

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XII, No. 4
APRIL 1965

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THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XII, No. 4
APRIL 1965

Henry M. Goodkind, Editor
Philip Silver, Assistant Editor

BOLIVIA **The First Air Mail Issue In 1925**

By LUDWIG HORN FLACH

(Editor's Note: Mr. Flach has resided in Bolivia since 1924 and has been actively engaged in philately since then. He began collecting stamps in 1909, when a young boy in Wiesbaden, Germany where he was born.

Only a few catalogues list this first air mail issue of Bolivia. Mr. Flach has decided to tell the story of this issue in stamp periodicals all over the world in the hope of having all catalogues list this first Bolivia air mail issue.

The following article in this magazine, however, goes into far more detail and has many more illustrations than in the other articles that have appeared and will appear).

"Sanabria" Lists Them

From its first edition in 1936 through the one dated 1955, the "Sanabria



Fig. 1. The first air mail stamp of Bolivia (San. #1) issued on August 5, 1925 shown on the upper portion of a cover flown from Cochabamba to Sucre. The stamp is cancelled with a special rectangular marking.

Air Post Catalogue" listed the first air mail stamps of Bolivia, issued and used in 1925, as Semi-officials under the numbers 501 to 503.

Then, in its 1959-60 edition, this old listing was changed. Bolivia Sanabria Nos. 1 to 3 now are the former Nos. 501 to 503. In other words, the Sanabria Catalogue finally recognized these stamps as the first official air mails of Bolivia and no longer as Semi-officials. This is correct, as shall be shown.

But there is still a further revision to be made. The former Nos. 1 to 12 became in the 1959-60 edition Nos. 4 to 16. But this is wrong, because the Sanabria Catalogue lists all issues in chronological order.

The present numbers 4 to 16 are the 1924 postage stamp commemoratives for the *Establishment of the National Aviation School*. Although these are not air post stamps, but commemorative postage stamps (See *Aero Philatelist's News* Vol. III, No. 7, article by your editor, Mr. H. M. Goodkind), they have been listed in this catalogue because of their aviation design and subject.

Since the 1924 commemoratives preceded the first air mail issue of 1925, the Sanabria Catalogue again is urged to change its Bolivia listing as follows:

Nos. 1 to 12 — 1924 National Aviation School Issue

Nos. 13 to 15 — 1925 First Air Mail Issue

But in other catalogues, even those on specialized air post, this 1925 air mail issue is not listed. As for the general catalogues, such as Scott, Gibbons and Yvert & Tellier, the issue is not even mentioned with a footnote; only the German catalogues list it.

It is the purpose of this article to show — 1) that these 1925 stamps were official, so ordered by decree and that 2) the stamps were on sale at the post offices and properly used on mail.

Consequently, every catalogue, general or air post specialized, should list the 1925 air mail issue of Bolivia, presently Sanabria Nos. 1-3.

A Gift Of An Airplane

Bolivia celebrated the centenary of her national independence in the month of August 1925. It was a very important occasion and many festivities were held for this important 100-year celebration of Bolivia's Independence.

A group of German-born Bolivians, with a very solemn and religious ceremony, presented a Junkers monoplane to the Bolivian government. The event was witnessed by the President of Bolivia, Dr. Bautista Saavedra, and the plane was christened with the name "El Oriente" and blessed by high Church dignitaries.

In connection with these celebrations, some special flights were made by the airplane, "El Oriente." The first flight was made from Cochabamba to Sucre, the capital (Fig. 1) and then a return flight (Fig. 2) two days later.

A second flight was made a short time after the first one, from Cochabamba



Fig. 2. Cover flown on the return flight of August 7, 1925 from Sucre to Cochabamba. The stamps bear a special handstamped marking in violet ink in three lines, reading "Correo Aereo/A Cochabamba/7-VIII-1925." The Sucre cancellations are in blue ink.

to Oruro (Fig. 3) with a return flight the same day (Fig. 4). Finally, a few days later, a third flight took place from Cochabamba to La Paz, the actual seat of the Government (see Figs. 6 to 9).

A small amount of mail was carried on these three flights in August 1925 as follows:— 39 pieces to Sucre, 65 to Oruro and 134 to La Paz.

Air Mail Stamps Ordered

For these celebrations and flights, special air mail stamps were ordered by the Government. By the authorization of the Prefect of Cochabamba, Colonel



Fig. 3. The second air mail stamp issued on August 11, 1925 for the Cochabamba-Oruro flight (San. #2). The rectangular cancellation is the same as used on the Fig. 1 flight to Sucre.

Reque Terán, the then current 50 centavos postage stamp (Scott 125) was ordered to be overprinted.

The surcharging was done in Cochabamba by the firm of Severo Cuenca.



Fig. 4. Another cover flown on August 11, 1925 with the San. #2 stamp. This has an oval cancellation and a special three-line postmark to the left of the stamp.



Fig. 5. The return flight cover from Oruro to Cochabamba on August 11, 1928. The stamps are cancelled with the same straight-line marking that appears on the Fig. 4 cover. The markings are in black ink.



Fig. 6. The third air mail stamp issued for the Cochabamba-La Paz flight of August 14, 1925. This is a pair with the overprint tete-beche, a very scarce error (San. #3b).

The overprint was produced by typography. The sheets of the basic 50 centavos postage stamps were divided into horizontal strips of ten and then overprinted one strip at a time. This means that no multiple pieces can exist in blocks, only horizontal pairs and strips of the stamps can be found. The largest multiple reported is a strip of four.

Due to inexperience with stamp work and also a lack of skilled craftsmen in the printing shop, the workmanship was not good. The overprints are far from uniform with many broken letters and numerals.

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Fig. 7. San. #3 on a cover flown August 14, 1925 from Cochabamba to La Paz. The stamp has the oval cancellation of Cochabamba and at the bottom is the circular La Paz receiving mark, which was also applied to the back of this cover.

Later on, some errors with the overprints were found. These were not made deliberately for philatelic sale, but were discovered after the stamps had been sold at the post office. Some were found with inverted overprints (Fig. 10). This is understandable, since besides the aforementioned conditions in the printing shop, the stamps were needed in a hurry. Being a rush job, some copies have the overprint reading down instead of up. The latter seem to be the scarcest variety (see Fig. 6).

Furthermore, there was no careful inspection of the surcharged stamps before their public sale. The decree authorized a set quantity of air mail stamps to be overprinted; the printer filled the order and delivered the stamps to the Government Post Office.

On Sale At The Post Office

For the first flight to Sucre that took place on August 5, 1925, 400 stamps were ordered overprinted with green ink having the words in three lines—



Fig. 8. The Cochabamba-La Paz stamp (San. #3) with the oval cancellation one day early — August 13, 1925.



Fig. 9. The Cochabamba-La Paz stamp (San. #3) with an August 14, 1925 cancellation, the same type used on the Fig. 1 and 3 covers.

"Correo Aereo/ A Sucre/ 5-8-1925" (Fig. 1). These first stamps (Sanabria No. 1) were put on sale at the Cochabamba post office and sold to the public. As mentioned before, 39 were used on the flight to Sucre.

The second flight to Oruro was made six days later and 600 stamps were ordered overprinted with green ink in the same style for this trip (Sanabria No. 2). This overprint reads — "Correo Aereo/ A Oruro/ 11-8-1925" (Fig. 3).

For the third and final flight to La Paz, the similar overprint was applied with red ink to 1,000 of the 50 centavos postage stamps (Sanabria No. 3) as follows — "Correo Aereo/ A La Paz/ 14-8-1925" (Fig. 7). The most mail went on the La Paz flight — 134 pieces.



Fig. 10. The three 1925 air mail stamps each with the overprint inverted (San. #1a-1b-1c). These were in the famous "Bute" Collection sold at auction by Robson Lowe, Ltd., London, England.

As mentioned before, the airplane made some return flights, but the special stamps do not seem to have been used on the return flights. Instead a special handstamped obliterator was used as the illustrations Figs. 2 and 5 show.

It has been reported that a flight took place between Santa Cruz and Oruro, but this is not true. These 1925 flights were made only between the cities of Cochabamba, Sucre, Oruro and La Paz.

Officially Issued And Sold

In attempting to learn why these Bolivian air mail stamps were not listed by leading catalogues such as Scott and Gibbons, it was found that the usual new issue information, when these 1925 air mail stamps were made, was not sent out. Only reports of them were sent to Germany and, of course, this accounts for their listing in the German catalogues.

They were omitted from most catalogues because of an oversight; not because anyone objected to some irregularity with their issuance and sale. The first air mail stamps of Bolivia were properly authorized by the Decree of the Prefect of Cochabamba and sold at the post office there.



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4th R. S. Bohn Memorial Award

Philip Silver 1965 Recipient



After receiving several nominations for the 1965 *Richard S. Bohn Memorial Award for distinguished service to aerophilately* from the Awards Committee, AERO PHILATELISTS' Board of Directors by unanimous vote selected *Philip Silver*.

Mr. Silver was born in Brooklyn, N. Y. on July 18, 1910. He was educated in Brooklyn's public schools, receiving his diploma with the first graduating class of the Thomas Jefferson High School.

His Higher Education And Profession

He attended the City College of New York, receiving his Bachelor of Science degree as a major in Spanish. Continuing his studies of Spanish, he at-

tended the Graduate School of Columbia University, New York and then, the National University of Mexico. Although he was there when the famous and valuable air mail stamps (Scott C54-61, Sanabria #102-109) were issued in 1934, unfortunately he does not own them.

Besides Spanish, he studied at the School of Engineering at C. C. N. Y. and qualified upon examination as a Junior Assistant Civil Engineer. In 1937, after his marriage, he entered the Baruch School Of Business and Public Administration at the City College of New York and completed all requirements for a Master's Degree in Business Administration. During his graduate school work, Mr. Silver was elected to two honorary scholastic societies—Sigma Delta Pi (Spanish) and Beta Alpha Psi (the National Honorary and Professional Accounting Fraternity).

His education completed, Mr. Silver entered the employ of the City of New York in the Comptroller's Office and presently holds the position of Chief of the Division of Accounting and Statistics. In addition, he practices accounting and tax work. He is a member of the Accounting Association.

The Silvers have one son, now in the advertising business in New York, after graduating from De Pauw University, Indiana a few years ago. They still reside in Brooklyn and take an interest in many of New York's cultural and philanthropic activities, and are ardent theater-goers.

Starting To Collect Stamps

One day when his son was still a young boy, Philip Silver was speaking with a judge in New York's Civil Court and the judge mentioned stamp collecting, advising Mr. Silver to look into it. With this sound legal advice, a stamp collection was started for the son. But as happens so often, within time, the son lost interest and the father continued.

About 25 years ago, two specialized collections were begun and both were topical stamp collections — Sports and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. With an increasing interest in stamps, Philip Silver began meeting in the shops and offices of Nassau Street stamp dealers, others interested in topicals. Consequently, he was one of the organizers of *the first topical stamp society in America; Topical Philatelists*, as they named it.

A Budding Philatelist

Topical Philatelists was the start of Philip Silver's long and distinguished career in philately. He helped organize, promote and stage *the first Topical Stamp Exhibition in the United States*. This was held in the now defunct Philatelic Museum in Philadelphia, Pa. Also, *Topical Philatelists* chose him to serve as their first Secretary and Treasurer, as well as the Business and Advertising Manager of the first exclusive topical stamp publication, "The Topicalist." He still retains his interest in this field and is co-author with Jan Bart of the American Topical Association's new book on "Rooseveltiana."

Attracted To Air Mails

Since Roosevelt Memorial Issues ceased being issued a few years after the President's death, new philatelic interests were sought. Mr. Silver began to become fascinated by the air mail stamps and covers of the United States and Uruguay. Consequently, he began meeting some New York aerophilatelists and in time he joined AERO PHILATELISTS. Being a very intense stamp collector, he came to every one of our meetings and began exhibiting at our Chapter Shows at 22 East 35 Street.

In 1956, he was elected to AERO PHILATELISTS' Board of Directors and has continued service on this board to the present day. Also, in 1956, he was elected Secretary of AERO PHILATELISTS and functioned in this office until 1959, when he was elevated to the Presidency of AERO PHILATELISTS.

In addition to all these organizational duties, Mr. Silver began writing articles on air mail stamps, most of them being published in this magazine. His contributions on the early air mail issues of United States and Uruguay were of a very high standard. Thus, he began receiving letters from all over the world; this encouraged him to write more. He has often said that of all philatelic work, his preference, by far, is for philatelic writing. As a result, in 1959, he was appointed the Assistant Editor of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS and in this capacity he continues to render very fine service.

As his interest in the first United States air mail stamps grew, Philip Silver noticed that the frequent changes in rates had been largely neglected by other students. Thus, he paid more and more attention to air mail rates and by now, he has developed into what many consider the leading aero-philatelic student in this field.

Next, The Collectors Club

Since the New York Chapter of AERO PHILATELISTS meets as one of the Study Groups at the world-famous Collectors Club, 22 East 35 Street, New York City, Mr. Silver visited here more frequently. He accepted an invitation to join and qualified for membership in the Collectors Club in 1951.

Just as with his interest and services to *Topical Philatelists* and AERO PHILATELISTS, Mr. Silver volunteered for committee work for the Collectors Club a year after his membership began. Each year he volunteered more service. Consequently, in 1961, he was honored by election to the Board of Governors of America's leading stamp club and the following year he was to be the Secretary of the Collectors Club. He served in this capacity for three years, and this year

he was honored by being elected the Vice President of this well-known New York philatelic organization.

In addition, in 1962, because of his great interest in philatelic writing, Mr. Silver was appointed a member of the editorial board of the "Collectors Club Philatelist," and some of the finest reports on this Club's meetings were written by Philip Silver. Also, he was appointed to the Awards Committee and in 1962 became the Chairman of this committee that annually selects the best article published in the "Collectors Club Philatelist" for an award highly respected in the philatelic world. Furthermore, following the sudden death after a heart attack, of the Chairman of the House Committee, Mr. Silver stepped in to take care of and give his attention to the maintenance of the famous clubhouse in New York City.

A Philatelic Expert

As his knowledge grew and as his philatelic writings gained stature, it became obvious that his philatelic knowledge also broadened. Therefore, three years ago, Mr. Silver was invited by Mrs. Louise Boyd Dale, Chairman of the *Expert Committee of the Philatelic Foundation*, New York, N. Y., to serve on this important philatelic body as an Apprentice Member. After one year, Philip Silver was made a member of the *Philatelic Foundation's Expert Committee* and he continues this very important and voluntary work.

Besides Philip Silver's topical and air mail stamp collections that had been previously mentioned, over the years he has proved to be a very keen stamp lover with interests in many fields. He has formed both a 19th and 20th Century United States stamp collection, and also one of the Confederate States of America and Israel.

The Exhibitor

It was only a question of time before Mr. Silver would start showing the collections he had formed. At first, he exhibited in the smaller local shows, then in the larger regional ones. He graduated to the national philatelic exhibitions, and about five years ago entered into the top field, international stamp shows.

Almost from his first entry into competition, the Silver exhibits have done very well. His leading national prizes were the Grand Award at the 1962 SEPAD and the 1963 SOJEX. Internationally, his collection of Uruguay gained a silver-gilt at the 1960 London, England Stamp Show. This was followed by three Gold Medals for his early United States air mails at The Hague, Holland (1961), West Berlin (1962) and Brussels, Belgium (1963). At Sicilia (1959), Barcelona (1960) and Istanbul (1963) the collections were awarded Silver Medals. At an international stamp show held in Monteray, Mexico in 1962, the Grand Award went to the Philip Silver exhibit.

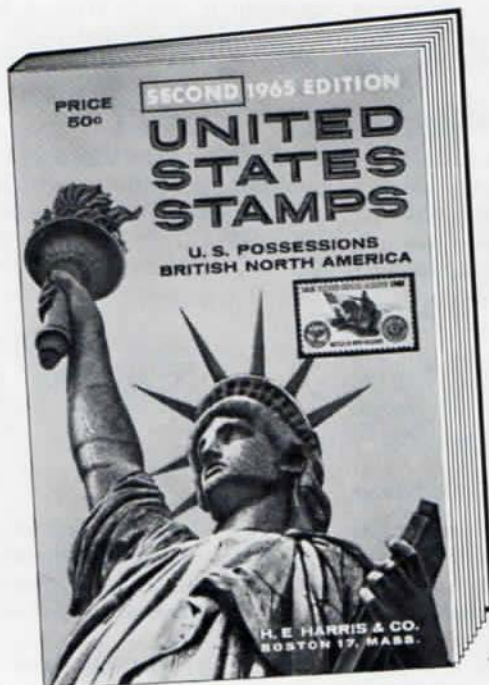
This experience with exhibiting and the awards gained led to invitations to Philip Silver to serve as a judge at national and regional stamp shows, such as Topex, Sojex, Naspex and Bepex. In 1956, he was appointed one of the judges of the Junior Division of FIPEX. In 1963, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the *Association for Stamp Exhibitions*.

Distinguished Service To Aerophilately

Certainly, the placing of Philip Silver's career in philately on record shows that he is well qualified to earn the *Richard S. Bohn Memorial Award for distinguished service to aerophilately*. As a matter of record, this service goes beyond the specialty of air mails and includes the entire field of philately.

At this time, final arrangements have not been made for the presentation ceremonies. These will probably take place next Fall. As soon as plans are definite, an advance announcement will be made. (H. M. G.)

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UNITED STATES

Counterfeit May 15, 1918 FIRST TRIP Cancellation

By PHILIP SILVER

From time to time, in these columns, the writer has discussed United States air mail covers and stamps with counterfeit cancellations in an attempt to educate collectors by pointing up the differences between the genuine and the fraudulent. (See *AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS* April, 1961, Vol. VIII, No. 4, and October, 1961, Vol. IX, No. 2 for articles and counterfeit cancellations on United States air mail stamps with Scott C3 and C2, respectively).

Shown in Fig. 1 is a C3 cover with counterfeit May 15, 1918 FIRST TRIP cancellation. This is not a recently "manufactured" item. A pencilled manuscript notation on the back of the cover, obviously placed there by the victimized purchaser, indicates he paid \$25.00 for it on November 16, 1947. Seventeen years ago, that was a pretty high price to pay even for a genuine May 15, 1918 FIRST TRIP cover. Today, of course, this would represent a very modest cost if indeed the cover were genuine.

No 3-Bar Cancellations Used

There are several obvious and some not quite so obvious characteristics about the cancellation which should be mentioned. First, there are three bars at the right which obliterate the stamp. *Never* in the entire history of the use of air mail handstamps for cancelling stamps was a canceller made with three bars. All such genuine air mail handstamps were *always made with four bars at the right*. So, this is a fatal defect in the cover illustrated.

Second, examination indicates a comma following the word "SERVICE" in the upper part of the circle. Based upon examination of hundreds of covers with this type of air mail handstamp, the writer can definitely state that the Post Office Department *never* used a comma at that point or in any other place



Fig. 1. C3 cover with counterfeit May 15, 1918, FIRST TRIP cancellation from NEW YORK. (H. M. Goodkind collection.)

on the handstamp. Additionally, the letters in the words "FIRST TRIP," whether the handstamps originate in New York, Philadelphia or Washington, *always* come with serifs. Examination of the cover in Fig. 1 indicates the letters in the words "FIRST TRIP" are in Gothic without serifs. And, last, the letters in the words "NEW YORK" are *always* made with serifs, too. The serifs are lacking in the Gothic letters of the words "NEW YORK" on the illustrated cover.

Another point of difference which obviously escaped the faker is that although the "1" of "15" is *always* made with serifs, this is not true of the "1's" in "1918." These latter "1's" *never* come with serifs.

Very Different From The Genuine

For comparison purposes, there is shown in Fig. 2 a cover with a genuine MAY/15/1918/FIRST TRIP/NEW YORK handstamped cancellation. Additional points of difference between that cover and the one shown in Fig. 1 are:

1. The letters and numbers in the genuine handstamp are much higher than in the counterfeit.
2. The letters and numbers in the words "FIRST TRIP" and "NEW YORK" are much wider in the counterfeit handstamp than in the genuine.
3. All the words in the upper perimeter of the circle are differently posi-

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Fig. 3. Invoice found inside the cover illustrated in Fig. 1. (All photos by Boutrelle)



Fig. 2. C3 cover with genuine May 15, 1918 FIRST TRIP cancellation from NEW YORK. (Author's collection.)

tioned in the genuine handstamp than they are in the counterfeit. In the genuine, the "A" of "AIR" falls several mm. below the "A" in "PHILA."

4. The "5" in "15" is inclined to the right in the genuine handstamp; it is upright in the counterfeit.
5. The "5" in "15" of the genuine handstamp has a long tail ending in a round ball. There is no tail or ball on the "5" in "15" of the counterfeit.

Genuine N. Y.-Phila. Covers Backstamped

There is another fatal defect in the cover shown in Fig. 1. It is addressed to Merion, Pennsylvania. Thus, it would have flown on the New York to Philadelphia leg of the air mail route between New York and Washington. Every cover received in Philadelphia on the May 15, 1918 first trip which has come to the writer's attention always had a Philadelphia receiving backstamp or transit marking on the reverse side. Sometimes, both are found on the one cover. No cover even seen lacked some kind of backstamp.

The cover shown in Fig. 1 is not backstamped which almost certainly brands it as a fake, if other criteria for genuineness were lacking. Only Washington, D. C. of the three cities on this air mail route was lax in backstamping covers. Since special delivery service was included in the twenty-four cent air mail stamp, backstamping was mandatory to indicate time of arrival.

The writer suspects that the block of four stamps with C3 illustrated on page 89 of his April, 1961 article was cancelled with the same counterfeit handstamp that was used to cancel the cover shown in Fig 1. Enough of the characteristics of the counterfeit handstamp are evident to bolster this suspicion. Certainly, the three bars at the right are practically identical. This only proves that several such items were made at the same time; thus, more may exist as a snare to the unwary.

Inside the Fig. 1 cover is an invoice which is illustrated in Fig. 3. Below the cover description and the \$25.00 price tag is a short note which reads:

"Sorry for the delay Hope you like the Cover

Sincerely

H Dolin & Co"

Concluding, the writer would like to append this footnote: it would have been much better if the delay in sending the counterfeit cover, referred to in the above note, had been even greater than it actually was. In fact, the cover should never have been submitted, at all. Additionally, such transactions would never come to pass if dealers would be more discriminating in their purchases and try to absorb sufficient knowledge to learn to reject such material when offered to them. We do not think this request is too demanding nor unreasonable.

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URUGUAY 1925 Birds, But What Ones?

By ROBERT J. LYON

On a wintry day, August 25, 1925 (the seasons below the Equator are the reverse of those above it), two special flights were scheduled for an important event in Uruguay—the commemoration of the centennial of the Florida Constituent Assembly.

Two stamps were issued, one for a special flight from Montevideo to Florida (Scott C7) and the other for a Florida to Montevideo trip (Scott C8).

Being in the earlier days of aviation, the planned flights never were completed. Unfortunately, one of the planes was forced down en route and the other could not take off. All correspondence prepared for these special August 25, 1925 flights was then forwarded by surface means.

The Government of Uruguay ordered 8,000 sets of these two stamps printed by the National Printing Works in Montevideo. They were produced by phototypography on white porous paper that was watermarked with fragments of the words, "Republica O. del Uruguay." The stamps were perforated 12½. The sheets were of 100 subjects (5x20).

No Mint Stamps Originally Sold

These stamps were not sold to the public, but only were affixed to envelopes by the post office clerks after payment. No mint copies were sold until sometime



Fig. 1. A double-weight cover with 72 Centavos postage paid by a 36c postage stamp (Scott 275) and the 1924 air mail set of three (Scott C4-6) flown from Florida to Montevideo. The 1925 set (Scott C7-8) paid the Registration fees. This is a specially printed cover for the 1925 flights and the map of Uruguay indicating the route between Montevideo and Florida is printed in the upper left-hand corner. (Collection of S. Rodvein)

later. At the request of philatelists, these were placed on sale. The Uruguay Post Office, however, retained 500 sets for their archives, thus leaving only a total of 7,500 sets.

These stamps paid the registration fees only and to indicate this, the design has the letter "R," signifying "Registrado" (Registered Mail). Additional postage had to be used and this could be prepaid either with postage or air mail stamps (see Fig. 2). The postage fees for the special flight were set at 36 centavos for a single letter, as the Fig. 2 and 3 covers show, and 72 centavos for a double weight letter, as the Fig. 1 covers evidences.

Registration, Not Air Mail Stamps

The Scott Catalogue listing of this set has always puzzled some philatelists, including the writer. In the late 1930's, the "Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue" revised its system of listings, introducing letters as prefixes to identify the proper classification of various stamps. The well-known editor of Scott Publications, Inc., the late Hugh M. Clark, introduced this new listing. Thus, he created the capital letter "C" for air mail, "CO" for Official Air Mail stamps, "F" for Registration stamps, etc. For some unexplained reason, these two 1925 Uruguay stamps escaped their proper Scott Catalogue designation. *They are air mail registration stamps and, therefore, should be classified as "CF" and not C7 and C8.*

Counterfeits

One would think that with the small quantity of these stamps available — only 7,500 sets — the demand would exceed the supply. But this set has had a



Fig. 2. The Montevideo to Florida flight cover with Scott C7 and four postage and two air mail stamps to pay the 36 Centavos postage. (Collection of S. Rodvien)



Fig. 3. 36 Centavos paid by five postage stamps were used on this cover for the special August 25, 1925 flight from Florida to Montevideo. The stamp (Scott C8) paid for the Registration. (Collection of S. Rodvien)

very reasonable catalogue price for many years. There should be a strong demand, because the stamps are not only for aero-philatelists, but also the "bird" topical collector wants them in his album.

The only reason that the price of this short-supply set has remained so low, in our opinion, is the appearance of counterfeits many years ago. These imitations are still around and they must have found their way into many collections.

The counterfeits do not seem to be too deceptive. Compared to the originals, they are poorly printed. The paper is unwatermarked and the perforations gauge $11\frac{1}{2}$ instead of $12\frac{1}{2}$.



Fig. 4. The two sketches above the 1925 stamps show the distinctive cancellations applied to these stamps.

Also, the distinctive cancellations used on these stamps (Fig. 4) have been counterfeited. Often, one sees the counterfeit stamps also with counterfeit cancellations. The genuine cancels have a red ink; the fraudulent markings are a more dull red color.

Stork. Crane. Heron ???

An authority on birds is needed to identify the one shown in the design of this Uruguay 1925 air mail set. Scott identifies this Type AP3 as a stork (family Ciconiidae). The specialized "Sanabria Air Post Catalogue" titles the bird a crane (family Gruiformes), while the Minkus Catalogue calls it a heron (family Ardeidae). Perhaps some expert topical collector or a member of the Audubon Society will properly identify the bird and set the catalogues straight.

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See Page 112

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FOR BOOKS ON AIR MAILS

See Pages 92 and 111

FREE FRENCH AFRICA

Commercial Air Mail Covers During World War II

By BEN HAMILTON

International air mail suffered severely from World War II. Air mail service became sporadic, nearly non-existent, in Free French Africa. This term General De Gaulle's regime applied to French Equatorial Africa and Cameroun as a unit.

In 1937, the *Chargeurs Réunis*, operating mail ships from France to French African colonies, began to send airplanes to Africa. The steamship company formed a subsidiary aviation organization, called *Compagnie Aéromaritime* (forerunner of a line called *Union Aéromaritime de Transport*).

Compagnie Aéromaritime, using Sikorsky seaplanes (French Equatorial Africa Scott Types AP1 and AP2), made stops at Dakar, Zinguinchor (Senegal), Monrovia, Liberia; thence Accra, Lagos, Douala, Pointe Noire and Brazzaville. Beyond Douala and Brazzaville air mail letters continued to go inland by river boat and human transport. Air mail from deep in French Equatorial Africa reached Brazzaville after an equally tortuous course there to await the plane to Paris, France.

The *Compagnie Aéromaritime* air mail service slashed transit time to New York to much less than that of freight ships.

Other French Airlines In Africa

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Fig. 1. (Top) The front of an air mail cover from the United States to French Equatorial Africa, and (Bottom) the back shows that it was censored in Hong Kong. This was before the PAA Clipper service was suspended in World War II. (All photos by Boutrelle.)

As early as 1925, Col. Jean Dagnaux (see France Scott Type SPAP2), a French World War I ace, operated his *Air Afrique* line. Changed to the *Compagnie Transafricaine de Vol* in 1928, this company merged with others working in 1937 under the old name *Air Afrique* (see Fig. 2). This fleet and *Compagnie Aéromaritime* united with *Air France* in 1940.

Air France maintained flights in those African areas which remained loyal to the Vichy regime. Once occupied by General Charles de Gaulle, Free French Africa necessarily depended on whatever air mail facilities wartime circumstances provided.

Following the establishment of regular transatlantic air mail service from the United States (see U. S. Scott Type AP16) mail to the coast of French Equatorial Africa appreciably cut the time in transit. Pan-America World

Airways soon flew Clippers to Léopoldville, Congo. But the monstrous flying boats were unable to pack mail for long. In 1940, announcements began to appear in the *U.S. Postal Guide* warning that mail sent via PAA Clippers to Africa would be at the sender's own risk.



Fig. 2. An air mail cover with French Equatorial Africa "Free French" postage stamps on an old "Air Afrique" envelope. This was the World War II predecessor company to the current "Air Afrique."



Fig. 3. The back of the Figure 2 cover showing the Egyptian censor tape and the receiving postmarks of Egypt; Honolulu, Hawaii; San Francisco and Whittier, Calif.

Later in the same year, the U.S. Post Office Department noted that air mail to Africa might be directed through Honolulu, Sydney, Australia or Auckland, New Zealand to Nairobi, the Kenyan capital. Events changed so rapidly in Free French Africa, special directions on air mail letters to and from the colony were often overlooked. Clipper service to Léopoldville shifted to exclusive military transportation after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. Pan-American Clippers quit flying the Oriental route (see Fig. 1). Then Free French African air mail sputtered on.

Souvenirs Of Disrupted African Air Mail

Air mail from French Equatorial Africa to the United States was rather scanty before and during World War II as most of the correspondence came from American missionaries. This writer was corresponding with one of the missionaries (now Mrs. Hamilton) as the Second World War came to French Equatorial Africa. Some of the covers from that period bear mute testimony to the flimsy air mail facilities available.

One cover from Whittier, California February 5, 1941 arrived at Bozoum, French Equatorial Africa by way of Hong Kong (February 19), Cairo, Fort Lamy (on March 25) and then Bozoum (April 25). Probably nobody will ever know how much of the distance the letter went by air mail. The Fort Lamy-Bozoum lap was not by plane — there was no airport at Bozoum!

A cover cancelled at Bozoum on September 20, 1941, postmarked via Sydney, Australia and Auckland, New Zealand went to Egypt. The cover went via air mail from Hawaii to Whittier, Calif. according to the dated registered back-stamps (Fig. 3) of Honolulu (November 16, 1941), San Francisco (November 17) and Whittier (November 18). Postage stamps on the envelope are singles

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Figs. 4 and 5. (Top) An air mail cover with the "Free French" air post stamps. Commercial covers with these stamps are not common. (Bottom) The back of the Figure 4 cover showing it flew via Trinidad, and Miami, Florida to California. The censor tape with the date shows that it was censored in Trinidad on January 22, 1942.

of French Equatorial Africa numbers Scott 114, 115, 117, 118, 120, 122 plus 124 (Fig. 2).

Another cover bearing French Equatorial Africa Scott C1-C3, C5-C8, C10 and C12-C16 is cancelled December 22, 1941 (Fig. 4). Mailed at Brazzaville, the envelope arrived in Whittier on January 31, 1942. Again, the registered backstamps testify that this envelope went part way by air mail as follows:—Trinidad (January 26) and Miami (January 28). Apparently, the cover made the trip from Miami, Florida to Whittier, California via trains (Fig. 5).

Some folks in Cameroun thought in 1942 Pan-American Clippers still carried mail from Lagos. Some post offices in Cameroun ran out of postage stamps. Postal clerks took cash, writing the amount of postage paid on the cover. On April 8, 1942 such a cover (Fig. 6) was mailed at Ebolowa in Cameroun. The Lagos (April 13) and Whittier (April 27) postal markings on the back suggest incomplete air mail treatment (Fig. 7).

Heavy Hand Of Censorship

Erratic air mail schedules were only a few annoying occupational hazards hindering the delivery of letters via airplanes. Censorship often proved to be pestiferous, too.

On March 27, 1943 a missionary in French Equatorial Africa sent a letter

from the Bozoum post office. There were also included corrections to be made on the New Testament in Karré then being readied for printing. On arriving in the United States, a zealous censor impounded all the contents. He could not read the innocent Karré words which he thought may have suggested a potential enemy plot.

On May 9, 1945 (immediately after V-E day) the air mail letter mailed March 27, 1943 in Africa — more than two years before receipt — arrived in the writer's mail box. Stamped on the envelope were the words: "This article has been held by the Office of Censorship." Such was wartime restraint on life. This interesting wartime cover is illustrated as Fig. 8.

The Cover's The Thing

None of the covers described above would bring any record high prices at



Fig. 6. A stampless air mail cover from Ebolowa, Cameroun with the manuscript notation "Taxe Percue" (Postage Paid), because there were no stamps available.



Fig. 7. The back of the Figure 6 cover shows that it was censored in Nigeria.



Fig. 8. The front of a cover from French Equatorial Africa with two of the 1942 definitive "Free French" air mail stamps (Scott C17-18). The other two stamps are postage values of the same "Free French" series and the same two, 5 frs. and 10 frs., are on the back of this cover. This was held by the U.S. Office of Censorship (indicated by the arrow) for two years and the cover was not delivered until after V-E Day.

auction. The catalogue prices listed for the stamps is not much. The covers do not have the sparkling cleanliness nor the professional and philatelic touch of the unaddressed first day cover. Yet, these African commercial covers are uncommon and quite unusual souvenirs of World War II aerophilately.

Different, because the African covers came out of the land from which the Fighting French marched to release France, as later commemorated in 1946 by the Chad-To-Rhine set from all the French Colonies. They are interesting because the censorship cachets and labels plus assorted postmarks are imprints of World War II days.

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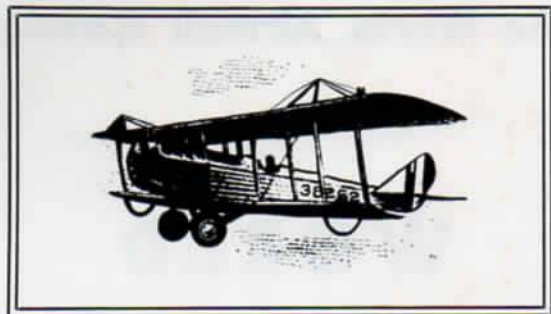
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