

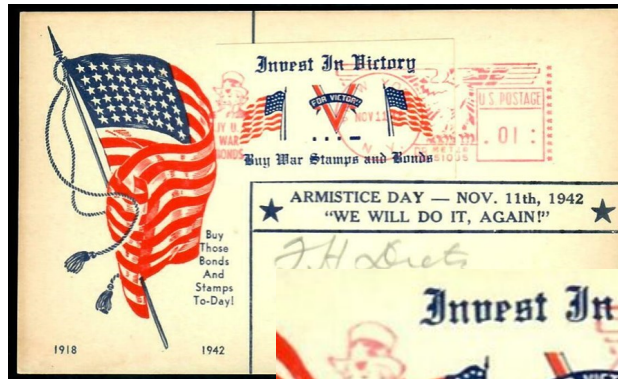
U N C L E S A M



(Above) U.S. poster stamp depicting Uncle Sam poster design of 1917.

By Michele M. Bresso, PhD

The image of a statesman patriot, wearing a tall hat over unruly white hair, sporting a billy goat beard, and attired in red white and blue, was well known in 1917. It embedded in the national culture that year when it appeared on an Army recruiting poster designed by James Montgomery Flagg. The character is said to originate in the War of 1812, attributed to Samuel "Uncle Sam" Wilson, a meat purveyor for the military. He shipped foodstuffs in crates stamped "U.S.," and soldiers said the meat came from Uncle Sam. The moniker became inseparable from the nation's image.



(Above) Uncle Sam pictorial cancel dated November 11, 1942 on metered Armistice Day postal card promoting war bond sales.

Uncle Sam Prevails

The U.S. military reprinted the recruitment poster for use in WWII. Later Uncle Sam images were conjured for wars in Korea and Vietnam. Today, Uncle Sam is represented in a variety of ways including postage stamps, product labels and, through the whimsey of one cachet designer, an appearance on the moon.

(Below, l-r) U.S. 1998 Scott #3263; Diamond Match Co. box cover for Uncle Sam Safety Matches; U.S. 1989 First Man on the Moon FDC featuring Uncle Sam in appropriate moon gear. Note that addressee is the First Family, although the President's name is misspelled.

