

# Patriotic Block Issued March 1

by John F. Dunn

The Patriotic Block stamp was released on March 1 in Liberty, N.Y.

The stamp is intended for bulk mailings by authorized nonprofit organizations, who pay separately the difference between the 5¢ stamp cost and the mailing fee. The main reason a stamp is used at all is because mailers feel that a mailing piece is more likely to be opened if it has a stamp affixed than if a print indicia is used.

It is a non-denominated stamp, priced at the Nonprofit Organization rate of 5 cents, and is available in PSA coils of 3,000 and 10,000 stamps.

The graphic stamp design features the components of the American flag arranged in a four-quadrant block. Carol Beehler designed the stamp with art direction by Antonio Alcalá.

All of the coil stamps are being printed using a gravure process by American Packaging Corp. / Banknote Corporation of America.

A plate number consisting of the letter B followed by three single digits will be found on every 25th stamp below the stamp image.

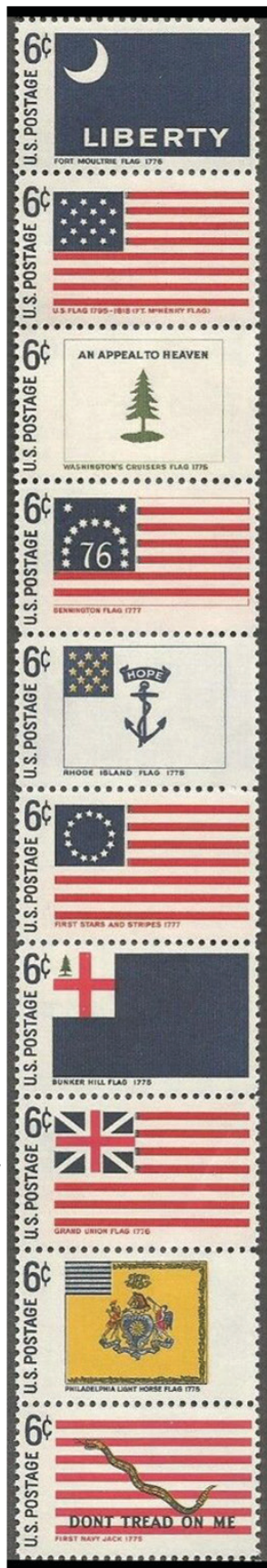
The initial print runs will be 30,000,000 stamps in coils of 3,000 and 1 billion in coils of 10,000.

### Design backgrounds

The word "Block" in the stamp description refers to the design, not a block of four designs. We now the following explanatory information of interest, provided by the USPS in their First Day of Issue announcement:

"This stamp displays the components found on the American flag—the stars and stripes—arranged in a four-quadrant block on a white background. The two identical quadrants at the top left and bottom right contain a white star on a blue field. The other two each hold three red stripes, which run vertically in the top right quadrant and horizontally in the bottom left.

"Flags flown during the American colonial period often featured the British Union Jack. As resistance to British con-



trol grew, though, flags occasionally displayed symbols that announced a distinctively American identity, such as pine trees or snakes. Stars were scarce. During the War for Independence, the Continental Army sometimes carried a banner that featured horizontal red and white stripes, with a small version of the Union Jack in the upper left corner but no stars. The Continental Colors, as it was known, was also used on garrisons and as a naval ensign for the emerging nation.

Shown to the left, top to bottom, from the 1968 *Historic Flag series*, Sc. 1345-54:

- Ft. Moultrie, 1776*
- Ft. McHenry, 1795-1818*
- Washington's Cruisers, 1775*
- Bennington, 1777*
- Rhode Island, 1775*
- First Stars & Stripes, 1777*
- Bunker Hill, 1775*
- Grand Union, 1776*
- Philadelphia Light Horse, 1775*
- First Navy Jack, 1775*

"On June 14, 1777, almost a year after it adopted the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress chose a design for the new country's first flag. It resolved that 'the Flag of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.' The new flag thus recognized both the 13 separate states and their union. Over the years, many stories have been told about the significance of the colors and of the stars and stripes, but scholars haven't found enough evidence to support any of them.

Carol Beehler designed the stamp with art direction by Antonio Alcalá.

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