

# THE CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIST



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Cover: Curtiss HS-2L landing in the rain and dark at Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec, during the first Trans-Canada flight in October 1920.

**Volume XXXVI, Number 3**

American Air Mail Society - Canadian Chapter  
 Royal Philatelic Society of Canada - Chapter No. 187  
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 FISA (Federation Internationale des Societes Aerophilateliques) - Club Member

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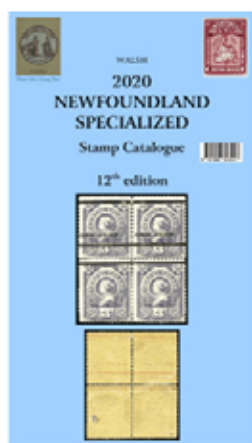
Index - Gord Mallett - (see contacts above)

**CAS CALENDAR**

**EDMONTON SPRING NATIONAL SHOW 2021** . Usually held at the end March. For more information see [www.edmonton-stampclub.com](http://www.edmonton-stampclub.com)

**ORAPEX 2021** - May 1st and 2nd at the RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Dr., Ottawa. The theme for ORAPEX 2021 is "Topicals, Thematics and Illustrated Mail". For more information see [www.orapex.ca](http://www.orapex.ca) THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CAS WILL BE HELD DURING ORAPEX.

**ROYAL 2021 ROYALE** - will be held in Peterborough, Ontario, June 25th - 27th. See [www.rpsc.org](http://www.rpsc.org) for further information.

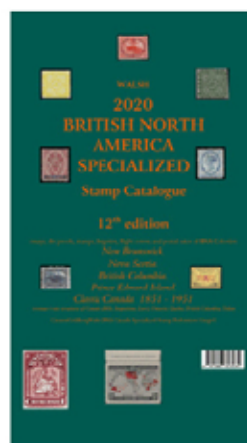


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In 2013 the Winnipeg Philatelic Society held Royal 2013, as part of which the CAS held its very successful aerophilatelic symposium. - In 2021 the Winnipeg Philatelic Society is planning to hold BNAPEX 2021, and has invited the CAS to meet during the show. I very much hope the show can be held as scheduled, and that many CAS members can meet up again there.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

To say this has been a challenging year is an understatement! The Covid-19 pandemic is continuing to disrupt our daily routines, and there are fears of a second wave oncoming. I urge all members to take care and practice social distancing. Let's stay healthy and use extreme caution as the world re-opens.

With the ongoing pandemic, isn't it nice to have a hobby to fall back on. While philatelic events and shows are being cancelled or re-scheduled, this doesn't mean we cannot connect. Now is a good time to write articles, or share new finds through emailing philatelic friends. The journal has been a wonderful

escape and I thank Chris and Paul for their dedication in producing our wonderful journal.

One note I need to remind members. A lot of spam email has been generated in my name and other executive names listed on the website. Please note, these spammers use alternate email addresses. Do not click on any links provided in these emails.

Be safe in these trying times.

**Steve Johnson**

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## EDITOR'S REPORT and COVID 19 UPDATE

I hope that all readers are doing okay in this era of Covid 19.

The spread of Covid 19 in Canada has greatly eased since the last issue of this journal. This is generally attributed to the following of strict social distancing rules, which included the curtailment of large gatherings. These rules have led to the cancellation of all the remaining philatelic shows for 2020.

The number of people working from home, staying home with children because schools are closed, and/or self isolating, led to an enormous expansion of home shopping. - Canada Post reported that it delivered 75 per cent more parcels in June this year than it did in June 2019. This also led to an increase in complaints about slow delivery, which by June 11th became a major story on the national

Global News network, with the title "*Where's your delivery? Canada Post backlog amid COVID-19 keeps customers guessing.*"

The delays also applied to letter mail within Canada, and between Canada and the United States. Some international services were also slow, and many were suspended completely at the request of the receiving Postal Operator, or due to the lack of available transportation. By the beginning of August the mail situation within Canada seems to have improved, but there are still 114 countries to which there is no international mail service.

Hopefully everybody will keep safe, and things will have improved in general by the next issue of this journal.

**Chris Hargreaves**

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## ZOOM DAY OF AEROPHILATELY - SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1ST

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Our 27th Annual Day of Aerophilately is scheduled for November 1st, and we've been exploring what can be done in this era of COVID 19 restrictions.

We are planning to hold a meeting in two parts, in conjunction with the BNAPS Air Mail Study Group:

- a Zoom meeting from 11.30 to 1.00. - Hopefully this will attract members who can't normally participate in the meeting in Toronto.
- if the Vincent Graves Greene Foundation building is open, we will simultaneously hold our usual meeting at 10 Summerhill Avenue,

Toronto, but in accordance with social distancing and all other required COVID precautions. - If the physical meeting goes ahead, we will start at 11.15, participate in the Zoom meeting from the VGGF, and then go for lunch. If we can't hold the physical meeting, everybody can participate in the Zoom meeting from their home.

If you are interested in participating in either meeting, please email [hargreavescp@sympatico.ca](mailto:hargreavescp@sympatico.ca) so that you can be kept informed regarding arrangements.

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## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Welcome to two new members:

#500 Piyush Khaitan of Mumbai, India

#501 David L DuBois of East Falmouth MA, USA

## IN MEMORIAM - DON FRASER

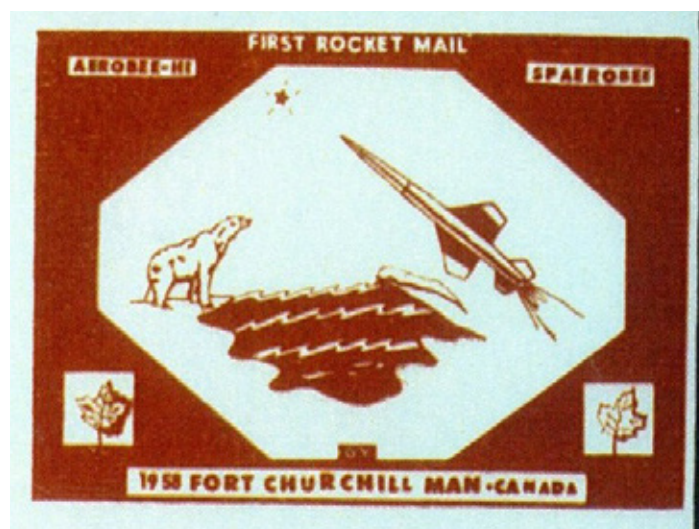
**December 8, 1936 - March 2, 2020**

Don was employed with the Federal Government of Canada as a Draughtsperson. His interests included volunteering with the Scouts, singing in choirs and the Winnipeg Male Chorus, Masonic Lodge associations, and philately.

Don was a very active member of The Winnipeg Philatelic Society, and of the British North America Philatelic Society. At BNAPEX 2018 he received the BNAPS Order of the Beaver Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of the six books he wrote on British North America Philately. These included Postmarks of Manitoba Prior to 1900 which was published as part of BNAPS exhibit series.

Don travelled to over forty BNAPEXs, and I enjoyed meeting him at several of them. He often produced unusual items to show me, which led to very interesting discussions and research. - At BNAPEX 2008 in Quebec City he asked about a cover with the "D.w." handstamp, which triggered the enquiry which lasted for several years. At BNAPEX 2011 in North Bay he produced these rocket mail labels from Fort Churchill:

I later found an article about the rocket mail labels among Don Amos's research binders, that Don Fraser had arranged to be donated to the CAS library some years earlier. That article was published in the December 2012 issue of our journal, and I am reprinting here in memory of Don Fraser and of his colleague in Winnipeg Don Amos. (Cont. next page)



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## First Outer Space Rocket Mail in Canada

By Robert Schoendorf

Visitors to the Third International Philatelic Exhibition in 1936 at the Grand Central Palace, New York, probably remember the launching rack and rocket which was on display in one of the booths. These were brought over from Europe for the purpose of firing a mail rocket between Canada and the United States over Niagara Falls. A set of four vignettes was prepared in advance of this event but could not be used affixed to covers, as a permit for the firing was required, which was not forthcoming within the short time available. Thus, the first attempt to carry Rocket mail in Canada remained in the planning stage.

Experiments continued in other countries, but the complexities of building a rocket capable of traveling over a long range were so enormous that individuals with limited means at their disposal were in no position to make such progress.

The Space Age actually did not start until World War II, when under government sponsorship in Germany all resources of science and technology were pooled to develop the nucleus of the V-2. The U.S. missile program received its biggest boost after the war, with the arrival of some of Germany's top scientists at the White Sands Proving Ground at Las Cruces, N.M., and the further development of the V-2 in 1946 and 1947. To the philatelist this became also a significant milestone, as mail enclosed in these rockets by Army authorities then reached outer space for the first time in history, thus preceding the Regulus/Barbero missile flight by 13 years. This event is narrated by Dan Lang in his book, *From Hiroshima to the Moon* (Simon & Schuster).

A span of 22 years intervened until actual mail rockets were fired in Canada, experiments that were conducted within the framework of the International Geophysical Year. The far-flung studies culminated in scientific expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic on a scale never undertaken before, comprising all phases of oceanography, geology, geomorphology, glaciology, gravity, meteorology, botany, etc., from which the field crews brought back a wealth of new discoveries.

A novel aspect—probably the most important task—was the study of the upper strata, the outer space over the Arctic regions traversing new frontiers

hitherto unexplored. These experiments were carried out during the winter months of 1958 by the United States Naval Research Laboratory from a site near Fort Churchill, Manitoba, in the northern part of Canada. Instruments carried aloft on the rockets recorded the scientific and technical observations which were transmitted by radio to the ground receiving stations during the flight. These findings provided an important link in the establishment of space communications.

The first Rocket, an Aerobee-Hi No. NN3.11F was launched on February 4, 1958, at 00:1658 with twenty pieces of mail bearing a printed notation of the rocket designation number, firing date, and location. At that time the terrain was covered with a heavy blanket of snow, thwarting any immediate attempt to recover the wreckage and mail. Unfortunately, a subsequent search was also fruitless.

Illustrated with this article is the unofficial rocket vignette, depicting a rocket in flight, the North Star, a polar bear, and maple leaves. Inscriptions at top and bottom read "First Rocket Mail/Aerobee-Hi"/-"Spaerobee"/-"IGY"/-"1958 Fort Churchill, Man., Canada."

Additional dispatches were made on three further occasions, with the mail placed in the forward compartments of the rockets. Details of these are as follows, giving first the name of the Rocket, then the firing date, time, and estimated altitude:

- (1) Aerobee-Hi NN3.21 F; Nov. 24, 1958; 0024:33.5 CST, 128 miles.
- (2) Spaerobee NN10.01; Dec. 1, 1958; 1134:40.5 CST; 130 miles.
- (3) Spaerobee NN10.02; Dec. 3, 1958; 1238:44.5 CST; 146 miles.

On each envelope carried there was typed a statement identifying the rocket with the signature of the project scientist. Unfortunately, upon re-entry, the rockets impacted on the ice of Hudson Bay and the possibility of salvage became remote. It may be assumed that the writing on the envelopes and the stamps exposed to the elements were washed off and rendered undecipherable. On the other hand, it is quite likely that the fragments were found by somebody unaware of the nature of these covers who

discarded them. Of course, a recovery is still within the realm of possibility and in view of their importance, it is hoped they might still turn up.

These rocket experiments at Fort Churchill were primarily undertaken to gather scientific data, and the dispatch of covers was merely incidental.

However, the fact remains that these envelopes constitute the first rocket mail ever carried into outer space in Canada.

(Article first published in Stamps Magazine, October 28, 1961.)

## 1936: ROCKET MAIL OVER NIAGARA FALLS !

Chris Hargreaves



The rocket referred to by Robert Schoendorf in the previous article, was one developed by Gerhard Zucker.

The 1930's were a time of many experiments by "enthusiastic amateurs" with rockets, though the rockets involved were more like giant fireworks than the rockets used later in World War II and to explore space. These visionaries thought that rockets could carry mail over mountains, or to and from remote islands, or from ships at sea to the shore. To finance their experiments some of the experimenters sold covers that were carried on their rockets, then put in the mail afterwards, in the same way that early aviators had carried and created the early flight covers.

The most prolific producer of these "rocket mail" covers was Gerhard Zucker. - The photo on the next page shows Zucker describing one of his rockets outside Berlin in 1933. Zucker also gave some public demonstrations, but these tended to be failures. As a result, there was speculation as to whether Gerhard Zucker was a true visionary, or a charlatan using "dummy rockets" to sell his "stamps" and covers?

In spite of the controversy, Gerhard Zucker was invited to TIPEX in New York, and was supposed

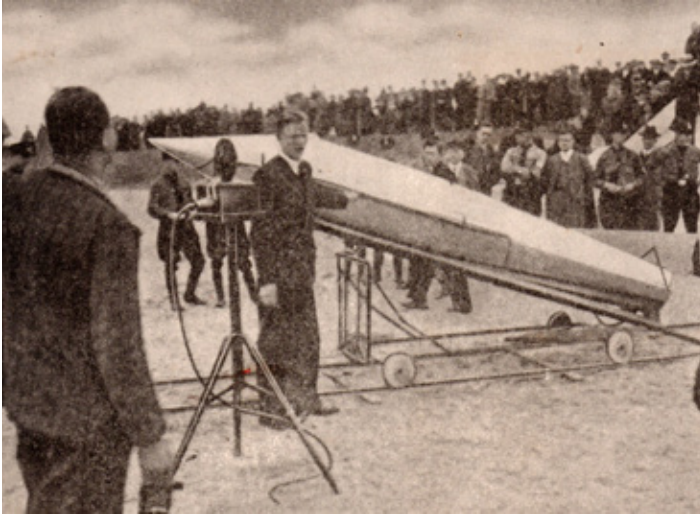
to demonstrate a mail carrying rocket flight over Niagara Falls. But: the Gestapo stopped him from leaving Germany! - There are several conflicting theories as to why this happened. It may have been because the German government didn't want Zucker drawing attention to rocket flights, at a time when they had begun their secret experiments at Peenemunde. However, it may just have been because Zucker was being investigated for fraud in connection with some of his earlier covers.

In order to fulfill Gerhard Zucker's contractual agreements, Karl Hennig took Zucker's rocket, stamps and covers to the show. - A series of 10 rocket stamps were sold at TIPEX, as were covers such as the one above. The "stamp" states "ROCKET FLIGHT FROM CANADA TO USA THE NIAGARA FALLS MAY 1936".

In the previous article Robert Schoendorf, who acted as interpreter for Karl Hennig at TIPEX, and went on to become a very respected aerophilatelist, stated that: "a permit for the firing was required which was not forthcoming within the short time available. Thus, the first attempt to carry Rocket Mail in Canada remained in the planning stage."



In view of the controversy surrounding flights that Zucker claimed to have made in Europe, I decided to research this "attempted" flight over Niagara Falls, before BNAPEX 2015 that was held in Niagara Falls.



As part of my research I contacted several librarians:

- Cathy Roy at the Niagara Falls (Ontario) Public Library, and Courtney of the Niagara Falls (New York) Public Library, both checked their local history records and newspapers from the time, but found no mention of a proposed rocket flight. Given Niagara Falls past delight in all forms of advertising and publicity stunts, I would have expected some sort of announcement regarding a rocket flight, if it had been seriously proposed!
- I also had help from Kathy Hartley of the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation Library in Toronto, and Tara Murray of the American Philatelic Research Library in Bellefonte. They both checked the philatelic journals they had from around 1936, but found no mention of a proposed rocket-mail flight. They also found no mention of the rocket-mail

stamps and covers being sold at TIPEX, or advertisements for them.

I then came across a letter from Karl Hennig Junior to Ed Richardson, stating that: "The USA and the Canadian Rocket starts took place!! Mr. Hennig remembers perfectly well, because he was present." Kathy found the original reference in a column called "The Hollow Tree" that Ed wrote for Popular Stamps in January 1957.

Then Tara found a Rocket-Post Pricelist produced by the Hennigs in the late 1940's, which described Zucker's covers, and stated that: "The first postal rocket start took place in connection with the TIPEX on 12th of May 1936 in the surroundings of the aerodrome of New York".

But either the Hennig's claim that the rocket start did take place, or Schoendorf's statement that it was planned but did not take place, must be false!

Logic suggests that the claim that the rocket start took place is false. - Why would they make a rocket flight and then not tell anybody about it? Why would they tell their interpreter Robert Schoendorf that it hadn't happened?

But Karl Hennig Junior and Robert Schoendorf were both repeating information told to them by Karl Hennig Senior. The evidence suggests that what Hennig Senior told Robert Schoendorf about a planned flight may not have been "the whole truth" either!

I am left wondering how serious Hennig Senior's preparations for the planned flights were? If he actually applied for a permit, how hard did he try to get one?

*Many thanks to Don Fraser, George Dresser, Hans Steinbock, Cathy Roy, Courtney of the Niagara Falls (New York) Public Library, Tara Murray, Kathy Hartley, Gene Fricks (editor of the Collectors Club Philatelist), Cheryl Ganz and Herb Trenchard for their help with my research.*

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## AMCN2 EDITOR'S REPORT

**Chris Hargreaves**

Matt Heller is the new chair of the American Air Mail Society's Publications Committee, and will be taking over publication of the revised edition of the Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland.

Many thanks to Vickie Canfield-Peters for all the work she has done on AMCN2 over several years.

### AMCN2 Section 16 - Progress, but help still needed!!

**By Mike Street**

CAS Members, in The Canadian Aerophilatelist No. 121, December 2019 I asked for your help in updating Section 16, Canadian Airport and Air Mail Field Cancels, for the new second edition of the Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland (AMCN2). Several members, particularly Christiane Faucher, Luc Frève, Denise Guimond, Dave Hanes, Kevin O'Reilly, Grégoire Teyssier and Bob Toombs have located or supplied many post-mark images, and more are needed. I'll return to that shortly, but first here's what has happened in the eight Covid 19 interrupted months since I wrote last.

The more I got into this the more I realized how difficult it must have been for Bill Robinson, J. F. Wilsdon and Joe Purcell to have gathered all the information that went into the AMCN1 list. All, or virtually all, of their work was done without the Internet, and none of their work was done with the kind of scanning and image processing tools we have today. A simply amazing effort!









It was also obvious that the AMCN2 version of the Canadian Airport and Air Mail Field Cancels must be fully illustrated so users of the list don't have to keep referring back to a set of basic illustrations to see if the cancel they are looking at may or may not be in the list. It became clear too that, because of the huge increase in AMF type cancels identified since AMCN1 was printed 23 years ago, a numbering system based on five different lettered categories needed improvement.

The results of these different conclusions are shown in the draft – repeat draft - table on the next page. Each different cancel is illustrated. The numbering system now uses the first four letters of the name of the city at which the airmail facility is or was located, for instance "MONC" for Moncton, NB and "MONT" for Montreal. When the Section 16 revision is complete, the country will likely be divided into four sections – the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec, Ontario, and the Western provinces. If a cancel was identified in AMCN1, its number is given in the new listing. Provision for Early and Late dates is also made. There is also a line for explanatory comments.

Last, but definitely not least, we come to the size of the Section 16 listing in the new format. The sample that follows covers eight (8) different cancels and takes more or less a full letter-size (8.5×11") page. The original AMCN1 list includes over 325 different cancels. At the rate of the sample which follows, the revised Section 16 will take more than 40 pages! What to do???? Answer – the intention is to put the completely new Section 16 on line. A printed copy may eventually be made available, but that decision is far down the road. The electronic advantage, of course, is that an on-line version can be updated as new information comes in.

I wrote at the beginning that more help is required. To complete the work, I need images of post-marks used at smaller cities such as, Halifax-Dartmouth, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton and Victoria; and at small airports – Brantford, Windsor, Lethbridge and Whitehorse - for instance. Clear, sharp Jpeg (.jpg) images at 300DPI are preferred. Dimensions of cancels would be appreciated. Scanning and return of numbers of covers/pieces can also be arranged for collectors who don't have that capability. I would also like to hear from the person or persons who purchased the AMF collection of the late Murray Heifetz. Please contact me by email at: [mikestreet1@gmail.com](mailto:mikestreet1@gmail.com) or by phone at 613-591-8471 or by regular mail at: Unit 105, 1136 Maritime Way, Kanata, ON K2K 0M1. Thanks in advance for any and all help.

## AMCN2 Chapter 16 Airmail Field Cancellations Revision – Sample Layout CAS124

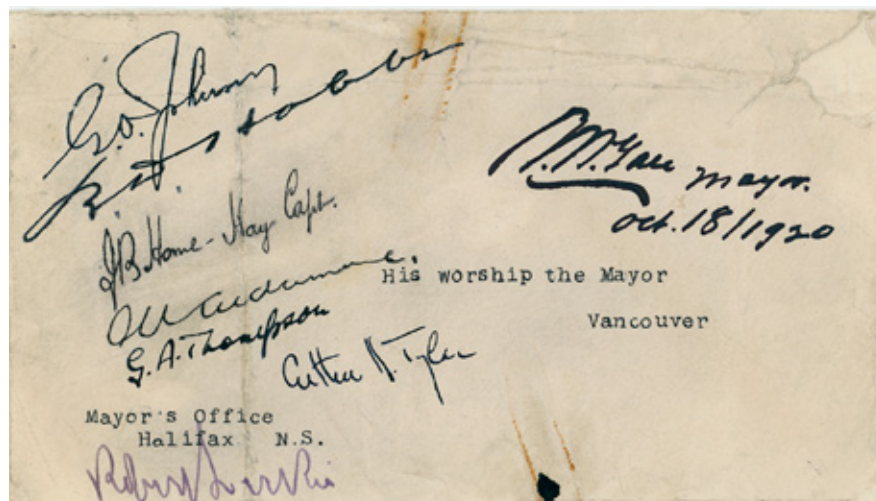
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GAND-aa	Exact Text: GANDER - A.M.F. / NFLD. Type: CDS Font: SansSerif Dimensions: EKD-LKD: 1955Feb18 - AMCN1 No.: N-5 Comment:	
GOOS-aa	Exact Text: GOOSE AIRPORT STATION A / NFLD Type: machine, 7-wavy line Font: SansSerif; UC Ltr size: Dimensions: EKD-LKD: 1967-78 AMCN1 No.: N-36 Comment:	
MONC-xx	Exact Text: MONCTON A.M.F. / N.B. Type: CDS Font: SansSerif; UC Ltr size: Dimensions: EKD-LKD: (1940-55) AMCN1 No.: M-8 Comment: At least three hammers over time span	
MONT-aa	Exact Text: Montreal A.M.F. Canada. / No. 27 Type: Lg Circle Font: SansSerif; UC Ltr size: Dimensions: EKD-LKD: (1961-67) AMCN1 No.: Q-19 Comment: part lower case letters, period after Canada	
MONT-bb	Exact Text: MONTREAL-A.M.F. / P.Q. Type: CDS Font: SansSerif; UC Ltr size: Dimensions: EKD-LKD: 1950-1970 (multiple hammers) AMCN1 No.: Unlisted Comment: Dash between Montreal & A.M.F.	
MONT-cc	Exact Text: MONTREAL-A.M.F. / P.Q. Type: CDS Font: SansSerif; UC Ltr size: Dimensions: EKD-LKD: (1939-75) (multiple hammers) AMCN1 No.: Q-12 Comment: Small dot between Montreal & A.M.F.	
WIND-mm	Exact Text: WALKER AIRPORT / AIR MAIL SERVICE / Windsor, Ontario. Type: Oval Font: SansSerif; UC Ltr size: Dimensions: EKD-LKD: 30Jun1930-28Nov1930 (1930-31) AMCN1 No.: O-75 Comment:	
WINN-nn	Exact Text: AIRPORT / No. / Winnipeg, Man. Type: Lg Circle Font: SansSerif; UC Ltr size: Dimensions: EKD-LKD: AMCN1 No.: W-90A Comment: No. 2 known	

## FIRST TRANSCANADA FLIGHT HALIFAX TO VANCOUVER 7th to 17th October 1920

**A description of the flight written by Dick Malott for the 50th anniversary in 1970, with additional information from John Orr of the Shearwater Aviation Museum.**

The development of aircraft capabilities and technical facilities progressed rapidly during World War I. The applicability of aircraft to Canada to improve transportation, communication and freight handling had to be proven. Many returned Air Force veterans from WWI connected with aviation in Canada were most anxious to effect a Trans-Canada flight from East to West. The opportunity came in 1920 despite the fact that aviation facilities in Canada were very limited.

*(Below) Fairey III C seaplane G-CYCF on take-off from Canadian Air Board Station Dartmouth 7 October 1920 on the first leg of the Trans-Canada flight. (Credit: DND Directorate of History and Heritage.)*



Cover containing letter from the Mayor of Halifax to the Mayor of Vancouver carried on the Trans-Canada flight. - The letter enclosed is shown on the next page. [Credit: City of Vancouver Archives.]

This aircraft had initially been developed for a non-stop Trans-Atlantic flight. - It was initially planned to use it for a 24 hour, non-stop flight from Halifax to Winnipeg, but it was found to be underpowered to take off with the fuel required.



# SPARKS

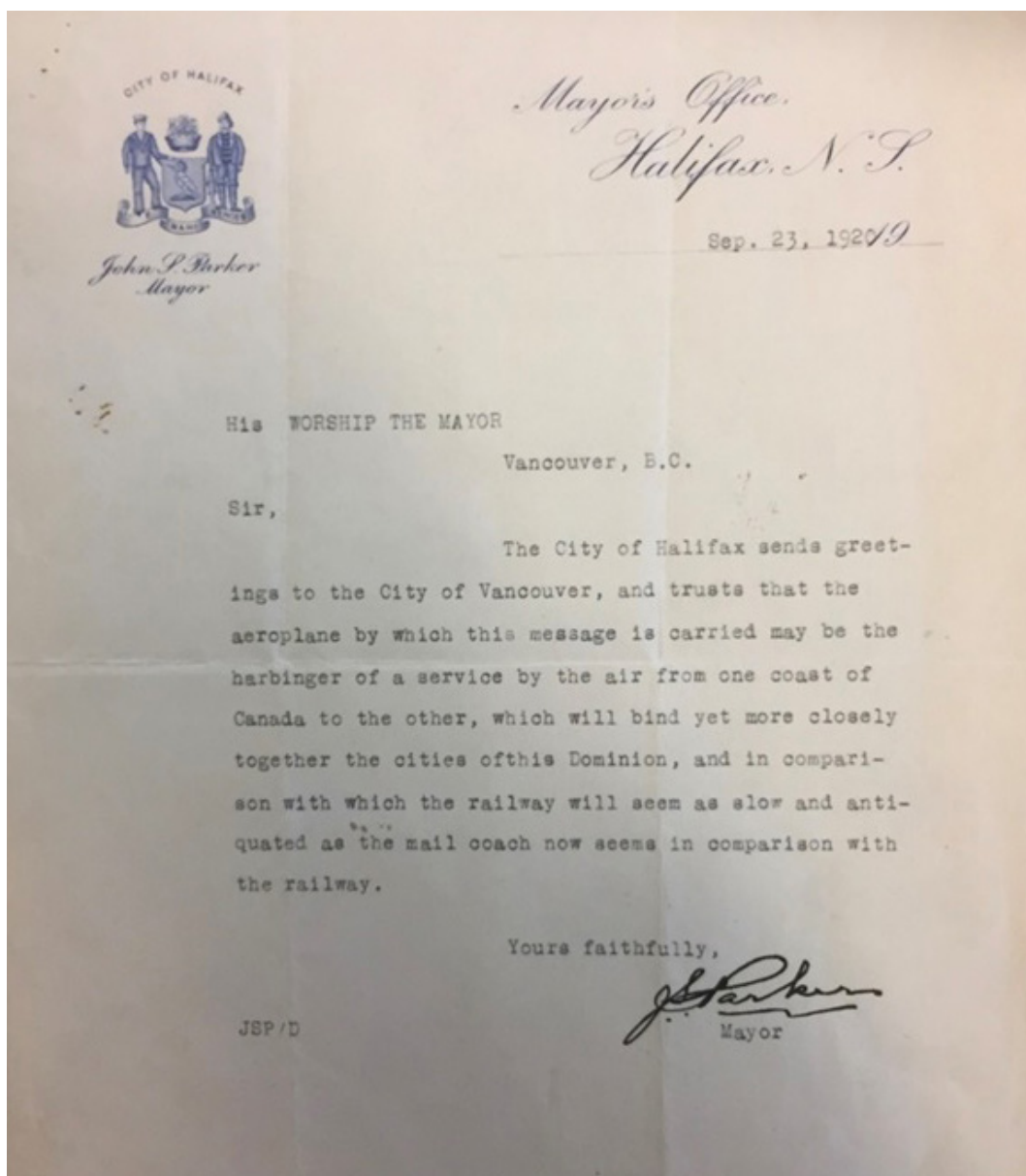
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*Letter from the Mayor of Halifax to the Mayor of Vancouver carried on the Trans-Canada flight.  
(Credit: The City of Vancouver Archives.)*

On 12 August 1920, Wing Commander J.S. Scott, Superintendent of the Certificate Branch of the Air Board, requested from the Air Board that approval be given for a transcontinental flight from Halifax to

Vancouver "to demonstrate the feasibility of such a flight from the commercial point of view; to prove the possibility of a fast trip from coast to coast without undue strain on the pilots or machines; and to serve as recruiting propaganda for the Canadian Air Force, and to stimulate an interest in aviation by commercial firms and the public generally".

## INDEX to THE CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIST

The Index catalogues the contents of The Canadian Aerophilatelist, beginning with the July 1985 inaugural issue.

By using the Find function any name, keyword, phrase or The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland

catalogue number can be utilized to locate pertinent articles.

The most recently updated Index is available from Gord Mallett [ [gdmall@telus.net](mailto:gdmall@telus.net) ]. There is no charge for the index.



*Curtiss HS-2L landing in the rain and dark at Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec, during the first Trans-Canada flight in October 1920.*

*[This painting by Robert Bradford is part of a series of eighteen paintings depicting historically significant aircraft and events, that he produced in the 1960s for the then Canada Aviation Museum.]*

Approval was given by the Air Board and W/C Scott was put in charge of arranging for landing fields and mooring, gasoline and oil supplies, wireless communication, and coordination with local civilian authorities. Ten sites suitable for night flying and ten sites with mooring facilities were prepared. All the provinces and the principal cities en route were invited to send letters of greeting among themselves and many did. All correspondence was forwarded to the Canadian Air Board Station, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, the starting point of the flight.

The flying of this operation was to be shared by the two other branches of the Air Board—the Flying Operations Branch supervised by W/C R. Leckie, DSO, DSC, DFC (later Air Marshall R. Leckie, CB, DSO, DSC, DFC, CD, Chief of the Air Staff,

RCAF); and the Canadian Air Force commanded by Air Commodore A.K. Tylee, OBE, W/C Leckie and his personnel were to fly the segment Halifax to Winnipeg, and the CAF were to fly the segment from Winnipeg across the Canadian Rockies to Vancouver.

On 7 October 1920 at 8:00 a.m. the Fairey seaplane G-CYCF took off from Dartmouth for Ottawa with W/C Leckie and S/L Hobbs as crew. Aboard the aircraft was the bag of official correspondence with letters to be dropped along the route. The Fairey Seaplane was forced to land at Whelpley's Point, N.B. on the Saint John River due to the loss of the engine cowling weakened and loosened by turbulent weather over the Bay of Fundy. In landing the Fairey Seaplane, the propellor, an undercarriage strut, and a float were damaged, necessitating the requirement for a replacement aircraft from Dartmouth Air Station.



*Felixstowe F3 flying boat G-CYBT at Sault Ste. Marie 9 October 1920 (Credit: DND Directorate of History and Heritage.)*

Squadron Leader A.B. Shearer, the commander of the Dartmouth Air Station, flew the replacement aircraft, an HS2L flying boat G-CYAG to Whelpley's Point. S/L Shearer handed the HS2L over to Leckie and Hobbs who took off immediately for Fredericton, N.B. At 6:10 p.m. they landed at Fredericton, and after refuelling they took off at 7:15 p.m. for Rivière du Loup. Despite fog and rainy weather they arrived and landed safely at Rivière du Loup at 11:05 p.m., on 7 October. On 8 October at 6:20 p.m., the crew in another aircraft, the Felixstowe F3 flying boat, took off for Ottawa. The cloud base was at 300 feet for the first part of the journey, but after Montreal was passed at 10:55 a.m. the sunshine broke through and a safe landing was made at Rockcliffe at 12:30 p.m.

An unserviceable engine delayed the aircraft's departure until 9 October. On 8 October, W/C Leckie delivered the letter of Mayor J.S. Parker of Halifax to the Mayor of Ottawa, and sent by rail the letters to Mayors of Fredericton, Quebec and Montreal. At 8:45

a.m. 9 October the F3 departed from Ottawa for Winnipeg with W/C Leckie, S/L Hobbs, mechanic Heath, and one new member, a navigator, F/L G.O. Johnson.

The F3 landed at Sault Ste Marie at 4:35 p.m. A dense fog prevented take-off on 9 October, but on Sunday 10 October at 7:30 a.m., the F3 took off for the next

point Kenora, 540 miles distant. After 8 hours and 25 minutes the F3 landed at Kenora at 3:55 p.m. A leaking engine radiator delayed take off from Kenora until 8:15 p.m. The Winnipeg River was reached and followed northwestward to Lake Winnipeg, then to the mouth of the Red River. A heavy ground mist forced the aircraft to land at Selkirk, Manitoba. The envelopes were sent on to Winnipeg to be flown westward by the CAF personnel in a DeHavilland 9, powered by a 400 hp Liberty engine. The F3 was flown on to Winnipeg on 11 October by Leckie & Hobbs who then left by train to Vancouver to await the arrival of the DH9A aircraft.

The CAF brought west four DH9A bombers which were, on 11 October, located at the following places: one at Calgary, Alberta piloted by F/L G.A. Thompson; one at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan piloted by F/L C.W. Cudemore, MC, DFC; one at St. Charles aerodrome, Winnipeg piloted by F/L J.B. Home-Hay, MC, DFC; and one, G-CYAZ, which had crashed at Winnipeg during a test flight.

## **NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE**

### **THE CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIST**

is produced quarterly in March, June,  
September and December.

If you have anything you'd like to be included in  
the next issue, please send it to the editor:

(for images, make high res tifs/jpegs - 300 dpi)

**Chris Hargreaves**

4060 Bath Road, Kingston,  
Ontario K7M 4Y4

Email: [hargreavescp@sympatico.ca](mailto:hargreavescp@sympatico.ca)  
**by November 1st.**





*DH9A used on the Trans-Canada flight. (Credit: Canadian Museum of History.)*

At 4:30 a.m., 11 October, in the DH9A G-CYAN, F/L J.B. Home-Hay, pilot, and Air Commodore A.K. Tylee, as passenger, took off for Moose Jaw. Aboard was the bag of official letters. The aircraft passed over Grenfell at 6:39 a.m. and at Regina, Saskatchewan at 7:39 a.m. However, engine trouble forced F/L Home-Hay to land at the Aerial Service Company's airfield just beyond Regina. F/L Cudemore was ordered to fly from Moose Jaw to Regina where he landed his DH9A, G-CYAJ and took off with Air Commodore Tylee at 11:00 a.m., destination Medicine Hat. There they were to meet F/L Thompson for the flight to Calgary Alberta. Cudamore landed at Medicine Hat at 1:45 p.m. and then both DH9A's took off at 3:10 p.m. for Calgary, arriving there safely at 5:10 p.m., 11 October.

The last and most dangerous leg of the Trans-Canada flight was to be flown in the DH9A, G-CYBF, by F/L Thompson, pilot, and Air Commodore Tylee, as passenger. Snow, rain and fog prevented take-off until 11:55 a.m., 13 October. The intrepid crew flew through heavy broken cloud in Kicking Horse Pass but the weather worsened and they landed at 3:10 p.m. at the Crowle Ranch, four miles south of Revelstoke, B.C. Mayor Walter Bews housed the 2 crew members for two days until the weather improved. On Friday 15 October, at 11:50 a.m. the DH9A took off and flew through very dangerous, turbulent weather, which eventually forced a landing at Merritt, B.C. at 1:15

p.m. An attempt to fly through the Coquihalla Pass in the Selkirk Mountains failed on 16 October. On 17 October another attempt commenced at 9:40 a.m., and this time despite a low cloud base the aircraft made it through the Pass, along the Fraser River and on to the flat delta country. At 11:25 a.m. the DH9A was landed at Minoru Park, Vancouver, 10 and a half days after the start of the Trans-Canada flight, and taking a total of 49 hours and 7 minutes flying time. A total of 3341 miles were covered at an average speed of 63 MPH. The train schedule for the same distance took 132 hours and 10 minutes. Mayor R.H. Gale of Vancouver greeted the aviators in driving rain. Little public interest had been created since the publicity had been limited for fear of failure of the venture and resulting discredit to aviation and the Air Board.

This Canadian pioneer flight was a success for it demonstrated that long distance flight by night and day was quite feasible in Canada, although much better facilities would be required in air fields, communication, directional aids, and supplies.

#### **SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM**

The museum is located at CFB Shearwater outside Halifax, and chronicles the history of Canadian Maritime military aviation from 1918. It features an airworthy Fairey Swordfish bi-plane, 2 CH124 Sea King helicopters and 14 other aircraft; art gallery; theatre; flight simulator and gift shop..

**For more information:**

[www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca/](http://www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca/)

## COMMEMORATING the 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRANS-CANADA FLIGHT



(Below) In October, Dick Malott produced covers from the stopping points of the original flight, on the actual 50th Anniversary dates. - Covers were franked with the special slogan postmarks that

The Royal Canadian Flying Clubs Association, organized a cavalcade of light aircraft flying between Halifax and Victoria from June 26th to July 5th. The first leg of the flight from Halifax to Moncton involved 22 aircraft. In Moncton 8 aircraft left the flight and one joined it. Other aircraft joined and left the flight at different points. 11 aircraft made the final leg from Vancouver to Victoria, 4 of which had made the complete flight from Halifax. Covers were flown to Vancouver from 24 different points, and to/ between some intermediate points: see *AMCN* Section 5 #7019.



the Canadian Post Office authorized for the period September 21st to October 17th 1970.



The Royal Trust Company was a co-sponsor of the commemorative flights, but Royal Trust and the R.C.F.C.A. rarely acknowledged each other.

Sources: *Canadian Aviation*, June 1970; *Brandon Sun*, 3rd July 1970; *Airpost Journal*, June 1970.

Many thanks to Ian MacDonald for the information he found.



# SEMI-OFFICIAL NOTES

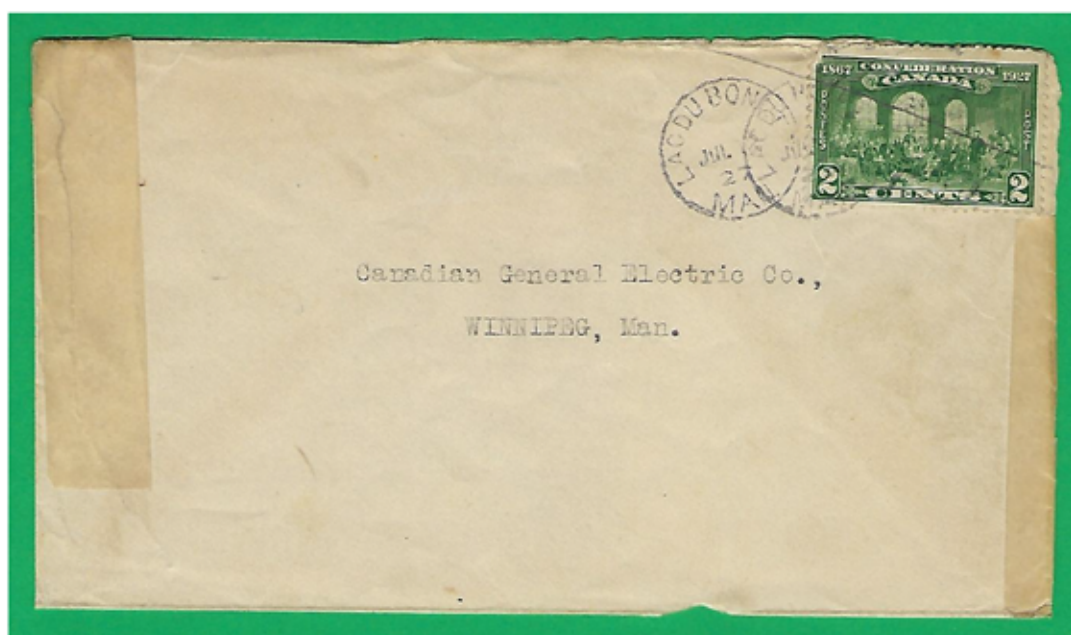
Tom Reyman

No. 11

## Tom Reyman

Before 1906, Winnipeg, Manitoba relied on steam-powered electric generation equipment to provide the electricity for the fast-growing city. As the need for more electricity increased, the city planners looked to the Winnipeg River area with its many rapids some 75 mi away as a possible source of hydroelectric power. The Winnipeg Electric Railway Company (WERCo) developed a privately-owned generating station on the Pinawa Channel of the Winnipeg River using equipment manufactured by General Electric. This unit began construction in 1903 and was ready for service in 1906, greatly adding to the electricity available to Winnipeg and the surrounding area. In 1911, the City of Winnipeg constructed a separate hydroelectric station on the Winnipeg River at Pointe du Bois, Manitoba and, in 1923, built another station at Great Falls, Manitoba. These three generating stations were within 25 miles of Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba. These three locations did not have a post office before 1927. Mail was routed to Lac du Bonnet for processing at its post office.

Lac du Bonnet settlement was established in 1900 when a brickyard and sawmill were constructed at the site by the Winnipeg River. In 1901 the Canadian Pacific Railroad (C.P.R.) brought a spur line from Molson to Lac du Bonnet to support the Lac du Bonnet Mining Development and Manufacturing company (MDM). The first airplane flights to the area occurred in 1922 but, in December 1926, Western Canada Airways, Ltd. (WCA) established a regional base of operations there and opened its head office in Winnipeg. On June 1, 1927, WCA initiated air mail service as a Semi-Official air mail carrier from Lac du Bonnet to other locations in Eastern Manitoba. A float plane terminal was established on the banks of the Winnipeg River.



This mailing is postmarked from Lac du Bonnet on July 22, 1927 to the Canadian General Electric Company in Winnipeg likely concerned communication related to one of the electricity



generating plants near Lac du Bonnet. Winnipeg was the location of a district office for the Canadian General Electric Company and GE generators and ancillary equipment were used in the generating stations. The liberal use of sealing tape on the envelope seems to indicate that the contents may have been bulky although the contents are unknown.

It is likely that this mailing initiated at one of the generating stations and was flown to Lac du Bonnet where the postmark and backstamp were applied. It is unknown if the WCA CL40 stamp was applied at the mailing site or at Lac du Bonnet. From there, the train to Winnipeg would have carried the mail to the recipient in Winnipeg.

The back of the envelope shows the WCA imprint and date. The WCA CL40 stamp (sticker) has been applied over another unidentified stamp (Arrow).



(Note: The author wishes to thank Terry Tottle of the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society for providing assistance and information regarding the history and details of the Lac du Bonnet area.)

#### References:

- Canadian General Electric Company;  
[Vintagemachinery.org/mfgindex/detail.aspx?id=3340](http://Vintagemachinery.org/mfgindex/detail.aspx?id=3340)
- Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society/History-stories/ldb-history/
- Molson, K.M., *Pioneering in Canadian Air Transport*, D. W. Friesen & Sons, Altona, Manitoba, 1974. Pages 22-23.
- Oder, Aileen, Editor; *Logs and Lines from Winnipeg River*, Derksen Printers, Steinbach, Manitoba, Pages 11-74

# 1927 MAIL FROM LAC DU BONNET - October

Chris Hargreaves

## POST OFFICE TAKES OVER THE ROUTE



- Cover has routing instruction "Via Rice Lake, Man" but the WCA stop on Rice Lake had been named BISSETT when a post office opened there on August 1st 1927.
- Typed endorsement: "Carried on first Government Flight Bissett to Lac du Bonnet, Mann.", and signed "W.L. Brintnell pilot".
- Backstamped WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS LIMITED SEP 30 1927 LAC DU BONNET, MAN.
- Postmarked BISSETT, SP 30 27
- Later postmark on WCA stamp BISSETT OC 3 27
- Backstamped with postmark LAC DU BONNET OC 5 MAN

[ Cover ex. Dick Malott. ]

On October 4th the mail service between Lac du Bonnet, Bissett and Wadhope was taken over by the Post Office: it became the first of the "Air Stage" services, on which mail was carried by air as part of the regular service.

According to "Air Mail Service in Canada" - a history of the air mail service that was published by the Post Office as part of the programme for the inauguration of the Montreal - Albany Air Mail Service in October 1928:

*"the influx of an unusual number of prospectors and the formation of several companies made it necessary for the Post Office Department to arrange for mail service. The desirability of inaugurating an air*

*mail service was made evident by the absence of roads... Arrangements were made with The Western Canada Airways Company for an air mail service semi-weekly from Lac du Bonnet to Wadhope and Bissett... This air mail service performed by the Western Canada Airways with Fokker Universal machines, was inaugurated on the 4th October, 1927.*

First Flight Covers for the Post Office service are scarce and puzzling. - According to *The Standard Airpost Catalog* published by The Berkshire Exchange in 1933:

*1927, Lac du Bonnet - Bissett -*

*Wadhope. 2c postage. First regular Government route in Canada. No cachet. About 150 letters to each place. So far we have never even heard of any covers in existence.*

A similar comment was made in the First edition of the *American Air Mail Catalogue*, published in 1940.

In the Second, 1950 edition of AAMC First Flight Covers are listed with the comment:

*Covers of this service must be postmarked and backstamped October 4. Many covers are found postmarked and backstamped October 3 and bearing the semiofficial of Western Canada Airways. Such covers were not official flights under the "Air Stage Services" authorization but merely subsequent flights of the Semi-official stamp period of the contractor's operation".*

This comment was carried forward and repeated in the 3rd, 4th and 5th editions of AAMC, and in the *Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland*, but I have never seen a cover postmarked and backstamped on October 4th! - I wonder when it was decided what a First Flight Cover for the Air Stage service should look like, and who made that decision?

Covers from October 3 or earlier bearing the WCA semi-official stamp are in fact scarce, and seem to have been mailed to Bissett or Wadhope in order to be flown back on the first air stage flight to Lac du Bonnet.

Another puzzle is that although the cover on the previous page was addressed to Ian Morgan in Montreal, it was not listed in *The Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Airmails* that he published in 1931!

This is particularly strange, as his catalogue did list First Flight Covers from Rolling Portage, Red Lake, Goldpines, Jackson Manion, and Narrow Lake when that route was "transferred" from Western Canada Airways and became an Air Stage service on January 25th 1928. It also listed FFCs from The Pas to Kississing, Manitoba, when that route became an Air Stage service on August 31st 1928!

### LATE USE OF WCA SEMI-OFFICIAL STAMP



WCA CL40 obliterated with CANCELLED handstamp postmarked JACKSON MANION FE 13 28 backstamped Hawkesbury FE 25 28

This is a legitimate use of the CL 40, even though it is a philatelic cover addressed to A.C. Douglas - a well-known philatelist in Hawkesbury, Ontario - and the CL 40 was used over two weeks after the Post Office began an Air Stage service to Jackson Manion!

Since the Post Office's Air Stage service between Rolling Portage, Goldpines, Red Lake, Jackson Manion, and Narrow Lake only operated once a week, but Western Canada Airways was flying in the area throughout the week, WCA was allowed to carry mail on other than regular mail days, and to continue charging for doing so.

WCA was given similar permission to keep using its semi-official stamp after the Post Office took over the air mail service from Lac du Bonnet in October 1927, and from The Pas to Kississing on August 31st 1928.

### Acknowledgements

My thanks to Tom Reyman and Terry Isaac with whom I have enjoyed corresponding about these covers.

If anybody can provide more information about the Lac du Bonnet covers of October 1927, their listing, and/or a scan of a cover "postmarked and backstamped October 4" please contact me.

**Chris Hargreaves**

(Below) The announcement in the February 1928 **Monthly Supplement to the Post Office Bulletin**

(2) **Air Mail Service to Red Lake Mining District, Ontario.**—Dating from the 23rd January, 1928, a weekly air mail service will be in operation between Rolling Portage and Red Lake via Gold Pines and from Red Lake to Gold Pines, Woman Lake and Narrow Lake, returning via Woman Lake and Gold Pines to Rolling Portage.

All classes of mail matter prepaid at the regular rates of postage may be accepted for transmission by this air mail service, **with the exception** that parcel post parcels must be prepaid at the rate of 12 cents for each pound or fraction thereof up to 10 pounds and \$1.50 per parcel over 10 pounds and up to 15 pounds. Postage as indicated above will cover all charges.

In addition to the weekly contract air mail service mentioned above the Western Canada Airways will convey to these points, at frequent intervals, such mail as is offered by the public on which the regular postage has been prepaid and on which a special fee of 10 cents per ounce represented by an aerial sticker issued by the Company, has been placed—the senders to assume all risk. Such special air mail in addition to bearing an aerial sticker, should be endorsed "Via Air Mail".



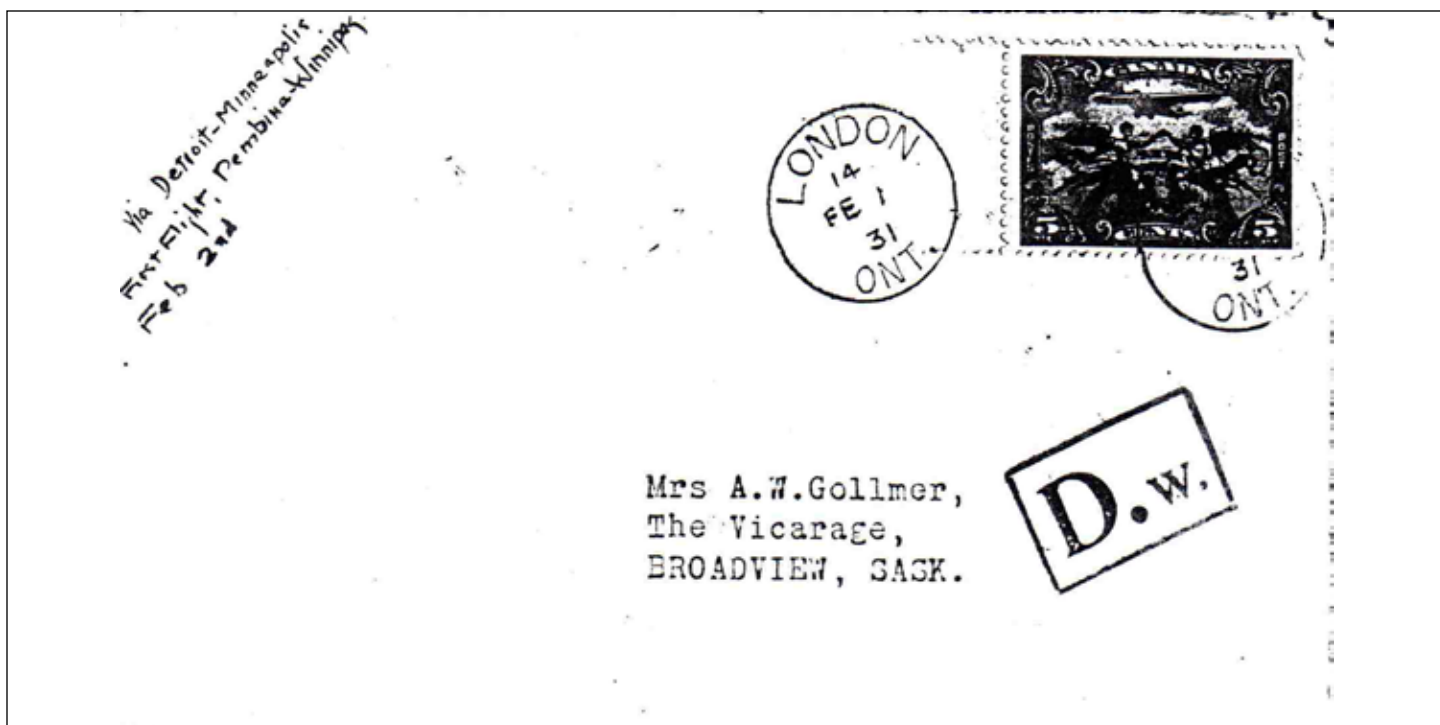


Figure 1 - D.w. cover #1 in my records.

The cover from Don Fraser that began the current D.w. enquiry in the September 2010 Canadian Aerophilatelist.

Postmarked: LONDON FE 1 31    Addressed to: Mrs. A.W. Gollmer, ... BROADVIEW, SASK.

Left top corner endorsement: Via Detroit-Minneapolis First Flight, Pembina-Winnipeg Feb 2nd

Backstamped: WINNIPEG FEB 3 1931 and BROADVIEW SASK PM FE 4 31

Air Mail from Pembina was delayed by fog, and arrived in Winnipeg at 5 p.m. on February 3rd.

Broadview was on the main railway line between Winnipeg and Regina.

The D.w. handstamp indicates this cover was diverted to rail in Winnipeg. - It would have left on Train 1 at 9.30 pm, and arrived in Broadview at 5.35 am on Feb. 4th.

If it had continued from Winnipeg by air, it would have left at 8.00pm on Feb. 3rd, and arrived in Regina at 9.50 pm; then been sent by train leaving Regina at 7.30 am Feb 4th, and arrived in Broadview at 10.50 am Feb 4th.

## **“D.w.” HANDSTAMP REVIEWED**

### **Diverted from air mail to rail in Winnipeg**

**Chris Hargreaves**

A couple of people have recently asked me whether the mystery of the D.w. handstamp has been solved?

I think it has been.

The theory proposed in the March and June 2015 issues of The Canadian Aerophilatelist, that the “D.w.” handstamp was applied when covers marked for air mail were diverted to surface routes in Winnipeg, has been very well received.

In those articles I proposed three reasons why such a diversion would occur:

1. Many railway services started from Winnipeg, and were operated by one passenger/mail train per day. Mail would reach its destination more quickly if it was sent by rail from Winnipeg, than it would if it was flown from Winnipeg to a point on the Prairie Air Mail Service, and then sent on by rail. - For example Figure 1.

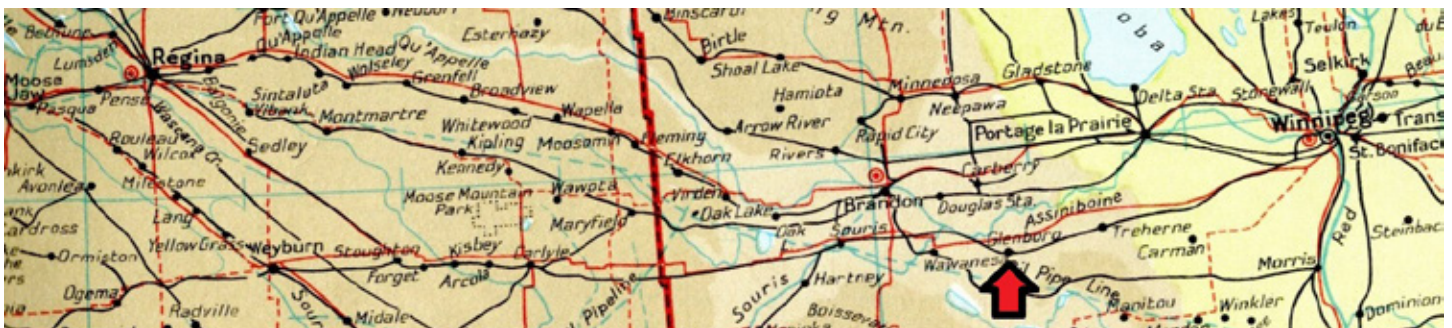
2. There were two Trans-Continental trains from Winnipeg to Vancouver each day. Their times changed slightly over the years, but in general:

- Train 3 left Winnipeg at 9.00 a.m., arrived in Calgary at 7.55 a.m. the next morning, and in Vancouver at 9.00 a.m. two days after leaving Winnipeg.
- Train 1 left Winnipeg at 7.00 p.m., arrived in Calgary at 6.45 p.m. the next evening, and in Vancouver at 8.15 p.m. two days later.

The Prairie Air Mail Service left at 8.00 p.m. and reached Calgary at 4.40 a.m. The Air mail service therefore speeded up delivery of letters mailed in Winnipeg during the day to Vancouver or other places west of Calgary, as they could be flown to Calgary overnight to connect with Train 3 the next morning. However, letters mailed during the night would reach Vancouver as quickly if they were sent by Train 3 in the morning, as they would if they were held for the air mail flight. (For example Figure 2.)



Figure 2 - Postmarked GLENBORO MAN May 6th 1930 - addressed to Vancouver: cancelled 9 MY 9 30.  
No backstamps. - This is the only D.w. cover recorded that was franked for Special Delivery



There was one train through Glenboro to Regina each day, and one to Winnipeg.

The cover left Glenboro by rail at 6.03 pm, arrived Winnipeg 9.30 pm May 6th.

The Prairie Air Mail had already left (at 8.00 pm) so the cover was sent by Train No.3 which left Winnipeg 9.30 am May 7th, and arrived Vancouver on schedule at 9.00 am on May 9th, at which time the envelope was given an arrival cancellation.

3. The Prairie Air Mail Service only operated six days per week. There was no flight from Winnipeg on Saturday, so mail posted during the day on Saturday would reach destinations like Vancouver sooner if it was sent by Train 1 on Saturday evening, than if it was held for the air mail service on Sunday. (For example Figure 3.)



Figure 3 - D.w. cover #31,  
Postmarked WINNIPEG 4.30 P.M. MAR 19 1932 - Addressed to The Manager, The Bank of Toronto, Calgary, Alberta

March 19th 1932 was a Saturday. Since the air mail service didn't operate westbound on Saturdays, this letter was diverted to surface routes, and sent by Train 1 which left Winnipeg at 7.00 p.m. and arrived in Calgary at 6.45 p.m. on Sunday March 20th. - If the letter had been held back for air mail, it would have left Winnipeg at 8.00 p.m. on Sunday, and have arrived in Calgary at 4.40 a.m. on Monday March 21st.

Although it initially felt like heresy to suggest that covers like Figure 3 which was endorsed "Via Air Mail", and had been paid for air mail, were being sent by regular surface routes, this would in fact have been consistent with other Post Office operating procedures:

- When Gord Mallett researched the Experimental Prairie Air Mail Service of December 1928, he established that if a flight was delayed or cancelled, covers were given a flight cachet, but sent on by rail, rather than being held for a future flight. [1]
- Gray Scrimgeour commented that: "Trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific steamship mail followed the procedure called the "first-packet principle". Mail was despatched by the steamship that would deliver it to its destination most efficiently (quickly). The same should apply to westbound air mail from Winnipeg - by air if it is beneficial, by train if that route is faster." [2, page 19.]

Following its proposal in *The Canadian Aerophilatelist*, the "Diverted from air to rail in Winnipeg" theory was also presented in *The Canadian Stamp News* on July 28th 2015, and in the April-June 2017 issue of *BNA Topics*.

I believe the theory can now be regarded as "accepted" because:

- it was vigorously discussed during a presentation at the BNAPS St Lawrence Seaway Regional Group meeting in October 2015, and by aerophilatelists during the CAS Day of Aerophilately in Toronto the following month, and passed both inquisitions.
- the amount of correspondence I received about the D.w. handstamp dropped off after the theory was published, and nobody has sent me new suggestions.



(Left) Figure 4 - D.w. cover #21  
Postmarked 10.30AM on June 27th 1931 in  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.  
Addressed to Vermilion, Alberta.



- I can now explain the D.w. handstamp on all 45 of the covers recorded when the theory was presented in our March 2015 journal. - At that time I was puzzled by the cover to Vermillion, Alberta shown in Figure 4. Vermillion is a long way from Winnipeg, but close to the northern end of the air mail route in Edmonton. The cover is postmarked 10.30AM on June 27th 1931 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. If it had connected with the U.S. Air Mail via Chicago that day, it would have arrived in Winnipeg on Sunday June 28th at 1.00 pm. It could then have left Winnipeg by the Prairie Air Mail service at 7.30 p.m. on June 28th, and arrived in Edmonton at 7.25 a.m. on June 29th. However, when I obtained a *Waghorn's Guide* which gave railway timetables for all of Western Canada, it turned out that Vermillion was on the line from Winnipeg via Regina, Saskatoon, and North Battleford to Edmonton. The daily train left Edmonton at 10.00 p.m. each day, and would have arrived in Vermillion at 3.00 a.m. on June 30th. But, if the cover had travelled by "Train No. 5" from Winnipeg, it would have left Winnipeg at 9.00 p.m. on June 28th, and arrived in Vermillion at 1.40 a.m. on June 30th.
- Since publishing the "Diverted from air to rail in Winnipeg" theory I have received copies of 33 more covers with a D.w. handstamp, to 15 different addresses. They are all consistent with the theory, as they were delivered more quickly or as efficiently by being diverted to rail in Winnipeg, than if they'd been flown beyond Winnipeg. - For a copy of the detailed analysis of these covers, email me at [hargreavescp@sympatico.ca](mailto:hargreavescp@sympatico.ca)

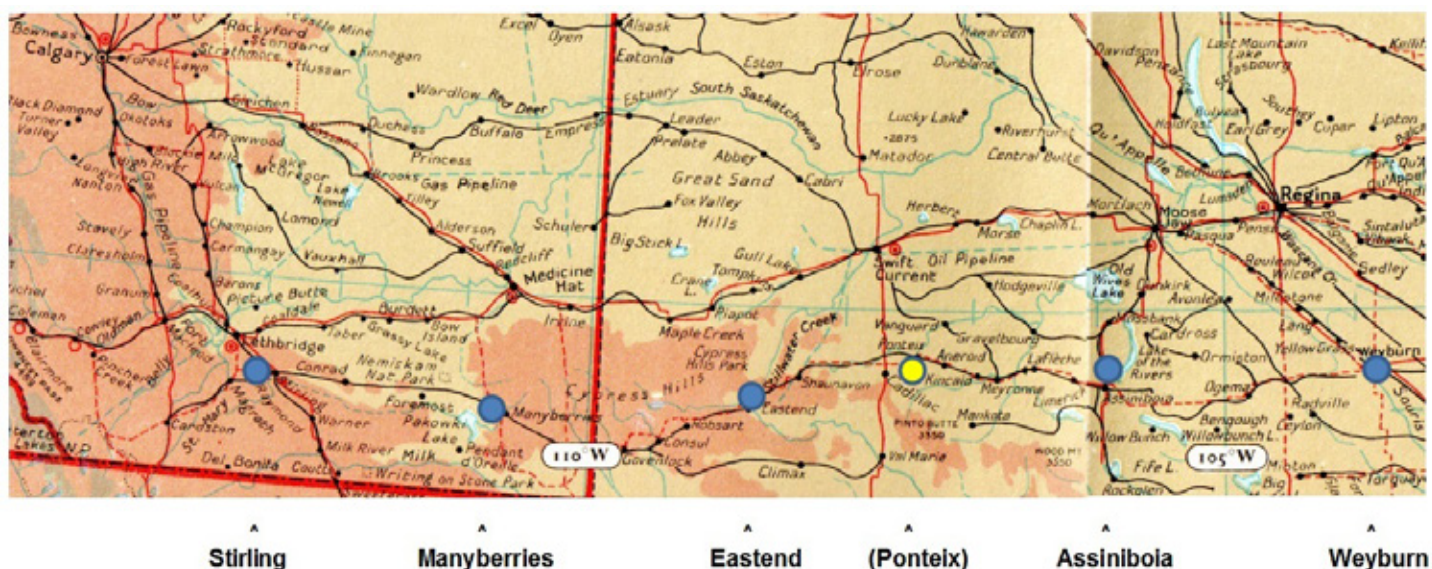
75 of the 78 D.w. covers are from the 1930-32 period when the Prairie Air Mail Service was operating. The remaining three are from 1938 and 1942. The earliest of these was mailed from South Africa on December 7th, and transited Winnipeg en route to Kindersley, Saskatchewan: it shows that the "Diverted in Winnipeg" procedures were reintroduced soon after the Trans-Canada Airlines flights began from Winnipeg in October 1938.



Figure 5 - D.w. cover #64 Postmarked Newark 6PM and 7PM May 30 1931 Addressed to Reginald Schmitt, East End, Sask. No backstamps.



Figure 6 - D.w. cover #74. Postmarked SAN FRANCISCO CALIF. SEP 15 12.30AM 1931 Addressed to R. Schmitt, East End, Sask. No backstamps.



The “new” covers included Figures 5 and 6, which were among 12 covers from aeronautical events in the U.S.A. addressed to Reginald Schmitt in East End, Saskatchewan, that each received a D.w. handstamp. Figure 5 originated in Newark, New Jersey on May 30th 1931. Its direct route to East End would have been:

- by U.S. air mail routes to Chicago, arriving there on May 31st
- left Chicago at 10.50pm May 31st, and flown via Minneapolis-St. Paul and Pembina to Winnipeg, where it arrived at 1.00pm on June 1st
- if flown by the Prairie Air Mail service, it would leave Winnipeg at 8.00 p.m. on June 1st and arrive in Moose Jaw at 11.10 p.m. June 1st. It would then continue by rail, leaving Moose Jaw at 11.00 June 2nd and arriving Assiniboia 1.35pm June 2nd; leaving Assiniboia at 2.05p.m. June 2nd and arriving Shaunavon 6.00 pm June 2nd; then continuing from Shaunavon at 9.00am June 3rd, and arriving in Eastend at 11.15am June 3rd.

However, the D.w. handstamp indicates it was diverted to rail in Winnipeg, so it left Winnipeg on Train 1 at 7.00 p.m. on June 1st, and arrived in Moose Jaw at 4.50 a.m. on June 2nd. It could then make the same connection to the train to Assiniboia as if it had been flown to Moose Jaw.

Figure 6 was also part of the group of 12 covers to East End, but began its journey in San Francisco. I believe the presence of a D.w. handstamp can now be used to establish the routing of a cover, and shows that Figure 6 travelled eastward from California, then through Winnipeg to Saskatchewan; and not northward from California, then through British Columbia to Saskatchewan.

There are, however, still some puzzles as to how covers were handled in Winnipeg. Figure 7 is part of a group of 6 First Flight Covers from the St. Paul - Fargo - Grand Forks - Pembina to Winnipeg inauguration that were mailed to Art Gibson in Alameda, Saskatchewan, but the only one of the group that received a D.w. handstamp.





(Previous page) Figure 7 - D.w. cover 59  
 Postmarked FARGO N. DAK FEB 2 10AM 1931  
 Backstamped WINNIPEG 5 PM FEB 3 1931 roller cancellation  
 and ALAMEDA FE 4 31



Figure 8 - Part of a Canadian Pacific Railway map

Figure 7 fits the Diverted in Winnipeg theory:

- The cover would have been put on Train 1, which left Winnipeg at 7.00 pm on Feb 3rd, and arrived in Brandon at 10.20 pm on Feb 3rd. In Brandon the cover would have been transferred to the daily train to Alameda, which left at 1.45pm, and arrived in Alameda at 7.28 pm on Feb 4th, when the cover was backstamped.
- If instead of being transferred to rail in Winnipeg, the cover had been flown "as much as possible", it would have left Winnipeg at 8.00 pm, and arrived in Moose Jaw at 11.10 pm on Feb 3rd. To get from Moose Jaw to Alameda, the cover would have gone by train to Estevan, which was on The Soo Line from Moose Jaw to Chicago, and then been transferred to a train to Alameda. The next train from Moose Jaw to Estevan left at 4.25am on Feb 4th, and arrived in Estevan at 12.45pm. However, there was only one train each day from Estevan eastward to Alameda, which left Estevan at 9.55 am, so the cover would have had to have been held to the next day, February 5th. Since the cover reached Alameda on February 4th, it was diverted to surface routes in Winnipeg.



Figure 9 - First Flight Cover postmarked GRAND FORKS N.DAK FEB 2 11AM 1931  
 Backstamped WINNIPEG 5 PM FEB 3 1931 roller cancellation  
 and ALAMEDA FE 4 31



Two of the covers to Alameda were First Flight Covers from St Paul to Winnipeg, and from Grand Forks to Winnipeg. The FFC from Grand Forks is shown as Figure 9.

Although these covers did not get a D.w. handstamp, they had similar backstamps to the FFC from Fargo, so would also have continued from Winnipeg by rail.

The absence of a D.w. handstamp is not significant, as the application of a D.w. handstamp seems to have been erratic:

- it has been found on facing slips that would have been attached to a bundle of covers
- sometimes it is found on one cover among a group of covers sent at the same time to the same address
- sometimes it is found on many individual covers to the same address, but not on all of them. (I now have copies of 19 U.S. special event covers to Reginald Schmitt in East End: 15 of them have a D.w. handstamp, but four don't.)



Figure 10 - First Flight Cover postmarked PEMBINA 10 AM FEB 2 1931 N.DAK  
Backstamped WINNIPEG 5 PM FEB 3 1931 roller cancel  
MOOSE JAW roller cancellation 2 AM FEB 4 1931 and ALAMEDA FE 4 31 no time

The other three covers in the group were all First Flight Covers from Pembina to Winnipeg - one is shown as Figure 10. These three covers had similar postal cancellations, and were all handled quite differently from Figure 7, as the Moose Jaw backstamp shows that Figure 10 was flown from Winnipeg to Moose Jaw!

Figure 10 creates two puzzles:

- how did it get from Moose Jaw to Alameda on February 4th, when according to my railway timetable, there was no same day railway service from Moose Jaw to Alameda! - Since my timetable was from 1933, I asked Ross Gray for help as he is an authority on the railway post offices, and editor of the BNAPS R.P.O. Study Group newsletter. Ross provided copies of the map in Figure 8, and the June 1931 railway timetables at the end of this article, but could not find a same day connection from Moose Jaw to Alameda either!
- why were Figure 10 and the two other FFCs from Pembina, handled differently to Figure 7 and the FFCs from St. Paul and Grand Forks?
- Another puzzle which remains is what did "D.w." stand for? -
- "Diverted in Winnipeg" would be logical, but several people reckon that a capital "W" would have been used in the grammatically correct 1930's.
- An alternative possibility is that it stood for "Diverted westbound", but the handstamp has also been found on mail heading east.



Figure 11

- A third suggestion is that “D.w.” stood for “Day (train) west”, since that reflects the mode of transportation used, and the Post Office sometimes used D.W. to indicate Day Train West in RPO cancellations: see for example Figure 11. However, when I asked Ross Gray about this, he commented that: *“The only ‘DW’ or similar indicia of which I am aware were used on the Montreal & Island Pond and Montreal & Toronto RPOs. NW was Night, West, DW was Day, West etc. I do not recall any such indications used in the western provinces.”* The Day (train) West alternative also suffers similar shortcomings to the other options: shouldn’t it use two capital letters, as in the previously recorded Day train cancellations, and why is it sometimes found on mail heading east?

As with the rest of the D.w. research, the meaning of the “D.w.” handstamp comes down to deduction, inference, and elimination.

Throughout the enquiry, we have been faced with the lack of Post Office records. - When Don Amos, who worked in the Winnipeg Post Office after World War II, wrote to Bas Burrell in December 2002, he commented:

*Now we come to a dandy. I read somewhere you were losing your sanity over the marking D.w. So am I! Before I retired I was in the main post office. One day I wanted to check back in the records for someone asking a question about them. I went to the room where the records were.*

*I was told they needed the room and the records were all thrown out. I couldn’t believe it. I tried Ottawa but they had no record of them. I have copies of it used in 1930-1931-1932. I have written to all the postmasters of each town and/or city giving all names and details, including Sinaluta in your letter, but never received a reply from any of them. The old-timers must have all gone. [3]*

The earliest suggestion was that “D.w.” was a pilot’s handstamp, but the D.w. covers were flown by many different pilots.

Then it was thought that “D.w.” may have been a collector’s mark, but it was questioned why a collector would place a handstamp over a stamp or other postal markings on a cover?

The suggestion that “D.w.” stood for “Delayed by weather” waned as more covers were reported - some had backstamps which showed they had not been delayed, and many had flown in fine weather. [4]

The proposal that “D.w.” indicated “Diverted due to weight” also waned as covers with backstamps were reported, and it was discovered that the covers had to have been diverted to rail before the amount of mail to be carried by air was known. [2] - It was later established that the Prairie Air Mail Service operated on a fixed price contract, and Western Canada Airways was paid according to miles flown, not amount of mail carried. [5]

Now the “Diverted from air mail to rail in Winnipeg” theory can explain all 78 recorded covers with a D.w. handstamp.

I will refer to the handstamp as “Diverted in Winnipeg” as that is a concise summary of what happened, and will leave the actual meaning of “D.w.” as one of the remaining mysteries about the handstamp.

But I will also be glad to hear comments on these deductions, and on the remaining puzzles.

**Chris Hargreaves**

### Acknowledgements

Many thanks for the recent covers and information to Chris Anstead, Dave Armitage, Peter Edwards, Alain Gauthier, Ross Gray, Jon Johnson, John Lewington, Dean Mario, Kevin O’Reilly, Bryan Normington, John Symons, Robert Timberg, Diana Trafford, Paul Varty and Howard Wallace.

My thanks also to everybody who contributed to the earlier stages of this research.

### References

- [1] “Experimental Air Mail Flights in the Prairie Provinces, 10 - 29 December, 1928” by Gord Mallett, The Canadian Aerophilatelist, June 2005.
- [2] “D.w. Update #4 - A New Theory!”, The Canadian Aerophilatelist, March 2015.
- [3] BNAPS Air Mail Study Group Newsletter, December 2002
- [4] “Update on the ‘D.w.’ Covers - Part 3”, The Canadian Aerophilatelist, June 2014, pages 22 - 27.

### Timetables provided by Ross Gray:

**These are being reproduced as a guide to how the railway system in Western Canada operated.**

**The Mountaineer carries sleeping car passengers only.**

E.T. Eastern Time

C.T. Central Time.

**M.T.** Mountain Time.

**P.T.** Pacific Time.

† Daily ex. Sunday. b On Sunday leave 4.30 p.m. d Stop westbound to entrain for Kamloops and beyond, and eastbound to detrain from Kamloops and beyond. f Stops on signal.  
 Δ Steamer for Vancouver leaves Victoria at 12.00 midnight, arrives 7.00 a.m.

\* Last date of this combination service will be announced later.



**WINNIPEG, GREYNA, DELORAINE, NAPINKA**

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## LA RIVIERE AND WINDYGATES

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DELOBRAINE, LYLETON, ESTEVAN

• Daily. † Daily ex. Sun. ‡ Mon. and Thu. § Mon. and Wed. ¶ Tue., Thu., Sat. Ⓜ Sat. only. Ⓝ Wed. only. Ⓟ Wed. and Sat. Ⓡ Mon., Wed., Fri.

NORTH PORTAL, MOOSE JAW									
READ DOWN			Miles	TABLE 125		READ UP			
13	5	315		Mountain Time		316	6	14	
P.M.	P.M.	P.M.				P.M.	P.M.	A.M.	
* 1.50	* 11.55	† 4.00	0.0	Lv	NORTH PORTAL, Sask.	† 2.40	* 10.50	* 11.50	
Sleepers	.....	f 4.18	8.2		Pinto	f 2.23	† 10.31	Sleepers	
only	.....	4.28	12.9		Roche Percee	2.13	† 10.21	only	
2.41	12.45	f 4.37	17.1		Shand	f 2.00	† 10.12	10.50	
.....	.....	4.55	23.2		Estevan 119, 122	1.40	9.53	.....	
The	.....	5.14	31.4		Hitchcock	1.26	.....	.....	
Moun	.....	5.32	40.3		Macoun	1.10	9.24	The	
tain-	.....	5.49	48.9		Midale	12.55	9.06	Moun	
eer	.....	6.06	58.1		Halbrite	12.40	8.51	tain-	
4.05	2.05	6.22	66.6		Ralph	12.25	.....	eer	
4.05	2.10	6.40	76.3	Ar	Weyburn	12.10	8.20	9.30	
.....	.....	6.50	.....	Lv	Weyburn	2.00	8.10	9.30	
.....	.....	7.04	84.7		McTaggart	1.45	.....	.....	
.....	.....	f 7.10	88.7		Brightmore	f 1.37	.....	.....	
.....	.....	7.19	93.3		Yellow Grass	1.30	7.39	First	
First	.....	f 7.32	98.3		Ibsen	f 1.21	.....	Train	
Train	Soo	7.47	105.7		Lang	1.10	7.20	from	
from	Paci-	8.02	113.7		Milestone	10.55	7.06	Van-	
Chi-	flic	8.13	120.0		Corinne	10.43	6.54	couver	
cago	Ex-	8.24	125.3		Wilcox	10.33	6.45	July	
June	press	f 8.32	130.4		Diana	f 10.24	.....	1	
29	.....	8.46	135.8		Rouleau	10.16	6.29	.....	
.....	.....	f 8.56	142.5		Pitman	f 10.05	.....	.....	
.....	.....	9.10	148.3		Drinkwater	9.55	6.09	.....	
.....	.....	f 9.21	154.8		Stelcam	f 9.45	.....	.....	
.....	4.10	9.33	160.6		Pasqua 77	9.35	5.50	.....	
* 6.30	* 4.25	† 9.50	167.4	Ar	Moose Jaw 77	† 9.15	* 5.30	* 7.00	
P.M.	A.M.	P.M.				A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	

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Bruce Charkow, Thornhill, ON [broose1946@gmail.com](mailto:broose1946@gmail.com)

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CANAV's "new and improved" booklist for Fall 2020 is now available, and includes something for every fan of aviation history. To get a copy email Larry Milberry at [larry@canavbooks.com](mailto:larry@canavbooks.com), write to CANAV Books, 51 Balsam Ave., Toronto, ON M4E 3B6 or call (416) 698 7559

Larry's blog at [www.canavbooks.wordpress.com](http://www.canavbooks.wordpress.com) has an update about CANAV's forthcoming grand history for the RCAF's Centennial for 2024. Other recent items on the blog? - Can Canada defend its Arctic geography? Also ... Norseman update, how goes RCAF Lancaster FM104, Air Cadets, Canada's "ghost" Canso, etc.

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The CAS runs the website [www.aerophilately.ca](http://www.aerophilately.ca) which provides extensive information about Canadian air mail

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