

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XXIII, No. 1

July 1979

**Edited by
Philip Silver**

863 Red Oaks Drive
Elberon, N.J. 07740

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**A PUBLICATION OF THE
AMERICAN AIR MAIL SOCIETY**



SUPPLEMENT TO THE AIRPOST JOURNAL, JULY, 1979

GERMANY: THE FIRST REGENSBURG FLIGHT DAYS, OCTOBER 1912

By Horst Aisslinger
Aalen, Wurtf., West Germany

The catalogue of the international stamp show IBRA '73 (Munich) contains my detailed account of those Bavarian airmail events that were held from 1912 to 1914 with royal permission and generously supported by the Bavarian post office.

Here I want to describe some details of an early Bavarian airmail, an event of 1912 that has been noted in airmail catalogs for almost 60 years.

Introduction

A Madame Reichard was the first aerialist in Bavaria, making a balloon ascent at Munich during the October festival of 1820.

The history of aeronautics was notably influenced by Bavarian activities well before the turn of the century, e.g., by the balloon factory of A. Riedinger at Augsburg and by inventions of airship builder von Parseval. When no heavier-than-air machine had yet left the ground, Augsburg gas balloons had already flown large distances. At Munich, von Parseval was devising novel construction techniques for balloons. His work later culminated in the so-called blimp, a light structure that is still considered to be a genial technical invention.

The old city of Regensburg on the Danube is well known to aerophilatelic researchers as the birth place of semi-official airmail stamps of 1912, 1925, and 1930, always much in demand and relatively rare.

October 11-13, 1912

Among the most difficult areas for the collector of early German airmails are the documents and semi-official airmail stamps that resulted from the Regensburg meet. (See Figure 1.)

Whereas French pilots, for example, had already had enormous air successes and records to their credit by 1912, German air activities lagged far behind those of other countries, except for airships. That is proven again by the Regensburg event, organized to advance the skills of airplane pilots.

A "flight contest" was announced for October 11, to take place on the horse-race track in the Prufening district. Thousands of visitors gathered not only at the track but also on the heights of Winzer and on other nearby hills, southeast of Prufening. The local paper, *Regensburger Zeitung*, noted on October 12 that the crowds might be termed "tremendous."

Though the 11th was a Friday, many stores, offices, and workshops were closed to let people go to the show. The paper stated further: "In fact, the organizers of the meet, the Regensburg automobile club and the Chamber of Commerce, took in more in entry fees yesterday than on a racing day."

The first pilot flew his Grade plane around the track in the afternoon. There was great jubilation that he could stay up so long. He was a Berlin aerial instructor, Paul Schwandt. Of course, his "endurance flight" had to last for quite a while: he stayed aloft four minutes and 15 seconds, but only



Fig. 1. The horse-race track at Regensburg, the site of the 1912 flights. with considerable exertion. He performed several similar feats that day, once even attaining a height of 540 meters, about 1800 feet.

He took along a passenger on each of the subsequent flights, one of them being the head of the aerial sports commission, Lt. von Pigenot, (See Figure 3.) Despite all efforts, however, Schwandt did not succeed in raising above 100 feet when carrying passengers. Still, he was a German Pilot in a German-built plane, quite a success for that time, and there was much applause. (At that time the French had already flown across half of Europe in their planes.)



Fig. 2. Pilot Hans Georgi with a Grade plane.

Pilot Georgi (Figure 2) also appeared with a Grade plane, but complained that the propeller "didn't pull enough." He immediately exchanged it for a new and larger one, which helped him get off the ground.

The Grade machine of pilot Schaefer hadn't yet been unloaded from the railway wagon at the station that first afternoon. Still, the public was grateful for the excitement of this air meet, the like of which it had never experienced before.

The Airmail Flight

I don't know whether the Prince of Thurn and Taxis, who made an appearance with a large retinue at the track, mentally connected his ancestors' means of mail transport with the revolution that was just then beginning to show its first signs. No matter, his interest was intense.

Most important for aerophilatelists is the fact that a small bag of mail with "flight cards" was taken along by Schwandt on his last flight of the day, towards evening "when it was already getting dark," on a flight "at a considerable height."

The paper mentions expressly that, after the flight, a postman received the jettisoned mail bag for official postal transport.

The aerophilatelist notes with pride that a mailbag was tossed out; but with not much pride that small sandbags were tossed from both airplanes in competition for a prize in precision bombing. If only Schwandt and Georgi had been allowed to throw out more mailbags instead of performing bombing exercises!

One of the aerophilatelic enigmas is why precisely von Pigenot, the military observer, was chosen to hold the mail bag on his one flight, instead of throwing "sand bombs into the target area." Flight passengers must have been rather uncomfortable, being strapped to the fuselage by leather belts. In addition, Lt. von Pigenot sustained serious leg injuries from the exceptionally hard landing.

Whether the mail should therefore be classed as crash mail is left to the individual taste of the collector.

Also, whether or not more mail was carried on the next two meet days in the pilots' pockets is unknown.

The Mail

Anyhow, a single mailbag was carried, a fact that is apparent when



Fig. 3. Lt. von Pigenot (seated at front) taken aloft as a passenger by pilot Paul Schwandt on Oct. 11, 1912 Regensburg flight.

one looks at aerophilatelic collections. The cards are rarely seen. In view of the incidental and subordinate publicity for airmail, compared with the hullabaloo made about all other events of this meet, the need for only one small mailbag is not surprising.

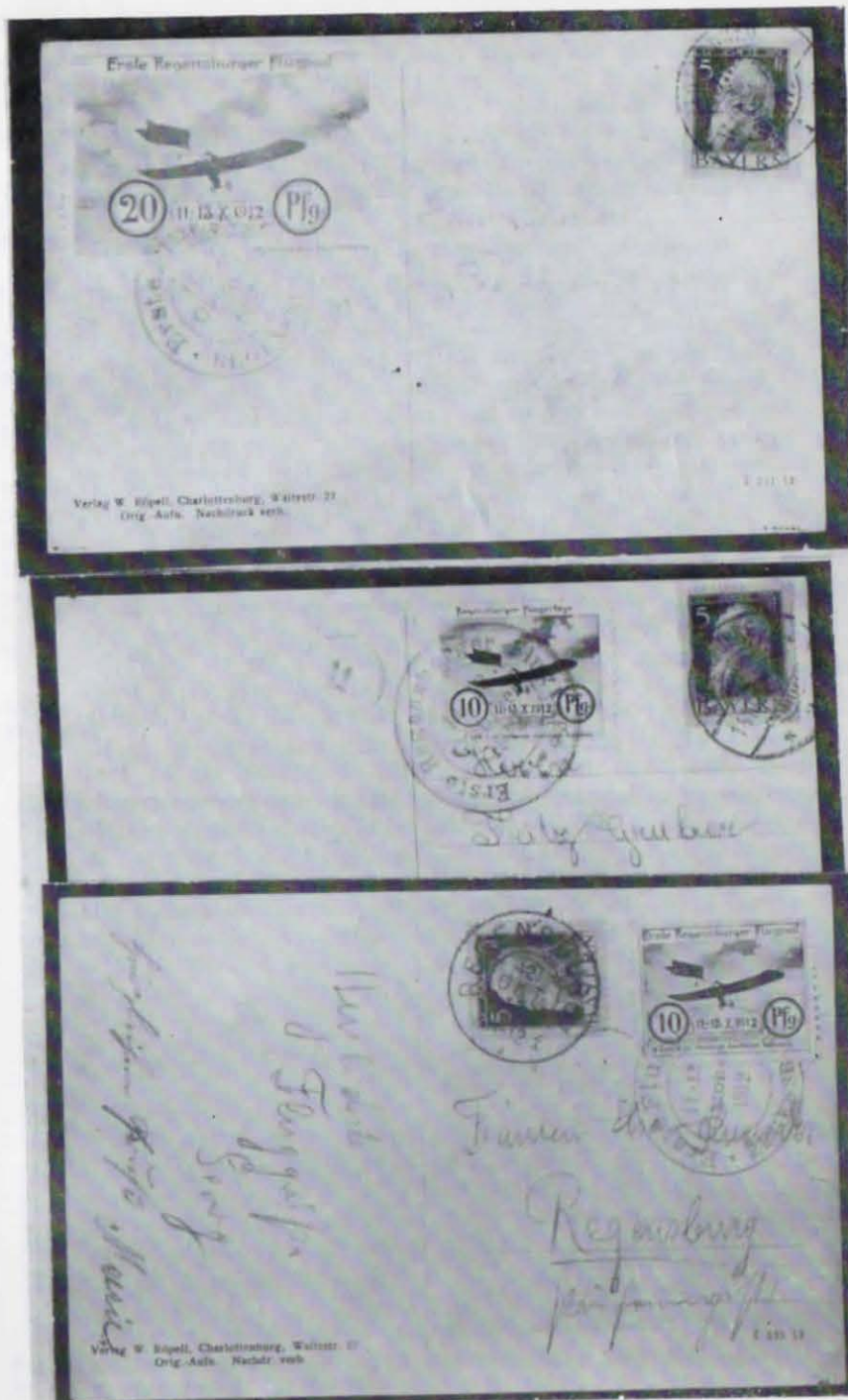
The only spot where the airmail was specifically advertised, was the editorial of the **Regensburger Zeitung** of October 11, 1912, page 4. Regensburg philatelist Eisenbeiss rediscovered this important source, quoted here in detail:

Airmail. On the occasion of its meet of October 11-13, Regensburg, too, will have its "first airmail." Collecting of air-mail stamps will undoubtedly have a future, because past airmails were of surprising interest to old and young. Earlier ones included that of "Rhine and Main", carried by the "Schwabens;" it ended prematurely with the destruction of the "Schwabens." Among others was one at this season's Leipzig folk festival. The current "Munich Airmail" is quite popular, although the airmail stamp is rather expensive at 25 Pfennig. **Now Regensburg will have the second Bavarian airmail.** In view of the great interest for the "Rhine and Main" airmail, for which stamps up to 3 Marks were issued, we might assume that the demand at Regensburg will be equally great, particularly as the local air-mail stamps of the smaller size cost only 10 Pfennig and the larger ones 20 Pfennig. The stamps can be affixed to any card, whether postal, picture, or **officially** issued by the air enterprise. In addition to the airplane stamp, the card must carry postal franking of 5 Pfennig (10 Pfennig for abroad). All cards with flight stamps will be transported by air mail and then sent to the post office. The flight stamps may be bought at the local stationers for 10 and 20 Pfennig, and at the aerodrome from the official viewcard salesmen. Cards with stamps affixed must be placed in the boxes that are clearly marked for that purpose (not post-office boxes), placed throughout the city and at the aerodrome. They will be properly posted. The airmail stamps will be canceled with special airmail cachets. Acquisition of the stamps and their use on the first "Regensburg Airmail" is highly recommended, because there is no doubt that these early airmail stamps will be good collecting investments in the future, as airmails develop, considering the tremendous interest shown even today.

Regensburgers didn't trust this prophecy. The private promoters undoubtedly had hoped to sell more of the airmail cards and stamps, for their program mentions: "Interested persons and collectors, buy airmail cards! Will be carried by pilots and canceled."

The airmail cards show the pictures of pilots Hans Grade, Otto Schaefer, Paul Schwandt, and Hans Georgi. The cards had to carry both regular and special stamps. (See Figure 4.) The value of the latter could be either 10 or 20 Pfennig. The vignettes, two types at 10 Pfennig (Figures 5 and 6) and one at 20 Pfennig, were produced photographically, perforated and gummed.

I don't know why the Regensburg philatelic leaders of that era denounced the airmail so harshly; why they went after the organizers of it



from the beginning, as soon as the plan became known; and why they agitated so constantly that the post office should immediately object to the use of these stamps. So much about the philatelic chieftains of that day, from an aerophilatelic point of view. It is all the more to the credit of the post office that it accepted the mailbag and distributed the cards properly.

As for the markings, especially prepared by the meet promoters, Stenger and Matzenau report only one cachet, figure "a," in their airmail catalogue of 1921. Much of the other literature notes two, figures "a" and "b." The excellent 1934 airmail catalogue of Theodore Champion lists three, "a," "b," and "c." In the past few decades I have found yet another type, shown here as "d," on various card cut-outs. (See Figure 7.)

I have not yet been able to determine whether "d" is genuine or a fake. Perhaps these lines will encourage the greatest expert in this area, Consul H. W. Sieger of Lorch in Wurttemberg, to pass on to readers of this magazine his special knowledge concerning forged stamps of this meet and the nature of cancel "d." Our mutual friend, the late Henry M. Goodkind, would no doubt be grateful to him, were he still alive.

Aerophilatelic Summary:

1. Excellent forgeries exist of the stamps.
2. Every flown and postally used card must carry a Bavarian 5 (interior) or 10 Pfennig (exterior) stamp in addition to an airmail stamp.
3. Because these covers are easily faked, an expert should be consulted when buying.

Airmail Stamps

Manufacture

The stamps were not printed but prepared as photographs by the Photographic Art Institute M. Laifle & Co., Regensburg. As Sieger expressed it, they are "little perforated photos that were affixed to postcards."

Paper

The photographic paper is thick, shiny, and sometimes has a slight pink tinge.

Color and Types

The two types of 10 Pfennig stamps are black. One reads "First Regensburg Airmail," the other "Regensburg Flight Days." The large 20 Pfennig stamp is dark brown.

Sheet Sizes and Composition

Both 10 Pfennig types are said to have been prepared in sheets of 15, whereas the 20 Pfennig came in sheets of 6, all without sheet margins.

Whereas neither full nor part sheets of the 20 Pfennig had been known up to a few decades ago, blocks of 4 and horizontal pairs have been seen since the end of World War II. The former show a narrow, blank gutter between the two horizontal pairs. I do not remember reading about such gutters in the literature from before the second World War. Nor have I ever seen one of the stamps on a card with gutter still attached.

Quantities

Of each type of 10 Pfennig, 200 copies are said to have been prepared; and about 100 of the 20 Pfennig.

 **Figs. 4, 5 and 6. Regensburg flight card with 20 Pr. special stamp; flight cards with both types of 10 Pf. stamp. Basic difference is in inscription at top margin of stamp.**

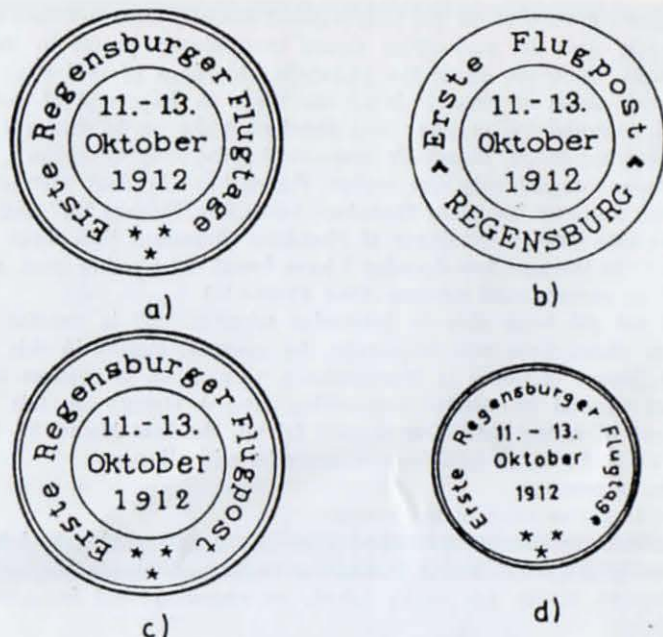


Fig. 7. The four types of flight cachets.

Gum, Shiny and smooth.

Perforation, 11.

Sales

The vignettes were sold at stationers in Regensburg and by the "official viewcard salesmen" at the race track, not at the post offices.

Rates

Because these vignettes were means of admittance and tokens of contribution, it was left to the individual as to which value was used on a card.

Rarity, according to Sieger, is "quite extraordinary."

Forgeries, made in the period 1920-1930, are very dangerous.

Official Cards

Subjects

Since all pilots were connected with, and all planes built by Grade, the four official cards show Grade, his employees and products.

Paul Schwandt was his best pilot. Hans Georgi was soon to become the owner of a pilots' school at Leipzig-Mockau. Georgi married one of the first German women pilots, Martha Behrbohm, and later became known as the "flying husband" all over Germany.

Manufacture

The cards were prepared by Grade's contract printer, W. Roppel Co. at Charlottenburg, near Berlin.

Sales

An unknown number of official cards was sold at stationers' and at the track.

(Continued on page 16)

The ZR-3 Trial Flights in Germany in 1924

By Roland F. Kohl

Zurich, Switzerland

When World War 1 came to an end, the German Navy still had 15 dirigibles. Six of them were destroyed by their crews; nine (plus two built in 1919 and 1921) had to be delivered to France and Italy. The United States, at that time, was not interested in its share of the war spoils. But when Dr. Eckner — the spirit of the Zeppelin idea after the death of the old count in 1917 — proposed to build a new and bigger ship for the U.S. Navy, as partial payment for wartime damages, the offer was accepted, the only conditions being that the ship had to be delivered at one of the naval air bases in the U.S.A. The risk was obvious: if Eckner failed to deliver the ship, the German Government would have to pay the corresponding amount in gold currency in addition to the construction cost. But Eckner gave his guarantee, using the entire assets of the Zeppelin Company as collateral. He was sure it could be done, and he had no other choice if he wanted to keep the Friedrichshafen works alive.

Construction of the 660-foot long, 90-foot diameter dirigible with a capacity of 2,000,000 cubic feet began in 1922. Five 40 horsepower Maybach engines were to give it a cruising speed of 68 miles per hour, a maximum of 79. To its builders, it was the "LZ 126;" to the Americans, it was the ZR-3, the U.S. Navy's third rigid airship. Actually, it was the second, because ZR-2, built in Great Britain, broke in two during the first test flight killing the entire crew; ZR-1 with the "Shenandoah," which crashed in September 1925. ZR-3 was completed in August 1924 and accepted by the American Naval representatives in Friedrichshafen. The first ascent took place on August 27, 1924. For 2½ hours, the dirigible cruised over the Lake Constance area.

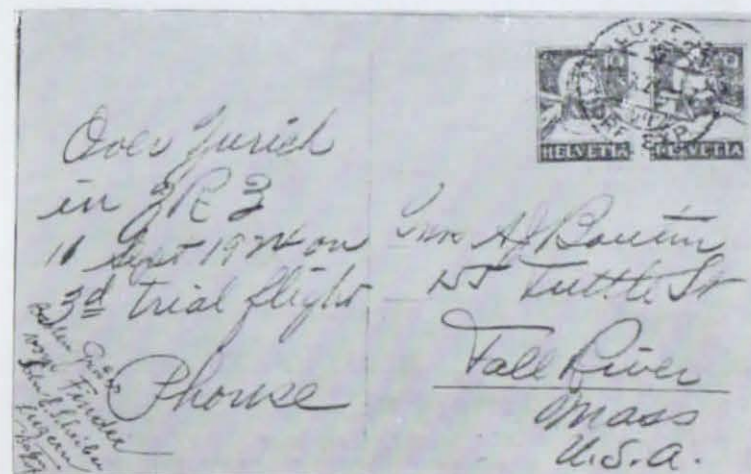


Fig. 1. Card dropped over Lucerne, Sept. 11, 1924.



Fig. 2. Card dropped over Hannover, Sept. 25, 1924.

Four more trial flights were made before the dirigible took off on its Atlantic flight. Dr. Eckener was the Commander on all flights, supported by Captains E. A. Lehmann, Hans Flemming, Hans von Schiller, Max Pruss and a crew of approximately twenty. Officers of the U.S. Navy and, occasionally, members of the German Government participated on the flights, as well as several scientists, engineers, experts and journalists, up to a total of 85 persons. There were no paying passengers and no mail carried.

The writer is in possession of an original letter written in 1939 by A. J. Boutin of Pasadena, Calif. to the well-known Zeppelin collector G. W. Bartlett. The letter states in part, "I was at the time connected with the Office



Fig. 3. Card dropped over Stettin, Sept. 26, 1924.

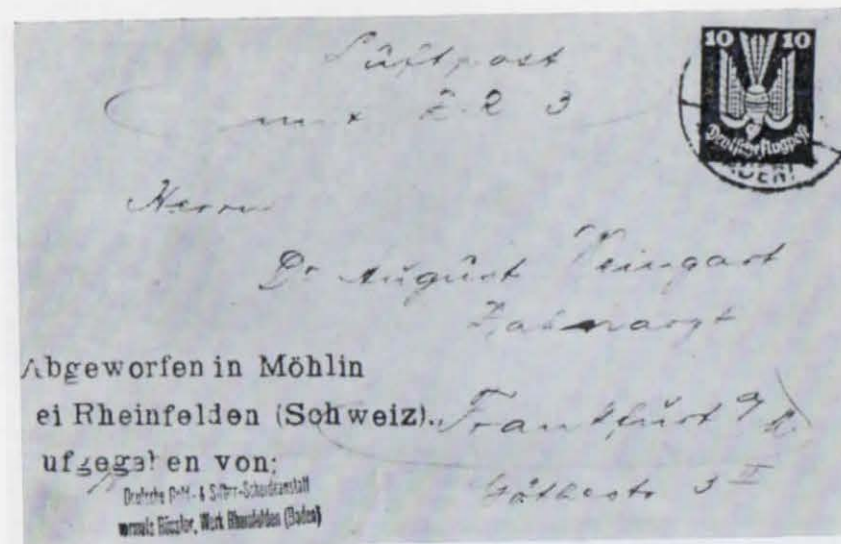


Fig. 4. Card dropped over Mohlin, Oct. 12, 1924.

of Inspector of Naval Aircraft at Friedrichshafen, Germany. Regarding the story of the test flights of the ZR-3 in Germany . . . it was on the flight to Switzerland that Max Pruss (the Commander of the late "Hindenburg") and I got the idea of dropping mail, so we had cards on board and we wrote them, having no stamps, we just dropped them, and you will note that they bear Switzerland stamps, in addition the bag which was recovered near Lucerne, were autographed by the finder I believe it to be off hand Sohn Schreiber, also his address was on same. I later sent the boy a transatlantic

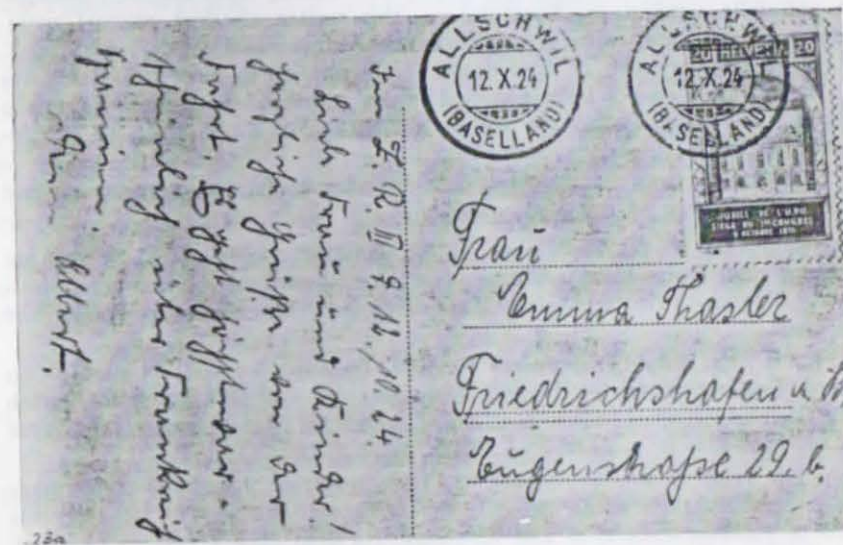


Fig. 5. Card dropped over Allschwil, Oct. 12, 1924.



Fig. 6. Card dropped over the Azores, Oct. 13, 1924.

cover, plus a picture of the ship autographed by Dr. Eckener for his good work. The mail was dropped in the Swiss mail boxes and the Swiss Government placed the stamps on them, with no charges . . ." Figure 1 shows the card dropped by A. J. Boutin over Lucerne; Figure 2, another card dropped by him over Hannover. But it was not only Mr. Boutin who dropped mail from the ZR-3 flying over Germany and Switzerland. We know of a few other cards which have come up at auctions or were shown among other Zeppelin material at philatelic exhibitions. Furthermore, this writer checked several newspapers of the time which are still available at the City Library of Zurich. Surprisingly, a number of mail drops are mentioned in these press releases which so far have not been reported in the philatelic literature. If anyone of my readers can supply me with a photograph of these cards, so far unknown, it will be greatly appreciated.

Following, is a list of the test flights with indication of the route and mail drops known or reported to exist:

2nd Trial Flight, September 6, 1924. Duration 8½ hours, 85 persons on board. Friedrichshafen - Constance - Munich - Regensburg - Nurnberg - Stuttgart - Singen - Friedrichshafen. Mail drops are reported from Munich and Stuttgart.

3rd Trial Flight, September 11, 1924. Duration 8 hours, 74 persons on board. Friedrichshafen - Constance - Schaffhausen - Basel - Lucerne - Zurich - St. Gallen - Friedrichshafen. Mail drops are known from Lucerne (see Figure 1), reported also from Basel and Zurich.

4th Trial Flight, September 13, 1924. Duration 7 hours cruising over the Lake Constance area. The purpose of this flight was to take various tests of wireless telegraphy and telephony. No drop mail known or reported.
(Continued on page 15)

More on U.S. Air Mail Markings

By Philip Silver

In the January 1977 and January 1978 issues of the **Aero Philatelist Annals**, are two articles I wrote on United States air mail markings. Since these articles appeared, new information has been supplied by our members or "discovered" additionally in my own collection.

On pages 50, 51 and 52 of the January 1977 issue, for example, a number of "Air Mail Service Designation" markings were listed. It was indicated that most appeared to be of private origin, although several might have been prepared by the Post Office Department. Those listings were not meant to be all-inclusive. Rather, an attempt was made to show the most common markings found on covers during the early period. So that a basis of near-completeness may be attained, I now list additions to the category named above, as well as to the other sections of air mail markings found in that original article.

"Air Mail Service Designation" Markings

Aerial Service	Via Aerial Mail
Aerial Mail Service	VIA AERIAL MAIL SERVICE
AERIAL MAIL VIA PHILADELPHIA	via Aerial Service
AERO MAIL	VIA AERO MAIL
AERO MAIL DELIVERY	VIA AEROPLANE MAIL
Aeroplane Mail Service	Via Aeroplane Mail
Aeroplane Postal Service	VIA - AEROPLANE
Air Mail	via Aeroplane Post
Air Mail Post	VIA AIR MAIL
AIR PLANE SERVICE	Via Air Mail
Air Route	Via Air Mail Service
Air Service	Via Airplane
By Aeroplane	VIA AIRPLANE MAIL SERVICE
By Aeroplane Mail	VIA AIRPLANE POST
By Airplane	Via 1st Aeroplane Mail
By Airplane Mail	VIA NEW YORK AEROPLANE
First Airplane letter	Via Seaplane
First Airplane Mail	Washington Aeroplane Mail

At the bottom of page 50 of the January 1977 article, I listed a number of markings which appear to have had official Post Office Department origin. To those, we may add the following:

AERIAL MAIL. ----- VIA PHILADELPHIA (13 dashes)

AERIAL MAIL. ----- VIA New York (15 dashes)

VIA Aeroplane (Cleveland, Ohio)

The markings found on covers which crossed the Pacific Ocean should be augmented as follows:

VIA CLIPPER

CLIPPER (heavy ½ inch letters, double underlined)

There are two corrections to this section which appeared at the bottom of page 51 in the January issue:

1. The marking VIA CLIPPER (double letters) should also be indicated as being double underlined.
2. In the marking shown as VIA TRANS-PACIFIC AIR MAIL, the last two words should have been hyphenated thus: AIR-MAIL

Several additional transatlantic air mail markings have been noted:

TRANS-ATLANTIC AIR MAIL

VIA DIXIE CLIPPER

Also to be included are two additional military markings:

- 1942 W.D. ESSENTIAL OFFICIAL AIR MAIL
P. R. O. PACKET NO
CLEARED .. By
A. G. O. DISPATCH NO
(all in a rectangular box)
- " BY O.W.I. BOMBER POUCH

Additional "Late" or "No Connection" markings

- 1928 Dispatched by rail to avoid delay
- " Forwarded by train to expedite delivery.
- 1929 Received too late for dispatch on C.A.M. Rt. 9
- " Sent by rail from San Antonio, Texas to avoid delay
- " NO FLIGHT
- 1930 DISPATCHED BY TRAIN TO AVOID DELAY
- " TOO LATE
(N.Y.P.O. VARICK ST. STA.)
- 1931 For'd by train on account of delay of Air Plane
- 1932 Dispatched by rail from Dallas, Tex. to advance arrival at destination.
- 1938 This AIR MAIL LETTER arrived after LAST DELIVERY TRIP Saturday. The fact that it was sent AIR MAIL indicates its importance. Had it borne a SPECIAL DELIVERY STAMP it would have been delivered promptly. Please advise the sender accordingly.
- 1940 Flight Canceled
Pouch killed at A.M.F. St. Louis, Mo.
- " Flight canceled at St. Louis account of weather. Mails given next dispatch

Additional "Short Paid" markings

- 1927 Insufficient postage for Air Mail.
- " INSUFFICIENT POSTAGE
FOR AIR MAIL
- 1932 Not paid for United States Air Mail Service
- 1940 "Insufficient postage for Air Mail. Dispatched as ordinary first-class mail."
- 1943 Insufficient postage for Air Mail
- 1944 Insufficient postage for Airplane Mail
Chicago, Ill. N.S. No. (all letters in italics)
- 1945 INSUFFICIENT AIR MAIL POSTAGE
- 1953 NOT IN AIR MAIL
Insufficient Postage
Chicago 7, Ill.
- 1957 NOT IN AIR MAIL

Additional "Miscellaneous" markings

- 1930 By Air Mail to Exchange office
- 1971 NOT SUFFICIENT DISTANCE
FOR AIRMAIL

ZR-3 TRIAL FLIGHTS —

(Continued from page 12)

5th Trial Flight, September 25/26, 1924. Duration 36 hours, 70 persons on board. Friedrichshafen - Frankfurt - Kassel - Hannover - Bremen - Hamburg - Flensburg - Kiel - Malmoe, Sweden — Copenhagen, Denmark — Stettin - Staaken - Berlin - Dresden - Chemnitz - Nurnberg - Augsburg - Friedrichshafen. Mail drops known: Hannover, Stettin and Staaken (see Figures 2 and 3). Mail drops reported: Frankfurt, Flensburg (the birth place of Dr. Eckener), Braunschweig.

The Atlantic flight to Lakenhurst, N.J. was performed from October 12 to 15, 1924, without any incident. The participating members of the U.S. Commission were Capt. George W. Steele, Commander Jacob H. Klein, Major Kennedy and Commander Sidney Kraus. The crew consisted of 28 persons under the Command of Dr. Eckener. Official mail was carried from Germany (148 kilograms in 7 mail bags) and from Danzig (amount unknown).

A rather mysterious mail drop was made over Mohlin, 12 miles from Basel, shortly after take-off. Several cards of this drop have been inspected by this writer. They all bear a three-line, rubber stamp reading "Dropped over Mohlin near Rheinfelden (Switzerland). Dispatched by:" plus the rubber stamp of a German industrial company. (See Figure 4.) It can be assumed that this mail was picked up in Switzerland by an employee of this firm located on the German side of the Rhine river. Since probably no stamps were affixed, he took the mail to his company, where this special rubber

stamp was prepared and applied. Stamps were probably affixed by the company and the mail placed in a letter box in the German town of Rheinfelden. The fact that different dates appear in the cancellation postmark (22.10.24 — 14.11.24) cannot be explained.

Another mail drop of the same date (October 12, 1924) is known from Allschwil, a suburb of Basel. These cards exist either with Swiss franking (See Figure 5) or with German franking. The latter are cancelled in Lorrach, Germany.

The last mail drop during the Atlantic flight was done above the Azores. Since no stamps were affixed, this mail was transmitted to the German Vice Consulate which was located in Angra do Heroismo on the island of Terceira. The Consulate applied its official cachet to the cards, affixed the Portuguese stamps and dispatched the cards to the addressees. (See Figure 6)

The ZR-3 touched down in Lakehurst, N.J., on October 15, 1924 at 9:37 AM. A few weeks later, it was christened the U.S.S. Los Angeles "because it has come to us from overseas like an angel of peace," said Secretary of the Navy Wilbur.

REGENSBURG FLIGHT DAYS —

(Continued from page 8)

Non-Official Cards

Sales

Non-official card salesmen operated at the track. It was common in those days to sell picture cards at any kind of festival. Examples are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Significance

I have not seen any private cards with airmail admission stamps affixed. Nevertheless, interesting ones exist, on which visitors describe the meet to their friends. Dr. Max Kronstein calls such cards "indirect witnesses to aerophilatelic events."

Rarity

Private view cards are rare, so that one has to be especially lucky to find one in an old grab box, usually at a ridiculously low price.

The Markings

Procedures

The airmail stamps were not canceled officially. Whatever was collected from the special boxes in town and on the track were first stamped by the organizers on the airmail stamp, later postmarked officially on the postage stamp.

Manufacture

The rubber stamps were prepared privately for the organizers.

Types

They are illustrated as "a" through "d," but note what has been said about "d."

Color, violet.

Bavarian P.O. Circular Date Stamp

The official cancel is the normal Regensburg cds for October 12, 13, and 14. In addition, cards addressed locally show a small, black, circular postmark with a number, used within the local post office for distribution to the correct postal route, i.e., mailman.