

SUITS OF ARMOUR ISSUE

Date of Issue	20th. January 1977.
Values	2c, 7c and 11c.
Stamp Size	47.15 mm × 20.5mm.
Art Designer	Chev. J. Briffa.
Printers	Printex Limited Malta.
Process	Lithography.
Perforation	13.5 × 13.5 Comb.
Watermark	Maltese Crosses pointing upwards.
Paper	Chalk surfaced.
Gum	P.V.A.

Colours:—

The colour of these stamps was produced by the four colour process, (Magenta, Yellow, Bright Blue and Black), but the colour of each value could be described as,

2c Green, Grey, Brown and Gold.

7c Vermilion, Ochre, Brown and Gold.

11c Blue, Grey, Brown and Gold.

Designs:—

One of the richest legacies left by the Sovereign Military Order of St. John of Malta during their stay in Malta from 1530 to 1798, is the Armoury which is found at the Magisterial Palace in Valletta. The number of items it contains and the high quality of some of its items makes it one of the most interesting armouries in the world.

The 2c stamp features a suit of half armour belonging to Grand Master Jean de La Valette (1557-1568). The armour is of Milanese make, and is divided into bands, enriched with aqua fortis engravings. The 7c stamp features a full suit of armour, made for Aloph de Wignacourt, Grand Master (1601-1622). It is of Italian fashion, and by reason of its high quality of workmanship, its elegance of form and the richness of its ornamentation, it has a rightful claim to the first place among the best known 17th. Century suits of the armouries of Europe. Grand Master Wignacourt is represented wearing this armour in his portrait by Lionello Spada at the National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta.

The 11c stamp reproduces a suit of complete armour, made for the Grand Commander Jean Jacques de Verdellin (1500-1673). The work both from the point of design and execution, is really fine. Grand Master Wignacourt is represented wearing de Verdellin's armour in a portrait by Caravaggio at the Louvre, Paris.

Colour checks in the form of coloured discs 3mm diameter are seen in the right hand margin, next to the last stamps of the two bottom rows. The colours from top to bottom correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers from left to right on all Panes of all values. Cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps are seen in top and bottom margins. Figures are 2.5mm high and printed in black in the 7c and 11c values. In the 2c value they are printed in magenta. The only relation I could find, between the difference in colour of these figures, is the different order of the colour checks in the three values. A close look at the colour checks will show that the order from top to bottom in the 7c and 11c values is: Bright Blue, Yellow, Magenta, Black, Brown and Gold, whilst in the 2c value the order is, Bright Blue, Yellow, Black, Magenta, Brown and Gold.

The Printed Sheets of all three values consist of three Panes. Each Pane has 50 stamps made up of five rows of ten stamps. All stamps are of the vertical format.

All that was written about the three lower values of the Christmas Issue 1976, holds good for this set. That is, if a Pane of stamps was looked at in such a way, that the Plate/Pane numbers are at the left hand side of the bottom margin and the colour checks are at the bottom of the right hand margin, stamps will be seen sideways resting on their 47.15mm side. In this way the watermark is sideways, but if stamps are looked at individually, the right way up, the watermark is upwards.

Plate/Pane Numbers:—

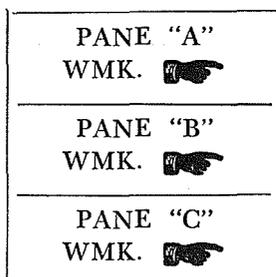
These are seen under the first stamp of the bottom row.

2c = 1A x 6, 1B x 6, 1C x 6.

7c = 1A x 6, 1B x 6, 1C x 6.

11c = 1A x 6, 1B x 6, 1C x 6.

Perforation of Margins:—



All margins of all Panes, of all values are fully perforated except the top margins of Pane "A", of all values, which is imperforated. No signs of any registration marks could be seen on any of the Panes examined.

The Printed Sheet of each value, before cutting, would look as shown on left. In this way, stamps would be seen sideways resting on their 47.15mm side.

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Imprint Blocks:—

“PRINTEX LIMITED MALTA” is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row and also extending to the right hand side of the last vertical perforation line. Here again the Imprint in the 7c and 11c values is printed in black and in the 2c value, it is printed in magenta. Letters are 1mm high. An Imprint Block of four will also include the colour checks. A special handstamp was used for cancellation on the first day of issue. Up to 4 p.m., on the first day of issue the sale of these stamp realised the sum of £M33,641.