METER STAMP SOCIETY

BULLETIN

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EXPERIMENTAL POST OFFICE METER FROM INTERMEC

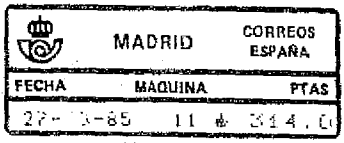
In the last Bulletin we reported a new "Friden-Alcatel" Postage Validation Imprinter (PVI) being tested in the Vienna, VA Post Office. We were misled by the nomenclature "PVI" which we erroneously thought was a Friden-Alcatel term used to describe their experimental post office meters. In fact it is a USPS term used to describe any of a new generation of postage machines now undergoing testing. This new Vienna machine is a product of the Intermec Corporation of Lynnwood, WA which is a maker of bar code and optical character printers and readers. This is their first venture into postage printing equipment after nine years of involvement with various test programs at USPS, utilizing bar code technology. At present, in addition to the Vienna PVI, they have machines which print zip codes used for sortation at a bulk mail test site.

Mr. Franklin M. Jones of Intermec provided us with much information about the Vienna test meter. The machine is actually a thermal bar code label and tag printer, model 8625, which has been programmed to produce the postage labels as shown.

It uses specially coated adhesive stock which is thermally reactive. Individual stamps are automatically removed from the backing material as they are printed. The adhesive is pressure sensitive and is very agressive to paper.

The image is produced with an array of 10 mil square heating elements, which are energized as the paper is moved beneath the head in a manner not totally unlike the development of a picture on a TV tube. The image is of high contrast with a resolution of 100 dots to the inch.

The PVI is primarily electronic with only three moving parts. The stamp image or images are electronically stored in the printer memory so that only variable data such as postage amount, need be supplied for each transaction. Other data, such as city and date, can be changed electronically when required. There is no physical "slug" in the printing head as in other postage meters. The "slug" is contained in the electronic memory of the machine, and it prints using a method roughly comparable to that used by a dot matrix printer. The preset stamp is an array of 875 x 210 elements. Much larger arrays are possible.



A similar system with adhesive labels is being used by the Spanish post office department at many post offices since 1981. It was developed in Spain under the name "EPELSA" and operates in connection with a scale which can weight mail matter up to 9.5 kilograms. Where the German system (used only by private firms) had a small post horn in front of the value originally, the Spanish imprints have a small crown in this place. (WS)

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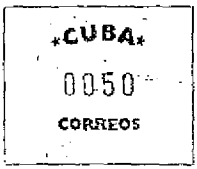
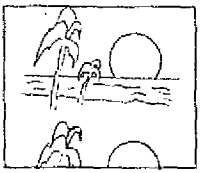
NEW FOREIGN METERS

In Bulletin 187/188 we announced a new TEC (Japan) automat meter from Singapore. This was meter no. JT1. Since then the following other numbers have been seen: CE1-3, GP1 and NT1-3. (GP)

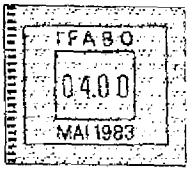
Cuba introduced two commemorative FRAMA automats in 1984, both of which were illustrated in Bulletin no. 185/186. At that time we speculated on whether there were plans to issue a definite, non-commemorative FRAMA. There were, and the indicia is pictured here along with an enhanced view of the scenic underprinting. (RS,PH)



Cuba



underprint



IFABO

A special commemorative FRAMA automat from Austria was issued in May 1983. It was issued in connection with something called "IFABO 1983" (what this stands for is unknown to your editor). The impression is in red on white paper. To the left is a column of black dashes. Underprinting the entire design is a pattern of pale yellow stylized posthorns. (RS,PH)