



Illustration 11/2

datestamp to the covers on Bikini was born on the Atoll. The cover presented to Mr. Lokiar is shown

here as Illustration 11/2 by courtesy of George L. Machado Jr. An eyewitness account of these events has been provided by courtesy of Bernd Neuhaus. Present at Eneu Island, Bikini Atoll that day was Dr. Earl L. Stone. Dr. Stone signed the 1 Jul 1986 Operation Crossroads First Day Cover shown as Illustration 11/1. In a letter to Paul Filipkowski quoted in part in the Newsletter of the Operation Crossroads Study Group, and more fully in a letter from Paul Filipkowski to Bernd Neuhaus, Dr. Stone recalls that day in March 1986. "I was present at the March event which had all the elements of confusion that sometimes attends affairs in that part of the world. On March 5 we gathered at the airstrip at Eneu" (Eneu is the South East tip of Bikini Atoll) "awaiting a scheduled diversion of AMI (Air Marshall Islands) from Enewetak to Kwajalein. Amongst the unexpected arrivals" (on the plane) "was a nice old Marshallese Postal Official, whether from Kili or Majuro, I don't know, but quite obviously quite ill-informed. He expected to proceed to Bikini Island and leave the next day or so. Since he spoke no English and we had no clue as to his mission, it took a bit of doing to explain that there would be no next plane until June, and to learn his purpose. That clarified, he and his mail bag climbed back on the plane. All this in a slight hurry because the plane was unusually late. The sun was going down and departure had to be before dark. I had a few words with him (the Postal Official) on the plane through one of our departing Marshallese workers but still didn't appreciate quite what was involved. Subsequently I -- and I suppose other Bikini Atoll Rehabilitation Committee members also -- received a first day cover with the Bikini stamp and a note from Tomaki Juda, the Mayor on Kili who is now a familiar acquaintance." Paul Filipkowski goes on to say in his letter to Bernd Neuhaus "From his (Dr. Stone) letter, I gather the flight was to get the scientists to Bikini not specifically for the postal aspect."

The 1 July 1986 Datestamp

This datestamp was produced to mark the First Day of Issue of the "Operation Crossroads" set of 4 stamps. Operation Crossroads was the name given to the nuclear tests on Bikini Atoll in 1946. It is possible that another visit to Bikini by a postal official was planned for 1 July 1986 but in the event no further visit to Bikini took place. Bernd Neuhaus believes the datestamp was never in the Marshall Islands. It was used only at the Marshall Islands Philatelic Bureau in Washington D.C. The story of the cover shown as Illustration 11/1 is told by Paul Filipkowski in a letter to Bernd Neuhaus. (3).

"About the cover carried to Bikini -- I located Dr. Stone of the Bikini Atoll Rehabilitation Committee in early 1986 and asked him to carry some covers to Bikini whenever he went next. I had 55 (I think) covers serviced via the U.S. Representative for the M.I. Postal Service; The covers were mailed back around September 1986 as I recall. I missed Dr. Stone's 1986 trip, but he did agree to carry them to Bikini in April 1987. Each cover was signed by Dr. Stone. Some of the covers went to Dr. Stone and I sold a number.....for \$4.00 for one and \$15.00 for a set of four singles." This article could not have been produced without the help of Bernd Neuhaus. I am grateful to Cy Kitching for providing Illustration 11/1 and to George L. Machado Jr. for allowing me to use material and Illustration 11/2 from his study "The Bikini Story". This is available from George at P.O. Box 240093, Honolulu, Hawaii 96824-3093 at \$2.00 plus postage \$0.55 to the USA and \$1.40 to Europe.

REFERENCES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- (1) Post Office Opens at Bikini Atoll - 1986 - William R. Hanson. "Possessions" Vol 9 No.2 2nd Quarter 1986
- (2) "The Bikini Story" by George L. Machado Jr. obtainable from the author
- (3) Operation Crossroads Newsletter - Date Not Known
Letter Paul Filipkowski/Bernd Neuhaus May 1.1990