



November 2019

Vol. 61, No. 247

AIR MAILNEWS

Journal of the British Air Mail Society

Formerly the British Aerophilatelic Federation and incorporating the Aero Philatelic Club, London (1923)

Affiliated to the Association of British Philatelic Societies and FISA



ISSN 0269 - 5820

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AIR MAIL NEWS

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH AIR MAIL SOCIETY

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Published in February, May, August and November

(Copy deadline 1st of the preceding month)

Volume 61 No.247 November 2019

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SOCIETY DIARY

Saturday 9th November

Wessex Group meeting at Harnham.

Saturday 30th November 2019

London Region Christmas Meeting at the Kings Head, Westmoreland Street. Marylebone, London

Saturday 28th March 2020

South Coast Group meeting at West Blatchington Windmill, Holmes Avenue, Hove *"It will be a very special day!"*

Saturday 6th June 2020

BAMS AGM at the Kings Head, Westmoreland Street. Marylebone, London

Tuesday 16th June 2020

BAMS joint meeting with The Wreck & Crash Mail society 14.00 - 18.00 at London 2020
Please make every effort to attend and help make London 2020 extra special

Obituary: Richard Beith FRPSL 1935-2019

We were all saddened to hear of the death of Richard Beith on 7th October 2019. He was a very enthusiastic aerophilatelist who was always more than willing to share his extensive knowledge with others.

He was born in Portsmouth in 1935 and married Margaret in 1960. In 1966, they moved to Dunblane from where he started his long association with the Stirling & District Philatelic Society, attending his last meeting in September 2019. He first held office as President in session 1970 and again in 1972, 1975 and 2009. He became an Honorary Vice President in 1991. In 1983, he had moved to Chester for work reasons, returning to Blackford, Perthshire in 2007.

He was very active in the British Air Mail Society (and its precursor the BAeF), regularly contributing articles, both to *Air Mail News* and the American Air Mail Society's *Airpost Journal*, describing findings from his extensive air mail history research. From 1991 to 1999, he was Editor of the BAeF *Bulletin* before it was incorporated into *Air Mail News*. He wrote 7 philatelic books on topics such as Scottish Air Mails, Yorkshire Air Mails, South Atlantic Air Mails and the postal history of Czech forces. He was also interested in Czech music and wrote 3 books on Czech composers for the Dvorak Society.

He leaves behind his wife Margaret, 3 children, 6 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. He will be sorely missed.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members.

As usual, the summer months are mostly made up of other activities such as holidays, gardening etc. and for me, are philatelically rather quiet. However, I did attend a very enjoyable South Coast Regional meeting at Ardingly which was well organised by Josh Spoor, so many thanks to Josh. It was well attended with some very good displays, which I am sure Josh will mention in his report. I did also manage to attend Autumn Stampex which had some excellent air mail exhibits: were these people members of BAMS! At this point I must remind you that we have a joint meeting with the Wreck & Crash Mail society at London 2020, so please try and support BAMS at this important event.

We are, of course, still looking for volunteers to help with the running of the society, so if you think that you can help in some way please let us know.

I continue in this issue with my series on German Catapult mail and hope that some of you find it interesting. It is meant to be easy to understand and not in too much depth. I hope that it will encourage some of you to try and do the same, it does not have to be too involved and I do know that Roger would appreciate as much material as possible for inclusion in the *Air Mail News*.

Regards, Eddie

FROM THE EDITOR

This past quarter has been the usual mix of good and bad news. On the upside I have had some very encouraging comments regarding the last issue. I am pleased to say, many people must indeed read it, judging by the number who spotted the faux pas on the cover with the wrong issue number! Brian also noticed that we claimed to be affiliated to the BPF but sported the correct ABPS logo. I would love to take the credit but we seem to have been doing this for a very long time now! You will notice this has been corrected this issue.

It was also brought to my attention that the volume number should have changed to 62 in August. This is deliberate. Up until the end of the 1990's the volume started at the beginning of the year to coincide with the founding year, 1959. We will be in our 62nd commencing next year so, I shall revert to the old numbering with the February edition of *Air Mail News* as the first in volume 62.

I am sure we have probably lost other members during the year, however, the tragic loss of Richard Beith will be felt by very many. Richard was a fount of knowledge, prolific writer and involved in all things aerophilatelic. He was also a tremendous advocate for our Society's community spirit, a hard act to follow. Our hearts go out to his family and friends.

Then there is the good and bad rolled into one. I am moving house – again – the second time in less than twelve months. The good news is that the new house is exactly what we want, where we want and at the price we want. The bad news, well, we are moving again and the beautiful library-come-study I spent ages creating will be lost. I shall set up a temporary one the moment we move in so that work on our publication will not suffer (I know it is the lifeblood of the Society and must be maintained). In the meantime, please continue to write up your collections, interests, reports and research and send it to me for the *Air Mail News*. Without your input we simply do not have a journal.

With that, may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR & NEWS

The Reason Why Romanian Air Mail via Lisbon to North & South America During 1941 was Flown a Different Route from that Taken by Bulgarian Air Mail

Dear Roger,

It is most pleasing to read members' letters to the Editor confirming that they do read articles we publish in *Air Mail News*, even those dealing with some of the less popular collecting areas of our hobby. More importantly I am gratified to learn that readers find what we write to be interesting – a good reason for continuing to write articles dealing with the air mails of some of our less popular collecting areas such as the Balkans and Central America.

I am particularly grateful to Josh Spoor for responding, (*Air Mail News* August 2019, page 12) so positively to my detailed and rather torturous article published in the May issue, (Vol. 61, No. 245, pages 38-44) in which I tried to rationalise the reason why during 1941 air mail covers that were sent from Bulgaria to the Americas are invariably found to have been struck with the German auslandbriefprüfstelle handstamp "Ag", thereby proving they had transited the German censorship centre in Vienna. By way of contrast, all Romanian covers I have found, were flown without these distinctive circular handstamps. This finding suggested that Romanian and Bulgarian covers had been flown a different route to Lisbon.

Josh is a highly respected collector and committed student of all things related to civilian airline routes in occupied Europe during the Second World War and it is so pleasing to hear that he concurs with the tentative conclusions I arrived at. I think we can now all agree that during 1941 Romanian air mail covers to Lisbon were almost certainly flown by aircraft of the Hungarian national airline MALÉRT using a route from Arad to Budapest, then to Italy, thence by Italian airline routes to Lisbon. By contrast, mail from Bulgaria was flown by DLH via Vienna to Germany before onward transmission via Italy to Lisbon. Josh wrote "*It is my belief that mail destined for America did not travel to Vienna [because] the Romanian postal authorities simply did not want the mail delayed.*" It always behoves postal authorities to expedite mail, circumstances permitting, the quickest way possible. In the first year of World War II nearly all air mail emanating from Axis countries tended to be sent via Italy in order to connect with PAA's transatlantic service from Lisbon. That explains the crucial importance of MALÉRT routes being used to expedite mail between Romania and Italy. MALÉRT did not operate a service to Bulgaria in 1941.

Josh concluded his letter with a bit of information that helps fill a gap. Josh wrote "*Just as a side issue on the subject of Bulgaria, I can state that on the 11th December 1940 it was proposed to operate a service between Sofia and Moscow, via Odessa. It was to use exclusively Russian aircraft. Earlier in that August Colonel Boidoff, who was at that time Chief of Civil Aviation, visited Moscow. As far as I can tell nothing came of this service. That is a shame because I am sure that Bulgarian air mails at this time via Moscow would have raised Richard's heart beat a little.*"

Well, Josh, my heartbeat increased some time ago when I acquired not one but two examples of first flight covers sent the Sofia-Moscow route. My two covers, however, present problems. One cover franked 18 leva, though bearing commemorative cancellations does not show any evidence of ever having been flown, whereas my second cover (Figure 1) franked 16 leva, although in an extremely tired and not very clean condition, shows a partial strike of a Moscow postmark (most of it was struck on the back flap which is missing). You will note the boxed dual language (Bulgarian and Russian) first flight cachet. Reference to the Muller Catalogue (Ref. 1.) and I have my first problem. Muller states the date of the flight as being March 23, 1940. The four strikes of the Bulgarian commemorative cancellations available to me, using the two covers, suggest the date might well be March 25.



Figure 1

Secondly, recourse to Akerman (Ref. 2.) and we learn the route was organised Moscow-Kherson-Burgas-Plovdiv-Sofia. I was hoping to confirm using this massive most reliable tome more details of the air mail service, but it was only mentioned by Akerman in the passing. I have the impression that Akerman gleaned his limited information from Davies's book on the Soviet airline Aeroflot (Ref. 3.). Akerman gives the date as being December 1939 when the agreement was signed between Aeroflot and Bulgaria to operate the Sofia-Moscow service. Insofar the first flight covers are clearly dated March 1940, I assume that, notwithstanding the detailed information given us by Josh he might well have made an error when mentioning the year?

I don't believe the Sofia-Moscow route was ever put into practice, other than this 'preliminary' first flight. Later when Germany turned against the Soviets, Bulgaria was obliged to help the Axis cause, though never committing forces to the invasion of Russia. The Bulgaria-Russia air mail service of 1940 was probably a non-starter.

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I am highly grateful for the letter from Josh Spoor that was published in our August issue.

Yours Sincerely, Richard Saundry.

References

- (1) Frank Muller, "Catalogue des Aérogrammes du Monde Entier 1950" (Re-edition published by FISA, 1970), Bulgaria listings, Cat. No. 15.
- (2) G. Adolph Akerman, "Via the Red Skies: the Development of Soviet Air Mail 1922-1945," 2nd Edition (2002), privately published by the author, Worthington, Ohio, USA.
- (3) R.E.G. Davies, "Aeroflot: An Airline and Its Aircraft", Paladwr Press, Rockville, MD. (1992)

AUTUMN STAMPEX 2019 COURT OF HONOUR



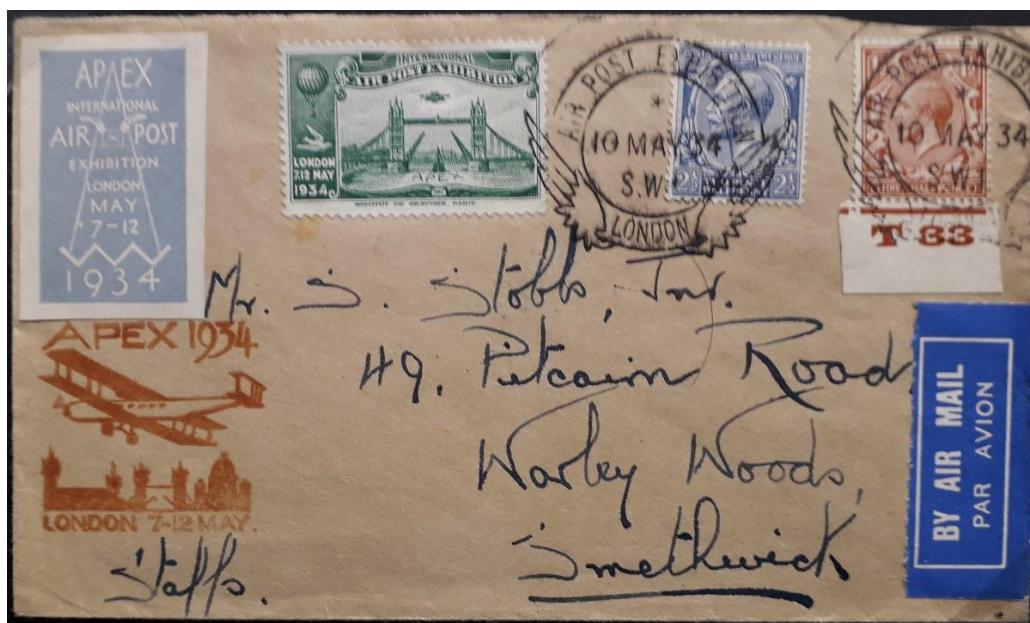
Brian Asquith in front of the first two frames of his eight frame "Faster Than a Bullet, the Concorde Story" exhibit, a subject he stated collecting in 1968

Our Patron reports that *"I was up there [Stampex] on three different days, including the Saturday. At the Concorde Study Circle meeting we had 12 present, including one from the Netherlands and one from the USA. There is always something new to see and members always bring material along which I have never seen or heard of before which makes the meetings well worthwhile."*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q-558

Curious Apex Airmail Cover



Dear Roger,

Thank you for an info-packed last edition of *AMN*.

I am hoping that somebody can illuminate me as to the above cover, which I acquired recently. It purports to be a scarce inland airmail between London and the Midlands, from Apex 1934. As can be seen, it bears the correct postage, airmail label, Apex vignette and cancellation of 10th May. However, I can find no record of any such flight from Apex, nor I believe would it qualify as a mail carried by RAS prior to 20th August. Also, it appears genuine in all respects and I can't think why it would be contrived. There is nothing to the rear.

Any suggestions or knowledge gratefully received.

Regards

Mark le Breton

Q-559

Mrs Smith's Letter

Can anyone help me with this cover?



It was posted at APO 5, almost certainly in South Africa, on the 25th November 1944. There are backstamps proving that it arrived in Miami on the 2nd December 1944, and in New York on the 12th December. There is also an informal "Dec 4 1944" s/l marking on the back. It was marked as subject to an American surcharge, as it was sent by Registered Post, which, in South Africa, would involve a fee of 4d, hence the charge of 10c Postage Due. It was franked 3/6d, which was the correct postage at the time for mail to be transported across the Atlantic by the very ad hoc Southern Atlantic service - indeed, it provided for this cover, at any rate, a superbly fast service bearing in mind the hostilities.

The only question is why is it so very tatty? It would seem extremely improbable that it was involved in some sort of air or train crash, bearing in mind the time limits.

Or is it just a case of Mrs Smith getting this in the mail, having to pay 10c postage due, removing the contents (which must have been important to be registered) and scrunching the envelope up, leaving it for some idiot like me to buy several years ahead?

Nicholas Arrow

PS I didn't pay much for it and the stamps are good anyway!

Q-560

GWR Letters

Dear Editor,

I was wondering if any members had knowledge of any GWR covers carried on the 3rd or 6th South American Zeppelin flights of 1933?

Having scoured the internet and auction archives, as well as AMN, I have only come across 2nd, 4th and 5th flights. Any help much appreciated.

Regards, Mark le Breton

AUSTRALASIAN CRASH MAIL AND MAIL FROM OTHER INCIDENTS VOL TWO, 1931 – 1935 By Brian R Peace FRPSL APR

Reviewed by Ken Sanford

Australasian Crash Mail and Mail from Other Incidents

Volume Two: 1931-1935



Brian R Peace FRPSL

This book continues from Vol. 1 which covered the period from 1917 – 1930. The book covers all crashes and incidents from 1931 – 1935 where mail was involved; but it is much more than that. The author has been thorough in setting a context; not simply explaining the distinction between an accident and an incident, but detailing both the constituent parts of an aircraft and the reasons for aerial events which lead to a crash.

There follows a chronology of aviation accident investigation in Australia, New Zealand and the UK. One can deduce from this that inquiries and investigations, even in the 1920s, were reasonably detailed and professional. We are told that today, investigations can take years, the sole purpose being to learn from the event and prevent a recurrence, the focus being on safety, not allocating blame.

The book is effectively a comprehensive demonstration of the challenges and hazards facing pilots and the growing airline industry, from a social and historical, as well as a philatelic, perspective.

The tables at the end of each of the three chapters are useful in that it is a relatively simple task to check air mail covers to establish if they were involved in an incident. In the chapter on overseas incidents, some flights suffered multiple incidents and the author has introduced a novel way of listing these in the table as being subservient to the most significant incident.

The inclusion in tables of the amount of mail carried, and the recorded or estimated numbers of surviving covers, will be invaluable for auction houses and dealers as well as collectors.

Whilst some would prefer to see values, auction realisations or scarcity ratings included, the author has deliberately avoided their inclusion.

The extensive list of references points to this study is not only thorough but wide-ranging. There are several serious, even fatal crashes of mail carrying aircraft in Australia which have remained unrecorded in philatelic literature, e.g. *Recovered Mail* by Henri Nierinck. The possibility of new crash covers emerging is an incentive for aero-philatelists, and dealers, to re-examine their air mail covers from this period.

The illustrations are excellent and many of them are in colour. This includes photos of aircraft, pilots, timetables, etc., maps & charts, and of course covers recovered from crashes.

At 430 pages, the book is the culmination of decades of research and writings. The author first wrote on the subject 57 years ago and is the acknowledged authority on the subject. It may be that the readership will turn out to be wider than the aero-philatelists and dealers mentioned in the introduction. Some of the stories of the inter-continental flights are gripping, and one may wonder why some of these feats have remained largely unacknowledged.

Further volumes will follow as the author has recently retired and is devoting more time to research and publishing.

The post paid price is £50 in the UK, EUR65 to Europe, USD80 to the USA and AUD120 to Australia. Payment online in GBP to Sort 05-00-40 Account 10082204, or in AUD to BSB 063000 Account 12391146 or by Paypal to brpeace@ntlworld.com, adding 4 per cent.

2 2 LONDON



DON'T FORGET 2-9 MAY 2020

MADAGASCAR AIR CONNECTIONS SEPTEMBER 1939 TO JUNE 1940

By Peter Wingent

The Island of Madagascar, with its capital Tananarive, which is 11,988 kilometres (7,449 miles) from Paris, was connected to the French capital by all-air services from August 1934 when SNAM (Service de la Navigation Aérienne de Madagascar) commenced a feeder service from Tananarive to Broken Hill, where connection was made with Imperial Airways African service.

In November 1935, the SNAM service was replaced by a joint French and Belgian service which operated from Europe. Sabena flew from Brussels to Elisabethville, from where the Malagasy air company Régie Malgache completed the journey to Tananarive. Air France flew from Paris to Algiers, from where Régie Air Afrique flew originally to Brazzaville, but later all the way to Tananarive, taking over from Régie Malgache. Thus, by August 1939, Madagascar had enjoyed a once-weekly air mail service to and from Europe for five years, the route (no. 236) is shown highlighted in yellow on the map in figure 1. In addition, many of the major centres on the island were served by two internal air services

operated by Service de l'Aéronautique Civile de Madagascar (SACM). Both the Northern Service (figure 2) and the Southern Service (figure 3) operated once-weekly in connection with the arrivals and departures of the Air Afrique service.

Upon the outbreak of WWII, both the French and Belgian services were suspended. Desnos [1] states that the last Air Afrique service to Europe departed Tananarive on 4 September 1939 and arrived Paris 13th. It recommenced with a departure from Algiers on 18 September 1939 but operated only to Brazzaville. This service is highlighted in blue on the map in figure 1, from which it can be seen that it was of no use to senders of mail to and from Madagascar. The Sabena service did not reopen until 11 February 1940, when it operated only from Marseilles to Leopoldville.

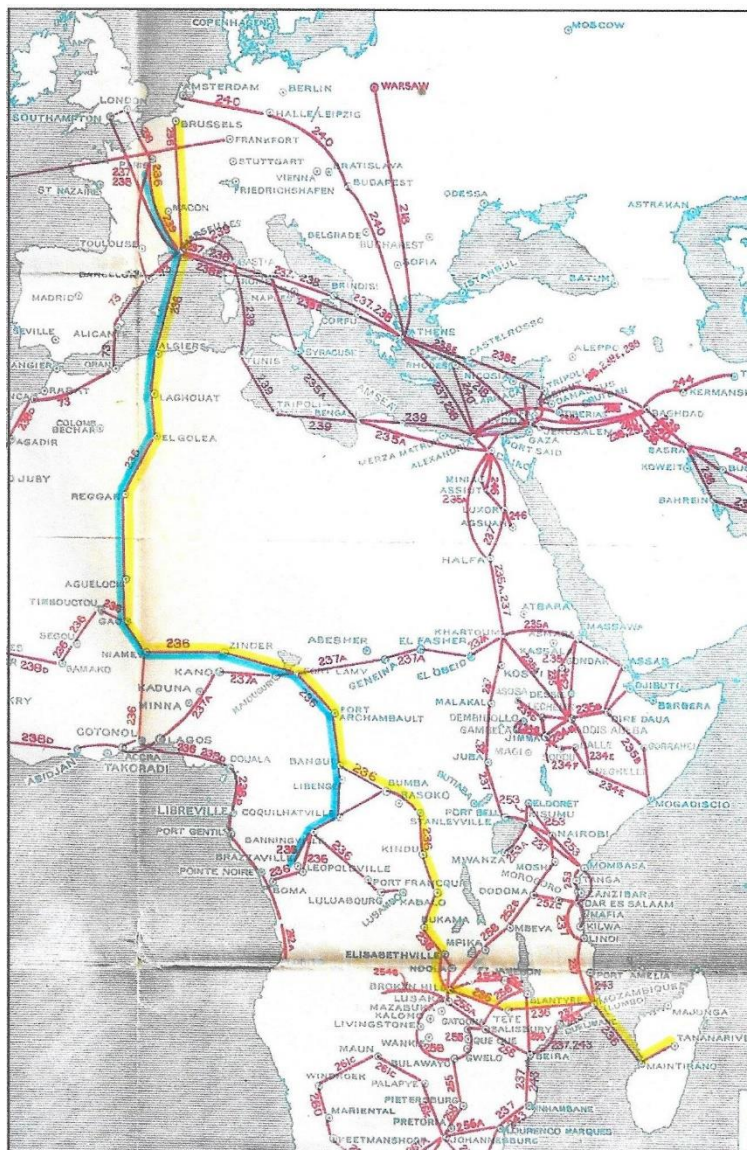


Fig 1. Map from "Bradshaw's International Air Guide," July 1939

I have found only one reference giving the date of the last service from France to Madagascar. Poskin [2] states it departed Algiers on 1 September and arrived Tananarive 6 September (it would have left Paris and Marseilles to schedule on Thursday, 31 August). The cover shown in figure 4 was posted in Envermeu on 4 September 1939 and has a Tananarive arrival backstamp of 5 October. The service scheduled to depart Paris on Thursday, 7 September did not operate and the cover was sent to Marseilles from where it was carried by the Messageries Maritimes ship *Général Metzinger*, which sailed on 11 Sept. and arrived at Tamatave on 4 October, from where it was sent by train to Tananarive the next day. The 3.90fr. postage = 0.90fr. up to 20 gr. ordinary fee + 3.00fr. per 5 gr. air mail fee. This was the pre-war air fee, introduced on 1 Sept. 1937, and this must have been the last despatch at this rate.

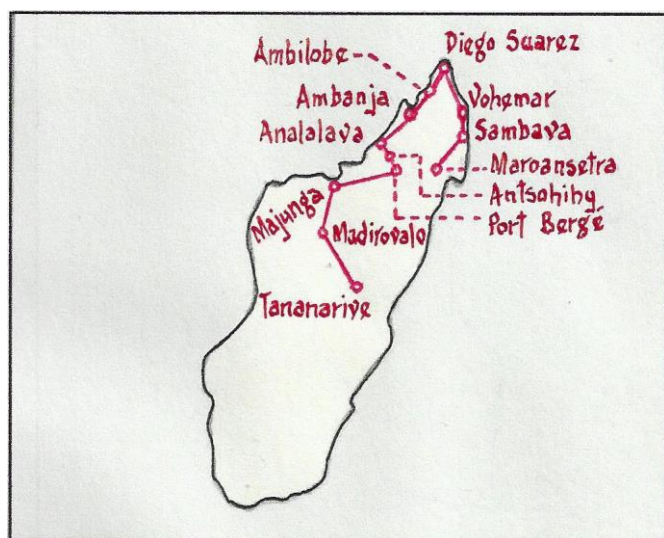


Figure 2. Map of the SACM Northern Service.

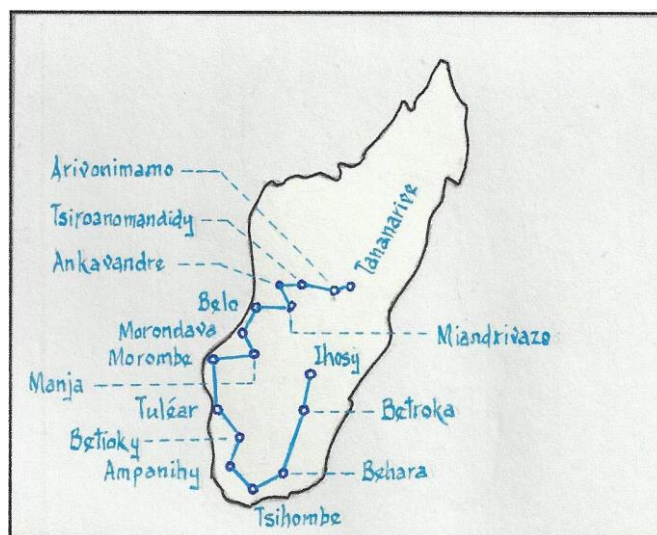


Figure 3. Map of the SACM Southern Service.

Although the island lost its external air connection with the outside world, the internal air services continued to operate throughout the war, with some minor route changes later in the period. François Chauvin [3] records that in 1937 the SACM fleet consisted of four Caudron Simouns to which were added, in April 1939, four Caudron Goélands.

The French authorities were keen to restore the air link between Madagascar and France. In a letter dated 3 October 1939, the French Director of Air Transport wrote to the British Air Ministry requesting that mail to and from Madagascar be carried by Imperial Airways between Mozambique and Marseilles in both directions, with SACM providing a connecting service between Mozambique and Tananarive. In a letter dated 23 October 1939, the British Post Office agreed to the arrangement and the Air Ministry wrote a letter of confirmation to the French Air Ministry, dated 27 October. This correspondence is held at the BPMA [4].

Collot and Cornu [5] record that the first mail via this route left Tananarive on 29 October and arrived in France on 6 November. However, these dates are puzzling because the Imperial Airways service was once-weekly and the Imperial Airways' October and November aircraft movement charts [6] show that service DN236 departed Mozambique at 04.45 on 29 October and arrived Marseilles on 2 November and service DN237 departed Mozambique at 04.30 on 6 November and arrived Marseilles 11 November. With no other air services operating from Mozambique, I am at a loss to explain how mail from Madagascar took only eight days to arrive in France on 6 November.

The National Air Communications Intelligence Summary No. 20, dated 1 November 1939 [7] stated that, *"In future, the French Government propose to use N.A.C. Empire services to transport mail from France to Madagascar. The mail will be picked up at Marseilles and carried to Mozambique. A French service will transport the mail between Mozambique and Madagascar."* Unfortunately, this report fails to provide an exact date of commencement.



Figure 4. Cover datestamped Envermeue 4 September 1939 with the Tananarive arrival datestamp of 5 October.

Chauvin [8] recounts that the Governor General of Madagascar very quickly reached agreement with the Governor of Mozambique to grant SACM landing rights, he says at Beira but it was certainly at Mozambique. He goes on to state that, *"on 24 October the Post Office informed the Colonies that from today letters and postcards for Madagascar and dependencies are accepted for carriage by air."* This provides the date of the first acceptance of mail from France to be carried by Imperial Airways but the date of the first acceptance from Madagascar remains uncertain.

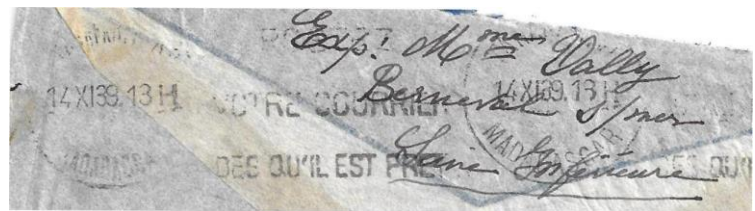
To add to the puzzle, Bob Picirilli [9] records a temporary air mail surtax of 5.00fr. per 5 gr., for which no documentary evidence has been found but he records six covers seen from Madagascar via East Africa and Imperial Airways and thus he says the rate, *"..... is based on solid cover evidence. The earliest date seen is 11 October and the last 5 November."* Chauvin mentions that the Governor General of Madagascar had fixed the air mail rate by 8 October. He doesn't give the rate but I think it is safe to assume it was that of 5.00fr. per 5 gr. He also records that the Colonies were notified that, *"because of the need to have recourse to using the British Imperial Airways service, the rates for carriage will be appreciably higher than on the Congo route."* The latter is the pre-war 3.00fr. per 5 gr. rate.

I have two covers franked at the 5.00fr. per 5 gr. air mail rate. The first is shown in figure 5 and was posted at Envermeue on 16 October 1939. The 5.90fr. postage = 0.90fr. up to 20 gr. ordinary colonial postage + the 5.00fr. per 5 gr. air mail fee. Given that the French P.O. did

not announce acceptance of air mail to Madagascar until 24 October, why was the sender of this cover charged the 5.00fr. air mail fee eight days earlier? It was sent to Marseilles where two strikes of the diagonal cross handstamp were applied to cancel the 'Par Avion' etiquette, see McQueen [10]. The cover was forwarded in the Messageries Maritimes ship *Compagnie*, which sailed on 21 October and arrived Majunga on 11 November. From there it took another three days for it to travel 399 miles by road to arrive at Tananarive on 14 November.



Figure 5. Cover datestamped Envermue 16 October 1939 with the Tananarive arrival datestamp of 14 November.



The second cover bearing the 5.00fr. per 5 gr. air mail rate is shown in figure 6. It was posted at Arivonimano on 28 October 1939 and has 7.25fr. postage, this being 2.25fr. per 20 gr. ordinary foreign postage + the 5.00fr. per 5 gr. air mail fee. Unfortunately, it does not have an arrival backstamp and thus how and when it travelled to London is open to doubt. It would have been sent 31 miles by road to Tananarive and arrived either on the day of



posting or the next day: the 29th: a Sunday.

Since Imperial Airways northbound services departed Mozambique very early on Sunday mornings, it is most likely that the cover remained at the Tananarive P.O. until Saturday, 4 November when it was flown to Mozambique by SACM to connect with Imperial Airways service DN237 which departed at 04.30 on 6 November (one day late due to a weather delay at Beira) and arrived Southampton at 13.45 on 13

Figure 6

November: 3 days late due to further weather delays at Alexandria and Marseilles. All this, of course, depends upon when exactly the combined SACM and IA carriage of mail commenced but, on balance, I feel this cover might well have been included in the first despatch from Madagascar. Can any reader confirm or deny this please?

The 5.00fr. per 5 gr. air mail rate was short lived because on 7 November 1939 it was reduced to 4.75fr. per 5 gr. and on 1 December 1939 the colonial surface rate was raised to 1.00fr. for 0 – 20 gr. and 1.30fr. for 20 – 50 gr. The foreign surface rate was raised on 1 January 1940 to 2.50fr. first 20 gr. and 1.50fr. each additional 20 gr. [11]

The cover shown in figure 7 reached Marseilles one week after it was posted at Tananarive on 8 December 1939 and is thus evidence of a speedy connection having been established. It was flown by SACM to Mozambique on 9 Dec. from where it departed at 04.30 on the 10th via Imperial Airways service DN242, which arrived Marseilles 14.25 on the 14th. The 39.30fr. postage = 1.30fr. for 20 – 50 gr. ordinary colonial postage + 8 x 4.75fr. per 5 gr. air mail fee (letter weighed 35 to 40 gr.).



Figure 7. Official Government letter. Arrival backstamp and Government handstamp on reverse shown left.



The speedy connection between Madagascar and France was interrupted at the end of 1939. Chauvin [12] records that, “On Saturday 30 December the mail could not leave Tananarive because of weather conditions and lack of mail. Then, following differences in the interpretation of the text about arrangements concluded between the French and Portuguese Governments, the Governor of Mozambique refused to extend the permission given to SACM to land beyond 1939. During the first weeks of 1940 no more air mail from Madagascar arrived at Marseilles.” He goes on to say that, “Mail left the colony once more on 13 January 1940 and was carried by an Imperial Airways aircraft on Sunday, 14th which arrived Marseilles on the 19th.” This was service DN247.

The withdrawal of SACM’s landing rights at Mozambique is one of the reasons why the cover shown in figure 8 took three and a half weeks from its date of posting to arrive at Tananarive. It was sent 133 miles by road and train from Lalevade d’Ardeche to Marseilles, where it arrived on 19 December 1939. I.A. service DS243 departed Marseilles on 17 December and the next, DS244 carrying the cover, did not depart until 08.10 on the 27th: three days late, its departure from Southampton having been delayed by bad weather. DS244

arrived at Mozambique on 31 December and the Tananarive backstamp, dated 12 January 1940, indicates it must have remained at the Mozambique P.O. for twelve days until the landing rights restriction was lifted. In addition, since Chauvin states that the first resumed flight from Madagascar to Mozambique was on 13 January, for the cover to have been flown from Mozambique on the 12th, a SACM aircraft must have been stranded there since late December. The 5.75fr. postage on the cover = 1.00fr. first 20 gr. ordinary colonial postage + 4.75fr. per 5 gr. air mail fee.



Figure 8. Cover delayed at Marseilles and Mozambique. Backstamps

There were further major delays to Imperial Airways services in January and February 1940 caused by the severe winter in Europe: the worst for many years [13]. An example of mail delayed at Mozambique awaiting an Imperial Airways service is shown in figure 9. Posted at Maevatanana on 26 January 1940, it was sent 247 miles by road to Tananarive and then flown by SACM to Mozambique on Saturday 3 February. There it remained for ten days.

Imperial Airways service DN249 departed Mozambique to schedule on 28 January but the next, DN250, did not leave until 04.50 on 13 February: nine days late because there was no aircraft available at Durban to operate the service, all the flying boats being weatherbound in Europe. The cover was carried by DN250, which arrived at Athens on 16 February, from where it was sent by ship to Vathy on the island of Samos, arriving 19 February. The 6.00fr. postage = 2.50fr. first 20 gr. ordinary foreign postage + 3.50fr. per 5 gr. air mail fee. (The only rate from Madagascar to Greece given by Picirilli [14] is 3.00fr. per 5gr. but that is dated August 1938 and so most probably would not apply to the SACM/IA services). Red manuscript 'T' mark applied, then cancelled – reason unknown.



Figure 9.



Two Imperial Airways southbound services departed Marseilles on 8 February 1940, the day the cover shown in figure 10 was posted in Envermue: DS249 which was eleven days late and DS250 which was four days late. Posted on a Thursday, the cover was sent by train to Paris then flown to Marseilles from where it should have departed via the I.A. service of Sunday, 11 February but DS251 did not depart until 13.00 on 14 Feb.: three days late and its departure that day was delayed further by a breakdown of the refuelling plant [15]. The service finally arrived at Mozambique at 15.40 on 19 February (four days late) and the cover was flown to Tananarive by SACM the next day, the aircraft having awaited the arrival at Mozambique of the delayed service DS251. It was sent from Tananarive to Tamatave by train, arriving 23 February. The 4.80fr. postage = 4.75fr. per 5 gr. air mail fee (overpaid 5 centimes). Ordinary postage was not charged on military mail.

In March 1940 Régie Air Afrique resumed a weekly service between Tananarive and Algiers, with Air France providing a connection between Algiers and Paris. It was reported in NACIS No. 39, shown in figure 11 [16]. Collot and Cornu [17] record that the first service was operated by a Lockheed 14 which left Algiers on 8 March and arrived Tananarive on the 12th. This arrival date is surprising because it is two days ahead of the scheduled arrival date of 14 March. The first return flight from Tananarive departed on 18 March and the mail arrived at Marseilles and Paris on the 24th.



Figure 10. Cover datestamped Envernue 8 February 1940, backstamped Tananarive 20th & Tamatave 23rd.

N.A.C. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO.39. SECRET.

Wednesday, 13th March, 1940.

NATIONAL AIR COMMUNICATIONS.

FOREIGN SERVICES.

FRANCE.

Resumption of France - Madagascar Service.

On 6th March, 1940, Air Afrique resumed their service between France, Algiers and Madagascar. On the outbreak of war, the service was terminated at Brazzaville (French Equatorial Africa), and mail for Madagascar was carried by Imperial Airways Ltd. between Marseilles and Mozambique, and thence by aircraft of the Madagascan Government.

Figure 11

The cover shown in figure 12 must have been flown by the last Imperial Airways service to carry mail from Madagascar. The Charmes arrival datestamp of 23 March proves it was not carried by the first resumed Air Afrique service, mail from which did not arrive in France until the next day. It is puzzling that having been posted in Tananarive on 8 March, why was it not flown by SACM to Mozambique on the 9th where it would have connected with Imperial Airways service DN255 which departed 10th and arrived Marseilles 14th? For whatever reason, it must have been flown to Mozambique by SACM on 16 March and from there by IA service DN256 which departed 04.30 on the 17th and arrived Marseilles at 14.55 on the 21st. It is franked at the 4.75fr. per 5 gr. air mail rate but the ordinary postage was

not paid. It bears the cachet of the postal service of the Health Service and perhaps such mail was not required to pay the surface fee. Can any reader confirm this please?



Figure 12. Cover carried by the last Imperial Airways service with mail from Madagascar.

The timetable of the Air Afrique service is shown below and is taken from an Air France timetable dated 28 April 1940.

RÉGIE AIR AFRIQUE TIMETABLE FROM 6 MARCH 1940

Wednesday	dep.	London	arr.	Sunday
Thursday	arr.	Paris	dep.	Sunday
Thursday	arr.	Marseilles	dep.	Sunday
Friday	arr.	Algiers	dep.	Sunday
Saturday	arr.	Gao	dep.	Saturday
Sunday	arr.	Fort Lamy	dep.	Friday
Monday	arr.	Stanleyville	dep.	Thursday
Tuesday	arr.	Elisabethville	dep.	Wednesday
Wednesday	arr.	Mozambique	dep.	Tuesday
Thursday	arr.	Tananarive	dep.	Monday

The cover shown in figure 13 was posted in Diego Suarez on 28 March 1940 and flown from there to Tananarive by the SACM Northern Service on the 30th. From there it was flown by the third northbound Air Afrique service which departed Monday, 1 April and arrived Algiers to schedule on Saturday, the 6th. It was flown to Casablanca on the 7th by the daily Air France Algiers - Oran - Rabat - Casablanca service, from where it was sent by train to Meknes and arrived the next day. It is franked 4.75fr. but the air mail fee to Morocco was 5.75fr. per 5 gr. and thus the blue manuscript "T/2.00" marking was applied but no dues were levied upon arrival in Meknes. Ordinary postage was not charged on military mail.

The Air France timetable of 28 April 1940 stated that from 29 April the service from Tananarive would become fortnightly, as would that from Algiers from 3 May. This is confirmed, somewhat belatedly, by the CAIS report shown in figure 14. It also confirms and gives the reason for the statement by Collot and Cornu [18] that, "They changed planes at Bangui where a Bloch 120 took over from a Lockheed and continued to Tananarive."



Figure 13. Military cover. Cachet of the postal service of the Colonial Artillery Group.

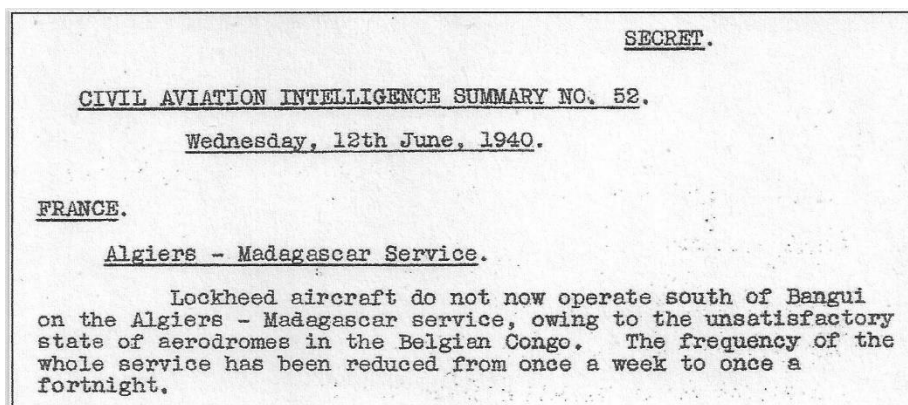


Figure 14

Collot and Cornu [19] state that the last service from Algiers was on 15 June 1940 and that from Tananarive departed on the 17th. Given that the service was fortnightly, the previous service from Tananarive was due to depart on Monday, 3 June. Thus the cover shown in figure 15, posted at Tananarive on 7 June 1940, was most likely held at the P.O. for the last despatch by Air Afrique on the 17th, especially as the full air mail fee of 4.75fr. per 5 gr. was paid, in addition to the 1.00fr. first 20 gr. ordinary fee. Unfortunately, there are no backstamps but Collot and Cornu record that the mail arrived in France on 25 June.



Figure 15. Cover carried on the last Air Afrique service from Tananarive.

I am aware that this account is not entirely complete, with some dates of commencement and closure of services open to doubt. I would be delighted if any readers who can fill any gaps left in the story would write to the editor.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Colin Spong who, over the years, has very generously sent me large amounts of copies of articles relating to Madagascar, many from French sources of which I was unaware.

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- [12] Chauvin, *op. cit.*, p.97.
- [13] Wingent, Peter, *The Winter of 1939-40*, Air Mail News no. 243, November 2018, pp.33-39.
- [14] Picirilli, *op cit.*, pp.178.
- [15] British Airways Archive, Heathrow, London, *Aircraft movement chart, February 1940*.
- [16] Wingent, Peter, *Extracts From the Air Ministry Civil Aviation Intelligence Summaries*. Published by the West Africa Study Circle, 2010, p.130.
- [17] Collot & Cornu, *op. cit.*, p.271.
- [18] *Ibid.*, p.271.
- [19] *Ibid.*, p.272.

THE PAN AMERICAN AIRWAYS 7-DAY EXPRESS AIR MAIL SERVICE BETWEEN NEW YORK AND BUENOS AIRES IN 1930

By Richard Saundry

Volume Three of the Sixth Edition of the AAMC, (the *American Air Mail Catalogue*) published by the American Air Mail Society, is the most recent edition (2004) cataloguing first flight covers flown over United States Foreign Contract Air Mail Routes, (FAMs). We see on pages 129 and 130 in the section dealing with first flight covers despatched over FAM Route 9, (FAM-9), the Pacific coastal route linking Cristobal in the Canal Zone with Buenos Aires and Montevideo, that there is a gap in the catalogue listing between F9-55 (first despatch Montevideo to Cristobal 30th November 1929) and the listing of F9-60 (first flight Miami to La Paz, Bolivia 18th May 1932). In this 2004 issue of the AAMC, however, the editors have inserted a short but most informative section entitled "1930, April 25-May 1 - 7-Day Service New York-Buenos Aires." Clearly editors of earlier editions of the AAMC thought the 7-day accelerated air mail covers flown between New York and Buenos Aires at the end of April 1930, plus reverse journey covers, merited full catalogue listing, whereas editors of subsequent editions of the AAMC dropped these listings from the catalogues. Technically the 7-day accelerated air mail covers of April 1930 - I prefer to call them 7-day express air mail covers - would not have been eligible for inclusion since they were not first flight covers, a scheduled air mail service between Cristobal and Buenos Aires having been started by PAA, (Pan American Airways, Inc.), more correctly by their associate airline PANAGRA (see below) in October 1929. Catalogue numbers originally assigned to later FAM-9 first flight covers were retained as a matter of expediency rather than deciding to renumber them. The current writer, however, in this article wishes to explore further the story behind the 1930 express air mail service New York to Buenos Aires (and on to Montevideo) since the implementation of the 7-day express service was in many ways a contributing factor in the successful story of the development of PAA and the history of provision of air mail services in South America. I trust our readers will forgive me writing in the first person. Collecting and studying the 7-day accelerated air mail covers has been fraught with a deal of personal angst and I trust that what follows will prove useful.

Before we embark upon a detailed discussion of the 7-day express air mail covers it is important to understand the reason why this new service was thought to be so special. It is so very frustrating that the current writer cannot now recollect exactly where he read it, but he read somewhere that according to official UPU figures, not unexpectedly, the country whose citizens sent and received the most items of mail per head of population in 1930 was the United States. A major part of the US total, however, was the substantial amount of unsolicited fourth-class mail that US citizens were bombarded with - what we in the early 21st century would probably more correctly term 'junk mail'. Strip out from the UPU data this 'junk mail' and the country that was seen to run the United States a very close second in the 'most items of mail received and sent per capita' stakes was Argentina. In the early 1930s, Argentina was an affluent country, there was a high literacy rate, and it is said the standard of living enjoyed by the citizens of Buenos Aires was on a par with the citizens of London, Paris and Berlin. Buenos Aires was regarded as the commercial and industrial centre of South America. Contracts to convey mail between the United States and Argentina and vice versa promised to be extremely lucrative since the volume of mail carried in both

directions was expected to be substantial. During the latter half of 1929 and the first part of 1930 a keenly fought commercial war was fought between two American airlines vying with each other to secure the Argentine and American contracts. In 1930 because the only long distance aircraft then available that were capable of carrying reasonable pay loads were amphibious or were sea planes (in the belief that in the event of engine malfunctions by flying over water you could attempt to land with some chance of survival) this resulted in only two air routes between the United States and Argentina: (1) the shorter Pacific coastal route (using a combination of either FAM-5 or FAM-8 with FAM 9); and (2) the longer Atlantic coastal route (FAM-6 and FAM-10).

PAA had already pioneered two converging routes, (FAM-5 starting from Miami and FAM-8 from Brownsville, Texas), bringing mail from the United States to Cristobal in the Canal Zone. The President of PAA, Juan Terry Trippe, realised that in order to extend air mail service beyond the Canal Zone using the Pacific coastal route he had to reach some sort of accommodation with the powerful W.R. Grace shipping conglomerate which had substantial interests on the western coast of South America. PAA and the Grace Shipping Company together formed a new airline, PANAGRA (Pan American-Grace Airways Inc.) which in March 1929 secured an air mail contract from the USPOD to carry mail between Cristobal and Buenos Aires using the Pacific coastal route (FAM-9). Although the proposed Pacific coastal route was shorter than the Atlantic coastal route, the former had two major shortcomings: (a) there were no large centres of population between the Canal Zone and Santiago de Chile such that the volume of mail and income engendered en route would have been almost negligible, and (b) there was the seemingly insurmountable obstacle presented by the Andes mountains. FAM Route 9 between Cristobal and Buenos Aires was accordingly difficult to organise. By May 1929, however, PANAGRA had implemented air mail service as far as Mollendo in Peru, subsequently extending this as far as Santiago de Chile on 16th July.

In contrast to the Pacific coastal route, the Atlantic coastal air mail route between the United States and Buenos Aires, (FAM-6 from Miami to Paramaribo in Surinam) together with the extension southward from Paramaribo to Buenos Aires (FAM-10) was economically very promising. The Atlantic coastal route promised to be very lucrative since, though being a very much longer route than the Pacific coastal route, it transited centres of relatively high population: – São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and Port-of-Spain in Trinidad to name just a few. The U.S. FAM-10 contract was most definitely the prize that Juan Trippe, President of PAA, so desperately wanted.

PAA's great rival for the FAM-10 air mail contract was another US-backed airline, NYRBA, (the New York, Rio and Buenos Aires Airline), founded by Ralph A. O'Neill, an American ex-World War I fighter pilot. Unlike PAA which had developed routes in the Caribbean and Latin America radiating southwards from the United States, NYRBA's nerve centre was Buenos Aires. By January 1930 NYRBA had already built up air connections linking Argentina with Uruguay, Chile and Brazil. NYRBA's 'ace card' was that with powerful US financial backers the airline had acquired a fleet of the most up-to-date aircraft then available (the Consolidated Commodore flying boats) that could easily out-perform any of the aircraft that their rivals at PAA then possessed. Beguiled in the belief that PAA did not have the ability to fly over the Andes between Chile and Argentina, NYRBA was content to slowly build the necessary infrastructure and make contracts with the various governments on their proposed route northwards along the Atlantic coastal and Caribbean route. NYRBA believed that through demonstrating their ability to organise and implement a reliable scheduled air mail service between Argentina and the USA, the USPOD would ultimately be only too willing to award NYRBA the lucrative FAM-10 postal contract.

The Postal Bulletin

Published daily, except Sundays and legal holidays, by direction of the Postmaster General, for the information and guidance of officers and employees of the Postal Service

VOL. LI

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1930—Three Pages

No. 15275

PERSONNEL—RETIREMENT

FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, Apr. 16, 1930.

In the notice appearing in the POSTAL BULLETIN of Mar. 11, 1930, under the heading "Personnel—Retirement," through inadvertence mention was not made of village carriers.

Regular village carriers are subject to the provisions of the retirement act, and they must retire at the age of 69 years if they have had 15 years of allowable service.

ARCH COLEMAN,
First Assistant Postmaster General.

DUTIABLE ARTICLES IN THE REGULAR MAILS TO FRENCH INDO-CHINA

SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, Apr. 15, 1930.

Effective at once dutiable articles will be accepted in the Postal Union (regular) mails to French Indo-China.

In view of the foregoing, the following changes should be made to the annual Postal Guide for 1929:

Section 53, page 196.—Insert the words "French Indo-China" between the words "French Guiana" and "French Settlements in India."

Page 583.—The information appearing under the subheading "Dutiable Articles" should be superseded by the following:

"Dutiable articles accepted, provided there is affixed to each letter or package prepaid at the letter rate a green label (Form D quarter), Form 2976, showing that the articles are to be submitted to the customs authorities for examination. A customs declaration properly completed or an invoice must also be inclosed in the package."

W. IRVING GLOVER,
Second Assistant Postmaster General.

EXPEDITED AIR MAIL SERVICE TO THE CANAL ZONE AND SOUTH AMERICA

SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, Apr. 16, 1930.

Attention is invited to the new schedules stated in this BULLETIN for air mail service to the Canal Zone and South America. This reduces the transit time from Miami to the Canal Zone to 28 hours and from Miami to Argentina and Uruguay to less than seven days, with corresponding reduction in time to intermediate countries.

All postmasters will, as far as practicable and without expense to the department, bring this materially improved service to the attention of all patrons having correspondence with these countries and endeavor to have them utilize this service to the fullest extent possible.

W. IRVING GLOVER,
Second Assistant Postmaster General.

SCHEDULES, ROUTES F. A. M. 5, 8 AND 9

SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, Apr. 16, 1930.

Effective Apr. 26, 1930, the schedules on F. A. M. Routes 5, 8, and 9 will be changed as shown below.

It will be noted that the Saturday flight from Miami leaves in the afternoon, immediately after the arrival of the southbound plane on C. A. M. 25, and that it makes the flight from Habana to Cristobal in 12 hours, flying directly over the Caribbean Sea to Cristobal and not making any deliveries of mail between Habana and Cristobal. The entire transit time from Miami to Cristobal is 28 hours.

The Thursday flights from Cristobal will make the flight to Miami in 33 hours, no mail being delivered between Cristobal and Habana.

Route F. A. M. 5, Miami-Cristobal (2,074 miles). To Curacao (3,097 miles)

Southbound		Northbound	
Please direct Flights direct	Saturday 7.00 a. m. 4.15 p. m. 6.00 a. m.	Tuesday, Friday Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	Flights direct Stopover night in Eastern Nicaragua
		Thursday, Sunday Lv. Curacao, D. W. I. Ar. Miami, Fla. Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	
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		Friday Lv. Curacao, D. W. I. Ar. Miami, Fla. Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	
		Friday Lv. Curacao, D. W. I. Ar. Miami, Fla. Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	
		Friday Lv. Curacao, D. W. I. Ar. Miami, Fla. Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	
		Friday Lv. Curacao, D. W. I. Ar. Miami, Fla. Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	
		Friday Lv. Curacao, D. W. I. Ar. Miami, Fla. Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	
		Friday Lv. Curacao, D. W. I. Ar. Miami, Fla. Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	
		Friday Lv. Curacao, D. W. I. Ar. Miami, Fla. Lv. Miami, Fla. Ar. Havana, Cuba Lv. Havana, Cuba Ar. Curacao, Yuc. Lv. Curacao, Yuc. Ar. Belize, Bri. Hond. Wednesday, Saturday Lv. Belize, Bri. Hond. Ar. San Lorenzo, R. H. Wednesday, Monday Lv. San Lorenzo, R. H. Ar. Managua, Nicaragua Thursday, Tuesday Lv. Managua, Nicaragua Ar. Puntarenas, C. R. Lv. Puntarenas, C. R. Ar. San Jose, C. R. Lv. San Jose, C. R. Ar. David, Panama Lv. David, Panama Ar. Panama, Panama Lv. Panama, Panama Ar. Cristobal, C. Z. Monday Lv. Cristobal, C. Z. Ar. Curacao, D. W. I.	

¹ Planes on Route 8 connect with southbound planes on Route 5 at San Lorenzo.

² The first stop in Costa Rica, both northbound and southbound, is Puntarenas. San Jose is reached from Puntarenas.

59102*—20

Route F. A. M. 8, Brownsville, Tex., to Mexico City, Mexico (472 miles); Brownsville, Tex., to San Lorenzo, Republic of Honduras (1,365 miles). Route F. A. M. 5, San Lorenzo, Republic of Honduras to Cristobal, Canal Zone (835 miles)

Southbound		Northbound	
<i>Daily</i>			<i>Daily</i>
8.15 a. m.	Lv. Brownsville, Tex.	Ar.	1.15 p. m.
11.00 a. m.	Ar. Tampico, Mexico	Lv.	10.45 a. m.
11.30 a. m.	Lv. Tampico, Mexico	Ar.	10.15 a. m.
1.45 p. m.	Ar. Mexico City, Mexico	Lv.	7.45 a. m.
<i>Monday, Thursday, and Saturday</i>			<i>Wednesday, Friday, and Monday</i>
11.30 a. m.	Lv. Tampico, Mexico	Ar.	9.45 a. m.
1.55 p. m.	Ar. Vera Cruz (Tejeria), Mexico	Lv.	7.15 a. m.
<i>Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday</i>			<i>Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday</i>
8.00 a. m.	Lv. Vera Cruz (Tejeria), Mexico	Ar.	1.00 p. m.
10.00 a. m.	Ar. San Geronimo, Mexico	Lv.	11.15 a. m.
1.00 p. m.	Ar. Tapachula, Mexico	Lv.	8.30 a. m.
2.15 p. m.	Ar. Guatemala City, Guatemala	Lv.	7.00 a. m.
<i>Wednesday, Saturday, and Monday</i>			<i>Wednesday, Saturday, and Monday</i>
9.20 a. m.	Lv. Guatemala City, Guatemala	Ar.	4.15 p. m.
10.45 a. m.	Ar. San Salvador, El Salvador	Lv.	11.00 p. m.
1.15 p. m.	Ar. San Lorenzo, Honduras	Lv.	1.30 p. m.
<i>Route F. A. M. 4</i>			
1.45 p. m.	Lv. San Lorenzo, Honduras	Ar.	8.30 p. m.
3.15 p. m.	Ar. Managua, Nicaragua	Lv.	7.00 a. m.
<i>Thursday, Sunday, and Tuesday</i>			<i>Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday</i>
7.00 a. m.	Lv. Managua, Nicaragua	Ar.	3.15 p. m.
8.00 a. m.	Ar. Puntarenas, C. R.	Lv.	1.15 p. m.
10.15 a. m.	Ar. San Jose, C. R.	Lv.	12.00 m.
11.30 a. m.	Ar. David, Panama	Lv.	10.45 a. m.
2.00 p. m.	Ar. Panama, Panama	Lv.	8.45 a. m.
3.00 p. m.	Ar. Cristobal, C. Z.	Lv.	7.00 a. m.

¹ The first stop in Costa Rica, both northbound and southbound, is Puntarenas. San Jose is reached from Puntarenas.

Route F. A. M. 9, Cristobal, Canal Zone, to Montevideo, Uruguay (4,577 miles)

Southbound		Weekly		Northbound	
Monday				Wednesday	
6.00 a. m.	Lv.	Cristobal, Canal Zone	Ar.	6.00 p. m.	Lv.
11.00 a. m.	Ar.	Buenaventura, Colombia	Lv.	12.50 p. m.	Ar.
1.20 p. m.	Ar.	Tumaco, Colombia	Lv.	10.30 a. m.	Ar.
6.00 p. m.	Ar.	St. Elena, Ecuador	Lv.	6.00 a. m.	Ar.
Tuesday				Tuesday	
6.00 a. m.	Lv.	St. Elena, Ecuador	Ar.	6.00 p. m.	Lv.
7.00 a. m.	Ar.	Guayaquil, Ecuador	Lv.	5.00 p. m.	Ar.
8.20 a. m.	Ar.	Puerto Pizarro, Peru	Lv.	2.25 p. m.	Ar.
10.00 a. m.	Ar.	Talara, Peru	Lv.	2.25 p. m.	Ar.
10.30 a. m.	Ar.	Peru, Peru	Lv.	1.00 p. m.	Ar.
12.30 p. m.	Ar.	Pimental, Peru	Lv.	11.35 a. m.	Ar.
2.05 p. m.	Ar.	Trujillo, Peru	Lv.	10.15 a. m.	Ar.
5.50 p. m.	Ar.	Lima, Peru	Lv.	7.00 a. m.	Ar.
Wednesday				Monday	
8.00 a. m.	Lv.	Lima, Peru	Ar.	4.30 p. m.	Lv.
12.05 p. m.	Ar.	Canana, Peru	Lv.	12.25 p. m.	Ar.
1.05 p. m.	Ar.	Arequipa, Peru	Lv.	11.25 a. m.	Ar.
2.20 p. m.	Ar.	Molendo, Peru	Lv.	10.20 a. m.	Ar.
4.15 p. m.	Ar.	Tacna, Peru	Lv.	1.00 p. m.	Ar.
5.05 p. m.	Ar.	Arica, Chile	Lv.	8.30 a. m.	Ar.
Thursday				Sunday	
6.00 a. m.	Lv.	Arica, Chile	Ar.	6.00 p. m.	Lv.
9.30 a. m.	Ar.	Antofagasta, Chile	Lv.	2.15 p. m.	Ar.
3.15 p. m.	Ar.	Ovalle, Chile	Lv.	8.30 a. m.	Ar.
6.00 p. m.	Ar.	Santiago, Chile	Lv.	6.00 a. m.	Ar.
Friday				Saturday	
8.00 a. m.	Lv.	Santiago, Chile	Ar.	4.45 p. m.	Lv.
9.45 a. m.	Ar.	Mendoza, Argentina	Lv.	2.30 p. m.	Ar.
4.00 p. m.	Ar.	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Lv.	8.00 a. m.	Ar.
6.00 p. m.	Ar.	Montevideo, Uruguay	Lv.	6.00 a. m.	Ar.

W. IRVING GLOVER,
Second Assistant Postmaster General.

FOREIGN EQUIVALENT OF AMOUNTS OF BELGIAN MONEY ORDERS MUST BE EXPRESSED IN BELGAS

THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, Apr. 15, 1930.

Postmasters are again reminded that the amount in foreign money on money orders issued in the United States for payment in Belgium must be stated in *belgas* and *centimes*, not in francs and centimes. A belga is in no sense the equivalent of the Belgian franc. It is invariably worth five Belgian francs. Many misunderstandings arise on the part of remitters and payees as to the exact sum to be received by the latter in Belgium when the monetary unit is incorrectly expressed.

The amount, of course, must also be given on all parts of the orders in dollars and cents.

F. A. TILSON,
Third Assistant Postmaster General.

Figure 1. Issue 15275 April 17, 1930 of the "The Postal Bulletin" published daily by the USPOD, announcing the forthcoming 7-day express air mail service New York to Buenos Aires.

The situation was blown completely apart in October 1929 when, to the consternation of NYRBA, PAA suddenly extended the Pacific route over the Andes from Santiago de Chile to Buenos Aires. Clearly NYRBA's misconception about the ability of PAA to fly the Andes using their Fairchild FC-2 aircraft had been shattered. There was now the real possibility that having pioneered a through air mail service between the United States and Argentina that Pan Am would now secure the ultimate prize, the FAM-10 contract as well. As almost a last ditch "throw of the dice" in order to convince both the US and Argentine Post Offices that they were genuinely capable of providing a regular fast air mail service between the two countries, in February 1930 NYRBA inaugurated a once-per-week through service linking Santiago via Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro and Port-of-Spain with the United States. The important point about this NYRBA Atlantic coastal service was that the whole journey Argentina to the USA was accomplished in seven days. The Argentine Post Office had already stated that if were to award an air mail contract for conveyance of mail to the United States it would require the journey to be completed in seven days. PAA's air mail service Miami to Buenos Aires using the Pacific coastal route was usually of the order of ten days.

It would now seem that PAA / PANAGRA were somewhat on the back foot and desperately needed a ploy to convince the USPOD that they and not NYRBA were the better airline to be given the FAM-10 contract. For this reason, it was decided they should also provide a 7-day service linking New York with Buenos Aires (and Montevideo) using the Pacific coastal route. The AAMC (page 129) explains this most aptly:

"A 7-day New York-Buenos Aires service, involving a combination of PAA, PANAGRA and domestic U.S. airlines, was organized in response to a serious challenge posed by NYRBA that threatened PAA plans for aviation hegemony in South America. ... A 7-day service to Buenos Aires, quickly organized by PAA as a response (to NYRBA's 7-day service), had the full support of the USPOD which cooperated in the rescheduling of domestic air routes that connected New York and other points in the northeast U.S. with Miami. The preponderance of the distance on the 7-day route was flown by PANAGRA, from Cristobal (the Canal Zone) to Buenos Aires."

Notice was given in *The Postal Bulletin* No. 15275 (Thursday April 17, 1930) (Figure 1.), defining the change of schedules for FAM Routes 5, 8 and 9, where W. Irving Glover (Second Assistant Postmaster General) explained:

"Effective Apr.26, 1930, the schedules on F.A.M. Routes 5, 8 and 9 will be changed as shown below.

It will be noted that the Saturday flight from Miami leaves in the afternoon, immediately after the arrival of the southbound plane on C.A.M. 25, and that it makes the flight from Habana (sic) to Cristobal in 12 hours, flying directly over the Caribbean Sea to Cristobal and not making any deliveries of mail between Habana and Cristobal. The entire transit time from Miami to Cristobal is 28 hours."

This announcement was followed by three timetables, one each for FAM Routes 5, 8 and 9.

On Fridays an aircraft would fly from New York, arriving Miami in the afternoon of Saturday timed to connect with the PAA flight leaving 2.00pm for Cristobal, scheduled to arrive at in the Canal Zone at 6.00pm on the Sunday, the only intermediary stop being the Saturday overnight stop in Havana. Service over FAM-5 Miami to Cristobal using landplanes usually made intermediary stops in Belize, San Lorenzo (Honduras, where connection was made with FAM 8 services from Brownsville), Managua (Nicaragua), Puntarenas (Costa Rica) and David (Panama) and took 33 hours. By using the fastest aircraft that PAA possessed, the Sikorsky S-38 and flying over the sea – the "cut off route" – directly between Cuba and Puerto Cabezas in Nicaragua this had the potential to save 5 hours journey time.

It is easy with hindsight to believe that with the cooperation willingly shown by the USPOD helping PAA achieve their 7-day express service that PAA already had the goodwill of the US postal authorities and that NYRBA's ultimate failed bid was a foregone conclusion. In April 1930, however,

this was not obvious to all but the more informed observers and those responsible for awarding FAM contracts still needed to be persuaded. Successful implementation of PAA's 7-day express service New York to Buenos Aires was, therefore, deemed to be vitally important as it was expected to generate favourable publicity helping persuade the postal authorities when the elusive FAM-10 contract should be awarded.

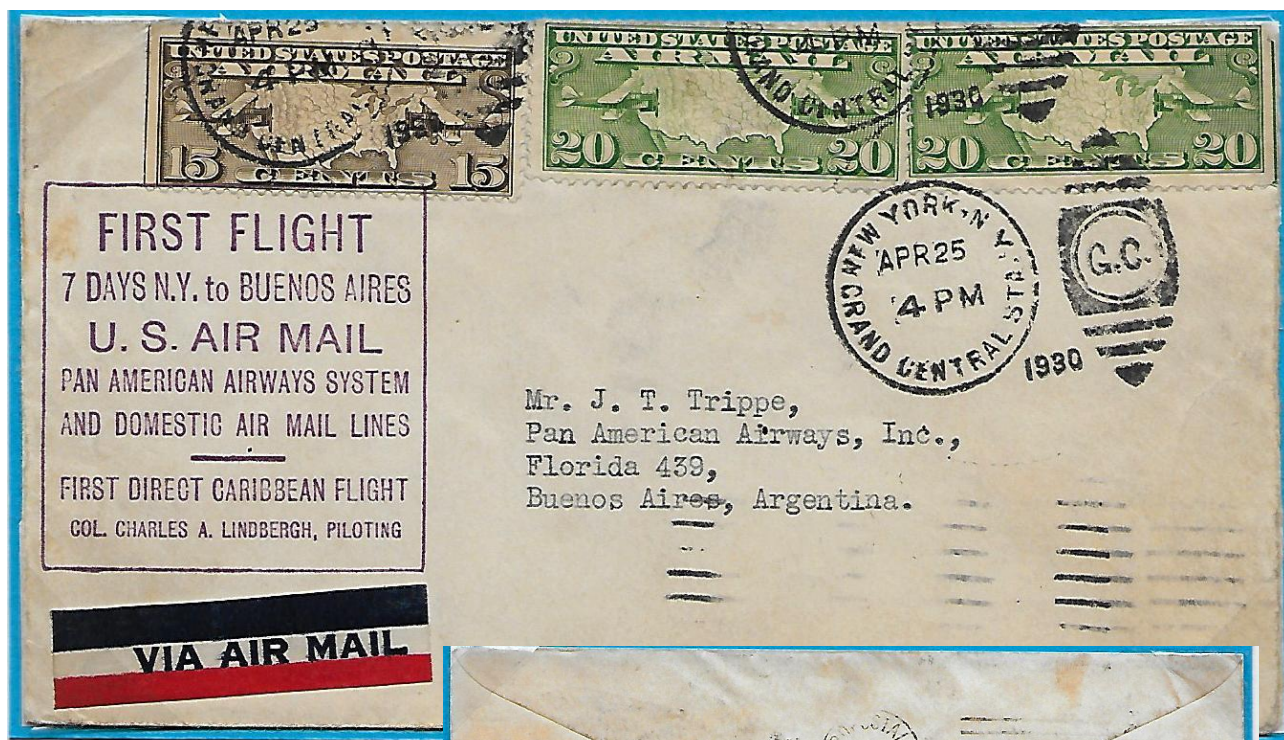
The AAMC very succinctly said: *"The 7-day clock began in New York on April 25, 1930. Mail was flown to Miami on the first day, connecting with the two-day trans-Caribbean express service, Miami-Cristobal. This was inaugurated by PAA on April 26-27, 1930, the second and third days. On the fourth to seventh days, April 28-May 1, PANAGRA carried the mail from Cristobal to Buenos Aires."*

As an avid collector of Argentine air mail covers, I thought it desirable for the purpose of completion to add first flight covers the 7-day express air mail covers New York to Buenos Aires, and vice versa to my collection. As you will see, for unexpected reasons, it took me some time to acquire a genuine first flight cover the United States to Argentina, and to date I have been totally unsuccessful in locating any Argentine first despatch cover the 7-day express air mail service to the United States. My searches did, however, reveal some surprises.

Because Col. Charles A. Lindbergh was the pilot, together with Basil L. Rowe as co-pilot, using Sikorsky S-38B NC-9776 for the inaugural Caribbean 'cut off' flight Miami to Cristobal this generated a great deal of interest from the philatelic fraternity. "Lindberghiana" has always commanded a great deal of attention from collectors. Covers flown the trans-Caribbean leg of the flight have helped explain/validate genuine covers flown to Argentina. A description of the Miami to Cristobal express covers can be found in the same volume of the AAMC on pages 44-46 in the FAM-5 section. Reference to these pages will show that inaugural 7-day express flight covers emanating from the United States addressed to Buenos Aires can be found that were struck with one of three different boxed 7-day service cachets (the three types are here listed in the same order as illustrated in the AAMC):- (type 1) a Colonial Airways 7-day service cachet found on covers posted from Albany, Boston and Hartford; (type 2) a PAA 7-day service cachet found on covers from New York and Newark; and (type 3) a PAA 7-day service cachet found on covers from New York. These large cachets with different wording stand out and help identify covers flown the inaugural flight to Buenos Aires.

Residing as I now do in the far west of England, miles from the nearest stamp dealer and nowhere near the vicinity of regular stamp fairs and stamp shows, I tend to acquire most covers these days through bidding at internet auction sites. Bidding via the internet is a lazy person's way of participating in philatelic auctions, but it is also faced with a major disadvantage. Using internet auction sites, you rely heavily on the illustrations and descriptions provided by the vendors. Popular though the internet has become in facilitating buying and selling of covers this method of acquiring covers is no substitute for examining covers for yourself before purchase. Furthermore, reputable dealers attending stamp fairs and stamp exhibitions generally know what they are doing. With internet auction sites many of the vendors seem to be doing business for 'pin money' and it is all too easy for the novice

to be taken in by extravagant or incorrect descriptions. (I would like, for instance, to have a pound for each time I have seen “air mail” covers offered for sale by ignorant vendors on internet auction which were clearly posted on dates before Wilbur and Orville Wright ever made their first hop off the ground at Kitty Hawk in December 1903! – but I must return to the subject at hand).



The first example of a First Flight Cover the 7-day express air mail service New York to Buenos Aires (Figure 2, front and back.) that I acquired, I found on eBay. The cover seemed to have all the required attributes of the sort of cover I was looking for. It was postmarked at New York Grand Central Station at 4 PM on April 25, 1930, bore the correct franking of 55¢ for ½ Oz. air mail letter from the United States, Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands to Argentina (rate January 1, 1930 to November 30, 1937), and had a clear strike of the type-2 PAA 7-day service

cachet. For good measure the cover was actually addressed to Juan Terry Trippe, President of PAA. So, what could possibly go wrong? The front of the cover was illustrated on the auction site, but not the back. Well, I certainly felt a great deal of disappointment when this cover eventually reached my grubby hands. You will have noted that if the inaugural 7-day express covers were properly flown from New York on April 25, 1930 they should have

Figure 2. (front and back) Air mail cover with type 2 cachet addressed to Juan Trippe, President of PAA. Posted in New York at the Grand Central Station (Post Office) 4 PM Friday April 25 intended to be flown the first southbound flight to Buenos Aires. Postmarks on back for Cristobal May 2 and Buenos Aires May 12 show this cover was mis-handled and was flown the second southbound flight.

arrived in Buenos Aires on May 2, possibly showing transit marks for Miami on April 26, and Cristobal, Canal Zone on April 27. My new acquisition showed a transit postal mark for Cristobal timed at 6AM May 2 and an arrival postmark for Buenos Aires at 18.00 hrs. May 12. Clearly for some unforeseen reason, though properly posted close to the end of the day's business in New York on April 25, the cover had not made the inaugural flight but had been flown the second scheduled 7-day express air mail service flight. (Yes, I could have first contacted the vendor before buying, but how many collectors bidding on internet auction sites ever do?). This is the kind of problem internet buyers should be aware of when bidding for covers where you are given illustrations of only one side of the envelope. If I had been made aware of the postal markings on the back of this cover, I would probably have recognised the inconsistency of the dates and possibly not have purchased it.

So, what had possibly gone wrong? Was this an atypical cover? Perhaps this cover had somehow not been emptied out from the bag of covers despatched from New York, whereas other covers posted from New York on April 25, 1930 would more likely have been carried according to schedule? I wrote an article (Ref. 1.), in which I said "tongue in cheek" that if Juan Trippe had been planning on using this cover as proof that PAA had successfully implemented the 7-day express service New York to Buenos Aires, he would most certainly not have been amused. There were, of course, other ways of documenting successful inauguration of the service in 1930 beside the evidence provided by inaugural air mail covers: for instance I am led to believe there was a telegraph line operative between the United States and Argentina so word would almost immediately have been sent from the PAA Office in Buenos Aires back to the PAA New York Headquarters. I have never read or heard that Juan Trippe was in anyway interested in philately let alone a serious collector of air mail covers but PAA first flight covers addressed to him are frequently encountered. Perhaps first flight covers were made by PAA to be presented by Trippe to visiting dignitaries as mementos of their visits? I just do not know the reason why Trippe had so many first flight covers addressed to himself.

Undaunted by this disappointment, when a few months later a second cover was offered for sale I also bid for that one and secured it. This cover franked 60¢, overpaid 5¢ through use of three postal meter 20¢ clichés, was addressed from New York by a Mr. David Taylor to the PAA Office in Buenos Aires and also carried a type 2 first flight cachet. There was an additional postmark on the front dated 4 PM for Grand Central Station Post Office, New York. I was fully aware that, as with the vendor of the first cover, the seller of this second cover had also neglected to illustrate the reverse of the cover. I reasoned, however, 'lightning is not expected to strike twice in the same place' and assuming my first example was probably atypical, there was an excellent chance the second cover would prove to be the "Real McCoy" - just what I was looking for. But oh, no! As with the earlier 'Trippe' cover, this second 'Taylor' cover had also reached Buenos Aires having been flown by the second scheduled flight. And to cap it all, a third inaugural 7-day express flight cover, also posted from the Time Square Post Office in New York to Buenos Aires at 4PM on April 25, 1930 appeared on eBay. At least this time I was not induced to part with more filthy lucre since the vendor helpfully illustrated both sides of the cover. Clearly this third cover also reached Argentina by the second, not the first scheduled service flight. It was now patently clear that covers handled at New York's Grand Central Station Post Office at 4 PM on April 25, 1930 did not arrive in Cristobal by April 27 in time to connect with PANAGRA's first express air mail flight the Canal Zone to Argentina. I was now seriously beginning to think the possibility that no genuine inaugural express service flight cover might ever have existed. Was this the reason there had been a gap in the AAMC catalogue listings because the Editors had been unable to verify their existence?

My article (Reference 1), caused our good friend Johnny Johnson, Jr. to write me from Groton, Connecticut. He confirmed that there were genuine inaugural 7-day express service covers sent from the United States to Argentina and Johnny kindly sent me illustrations of a cover posted from Boston, Massachusetts on April 25 that reached Buenos Aires on May 2, having transited Cristobal 4PM April 27 (see Figure 3, front and back), showing in the case covers posted from Boston that the required schedule had been met. What is noteworthy about this Boston cover is that the first flight cachet was worded differently from the failed New York covers, bearing the text “U.S. AIR MAIL / 7 DAYS TO ARGENTINA / FIRST FLIGHT / APRIL 25 – MAY 2 / COLONIAL AIRWAYS / EASTERN AIR TRANSPORT / PAN AMERICAN AIRWAYS SYSTEM”. As stated above this was an example of the type 1 cachet which according to Vol. 3 of the 6th Edition of the AAMC, page 45, was struck on covers posted from Albany, Boston and Hartford and flown initially by Colonial Airways, (over US Contract Air Mail Route 1, (CAM-1) to New York, making connection with a CAM-19 aircraft to Atlanta, thence by CAM-25 aircraft to Miami (CAM routes 19 and 25 were both operated by Pitcairn Aviation, Inc.). The boxed first flight cachet found on the covers that failed to connect with the first flight at Cristobal were all struck using the type 2 boxed ‘first flight’ cachets illustrated in the AAMC. Incidentally, strictly speaking, we should point out that these boxed “first flight cachets” were not officially applied by the US Post Office, but by the airlines involved in flying the covers to Miami: by Colonial Airways over CAM-1, or in the case for those covers posted from New York using US domestic airlines. PAA did not fly the mail the first leg New York to Miami, so why did the cachets found on mail from New York not mention Pitcairn Aviation, Inc.? I know I am nit-picking here, but this is a minor inconsistency.



Figure 3. (front and back) Boston, Mass cover to Buenos Aires showing type 1 first flight cachet. Posted 530PM April 25, postmarks on back for Cristobal 4PM April 27 and Buenos Aires May 2 confirm cover was flown the inaugural southbound service flight.

In Johnny Johnson's letter to me, he also enclosed photocopies of three different contemporary newspapers, each of which either advertised or described the inauguration of the seven-day express service. A column by John W. White in the *Chicago Daily News*, under the by-line "*The Air Mail Goes Through – U.S. Pilots Overcome Tremendous Odds to Fly South American Route,*" describes in detail the route and timings at intermediary points. It also includes the useful information that after arriving Buenos Aires at 3 o'clock on Friday May 2, 1930 1½ hours ahead of schedule, the aircraft proceeded to Montevideo, arriving 5.45 PM. A total of 317 pounds of mail was brought to Buenos Aires. I suspect that the proportion of the 317 pounds of mail that arrived in Argentina on this flight that still exists is exceedingly small, most of the covers being commercial in nature and thus not retained after delivery and therefore not available for modern-day collectors. Also remember most of the air mail collectors of the time were predominantly "Lindbergh-mad" and only interested in collecting covers flown the "cut-off" route Miami to Cristobal via Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua. Covers flown the whole route to Buenos Aires or to Montevideo might have been of minority interest, or collectors might have been put off by the relatively high postal charge involved (55¢ per ½ Oz.).

Apparently two different airline companies Canadian Colonial Airways and the US Colonial Airways between them operated FAM-1 exchanging mail between New York and Montreal, Canada. Following the inauguration of the 7-day express air mail route New York to Buenos



Figure 4. (front and back). First Canadian acceptance for the 7-day accelerated air mail service. Posted from Montreal May 2, 1930. Buenos Aires postmarks for May 12 prove cover was flown to Argentina by the second of the once-per-week southbound accelerated air mail service flights.

Aires, acceptances were made from Canada but only in time to connect with the second

scheduled southbound flight from New York. I show, (Figure 4, front and back) an inaugural flight cover posted from Montreal on May 2, 1930 that arrived Buenos Aires May 12. The cover was franked Canadian 60¢ (correct rate January 1, 1930 – December 31, 1936). A distinctive boxed first flight cachet appears on the back of the envelope and is clearly out of

the “Colonial Airways stable”. This cachet resembles closely the type 1 cachet found on the cover posted from Boston, but the wording has been changed to read “CANADIAN AIR MAIL” instead of “U.S. AIR MAIL” and the first line of the original date has been excised to leave the date “ – MAY 2” the date of the first acceptance from Canada.



Figure 5. (front and back). Registered philatelic air mail cover pre-positioned in Miami by L.G. Tedesche of Cincinnati to be flown the first trans-Caribbean accelerated flight to Cristobal, thence by PANAGRA to Buenos Aires. Postmarks on back for Cristobal April 27 and Buenos Aires May 2 prove cover flown on the first southbound accelerated air mail flight. Additional date stamps on back are associated with the return of the letter to Cincinnati via New York.

Covers posted onto the 7-day express flight to Argentina from Miami should, in theory, possibly be more plentiful than those posted from New York because of the philatelic interest by collectors contriving Lindbergh-carried mail, but since such covers were not struck with distinctive boxed “First Flight” cachets, I suggest many such covers may reside in collections unrecognised by their owners for what they really are. I show, however, (Figure 5, front and back) one such registered cover posted from Miami April 26, 1930 to Buenos Aires that most certainly was flown the inaugural 7-day express flight, arriving Cristobal April 27 and Buenos Aires May 2. This was a philatelically contrived cover made by a Dr. L.G. Tedesche who I am led

to believe was a board member of the American Air Mail Society. I guess Dr. Tedesche’s primary interest was Lindbergh since this Cincinnati collector deliberately pre-positioned his cover in Miami to be flown from there by Lindbergh. I show this cover to point out that with due diligence Miami acceptances can be found. Being posted, however, as it were from Miami, this is not strictly a 7-day express cover, the emphasis for the express service being the linking of the eastern seaboard of the United States with Buenos Aires, and this cover was only carried six of the seven days New York to Buenos Aires.

Committed air mail cover collectors have always found ingenious ways of ensuring their ‘first flight’ covers were in place in sufficient time to be loaded on the inaugural flights. One common ploy by collectors was to pre-position covers well in advance of flights asking postmasters to hold them until the desired flights took place. I have two such “7-day express flight” covers that were posted well in advance by well-informed collectors. Firstly, I show a

cover (Figure 6) posted by that well-known aerophilatelic dealer Nicolas Sanabria of New York. Sanabria posted his cover addressed to a philatelic firm in Buenos Aires from New York one day in advance at 4PM on Thursday April 24, 1930. Most interestingly, though I have no doubt the Sanabria air mail cover was correctly flown on the first 7-day express flight (it was postmarked in transit 4PM April 27 in Cristobal) it did not receive any Argentine arrival date stamp, and more tellingly was not struck with any boxed first flight cachet. I believe whoever was tasked with applying the first flight cachets decided that this was not a bona fide first 7-day express flight cover since the object of the whole exercise was to fly the mail in seven days from New York, whereas by posting his letter one day in advance Mr. Sanabria's cover could no longer be said to show evidence of the 7-day journey time to Argentina.



Figure 6. "First flight" cover devised by Nicholas Sanabria and sent the inaugural southbound accelerated service flight to Buenos Aires. Posted 4 PM April 24, the day before the service was supposed to start, the cover did not receive a boxed 'first flight' cachet and was not postmarked in Buenos Aires. Transit date stamp for Cristobal 4 PM April 27 on the back (not shown) indicates this cover was flown to schedule.

A second cover (Figure 7) was posted by a Mr. H.F. Hippenstiel in New York at 1 PM on April 25, was addressed to the American Consulate in Buenos Aires, was treated as a bona fide inaugural flight cover, was stamped with the boxed "first flight" cachet (type 2) both on the front and on the back, was postmarked in Cristobal on April 27 and was postmarked on arrival May 2. Hip, Hip, Hooray! A genuine cover that was properly flown! But I beg to suggest not strictly so if it was to conform to my very strict expectation it had to have been posted at or near the end of the business day. I know here I am really nit-picking. This is a really good cover.

Most interestingly a recent find was a cover, (Figure 8), though not sent to Buenos Aires, was posted directly at the Air Mail Field Post Office in Newark, N.J. as late in the day as 9 PM on April 25. Franked 20¢ and addressed to the Postmaster, Cristobal, Canal Zone it arrived



Above: Figure 7. Cover with type 2 boxed 'first flight' cachet posted from New York 1 PM April 25. Addressed to the American consulate in Buenos Aires, arrival postal markings prove cover was flown to schedule.

Below: Figure 8. Cover posted from the Air Mail Field postal facility at Newark at 9 PM April 25, 1930. This cover addressed only as far as Cristobal, Canal Zone but flown on PAA's inaugural southbound 7-day accelerated air mail flight, suggests covers posted in New York at or immediately after the ending of the day's business would have had plenty of time to make connection with the service flight at Newark.

there along with all the covers flown the 7-day express service flight to Argentina. The important point about this particular cover is that it clearly demonstrates that if a cover could be successfully posted onto the CAM-19 aircraft at Newark as late in the evening as 9 PM, all the covers posted in New York earlier in the day should have had more than ample time to connect with the flight. Clearly all those failed covers posted at 4 pm from the Grand Central Station post office had been mis-handled. (Where, I cannot be sure, but I surmise at the Grand Central Station post office. This was calamitous because that posting contained so many of the covers despatched from PAA Headquarters!)

I round out this study of the southbound express flight covers by showing, (Figure 9, front and back)) another pre-positioned Lindbergh-inspired collector's cover, posted from Newark, N.J. at mid-day on April 25,

but this time addressed to Montevideo, Uruguay. We find a Cristobal transit postmark on the back of the envelope for 4 PM April 27 proving it was carried the inaugural 7-day express service flight to Argentina, but there is no Buenos Aires arrival mark. There is, however, a Montevideo arrival machine mark for May 2. We thus have one of the covers carried through to Montevideo that was mentioned in John White's Chicago Daily News article. Clearly, application of the boxed first flight cachets was reserved only for covers addressed to Buenos Aires, not to Uruguay. Possibly all the Uruguay covers were bagged up separately from the covers addressed to Buenos Aires.



Figure 9. (front and back) Newark, N.J. mid-day April 25 to Montevideo, arrived (time unclear) Montevideo May 2. Flown beyond Buenos Aires to Uruguay on the inaugural 7-day accelerated air service flight.



THE FIRST NORTHBOUND COVERS

This rambling article has largely concentrated on the inaugural 7-day express air mail covers sent from the United States to Buenos Aires. To date I have been unsuccessful in locating any Argentine air mail covers despatched the inaugural service flight sent the reciprocal northbound direction Argentina to the United States. Such choice covers are not obvious since the Argentine Post Office did not use first flight cachets for the inauguration and presumably few collectors at that time realised here was the chance to contrive some choice covers. I am sure, however, one day with due diligence such a cover will be located. Meantime for a description of the start of the northbound service we have to rely on that which appears in the AAMC.

On page 130 of Vol. 3, the 6th Edition of the AAMC we read:

"The preponderance of interest, including related aerophilatelic activity, was in the southbound trip to Buenos Aires. However, the return mail from Buenos Aires to New York, was a key part of the overall service. The return flight, departing Buenos Aires on April 26 (1930), was scheduled to connect with the return leg of the trans-Caribbean express service that would leave Cristobal for Miami on May 1."

A potentially serious problem developed on the PANAGRA portion of the return flight. Severe weather substantially delayed crossing the Andes Mountains. Arrival at Santiago was 41 hours late, and the Santiago-Cristobal part of the route was scheduled for three days of daytime flying.

The mail was delivered to Cristobal in time to connect with the northbound (trans-Caribbean) express flight by a combination of heroic night flying on routes where there was no lighting and bypassing of scheduled stops.

One of the stops that was bypassed was Guayaquil (Ecuador), by far the aerophilatelically most active location on the PANAGRA route. Northbound first flight mail that had been prepared for the inaugural of 7-day service was held up at Guayaquil and was dispatched the following week."

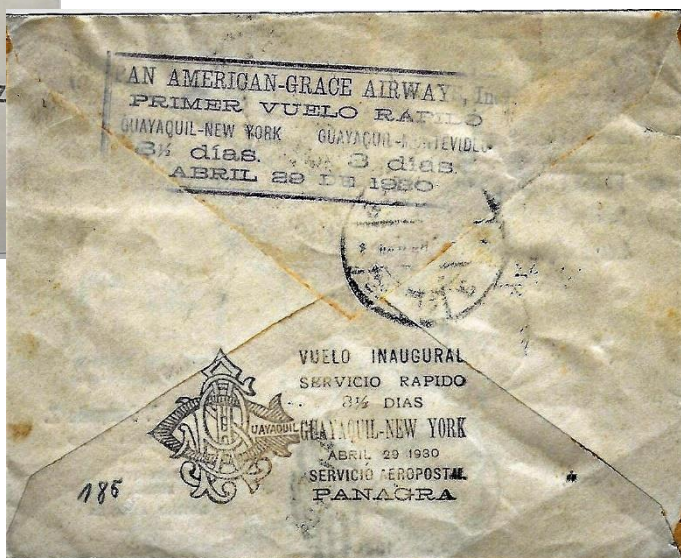
Currently I have been unable to find any account of the first 7-day express flight Buenos Aires to the United States other than that given by the Editors of the AAMC, with the exception of a sole smidgen of information accessed during my unsuccessful trawls using the internet. The name of a renowned early US flyer, Lloyd R. "Dinty" Moore popped up telling us he had made an "impossible" dawn to dusk flight between Peru and Panama. Putting two with two, and probably making five, I assume this flight by Moore refers to the PANAGRA flight that bypassed Guayaquil to connect with the return first "trans-Caribbean Express Flight" from Cristobal. Perhaps our readers will be able to fill in the gaps here? My knowledge of Peruvian aerophilatelic history is sketchy to say the least.

The Editors of Volume 3, the 6th Edition of the AAMC kindly illustrated, page 129, one of the first flight covers posted by an Ecuador collector, R.S. Biaggi, April 29, 1930 to be flown the first northbound flight to New York, that was flown the second flight since Guayaquil had to be bypassed. This cover has a very flowery cachet "VUELO INAUGURAL SERVICIO RAPIDO 3½ DIAS GUAYQUIL-NEW YORK ABRIL 29 1930 SERVICIO AEROPOSTAL PANAGRA". This registered air mail cover was franked, I think, (the postage stamps are not that clear) 3.60 sucres. This gives us some idea of the contemporary Postal costs required to send a letter by air from Ecuador to the United States.



Figure 10. (front and back) Intended Ecuador internal first flight cover (from Salinas to Esmeraldas) April 29, 1930 that was mis-sent to New York on the second northbound 7-day accelerated air mail service to New York, scheduled to call at Guayaquil the same day. Guayaquil was bypassed the first northbound flight and was flown the second flight, arriving New York on May 10.

To state that 'Guayaquil was by far the most active location on the PANAGRA route' was by no means an understatement. If you wanted to collect colourful covers with lots of different postage stamps and lots of flowery cachets, then Ecuador should be the country for you. Remember 1930 was a time when all sorts of different things were



happening in the field of aviation, lots of postal routes were being started, and Ecuador was no exception. I now show (Figure 10, front and back) a 4 gm. Ecuador cover from my collection prepared by another well-known collector, Sr. Justo P. Campaña Z., that was clearly flown the second northbound flight. On the back of the envelope we see, in addition to the same first flight cachet shown on the cover illustrated in the AAMC, an additional boxed cachet: "PAN AMERICAN-GRACE AIRWAYS / PRIMER VUELO RAPIDO / GUAYAQUIL - NEW YORK 3½ dias / GUAYAQUIL-MONTEVIDEO 3 dias / ABRIL 29 DE 1930". The front of this cover is most extraordinary. At the top left is a third very faint almost undecipherable three-line cachet "FIRST FLIGHT with / Reduced Delivery time / 4 days G'quil-New York". After arrival in New York a 2¢ US postage stamp was added, plus a clear duplex postmark for New York Times Square Station May 10 1130AM". Incidentally, British readers may be confused with the US use of the word "Station". It has not necessarily anything to do with the railways, since here the word is used to mean a post office.

What is so remarkable about this cover is I believe that Sr. Campaña never intended this cover to be flown to the United States. On the same day, April 29 1930, that both the southbound and northbound inaugural 7-day express covers were expected to transit Guayaquil, Ecuador coincidentally inaugurated an internal air mail route linking Salinas with Esmeraldas and this cover was intended to be flown that route. This explains the low total franking of only 10 centavos. I guess with so much philatelic activity taking place the same day mistakes were bound to be made, presumably by over-worked Ecuador postal clerks, and this internal flight cover was erroneously cacheted and sent on its way to Cristobal and to New York.

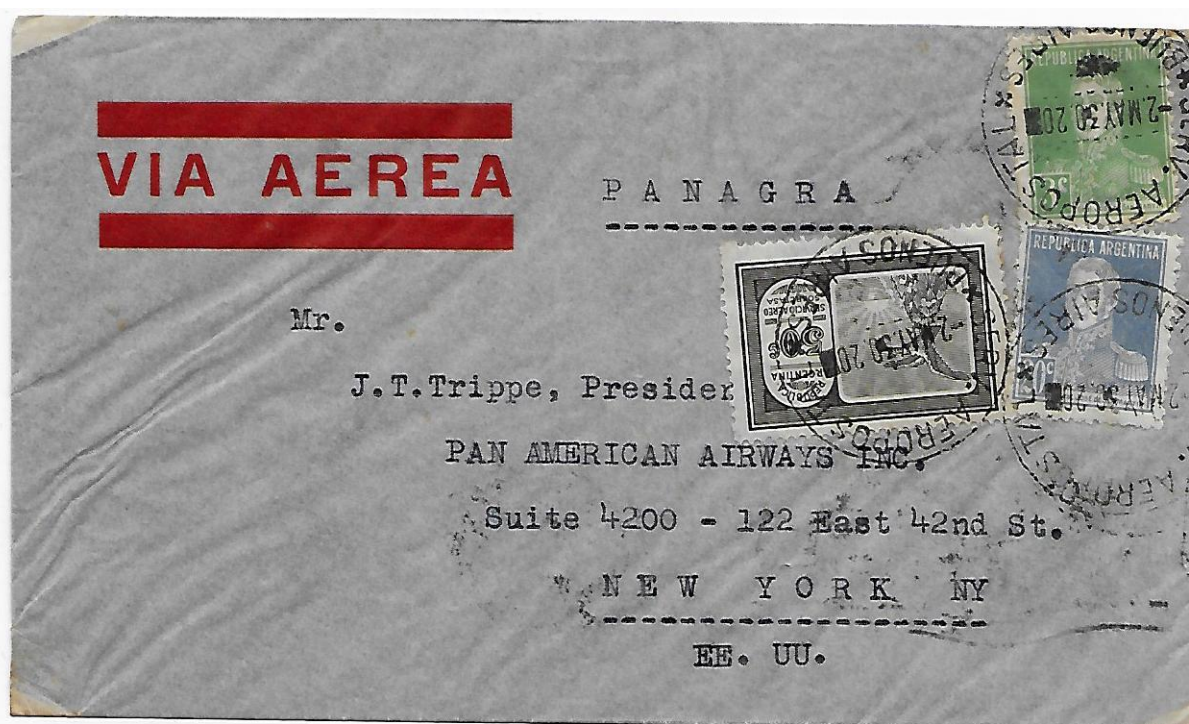


Figure 11. Air mail cover from Buenos Aires May 2, 1930 to J.T. Trippe in New York. Correctly franked 73 centavos for 4 gm. carried the second northbound flight to the United States. Transited Cristobal 6 AM May 8.

Finally, I finish with a bit of an aerophilatelic mystery. I show, (Figure 11), a cover that was definitely flown the second northbound 7-day express flight May 2, 1930 since it transited Cristobal 6 AM May 8 (there is no arrival postmark). Addressed to 'J.T. Trippe, President, Pan American Airways, Inc.' and correctly franked 73 centavos (5 centavos UPAE surface letter rate plus 4x 17 centavos per gramme the PANAGRA air surcharge rate to the USA until June

7, 1931), one would be forgiven to thinking this was a business letter being sent the second flight to Juan Trippe. I note, however, other essentially identical covers were also sent to Trippe this same flight, so I don't really think they were anything other than contrived 'philatelic souvenirs.' But why would Trippe have even wanted these second flight covers? I guess we will never know, unless he had never received any covers flown the fraught first northbound express flight. I even fantasize that there never ever were any Argentine northbound first express flight covers. If they do exist, as they should, I am confident news of their existence will eventually reach us.

Epilogue

PAA's 7-day express air mail service New York to Buenos Aires was almost impossible to operate to schedule in 1930 as it tested the aircraft and the pilots to their limits. I note, for instance, a US cover posted New York on Friday September 11, 1930 that arrived in Buenos Aires 13 days later, and a cover posted Saturday (why a Saturday and not a Friday I cannot explain!) September 26, 1930 that reached Buenos Aires 10 days afterwards. These two covers show the 7 days schedule was not easy to maintain. Although PAA was awarded the contract for FAM-10 in August 1930, extension of that route the whole way to Buenos Aires, because of local difficulties in Brazil, was not possible until October 1931. Until October 1931 the 7-day express Pacific coast route air mail service (FAM-9) provided the quickest way of expediting mail between the United States and Argentina. It was only when the first of the new generation of landplanes, the Douglas DC-2 was employed by PANAGRA on the Pacific trunk route (Cristobal-Lima-Santiago-Buenos Aires) in 1934 that the route again became viable, having been superseded for a time after 1931 by FAM-10.

References

- (1) *Would Juan Trippe have been Furious when he received this Cover?*, Air Post Journal, Vol. 87, No. 4 (April 2016), pp. 164-167.
- (2) *The Seven-Day Accelerated Airmail Service New York to Buenos Aires*, Air Post Journal, Vol. 88, No. 10 (October 2017), pp. 412-416.

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THE GERMAN CATAPULT MAIL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

PART 7

By Eddie Spicer

The 1931 Catapult Mail Season Continued

I start with two very philatelic covers which were contrived by Charles Winchel of New York City but are both interesting.



Figure 1

This cover was first posted on 2nd June 1931 at Bismarck North Dakota and addressed to Victoria British Columbia. It was carried on the first flight from there on route AM9 to Mandan, North Dakota and from there by rail to Victoria, British Columbia, arriving on the 4th June. It was then posted most



likely under separate cover to New York and arrived on the *Europa* on 23rd July. It was addressed to Berlin and flown from the ship to Southampton on 27th July at 07.00 and arrived at 13.00, having flown a distance of 1,110km. It was then transferred to Croydon and flown by DLH to Berlin arriving on 28th July.

The postal rate appears to be, 4 cents to Victoria, including the first flight, 3 cents international letter rate to Berlin and 50pfg. For the catapult service.



Figure. 2



sent, most likely under separate cover, to New York to meet the *Bremen* for the trip to Europe. It arrived on the ship on 22nd August.

It was flown one day late from the ship on 27th August at 07.05 and flew direct to Amsterdam, arriving at 11.10, having flown a distance of 556km. It was then flown by DLH via Cologne to Berlin arriving on 27th August.

Note the two catapult flight cachet's in different colours which is not unusual for this flight.

The postal rate is confusing but appears to be 4 cents letter rate and for the first flight, 1 cent international printed matter rate to Berlin (1/2 cent underpaid), 5pfg. German printed matter rate to Berlin and 50pfg. For the catapult service.

Figure 3 is a very interesting commercially used post card which was flown both ways on the catapult system. This was the first time that it was possible for a cover to be flown from west to east and then from east to west on consecutive flights. This post card, addressed to New York, was posted on board *Europa*. It was flown from the ship on 30th August 1931 at 08.00 and arrived at Southampton at 15.35 having flown a distance of 1,037km. Meanwhile *Bremen* left Bremerhaven, also on the 30th August. When it arrived at Southampton it took

on board catapult mail from the Europa that was destined for New York. *Bremen* departed from Southampton at 11.00 on 31st August and sailed to Cherbourg where it took on board mail from the Cologne -Cherbourg supplementary air mail service, then proceeded to New York. This post card was flown from the ship at 10.00 and arrived in New York at 18.00 having flown a distance of 1,180km.

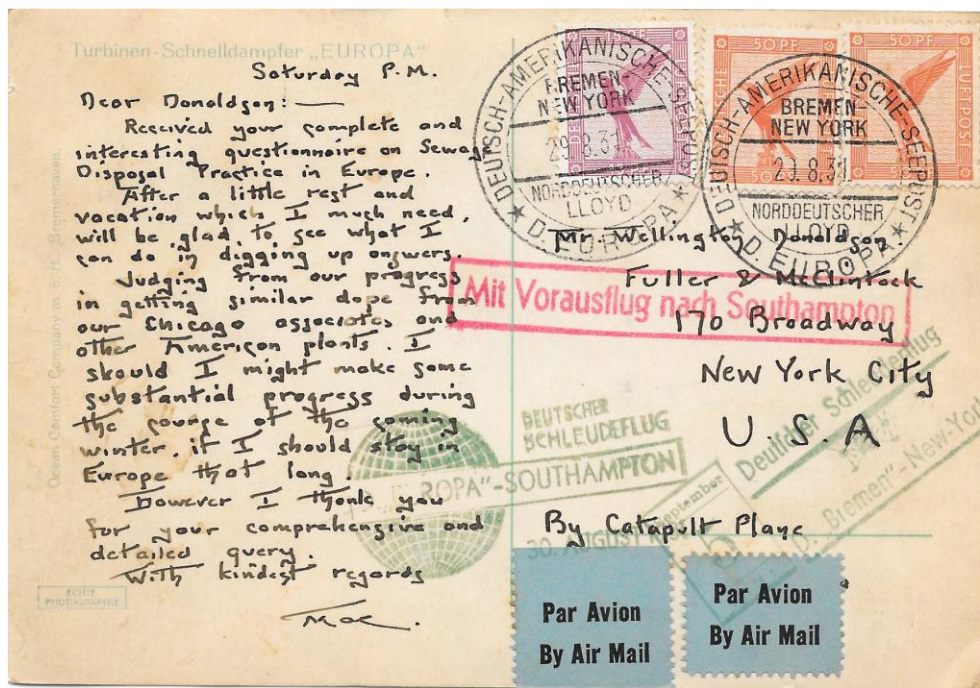


Figure 3

The postal rate consists of 15pfg. International post card rate end 50pfg for each of the catapult flights.

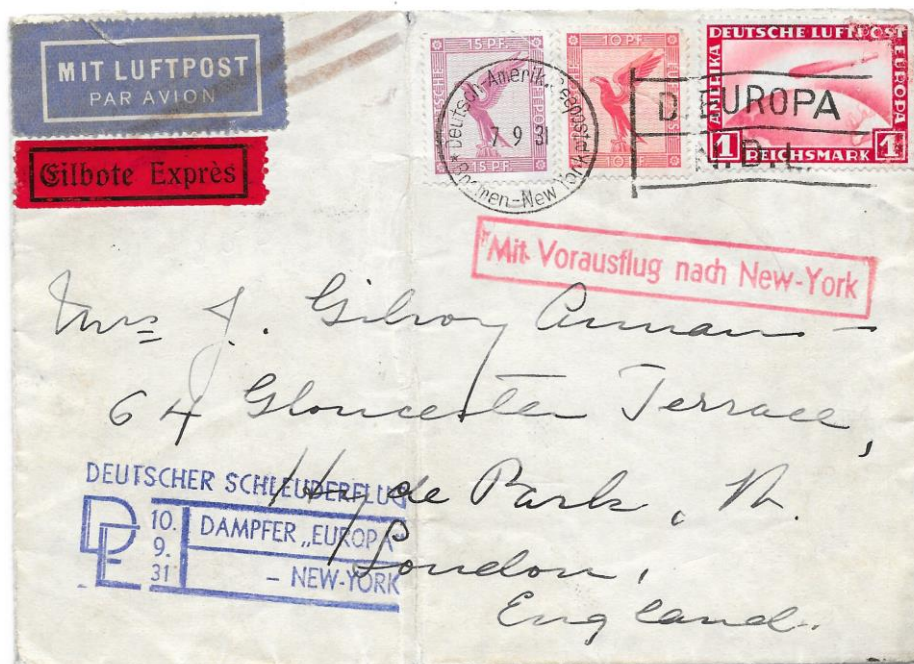


Figure 4

This express cover addressed to England was posted on board *Europa* as it sailed westward to New York. It was flown from the ship at 10.50 on 8th September 1931 and arrived in New York at 08.45 on 9th September having flown a distance of 2,487km. This was a record flight and stops were made at Sydney, Nova Scotia and Bridgeport, Connecticut, for fuel. When the cover arrived in New York the "Mit Luftpost" etiquette was cancelled with two purple bars to indicate the end of air mail service and this cover was then carried by sea back to the UK.

The postal rate is made up of 25pfg international letter rate, 50pfg for the express delivery and 50pfg for the catapult service.



Figure 5

This cover, addressed to Union City, New Jersey, was posted in Cologne on 16th September 1931. It was flown on the supplementary service to Cherbourg to meet with *Bremen* for the Atlantic crossing. It was flown from the ship at 07.45 on 21st September and arrived in New York at 10.20 having flown a distance of 409km.

The postal rate is made up of 25pfg international letter rate, 30pfg for the supplementary flight to Cherbourg and 50pfg for the catapult service.



Figure 6

This post card was posted on 28th September at City Hall Annex, New York and addressed to Vienna.

It was carried on board *Europa* on the east-bound leg on the final catapult service of 1931.

It was flown from the ship at 09.00 on 3rd October and arrived in Southampton at 14.35 having flown a distance

of 1,100km. It was transported to Croydon for the flight by DLH to Berlin arriving in Berlin on 4th October. It then went, most likely, by rail to Vienna arriving on 5th October.

The postal rate is made up of, 3 cents international post card rate and 15 cents for the catapult service.

The catapult flight from *Bremen* on it's final westward journey of the 1931 season took off from the ship at 11.36 on the 5th of October. Pilot Fritz Simon and his mechanic Rudolph Wagenknecht, in the float plane He- 12 D-1717 *New York*, were launched about 650 miles off Cape Race, Newfoundland, approximately 800 miles from New York. They landed in the harbour of Sydney, Nova Scotia, in foggy conditions to re-fuel. They then took off, heading for Connecticut where they were expected to take on further supplies of fuel but they never arrived. A loud crash was heard from the shore at Cobequid Bay and in the darkness cries for help were heard. A search was made at day-break but no trace was found of the airplane, its crew or the mail. A few days later the body of Flight Captain Fritz Simon was recovered from the sea but no trace of his flight engineer, the airplane or the mail was found. This was the only fatal accident during the seven years of this catapult service.

References

James W. Graue. *German North Atlantic Catapult Airmail 1929-1935*

R.G. Stanley-Smith. *The North Atlantic Catapult* parts 1&2.

American Air Mail Catalogue fifth edition pages 661 and 682

SHIP TO SHORE SINCE THE WAR

PART 1: FRANCE

By Roger Stanley-Smith

Readers are increasingly aware of the mail generated by the German catapult service that operated from *Bremen* and *Europa* between 1929 and 1935. Most others are also familiar with the short-lived service from the liner *Ile de France* between 1928 and 1930. However, it has become apparent that few realise that the idea of flying off mail from military ships, either by conventional catapult or VTOL (Vertical Take Off and Landing - most commonly helicopters) aircraft has never ceased.

The navies of the world have all required the means to deliver mail and parcels to, and collect the same from, active personnel serving aboard their ships. Aircraft carriers have always been the optimal distribution platform for mail, whether to or from members of carrier's crew or those vessels in the same group, to which it could easily be transferred by way of helicopter, line or tender.

Much of this mail is by nature private, addressed to family and friends and, as such, scant remains to find its way into the hands of collectors. Fortunately, some of philatelic origin has been sent to people who either have an interest or who know people who have. Considering how much must have been flown, a very small amount appears to have survived and huge gaps between known dispatches are all too clear.

There is a possible additional contributory factor, which may help account for the lack of material. The French military catapults from cruisers in the 1930's did not mark all the mail to be flown, often only the top letter in each bundle. If this practise continues to the present day, then there would not be many identifiable covers in the first place. Couple that with natural wastage and the pool of available pieces shrinks dramatically.

I have recorded all the examples that I seen to date. They all relate to the two Clémenceau-class carriers *Clémenceau* (1961-1997) and *Foch* (1963-2000) which formed the backbone of the post-war French navy. The two 32 knot, 24,200 ton ships, carried a crew of 1,338 and were originally equipped with 15 x Super Étendard, 4 x Étendard IVP, 10 x F-8E Crusader, 6 x Breguet Alizé aircraft plus 2 x Dauphin Pedro and 2 x Super Frelon helicopters. They were superseded by the new nuclear-powered carrier *Charles de Gaulle* in 2001, from which, to date, I have not seen any examples of flown mail.

Below is a list of dispatches I have seen to date:

1971
18 June Clémenceau

1972
28th May Clémenceau

1979
24 May Foch
8 October Clémenceau
24 October Clémenceau
2 November Foch
7 November Foch

1980
17 May Foch

1981
19 September Clémenceau

1982
23 February Foch
9 November Foch
19 November Foch

1982
14 May Foch
9 November Foch

1983
30 March Clémenceau
3 October Foch

1984
5 January Foch
6 February Foch
4 April Foch
13 April Clémenceau
15 June Foch
29 November Foch



Catapult from *Clémenceau* 28 May 1972 off Norway



Catapult from *Foch* 3 October 1983

1990

10 May

Foch

16 June

Foch

1992

22 July

Clémenceau

22 November

Clémenceau

1993

15 October

Clémenceau



Catapult from *Foch* 4 April 1984



13 April 1984 *Clémenceau* catapult



15 October 1993 *Clémenceau* catapult



Étendard IVM and Super Étendard aboard *Foch* 1983

The writer would love to hear from anyone with other examples of dates not recorded here and any scans of covers they may have.

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