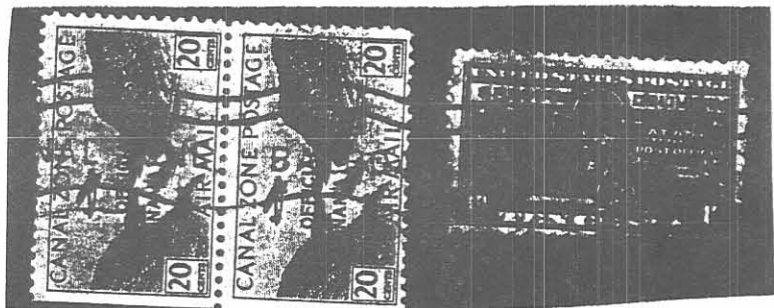


## Does US Scott No. E15 Exist Perforated P for Official Use in the Canal Zone?

Gary B. Weiss (LM15)

The Canal Zone government used stamps perforated P from 1915 to 1941 on all official mail not qualifying for penalty envelopes. The purposes of the perfin included identification and security. The most common usage was to pay air mail rates. In 1941, stamps perforated P were replaced with stamps overprinted "Official Panama Canal." To date, 82 face different Canal Zone stamps are known with the P perfin for official use.



No official mail with special delivery franking is recorded for the Canal Zone, but this piece demonstrates that it existed. The two 20¢ official air mail stamps (positions 6 and 11 of the June 4, 1942 printing) and a 10¢ special delivery stamp are all tied by a Balboa roller cancel. This also raises the possibility of U.S. stamps being perforated P for official use.

Recently, Paul Kravitz provided me with an unusual item for my collection, a pair of Canal Zone official air mail stamps, 20¢ red violet, aircraft over Gaillard Cut (*Scott Catalog* number CO4) and a single copy of US special delivery, 10¢ gray violet, Post Office truck (*Scott Catalog* number E15) used on a small piece. The Canal Zone stamps are identifiable as the June 4, 1942 printing. The 10¢ special delivery rate suggests usage prior to November 1, 1944, when the rate increased. This time period was shortly after the change from perfins to overprints for official use.

The Canal Zone did not issue its own special delivery stamps and sold United States special delivery stamps for the convenience of customers.

Although not previously recorded on official mail, the use of US special delivery stamps from the Canal Zone is well known. The illustration demonstrates that such usage of special delivery stamps by the Canal Zone government took place. If such usage existed a little earlier than this item, the US special delivery stamp should have been perforated P.

Does any reader have an example of a 10¢ special delivery stamp perforated P? Any information would be appreciated and the finding of an example would be both an important discovery and a good topic for an article. Please write to the editor or Gary B. Weiss, MD; 400 Medical Center Boulevard, Suite 111; Webster, TX 77598.