

THE

PHILATELIST

AERO

ANNALS

* * A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY * *

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UNITED STATES

The 24c Air Mail Stamp of 1918 Multiple Rate Covers

By PHILIP SILVER

Postal Order No. 1443, dated May 11, 1918 fixed the first rate for air mail service at 24c an ounce or fraction thereof. The effective date was May 15, 1918. Thus, it coincided with the scheduled first air mail flights from Washington, D. C., New York City and Philadelphia. This 24c rate included special delivery, as well.

Catalogue information about these first flights indicates that approximately 11,000 covers were carried on the first flights of May 15th and May 16th.¹ Although, the New York and Philadelphia flights took place on the 15th, the northward flight from Washington was delayed until May 16th. The breakdown on the number of covers carried on the several legs of the first flights is as follows:

Washington to New York	3,000	
Washington to Philadelphia	600	
Washington to other points	<u>3,000</u>	6,600
Philadelphia to New York		350
Philadelphia to Washington		300
New York to Philadelphia and Washington		<u>2,457</u>
		9,707

1. American Air Mail Catalogue, 1947 Edition, p. 108.

UNITED STATES

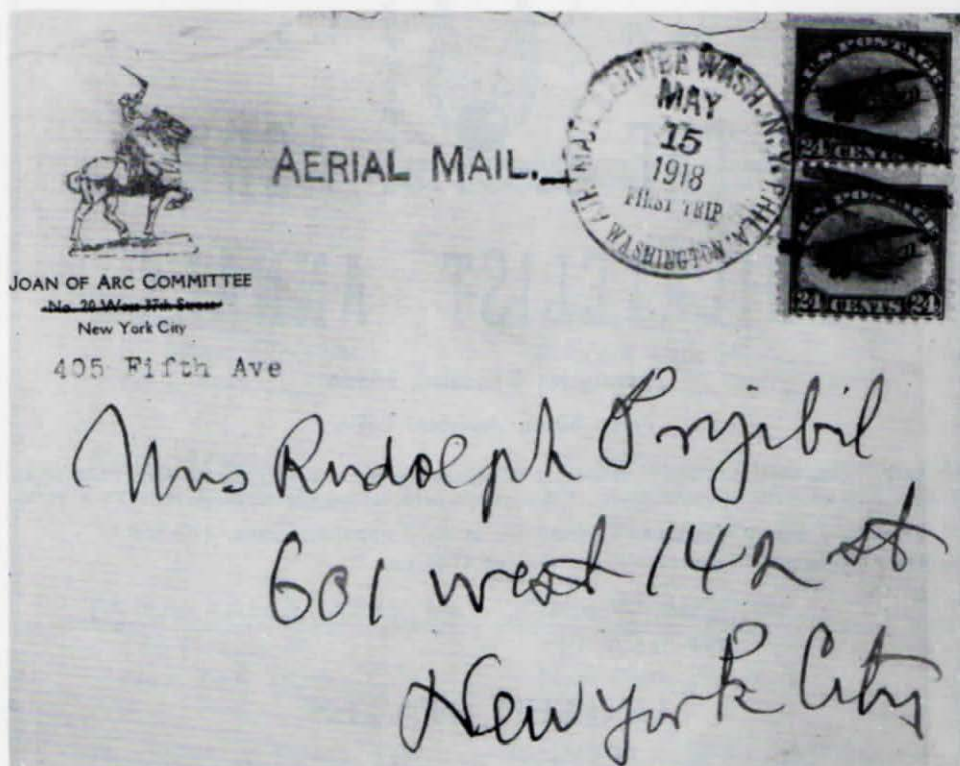


Fig. 1. Double rate cover with "May 15, 1918/Washington, D.C." cancellation for the first flight to New York. Enclosed was a bronze medal; thus the cover and contents together weighed more than one ounce. [Author's collection].

Washington, additional covers dated May 16th	1,300
Total covers carried	<u>11,007</u>

All the figures shown above, with the exception of that for Philadelphia to Washington, are taken from the catalogue. The 300 cover amount for the Philadelphia to Washington flight is the author's approximation. This was set as the lowest of the several legs of the flights since it is known that fewer covers were carried on that leg, such covers being extremely scarce and desirable. The likelihood is that the number is even less than 300; however, that quantity was used to make the total of approximately 11,000.

In view of the relatively accurate information about the number of covers carried, it is noticed that nothing is available in any source book on the number of multiple rate covers carried on these flights. But several such covers are known to exist, and the author feels that information about these covers should be part of the over-all story of the popular first United States air mail stamp of 1918.

Although the first day of issue of the 24c air mail stamp was May 13, 1918, only three first day covers are known.² This is a surprisingly low number by today's standards. Nowadays approximately 600,000 covers, and sometimes as many as 1,000,000 are serviced on the first day of issue of each new United States stamp. *But in May, 1918 the important date was not the first day of issue, but that of the first flights, May 15, 1918.* Also in 1918 first day cover collecting had not achieved anything like the popularity it enjoys today.

2. United States, the 24c Air Mail Stamp of 1918 With Inverted Center, by Henry M. Goodkind, The Collectors Club, New York, N. Y.

UNITED STATES

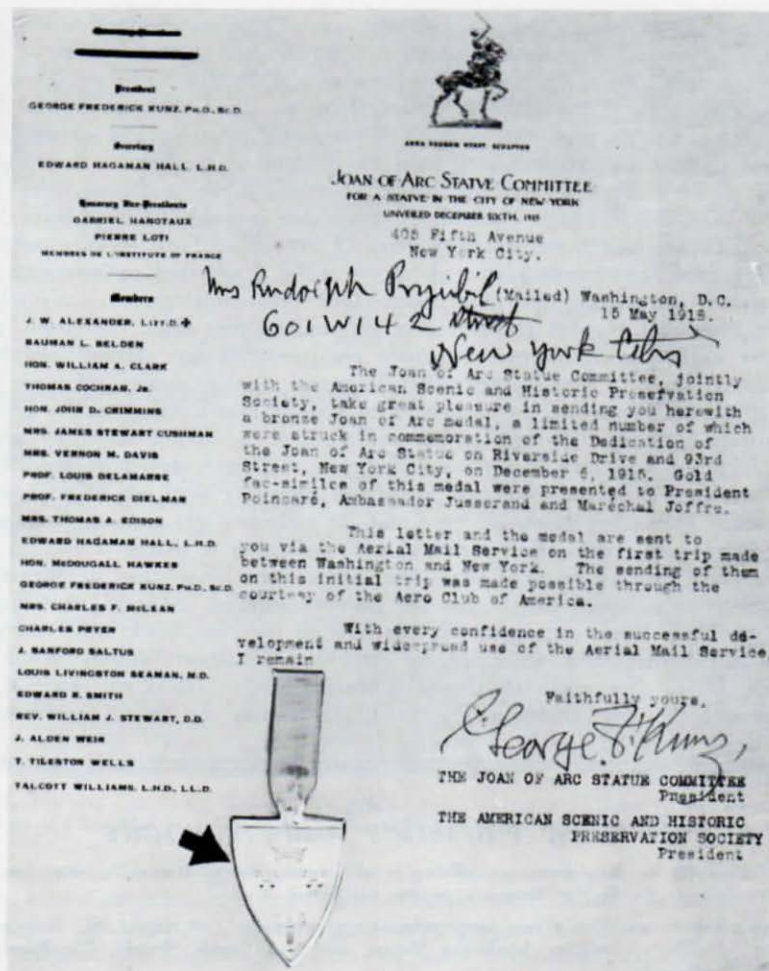


Fig. 2. The letter and medal (indicated by the arrow) enclosed in the cover shown in Fig. 1.

Today stamp firms, as well as collectors, service covers with singles, pairs, blocks of four and plate blocks of four, if available. 1918 was a war year. Twenty-four cents then was a lot of money. We venture to say that if we were to relate that amount to today's standard, its purchasing power would be more than one dollar. Thus it is easy to see why few covers, of necessity, would have been prepared with pairs, blocks or other multiples. The times mitigated against such extravagance.

The writer is fortunate in having at least a nodding acquaintance with most of the advanced United States air mail collections in the East. In all these collections, he has noted only five multiple rate covers used on May 15th or May 16th. Three of these are in his own collection.

Double Rate Covers

There are three double rate covers known. Two of these are in the author's collection. The third is in the collection of Mr. Sol Glass of Baltimore, Maryland. Since the rate, as noted in Postal Order No. 1443, was 24c an ounce or fraction thereof, a double rate cover would have had to weigh more than one ounce but not more than two ounces.

Perhaps the most interesting of the author's double rate covers is shown in Fig. 1. There

UNITED STATES

is no need to conjecture why it needed the double rate. The cover was used to send a bronze medal to the addressee. This medal had been issued in 1915 on the occasion of the dedication of the Joan of Arc statue at Riverside Drive and West 93rd Street in New York City on December 6, 1915. Apparently, some were left over from the ceremonies. So Prof. George F. Kunz, President of the Joan of Arc Statue Committee and of the American Scenic and Historic Presentation Society, used the occasion of the first air mail flight from Washington to New York to send the medal as a gift to the addressee, Mrs. Rudolph Prizibil, 601 West 142 St., New York City. The cover is franked with a vertical pair of the 24c stamps. The stamps are cancelled "May 15/1918/First Trip/Washington" in black.

The medal and accompanying letter are shown in Fig. 2 and shed an interesting sidelight on the activities surrounding the first flight. One may conjecture how many of these double rate covers with medals enclosed were sent on the first flight. Probably a goodly number were. However, in the more than forty one years that have elapsed since then, only this one example seems to have reached philatelic hands. Unless similar covers are "smoked out" as a result of this article, we may have to surmise that if other similar covers were sent, they were not received by philatelists and so have not found their way into stamp collections. Indeed, one may inquire whether even the cover shown in Fig. 1 received philatelic handling. Note the piece torn out of the upper left hand side of the cover where it was opened. This offers strong evidence that the addressee was no stamp collector.

The second double rate cover in the author's collection is shown in Fig. 3. This is a fairly large size envelope made of heavy linen stock much longer than its illustration. It is franked with a horizontal pair of the 24c stamps cancelled "May 15/1918/First Trip" with the New York handstamp in purple. It flew on the New York to Washington leg. It will be noted that it is addressed to President Woodrow Wilson, White House, Washington, D.C. But, why did it need a double rate? This is not quite as easy to establish as with the cover shown in Fig. 1. Unfortunately, we do not have any clue to

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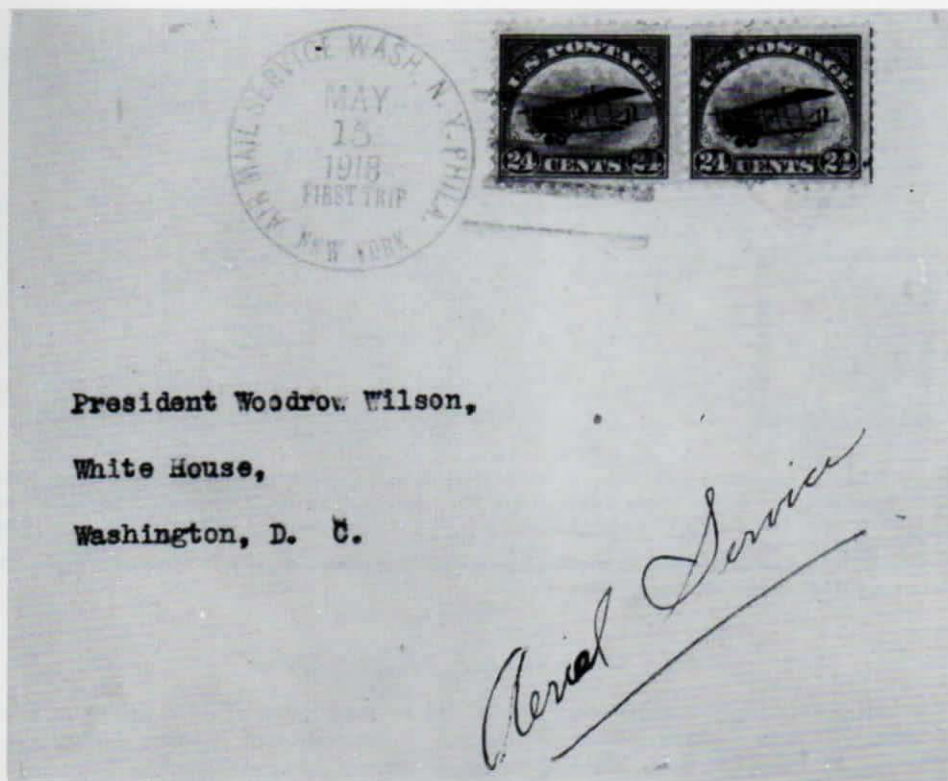


Fig. 3. Double rate cover with "May 15, 1918/New York" cancellation flown on the first flight from New York to Washington. It is addressed to President Woodrow Wilson. (Author's collection).

the enclosure as proof of the weight. However, close examination of the cover indicates that it must have contained a rather bulky enclosure, which caused the envelope's edges to become slightly distended, a not uncommon happening. This is not proof positive that the cover and enclosure weighted more than one ounce, but it does offer some good evidence.

The third cover, in the collection of Mr. Sol Glass of Baltimore, Maryland, is shown in Fig. 4. It was sent from Washington to New York and is addressed to Emil Sperling, 725 Fifth Avenue, New York City. This address is important. Most covers addressed to New York City were mailed to downtown locations where most of the stamp dealers' offices were located. After Lt. Boyle was forced down at Waldorf, Maryland, on May 15th, the Washington to New York flight was postponed until the 16th. The flight did take place on the latter date. Almost all Washington to New York covers flown on the 16th examined by the writer have a "4 p. m., May 16, 1918" New York receiving mark. But, as noted above, these covers were addressed to downtown New York locations. The cover shown in Fig. 4 has a 5 p. m., not 4 p. m., receiving mark. Obviously, it required additional time to be sent to the uptown branch post office. Or, it may be that the clerks at that office took additional time before they applied this receiving mark. Another interesting thing about this cover is that it is the only one of the double rate covers that is franked with two single stamps. The others all have pairs.

One may again conjecture about the necessity for the double rate. This is a large legal-size envelope and it is likely that together with the enclosure it weighed more than one ounce, requiring double rate franking. Another interesting thing about this cover is the pilot's signature it bears. It is signed by James C. Edgerton, the pilot who successfully flew the Washington to New York mail on May 16th, the actual first trip on that leg.

UNITED STATES

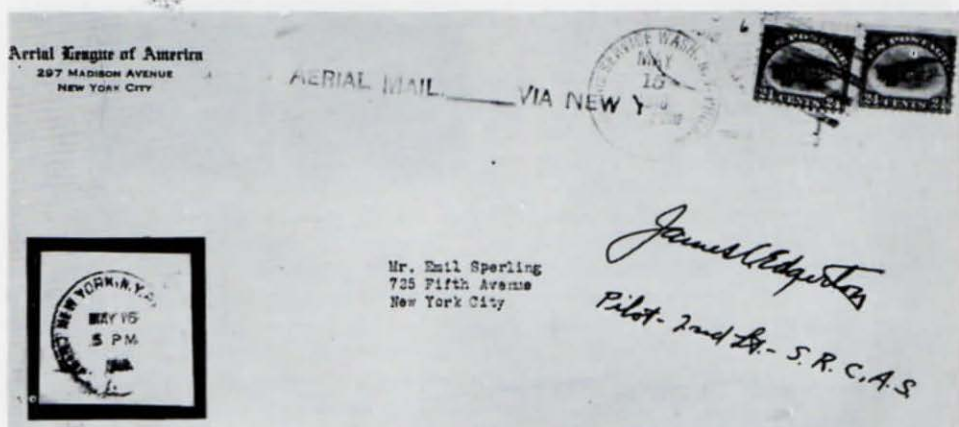


Fig. 4. Double rate cover with "May 15, 1918/Washington" cancellation for the first flight to New York. It is franked with two single copies, not a pair. Autographed by Lt. James C. Edgerton, the Army flyer, who flew the first Washington to New York air mail on May 16th after the first plane had crashed on May 15, 1918.

In the lower left corner framed with a black border is the "New York, N.Y. May 16, 1918 5pm" backstamp. (Sol Glass collection).

Block Of Six On May 15, 1918 Cover

This is the largest multiple piece of the 24c air mail stamp of 1918 known to exist on cover. It is in the collection of Dr. Samuel J. Penchansky of Bayonne, New Jersey. (See Fig. 5) Like most other Washington to New York covers of May 15, 1918 sent to downtown New York addresses, it bears a receiving backstamp "New York, N.Y. May 16, 1918, 4 p.m.", shown at the bottom of Fig. 5. But even more interesting are the lightly struck cancellations on the face of the cover. There are exactly five such hand-stamps in black. Four of them are rather indistinct. But, the fifth in the upper left corner is quite clear. This has the scarce "10AM" cancellation hitherto noted on only a very few Washington to New York first flight covers franked with single stamps. So, this cover, which numbers many "firsts" in its pedigree, shows the first recorded use of this cancellation on a multiple rate cover.

Another first on this cover, of course, is the size of the multiple piece. It is the first and only known block of six with the "May 15, 1918" cancellation. The sheet positions of the stamps are highly interesting as well. The block has the lower portion of the left arrow sheet margin and, along the upper edge, is a portion of the horizontal center line which divides the pane of 100 in half. The stamps, therefore, are positions 51, 52, 53, 61, 62 and 63. And, used on May 15, 1918, we may be reasonably sure that this block of stamps came from the first printing. On the second printing, only the right arrow is found in the sheet margin. Although the third printing also has a left arrow, this is a later printing which was prepared long after the purchase of the sheet of inverts by Mr. Robey in Washington, D.C. on May 14, 1918.²

Still another first which may be claimed for this cover is the 10c special delivery stamp affixed in the lower left corner. This, of course, is superfluous usage, since the 24c rate, as noted earlier, included special delivery service.

The cover, addressed to J. M. Bartels Co., 99 Nassau Street, New York, N.Y. a well-known stamp dealer, is obviously overfranked. The total value of all the stamps, including the 3c embossed envelope stamp is \$1.57. Since there appears no physical indication on this cover of extra weight, the overpayment would appear to be \$1.33.

This is, nevertheless, one of the most unusual and probably a unique multiple rate cover.



Fig. 5. A block of six on a "May 15, 1918/Washington" first flight cover. Note the very scarce "10 AM" in the cancellation. This is the largest known multiple piece with the 24c air mail stamp of 1918 used on cover. Possibly unique.

(Below) The "New York, N.Y./May 16, 1918 4 pm." backstamp. (Photo by Boutrelle). (Dr. Samuel J. Penchansky collection).

Block Of Four, "May 16, 1918 First Trip" Cancellation

In the writer's opinion, the cover shown in Fig. 6 is the most unusual multiple rate cover flown on the first flight from Washington to New York. As most collectors of United States air mail stamps already know, this leg of the flight came to grief on May 15th, shortly after Lt. Boyle had taken off from the Polo Grounds just outside Washington, D. C. He was forced to land after a short flight at Waldorf, Maryland and, in the process, his plane was damaged. The mail was returned to Washington and was flown on the next day, May 16, 1918. To the more than six thousand covers cancelled on May 15th, were added approximately thirteen hundred with a May 16th cancellation. But a mistake was made on very few of these May 16th covers. The clerks neglected to remove the words FIRST TRIP from the slug. The mistake was noted almost immediately and remedied with the removal of these words from the canceller. It is believed that no more than approximately six of the "MAY/16/1918/FIRST TRIP" covers exist.³ All of these are single rate covers except the one shown in Fig. 6. This cover is franked with a block of four, cancelled Washington, D. C. in purple. Like most covers addressed to New York, it is backstamped May 16, 1918, 4 p. m. The cover is addressed to Mr. J. W. Sampson, Vanderbilt Building, New York City. The clue to the downtown address is the pencil notation immediately below the address, "132 Nassau." Most likely, it was added by a

3. "The First Air Stamp of the United States," by Henry M. Goodkind, "The Collectors Club Philatelist" (1950) Vol. 29 p. 337.

UNITED STATES

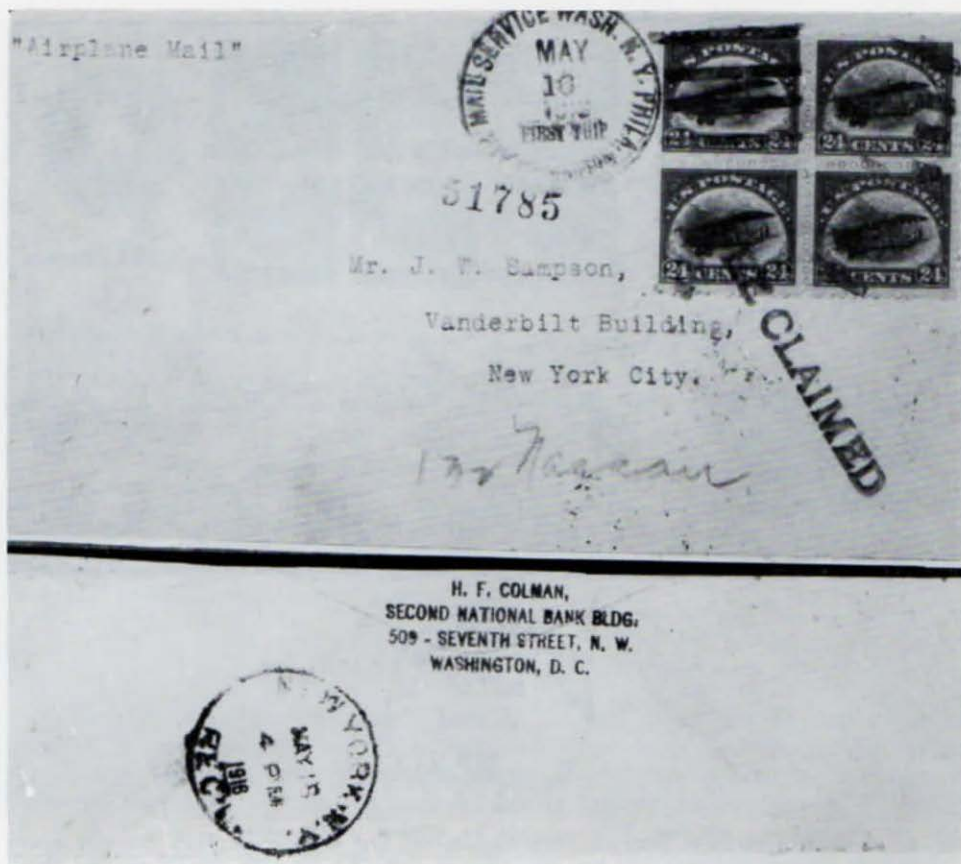


Fig. 6. A block of four cancelled with the very scarce "Washington/May 16, 1918 First Trip" cancellation for the first flight to New York. Only about six covers are known with this FIRST TRIP cancellation error and this is the only one with a block of four. (Author's collection).

(Below) The back of this cover showing the sender's name and address, and also the "New York, N. Y. May 16, 1918 4 pm." backstamp. Possibly unique.

post office clerk or carrier for proper routing. It was quite logical of course, that many covers on the first flight would be sent to stamp dealers and Nassau Street was then the stamp center of New York City, if not of the country.

The writer feels safe in describing this cover as unique, a block of four with a most desirable "May/16/1918/FIRST TRIP" cancellation. And, but for Lt. Boyle's unfortunate accident, it never would have flown on the first flight to New York. This is true also of all covers postmarked May 16, 1918 from Washington to New York.

From all appearances, however, this cover did not require more than a single 24c stamp. It is handstamped "FEE CLAIMED," but this only indicates that it received special delivery handling and that service was already included in the 24c air mail stamps. So, most likely, this cover was overpaid 72c, a not inconsiderable sum in 1918. But, again, if not for this apparent overfranking, this cover would not be available today as most unusual multiple rate cover.

It will be noted that the special delivery control number on this cover is 51785. This is strange. Let us refer back to the cover with block of six shown in Fig. 5. Note that that special delivery control number is 51815. Since both of these numbers are probably from the same source, why does the one cancelled May 15, 1918 have a later number than the May 16th cover? It has been recorded that the mail that was processed for the first

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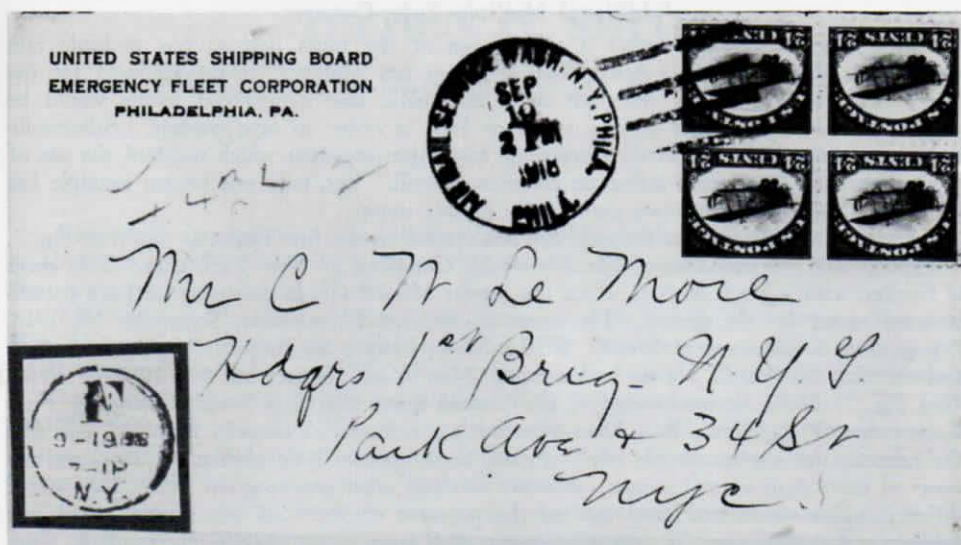


Fig. 7. Block of four affixed upside down to a cover cancelled Philadelphia, Pa. September 19, 1918. Largest known piece on a commercial cover. Possibly unique. Flown to New York as the backstamp framed with a black border in the lower left corner shows the receiving mark reading "New York Sept. 19, 1918 7pm." (Photo by Boutrelle). (Henry M. Goodkind collection).

flight went through only one Washington, D.C. Post Office. So, it appears, we have another little mystery that needs clarification. The writer can only conjecture that the May 16th cover with number 51785 was accidentally mislaid after receiving the control number. The fact that it eventually flew on the first flight is again due to Lt. Boyle's mishap on May 15th after he had left Washington on his flight to New York.

In connection with both of these covers, the block of six and the block of four, (Figs. 5 and 6) the address and the handwriting offer us clues that they were mailed from the same office. The May 16th cover with block of four (Fig. 6) as shown on the back was sent from the office of H. F. Colman, a well-known stamp firm of Washington, D.C. The May 15th cover with block of six (Fig. 5) is recognized by Mr. Henry M. Goodkind as being in the handwriting of the late Henry Hammelman who, in 1918, spent almost all his spare moments in Mr. Colman's office in Washington D.C. But for the work of these stamp men in the early air mail period, many of the prize covers known today would not be available for reference and collections.

Built-In Overpayment On Multiple Rate Covers

But, in a sense, every multiple rate cover, whether it required more than a single rate because of weight or was overpaid for philatelic purposes, has in it a built-in element of overpayment. That is because the Post Office Order stated that the 24c stamp was to be used on letters weighing one ounce or fraction thereof, with special delivery service included. Obviously, a letter could get special delivery service only once. So, a double rate cover at 48c was actually overpaid 10c, since that sum was already included in the single 24c stamp for special delivery service. One may argue about the strict reading of the order which set the rate at 24c an ounce or fraction, but the conclusion, it would appear, is quite obvious. Later, on July 15, 1918, when the 16c rate became effective, this defect was remedied. The new rate was 16c for the first ounce which included special delivery. Every additional ounce or fraction required only 6c additional postage. So, only 10c was paid for special delivery service, not 20c as with a pair of the 24c stamp, or even more depending on the size of the multiple used.

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Additional Multiple Rate Covers

One may conjecture whether it was a sign of the times that so few multiple rate covers were flown in 1918. Apart from the very few philatelic covers prepared for the May, 1918 first flights, it does not seem reasonable that commercial letters would be purposely limited in weight to one ounce or less, in order to save postage. Admittedly the 24c rate was high, but surely there must have been occasions which required the use of more than one 24c air mail stamp on commercial mail. Yet, only one known example has survived in the almost forty-two year history of this stamp.

This multiple rate cover, the only one not carried on the first flight, is shown in Fig. 7. The cover is in the collection of Mr. Henry M. Goodkind of New York City. This cover is franked with a block of four which the sender affixed upside down, so we have pseudo inverted center for the record. The cover is cancelled Philadelphia, September 19, 1918, 2 p. m. and is addressed to Mr. C. W. Le More, Hdqrs. 1st Brig.-N. Y. G., Park Ave. and 34 St., N. Y. C. It is backstamped New York, September 19, 1918, 7 P.M. (See Fig. 7) Note the corner card of the United States Shipping Board, Emergency Fleet Corporation, Philadelphia, Pa. Does this indicate commercial usage? Probably, but why the necessity for the quadruple rate? Again, there appears little physical evidence on this cover of more than normal weight. Neither was any other service given, other than special delivery, which would not have required the payment of 96c. So, one must come to the conclusion that this cover, like the other covers with large pieces, may be overfranked. But, again, this is a most unusual cover, the only multiple rate cover not used on the first flights.

Conclusion

That writer realizes that he is taking a rather tenuous position in stating that only five multiple rate covers used on the first flights and one commercially used cover with multiple are in existence. This, however, is all that have been seen by him in the most advanced United States air mail collections here in the East. Diligent efforts have been made to unearth other examples of multiple rate usage, but to no avail. If other collectors, who read this article have or know of other multiple rate covers which flew on the 1918 first flights or were commercially used in this same year, the writer would like to be apprised of them. The AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS is a magazine of record and any other covers "smoked out" by this article will be duly noted and photographed.

24c Air Mail Inverted Center of 1918 Again Breaks Record

The last number of this magazine reported a new record price of \$6100—\$2000 more than the previous high auction sale price realized by this famous United States air mail error. It appears as if a quarterly magazine on aerophilately cannot keep pace with the soaring prices of this sensational stamp. The 24c air mail inverted center of 1918 established another high on December 10, 1959 of \$6400.00. This record-price copy was sold by Robert A. Siegel, New York, N. Y. It was pencilled as Position No. 68 in the sheet of 100. This copy, in a Columbus, Ohio collection, had been reported to me some years ago. In other words, this is not a previously unrecorded copy.

The census that I have been making for many years of all known copies now is close to 90. Will this census ever reach 100, the number of copies in the original sheet when bought in 1918 and sold shortly thereafter to the late Col. E. H. R. Green? Consultations with those I respect as good U. S. stamp authorities familiar with this stamp leads me to think that the unconfirmed rumor that Col. Green lost some copies years ago might prove to be true. Many think we shall be able to finally record only about 93 or 94 copies.

Surely with this increasing price, copies that have been in hiding, should be coming on the market now. But whether all of the original 100 copies now exist, or if there are less, this famous stamp might better be called "valuable" or "expensive," not "rare." (H. M. G.)

STEPHEN H. SMITH

ROCKETS and SPACE MISSILES

By JOHN J. BRITT

For several years we have been hearing from the Russians the claim that they were the first to send into space by means of a rocket, live animals; witness, SPUTNIK II carrying the first space traveller, the dog "Laika."

More recently the Russians have sent up several more rockets also carrying live dogs. The United States joined the parade when in 1959 they sent up a rocket carrying two small monkeys. In June of 1959 our own Postmaster General, Summerfield, authorized a "Missile mail" experiment which was launched from the guided missile submarine "U. S. S. BARBERO" and arrived safely at its destination, the naval auxiliary air station, at Mayport, Florida. Since the above experiments and the broad news coverage of these events, the world has become very "Rocket" conscious.

Few know or realize, however, that mail rocket experiments were carried out in the early 1930's, by such pioneer rocketeers as Friedrich Schmiedl, Gerhart Zucker, Karl Roberti and Stephen H. Smith. While these men were all contemporary, their experiments were primarily designed for the sole purpose of carrying mail in their various rocket experiments. This was originally also true in the case of Stephen H. Smith, who conducted his experiments from his native country of India. But he had the foresight to realize early in his experiments the possibility of utilizing his rockets for purposes other than merely carrying mail.



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Fig. 1. (Author's collection). (Photos by Boutrelle)

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ROCKET MAIL



Fig. 2. (Collection of John R. Dilworth)

Stephen H. Smith was acutely aware of the periodic ravages of nature in his country, with its yearly toll of human life due to floods, monsoons and earthquakes. During such times of devastation, it was not uncommon for an entire community to be cut off from the rest of the neighboring territory. This resulted in much suffering on the part of those poor unfortunates, who were trapped by nature's wrath. Thus food, water and medicines so necessary to their well being were not available. Relief in most cases was slow in coming because of the difficulty of transporting supplies over impassable terrain.

Stephen H. Smith decided to do something about these human tragedies and extended his experiments to include the carrying of parcels of foodstuffs, medicines and other relief supplies in his rockets, which might be sent to stricken areas, in addition to the ever-present mail. The inspiration to carry animate things in his rockets was another forward step in his experiments.

Before we begin to chronicle these experiments, we should also bear in mind that Stephen H. Smith was the first of the pioneer rocket experiments to successfully transport by means of a rocket, live fowl, mice and a snake; starting in 1935, predating by some twenty-two years the Soviet's claim of their being the first to set off a live animal carrying rocket.

The following data is based upon the personal collection of the late Stephen H. Smith, which was acquired after his death in 1951, by Mr. John R. Dilworth, of Philadelphia, Pa., the present owner, who is a member of the Board of Directors of Aero Philatelists.

It is interesting to note that the frontispiece of the Dilworth collection of Indian rockets, bears the following tribute to Stephen H. Smith:-

"Stephen H. Smith was a true pioneer of rocketry in the country of India. He was a man endowed with much imagination and a profound interest in air power. From the years 1934 to 1944 he experimented with many types of rockets and conducted approximately 80 firings, invariably enclosing some mail in each rocket. Stephen H. Smith by all standards was the most prolific and surely the most ingenious of the contemporary rocket experimenters. To him belongs the glory of being the first to convey by means of a rocket, not only parcels of food and medicine, but live fowl as well. This is his saga, for the following items were part of his personal collection and certain memoranda written

ROCKET MAIL

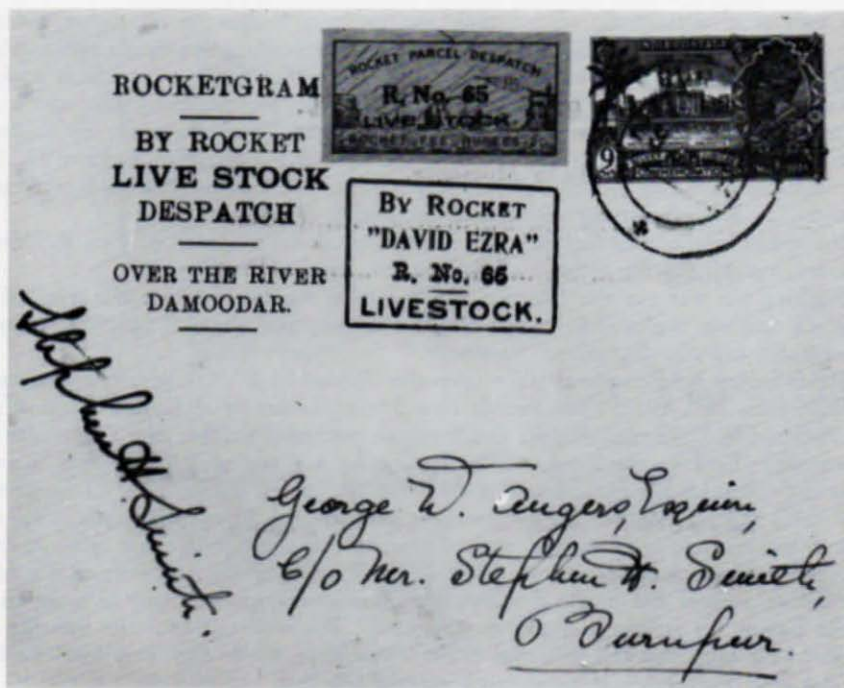


Fig. 3. (Collection of John R. Dilworth)

AIRMAIL STAMP COLLECTING

We offer to collectors the world's most efficient service in forming outstanding collections of Airmails in every phase of Aerophilately:

NEW ISSUES: We maintain a complete New Issue Service of mint Airmail Stamps, including the scarce issues. By subscribing to this service you are assured of acquiring new items in the most economical way. Write for folder giving full particulars.

RARITIES: We handle rare airmail issues which are issued in very limited quantities and usually not obtainable in the open market.

ERRORS AND VARIETIES: Through our many connections all over the world, we are in a position to offer a large number of scarce errors and varieties to our clients. Most of these issues are submitted on our New Issue Service as they appeared, before prices increased.

AIR LETTER SHEETS: We also service new issues of air letter sheets—a new and very popular field of Aerophilately. Our service offers all new air letter sheets, including scarce issues. Write for further details.

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We welcome your inquiries regarding any
of the above services.

F. W. KESSLER

500 Fifth Avenue

New York 36, N. Y.

ROCKET MAIL

by his own hand as a means of recording the history and data of his rocket endeavors. In the light of current events his belief in the utility of rockets must be considered prophetic."

This article might never have been written if the author had not come into possession of a rather odd souvenir of the Stephen H. Smith rocket experiments. This was a small sheet of paper on which was mounted some feathers pasted onto the paper by the orange rocket label bearing the legend "R. No. 65 LIVE STOCK," over which Stephen H. Smith had written the following "A few feathers from 'Adam' the 1st cock bird to be successfully transported by Rocket" and signed Stephen H. Smith. See Figure 1.

The author recalled that he had seen a similar item in the collection of John R. Dilworth, which was originally in the archives of Stephen H. Smith. See Figure 2.

Checking the date in the "Rocket Mail" catalog we learned that this revolutionary method of carrying live fowl by means of a rocket began on June 29th, 1935 in Stephen H. Smith's rocket No. 65, named "Livestock." See Figures 3 and 4.

The following brief comment taken from the "Rocket Mail" catalog is most noteworthy; "XII. June 29th, 1935. The world's First Rocket Transport of Livestock was effected, when Rocket No. 65 named 'David Ezra' was despatched over the river Damoodar from the Damoodar Bank to the Ramkanali bank carrying a young cock and a hen, as well as 189 specially printed missives, each bearing a reddish brown Rocket stamp overprinted in black, with a face value of Rs. 2. When the rocket reached the opposite bank it slid along the sandy beach and lay untouched until the arrival of the experimenter. On the rocket being opened, it was found that both Adam the cock and Eve the hen, were uninjured, but rather restive perhaps due to the confined space and any shock they may have experienced either in leaving the rack or alighting on the sand. The cock and hen were brought down to Calcutta the same day and presented to Sir David Ezra, where they were well and happy when the experimenter saw them eighteen months later."



Fig. 5. (Collection of John R. Dilworth)

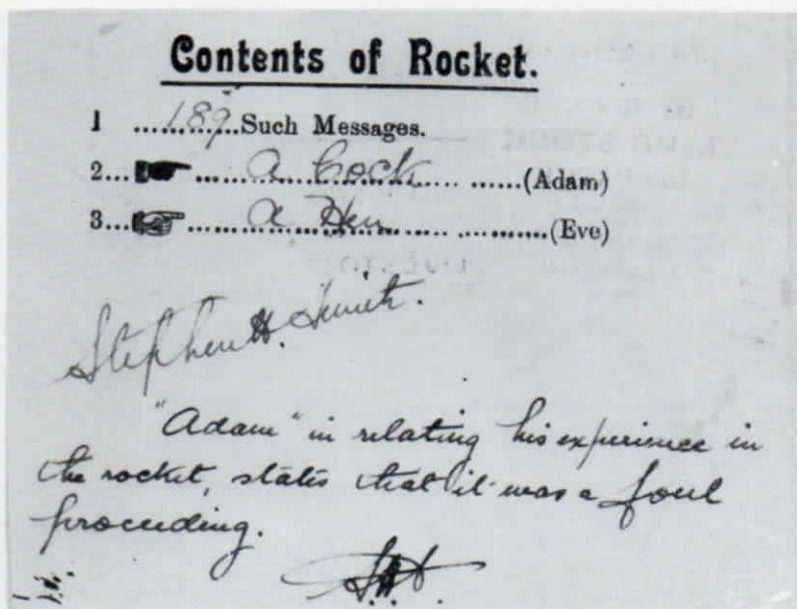


Fig. 4. (Collection of John R. Dilworth)

These amazing facts so intrigued the author that he delved into the many other rocket flights of Stephen H. Smith and found, that during the series of "Sikkim" rocket experiments, another live cock was carried in Rocket No. 84, named "Livestock", on September 28th, 1935. See Figures 5 and 6.

It was also discovered that a "snake" (Miss Creepy) was sent up in Rocket No. 127, named "John Winterton," on September 21st, 1936. No rocket cover from this experiment became available, but the catalog has a most interesting commentary regarding "Miss Creepy," and it is quoted herewith in abbreviated form;

"The 'John Winterton' which was built up of three different compartments besides the magazine chamber, had the unique distinction of carrying a *live snake* (Miss Creepy), an apple and a packet of mail. Dozens of eager helpers rushed to retrieve the rocket, a fight almost ensuing as Mr. Smith had promised a rupee to the person who picked up the rocket for him. When the rocket was handed over eventually, a small crowd gathered around, all demanding a rupee each. When the rocket was opened, Miss Creepy, realizing the end of her trip had arrived, gave a leap out of her compartment and sought her freedom. The crowd on seeing a snake leap out, were scattered to right and left, tumbling over each other. No further demand was made for a rupee, as they thought the rocket contained a cargo of snakes—Miss Creepy being the first one to make her appearance."

The author also discovered that two mice (Mr. and Mrs. Mousie) were sent up by Stephen H. Smith in the world's first rocket train the "Herbert E. Barber" on September 22nd, 1937. See Figures 7 and 8.

Following is an excerpt from "the Rocket Mail Catalog" description;

"The control and parcel cabin contained the magazine chamber and also carried a small bottle of Long John Whisky and one hundred postcards. The passengers saloon in this instance was reserved for Mr. and Mrs. Mousie (*two mice*) who relied on a small bottle of Denis Mounie's Gold Leaf Brandy to fortify themselves in case of eventualities."

Strangely enough, the last three rockets to be utilized for carrying livestock of one sort or another were all sent up during the month of September in 1935, 1936 and 1937. This choice of the same month over a three-year period in itself might very well be coin-

ROCKET MAIL

ROCKETGRAM
MAY 1937

CONTENTS OF ROCKET.

(1) *One bookie (a cook)*

(2) *15-6- such messages*

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

(7) _____

(8) _____

Sept 2nd 1937

Fig. 6. (Collection of John R. Dilworth)

23a

**ROCKETGRAM.
INDIAN AIRWAYS.**

23b

FOR THE SATURN EXPRESS

BY
ROCKET TRAIN
"HERBERT E. BARBER"
PHANTOM OF THE FUTURE

BEHALA.
22ND.
SEPTEMBER.
1937

MRS Herbert E. Barber,
6/0 The D. A. M. S.,
14, Elliott Road,
Calcutta.

Fig. 7. (Collection of John R. Dilworth)

ROCKET MAIL

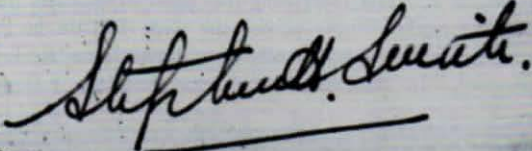
ROCKET TRAIN.		No. <u>1</u>
1st PARCEL VAN.		
One bot. Long John Whiskey		
100 P/Cards		
2nd PASSENGER SALOON		
Mr & Mrs Monnie		
One bot. Brandy (B. Monnie)		
3rd DINING CAR.		
1 One bot. Long John Whiskey		
2 " Pk. Cheese		
3 " " Sugar		
4 Two " Tea		
4th MAIL VAN.		
200 P/Cards		
		

Fig. 8. (Collection of John R. Dilworth)

cidental, but by the same token it could also mean that Stephen H. Smith had in some way discovered that September was more propitious than the other months for his livestock carrying rockets.

In view of all the above evidence, it may truthfully be stated that Stephen H. Smith was the first experimenter to carry medicine, food, livestock and other supplies over long distances by means of rockets to inaccessible places.

It may also be said without fear of contradiction that Stephen H. Smith's many and varied rocket experiments may well be considered as the forerunners of the many types of rocket missiles now in use by the military services of the great powers in the world.

In conclusion, the author would like to reiterate that to Stephen H. Smith belongs the glory for all time for being the first individual to send live things into space via means of a rocket, Russia's claims notwithstanding.

TO JOIN AERO PHILATELISTS

See Page 84

URUGUAY

The Commencement Of Air Mail Service

The 1910 Cattaneo 'Flight'

By ROBERT HOFFMANN

Preface

On June 9, 1958, H. R. Harmer, Ltd. of London, England sold at auction the Rothschild air mail collection. Included among the items in this auction sale was the very rare URUGUAY CATTANEO flight card of 1910 from Colonia, Uruguay to Buenos Aires, Argentina. (See Fig. 1.) This December 18, 1910 flight has always been listed in the air mail catalogues as the first air mail flight in Uruguay. The post cards flown on the flight, handstamped "Aeroplano Cattaneo", are considered desirable and much sought-after rarities by both Uruguayan and air mail specialists.

On the occasion of his visit to the United States in 1958, I discussed this piece with Mr. Robert Hoffmann, the well-known collector of Uruguay. This was before the auction sale in London. Mr. Hoffmann confided that he had reservations about whether this was indeed a flown item. However, Mr. Hoffmann did decide to place a bid on the lot, although it was unsuccessful. The purchaser was the French collector, M. Jean Gravelat, whose successful bid was 55 British pounds or \$154.00.

Upon his return home to Argentina, Mr. Hoffmann continued his interest in this flight and, when he was in Colonia, searched the newspaper files for information about it. He reasoned that a successful flight across the wide Rio de la Plata in 1910 should have occasioned as much newspaper notice and fame as the later Blériot flight from France across the English Channel. In this search, he unearthed the following account of this



Fig. 1. The rare 1910 post card, now in the collection of Mr. Jean Gravelat of France.
(Photos through courtesy of Mr. Gravelat).

URUGUAY

famous flight. Mr. Hoffmann wrote his story in Spanish, and asked me to prepare the following not quite literal translation. (*Philip Silver*)

The Commencement of Air Mail Service in Uruguay Not 1910 But 1912

The aeronautic history of the Rio de la Plata countries begins in 1910 with the successes and triumphs of the Italian aviator Bartolomé Cattáneo, Mr. Cattáneo being justifiably considered the father of Uruguayan aviation. On December 16, 1910 he achieved his stupendous air crossing of the Rio de la Plata from the park of the Argentine Sport Club at Palermo, Buenos Aires, to the bull ring El Real de San Carlos near Colonia, Uruguay. This was accomplished with an unscheduled descent at Cerros de San Juan, a little north of Colonia, because the aviator had lost the most direct route to Colonia and had to land to get his bearings. The distance of the first leg of the flight was 58 km. and of the second 32 km. Cattáneo left Buenos Aires at 14.02 hours and arrived at Colonia at 17 hours. Thus, his total elapsed time was just under three hours. This crossing, comparable only to the famous crossing of the English Channel by the French aviator Blériot, which caused such an international sensation, was later repeated by other aviators such as Theodore Fels, who made a round trip flight from Buenos Aires to Montevideo in September, 1917. But the fame of the Italian aviator is all the more firmly established because he was the first who dared to cross the waters of the Rio de la Plata which was considered a tremendous risk at the time.

The return flight from Colonia to Buenos Aires, planned for December 18, 1910, two days after his arrival, was carefully organized by the aviator and provided for postal authorization to carry mail. The Post Office authorities delivered to him a sealed bag of mail in accordance with the following telegraphic authorization of Sr. Garcia Santos, Administrator

Vatican City Air Mail FDC

SPECIAL OFFER

#C1-8	Flown to France regist. RR	\$22.00
C9-15	2nd air mail set	5.75
C16-17	Tobias (30,000 sets issued)	65.00
C18-19	U. P. U. (40,000 sets issued)	32.00
C20-21	Gratianus on cacheted FDC	40.00
C22-23	Dome 1st issue, regist.	18.50
C24-32	Now Obsolete on 3 cach FDC	7.00
C33-34	Dome 2nd issue on cach. FDC	5.25

We have the finest assortment of First and Special Flights, Zeppelin, JET, VATICAN CITY, Approvals. References please if unknown to us.

PENNY BLACK STAMP CO.

Est. 1912

S. L. Bayer, Prop.



116 Nassau Street, New York 38, N. Y.



URUGUAY



Fig. 2. The reverse side of the card showing the Buenos Aires backstamp December 21, 1910.

General of the Department of Colonia, directed to Sr. del Cerro, the local postmaster:
 "Administrator of Posts and Telegraphs of Colonia.

No inconvenience exists to comply with your application to dispatch correspondence through conduct of aviator Cattáneo, always providing delivery to the Argentine Post Office. Mail and printed matter must be properly franked and enclosed in sealed wrappings. I wish to thank Sr. Cattáneo in the name of the General Administration for his gallant offer which—being accepted—compromises the undersigned in the name of the Uruguayan postal institution to thankfulness."

However, the flight never took place. No reason is known for the last minute cancellation of the return flight from Colonia, but it may be assumed that bad weather, unfavorable winds or other similar conditions caused the suspension. The following public notice appeared in the Colonia Newspaper on December 20, 1910:

"Latest notice:- We have received an announcement at the last moment that Cattáneo has cancelled his air flight and is returning to Buenos Aires aboard the steamer ADRIATIC."

There is an interesting sidelight to this story. In examining some old air mail catalogues of 1921 and 1928, one is struck by the fact that the flight is described as between Montevideo and Buenos Aires. Later catalogue listings show the flight correctly as between Colonia and Buenos Aires. Since, however, this mail never did fly, it is the writer's suggestion that future catalogue listings show the 1912 flight from Salto to Montevideo, also made by Cattáneo, as the number one Uruguay flight, which by the way is another most interesting story, because a distance of 500 km. at that time was almost as sensational as crossing a river or channel. The 1910 "flight" covers must, nevertheless, be considered interesting and desirable items and perhaps listed similar the stamp issues "prepared but not issued." It is, furthermore, interesting to know that owing to this failure, the Argentine air mail history got ahead of the Uruguayan, because the same Italian aviator Cattáneo accomplished the first Argentine airmail flight from Rosario to Buenos Aires on June 25, 1911.

So, Cattáneo and his plane returned to Buenos Aires on the ADRIATIC and thus ended the attempt to return by air as he had come.

Based on the foregoing, we cannot say that the very rare postal pieces bearing the legend "Por Aeroplano Cattáneo," prepared for a flight on December 18, 1910 are in any way mere contrivances. It is sufficient to know that the flight was honestly planned and prepared until the last moment but was never realized and the mail officially entrusted to Cattáneo in a sealed pouch was dispatched to Buenos Aires via ordinary river mail. Such correspondence has a Buenos Aires receiving stamp of December 21, 1910.

Editorial

Mint or Used? Neither!

For a long time, the question of whether one should collect mint or used has come under much discussion. Obviously, the less experienced collectors seek guidance as to which way is preferable. This question no doubt arises because of the pricing practices in most standard catalogs. Practically all stamps are priced two ways—unused and cancelled. Generally catalogs price mint higher than used copies. Most of those offering advice on this problem straddle the issue. They point out the advantages to both ways, thus leaving the final choice to the collector himself.

The exceptions are those partisan collectors or dealers, who lobby for their own preference. If one is an ardent used stamp specialist, he can only see virtues in his method of collecting. In order to prove his point, he has to knock everything about collecting mint stamps. But in actual practice, such views are extreme, and the picture is not as black nor as white as such prejudiced people make it.

However, a specialist, such as an air mail stamp collector, need not have to contend with this problem. The field is big, and thus he should vary his stamps, having some mint, others used as well as some stamps on covers. There is just one *dont*. When air mail stamps come in sets, do not combine some denominations unused with others used in the same set. Have each set complete either mint or used.

Aero-philatelists can form exceedingly interesting collections. Some of the most colorful stamps are best collected unused. Free from any markings, the graphic arts' appeal is best displayed by mint copies. But if one is collecting foreign air mail stamps in particular, he should seek some copies with cancellations showing town marks and dates. Just a touch of a cancel is philatelically insignificant. The attraction to used stamps, as European collectors who originated this will tell you, is the proof of postal use. So the more a cancellation discloses, the more desirable it becomes.

Cover collecting has grown enormously in recent times. An air mail cover is fascinating because it generally shows how fast the mail was delivered. Some stamps were used on historical flights by famous aviators. Having the complete article, the stamp on the cover represents the ultimate for many collectors.

It is our opinion that the air stamp specialist, who adheres to either mint or used, is depriving himself of both pleasure and knowledge about his stamps. Furthermore, looking over an album with page after page of stamps all the same way becomes rather boring. But placing some copies with interesting cancellations, covers or even unused blocks on a page breaks the monotony.

From our experience, all of the top contemporary air mail collectors started out with a printed album. After some years, the collection was remounted from a printed album onto blank pages, where the collector could do his own writing-up. Those now beginning would be well advised to follow the same example.

The "sad sack" collector is the one who fears that he has reached the saturation point. He has all the stamps he can afford. Those missing numbers are the very expensive stamps far beyond his means. So at this point, such a collector is about to give up. He needs rejuvenation. One of the best ways of overcoming such a feeling of frustration is to remount his collection. He re-examines stamps that he had not looked at closely for sometime. He notices new things on the stamps he owns. He has entered into an entirely new world. So an air mail stamp specialist must have unlimited horizons. If, at the very beginning, he decides to confine his collection to either mint or used, he defeats his own purpose by narrowing his field. Collect air mail stamps all ways and remember "variety is the spice of life."

A Second Look At THE RF OVERPRINTS

It is now about two years since I wrote about the RF markings applied by the French Navy to United States air mail stamps and postal stationery during the North African campaign in World War II (1944-45). It will be remembered that this study first appeared in this magazine as a three-part series (*AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS* Vol. V, Nos. 3-4 and Vol. VI, No. 1) and then in October, 1958 it was published as a unit by the *Collectors Club's Theodore E. Steinway Memorial Publication Fund*. Then followed much publicity in stamp periodicals here and abroad, especially when reviews of the RF handbook appeared.

Revisions By The Scott and Sanabria Catalogues

The first interesting development was the action taken by the American catalogs—Scott and Sanabria. Both these fine reference books followed the information in my studies without one amendment, and in the following editions of both catalogs, the listings and pricings in "the Scott Catalogue, and Scott U. S. Specialized Catalogue (1959 Editions)" were changed. Later on the newest edition of "the Sanabria Air Post Catalogue" issued in the summer of 1959 revised its listings and pricing of the RF overprints. The importance of such quick catalog reaction cannot be too highly stressed.

Now what did most dealers and stamp auction houses do? As only proper, they followed the new catalogue listings. But this unfortunately cannot apply to all dealers. Some just wont give in, and they continue selling RF material that has been shown to be either bogus or counterfeit. Furthermore, they do it in a clever manner. When selling RF overprints at auction, they list the material and then at the very end insert the old catalogue number and price, ending with (1958) in parenthesis. Others describe the RF material that has been removed from the catalogues and then end with the statement: "Sold as is."

Correspondence has come from two collectors, who purchased such catalog delisted RF overprints in recent months. First of all, in mentioning the purchase prices for these auction lots, they paid a good percentage of the old catalog list price. But more important, they did not understand the auction catalog description in that the price and catalogue number referred to the 1958 edition and *not the new revised 1959 one*. Both collectors felt that they had been deceived by such questionable trade practices, and I know one tried to have his money refunded by offering to return his lots. I never learned if he had been successful. It is my hope, and I feel sure that most all collectors and dealers share this view, that from now on all RF overprints will be sold only by the most recent catalogue listing and prices.

Inquiries For Material

The sales of the handbook were most pleasing and resulted in many letters coming from readers. The correspondence evidenced several interesting matters. RF overprints are being collected by substantial people, not the sheet buyers and shoe-box type of "stamp saver." Letters came mostly from doctors, dentists, college professors, engineers and bankers. So many asked: "Do you have any duplicates to sell? Do you know where I can buy RF's?" As I wrote to one correspondent, in collecting RF's since they first became known to me in 1945, I have had exactly one duplicate cover. I too am still seeking material for my own collection, which is far from complete with all types known on both the air mail adhesives and the postal stationery. All these inquiries demonstrate clearly that bona-fide RF material is very scarce. In fact, I think it is easier (provided one has the money) to buy a copy of the U. S. 1918 24c air mail inverted center than genuinely flown RF cover.

Unused (Mint) RF

When finishing my lengthy printed comments after a prolonged examination of much mint material, I concluded as follows:

RF OVERPRINTS

"Unused stamps and stamped envelopes with RF overprints do not seem to be genuine."

The impact of the results of that study seemed to have surprised many, and some appear to have adopted the attitude of the legendary stubborn Irish-American, who said: "You are 100% right, but I'm still not convinced."

Some people raised the question whether some RF overprints now existing in mint condition could not have been legitimately made, because the Naval Directives for the use of the RF markings may not have been fully understood by everyone handling this mail. There is no question but that experience shows that in philately one usually encounters an exception. Thus it could be with unused RF's.

The matter to stress here, however, is what the study of the material disclosed. Since doing this work in 1958, I have continued examining many more mint RF overprints—in singles, blocks and two more full sheets. *But not one overprint on a mint copy tallied favorably with the known genuine.* Until a good authority on RF's comes forth with some mint stamps that satisfies him and the other students that the overprint is genuine, then I believe that we all must hold to the accepted opinion that the unused material is not genuine.

On the other hand, we can have genuine unused copies (without gum). A number of legitimate covers exist where the stamp is not tied to the cover by a cancellation. Some are illustrated in the handbook. One may remove an untied adhesive from such a cover and then have a genuine unused copy, although this would be philatelic mutilation. But even if one were foolish enough to remove an uncanceled genuine copy from a cover, what point has he proved?

Among the volume of correspondence received, there was one letter, that I feel, may offer a good clue to the reason why a quantity of RF overprints in mint condition became available to collectors. I quote from parts of this letter:

"I read your RF book and might say 'I was there.' I was in Casablanca, North Africa, from Christmas 1942 to Thanksgiving 1945. I sold and bought lots of stamps.

"As for the RF's, I bought 1,000 six-cent air mail stamps at a time and sold them to a local wholesale dealer. And he in turn would contact the different ship captains and have them place the RF overprint on the sheets and sell them to retail dealers.

"It was an interesting game with a quick turnover for a little profit. If I had stayed in North Africa for another six months, I would have had complete mint sheets for practically all the R. F. issues, but Uncle Sam said 'move on.' I did not handle any covers to be overprinted."—G. W. G., Illinois.

NEW U. N. POSTAL STATIONERY SOUVENIR FOLDER

Containing one each of the following:

7c Air Mail Envelope Size 13

7c Air Mail Envelope Size 8

5c Air Mail Postal Card

Each of the above items with the special Sept. 21st first day U. N. cancellation.

\$2.00, post free from:

AERO PHILATELISTS

22 East 35th Street

New York 16, N. Y.

RF OVERPRINTS

Bogus and Counterfeit RF

Another pleasant aftermath to this RF work was having Mr. William W. Wylie, Editor of "Western Stamp Collector", send me some letters and clippings in his personal file relating to the RF overprints. Most all of it was from the preceding editor of this stamp newspaper, the late Al Burns, who had turned it over to his successor, W. W. Wylie. I went over this correspondence carefully, but found little that added to my knowledge with the exception of one letter. This was written on April 7, 1948 by a Mr. Louis I. Schreiber, P. O. Box 150, Elizabeth, N. J. It came, as other correspondence in the Burns file indicated, because "Western Stamp Collector" had published some data on the RF overprints earlier in 1948. I have never heard of Louis I. Schreiber, known of him nor ever found anyone who did know him. But what he wrote in 1948—ten years before the handbook appeared—agrees practically completely with the conclusions drawn from my studies. Here is this letter:

"The following information is submitted concerning the 'R.F.' overprints on U. S. #C25:

"1. Under the terms of an agreement between the U. S. Forces and the French Forces in North Africa (1944) French Military and Naval Personnel were permitted to use U. S. C25 on airmail letters addressed to U. S. territory.

"2. Supplies of C25 (and also the 6c airmail stamped envelopes with and without colored borders) were distributed to various French Naval Post Offices, where they were sold for three francs each.

"3. Under the terms of the abovementioned agreement, U. S. airmail stamps used by French personnel were to be marked by the Naval Post Office in such a manner as to identify the mail matter as having originated at a French Naval Post Office. It was decided that the stamp used by the French Forces would be marked 'R.F.' (Republique Francaise), and postmarked 'Poste Navale.'

"4. As no provisions were made for the distribution of standard marking devices, Naval Post Offices which sold C25, were obliged to obtain 'R.F.' marking devices locally, the result being that many different types are known.

"5. U. S. C25 was definitely sold at the French Naval Bases at; Algiers, Bone, Oran, in Algeria; Bizerte, Tunis in Tunisia; Casablanca in Morocco; and no doubt, in a number of other places in North and West Africa.

"It is the opinion of the writer, that only used (and preferably used on cover) copies possess philatelic value. (Italics are mine.)

"The above information was obtained in part from the Adjutant General of the U. S. Army, the Office of the 2nd Asst. Postmaster General, and personal mail contact between the writer and the French Naval Forces in North Africa in 1944-45.

"I would be glad to try to answer questions of W. S. C. (Western Stamp Collector) readers, however, a stamped, addressed envelope would be appreciated."

My memory goes back to 1948 to recall that there were then only a few specialists interested in this RF air mail. So obviously Mr. Schreiber's most informative and correct letter to the editor of "Western Stamp Collector" was not published, but instead placed in his file. What a shame! If this information had become known, then much later grief would have been avoided because collectors after 1948 would have had the facts before them, and not had purchased all the doubtful and counterfeit material they did. Also I am inclined to think that the editor of Scott, who first listed and priced RF overprints in that catalogue, would have discounted the story given him by his sources of information, and instead would have based the original Scott catalogue listings upon the source material that Mr. Schreiber had received from Officials and the Post Office, as he had written to the editor of "Western Stamp Collector." Of course, it must be admitted by me that the finding of this letter was a source of great personal satisfaction, because practically all of the main points made in my later RF studies agree with the information written in this 1948 letter. (H. M. G.)

AERO PHILATELISTS

1960 OFFICERS

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<i>Executive Vice President</i>	SAM RODVIEN
<i>First Vice President</i>	LOUIS N. STAUB
<i>Secretary</i>	HARRY A. HOLMAN
<i>Assistant Secretary</i>	FRANK GLANZ
<i>Treasurer</i>	BERNARD FINK

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MAURICE TRIPET
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