

# *World of Stamps:* **Palau**

By Geir Sør-Reime

Since 1994, there has been a Republic of Palau, with an area of 177 square miles and a population of about 21,000. It consists of a number of islands, and is a federal state with currently 16 states. (The smallest, Hatohobei, has only 44 inhabitants.) The flags of all 16 states were depicted on a 2002 sheetlet of 17 stamps (one stamp featuring the national flag).



*2002 souvenir sheet showing flags of the constituent states of the Republic of Palau (Sc. 686)*

Curiously, the stamps of this sheetlet do not show the country's name, only that of the respective states. Its capital city is Koror.

Palau was considered part of the Caroline Islands of Micronesia for a long time.

The islands were probably sighted already in the 16th century. A well-known landing occurred in 1783, when a British ship commanded by Captain Henry Wilson wrecked on the islands. His stay on the islands was commemorated

already on one of Palau's first stamp series, in 1983, commemorating the bicentenary of his visit. On his return to England, the son of the local king, Prince Lee Boo, followed him and this event was commemorated on a 1990 set of nine stamps.

Visits by other Europeans during the 18th to early 20th centuries were commemorated on a 1984 set of four stamps issued for the UPU Congress.

The islands were ultimately claimed by Spain, a claim confirmed by Papal arbitration in 1885. After Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War, Spain sold the Caroline Islands to Germany in 1899.

During WWI, the islands were occupied by Japan and administered by Japan as a League of Nations mandated territory until the end of WWII, when the islands were occupied by the United States. The 1944 U.S. invasion was commemorated on a 1990 set of four and a souvenir sheet.



1991 *The War in the Pacific* (Sc. 299), 2nd last on lower row depict Battle of Bloody Nose Ridge on Peleliu, Palau (part of the invasion of Peleliu September-November 1944)

The souvenir sheet was re-issued in 1994 with an additional inscription commemorating the 50th anniversary of the invasion (see page 3).



1994 part of souvenir sheet illustration 1944 events in Pacific Theater of War: a. U.S. troops secure Peleliu; b. U.S. troops secure Angaur; d. U.S. war memorial in Palau (from Sc. 325)

Silhouettes of Japanese ships sunk during the invasion were shown on a 1995 sheetlet of 18 stamps.



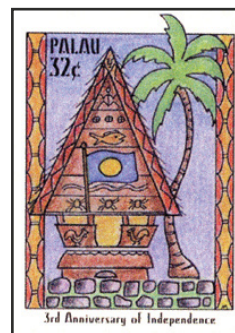
1995 from souvenir sheet with art-work illustration WWII events, here a. Marine headed for Peleliu b. Battle on Peleliu (from Sc. 397)

Since 1947, the islands became parts of the United Nations Trust-eeship Territory of the Pacific Islands – TTPI (which also included the Marshall Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands). Although several of the districts of this territory decided to form a federated Micronesian state, Palau and the Marshall Islands opted for separate independence, whereas the Northern Mariana Islands decided to keep closer ties to the United States and later became the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Palau’s inhabitants opted for independence in 1978 and signed the Compact of Free Association with the United States in 1992. In 1994, Palau achieved independence within the Compact, and became a member of the United Nations.



United Nations 2001 flag of Palau (Sc. 798)



1997 third anniversary of independence (Sc. 435)

When Germany took over possession of the Caroline Islands, including Palau, a set of German stamps overprinted “Karolinen” was available right from the opening of the first post office on Ponape, October 12, 1899. The post office on Palau opened October 4, 1907,

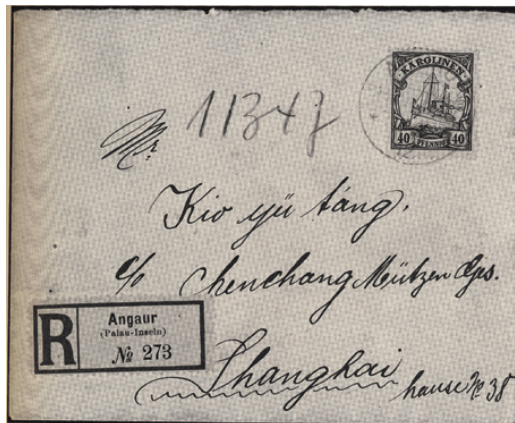
and another one, on Angaur, opened February 2, 1909.

Both these post offices used datestamps additionally inscribed “Palau-Inseln” (Palau Islands), not “Karolinen” (Caroline Islands). All German post offices in the Caroline Islands closed in August 1914.

When the two Palau post offices opened, the colonial key-type stamps for the Caroline Islands, showing the Imperial Yacht *Hohenzollern* had already been issued, and the German stamps with “Karolinen” overprint had been invalidated. So the set of 13 stamps first issued in 1901 were the only German colonial stamps used from Palau and Angaur. Several of these stamps were reprinted during WWI on watermarked paper, but these were never available for postage in the Carolines.

It should be noted, that the post office on Angaur also used Marshall Islands stamps during 1910.

Distinct stamps for the Republic of Palau were issued already from 1993 onwards. The first issue commemorated the establishment of a distinct postal service for the islands. The first issues, including the 1983-84 definitives, were inscribed Republic of Palau, later issues have been inscribed simply Palau.



1912 registered cover from Angaur with Caroline Islands 40p stamp, from the “Romanow” Collection Auction Berlin June 7-8, 1991, auctioned by Walter Kruschel, Berlin



1983 first issue of Republic of Palau (Sc. 1-4)



1985 50th anniversary of China Clipper service (Sc. C10-13 and Sc. 94)



During the Japanese administration, Palau witnessed a rapid economic development and Koror was sometimes dubbed 'Little Tokyo'. Koror became a stopover point for the Trans-Pacific Mail flights, and in 1985, an air post series and a souvenir sheet commemorated the First Trans-Pacific Mail Flight by a Pan-American Airways China Clipper plane, November 1935.

Palau's past as a German colony was first marked by a 1985 set of four air post stamps, showing scenes of the German administration and reproductions of stamps used in Palau during that period.



1985 air post stamps showing stamps and cancels used during German rule, including date stamps of Palau and Angaur post offices (Sc. C6-C9)

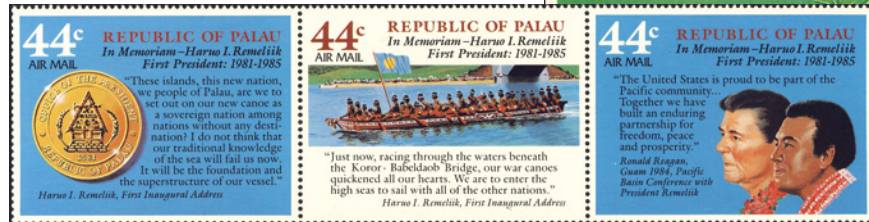
A similar series of postage stamps was issued in 1987 showing scenes of the Japanese administration and reproductions of Japanese stamps and date stamps used on the islands (see page 6).



1987 showing Japanese stamps and cancels used during Japanese rule (Sc. 164-168)



In 1986, a set of three air post stamps was issued in memory of Haruo I. Remeliik, the first President of Palau.



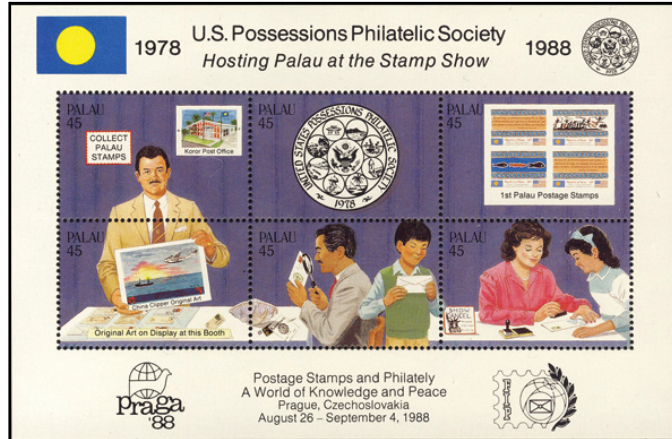
1986 air post stamps commemorating Haruo I. Remeliik, first President of Palau (Sc. C14-16)

For the fifth anniversary of postal independence, two 1988 souvenir sheets recalled the island's political and postal history.

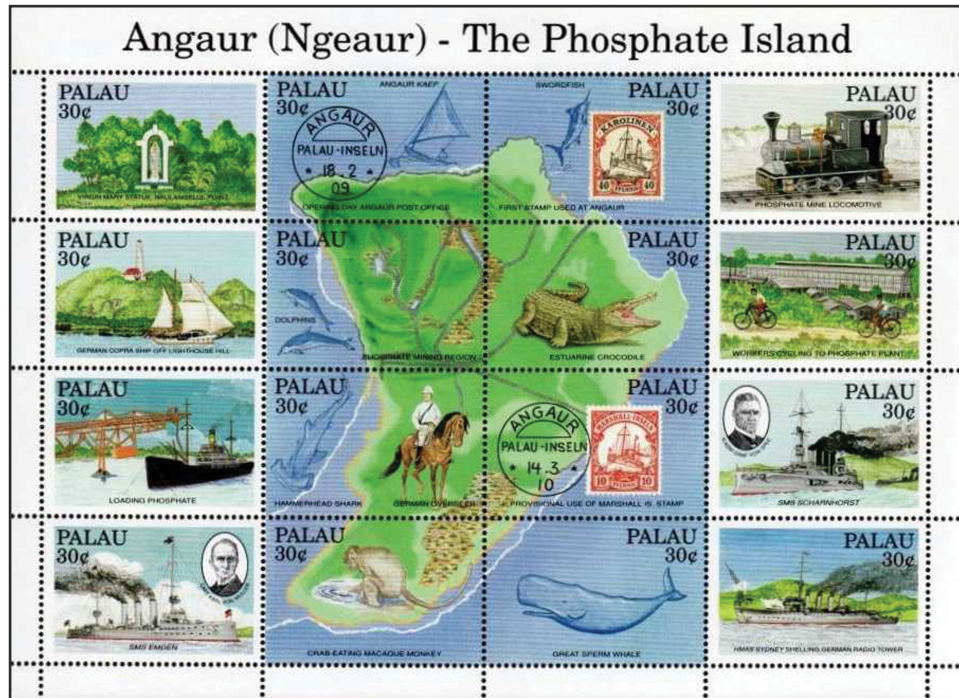
1988 souvenir sheet for fifth anniversary of postal independence (Sc. 196) illustrating the political development of Palau: a. indigenous canoe b. Spanish warship c. German mail boat d. Japanese mailbox and gun e. U.S. Trust Territory ship f. post office Koror (see also page 7)



1988 souvenir sheet for Praga88 stamp exhibition, reproducing first issue as well as stamp from 1988 Helsinki88 souvenir sheet (Palau10) (Sc. 197)



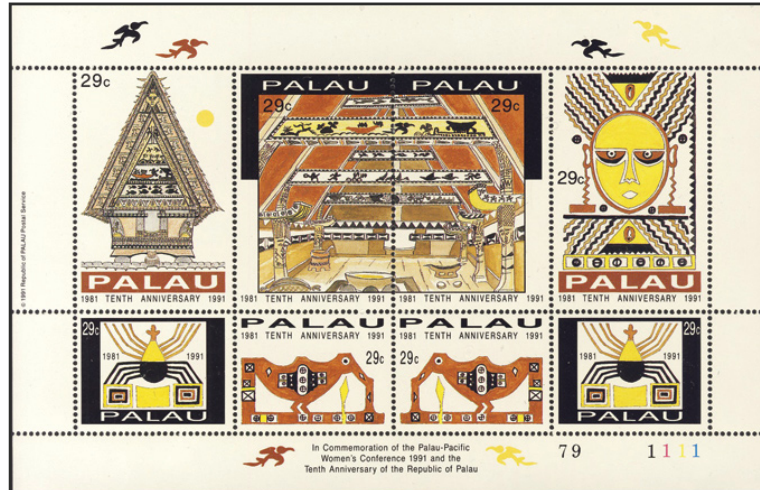
Already during German times, phosphate was mined on the island of Angaur, and in 1991, a sheetlet of 16 stamps dedicated to the history of Angaur was issued.



1991 souvenir sheet illustration history of Angaur, including phosphate mining (Sc. 263)

Also in 1991, a sheetlet of six stamps commemorated the centenary of Christianity in Palau. The 10th anniversary of the Republic of Palau was celebrated in 1991 with stamps showing traditional scenes of Palau. (See page 8.)

1991 for 10th anniversary of Republic of Palau (Sc. 293 and C21)



The Japanese heritage of Palau was the theme of a 1991 sheetlet of six stamps and a souvenir sheet.



1991 souvenir sheet for Japanese heritage of Palau (Sc. 295)

Palau's independence was commemorated with a 1994 strip of five different stamps, and in 1995, two stamps commemorated the first anniversary of independence.



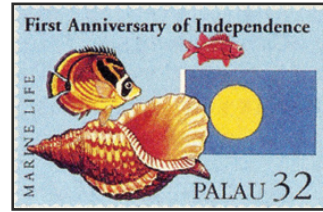
1994 Independence Day (Sc. 338)

The latter was a joint issue with the United States, featuring the Palau flag. Whereas Palau issued four stamps,





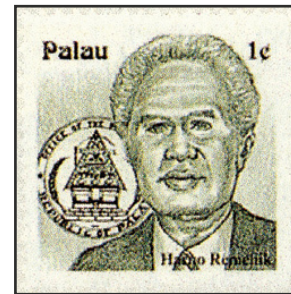
1995 U.S. and Palau same designs for first anniversary of Palau independence



Palau 1995 for first anniversary of independence, issued in addition to stamp above in same design as U.S. stamp (Sc. 377)

the U.S. issued one.

Also, the second anniversary of independence was commemorated, this time with a pair of stamps showing beach scenes. The third anniversary was commemorated with a single stamp showing a traditional Palau assembly house, a bai (see page 3).



Haruo I. Remeliik on 1999 definitive (Sc. 485)

Prominent Palauans were portrayed on a 1999 definitive series. A 2000 sheetlet of 12 stamps (shown) celebrated the 45th anniversary of the National Museum.

Other items from the museum were featured on a 2005 sheetlet of ten.



2000 45th anniversary of National Museum of Palau (Sc. 593)



2009 tourism,  
beach scene

In 2009, six stamps (one shown) were issued to publicize Palau as a tourist destination, featuring beaches, hotels and tourist activities.

A 2010 series of three depicted the National Capitol of Palau.

Palau has released a number of issues relating to so-called 'international events', including recent issues for the Royal Marriage in Britain, and stamps portraying prominent people like U.S. President Obama and Pope Benedict XVI



1994 another perspective on Palau  
tourism (Sc. 340)



2010 showing Executive  
part of National  
Capitol

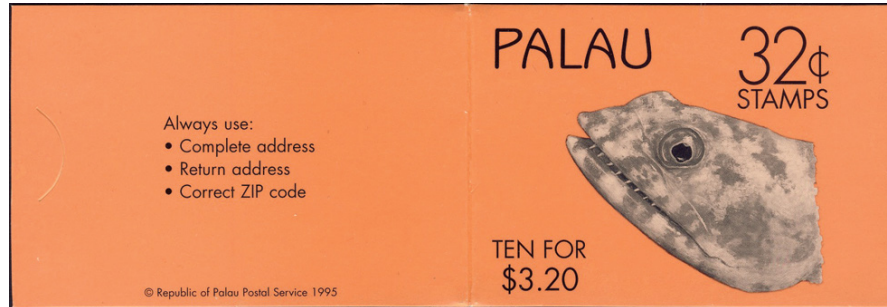


Left tot right: 2011 for wedding of Prince Andrew and Catherine Middleton; 2010 portraying President Obama; 2010 showing Pope Benedict XVI



Left, 1985 definitive \$10 (Sc. 85);  
right, 1987 definitive \$2 (Sc. 140)

Palau also issued its first definitives in stamp booklets (with stamps with imperforate outer edges), up till the 1995 definitives.



1995 definitive booklet (Sc. 367a)



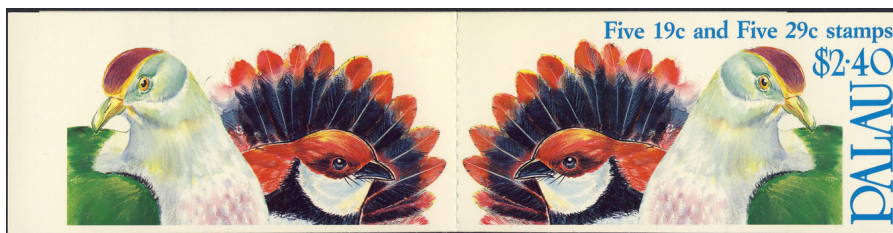
1983 definitive booklet (Sc. 13b)



1987 definitive booklet  
(Sc. 133b)



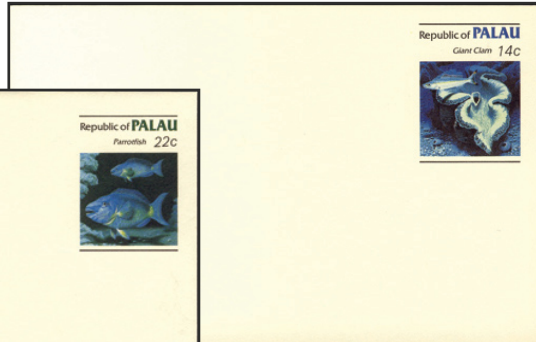
1989 air post booklet (Sc. C20b)



1991 definitive booklet (Sc. 272a)

A few postal stationery items have also been issued, 1984 an aerogramme and also a postal card and a pre-stamped envelope. Further pre-stamped envelopes were issued 1984 and 1990.

*Right, 1984 pre-stamped postal card*



*Left, 1984 pre-stamped envelope*



*1984 aerogramme*



*1990 pre-stamped envelope (stamp imprint similar to Sc. 203a)*

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