

March 1993

Box 961, Boston, Mass. 02103

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN SEMI-OFFICIAL AIR MAIL STUDY GROUP

(a division of the  
British North America Philatelic Society)

STUDY GROUP STILL ALIVE!

"The reports of my death  
are greatly exaggerated."

- Mark Twain (1897)



Contrary to reports of our study group's demise, we are alive and kicking.

The confusion began at the annual BNAPS convention in September (BNAPEX '92), when nine BNAPS members met and formed a new, separate "Air Mail" study group.

Be assured, our study group was not discontinued or "reorganized." Our study group was not converted into the new Air Mail study group, nor did the new Air Mail study group replace the Semi-Official Air Mail study group. Both groups are sanctioned by the BNAPS and each may operate independent of the other.

We hope that everyone knows the facts by now.

Let us bury the disappointments of last year and begin to make the most of 1993.

Bob Marcello  
BNAPS 2636  
Chairman/Newsletter Editor  
Semi-Official Air Mail Study Group

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Three years ago, after more than thirty years of collecting, researching, writing, and exhibiting, Major R. K. "Dick" Malott donated his massive accumulation of Canadian aerophilatelic data to the Canadian Postal Archives. Three archivists then spent nearly nine months in organizing the material and producing a useful 120-page "Finding Aid" or guide to the collection.

The finding guide to the Malott papers will enable researchers interested in Canadian aviation and philately to locate specific information within a wide range of aerophilatelic subjects.

Dick says he will send a complimentary copy of the guide to any member of our study group who requests one. You may write him at 16 Harwick Crescent, Nepean, Ontario K2H 6R1.

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Congratulations to Stephanie Lynn Burklow, teenage daughter of study group member Duke Burklow, of Lexington, Kentucky. Stephanie's essay, "The Zeppelin," won first place in the 16 to 21 age group in a nationwide contest for youth, sponsored last year by Stamps magazine. The contest celebrated the weekly publication's sixtieth anniversary. Miss Burklow's winning essay was published in the November 14 issue of Stamps.

In addition to being awarded a one-year subscription to Stamps, Stephanie also received a "boom box." We wonder if her dad now wears earplugs and dons earmuffs when he works on his stamps... Duke recently told us that he has three teenage daughters; he probably is used to hearing high-volume music around the house, with or without the accompaniment of boom boxes.

Besides being an able writer, Stephanie also is a serious stamp collector. Last October she exhibited her collection of zeppelin covers at CHICAGOPEX '92, the All Air Mail Show.

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Duke Burklow suggests that we set up a register of members' interests and specialties, perhaps to be included later as part of our membership list.

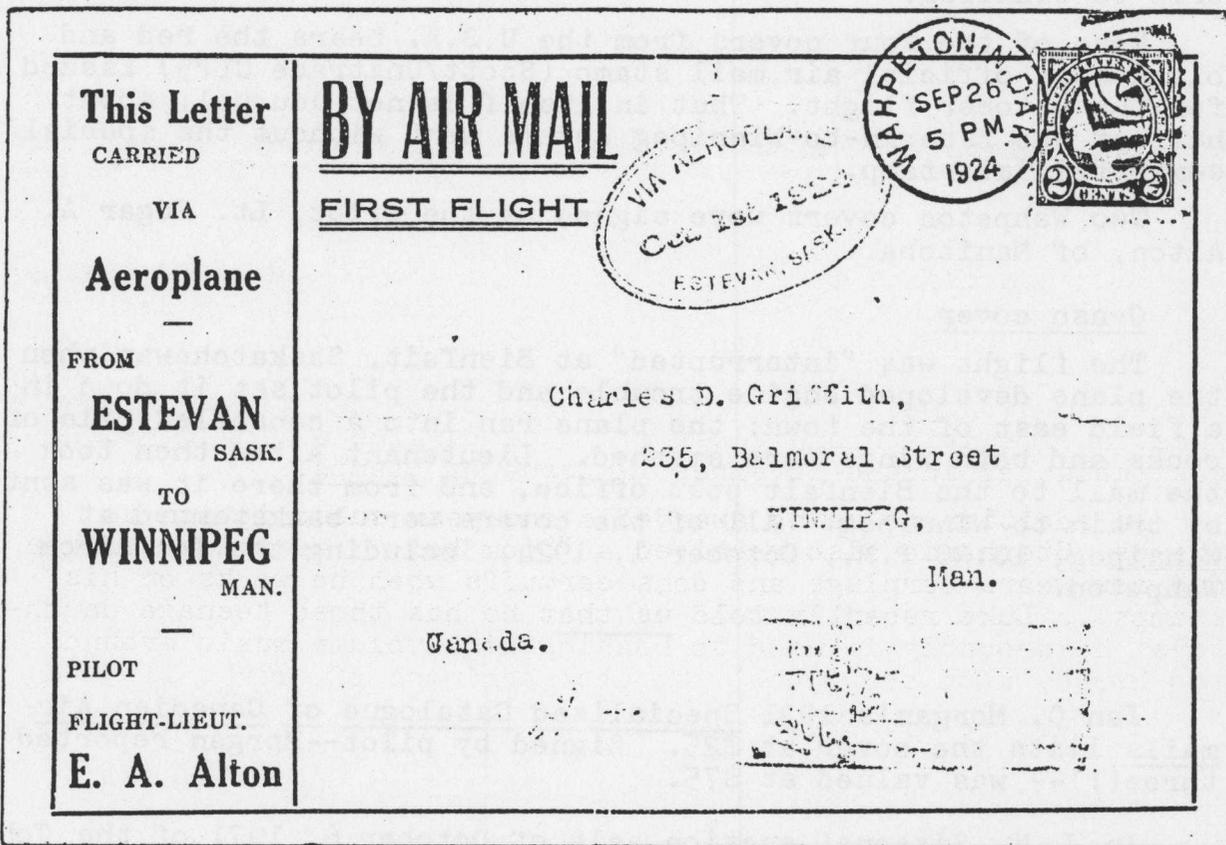
He wishes more information were readily available about semi-official airmails. Further to that, he says, "I have several books on semi-official stamps that I am willing to share with other members, and there are some books and manuscripts that I would like to see."

Duke also has some duplicate covers that he is willing to trade for needed material. He suggests, "Maybe we could start a swap column."

Good idea. Let's hear from more members who are interested in trading, and we'll run a swap column in one of the next newsletters.

FOUR COVERS FROM WAHPETON, NORTH DAKOTA  
CARRIED ON 1924 ESTEVAN-WINNIPEG FLIGHT

Illustrated below is a very rarely seen cover. Only four such covers are known, postmarked at Wahpeton, North Dakota on September 26, 1924 and carried on a promotional flight from Estevan, Saskatchewan to Winnipeg, Manitoba on October 1, 1924. (The catalogue of the American Air Mail Society lists this as #34e.)



The purpose of the Estevan-to-Winnipeg flight was to publicize the rich, coal-bearing area in Saskatchewan, especially the district of Estevan.

The cover shown here is addressed to Charles D. Griffith at Winnipeg. Mr. Griffith apparently was the postmaster at Estevan. (The 1985 Report of our study group mentions Griffith as being both an Estevan businessman and the postmaster who brought the mail sack to the Estevan airfield on the morning of October 1, 1924.)

The story behind these particular covers from the U.S.A. is almost as little known as the covers themselves:

Sometime before September 26, a friend from the U.S.A. was visiting Mr. Griffith, and when told of the proposed flight

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Wahpeton Covers on Estevan-Winnipeg Flight (cont'd)

from Estevan to Winnipeg, the friend wanted to send a letter from his home town (Wahpeton) to be carried on the Canadian flight. They apparently decided that the best way to accomplish their mission was for the postmaster at Wahpeton to affix and cancel U.S. stamps on several souvenir covers and then send the covers so canceled under separate cover to Estevan, where Griffith would put them into the mail sack to be flown on the special trip to Winnipeg.

None of the four covers from the U.S.A. bears the red and black semi-official air mail stamp (Scott/Unitrade CLP5) issued for the October flight. That in itself is not unusual; about half of the Estevan-to-Winnipeg covers went without the special semi-official stamp.

Two Wahpeton covers were signed by the pilot, Lt. Edgar A. Alton, of Manitoba.

Crash cover

The flight was "interrupted" at Bienfait, Saskatchewan when the plane developed engine trouble and the pilot set it down in a field east of the town; the plane ran into a concealed pile of rocks and both wings were smashed. Lieutenant Alton then took the mail to the Bienfait post office, and from there it was sent by train to Winnipeg. All of the covers were backstamped at Winnipeg, 10:30 P.M., October 1, 1924, including the four from Wahpeton.

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Ian C. Morgan's 1931 Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Airmails lists the cover at \$25. Signed by pilot--Morgan reported three(!)-- was valued at \$75.

In J. N. Sissons' auction sale of October 6, 1971 of the John C. Cornelius specialized collection of Canada airmails, a similar cover to the one illustrated here sold for \$65 (Lot 147). It was listed with a catalogue value of \$500.

If anyone in the study group can offer additional information about these Wahpeton covers or correct any possible errors in this story, please send us your information and comments.

Special thanks to Duke Burklow, for his photocopy of the Wahpeton cover; also thanks to Haughton Sanguinetti, editor of the 1985 Report, for most of the information used in this article.

-R.W.M.

NEWSLETTER WINS AWARD AT LITERATURE FAIR

We were invited to participate in last year's Sixteenth Annual Literature Fair at the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum in Weston, Massachusetts, where approximately 170 books, periodicals, and catalogs from around the world were exhibited and judged.

The 1991 newsletters of the Canadian Semi-Official Air Mail Study Group were displayed at the fair, along with brochures about the BNAPS.

We are very pleased to report that our study group's newsletters won a Silver award.

MORE LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Jeffrey Ward sent a note to say he is looking forward to exhibiting his specialized collection of Yukon semi-officials at the SPRINGPEX '93 show in Virginia, March 6 and 7.

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Joseph Berkovits comments that there is a new BNAPS Air Mail Study Group, in addition to the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society, the Aerophilatelic Federation of America (with articles about Canadian air mail in almost every issue of their newsletter); and now we have a renewed Canadian Semi-Official Air Mail Study Group. He says, "I wonder if the readers can handle it all?"

We say, is there such a thing as "too much" information about Canadian air mail? Let us hope not.



