32 – The Proton Series Satellites

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This is the thirty-second in a series of articles about un-manned satellites on postage stamps. This article features the Russian Proton series satellites. Four Proton-series satellites were successfully launched, starting with Proton-1 on 16 July 1965, and ending with Proton-4 on 16 November 1968. The Proton name was later used as well for a series of Russian launch vehicles. Postal items featuring Proton launch vehicles are not covered in this article and checklist.

Proton-1 through Proton-3 were magnetospheric research satellites that carried instruments to study ultra-high-energy cosmic particles, including galactic electrons, as well as cosmic gamma rays. Proton-4 was an improved and heavier version of the first Protons, with a mass of nearly 17 metric tons, making it the heaviest scientific satellite of that era.

The Protons had cylindrical bodies with antennas and four extended triangular solar panels that made the spacecraft look a bit like electric motors with attached fan blades. Proton-4 is distinguished from the earlier Protons by its larger body.

Both small and large Proton types are represented on many postal items, mostly from Russia and other eastern bloc nations. Proton-1 and 4 are featured most often, with a few items showing the earlier-type Proton without an assigned number.

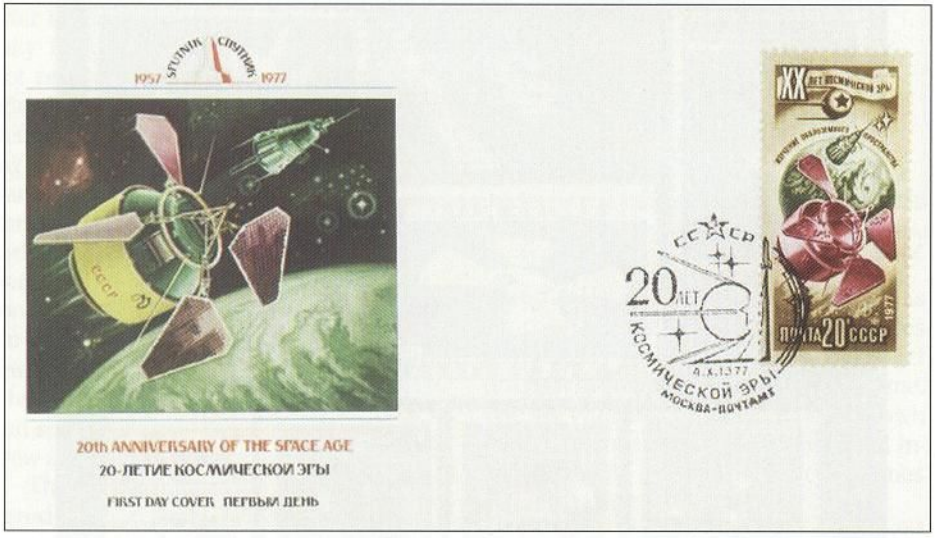
A checklist of postal items showing Proton satellites is on the next page and also at http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/hillger/Proton.htm, a website developed by the authors for un-manned satellites at http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/hillger/satellites.htm E-mail is welcome. Don Hillger can be reached at hillger@cira.colostate.edu and Garry Toth at garry_toth@hotmail.com.

Checklist of Russian (USSR) Proton Series Satellite Postal Stamps and First Day Covers

Country	Catalog No.	Type of Item	Issued	Notes
Altai Republic	Local	Poland 1469 overprinted on 4x Russia 5723	1996?	Proton-1
Altai Republic	Local	Poland 1469 overprinted on 4x Russia 6069		
Cambodia	779 (Mi857)		1987	Proton-4
Germany (East)	1266 (Mi1640)	One of MS8 (1269a (1262-1269))	1971	Proton-1
Korea (North)	1244 (Mi1286)		1974	Proton-1
Mongolia	440 (Mi453)		1966	Proton-1
Nicaragua	1656 (Mi2818)		1987	Proton-4
Poland	1469 (Mi1733)		1966	Proton-1
Poland	1469-1471 fdc	One of three stamps on FDC		
Romania	1802 (Mi2465)		1965	Proton-1
Russia (USSR)	3297 (Mi3320)		1967	Proton-1/2/3[1]
Russia (USSR)	3844 (BL69)	In (left) margin of MS4 (3844 (a-d))	1971	Proton-1/2/3[1]
Russia (USSR)	None	New Year's greeting card, also cachet on envelope	1974	Proton-1/2/3[1]
Russia (USSR)	None	Stamped envelope	1977	Proton-4
Russia (USSR)	4594 (Mi4651)		1977	Proton-4
Russia (USSR)	4594 fdc	Stamp and cachet on FDC		
Russia (USSR)	None	Postal card	1982	Proton-4

*Scott catalog number, unless prefixed with Mi or BL for Michel; "i" prefix denotes imperforate version.
SS# = souvenir sheet, MS# = miniature sheet, where # = stamps in sheet, and numbers in parentheses are the catalog numbers of the stamps.

[1]Proton-1 — Proton-3 are all basically identical.



BALPEX Space Unit Meeting

September 5, 2009, from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm in Salon "C", Hunt Valley, Maryland, Marriott Hotel, with Guest Speaker, the former Commanding Officer of USS Kiowa, Captain Joseph Guion (US Navy, retired), for recovery of space monkeys Able and Baker.