

# ORBIT

Astro Space Stamp Society



The First all Female  
Spacewalk



Halley's Comet  
Catalogue



SpaceX Falcon-9 Rideshare  
SmallSat Missions







## Editorial

Greetings and welcome to your May issue of Orbit.

Member Edmund Poscher from Austria has put together a catalogue on Halley's Comet. We would like to thank Edmund for making this catalogue available to our members. You will find the link to the rest of our catalogues on the right. I am sure you will find this catalogue a great help in collecting your Halley's Comet stamps.

The Halley's Comet Catalogue is in German, but we hope to have an English version of the Halley's Comet Catalogue ready for you for the July issue of Orbit.

In this issue Don Hillger and Garry Toth take a look at SpaceX Falcon 9 Rideshare SmallSat Missions and Nik Steggall takes a look at the female astronaut space walkers.

Umberto Cavallaro looks at the space art of Paul Calle and the Calle family, while Chris Calle tells us about the Italian astronauts on the C76 - "First Man on the Moon postage stamp".

We also have stories about Wally Funk, the Blue Ghost on the Moon, Athena descends on the Moon, the Lunar Trailblazer to search for water on the Moon and not forgetting Peter Hoffman's new issue guide and Johnathan McDowell updates us with his space report.

Cheers  
Derek

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**Copy Deadline for the July 2025 issue is June 10th by which time all material intended for publication should be with the Editor. Please send your articles to**

**[astrospacestampsociety@gmail.com](mailto:astrospacestampsociety@gmail.com)**

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### Astro Space Stamp Society Newsletter



For the Catalogues of  
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**Coming Soon**

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BLOG



# Italian Astronauts on C76

By Chris Calle



Paul Calle's First Man on the Moon stamp, Scott #C76.

As many who know me are aware, my primary collecting interest is First Day Covers for the 1969 First Man on the Moon postage stamp, #C76 (see note 1 and 2). The stamp was designed by my father Paul Calle, so the subject is

very personal, and what better topic than Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, Mike Collins and the Apollo 11 moon landing!

Over the years I have sought out #C76 covers signed by astronauts, employees of NASA, aviators, politicians, actors and anyone who seemed appropriate to the theme, interesting, fun or unique. Notably my two favorite signed #C76 covers are one signed by aviator Charles Lindbergh, and the other signed by my boyhood sports hero San Francisco Giants baseball superstar Willie Mays. There is an interesting story behind each of these covers.

Ask me next time you see me...

The two covers here have been 12 years in the making! Many years ago through this wonderful space collecting hobby I became friends with Umberto Cavallaro, an Italian collector and founder of AS.IT.AF, the Italian Astrophilately Society. In one of our email exchanges I mentioned my #C76 collection and how I am always on the lookout for interesting new material and thinking about who I would like to see signing a First Man on the Moon First Day Cover. Umberto came up with the idea of having each of the Italian astronauts sign a cover, which I thought would be a brilliant addition to the collection and one that he thought he could accomplish for us. At the time there were only five Italian astronauts. And so the quest began.

The idea seemed almost easy because in 2012 they were organising to put all five Italian astronauts on a train trip from Turin to Rome to celebrate the 20 year anniversary of the space shuttle flight of the first Italian astronaut, Franco Malerba. Five at once, this was going to be great!

The program was changed and unfortunately the trip did not happen. Umberto however was confident that we could still make the signed covers happen.

The first signer was **Paolo Nespoli** (who became an



Italian astronauts signed covers with the First Man on the Moon stamp, Scott #C76.



ASITAF Honorary Member alongside Apollo 7 astronaut Walt Cunningham and myself). Nespoli first launched into space as a mission specialist aboard Space Shuttle Discovery's STS-120 mission. His next flight was in December 2010 aboard the Soyuz TMA-20 spacecraft as an Expedition 26/27 flight engineer. Nespoli's third spaceflight was in July 2017 aboard Soyuz MS-05, Expedition 52/53.

A few days later the covers were signed by Umberto Guidoni, Maurizio Cheli and Franco Malerba at a space event.

**Franco Malerba** in 1977 was chosen by the European Space Agency (ESA) as one of four European payload specialist candidates for the first Spacelab mission. Malerba flew as the first Italian citizen in space on Space Shuttle Atlantis STS-46 mission in 1992.

**Maurizio Cheli**, an Italian Air Force officer, flew aboard Space Shuttle Columbia STS-75 in 1996 as a mission specialist.

**Umberto Guidoni** is an Italian astrophysicist who made his first spaceflight aboard the space shuttle Columbia with Cheli. In 2001, Guidoni participated in the Space Shuttle STS-100 mission, becoming the first European on board the International Space Station.

**Roberto Vittori** was the first Italian astrocosmonaut since he flew on Soyuz TM-34 in 2002 and on Soyuz TMA-6 in 2005. The third time he flew as mission specialist aboard NASA Space Shuttle Endeavour's final flight, STS-134, in 2011.

When Umberto Cavallaro met Vittori in Italy in 2014, unfortunately he did not have the covers with him. Vittori was living in Washington DC at the time which made it difficult to predict when a signing would be possible but he eventually succeeded.

The other signers are:

**Luca Parmitano**, a colonel in the Italian Air Force, was assigned as a flight engineer to Expedition 36/37, which launched aboard Soyuz TMA-09M on 28 May 2013. His second space mission was Soyuz MS-13, also designated ISS flight 59S, launched on 20 July 2019.

**Samantha Cristoforetti**, who launched to the international Space Station on 23 November 2014, aboard Soyuz TMA-15M, she spent 199 days in space and at the time became the holder of the record for the longest single mission for a woman. Her second spaceflight was on the fourth mission of NASA's Commercial Crew program, SpaceX's Crew-4 mission aboard SpaceX Dragon spacecraft that launched on 27 April 2022.

**Walter Villadei** was the mission pilot aboard Axiom Mission 3, a private spaceflight mission to the ISS. The flight launched on January 18, 2024 on a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft.



Photo of Paul and Chris.

(Note 1) This "post" was originally issued by Chris Calle on CollectSpace [www.collectspace.com/ubb/Forum20/HTML/001918.html](http://www.collectspace.com/ubb/Forum20/HTML/001918.html).

(Note 2) The USA Scott "C76" 10¢ stamp (Michel 990) is the "First Man on the Moon": perhaps the most well known US stamp worldwide.



Chris's artwork called "The Great Moment" (copyright Chris Calle, CalleArt, Paul Calle Inc).