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**U.S. DIPLOMAT CREDITED WITH SAVING THOUSANDS OF JEWS FROM NAZIS
TO BE IMMORTALIZED ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMP**

WASHINGTON — Hiram Bingham IV, the U.S. diplomat credited with saving more than 2,000 Jews and other refugees in France from the invading Nazis, will be immortalized as part of the U.S. Postal Service's "Distinguished American Diplomats" commemorative postage stamps with five other diplomats. The stamp image was previewed today at a Capitol Hill briefing that highlighted Bingham's incredible and little-known story of



his clandestine work to help refugees in France escape the Nazis. The "Distinguished American Diplomats" sheet of six stamps will be dedicated Tuesday, May 30 at the Washington 2006 World Philatelic Exposition at the Washington Convention Center and be available in Washington, DC, only that day. The stamps will go on sale nationwide Wednesday, May 31.

In 1940 and 1941, as vice consul in Marseilles, France, Bingham issued visas and false passports to Jews and other refugees against official U.S. policies, assisting in their escape and sometimes sheltering them in his own home. Artist Marc Chagall, philosopher Hannah Arendt and novelist Lion Feuchtwanger were among the refugees he rescued.

"The honor of being depicted on a Commemorative stamp is not one that is easily achieved," said Thomas Day, U.S. Postal Service Senior Vice President, Government Relations. "Hiram Bingham is clearly an individual who is worthy of this unique recognition. It is an honor he and will share with five other distinguished diplomats who have served this nation," he added referring to Charles E. Bohlen, Philip C. Habib, Robert D. Murphy, Clifton R. Wharton, Sr. and Frances E. Willis. Joining Day in unveiling the image was Robert Kim Bingham, one of Bingham's 11 children, and Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA) — the only Holocaust Survivor in Congress.

"I hope by bringing out my father's story we, as a society, can further the cause of making this world a more humane and loving place," explained Bingham. "Having this hope is what my father's life is all about. His motto that informed us of his acts of courage and compassion during the Holocaust was: 'Give

the best that you have to the best that you know.' He put humanity ahead of career," he continued. "He and his wife Rose taught his children there's a spark of divinity in every human being."

Also participating in the event were Dr. Bella Meyer, granddaughter of artist Marc Chagall; Sara J. Bloomfield, Director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; and, Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) and Congressman Rob Simmons (R-CT), both of Bingham's home state. The event was sponsored by the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies and Wally Findlay Galleries International, in cooperation with Congressman Lantos, who spoke of Bingham's character.

"Hiram Bingham's courage is an inspiration to us all," said Lantos. "In an age when too many chose to ignore the plight of the persecuted, he became directly engaged in their cause at significant risk to himself. It is said that whoever saves one life saves the world. Humanity owes Hiram Bingham its admiration for the example he provided in saving the world many thousands of times over."

Born to a prominent Connecticut family in 1903, Bingham graduated from Yale in 1925 and studied international law at Harvard. After he entered the Foreign Service in 1929, his postings included China, Poland, and England.

Following the fall of France in 1940, the armistice required the French to "surrender on demand all Germans named by the German government in France." Civil and military police began arresting German and Jewish refugees the Nazis marked for death. Several influential Europeans tried to convince the U.S. government to issue visas to allow the refugees to leave France and escape Nazi persecution. Because of U.S. policy at the time, American officials refused.

In 1941, the U.S. government transferred Bingham to Portugal and then Argentina. In 1945, he retired from the U.S. Foreign Service. Bingham died in 1988.

On June 27, 2002, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell praised Bingham's "constructive dissent" and presented a posthumous "courageous diplomat" award to his children at an American Foreign Service Officers Association awards ceremony.

Since 1775, the Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 144 million homes and businesses every day, six days a week and is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of

the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than half of the world's mail volume — some 212 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year — and serves seven and a half million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide. Its website, usps.com, attracts more than 21 million visitors each month.

Distinguished American Diplomats Commemorative Stamps Backgrounder

In addition to Bingham, five other diplomats will be honored on the Distinguished American Diplomat stamps at noon, Tue., May 30 at the Washington Convention Center as part of the Washington 2006 World Philatelic Exhibition.

A renowned expert on the Soviet Union, **Charles E. Bohlen** (1904-1974) helped to shape foreign policy during World War II and the Cold War. He was present at key wartime meetings with the Soviets, he served as ambassador to Moscow during the 1950s, and he advised every U.S. president between 1943 and 1968.

Philip C. Habib (1920-1992) was renowned for his diplomacy in some of the world's most dangerous flash points. An authority on Southeast Asia, a peace negotiator in the Middle East, and a special envoy to Central America, Habib was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1982.

A skilled troubleshooter, **Robert D. Murphy** (1894-1978) played a key role in facilitating the Allied invasion of North Africa during World War II. He served as the first postwar U.S. ambassador to Japan, and in 1956 he became one of the first diplomats to be named Career Ambassador.

The distinguished career of **Clifton R. Wharton, Sr.** (1899-1990) spanned nearly four decades. In addition to becoming the first black Foreign Service Officer, Wharton was the first black diplomat to lead an American delegation to a European country and to become an ambassador by rising through the ranks rather than by political appointment.

Frances E. Willis (1899-1983) began her diplomatic career in 1927 and served with distinction, especially in Europe, until 1964. She was the first female Foreign Service Officer to rise through the ranks to become an ambassador and the first woman to be honored with the title of Career Ambassador.

During the Washington, DC World Philatelic Exhibition, www.washington-2006, May 27-June 3, visitors can see \$40 million worth of world's rarest stamps, have stamp collections valued and witness multi-

million dollar stamp auctions. Families can get a jump-start on stamp collecting by buying stamps from the only location on the planet selling stamps from 135 countries under one roof.

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