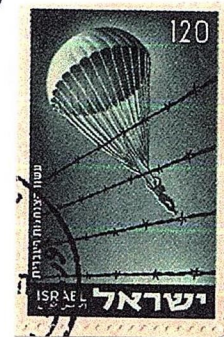
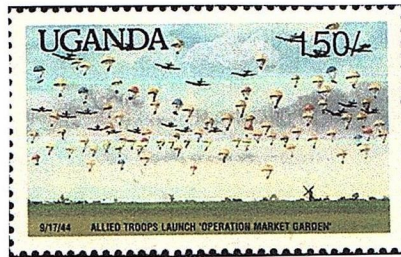


PARACHUTE PHILATELY

Par-a-chute n. 1. An apparatus used to retard free fall from an aircraft, consisting of a hemispherical canopy attached by conically arrayed cords to a harness worn or stored folded until deployed in descent.
2. Any of various similar unpowered devices for retarding free-speeding or free-falling motion.



Military airborne operations are by far the most widely used application of parachutes today. Since World War II, the stamps of dozens of countries have featured paratroopers in combat and the use of these devices to move equipment and supplies in warfare.



Sky diving--the sport of parachuting--has become a popular activity around the world with international competitions for precise landings from high altitudes and ceremonial events such as delivering a football inside a stadium for an NFL game. President George H. W. Bush even made a tandem parachute jump for his 90th birthday!

Contemporary uses for parachutes include support of rescue and resupply missions to remote areas in the wake of natural disasters and the recovery of manned spacecraft from the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo manned space flights. Parachutes were also essential to slow the landings of the Space Shuttle aircraft and in Experimental test flights.

