

## Non-denominated “A” - “G” Definitive Stamps on International Mail

by Tony Wawrukiewicz

**New Introduction:** This article first appeared in the September 2011 volume of the *U.S. Specialist*. Since it appeared there, I have been able to acquire further examples of the more difficult to acquire usages and Rob Washburn has given me access to other examples of other more difficult to acquire usages. The former are indicated in blue and the latter in red in Table 3. The added information garnered from these usages is also scattered throughout this article as blue or red text. I am indebted to Kurt Lenz for his suggestion that I add to Tables 2 and 3 the dates upon which use of these definitive letter stamps likely or definitely was allowed in the international mails. The section for the “G” stamp in the original article was, in my opinion, confusing, and, therefore, I

have rewritten it.

This article is a complex and somewhat repetitive discussion of the use of the various letter stamps in the international mails. Because of this, I would recommend that the reader first read only the introduction, purpose and conclusion matter, which together clarify what this article is about. The reader then can decide how much detail he or she needs to read in order to feel comfortable that the article’s purpose has been fulfilled.

This article will also be made available on the AMC’s website. This will allow me to further improve on its conclusions as more information is made available. The PDF copy on the website will be redated as it is updated.

**Introduction:** Beginning on May 22, 1978 (with the type “A” (15¢) non-denominated stamp), a series of non-denominated definitive letter stamps have been produced with the introduction of each new domestic first-class rate. They allowed a new rate to be introduced before new stamps of the new first-class denomination had been printed in sufficient quantity. These letter stamps were introduced through and including the type “H” (33¢) nondenominated stamp.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this article is an attempt to clarify collectors’ knowledge about how these stamps could be used in the international mails. That is, was it legal for these non-denominated definitive letter stamps to be used on international mail? A first look at official documents suggests that it was not legal. For instance every announcement of each issue, from “A” to “G” said essentially: “The non-denominated ‘letter’ stamp may be used only on domestic mail. It may not be used on international mail.” Then,

these initial announcements were apparently supported by frequent intervening *Postal Bulletins (PB)* such as *PB 21809* (February 10, 1992) and *Domestic Mail Manuals (DMM)* such as *DMM Issue 44* (September 20, 1992) in which follow-up statements reiterating concepts presented in initial announcements occurred.

However, these initial and follow-up statements are contradicted by the fact that *eventually it became legal to use every non-denominated definitive letter stamp in the international mails*. As I will show in this article, while it is true that initially in each new domestic rate period it was announced that each new letter stamp “could only be used on domestic mail,” after this initial period, or immediately in the case of the “G” stamp, each new letter stamp could be and was legally used in the international mails. This will be shown by both (1) four published statements in *Postal Bulletins* and/or (2) by the pattern of use of each issue.

At the end of this article, when the reader has seen the evidence

**Table 1. Rates for International Airmail: May 29, 1978 – July 9, 1995**

Rate Category	1 May 29, 1978	2 Jan 1, 1981	3 Mar 22, 1981	4 Nov 1, 1981	5 Feb 17, 1985
U.S. domestic first-class letter/oz	15¢ (“A”)	→	18 (“B”)	20 (“C”)	22 (“D”)
Canada, first-class letter/oz	15	→	18	20	22
Canada, first-class post card	10	→	12	13	14
U.S. international airmail letter, CA & SA/½ oz	25	35	→	→	39
U.S. international surface letter, all other countries/oz	20	30	→	→	37
U.S. international airmail letter, all other countries/½ oz	31	40	→	→	44
U.S. international airmail post card, all other countries	21	28	→	→	33
U.S. international surface post card, all other countries	14	19	→	→	25

CA = Central America; SA = South America; → = rate continues; AM = airmail;

Rate Category	6 Apr 3, 1988	7 Feb 3, 1991	8 Jan 1, 1995	9 Jul 9, 1995
U.S. domestic first-class letter/oz	25¢ (“E”)	29 (“F”)	32 (“G”)	→
Canada, first-class letter/oz	30	40	→	46
Canada, first-class post card	21	30	→	40
U.S. international airmail letter, CA & SA/½ oz				
U.S. international surface letter, all other countries/oz	40	70	→	
U.S. international airmail letter, all other countries/½ oz	45	50	→	60
U.S. international airmail post card, all other countries	36	40	→	50
U.S. international surface post card, all other countries	28	35	→	

CA = Central America; SA = South America; → = rate continues; shaded area = rate ends.

accumulated over the years of use of the non-denominated stamps, it will also be clear that the evidence shows that the edicts of the USPS frequently were not followed by postal workers. Once one finishes this article, I believe that readers will agree with me that frequently the right hand of the USPS and/or its workers did not know what the left hand was doing!

By the way - is the word non-denominated or nondenominated? Well, it's both. The early announcements for the type "A" through "C" stamps used the form non-denominated. Starting with the type "D" stamp, the form nondenominated was used on all official documents. *However*, many of the handstamps used with the type "E" non-denominated stamp on cover use this hyphenated form.

Therefore, in discussing the "A" through "C" and "E" issues I use non-denominated, but for the other issues ("D" and "F" through "H") I use nondenominated.

Before discussing the use patterns for each issue, we first illustrate the rates applicable during each new domestic rate period associated with each non-denominated definitive letter stamp. Table 1 summarizes domestic and international postage rates corresponding to each rate period associated with a non-denominated letter stamp. Table 2 summarizes the actual (published) or deduced dates for the allowed use of each letter stamp in the international mails. This table includes appropriate references for the allowed uses where they exist.

**Table 2. Dates for Legal Use of Non-denominated Stamps in the International Mails. \***

	Reference or deduced date for legal use in international mails
"A" (5/22/78, 5/29/78)	<i>PB 21148</i> (6/15/78): "A fully prepaid international mail item bearing non-denominated postage inadvertently entering the U.S. postal system was not to be returned to the sender but instead sent on to the international exchange office for dispatch to its destination." (17 days after the rate change - 6/15/78)
"B" (3/15/81, 3/22/81)	About 37 days after the rate change - 4/28/81.
"C" (10/11/81, 11/1/81)	About 37 days after the rate change - 12/8/81.
"D" (2/1/85, 2/17/85)	<i>PB 21508</i> (April 4, 1985): "Nondenominated stamps intended for domestic mail only, but if small amount of mail with such mailed with correct amount, allow on to exchange office." (46 days after the rate change - 4/4/85)
"E" (3/22/88, 4/3/88)	About 45 days after the rate change - 5/18/81.
"F" (1/22/91, 2/3/91)	<i>PB 21782</i> (February 7, 1991): "Foreign postal administrations have been advised of the nondenominated stamps, and international mail presented by customers with those stamps affixed should not be refused." (4 days after the rate change - 2/7/91?)
"G" (12/13/94, 1/1/95)	A USPS memo of January 24, 1995 stated "... Universal Postal Union regulation... now allows the use of non-denominated stamps in the exchange of international mail." (Probably immediately after the rate change - 1/1/95)

\*Dates in the parentheses after each letter indicate date non-denominated stamp was issued and date of domestic rate change.

We will see that in the pattern of international use discussed for each non-denominated definitive letter stamp, the period of time after the announcement of the new domestic rate until the stamp use in international mail was considered legal is quite variable, even when there was an official announcement. This period was 17

days for the type "A" stamp, about 37 days for the type "B" stamp, about 37 days for the type "C" stamp, 46 days for the type "D" stamp, about 45 days for the type "E" stamp, 4 days for the type "F" stamp and probably immediately for the type "G" stamp.

**The beginnings - the Type "A" stamp:** The *PB 21146* of May 19, 1978 stated: "15¢ 'A' stamp intended for domestic use; it may not be used on international mail." From the *PB 21148* of June 15, 1978 we find, "A fully prepaid international mail item bearing non-denominated postage inadvertently entering the U.S. postal system was not to be returned to the sender but instead sent on to the international exchange office for dispatch to its destination."

Unfortunately, I am not I aware of an example the type "A" stamp used on international mail before June 15, 1978 that was returned to the sender because the use was illegal. However, the June 8, 1978 airmail post card to England in Figure 1, which should have been returned because of the illegal use of the "A" stamp, was not returned. If it had been used legally (after June 15, 1978), the 21¢ on the postcard (6¢ plus 15¢ "A" stamp) was the correct postage.



**Figure 1. June 8, 1978 illegal use of non-denominated stamp "A" in the international mails. It should have been returned to sender. Such a use would have been legal only as of June 15, 1978.**

The June 9, 1978 airmail letter to Guatemala in Figure 2, although philatelic in origin and possibly contrived, which should have been returned because of the illegal use of the "A" stamp, was not. If it had been used legally (after June 15, 1978), the 25¢ on the letter (10¢ plus 15¢ "A" stamp) was the correct postage (25¢ for up to 1/2 ounce airmail letter rate). The letter was returned

from Guatemala because the addressee was unknown, possibly because the address was inadequate, or because it was an experiment to see what would happen.



**Figure 2. June 9, 1978 illegal use of non-denominated stamp “A” in the international mails. It should have been returned to sender. Such a use would have been legal only as of June 15, 1978.**

Figure 3 illustrates a July 3, 1978 letter to Australia, paid at 31¢ for an up to 1/2 ounce airmail letter. Because the letter’s date was after June 15, 1978, the two type “A” stamps were legally used and accepted along with the 1¢ Prominent American stamp. Unfortunately, for the Type “A” issue I have no example nor am I aware of an example in other collectors’ hands where a legal use was incorrectly returned later than June 15, 1978.

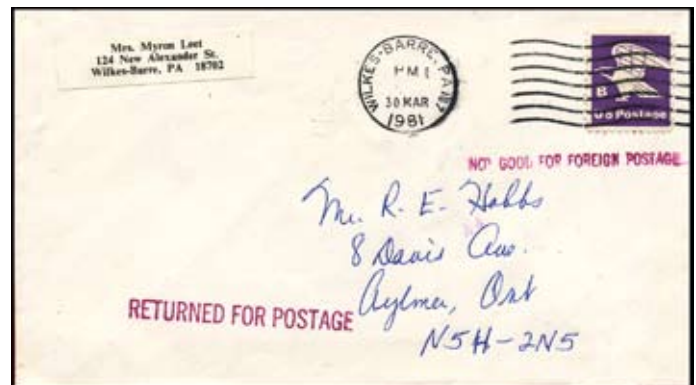


**Figure 3. July 3, 1978, airmail letter to Australia, post-June 15, 1978 (legal) international use the type “A” non-denominated stamp.**

**The Type “B” stamp:** The first-class domestic letter rate increased to 18¢ for up to one ounce on March 22, 1981. On release, as the *PB* of March 20, 1981 indicates, the type “B” non-denominated stamp was not to be used in the international mails: “This stamp is intended for domestic use only; it may not be used for international mail.” Unlike for the “A” stamp, there was no second announcement for the “B” stamp that indicated that the “B” stamp could subsequently be legally used in the international mails. However, as one would expect from the “A” stamp handling, the “B” stamp was soon allowed into the international mails. In fact, in this section we will discuss two covers dated March 30, 1981 and July 20, 1981 where the use of the type “B”

stamp on international mail was denied and two dated April 30 and April 28, 1981 where the use was accepted.

The first example (Figure 4) is a March 30, 1981 (8 days after new domestic rate) first-class letter to Canada where the type “B” stamp was considered to be used illegally and was returned to the sender because the use was illegal.



**Figure 4. March 30, 1981 unsuccessfully attempted illegal use of non-denominated stamp “B” in the international mails. It was correctly ‘RETURNED FOR POSTAGE’ because, as explained in the text of the article, it was mailed only 8 days after the new domestic rate was implemented. As is discussed in the text of the article, such a use was probably not legal until late April 1981.**

This is indicated by the handstamps ‘NOT GOOD FOR FOREIGN POSTAGE’ and ‘RETURNED FOR POSTAGE.’ Even though no announcement concerning allowing international use followed the issue of the type “B” stamp, certainly this disallowance of international use only 8 days after the rate change makes sense, especially when one considers that for the type “A” stamp there was a period of 17 days when it was not legal to use it on international mail. Incidentally, if it had been used legally, the 18¢ “B” stamp on the Figure 4 letter was the correct postage.

Tony Dewey has an April 24, 1981 surface letter (not shown here) to Sweden mailed at the 30¢ for up to one ounce rate, paid with a 2¢ Americana stamp and a single of the type “B” stamp. The cover was handstamped as short paid 28¢ (the non-denominated stamp use was considered illegal and given no value and it was also short paid an additional 10¢) and returned to sender. I assume that since the cover was mailed only 33 days after the domestic rate change, the use of the type “B” stamp was still considered illegal.

Figure 5 illustrates a April 30, 1981 airmail post card to England, correctly paid at the airmail post card rate of 28¢ (10¢ Americana definitive stamp plus 18¢ type “B” stamp). I believe that since this post card was mailed 39 days after the rate change, enough time had passed that, even without a *PB* announcement to the effect, de facto at this late date, the type “B” stamp was legally used and accepted. I have an April 28, 1981 airmail letter use to Guatemala with the same legal pattern of use as this cover.

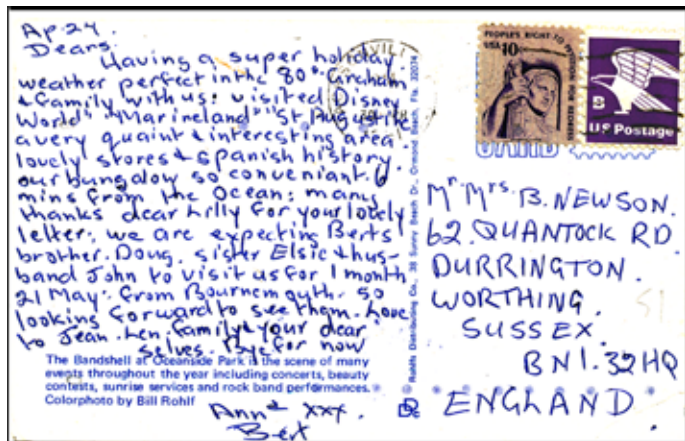


Figure 5. April 30, 1981, legal international use of type “B” non-denominated stamp to pay 28¢ surface post card rate to England. Legal as mailed 39 days after rate change and fits pattern for other non-denominated letter stamps before and after it.

The last cover I will show in this section (Figure 6) is an attempted use of the “B” stamp on a July 20, 1981 up to one ounce first-class letter to Canada, 18¢/oz rate. The two handstamps on this letter indicate its return for two reasons - a mail strike in Canada and the so-called illegal use of type “B” stamp. If one considers the pattern of the type “A” and “D” stamps and even the “C” and “E” stamps and the fact that of April 28 and 30, 1981 allowed-uses, it seems likely to me that this use was incorrectly disallowed by a postal worker.

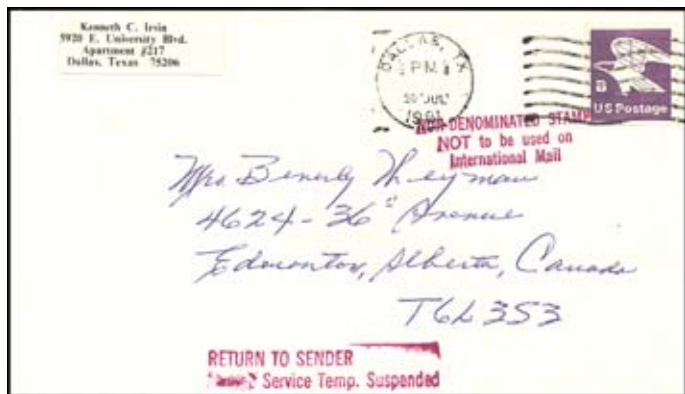


Figure 6. For reasons discussed in the text of this article, this July 20, 1981 cover was incorrectly returned to sender because the ‘NON-DENOMINATED STAMPS NOT to be used on International Mail.’

**The Type “C” stamp:** The first-class domestic letter rate increased to 20¢ for up to one ounce on November 1, 1981. On release, as the PB of October 6, 1981 indicated: “NON-DENOMINATED “C” STAMPS ARE NOT TO BE USED FOR MAIL TO CANADA, MEXICO, OR OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES.” Like the “B” stamp, there was no second announcement for the “C” stamp, yet we will see that soon after the date of the new 20¢ for up to one ounce rate of November 1, 1981 (as early as December 11, 1981), the “C” stamp was allowed into the foreign mails.

The first example from this period is an early November 28, 1981 use on an up to one ounce first-class letter to Canada, 20¢/oz

rate, shown in Figure 7. This represented an attempted use of the non-denominated (20¢) Christmas stamp to pay postage only 27 days after the domestic rate change. One handstamp on this letter indicates its return because at this time this postage or the “C” stamp could not be legally used. The other handstamp incorrectly indicates that the 20¢ due was for surface service, not airmail service. By this time, there was no distinguishing between letter surface and airmail service to Canada - all letter mail to Canada was given the most expeditious service whether by surface or air. I believe that this was an appropriate returned item because it was so soon after the rate change.

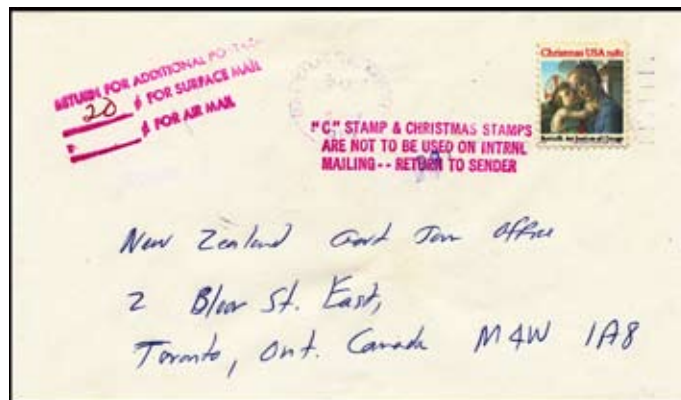


Figure 7. December 28, 1981 unsuccessfully attempted illegal use of the 1981 non-denominated Christmas stamp in the international mails - letter correctly returned. Use of this stamp and the “C” stamp (see handstamp) very likely illegal only 27 days after November 1, 1981 domestic rate change.

On the other hand three international covers I own were used on December 8, 11, and 17, 1981, all franked with the type “C” stamp and correctly allowed into the international mails. One of these, shown in Figure 8, was a December 11, 1981 airmail letter to England, franked with two type “C” stamps, paying the 40¢ for up to 1/2 ounce rate. Since this cover was mailed 40 days after the domestic rate change, like the “B” period example in Figure 4 that was mailed 39 days after the 18¢/oz domestic rate change, this seems to be an expected interval after which the “C” stamp usage became legal.



Figure 8. December 11, 1981 legal international use the type “C” non-denominated stamp to pay 40¢ for up to 1/2 ounce airmail letter rate to England. Legal because was mailed 40 days after the rate change and fits pattern for other non-denominated letter stamps before and after it.

Tony Dewey has a November 9, 1981 cover illegally used and not returned, and I have not seen examples of the “C” stamp not allowed legal use after December 11, 1981.

**The Type “D” stamp:** The first-class domestic letter rate increased to 22¢ for up to one ounce on February 17, 1985. A philatelic release of January 18, 1985 announced this new rate and the release of the type “D” nondenominated stamp. This release indicated that as before, this stamp, at the time of the introduction of this new domestic rate, was not allowed on international mail. However, the *PB 21508* (April 4, 1985) further announced concerning the “D” stamp: “Non-denominated stamps intended for domestic mail only, but if small amount of mail with such mailed with correct amount, allow on to exchange office.”

Therefore, the usual pattern of the prior nondenominated letter stamps held with the introduction of the type “D” stamps. And, for this new value there is actual documentation in the *PB* just as there was for the type “A” stamp! These documentation references are of course vital as they strongly support the basic premise of this article that the nondenominated letter definitive stamps, at first denied access to the domestic mails, were then, eventually, legally allowed into the international mails.

The first example for this rate period is a February 17, 1985 unsuccessful illegal attempt to use two type “D” stamps valued at 44¢ to pay the airmail postage on a letter to Germany, at the 44¢ for up to 1/2 ounce rate (Figure 9). The letter was correctly hand-stamped ‘UNMAILABLE RETURN TO SENDER.’ I have a similar item dated February 19 that was handled in the same manner.



**Figure 9. February 17, 1985 (first day new rate) correctly unsuccessfully attempted illegal use of 1985 type “D” definitive letter stamp in the international mails. The type “D” stamp was not allowed legally into international mails until April 4, 1985.**

I have two covers dated before April 4, 1985, dated March 16, and March 28, 1985, that were illegally placed in the international mails and were incorrectly allowed onward to their destination. The one in Figure 10 is a March 28, 1985 airmail letter mailed to Thailand. Incidentally, if it had been mailed on or after April 4th, it would have been correctly franked as two type “D” stamps had a 44¢ value, and the airmail rate at that time was 44¢ for up to 1/2 ounce.



**Figure 10. March 28, 1985 illegal use of 1985 type “D” definitive letter stamp in the international mails. As mailed before April 4, 1985, letter should have been returned to sender.**

The last cover in this section is the earliest example (September 13, 1985) I have used after the April 4, 1985 announcement date that allowed the type “D” stamp to be used legally to pay international postage (Figure 11). A pair of the “D” stamps (44¢ value) pays the airmail postage on this letter to Denmark at the airmail rate of 44¢ for up to 1/2 ounce.



**Figure 11. Sept. 13, 1985 legal international use of type “D” nondenominated stamp to pay 44¢ for up to 1/2 ounce airmail letter rate to England. Legal as mailed after the April 4, 1985 *PB* announcement allowing its use in international mails.**

**The Type “E” stamp:** The date of the rate change associated with the “E” stamp (increase from 22¢ to 25¢) was April 3, 1988. The *PB 21664* of March 24, 1988 announced, “E stamp may not be used for international mail.” There was no second announcement allowing type “E” stamp use in the international mails, but as with the type “B” and “C” non-denominated issues, this eventually occurred even with no announcement.

There was a large correspondence addressed to a child in an English school. Since it was a large correspondence, and, as we have seen from the discussion of uses of the “A” through “D” issues and will see for the “F” issue, postal workers and even the USPS erred frequently in not obeying its own rules and regulations, there are many more examples of returned “E” items than returned “B,” “C” and “D” items. Therefore the statistics for this “E” section are skewed for usages that are discussed in it.

An early type “E” cover, in Figure 12, is an April 8, 1988 (5 days after new rate began) surface international post card to England, 28¢ rate, franked with one 25¢ type “E” stamp. At first, the card was considered short paid 3¢ (“Returned for 3¢ additional postage. When re-mailing, cross out this notice or paste stamps over it.”). Only then was the illegal attempt to use “E” stamp noted, and the due markings ‘CANCELLED’, and the card presumably returned for the correct reason, for attempted use of type “E” stamp before this was legal.

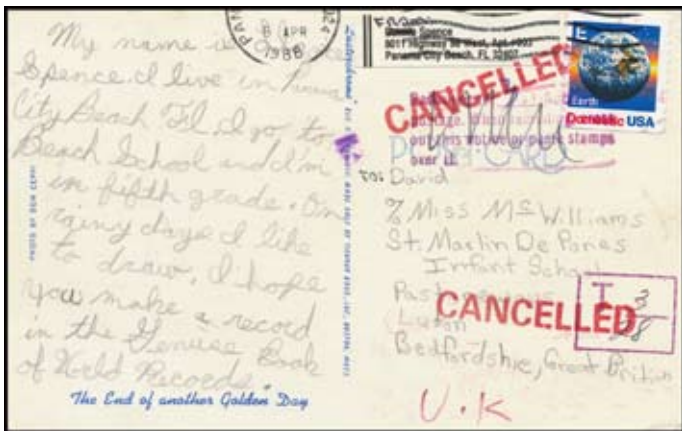


Figure 12. April 8, 1988 early (5 days after rate change) unsuccessful attempted illegal use of “E” stamp on post card to England. Complex handling explained in text.

The April 25, 1988 airmail cover to Thailand in Figure 13 is franked with two type “E” (25¢) stamps which overpay by 5¢ the 45¢ for up to 1/2 ounce rate.



Figure 13. April 25, 1988 illegal use of 1988 type “E” definitive letter stamp in the international mails. Since mailed only 22 days after the new domestic rate introduced this letter should have been returned to sender.

Although no announcement concerning when acceptance of this non-denominated stamp into the international mails occurred, comparison with the pattern of the other letter values indicates that this letter should have been returned because of illegal use of the type “E” stamp (only 22 days after the new domestic rate was introduced).

The use of the pair of type “E” stamps on the June 3, 1988 airmail letter to Scotland in Figure 14 was allowed and is felt to be legal as it occurred two months after the rate change. The two ‘E’ stamps overpay by 5¢ the 45¢ for up to 1/2 ounce rate.



Figure 14. June 3, 1988 legal international use two type “E” stamps to pay 45¢ for up to 1/2 ounce airmail letter rate to Scotland. Legal as mailed 61 days after the rate change and fits pattern for other non-denominated letter stamps before it.

A later use of the type “E” stamps in Figure 15, an August 2, 1988 (18 weeks post rate change!) airmail post card to England, overpaid by 14¢ the 36¢ international airmail post card rate with two type “E” non-denominated stamps, represents what is felt to be a late example of an incorrectly returned cover. As discussed earlier, this is one of many returned type “E” covers that should not have been returned.

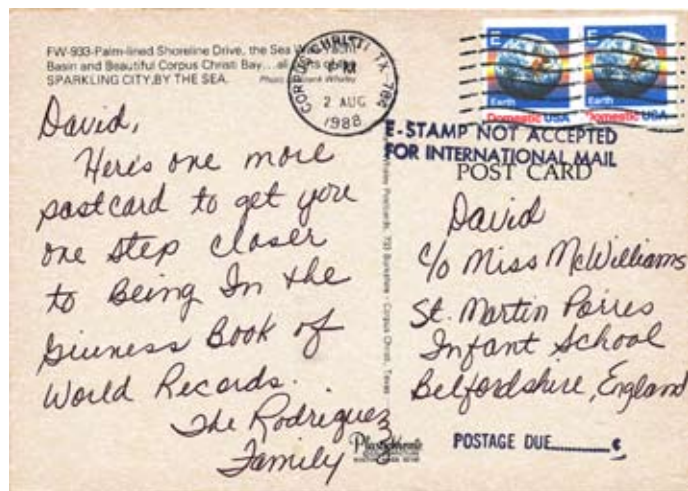


Figure 15. As this post card was mailed 18 weeks after the rate change of April 3, 1988, comparing the pattern seen for other non-denominated letter stamps, this August 2, 1988, airmail post card to England should not have been returned as by this time the use of the “E” stamp was legal.

I now present three examples of handstamps placed on post cards that were franked with some number of type “E” stamps. Since they were on cards mailed 45 or more days after the rate change, they were, in my opinion, legally placed on items and incorrectly not accepted on international mail. I evidence this as I identify the dates upon which the items were mailed. Another anomaly of each of these items is that the handstamps (all shown actual size) each clearly or probably had a return to sender component that was incorrectly blacked or lined out. Instead some kind of postage due marking was placed. According to *International Mail Manuals* of the time they instead should have had some marking such as ‘Returned for additional postage.’ Also note the use of the hyphenated non-denominational (sic). First it shouldn’t be hyphenated and second the “E” stamp is not a religious stamp.

NON-DENOMINATIONAL  
STAMPS CANNOT BE  
USED FOR FGN. MAIL.  
~~RETURN FOR POSTAGE.~~

May 23, 1988

“E” STAMPS NOT GOOD  
FOR FOREIGN MAILS  
~~RETURN FOR POSTAGE~~  
Due

May 24, 1988



August 2, 1988

What conclusions can be drawn from the extensive data on the type "E" stamp? Based on the usage patterns seen with the earlier letter types, the following can be deduced:

(1) The April 8, 1988 (5 days after new rate began) and May 13, 1988 (40 days after new rate began) returned items were correctly returned.

(2) The May 23, 24, 25, 1988 (50 to 52 days after new rate began) returns were not correct.

(3) The June, July and August returns were also incorrect.

(4) The April 25, 1988 and May 11, 1988 (22 and 38 days after new rate began) unreturned items were incorrectly not returned.

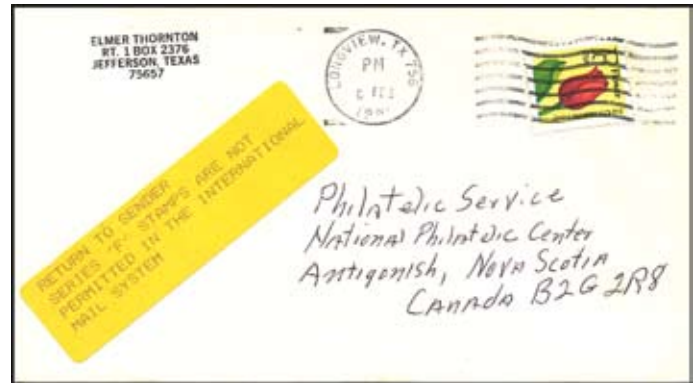
(5) The May 18, 1988 (45 days after new rate began) and June 3 (Figure 14) items were correctly not returned.

(6) The passing of any late May, early June or later 1988 item into the international mails (i.e., not returned) was legal.

Incidentally, almost all returned "E" items and those successfully passed into the international mails, whether from this mailing or not, that I have seen, are overpaid. A few are underpaid. None I have seen are correctly paid.

**The Type "F" stamp:** We see a major change in the pattern of use for the nondenominated definitive letter stamps with the "F" stamp. In the *PB* 21782 of February 7, 1991 we read, "Foreign postal administrations have been advised of the nondenominated stamps, and international mail presented by customers with those stamps affixed should not be refused." That is, from at least February 7 and possibly from the beginning of the domestic 29¢ rate period on February 3, the new nondenominated "F" stamp was officially allowed on international mail. Thus, by at least February 7, international covers that were mailed shortpaid, whether with a nondenominated "F" stamp or with other stamps, were to be returned to sender because of the short payment, but all postage on the shortpaid covers was to be given credit.

Unfortunately, we now, with the first example in this section, either (1) again see the apparent lack of conformity of USPS workers with the rules with this February 6, 1991 example, or (2) the "F" letter stamp wasn't allowed officially in to the international mails until February 7. Figure 16 shows an up to one ounce February 6, 1991 first class letter to Canada, 40¢/oz rate, underpaid 11¢ with type "F" stamp. The affixed label reads, 'RETURN TO SENDER. SERIES 'F' STAMPS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE INTERNATIONAL MAIL SYSTEM.' That is, this letter was postmarked a day prior to the USPS announcement that the "F" stamp was to be accepted in the international mails. I believe that the *PB* announcement, since it was almost concurrent with the rate change date of February 3, 1991, indicates that the USPS meant the "F" stamp to be legal on international mail as of February 3rd. However, since the first official announcement that I can find is the one on February 7th, I believe that USPS workers could well indeed have not known what to do until this date. Therefore, one can understand the reason for the label denying the legality of the "F" stamp. However, even if the "F" stamp had been recognized, the Figure 16 letter should have been returned to the sender since it was shortpaid.



**Figure 16. Whether or not the "F" stamp use was legal on this cover to Canada (see article discussion), the cover short paid 11¢ for first-class rate for an up to one ounce letter to Canada. Therefore, it should have been returned to the sender.**

Before I show an appropriate and legal use of the "F" letter stamp in the international mails, the Figure 17 cover (illustrated courtesy of Anthony Dewey) helps to emphasize one of the facts I have been attempting to illustrate, namely, that postal workers and the USPS were frequently not on the same page with regard to the use of nondenominated definitive letter stamps in the international mails. Figure 17 shows a June 24, 1991 first class letter to Canada correctly franked with 40¢ in postage, including a non-precanceled nonprofit pre-stamped envelope indicium, a 5¢ stamp and a 29¢ type "F" stamp. This cover was incorrectly 'RETURNED for 29¢ Additional postage....' because supposedly 'The F Series stamp is valid for First Class domestic mail use only, and may not be used for international mail.' As we have noted from the *PB* notice of February 7, 1991, the handling of this cover and the label message are simply not correct (somebody didn't get the memo!).

All the other international items I own, including the one in Figure 18, and another dated April 12, 1991, are adequately franked for the service requested and have been correctly allowed into the international mails. The cover in Figure 18 is a first-class letter to Canada correctly franked with 40¢ postage, including the 29¢ "F" stamp. The stamps on this cover correctly pay the 40¢ for up to one ounce Canadian first-class rate.



**Figure 17. As per the *PB* announcement and as discussed in the article text, this letter to Canada should not have been returned. The use of the type "F" stamp was eminently legal. That is, the label on this letter is incorrect.**

This cover is particularly pleasing because it is accurately franked with 40¢ postage. Starting with covers with the “E” stamp (where none are franked correctly) and continuing through the type “F” and “G” stamps, all too often covers are overfranked.



**Figure 18.** As per the *PB* announcement, this is a legal use of the “F” (29¢ value) stamp which together with 11¢ in added stamps was used to pay the 40¢ for up to one ounce first-class letter rate to Canada.

**The Type “G” stamp:** With the introduction of the type “G” nondenominated definitive stamp we find a pattern defined by various official USPS documents, including a report of one official announcement, and the actual evidence from all covers that are known. This pattern, discussed now, is felt to force the conclusion that all international uses of the type “G” stamp were allowed, and allowed immediately when the new domestic rate was introduced on January 1, 1995.

Initially, on December 22, 1994, in *PB 21883*, we have the usual announcement refusing legal access of this stamp to the international mails.

Then, as Table 2 indicates, a USPS memo of January 24, 1995 (private communication from Anthony Dewey) stated “... Universal Postal Union regulation... now allows the use of non-denominated stamps in the exchange of international mail.”

This memo is supported later by an announcement of *PB 21896* of June 22, 1995, where we read “... international conventions that were in effect when G series nondenominated stamps were produced (bearing and endorsement for domestic use only) were later changed to allow the use of nondenominated postage in international mail. Therefore, despite the endorsement they bear, some G series stamps (the 32-cent domestic rate, the 20-cent postcard rate, and the 3-cent make-up stamp) may be used on international mail and given credit for their established value. G stamps for the nonprofit rate and the First-Class Presort rate must not be used on international mail. Post offices and exchange offices must accept, process, and forward mail bearing the G series stamp if the total postage paid is correct for the class and weight of the mail piece. The mail must not be returned solely because its postage includes one or more of the G stamps.”

The USPS memo is also supported by the fact that all international uses of the type “G” nondenominated stamps known (all but two owned by Anthony Dewey) were allowed into the international mails. That is, they were not returned because they were considered illegal uses.

In other words, the *PB 21883* announcement was immediately superseded, and all international uses of the type “G” stamp were allowed, and allowed immediately when the new domestic rate

was introduced on January 1, 1995. That is, the pattern of conflict that we have seen time and time again with each and every non-denominated letter issue continued through the type “G” issue. All of the type “G” stamp international uses illustrated here and all but two known are in the collection of Anthony Dewey.

The earliest type “G” cover known is a January 4, 1995 first-class letter to Canada, franked with denominated 29¢ and 5¢ stamps and two “G” period nondenominated 3¢ make-up rate stamps (Figure 19). The stamps together correctly pay the 40¢ for an up to one ounce Canadian letter rate. Incidentally, this cover was returned but only because the address was insufficient.



**Figure 19.** January 4, 1995 letter to Canada. Earliest known international “G” cover, correctly paid at 40¢ per up to one ounce rate. The “G” issue stamps in this case were the 3¢ nondenominated make-up stamps. Their use was legal even though used only 3 days after the new domestic rate was introduced. All international type “G” stamp uses were apparently legal.

Another early type “G” stamp international cover is a January 12, 1995 airmail cover to Australia, overpaid 1¢ with a type “G” stamp and a denominated 19¢ regular stamp, paying the 50¢ due for an up to 1/2 ounce letter (Figure 20). It was refused and thus returned for that reason. That is, the nondenominated stamp use in the international mails was legal.



**Figure 20.** January 12, 1995, airmail letter to Australia. “G” stamp plus regular 19¢ stamp overpay by 1¢ the 50¢ for up to 1/2 ounce rate. Cover returned because it was refused - not because of an illegal “G” stamp use.

An international “G” stamp cover that actually completed its journey (Figure 21) is another airmail cover, this time to France, correctly paid with a type “G” stamp (32¢) and 7¢ and 11¢ regular stamps, paying the 50¢ due for an up to 1/2 ounce letter. The nondenominated stamp use was legal.





**Figure 21. February 13, 1995, airmail letter to France. “G” stamp plus regular 11¢ and 7¢ stamps pay the 50¢ for up to 1/2 ounce rate. Cover accepted into the international mails as use of “G” stamp was legal.**

After the type “G” stamps, most nondenominated stamps with few exceptions (for example, see the text of the *PB 21896* of June 22, 1995) were legal in the international mails. Specifically, the *PB 21978* of August 13, 1998 stated, “Effective August 13, 1998, *International Mail Manual* (IMM) 152.2 and *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) P022.2.1 are being revised to allow nondenominated stamps (e.g., the ‘G’ stamp), except for precanceled stamps with rate markings, to be used for international mail. These revisions will be incorporated into IMM Issue 21 and DMM Issue 54.”

The *International Mail Manual* Issue 21 (and all issues thereafter), Chapter 1, Section 152.2 Stamps, included this new paragraph: “d. Postal customers may affix nondenominated postage stamps (e.g., the ‘G’ stamp), except for those that bear rate mark-

ings (First-Class Presort, Bulk Rate, or Nonprofit Organization), to their international mail. The nondenominated Breast Cancer Awareness Semi-postal Stamp, which has a postage value that is equivalent to the domestic rate for a 1-ounce First Class letter, may also be used for that purpose.”

When the final nondenominated definitive letter stamp, the “H” stamp (33¢ value), was produced for the domestic rate change of January 10, 1999, *PB 21985* (November 19, 1998) reiterated this fact: “Accordingly, please advise retail customers and postal personnel that the 33-cent First-Class Rate ‘H’ postage stamp (which depicts Uncle’s Sam’s Hat) and the 1-cent ‘H’ Rate Make-Up stamp (which depicts a Weathervane Rooster) may be affixed to international mail.”

**Conclusion:** It has been shown that while it is true that initially in each new domestic rate period it was announced that each new letter stamp “A” through “G” “could only be used on domestic mail,” after some initial period, or even immediately in the case of the type “G” stamp, each new letter stamp could be and was legally used in the international mails. It is now hopefully also clear that the edicts of the USPS frequently were not followed by postal workers.

This article concludes with Table 3, which lists all the known (to Wawrukiewicz) examples of usages or attempted usages of the non-denominated definitive letter stamps in the international mails. It is the opinion of Wawrukiewicz, Anthony Dewey and Bill DiPaolo, as collectors (and a dealer) who have been searching for nondenominated material for well over a decade, that, except for the type “E” material, early in a rate, material and especially returned material is very scarce for the “A” through “G” letter type usages.

**Table 3. Known uses of the “A” through “G” Nondenominated Definitive Letter Stamps**

Non-denominated letter*	Returned illegal attempts**	Unreturned illegal usages**	Legal usages**	Incorrectly returned legal usages**
“A” (5/29/78, exactly 6/15/78.	None known	6/6/78, 6/8/78, 6/9/78, 6/13/78	7/3/78, 7/4/78, 7/5/78, 7/11/78, 7/20/78, 8/4/78, 8/15/78, 8/21/78, 8/21/78, 8/23/78, 8/28/78, 8/2/78, 9/20/78, 9/2/78, 12/2/78	None known
“B” (3/22/81, about 4/28/81.	3/30/81, 3/30/81, 4/3/81, 4/28/81, 4/24/81	3/31/81	4/28/81, 4/30/81, 5/1/81, 5/3/81, 5/20/81, 5/8/81, 6/10/81, 6/20/81, 6/2/81, 6/26/81, 8/12/81	7/1/81, 7/20/81
“C” (11/1/81, about 12/8/81.	11/28/81	11/9/81	12/11/81, 12/16/81, 12/17/81, 12/17/81, 12/31/81, 12/2/81, 12/8/81, 1/17/82, 1/29/82, 3/15/82, 4/19/82, 6/14/82, 6/18/82	None known
“D” (2/17/85, exactly 4/4/85.	2/17/85, 2/19/85, 3/4/85, 3/9/85, 2/85, 4/3/85	2/27/85, 3/7/85, 3/7/85, 3/16/85, 3/16/85, 3/24/85	4/23/85, 9/13/85, 3/11/86	4/5/85
“E” (4/3/88, about 5/18/88.	4/8/88, 5/13/88,	4/15/88, 4/15/88, 4/25/88, 5/2/88, 5/10/88, 5/11/88,	6/3/88, 8/8/88, 8/22/88, 1/5/89, 2/2/89, 2/20/89	5/18/88, 5/23/88, 5/24/88, 5/25/88, 6/28/88, 7/25/88, 8/2/88
“F” (2/3/91, exactly 2/7/91.	None known	1/3/91?	3/26/91, 4/12/91, 4/15/91, 5/1/91, 6/30/91, 11/25/92	2/6/91?, 6/24/91
“G” (1/1/95, probably 1/1/95.	None known	None known	1/4/95, 1/12/95, 1/19/95, 2/2/95, 2/7/95, 2/13/95, 2/15/95, 3/6/95, 4/24/95, 6/8/95, 7/7/95, 7/21/95, 8/14/95, 9/19/95, 12/1/95	None known

\*Dates adjacent to the letters are dates of the new domestic rates, followed by the exact or likely dates international use allowed.

\*\*Underlined items from Anthony Dewey collection, red items from Rob Washburn collection.