

# Blank Admiral stamps

*Leopold Beaudet*

**K**ASIMIR Bileski died on 19 January 2005 at age 96 [1],[2]. Bileski was noted for the many varieties that he promoted during his career as a stamp dealer. Here is the story of one such from the Admiral era. One of the philatelic curiosities of the Admiral period is the existence of perforated pieces of gummed stamp paper that look like Admiral stamps but are utterly blank on the face side. The dimensions and perforations of the stamps in Figure 1 are identical to those of the Admiral series. The paper characteristics, including the vertical weave (when the block is oriented as shown in the illustration), and the gum match those of the Admirals.

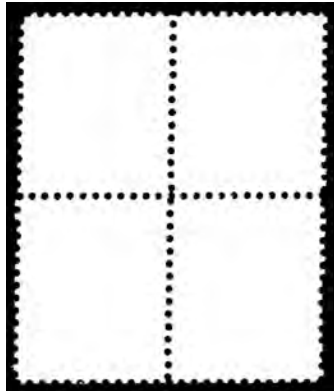


Figure 1. Block of four from Admiral era with no design

This block was offered on e-Bay in January 2003 where it realised \$35.50 (about CA\$48 at the time). Along with the block came the following note written by Kasimir Bileski explaining its provenance.

Recently I purchased seven perforated sheets of paper at a rather high price. Ordinarily, one would feel somewhat foolish about this but the story given to me with the lot is rather intriguing and quite logical. A postmaster is supposed to have found these in a pad of 1¢ Admiral sheets over fifty years ago. All showed no printing whatsoever. He bought these at the \$1 per pane rate and put them away.

[It is] not possible to verify this, but the [following] facts are indisputable.

(a) Each of the panes of one hundred is absolutely blank on the face. It would be

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impossible to remove the printing without damage to paper and sheets, yet they were perforated—which comes only after printing!

- (b) Each unit of one hundred is the exact size of a pane of one hundred Admiral stamps. Margins testify these were either upper left or lower panes.
- (c) The gum is typical of that used on Admiral panes.
- (d) The paper is, of course, the usual vertical mesh Admiral paper.
- (e) The perforations match perfectly with those of Admiral stamp.

It is also possible such blank panes were used during World War I to train post office personnel. The British to this day use regular stamps overprinted with bars for this purpose. There are no records available to verify such a theory. Nothing like this has ever appeared on the philatelic market. Whatever the answer, they are of interest to philatelists and especially to specialists of the Canadian Admiral set.

Unfortunately, Bileski did not date this note. His comment that the panes were found over fifty years ago suggests that he bought the panes during the 1960s or 1970s.

There is a more recent example of the same sort of thing in Canadian philately. Blank perforated stamps matching the paper, perforation, and gum characteristics of the 8¢ Caricature definitive (1973) printed by British American Bank Note Company appeared on the philatelic market some years ago. In fact, cylinders 1 & 2 of this stamp come on a lightly horizontally ribbed paper variety, and so do the blank stamps.

## References

- [1] *Philatelist Bileski passes away at 96*, Canadian Stamp News, volume 29, # 21, 22 February 2005.
- [2] John Jamieson *Kasimir Bileski, FRPSC, 1908–2005*, Canadian Philatelist volume 56, # 3, May–June 2005.

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