

## Fake BBS State Strip Recently Discovered

An Air Scout BBS (Blue on Blue) 1/4 state strips (“MASS.” for Massachusetts) was recently offered for sale on eBay. Bidding was heated, with two bidders topping \$500.

As Air Scout state strips are quite rare, I was surprised to receive a Second Chance offer at my (distant third) bid. The fact that 3 (or more) of these had surfaced at the same time should have been a red flag, but it seemed plausible that these might surface in the vicinity of Otis Air Force Base, and I had purchased from this seller before. I don't believe he had any prior knowledge nor intended any deceit, and my purchase was refunded immediately.

The colors on this new fake are PERFECTLY matched to the colors of a real BBS, so from the front it appears at quick glance to be genuine. However, upon inspection of the reverse side of the item, its contemporary origin is immediately apparent: the patch has a synthetic (Pellon) backing material that would not be available for another 3-4 decades after the era (1948-1953) of a real BBS.



This type of backing material simply did not exist circa 1950. (see scan of the reverse, above).

The *correct* backing for a BBS strip should be either a heavy white gauze (behind the lettering only) ) for a “type 1” strip, or plain (no backing) for a “type 2” nationally produced strip.



(genuine Type 1 BBS strip shown at left, recently discovered fake shown at right).

### **Other differences:**

High resolution scans of the patch reveal other, more subtle differences, as shown below:

### **Base Material:**



The light blue cotton twill from the 1948-1952 era (shown at right above) reveals a “fine twill” pattern of ridges at high magnification. The fake (at left) is on a different (“no twill”) woven material. As you can see from the scans, the colors are perfectly matched.

**Border:**

The embroidery of the “cut edge” border is a bit cruder on an original BBS strip, while the border embroidery on the fake is thick and smooth.. The “cut edge” is cut extremely close to the embroidery on this reproduction, whereas the trimming of original strips of the 1948-1953 era were less precise.

**Lettering:**

As you can see in the side-by-side scan (previous page), the lettering of a “type 1” BBS strip is squarish and crude, while the fonts used in the manufacture of the new fake are rounded, smooth, well formed and precise.

Even the machine-embroidered lettering of a nationally produced “type 2” strip (see scans of KRS state strip below) is relatively crude by comparison.

Note also that the letters of a genuine type 2 strip are connected to the outer border, while the letters on the newly discovered fake connect to each other.



<< FAKE >>



<<REAL (KRS)  
>>