

# 1924 Panama Arms Issue for Use in the Canal Zone

## Purpose and Scope:

This single-frame exhibit explores the development and use of the 1924 Panama Arms issue within the Canal Zone. Material includes the 1924 Panama Arms issue overprinted for use in the Canal Zone. The use on mail originating in the Canal Zone is considered within the scope of the exhibit.

## Treatment:

The traditional format is used within this exhibit. The exhibit opens with the development of the base set of stamps for use in Panama and the planned overprinting for use in the Canal Zone. This is demonstrated with a study of the sunken die proofs and proofs of the ten denominations produced by the American Bank Note Company (ABNCo).

To satisfy the Taft Agreement of December 3, 1904, the Canal Zone Postal Service was required to purchase stamps from Panama at 40% of face for use in the Canal Zone. This was a compromise negotiated by William H. Taft as Secretary of War and approved by President Theodore Roosevelt to compensate Panama for lost postal revenue.

The stamps of Panama were overprinted with "Canal Zone" for use within the Canal Zone. Panama placed an order in October 1923 for the Panama Arms stamps overprinted with "Canal Zone" from the ABNCo utilizing 9 of the 10 denominations. The 1/2 cent yellow was not ordered. This segment of the exhibit reviews overprinting of Panama Arms stamps through specimens from the ABNCo archives. One plate was utilized for printing sheet stamps and one for booklet panes which will be demonstrated

with specimen and issued order number blocks.

The frame includes postal history relating to the use of these stamps originating within the United States Administered Canal Zone. The two major metropolitan areas of Panama, Panama City and Colon, bordered the Canal Zone, with Panama City adjacent to Ancon and Colon adjacent to Cristobal. Ninety percent of Panama's populace lived within these metropolitan areas in the 1920s. Panamanians and residents of the Canal Zone had access to post offices in both Panama and the Canal Zone.

The 1-cent dark green and 2-cent carmine were available from February 1924 until June 30, 1924, following the abrogation of the Taft Agreement. They were valid for postage during a grace period that lasted until August 30, 1924.

Due to the short window of time from receiving the stamps in February 1924 to the abrogation of the Taft Agreement, stock of the 7 higher values and booklets of the 2 lower values were not issued. Panama requested 600 copies of each value for submission to the Universal Postal Union. At that time the UPU only required 480 copies of each issue. Shortly after this submission to Panama, full sets of the nine overprinted values appeared in the philatelic market in Panama, England, and France. These are presumably the extra 120 sets. The exhibit will conclude with a look at the full unissued set and specimens of the booklets. All copies of the booklets were destroyed with the unused stock. The specimen archive included 1 cent dark green (69 panes) and 2 cent carmine (71 panes). New to the exhibit is a pair of specimen booklets (**1 of 2 complete booklets known**).

## Importance:

The abrogation of the Taft Agreement led to a shift in the Canal Zone Postal service from overprints on Panama stamps to overprints on United States stamps. This rapid change in policy led to a short usage window of the 1924 Panama Arms overprint issue.

This exhibit is the most complete and extensive exhibit of this issue to be shown.

## Research:

This exhibit displays knowledge gleaned from written references, viewing collections, and correspondence with the major collectors of the Panama Arms issue.

I located a previously unreported **earliest known use of the 2-cent Panama Arms issue** with a postmark of February 11, 1924. The prior reported date was February 12, 1924. This is the earliest use of any of the Panama Arms issues within the Canal Zone.

I have located shipping records for the 2c carmine (*S.S. Calamares* December 29, 1923) and 1c green (*S.S. Metapan* January 30, 1924) from New York to Panama. These denominations were rush orders to supply the Canal Zone ahead of the full order.

## References:

- Streepy, Kurt. 1924 Panama Arms Issue of Panama and Overprints for the Canal Zone. *Canal Zone Philatelist*. 2022;58(1):1-7 or *COPACARTA* 2022;39(2):12-20.
- Streepy, Kurt. EKV of Canal Zone Scott 69. *The Canal Zone Philatelist*. 2021; 57(3):31.
- *Canal Zone Stamps: Updated and Supplemented 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* by Gilbert Plass, Geoffrey Brewster, and Richard Salz. Published by The Canal Zone Study Group 2016. Pages 118 – 125.
- Crumpacker J, Weiss G, Leeds D. ABNCo Specimens of the 1924 Canal Zone Coat of Arms Series. *The Canal Zone Philatelist*. 1998; 34(1): 5 – 8.

APS Canal Zone Stamp Chat  
<https://ksphilatelics.com/videos>

Published in the *Canal Zone Philatelist* and *COPACARTA* is the definitive article on the production of the Arms issue based on my research using the ABNCo communication archives.

## Rarity & Condition:

The cover section has been upgraded for WESTPEX with covers that recently became available from other collections. The section contains the best examples of known covers. **This now includes the last known cover used (8/29/24) before the end of the grace period on 8/31/24 and the last known non-philatelic use of the stamp after the grace period 11/7/1924.**

A limited number of proofs and specimens were sold at the ABNCo archive auction. The group of specimen stamps represents the complete run of the Canal Zone issue. **The 10-cent purple block of 12 with specimen room handstamps and the 1-cent dark green and 2-cent carmine uncut booklet panes are rare presentations of the available specimens.** The 1-cent and 2-cent sunken die proofs are representative pieces of the complete set in the author's collection.

Access to my references.  
<https://ksphilatelics.com/exhibits>