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## **National Postal Museum Launches Owney the Dog Augmented-Reality Experience**

The Smithsonian's National Postal Museum today launched a new augmented-reality experience that brings to life "Owney the Dog," mascot of the Railway Mail Service. The experience, offered via iPhone and Web applications, is the first multidimensional, augmented-reality experience triggered by a U.S. postage stamp.

Owney was a scruffy mutt who became a regular fixture at the Albany, N.Y., post office in 1888. He loved the mail and began to ride with the mailbags on Railway Post Office train cars across the state and then the country. In 1895, Owney even made an around-the-world trip, traveling with mailbags on trains and steamships to Asia and across Europe. The RPO clerks adopted Owney as their unofficial mascot, marking his travels by placing medals and tags from his stops on his collar. He has been preserved and is on display at the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C., and is the subject of a recently released official commemorative stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service.

The Owney augmented-reality experience comes "to life" when the Owney the Dog postage stamp is viewed via a free iPhone app available from the Apple iTunes Store or the museum's special webcam page ([www.postalmuseum.si.edu/owneyapp](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/owneyapp)). A multidimensional virtual Owney appears above the stamp. Owney barks, trots, sits and listens to postal train whistles in full 3-D. When the stamp is moved closer to the camera, details of Owney's collar and some of the tags he received from his many travels can be seen. When viewed from a slight distance, the stamp can be moved around to see Owney from any side or angle.

"It is a fun way to experience Owney the Postal Dog, a crowd favorite at the National Postal Museum," said Allen Kane, director of the museum. "We are thrilled to bring him 'to life' in conjunction with the release of his commemorative postage stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service."

"As the Smithsonian's first augmented reality application, Owney the Dog was a fun way for us to learn about this new technology in partnership with the Postal Service and its launch of the

Owney stamp while extending the Owney experience to broader audiences, including those who may not be able to see Owney in person at the postal museum,” said Nancy Proctor, head of new media initiatives at the Smithsonian Institution. “The app also offers fascinating glimpses of how digital technologies might change our experiences of analog stamps in the future and even the concept of stamp collecting!”

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation’s mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For more information about the Smithsonian, please call (202) 633-1000 or visit the museum website at [www.postalmuseum.si.edu](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu).

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