

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. X, No. 4
APRIL, 1963

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THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

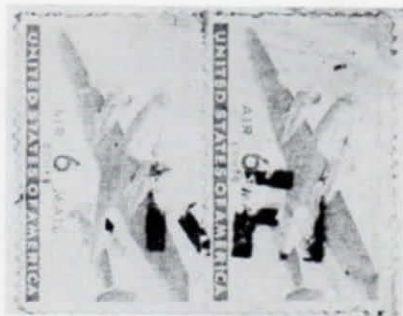


Vol. X, No. 4
APRIL, 1963

Henry M. Goodkind, Editor

Philip Silver, Assistant Editor

RF OVERPRINT New Type Appears



The RF overprinting began in 1944. Careful study of these stamps started about a year later and has not ended. In 1956, the writer commenced work on



The back of the cover with the new Type 11 RF overprint.

his book on these RF overprints. In 1958, it was published, offering the opinion after twelve years of study that there are *ten distinct types* of RF overprints. Types 1 to 9 are illustrated on page 23 and Type 10 on the top of page 58 of the book*.

A new and entirely different RF Type was presented in an article in this magazine (AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 3-6). This was written by the Assistant Editor of this magazine, Philip Silver, after he had made his discovery in 1960. "Scott's United States Catalogue Specialized" listed this new type in its 1962 edition as CM10, illustrated on page 249 of that catalog.

Now 11 Types Of RF's

Another new RF Type appeared in 1962, when the writer bought the illustrated cover in a New York City auction sale. The RF overprint is different than those previously noted.

Some may believe that it looks somewhat similar to Type 9. But this is not so. Both the "R" and "F" on Type 9 are longer and thinner, while the lower right stroke of the "R" and the top cross-stroke of the "F" are more extended on Type 9 than on this new one.

This is noted because the Type 9 illustration in the book is a rather exact reproduction of this overprint. On page 60, one will note that the only RF found on Destroyer Malin (the book designates this naval vessel as "a Light Cruiser" and probably is wrong) correspondence was a Type 9. The return address as shown on the back of this new cover reads, "Destroyer Le Malin." It seems apparent, therefore, that the Destroyer "Le Malin" had used two different types of RF, the Type 9 and then this new find, which is designated as Type 11.

Theorizing about this, one notes that the one decipherable "Poste Navale" cancellation is dated July 1, 1944. Since the earliest date found with any RF

*"United States, RF Overprints On Air Mail Stamps and Stationery, 1944-45" by Henry M. Goodkind. Published (1958) as the Theodore E. Steinway Memorial Publication #5 by the Collectors Club, 22 East 35 Street, New York 16, N. Y.

is May 8, 1944 and they continued until August 1945, the aforementioned date is an early one. (Directive No. 523 PN/Ep is dated June 22, 1944).

The new Type 11 RF overprint was not hit clearly on the illustrated cover. Most likely the stamping device already had worn from use. Consequently, a new one was ordered for the "Le Malin," being, however, the first one recorded, Type 9 overprint.

More Substantiating Evidence

Several other matters about this RF Type 11 cover should be pointed out.

1. There have been only a few genuine RF covers seen by the writer with double rate frankings. One is shown as Fig. 41 on page 40 of the writer's book. Both this latter and the new find have a pair of the 6c air mail stamp (C25) but with just one overprint, so that the "R" appears on the left stamp and the "F" on the right one.

This overprinting of a pair of stamps with one RF is more concrete evidence that these markings were applied after the stamps were affixed to a cover, so that mint RF air mail stamps were not sold by the French Navy.

2. Another interesting matter ties in with the writer's observation that most of the genuine RF covers examined are addressed to women in



The New Type 11 RF overprint on cover. (Photos by Boutrelle).

the United States. There are a few "Mrs." but by far the greater percentage have "Miss" as the addressee.

3. The cancellations, naval postmarks and censor marks tally exactly with the officially issued French Directives.
4. The "Poste Navale" cancellation that ties this pair of C25 with Type 11 RF to the illustrated cover was lightly applied. The right portion of this cancel is very faint. No month nor year date is evident. Furthermore, only about 1 mm. of the circular outer line of this cancellation ties this pair of air mail stamps to the cover, just enough to show that this Type 11 RF "grew on" this cover.

Conclusion

It must be stressed that when the designation of the different RF types was originally made, the objective was to list only RF types that are plainly unlike. Minor variations were disregarded, because the RF overprint was frequently applied by a rubber handstamp. This resulted in variations because one individual applied the overprint with more pressure than another. Also such devices were quickly with use.

Now there is a tabulation of eleven different RF overprints. It seems likely that a few more may show up as time goes on. (H. M. G.)



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UNITED STATES

Air Mail Rates 1926-1927

By PHILIP SILVER

During the period from January 19, 1926 to January 31, 1927 there were two sets of air mail rates in operation at the same time in the United States, an unusual situation not duplicated, to our knowledge, in any other country in the world. The first of these was the zone rates used on the Government-operated route. The second set of rates applied to air mail carried by contract carriers. The existence of the two rates simultaneously is not too clearly understood by most air mail collectors.

The government zone rates were established by Order No. 713, June 30, 1924:

"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 of zone in which mail is carried by plane, such postage including transportation to and from air mail route as well as transportation by plane. Any mailable matter may be carried, including sealed parcels not exceeding 50 pounds in weight nor 84 inches in length and girth combined. Special airplane stamps may be used, but in lieu thereof ordinary stamps may be used, the matter being indorsed 'Via Air Mail' in the latter case."

"The New York-San Francisco route was the only one operated by the Post Office Department and for rating of postage is divided into three zones: (1) New York to Chicago, (2) Chicago to Cheyenne, and (3) Cheyenne to San Francisco."

Commercial Covers Uncommon

It should be remembered that the 1923 air mail series consisted of 8c, 16c

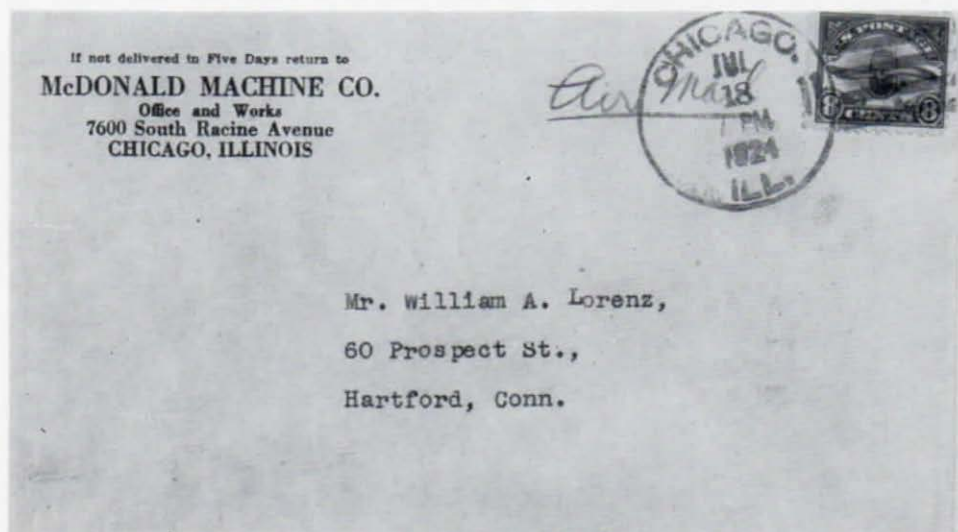


Fig. 1. The 8c stamp, Scott C4, cancelled July 18, 1924, Chicago, Illinois, sent to Hartford, Conn. on Chicago to New York zone.

and 24c stamps for the franking of mail to be carried on the planned Transcontinental Government route from New York to San Francisco. The route was first flown on July 1, 1924; covers carried over the several zones of this Transcontinental route are fairly abundant. Less common are commercial covers flown from July through December, 1924 and during the years 1925 and 1926. Several such commercial covers flown during 1924 and franked with the 1923 air mail stamps are illustrated (see Figs. 1, 2 and 3).

Provision for mail to be carried on the planned contract air mail routes was established by Act of February 2, 1925 (43 Stat. 805) which provided "for the transportation of air mail under contract, the rates of postage on such mail to be not less than 10 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof."²

Almost a full year was to pass, however, before the issuance of *Order No. 3817, January 19, 1926* establishing the specific rates to be used on the contract routes:

"The rates of postage on mail carried by airplane on contract air mail routes shall be 10 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof on each route or part thereof not exceeding 1,000 miles in length; 15 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof exceeding 1,000 miles and not exceeding 1,500 miles in length; and 20 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof on each route or part thereof over 1,500 miles in length, direct air mileage to control in each case, with 5 cents for each ounce or fraction of an ounce additional for each airmail zone or part of such zone the mail is carried over Government-operated air mail routes. Such postage includes any transportation to and from the contract air mail routes except by air mail.

It will be noted that no effective date for the start of contract air mail routes is given in the order. In effect, then, contract air mail rates for various distances begin on January 19, 1926. However, the first actual flights at the new rates took place February 15, 1926 on the inaugural flights between Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago on routes CAM6 and CAM7 operated by the

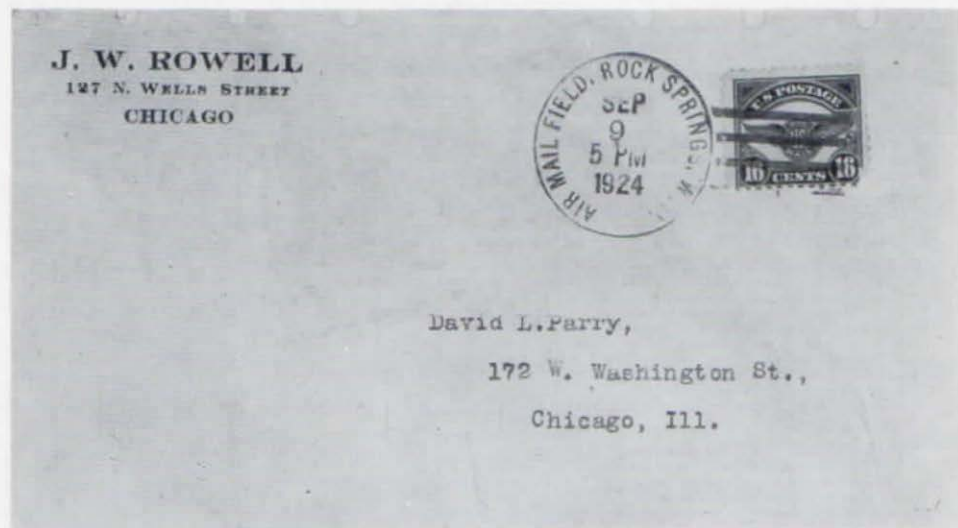


Fig. 2. The 16c stamp, Scott C5, cancelled September 9, 1924, Rock Springs, Wyoming, sent to Chicago, Illinois. 8c was required for the part zone from Rock Springs, Wyo. to Cheyenne, Wyo. and the additional 8c for the full zone from Cheyenne, Wyo. to Chicago for a total of 16c.



Fig. 3. The 24c stamp, Scott C6, cancelled August 14, 1924, Los Angeles, Calif., sent to President Calvin Coolidge, The White House, Washington, D.C. Note the White House receiving handstamp of August 18, 1924.

Ford Motor Company, Inc. But, what is even more important to note in the language of Order No. 3817 is the reference to the "5 cents for each ounce or fraction of an ounce additional for each air mail zone or part of such zone *the mail is carried over Government-operated air mail routes.*" The allusion is

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clear. Government-operated air mail routes were still to remain in existence during the period of contract flying of the air mail.

Two Rates At One Time

A final reference to the duality of air mail operation with concomitant separate rates is found in Order No. 4961, December 23, 1926, effective February 1, 1927:

"The rate of postage on mail carried by airplane on either Government-operated or contract air mail routes or on both shall be 10 cents for each half ounce or fraction thereof regardless of distance."⁴

Note that the language of the order specifically refers both to Government routes and contract routes, thus implying the two existed simultaneously. Actually, of course, there was only one Government-operated route from New York to San Francisco, the one that had been officially opened with the first flights of July 1, 1924. The rates on this Government route from that date to January 31, 1927 continued to be 8c for each of the three zones — New York to Chicago, Chicago to Cheyenne and Cheyenne to San Francisco. Incidentally, this Government route was finally discontinued and put under contract operation later in 1927. The section from Chicago to San Francisco was placed under contract operation on July 1, 1927. This became known as C. A. M. 18 operated by the Boeing Aircraft Corporation. The section from New York to Chicago became C. A. M. route 17 on September 1, 1927, the contractor being National Air Transport, Inc.

Mr. Delf Norona in his "Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks" refers to the existence of the two rates as follows:

*"This order [January 19, 1926] continued in effect the Government-operated air mail routes at the 8 cent zone rate, and the 10 cent New York-Chicago night route. It also provided rates 'on mail carried by airplane on contract air mail routes.'"*⁵

Thus, persons using the air mails after the establishment of contract routes were faced with a rather intriguing situation. One had to determine whether a letter would fly on a Government-operated or a contract route before deciding on the required postage. It is true, of course, that most air mail during this period was flown by contract operators whose routes were, for the most part, under 1,000 miles in length. So, a 10c air mail stamp was needed. However, if mail flew on the Government route, the sender needed 8c stamps or multiples to prepay the correct rates. The difficulty was also compounded when mail was flown on both a contract route and Government route. Then, a calculation would have to be made of the number of zones or part zones the letter was to be carried on the Government route. The era of the digital computer probably dates from that period.

Mr. Norona states further that "little attention is paid to air mail postage rates by most air mail collectors, and there is little demand for commercial covers bearing postmarks of the kind mentioned in this article and applied in the regular course of postal business."⁶ We are inclined to echo his sentiments. Although first day and first flight covers exist in relative abundance, few commercial covers illustrative of the rates in use during the period from July 1, 1924 to January 31, 1927 are to be found. We rather suspect that most covers were either completely discarded or the stamps soaked off to satisfy demand for used copies. As a consequence, covers showing proper rate usage are scarce.

A So-far Unique Commercial Cover

One such commercial cover, proving the use of zone rates on the Govern-



Fig. 4. The 8c and 16c stamps (Scott C4 and C5) used together for the 24c rate from San Francisco to New York, cancelled Pittsburg, California, March 6, 1926. Backstamped San Francisco, March 7, 1926 and Cleveland, Ohio, March 8, 1926.

ment-operated Transcontinental route during the period of dual rates from January 19, 1926 through January 31, 1927 is illustrated as Fig. 4. It bears the 8c and 16c air mail stamps of the 1923 series to make up the 24c coast to coast rate. Cancelled March 6, 1926, 7:30 p. m. at Pittsburg, California, it was sent by train to San Francisco where it received an arrival postmark at 6 a. m. on March 7, 1926. From San Francisco it flew to Cleveland where it was back-stamped March 8, 1926, 1:30 p. m. Presumably, from Cleveland it was sent by train to Schenectady, N. Y.

So, this cover illustrates air mail usage over the Government-operated route during the period of contract air mail rates. It must be admitted that this is the only commercial cover we have thus far been able to obtain which is illustrative of the Government zone rate during the period of dual rates. Perhaps others will appear in the future. In our collection, are several covers showing contract usage with additional zone charges for service on the Government route. These will be discussed in a future article on the 1926-1927 United States Air Mail rates.

References

1. United States Domestic Postage Rates, 1789-1956, pp. 75, 76. P. O. D. Publication 15, published by the Post Office Department, Washington, D. C.
2. Ibid, p. 76.
3. Ibid, p. 77.
4. Ibid, p. 78.
5. Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History, Article 22, p. 5, edited by Delf Norona. Published 1935 under the supervision of the Handbook Committee of the American Philatelic Society.
6. Ibid, p. 11.

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COLOMBIA

A Scadta Cover From Germany

By RICHARD BARTELS

Illustrated (Fig. 1) is a cover posted in Berlin, Germany on December 10, 1923 and franked in the usual upper righthand corner with three common German postage stamps. The letter is addressed to Barranquilla, Colombia, South America.

Postage Due Collected

Evidently the addressee had moved from Barranquilla to Bogota, so that the cover was forwarded.

In order to pay the required, additional air mail postage rate, a 60c Colombia Scadta air post stamp (Scott C45) was affixed to the cover together with the green "Correo Aéreo" air mail label.

The Scadta air mail stamp (C45) was cancelled with a regular Scadta red cancellation used at that time in Barranquilla. Upon receipt in Bogota, Colombia, the Scadta air mail receiving mark dated January 16, 1924 was applied to the back of this cover (Fig. 2).

In the author's opinion, the 50c Scadta air stamp (C45) was used as a *Postage Due stamp*. This is seen by the red pencil mark "60" in the upper right corner just below the German postage stamps. If the person forwarding



Fig. 1



Fig. 3

the cover had affixed the Scadta air mail stamp, he should have known that this by itself was not sufficient. Air mail in Colombia required the use of both the Scadta air stamp and the regular Colombian postage stamp. The lack of the latter, in the writer's opinion, is good evidence of Postage Due collection rather than the use of the Scadta air mail stamp for forwarding.

Unusual Use Of An Air Mail Stamp

In the author's collection are many air mail covers from Germany to Colombia. All but one are franked in the same manner as the cover shown in Fig. 3. They bear the common German postage stamps at the right and at the left the Consular Overprints applied in foreign countries to Colombia Scadta air mail stamps. This Fig. 3 cover was selected for illustration because it is addressed to the same person as the Fig. 1 cover. The three Colombia air mails are Sanabria Catalogue Nos. SA24-26. The "A" overprint signifies Alemania (Germany). These Consular overprints were sold only in Germany and only could be used from there.

The single exception of an unoverprinted stamp on an air mail cover from Germany to Colombia is the one illustrated as Fig. 1. This is the only one with a regular Scadta air post stamp.

A Difference Of Opinion

This opinion about the 60c Scadta air mail stamp on Fig. 1 being used for Postage Due is not shared by some other Colombia air mail stamp specialists,



Fig. 2

including the editor of the *AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*, Mr. Goodkind. They believe that the C45 stamp was affixed by a private party in Barranquilla after the cover arrived there and he re-addressed it and then forwarded it on to Bogota.

They maintain also that there is no indication of Postage Due. The pencilled "60" is not a Scadta notation but was done by the party who forwarded the letter. He weighed the cover and noted that 60c postage was required. Later he or someone in his office affixed a 60c Scadta air mail (C45) and the green Colombia "Correo Aereo" label.

Those who do not accept the view of Postage Due on the Fig. 1 cover point out that the only stamps available in Colombia were the unoverprinted stamps. The Consular Overprints were sold exclusively in the various foreign countries.

The purpose of this writing was to get further views about this Fig. 1 cover. Was Postage Due collected by the use of the unoverprinted Colombia Scadta air mail stamp? The author welcomes any comments. Please write to — Richard Bartels, Ahmser Strasse 24, Herford, Westfalia, West Germany.

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1963 International Air Mail Exhibition



An international air mail exhibition called AEROPHILA 63 will take place in Brussels, Belgium from September 1 to 8 in conjunction with the Third Federation of Societies Aerophilateliqes (F. I. S. A.) Congress.

This coming exhibition may turn out to be the most successful aero-philatelic affair yet held in Europe. This will not be easy in the face of the records of CURIOSA 61 in The Hague, Holland and LUPOSTA 62 held in West Berlin, Germany.

The British Air Mail Society with John W. Field as the British Commissioner is making a determined effort to have more exhibits from Great Britain at AEROPHILA 63. Furthermore, the British member of the International Jury will be H. R. Holmes, the president of the Royal Philatelic Society, London. For many years, Mr. Holmes was the curator of the British Museum's philatelic properties among which is the outstanding Fitzgerald air mail collection.

The United States exhibits promise to be better than the ones at Holland and West Berlin. Some outstanding collections that have not been exhibited previously overseas have been entered in AEROPHILA 63. To mention a few, the new entries are:

Honduras of Irving I. Green, Newton, Mass.

Canary Islands of Herbert Bernstein, Vineland, N. J.

Italy & Colonies of Louis N. Staub, New York, N. Y. This won the Grand Award at Interpex 1963.

Also the *Philatelic Foundation*, New York, N. Y. will exhibit not-for-competition several frames of air mail stamps from the famous John N. Luff Reference Collection.

If any member of AERO PHILATELISTS, especially those who have not exhibited before in Europe, would like further details about exhibiting in Brussels, Belgium, write to the United States Commissioner, Henry M. Goodkind, 22 East 35 Street, New York 16, N. Y. and he will forward an AEROPHILA 63 prospectus and Entry Form.

TO JOIN AERO PHILATELISTS

Simply fill in the membership Application on Page 104 and mail:

Second Bohn Memorial Award

Taken By John J. Britt

In 1961, the directors of AERO PHILATELISTS decided to create an award for "Distinguished Service to Aero-philately" in the memory of one of the main forces behind AERO PHILATELISTS' formation and its following success in our earlier years, Richard S. Bohn.

The first award went to this magazine's editor in 1961.

In 1962, a committee was appointed to study the R. S. Bohn Memorial Award and report back to the board of directors with any recommendations for future action and nominees.

After a long and careful deliberation, the committee rendered the following report to the directors while in regular monthly session at the Collectors Club, 22 East 35 Street, New York, N. Y. on Thursday, March 14, 1963.

The committee met on March 6, 1963 at 5 p. m. at the Collectors Club to discuss outlines of the charter or deed of trust for the award.

It was decided that the award was to be granted for:

Long-time and distinguished service to aero-philately.

What constitutes "distinguished service?"

1. Research and writing on aerophilatelic subjects,
2. Publishing of periodicals, catalogs, handbooks, auction catalogs and other literature pertaining to aerophilately,
3. Organizational services, such as member of board of judges for an air mail exhibition, services as an officer of a philatelic society devoted to air mail collecting.

When should the award be granted?

The committee recommends the award be granted *not more than once* in any one year. There should be no requirement, however, that it be granted annually unless there is a worthy candidate available.

Richard S. Bohn Memorial Award Committee
Ira Seebacher, Chairman
Henry M. Goodkind
Philip Silver

After much discussion, the above report of the Richard S. Bohn Memorial Award Committee was adopted for the future guidance and action by the board of directors.

Following this, the chairman of the committee recommended four nominees for the 1963 award. Two more names were placed in nomination and seconded from the floor.

By written ballot, John J. Britt, the first president of AERO PHILATELISTS was voted the Richard S. Bohn Memorial Award for 1963.

At this time, no final decision has been reached as to the time and place of presentation. Most likely, it will take place during our annual convention that generally is held in late October or early November. (H. M. G.)

FOR BOOKS ON AIR MAILS

See Page 112

RUSSIA

The Air Fleet Stamps

By JOHN W. NICKLIN

Information on the Russian Air Fleet stamps of 1923-24 and a listing of all the issues then known and recorded by the author was the subject of a long article in the October 1958 number of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS (Volume VI, No. 2).

The purpose of these stamps was to provide funds for Soviet Military Aviation. Societies were formed throughout the vast expanse of Russia and they prepared, issued and sold stamps.

The stamps bore such slogans as "Society of Soviet Aviation," "Friends Of The Air Fleet," "Workers Build The Air Fleet" and others.

As the stamps' use was substantially obligatory, they certainly were more than labels. But as they did not actually pay postage fees, their status must be regarded as somewhat less than stamps. Semi-officials may be the best term applicable to these Russian Air Fleet issues.

After the 1958 article, two of the most striking examples of covers preserved bearing Russian Air Fleet stamps were contained in a large lot from the Bute collection sold in London, England at auction on March 25, 1959 by Robson Lowe, Ltd. Both covers emanated from Tashkent in Middle Asia and were flown on to Berlin, Germany:

A detailed description of each cover has been prepared by Igor Rubach, an authority on Russian stamps. His comments now follow:

Fig. 1 shows the front of a flown cover 1925 from Tashkent (Turkestan, Middle Asia) to Berlin. It has:



Fig. 1. (Photos by Boutrelle)



Fig. 2

Postage stamps; 2 sets (#269, 272 and 298-301) and 3 singles (278(2), 285).

Air mail semi-official 25 Gold Kopeks red and black; "Moscow Society of the Friends of Air Fleet."

5 Gold Kopeks dull green "U. S. S. R. Society of Friends of the Air Fleet."

Welfare label: "The Pan-Russian Committee of Help to the Invalids of War" of the All-Union-Central Executive Committee.

Welfare label of the Commission for Care of Children of the Central Executive Committee - 5 Gold Kop. - Brown.

Justice revenue stamp 25 kop. dark green and brown red.

The cover has the cancellation: "Moscow, I. expedition 17. 10. 1925."

Fig. 2 shows the back of the Fig. 1 cover with the special Revenue tax stamp for export of stamps, 25 kop. on 7 kop. (on semipostal stamp B7, perf. 13½).

This cover with stamps addressed to Berlin, Germany was sent from Tashkent to Moscow, to the Central Control Service for the Foreign Exchange at the Sovietique Philatelic Association, Moscow 50, Nastasinski Pereulok No. 3, because all the stamps sent to foreign countries had to pass exclusively through the above Control service. At this place, the letter was censored and the contents of the letter checked. Afterwards, the letter went further through the Philatelic Section of the Central Post Office in Moscow (See letter "F—" in Russian transcription on the registration label No. 661).

On back is the German arrival postmark "Charlottenburg 20. 10. 1925."

The cancellation of the Export-Tax stamp on back of the cover means: "The philatelic and fiduciary material contained in this post parcel has been checked and approved for export to the Foreign countries. Based on a decision of the All-Union Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of the People's Commissars of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic from 27. IX. 1922."

Fig. 3 is a flown registered cover from Tashkent (Turkestan-Middle Asia) to Berlin, Germany.

On front:

Four air mail stamps #C6-9

Postage stamps: #255, 267, 276 (2)

Semi-official Air Mail stamp without denomination: "Working People of the R. S. F. S. R. (Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic) — build up your Air Fleet"

Welfare label of the Turkestan Section of the M. O. P. R. (The International Society of Aid to the Revolutionery) 2 Kop. red with imprint: "Turklith No. 799" (Lithography of the Middle Asia Publishing)

Tied with round cancel Tashkent 19. 8. 1925, bilingual Russian and Uzbek

On the back is arrival German postmark Charlottenburg "25. 8. 1925," which is not illustrated.



Fig. 3. (Both these covers from the H. M. Goodkind collection.)

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References:

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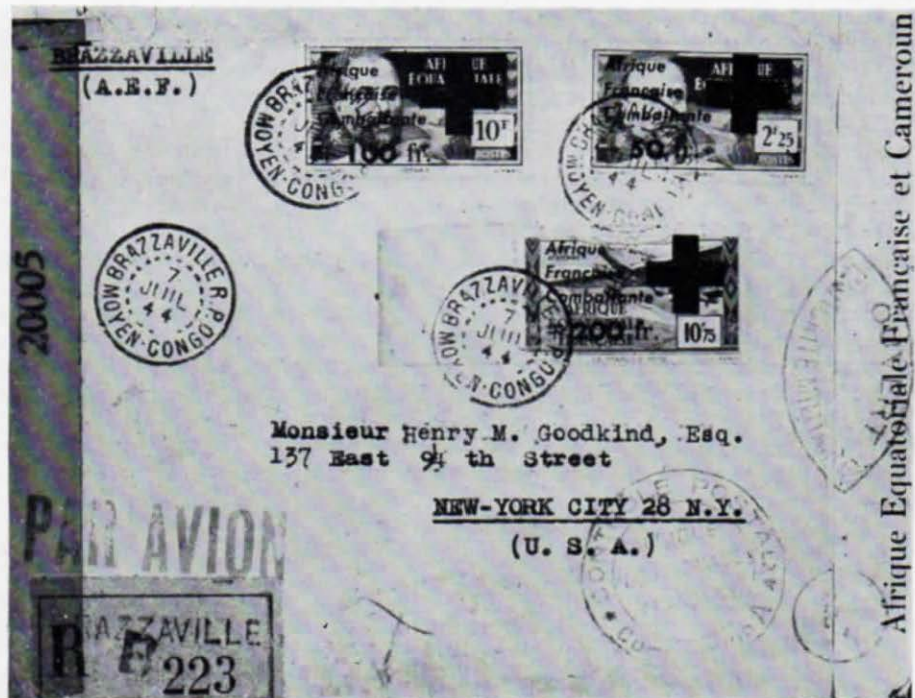
EXTRACTS FROM BY-LAWS, ARTICLE III—MEMBERSHIP

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FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA B10-B35, CB2

By BEN HAMILTON

(Reprinted by permission of Scott Publications, Inc., 461 Eight Avenue, New York 1, N.Y. from the "Scott's Monthly Stamp Journal.")



B10-11 and CB2. The complete set of these Free French semi-postals used on an air mail cover July 7, 1944 from Brazzaville with 3 French Censor markings and one seal.

Frankly, Free French Equatorial African postal officers never intended the 27 semi-postal stamps sold during 1943 should meet any special postal needs. The stamps were made to raise funds for the societies helping Free French military and civilian war workers in Africa. Indeed French Equatorial Africa B10-B35 and CB2 were the fruit of such patriotic gesture.

Unknown to the Brazzaville authorities responsible for issuing the three 1943 semi-postal series, a precedent for war fund semi-postals was established 43 years earlier. In 1900 the Australian state of Victoria had sold special one penny and twopence stamps for a price of one and two shillings respectively. As the footnote in Scott's Catalogue indicates, the charge in excess of the face value "was given to a patriotic fund in connection with the South African War." Unlike the 1900 Victoria semi-postals, the surtax was surcharged openly on French Equatorial Africa B10-B35 and CB2.

Fighting French Africa

When the French Equatorial African postal system issued Scott numbers B10, B11 and CB2, it became the fifty-third to release Red Cross semi-postal stamps. The June 28, 1943 decree (text in July 15, 1943 French Equatorial African Official Journal) authorized the conversion of remainders of numbers 67, 71 and C8 into semi-postal stamps.

All were to be overprinted *Afrique Française Combattante*, a motto that would be powerful propaganda for Frenchmen everywhere. The words "Fighting French Africa" would be a reminder that French forces in Africa were campaigning to release France from the detestable Nazis! An emphatic red cross, made of quads, is an essential part of the overprint.

The official decree prescribed the following surtaxes to be surcharged on the Red Cross stamps: 50 francs on 17,150 copies of French Equatorial Africa #67, 100 francs on 8,550 copies of #71 and 200 francs on 5,350 copies of C8. The stamps were to be placed on sale only in the main post offices.

At least six post offices must have sold the stamps. Postmasters mailed out advance notices of the new series to European residents in the towns concerned. Those wanting to buy rationed quantities of the stamps had their names inscribed in a special notebook at the post office. Persons whose names were not on the lists could not buy the stamps. Sales were limited to Europeans because in 1943 the African populace of the colony was not interested in stamp collecting.

The June 28, 1943 decree called for a commission, including the colonial finance director and the postmaster general, to supervise the surcharging by the Brazzaville government printing office. Irregularities had turned up when that bureau overprinted and surcharged stamps to make French Equatorial Africa 80-141 and C9-C16. Stamp collectors were delighted; the printery superintendent vexed!

The postmaster general was to call the commission prescribed by decree for these purposes:

1. To control the number of stamps surcharged to prevent a surplus or deficiency of stamps decreed.
2. To control the surcharging to avoid inverted and double surcharges, orthographic flubs and other mistakes. In connection with the second purpose, the commission was directed to incinerate sheets having one or several flaws in the overprinting and surcharging. Apparently the duty was performed thoroughly as no errors have been reported for B10, B11 and CB2.

(Editor's note. A portion of the article from "Scott's Monthly Stamp Journal" at this point has been omitted because other semi-postal but not air mail stamps are described.)

Cancelled, but!

All the cancelled copies of French Equatorial Africa B10-B35 and CB2 are not postally used. The stamps were placed on sale in selected principal post offices. Which were the major offices?

In size, the six main postal centers were Bangui, Brazzaville, Fort Lamy, Libreville, Pointe Noire and Port Gentil. Copies cancelled-to-order by the above-named post offices are common. The writer visited the philatelic shop in the *Bon Marché* department store in Paris in 1950. The stamp dealer there showed me a large, unaddressed French Equatorial African Bureau of Posts envelope bearing numbers B14-B21. Each carefully aligned stamp had a neat "Port Gentil" cancel tying it to the cover. The Parisian dealer also had cancelled-to-order specimens with full gum. Postally used stamps exist, com-



French Equatorial Africa CB2 is the fifth scarcest stamp of the colony from the standpoint of quantity printed. An official decree authorized only 5,350 copies of CB2 to be printed.

manding premiums on covers!

Several years ago an American stamp weekly reported that just one copy of CB2 tied to a commercial cover had been seen in the United States. This is somewhat exaggerated. CB2 is rare on cover—see illustration.

Are These Cancellations Genuine?

Specimens of B10-B35 and CB2 exist with cancellations of post offices that apparently did not stock the issues. In my collection, each copy of B31-B33 has part of the Zouar cancellation across each lower corner. In the 1940s Zouar was a fortified military post in the Saharan wastes of north Chad. The garrison was a checkpoint in the frontier zone along Italian Libya. Although on a main caravan route, Zouar normally was not a major post office. However, under Free French administration Zouar became an important military supply depot. The fort was a logistics center for campaigns in Fezzan and Koufra. The Zouar cancellation on B31-B33 is a baffling mystery.

ITALY AIR MAIL COVERS

#C1 World's first air mail stamp, flown Turin-Rome	2.00
#C1 do. error in arrival pmk. 22.IV. instead 22.V. 1917	4.00
#C1 do. return flight Rome-Turin cover	2.50
#C2 World's first sea-plane st., Naples-Palermo	2.00
#C2 do. Naples-Palermo posted in Rome	4.00
#C2 do. return flight Palermo-Naples	2.00
1925, Special flight LEGHORN-ROME with unused 1/2 off. air st.	2.00
1925, Same flight, 1/2 off. air st. cancelled	3.00
1926, "NORGE" airship Polar cover with 1/2 off. air stamp, Rome-Kingsbay	14.00
1926, do. Cover flown across North Pole to TELLER, Alaska, where Italian franking has been cancelled upon arrival, autographed by a member of the Crew, few known	60.00

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Due to the wartime military significance of Zouar an increased number of French soldiers was sent there. Postal facilities doubtless were expanded. Small supplies of B12-B35 may have been stocked at Zouar for French personnel. If not, the stamps may have been bought in Fort Lamy and taken to Zouar for cancelling. The truth cannot be proven in 1963!

Catalogue Recognition??

French Equatorial Africa B10-B35 and CB2 were controversial right from the start. One school thought the high surtaxes should bar the stamps from catalogue recognition. True, the B10-B35 and CB2 surtaxes averaged 1000% of the face value. The surtaxes on Belgium B344 and B345 equals 3000% of face value.

Others thought 27 semi-postal stamps were too many in one year. Czechoslovakia issued 123 semi-postals in 1919. Look at the Scott footnote after Czechoslovakia B123: "Nos. B1 to B123 were sold at an advance of 50 per cent over face values for the benefit of charity. They were sold in sets only, *at a window of the Prague Post Office known as the Philatelists Window.*" (Author's italics) French Equatorial Africa B10-B35 and CB2 were sold at *post offices*.

Removal B10-B35 and B2 from albums and catalogues would necessitate a sweeping reappraisal of the worthiness of numerous other semi-postal issues.

One thing is certain: Collectors wanting complete country collections must include semi-postal stamps, whether the surtax is 1% or 5,000% of the stamps' face value, if the catalogue lists them.

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VENEZUELA

Official Air Mail

Preface

While editing and preparing for publication in this magazine Philip Silver's excellent and exhaustive study of Uruguay's official air mail stamps, now running serially, the thought occurred that the official air mail stamps of another South American republic—Venezuela—offer some similar problems. This is particularly true about the period of years official air mail stamps were in use.

Over ten years ago, in the *Aero Philatelist's News* dated February 15, 1953 (Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 14-15) some information on the official air mail stamps of Venezuela was given by Henry Kraemer. These are the stamps perforated with the initials, G. N., which are listed and priced in the "Sanabria Catalogue."

The end of this 1953 article is interesting because Henry Kraemer had asked one of our members in Venezuela to check the postal archives to see what was recorded about these official air mail stamps. The report came back here that nothing was recorded. A similar situation prevailed in Uruguay. It seems evident that stamps were perforated with initials in Venezuela or punched



Fig. 1. Official air mail cover without stamps sent in October 1938.



Fig. 2. The two backstamps on the 1938 cover.

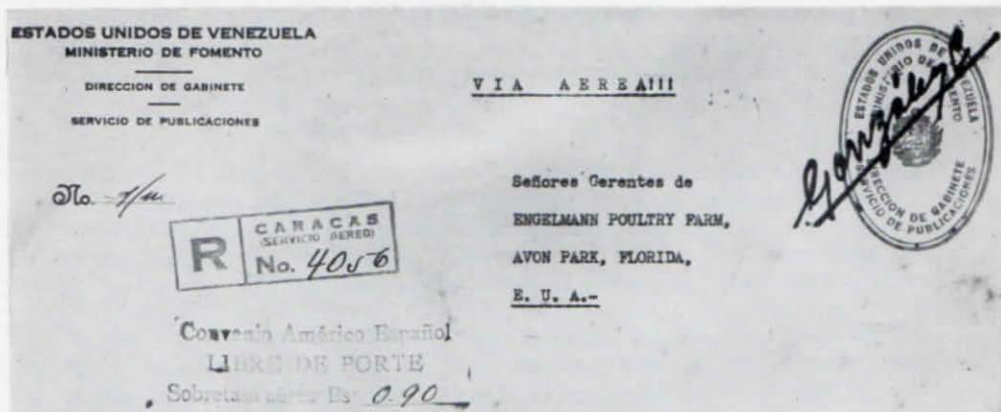


Fig. 3. An official air mail cover with no stamps dated 1940.

with holes in Uruguay for governmental mail without any documentation. Therefore, this offers a challenge to the aero-philatelic student.

Dates Of Use

The 1953 article in the *Aero Philatelist's News* said that G. N. perforated initials had already been in use for official correspondence when Venezuela issued her first air mail stamps in 1930. Therefore, the G. N. perforated initials did not start in 1930, but that year obviously saw their first use on air mail stamps.

The article concluded that, to quote: "The use of perforated initials was discontinued in 1943, when metered mail was substituted for Official Stamps. Illustrated is a cover mailed in August, 1943 from the Office of the President showing the use of 'G. N.' with a meter."

Since 1950, the writer has assembled a number of air mail covers of Venezuela used by government officials and has studied them to determine if they can reveal some more definite information. Incidentally, securing Venezuela's official air mail stamps on cover is not easy. In fact, these G. N. initialled stamps are also scarce used off cover as well as mint.



Fig. 4. The backstamps on the Fig. 3 cover.



Fig. 5. (Photos by Boutrelle)

G. N. Initials Not Exclusive On Official Air Mail

A few years ago, the writer received a gift. Perhaps it had little or no philatelic value. A friend in Florida secured about twenty official envelopes from Venezuela and sent them on with his compliments. Not one cover in the lot had a stamp. All were as the first two covers illustrated (Figs. 1 and 3).

A tabulation was made of the dates on these twenty covers without stamps. The earliest use was found on the Fig. 1 cover where the Miami, Fla. receipt mark on the back (Fig. 2) is dated Oct. 27, 1938.

The next date in chronological order is on the Fig. 3 cover that is back-stamped Miami, Fla. March 15, 1940 (Fig. 4). The balance of the official covers without stamps date from 1942 to 1947.

The use of official air mail without stamps in 1938 and again in 1940 obviously proves that both the G. N. official air mail stamps and non-adhesive stamp franking for official mail were simultaneously in use.

Official Air Mail Stamps Ended In 1943

Most of the covers in the writer's collection have the G. N. official stamps. A study of them reveals the latest date occurs on the Fig. 5 cover. The Caracas, Venezuela cancellation tying the G. N. perforated initial stamp (Sanabria No. 199) to the Fig. 5 cover is so lightly hit, as usual, that it is practically impossible to decipher. It could possibly be May 13, 1943, because a "3" is seen under magnification. But the receipt postmarks on the back show Miami, Fla. May 21, 1943 and New York, N. Y. May 22 and May 24, 1943. These back-stamps offer a good clue to the date of mailing of the Fig. 5 cover in Venezuela.

No cover with the Venezuela official air mail stamps so far has been seen



Fig. 6. The four backstamps on the cover with the G. N. initials.

dated later than the aforementioned May, 1943. This possibly could set the time of the discontinuation of Venezuela's G. N. official stamps around that time. Furthermore, this Fig. 5 cover ties in with the one illustrated in the 1953 *Aero Philatelist's News* article. The meter using the initials G. N. is dated Caracas, Venezuela August 11, 1943. (H. M. G.)

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