

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

★ ★ A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY ★ ★

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FRANCE

Air Post Stationery of the Siege of Paris, 1870-71

By EMMETT PETER, Jr.

Most of us think of the aerogramme as a lightweight postal form devised in recent years to provide a convenient method of sending messages by air.

The Iraq air letter sheet of 1933 generally is credited with being the first aerogramme as we know it today. Many military air forms were issued and used during the second world war, and it was then the air letter sheet became established as a compact, desirable way to communicate by air.

The writer proposes to show, however, that government-approved and inspired aerogrammes had their real origin during the dark days of late 1870, when Paris was under the siege guns of the Prussians.

Well known are the "ballon monté" covers, flown over the heads of the Germans to keep open the line of communication between Parisians and the outside world. But little known are several varieties and sub-varieties of balloon letter sheets, printed on lightweight paper. On these forms, a space was provided for the message—then the form could be folded, addressed and sent on its way by "monté" (piloted) balloon.

Evolution of the Aerogramme

But before we examine these balloon-grammes, let us consider the various types of aerogrammes as they have evolved and how the balloon stationery fits into the pattern.



Fig. 1. Folded balloon aerogramme was transported by monte (mounted or piloted) balloon. This type is easily identified by the size of the box at right — 20 by 25mm.

The advantages of the aerogramme are twofold: First, the message is on a thin, light-weight paper, requiring less weight than an envelope and enclosure; secondly, the size is uniform, enabling the postal clerk to pack the bags compactly, conserving space.

The aerogramme can be divided into these three major classes:

1. Those issued by governments and sold in post offices bearing an impressed postage stamp or indication of value showing prepayment of the air post rate. This includes official forms indicating the prepayment of fees.
2. Those supplied by governments to postal patrons but without franking. The postage is paid by the addition of adhesive stamps by the sender.
3. Forms supplied by private printers, but which fill postal requirements and are accepted for mailing by post offices after the proper postage has been applied.

(Some aerogrammes of classification 2 have been sold by postal clerks over the counter with the stamps already affixed. Thus, these forms achieve the status of classification 1, since they are sold to the public with the franking power already a basic part of the sheet).

The Siege Aerogrammes

Now let us examine the "balloon monté" forms and see how they compare. There are two basic varieties of the form authorized and issued for civilian use. A third and rare type appears to have been intended for official use.

Here are the types that we have had the opportunity to examine:

Type 1 (See Fig. 1)

Color ink: black.

Paper: Two types of paper were used. A lightweight quadrille exists in lilac, green, rose and light blue. A batonné tissue paper has been noted in light blue.

Size: Varies from 201x264mm. to 207x260mm. (unfolded). We have noted one of considerably smaller size, 209x137mm., but this may have been trimmed from one of the larger sizes.

Type measurements: The word "MONTE" at left is 12mm. long. At right is a box 20x25mm. containing the inscription:

Affranchissement
OBLIGATOIRE



Fig. 2. A second type is shown here unfolded, with groups of patriotic slogans to the right and left of the address panel. This type can be identified by larger postage box at right of the arms — 21½x26mm.

FRANCE — ALGERIE
20 Centimes

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Taxe Ordinaire

(Required postage for France and Algeria, 20 centimes; foreign postage, affix stamps at the usual rate).

In the center is a coat of arms bearing flags, clasped hands and the French patriotic slogan, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." The bottom of the front panel quotes French postal regulations governing the balloon mail: "ART. 2. Le Poids des lettres expediees par

The highest price



ever paid for a single airmail stamp, \$11,500, was paid in a 1957 Harmer Rooke auction for the 25c on 10c "Black Honduras" (Scott #C12, cataloguing \$17,500). The previous record price of \$5,300 was paid in 1939 for this very stamp.

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les aerostats ne devra pas dépasser 4 grammes." (The weight of letters carried by airship must not exceed 4 grams). The first line of this regulation on Type 1 is 85mm. long.

To the left and right of the front panel are eight patriotic slogans, four on each side.

Type 2 (See Fig. 2)

This type also is printed in black ink. We have examined two copies. One is on a sage green quadrille paper and the other on an extremely light blue tissue paper. Both measure 208x131mm.

The setting differs from Type 1 in the following respects:

1. The word MONTÉ is now 13mm. wide instead of 12.
2. Box at right of arms now $21\frac{1}{2}$ x26mm. instead of 20x25mm.
3. Line beginning "ART. 2" is 87mm. long instead of 85mm.

The Le Pileur-Beaufond handbook of 1947 lists seven other types of privately-produced formula aerogrammes, all of which bear the inscription "Par Ballon Monté" and a box for affixing the necessary adhesive stamp. Le Pileur also lists eight types of private formula cards for the balloon-post, inscribed "Par Non Ballon Monte," "Par Ballon Libre" or "Correspondence Aerienne" (which appears on the reverse of one card). These forms can be classified as extremely scarce unused and rare flown. All conform to the requirements of the decrees establishing the balloon-post, but obviously are privately-produced without apparent inspiration of the government.

Type 3 (See Fig. 3)

The third (and rarest) type is a form 210x280mm. in black ink on thin white parchment-like paper. The inscriptions all are in script or italic script type. The words "PAR BALLON" are 26mm. long and the word "MONTÉ" $13\frac{1}{2}$ mm. long. The arms measure 29mm. between the tips of the flagstuffs. The line beginning "ART. 2" at bottom is 122mm. long. This form bears the inscription "Ministres des Finances" at the left of the coat of arms.

In his 1925 "Catalogue Historique et Descriptif des Timbres de la Poste Aerienne," Theodore Champion pictured and described an unused aerogramme of this "official" type, adding the following comment:

"This piece is extremely scarce unused; nor have we ever seen it used. The government contented itself with a first supply, moreover limited, and left the responsibility of meeting further public requirements to private enterprise."

However, eleven years prior to the publication of the Champion catalogue, Leon Chamboissier published a pamphlet, "La Poste a Paris pendant le Siege et sous la Commune," in which he illustrated a postally used and flown example of the official aerogramme. It bears the boxed handstamp "P. P.", but no adhesive stamp. Under the printed inscription "Ministres des Finances", the word "Service" appears in manuscript, together with a signature of the Receveur des Postes de Paris, No. 2. The message inside is official in nature and discusses the whereabouts of a letter from Pondichery, India, to a man identified only as M. W. C., Paris No. 2, general delivery.

The aerogramme is dated December 6, 1870.

M. Chamboissier notes that this aerogramme is "the greatest rarity up to now", with only one used example known. He adds that it was (at the time) in the collection of M. Pinheiro, described in the paper as "a great collector of Brazil."

The present whereabouts of this piece could not be learned by the author.

However, a second flown example is in the author's collection (Fig. 3). This aerogramme is of much earlier use, the message being dated October 2, 1870, and the postmark October 3, 1870.

The usage differs in only one respect from the December 6 aerogramme described by Chamboissier: it bears a 40 centime Ceres adhesive stamp, pasted over the "Ministres des Finances" inscription at the top left.

Significantly, both aerogrammes were sent by the same man—a post office official. More than two months separate their use—October 3 for one and December 6 for the



Fig. 3. Rarest type of folded balloon-letter. This flown example was used only a few days after inauguration of the balloon-post. It was franked by a 40 centime Ceres stamp which was pasted over the inscription, "Ministres des Finances." (Author's collection).

second usage. And these are the only two that have come to light.

How, then, can we explain the apparent discrepancy: On December 6, the aerogramme had franking power, while in the earlier use, a 40 centime stamp (double-rate, if you please) was affixed?

The explanation, we think, is simple and relates to the nature of the message conveyed on each occasion.

In the author's example, the message is addressed to Monsieur Baralean (Paul Louis), c/o Place de la Bourse, Marseille. It is backstamped Marseille 3 P. M. October 9, 1870.

The message is brief and sad:

"My dear Louis:

"Alphonse is dead—fallen in the great cause. I wish to console his poor father."

In this case, a postal official is notifying a friend or acquaintance of a death, which obviously is not the business of the Post Office Department.

In the second instance, however, the same official is writing about a lost letter from French India, and his inquiry is addressed to a colleague, the Postmaster at Marseille. There could be no question that this was official Post Office business.

This explanation is further strengthened by the fact that the December 6 aerogramme bears the manuscript notation, "Service," on both the address panel and above the message, while no such inscription appears on the earlier use.

The early use—only a few days after the balloon post was inaugurated—was more than likely carried aboard the balloon "L'Armand Barbes" which departed Paris at 11 A. M. on October 7. Another balloon, "Le Georges Sand", left five minutes later but being a private balloon it probably carried no mail. It is interesting to note that the "Barbes" had as a passenger Leon Gambetta, the French interior minister, and his secretary. The other balloon, "Le Georges Sand," carried two Americans as passengers who paid \$1,000 apiece to leave the beleaguered city by balloon. Both flights were subjected to Prussian rifle and cannon fire.

The later (December 6) flight was carried on either the balloon "Denis-Papin", released at 1 P. M. December 7, or "Armée de Bretagne", released at 6 A. M. the same day.

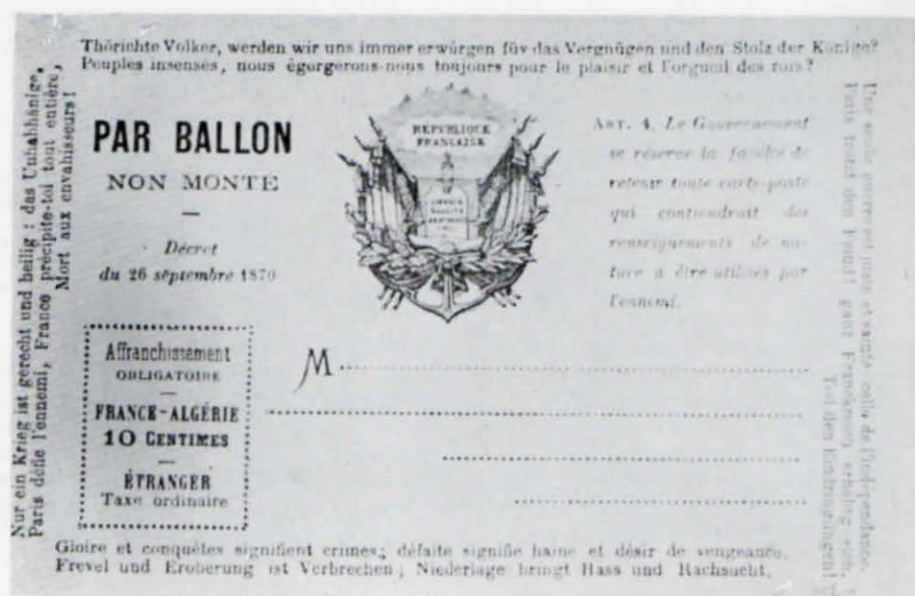


Fig. 4. An example of the balloon postcard. These were intended for unpiloted "free" balloon flights, but the experiment failed when the first bag fell into the enemy's hands. Note that the same patriotic slogans appear on the cards, but are arranged around the edges.

The Post Card (Fig. 4)

Another air postal stationery form of the Paris siege is a post card. This card is recognized and listed by "The Sanabria Air Post Catalogue" as France Number SPC1 in the section devoted to air postal stationery.

The card is of the same general design as the aerogrammes, bearing coat of arms and box showing the required postal rates (10 centimes for the cards). The patriotic slogans are arranged around the edges of the card—two lines at top and bottom, three lines on the sides. Overall measurement of the card is 115x71mm. It is printed in black ink on at least seven different colors of card, white, yellow, gray, violet, greenish blue, greenish yellow and rose.

There is an important difference to be noted in the service that was intended for the cards compared with that for the aerogrammes. The card bear the inscription "PAR BALLON NON MONTE" (non-piloted balloons), while all the letters and aerogrammes were to be sent by balloons with aeronauts (pilots).

However, this plan was abandoned after the first unmanned balloon, consisting of two thicknesses of wax paper, departed at noon on September 30, 1870, carrying postcards, but fell into the hands of the enemy after travelling only about two kilometers.

The postal cards are scarce unused and of considerable rarity used. It must be remembered that the postcard was a novelty in 1870. The first government-issue impressed postal card had been issued only one year before in Austria. The lack of privacy of the card was looked down upon by the public, and no doubt most messages entrusted to the cards were routine and impersonal.

The noted student of the French Balloon Post, Brainerd Kremer, of Upper Montclair, N. J., points out that: "It is interesting to note that although article 4 of the second decree mentions confiscation of post cards which might bear information useful to the enemy, no provision was ever made for censoring sealing letters." Did the French assume that the Prussians would be too gentlemanly to tear open a sealed letter and peek inside?

FRANCE 1870-71

The Balloon Post Decrees

In his monograph, "The Balloon Post of the Siege of Paris," Mr. Kremer quotes two decrees of the Government of National Defense under date of September 27, 1870.

FIRST DECREE

Article 1. The Postal Administration is authorized to send by means of balloons, ordinary letters addressed to France, Algeria and foreign countries.

Article 2. The weight of letters sent by balloon post must not exceed four grams. The rate for ordinary letters will remain at 20 centimes. Prepayment of postage is obligatory.

Article 3. The Finance Minister is charged with carrying out this decree.

SECOND DECREE

Article 1. The Postal Administration is authorized to carry by means of unpiloted "free" balloons post cards having the address on one side and the correspondence on the other.

Article 2. Post cards shall be of wove paper with a maximum weight of 3 grams. They shall measure 11 cm. in length and 7 cm. in width.

Article 3. Prepayment of postage on post cards is obligatory. The post card rate for France and Algeria is 10 centimes.

Article 4. The Government reserves the right to confiscate all post cards bearing information that might be useful to the enemy.

Article 5. The Finance Minister is charged with carrying out this decree.

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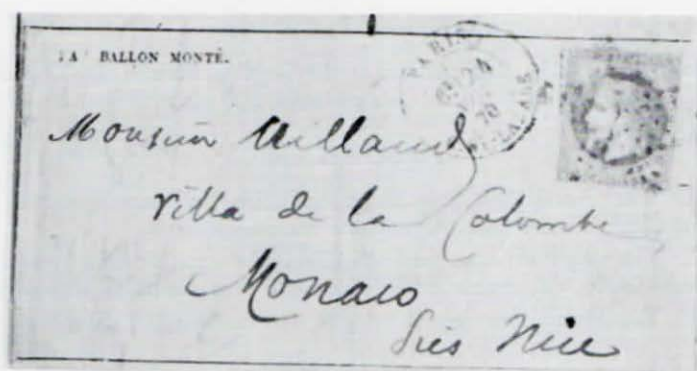


Fig. 5. Folded newspaper, "Gazette des Absents No. 10", was a form of privately-produced aerogramme. This example was flown aboard the "Ville d'Orleans", which was carried to Norway by unfriendly winds and crash-landed in the deep snow at Lifjeld. Mail abroad this balloon thus became the pioneers of what we know today as "crash covers."

Status of the Siege Stationery

There is little doubt that these aerogrammes and postcards both properly come under Classification 2—issues of the government, but without an impressed stamp or indication of franking. Thus, they are officially-sanctioned formula sheets or cards requiring the addition of adhesive stamps to validate them.

The lone exception is Type 3 which, as we have seen, had official franking power on at least one occasion.

However, the author was unable to find proof that any of these forms actually were printed on order of the Finance Minister. It is still possible that they were prepared by a private printer or printers to comply with government specifications and sold to the public through stationery stores and public places. This distinction might be considered quibbling, however, since (1) the government authorized them by specific decree and (2) provided the service by which they were flown from Paris by balloon. Because of the inscriptions on the forms (patriotic slogans and quotations of the government decrees), there is a strong indication that the officials of the regime had a hand in their preparation. For these reasons, the author considers them issues of the government to all practical purposes, even if they were produced by private printers without a specific written government order.

Gazettes des Absents

There is another classification of air letter—the form obviously produced privately but recognized by the government and accepted for air mail when properly franked.

The letter-journals (small folded newspapers) are in this category. They were produced by several newspapermen in Paris during the Siege specifically to be flown to unoccupied France and from there forwarded by train, coach or ship to their destination.

These newspaper forms (usually $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ inches prior to folding) ordinarily provided one blank page so that the sender could pen a personal message. Thus, they become a personal aerogramme.

One of the most interesting examples in the author's collection is the "Lettre-Journal de Paris—Gazette des Absents No. 10" dated November 23, 1870. (Fig. 5).

The editor reports the military situation and tells how Parisians are faring under the Siege. He gives a daily diary starting with November 19 and ending on November 22, 1870.

The balloon carrying Number 10 was the "La Ville d'Orleans," which left Paris on November 24 carrying 250 kilos (approximately 567 pounds) of mail. Our example is addressed to Monaco, and bears the backstamp of that city dated December 23, 1870. Thus, it was 29 days in transit.



Those 29 days were hectic ones. The flight of this balloon was detailed as follows by Mr. Kremer in his monograph:

"(Flight No. 34). La Ville d'Orleans (B), November 24, 1870, at 11:40 P. M. (letters dated 11/21 to 11/24 with backstamp from 12/2 to 12/25). Landed the next day at Lifjeld, Norway. The balloon started out in a thick fog and was carried north by high winds. During the night they nearly came down in the sea and the pilot threw out one sack of mail which was picked up by a passing ship. Again lightened, the balloon continued its flight in the windy night. They finally landed in the deep snow. The balloon again soared up, carrying away the mail, the instruments and the food. All was safely recovered and the mail was delivered, including the letters in the sack which was picked up at sea. Pilot: Rolier. Passenger: Bezier; Size, 2,000 m. c.; pigeons, 6; mail carried, 250 kg. Distance covered, about 1,400 km."

The newspaper was priced at 15 centimes, and another 20 centimes was required for franking. Thus the correspondent paid a total of 35 centimes (about 9 cents U. S. based on the gold franc at that time)—certainly a reasonable fee for carrying a combined newspaper and personal letter over the heads of the Germans! (Message portion pictured in Fig. 6).

f. postal stationery of the siege

Aero Philatelist Annals

FRANCE — OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

heading inside: "Paris, le....., 1870", the date being filled in by the sender.

These forms, equivalent to the "Apsley" and other privately printed British forms of the present day, undoubtedly were produced by printers in Paris to take advantage of the public's demand for a convenient piece of balloon post stationery complying in size and weight with government restrictions.

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Aerophilately Of MONGOLIA

By JAMES NEGUS*

As the aircraft taxied to a stop outside the airport building at Ulan Bator, I prepared to leave the plane. "Not here," said the Russian air hostess, who has come with us from Irkutsk. "Da, da," I replied. "Nyet, nyet," she insisted. "Nobody ever gets out here."

—Desmond Donnelly, *The Observer*, London, 24 Nov. 1957

Mr. Donnelly's remarks are rather applicable to philatelists also. Metaphorically speaking, very few stamp collectors got out at Mongolia either until quite recently.

The situation has changed in the past three years and the postal history of this once remote country is now under active investigation. With the quickening interest, larger quantities of postal material are coming to light. What is still lacking is authentic information. As yet there is no flow of data from the country itself, although with the setting up of a Philatelic Bureau¹ this may alter.

Students are therefore reduced to gleaning what scanty facts they can from whatever source. The aim of the present notes has been to set down the facts known to me from the literature and from material studied. I have no doubt that other collectors can readily supplement what I have written. In the Editor's words: "I am attempting to smoke out information."

1. Early Period

The early aerophilately of Mongolia will be considered under three headings: (1) flights to Mongolia; (2) flights from Mongolia, and (3) flights across Mongolia. (I have throughout corrected errors of spelling in town-names, to which published accounts seem particularly prone.)

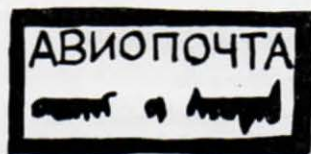
Flights to Mongolia

We learn from Friters² that "agreements . . . were concluded by the Soviet Union with Outer Mongolia in 1926 . . . for aerial, postal, and passenger communications between Mongolia's capital (Ulan Bator) and Verkhne Udinsk." Two sources, D. Field³ and Billig⁴, agree that the first flight from Verkhne Udinsk to Ulan Bator took place on Tuesday, August 3, 1926. Verkhne Udinsk has since been renamed Ulan Ude and is a town on the eastern side of Lake Baikal in Buryat Mongolia (U. S. S. R.). According to the map, it is about 300 miles from Ulan Bator (formerly Urga).

Russell⁵ quotes the *Standard Airpost Catalogue* as saying that survey flights by the Soviet "Dobrolet" airline had taken place in July 1926. On the flight of August 3 only ten letters were carried, unidentified by any special cachets and bearing only departure and arrival marks—the date of the latter is not given. The plane was a Junkers, with German pilot and Russian crew, and the mail was forwarded to Harbin in Manchuria and back-

ВОЗДУШНАЯ
ПОЧТА

TYPE A



TYPE B

Fig. 1. Air mail indicators.

*Mr. James Negus is Hon. Librarian of The Junior Philatelic Society, London, England.

MONGOLIA

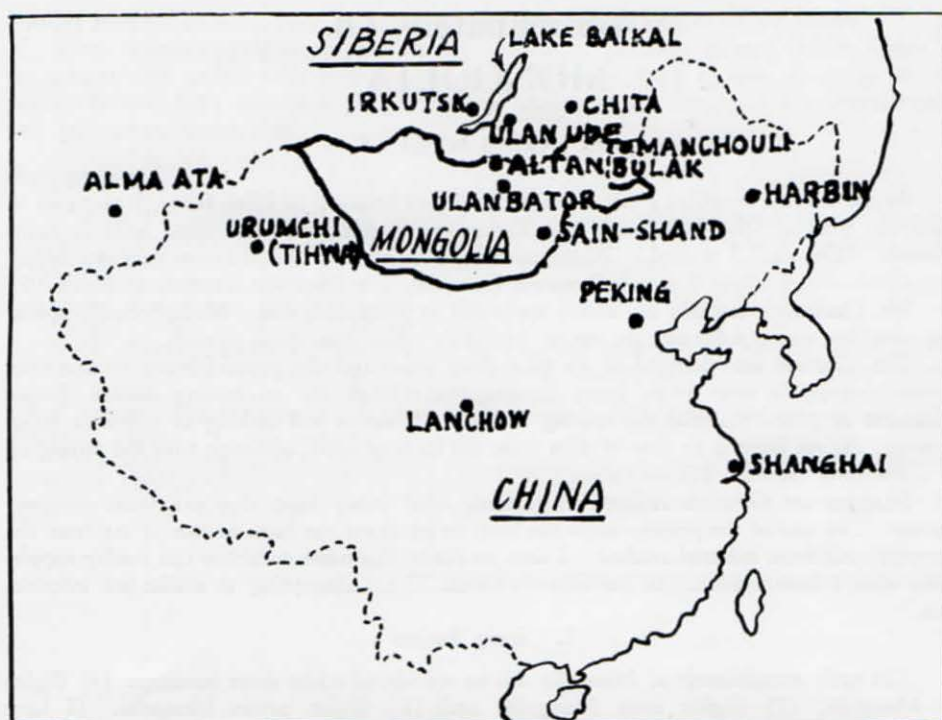


Fig. 2. Mongolia and surrounding countries.

stamped there. By the end of 1927 a twice-weekly service is said to have been in operation for nine months of the year—presumably between the two towns of Verkhne Udinsk and Ulan Bator only. Two articles ^{6,7} dealing with air routes from Europe to the East confirm, but do not add to, this data.

To conclude this section on flights to Mongolia, I draw attention to Starr and Mills⁸, which gives a slightly confusing reference to a supposed trial flight on November 23, 1932 from Lanchow (China) to Tchukuchak (Mongolia). It was in a list of flights furnished to them by the Eurasia Aviation Corporation (of China) and they say: "It probably started from Lanchow, but may have started from some point further east. No information is given as to the return flight or whether or not any mail was carried." They remark that Tchukuchak was "originally intended to be the western terminus of the line" (through Tihwa, capital of Sinkiang province), but later in the book⁹ speak of Tchukuchak as simply a stage in the through-route which the Corporation were endeavoring to establish from China to Western Europe and which would run via Tihwa, Tchukuchak, and Siberia.

As far as I am aware, Tchukuchak (or Tacheng) is not in Mongolia at all, but in the Chinese province of Sinkiang.¹⁰

Flights from Mongolia

The article quoted before⁶ says that "by 1929 there were regular internal services in Mongolia." The period 1929-31 seems to be one of significance for the development of flights from Mongolia.

In point of time the first flight is customarily given as taking place on Thursday, May 9, 1929 from Ulan Bator to Verkhne Udinsk. The covers (quantity unrecorded) are distinguished by an air mail indicator (Type A), a rubberstamp said to be struck in violet. As will be seen from the illustration, the indicator consists of two lines of Russian, transliterating to *Vozdushnaya Pochta*, that is, "Air Mail" (Fig. 1). A cover from this flight realized £13 in

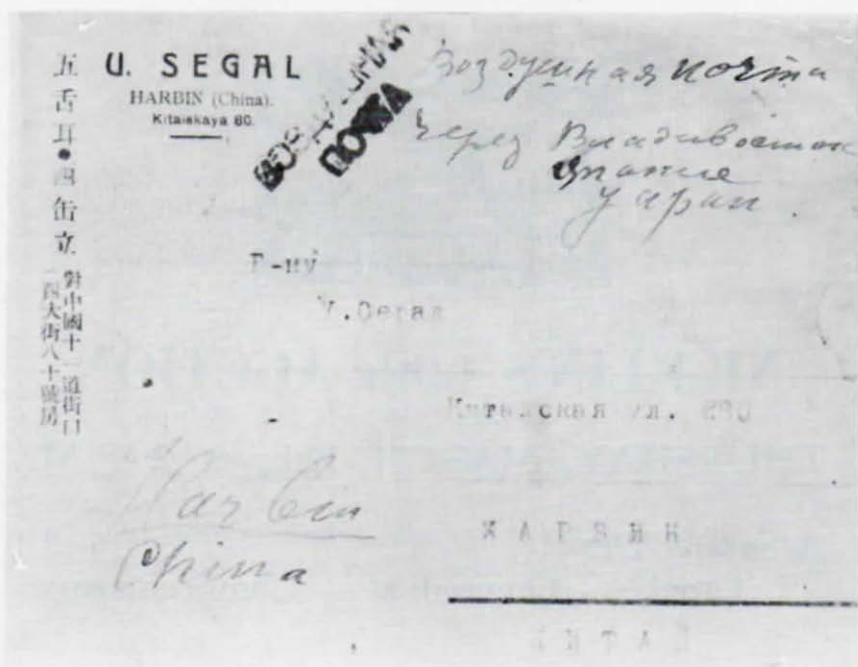


Fig. 3. Cover showing Type A indicator (collection of A. F. Godwin).

a London auction in 1952 and was described as "very rare"¹¹. The Mongolian postage was 85 mung with 50c. Chinese postage due; the dues are cancelled at Manchouli but the illustration is not clear enough to make out more of the date than "June".

I have had access to the manuscript notes left by the late H. B. R. Clarke, now part of the Library of the China Philatelic Society of London. There are many intriguing little notes in this collection, whose significance can now only be a matter for conjecture. For example, Mr. Clarke pencilled on some correspondence¹² he had been having about covers from the first flight of May 9, 1929: "Ulan Bator 9.V.29; Manchouli on Postage Dues 8.6.29; Manchouli back stamp 8.6.29". My information is that the cover in the London auction mentioned above was, in fact, from Mr. Clarke's collection, so that I take his annotations to complete the information lacking in the auction catalogue description.

Mr. F. J. Field¹³ has kindly mentioned that he has the following note in his records of a cover which has passed through his hands:

"Cancellation Ulan Bator 6 April 1929, via Verkhne Udinsk to Manchouli 24 April 1929, and addressed to Harbin 26 April 1929."

A Type A cachet was applied in violet and the postage was 55 mung. At this distance no further details are available, but it is significant that this cover would pre-date the traditional "first flight" by a month.

Another note in the H. B. R. Clarke Library is equally as intriguing.¹⁴ There is a manuscript list dated 1944 of "covers in the Chester Beatty Collection". One is noted as: "Altanbulak 10 December 1927; Harbin 14 December 1927; postage 25 mung". The very short transit time caught my eye, so much so that I would be inclined to say that the dates in the cancellations (which are often indistinct and badly applied) had been misread. Since the most puzzling feature of these early air covers is the excessively long transit times—which causes me to suspect that part or all of the journeys may have been by land, irrespective of "air mail" indicators—such a brief transit as Altanbulak to Harbin in five days is worthy of further investigation. This particular cover is no doubt still extant and opportunity for further study may perhaps present itself.



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MONGOLIA



Fig. 4. Card showing Type B indicator (collection of M. Mochi).

There is illustrated as Fig. 3 a later item from Altanbulak. This is a self-addressed cover from U. Segal, posted in Altanbulak to his home in Harbin, Manchuria. The stamps are on the reverse (not illustrated) and consist of 54 mung Mongolia and 10c. Chinese (Kirin overprinted). One stamp has been removed from the cover, and this may have been a 1 mung Mongolian, making a total postage of 55 mung. Combination Mongolian-Chinese covers are relatively common at this period and arose from China's non-recognition of the Mongolian regime: in the Chinese view, the Mongolian stamps paid transit to the border only, from whence Chinese stamps were required.

The Altanbulak cancellation reads either September 23 or 25, 1929. The Harbin arrival marks seem to read 19.10.18, which would mean October 19, 1929 (the year date "18" being in the Nationalist Chinese calendar, reckoned from 1912). The front of the cover has the Type A air cachet struck in black. It has also been annotated in English and Russian manuscript (top right) to read: "Air Post. /Via Vladivostok./ Japan".

The rather crude official Mongolian postal stationery cards have been used for air post. Mr. Russell, for example, has described⁵ a card carried from Ulan Bator to Harbin dated June 29, 1929, which bore 30 mung in imperforate varieties of the 1926-27 definitives. No details of cachets or possible backstamps were given.

One of these cards, which is illustrated at Fig. 4, is marked with the other type of cachet known at this period (Type B). This is a box, 40x19mm, in which are the words *Aviopochta* in Russian script, with (presumably) the Mongolian equivalent below. The card illustrated travelled from Ulan Bator to Leningrad. It is one of two written in Russian in a now rather faded pencil. It is postmarked Ulan Bator, circular Type 2 in black¹⁶, October 16, 1931 and has the Leningrad arrival cancellation October 29, 1931.

The postage was 25c. in the "Ulan Bator provisionals", the set of Fiscal Stamps hand-stamped in May 1931 with "Ulan Bator Post Office" in old Mongolian script and "Postag" (no terminal-e) in English. They were only on sale in, and used from, Ulan Bator.

Since these provisionals seem to figure prominently in air postal history and, to my knowledge, have not been satisfactorily dealt with in English, it may be as well to distinguish two types of overprint. They are normally placed so that the word "Postag" reads vertically downwards:

Type 1. "Postag" about 15½mm long. Struck in bright violet. Tail of "g" is farther from the Mongolian inscription than in Type 2. (A clear illustration of this Type 1 is given in the *Gibbons Catalogue*.)

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Fig. 5. Air mail etiquette with sans-serif lettering.

Type 2. "Postag" about 16¼mm long. Struck in grey-blue. The whole overprint has a thicker and heavier appearance than Type 1, and the tail of the "g" is near to the Mongolian inscription.

The card illustrated was franked with 25c. Mongolian made up of three copies of the 5c. with interrupted perforation (S. G. 37b), Type 1 overprint, plus one 10c. (S. G. 38), Type 2 overprint.

Another card from this correspondence also bears the Type B air cachet in bright violet and is postmarked with Ulan Bator circular Type 2 in black, dated October 9, 1931. The Leningrad arrival cancellation is October 18, 1931. The postage was again 25c Mongolian in Ulan Bator provisionals, made up of five copies of the 1c. (S. G. 35), Type 2 overprint, and one copy of the 20c. with overprint (Type 2) *inverted* (S. G. 39). Apart from its aerophilatelic interest, the discovery of the inverted overprint on the 20c. provisional makes this a desirable item.

Mr. Russell⁵ gives the following details of an interesting cover in his collection. It has an imperforate block of four of the 20m. on 20c. "menge" surcharge of July 1931 (S.G. 45a). It is addressed on a Russian typewriter to Schooliack, the Harbin dealer, and was posted registered from Ulan Bator on October 14, 1931. The air mail indicator is Type B, in purple. On the back of the cover are three 4c. "Junk" stamps of China (Kirin overprinted), plus 76c. in Chinese postage dues, cancelled at Harbin on October 23, 1931. Thus transit time was ten days.

Stamp¹⁶ has a map of the air routes of Siberia in operation in 1934, that shows that there was a spur line to Ulan Bator in the route proceeding eastwards from Irkutsk. No details are given. A good summary of Soviet Trans-Siberian routes published about the same time¹⁷ shows that there were three branch routes in the Baikal region then. One was from Verkhne Udinsk to Ulan Bator, with a daily service.

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Fig. 6. Air mail etiquette with serified lettering.

The following table summarizes the information derived from the covers so far mentioned:

Ulan Bator	China	Transit (days)	Postage	Airmail indicator
Apr. 6, 1929	Manchouli Apr. 24, 1929	19	55 mung	Type A
May 9, 1929	Manchouli June 8, 1929	31	85 mung	Type A
June 29, 1929	Harbin	?	30 mung	?
Oct. 14, 1931	Harbin Oct. 23, 1931 Russia	10	80 mung	Type B
Oct. 9, 1931	Leningrad Oct. 18, 1931	10	25c.	Type B
Oct. 16, 1931	Leningrad Oct. 29, 1931	14	25c.	Type B
Altanbulak	China			
Sept. 25, 1929	Harbin Oct. 19, 1929	25	55 (?) mung	Type A

Flights across Mongolia

The story of the air mails between Germany and China, by which a through-route was achieved for the first time in 1931, has been ably told by Starr and Mills¹⁸ and more recently by Baldwin¹⁹. This pioneer endeavor of linking Europe and the Far East met with trouble in its early stages. The route followed was for Chinese mail to be transported by air to Manchouli (in Manchuria), then to travel by Trans-Siberian Railway to Irkutsk (U.S.S.R.), and from there again by air to Moscow and Berlin. To get to Manchouli, aircraft flew from the Chinese town of Linsi across Mongolia. Baldwin states: "... the aircraft that left Peiping on July 2nd carrying mail to Manchouli was shot down by rifle fire in Mongolia. The aircraft, pilots and mail were detained for a time by Mongolian officials and the service was suspended."

This short-lived service (May 31-July 2, 1931) thus came to an end through Mongolian activity, although the Manchurian troubles of the time are blamed in another source²⁰. More circumstantial detail would be welcomed, especially the method of bringing down a plane by rifle shots!

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2. Modern Developments

In spite of Mr. Donnelly's gloomy observations, quoted at the beginning of this article, part of Mongolia's isolation has crumbled away in the last few years. Ulan Bator is now, in fact, a stop-over on the Moscow-Peking air route. It is accessible at last and part of the obstacles of geography are overcome.

This achievement, no doubt, has been widely publicized behind the Iron Curtain, although it can hardly be said to be common knowledge in the West. A leading London newspaper²¹ in May 1956 spoke of Ulan Bator being "a week's pony ride" from the Siberian town of Irkutsk, implying that this was the only method of entry into Mongolia. Three days later²² a letter to the Editor pointed out: "As for the 'week's pony ride' route from Irkutsk, a daily plane service and frequent trains serve the Mongolian capital."

We know something of this "daily plane service" from recent writers. Donnelly was making a flight from England to Peking via Moscow and Ulan Bator for a series of newspaper articles. He reached Ulan Bator from Irkutsk in Siberia. This was in 1957. Three years earlier, in September 1954, Montagu also visited Mongolia and gave the following graphic description:²³

"Please accompany us, then, as we leave Irkutsk on a two-engined Ilyushin of the Soviet-Chinese air line. In a few hours, behind us lies 400-miles-long Lake Baikal. . . .

. . . and run slowing-down across the short tight grass Ulan Bator airport, its white reception building in the distance. Peking is still about 750 miles further, we are 2,000 miles from Delhi; 3,000 from Moscow, 6,000 from New York, and 4,000 from our starting-point, London."

Two further useful observations appear in his book:²⁴

"Ulan Bator . . . as well as Sain-Shanda, to the south and in the Gobi, have become regular hour halting stations on the air journey from Moscow to Peking.

"There are no internal air-lines for passenger travel, but small military Mongolian planes take post and some parcels between some of the towns."

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It is a little difficult to find whether it is Russian or Chinese aircraft, or both, which work the Moscow-Peking route. Pien²⁵, for example, says:

"... the Sino-Soviet Joint-stock Civil Aviation Company ... was founded in 1950 ... Profits and costs in this common enterprise were shared equally between the two countries. Leading posts were alternated every two years between Soviet and Chinese representatives. ... On December 31, 1954, all Soviet shares in the company were formally turned over to China. Its enterprises have now been absorbed into our Civil Aviation Administration, and are all managed by Chinese."

Another source²⁶ agrees that the Joint-stock Company operates lines "from Peking to Alma Ata, Irkutsk, and Chita". However, a very recent detailed survey of Russian civil aviation²⁷ shows Ulan Bator as a spur line in the Russian network—the next stop after Irkutsk.

Postal Markings

Postal markings of the modern period seem to be very prosaic, considering the revolution ushered in by daily air contact with the two great capitals of Moscow and Peking. Nothing in the nature of commemorative covers has yet come to light; commemorative cancellations are as unknown in this connection as in any other period of Mongolian postal history; and not one of the 60-or-so stamps of Mongolia's "modern period" (roughly post-war) has depicted an aircraft or mentioned air post in its inscription.

The markings which have come to light so far have been non-descript *Par Avion* etiquettes (two types) and an equally uninspiring rubberstamp with the same words enclosed in a box.

The etiquettes, which are in blue, are shown in Figs. 5 and 6. The lettering on the label in Fig. 5 is sans-serif, whereas that in Fig. 6 is serifed. The cover in Fig. 6 is notable for its high rate of postage, amounting to 20 tuhrik, and is another confirmation that the old set of 1932 pictorials still has a few denominations current in Ulan Bator even to this day.

The other indicator, a framed "Par Avion" struck in black, is shown in Fig. 7.

I have indicated elsewhere²⁸ some of the difficulties of acquiring modern postal material from Mongolia. Covers of the period since 1945 which I have seen or possess are inclined to be unevenly distributed: most readily available are those dated 1956-57 (coinciding with the heightened interest in Mongolian philately and probably coming on to the market to satisfy the demand which has arisen).

Two sorts are common just now: those addressed to China and those addressed to England. The Chinese obligingly backstamp correspondence, so that we can accurately fix transit times. The British do not, which accounts for my vagueness in determining how long it took for covers to reach their destination. I tabulate the data from 18 covers which I have inspected. From the evidence it would seem that the Moscow-Ulan Bator-Peking airline came into operation between 1951 and 1954, and that the foreign postage rate seems to be 1.50 or 1.60 tuhrik, with an extra 70 or 80 mung for registration.

Ulan Bator	China	Transit (days)	Postage
Sept. 18, 1951	Shanghai, Oct. 10, 1951	23	2.30* Registered
Apr. 12, 1954	" Apr. 23, 1954	12	1.00 "
Apr. 13, 1955	" Apr. 27, 1955	15	2.20 "
Aug. 26, 1955	Tientsin, Sept. 6, 1955	12	1.50 "
Apr. 29, 1957	Shanghai, May 4, 1957	6	1.60 "
May 3, 1957	" May 12, 1957	10	1.60 "
May 8, 1957	" May 15, 1957	8	1.50 "
May 13, 1957	Chou-ho, Liaoning, May 19, 1957	7	1.50 "
May 16, 1957	Shanghai, May 20, 1957	5	1.50 "
May 17, 1957	" May 25, 1957	9	1.50 "

*2 30 = 2 tuhrik 30 mung; 100 mung = 1 tuhrik = 1 rouble.

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Fig. 7. Handstamped "Par Avion" indicator.

June 20, 1957	"	June 29, 1957	10	?	Stamp missing
	England				
July 23, 1956	Watford, early Aug. 1956	c. 14	2.30	Regd.; etiquitte	
Dec. 8, 1956	" Dec. 17, 1956?	c. 10	2.30	"	(Fig. 5)
Dec. 27, 1956	" Jan. 3, 1957?	c. 8	2.30	" Handstamp (Fig. 7)	
Sept. 25, 1957	London, Oct. 2, 1957	8	2.30	" MS. endorsement	
Jan. 16, 1958	Watford, Jan. 25, 1958?	c. 10	20.00	" etiquitte (Fig. 6)	
Jan. 16, 1958	" Jan. 25, 1958?	c. 10	2.30	" "	
	Russia				
June 21, 1957	Tonsk, June 30, 1957	10	1.60	handstamp	

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my thanks to all the gentlemen named in this article for kindly supplying data, and in particular to Mr. F. J. Field for his continuing interest and encouragement.

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Why The 1958 Exhibition and Convention Was So Successful

Since most of the stamp papers have reported upon our convention and exhibition held in Philadelphia, Penna. from October 10 to 12, 1958, there is no purpose in repeating a similar report three months later. However, this three-day meeting was so well-received by all who attended, that some observations in review are in order.

Philatelic conventions have settled into a rather standard pattern. AERO PHILATELIST's has tried to have its somewhat different. It is believed that a gathering of stamp collectors and their understanding(?) wives should stress the two most important fundamentals of philately—stamps and friendship. Obviously when stamp collectors meet, the main topic of conversation must be stamps. Thus for three days, whether just two friends sat down together or a large group of 12 or more breakfasted together, the talk was stamps.

The second fundamental of friendship was evidenced every minute of the day and night. A shining example was the banquet when the awards were given. The Chairman of the Board of Judges, *John R. Boker Jr.*, set a standard of how this can be done with intelligence, dignity and humor. More stamp organizations should have the pleasure of hearing *the President of the Association of Stamp Exhibitions*. How remarkable it was that the entertainment was provided by a member and his wife. The combination of a great singing voice plus the talent of telling jokes marked the team of *Mr. and Mrs. Jan Bart*.

The membership must have been satisfied with the services of the officers and directors, because with little fuss or time, all were re-elected to knock themselves out for another year.

The exhibition surpassed the fondest hopes of those who had planned this. If you had picked up an air post stamp catalog to check off the stamps shown, after you had viewed the last of the two hundred-odd frames, you would have marked off every listing in the catalog. The 52 individual exhibitors had the stamps on display unused from single copies

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1958 EXHIBITION AND CONVENTION

to large multiples, cancelled and on flown covers. In addition, the viewers saw plenty of original research and study. Air mail stationery shone like a bright star. Proofs and essays were shown with knowledge as well as showmanship. The one country collections were outstanding. The judges, incidentally all good philatelists, faced a terrific task to select a winner from very fine collections of Austria, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Portugal, United States and Uruguay. The experienced judges sweated many hours before making their selections.

Those, who won the top awards, can be justly proud of the standing their collections had gained in this severe competition. For the others, who did not do as well, there must be some sense of disappointment. Unfortunately every competition must have winners and losers. But often the latter do not realize how close they made the competition. They should understand that collections, that had won top prizes in other stamp shows, earned no better than a third prize at the 1958 AERO PHILATELIST's exhibition.

Our organization may be proud of the wonderful collections owned by its members. These prove that we have an organization of stamp collectors dedicated to the hobby in its best tradition. "Seeing was believing."

So the 1958 Convention and Exhibition has gone like a T-V program, but many will not soon forget it. Our hosts, the *Philadelphia Chapter*, were great. So was *Bernard Davis*, the Director of the Museum. He had special handsome displays relating to the AERO PHILATELIST's and its publications placed around the museum. His hospitality was always available. The great help of the Museum staff, especially *Major "Bob" Scherer* (also a member), was most efficient.

One can conclude this report by repeating that a successful philatelic gathering must accentuate two features—stamps and friendship. Other matters may crop in, but they should assume a secondary role. To the ringmaster, *J. J. Britt*; his chauffeur, *Bernie Fink*; Prexy *Stanley Rice* and the veep, *Sam Rodvien*; the "Bills", *Higginbotham and Mead*; the good letter-writer, *Ray Young*; to the workers like *Milt Cohn*, *Sol Whitman* and *Phil Silver*, and over 50 others that space limits prevent mentioning a big "thank you". The 1958 convention and exhibition was so successful because of harmonious teamwork, where, of course, some gave more time than others. And last but not least, thanks to those who wish to remain anonymous, especially keeping this from their wives, but who underwrote the financing.

(H. M. G.)

Now follows a list of the exhibits in The Court of Honor, the judges and the prize winners:

COURT OF HONOR (Not For Competition)

Selected pages from a general air mail collection	<i>Thomas A. Matthews</i>
Rare air mail covers of the world	<i>Bernard Fink</i>
Selected pages from a general world wide mint air mail collection	<i>Dr. R. H. Shradly</i>
Specialized South and Central America, used on and off cover	<i>Sam Rodvien</i>
Air Mail Essays and Proofs of the world	<i>John J. Britt</i>
The history of aviation from Balloon to space travel	<i>Herbert Rosen</i>

Mr. John R. Boker, Jr. of New York, President of the Association For Stamp Exhibitions was chairman of the panel of judges, other members of which were *Herbert Bloch*, *Harrison D. S. Haverbeck*, *Fred W. Kessler* and *Alfred D. Maier*. The following is a list of the award winners:

Grand Award	<i>Mrs. Louise S. Hoffman</i> for air mail rarities of the world.
Class 'A' Trophy	<i>Dr. R. M. Shradly</i> for semi-official air mails of the world.
Class 'B' Trophy	<i>Henry M. Goodkind</i> for his collection of air mail rarities shown competitively for the first time.
Research Trophy	<i>Jules L. Wacht</i> for Provisional Issues of Papua.
Chapter No. 5 Trophy	<i>Bernard Fink</i> for Graf Zeppelin covers.

Trophy winners in the seven sections were as follows:

Section 1	Stanley R. Rice, best general air mail collection.
Section 2	Philip Silver, best specialized air mail collection.
Section 3	Frank E. Adams, best air mail cover collection.
Section 4	Emmett B. Peter, Jr., best aero-postal stationery collection.
Section 5	Maurice Tripet, best semi-official air mail collection.
Section 6	Herman Seltzer, for Essays and Proofs of France and Colonies.
Section 7	Ira Seebacher, for air mail sport stamps, covers and proofs.

First Awards:

Fred Bauer
John J. Britt
Florence Ortale Brown
Jacob S. Glaser
Clayton J. Goodpastor
Ethel McCoy
Herbert Rosen

Second Awards:

Harry Abelson
Sam L. Bayer
Herbert A. Feist
M. C. Hoffman
W. C. Rickerson
Nellie Sergeant
Raymond N. Young

Third Awards:

Al D. Bluver
Albert Philip Cohen

Third Awards (Con't)

John R. Dilworth
Frank Glanz
Vincent Lopez
Louis N. Staub
Sol Whitman

Certificates of Merit:

Jan Bart
Adrien Boutrelle
Richard W. Canman
J. T. Edgar
William G. Higginbottom
Harry Holman
William N. Mead
Richard E. Samek
Robert W. Scherer
Ralph S. Von Kohorn
Mrs. Conway Zirkle

Book And Catalog Reviews

The Airpost of South Africa by N. C. Baldwin and M. F. Stern. Published by Francis J. Field, Sutton Coldfield, England. 22 pp., illustrated leaflet. Price 55c postpaid.

Postal Stationery For Rocket Mail. The California Rocket Post Experiments 1957 (both) by Dr. Max Kronstein. Published by Francis J. Field, Sutton Coldfield, England. 11 pp., illustrated leaflets. Price 45c postpaid.

Both of these leaflets are reprints from what is now the world's oldest air mail publication, the "Aero Field". As in past tradition, the new information in these leaflets treats aspects of aero-philately seldom described in print. The greatest part of both works are devoted to flight material rather than adhesive air mail stamps, even of a semi-official nature. For those interested in the above specialties, these inexpensive reference works can prove useful.

Stamp Curiosities by R. J. Sutton. 285 pp. Illustrated. Clothbound. Philosophical Library, Inc., New York, N. Y., Publishers. Price \$6.00.

This 285-page book deals with only a few air mail stamps. The idea of this book is to spin a few amusing facts but mostly fiction about stamps from the viewpoint of the design. When air mail stamps are mentioned, one reads with amazement. For example, most of page 263 is about that famous air mail stamp, the 1918 Inverted Center of United States. Nearly every philatelist will admit that this reviewer knows this stamp of fame. Here is quoted one of the first statements:

" that Mr. Bill Robey went to the post office (presumably New York—but not

BOOK REVIEWS

specified)". Well, at least the author was not presumptuous enough to change the locale to London, England, although this is the first time any writing has transferred the post office from Washington, D. C. to New York.

Reading on further, one finds much the same apocrypha about this air mail invert repeated plus some new ones that had not been read before including the wrong sale prices back in 1918. There is no reason for all these mistakes since a very popular book by this reviewer has set forth the facts and actual events. Published in 1956, Mr. Sutton certainly could have consulted this.

But this is not all. Page 277 makes a short reference to the Uruguay Official stamps, causing any collector familiar with these punched officials to throw up his hands in disbelief after reading what has been written. Furthermore, referring to the well-known Uruguay "Pegasus" air mails on page 278, one reads that they were printed by "Waterflows" (sic). And the author is British!

Going a bit further on page 278, one comes to the 1932 issues of Venezuela that were specially printed upon Winchester Security paper. The reason attributed for the use of this paper is, to quote, "as a security measure to render forgery difficult". No, if one cares to refer to this reviewer's research published in the "Aero Philatelist's News" back in 1952, he will find that Venezuela was using a soluble ink for cancelling stamps that was cleaned without too much difficulty. Thus the 1930 air mail issue of Venezuela is known with many cleaned and regummed copies. Information coming to us from Venezuela attributed the use of new security paper in 1932 to the prevention of further cleaning of cancellations.

There is an amusing reference to the design of the first air mail issue of Belgium. But here is a book, which with more "homework" on the author's part, could not only have afforded many readers pleasure, but also offered proper information on stamps. More consultation with known philatelic authorities and reference to accepted text books would have done the trick. (H. M. G.)

Catalogue Muller 1959; Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Publisher Ernest Muller, Aeschenvorstadt 21, Basel, Switzerland. Price \$1.00 postpaid franked with complete set of Swiss Semi-Postals.

This fine specialized catalogue with more than 1000 illustrations lists and prices over 3,000 stamps. The prices are net quotations and the publisher is prepared to supply all items at his listed prices. Being confined to two countries, the listings are comprehensive. Being edited by an active, old-established dealer, the prices have received careful consideration to reflect the current European market. The air mail stamps are fully treated including the Pioneer material and semi-officials. Stamps are not only priced for unused and cancelled singles but for mint blocks of four. Lacking only are more on cover prices for the air mails.

Although in German, the catalogue has been printed with an eye to the English-speaking collector. Upon application, a separate unit will be sent along with this catalog giving the Muller catalog numbers keyed to the Scott catalog numbers for those used to collecting by the latter book.

United States, RF Overprints on Air Mail Stamps and Stationery, 1944-45 by Henry M. Goodkind. 64 pages. 75 illustrations. Published by The Collectors Club, 22 East 35th Street, New York 16, N. Y. under the sponsorship of The Theodore E. Steinway Memorial Publication Fund. Price \$2.00 postpaid.

Although this handbook repeats a good portion of the three-part series that was run in Vol. V of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, we wish to call this to your attention, because the complete story in one unit has turned out to be preferable for many of our members. Furthermore, new information and illustrations, not in this journal, have been added to this RF book.

Obituary



Louis W. Charlat

Although he was beyond the biblical age of "three score and ten", we were shocked to learn of the sudden death of Louis W. Charlat in a New York City subway station on November 21, 1958. Even some of Mr. Charlat's closest friends never knew his age. We did know that he had been a dealer for many years. There are covers in some stamp collections with L. W. Charlat corner card going back to before World War I. Look at the top of page 36 of the October, 1957 number of this magazine. There is illustrated a very rare first day cover with the second air mail stamp of the United States mailed by L. W. Charlat. The cancellation reads July 11, 1918, proving that he was a real pioneer in aero-philately and rightly deserved the title, "Dean of the American Air Mail Stamp Dealers."

L. W. Charlat was the quiet, studious type. Consequently, he was not as widely known in the philatelic world as he deserved. However, among the many who did know him, we can think of no professional who was more respected for his integrity and knowledge. It had been this writer's pleasure and privilege to work closely with Mr. Charlat for many years expertizing air mail stamps. It was with work like this, where one came to fully appreciate his sharp memory and tremendous fund of knowledge about air mails. He was careful and cautious, never rendering a snap judgment, an example others, who would like to bear the title "philatelic expert", should follow. If he was not sure beyond a reasonable doubt, he would refuse to commit himself.

AERO PHILATELISTS was started in 1946. As evidence of L. W. Charlat's long association and support, one will find his first advertisement in Volume I, No. 2 of the "Aero Philatelist's News". Furthermore, both in our first publication and now in this quarterly magazine, one finds some very fine articles on the Official Air Mails of Canal Zone by L. W. Charlat. This too demonstrated the character of this stamp dealer, who so often contributed voluntarily to an amateur publication without urging.

Mr. Charlat was a stamp lover from youth. Although he soon became a full-time stamp dealer, he never was without at least one collection of his own. For instance, his Canal Zone air mails gained a high international silver-gilt award at FIPEX. His collection of "F. D. Roosevelt" was one of the best of its kind.

Almost three years to the date of his sudden passing, AERO PHILATELISTS honored Louis W. Charlat for his unselfish devotion to aero-philately on November 19, 1955 at our 9th Annual Dinner following our Convention. We have not honored many in our thirteen year history. Mr. Charlat was one of the few. We recall the events leading up to this. L. W. Charlat was so modest and retiring that some thought he might not come to that dinner to face a large gathering of 100 or more and be called upon to make some sort of a speech. Therefore Past President Britt, President Rice and the editor visited the office of Mr. Charlat to inform him of our intentions. He was really overwhelmed.

L. W. Charlat will be around philately for many years. There are covers in collections with his name. Furthermore, many of the great air mail rarities bear the signature, "Charlat", a brand that has been accepted for years. Besides his devotion to stamps, his family was an important part of his life. To his widow, his brother and sister and all his immediate relatives, heartfelt sympathy from his many friends in AERO PHILATELISTS. (H. M. G.)

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....., 19.....

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EXTRACTS FROM BY-LAWS, ARTICLE III—MEMBERSHIP

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