



BNAPS
AIR MAIL
STUDY
GROUP

BNAPLEX 2000

VOLUME 8 - NUMBER 1

APRIL 2000

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

We have completed another successful year in our Study Group activities, culminating in the Annual Meeting at Vernon. I'd like to mention one piece of unfinished business from Vernon and that is the attendance. Those who signed in were: Fred and Dorothy Dietz, Bill Topping, John Wynns, Jim Longbourne, George Dresser, Bill Robinson and Malcolm Jones. There were a couple of others who were doubling up on meetings and who did not sign in.

This of course leads us to the matter of **BNAPLEX 2000** ! I believe we should carry on the tradition of having a one frame exhibit on our topic for all to see. Is there anyone out there who would volunteer to put together 16 pages for such a frame ? If so please drop me a line and let us work out the details. If you only have 8 pages, then perhaps we can get another 8 from someone else.

We will also have a Study Group meeting and I will chair. Bas Burrell will be busy with the events and running of the BNAPEX 2000 as his Group is the sponsor.

I'd also like to hear from any of you who feel that there are other subjects we should be covering. I have made a few suggestions to Bas and they will be along.

In the meantime, Good Collecting,

Ed Christman

RECAP ON BOGUS CANADIAN AIRWAYS STAMP:

After the first report on the bogus stamps was published in April 1999 some more replies came in. Of 26 respondents 20 had none of the "Red Tree" variety. 6 collectors had 13 stamps which were in two blocks of 4 and the rest in singles. It would seem that we have 65% or 16% depending on the assumed total of 20 each or 20 blocks of four.



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From the December 1999 issue of the Airpost Journal of AAMS.

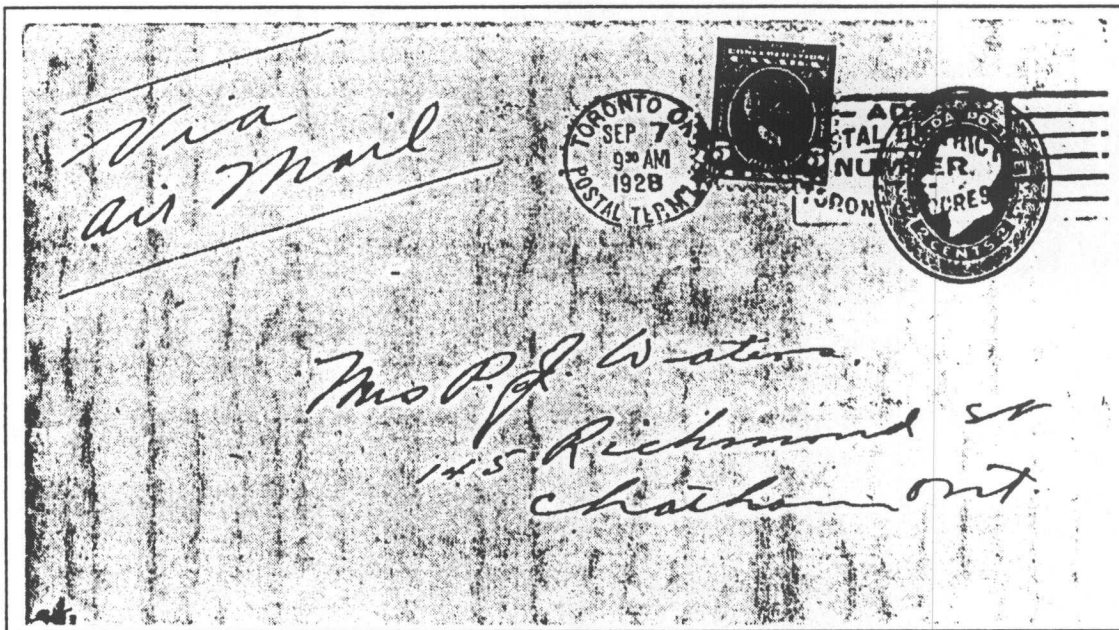
Unsolved Mysteries of Canadian Airmail

Murray Heifetz

In the study of any country, there are generally items that turn up which seem to defy attempts at proper analysis. Canada is no different and there are a number of items which, to date, remain as unsolved mysteries. I am illustrating one of these from my own collection. It has been frustrating me for some time.

Mysterious Airmail Service

The cover shown is posted at Toronto September 7, 1928. It is addressed to Chatham, about 180 miles away and halfway between London and Windsor. The writer has inscribed "Via Air Mail." In addition, franking is 7¢, presumably because the sender thought 2¢ was needed for normal postage and 5¢ for additional airmail. We do not know who the sender was, but the general appearance of the cover makes it almost certain that this was genuine personal mail and not philatelic.



At this time there was no regular airmail service between Toronto and Windsor or to any other city in this general area. It started only in July 1929. There was no airmail service of any type to Chatham. The postage rate was just a guess by the sender. The established airmail rate of 5¢ did not begin until September 1928 and even then it did not require the additional 2¢. It would appear that the sender had received some information which lead him (or her) to believe that there would be an airmail service on this route and that the extra 5¢ postage would have to be paid. So far, no information on this possible proposed service has been discovered. Can anyone shed any light on this cover? Is there other similar mail around?

B. C. AIRWAYS MAJOR VARIETY

Trelle A. Morrow

We have had numerous references in our Study Group Bulletin regarding the B. C. Airways major variety which is the dot at the tail of the 5, and which is on stamp number 4 in the U. L. pane of stamps. Additional comment, possibly a final comment, is likely in order. I agree with Mike Painter who suggest that this major variety is the only one worth cataloguing since there are many minor varieties to be found over the panes. In a letter from Ed Richardson, September 11, 1962, the same opinion was introduced, "there are a number of minor varieties, but none of any importance"... It will be interesting to hear of the response to Jim Brown's letter to Unitrade.

Some history on the recording of this major variety may be of interest at this time. Commencing in 1973 a BNAPS Airmail Study Group was formed, of which I was the chair and over a period of time up to 1977 we issued bulletins dealing with the various stamp-issuing Companies, 1924 to 1932. Information at that time was furnished by such stalwarts in the collecting field as Richardson, Pelletier, Rosenblatt, Banner and others. Bulletins were circulated to about 15 or so collectors, among which was Longworth-Dames and much of the information in his publication on Semi-Official Airmails can be found in our earlier Study Group Notes. Longworth-Dames kindly gave me credit for some work I had done on Patricia Airways and Exploration Ltd.

About 25 years ago I acquired an U. L. pane of B. C. Airways stamps and the major variety is of course shown on stamp number 4. This is the source of some photographs I have circulated regarding this variety. This particular pane came from the Clark collection and he had acquired the pane from F. E. Eaton in Vancouver shortly after W. W. II. So, with this archival material on hand I was able to illustrate this major variety to our Study Group in 1974 and I expect this is where Longworth-Dames derived his information on the issue. To date I have heard of no other U. L. panes of the stamp issue, however there is the possibility that others do exist.

FLIGHT 3011 COVERS TO ENGLAND:

A collector in South Africa asked us for advice on a group of eight legs of this flight, all addressed to an English dealer. Two of them are illustrated on the next page so that you may see what we are talking about.

I sent the covers to Trelle Morrow for a look see and here is his reply. I pass it on as I think we will all be interested in seeing the confusion caused in some circles, let alone philately.

Interesting bunch of covers you have there. The Postage Due is of interest, as flight covers they are not outstanding.

It appears that the Postmaster in Canada assumed that the 2¢ letter rate was required in addition to any airmail fee. That's why the endorsement says 4¢ Due. It is double deficiency. The other special services such as registration and special delivery did require the 2¢ letter rate plus the special service fee, but the special service of airmail did not require the letter rate in addition to the airmail stamp. It was all-inclusive.

So, I suggest the covers went surface to Britain, after some limited flight airmail travel in Canada. The British went along with the Canadian endorsement and put their 2 d on the covers so it would get collected in Britain. The covers were sent back to the collector somehow, and over-charge was refunded. Or he may have got it back in Britain, I don't know. In any case the covers would look better if they did not have "Surcharge refunded" added to them. Yes, it appears to be an illegitimate postage due charge. The surface rate to Britain at the time was 2 cents, which was well covered by the 5 cents already paid.

It is odd that a Canadian Postmaster would get this screwed up in 1930, the 5¢ stamp had been out for a year and a half.

In checking through my rate schedules and dates of establishing service I note the following:

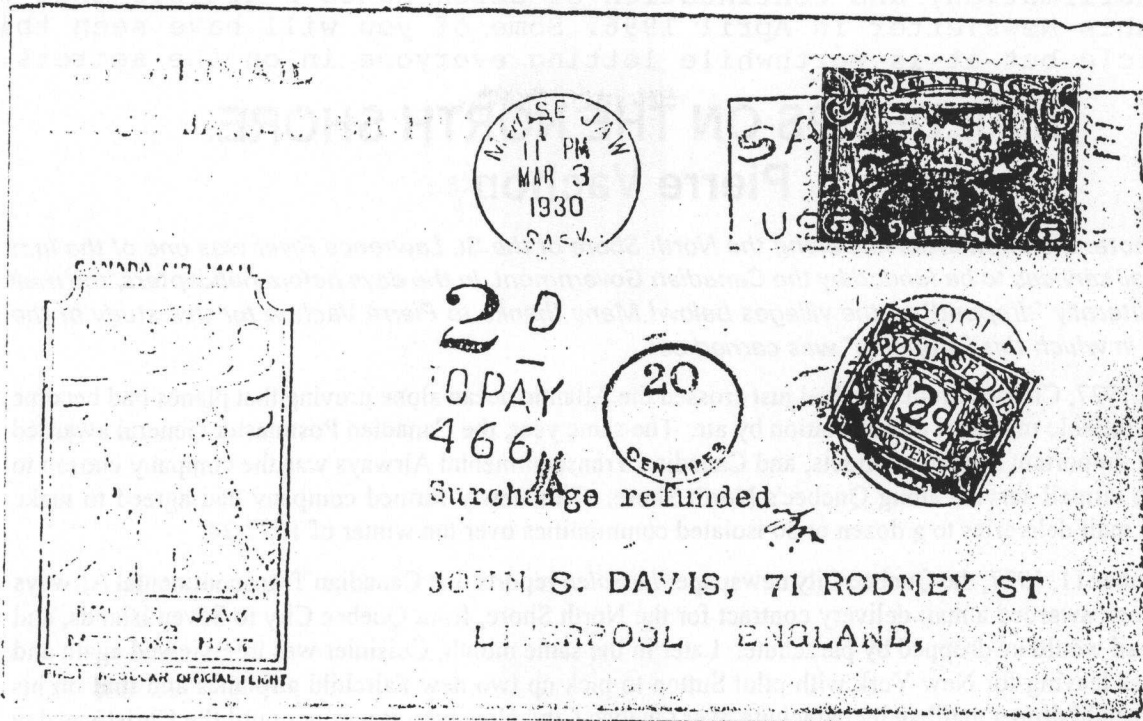
- 1924 Airmail service commenced to the U.S.
- 1928 Start of Canadian Domestic service.
- 1934 Airmail service commenced to Europe & Br. Colonies.

Anyway, that's my theory on your covers, incidently, the centime designation is the UPU standard even though it is in French! I don't know what it is to-day, but traditionally 5 centimes = 1 cent Canadian.

All the best,

Trelle M. *Trelle*

Flight 3011m, Moose Jaw to Medicine Hat



Flight 3011q, Saskatoon to Edmonton



Mail drops on the North Shore:

Chris Hargreaves was kind enough to remind me that in July 1999 he had published an article on the North Shore mail drops which was a confirmation, and continuation of Derek Rance's article that was in this Newsletter in April 1996. Some of you will have seen this article but it is worthwhile letting everyone in on the secrets.

MAILDROPS ON THE NORTH SHORE.

Pierre Vachon

Editor's note: the air mail service along the North Shore of the St. Lawrence River was one of the first air mail services to be funded by the Canadian Government. In the days before helicopters, the mail was literally "dropped" to the villages below! Many thanks to Pierre Vachon for this study of the ways in which this "dropping" was carried out.

In May of 1927, Charles Lindbergh had just crossed the Atlantic ocean alone proving that planes had become a safe and reliable means of transportation by air. The same year, the Canadian Postmaster General awarded a series of important airmail contracts, and Canadian Transcontinental Airways was the company chosen to inaugurate airmail service along Quebec's North Shore. This newly formed company had agreed to make thirty-two mail deliveries to a dozen or so isolated communities over the winter of 1927-28.

On November 11, 1927, the Quebec City newspaper *Le Soleil* reports that Canadian Transcontinental Airways had just been awarded a mail delivery contract for the North Shore, from Quebec City to Seven Islands, and that the mail would be dropped by parachute. Later in the same month, Cuisinier was interviewed again and said he was leaving for New York with pilot Sutton to pick up two new Fairchild airplanes and that on his return he would drop a mailbag by parachute over Quebec City. However, it was not until the Christmas day of 1927 that Dr. Louis Cuisinier, Canadian Transcontinental's general manager, took off from Quebec City for Seven Islands to fly the first North Shore mail run. Captain Charles Sutton was the pilot at the controls and they flew in a single-engine Fairchild cabin monoplane powered by a Pratt & Whitney air-cooled radial engine that was mounted on floats.

My father, Romeo Vachon is first reported by the Quebec City *Le Soleil* newspaper as being on the scene when, on February 8, 1928, he and his flight engineer Thibeault complete the first round trip distributing mail on the same day. Mailbags dropped by Charles Sutton and Louis Cuisinier on Christmas Day, 1927 were equipped with parachutes according to newspaper accounts of the times. However, this practice appears not to have continued for very long as a photograph published in *Le Soleil* on March 23, 1928, shows a Fairchild dropping a mail bag by itself in a flight over Clark City. The caption under the photo is interesting in that it says Clark City - located three hundred miles from the provincial capital - had been relying until then on dog teams for mail deliveries effected every three to four weeks. Since that December, the city had been most fortunate to get its mail only four and one half hours after the plane's departure from Quebec City.

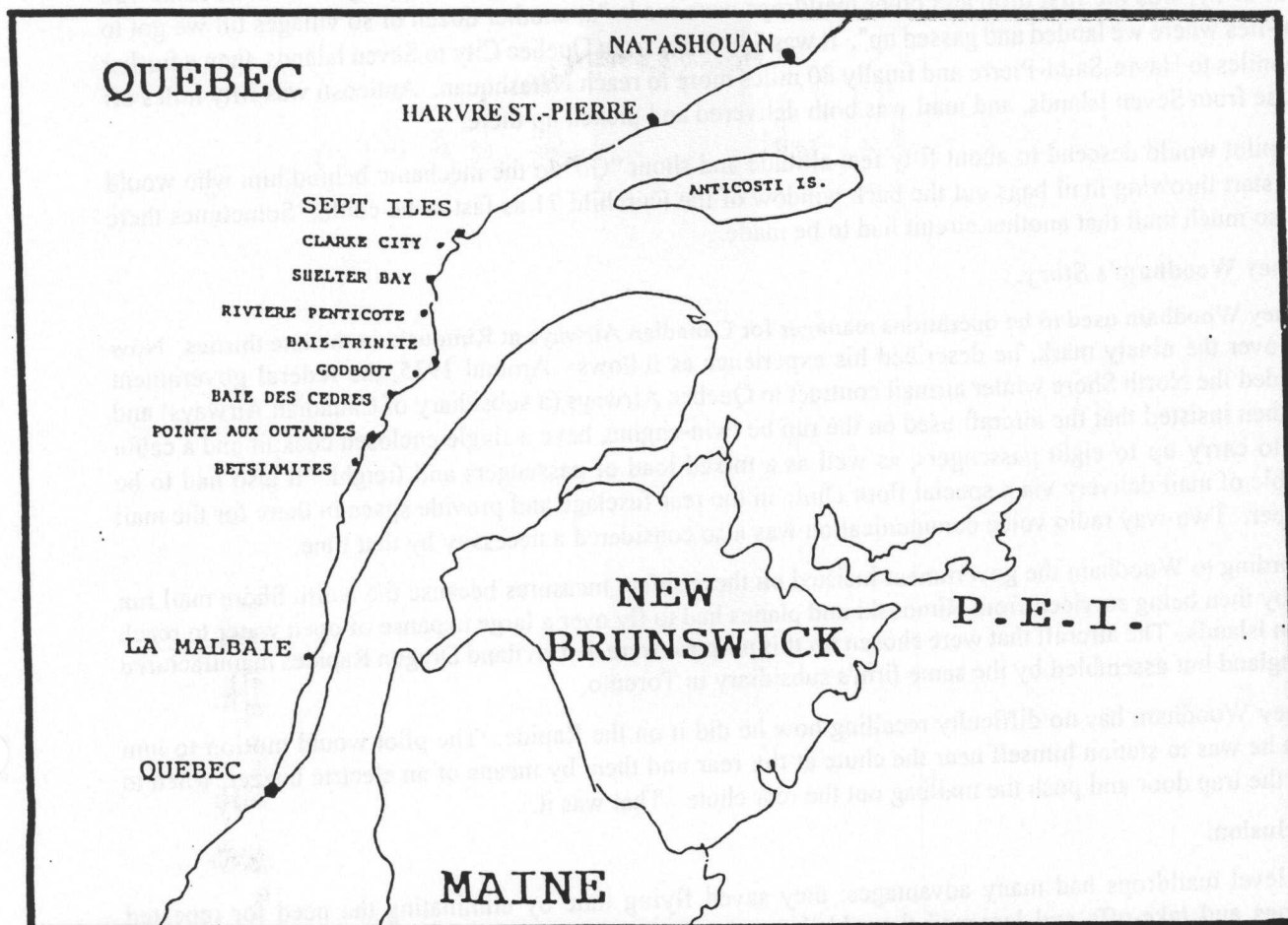
Donat Vachon's Account.

As indicated earlier, North Shore mail runs were made by a pilot and his flight engineer. My uncle Donat Vachon, now ninety-six, was one of those who flew with my father, Romeo Vachon, between 1928 and 1930. He recently told of this experience to author Nicole Dorion in the following manner: when it came the time for the drop, his brother Romeo, piloting the plane, would reach back and open the rear window so that Donat could throw the bags out into the airstream by hand. They used the rear window so there would be no chance for the bag to hit the wing strut and damage the plane.

Babe Woollett's Description.

Babe Woollett, who died recently, described for me in greater detail the mail-dropping technique he used on the North Shore mail run in 1929 in a telephone call a couple of years ago this way: each mailbag was first rolled tightly against itself and made fast with the bag's own drawstrings. Then, the mailbags were placed in the cabin in reverse order to the anticipated sequence of the drop: Bersimis first and Seven Islands last. Once a week they would go further to Harvre St.-Pierre and Anticosti. Each pilot had his mail-dropper with him and his was usually a man named Romeo Belanger, a person full of joie-de-vivre, whom he had nicknamed "Bellhanger".

On arrival over a designated community, Woollett would circle the settlement to alert the people of his presence and then make a low level practice pass at the location marked with flags beforehand as the spot where they wanted the mail to land. On the second run, the pilot would tell the mail dropper when to open the window and then when to start to push the bags out against the air stream.



Bibby's Narrative.

R.H. (Dick) Bibby is quoted on his North Shore maildrop experience at some length by K.M. Molson in his book titled "Canadian Airways Limited: Pioneering in Canadian Transport".

At the point when Bibby tells his story, probably around 1929-30, Lac-Sainte-Agnes had been set aside in favour of Quebec's Saint-Louis airport, the same airfield is often referred to in French as "Bois Gomin". Fairchild 71's then in use were mounted on skis and a pilot was assisted by an engineer. Some twelve hundred pounds of mails were carried and landings were not possible at any of the settlements - Bersimis, Ontarides Falls, Pentecost, Franklin, Trinidad Bay, Godbout, Shelter Bay - until reaching Seven Islands. A visit to Clarke City was then made separately. The next day, Anticosti and points as far as Harvre St.-Pierre were covered.

Bibby's colourful account "includes a description of how the engineer would pare down his finger nails the previous evening to avoid having to loose them as the slipstream would tear the mailbag away from his hands".

Bill Irvine's Account.

Irvine flew the North Shore mail run from 1930 until 1934 with "one hundred per cent delivery". He recounts in an article published in the July issue of *Wings*, 1978, how he would get up at four in the morning and take a truck to the old St.Louis airport in Quebec City and check on any weather reports obtained over the single line telegraph wire. The mail service was done twice weekly and, in the event of really bad weather reports, the flights were postponed until the next day.

MAILDROPS ON THE NORTH SHORE by Pierre Vachon continued:

There would be about 1,000 lb. first class mail to be loaded in sequence for dropping. Bersimis, some 150 miles away, was the first drop and other maildrops were made "at another dozen or so villages till we got to Sept-Iles where we landed and gassed up". It was 330 miles from Quebec City to Seven Islands, then a further 125 miles to Havre-Saint-Pierre and finally 80 miles more to reach Natashquan. Anticosti was fifty miles off course from Seven Islands, and mail was both delivered and picked up there.

The pilot would descend to about fifty feet altitude and shout "Go" to the mechanic behind him who would then start throwing mail bags out the back window of the Fairchild 71 as fast as he could. Sometimes there was so much mail that another circuit had to be made.

Sydney Woodham's Story.

Sydney Woodham used to be operations manager for Canadian Airways at Rimouski in the late thirties. Now also over the ninety mark, he described his experience as follows: Around 1935, the federal government awarded the North Shore winter airmail contract to Quebec Airways (a subsidiary of Canadian Airways) and had then insisted that the aircraft used on the run be twin-engine, have a single enclosed cockpit and a cabin able to carry up to eight passengers, as well as a mixed load of passengers and freight. It also had to be capable of mail delivery via a special floor chute in the rear fuselage and provide space in there for the mail dropper. Two-way radio voice communication was also considered a necessity by that time.

According to Woodham the government insisted on these safety measures because the North Shore mail run was by then being serviced from Rimouski and planes had to fly over a large expanse of open water to reach Seven Islands. The aircraft that were chosen for this purpose were de Havilland Dragon Rapides manufactured in England but assembled by the same firm's subsidiary in Toronto.

Sydney Woodham has no difficulty recalling how he did it on the Rapide. The pilot would motion to him when he was to station himself near the chute at the rear and then, by means of an electric buzzer, when to open the trap door and push the mailbag out the rear chute. That was it.

Conclusion.

Low level maildrops had many advantages: they saved flying time by eliminating the need for repeated landings and take-offs and lessened the added wear and tear on engines and airframes that these same procedures entailed; also, these maneuvers are always a little risky in rugged terrain like the North Shore and these were reduced to a minimum. All of these are important factors when operating in remote areas with no proper landing fields, poor communications and absence of any support facilities in the event of an emergency. However, their principal drawback was that they did not allow mail originating there to be taken on board and this had to be transported in the traditional manner to a pick-up point, like Seven Islands.

After my father joined Canadian Transcontinental Airways, he soon replaced Dr. Cuisinier as manager and made a number of changes in operations to improve safety and reliability of service including the installation of on-board radio for weather notices and the construction of landing fields at various points along the way. In 1938, after having been awarded the McKee Trophy, largely on account of this work, he left the position of Eastern Division Superintendent with Canadian Airways, the firm that had acquired Canadian Transcontinental in 1930, and joined newly formed Trans Canada Air Lines. Within a few years he had stopped flying altogether and turned his attention exclusively to the management of the air transportation business.

Editor's acknowledgments: thanks again Pierre!

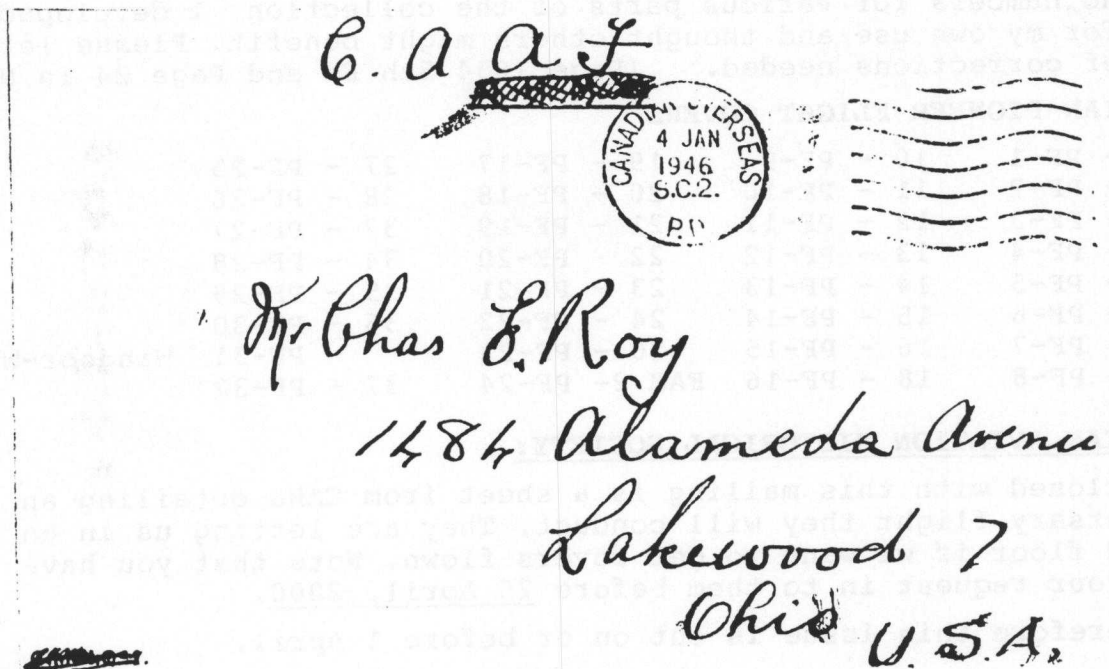
This article is reproduced from the June 1999 issue of The Canadian Aerophilatelist, quarterly newsletter of the CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIC SOCIETY. For more information on the CAS contact Chris Hargreaves, 4060 Bath Road, Kingston, Ontario K7M 4Y4.

MYSTERY COVER OF THE MONTH:

I am sure we have all been given covers because we collect Canadian air mail, by those who deal in small queens etc. I am not sure what I was given. Can anyone help ?

1. What is C.A.A.F. Perhaps Canadian Auxiliary Air Force.
This might be women flying planes on ferry missions.
2. What would be Canadian Overseas P.D. Postal Detachment ?
3. Was this "FREE" postage ? No sign of a stamp, but no note that says free. The free privilege was discontinued Dec 31, 1946.
4. Does S.C.@ shed any light on it ?
5. There is nothing on the back except a number K62177 Sapper M. Book. I presume a serial # and name.

I look forward to hearing when you have time.



Only marking on the back of cover.

K62177 Sapper M Book

The Air Mails of Canada;

As with any new listing of anything there are errors and omissions. I have come across a few and have shared them with Dick McIntosh.

1. Page 543: 5th Edition AAMS shows # 361 converts to 4904. This is an error and should read 4911.
2. Page 175: Flight 4205 has six legs listed. However, 4205 and 4205a should both have a listing that shows the covers were cancelled at the Moncton Air Mail Facility.
3. Page 178: The very first listing on this page, Washington to Montreal should also have an Air Mail Facility cancel listed from Washington. This was an oversight as it is listed under 71N1 on US route 71. (Page 968 in 5th Ed.)

I expect there will be more as we struggle to renumber our collections. If you come across any situations let me know so it may help us all.

Conversion list for new Airmails Catalog:

I have found that on occasion it is convenient to have a list of old and ^{new} numbers for various parts of the collection. I developed this list for my own use and thought others might benefit. Please let me know of corrections needed. (Page 1654 5th Ed and Page 24 in New.)

CANADIAN PIONEER FLIGHT COVERS

1 - PF-1	10 - PF-9	19 - PF-17	27 - PF-25
2 - PF-2	11 - PF-10	20 - PF-18	28 - PF-26
3 - PF-3	12 - PF-11	21 - PF-19	32 - PF-27
4 - PF-4	13 - PF-12	22 - PF-20	34 - PF-28
6 - PF-5	14 - PF-13	23 - PF-21	35 - PF-29
7 - PF-6	15 - PF-14	24 - PF-22	36 - PF-30
8 - PF-7	16 - PF-15	26 - PF-23	- PF-31 Windsor-Windsor
9 - PF-8	18 - PF-16	FAM 2- PF-24	37 - PF-32

CANADIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

Enclosed with this mailing is a sheet from CAHS detailing an Anniversary flight they will conduct. They are letting us in on the ground floor if we want to get covers flown. Note that you have to have your request in to them before 25 April, 2000.

Therefore this issue is out on or before 1 April.

INDEX FOR NEWSLETTER:

As editor I thought it might be a good idea to compile an index for the articles written in 20th Century Newsletters. I didn't realize what a big job this is and I have not got a handle on it.

However it will be along as I find much need for the thing.

EDITORIAL:

I wish to again express my deep appreciation to you all for the support of my efforts in this little enterprize. I especially wish to acknowledge the stamps and extra change you have donated to the Air Mail cause we all love. Some have not paid up for this year, 2000, but I take this moment to remind those of the fact.