

This Day in History... July 15, 1975

First US-Soviet Joint Issue Stamps

On July 15, 1975, the US and Soviet Union each issued stamps honoring the launch of their Apollo-Soyuz Test Project, their first joint space venture.

After several years of tension and a Space Race to the Moon, the United States and Soviet Union began to adopt a détente policy. This was an easing of strained relations. Out of this policy came the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project.

As the American and Soviet space agencies worked together, so did their postal administrations. Plans for a joint issue between the nations began in July 1973. At that time, Gordon Morison, manager of the US Postal Service's Philatelic Affairs Division submitted a proposal to Senior Assistant Postmaster General Benjamin Bailar. Morison's proposal was to create stamps for both nations to mark the linkup in space.

One of Morison's suggestions was for each country to design two stamps, and then both countries would issue their own designs and the designs of the other, for a total of four stamps. Meanwhile, that October, the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC), unaware of Morison's proposal, began discussing the test project and the possibility of producing a stamp.



Soviet stamp picturing the launch rocket.

The US and Soviet postal agencies then began working together to design the stamps. In the end, Robert McCall, who previously did the artwork for the 1971 Space Achievement and 1974 Skylab-Pioneer stamps, was selected to design the "after link-up" stamp. Soviet Artist Anatoly Aksamit designed the "before link-up image."

The Soviet Union also issued three commemorative stamps illustrating the Soyuz launch, both crews, and the Soviet Mission Control.



These stamps were issued on the same day both craft were launched into space.



Soviet Union stamp picturing Apollo-Soyuz astronauts



Soviet Union joint issue stamps issued for the launch

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