

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XII, No.1
JULY 1964

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THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XII, No.1
JULY 1964

Henry M. Goodkind, Editor
Philip Silver, Assistant Editor

EGYPT 50 Years Ago, Marc Pourpe

By JEAN GRAVELAT

For several years we have been commemorating in many forms the memorable events, which marked the debut of aviation, in which pioneer aviators from every land covered themselves with glory. So, a French arcophilatelist wishes to pay tribute to a great pioneer French aviator.

A 50th anniversary which seems to have been completely overlooked, is the remarkable feat performed by the French aviator, Marc Pourpe, in his flight in Egypt from Cairo to Khartoum in the Sudan and return at the beginning of 1914. I shall repeat the story of his great feat of 50 years ago.

The 1914 Flight

This flight, organized by the National Aerial League with the agreement



Fig. 1. Cover personally addressed by Marc Pourpe on the flight from Cairo, Egypt to Khartoum, Sudan. It is cancelled Abou-Hamed, January 10, 1914. (All illustrative material is from the author's collection.)

of British authorities, was made with complete success in a country where the sand, sun, dryness and wind reign over everything. The flight covered 4,000 km.—or just about the distance from Paris, France to St. Louis, Senegal. The project took place over Africa, following the Valley of the Nile across Egypt and the Nubian desert. It was divided into four stages, where at each landing place provisions, tires, oil and gas had been sent.

On January 4, 1914 at 9:07 a. m., Marc Pourpe left Heliopolis near Cairo, Egypt in a monoplane made by Morane Saulnier with a Gnome 50 HP engine. During the first stage, the sky was overcast and Pourpe almost became lost in the desert. He flew over Beni-Souef, Minieh, Assiout and landed at Men Shah.

After dismounting and completely cleaning the engine, Pourpe left on January 6 at 10:05 a. m. and arrived at Luxor at 11:50 a. m.

On January 7, he flew to Wadi-Alfa after a journey of 350 km. over the mountains. After one day of rest, third stage of 440 km. to Abou-Hamed was flown under a scorching sun and clouds of sand, which hid the railroad tracks that he had been following in order not to get lost. His arrival at Abou-Hamed took place January 9 at 12:20. There, Pourpe decided to await his mechanic and fly the last part with him. This he did on January 12 after five hours of flight in extreme heat and under anything but favorable flying conditions.

Awaited by an immense crowd, the aviator was received by the Sirdar Kitchener, officers of the military garrison, and authorities of every rank.

He was greeted and feted as a hero. Keeping a promise given to Lord Kitchener at Cairo before his departure, he took part on January 17 in a celebration organized at Khartoum in honor of the anniversary of the visit of the King of England, and in a majestic flight, surveyed the troops massed by the Sirdar.

The Return Flight

The next day, Pourpe began his return trip toward Cairo. Making many more stops, he voluntarily landed at places that he had missed the first time, so that he could give all those, who had assisted him, the satisfaction of seeing him other than flying up in the clouds. On January 19 he came to Atbara, on the 20th to Abou-Hamed, on the 21st at station No. 6 of the railway of Sudan, on the 22nd at Wadi-Alfa, on the 23rd at Deer, on the 24th at Assouan and on the 26th at Luxor, where he rested for a few days. He arrived at Naghamadi after having flown over the tombs of the Egyptian kings on January 30th. Pourpe completed his glorious tour by landing safely at Helipolis, the airport of Cairo on February 3, 1914. During this entire trip there was a very small amount of mail carried. The covers or cards bore the round cachet of the National Aerial League. A British collector tried to make a census of this mail. He found, if my memory is correct, thirty-seven cards or letters were all that were flown on this 1914 flight. It is not necessary to say that these pioneer pieces are very scarce.

Pourpe, A Great Pioneer Aviator

In conclusion, a short description of Marc Pourpe's career is added.

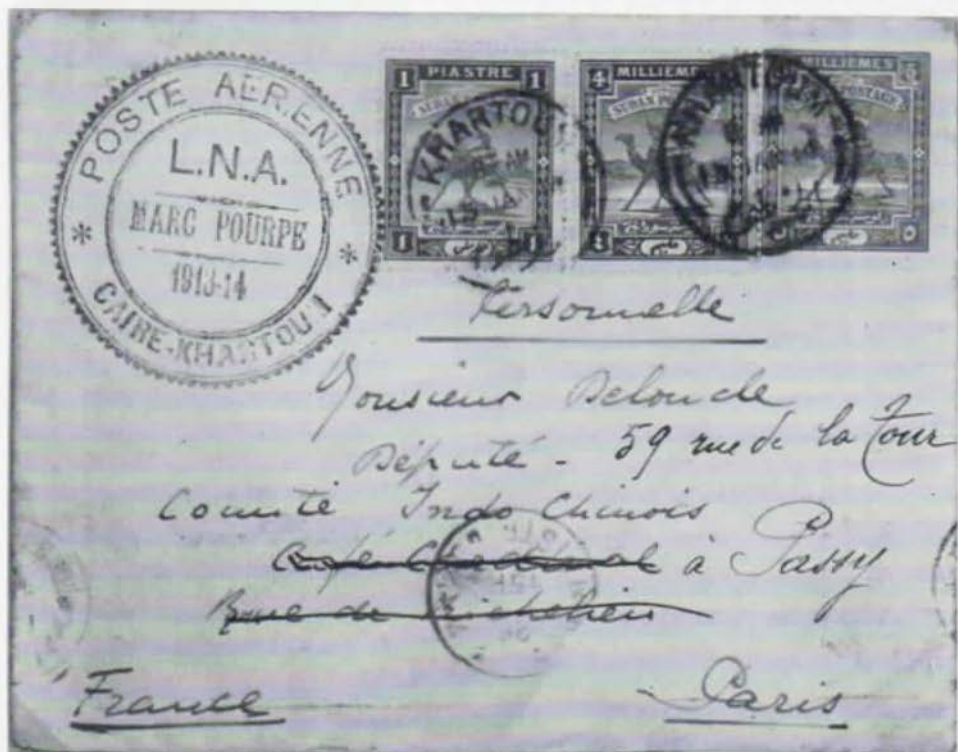


Fig. 2. A cover carried on the return flight from Khartoum to Cairo. The cancellation is Khartoum January 15, 1914. This, too, was personally addressed by the aviator, Marc Pourpe.

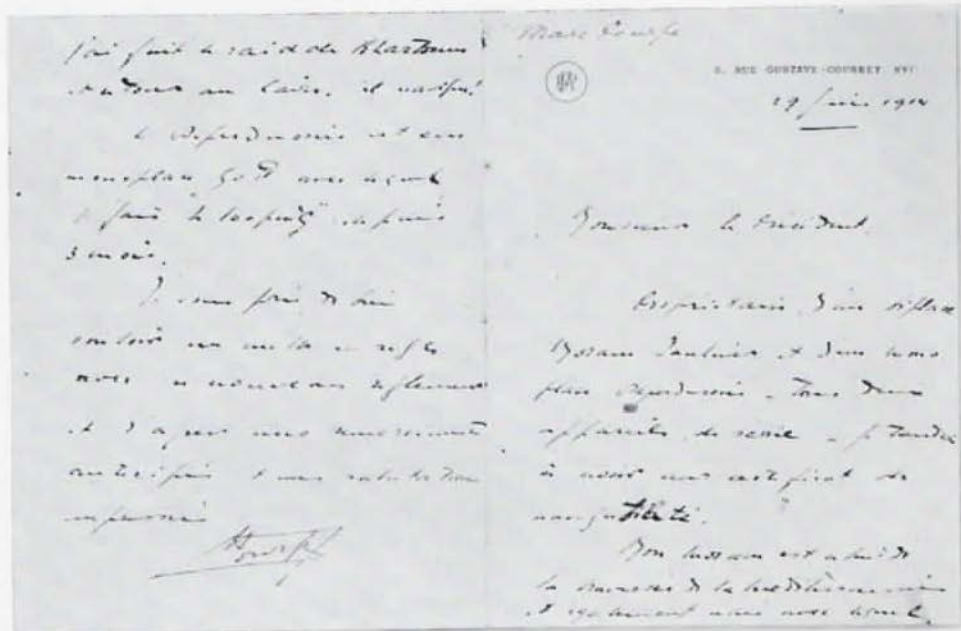


Fig. 3. A personal letter written by Marc Poupe on June 29, 1914, in which he refers to his Egypt to Khartoum and return flights.

He was the son of a naval officer and of the famous Liane de Pougy. He had inherited from his father the love for faraway places. In 1910, he was in Indo-China. In August 1911, without convoy, he flew across the English Channel from Boulogne to Folkstone and return. In January 1913 he was in Calcutta with Vermick, in January 1914 in Egypt. But then World War I broke out and Poupe died shortly thereafter on the field of honor on December 2, 1914 on the Somme front.

References

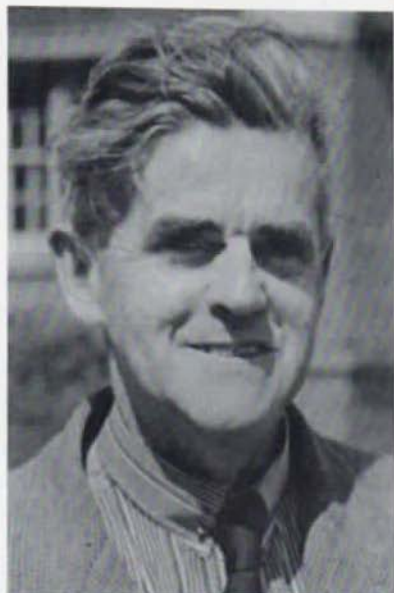
- La Revue Aerienne*, January-February 1914.
L'Aerophile, January-February 1914.
Le Journal du Caire, January 12, 1914.

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About the 1964 recipient, this magazine proudly places the following achievements in the long career of *Francis J. Field of Sutton Coldfield, England* on record.

Francis J. Field was born in a hamlet on William Shakespeare's famous Avon in 1895. He has lived his entire life in the Shakespeare country.

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, he joined Lord Montgomery's Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He was severely wounded in 1916 at the Battle of the Somme in France, and, as a consequence, was invalided for the next two years in a military hospital.

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In 1920, he became interested in the study of aviation and commenced collecting aeronautical souvenirs. One year later, he decided to make his hobby his profession and started a business as a dealer in air post stamps, covers and documents. Also, he began to collect books and historical records on aviation and aerophilately. The Field library has grown over the years following and it is now said to be the largest private reference library in the world on this particular subject.

Mr. Field in 1925 compiled and published his first book, "Commercial and Historical Atlas of World's Airways." The following year he started his air mail periodical, "The Aero Field," with Mr. N. C. Baldwin as editor. This journal has never ceased publication and Mr. Baldwin still continues as the editor, establishing what is a record (that should stand for a long time) for aerophilatelic publishing and philatelic editing—thirty-eight consecutive years.

During this period of close to four decades, a total of approximately eighty handbooks, catalogues and specialty pamphlets have been published. This vast number is not only a great achievement but many of the handbooks are accepted throughout the world as the definitive ones.

Francis J. Field, active without pause as the Managing Director of Francis J. Field, Ltd., has given much of his spare time to the furtherance of aerophilately. Frequently, he has lectured and displayed air posts throughout Great Britain. Also, he has served as a judge for many British philatelic societies' stamp shows.

In 1930, he took a leading part in the First International Air Post Exhibition held in Paris, France. This was followed in 1936 with what many veteran air mail collectors believe was the finest international air post exhibition ever held. This was APEX in London, England, and Mr. Field played an important role, being an active member of the Organizing Committee. He was a member of the Committee of Honor at the 1937 Paris International Philatelic Exhibition.

Air mail societies in Britain always have had the encouragement and active support of Francis J. Field. At present, he is the Vice-President of the British Air Mail Society. He holds membership in over fifteen other philatelic and aerophilatelic societies in Great Britain, Europe and the United States. He was elected in 1934 a Companion of the Royal Aeronautical Society, later a Senior Member of the British Interplanetary Society and a Fellow of the Society of Postal Historians.

Although most of his time is devoted to the management of his farm and his aerophilatelic work, Mr. Field finds time to occasionally lecture on psychography, which he has been following since 1916. Also, he is the Chairman of the Sutton Arts Theatre.

A few years ago, his son, John, joined the firm of Francis J. Field, Ltd. and he, too, has become an active British aerophilatelist. He has served as the British Commissioner to the recent FISA-sponsored international air mail exhibitions in Europe, and he also has been writing about air posts for the popular stamp weeklies.

The 1964 Richard S. Bohn Memorial Award will be sent to England to be presented to Mr. Francis J. Field during the 4th FISA Congress that is being held in London during September of this year. At the request of AERO PHILATELISTS' Board of Directors, Mr. H. R. Holmes, President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, who was the British judge on the AEROPHILA 63 international jury in Brussels, Belgium, will make the presentation to Mr. Field.
(H. M. G.)

UNITED STATES

1918 27c Rate Covers

By PHILIP SILVER

In the course of writing about the covers flown on the first flights with the 24 cents air mail stamp of 1918 (Scott No. C3) one reader, an oldtimer and a member of the Early Birds flying group, advised that the proper rate for a cover flown on May 15, 1918 was 27 cents, not 24 cents. The statement was made that the first-class letter rate, which was 3 cents an ounce in 1918, had to be paid in addition to the air mail rate of 24 cents an ounce, or a total of 27 cents for the combined air mail and first-class fee. Apparently, others must have labored under the same misunderstanding about the rates, because 27 cent rate covers do exist, although they are not too common.

Postal Order Not Explicit

Order No. 1443 of May 11, 1918, effective May 15, 1918 is not too clear on this. It states that the rate shall be 24 cents an ounce or fraction thereof, of which 10 cents shall be for special delivery service. The order reads in part, as follows:

"Such mail shall consist of matter of the first class including sealed parcels not exceeding 30 inches in length and girth combined and be endorsed 'By Airplane.'"

It will be noted that nowhere is any statement made that the first-class fee had to be paid in addition to the one for air mail. The sole reference to first-class mail is the statement that only such mail may be carried by airplane. The writer, therefore, is at a loss to understand how the misconception about



Fig. 1. 27 cents rate cover, May 15, 1918, Washington to New York. The bottom arrow on the 24 cents air mail stamp indicates it is from the first printing. (Author's collection).



Fig. 2. A second day cover flown May 16, 1918 on the first flight from Washington to New York. First-class postage paid by 2 cent embossed envelope stamp plus 1 cent adhesive postage stamp. (Author's Collection).

payment of the first-class fee came about. For some, this misunderstanding has never been resolved. In the writer's and other collections are covers from the 1918 period to the present date; many are franked with postage stamps and air mail stamps to pay the first-class postage fee in addition to the air mail rate.

When the 1918 rates later were reduced to 16 cents and 6 cents, effective on July 15, 1918 and December 15, 1918, respectively, the orders establishing the new rates also were not too clear on the matter of first-class postage either; the writer has seen a 19 cent rate cover, but never a 9 cent rate cover.

It was not until 1924 that the wording used in an official order established the fact that the air mail rate included ordinary mail transportation. Order No. 713 of June 30, 1924 states, in part:

"Mail carried by airplane shall be fully prepaid with postage at the rate of 8 cents an ounce or fraction thereof for each zone or part zone in which mail is carried by plane, such postage including transportation to and from air mail route as well as transportation by plane." (Italics are ours).

An Early Incorrect Newspaper Story

A clue to the misunderstanding about the air mail and first-class rates to be paid on the first flight of May 15, 1918 is found in a story which appeared in the newspaper. "The New York Sun," on March 4, 1918 citing a special despatch of March 3rd from Washington, D. C., which is quoted, in part:

"Coincident with the opening of the first aerial mail route between New York and Washington on April 15 there will be issued a new

stamp sure to be of interest to Philatelists. The stamp will perform a function similar to the special delivery stamp, for it will cause the letter to which it is affixed to be sent by air service. The present plan is to sell the stamp for 24 cents, which with the regular postage will make the cost 27 cents. It will be cheaper and quicker than a night letter by telegraph."

It will be noted that the date of the opening of the service between New York and Washington is given as April 15, 1918. Actually, it was originally intended to start on that date but it was found necessary to postpone it to May 15th. Also, the newspaper report compares the air mail stamp to the special delivery stamp, apparently not realizing that the cost of the air mail stamp included payment for special delivery service, as well.

Claim is not made here that the above-quoted story was responsible for all the 27 cent rate overfranked covers and postal cards that exist in collections today. However, it is possible that many collectors and non-collectors alike, were misled by "The New York Sun" story or by any other such reports which may have appeared in the lay press. This newspaper account does, however, give a clue to the reason for the misunderstanding coming, as it does, from Washington where the reporter obviously had access to official sources of information. It may even be true that persons connected with the United States Postal Service had a wrong conception of the new air mail rates. This was, after all, a departure from custom with the U. S. Mail.

Overfranked Covers

Shown in Figure 1 is a cover cancelled May 15, 1918 for the first flight from Washington, D. C. to New York. It bears 3 cents in postage stamps to pay the first-class rate in addition to the 24 cent air mail stamp. Note part of the bottom arrow on the selvage at bottom of the air mail stamp. It obviously is from the first printing since the bottom sheet margins were cut away on both the second and third printing.



Fig. 3. 37 cent rate cover, May 18, 1918, Washington to Philadelphia. (H. M. Goodkind collection).

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Fig. 4. A 26 cent rate post card. The 2 cent ordinary postage stamp paid the first-class rate for a post card. (Author's collection).

A 27 cent rate "second day" cover is shown in Figure 2. The 3 cents first-class postage is paid by the 2 cent embossed envelope stamp plus a 1 cent adhesive postage stamp. Both covers, shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, are backstamped May 16, 1918, the day of the actual first flight from Washington to New York.

Another interesting cover is shown in Figure 3. It is dated May 18, 1918 and is franked with three cents in postage stamps in addition to the 24 cent air mail stamp. However, the sender of this item had a complete lack of understanding of the new air mail rate for, affixed in the lower left corner, is a ten cent special delivery stamp. What he failed to realize was that special delivery service was already included in the 24 cent air mail stamp. So, this is a most unusual item, a 37 cent rate cover.

Another unusual item is shown in Figure 4. It is a post card cancelled May 5, 1918 at Washington for the first flight to Philadelphia. In 1918, the postal card rate was 2 cents. Therefore, this is a new variation—a 26 cent rate. From the writer's viewpoint, it is more interesting than the two 27 cent rate covers. The 27 cent rate had been publicized to some extent as the previously referred to newspaper story shows. But, the individual, who sent this post card, first, had to be aware that first-class postage was required in addition to the air mail rate; and, second, had to determine that, since he was mailing a post card, the first-class rate for such mail was 2 cents.

More than 11,000 covers were flown on the first flights of May 15 and May 16, 1918. Practically all were franked with the 24 cent air mail stamp (C3) alone. No covers prepaid with that amount were rated for postage due. So, that, obviously, was the proper rate, regardless of the lack of clarity in the official order and the misleading March 4, 1918 newspaper story.

As stated at the beginning of this article, 27 cent rate covers are not common. There may be one in your collection that you may have overlooked.

Book And Catalogue Reviews

The Air Post of Colombia by Eugenio Gebauer. 126 pp. Illustrated. Paper cover. Published by the author, Apartado 953, Caracas, Venezuela. Price \$5 (Available in the U. S. A. from N. Sanabria Co., Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10017).

Our thanks to Mr. Georges Medawar, President of N. Sanabria Co., Inc., for presenting to the editor of this quarterly magazine a review copy of this new book.

Some prefatory remarks seem to be in order. In 1936, the late Fred W. Kessler, the New York stamp dealer, published a 117-page book "The Air Posts of Colombia." It proved to be very popular, which it deserved to be, and sold out about seven years ago. Since then, when a copy becomes available, it commands a price far above the original one. A friend of this reviewer has been seeking a copy without success for more than a year.

Secondly, Mr. Eugenio Gebauer is a leading collector and student of Colombia air mails. His collection was one of the finer on exhibit at the New York Coliseum during FIPEX 1956 and gained a deserved gold medal. In addition, Mr. Gebauer's opinion often has been sought. Furthermore, he has written some meritorious articles on Colombia air mails.

This new 1963 book is practically a copy of the 1936 Kessler book. It runs 126 pages against 117 for the latter. Most of the illustrations are to be found in both books. This is explained by the acknowledged sale to Mr. Gebauer by Mr. Kessler before his death last year of his illustrative material. The 1963 book has a Foreword in four languages, English, French, German and Spanish, in that order, that covers eleven pages. But basically, the pattern of both books

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is the same. The first part is a handbook with information. The second part is a priced catalog listing. It is regretted that Mr. Gebauer dropped the idea of an index, which the Kessler book supplied.

Perhaps because of the fine reputation of the author, we had expected too much from Mr. Gebauer. But his book proved disappointing on two counts. Much more new information had been anticipated. It certainly has been made available by publication. Consulting Mr. Gebauer's bibliography, for example, no mention of many articles in the old "Aero Philatelists's News" were found. Oddly, one series had Mr. Gebauer as co-author.

The greatest let-down was on the prices in the new book. Surely, the prices of Colombia air mails have greatly increased since 1936, especially when Scott added all the 1920 French Company and the SCADTA issues a few years ago. Mr. Gebauer specifically mentions his consultation of relatively recent auction realizations in New York for some outstanding Colombia air mail material from the Matthews, Larsen, Bute and Oriol collections. Having been interested in all these sales, as a successful bidder and sometimes an underbidder, we must regretfully state that Mr. Gebauer must have scanned the prices at auction very hurriedly, or something else went wrong.

The 1919 Number 1 air stamp always has been a valuable item. Scott C1 or Sanabria #1 has not gone down in price. In 1936, Kessler priced it at \$500 mint and \$200 used. Gebauer in 1963 decreases these to \$400 and \$200, respectively. The same applies with the serif "1" error (Scott C1a). Why?, we wonder.

The prices of the multi-colored 1920 stamps are accurate. But some of the early SCADTA Co. issues, particularly the surcharges, seem priced far below their current New York auction prices. Early SCADTA stamps on cover are priced right, although this reviewer would have valued them for more, in view of their extreme scarcity and the sharp increases in recent years.

One of the most elusive items to find on a flown cover is the lower denomination of the 1928 Mendez Flight issue. First, when he was alive, Mr. Federico Larsen of Colombia tried to secure a cover for this reviewer, but never succeeded. It took years, until the Larsen auction by H. R. Harmer Inc. of New York, to secure the cover that our friend possessed. And a lot more than \$15, Mr. Gebauer's price for Scott C53 on cover, was paid. Kessler's price in 1936 was \$25. What goes on here? C54, although much more common used, also is priced for less in 1963 than in 1936.

This reviewer is not alone in his adverse opinion of the Gebauer pricings. He consulted with other New York collectors and dealers. And there was complete agreement that Mr. Gebauer failed on his pricings in many cases. We did not cite the prices of the Consular overprints, although there was agreement that the 1963 book's quotations were too low. This is scarce material with a strong demand, not only from Colombia aerophilatelists but from collectors seeking the Colombian Consular stamps of their own country.

Perhaps, as stated before, because of the fine reputation of Mr. Gebauer, too much was expected. The handbook part, even tho it substantially follows Kessler, is full of valuable information. And mainly because the 1936 handbook is not available, this 1963 book will serve as a good substitute and Mr. Gebauer is to be complimented for his energy in doing this work. It was not easy. Maybe he will revise his prices and then, his book will become as excellent as the Gebauer stamp collection. (H. M. G.)

Aerophilatelie der Deutschen Lufthansa 1926-1936 by Horst Aisslinger. 31 pages plus 14 pages with illustrations. Paperbound. Published by the author,

Neue Heidenheimerstrasse 60, Aalen, Wurttemberg, Germany. (German text).
Price not given.

Mr. Aisslinger, who became a member of AERO PHILATELISTS during the AEROPHILA 63 International Exhibition in Brussels, Belgium, is a very keen aerophilatelist in Germany. His fine collection of the 1932 Graf Zeppelin Flights won a Silver-gilt medal in the Brussels show.

This booklet covers the history of this German commercial airline during the 1926-1936 decade. The Catapult flights from the German ocean-liners, the "Bremen" and "Europa," are treated with a clear, detailed tabulation.

The greater part of this book is about flight covers. There is very little about the stamps. A knowledge of German will help in reading this booklet's text that covers the first eighteen pages. But after this come the tables, and these will prove much easier for use to one who does not understand German. Also, there are approximately thirty illustrations that are self-explanatory.

This work seems to be a "labor-of-love." Anyone, who is interested in the German Lufthansa cachet covers during the Hindenberg and the Hitler regime that followed, will find this a helpful reference work.

Sieger's Weltraumfahrt Special Katalog (2nd edition.) 126 pp. Illustrated. Paper cover. Edited and published by Hermann E. Sieger, Lorch, Wurttemberg, Germany. Price DM2 (U.S. 50c).

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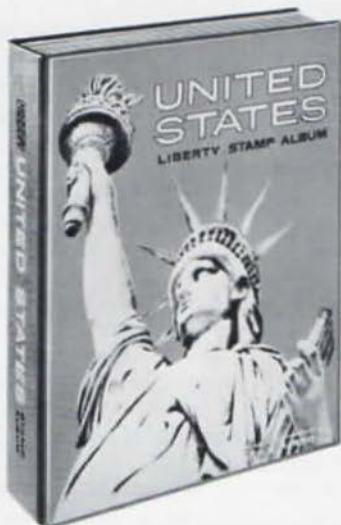
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specialty, because of its timely appeal and world-wide public interest, is growing by leaps and bounds, more so in Europe than in the U.S.A. Actually, the stamps are more topical collecting than aerophilately.

To our knowledge, very few handy and up-to-date reference works on this field have been published, certainly not in English. Nothing keeps up a stamp collector's interest better than a priced catalogue.

Although in German, with its many illustrated cuts and its orderly classification, a collector interested in Space Flights and the related philatelic material will have no trouble consulting and using the Sieger Catalogue. This reviewer is not familiar with the material and is, therefore, in no position to comment upon the accuracy of the prices and how they compare to those in this country. But firm of Sieger in Germany happens to be about the most active in the world in supplying new issues of cachet and flight covers, which should make it highly qualified for giving the prices on this kind of material.

The price of this catalogue is very reasonable — fifty cents. It seems to be very comprehensive and well done. Being a familiar user of other Sieger catalogues for a long period of years, it is believed that this new work can be highly recommended to those interested in this specialty.

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AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

Vol. XI (July 1963 • April 1964)

Compiled By The Editor

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UNITED STATES

The 5c Beacon Air Mail Stamp of 1928

By HENRY M. GOODKIND

(Part 3, Continued From Volume XI, Page 112)

CHAPTER 2

Covers

For over thirty years the writer has collected air mail stamps of the world on flown covers, preferably those showing commercial rather than philatelic use. In seeking covers and cancellations with the U. S. Beacon air mail, one can select from a vast amount of material, and, depending upon the individual collector's taste, much can be collected.

As for covers, the most desirable seems to be a *first-day cover cancelled July 25, 1928 Washington, D. C.* (Fig. 33). The 5c domestic air mail rate became effective August 1, 1928. But the stamp had its first-day sale one week in advance on July 25.

The air mail rate up to the end of July 1928 was 10 cents per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Therefore, first-day covers had to have a pair of the 5c Beacon stamps for this rate.

In 1928, the U. S. Post Office Department did not provide services for preparing first-day covers. Therefore, although first-day cover collecting was starting to gain popularity in 1928, the number cancelled then was only a very small fraction of that in more recent times. No records of first-day covers cancelled was kept in 1928. Consequently, it is not known how many first-day covers were made. One could estimate this roughly at less than a thousand, judging by their current scarcity.



Fig. 33. A first-day cover cancelled July 25, 1928. 10c postage was needed because the rate was not reduced to 5c until August 1, 1928. [All photos by Boutrelle]



Fig. 34. An interesting first-day-of-use dated August 1, 1928. The Worcester, Mass. cancellation is the "R. M. S." (Railway Mail Service) that was used for air mail during the time that the 5c Beacon air mail was current.

One fact has become apparent. The supply of C11 first-day covers presently cannot meet the demand. The writer owned about six first-day covers at one time, which he traded for other material or gave to friends as gifts. Last year, a collector friend from overseas, who collects U. S. air mail stamps, sent a list of first-day covers of air mail stamps needed, and C11 was included. No longer having any duplicates, inquiries were made among New York City stamp collectors and dealers. It took over a year to finally secure a July 25, 1928 C11 cover and the price paid was far above the 1964 Scott Catalogue price.

After the first-day July 25, 1928 cover, one should collect a *first-day-of-use* cover dated August 1, 1928 when the new 5c air mail rate went into effect. (Fig. 34). These latter are much easier to find than the former. Unfortunately, too many collectors and dealers are prone to confuse the *first-day of issue* with the *first-day of use*, not only with C11 but with most U. S. air mail stamps starting with C1-3 of 1918.

Other desirable covers are those used *commercially* with a pair of the Beacon stamps to pay the ten-cents rate for a half-ounce in the short period between July 25, 1928, the first day of issue, and July 31, 1928, until the rate was lowered to five-cents an ounce. Such covers, because of the short six-day period of use, are scarce. If many were like our Uncle Mart, they would have used air mail, only if very urgent. Instead, such conservative people would have waited out this short six-day period until the 5-cents air mail rate went into effect on August 1, 1928.

Multiple Rates

Every source consulted, when commenting on the domestic air mail rate, stated that on August 1, 1928 this became five-cents per ounce. No one, including Johl and Sloane, referred to the rate for letters weighing over one ounce. Thus, the contemporary writers are totally ignorant of the facts, and when they describe a cover with *three* 5c Beacon air mail stamps, they erroneously conclude that this is a triple rate cover. *It is not.*



Fig. 35. A cover flown on the first day of use, August 1, 1928. The interesting matter on this cover, however, is the cachet in the lower lefthand corner. It indicates the new air mail rate is 10c for each additional ounce.

Fortunately, there is an exceptionally good student of U. S. air mail rates, Philip Silver, and it was he, who first educated the writer about the 1928 air mail rates in excess of one ounce. He was supplied the following pertinent information.

Postal Order No. 7773, dated June 7, 1928, effective August 1, 1928 provided that "the rate of postage on air mail letters shall be 5c for the first ounce and 10c for each additional ounce or fraction thereof." This marked the first time since the official beginning of the U. S. air mail service on May 15, 1918 that the rate for the additional weight was *greater than for the first ounce*. (Fig. 35).

Most mail sent by airplane after August 1, 1928 weighed less than one ounce. As a consequence, covers usually bear a single copy of the 5c Beacon air mail stamp.

Therefore, multiple rate covers of the Beacon stamp are not common. A letter weighing over one and up to two ounces required 15c in air mail



Fig. 36. 15 cents prepayment with three Beacon air mail stamps to correctly prepay for an over-weight letter that weighed over one ounce but less than two. This is NOT a triple rate cover as most assume. (Courtesy of Philip Silver.)



Fig. 37. 10 cents Postage Due was collected for the second ounce on this cover that had been underpaid. (Courtesy of Philip Silver.)

postage—some uninitiated collectors have erroneously assumed this to be a triple rate at 5c an ounce.

The one cover illustrated (Fig. 36) shows the correct 15c prepayment with three 5c Beacon air stamps for letters weighing over one ounce. When an overweight letter was underfranked, 10c postage due was collected (as Fig. 37 shows).

Foreign Uses On Cover

The 5c Beacon stamp was issued primarily to be used for domestic air mail. Some covers, however, can be found showing use originating outside of the United States. These all have combination uses of a foreign stamp with C11. Such covers are interesting to include in a Beacon collection. Two countries most often found using the Beacon air mail are Canada and Cuba. But neither is easy to find. The Canadian covers have both the Canadian and the 5c U.S. air mail stamps. This combination assured a complete air mail service from Canada to the address in the United States. (Figs. 38 and 39).

Air mail in 1928 could not fly directly from Cuba to places in the United States but only as far as Key West, Florida. From there, the mail was transmitted by surface means to its destination. However, if the 5c U.S. postage was also prepaid, a letter from Havana, Cuba could fly to any destination in the United States.

The Cuban air mail stamp paid for the air mail service from Havana to Key West. Sometimes, the Havana post office took care to cancel only the Cuban stamps. This is shown on one cover where the Havana cancellation just hit a small part of the upper margin of the U.S. C11. Then upon arrival in New York City, the U.S. stamp was cancelled (Fig. 40).

A second Havana to the United States cover shows the Cuban cancellation on both Cuba C1 and the pair of U.S. C11. This one went to Atlanta, Ga. (Fig. 41).

Occasionally, one comes across a cover with a most unusual combination of the first air mail stamp of Papua (C1) and the U.S. 5c Beacon air mail stamp (Fig. 42). The covers all bear the name of A. C. Roessler, East Orange, N.J., a stamp dealer who was very active in aerophilately during its first few decades, especially with first flight covers. Roessler was an enigma. Many choice air mail covers have survived only because of the ingenuity and hard work by this dealer. On the other hand, some of his creations were



Fig. 38. (Left) A cover with both U.S. and Canada air mail stamps. Fig. 39. (Right) A philatelic "cutie"—Canada C1 was affixed on top of U.S. C11 for air mail from Hamilton, Ontario to New York, N. Y.

questioned by aerophilatelic authorities as being "manufactured" solely for sale to enthusiastic collectors. Also, he ran into trouble with the United States government for one of his illegal creations.

This Papua cover is genuine, only Roessler seems to have miscalculated in preparing it. One can only theorize that he wanted some covers to fly in 1930 on some of the first flights from Port Moresby, Papua to Australia. Thus, he prepared covers with copies of Papua C1, issued on January 1, 1930, and a U. S. 5c Beacon air mail, expecting the covers to be flown. However, they were insufficiently prepaid for air mail, as the Australian boxed postmark in red at the left shows. In the writer's air mail stamp collection of the world, Papua-Australia air post covers in 1930 required 7 pence postage, not 3 pence as Roessler figured.

Since Roessler's covers were not properly prepaid for air mail, they went by surface mail. The cover illustrated in Fig. 42 has Papua C1 cancelled Port Moresby March 11, 1930. Then, Australia cancelled the U. S. 5c Beacon stamp on arrival at Sydney March 19, 1930. The Roessler covers bear no backstamps, so that they reached the United States by surface mail, because there was no Transpacific air mail in 1930.

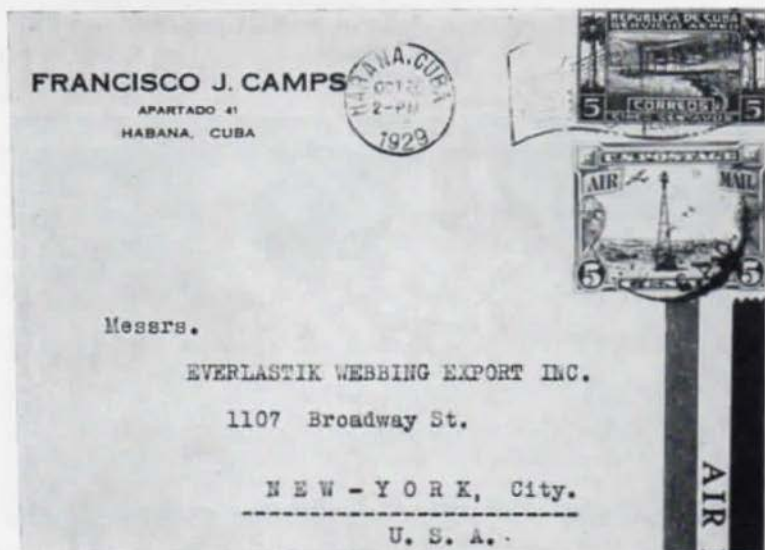


Fig. 40. The Cuban air mail stamp has the Havana cancellation, the bottom part just hits the U. S. 5c Beacon air stamp, which was cancelled when reaching the New York, N. Y. G. P. O.



Fig. 41. Cuba C1 and the pair of U. S. C11 all were cancelled at Havana, Cuba.

If the copy of the U. S. 5c Beacon on this Papua cover were removed, one would have a copy cancelled Sydney, Australia on March 19, 1930 (Fig. 43). In later years, this would be considered an unusual collectors item and very scarce. Can you imagine someone in the future finding a U. S. stamp issued for domestic air mail used in Australia? One wonders if the Sydney, New South Wales cancellation on U. S. C11 ever could be satisfactorily explained at a future time. Some philatelic authorities probably would call such a cancellation fraudulent.

Catapult Covers

In 1929, a new experiment was tried with transatlantic mail. A seaplane was put aboard some large ocean liners and within a day off shore, a plane was catapulted from the ship's deck. The purpose was to try to save one day in the transmission of mail by the use of air transport.

In retrospect, this practice might have come into wide use in later years were it not for non-stop trans-ocean flying between Europe and America that developed after World War II, which is so commonplace today.

Three countries tried this catapult mail—the United States, France and Germany. France began it in August and September 1928 from her luxury



Fig. 42. A combination cover with Papua C1 and the U. S. 5c Beacon air mail stamp. The American stamp dealer who prepared such covers did not provide for sufficient prepayment so the covers were not flown.



Fig. 43. If the 5c Beacon air mail stamp had been soaked off the Fig. 42 Papua cover, later it would be difficult to properly explain the reason for a copy of U. S. C11 being cancelled "Sydney, Australia." Some skeptics might incorrectly brand this cancel as counterfeit.

liner, the Ile-de-France. A seaplane was placed aboard and within one day of land, it was catapulted from the ship, carrying special air mail. France issued two specially overprinted stamps for this service, and they (France C3 and C4) have become one of this European country's most valuable set of stamps. Look them up in the catalogue.

The 5c Beacon air mail stamp also was used on these 1928 "Ile-de-France" catapult flights. One that is illustrated (Fig. 44) was cancelled August 17, 1928 for which the same stamp dealer, A. C. Roessler, prepared a specially printed cover.

Another "Ile-de-France" cover shown (Fig. 45) also sent by Roessler, is cancelled September 7, 1928. This latter experiment was unsuccessful. The arrow on this cover points to a small two-line rubberstamp reading: "Mail Rescued at Sea From Plane/Abandoned 400 Miles from Paris." This "Ile-

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Fig. 44. Ile-de-France catapult cover cancelled August 17, 1928.

de-France" cover is backstamped "Paris, France, Gard du Nord Station, September 13, 1928," indicating that the rescued mail took almost one week to deliver. This experiment, which was made at sea on September 11, 1928, marked the last flight from the "Ile-de-France."

The S. S. Leviathan of the United States Lines also tried some catapult flights in the summer of 1929 (Fig. 46). The first cover (Fig. 47) is cancelled "New York June 9, 1929." From the printing on the envelope, one sees that the mail was delayed. The ship was due in New York on June 7th. The letter enclosed is of interest because it was written by the Leviathan's captain, who wrote: "In the not too distant future when mail pick-ups at sea are a daily occurrence, you may be pleased to recall that this, the first, brought you a message. (signed) Giles Chester Stedman." Forecasting often is hazardous, they say, and in this instance the future was not correctly forecast.

The cachet used on Leviathan mail because of its large size usually was applied to the back of the covers as the illustration shows (Fig. 48).

A second S. S. Leviathan cover is shown (Fig. 49) because it bears both a French stamp and a copy of the United States 5c Beacon. This was obviously used on the eastbound trip. The French postage stamp is cancelled



Fig. 45. The September 1928 "Ile-de-France" flight that ended unsuccessfully shown by the rubber-stamp indicated with the arrow.

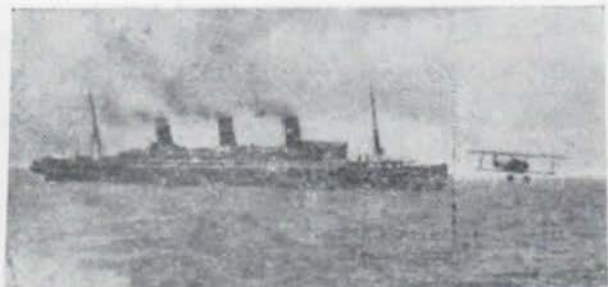


Fig. 46. A photograph taken in 1929 when the plane was leaving the S.S. Leviathan at sea to fly the mail to New York, N. Y.

"Cherbourg-Maritime July 9, 1929" when the ship left France. On leaving the S. S. Leviathan, the 5c Beacon stamp was cancelled "U. S.-Ger (German) Sea Post. July 14, 1929."

The two German ocean liners, the "Europa" and "Bremen," also used catapult mail in the summer of 1929 and 1930. Two examples with Beacon stamps are shown (Figs. 50 and 51).

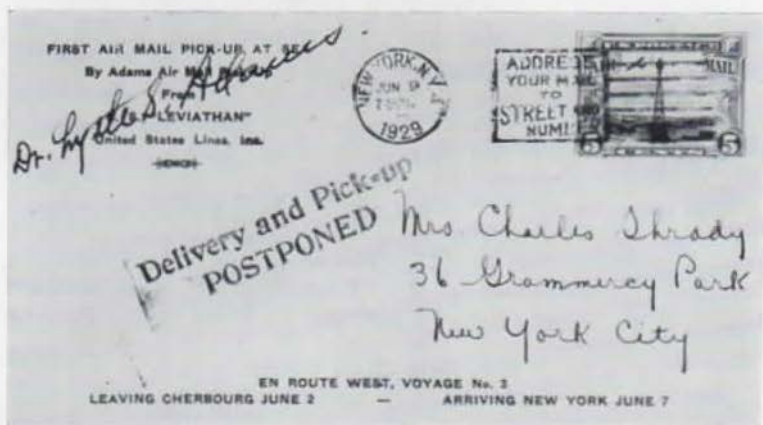


Fig. 47. The first U.S. catapult mail from the S.S. Leviathan.



Fig. 48. The large rubberstamped cachet of the S.S. Leviathan.



Fig. 49. S.S. Leviathan Ship-to-Shore mail with the stamp of France cancelled July 7, 1929 when the ship left Cherbourg and the U.S. 5c Beacon cancelled July 14.

Combination Covers

Covers used in combination with U.S. Special Delivery or Postage Due stamps add interest to a specialized collection of the 5c Beacon air mail. Not too many covers are to be found with the Special Delivery stamp combination (Fig. 52). Most people were content to use the faster air post service. But to insure the fastest delivery, a Special Delivery stamp would do the trick. One should remember that in 1934, the United States introduced a special 16-cents stamp covering both air mail and special delivery service.

Postage Due stamps are found mostly on First Flight covers from San Juan, Puerto Rico on January 9, 1929. The 5c Beacon air mail stamp could not pay the fee from Puerto Rico to Key West, Florida, because the rate was 12 cents. Therefore, 7 cents postage due was collected (Fig. 53). Other uses are known.

U. S. First Flight Covers

During the period of time when the 5c Beacon air mail stamp was current, aviation both domestically and to Latin America was expanding at an accelerated pace.

As the various cities in the United States were linked by an air mail service, a special cachet was applied to the cover with a rubberstamp showing that it went by the first flight. Contract Air Mail flight covers, popularly called C. A. M.'s, are those flown on the domestic routes. The foreign air mail route



Fig. 50. (Left) A block of four of C11 used on the German S.S. Bremen Catapult flight in 1929. Fig. 51. (Right) First Catapult service from the German S.S. Europa in September 1930.



Fig. 52. (Left) The Beacon air mail and a Special Delivery stamp. Fig. 53. (Right) A combination use of the 5c Beacon air mail stamp with U. S. Postage Due stamps.

covers are called F. A. M.'s.

A collector has no trouble in finding C11 on hundreds of C. A. M. covers and many F. A. M.'s as well. The examples of each shown were selected because they were on both the C. A. M. (Fig. 54) and F. A. M. Flights Number one (Fig. 55).

The supply of these C. A. M. and F. A. M. covers is great, far greater than the demand. The writer finds little interest in collecting most of them, except to show a few examples.

Unusual Covers

Of course, unusual covers can be found using the 5c Beacon air stamp. One happens to be a first day use of the new 5c rate on August 1, 1928, that was sent by the British Steamer, S. S. Aquitania, to London, England. It carried 11 cents postage—two 5c Beacon air mail stamps and a one-cent regular postage stamp. Due to a U. P. U. agreement for air mail from one country to another, 11 cents was the correct prepaid rate. Thus, when this cover reached Europe on August 9, 1928, it was sent on to its destination in Germany by air mail (Fig. 56).

The cancellations on this cover via London to Germany also are interesting. The 1c regular postage stamp has the usual town and date circular cancellation. But the two Beacon air mail stamps have long and wide diagonal lines that appear shaped somewhat like a Zeppelin. It could not be determined if these odd cancellations were applied first in New York, or on board the British steamer, or finally in Germany. But no cancellation similar to these has been seen nor is it described as one used by the United States in any philatelic literature. The cover's printed cachet shows the famous Lindbergh.

A second unusual cover was one used by a Spokane, Washington lumber



Fig. 54. (Left) A C.A.M. Route No. 1 cover. Fig. 55. (Right) An example of a F.A.M. Route No. 1 cover.



Fig. 56. A first day of use cover, August 1, 1928 from New York via steamer to London, England; on to Berlin, Germany and forwarded by air mail to its destination in Germany.



Fig. 57. (Left) A piece of wood was used to mail this, and (Right) the advertising that appeared on the back.

dealer for advertising purposes. It was mailed on a piece of wood cut to the size of a regular postal card. Its front and back are illustrated (Fig. 57).

(To Be Continued)

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