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PETER REXFORD STAMP & COIN EXCHANGE COLUMN
TRAVEL & LEISURE
STAMP COMMEMORATES U.S.-LED POSTWAR AIRLIFT

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One thing you learn growing up in this country is that when you win, you support the loser. Especially in sports, the victor always gives the loser a handshake or pat on the back. On occasion it's even seen in business. Bottom line: Let the loser save face and you'll be the bigger person.

But what if the ante were upped? What if your opponent didn't just win a softball game? What if they physically attacked you? What if they seriously and purposefully hurt you or someone you knew? What if they killed one of your friends or your family? Would the same rules apply? How long would a benevolent attitude last under those circumstances?

If the actions of American airmen some 50 years ago this month are any indication, it would last far longer than we might imagine today. The attitude of those airmen is now being commemorated on a new U.S. postage stamp - a 32-cent issue commemorating the 1948-49 Berlin airlift of food, fuel, hope and virtual salvation.

The need for the U.S.-led airlift of supplies to Berlin arose shortly after the end of World War II, when more than 2.5 million citizens of Berlin were surrounded in a siege by Russian troops, a not-so-forgiving force that had cut off Germany's civilian supplies.

Even with the horror that Germany had inflicted upon the world, American planes led a non-stop delivery service of food, medicine, fuel and virtually all other supplies into the heart of the "enemy" capital. During the peak of the supply delivery, more than 1,300 flights landed per day.

Dedicated at Rhein-Main Air Base in Germany, the stamp, based on a photo taken in 1948, depicts a German family watching a C-54 U.S. aircraft flying low over a section of Berlin.tb

Attending the stamp's dedication ceremony was U.S. Air Force Col. **Gail Halvorsen**, who, during the blockade, was known as the "Candy Bomber." That's because, while leading his squadron to bring in food, coal and other supplies, he also dropped candy attached to small parachutes to Berlin children. Over his squadron's many missions, Halvorsen's planes dropped an estimated 250,000 candy-laden parachutes.

Three special cancellations on the stamps are being offered. A standard U.S. First Day of Issue cancel can be obtained by purchasing the stamp, affixing it to a self-addressed envelope and mailing it inside a larger separate envelope to: Berlin Airlift Stamp, U.S. Postal Service, Cancellation Services, P.O. Box 419400, Kansas City, Mo. 64144-6400.

For this issue, the Postal Service has also made arrangements to have two pictorial cancels applied in Germany. For the Berlin cancel, send the envelope to: Berlin Airlift 50th Anniversary Stamp, Berlin Station Postmaster, PSC 120 Box 50, APO AE 09265.

For a cancel applied at Rein-Main Air Base, send the envelope to: Berlin Airlift 50th Anniversary Stamp, Rhein-Main Air Base Station Postmaster, PSC 5 Box 50, APO AE 09050. Naturally, orders sent to Germany will take a bit longer for the return. All order for First Day cancels must be postmarked no later than July 26, so put in your order soon!

Not only is it official that a new U.S. one-dollar coin is in the works, it now has a subject that it will depict. Like so many coins, and virtually all dollar coins up to 1935, the new coin will have a female image representing "Liberty." However, for the first time, instead of the figure being just an allegorical image of Liberty, it will be based on an actual woman.

For the new dollar coin, by a 6-1 vote, the Treasury Department's Dollar Coin Advisory Committee selected the Native American woman Sacagawea to represent Liberty.

Also known as the "Bird Woman," Sacagawea was the guide and interpreter for the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804. A Shoshone Indian by birth, she spent many years as a slave.

In addition to Sacagawea, the committee decided to incorporate the word "peace" into the design, as in silver dollars minted between 1921 and 1935.

No preliminary art has yet been created for the coin, but Native American artists and historians are scheduled to play a major role in its creation. I'll keep you posted.

LEISURE

GRAPHIC | Graphic / Illustration - (postage stamp) - Berlin Airlift delivers food and fuel in 1948-49 blockade

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