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EARLY FOOTBALL HEROES RETURN TO GLORY ON NEW POSTAGE STAMPS

WASHINGTON — Although it has been several decades since “The Galloping Ghost” and three other legends of the gridiron made their mark on college and professional football, they will return to glory on Aug. 8 when the U.S. Postal Service issues four new commemorative postage stamps in their honor.

Walter Camp, Ernie Nevers, Red Grange and Bronko Nagurski will be featured on the Early Football Heroes stamps to be issued at the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame’s Enshrinement Festival at 111 S. St. Joseph St., South Bend, Ind. The first day ceremony will take place at the “Mayor’s Breakfast,” which begins at 7:30 a.m. There is a \$30 admission charge for the breakfast. However, stamp collectors are invited to a nearby closed-circuit broadcast of the ceremony.

All four players depicted on the stamps are enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame. Nevers, Nagurski and Grange are also enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Among the modern-day players scheduled to be enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame that day are Ronnie Lott, Dan Marino and Reggie White.

The 37-cent, self-adhesive Early Football Heroes stamps will be available at the ceremony location and at South Bend Post Offices on Aug. 8. They will be available at Post Offices across the country beginning Aug. 9.

“By issuing these stamps at the Hall of Fame, they will become part of the tradition of recognizing the achievements and contributions these legendary individuals made to the game of football,” said John F. Walsh, vice chairman of the presidentially appointed Postal Service Board of Governors, who will dedicate the stamps.

Known as the father of American football, Walter Chauncey Camp (1859–1925) shaped the rules that transformed rugby into the familiar modern game. First as an undergraduate and then as a medical student, Camp played halfback on the football team at Yale College (which became Yale University in 1887) from 1876 to 1882, serving as captain — at the time, a role similar to the modern role of head coach — during the latter years of his career. Camp was coach of the Yale football team from 1888 to 1892 and later held an advisory position until 1910.



Camp is credited with a wide range of important innovations, including the system of downs, the play from scrimmage, the restriction of eleven players per side and the position of quarterback. He was also a prolific writer whose many books about football helped popularize the game.

Harold "Red" Grange (1903–1991) rose to national fame as a halfback for the University of Illinois Fighting Illini. As a result of his speed and his ability to evade opponents, he became known as "The Galloping Ghost." On Oct. 18, 1924, in a game against the University of Michigan Wolverines — who were undefeated during the two previous seasons — Grange scored four touchdowns in the first 12 minutes of play and ran an incredible 402 yards of offense to a 39 to 14 victory. Grange was a three-time All-American, earning that distinction in 1923, 1924 and 1925.

Grange's professional career began on Thanksgiving Day in 1925 when he first played for the Chicago Bears. His transition from college football brought both publicity and credibility to a then-struggling National Football League (NFL).

During the 1926 season, Grange briefly played in the rival American Football League. After an injury in 1927 that kept him off the field through 1928, he returned to the Bears from 1929 to 1934. As a result of his football fame, Grange was a celebrity, starring in two films in the late 1920s — "One Minute to Play" and "A Racing Romeo" — and appearing as himself in a 1931 film serial appropriately titled "The Galloping Ghost."

Both in his college career and as a professional, Ernest Alonzo Nevers (1903–1976) achieved fame as a "one-man team," a versatile player who could do it all, including running, passing, tackling and kicking.

Nevers was a star athlete at Stanford University, earning 11 letters in 4 sports. Although Stanford lost the famous 1925 Rose Bowl against Notre Dame and its renowned "Four Horsemen," Nevers is nonetheless remembered as the game's hero. Although he was recovering from two broken ankles, Nevers played the game's full 60 minutes while wearing special braces. He carried the ball 34 times, made four out of five tackles, and earned an impressive net gain of 114 yards against the net gain of 126 yards by all Four Horsemen combined.

From 1926 to 1927, Nevers played for the Duluth Eskimos, which also became known as "Ernie Nevers's Eskimos." During the 29 games of the 1926–1927 tour, Nevers was on the field for nearly all of the season's 1,740 minutes. From 1929 to 1931, Nevers played for the Chicago Cardinals, serving as a player-coach in 1930 and 1931.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1929, the Cardinals defeated the Chicago Bears — who had Red Grange on the field — by a score of 40 to 6. Nevers scored all 40 points, a one-game professional scoring record that remains the longest-standing record in the NFL. Interestingly, Nevers also played professional baseball from 1926 to 1928 and briefly played professional basketball as well.

Known as much for his formidable strength as for his incredible versatility on the field, Bronislau Nagurski (1908–1990) earned his lifelong nickname, “Bronko,” as a child in International Falls, Minn. He played both tackle and fullback for the University of Minnesota football team, the Gophers, from 1927 to 1929. In 1929, fifteen organizations and publications named him to their All-American teams.

Nagurski played multiple positions for the Chicago Bears from 1930 to 1937 and again in 1943. In 1933 he helped lead the Bears to victory in the NFL’s first official championship game. A shortage of football players during World War II brought him back to the Bears for their 1943 championship season. Nagurski’s incredible strength remains legendary in the football world: A crack in the wall at Wrigley Field, former home of the Bears, is attributed to Nagurski having crashed into it after barreling through two opponents and ricocheting off the goalpost while scoring a touchdown.

In contrast to his fearsome reputation on the field, Nagurski is remembered as a modest, soft-spoken man. Today the Football Writers Association of America annually selects the recipient of the Bronko Nagurski Trophy, which is awarded to the defensive college player of the year.

The photographs that appear on the Early Football Heroes stamps have been colorized. The photo of Camp, from the collection of the Yale Archives, was taken at the Yale fence in 1880. According to the Walter Camp Foundation Web site, having one’s photo taken alone and in uniform at the fence was the sole privilege of team captains. The 1926 photo of Nevers is a part of the collection of Stanford University. Taken in 1933, the photograph of Nagurski in his Chicago Bears uniform was probably a Bears publicity shot. The photograph of Grange in a practice uniform was taken in 1925 while he was a player at the University of Illinois.

To see the Early Football Heroes stamps, visit the Postal Service Web site and open this press release at www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 140 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver 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 \$66 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world’s mail volume—some 203 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue: *Early Football Heroes*
Item Number: 454800
Denomination & Type of Issue: 37-cent commemorative
Format: Pane of 20 (4 designs)
Series: N/A
Issue Date & City: August 8, 2003, South Bend, IN 46624
Designer: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Art Director: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Typographer: Richard Sheaff, Scottsdale, AZ
Engraver: Armotek Industries
Modeler: Avery Dennison, SPD
Manufacturing Process: Gravure, with Scrambled Indicia®
Printer: Avery Dennison (AVR)
Printed at: AVR, Clinton, SC
Press Type: Dia Nippon Kiko (DNK)
Stamps per Pane: 20
Print Quantity: 70 million stamps
Paper Type: Prephosphored, Type I
Adhesive Type: Pressure sensitive
Processed at: AVR, Clinton, SC
Colors: Yellow, Magenta, Magenta (Scrambled Indicia), Cyan, Cyan (Scrambled Indicia), Black, Line Green
Stamp Orientation: Vertical
Image Area (w x h): 1.100 x 1.475 in./28.194 x 37.465 mm
Overall Size (w x h): 1.250 x 1.625 in./31.750 x 41.275 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h): 7.150 x 7.250 in./181.61 x 184.150 mm
Plate Size: 200 stamps per revolution
Plate Numbers: "V" followed by seven (7) single digits
Marginal Markings: "© 2002 USPS" • Price • Plate position diagram
Plate numbers (4 per pane) • 4 Barcodes on back
Catalog Item Number(s): 454820 Block of 4 — \$1.48
454830 Block of 10 — \$3.70
454840 Full Pane — \$7.40
454863 FDC set of 4 — \$3.00
454893 Full pane w/FDC — \$10.40
454891 Full pane with Ceremony Program — \$13.35

How to Order the First Day of Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 1 800 STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

EARLY FOOTBALL HEROES COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS
POSTMASTER
424 S MICHIGAN ST
SOUTH BEND IN 46624-9991

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Sept. 9, 2003.