



## BNAPS AIR MAIL STUDY GROUP

VOLUME 9 - NUMBER 2

AUGUST 2001

### CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

BNAPEX 2001 is well on its way to its date in Ottawa with the membership August 31st to September 2nd, 2001. Doug Lingard and the rest of the committee have a wonderful philatelic array planned for all of us. If you haven't made plans yet, at least get a hotel reservation.

The Air Mail Study Group will have a meeting to be chaired by George Dresser. I won't reveal details at this time, but it will be an interesting air mail experience.

I'd like to welcome the following new members to the Study Group, as reported to me by Bas: James Davidson, Scott Hansen, Richard McIntosh, Gordon Smith, Jesse Spector.

As always I stand ready to answer your comments and concerns relative to the Group and the newsletter if you don't care to send them to the editor.

Good Collecting,

*Ed Christman*

### DOT COM MELT DOWN ?

We reported in this Newsletter a number of issues ago about the wonderful things that the new technology would bring to the Postal Services worldwide. Now it appears that the services were a little bit ahead of the moves in the market and E-Stamp melted early.

**Tuesday, November 28, 2000**

## Moneyline

### Monday markets

### **E-Stamp to stop selling postage stamps**

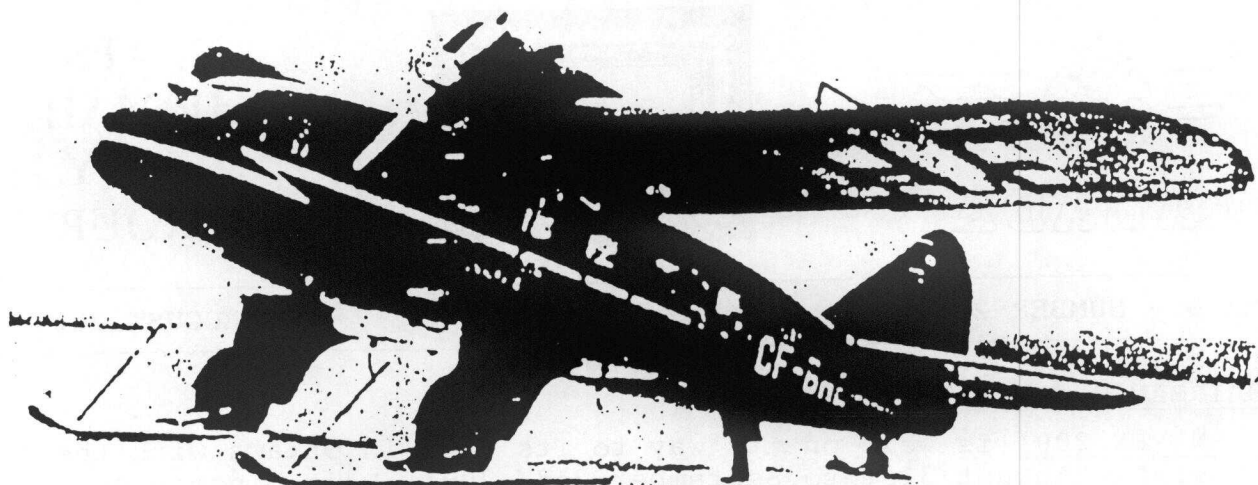
E-Stamp, which had hoped to build a business selling postage over the Internet, said Monday it was unable to sustain its high operating costs and would close that business and slash 36 jobs, close to a third of its staff. E-Stamp, which was the first company to get U.S. Postal Service approval to sell postage over the Internet, plans to remain in operation by helping other businesses order supplies over the Internet.

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CHAIRMAN  
Ed Christman, Jr.  
5419 Jason Street  
Houston, Texas  
77096 USA

SECRETARY/TREASURER  
Basil S. Burrell  
857 Pembridge Drive  
Lake Forest, Illinois  
60045-4202 USA



The second Fairchild 45-80 Sekani, ready for its delivery flight to Edmonton. .

#### STEAMER AND SESQUIPLANE

by J. Colin Campbell

The sternwheeler, S.S. Distributor, was well known in the Northwest Territories during the years 1920 to 1946. She is shown on the stamps at Fort Wrigley on the Mackenzie River where she served the Hudson's Bay Company.

The sesquiplane (wheels, floats, and skis), the main focus of this article, is thought to be a Fairchild Sekoni which first flew on August 24th, 1937. The stamp (C6) was first issued June 15th, 1938.

The Sekoni, of which only two were built, took its name from an Indian Tribe living around the headwaters of the Peace and Laird rivers in northwest British Columbia. The name means, "dwellers on the rocks".

The Fairchild 45-80 Sekoni was powered by two Pratt and Whitney 400 horsepower Wasp Jr. engines and had accommodation for 12 passengers while cruising at 171 mph. The stub lower wings, an identifying feature housed the fuel tanks. The second aircraft, CF-BHE, was flown to Edmonton, Alberta on delivery but was not accepted and returned to the factory at Longueuil, Quebec.

Further development was stopped and both aircraft were scrapped.

Canada's airmail and special delivery stamps are a most interesting group to collect. The aircraft on the other airmail stamps are quite easy to identify.

Bibliography: Canadian Aircraft Since 1909 by K.M. Molson & H.A. Taylor. First published in 1982 by Canada's Wing, Inc., Box 393 Stittsville, Ontario K0A 3G0.



Blackout cancels.

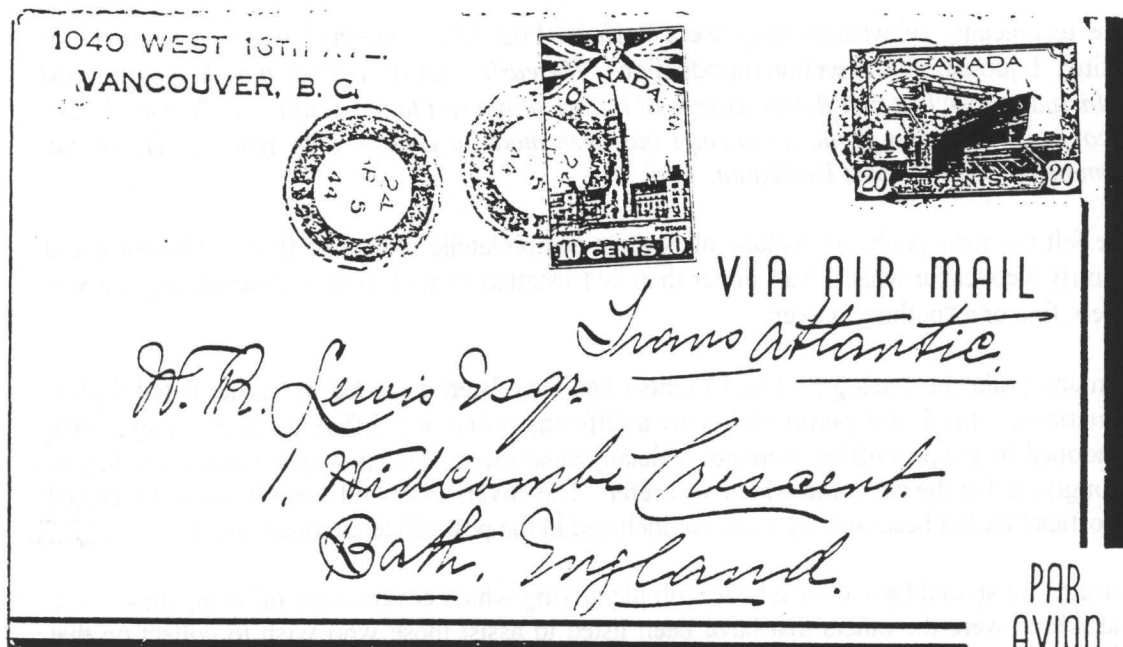
John Wynns sent in a copy of his Vancouver Air Mail cover with blackout cancel and return address. It was not censored and has no backstamps.

Were blackouts not censored if going to the empire ?

Was mail to the empire not censored at all ?

Were blackouts used only on mail going out of Canada ?

Was the Post Office wrong to allow address to show ? If not, WHO ?



Will some "Blackout" specialist please give us a rundown on this one ?

GOLD MEDAL AWARD:

At New England's premier stamp show, 4-6 May, in Boxborough, Massachusetts, Fred Dietz was awarded a GOLD.

Fred's exhibit, "Canadian Semi-Official Airmail Carriers: 1924-34 and Precursors" won a well deserved recognition for his efforts to bring more attention and respect for what is surely one of the most interesting phases of philately. Congratulations to Fred, and perhaps we can get him to share his experiences with us at the meeting in Ottawa.

APS STAMPSHOW 2001:

The APS Stampshow for this year will be held Thursday to Sunday August 23rd to August 26th, 2001 in the Convention Center in Rosemont, Illinois. Rosemont is right next to O'Hare Field and Chicago's North-west side.

BNAPS will be holding a meeting at 1:00 PM in Room E. This notice is made in case any of you might happen to be in the area and could join us for the program. We'd love to have the company.

EDITORIAL REBUTTAL on our April 2001 criticism of 10 listings in "The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland".

In a letter from Dick McIntosh to Bas Burrell he said:

The basic premise we went on in preparing the new edition was that all covers that looked like significant flight covers should be listed. This leaves the interpretation of "significant" open to inconsistencies but we have tended, as you point out, to lean on the side of being inclusive.

The technicality of whether they were "official Post Office covers" was not required for listing. I quote from the section introduction *"The earlier AAMC listings have been expanded to include as well as first flights, covers of historical interest to the aviation collector. Where a cover is not a first flight, an attempt has been made to identify it by type e.g. Historical, Commemorative, Airport Dedication, et al."*

We felt the listings should include all known aerophilatelic covers so that a collector could identify a cover for what it was, rather than be frustrated by no listing and wondering if it was a new find or a "nothing" cover.

In many philatelic catalogues listed flights often have been preceded by earlier listed flights-sometimes official or experimental or by a different airline or a different route. Many, while condoned by the post office, were not officially announced. This is why we saw fit, rightly or wrongly, to list the covers to which you refer. The covers exist and were flown but received no official cachet because they were not included in the post office announcement.

Perhaps we should have done a better job identifying which covers were officially announced and which were the others that have been listed to assist those who wish to collect on that basis. Frankly, we did not have all the original post office announcements but tended to believe official legs got cachets. No cachet meant not many covers were prepared but obviously some were and do exist. We relied on the listings in earlier editions unless we had evidence to change. Of course, few official first flights occurred after the "all up" airmail policy was introduced.

Your criticism of the C3 first day listing is a valid one. We normally would not include first day covers because that information is easily available in other catalogues. C3 was listed because it was the only one with a large number of official issuing offices and collectors kept asking why they were seeing such a variety and which were "official". Listing a city not on the official list is indeed incorrect in this case and it will be dropped.

A rereading of the introduction to Section 5 can help all of us to understand the basis for inclusion. Dick acknowledges that items could have been clarified by labels like "Last Direct Flight (no cachet)" after [3101d], but which have not been applied to some of the flights questioned. Copies of 25 Post Office Announcements have been provided to Dick and will, I am sure, be a basis for future amendments.

One of the 10 points we now agree on: Victoria should not be included in the list of C-3 FDC's. [3207]. I'm not so sure we agree on 3207 inclusion at all.

## THE AIRPOST JOURNAL, MARCH 2000:

The following article from the APJ memorialized the failure of a much appreciated route because of the tight financial conditions of the time. It shows the experimental flights Dec 10, 1928 which are in the Catalog as 2853 (Old # 219). Inaugural Flights March 3, 1930 in the Catalog as 3011 (Old 235) and the Last Flights March 30, 1932 in the catalog as 3209. There is no old listing.

This answers a question in Volume 1 No 3 (August 1993) asking about such covers. They now have a place in the catalog.



Printed cachet lamenting the fate of Canadian Prairie Air Mail.

The second cover came my way by chance, as treasures often do. It was lotted in auction with the cover I really sought. This cover, flown to Edmonton on March 30, 1932, bears one of the most memorable (some will say objectionable) cachets I have seen. In one fell swoop, the cachet covers a complete history of one short-lived Canadian airmail experiment that lasted for two years. This experiment linked the prairie cities of Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton. It was part of a trans-Canada service planned in 1928. Public reaction to the closing down of this bold venture seems documented by the cartoon that dominates the cachet. For me, the cachet, with its intriguing rosters of pilots from key moments in the life of the service, shows us more history than we have a right to expect from any cover.

I would like to know more about this Canadian effort and a timely book find in an antiquarian book shop will help me do that. I refer to J. R. K. Main's *Voyageurs of the Air* (1967). The cover has made the book essential reading. I feel certain that the book can only heighten the cover's unusual appeal.

One cent (1¢) franking on Cherry Red Airlines covers.

In the December 2000 Newsletter Fred Dietz asked why a 1¢ stamp could pay for a FFC on Cherry Red Airlines, and why were they unsealed ?

In the April 2001 Newsletter Chris Hargreaves suggests this was a "Drop Letter Rate". This then brought the question, "Is this an Official Rate?"

We now have further word from Fred Dietz who illustrated his story with an unsealed Cherry Red Airlines 1¢ franking on a FFC.

RE, pg. 4. April 2001 Issue: 1c Franking on Cherry Red Airline Covers:

I liked Chris Hargreaves' suggestion that the one cent franking on Cherry Red Airlines unsealed covers may have been "drop rate" postage for flight covers that a pilot handed over to a postal facility for servicing and then picked them up again for further transit. That would be an efficient way to get a sack of flight covers quickly postmarked with just one stop at a station on the route. But on the other hand, it seemed unlikely that such a one-stop, in-and-out procedure would work at the Prince Albert Post Office. So I decided to research Canada's "drop letter rate" during the Semi-Official Air Mail period.

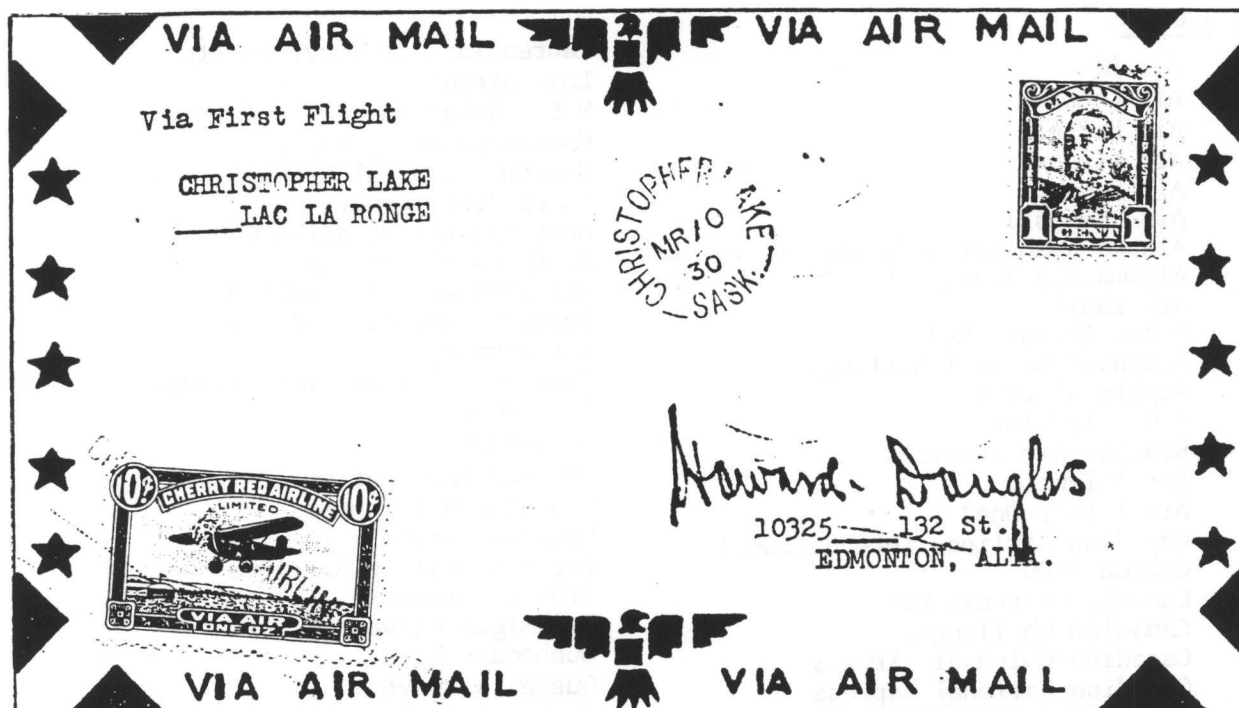
My source is Domestic Rate Table 1, Canada Domestic and International Postal Rates and Fees 1870-1999, Smith and Wawrukiewicz, Edition 1.0, The Press for Philately, March 1, 2000. It indicates that the rate for a carrier drop letter, first ounce, was 2 cts. throughout the Semi-Official Air Mail period. Ergo, Chris' interesting suggestion doesn't apply.

But Table 1 reveals that the rate for "Printed Matter" was 1ct./4ozs. during the period. I reviewed all of the one cent franked covers in my collection and, indeed, found one with "printed matter" typed on the front. It is the only cover with 1ct. Postage that is sealed. It is without content. All the other covers have never been sealed and the gum on their flaps is pristine. One has a "stiffener" inserted. The others are empty. Although Table 1 doesn't include a footnote that unsealed covers without correspondence could be mailed at the "printed matter" rate, it seems to me to be the most likely explanation for the 1ct. postage on the Cherry Red covers.

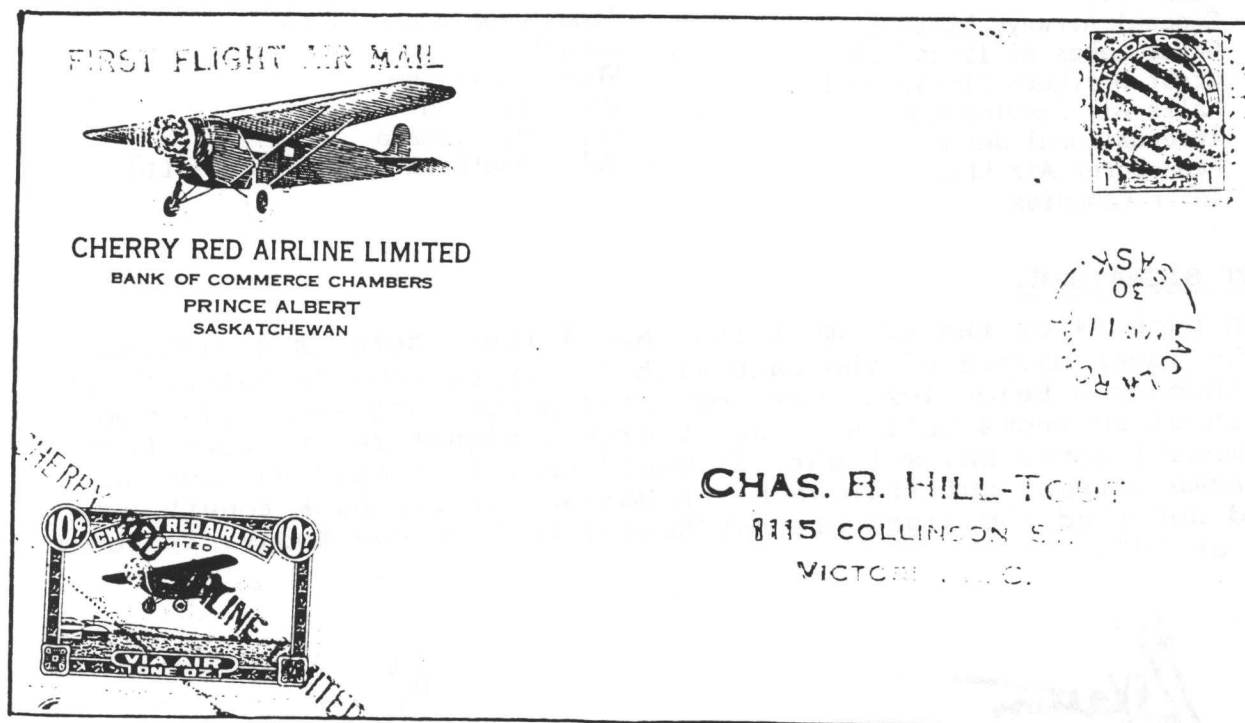
I also have a March 9 1928 Patricia Airways Limited cover, unsealed, with 1 ct. postage. I don't think the 1ct. rate only applied to Cherry Red mail.

The practice of according lower postage rates for unsealed mail is not without precedent. For many years in the U.S.A. we could mail unsealed Christmas and Easter cards at the third-class, single-piece rate rather than the higher first-class rate providing no correspondence was included. Presumably, the unsealed flap would permit inspection of the envelope's content to insure it contained only the card and not correspondence. The special rate category was in effect from 1911 until 1968.

CL46-3001a



CL46-3001b



CANADIAN AIR LINE LABELS:

IN THE 1993 EDITION OF THE AIR LABEL CATALOG ISSUED BY AALCC (AERONAUTICA & AIR LABEL COLLECTORS CLUB) THERE ARE LISTED THE AIR LINES THAT HAVE SUCH LABELS. THIS MAKES A GOOD REFERENCE FOR COLLECTORS WHEN THEY WANT TO KNOW IF THERE WAS SUCH A LINE.


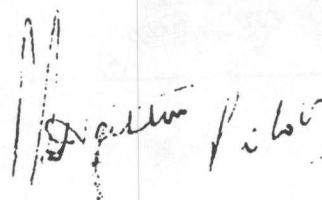
CANADA

Air BC  
Air Canada  
Air Fecteau  
Air Niagara  
Air Nova  
Air Rimouski  
Alaska-Washington Airways of B.C.Ltd.  
Algoma Air Transport  
Air Inuit  
Arrow Airways Ltd.  
Atlantic Central Airlines  
Austin Airways  
B.C. Air Lines  
Bradley Air Services  
Air Atlantic  
Air 1 (Air One)  
Canadian Airlines International  
Canada 3000  
Canadian Airways Ltd.  
Canadian Challenger  
Canadian Colonial Airways  
Canadian National Express  
Canadian Helicopters  
Canadair  
Canadian Pacific Air Lines (CP Air)  
Chinook Flying Service  
De Havilland - Canada  
Dominion Skyways  
Eastern Provincial Airways  
First Air  
General Airways Limited  
Great Lakes Airlines Ltd.  
Great Northern Airways Ltd.  
Halls Air Service Ltd  
International Jet Air  
Kenn Borek Air Ltd.  
Inter Canadian

Laurentian Air Services Ltd  
Lome Airways  
M & C Aviation  
Mackenzie Air Service  
Maritime Central Airways  
Inter City Airways  
Mont-Laurier Aviation Co.  
Northern Airways Co.  
Northern Airways Limited  
Northern Thunderbird Air  
Northern Wings  
Northwest Territories Airways  
Nordair Ltd.  
Nationair  
Odyssey International  
Okanagan Helicopters  
Ontario Worldair  
Pacific Western Airlines  
Prairie Airways  
Ptarmigan Airways  
Quebecair Ltee  
Quebec Airways  
Quebec Aviation  
Queen Charlotte Airlines  
Saskatchewan Government Airways  
Skylines Express Ltd.  
Starratt Airways  
Time Air  
Toronto Airways  
Transair  
Trans-Canada Air Lines  
Wardair  
Wheeler Airlines  
Wings Limited  
Worldways Canada  
Yukon Southern Air Transport Ltd.

PILOT SIGNATURE:

On page 44 of the December 1997 Newsletter there is a signature in the lower middle of the page with the typed name "H.Hatton". It is reproduced below left. Our new catalog does not show this name, but in stead shows Hatton, V.J. "Shorty". Signature is shown from a Rimouski cover below right. It would seem that this was one and the same person, but that when Ian Morgan put his book together he could not read the signature any better that we can today. It looks like an "H".

  
H. Hatton

**WELLS AIR HARBOUR:**

In the last issue of the Newsletter a question was asked about a "Hang-up" card from Wells Air Harbour, or Wells Air Transport, Ltd. (\$5 fare Vanc-Vict)

Jim Brown was kind enough to help with some history which is briefly recapped below.

From the late 1920's until the commencement of World War II, a seaplane base on the middle arm of the Fraser near Marpole was an important center of aviation activity. Generally known as Wells Air Harbour, after its early '30's operator, Hunter Wells, it was actually established in the late 1920's by Air Land Manufacturing Company, who erected a hangar and commenced operations with three Junkers monoplanes in 1929.

The pilots for Air Land Mfg. crashed their planes and killed themselves, thus causing the company to go out of business. The Air Land hangar was used briefly by Alaska-Washington Airways of B.C. (2955) and by Commercial Airways-both shortlived operations - then came into the possession of Wells Air Transport, operated by Hunter Wells.

Wells business was the repair of planes that had crashed or were otherwise unserviceable. Having planes he added pilots and ran a charter service. He also ran a flying school.


The charter phase of this operation did not prove too successful, since the flying boats tended to crash too often. However, the flying school was a success because of the instructor Jack Wright. It was not until Wright had left their employ that the company went out of business.

Sharing the Air Land hangar with Wells Air Transport was the repair business of Tommy Jones, which was to outlast Wells Air Transport by several years. Jones was one the few Vancouver area people to operate a profitable aviation business during the '30's.

With the closure of Tommy Jones maintenance operations, the Air Land building was put to other uses and Wells Air Harbour fell into disuse, passed up for the superior facilities which were developed around Vancouver during the war years. In more recent years, the old Wells Air Harbour building has been converted into a Keg Boathouse Restaurant.

(First Hang      Me Up)

**24-HOUR PHONE**  
**SEYMOUR 300      EMPIRE 3031**  
 (Vancouver)      (Victoria)



**WELLS**  
Air Transport Ltd.

New Summer Schedule, June 15, 1933

## Vancouver-Victoria AIR LINE

TWICE DAILY

1. VANCOUVER .....	10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
2. ESQUIMALT .....	9:15 a.m. and 4:15 p.m.

**FARE: \$5.00 EACH WAY**

## Vancouver-Bridge River THE GOLD LINE

EACH TUESDAY AND SATURDAY

1. VANCOUVER .....	5:00 p.m.
2. BRIDGE RIVER .....	7:00 p.m.

**FARE: \$15.00 EACH WAY**

PASSENGER must be limited to 30 pounds except by special arrangement.

**FREE AUTOBAC VANCOUVER CITY TO  
WELLS AIR HARBOUR**  
(See map on reverse side)

### RESERVATIONS, INFORMATION

SEYMOUR 300 Dan MacLure's Taxi Ltd., 706  
W. Hastings, opp. Post Office.  
EMPIRE 3031 Roy Simons, Dominion Hotel.  
3 FLOYD Neel "Curly" Evans, Skelath.

**FLOYD'S LIABILITY INSURANCE  
PROTECTION ON ALL AIRCRAFT**

AIR MAIL POSTAL SLIPS:

A collector who has changed his attention from Air Mail to RPO's has offered to sell or trade with any member of our group some or all of his collection of AIR MAIL POSTAL SLIPS.

These are the slips that were attached to the top of a package of letters going to a common destination. They make a very interesting adjunct to covers going from A to B. Here are some of the cities he has.

Poland to Montreal	London (UK) to Kuwait	Frankfurt to Montreal
London to Punjab	Nairobi to Canada	Kobenhavn to Canada
Windsor to Dublin	Liverpool to Ottawa	Frankfurt to Hamilton
To and from London Ontario to the rest of the world (about 35 each)		
Several more that I can't read or understand.		

If any of our members are interested please drop the editor a note and contact will be arranged, or xerox copies sent, or any other way you may wish to correspond will be decided upon. Example below.

Agent expéditeur (Despatching or tying officer)	AV 10 Administration expéditrice (Despatching administration) <b>Grande Bretagne</b> (Great Britain) Bureau expéditeur (Despatching office) Reading Foreign Section
<b>LC</b>	<b>Par avion</b> <i>By Air Mail</i>
pour (for)	<b>London (Ont.)</b> <b>(Canada)</b>
En cas d'erreur, prière de joindre cette étiquette au bulletin de vérification. (In case of error, please attach this label to the verification note.)	

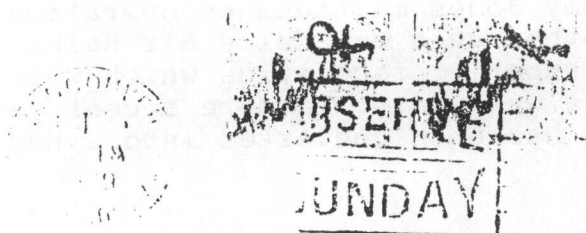
<b>PAID LETTERS FOR</b>	
<b>LONDON</b>	
<b>(ONTARIO)</b>	
FROM	This label should accompany any report in respect of correspondence received in this bundle. Cette étiquette doit accompagner toute plainte à l'égard des correspondances reçues dans cette liasse.
Liverpool	Bundle made up by <i>MS</i>

FLIGHT 2955, J.C. SMITH:

In the April 1995 issue of this Newsletter the question was asked "Who is the Smith on the stamps ?" The question went to C.A.S. as well and no one came forward with any information.

If you look carefully at the stamps shown in 1995, or below, you will quickly see that each signature is different. Our bible, the AAMS catalog indicates it was overprinted which would mean a uniform signature on all stamps.

Does anyone have further information on this flight ?



**FLIGHT # 2967:**

This article from the Jan 1954 issue of "the Postmark" is a sequel to the "Wings North" carried in the August 2000 issue of this Newsletter. "the Postmark" was the official mouthpiece of the public relations division of the Canadian Postal Service.

This flight takes two pages to describe in the new catalog and this cross reference by those there at the time is very interesting.

## *Wings North*

(PART 2)

### *The First Regular Arctic Flight*

**L**AST month we told of the great experimental mail flight by Punch Dickins with his crew, accompanied by former Inspector T. J. Reilly from Edmonton and Fort McMurray to Fort Resolution and the Great Slave Lake, in January 1929.

We will quote largely from an account of the subsequent flight in December 1929 by the late R. W. Hale, District Superintendent, when the first official mail flight was made down the Athabaska, Slave and Mackenzie Rivers, and letters carried by Air reached the far distant points and the Arctic itself, during the Christmas season as a result of the revolutionary method of transportation.

The late Mr. Hale in his article "Pilots, Postmen and Peril" records that as result of the memorable flight of Punch Dickins and his crew, (recorded in the *Postmark* last month) the desolate and barren country—once even beyond the scope of prospectors from a paying standpoint, suddenly came to the fore. The plane had found the way in. Samples of the vast mineral wealth taken from the areas where even the natives could scarce eke an existence, were taken from the shelves where they had been left to collect dust. An air rush started. Fort McMurray (now McMurray, Alta.) and Fort Resolution became veritable air bases.

This gave the Canada Post Office the opportunity it had been seeking. When the Hudson's Bay mail contract ran out it let a new contract by air and the fall of 1929 saw W. R. "Wop" May, Cy Becker (famous First War pilots) and John Michaels, prominent Edmonton businessmen, principals in an air company feverishly preparing to fly the mails north in December.

Their task was immense. Gas had to be arranged for, skis and shock-absorbers fitted, fire-proof engine covers made, huge blow-torches and other equipment experimented with

to service aircraft which would be flying in sub zero temperatures 2600 miles before returning to base. All the preparations, too, had to be made on a basis of regular service, month after month—not on the short-time basis of a special flight.

During the break-up and freeze up period of six weeks all transportation in the north-land by surface used to be suspended and mail weighing perhaps four tons generally accumulated. This was the situation which confronted the new air company, but as word had got around about the new service which would transmit mail in a matter of days instead of months, a vast and unwieldy load was waiting, which had to be carefully hand-picked.

The four Aircraft of Commercial Airways of which Mr. May was Chief Pilot—consisted of three Bellancas—(CF-AKI, CF-AJR, CF-AJQ) and a Lockheed—Vega (CF-AAL). On leaving Edmonton for McMurray they were given a rousing "send-off". F. J. X. Leger, then District Superintendent of Postal Service, was on hand for the farewell. The late R. W. Hale (then Post Office Inspector) accompanied the flight. With him were such celebrated flying men as Cy Becker, at present a barrister in Edmonton, and then Managing director of Commercial Airways; Glyn Roberts, who returned to England shortly after the flight and operated a commercial air line there; Tim Sims, engineer, now in charge of engines and engine revision for Canadair; Casey van der Linden, engineer, RCN; Maurice Burbridge, pilot, retired, now of Victoria; John Melvin, Hudson Bay Co., deceased; R. Robertson, now in England; Archie McMullen, now a pilot with Canadian Pacific Airlines, and Mr. Lumsden, pilot, who later returned to England.

### *Relayed Mail North*

The trip of the four planes with the mails is a saga of snow, ice, high winds, and of sub-zero temperatures. The flight started on schedule with "Wop" May flying ahead to pick out a landing at the next post, then returning to guide the fleet in, and while the remaining load was being ferried up, going ahead again.

This procedure was followed until Fort Simpson, (the half-way mark) was reached on



ON MEMORABLE FLIGHT—Original party just before leaving Edmonton. Front row—Messrs. Robertson (Pilot); Jackson (Secretary); Lumsden (Pilot); McMullen (Pilot); a Mechanic. Rear row—Glyn Roberts, (Pilot); Cy Becker (Pilot); Mr. Melvin (H. B. Co.); R. W. Hales (P.O. Dept.); Mr. Burbridge (Pilot); Mr. Watt (Press).



**WINGS NORTH . . .**  
Continued from page 5  
it would have frozen solid in the engine. Then it had to be heated and poured back hot before the aircraft took off, because an idle engine's lubrication soon goes solid up in those winter latitudes. Getting wood for the fire or for the jacking-up process in the mornings meant a walk of half a mile over rough ice.

Gasoline had to be located. The barrels rolled to the planes, tanks filled, and perhaps some engine overhauling done. Handling gas in sub zero weather from metal drums is a miserable job. Often the overhaul meant that the men had to work with bare hands using heated tools.

On the morning after arrival there was always the walk back from the post to the plane, hours spent heating the oil and in keeping blow torches going beneath the engine. Sometimes the intense cold put out the torch. To guard against the danger of fire to the plane, somebody had always to be on hand with a fire extinguisher.

Then when engine and oil reached the right heat there was a mad rush to get out of the way and to scramble on board as when the temperature reached 50 degrees below, once the engine started it could not be run fast enough to keep it warm, or the plane would be in the air. So removing the engine cover, putting in the oil, getting under way, and out of the way of the machine, was completed in one operation. The passenger climbed into the very cramped space sometimes lying at full length on the load.

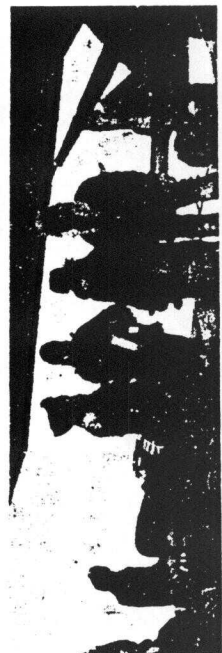
### Another Tragedy

Reaching Fort Good Hope, just outside the Arctic Circle on Christmas day (57 degrees below zero) the fliers found another tragedy. The Hudson Bay Post had been burned down and its manager had perished. His body was being kept frozen until the weather moderated sufficiently to permit burial.

### An Arctic Yuletide

Earlier on this trip preparations had been made for a Christmas dinner and stowed in the plane were a turkey (already cooked) mince pies, canned sausages, etc. An empty Indian house was commandeered and by borrowing from the R.C.M.P. and Missions—a stove from one, stove pipes from the other, wood for a table from someone else, order emerged from chaos. The Mounties had opened their parcels and doled out their Christmas fare to make a very presentable meal.

Lack of room made it necessary to have the table in two tiers—the upper for the "cats" the lower for operations.



**ARRIVAL AT AKLAVIK**—Mail being transferred from plane to dog-train. Bishop Geddes, the Postmaster, holds a case of ginger ale transported from Edmonton. Others shown are Eskimo, Glyn Roberts, W. R. Hale and extreme right "Wop" May.

the ninth day out. From there, with the bulk of the mail already delivered, it was decided to carry on with two planes only.

### Kept The Schedule

The thermometer was hovering around 60 degrees below zero, the days were shortening and it was felt that the chance of mechanical trouble would be greatly minimized if two ships, instead of four, were used. However, 1,000 pounds of mail remained for the more northern posts, with a capacity aboard the planes for just 1,600 pounds.

Fort Chipewyan was reached on December 10th, Fort Fitzgerald on December 12th, Fort Smith on December 12th, Fort Resolution on December 15th, Hay River, December 17th, Fort Providence on December 17th, Fort Simpson on December 18th, Wrigley on the 22nd, Fort Norman on the same date, Fort Good Hope on Christmas Day, Arctic Red River on the following day, and Fort McPherson and Aklavik on the 27th.

### Some Queer Addresses

The letters were handpicked this time leaving the less important mail for a later flight. Many a laugh was caused, Mr. Hale reported, by the scant geographical sense of some of the mailers. Why, for instance should "hurry" letters be addressed to proprietors of Ice Cream Parlours at the various sub arctic posts? It was also felt that no great harm would be done if elaborate circulars advertising refrigerators to a country which was the last word in refrigeration itself, were likewise held over until the next trip.

### A Tragic Episode

Mr. Hale recorded that at Fort Good Hope Bay, 100 miles East of Fort Norman lay the outpost of Northern Bay Traders, run by the celebrated "Rags" Wilson, mentioned in our

December article. Mr. Hale had brought him a suitable Christmas present—but when looking around at Fort Norman to see when a dog-train would be leaving for Fort Good Hope Bay before Christmas, he found that "Rags" was actually in Fort Norman—but dead! He had died of heart failure alone at his post and his Indians brought in his body by dog train the night before! Standing around the remains of the trapper a silent toast was drunk to his memory, from the gift that would have cheered his lonely Christmas.

The Odyssey of this fleet is still a northland legend. At every post the inhabitants turned out on the ice, to greet them. Postmasters there rapidly transferred mails from the planes to dog trains and rushed them in to the offices.

As the Arctic drew closer the sun no longer appeared. If the sky was at all overcast "day-light" was actually two or three hours of near twilight. But with the low temperature the shortness of the daily flights did not worry the pilots, for every hour airborne meant an hour's work later, on the ground. Oil had to be drained, using a blow torch to remove the crankcase cap. Skis had to be jacked and lowered on pieces of wood or the friction on landing would freeze them solid!

Regarded as "luxurious" were the nose-hangers of Fort McMurray—now far to the south. These were heated sheds into which the planes' noses were thrust through a curtain in order to keep the engines warm and the oil from freezing. An old picture of the flight shows these "nose hangers", presumably in operation in December 1929.

### A Chilly Routine

At Fort Simpson the crews filled tanks in temperatures of 70 below zero. When a plane landed the oil had to be drained immediately or

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**THE FIRST OFFICIAL FLIGHT**—The four planes carrying the mail, on the ice at Fort Resolution, preparing for trip down the Mackenzie. The four carried 5 tons of mail.

**ALL ABOARD FOR LONDON!**—Ceremonies at Toronto on November 3rd when TCA Flight No. 532—Toronto to London, England, was inaugurated. Two hundred and forty pounds of mail were carried and on hand to check arrangements were, left to right—R. Foster, P.S. Gr. 8, Supt. Fwd. Dispatch; Postmaster G. E. Lawrence; S. Himmelman, Station Manager, Malton Airport; and R. Fugard, P.S. Gr. 4, Supervisor, Air Mail Branch, Toronto. Toronto's Mayor was on hand and the occasion was broadcast by CBC.

### Chop Up Turkey

Everything went well until it was discovered that the turkey which had experienced 67 degrees below zero weather was going to take a lot of defrosting. Eventually it was chopped up with an axe and the pieces were thawed out in hot water.

The few families of Eskimos who greeted the aircraft at Aklavik on December 27th showed nothing but stolid indifference—an attitude of "So What".

They observed that if the White man had the wood to build boats and the material to build engines to make them speed along the river—he'd be dumb if he couldn't do the same thing in the air. What they wanted to know most was how many skins it would cost to take a flight.

The two planes which reached Aklavik carried W. R. May, Glyn Roberts, Engineers, Tim Sims and C. van der Linden, Inspector Hake and Fred D. Watt the correspondent.

Lightly loaded and travelling in the daylight the planes returned reaching Edmonton on January 10th. Their flight proved conclusively that Air Mail service to the Arctic was feasible and has come to stay.

★ ★ ★

"So you're a young man with both feet on the ground, eh? What do you do for a living?"  
"I take orders from a man with both feet on the desk."