

The Pilot's Log

Newsletter of the BNAPS Airmail Study Group

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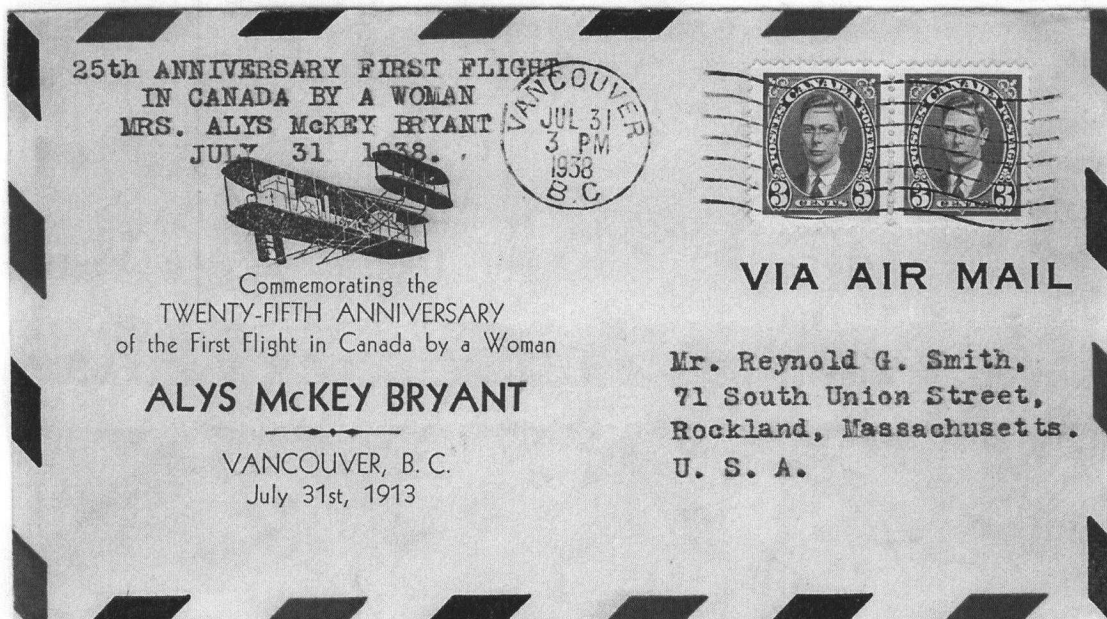
**Notes from the Editor**

Hello again to all and thanks to those who sent me their kind comments on my first newsletter. I appreciate the words of encouragement and have made a few changes based on the feedback received. As I reflect back on BNAPEX 2005 that was held in Edmonton I am left with the belief that the interest in airmail continues to be very strong, particularly with respect to semi-official airmail. While at the show I enjoyed seeing and chatting with several of the study group's members and even had the pleasure of reacquainting myself with Denny May, son of pioneer airmail pilot W.R. "Wop" May. Denny, who is building a collection of airmail items related to his father, shared some wonderful anecdotes with me about Wop's exploits during the early days of air service in Canada. Denny also reminded me that he has built a website dedicated to his father that may be viewed at: www.wopmay.com. It contains some comprehensive information and I recommend having a good look.

Cover on the Front Page - Short Paid Airmail Rate to France

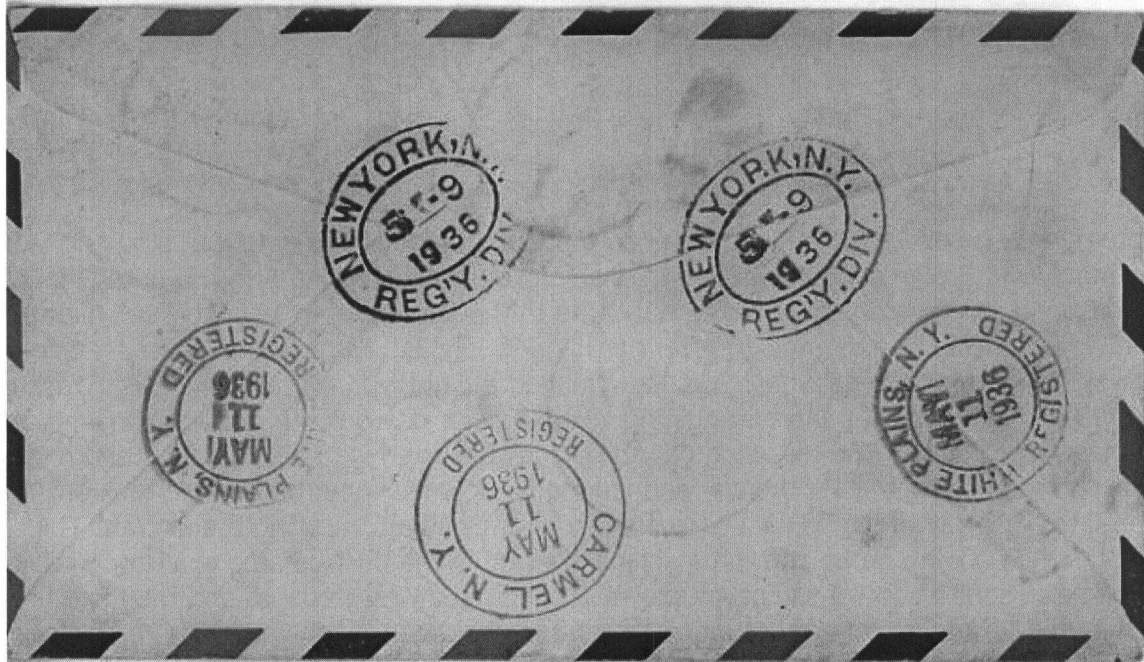
At the time this cover was posted the airmail rate to France was 15¢ per ¼ ounce and while it was only franked with 9¢ postage it still received airmail service as evidenced by the receiving cancel two days after posting. However, the French postal authorities recognized the deficiency and rated the cover 27F postage due. Why the cover was rated 27F due is somewhat unclear but it would appear that it was a double weight letter and thus should have had 30¢ postage. At the time the French rate to Canada was 18F and so double weight would be 36F. At the ratio of 30¢ to 36F, the 9¢ Canadian postage on the cover equated to 10.8F. However, it would seem that the French post office did not use this ratio but rather used a 1 to 1 ratio (since 10.8F so closely equated to 9¢) and they apparently credited the 9¢ as 9F. The 9F credited against the 36F double weight airmail rate left 27F as unpaid and the cover was oddly charged only this single deficiency. A rather convoluted and imperfect explanation but the best I am able to ascertain. I would welcome any alternate interpretations.

25th Anniversary Cover of First Woman to Fly in Canada



The September issue of The Pilot's Log featured a postcard of Alys Mckey Bryant standing in front of her plane. David Brown sent in some additional information regarding Alys. He notes that she and her husband John were a flight team that came to the Northwest in 1913 to demonstrate man's newfound ability to defy gravity. After her historic July 31st flight, their Curtiss Pusher biplane was shipped to Victoria where Alys had planned a flight from the Willows Race Track on August 5th. Her flight was cut short by gusting winds on that day but she managed to land safely back at the Willows track. The following day the plane was fitted with a single float and Alys' husband John made a flight over the city and landed in Victoria's inner harbor. He took off from the water later that day under windy conditions and had trouble controlling the aircraft. The short flight ended when a wing broke and the machine crashed in the built up area of Victoria killing John. David also sent a copy of the cover shown above which was prepared and the flight arranged by the Philatelists of Vancouver to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the historic Bryant flight. David notes that the original 1913 flight took off from Minoru Park in what is now the municipality of Richmond near Vancouver. My friend Gray Scrimgeour tells me that this incident is described in a new book by Elwood White and Peter Smith, *Wings Across the Water, Victoria's Flying Heritage 1871 - 1971*. It is available from Harbour Publishing, Madera Park, 2005.

Following up on the cover illustrated in the September issue, Denny May sent in some scans of the following wonderful Hindenburg and other Zeppelin items. First is a cover posted from Stuttgart, Germany (May 6, 1936) to White Plains, New York and re-directed to Carmel, NY. The cover is backstamped at New York City on May 9th and both White Plains and Carmel on May 11th. Denny notes that this is a registered letter with two great cancellations on the front - the Hindenburg "Via" stamp and the Europe to North America round stamp with the Zeppelin illustrated.



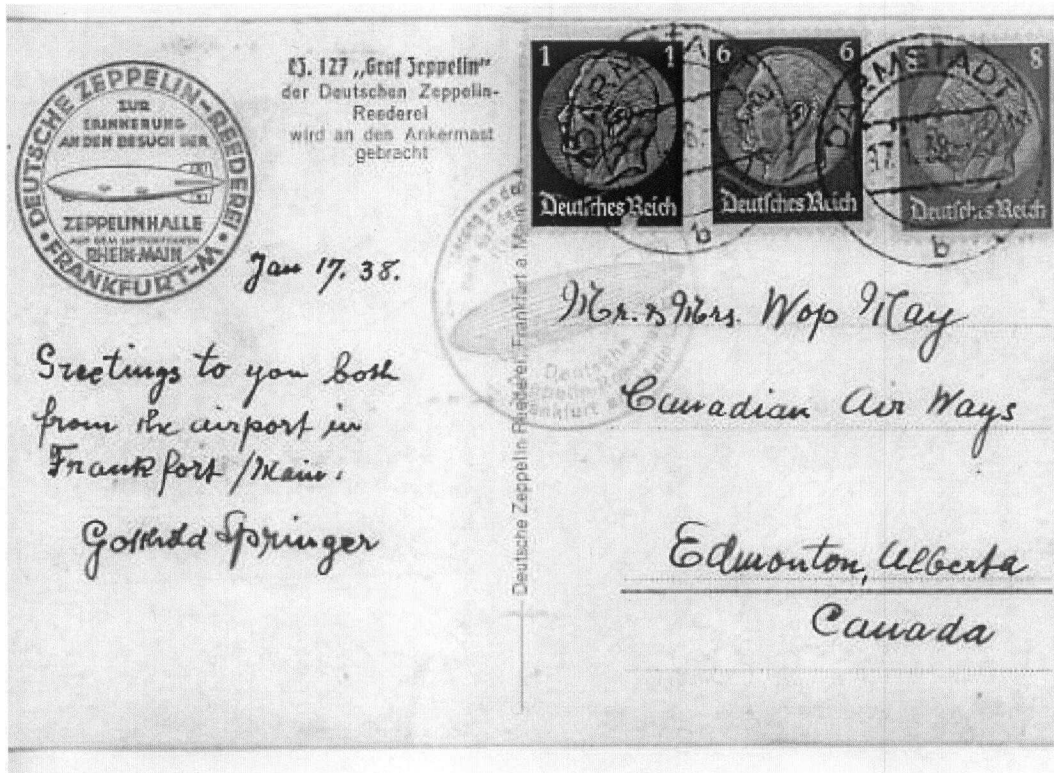
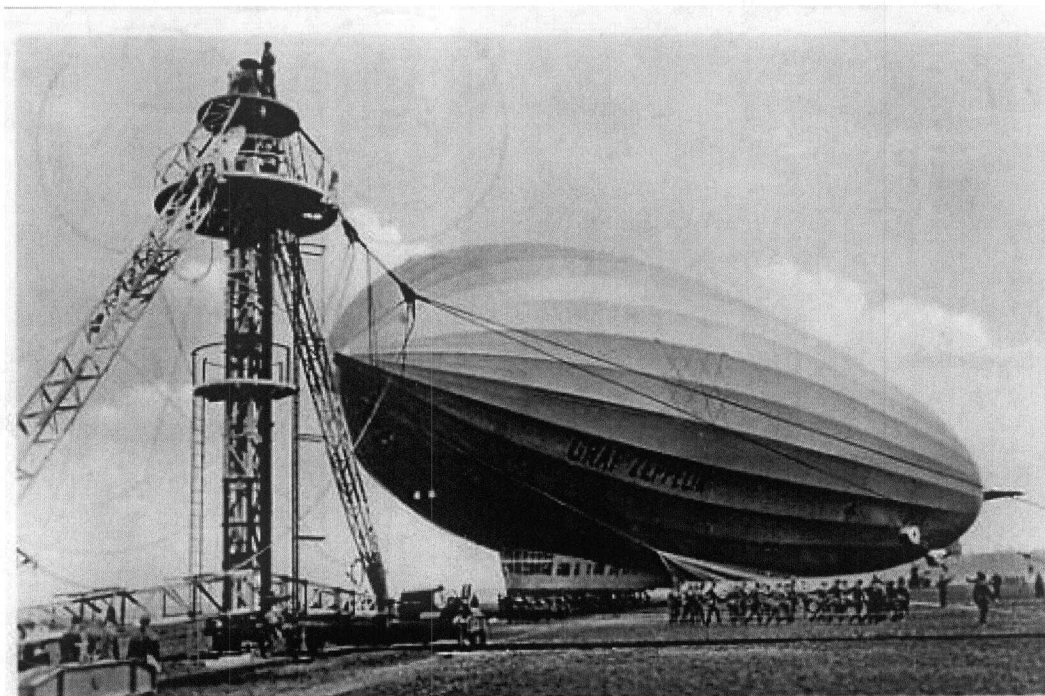
Zeppelin Postcard

Denny also sent in this postcard depicting the Zeppelin L.Z. 129 which was cancelled at the Berlin Olympics on August 11, 1936. I note the Swastika flag on the tail of the aircraft.



Zeppelin Postcard

Here is a postcard of the Graf Zeppelin L.Z. 127 postmarked at Darmstadt on January 17, 1938. Denny notes that this card was mailed by Gotthold Springer (a hotel operator from Edmonton) to his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Wop May, c/o Canadian Airways. Nice item!



One More Hindenburg Item

Denny also sent in this home-made Hindenburg postcard (blank back) postmarked at Frankfurt on August 1, 1936 with a Hindenburg rubber stamp with the Olympic logo. It also has the Berlin postmark from the same day. It also has the postage to match.



Anecdotes about Wop May

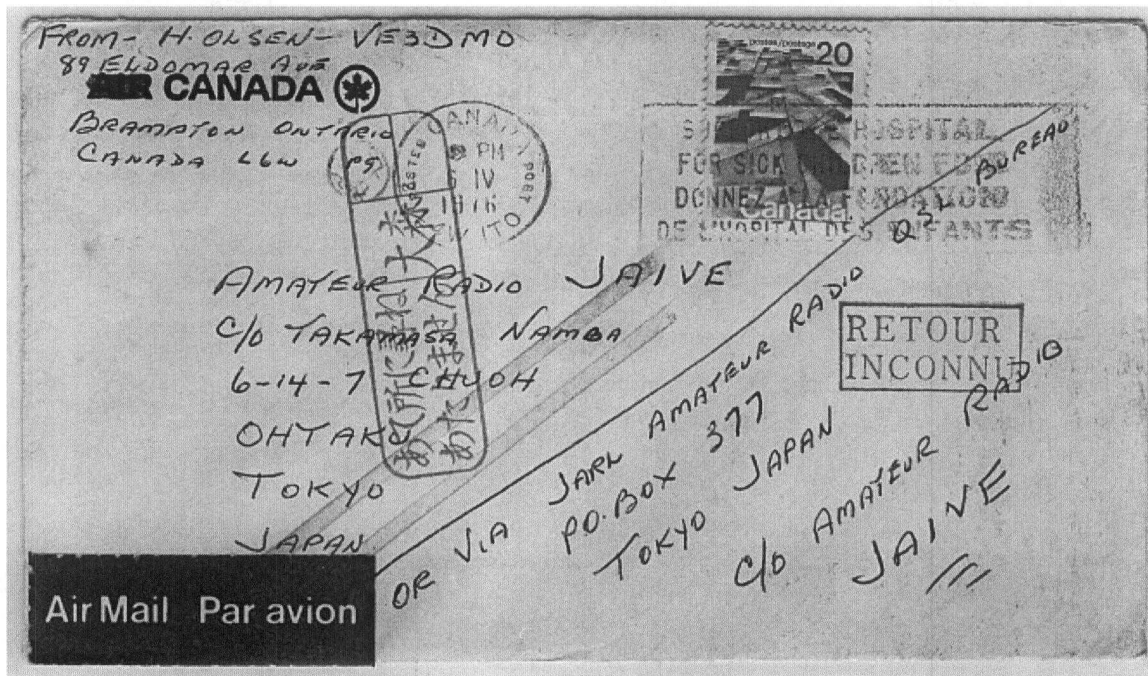
Back in September I had asked Denny for some tales of his father's flying career and Denny kindly responded with the following short story.

On one flight north in 1947 or 1948 we were flying with Ernie Boffa in the C.P.A. Norseman on our way from Yellowknife to Port Radium on Great Bear Lake - the trip was slow. As we flew along my Dad pointed out places he remembered - and it showed that he had an amazing memory - he said "we had a fuel cache on that lake"; "That's Wopmay Lake"; "That's Wopmay River"; "good fishing in that lake"; "I had to land there to fix my engine one time" - remember that this was 10 years after he had flown in that part of Canada - he still knew every lake, hill & river. As we were approaching Great Bear Lake my Dad was asleep in the right front seat - my sister Joyce & I were sitting in the back on a pile of baggage - Ernie looked back at me, winked, and turned off the master switch. The engine quit, and Ernie just sat there. In a few seconds my Dad woke up, looked around, looked up, turned the switch back on and went back to sleep. Also on that trip we were leaving Port Radium - Great Bear Lake was flat as a mirror. My Dad was flying the plane and in order to get enough waves to get the plane on the step he put the aircraft in a tight turn on the lake until there were waves, then turned and flew across the waves and we were up. From there we went to Gunbarrel Inlet for a week of great fishing - my first fish was an 18 lb Lake Trout. Good memories.

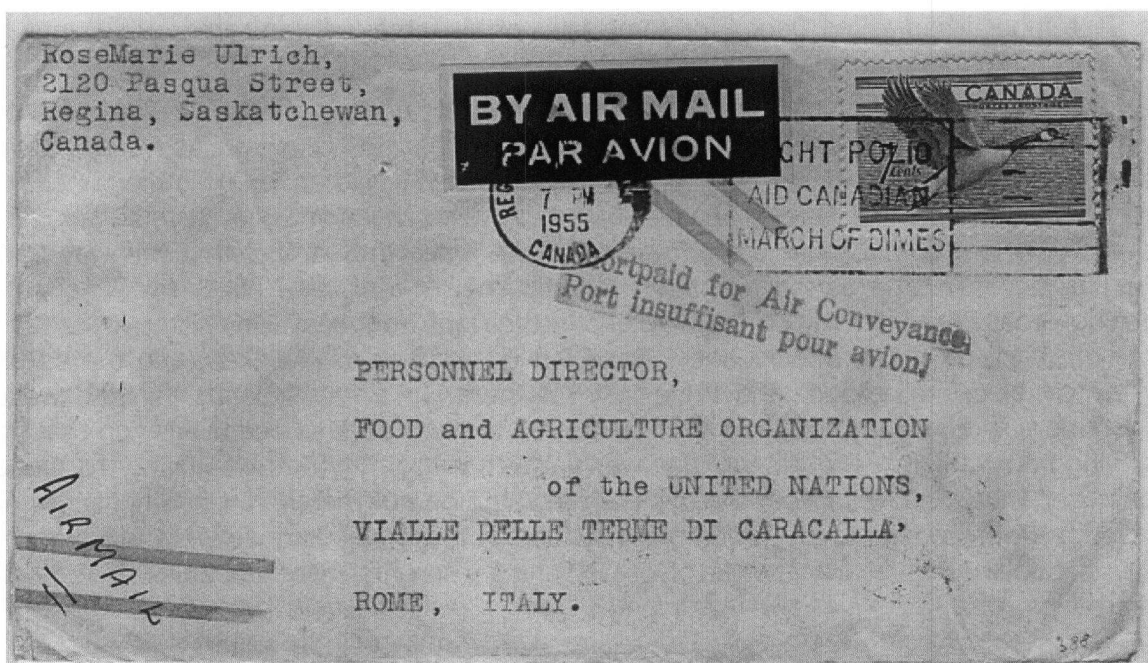
Thanks Denny!

Jusqu'a Airmail

French for "as far as", jusqu'a markings typically are found in the form of two parallel bars striking out an airmail endorsement on the cover to indicate that there was to be no further carriage by air service. Such markings are typically found on returned, re-directed or short paid covers like those shown below.



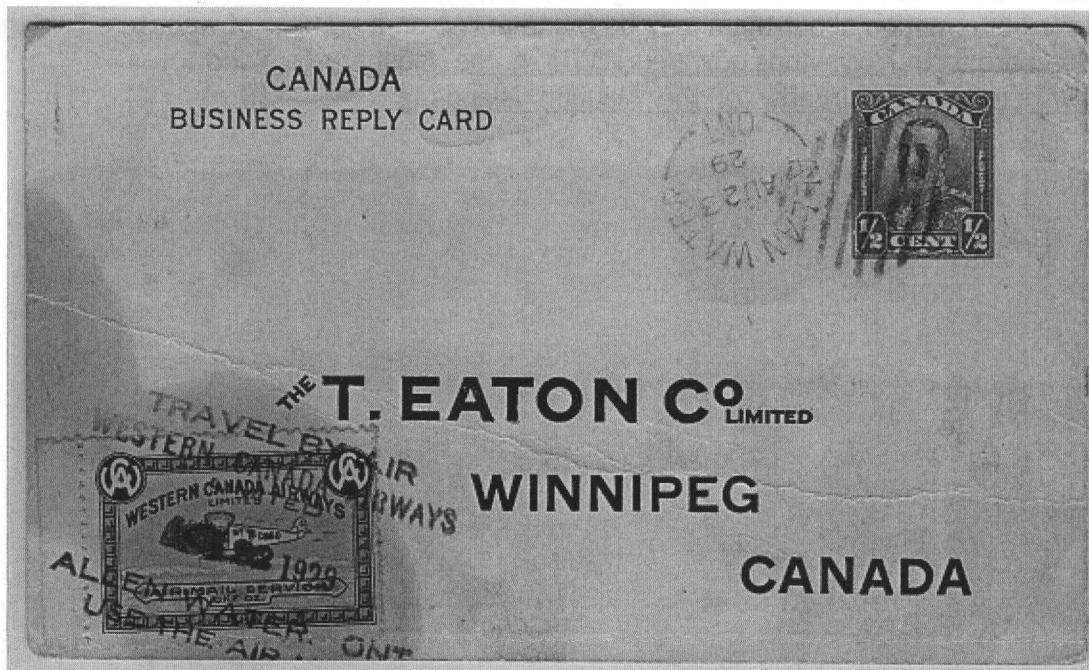
Above is a cover sent to Japan and returned to Canada with the airmail endorsement struck out by the Japanese post office. This is the latest example of a jusqu'a marking on a Canadian cover that I have seen. Does anyone else have a later one?



Here is an example of a cover that was meant to be conveyed by airmail to Italy but was short paid and had jusqu'a markings applied to cancel the airmail service. It is also hand stamped "Shortpaid for Air Conveyance" and would have been sent by surface mail.

Postcard Carried by Western Canada Airways

Below is a business reply postcard that was posted from Allanwater, Ontario to the T. Eaton Company in Winnipeg on August 23, 1929. The card was sent requesting the company's catalogue and to ensure its timely delivery the sender had it carried by Western Canada Airways (WCA) and applied the airline's 10¢ airmail stamp to pay for the service. There is no Winnipeg or other postmark on the card. While I have many commercial examples of covers carried by WCA, this is the first such postcard that I have encountered.



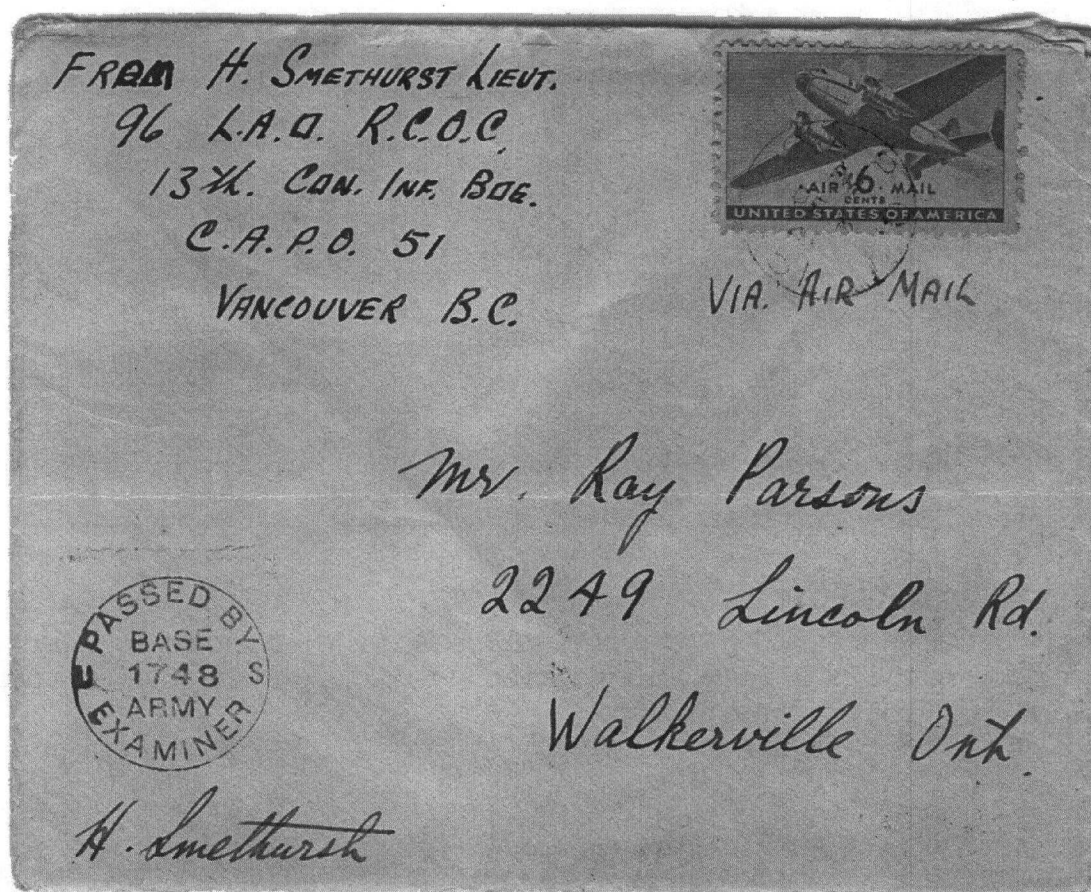
Airmail Special Delivery

Airmail was often used in conjunction with special delivery service in order to ensure expedited delivery and below is a typical example of such a cover. At the time, the rate would have been 10¢ for special delivery plus 6¢ per ounce for airmail.



Airmail from Canadian Army Post Office (C.A.P.O.) 51

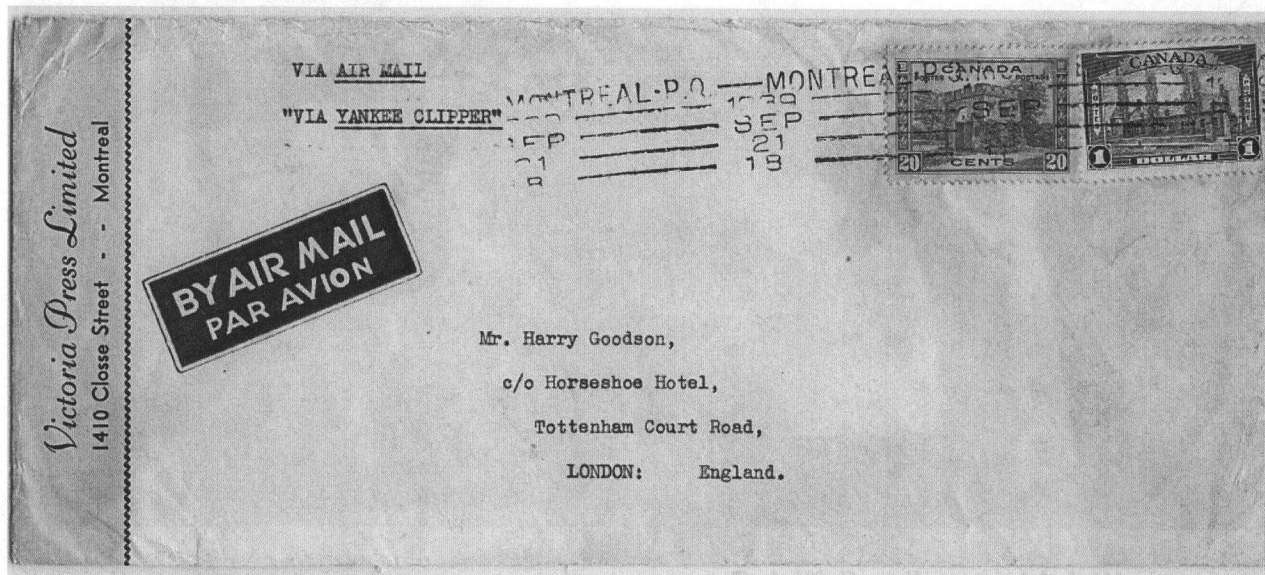
During the Second World War Japanese forces invaded and occupied the islands of Attu and Kiska in the Aleutian archipelago of Alaska in June of 1942. The islands were recaptured in 1943 by the U.S. Army beginning with landings on Attu in May and then on Kiska in August. The latter was undertaken with the help of 5,300 Canadian soldiers of the 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade, although the island was taken without a fight as the Japanese had earlier evacuated their forces. The battles in the Aleutians are an interesting yet poorly known part of the fight in the Pacific and more detailed information about them may be found online on a number of websites. Two that I found helpful are: http://www.nps.gov/aleu/WWII_in_the_Aleutians.htm and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Aleutian_Islands.



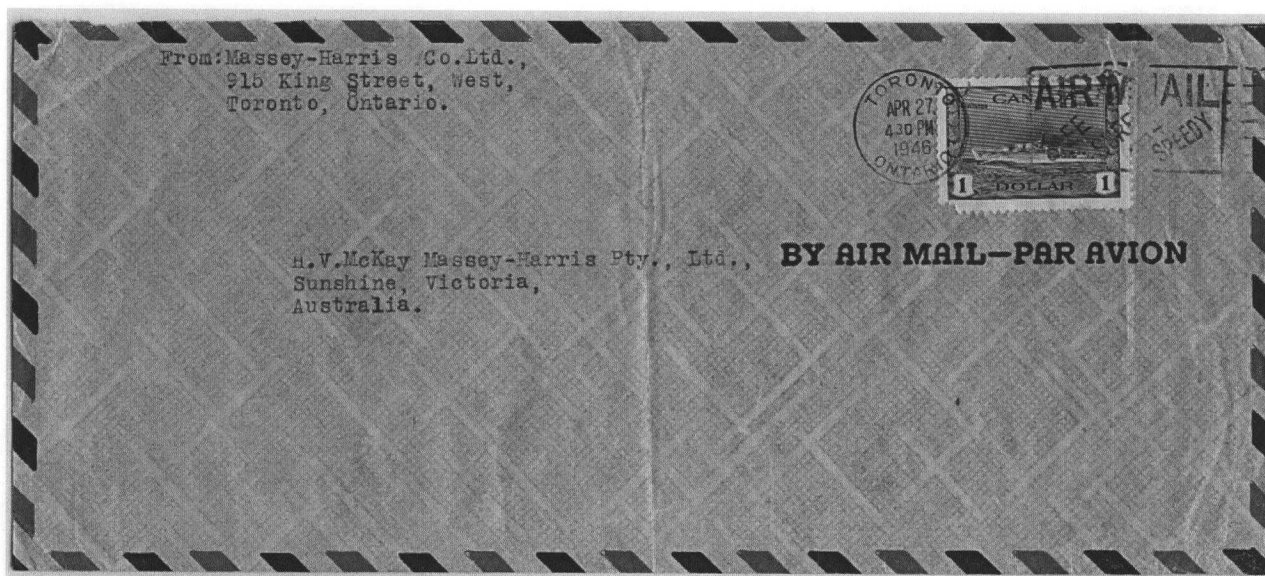
C.A.P.O. 51 was established on Kiska Island to support the Canadian forces and operated from August 17, 1943 to January 12, 1944. Mail from this office was handled through the U.S. postal system and letters were therefore censored by U.S. authorities and U.S. postage used. Above is an airmail cover sent on December 6, 1943 by a Canadian serviceman and bears both U.S. postage and a U.S. censor marking. The envelope contains a Christmas card wishing Seasons Greetings.

Multiple Weight Airmail Rates

While they may be more challenging to mount, larger #10 covers are often the only way to show higher airmail rates. Below are a few such covers, beginning with this September 1939 quadruple weight (4 x 30¢ per ½ ounce) airmail cover from Montreal to the UK. The 30¢ per ½ ounce rate was in effect from June 24, 1939 to October 31, 1946 after which the rate became 15¢ per ¼ ounce.

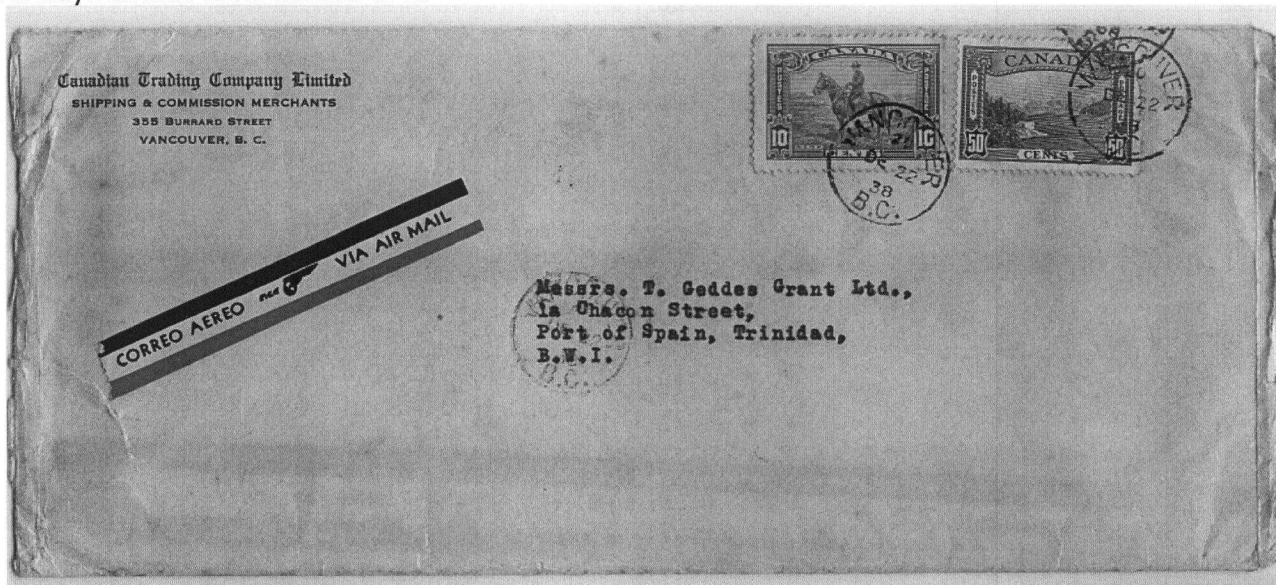


Below is a double weight airmail rate cover to Australia (2 x 50¢ per ½ ounce). The 50¢ per ounce rate was in effect from March 1 to October 31, 1946 only and is a nice way to show the proper single use of the \$1 Destroyer stamp.



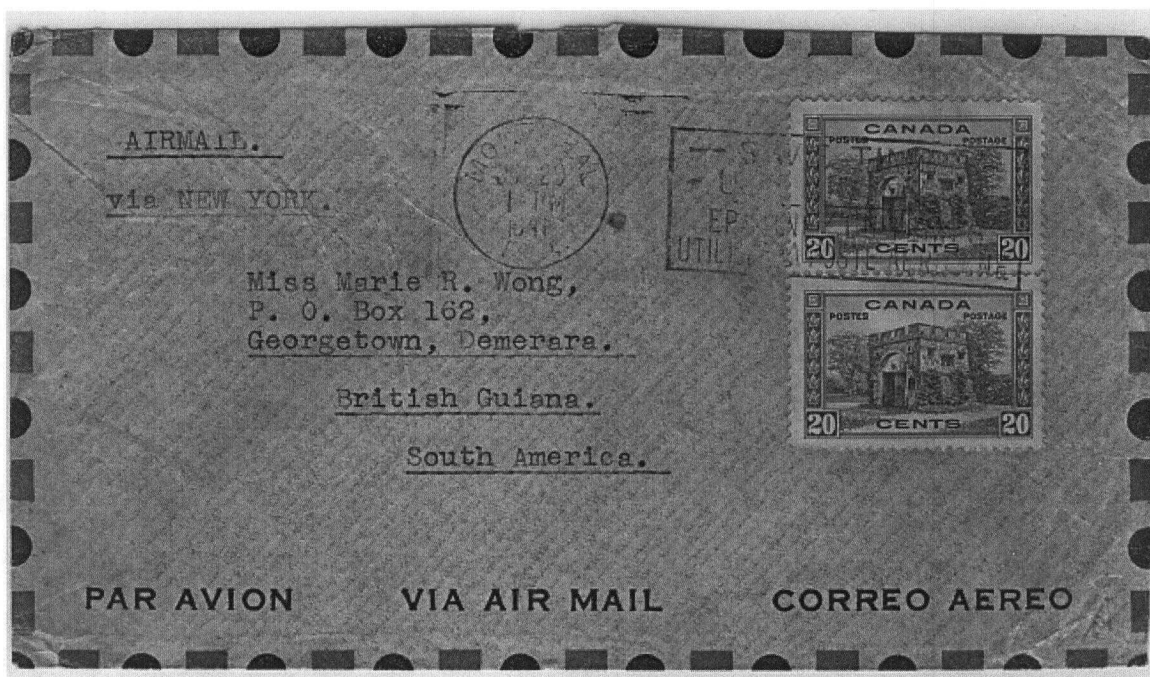
Multiple Weight Airmail Rates - Cont'd

Mailed from Vancouver on December 22, 1938, here is an example of a six times weight airmail rate cover to Trinidad. The rate was 10¢ per ¼ ounce and so with 60¢ in postage, this cover weighed 1½ ounces. It has an arrival backstamp dated December 28 and has a nice Pan Am Airways airmail label affixed to it.



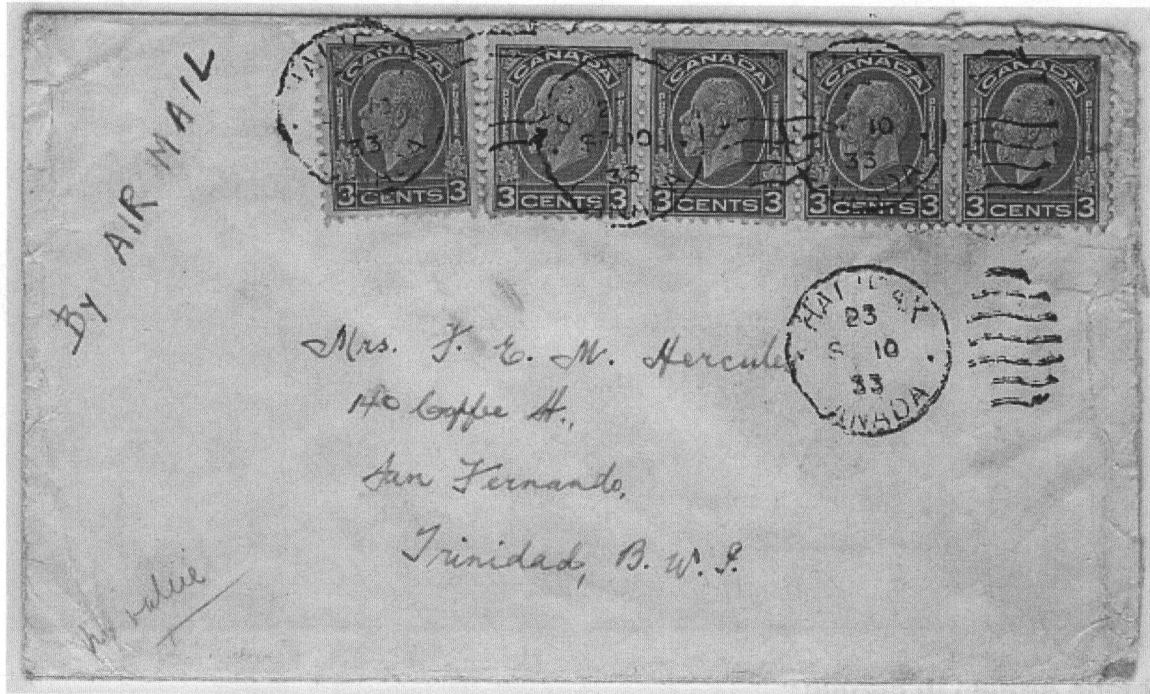
Quadruple Weight Airmail to British Guiana

Not all multiple weight rate airmail covers are found as #10 envelopes, as evidenced by the cover below. The rate for airmail to British Guiana was 10¢ per ¼ ounce from December 15, 1937 to June 30, 1953 and so this cover, with 40¢ postage, weighed 1 ounce. Note the endorsement "via New York".

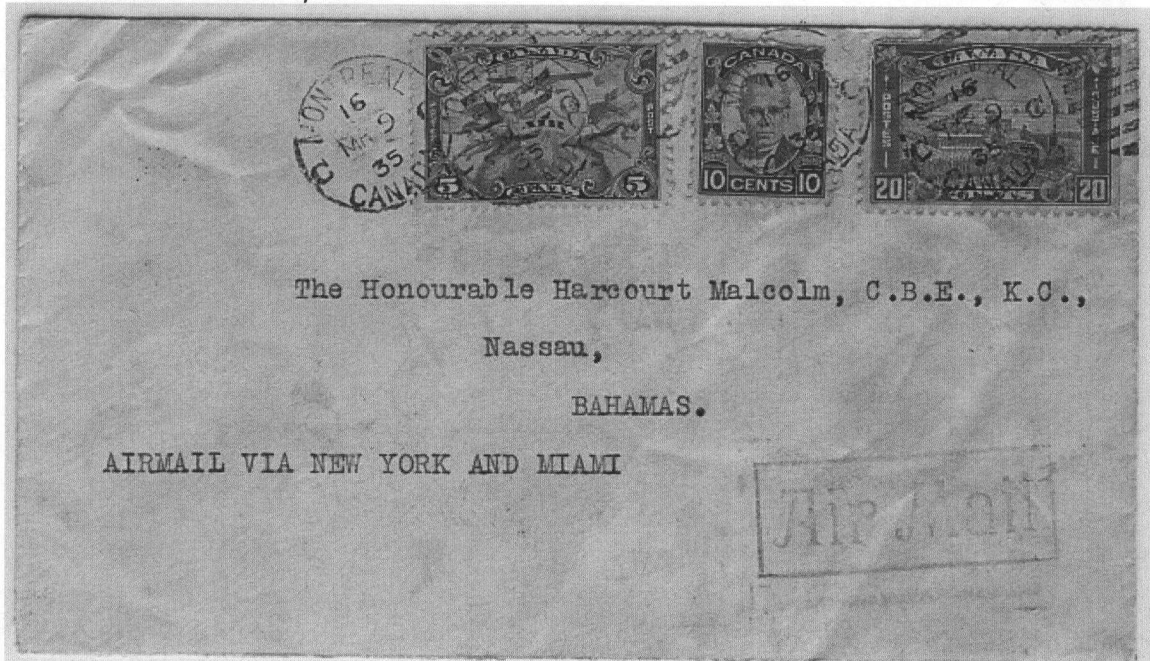


Early Airmail to the Caribbean

Airmail service to the Caribbean began in early 1931 with the introduction of service by Pan Am Airways through Miami. Beginning February 2, 1931 to June 30, 1934 the rate to the West Indies was 15¢ per ½ ounce and below is an example of a cover mailed from Canada to Trinidad at that rate. Sent on September 10, 1933 the cover is backstamped September 16.

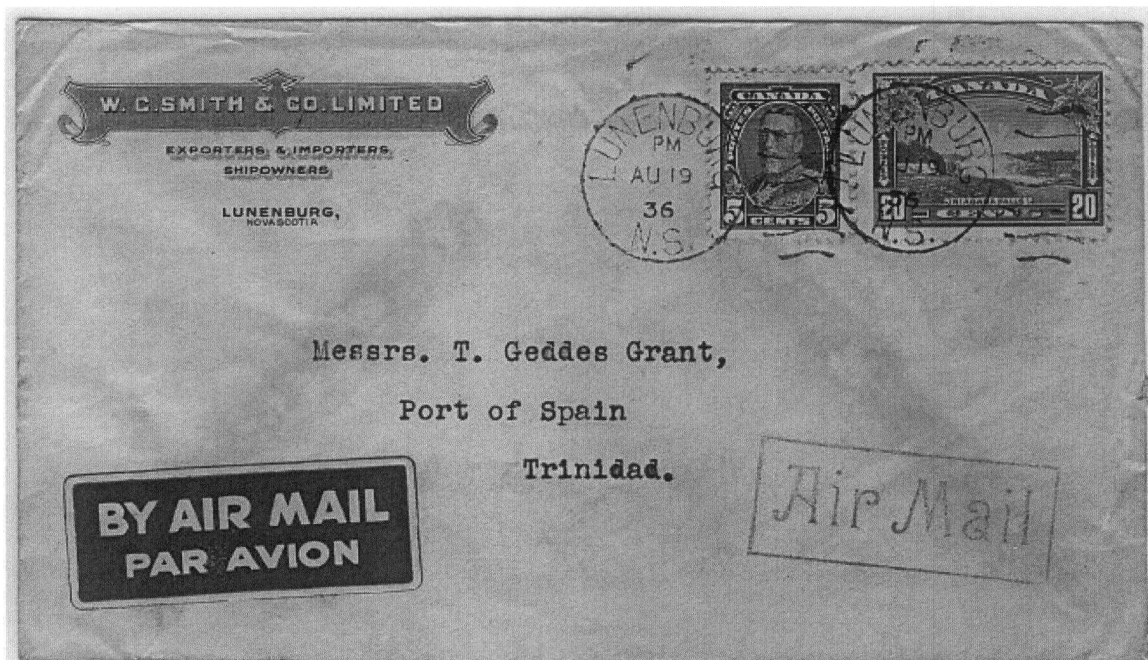


On July 1, 1934 the airmail rate to the Caribbean was increased to 35¢ per ½ ounce. This rate lasted just one year until June 30, 1935 and below is an example of a cover posted from Montreal to The Bahamas on March 9, 1935.



Early Airmail to the Caribbean - Cont'd

On July 1, 1935 the airmail rate to the West Indies was lowered to 25¢ per ½ ounce and below is a cover mailed to Trinidad in 1936 that reflects this rate. This rate lasted until December 14, 1937 when the rate was changed to 10¢ per ¼ ounce, a rate which lasted for over 14 years.



Short Paid Airmail to Europe

Here is a short paid airmail cover sent to Switzerland at the 10¢ per ounce rate for airmail service by all means available in North America and in Europe, although the trip across the Atlantic was still made by ship. Deficient by 4¢, this cover was rated T/40 centimes due.

