

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

★ ★ A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY ★ ★

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Vol. VII



No. 4

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

Henry M. Goodkind, Editor

Philip Silver, Assistant Editor

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Editorial

Cancelled-To-Order

A few months ago, a stamp dealer whom we had known for about 25 years, sought our advice on the United States 1930 Graf Zeppelin issue. From the length of time of this acquaintance, it is obvious that this man is not inexperienced, because he must have been in the stamp business for at least as long as he was known to us. He wished to find out if a set of the Graf Zeppelins could be secured in blocks of four cancelled. We told him that we never recalled seeing any used blocks of four.

A few first day covers with blocks of four of the Graf Zeppelin issue are remembered. But no one would have been foolish enough to remove these blocks from first day covers. First, the first day cancellations often did not hit the stamps. Second, first day covers with the Graf Zeppelin stamps are far more valuable than used off cover copies. We proceeded to explain that blocks of four of the lower denominations, the 65c and \$1.30, do exist on 1930 Zeppelin Flight covers. A block of four of the 65c was used a few times to make the \$2.60 Round Trip rate. Since the rate for the "Complete Round Trip" was \$3.90, a few blocks of four of the \$1.30 were used for this latter type of the Zeppelin mail, even though this represented an overpayment of \$1.30. Thus covers with blocks of four with the 65c and \$1.30 do exist, although they are very scarce.

When it comes to the \$2.60, however, a block of four cost \$10.40. Since the highest Zeppelin postal rate was the aforementioned \$3.90, it seems doubtful if anyone would have been that extravagant to overpay a mailing by \$6.50, especially since 1930 was a depression year.

This information seemed to disappoint this dealer, because he had a customer, who was trying to collect every United States 20th century stamp in used blocks of four. (We did not embarrass him by asking where he hoped to find used blocks of Scott Nos. 544 and 594.) Since this dealer was obviously so anxious to fill an order for Graf Zeppelin stamps in used blocks of four, he again requested that we search our memory to make sure that they did not exist. We told him that we had never seen such material in all our years of collecting, and

EDITORIAL

held serious doubts that cancelled blocks of four did exist.

Then he posed this question—"What about now having an unused set of Graf Zeppelins cancelled?" He seemed to be very serious about this, overlooking the fact that these stamps currently catalog for \$870 mint but only \$760 used, a big difference of \$110. Even pointing this out did not seem to satisfy him. So we asked him if the 1930 Graf Zeppelin issue would not look odd with a 1960 cancellation? He agreed, but with an evident show of disappointment. Suddenly his face brightened as he said: "How much do you think it would cost to have a 1930 cancellation applied to the U.S. Graf Zeppelin stamps? I have a set of mint blocks of four in stock. Do you think I could arrange to get a 1930 cancellation on them?"

He still is awaiting our answer.

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UNITED STATES
The Lindbergh Air Mail Stamp
With Chicago Air Mail Field First Day Cancellation

By **PHILIP SILVER**

For many years, "the Scott United States Stamp Specialized Catalogue" listed the following first day cities for the Lindbergh air mail stamp issued on June 18, 1927:

Washington, D. C.,
Detroit, Michigan,
Little Falls, Minnesota,
St. Louis, Missouri.

Starting with the 1958 edition, a new listing was shown for AIR MAIL FIELD, CHICAGO. This listing appears in both the 1958 and 1959 editions of this catalogue without price, a probable indication of lack of basis for pricing because of infrequent sales. It is surprising, however, that thirty-one (31) years should elapse from the date of issue of the stamps until the listing of this first day cancellation.

The writer does not know what material or information had been furnished the editors for the listing. But, reasoning that more than one such item must exist, diligent search was made among the stocks of New York City dealers but to no avail. In examining old philatelic sources that might shed light on this interesting problem, the writer came across the following item in "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News"¹ quoting from a Post Office notice:

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This Important Sale Contains

A Full Session of Airpost Stamps

The Collection includes most of the

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U. S. LINDBERGH STAMP

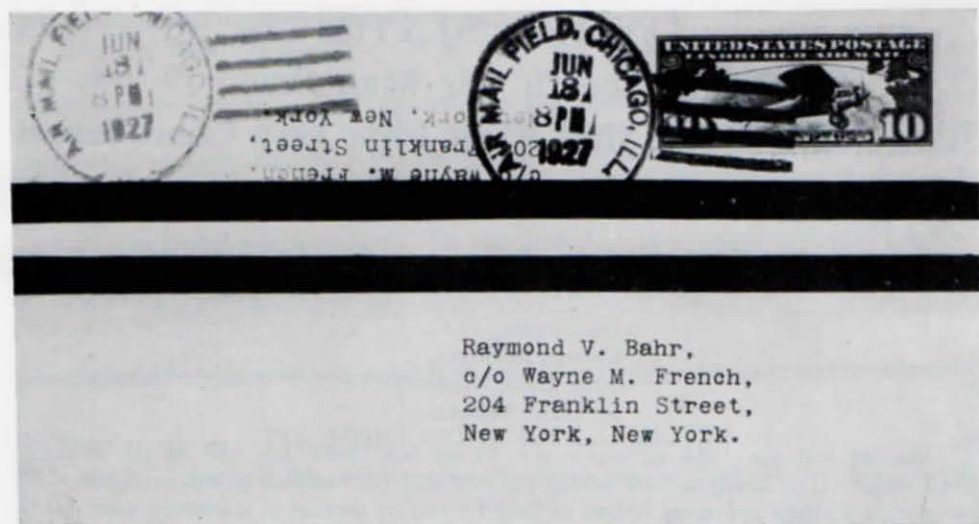


Fig. 1. The 1927 Lindbergh air mail stamp on cover with First Day "Chicago, Ill. Air Mail Field" cancellation, June 18, 1927. The handstamped cancellation is hit twice; the one on the left with a greenish blue ink and that at the right tying the stamp to the cover in black.

"The stamps will be placed on sale on June 18, 1927 in four different cities, 'named especially because of their connection with the lives of either Col. Lindbergh or his mother Mrs. Evangeline Lodge Lindbergh. They are St. Louis, Missouri, Detroit, Michigan, Little Falls, Minnesota and Washington, D. C.' On the same day the stamps will be on sale at the Philatelic Agency and other offices will be supplied as soon as possible."

It will be noted that Chicago was not one of the cities from which first day covers could be serviced since a supply of the stamps was not supposed to arrive there until several days later.

Lindbergh's flight had stirred the imagination of the American public and, consequently, many stories appeared in the philatelic press about the issuance of the stamp commemorating the flight. Indeed, practically every one of the weekly issues of Mekeel's during June, July and August, 1927 carried an item about the stamps. Thus, searching further, the writer came across the following:²

"The cities that got their supply of stamps for sale on the 18th of June were notified by wire from Washington that the Lindbergh packages were not to be opened until 7 am. on that date and then, in the presence of a government inspector. Consequently, none of the stamps were sold officially until that time. We have a story that came to us from a substantial source to the effect that Henry Ford sent twenty letters bearing the Lindbergh stamps by special messenger to Chicago with instructions

TO JOIN AERO PHILATELISTS

See Page 112

U. S. LINDBERGH STAMP

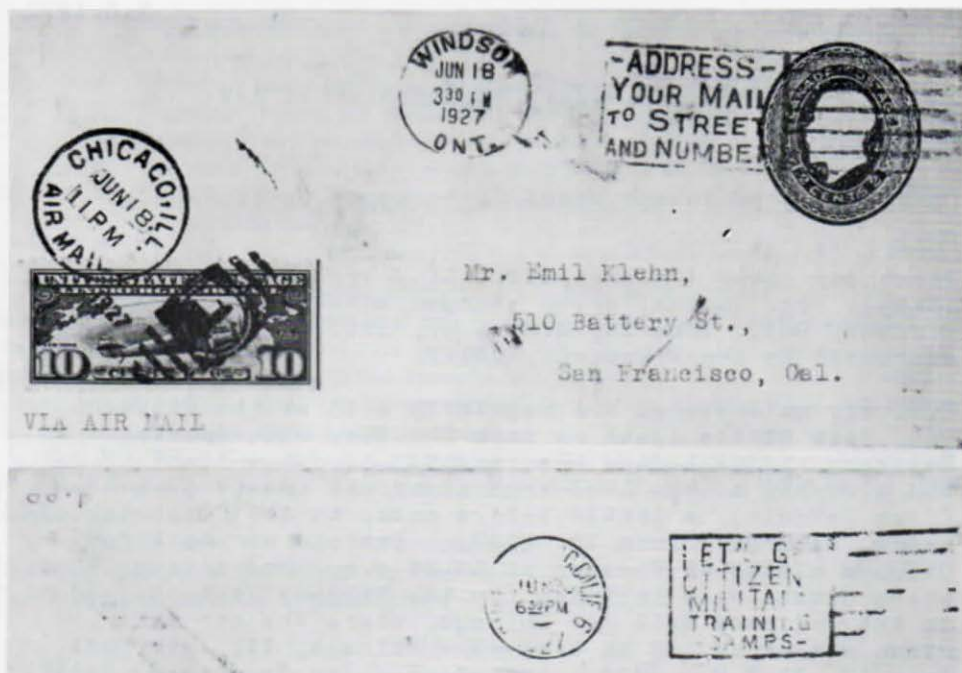


Fig. 2. The Lindbergh air mail stamp on a cover originating in Windsor, Ont., Canada. Note this cancellation reads "June 18, 1927; 3:30 PM" in Canada. The Chicago, Ill. cancellation is also First Day "June 18, 11 PM". At the bottom is the San Francisco, Calif. backstamp dated "June 20, 1927; 6:30 PM."

that they be returned to Detroit by the 8:30 flight from Chicago. Thus, Mr. Ford has twenty letters flown Chicago to Detroit on June 18th or two days before the Lindbergh stamps were on sale in Chicago. The Lindbergh stamps were sold in Chicago on June 20th and the rush for the stamps on the part of the public as well as collectors was unprecedented and the clerks from different windows were impressed into service to sell to customers whose queues made the post office a scene of activity."

The attention of the reader is directed to the fact that Chicago did not receive its supply of Lindbergh stamps until June 20th, thus obviating its chance to service first day covers on the 18th.

The story now appeared to be complete; in all probability, the listing in the 1958 edition of the Scott Catalogue was based upon one of these twenty covers serviced for Mr. Ford. Fair credence was lent to this belief since no further mention was found in the 1927 issues of Mekeel's about covers with this Chicago Air Mail Field cancellation.

One may then imagine the writer's jubilation when he found a Chicago Air Mail Field cancellation on a cover purchased in a recent New York Auction. The cover was in a lot of approximately twenty covers, no special mention being made of the item in question in the description of the lot. (See Fig. 1) But, this cover does not appear to be one of the twenty serviced by Mr. Henry Ford. It is cancelled June 18/8PM/1927/AIR MAIL FIELD, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS and is addressed to New York rather than to Chicago and is backstamped at the Varick Street Station, New York June 20, 1927, 10:30 am. The handstamp which ties the stamp is in black and the other, at the left, is in greenish blue. Judging by the elapsed time of one and one half days, it does not appear to have received air mail service. This, of course, may not be the fact; air mail schedules in that period were not always kept and flights were frequently delayed for several days. A rubber handstamp

U.S. LINDBERGH STAMP

7.5.1927.

To Mr. P.H. Ward, M.W.S.N., New Issue Chronicle.
Philadelphia, Penn'a.

Compliments of Joseph Moert, Kitchener, Ont., Canada.

First day cover (Chicago, Ill.) Lindbergh commr. air mail stamp. 2c. Canada, green stamped envelope, postmarked Windsor, Ont., June 18, 3.30 p.m., 1927. addressed to San Francisco, Calif.

U.S. air mail stamps are regularly sold at the Windsor Ont., Post Office (just as were the 10c. U.S. Special Delivery stamps before the recent 20 c. convention) and a supply of the Lindbergh stamp was received by them (from Detroit), a little before noon, on the first day of issue, Saturday, June 18, 1927. Detroit air mail for Chicago closes at Windsor at 12.30 p.m., and missing this, these covers were included (by the Windsor Post office) in the ordinary mail for Chicago, where the air mail stamp was cancelled on arrival - Chicago, Ill, Air Mail, June 18, 11 P.M., 1927. Backstamped San Francisco, Calif. 6.30 p.m., 1927.

Fig. 3. The letter enclosed in the cover shown in Fig. 2.

on the cover flap indicates that it was sent by The Pure Ice and Cold Storage Co., 913 E. Jefferson St., Springfield, Illinois. One may conjecture where the sender obtained the stamps to be affixed for mailing since, as previously noted, the Lindbergh stamps were not even available at Chicago until June 20th. A second question which naturally comes to mind is "Which cover was used for the Scott Catalogue listing, the one in the writer's collection or one of Mr. Ford's?"

At this point, the story assumes even more interesting proportions. A most unusual cover was recently acquired by the writer. It was found in a cover accumulation of one of the old-time dealers. (See Fig. 2). It will be noted that this is a Canadian postal stationery item bearing an imprinted 2c Canadian stamp cancelled Windsor, Ontario, June 18, 1927, 3:30 pm. The Lindbergh stamp is affixed in the lower left portion, tied with an entirely different type of Chicago Air Mail Field cancellation than the cover shown in Fig. 1. The postmark is dated June 18, 1927, 11 pm.

This, certainly, appears to be a mystery cover. Where was the Lindbergh stamp obtained on June 18th if these stamps did not reach the Chicago post office until June 20th? Fortunately, the cover contained an insert, (See Fig. 3), which sheds light on the mystery. It is a memorandum dated July 5, 1927 addressed to Mr. Philip H. Ward who, at that time, wrote a column, THE NEW ISSUE CHRONICLE, for Mekeel's. The chronology of events shown in this memorandum may be detailed as follows:

1. United States air mail stamps are regularly sold at Windsor, Ontario where they are received from the Detroit post office. Windsor is just across the Detroit River from Detroit.
2. A supply of the Lindbergh stamps was received from Detroit shortly before noon, June 18, 1927.

U. S. LINDBERGH STAMP

3. The Lindbergh stamp was purchased at the Windsor post office and affixed to the cover.
4. Detroit air mail for Chicago closes at Windsor, Ontario at 12:30 pm.
5. This cover missed the deadline for the flight. It will be noted that the 2c Canadian stamp is cancelled Windsor, Ontario, June 18, 1927, 3:30 pm.
6. The cover was then included with the ordinary mail for Chicago.
7. Upon arrival in Chicago, the Lindbergh stamp received the Chicago Air Mail Field cancellation, June 18, 1927, 11 pm.
8. The cover was flown to San Francisco where it arrived June 20, 1927, 6:30 pm.

So, through a fortuitous set of circumstances, a most unusual postal history item was born. It will be noted that the arrival time in Chicago is 11 pm. Had it arrived a little more than an hour later, it would have not been a first day cover. If it had not been late in arriving at the Windsor post office, it would have flown from Detroit which was already a first day city and thus never would have received the Chicago Air Mail Field cancellation. So, this cover must have indeed had a charmed life.

But, Mr. Ward never did use the story sent to him by his correspondent, Mr. Joseph Moert of Kitchener, Ontario. A careful search of the weekly issues of *Mekeel's* for 1927 does not disclose its use.

Once again, then, the writer poses the question. Which cover was used by Scott in its catalogue listing of the Chicago Air Mail Field cancellation? Was it one of Mr. Henry Ford's covers or one of the covers illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

Bibliography

1. *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, June 27, 1927, p. 370.
2. *Ibid*, July 4, 1927, p. 382.

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	503	80.00
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	29 imp.	20.00
	30 imp.	20.00
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COLOMBIA

The First Mail Stamp

(Scott C1, Sanabria No. 1)

As most air mail specialists know, for an experimental flight on June 18, 1919 from Barranquilla to Puerto Colombia by an American aviator, Knox Martin, 200 copies of the 2c postage stamp of the 1917 series were overprinted. This is one of the first air mail stamps issued in the Western Hemisphere, as well as one of the first in the world. It is easily dated because the five-line overprint reads: "1er/Servicio/Postal/Aero/6-18-19."

Obviously with such a small quantity, Colombia (Scott C1), over the years, has grown to be one of the scarce and valuable air mail stamps. The official status, however, of this stamp long has been questioned. Consequently, it has become the subject of a series of controversial articles. Some respected aero-philatelists have championed this stamp as an issue worthy of listing by every catalog, general or specialized. But one well-known student of Colombia stamps has written and published much research to establish the non-official status of this 1919 air stamp. Thus if the latter is true, then a general catalog as Scott should not list its Colombia C1.



(Photo by Boutrelle.)

A very strong argument for the *OFFICIAL* character of Colombia C1 was put forth in 1959 by none other than the Republic of Colombia itself, because upon the occasion of the 40th anniversary of this 1919 issue, a special commemorative stamp and a souvenir sheet were issued. Illustrated is the commemorative sheet. Notice in the design the stamp on the right. Close to the center is a replica of Colombia C1. This design also carries the dates, "1919-1959" and the inscription, "40th Anniversary."

FOR BOOKS ON AIR MAILS

See Page 105

HONDURAS

The Roosevelt Issue

By JAN BART

In 1946, Honduras issued a set of eight air mail stamps (Scott C155-162) to commemorate the victory of the allied powers over Japan in World War II. "The Sanabria Air Post Catalogue" is the only one which lists the first day of issue of these stamps, October 15, 1946. "The Scott Catalogue" gives only the year, 1946, while "The Stanley Gibbons Catalogue" also gives the year, 1946, as the date of issue.

The writer has also consulted the *Aero Philatelist News* for information on these stamps. On page 47, Volume I, No. 12 the following information is found:

"109A Honduras. A new series of 8 airmails were issued on 10-15-46. The values are 1 cs red; 2 cs orange brown; 5 cs purple; 8 cs brown; 15 cs dark brown; 21 cs blue; 1 L green; and 2 L dark green. The 8 cs value pays homage to the late President Roosevelt. The stamps were printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Company. (Face value in U.S. currency is \$1.76)"

The writer is in possession of information which shows that the catalogue information is wrong on two counts. First, he questions the date of issue; second, the reason for the release of these stamps.

In the writer's collection are two covers, recently acquired, which distinctly show an earlier date of issue for the two lowest denominations, the 1 centavo brown-red and the 2 centavos orange brown. Both of these covers (Figs. 1 and 2) are cancelled April 8, 1946, fully six months prior to the date given by the Sanabria catalog.

It should be noted that both covers are addressed to Mr. Louis Schiappa and that



Fig. 1. Block of six of the 1 centavo on cover cancelled April 8, 1946. Note the "First Day Cover" handwritten notation in the center of the cover.

HONDURAS



Fig. 2. Block of four of the 2c on cover cancelled April 8, 1946. Note that the sender has written April 4, 1946 in the lower left hand corner above the words "FIRST DAY COVER." Is this a mistake, or were the stamps supposed to be issued on the 4th instead of the 8th? (Photos by Boutrelle.)



Fig. 3. Cover with the 5c Air Mail and 8c Roosevelt cancelled October 15, 1946 from the same sender to the same addressee as Figs. 1-2, but also marked "New Issue/First Day Cover."

HONDURAS

they were sent by a Mr. J. B. Edwards, living in Honduras. These names are mentioned because the six remaining denominations of the set of eight stamps are on covers bearing the same sender's and addressee's names and are cancelled October 15, 1946, the date given by Sanabria. (See Fig. 3) One may, therefore, conclude that Mr. Edwards in Honduras serviced Mr. Schiappa with the new issues of the country.

Note too, that on the 1c and 2c covers, the sender has written "First Day Cover" and, lacking any other proof to the contrary, these may now be taken as the date of issue of these two low denominations. In any event, they certainly are the earliest dates hitherto recorded.

The writer has also seen a letter written by Senor Ramon Ynestroza, Sub-Director and Inspector General of the Department of Posts of the Republic of Honduras, which states that the date of the decree authorizing the 8 centavo stamp honoring the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which is included in the set, was July 17, 1945.

Since the Allied victory over Japan did not take place until August 1945, obviously the decree could not refer to the entire issue of eight stamps, that were purportedly issued to commemorate that victory. What most probably happened was that there was an inexplicable delay in issuing the Roosevelt stamp, and in the interim, the Allies had attained the victory over Japan. What a better way but to issue the eight stamps and include one, namely the 8 centavos, as the Roosevelt commemorative? In this manner the set becomes a Roosevelt as well as an air mail set, making it have a wider philatelic market.

The question, however, still remains, as to the reason for the issuance of the 1 centavos and 2 centavos six months earlier than the other six denominations. The sender addressed the covers as "First Day Covers", which perhaps might indicate that the two stamps were intended to be issued earlier than the rest of the set. If they were not so intended, then we have the probable answer of an error. Nevertheless, here we have two interesting and thought-provoking items for the record.



The highest price

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

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UNITED STATES

1918 24c Red & Blue Air Stamp New Type First Trip Cancel Found

Those who specialize in covers with the first United States air mail stamps know that most First Flight covers bear the cancellation "May 15, 1918 First Trip." There are not many exceptions. On the Washington-New York leg, a few covers have "10 A.M." in the cancellation instead of "1918," according to "The American Air Mail Catalogue, Vol. I (1947) page 108." Recently a new May 15, 1918 cancellation was found by Mr. Philip Silver. This was written up by him in *THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*, Vol. VI, No. 2, page 53. This cover, that was illustrated, also was on the Washington-New York leg, but the cancellation read "May 15, 4 PM, 1918."

Early in 1960 I went to Gimbel's Stamp Department, New York, N.Y. to have luncheon with my friend, Mr. Jacques Minkus, who is the head of this department. Mr. Minkus was momentarily busy with a customer, so while waiting I began to examine the material for sale displayed on the counters. Soon my eyes lit upon some early United States air mail covers, all of them being quite familiar to me. Suddenly one cover seemed to attract my particular attention. It was franked with the first air mail stamp of the United States, the well-known 24c red & blue, but I looked at the cancellation several times. I could not remember ever seeing one such as this, and many collectors know my interest in this stamp goes back many years to its time of issue in 1918.

As shown in the illustration, this cancellation reads: "May 15, 7 PM, 1918."

When Mr. Minkus had finished, he came over to take me to lunch, but I first asked him to show me this cover. With Mr. Ben Blumenthal's help, it was removed from under glass on the counter and handed to me for inspection. The back of the cover was important, because this would show whether this was flown on the first flight or not.

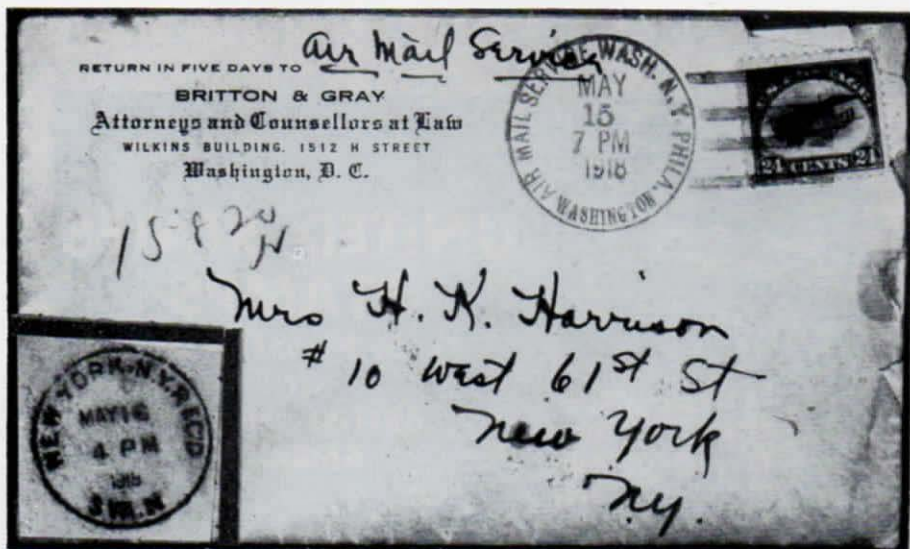
As generally known, the Washington to New York flight did not take place on May 15, 1918 because the plane met with an accident shortly after leaving Washington. The mail was returned to Washington from Waldorf, Md. where the plane had crashed. Now a few maintain that this returned mail went by train in the afternoon of May 15th to New York. If this were true, then there should be some evidence to show this. *Evidence does exist, however, which plainly refutes the misconception that the mail went by train from Washington to New York on May 15, 1918.*

All Washington to New York covers were backstamped on arrival in New York. This backstamp reads: "New York, N.Y. May 16/4PM/1918." It is known that some mail cancelled "May 16, 1918/Washington, D.C." bears the same New York receiving mark. There is one exception where a cover is stamped 5PM instead of 4PM, May 16th (*AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*, Vol. VII, No. 3, page 62). Now what is the meaning of this New York May 16, 1918 backstamp? *This clearly indicates the day and time of arrival.* Had the Washington First Flight mail gone by train on the afternoon of May 15th, it must have arrived in New York in the evening or the very latest, the night of May 15th, and would be so postmarked. To my knowledge, none are.

The first flight from Washington to New York took place on May 16, 1918. I possess newspaper clippings of the time and have seen a letter written by Lt. J. C. Edgerton stating that he had the honor to fly the first Washington to Philadelphia and New York air mail on May 16, 1918, because of the accident of the day before. Certainly all mail flown on May 16th must bear the backstamp "New York, N.Y./May 16/4PM/1918." The cover I inspected at Gimbel's bore this very receipt mark as shown in the lower left corner of the illustration.

In explaining the recent discovery of two new First Flight air mail cancellations, "Washington May 15/4 PM/1918," and this new one described here "Washington May

U. S. FIRST AIR MAIL STAMP



A cover flown from Washington to New York on the First Flight. The Cancellation reads "May 15, 7PM, 1918," a heretofore unrecorded type. The New York, N.Y. backstamp of "May 16, 1918, 4PM," is seen in the lower left corner. (Photo by Boutrelle.)

15/7 PM/1918," I agree with Mr. Philip Silver's explanation for the reason why these new types of First Flight cancels have been found. They come from Washington, none from New York or Philadelphia. This was all due to the accident outside of Washington on May 15, 1918. The New York and Philadelphia flights went off on schedule.

These two new types of May 15, 1918 markings never should have made the first flight, because they were posted in Washington, D.C. too late in the day. The flight was scheduled to start at 10 A.M. Inexperience caused delays until after 11 A.M. The plane then took off and soon crashed. The mail bags were returned to Washington on the afternoon of May 15th. Consequently, other air mail letters posted in Washington on the afternoon or the evening of May 15, 1918 went the following day on the *Washington-New York First Flight*. Had the plane not been forced down around noon on May 15th, then this illustrated cover would have been a Second Day, not a First Flight cover. The same is true of Mr. Silver's cover, that he wrote about in October 1958.

It is remarkable how specialists, such as Mr. Silver and the writer, are discovering new material connected with our first air mail service, that never have been catalogued or previously mentioned. These findings more than 40 years later are so interesting because the 1918 First Flights were chronicled by some of America's best stamp students in detail from the very time they took place. (H. M. G.)

THE FIRST AIR MAIL STAMP OF THE UNITED STATES

By Henry M. Goodkind

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U.S.A. - TUNISIA MIXED FRANKING Cover Cancelled "Poste Navale" June 24, 1944

Our member in France, Henri Trachtenberg, came across two covers franked with both U.S. and Tunisia stamps that he could not explain. He then wrote to the editor of this magazine, hoping to receive an explanation, because of his studies on the "RF" overprints.

One of the two covers is illustrated. On the left are three U.S. stamps—the two air mails, 6c and 8c of the 1941-44 series, plus a 5c of the 1943 Overrun Nations series (France). The total postage paid by the U.S. stamps is 19 cents. If this letter had been mailed by one in the French Navy using the U.S. air mail facilities and the letter had required a triple rate, then the postage would have been 18, not 19 cents.

On the right are four Tunisia postage stamps amounting to 11.40 francs. These stamps were current in 1944. The cover is addressed to "Poste Navale, Bizerte, Tunisie." All seven stamps are tied with the same cancellation reading: "Poste Navale/June 24, 1944/Bureau No. 58."



RF overprints on U.S. air mail stamps or postal stationery were confined exclusively to air mail to the United States and Canada. They were not to be legitimately used on anything but Transatlantic air mail. In the RF articles (AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, Vol. V Page 75) Fig. 7 shows the RF cover with the earliest date of use so far seen. This RF stamp is cancelled May 8, 1944—well over a month before the U.S.-Tunisia cover. So this latter cannot be a forerunner. In our opinion, there is nothing that is "right" about this cover. Nevertheless, it is difficult to explain. It may be a philatelic cover; the sender probably placed an assortment of stamps on this envelope and mailed it as a curiosity.

Perhaps after studying the illustration, others may come up with an explanation. If you have some ideas, please write the editor.

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UNITED STATES

Discovery of 2c Bicentennial Air Mail Revalue on Size 5 Envelope

By EMMETT PETER, Jr.

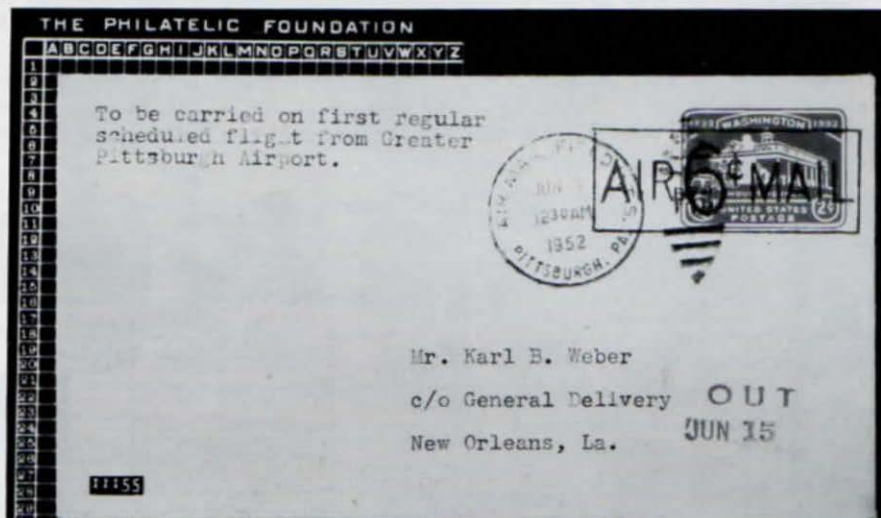


Illustration courtesy of the Philatelic Foundation, 22 East 35 Street, New York 16, N. Y.

In going through a lot of more or less common U. S. covers a few months ago, the writer was startled to find a 2c Bicentennial envelope revalued to 6c for air mail use (Scott UC9)—but in the small Size 5 instead of the larger Size 13.

Having studied U. S. air mail envelopes, I knew that the Post Office Department did not issue this revalue in a Size 5 (160x89mm), but only in the standard air mail Size 13 (171x95mm). Yet, here it was in the small size! Moreover, it was postally used, flown, and with a backstamp.

To use up a supply of obsolete envelopes, the P. O. D., beginning on March 27, 1946, revalued a supply of the ordinary 2c round-die envelopes in various watermarks and in sizes 5 and 13 during World War II, primarily for the use by the personnel of the Armed Forces overseas. Included in the revaluation was the 2c Bicentennial—but only in the Size 13.

The newly-discovered Size 5 example was posted June 3, 1952, at "Air Mail Field Pittsburgh, Pa." It is addressed to Mr. Karl B. Weber, c/o General Delivery, New Orleans, La. In the top left, there is the typewritten notation "To be carried on first regular scheduled flight from Greater Pittsburgh Airport." It has a New Orleans backstamp of June 4.

Is this (1) a legitimate, rare (possibly unique) U. S. air entire? (2) A counterfeit? or (3) a deliberately created "favor item" with no real philatelic standing?

These air mail revalues must be viewed with suspicion because of their very nature. They were surcharged crudely by cancelling machine slugs. There are ten different types of these surcharges all readily identifiable. The "Thorpe-Bartels Catalog" pictures and

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*An attempt to solve
the mystery of an air
mail postal marking
seen mostly on mail
during World War II*

THE O. A. T. POSTAL MARKING

By HENRY M. GOODKIND

This story begins with our curiosity about a postal marking that appeared on a few air mail covers received during 1944 from the French colony, Reunion. (Fig. 1). The recipient, a well-known aero-philatelist, kept one cover for his own collection and presented the second one to his long-time collector friend, the author. At first, slight attention was paid to the postal marking because our eyes focused mainly upon the stamps that at that time were seldom seen in the United States. It so happened that during the course of World War II, the special overprints of the *Free French* colonies were not appearing in America, especially from some the out-of-the-way places like Reunion. Later on we did notice this large oval O. A. T. marking, and one day Mr. Rice and the author had a discussion, wondering about its significance and meaning. But at that time, no strenuous attempts had been made to seek further knowledge.



Fig. 1 An air mail cover from St. Denis, Reunion mailed on January 15, 1944 to New York, N. Y. with a Type F (see Fig. 3) O. A. T. marking. (Photo by Boutrelle)

O. A. T. MARKING

In latter years, in some of the lesser stamp papers, references had been read about this O. A. T. marking, but the information supplied was quite sketchy. Also it did not satisfy us because there seemed to be better explanations than these articles offered. But we must admit we did nothing.

It was not until 1957 and 1958, when the author was compiling his research on the RF* overprint that really prodded us to do some investigation of this O. A. T. marking. Then after the RF handbook was published, we truly were challenged, because many, who read the RF book, incorrectly assumed that the author was an authority on military air mail markings and began writing to seek information. Among the queries that seemed in need of an answer was the meaning of these initials, O. A. T. Then and there we decided that we really "did not know our oats;" we should make some attempts to find out.

First we contacted some of the American collectors, who we knew had great interest in collecting military markings and covers. One was Dr. Fred Brock of Burbank, California. He replied that he too was mystified by this marking and suggested that we contact two in England, who he believed could supply the necessary information. This was done, and now the information as received from England is published.

Mr. Francis J. Field, the well-known British air mail dealer and publisher of the magazine, "Aero Field," besides being an old friend, wrote the following:

"I could write you quite a lengthy article regarding the O. A. T. cachets which exist in a variety of sizes, formats and colours of impression.

* RF Overprints on United States Air Mail Stamps and Stationery (1944-45). (1958) Published by the Collectors Club, New York, N.Y. under the auspices of the Theodore E. Steinway Memorial Publication Fund.



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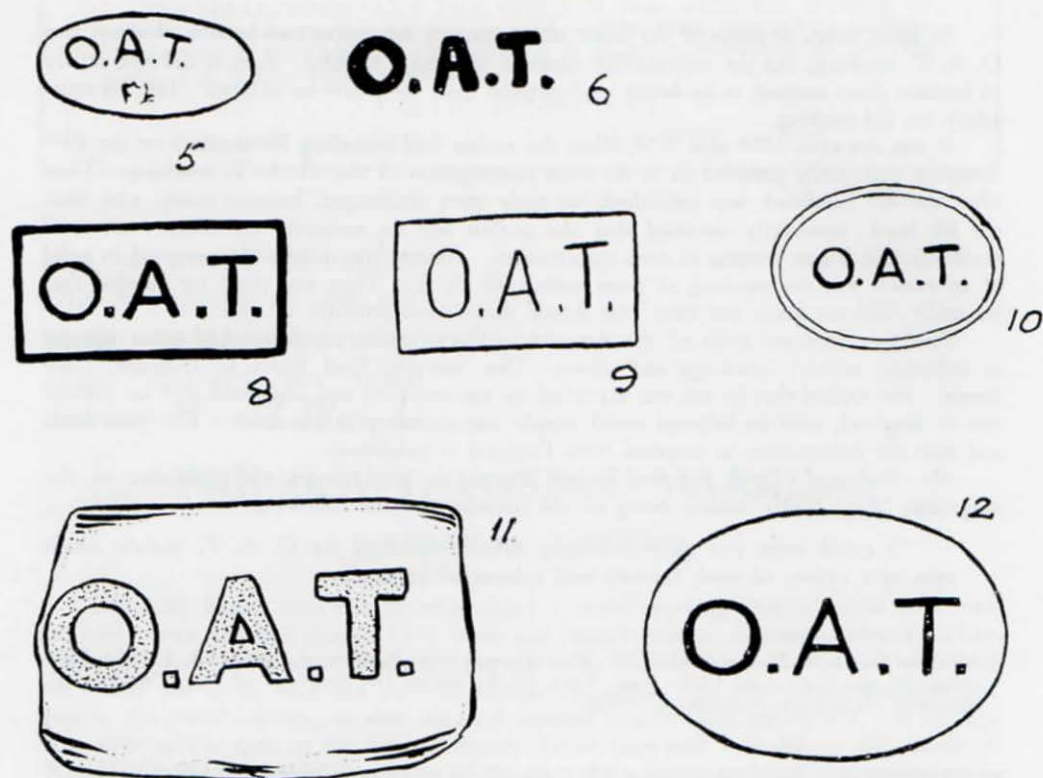


Fig. 2 The seven O. A. T. types as described by Dr. Gordon Ward of England.

" 'Onward Air Transport' was applied as a rubber stamp at certain mail sorting and handling points in the last years of the War and until possibly early in 1946.

"Mail carrying by the Allies was undertaken by the Air Transport Command, which was a combination of the Allied Air Forces, B. O. A. C., Sabena, K. L. M. and Air France pilots and machines. Certain routes were operated regularly and others when occasion demanded. Mails carried by air or surface means to certain main postal depots for the Air Transport Command were thus marked before being passed over for flight on the Air Transport Command system. Thus, French Colonial covers carried by sea or any non-A. T. C. service would be transferred to the Air Transport Command operations at a headquarters in Australia or Ceylon at which point the O. A. T. cachet was applied. Gibraltar, Cairo and later Athens are examples of other staging points".

Dr. Gordon Ward, whom we had known through previous correspondence, sent us a copy of "the London Philatelist" (June and July 1950), wherein he had published a series of articles on "Minor Air Mail Markings," in which reference had been made to the O. A. T. cachet and in addition, he was kind enough to send us further information as follows:

"The letters O. A. T. were sometimes found on air mail letters posted during the war years, 1940 to 1945. They mean 'Onward Air Transmission' and these words are sometimes written in full on covers from the Netherland East Indies. I had also in my collection of these marks (since disposed of) a cachet which gave the words in full, but I cannot remember further details about it.

"There was good reason for these O. A. T. cachets. It often happened that air mail correspondence of value arrived by a feeder line at some station on a main air

O. A. T. MARKING



Fig. 4 (Photo by Boutrelle)

mail line, e.g. the European and far east lines, or transatlantic services. Such correspondence had to be noted (as to weight, value, etc.) and held until it could be forwarded. When this process had been effected, the letter was stamped O. A. T. and set aside for 'onward air transmission'. I believe that this is what happened but it is very difficult to obtain accurate information. It was not a post office job and Postmasters at Singapore, Egypt and other points have declared with no little emphasis that they know nothing of it.

"The collector will of course want to know where particular types of O. A. T. handstamps were used. In the accompanying illustration (See Fig. 2 Ed.) No. 5 is

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O. A. T. MARKING



A



B



C



D



E



F

O.A.T

NORTH ATLANTIC
AIR SERVICE

G



H



I

Fig. 3 The nine types of O. A. T. markings traced from covers studied.



Fig. 5 The only U.S. stamp seen on a cover with an O. A. T. mark. This was mailed by a French sailor while serving with the combined Allied Fleet in Mediterranean waters during World War II.

found on letters from North African towns, e.g. Tangier and Tetuan. No. 6 is on a letter from Tangier to Detroit. It is or was in the collection of George C. Meyer who kindly gave me a tracing of it. I have seen no other example. No. 7 occurs on letters from Addis Ababa. Nos. 8 and 9 were on letters from Norway to Hong-

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kong—a long series, all marked with one or other. No. 10 seems to be another Tangier mark. It was on a letter sent from there to New Zealand.

"No. 11 probably shows the rarest of all such marks. I used to have two copies, both from the Norway-Hongkong series and they were evidently provisional handstamps cut out of a block of rather soft rubber.

"No. 12 is large, often in red, and is said to be used in Ireland on letters of transatlantic origin as well as those going in the opposite direction. It is at Foynes, according to Francis J. Field.

"It is not profitable to discuss O. A. T. markings without mention of another mark with a similar origin and usefulness. 'A. V. 2' is the number of an international form used in connection with air services. It is, in fact, the form upon which are entered the details already mentioned as involving an O. A. T. mark, namely, such details as might be required to make it clear how much of the air mail fee was to go to each line or country involved in carrying the letter.

"The Universal Postal Union meets every five years or so. It publishes a book setting out what has been agreed upon and gives many many details of the various A. V. forms required. It is well worth obtaining this report for the last 20 years or so.

"I have never succeeded in discovering what the letters 'A. V.' stand for. The O. A. T. and A. V. 2 marks seem never to have been used on the same airfield and there is still much to be discovered about them. I do not know of either mark used in the western hemisphere".

Thus from these two authoritative British sources there are two slightly different versions of the meaning of the O. A. T. initials. One said, "Onward Air Transport" and the other "Onward Air Transmission." The latter, according to Dr. Gordon Ward, seems to have better evidence to support it because Dr. Ward mentioned that he had seen it written out in full on some covers.

As far as we were concerned, this story should have ended here. Our curiosity had been satisfied by hearing from two Britishers as to the significance of this O. A. T. marking. But someone spread a tale that we were planning to publish an article on these O. A. T. marks in this magazine. We never had such an idea. In the first place, we are no authority on military or wartime postal markings so that it struck us as presumptive to assume such a role by breaking into print on this subject. Furthermore, at the time, we were deeply involved with the solution of some stamp problems and had no idea of being sidetracked to write an article on postal markings. Thus this report caught us by surprise.

As word spread about this O. A. T. article, we began hearing from Collectors Club members expressing their interest and in addition, some forwarded their material in the hope that it might be helpful for our writing. For instance, *Mr. Ernest H. Bellard* of Cleveland Heights, Ohio sent us his collection of covers with O. A. T. cachets and we found our interest intensified by the inspection of such a collection. Then *Dr. Brock* of California sent us his material for examination, so that before we knew it we had quite an assortment of O. A. T. covers to study.

From the Bellard and Brock holdings, we attempted to classify the different types of O. A. T. markings to see if we could assign certain ones to a definite locale. This work disclosed a total of NINE entirely different types. We selected those markings that were hit the clearest on cover such as the one shown by Fig. 4 and asked *Mr. Murstein*, a draftsman, if he could copy these to have them suitable for illustration. The result is Fig. 3. These are actual reproductions from markings on cover. Where a marking was incomplete, it was so copied.

These nine different types of O. A. T. markings were found hit in different colors of ink—red, violet, purple, blue and black. The latter was less seen, perhaps marking black as the scarcest. Red and violet strikes were the most common. Of the nine types, a tabulation was made to determine which was the scarcest and those that appeared most. There were over 100 covers examined. *Mr. Bellard* also supplied us with a listing of the

O. A. T. MARKING

covers with O. A. T. markings in the collection of his friend, *Mr. Carl Sachs* of Columbus, Ohio.

As shown in the illustration Fig. 3, Types G, H and I seem to be the scarce ones. Type F seems to be the most common closely followed by Types B, A and D in this order. Without the examination of further material, we cannot claim that this tabulation is representative. It might be, but for those interested in this subject, further confirmation through the examination of more material is suggested.

Our final task was an attempt to make a census from the material loaned to us of the dates and countries of origin on covers with these O. A. T. markings. They were found originating from the following 26 countries: (This list is not complete.)

Aden	Madagascar
Algeria	Malta
Angola	New Zealand
Australia	Northern Rhodesia
Belgium	Palestine
Ceylon	Reunion
Egypt	Southern Rhodesia
French Morocco	Spanish Morocco
French Somaliland (Djibouti)	Switzerland
Great Britain	Tangier
Iraq	Tunisia
Ireland	Union South Africa
Kenya	United States of America

Regarding the one cover seen with a U. S. stamp, this should be explained because the only one seen did *not* originate from Continental United States but probably from North Africa, a place like Casablanca in Morocco. It was mailed by a French sailor on board

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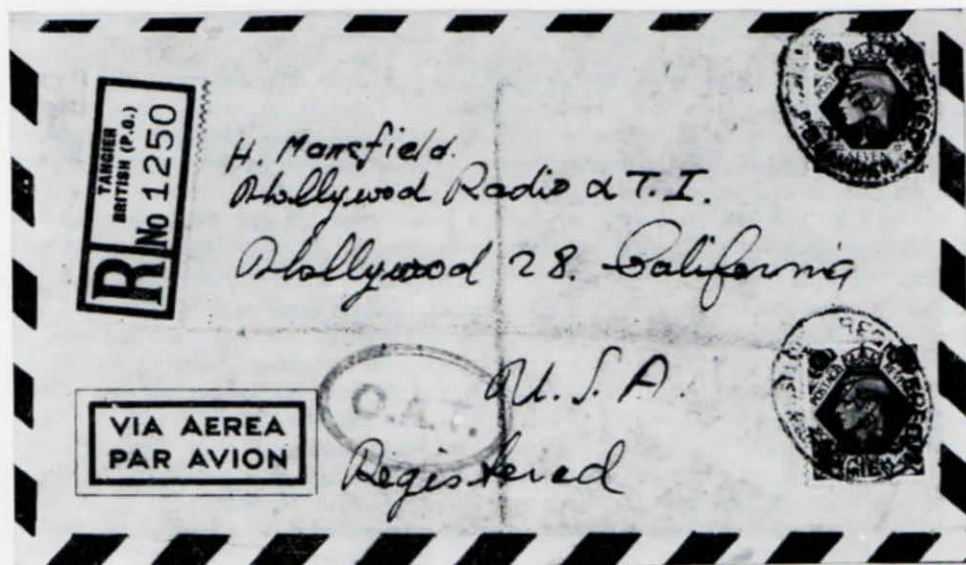


Fig. 6 Cover with O. A. T. cachet from Tangier (British).

the Light Cruiser, "Georges Leygues" to the well-known singer, Jan Kiepura, Majestic Theatre, New York City (Fig. 5). From our experience and knowledge of the French Naval mail through our studies of RF overprints, we know that French sailors were allowed the same mailing privileges as those in our own Armed Forces. So if a French sailor during this World War II period wanted to write to America by air mail, he was permitted the use of the then current 6c air mail stamp. This cover is not dated either front or back. But by deduction, we would estimate that it was posted before May 1944. After then, the RF Control Marking for French Naval personnel using the United States air mail facilities began.

Studying the cancellation dates, the earliest one found with an O. A. T. marking was 1942 and this was from Aden. A few cancelled in 1943 were seen, coming from French Morocco, Switzerland and Tunisia. Many more had a 1944 date, while the majority of the covers we examined were dated 1945. Six were found cancelled 1946, two 1947, three 1948, one 1949 and an O. A. T. mark was seen on one cover dated 1952. This latter in Dr. Brock's collection is an air mail registered cover flown from Tangier (British P. O.) to Hollywood, Calif. It is cancelled Tangier April 26, 1952 and backstamped Los Angeles and Hollywood, Calif. April 30, 1952. The O. A. T. marking is the Type B hit with purple ink. (See Figs. 6 and 7)

Finding these O. A. T. markings used in 1948 and 1949 and even as late as the above mentioned cover cancelled 1952 would show that the use of this marking continued long after World War II ended.

Before concluding, we would like to include a few remarks as to the nature of this article. Most all of the information came to us through correspondence and was not ours. Also the material studied, outside of one cover, was that of others. No pretention is made that this represents the final, authoritative study on this postmark. All we did was compile and at least get into the record what we had learned about the meaning of this O. A. T. marking. We hope that this might stimulate others, so that in the future some postmark specialist will go deeply into the matter of these air mail markings and publish the results of his work.

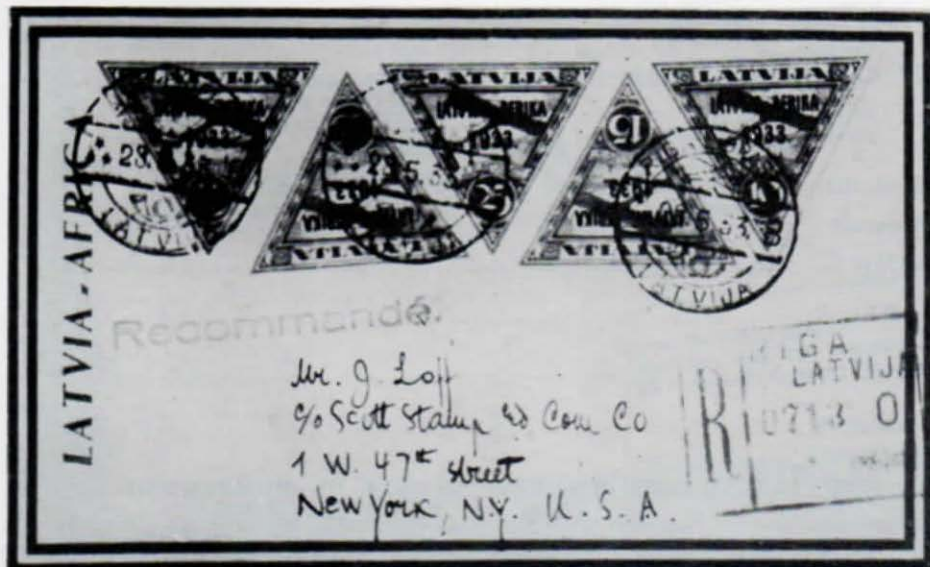
Since publication in November, 1959, many letters came disclosing more types than those shown in Fig. 3 and more countries with O. A. T. covers such as Iceland, Faroe Islands, Liberia and Nigeria.



Fig. 7 A portion of the reverse of the Fig. 6 cover showing the three backstamps dated 1952.

THE LATVIA-AFRICA-1933 FLIGHT ISSUE

This magazine in its July 1956 number (*AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*, Vol. IV, No. 1) pointed out in an article that the 1933 Latvia air mail stamps overprinted for the "Latvia-Africa Flight" were not listed in the *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*. It is believed that the information contained in this article did influence the editors of the aforementioned catalogue, because in its 1957 edition, Scott listed and priced these stamps as Latvia C9-13.



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