

The Pilot's Log

Newsletter of the BNAPS Air Mail Study Group

Volume 15 – Number 5

December 2022

THE NEXT BNAPS AIR MAIL STUDY GROUP / CAS ZOOM MEETING

Will be held on Sunday February 5th 2023 - 11 AM to 1 PM Eastern Time

The meeting will be organized on a “show and tell” basis to facilitate discussion between participants. - Everybody is invited to show a favourite cover from February (from any year to anywhere) or another item of their choosing.

To try and ensure that things go smoothly, please send a copy of your presentation in advance to Chris Hargreaves at hargreavescp@sympatico.ca The presentations will then be sent to our Zoom Masters, Charles Livermore and Dave Bartlet, so that they are ready for participants to speak to. Following this initial presentation, additional items can be shown by screen sharing.

Wop May – Pioneer Air Mail Pilot

Denny May gave a very interesting presentation about his father Wop May, to our zoom meeting in February 2021.

A recording of Denny's presentation can be viewed at <https://bnaps.org/hhl/DocAccess.php?Doc=18>

Last year a 20 minute movie called BLIND AMBITION – THE WOP MAY STORY was made about Wop May, and received the jury award for Best Documentary Short Film (Alberta) at the Edmonton International Film Festival in 2021. This movie can now be viewed on the Alberta Aviation Museum's website at

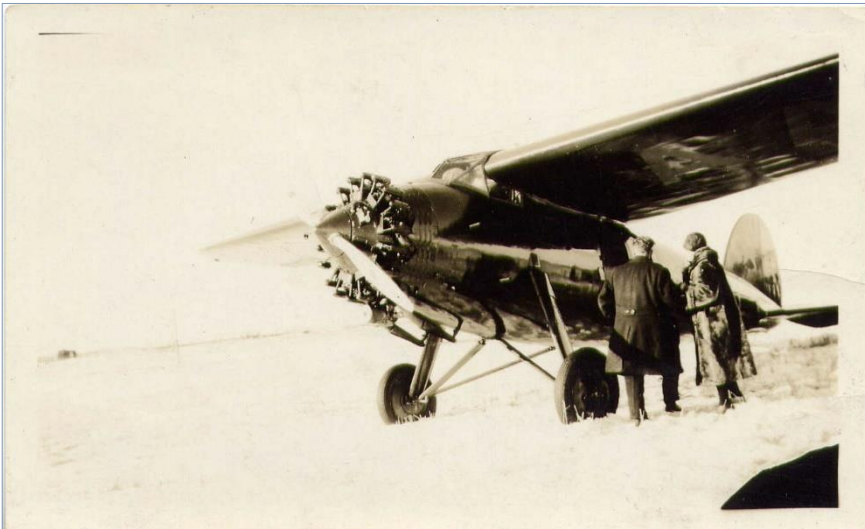
<https://albertaaviationmuseum.com/collection/featured-videos/>

It can be viewed without charge, and your editor thinks it is excellent!

Many thanks to Gord Mallet for the following article
AN AEROPHILATELIC SALUTE TO WOP AND DENNY MAY



AN AEROPHILATELIC SALUTE TO WOP AND DENNY MAY



These photographs were given to me by my father in the late 1970s. They are of a flight undertaken by famous bush pilot Wop May on **March 9 1929** - to a snowy field near the hamlet of Hackett about 20 miles southeast of Stettler, Alberta. The aircraft flown was a Lockheed Vega, registered as CF-AAL.

Ten or more years later I attended a stamp club meeting with a colleague and entered an auction at the wind-up of the meeting. I was the successful bidder on a pair of first flight covers. Scans of these envelopes are on the next page.

Each cover was aboard flights made during December 1929's first official service in the Northwest Territory. On examining the two covers, it was surprising to learn that they both carried the signature "W R May Pilot."

I became 'hooked' on locating other covers from the early Canadian airmail flights and researching the happenings linked to them. Membership in the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society and British North America Philatelic Society have been of great help.



Wop May



Ivan Mallett



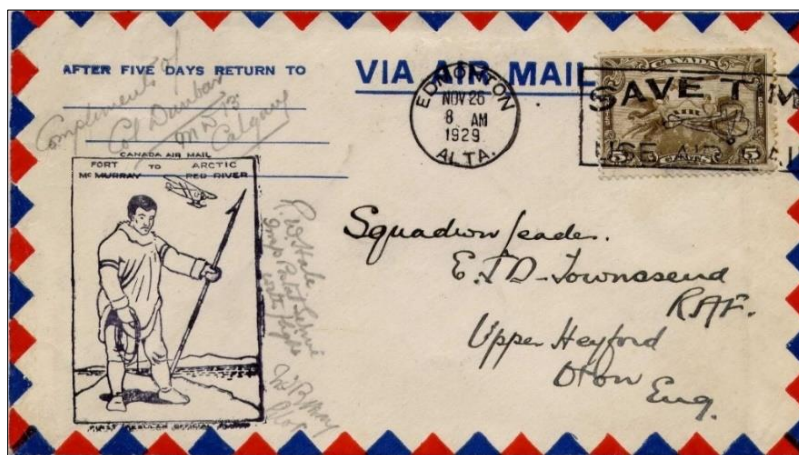
¹⁹³⁰
 Wop May's plane
 landed a half mile
 north of Hackett
 March 1930 [actually
 1929]
 Mabel Rowat
 Julius Otto - I took
 the snap. The boy
 is Albert Keest
 It was a red-letter day
 at Hackett. The rest
 of the by-standers
 were local folks.

Gord Mallett

Cdn.airmail@gmail.com

A reported 125,000 covers were transported from Edmonton to Fort McMurray by rail in late November in advance of the inaugural flights made along the Mackenzie River water route of the Northwest Territory, made reference to above.

The cover immediately below was flown from Fort McMurray to Fort Chipewyan on the first or second day of the flights and on December 12 across the Northwest Territory border to Fort Smith. It received a DEC 13 Fort Smith postmark and was carried southbound one day later aboard CF-AKI, the Bellanca flown by Wop May, arriving at Fort McMurray on December 15.



Above, this cover was postmarked EDMONTON NOV 26 1929. Exactly one month later it was backstamped ARCTIC RED RIVER DEC 26 29 upon arrival at its philatelic destination. Postal Inspector Walter R. W. Hale accompanied May on the northern flights. His signature also appears on the two covers.

In 2000, Lockheed Vega CF-AAL's flight report log book (next page) was found to be in Calgary's Glenbow Archives, one of the items held in the May Collection, [M829]. There, in front of me, was a record of the flight pictured in my dad's photos!

Wop May's March 9 flight to the field just north of Hackett was CF-AAL's third-only commercial trip, the first being a February 16 medical emergency flight to Westlock,

an Alberta farm community. The trip from Edmonton to Hackett is recorded in his report as, "140 miles flown" to "S.E. (southeast) Stettler," in "1 hour 30 min."

PILOTS NAME		CLASSIFICATION		LICENSE NUMBER			
W.R. May							
ADDRESS			CITY		STATE		
COPYRIGHT 1928 RICHFIELD OIL CO. OF CALIFORNIA							
PILOTS LOG			FORM A-8				
DATE	REG. MARK	TYPE OF PLANE	NO. OF FLIGHTS	MILES FLOWN	NATURE OF FLIGHTS	DURATION IN MINUTES	CERTIFIED BY
BROUGHT FORWARD				350	Testing	3.25	W.R.M.
Feb 2	1929			50	Burbank Metropolitan	30	W.R.M.
" 3				10	Burbank National Guard	15	W.R.M.
" 3				20	Patrol Guard Western Air Expt	3.0	W.R.M.
" 3				25	Pro & Pro Wash.	15	W.R.M.
" 4				60	Western Air Expt. March Falls	45	W.R.M.
" 4				60	March Falls Western Air Expt	45	W.R.M.
" 5				275	Western Air Expt. Las Vegas	2.30	W.R.M.
" 5				425	Las Vegas Salt Lake City	4.00	W.R.M.
" 6				650	Salt Lake Great Falls	6.00	W.R.M.
" 7				375	Great Falls Calgary	4.30	W.R.M.
" 7				50	Pro Adams Smith & May	30	W.R.M.
" 10				200	Pro & Pro Horner Pro May	2.10	W.R.M.
" 16				55	Edmonton Westlock	35	W.R.M.
" 16				15	Westlock. On + Home 15 Miles SW.	20	W.R.M.
" 16				15	SW. Westlock W. H. H.	15	W.R.M.
Feb 16			1	50	Westlock Edmonton	15	W.R.M.
" 24			1	25	Tex. Passenger C. Buben	15	W.R.M.
Mar 5			2	100	4 Prairie Prov. 4 Prae grat.	60	W.R.M.
" 7			1	300	" " Grande Prairie 1929	3 hr 20m	W.R.M.
" 7			1	300	" " Edmonton 1929	2 hr 10m	W.R.M.
" 9			1	140	" " S.E. Stettler 1929	1 hr 30m	W.R.M.
" 9			1	25	2 Prae Pt. 2 grat.	15m	W.R.M.
" 9			1	115	2 Prae Pt. Edmonton 1929	1 hr	W.R.M.
" 10			31	275	27 Pt. Passenger	2:45	W.R.M.
" 13			2	400	Edmonton 1 Prae 3 Prae 2 Prae + Grande Prae	4.70	W.R.M.
" 13			1	300	Grande Prairie 3 Prae Edmonton	2.45	W.R.M.
" 14			4	125	Edmonton taking the 10:00 Big Lake	1.15	W.R.M.
" 15			1	180	" Youngstown	1.30	W.R.M.
" 15			1	180	Youngstown 175 ⁰⁰ Edmonton	2.00	W.R.M.
CARRIED FORWARD						53 35	

It is of interest to note that May's first flights aboard CF-AAL were in the Burbank, California area. He and fellow-pilot Vic Horner had travelled by train to California to take delivery of the Lockheed Vega at Howard Hughes' Lockheed Manufacturing Company. While there, they took part in a number of the flying scenes in Hughes' WW I movie *Hells Angels*, one of the first talking pictures. Scenes featured aircraft engaged in simulated dogfights. Several pilots died in the shooting of those scenes. May's flight back to Edmonton from the USA was made via Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Great Falls and Calgary. [Note the CF-AAL log book entries for February 5-7.]

In June 1992 the western chapter of the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society was set up during the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada's convention being held in Alberta. Several airmail enthusiasts in the province became members, including Wop May's son Denny and myself.

Over the years that followed, he was generous in providing details of the excursions his dad and other pilots made into Canada's northcountry. As well, a number of aerophilatelic covers from the prairie region and the Mackenzie River district were exchanged between us. The *Early Canadian Air Mail* studies outlined below were possible, in large part, by incorporating material he provided.

Of particular assistance was a photograph album prepared by Postal Inspector Hale that he had initially passed on to Wop May and which Denny gave me to assist in my research and for permanent safekeeping. This large size 56-page album holds more than 130 photos of varying size, complete with detailed captions.

EARLY CANADIAN AIR MAIL

Mackenzie River District Air Mail Service Memorabilia: —a collection of photos with explanatory captions from an album titled *Mackenzie River District Air Mail Service* created in **the 1930s** by District Postal Superintendent Major R. W. (Walter) Hale, detailing his inaugural mail flights throughout the Mackenzie River corridor and Great Slave/Great Bear Lakes region. [In addition to hi-res scans of the 55 intact album pages and the 130-plus individual photos, this 285-item file displays scans of Hale/pilot-signed covers, maps and related items.]



Mackenzie River District Flying Postal Inspector: —a detailed biography of Western Northwest Territories District Postal Superintendent, Major R. W. (Walter) Hale **1889-1950**. Running away from home to join the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve—jumping ship in a foreign port—receiving the Military Cross for “conspicuous gallantry” in the Great War—carrying mail by dog team to remote northern Canadian settlements and flying with bush pilots on mail runs to outposts in oft-times hazardous weather are but a few of the life experiences of this adventurous British émigré! Hale played a major role overseeing the inauguration of air mail delivery throughout the Great Slave/Great Bear Lakes region and Mackenzie River corridor as well as in British Columbia and Alberta. [90 pages, 27 000 words, Hale/pilot-signed covers, aviation-related monographs, maps, related memorabilia, 100 pictorials] **



Mackenzie River District "Pilot Since Killed": —a study of major events in the flying career of Paul B. “Paddy” Calder. This former WW I pilot was appointed to the staff of Western Canada Airways in **1928** and flew with the company as well as its successor, Canadian Airways, until his death at age 33 in an aircraft accident near Great Bear Lake, NWT in 1933. Two of the rivers in Canada's North Country are named in his honour. [16 pages, 4 000 words, 10 flight covers]



Katherine Stinson's Flights in Canada: —an investigation of the aviatrix's exhibition flying at Canadian fairs during the **latter three summers of World War I**. Special attention is paid to her **July 9 1918** Calgary to Edmonton flight, the first time in Western Canada mail had been transported by air and first-ever flight between major western urban centres. Known covers from the flight are examined. [135 pages, 30 000 words, vintage Canadian photos and picture postcards, the 24 known covers, related memorabilia, 125 pictorials, © 1109209] **



Many of the photos were taken at the time of December 1929's inaugural flights. On the introductory page, Hale acknowledges assistance provided by several of his friends and associates: "To supplement my pictures and to make this album complete I am indebted to those well-known men of the North, C. H. (Punch) Dickins, District Superintendent, Canadian Airways; W. R. (Wop) May, Chief Pilot, Canadian Airways; ..."

The fourth study listed above details the flights that Katherine Stinson performed at Canadian fairs during the latter three summers of the Great War. Denny shared recollections his father told him of her and of her correspondence to "Captain May" from Paris. She had sailed overseas late in the war to drive a Red Cross ambulance.

On July 9 2006, a Calgary→Edmonton re-enactment flight was made in conjunction with the unveiling of a replica of the aviatrix's Curtiss biplane at the Alberta Aviation Museum. Exactly twelve years later, a flight (again involving carriage of 259 covers) commemorating her pioneering 1918 airmail delivery was made between the cities. Denny was actively involved in the planning and execution of both events.

The Wop May and Ivan Mallett March 9 1929 chance encounter came full circle when more than 75 years later an unplanned chat took place between two of their family members at a prairie airshow.



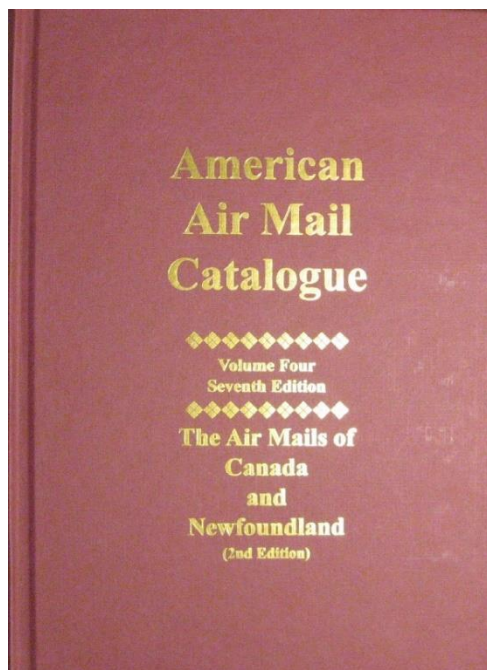
WW 1 aviator / bush pilot Wop May's son Denny alongside Ivan Mallett's grandson Chuck Mallett

The link below provides access to a notable aviation adventure film, *Blind Ambition*, a biography of Wop May. Part of the narrative was provided by Denny. Regrettably, he passed away on October 9 2021, the night before the film's première.

<https://albertaaviationmuseum.com/collection/featured-videos/>

THE AIR MAILS OF CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND

1st edition - 1997



THE AIR MAILS OF CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND

2nd edition – 2022

What's the difference?

Chris Hargreaves – AMCN2 Editor-in-chief

Readers' first impression of the second edition (AMCN2) will be that it contains coloured illustrations – and a lot more illustrations than in the first edition (AMCN1). This is particularly so in the Pioneer section where many classic covers are now shown. (See for example Figures 1 and 2.)

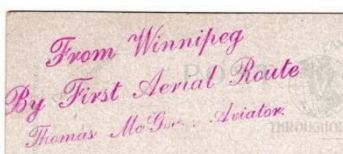


Figure 1

PF-4: the handstamp on postcards prepared to be flown at the Manitoba Air Circus in Winnipeg on May 10th 1912 is now shown.

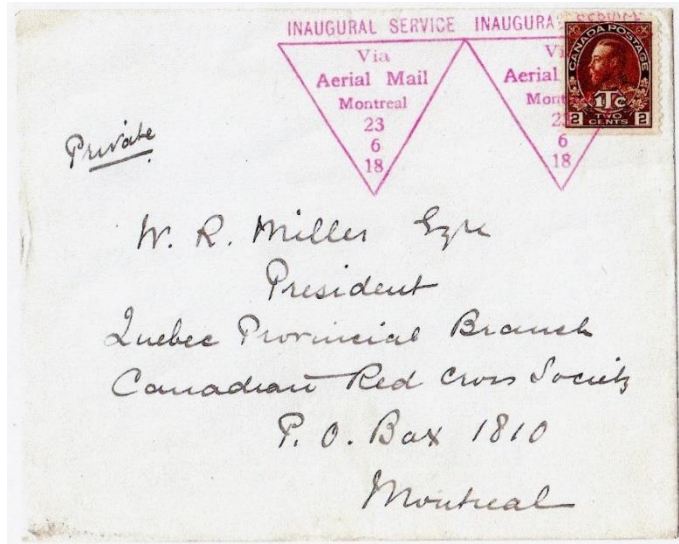


Figure 2

PF-6: a cover carried by Capt. Brian Peck on his June 24th 1918 flight from Montréal to Toronto – the First Airmail Flight in Canada - is shown with a clear cachet.

The catalogue also updates values on all the covers listed.

A LESS APPARENT BUT KEY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO EDITIONS IS THAT AMCN2 CONTAINS ALL THE ADDITIONS, REVISIONS AND CORRECTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN *THE CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIST* AND *THE AIRPOST JOURNAL* OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS!

A further very significant difference is that in Section 3 which lists covers with Semi-official stamps, the flights are now listed according to the company which flew the cover, not by the stamp used. This change was requested by many collectors, who found the old system difficult to use. However, reorganizing the listing required a new numbering system.

For example, the Elliot-Fairchild Air Service flight from Rolling Portage to Red Lake on April 15th 1926 carried covers franked with CL7, CL8 and CL9. (See Figure 3.) - The covers franked with CL7 were listed as CL7-2602 on page 48 of AMCN1, but those franked with CL8 were listed as CL8-2601 on the following page. Those franked with CL9 were listed as CL9-2600 and were also on page 49.

All these covers are now part of a single listing, and are numbered as ES 2615-CL7, ES 2615-CL8 and ES 2615-CL9.



Figure 3

CL7

CL8

CL9

There are illustrations of all the semi-official stamps in AMCN2, but not of varieties.

The Semi-official section also now lists a number of commercial covers, to emphasize the fact that the companies were functioning airlines, and usually operated for long after the first flight covers were produced. This also draws attention to the fact that commercially used covers with semi-official stamps are generally rare and some have high valuations. (For example Figure 4.)



Figure 4

WC2815-CL40: a registered cover from Wadhope to the T. Eaton Company in Winnipeg. The Western Canada Airways CL 40 stamp was cancelled in Lac du Bonnet with a LONG LAKE handstamp. (Valued at \$400.)

In addition to updating older flights and valuations, recent flights since 1997 have been added to the sections listing Airship, Government, Airline, Special Event, Balloon, Military and Anniversary flights, and also to the Crash Cover section.



Figure 5

Section 5 #202001 - cover prepared for an inaugural flight from Ottawa to Frankfurt on May 16th 2020. The green cachet states that the flight was canceled due to Covid 19

Although there have been no flight covers with Newfoundland stamps since 1949, there are several additions to the listings in that section, as it now includes flights to Newfoundland, not just flights in and from Newfoundland. – See for example Figure 6 which is now included in the catalogue.



Figure 6

NFF-63C: First commercial trans-Atlantic flight through Gander. – It has a large handstamp on back: This is to certify that this cover was carried on the first commercial flight from New York City (LaGuardia Field) U.S.A. October 23rd, 1945, to Gander (Newfoundland Airport) Newfoundland (arrival October 23, 1945) This mail did not enter international mail channels due to rate problems. The plane used was the “Flagship London” (landplane) of the AMERICAN AIRLINES SYSTEM.

As well as the changes to sections listing flight covers, there have been changes to many other sections. These include:

AIR MAIL PERFINs OF CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND

This section has been completely revised to match the latest, sixth edition of the *BNAPS Perfin Study Group Handbook*.

AIR LETTERS AND AEROGRAMMES

These sections have been expanded to include forerunners: Airgraphs, and the unstamped Forces Air Letter sheets introduced during World War II.

A.M.F. CANCELLATIONS

The section clarifies that in Canada A.M.F. stood for Air Mail Facility not Air Mail Field. It gives details of the extensive revision currently underway.

AIR MAIL RATES

Much more information has been found and published about Canadian air mail rates since AMCN1 was published in 1997. Unfortunately, the new publications sometimes contradict each other. AMCN2 is intended to be the definitive guide to Canadian air mail rates. - It includes a quick reference chart, followed by detailed tables of information, and links to David Crotty’s *Canada Air Mails Rates from 1925 2020* where information on rates since 1976 can be found

A section on Newfoundland air mail rates has also been added. – These were quite different to Canadian air mail rates, and were based on the destination country not regions.

COURTESY FLOWN MARKINGS

The listing of companies which carried mail by favour, and the markings they applied to these covers, has been greatly expanded.

ASTROPHILATELY IN CANADA

There is a listing of many additional covers from a variety of space related activities, to complement the original listing in AMCN1.

AIRCRAFT ON CANADIAN STAMPS

Identifies the aircraft shown on stamps up to the "Canadians in Flight" series of 2019.

AIR MAIL PILOT SIGNATURES



Figure 7

Who's signature is this?

Signed covers are a popular collectible, but the signatures are sometimes difficult to identify. AMCN2 gives an extensive list of pilots, the flights they made, and where an example of their signature can be found. Examples may be in AMCN2 on a page reproduced from Ian Morgan's *Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Airmails* published in 1931; on the internet in the collections of Gord Mallett, Denny May and Tom Reyman; or in back issues of the *BNAPS Air Mail Study Group Newsletter*. (Figure 7 is the signature of Herbert Hollick-Kenyon.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This completely revised section now includes websites for internet searches beyond Google, and a listing of classic books about Canadian airmail, as well as great new books that were published in the last 25 years but are now often forgotten.

AND AT THE END OF THE CATALOGUE IS A FINDING GUIDE.

In order to include all the new information without increasing the catalogue to an unwieldy weight and size, some of the information in AMCN1 was not repeated. There are references to such information throughout AMCN2, and to make sure that all purchasers of AMCN2 can access this information without having to also purchase a copy of AMCN1, a complete version of AMCN1 has been posted on the AAMS website at www.americanairmailociety.org/ It is in the Resources/ Publications section and is open to everyone.

All the information in AMCN2 came to 640 pages. The book is casebound, but was printed on a lighter weight of paper than AMCN1, so is a similar size and weight to the previous catalogue.

It is now eight years since I was asked to be Editor-in-chief for the second edition of *The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland*. The revision has taken much longer than anybody expected, but I'm very pleased with the finished publication.

Many thanks to everybody who contributed to the information in the catalogue!

I particularly want to acknowledge:

The Section Editors:

Barry Countryman - Airship Posts

David Crotty - Canadian Air Mail Rates, Newfoundland Air Mail Rates

David Ball - Astrophilately In Canada

Denny May* - Air Mail Pilot Signatures

Dick Mcintosh - Government Flights, Anniversaries, Canadian Forces Covers

Earle Covert - Aerograms, Canadian Forces Air Letter Sheets
Chris Hargreaves – Government Flights, Newfoundland Flights, Rates
Gord Mallett - Air Mail Pilot Signatures
Ken Sanford - Interrupted and Crash Covers
Steve Johnson - Canadian Semi-Official Stamps and Covers
Mike Street - Air Mail Facility Cancellations
Nino Chiovelli - Balloon Covers
Ron Miyanishi - Canadian Forces Covers
Ron Pazdzierski - Airmail Perfins
Ray Simrak - Pioneer Flight Covers, S.C.A.D.T.A., Semi-Officials
Tom Reyman - Air Mail Pilot Signatures
Tom Watkins - Semi-Officials, Covers with Courtesy Markings

The dealers who reviewed various sections and values before publication:

Chris Carmichael of Vance Auctions Ltd.
Erling van dam of E.S.J. van Dam Ltd.
Hugo Deshayé of Hugo Deshayé (Philatelist) Inc.
Stéphane Cloutier of Sparks Auctions;
Yohann Tanguay of Eastern Auctions Ltd.

For their additional help recently:

Alec Globe, Brian Wolfenden, Derek Rance,
Gary Tomasson, Howard Wunderlich, and Jon Johnson

David Ball the AAMS President,

and Vickie Canfield-Peters, the AAMS Publications Editor who put everything together.

Thank you all,

Chris Hargreaves

In order to make AMCN2 available at an appealing price to many collectors, the AAMS has set a price of \$50 US for AMCN2 + postage.

The Canadian Aerophilatelic Society is matching this price, and selling the catalogue for \$65 Canadian + \$10 postage to anywhere in Canada, and to collectors and libraries overseas that are interested in Canadian air mail. This is possible due to a generous donation we were given some years ago to promote and encourage Canadian air mail collecting.

To order a copy of AMCN2 for delivery by mail send your address and payment of \$75 by Interac e-Transfer to canadianairmail@gmail.com or by PayPal to hargreavescp@sympatico.ca or send a cheque payable to Chris Hargreaves to 4060 Bath Road, Kingston, Ontario K7M 4Y4

To pick up a copy in Victoria, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa or Kingston, email hargreavescp@sympatico.ca for more information.

In the USA, orders should be placed with the American Philatelic Society: <http://stamps.org>

INFORMATION WANTED

Patrick Durban is looking for articles and information on the use of 4-hole OHMS perfin air mails. If you can help, please contact Patrick at durbanostamps@gmail.com

DENNY MAY'S FIRST FLIGHT COVER COLLECTION.

Philip Wolf has purchased Denny May's First Flight Cover collection. The collection includes better semi-official airmail, signed covers, covers addressed to Wop May, etc.

Philip will be selling the collection on eBay in the near future, and has offered to donate 3% of the purchase price of any cover bought by a BNAPS member to BNAPS.

For more information contact Philip at SELSTAMP@TELUS.NET or at
SELECT STAMPS & COVERS, 825 8 AVE SW, ROOM 107B, CALGARY, ALBERTA T2P 2T3
403-264-1551

SPARKS AUCTIONS

The next sale by Sparks Auctions will be:

January 21, 2023 - The Athena Collection, Part 1

February 11, 2023 - The Athena Collection, Part 2

The Athena Collection of Exceptional Quality Mint and Used Canada. Sparks Auctions is proud to have been chosen to sell this remarkable collection, being sold in two parts. It includes: regularly issued Canadian stamps up to the 1940s, including a mint, never-hinged #3, the 12d black Victoria; imperforate pairs, blocks and multiples; plate proof singles, pairs and blocks; as well as die proofs, progressive proofs, varieties and more. The quality present is consistently very strong, as the owner bought only the best from the most reputable sources, with cost not being an impediment. Please contact us to request a catalogue for this very exciting sale!

For more information on this and future sales contact Sparks Auctions at sparks-auctions.com or 1770 Woodward Drive, Suite 101, Ottawa ON K2C 0P8 Tel. (613) 567-3336

The AMSG is operating on a cyber-only basis, so no membership dues are required. - Anybody who would like to be added to the AMSG email/membership list and receive future issues of *The Pilot's Log*, should just send their email and postal address to me at hargreavescp@sympatico.ca

Chris Hargreaves, AMSG Chair/Editor