

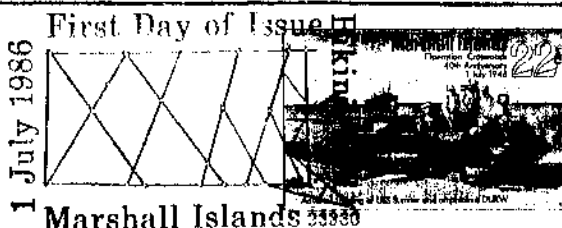
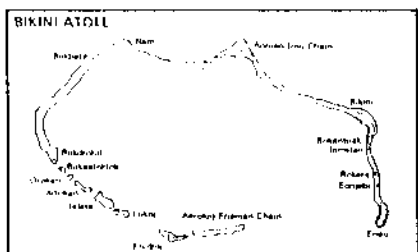
U.S. PACIFIC ISLANDS BULLETIN

An occasional bulletin about U.S. Post Offices in the Pacific area (including the successor administrations in the Caroline, Marshall, and Line Islands.)

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THE BIKINI ATOLL POSTMARKS OF 1986



This envelope was carried to BIKINI ATOLL by Dr. Earl L. Stone, a member of the Bikini Atoll Rehabilitation Committee. The BARC group of scientists will make recommendations on how to make Bikini livable again.

Earl L. Stone

Dr. Earl L. Stone

17-Apr-87 Date

Illustration 11/1

Bikini Atoll has never had a fully functioning Civil Post Office but postal datestamps bearing the name 'Bikini Atoll' do exist. Illustration 11/1 shows a cover bearing one such postal datestamp dated 1 Jul 1986. The first thing to understand about this cover is that, while the cover did travel to Bikini Atoll, the postal datestamp did not -- it was applied at the Marshall Islands Philatelic Bureau in Washington D.C.

BUT..... it was not the only datestamp of this design. An identical First Day of Issue Datestamp was used on 7 March 1986 on First Day Covers of the \$2 and \$5 definitive map stamps. Unlike the 1 Jul 1986 datestamp which, it is believed, was only used at the Washington D.C. Bureau the 7 March 1986 First Day of Issue datestamp was used at Majuro, at the Washington D.C. Bureau AND ALSO AT BIKINI.

March 7, 1986 marked the 40th Anniversary of the removal to Rongerik Atoll of the Bikini people. The Marshall Islands Postal Service chose this day to issue the \$2 and \$5 definitive Map stamps. The \$5 stamp features a map of Bikini Atoll. USPPS Director at Large, William R. Hanson, suggested establishing a one day only Post Office on Bikini and designed a special postmark depicting an ancient Navigator's stick chart from the Bishop Museum in Hawaii and donated it to the Marshall Islands Postal Service (MIPS). MIPS accepted the suggestion, a special one day Post Office was authorised, an Acting Postmaster appointed and arrangements made for him to travel to Bikini Atoll, which at that time had no permanent population. (1)

The 7 March 1986 Datestamp

The background story to the use of this datestamp is covered in detail in "The Bikini Story" by George L. Macnado Jr. (2) who had access to information from Marshall Islands Postal Officials including Mr. John Lokiar. The basic facts are that a Marshall Islands Postal Official, Mr. John Lokiar

(Lakwiar) travelled to Bikini Atoll on or around March 7 1986 carrying with him 200 Aircraft covers to which he had previously affixed the new \$5 map stamp. He also carried the First Day of Issue Datestamp. At that time Bikini had no scheduled air service so Mr. Lokiar took advantage of a special flight carrying a delegation of officials to the island. On arrival at Bikini he set up his one day only Bikini Postal Sub-Station in the shadow of the aircraft and applied the special First Day of Issue datestamp to the 200 covers he carried. Only these covers were physically handstamped on Bikini. All carried only the \$5 stamp and were addressed in green ink. The covers, accompanied by a letter from Tomaki Juda, Mayor of Bikini/Kili/ujit Local Government Council were presented to those Bikinians who were moved off the Atoll in 1946 and who were alive in March 1986 and also to friends of the Bikini people who had helped over the years. Most of the people removed from Bikini Atoll in 1946 and their descendants now live on Kili. The letter is headed BIKINI/KILI/UJIT COUNCIL, Kili, Marshall Islands and is dated March 7 1986. It reads "Dear Friend, It gives me great pleasure to send you a first-day issue of the new five dollar Marshall Islands definitive stamp depicting Bikini Atoll. The stamp is being issued on March 7 to coincide with our people's commemoration of the 40th anniversary of our removal from Bikini. A one-day only postal substation has been established at Bikini Atoll for the special occasion of the issuance of this stamp, and this letter is one of only two hundred that has been cancelled on Bikini today, March 7. These two hundred letters are being sent to those Bikinians who were moved off Bikini on March 7, 1946 and are still alive today, as well as to people, like you, friends of the Bikini people who have helped us over the years. sincerely, Tomaki Juda, Mayor, Bikini/Kili/ujit Local Government Council". Mr. John Lokiar(Lakwiar), the postal clerk who applied the First Day of Issue