November’s featured article —

The U.S. 1928 Beacon Airmail Issue
Reviewing the Initials and Numbers

Page 448
Zeppelins & Aerophilately

Ask for our Free Price List of Worldwide Flight covers and stamps. The following is a small sampling – full list on Website!

**United States**

1930 C14 VF stamp on VF flown 5¢ airmail postal stationery cover to Prague, Czechoslovakia. Lakehurst flag cancel, backstamped Friedrichshafen, June 6 and Prague June 7. $450.00

1930 (June 2) C14 F-VF on cover to Germany. Both German and US flight cachets are somewhat light strikes. Cover has a vertical crease on left. Friedrichshafen June 6 backstamp. S.64G $350.00

Early Autographs Amelia Earhart 1931 US National Air Race Cover, Cleveland OH signed by Amelia Earhart 9/15/31 with C12 VF Cover. $1,350.00

**Austria**

Austria 1952 VF Balloon Post cover to Switzerland. Spelterini vignette with Bird airmails + 3g and 30g stamps on top. Ank K-S Id o5 4700 $200.00

**Czechoslovakia**

1936 Czechoslovakia / Argentina card with dual franking, Czechoslovakia (Feb 10) 50h postal card flown on South America flight with 3 additional stamps, sent to Argentina. Backstamped Buenos Aires, Feb. 17. Re-posted in Argentina on reverse (Mar 18) and sent back to Czechoslovakia $250.00

**Germany**

Germany 1917 Piece of German Zeppelin cloth - approximately 35x35mm - Obtained in 1965. Copy of letter from The Society of World War I Aero Historians included. $29.95

**Kuwait**

1934 (Sept 28) 10th South American flight cover sent registered from Kuwait. F-VF cover addressed to Brazil. Red flight cachet and Friedrichshafen postmark on front. S.280. $1,950.00

**Switzerland**

Henry Gitner Philatelists, Inc.
PO Box 3077T, Middletown NY 10940
Email: hgitner@hgitner.com — http://www.hgitner.com
I am a non-subscriber who was drawn to the cover photo of your August 2013 issue of *Airpost Journal* because of my interest in Burma, which is in fact the only country I collect. (My friend Bill Clair showed me the issue). I was intrigued by the featured article and I have a comment that probably adds more mystery to the subject.

The article by Bob Wilcsek, “External Airmail from Unoccupied China 1942-45,” discusses the overland route from China through northern Burma during World War II. The illustrated cover (pp. 324-5) is postmarked in August 1942 in Kunming and Chungking, and has censor marks of Burma. That censor mark is known to have been used in Rangoon and Lashio, with the latter town being the logical source of the censoring. The latest known date of use for this censor is 17 April 1942 (per Konrad Morenweiser, *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices, World War II, British Asia*, 4th edition 2005 on page 85).

It is possible the marks on the cover shown in the article represent a new Latest Known Use, except for the chronology of events in WWII Burma. The last remaining British forces were evacuated from Burma in May 1942, and when they again occupied Burma and resumed censoring in 1945, different censor marks were used. The British forces were long gone in August of 1942.

I cite the following events from an article by Gerald Davis’ “War in Burma: a Philatelic Chronology,” *The Burma Peacock*, Spring 1986, (Vol. 8, No. 1), pp.3-6:

- 29 April 1942 Japanese capture Lashio
- 30 April Japanese complete conquest of central Burma
- 1 May British troops evacuate Mandalay
- 2 May All British troops withdrawn from Irrawaddy area
- Base Office P.O. withdraws to Dimapur (India), then disbanded in June
- 15 May Dorman-Smith evacuates from Myitkyina to Simla; remaining British forces cross Burma-India Frontier

I am at a loss to explain the apparent use of a British Burma censor in August 1942. I am unaware of any counterfeiting of WWII Burma.
censor marks and, indeed, these look genuine. It is possible the China circular date stamps used incorrect year slugs, although such a clerical error seems unlikely to occur in two different cities.

So I am left with posing a puzzle, and not being able to solve it. For that I apologize. But I would very much like to learn the answer, if your writer or your readers can solve it.

Your journal is most professional, informative and highly readable. It almost makes me want to expand my philatelic interests into airmails.

Brian Saxe
bcsaxe@yahoo.com

***

I read with interest “External Mail from Unoccupied China 1942-1945,” by Bob Wilcsek in the August Airpost Journal. I do have to question the Finding and Conclusion 5 on page 326. It would have been unlikely for any mail out of China to travel through Burma in the period 1942-1945 since Lashio fell to the Japanese on April 29, 1942 and by the end of May 1942 nearly all of Burma was under Japanese control. One exception was a small area in the Chin Hills but that was not near the China border.

I can’t explain the Burma censor mark 36 on Cover 4 which is apparently from August 1942. That censor mark was used in Rangoon until it fell and later in Maymyo and then Lashio. That mark with number 27 was later used at Falam in the Chin Hills.

Mike Ley

Further Exploring South American Airmail

Let me publicly thank Dr. Madsen for his article, “Peruvian Airmail to Europe 1931 - 1941,” in the September Airpost Journal. After his great study on the airmail history of Chile, Eduardo has now picked up a further chapter of South American airmail that was really overdue.

Let us hope this study prepares the ground for more research on Latin American aerophilately.

Wolfgang H. Porges
FISA General Secretary

There's More than Two Ways to Skin a Word

For those of you who are entertained by the “airmail” versus “air mail” dilemma, I offer some further amusement. The cover shown here provides yet another spelling, “air-mail.” The blue straight line marking

Marking “Trans-Atlantic Air-Mail” applied by the Balboa, Canal Zone post office in 1940.

"Trans-Atlantic Air-Mail" is an official marking used by the Canal Zone Postal Service between 1936 and 1941 and perhaps longer. As such, it represents a third spelling option sanctioned by a United States postal authority.

What’s an exhibitor to do? This exhibitor selects the spelling by context. In German related exhibits, I use the combined word “airmail,” in keeping with usage in the German language. For U.S. related exhibits, I use “air mail,” which seems somehow more genuinely American to me. Am I going to change the spelling to "air-mail" in my Canal Zone exhibits? Definitely not.

Dickson Preston

Electronic Mail

I am a great believer in cutting costs and saving money. However, I believe that going to total electronic mailing is like shooting ourselves in the foot.

We are collectors. What do we collect? STAMPS! There are no stamps in electronic mailing. We keep looking for the young and new collectors to carry on our hobby. What are they going to collect?

If it had been electronic years ago, none of us would be discussing the merits one way or the other. We would have never become collectors. There would have been nothing to collect.

We should keep in mind, we are in the STAMP business.

Jack Seaman (sent via the USPS)
Aerophilately 2014 . . . and the (Aero)Postal History Symposium

A component of Aerophilately 2014 that we did not have for Aerophilately 2007 is a Postal History Symposium.

Postal History Symposiums are a special series jointly sponsored by the American Philatelic Society (APS), the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL) and the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

8th Postal History Symposium

September 12-14, 2014 at Bellefonte, Pennsylvania

Development of Trans-Atlantic Airmail Service

This symposium seeks papers that address any aspect of the development of trans-ocean airmail service. Possible subjects include:

• Competition in the South Atlantic: Aeropostale / Air France – Zeppelin – Deutsche Lufthansa;
• Developments in the North Atlantic: Catapult Airmail – Zeppelin – Deutsche Lufthansa – PAAM
• Crossing the Pacific: Pan American Clippers;
• Effects of World War II on Trans-Atlantic Services: Interrupted Services, New Carriers, New Routes.

Proceedings of the symposium will be considered for publication by the Smithsonian Institution Press.

The “Call for Papers” is now being prepared. Proposals may be submitted either as individual papers or in panels.

This is a great opportunity for aerophilatelic historians to get together for individual or joint development of papers / programs that consolidate resources and bring new light and focus on some of the most important aspects of world-wide airmail transport.

If you have a special interest in this subject, please let me know so we are sure to get the “Call for Papers” and other information to you as soon as it is available.

AAMS Convention Slate

We are delighted to confirm WESTPEX in San Francisco as the site of our 2018 AAMS Annual Convention. This leaves only 2017 open, and we will seek to fill that slot in the near future.

Donors Needed for Aerophilately 2014 Funding

We are seeking donors to provide needed funding for some of the extraordinary expenses that inevitably arise with the production of a special event such as Aerophilately 2014.

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If you are ready, willing and able to provide some financial support (any amount, large or small, is welcome), we ask that you make your donation payable to the American Air Mail Society. AAMS is an IRS 501(c)(3) exempt organization, so donations are tax deductible. Please specify “Aero 14” on the check memo. Remainder funds will be held separately for the support of our next Aerophilately exhibition (2021?).

All donations will be gratefully acknowledged and donors will be listed in both the event program and the Airpost Journal.

Thank You Very Much for Your Consideration and Donation!

AAMS Convention in Portland, Oregon in May

This is November already! The Holiday Season is upon us. When we awaken from it, it will be 2014 . . . and the AAMS Annual Convention at PIPEX 2014 in Portland, Oregon on May 9-11 will be coming on very quickly.

We need aero exhibitors for this show, and it would be best (and greatly appreciated) if exhibit applications were completed before the end of this year. Yes, I know the deadline is later, but we need to give PIPEX management less chance of anxiety-caused blood pressure problems, breathing difficulty or worse. So, please visit www.pipexshow.org to get the prospectus.

Not an exhibitor? We want you to attend and join in the fun of sharing our great hobby. You will never regret attending this wonderful show in the beautiful Pacific Northwest! Get the full details at the above-referenced website.

Happy Thanksgiving to All!
The U.S. 1928 Beacon Airmail Issue
Reviewing the Initials and Numbers

Joe Kirker

The large and distinctive five-cent Beacon airmail stamp was issued July 25, 1928 to accommodate the new postal rate reduction from 10 cents for the first ounce to 5 cents, effective August 1, 1928. Nearly 107 million of these stamps would eventually be produced.

All were printed in plates of 100 subjects (10 x 10), then cut vertically into left- and right-side panes of 50 for distribution and sale. As with the first airmail stamp of 1918 (Scott C3), a blue vignette was centered within a carmine frame, necessitating two prepared plates. Plate numbers for each color were printed in the top outer margin, but none were added to either side or the bottom, as in C4 through C10.

Quoting from Henry M. Goodkind in the January, 1964 Aero Philatelist Annals, “The one making the transfer roll—the siderographer—is a very important person in the stamp’s production. He requires great skill for rocking-in the single die on to the transfer roll so that a sheet of 50, 100, or 400 subjects will have every single stamp registered as evenly as possible.

On the 5 cent Beacon there are four (sic) siderographers’ initials as follows:  
AB - Andrew Black  
AEF - Albert E. Fischer  
GFH - George F. Henlock  
JHS - John H. Silbert.

For unknown reason Goodkind fails to mention CIR (Clarence I. Ronsaville), so there are actually five different siderographers (Figure 2).

Quoting again from Goodkind, “Another important step in a stamp’s production is making the plate that prints the stamp. The ones doing this are called platemakers(sic). Their initials appear in the lower

Figure 1
Plate strip on cover with frame 19696 and vignette 19691. The plate single 19612 would have had siderographer initials JHS at lower left and RFW finishers mark at lower right on uncut sheet of 100 subjects.

Figure 2
Siderographers Albert E. Fischer and Clarence I. Ronsaville
right margins. The names and initials of the five platemakers of the 5 cent Beacon airmail are as follows:

- **JMB** - James M. Butler
- **JAC** - Joseph A. Clark
- **ELS** - Edward L. Shankle
- **WES** - Walter E. Spring
- **RFW** - Ralph F. Wurtz.

(Readers should review the Follow-Up presented after this main text for a better evaluation of the Goodkind quote and use of the term "platemaker.")

Those stamped initials, like those of the siderographers, are always carmine ink and only appear on 25 of the 55 frame plates with none higher than 19624. In most cases, if initials appear on one side of the printed sheet of 100 subjects, there are initials on the opposite side.

There are seven known exceptions to that situation, those being with 19567 (**AB** only at left), 19589-90-92 (**CIR** only at left), 19607 (**JHS** only at left), 19613 (**GFH** only at left) and the unique 19624 (**RFW** only at right).

Obviously with only five different individuals per task, those personnel worked on multiple plates. For example Albert E. Fischer was assigned to 19549, 19550, 19552, 19566, 19569, and 19572, plus possibly others where initials were not stamped. James M. Butler performed work on 19552 (with Fischer), 19565, 19570, 19614, and 19615. The **RFW** initials appear on 13 plates, and so on.

For the serious student desiring to match-up the carmine frame plates with the stamped initials the primary written reference is the BIA Plate Number Checklist for plates #1 through #20,000 (1990 Revision).

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**Figure 3**

The three team efforts on covers, including **CIR** and **JHS** (Siderographers for 19591), Finishers **ELS** and **RFW** for 19551, and Finishers **JAC** and **WES** for 19568. Courtesy of Jamie O’Bannon.

**Figure 4**

Frame plate 19551 (left pane, without F) would have had **AB** as siderographer, and also the unique team of **ELS** and **RFW** as finishers on uncut sheet of 100.

There are three examples where the exact frame plate can be linked to initials only. This occurred the three times that a team of two men stamped their initials and includes plate 19551 with the lower right team of **ELS** and **RFW**, plate 19568 with initials **JAC** and **WES**, and the only recorded team of siderographers, that being **CIR** and **JHS** on 19591. No other “team efforts” appear and the initials **ELS** and **JAC** do not appear on any other C11 plate, alone or teamed.
Fellow specialist Jamie O’Bannon has acquired covers showing all three of these team efforts, and they are presented here, certainly a rare trio! (See Figures 3 and 4). Locating mint singles would also be a worthwhile accomplishment.

A total of 43 plates were made for the blue vignettes, four of which were experimental with only 100 impressions of each printed. Those experimentals are 19636, 19637, 19638, and 19639. Only one example, a plate strip of three with 19639 and frame plate 19605, is recorded in collections. Likely, any other copies of those experimental numbers never left the bureau and were later destroyed.

The regular issued vignette numbers start with 19545, again do not run consecutively, and finish with 19694. All 39 have been recorded with many combinations of the carmine frame plates.

Paraphrasing from Max G. Johl’s *United States Postage of the 20th Century*, “The Bureau first printed the frame design using four plates to a press . . . After the frames had been printed the sheets were dried, examined and allowed to season while stored in a vault. Later the vignettes were printed also with four plates to a press. Due to the necessity of careful registration of the vignettes, the second printing was slower . . . This difference in the printing speed between the first and second impressions is one of the causes for the irregularity of the plate number combinations.”

For the plate number enthusiast there are over 2,000 possible combinations (55 frames x 39+ vignettes). To date only about 50 percent have been recorded. Many combinations may have never been printed at all with the random two-step process. Along with that the blue vignette plates actually wore out faster because of the higher acid content in the ink. Some plates were probably retired before others were even produced (Figure 5).

The 1935 Johl work shows about 940 combinations in chart form, but does not distinguish between left and right side panes. The Beacon stamp had only been issued seven years earlier, so interest by collectors was immediate. The *2000 Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog* lists more than 1,000 combinations, so over the years more have been found and recorded, which is part of the ongoing fascination with the issue.

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**Figure 5**
Left pane plate strip with the first frame (19549) number and first vignette (19545) number used in production.

**Figure 6**
Upper right and lower right corner blocks from the frame proof sheet of 19613. None of the marginal markings shown on the lower right block would appear on the issued panes. Courtesy of Smithsonian National Postal Museum.
It is not likely that bureau records were kept showing which vignette plate may have been printed with any given frame. Not a single frame number is recorded with all vignette numbers and vice versa. Except for the three “team” efforts as noted earlier, it is nearly an impossible task to match any solo name to a plate, without a full pane of 50.

The 1990 BIA Plate Number Checklist can be referenced, although one correction has been noted. Frame plate number 19613 is shown in the checklist with JMB as finisher, but the actual proof sheet in the Smithsonian archives show no initials at lower right (Figure 6).

Viewing all the C11 proof sheets in the National Postal Museum would be a daunting task, assuming copies still exist. The 1990 BIA Checklist is a monumental reference for all specialists with data acquired over many decades, and updated corrections are also published.

The 1928 Beacon stamp is replete with plate number varieties, initial varieties, vignette shifts, impression recuts and so much more. “Blue Moons” and “Open Doors” are just two of the popular varieties, with no doubt many yet to be discovered. Countless postal history items are still available to collectors and certainly the specialist, whether just beginning or with years of searching, will have no shortage of material. Little wonder it has always been so enjoyed by so many.

**Figure 7**

Right side top block of 20 with vignette shift. No initials would have been stamped at lower right in the pane of 50 with the 19696 frame plate. Courtesy of Jamie O’Bannon.

**References:**

2. BIA Plate Number Checklist, Plates 1 - 20,000, Revised 1990, Published by the Bureau Issues Association (now known as the United States Stamp Society)

Special thanks to fellow collector Jamie O’Bannon, Cheryl Ganz, and the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, and to Douglas D’Avino and the United States Stamp Society.

**Plate Maker and Plate Finisher - A Follow Up**

During the cross referencing of past articles and monographs related to the bureau employee initials it became evident that the personnel involved were being referred to with different job titles. In Johl’s 1935 presentation reference is made to the initials found at lower right as being those of the “platemaker” (page 197 reference to Scott C5). Goodkind continues this description in his 1964 treatise on the Beacon issues, citing Johl several times in discussing the printing procedures, using the term “platemaker” with description of duty, but incorrectly for those initials at lower right.

In Silver’s 1966 work the title given to those personnel whose initials appear at right are “plate finishers,” and, correctly so, as these men had the main responsibility of cleaning the impressed plate, removing scratches and so on, in preparation for actual printing of the sheet stamps. At one time they had been known as “plate cleaners.”

This confusion in reference to those personnel prompted the author to contact fellow collector Douglas D’Avino, a leading expert on U.S. marginal markings and bureau procedures.

His most gracious response:

“I have never seen the term plate maker. I don’t believe it was ever an official BEP job category. Four BEP job categories were commonly used: Transferrer or Siderographer & Plate Cleaner or Plate Finisher.

“On July 1, 1922 the BEP switched job titles from the former to
the latter. Any other terminology was from another source. If you said plate maker to me, I’d assume you meant siderographer, not finisher.”

In summary, both Johl’s and Goodkind’s discussion of those initials found at lower right confuses those who actually produce the impressions on the blank steel plate with those who “clean-up” (finish) that plate for the actual printing.

**AAMS Chapters**

The following local, regional and national organizations are Chapters of the **American Air Mail Society**. To enjoy the hobby of aerophilately, the AAMS recommends that collectors contact these groups about programs and meetings, as well as information about bulletins, services and dues.

- **Canadian Aerophilatelic Society**
  Steve Johnson
  787 Wharncliffe Road S
  London, ON N6J 2N8 CANADA
  steveman@rogers.com

- **Metropolitan Air Post Society**
  Ernest Wheeler
  7 Evelyn Terrace
  Wayne NJ 07470-3446
  ernestwheeler@hotmail.com

- **Northwest Chapter - AAMS**
  Leonard (Len) Lukens
  2710 N.E. 131st St.
  Portland OR 97230
  llukens@easystreet.net

- **Southern California Air Mail Society**
  c/o President Bill Keesling
  14723 Burbank Blvd.
  Van Nuys CA 91411-3336

- **Rocky Mountain Aerophilatelic Club**
  William E. Crabbs, secretary
  P.O. Box 620695
  Littleton CO 80162-0695
  w.crabbs@comcast.net

**Changes or corrections?**

Please send all corrections, additions or changes to: vcanfieldp@gmail.com

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**CHI & Air Mail Field Motor Truck:**

**A Very Scarce Postmark**

Harlan Radford Jr.

In 1927, the U.S. Post Office Department put a large, four-wheeled truck in service in Chicago. This truck was used in the handling, sorting and postmarking of mail being transferred between the Main Post Office in downtown Chicago and the Chicago Municipal Airport. The resulting “Chi & Air Mail Field Motor Truck” postmark was the only one of its kind used by the POD. This seldom-seen airfield cancellation was in use only for a brief time, between October 25, 1927 and February 21, 1928.

Originally, the truck made a single, daily round-trip but over time the vehicle was making as many as three and even four round-trips daily. Generally, letters mailed near closing time were postmarked aboard the truck while it was en route to or from the airport. Specialists also consider this to be the premier or first Highway Post Office cancellation.

Only three known postmark devices or variants are known to exist. These are quite scarce and much sought-after. The devices were used primarily as point of origin or dispatching postmarks, but examples also exist of the postmarks used for arrival backstamping purposes. The four-bar hand-applied devices contained the following wording within...
the circular date stamp: CHI & AIR MAIL FIELD MOTOR TRUCK (both without and with a period after the word “TRUCK.” A third imprint variety exists, used only as a backstamp between May 12 and June 3, 1928. This third variant read “CHICAGO, ILL.” at the top portion of the circular date stamp and “AIR MAIL FIELD – MOTOR TRUCK No. 3” on the bottom.

It has been determined that the most prevalent use of the aforementioned postmarks were applied to envelopes that were rendered philatelic treatment and flown on the inaugural Contract Air Mail Route 2 flight services on February 21, 1928 with a time designation of 5AM.

Just as abruptly as it began, use of the so-called “Motor Truck” was halted July 1, 1928 when only “closed pouches” of mail were transported between the two Chicago post office facilities. No more sorting and postmarking of individual pieces of airmail occurred.

The cover illustrated in Figure 1 reveals one complete and two partial strikes of the distinctive Chi & Air Mail Field Motor Truck postmark. This cover was flown on the special flight over CAM Route 2 from Chicago to Oakland, California via St. Louis, Missouri on February 21, 1928. It sports the horseshoe-shaped cachet associated with the pilot known as “Lucky Lindy” or Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh. The cachet, applied in black ink, announced “Lindbergh Again Flies the Air Mail.” This particular flight service represented a temporary return of Lindbergh to airmail service for just two days, February 20 and 21, 1928, along the Chicago-Peoria-Springfield-St. Louis route.

Figure 2 depicts a Chi & Air Mail Field Motor Truck cancel used as a backstamp on a CAM 9 inaugural flight cover carried from Madison, Wisconsin, to Minneapolis, Minnesota on November 22, 1927.

In conclusion, the basis for this brief article stems from the author’s strong interest in airmail field postmarks. However, the sources of information utilized to support this article are about as limited as the actual number of Chi & Air Mail Field Motor Truck postmarks in existence. Primarily, just two authoritative publications were consulted to obtain some sketchy background information on the postmarks.

The first source was the American Air Mail Society’s American Air Mail Catalogue, Vol. Two, Fifth Edition dated 1977. The second source was the published work of Leonard Piszkiewicz, Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History, published in 2006. Both books provide a wealth of specialized information pertaining to types and usages of postmarks and postal history.

Every Cover Tells a Story
(If you care to do some research)

John Wilson

By using some “out of the box” thinking, and widening the search, almost every cover has a story to tell, often of general interest and occasionally of some significance. The cover shown here illustrates what I mean.

Posted in Argentina on June 20, 1941, it is addressed to Beirut in Lebanon. The rate paid is correct for the journey, according to Ravignani [1] at 20 centavos surface rate + 135 centavos air fee to Lebanon. The cover traveled by Pan American to Miami and then from San Francisco by FAM-14 to Singapore. In Singapore it was opened and re-sealed by Censor #52 and transferred to the BOAC “Horseshoe” route to Calcutta-Karachi-Basra-Cairo. From there it would have been flown to Beirut. So far, so good, but the devil (and the interest) is in the detail.
The cover has been endorsed “Service Suspended, Return to Sender,” and I have not yet determined where this happened. My best guess would be in Cairo, but I would love to be corrected. It was indeed returned, arriving back in Cordoba on February 11, 1942, and there is a pencil endorsement on the back of the cover saying “Via Natal.” This I doubt, and the inscription may well be a later addition by a dealer or collector – but we will leave that aside.

The interest comes from a wider look at history. In June 1941, the Allies launched “Operation Exporter” against Vichy/German forces in Syria and Lebanon and this is almost certainly the reason for the mail service being suspended. To me, a further significant fact is that fighting in the Australian forces involved in “Operation Exporter” was one Moshe Dayan, later, of course, more famous as General Dayan of the “Six Day War.” It was in this campaign in Lebanon that Moshe Dayan lost an eye and for his bravery was awarded the British Military Cross. The black patch over his left eye made Moshe Dayan instantly recognizable anywhere in the world.

And so, although an interesting cover to the airmail collector, this small piece of paper opens up a much wider view of world history if one just takes the time to think.

References

The Italian South Atlantic Airline (L.A.T.I.) by Martyn Cusworth. Published in 2012 by the Italy & Colonies Study Group, UK, 98 pages, with color illustrations, A4 spiral bound.

Order from Andy Harris, 13 Pond Close, Harefield, Uxbridge, Middlesex, England UB9 6NG. UK£25.00 plus postage - UK£2.00, Europe £5.50, rest of the world £8.50. Payment by sterling cheque or Paypal (no extra charge) to: andycharris@blueyonder.co.uk

LATI operated a South Atlantic scheduled airline service for slightly more than two years, from December 15, 1939 to July 15, 1941. The book starts out by describing the first Italian flights to South America: the Francesco DePinedo flight attempts in 1927, the General Italo Balbo mass flights of 1931, the 1934 survey flight by Lombardi and Mazzotti, the experimental flight in 1938 by three aircraft called “Sorci Verdi” (Green Mice,) and the survey flight by the Italian civil airline Ala Littoria from Sardinia to Buenos Aires in 1938.

The first chapter describes the aircraft used by LATI, all Savoia Marchetti models SM.82, SM.83, SM.75, SM.76 and SM.79. The next chapter covers the role of Sol Island (Isla del Sol) and the European political situation at the time.

The next chapter shows all the publicity material, airmail etiquettes, baggage labels, publicity cards, seasonal greeting cards, publicity envelopes and coffee bags. The following chapter covers censorship of the LATI flown mail by Germany and Italy.

The main chapter describes the LATI route and the various first flights, crashes and mail carried to or from other countries which connected to the LATI routes. Many first flight covers are shown in color. Many more covers have come to light since the Richard Beith book on LATI was published in 1993. All the known directional markings used on LATI mail are also shown. These were applied in various countries, usually to indicate that the cover was to be flown by LATI.

There is a chapter covering postal rates. The final chapter covers the political background to the end of the LATI service. There are two appendices listing the important dates in World War Two and all the South Atlantic crossings by LATI during its short existence.
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HRH A2 10.07.13
Great Western Railway
First Aerial Excursion

Howard J. Wunderlich

Every once in a while, one comes upon a cover that appears fairly bland but piques your interest. For me, this occurred when I first purchased the cover in Figure 1. It is cancelled 18 July 1934 with a Cardiff canceler and has a typewritten four-line notation at the top: “Souvenir of the First Aerial Excursion / PLYMOUTH-CARDIFF / Great Western Railway / July 18th 1934.” The date is underlined in red. As a collector of British internal flight covers, I was both intrigued and confused by this cover. Some history is required to see why.

At this time in Great Britain, the post office had the exclusive right to carry mail with certain limited exceptions not relevant here. However, there was one special concession made to railway companies to speed delivery for which a 3d fee could be added (4d for Northern Ireland).

In general the railway received a letter from the sender and carried it on the railway, depositing it in the mail stream at the destination. The letters had to have a Royal Mail stamp in the correct postage.

Great Western Railway (GWR) set up a passenger plane service in 1933. The first airmail letter service occurred on April 12, 1933. Letters were hand-carried on the flights and then deposited in the mail stream. For a more in-depth explanation refer to The Air Mails of the British Isles by Stanley Redgrove, 1940. A fee of 3d was charged for each letter and either a GWR parcel stamp or a purple hand cancel note the GWR fee being paid was applied. The hand cancel does not mention any fee. This was an unofficial handling of mail. The method of carrying the covers is important later on.

Subsequently, GWR officially carried mail on its various flights. The last official mail carrying flights were on September 30, 1933. Therein lies both the intrigue and confusion as the cover in question is dated just over nine months later.

For a number of years after acquiring the Figure 1 cover I never saw another similar cover. Then I got lucky and found two! The covers in figures 2 and 3 also have the same four-line notation and red underlining. Figure 2 is canceled in Cardiff. Figure 3 is canceled in Plymouth and the second line of the four-line notation reads, “PLYMOUTH-CARDIFF-PLYMOUTH.”

The Cardiff covers (figures 1 and 2) are both canceled at 11:30 AM and the Plymouth cover (Figure 3) is canceled at 7 PM. The covers in figures 2 and 3 have an additional typewritten notation in the lower left hand corner: “Carried by;” over the signature of Mr. C. Nichols. The covers in figures 1 and 2 appear to have been carried on the Plymouth-to-Cardiff leg of the excursion while the Figure 3 cover appears to be a round-trip cover.
I consulted numerous books, journals, on-line sites, etc., but could not find anything out about this first aerial excursion until I came across Question 99 in Bulletin No. 121, August 1995 of the British Aerophilatelic Federation. The cover pictured there was similar to my Figure 2. Then in Bulletin No. 122, October 1995, there was an answer (A99) that included four responses to Q99: two reported similar covers; a third concerned GWR being part of the Railway Air Service consortium but nothing directly concerning the covers. One response answered some of the questions. Mr. Nichols was one of the passengers on the flight that carried the letters. Some of the letters were posted in Cardiff and the rest were posted on return to Plymouth. He apparently only signed some of the covers. I was still trying to answer the who, what, where, when, why and how of these covers. The covers themselves and the A99 provided answers for the who, what, when and how or at least part of them but left the why unanswered.

The solution lay in Figure 2. That cover contained a letter (or copy of one) which answers the questions of these covers. Only that cover had the letter inside, indicated by a small red label on the back which said “enclosure.”

Here is the text of the letter, dated July 18, 1934, and bearing the heading, “THE FIRST AERIAL EXCERUSION:”
The Great Western Railway Company, who made Aerial History by starting the First British Rail Air Service on April 12th 1933 have again shown their enter-
prise by advertising the First Special Return Day Excursion by aeroplane from Plymouth to Cardiff on July 18th 1934.

No doubt this will be followed by others in due course. Owing to the present attitude of the Post Office in regard to these Services, it has been impossible to arrange for any mail to be officially carried by the Railway Company upon this historic occasion, but a limited number of Souvenir Covers have been conveyed by Special Messenger and posted at either end, thus obtaining the dated postmarks of Cardiff and Plymouth respectively. Although these covers have of course no real Air Mail status, they will no doubt be welcomed by all collectors who are interested in the development of aviation. Within the short period of 25 years, Air Travel and the Carriage of Mails by Air has developed to its present advanced stage, and within the next few years there is very little doubt that all First Class Mail will be carried by Air, probably without extra fee of any kind. Those collectors who have preserved all early souvenirs of aviation development are already reaping their reward and will continue to do so, as the cult of Aerophilately spreads.

Plymouth July 1934 THE MIDLAND STAMP CO LTD.
The letter provides the why and further expanded the who. I presume that Mr. Nichols was either a principal or agent for The Midland Stamp Co. Ltd. This would also explain why the covers are addressed to stamp dealers. It appears Royal Mail had problems with letters being carried partially outside its system even though there was a railway agreement. Therefore, these covers were hand-carried by “Special Messenger,” similar to the April 12, 1933 covers. There is no mention of any fee being charged. It seems the dealers were just looking for a new way to produce covers for sale to collectors.

The remaining questions deal with how many of these covers were carried and how many were signed. There is little doubt these are unofficial and philatelic in nature but they did go through the mail. Despite this, they are still a philatelic souvenir of an aeronautical event. I leave it to you to judge the worthiness of these covers for inclusion in your collection.

I would be happy to communicate with anyone who has an interest herein and try to answer any additional questions you have. Anyone with comments or additional information can email me at hjwesq@yahoo.com.
Treasure Hunting for CAM Covers

Lee Downer

Unlisted CAM 34 Cover

One of these years, we might see a revised CAM volume to the AAMC 6th Edition. As you could imagine, there are reasons why this is way behind schedule, not the least would be concerns about footing the printing bill and then who would buy it? In the meantime, the hobby continues and amazingly, with more than 80 years since the "classic CAM" era, new finds still turn up.

From time to time, the treasure hunt reveals covers that do not match the listings in the AAMC. These are often outside the definitions and rules that the original editors established to set limits on the scope of their publication or possibly their view of what should be collected. The early CAM collectors, including some AAMC editors, carefully watched for changes in routes and terminals as announced in postal bulletins and then prepared and positioned covers to capture each new change.

Some of these items, like first night flights, first holiday flights and last flights, fell outside the rules for catalogue listing and subsequently have not been given much value even though these were important changes to postal service that diligent CAM aerophilatelists should be interested in collecting. Today, flown covers of this type that help tell the complete story of our expanding air mail service can be found for very reasonable prices.

Occasionally, even after 80 years, we stumble on covers that should be listed in the AAMC, but were overlooked, or felt not to exist. Most have been varieties of cachet colors, some of which are a bit obscure. Who can really tell the difference between "light purple," "reddish violet" and "magenta?" A busy postal clerk re-inked the cachet on the wrong pad and it took a few strikes to get the color back. 85 years later, after exposure to light, handling and effects of moisture, the colors are even harder to distinguish. Finding a real unlisted variety is significantly more difficult. Recently, I may have found one.

When Route 34 was authorized and funded by the U.S. Post Office, transcontinental airmail, that ended when U.S. Government Mail Service stopped flying in 1927, was once again a reality. To meet the goal of two day delivery across the U.S., the contractor, Transcontinental and Western Air (T&WA) had to have a lot of resources: pilots, airplanes, mechanics and mail handling capability. The routes were planned with timed precision, allowing only about 10 minutes at each terminal to off-load/mail (Figure 1 CAM 34 timetable).

The mail had to be canceled, bagged and tagged methodically to
allow efficient drop off and quick trans-loading at each stop. Air Mail Facilities (AMF), located at terminals connecting with other CAM routes, helped with the efficient handling of mail destined for other parts of the country. CAM Route 34 was served by New York AMF at Newark (connecting to CAM 1), AMF Camden (connecting to CAM 19 and 23), and St. Louis AMF (connecting to CAM 28 and 30). Kansas City, another multi-route hub, did not require AMF services due to a planned lay-over. To avoid night flying, Route 34 had built-in overnight stop at KC, giving plenty of time to process the mail from both the eastbound and westbound flights. LA did process inaugural mail at the AMF even though they had mail destined for CAMs 4 and 8.

T&WA used the Ford 5 AT B as their aircraft, a big tri-motor with a spacious cockpit for two which allowed two or three pilots to fly on each segment. The AAMC records one pilot for each route segment. Look closely at the signed covers you have and you might find names that are not documented in the AAMC. Some covers were signed by the co-pilot or third pilot. In a future column, I'll talk more about the "unlisted" pilots.

The mail at AMF locations received an easily identifiable AMF cancellation. AAMC provides a separate listing variety for AMF-serviced covers -- the "F" variety. AMF covers went both directions on the route wherever mail could be sent either way. One of the CAM 34 anomalies is Camden, the AMF serving Philadelphia, where the AAMC lists only a westbound variety. That westbound flight originated in New York or Newark AMF at 8am on 15 October 1930. The pilots, C. W. Rach and L. S. Andrews, made stops at Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, where a new group of pilots took the aircraft on to KC.

The morning westbound plane arrived at Philadelphia at approximately 8:45am to on-load and off-load mail. Covers originating at the Philadelphia POs were typically given a 7 a.m. time stamp but covers originating at the AMF got 8 a.m. AMF-serviced covers are listed in the AAMC as 34W2f (Figure 2) and are scarce.

However, the AAMC does not list a similar cover for the short eastbound leg out of Philadelphia to NY: no 34E2f. The eastbound segment of the route departed Columbus at 1:15 p.m. where John Collings (other pilots on his crew are not identified) took over the plane arriving from Indianapolis loaded with the bulk of the eastbound mail from points west. If you add up the weights listed in the AAMC, he was hauling about 2,000 pounds of dead weight on the last few legs, a lot of it philatelic mail. He made stops at Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia en route to NYC. At Philadelphia 28 pounds of mail, relatively light for CAM 34 inaugurals, was prepared and loaded on the plane for NY. Philadelphia applied 8am to virtually all philatelic mail, either direction. In the eyes of the AAMC editors, none of it was processed at the AMF, so no "f" variety is listed.

Proving there are still nuggets out there, the illustrated cover (Figure 3) was offered for sale on eBay last year. It could be a valid CAM 34E2f. Much of the eastbound philatelic covers from Philadelphia were date stamped at 7am, but a few were given 5pm. This cover was given an AMF cancel with a 530pm time stamp and it is signed by the pilot, John...
Collings. The morning mail was long gone, so this cover, and possibly others, was processed at the AMF and put on the evening flight to NY, which passed through Camden around 5:30 p.m. Too bad there is no back stamp. Armed with better information, I found another one this year. So those of you lucky enough to own a 34W2f should pull it out and look again. You might be sitting on some added treasure.

Ken Lawrence explores the use of the presidential series of stamps on trans-Atlantic airmail during the period 1938-1941 in the July 15 issue of Linn’s Stamp News. He shows covers that have been marked for Clipper mail, items marked for return to sender as service was suspended, changes in routes, evidence of censorship, etc., as the political situation changed.

In the August 5 Linn’s, Michael Rogers describes the important role that India played in East-West airmail. He mentions the Horseshoe Route and the Hump Route over the Himalayas. Rogers illustrates a cover sent airmail from Bombay in 1941 to New York City. The cover was endorsed with the routing India/Chungking/USA via trans-Pacific airmail. From Chungking it went to Hong Kong and thence to San Francisco via China Clipper service.

David Alford continues his series on the 1941 Pan Am flight from Fiji to the USA in the August issue of Stamp Lover, published by the National Philatelic Society in the U.K. He illustrates covers from this last leg, November 14, 1941.

Australia and pioneer flights are subjects of Frank Tonge’s article in the July 30 issue of Canadian Stamp News. He recalls the flight of Ross and Keith Smith from London to Australia in 1919 in 28 days to win a prize offered by the Australian government. Charles Kingsford Smith established many airmail routes in Australia in the early 1930s. With his colleague Charles Ulm, Smith came to the United States to purchase their plane, Southern Cross, in which they set a new record for an around-the-world flight. Smith was attempting to set a new record for carrying mail from England to Australia in 1935 when he disappeared near Rangoon, Burma.

In the same issue of CSN, Ian Robertson describes the 6-cent Canadian airmail stamp issued in 1938. The stamp depicts a seaplane flying over the passenger vessel SS Distributor on the Mackenzie River in the Northwest Territories.

Dave Larson describes the Fulton Aeroretriever “Skyhook” system used in the Arctic in the July issue of Ice Cap News. Robert Fulton developed a retrieval system for picking up equipment or personnel by an airplane in situations or areas that did not permit accessibility by helicopter. With a contract from the Office of Naval Research, Fulton refined his system in the 1950s. When personnel or material were dropped in Arctic areas and needed to be retrieved a short time later, Fulton’s system was used.

The pickup equipment was dropped by aircraft and consisted of a harness, a line and a portable helium bottle to inflate a small balloon. The pickup aircraft, at first a P2V and later a C130 or B-17, was equipped with a special fork that snared the line and the balloon was released. The pickup crew pulled the cargo or personnel into the fuselage.

Writing in the September/October Canadian Philatelist, coauthors Rob Moore and John Walsh describe a new variety of an overprinted Newfoundland airmail stamp. The 35-cent Cabot issue of 1897 was overprinted “AIR MAIL to Halifax, N.S. 1921.” The stamps were intended for use on mail delivered by air from Botwood to Halifax and then to continue to Canada, Great Britain and United States destinations.

Several varieties exist with respect to word spacing and presence or absence of periods in the overprint. The latest finding is a mirror image offset that is found on the back of stamps that have the overprinted inverted on the front. The authors describe the conditions that likely allowed for this variety to occur.

The October issue of Gibbons Stamp Monthly carries three articles of aerophilatelic interest. Peter Jennings writes about the pictorial air letter sheets or aerograms issued August 1, 1963 by Great Britain. They were sold primarily for use by tourists at the London post offices as well as offices at Heathrow and Gatwick airports. In the same issue Peter Martin reviews the first autogiro mail in Great Britain and Australia. The...
autogiro was used for carrying mail during the brief period 1931-1940 in the United States and elsewhere. The author shows Britain and Australia uses from 1934.

Also in the October GSM, Ian Hamilton begins a new series on “Those Magnificent Men and Their Flying Machines.” In this first article he explores the depiction of mythological flights and “birdmen” as seen on many stamps. He ends with 18th and 19th century attempts by man at heavier-than-air flight.

### Airpost Journal

#### Procedures and Deadline

**Deadline**

Deadline for the receipt of articles, letters, advertising and news is the first of the month preceding the month of publication. For example, we need everything for the November issue by October 1, everything for the December issue by November 1, everything for the January issue by December 1 and so on.

The preferred method of receiving copy is via an email attachment. Please send as an MS Word document. We also welcome compact disks (CDs). Hard copy is acceptable but it must be rekeyed so we prefer electronic transmission.

**Illustrations**

The most effective way to transmit illustrations is electronically. They should be TIF or JPEG, scanned at no less than 150 dpi and attached to an email. They can also be sent on CD. We can also retrieve copy and illustrations from electronic storage if provided with the correct routing.

Questions can be directed to editor Vickie Canfield Peters by emailing vcanfieldp@gmail.com or by writing to her at 11911 E. Connor Road, Valleyford WA 99036. The telephone number is 509-924-4484.

Your attention to and compliance with these procedures and deadline assures the best quality we can achieve. Thank you for your support of, and contributions to, the Airpost Journal.
Wisconsin Hall of Fame Honors Ganz

Cheryl Ganz, Smithsonian National Postal Museum chief curator of philately, was inducted into the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame on August 10 during the Wisconsin Federation’s annual meeting, held this year at APS StampShow 2013 in Milwaukee.

Ganz’ Wisconsin ties are with Washington Island, where she was born and lived until her family moved to Illinois. She returns to Washington Island several times a year for family visits and collects postal history of Door County, Wisconsin.

Ganz is a renowned worldwide collector of zeppelin mail and served as editor of The Zeppelin Collector for 36 years. She is a prolific philatelic researcher, exhibitor and writer, authoring and co-editing three notable publications. She is past president of the American Air Mail Society and serves on the APS Ethics Committee.

Canadian Aerophilatelic Society Elects New President

Steve Johnson was elected president of the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society (CAS) at the society’s Annual General Meeting in Winnipeg.

Steve is well known as a researcher and exhibitor of Canadian semi-official airmails. His exhibit on Yukon Airways & Exploration Limited has won several national-level gold medals. He is editing the “Semi-Official Stamps and Covers” section for the revised edition of the Canadian airmail catalogue, The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland. Steve is also the webmaster for the CAS, and has been the society’s vice president since 2011.

The CAS now has two past presidents who are active members of its Executive Committee: Chris Hargreaves and Dick Malott. Chris edit’s the society journal, “The Canadian Aerophilatelist.” Dick organizes the popular covers flown over Ottawa by the RCAF Snowbirds air demonstration squadron each year on Canada Day.

For more information about the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society, check out the website: www.aerophilately.ca

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The American Air Mail Society announces the availability of seven different aerophilatelic programs. They are PowerPoint 2010 presentations showing covers and related material, along with spoken narration. The following titles are available on CD-ROM:

1. Lindbergh’s Early Flights to the Canal Zone (FAM 5-1 and FAM 5-2) by Alan P. Bentz;
2. Lindbergh’s Early Flights to the Canal Zone - Latin American Good Will Tour of 1928 by Alan P. Bentz;
3. Program 3, FAM-14 to Singapore Straits Settlements is still being developed. Its availability will be announced upon completion;
4. History and Scope of Aerophilately by Roger O. Gilruth (this program is all encompassing and is an ideal introduction to aerophilately and might inspire a new generation of collectors);
5. Airships of the United States by Phillip J. Stager;
6. CAM 9 – Chicago-Minneapolis Route via Milwaukee, La Crosse & Saint Paul – Inaugural Flights by Ronald S. Sarson;
7. Collecting Air Crash Covers by Kendall C. Sanford;

The CDs are ideal for showing at stamp club meetings, for educational purposes or personal use. Each presentation can be purchased for $10.00 including postage. Orders should be sent to:

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Editor and Advertising: Vickie Canfield Peters, 11911 E. Connor Road, Valleyford WA 99036 (vcanfieldp@gmail.com)

Publications Committee

Chairman: Jim Graue, 11911 East Connor Road, Valleyford WA 99036 (jimg@air-pipe.com)

Member Services

Auction Manager: Don Lussky, 1332 N. Webster St., Naperville IL 60563

Publications Sales Manager: Greg Schmidt, 1978 Fox Burrow Court, Neenah WI 54956 (gschmidt7@new.rr.com)

Merchandise Sales Manager: J.L. Johnson, Jr., 248 Shore Ave., Eastern Point, Groton CT 06340 (fam14@tvccconnect.net)

Historian: Len Lukens. 2710 N.E. 131st St. Portland OR 97230 (llukens@easystreet.net)

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