

The Pilot's Log

Newsletter of the BNAPS Airmail Study Group

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**Chairman's Comments**

I am pleased to offer a few thoughts, in this, the continuation of the BNAPS Air Mail Study Group newsletter under our new editor, Tom Watkins. Some of you may have done business with Tom as he is a part-time dealer in Canadian postal history. Tom has found some nice items for me that are now in my Edward VII collection. Please introduce yourself to Tom and let him know your collecting interests and particularly your Canadian airmail interests. One purpose of a study group is for the group members to collectively benefit from the interests and knowledge of individual members of the group. A second benefit is for individual members to ask other members for help in understanding their material and building their collections. A third benefit is for members to sell or trade material with other members. For this to happen, it is necessary for members to share and exchange information about their collecting interests.

There are currently about 50 members in the Air Mail Study Group. Many members belong to other airmail groups. For example, I am a member of the American Air Mail Society and receive the Airpost Journal and the Jack Night Air Log and I am a member of the Canadian

Aerophilatelic Society and receive The Canadian Aerophilatelist. I enjoy reading these publications even though most of the articles do not relate to anything I am currently collecting. My airmail collecting interests are not well defined and one of my goals for this year is to better define what I am trying to do with my airmail material. Ed Christman introduced me to Canadian first flight covers, but he did not give me any instructions on how to limit or define my collecting interests. I am open to suggestions. For me the unifying tie is the airplane. I have always liked airplanes. For 26 years I was directly involved with United States Naval Aviation. I continue to be involved with general aviation and for 30 plus years I have assisted state aviation agencies in developing and maintaining their state airport system plans. I enjoy air shows and aviation museums.

I am not sure that there is a need to define the scope of the BNAPS Air Mail Study Group newsletter. The newsletter can only be what the membership makes it to be. An idea I want to try is to have our members introduce themselves to the membership in terms of their airmail collecting interests. So your assignment, write a paragraph describing what you worked on in the past, what you are working on now, in what areas you are able to share your knowledge, and/or in what areas you are looking for knowledge. And, if you are a bit like me, that is, you are not very focused in your collecting, that is ok too. Tom's email address is elsewhere in this newsletter. As space permits, Tom will include these paragraphs in the newsletter and I can exchange them with the membership via email. Please note that my email is now g-dresser@cox.net. My previous address no longer works. Enjoy your collecting. George B. Dresser

Notes from the Editor

Greetings fellow airmail collectors, it is with a sense of great humility that I assume responsibility for the airmail study group newsletter from our friend Basil Burrell. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Bas for his dedication to the newsletter for the past 11 years. This will be my first foray into the world of newsletter writing and so I would ask for your feedback and, like any good editor, for your submissions as well.

As most of you will not be familiar with me, a little about myself. I live on beautiful southern Vancouver Island with my wife and two children and work for local government. I am an avid collector of airmail postal history with a particular interest in commercially used semi-official airmail and courtesy airmail. I am no longer much of a stamp collector and so for information and anecdotes about airmail stamps I will be relying heavily on the rest of the study group for input. I look forward to hearing from all of you.

Cover on Front Page - Telegram Carried by Western Canada Airways

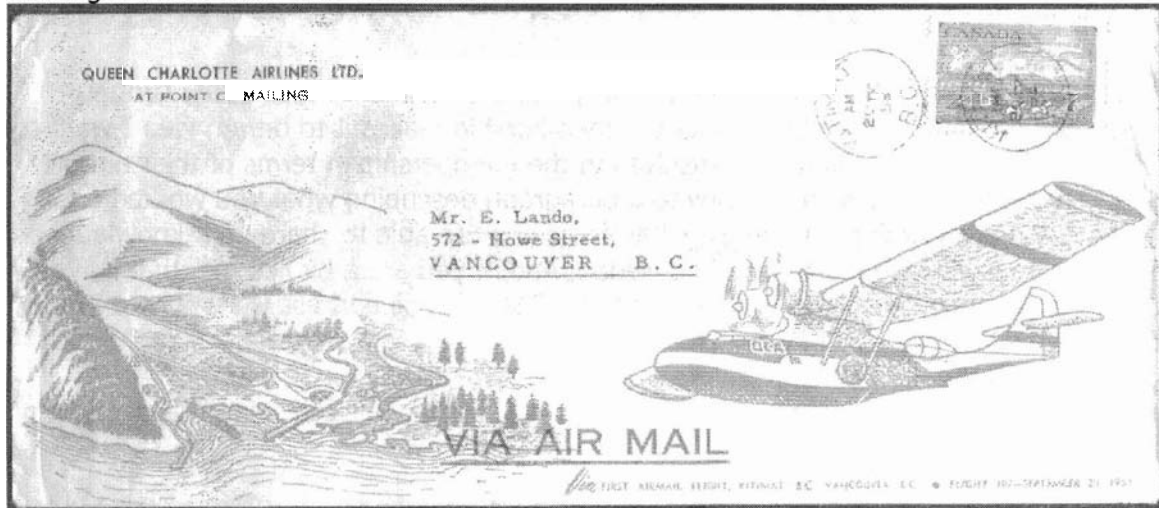
The cover shown on the front page shows one of the more unusual facets of semi-official airmail collecting, a piece of mail that never actually entered the government postal system. Since there were no roads or railway connections into the gold fields of the Kenora District of northern Ontario at the time, the Canadian National Telegraph and Cable Company apparently paid Western Canada Airways to carry its telegrams into the region in a timely manner.

The cover bears the airline's Rolling Portage four-line rubber handstamp dated June 19, 1927 tying a pair of CL-40 semi-official airmail stamps. Since the telegram would not have ever entered the regular mail stream, it did not need any government postage. Why two airmail stamps were required is unclear, I have three other similar telegrams and all have the same franking. Perhaps an additional charge was applied because telegrams required special handling or security? Any thoughts on this matter would be appreciated.

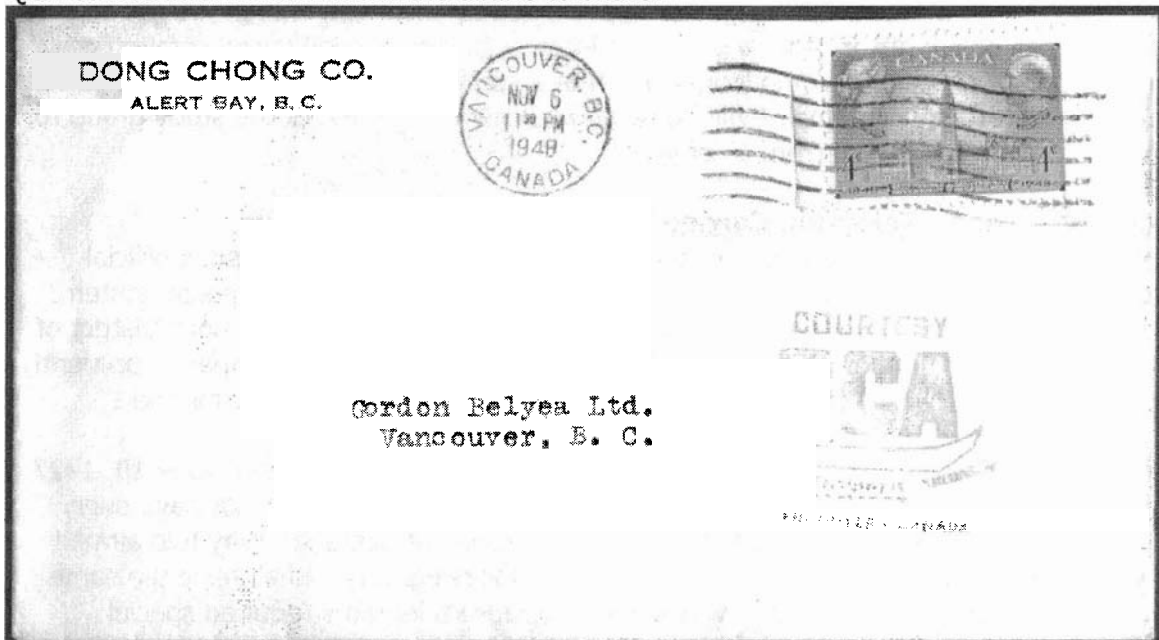
Queen Charlotte Airlines

Queen Charlotte Airlines (QCA) was founded by Jim Spilsbury in 1943 and operated on the West Coast of Canada until 1955, when it was sold to Pacific Western Airlines. At the time of its sale, it was the third largest airline in Canada and it often carried mail.

Shown below is a first flight cover carried by the airline from Kitimat, BC to Vancouver on September 20, 1952. It is listed in the Canadian Airmail Catalogue as 1st flight #5219. It does not indicate how many pieces of mail were carried but this is the only example of mail from this flight that I have ever encountered.



Here is an example of a commercial cover carried by QCA as part of the unofficial "courtesy" airmail service it provided on the west coast during its years of operation. Note the company's handstamp applied to the front of the cover. I have about a dozen courtesy airmail covers carried by this airline, all have this handstamp in either bluish-green (7) or red (5). The earliest cover is dated Sept. 4, 1947 and the latest is Apr. 21, 1949. Most originated from small coastal communities such as Sullivan Bay or Zeballos. Does anyone else have any similar QCA covers information about the airline to share?



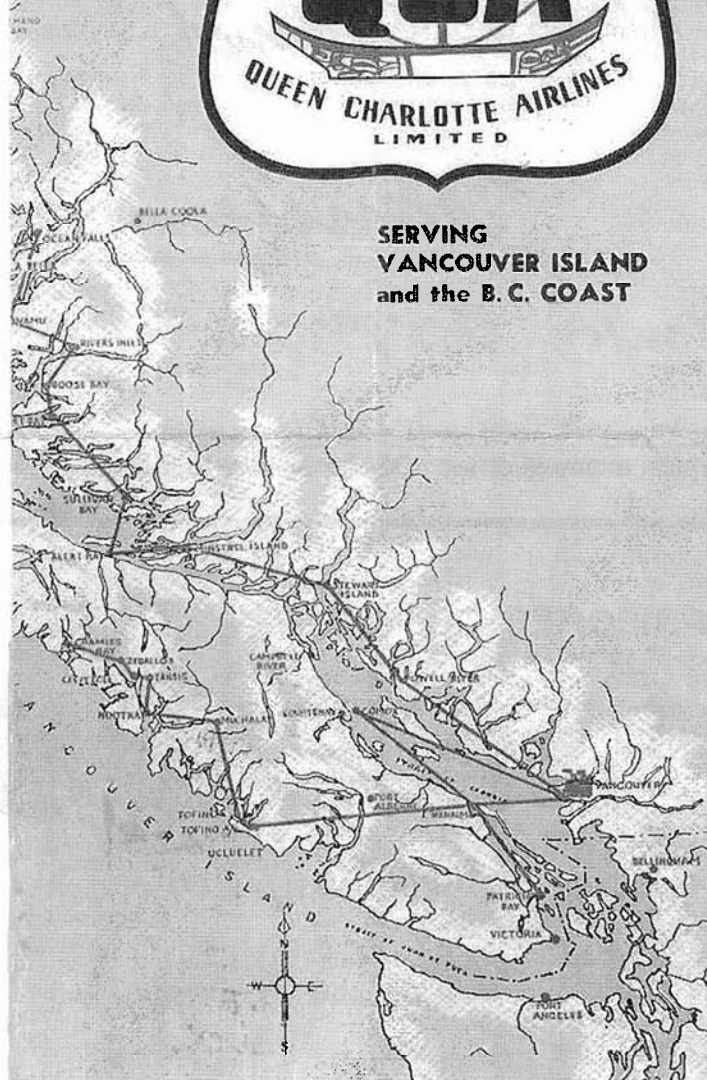
EFFECTIVE
JANUARY 16, 1952



Fly



**SERVING
VANCOUVER ISLAND
and the B. C. COAST**



Authorized by the Air Transport Board of Canada to
operate Scheduled, Non-scheduled and Charter Services.

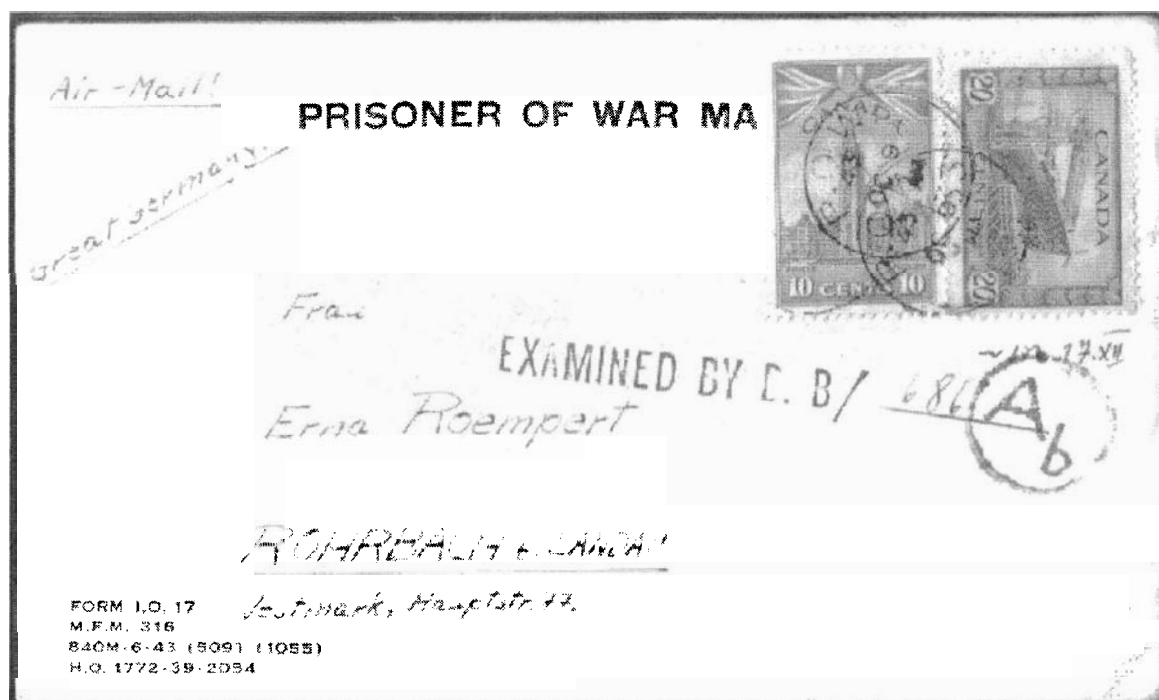
Here is a copy of the front cover of QCA's 1952 flight schedule that nicely shows the airline's routes at that time. I have seen courtesy mail carried by the airline from several of the settlements shown including Alert Bay, Allison Harbour, Nanaimo, Sullivan Bay, Victoria and Zeballos.

Pre-War Airmail to Europe

On February 2, 1931 the Canadian post office set its airmail rate for mail destined for Europe at 10¢ per ounce. This meant that such mail was provided with all airmail services available in North America and in Europe, although the trip across the Atlantic was still made by ship. The airmail rate for postcards at this time was same as that for letters.



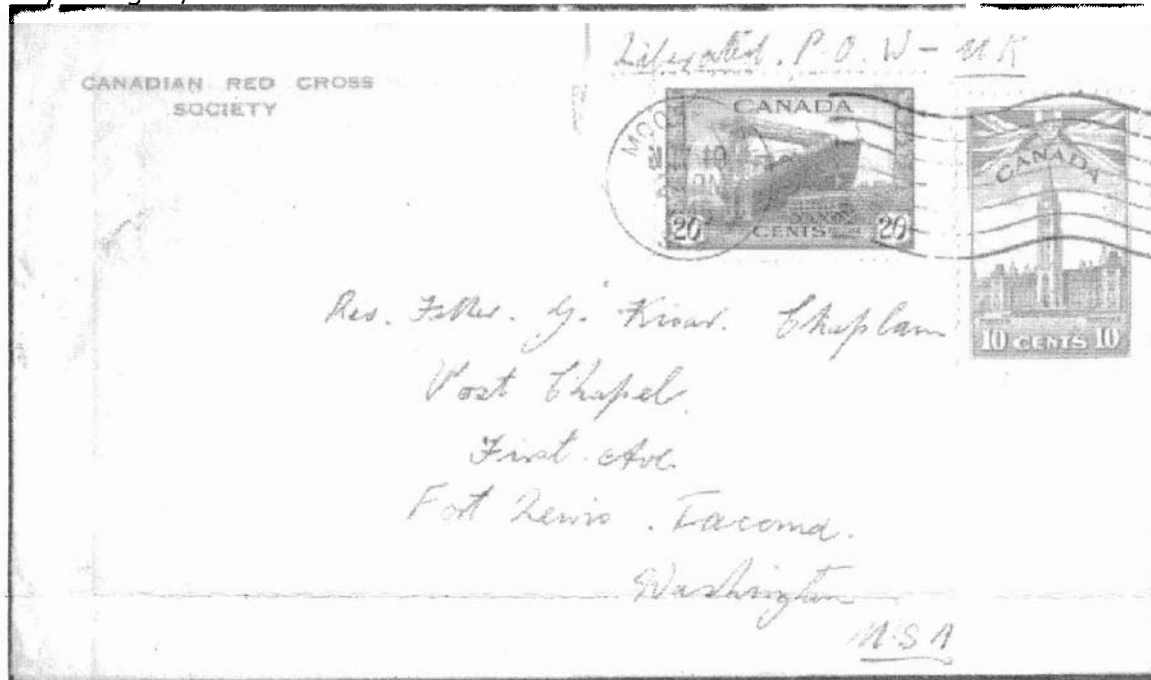
The cover above is a typical example of the 10¢ airmail rate to Europe.



On June 24, 1939 the option of trans-Atlantic airmail service at the rate of 30¢ per ½ ounce became available, as shown by this POW cover sent by airmail to Germany in 1943. However, the option airmail at the 10¢ rate without trans-Atlantic service remained available until April 1, 1947 after which time full trans-Atlantic airmail service became mandatory.

Mystery Cover

Below is an unusual cover that poses some questions. The cover is addressed to the USA as is postmarked at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan on Nov. 10, 1945. However, it is franked with 30¢ postage (the trans-Atlantic airmail rate) and was sent by a liberated POW in the UK (return addressee - Lance Corporal M. Walsh of the Royal Engineers). Assuming that this piece did, in fact, originate from the UK, was it carried by trans-Atlantic airmail service from the UK to Canada (perhaps by military aircraft) and cancelled on arrival in Moose Jaw or did the sender prepare the letter in the UK only to mail it upon return to Canada? Was it simply overpaid? Any thoughts/comments?



BC Airways Re-directed Cover

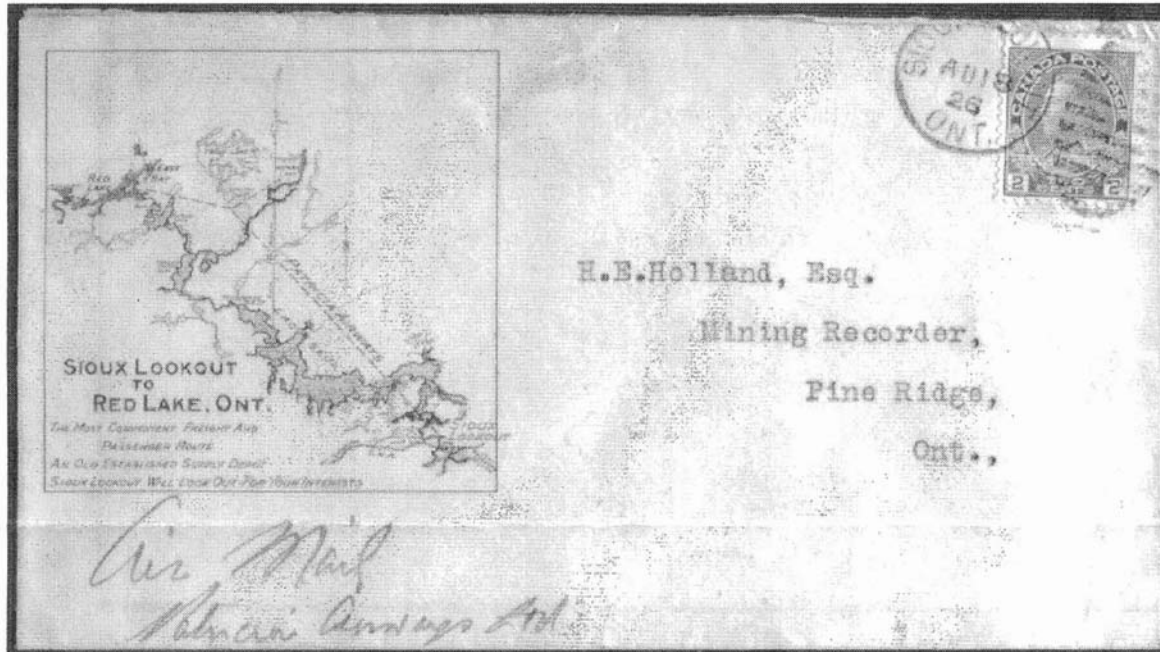
B.C. Airways semi-official airmail service lasted for just 23 days, ending with the crash of the company's only aircraft on August 25, 1928. Below is a cover, posted Aug. 11, 1928 from Vancouver to Victoria, then re-directed to Nanaimo.



Patricia Airways & Exploration Co.(PA&E) Commercial Mail

PA&E began offering semi-official airmail service in the Kenora District of northern Ontario on July 7, 1926 during a gold rush in the region. The airline carried mail to and from five locations in the Red Lake region: Red Lake, Pine Ridge, Woman Lake, Birch Lake and Cat Lake, Ontario. The cost of airmail delivery to and from the first two communities was 25¢ per letter, while the cost for the latter three was 50¢ per letter.

The cover below is illustrated with a map depicting PA&E's routes in this region and would have been carried by the airline during its second month of operation. Addressed to the region's mining recorder, this letter likely pertained to a mining claim.



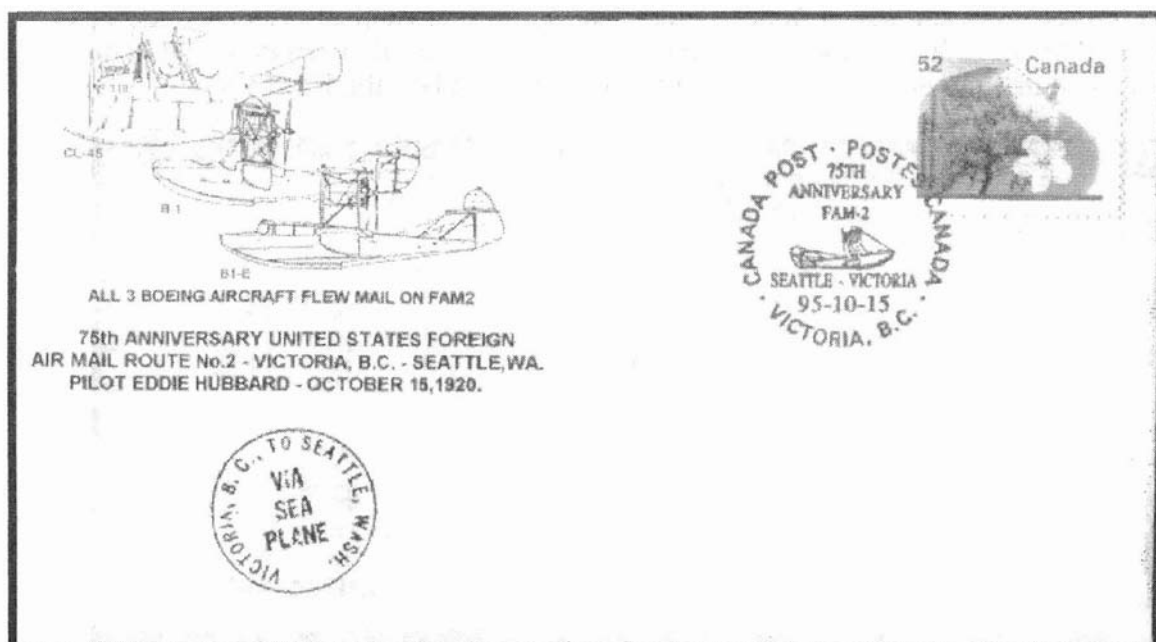
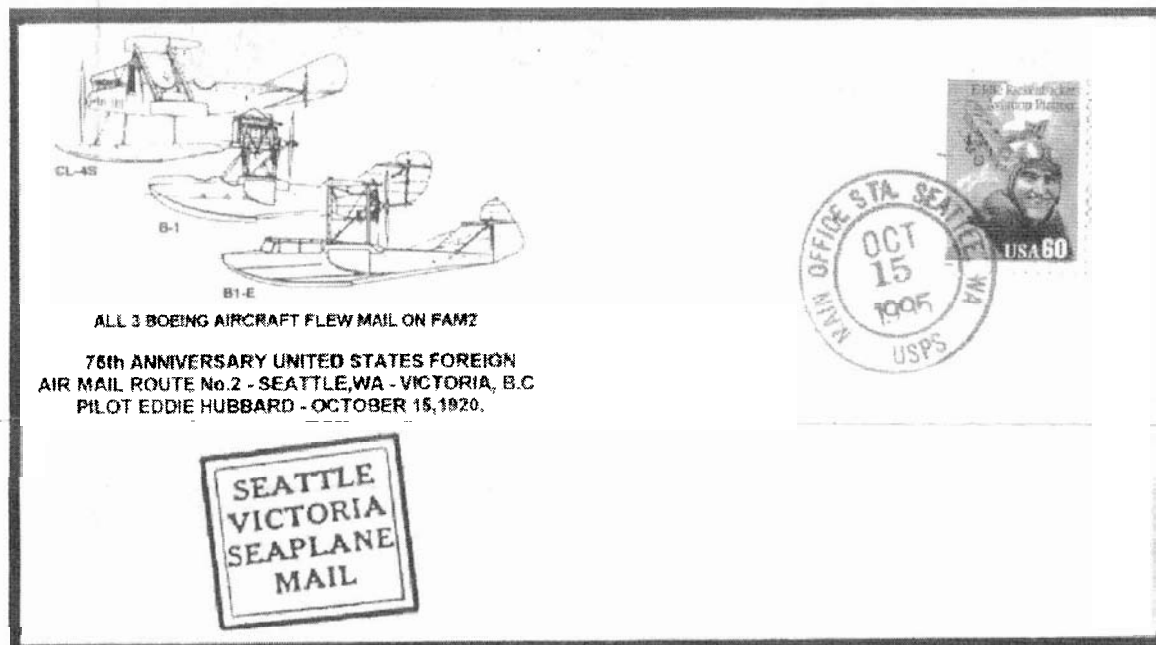
The back of the PA&E cover, note that the 25¢ semi-official stamp is correctly placed on the back in accordance with post office requirements.



FAM-2 75th Anniversary Flight Covers

Back in 1995, long time airmail collector Jim Brown prepared a set of covers to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the first flight on the U.S. post office Foreign Air Mail contract number 2 (FAM-2). Jim, who was an avid collector of FAM-2 mail, died on April 11th of this year; his obituary is posted on the BNAPS website at: <http://www.bnaps.org/obits/obits.htm#brown>, please take a moment to read it.

After Jim's death the commemorative covers he put together found their way to me and there are about 50 copies of the Canadian cover and 25 of its U.S. counterpart. I felt that Jim would appreciate seeing these dispersed among the airmail collecting community and I would therefore like to offer them to the study group members on a first come, first served basis for \$5.00 per set with the proceeds going towards providing this newsletter.



Here is an example of the commemorative covers Jim had prepared.

Pre-Paid Airmail to the USA

Utilization of early airmail service within the United States for mail originating from Canada required first class letter rate payment, plus pre-payment of airmail fees with U.S. postage. However, prior to 1927 fees for airmail service within the United States from Canada were varied and confusing. Therefore, in an effort to simplify this airmail service, the Post Office in its March 1927 Official Postal Guide Supplement announced a uniform rate of 10¢ per ½ ounce beginning February 1, 1927, with the airmail fees continuing to be pre-paid with U.S. postage. The cover shown below illustrates this new rate, note the endorsement "via airmail at Chicago". The new rate was, however, short lived as on August 1, 1928 the airmail rate was reduced to 5¢ for the first ounce and 10¢ for each additional ounce. Canadian postage also became accepted by the U.S. Postal Service at this point in time for airmail conveyance under a new reciprocal agreement and pre-payment in U.S. postage ceased being required.



The *Airmails of Canada • 1925 – 1939* by Arfken and Plomish provides a comprehensive explanation of Canadian airmail service to the United States during this period.

Airmail to French Guiana

In the mid-1940's airmail rates from Canada to French Guiana changed frequently. Up to Nov. 11, 1944 the rate was 25¢ per ¼ ounce. From Dec. 1, 1944 to Aug. 31, 1945 it was 75¢ per ½ ounce and below is an example of this short-lived rate. On Sept. 1, 1945 the rate changed again, this time to 15¢ per ¼ ounce. Three different rates in less than two years!

