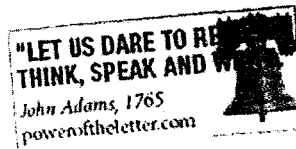


John Adams

A recent television series on the History Channel, promoted by this postmark, tells the life story of John Adams, one of the most influential individuals in the building of the American Revolution and, indeed, of the American nation. It is said that



Adams complained during his lifetime that he never gained the recognition he deserved for his role in helping create this country. Some philatelists have also noted that postal recognition of this founding father is also lacking. His only postal appearances in the 160 years of American postage stamps have been on the complete sets of stamps that pictured all of the presidents up to the time of issuance, the 1938 Presidential series (which helped many of us learn the names and sequence of the presidents), and the 1986 AMERIPEX souvenir sheets. On both of those sets he had to share space with such non-luminary residents of Washington's Executive Mansion as Millard Fillmore and Rutherford B. Hayes.

The Navy has, in fact, had more ships named for John Adams than the post office has had stamps. The first such vessel was a 24-gun frigate launched in 1799 and named for the nation's then-current president. The wooden sailing ship had a career of more than 60 years fighting, at various times, against French interference with American trade, the Barbary Pirates of North Africa, the War of 1812, pirates in the Caribbean, and the Mexican War, ending her life as a training ship during the Civil War. In an era when the sailing ship was the mode of world transportation, she also played an important role in diplomacy, carrying American ambassadors and diplomats to distant stations, and showing the American flag in far-off lands. More than once she circled the globe, and visited such exotic ports as Zanzibar and Bangkok. In 1833 she helped protect American ships carrying freed American slaves back to Africa to help found Liberia.

A second, much more modern ship, was named for both John Adams and his son John Quincy. A Fleet Ballistic Missile submarine completed in 1964 conducted deterrent patrols throughout most of the Cold War, until she was finally retired and scrapped in 1989.

But these weren't the only Navy ships named for John Adams. During World War II the Navy built a huge fleet of ships called "transports," which were used to carry troops to distant battlefields. Except for a brief period during World War I, the Army had always been responsible for operating troopships, which it staffed with civil service crews. World War II was of such a massive scale, however, that it took the combined efforts of the Army, the Navy and the War Shipping Administration to carry all of the troops and supplies to the battlefields across the world. The vessel of our interest here was one of a series of seven troop transports that the Navy named for American presidents (there were many more transports in the fleet, but most of them were named for Army generals and Navy admirals).

.....>

USS President Adams

Our ship was one of many ordered by the Maritime Commission during the 1930s, constructed by the Newport News Shipbuilding the Drydock Co. in Virginia, where she was launched on Jan. 30, 1941. She was taken to the Norfolk Navy Yard and converted to a troop transport, and officially placed in commission on Nov. 19, 1941. Postmarks, incidentally, did not arrive promptly, and so this cover celebrating her entry into the fleet is postmarked on Nov. 28, the day her post office opened for business.



The cranes (the nautical term is "kingposts") on her deck tell us that she was designed to carry cargo as well as troops, and indeed *USS President Adams* served her country in many capacities as faithfully as her namesake, but without fanfare. When war was declared in December 1941 she headed for the Pacific and spent the entire war there. In August 1942 she helped land troops and equipment on the island of Guadalcanal, the first of many troop landings she would support. Throughout World War II she continued this service, with periodic overhauls. The places she visited are a recitation of the history of the Pacific war - Bougainville, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, the Marianas, Saipan, Leyte in the Philippines, Guam. In February of 1945 she landed troops on Iwo Jima for the famous battle. With the war finally over, she helped bring the troops home, and on her way back west again carried families to the troops that were to remain in the Orient as occupation forces or regular garrisons. This duty continued for the next two years.

In 1947 she returned to the Atlantic, where she spent another two years carrying troops and their families between the East Coast and bases in the Caribbean. She was decommissioned on June 14, 1950 and was placed in the "reserve" fleet, to be called upon again if needed. That need never arose, and she was finally scrapped in 1974.