

# The American Stamp Collector & Dealer



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# Editor's Pasteboard

Wayne L. Youngblood

## Does History Change, or just the Depiction of it?

Here's the funny thing about history: it exists, whether we like it or not. While there are a multitude of different interpretations of most any historical event, the event itself is real and enduring. Marking it as such neither glorifies nor denigrates it. These events happened. Period. Such is the case with the dropping of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, which occurred 75 years ago this month (Aug. 6 and Aug. 9, 1945). You may disagree with the philosophy of using these bombs, but there's no debate that they hastened the end of a long and brutal war. Enter the Japanese government and a Clinton administration that was eager to please it.

On the facing page you'll find the beginning of an important feature by Gerry Newhouse, a real estate broker who ended up changing his career as a result of the sanitization of one event in history. He was incredibly frustrated by the actions of the White House (and the Smithsonian, which altered its plans to exhibit the *Enola Gay*) and created a protest label that still attracts considerable positive attention. His first-hand account of how these labels came about is fascinating. Although Newhouse's label was not the first, it is certainly the most popular and most well-known of about 10 or so different ones known.

At the time Newhouse created this cinderella item, I was editor of the *Scott Stamp Monthly*. We not only ran a major feature on Newhouse and his creation (as well as a number of similar items that were arguably inspired by his), we eventually gave thousands of them away to collectors through a monthly feature I designed called "Free For All." Each month's featured item was free for a stamped, addressed envelope.

At any rate, as is the case with many stamps, there are four major types of Newhouse's stamp known. The following are the most major of these (three of which are known to collectors). There are also selvaige description differences known.

1. The first design (not pictured) closely resembles the rejected stamp design, with a depiction of a B-29. The caption reads "August 1945 Atomic bombs end WWII." This type is rather scarce, as it is these Newhouse used on outgoing mail before they became popular.

2. When the stamp needed to be reprinted, the design was regenerated and refined to create the design as we know it. Labels were produced in sheets of 36. These labels were produced by a laser-printing technique that appears almost raised on the paper (similar to thermographic printing). The paper itself

is extremely fluorescent, glowing a bright bluish-violet color under longwave ultraviolet light.



The basic design (excluding the black lettering) measures roughly 38 by 23mm, and the perforations (with intersections that meet perfectly) measure about 13 by 13½. The aircraft appears outlined in white against the red sky.

3. By mid-summer 1995, yet another version appeared, this time printed by offset lithography, darker in appearance, with a crisper image and the white lettering is larger. The design (again, excluding black lettering) measures about 38 by 22½m. The paper is a bit thinner and is not as highly fluorescent. The perforations, which were applied by a line perforator (with imperfect intersections) measure about 12½.



4. The last major type of this label is on a highly fluorescent self-adhesive paper with die-cut serpentine roulettes that measure 13. The design, which measures about 36½ by 25mm (excluding black type), is visually different from the other versions. Other than the difference of design size, the "August 1945" inscription now appears in the neck of the mushroom cloud and the black lettering at bottom is a different typefont and is much larger. The printing appears to be laser generated, with the slightly raised appearance noted on the version II type. ☐



**About the cover: History Denied.** The background image features a number of sheets of Gerry Newhouse's protest label, created in late 1994, after the White House (at the bequest of the Japanese government) canceled the planned stamp depicting the familiar mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb. The foreground images feature both the original planned stamp design (with "00" denomination) and artwork for the replacement.





# History Denied: The Rebirth of the “Atomic Stamp”

Gerry Newhouse

In 1991 the United States Postal Service previewed a series of 50 stamps, 10 for each year commemorating events in World War II from 1941-45. The ninth stamp in the 1941 series, “A World at War,” depicted the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, which led directly to our deep involvement in the war.

This stamp series was planned to end with the events in 1945. In the “Victory at Last” sheet, the eighth stamp was to show an image of the atomic mushroom cloud over Hiroshima, Japan, with the caption “Atomic Bombs Hasten War’s End.” The final stamp in the series showed returning Veterans with the caption “Home Towns Honor Their Returning Veterans, 1945.”

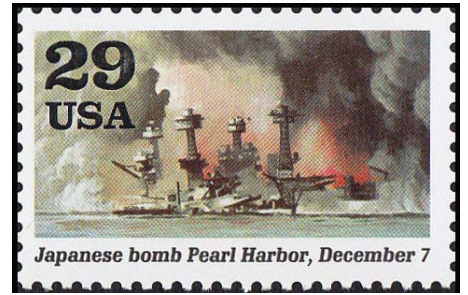
As a U.S. stamp collector and WWII history buff, I was very excited to be able to add this series of stamps to my collection. Each year as that series was available, I went to the post office and bought several panes.

On Dec. 7, 1994, Dee Dee Myers, the White House press secretary for the Clinton administration, made the announcement that the proposed atomic bomb stamp would be rescinded, due to protests and outrage from Japanese government officials and intervention by President Clinton. To my knowledge, this is the only commemorative stamp ever rescinded by the U.S. Postal Service. Ironically, the White House made this



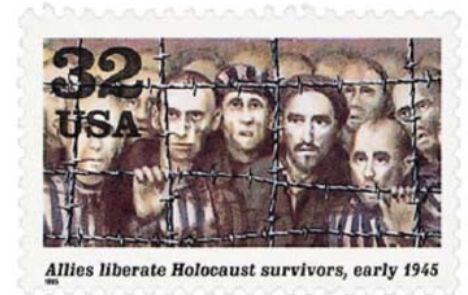
Above: The design of what would have been a 32¢ stamp marking the event that unquestionably hastened the end of WWII. It was scrapped as a direct result of Japanese objections and the Clinton Administration’s sudden involvement with the U.S. stamp program.

Below: After the abrupt cancellation of the atomic bomb stamp design, USPS rushed to produce this original artwork for a stamp depicting Truman reading the announcement of Japan’s surrender.



Above: The design of the 29¢ stamp depicting the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attack that led to our deep involvement in WWII, and one that was still keenly felt by numerous veterans and other Americans.

Below: A design from the sheetlet honoring 1945 events that depicted Holocaust survivors.



announcement on Dec. 7, 1994, exactly 53 years to the day of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor. On Dec. 8, 1994, “via the U.S. postal newsbreak,” the USPS announced it would be replacing the proposed atomic bomb stamp with an image of President Truman announcing Japan’s surrender.

I could not believe that President Clinton and the USPS gave in to the demands of the Japanese Government. “They felt the stamp was offensive to Japan, and not politically correct.” It should be noted that the German government did not protest the U.S. stamp depicting Holocaust prisoners behind barbed wire with the caption “Allies Liberate Holocaust Survivors, early 1945.”

I decided I needed to do something to express my anger and frustration regarding this stamp being canceled. After several days of contemplating what I could do, I came up with the idea to design and produce a “Cinderella Atomic Stamp.” I knew a local artist who was also a WWII veteran, Robert Littlehale. He drew the first version of the atomic stamp. I wasn’t entirely happy with the artwork. It was just an okay rendition, but I was anxious to have the stamps printed and I felt they would get my point across.

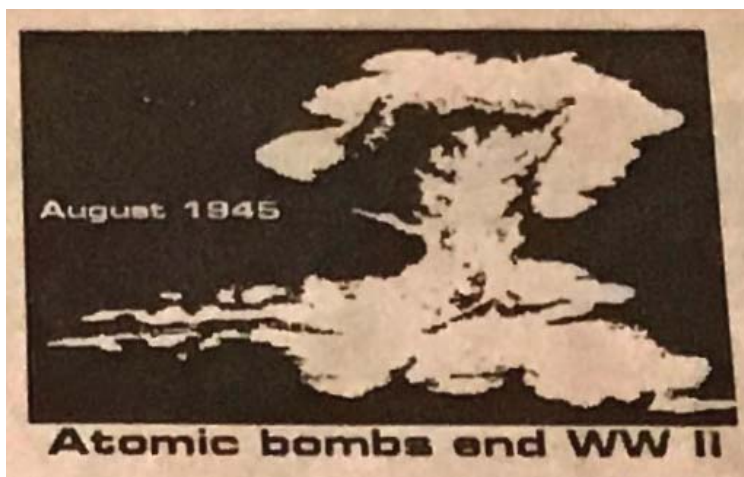
I was able to locate a printer in New York City who could produce this image for me on perforated gummed paper. I ordered 50 sheets with 36 stamps per sheet, and I began placing these protest stamps to the left of real stamps on all my outgoing personal and business mail. (I was a real

estate broker at the time). My sales agents and secretary volunteered to use them also. I also sent a letter to President Clinton expressing that I felt it was wrong to rescind the stamp and I enclosed a sheet of my stamps for his use. I never received a reply.

Several weeks later, however, I received a call from James Prichard, an Associated Press writer. He asked if I would share the story of the atomic stamp. I asked him how he found out about it. He told me a woman who works for Columbia Gas of Ohio called the AP headquarters and told them she received a check for payment of a gas bill and this stamp was on the envelope. She gave him my contact information.

James came to my office to conduct the interview and he took a picture of the envelope with the atomic stamp on it that I sent to President Clinton. I told him the story of the stamp being rescinded and my producing it as a small personal protest. I explained to Prichard that I felt strongly that it's a significant part of our country's history. Dropping the atomic bomb was a major event in our WWII and was a major factor in ending the war in the Pacific. The Associated Press article James wrote came out on Jan. 28, 1995, and was subsequently picked up by newspapers across the country. My business and home phone began to ring constantly with people asking how to purchase a sheet of stamps. I was not prepared for such an overwhelming response. I realized that before I printed large numbers of the stamps I would need a better image.

Ironically, the same day the AP article came out in my local newspaper, I received a call from Ron Kaplan. He told me he was an aviation artist and the executive director of the National Aviation Hall of Fame.



The original artwork for the author's first design for a protest stamp did not feature an aircraft in the design. This was later corrected and enhanced.

He said he would like the opportunity to paint a more detailed image of the stamp. Great!

I asked Ron to add a more detailed silhouette of the B-29 airplane (the *Enola Gay*) in the upper-left corner, where the denomination and "USA" were to be, and to add the date "August 1945." I also decided not to use the proposed caption from the original stamp design, "Atomic Bombs Hasten Wars End," but to add the caption "Atomic Bombs End WWII."

A week later, Ron brought me a beautiful painted image of my atomic stamp. This would become the final version. I set up a company to handle the many orders that were coming in, and placed a rush order for 2,000 additional sheets to be printed. At the bottom margin of these new stamp sheets I added the history of the rescinded stamp, my new company name, address and toll-free number. I also copyrighted the stamp with Ron's name and mine.

The best part of this story was yet to come. I soon received a phone call from Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets, pilot of the *Enola Gay*. He actually lived only four miles from my house in Columbus, Ohio. He said he wanted to thank me personally for producing the atomic stamps and asked if I would meet him for lunch. I did and, of course, gave him several sheets of stamps. Fortunately, I had read his autobiography nine months before our meeting. As was his practice,

An enhanced version of the original protest label design, which was created by Ron Kaplan, an aviation artist and then executive director of the National Aviation Hall of Fame. Kaplan's design, among other things, provided much more detail.





# Man designs own version of A-bomb stamp

By JAMES PRICHARD  
Associated Press Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio — A military veteran angry that the Postal Service scrapped plans to sell a stamp that recalled the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan has come up with one of his own.

Gerry Newhouse, a 49-year-old former Marine who spent two years in Vietnam, designed his own stamp after the U.S. Postal Service decided not to issue a stamp that depicted the mushroom cloud created by the August 1945 bombing.

"My motivation for producing this stamp has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the debate on whether it should have been used or not," Newhouse said.

"I produced this stamp because it's history, and it's about remembering the past."

The post office scrapped the stamp, one of a series commemorating significant moments from World War II, under pressure from the White House and the Japanese.

"It was a very sensitive issue and we withdrew it at the request of President Clinton," said Robin Wright, a post office spokesman in Washington.

Later this year, another stamp — one featuring President Truman preparing to announce the war's end — will be issued in its place, along with the remaining stamps in the series.

"I produced this stamp because it's history, and it's about remembering the past."

Gerry Newhouse  
A-bomb stamp designer-  
Real estate broker,"

"When I saw ... that President Clinton had accomplished getting the U.S. Postal Service to not produce this stamp, it hurt me," Newhouse said.

"It hurt me as a veteran and it hurt me knowing that to a lot of veterans, that is an image of the end of the war."

So Newhouse, a real estate broker who sculpts and collects stamps, collaborated with artist Robert Littlehale of Columbus to create a similar stamp.

"If somebody had just briefly seen the original, they would probably think this was the original stamp — and that was my intent, rather than to do a completely different design," Newhouse said.

The new version contains several differences. The silhouette of a B-29 — the plane used to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki — has been added. Below the magenta-tinted image are the words: "Atomic bombs end WW II" instead of "Atomic bombs hasten war's end, August 1945." The month and year have been incorporated into the illustration.

"What I wanted to do was to take their image and to

alter it just enough to avoid any copyright infringement, which I've done, and secondly, to support the veterans by putting the silhouette of a B-29 on there," Newhouse said.

He has had 1,800 stamps printed. In addition to placing them on his own mailings — which Wright said is legal as long as the proper postage is included — Newhouse is sending samples to politicians and others who think the image "has historical significance."

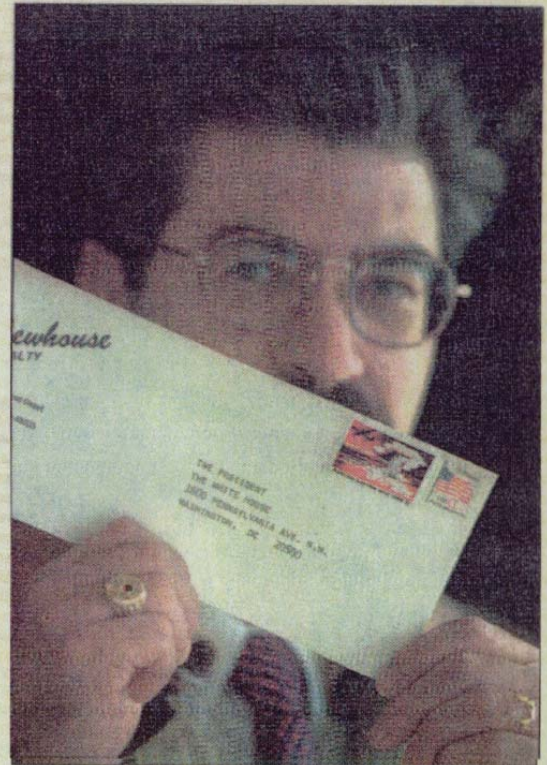
One sheet of stamps will be sent to retired Brig. Gen. Paul Tibbets, the Columbus man who commanded the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the Hiroshima bomb.

Newhouse also will stick one on a letter of protest he's sending to Clinton. The president, he said, had "absolutely no authority or right to deny history" by asking the post office not to issue the original stamp.

Newhouse said Japan's reaction surprised him.

"If there was ever an image that was an anti-war statement or a strong argument on behalf of total nuclear disarmament, that's the image I think about," he said.

Kenji Nakano, a spokesman for the Japanese Embassy in Washington, declined to comment on Newhouse's stamp. But he



**BOMB STAMP FOR BILL** — Gerry Newhouse holds an envelope addressed to President Clinton. Newhouse has attached a copy of his stamp acknowledging the atomic bomb's significance in ending World War II.

said the Japanese government "welcomed the decision of the United States government to change the original stamp."

Newhouse is selling the stamps for \$6 per sheet of 36 stamps. They free to those

who can't afford them, on one condition: that each stamp be used "so other people can see it and remember how terrible the war was, and also remember the sacrifices of the veterans," he said.

The complete Jan. 28, 1995, AP news story about the author and his creation, from the *Columbus Dispatch* of that date.



An Aug. 14, 1995, "First Day of Non Issue" cover, bearing the author's protest label, as well as the autograph of Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets, pilot of the *Enola Gay*, which dropped the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima. Aug. 14, 1995, marked the 50th anniversary of the unconditional surrender of Japan.

he quizzed me on my knowledge of World War II, and what I knew about his mission, specifically. He also wanted to know all about me, my time in the Marine Corps and particularly about my time in Vietnam.

Over the next few weeks we met several times for lunch at his home or in my office. He asked if I would be interested in being his business manager, and he also wanted me to revise and republish his book, *The Tibbets Story*. I asked him if I could have time to think it over. I knew if I said yes, I would have to close my real estate company and work with him full time. I asked my wife if I should take a gamble and pursue this new business opportunity. Her response was "yes, it's too important not to do it."

My little stamp protest led to a wonderful eight-year business and personal relationship with Paul, as we traveled across the country together for appearances and book signings. But that's another story. ☐



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