

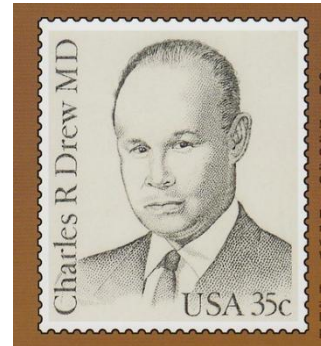
# American Hero

## Charles Richard Drew, Blood Bank Pioneer

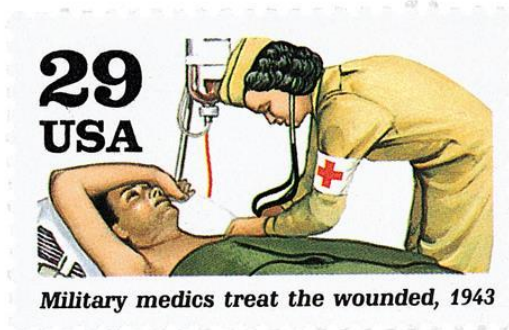
by Dan Wagenknecht

To me, the best part of collecting stamps is the people we meet. Some of them are folks we meet in real life as fellow collectors or dealers. Some of them are important people on stamps. One such important person I learned about through stamp collecting is Dr. Charles Drew, M.D.

Dr. Drew (June 3, 1904 – April 1, 1950) was an African American physician. He discovered that plasma, separated from red blood cells, could be stored longer than whole blood, which needed to be used immediately. He organized the first blood bank in the United States.



Dr. Drew grew up in Washington, D.C., the son of a carpet layer. He graduated from Dunbar High School in 1922. His athletic abilities in swimming, football, track, and basketball earned him an athletic scholarship to Amherst College. In 1926 he completed his bachelor's degree but needed money before he could pursue medical school. He earned enough by coaching and teaching biology at Morgan College (now Morgan State University), that in 1928 he enrolled at McGill University in Montreal. While there he won the J Francis Williams Prize in Medicine and the annual scholarship for neuroanatomy. He was elected to the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society and completed his medical and Master of Surgery degrees in 1933. Dr. Drew continued studying issues related to blood transfusions and earned a Rockefeller fellowship in 1938. At Columbia University he began working with physician John Scudder, where they conducted extensive research in blood preservation and fluid replacement, and developed a trial blood bank.

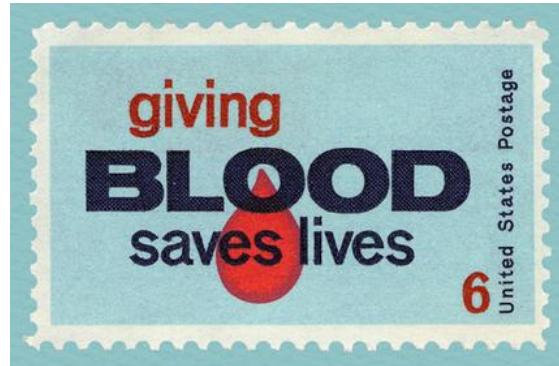


In 1940, Drew and Scudder began working on a new program called “Blood for Britain.” About five thousand liters of lifesaving plasma were sent to England. In 1941, Drew became the first Black surgeon to serve as examiner on the American Board of Surgery, and the first director of the American Red Cross Blood Bank in New York. He organized mobile blood donation stations, which are now called bloodmobiles.

There was a great need for blood as the US entered World War II, but the armed forces insisted that the Red Cross exclude Black donors. In 1942 the Red Cross began accepting blood from African Americans but still kept the blood separate. Drew objected to this policy because it was medically unnecessary, humiliating for Blacks, and counterproductive to the ability to meet a great need for blood. When his letters were rejected, Drew resigned from the Red Cross in protest. Drew's focus became his residents and students. In 1944 he became chief of staff at Freedmen's Hospital. In 1946 he became Fellow to the International College of Surgeons and served as a consultant to the US Surgeon General in 1949.

On April 1, 1950, Drew was driving home from a medical conference in Tuskegee with other surgeons in his car. Drew fell asleep and the car ran off the road and overturned. At age 45, he died of his injuries at Alamance County General Hospital in North Carolina. Tragically, even though the blood transfusion techniques he had pioneered were used to treat him, they were unable to save his life.

Many of the techniques developed by Dr. Charles Drew are still being used today. Of course there have been myriad improvements. In Florida, the blood centers are operated by OneBlood. You will see their bloodmobiles all around central Florida. You can find their donor centers in most cities. I give whole blood and platelets regularly, and I would encourage you to do the same if you are able. Maybe you can donate on April 1 in honor of Dr. Charles Richard Drew!



Drew was commemorated on the 35 cent Great Americans Issue, Scott #1865, in 1981. On one of the 1993 World War II stamps (2765b) a medic is shown treating a wounded soldier with an intravenous blood transfusion. The 1971 six cent Blood Donor Issue was a salute to blood donors and an encouragement for more participation in blood donation programs.

*[Editor's note: Another example that great American Heroes come in all shapes, sizes and colors.]*

## Questionable eBay, Another Take

Who wants to be a Millionaire?

By Robert Fisher



Listing reads “Stamp Germany 1 Million Mark 1923 – Inflation era”. Starting bid is US \$750. Item description from the seller: “Germany stamp from the 1923 hyperinflation period; Country: Germany (Deutsches Reich); Year: approx. 1923; Denomination: 1 Million Mark (overprint); Condition: Used; Back: Hinged with tape residue.”

This stamp reflects Germany’s famous inflation crisis when postal rates reached the millions. Visible aging and hinge/tape mark on back.”

A quick check of a Scott volume 3A would list this stamp as Scott #281. List price of a used copy is \$1.60. However, I don’t see any hint of a cancellation (just some dirt) so it should list for 25 cents. On top of that, this is the second in a set of 18 stamps, going from 500,000 Marks to 50 billion Marks. Hardly a rarity.

Personally, I would be ashamed to sell this stamp at ANY price or have it in my collection. Looks like trash to me.