



THE CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIST

#88

Quarterly Journal of THE CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIC SOCIETY

American Air Mail Society - Canadian Chapter

Royal Philatelic Society of Canada - Chapter No. 187

American Philatelic Society - Affiliate No. 189

FISA (Federation Internationale des Societes Aerophilateliques) - Club Member

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SI VOUS DÉSIREZ DE L'INFORMATION EN FRANÇAIS SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE D'AÉROPHILATÉLIE,
VEUILLEZ VOUS ADRESSER À M. PIERRE VACHON, 249 GUILFORD STREET, SAINT JOHN, N.B. E2M 1V5.

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Anybody who wants to copy an item from this newsletter is welcome to do so. - Please acknowledge
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I very much enjoy our various CAS meetings.

At BNAPEX in North Bay we had a joint meeting of the CAS and the BNAPS Airmail Study Group, highlighted by a presentation from Vic Willson on *Canadian Airmail Through US Carriers, 1920-1941*. I am very pleased that we will be holding another joint meeting with the BNAPS Airmail Study Group at BNAPEX 2012 in Calgary.

The next CAS meeting coming up is the annual

TORONTO DAY OF AEROPHILATELY

This will be held on Sunday November 6th, from 11.15am to 4.00pm, at the Vincent Greene Foundation, 10 Summerhill Ave. The building is close to Summerhill subway station on the Yonge St. line, and last year parking was allowed on Summerhill Avenue after 11am. (We have learned to check the streetsigns to see where parking is allowed each year.) The Day features displays, questions and answers, trading, lunch at a nearby restaurant, and lots of excellent conversation. It is going to be the eighteenth annual Day of Aerophilately! The regulars look forward to this meeting each year, and warmly welcome new participants. For more information contact Dick McIntosh, tel. 416 447 1579.

Future CAS meetings will be held at:

- ORAPEX - Ottawa.
We plan to hold our Annual General Meeting on Sunday May 6th. - This is always a sociable occasion as well as a business one.
- ROYAL 2012 ROYALE - Edmonton.
Royal 2012 will be held at the Europa Conference Centre in the West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton, Alberta, from June 1st - 3rd 2012. - CAS activities will be co-ordinated by Dave Brown. [Address above.]
- BNAPEX - 2012 - CALTAPEX
The show will be in Calgary from August 31st to September 2nd. The primary venue is the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 700 Centre Street SE. The CAS/BNAPS Airmail Study Group meeting will be co-ordinated by George Dresser.
[g-dresser@suddenlink.net]

Then, in 2013, we will have the CAS SYMPOSIUM as part of ROYAL 2013 in Winnipeg from June 21st to 23rd. This will feature aerophilatic talks, competitive and non-competitive exhibits, and tours to historical aviation sites.

I encourage all members and readers to participate in these meetings when they can. - They should be fun!

Chris Hargreaves

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Welcome to another new member: Allen Klein of Sherman Oaks, California.

CONGRATULATIONS

To **Nino Chiovelli**. - I was delighted to receive a press release from the RPSC that:

Geldert medal goes to Nino Chiovelli

George Pepall, President of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC), has announced that Nino Chiovelli of Edmonton, Alberta has been awarded the Geldert Medal for 2010. The Geldert Medal is given annually for the best article or series of articles in *The Canadian Philatelist*, journal of the society.

Chiovelli was chosen the Geldert winner for his article "Canadian Food Mail Program" which was published in the March-April 2010 issue. It was one of 20 eligible items. The jury chose Chiovelli's article for its originality and the emphasis placed on a little known area of philately.

On hearing of his success, Nino Chiovelli said, "I was totally surprised and was completely unaware that the Geldert Medal existed." When he was asked why he chose to write such a story, he said "I am a retired postal clerk and have been familiar with the program for many years." He admitted articles "have been written about the program," but this is an "important piece of information for air mail collectors and generalists" that may have been missed.

Unfortunately, Chiovelli does not have any original CFMP material. He said his goal was "to inform the philatelic arena of the program" which the Geldert Medal Selection Committee considered he did with informed expertise.

Nino Chiovelli collected stamps when he was a youngster, but "then dropped out" until he started piloting hot air balloons in the 1970s and 1980s when people asked him to carry covers on various flights. "That started me on the highly specialized trail of collecting Trans-Atlantic, Trans-Pacific, and around-the-world 'carried-on-board flight covers.'" He has also helped the Aerophilatelic Society and some balloon clubs in producing covers.

On the importance of collectors sharing their hobby with others, he said "it is that research that supplies both the vocal and printed information that gives vibrancy to the hobby." He added "sharing research is a magnet that will draw people to the hobby as it does open the door to adventure."

George Pepall said "it is important to congratulate Geldert Medal winners because they are an inspiration to others and a wonderful example for the hobby." He said "the 2010 winner has presented an little known area for the collectors, and it should motivate aerophilatelists especially." He added "because Nino Chiovelli was prepared to share his expertise with collectors, it is an immense benefit to *The Canadian Philatelist* and other philatelic publications."

The Geldert Medal was established in 1967 by Phyllis Geldert in memory of her husband Dr. George M. "Mac" Geldert, FRPSC and RPSC president (1958-1967). The Geldert Medal selection committee consists of RPSC members Michael O. Nowlan, Chair; Cimon Morin and Kevin O'Reilly.

Information on The RPSC can be had by e-mail at info@rpsc.org or by visiting the Society's website at www.rpsc.org, or by calling 416-979-8874, toll free 1-888-285-4143.

Nino's article was also published in the March 2010 issue of *The Canadian Aerophilatelist*. - I think it's great to see Nino and his article given this award by the RPSC.

To **John Walsh**, who has been elected a Fellow of The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. According to the RPSC:

John M. Walsh has been an active member of the RPSC throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. He is a regular exhibitor at North America shows where he has won numerous gold medals and a large vermeil at a FIP sponsored show. His major contribution to philatelic literature has been the *Newfoundland Specialized Stamp Catalogue* which has seen seven editions since 1988. His contributions as a volunteer are legendary, and include organizing and scanning the journals of The RPSC, the British North America Philatelic Society, and the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors.

John is also a member of the CAS, and is editing Section 24 "Newfoundland First Flight Covers 1919-1947" for the next edition of *The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland*.

More Congratulations

To **Jim Graue** and **Ben Ramkissoo** who have been elected to the American Air Mail Society's Aerophilatelic Hall of Fame.

Jim is Editor-in-Chief of the "American Air Mail Catalogue", of which *The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland* is a part. He is also Vice President of the American Air Mail Society, and a distinguished exhibitor who won the Grand Award at AEROPHILATELY 2007 for his "German North Atlantic Catapult Mail 1929-1935".

Ben is an authority on Astrophilately, and edited Section 20, "Astrophilately in Canada", in *The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland*.

To **Stephen Reinhard** and **Mark Banchik** who have been elected as Vice-Presidents of the American Philatelic Society.

Stephen is the long-serving Treasurer of the American Air Mail Society, and the Past-President of F.I.S.A. He is an international exhibitor and judge, and gave the "FIP Aerophilately Judging Seminar" at ORAPEX in 2010. Stephen has been a member of the CAS for over 20 years.

Mark is the current President of the American Air Mail Society.

To **Denny May** for his new book "*More Stories About Wop May*".

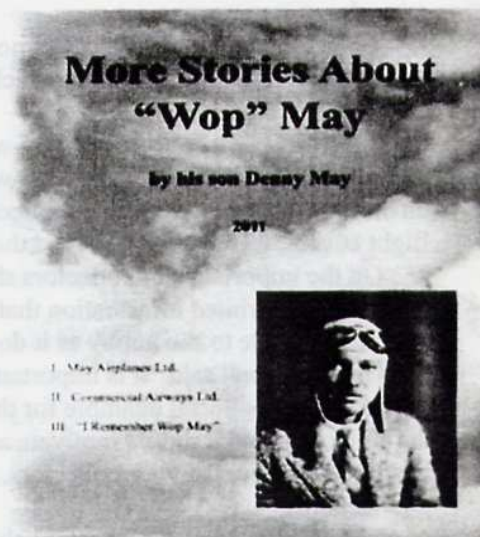
According to the website www.wopmay.com :

This 100 page book has three main sections - May Airplanes, Commercial Airways, and "I Remember Wop May" - stories from the many people who knew or knew of the man, and who shared a story about what they remember.

The book is full of photos, many that have never been published before. Author Denny shares his memories and thoughts as well. It's a book worth reading, and is getting rave reviews from all who have read it.

The initial printing of 200 sold out within weeks and a second printing of 100 is ready. The book is a good companion book to "Wings of a Hero" and BOTH BOOKS are available from Denny - contact him at PO Box 53083 RPO Glenora, Edmonton, Alberta T5N 4A8 or email WCCAS@shaw.ca .

Cost is \$25 for each book (Postage included to anywhere outside of Canada), or \$20 each (Postage within Canada). Denny can send you a PayPal invoice, or contact him for other payment options.



To **David Crotty** whose exhibit on "*Canadian Postage Meter Stamps*" has been published by BNAPS as part of their exhibit series. David is a Member at Large on the CAS Executive Committee.

To **Don Fraser** whose book on "*Postmarks of Manitoba prior to 1900*" has also been published by BNAPS. Don is one of our Winnipeg members. His question about the D.w. handstamp triggered the current, ongoing enquiry.

For more information about these publications, visit the BNAPS website at www.bnaps.org , or contact Ian Kimmerly Stamps, 62 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5A8. [Tel. (613) 235-9119].

To the **Airmail Exhibitors at BNAPEX:**

Steve Johnson - Yukon Airways And Exploration Company Limited (Single Frame)
Gold and Canadian Aerophilatelic Society Award for the Best Airmail Exhibit.

Hans Steinbock - Zeppelin Mail To and From Canada
Silver with Felicitations.

WEBMASTER REPORT

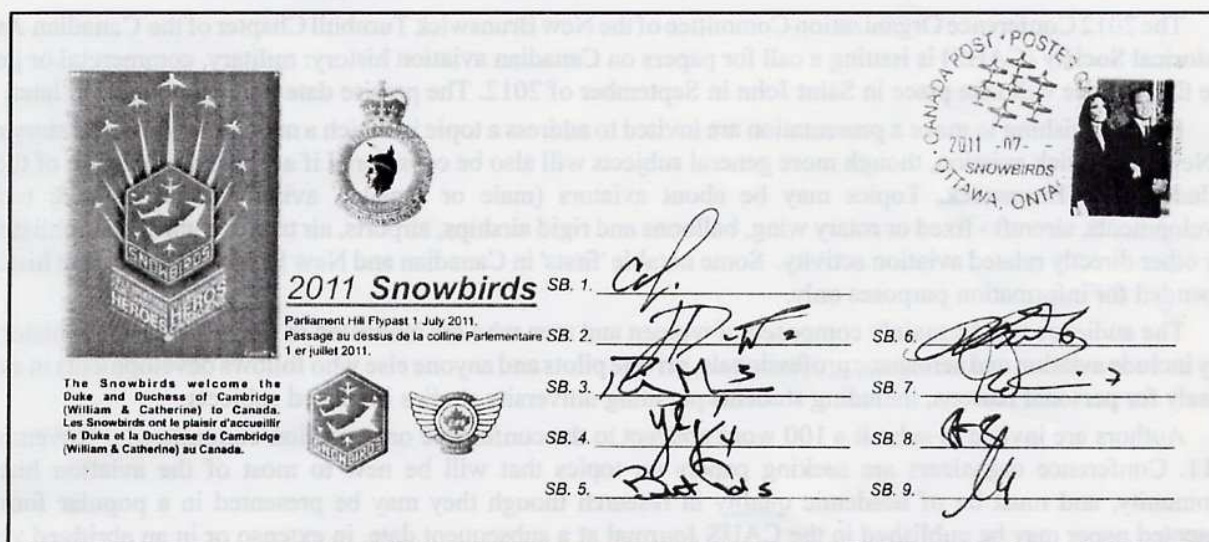
After much delay, a number of updates have been made to the webpage:

- The new constitution has been added.
- The list of Executives has been updated.
- Future CAS events/meetings has been updated.
- A new member exhibit has been added. This is a great chance to view Neil Hunter's Grand Award winning exhibit on EVOLUTION OF AIR MAIL - TORONTO, CANADA- FROM BIPLANE TO JET. The purpose of this section is to share your collection/exhibit/research with other members. Please let me know if you wish to add your collection to the webpage.
- The CAS price list has been updated.
- I am now in the process of adding CAS back issues to the webpage. Issues #1-16 have been added already. I would like to acknowledge the hard work done by Gord Mallet and Charles Livermore for preparing the back issues for the website.

The webcounter passed 3,500 in August.

Steve Johnson

2011 SNOWBIRDS COVERS



The 2011 Snowbird flown and autographed covers are now available. The covers were flown over Parliament Hill, Ottawa, at noon on Canada Day in the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. All covers have a bi-lingual greeting to the Duke and Duchess; a striking Snowbird logo celebrating our Canadian Heroes; the 431 Squadron badge; the red and white Snowbird logo; and the red, black and white CAS logo. They are franked with the .59 cent, Permanent Rate stamp depicting Prince William and Catherine prior to their engagement announcement. The stamp is cancelled on 1st July 2011 with the Snowbird postal cancellation.

The prices remain the same as previously: \$30.00 for single envelope autographed by all nine Snowbird pilots; and \$55.00 for the set of nine envelopes, each signed by an individual pilot. Each order receives two complimentary 2011 Snowbird brochures. The prices include any applicable taxes and mailing costs.

To order any of these covers, please send payment made payable to the CAS to Major Dick Malott, 16 Harwick Crescent, Nepean, Ontario K2H 6R1.

Our Secretary Treasurer, Brian Wolfenden, has a small stock of earlier Snowbird covers for sale. If interested please contact Brian directly at 203A Woodfield Drive, Nepean, Ontario K2G 4P2 (Tel: (613) 226-2045; Email: bjnepean@trytel.com)

Dick Malott, Snowbird Cover Co-ordinator

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Many thanks to the family of Pat Sloan for donating Pat's aerophilatelic books and notes to the CAS library.

Pat's awards from FIP, AAMS, FISA, RPSC, ORAPEX, and other exhibitions, have been donated to the Air Mail collection of the American Philatelic Research Library in Bellefonte.

Thanks also to Dick Malott for arranging these donations, and for various items he has donated to the CAS library as he prepares to move house.

Chris Hargreaves

LETTERS AND COMMENTS TO THE EDITOR

Canadian Aviation Historical Society - 2012 Annual Conference

Pierre Vachon has sent the CAS a copy of the call-for-papers for anyone wishing to make a presentation at the 2012 Annual Conference of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society. - Sending out a call-for-papers is a new development for the CAHS, and it is very nice for aerophilatelists to be included.

First In The Air - New Brunswick's Place In Canadian Aviation

Sub-Themes: Balloons, Fixed and Rotary-Winged Aircraft

The 2012 Conference Organization Committee of the New Brunswick Turnbull Chapter of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society (CAHS) is issuing a call for papers on Canadian aviation history: military, commercial or general. The Conference will take place in Saint John in September of 2012. The precise date will be announced later.

Persons wishing to make a presentation are invited to address a topic in which a major portion of the story relates to New Brunswick aviation, though more general subjects will also be considered if a significant portion of the story includes New Brunswick. Topics may be about aviators (male or female), aviation enterprises & technical developments, aircraft - fixed or rotary wing, balloons and rigid airships, airports, air traffic control, aerophilately and any other directly related aviation activity. Some notable 'firsts' in Canadian and New Brunswick Aviation history are appended for information purposes only.

The audience will be mainly composed of women and men who are interested in Canadian aviation history, and may include aviation and aerospace professionals, private pilots and anyone else who follows developments in aviation closely for personal reasons, including students pursuing university studies in related subjects.

Authors are invited to submit a 100 word abstract to the conference organization committee by November 15, 2011. Conference organizers are seeking papers on topics that will be new to most of the aviation historical community, and must be of academic quality in research though they may be presented in a popular format. A presented paper may be published in the CAHS Journal at a subsequent date, in extenso or in an abridged version. Anyone can submit a paper for consideration. Presentations should be crafted not to exceed fifty minutes.

Please address all submissions to: 2012 CAHS Conference Organization Committee, 21 Broadway, Rothesay N.B. E2H 1B3. Submissions may also be made by email to: wbtft@nb.sympatico.ca

Fixed-Wing Aircraft Anniversaries:

100th anniversary of the first powered flight in New Brunswick, Cecil Peoli, Saint John, 1912.

85th anniversary of the first electric variable-pitch propeller, W. R. Turnbull, Rothesay, 1927.

82nd anniversary of Daphne Paterson, Saint John, Canada's first female commercial pilot, 1930.

80th anniversary of the Webster Trophy, donated by Dr. C. Webster, Shediac, 1932.

80th anniversary of Amelia Earhart's visit on her solo transatlantic west to east flight, Saint John to Ireland, 1932.

80th anniversary of the first solo transatlantic east to west flight, James Mollison, Pennfield Ridge, 1932.

Balloon Aircraft Anniversaries

172nd anniversary of the first aircraft flight in Canada, Professor L.A. Lauriat, Saint John, 1840.

12th anniversary of a transatlantic flight duration record, L. Lajoie & C. Houver, Saint John to Normandy, France, 2000.

8th anniversary of the first solo transatlantic crossing in an open basket, David Hempleman-Adams, Sussex N.B. to Blackpool, England, 2004.

Rotary-Winged Aircraft Anniversary

137th anniversary of James Fraser's helicopter design, Saint John, 1875.

For more information contact Pierre Vachon. His address is on the front cover of this journal.

LETTERS AND COMMENTS TO THE EDITOR *continued:***Wanted - candidate Aerophilatelic Judges**

Re: the comment in the minutes of the 2011 AGM, published in the June 2011 *Canadian Aerophilatelist* that:

It was agreed that as part of the CAS presenting an award for ORAPEX each year, we would also push to have an aerophilatelic judge on the panel each year

I have had a very pleasant discussion about aerophilatelic judging with Doug Lingard. - Doug is very involved with the organization of ORAPEX, and was instrumental in having Stephen Reinhard on the judging panel last year, when Stephen also gave the "FIP Aerophilately Judging Seminar".

Doug pointed out that they normally do have an aerophilatelic judge on the panel at ORAPEX each year, but it is increasingly difficult to arrange this, as there are very few active aerophilatelic judges in Canada at the national level.

Doug therefore asked me to push for CAS members, and other readers, who are interested in exhibiting, to consider qualifying as aerophilatelic judges!

If any reader is interested in qualifying as an aerophilatelic judge at the national level, please contact David Piercey [dpiercey@telus.net] for full information about the RPSC's training and qualifying process for philatelic judges. - If you would like more information about judging in general, Doug would be pleased to discuss judging with you. [lingardd@istar.ca] Tel. 613 737 4864.

Why support F.I.S.A.?

Re: "FISA Report - Motion of the Directorate to Dissolve FISA" in the June 2011 *Canadian Aerophilatelist*.

I have been asked why I wished the FISA Directors every success in re-vitalizing the organization, when the CAS had voted to dissolve FISA?

According to our Constitution, (Section 2.3), one of the purposes of the CAS is:

To represent Canadian Aerophilatelists at the National and International levels.

It seems to me that the best way of representing Canadian Aerophilatelists at the International level, is by supporting international organizations like FISA, and the people who are prepared to serve on the Directorate of FISA.

When the people involved in running FISA decided that the organization was no longer viable, and recommended its dissolution, we followed their recommendation and voted in favour of dissolving FISA.

However, there is a new group of people prepared to try and make FISA a vibrant International organization. If they succeed, a strong and active FISA should be good for Canadian Aerophilatelists at the International level.

I will therefore repeat my best wishes to Ross Wood, the new FISA President, and to the FISA Directors, for every success in re-vitalizing the organization.

Update on FISA

The FISA website at www.fisa-web.com has been re-organized, so that "news" from different societies/countries now comes up on the first screen.

Ross Wood, FISA President, has written to all the member societies about re-organizing FISA. His letter included some comments suggesting a possible change in emphasis for FISA:

When FISA was originally set up in 1960 there was a big push for exhibitions and separate classes for Aerophilately and later Astrophilately at FIP. Though it is important that we keep close ties with FIP to ensure that our classes remain relevant and are promoted at that level and all levels leading up to World Exhibitions we must also look to support the majority of your members. By that I mean the majority of your members are not interested in exhibiting at any level. Hopefully one day this may change as they become more involved, but I know that this will not come to reality. Therefore more emphasis on what is shown on the FISA Website and in the e-newsletters should relate to the collecting and obtaining material, research on the material that you have or are interested in and the publication of your findings, the attending of re-enactments, the nostalgia associated with old and new aircraft and the flights that they have made or are intending to make. This means that we could get more interest from people that are not members of aero related clubs and you should benefit by increased participation in your clubs.

Chris Hargreaves, CAS President and Editor of "The Canadian Aerophilatelist"

THE EARLIEST AIR MAIL TO CANADA ?

Chris Hargreaves

The last issue of this journal included a cover flown from Allahabad on February 18th 1911 addressed to South Africa, and a question as to whether anybody knew of a cover from the Allahabad flight addressed to Canada?

Nobody has contacted me with details of an Allahabad - Canada cover.

Meanwhile, the question was followed up by Neville Polakow, who consulted Pradip Jain. Pradip has studied the Allahabad flight, and responded that he does not know of a cover addressed to Canada.

It is possible that a cover exists. - Neville added that he found the cover to South Africa, "purely by chance when it appeared on a Harmers auction some fifteen-odd years ago. It was listed under India and I nearly missed it!"

However, it seems safe to say that no covers from Allahabad to Canada are known.

The next public carriage of air mail was in England, to mark the coronation of King George V. - Sixteen mail carrying flights took place between 9th September 1911 and 26 September 1911, carrying 130,000 specially designed souvenir postcards and envelopes.

These flights were proposed by Walter Windham, who had organized the Allahabad flight. They were described in detail by Donald Holmes in his wonderful book *AIR MAIL an illustrated history 1793 -1981* published back in 1981. This description is reproduced with kind permission of Donald following this article.

At least three items addressed to Canada were carried on these flights:

- a brown postcard cancelled September 9th and addressed to Toronto, which is shown on the front cover of this issue.
- a brown postcard cancelled September 9th and addressed to Burk's Falls, Ontario, that was found by Donald Holmes and is shown on this page.
- a reddish postcard cancelled September 14th and addressed Winnipeg, that was sold by Vance Auctions in December 2010.



Although they are cancelled for the first day of the Coronation Air Mail Service, these cards postmarked September 9th 1911 were not actually flown on that day. - Donald Holmes comments in his book that postcards were produced in different colours. Only violet cards, available to the organizing committee, and official greetings were carried on the first day.

The cards postmarked 9th September 1911 are, however, the earliest airmail to Canada currently known.

Does anybody know of a violet Coronation Air Mail Service card or letter addressed to Canada that would have been flown on September 9th 1911? If so, please send details to the editor. I would also be interested to receive details of any other Coronation Air Mail Service cards or letters addressed to Canada.

If you can help, please send information to the editor:

Chris Hargreaves, 4060 Bath Road, Kingston, Ontario K7M 4Y4. (Email: hargreavescp@sympatico.ca)

THE CORONATION AIR MAIL SERVICE

Donald Holmes

Reprinted from *AIR MAIL an illustrated history 1793-1981*.

1911

September 9 England

From London to Windsor The first United Kingdom aerial mail was conceived as part of the celebrations surrounding George V's ascension to the throne of England in 1911. This temporary service of mail by air has long been termed "The Coronation Air Post."

When Windham returned from Asia to Britain early in the spring of 1911, he was enthusiastic about the possibility of a trial air mail in England and went at once to see the British Postmaster General, the Right Honorable Herbert L. Samuel. Though Samuel favored the idea and was willing to help, he pointed out a technicality that seemed a substantial hindrance to any such effort. A special charge would be required if letters were to be flown in order to help underwrite the experiment, much along the lines of the Allahabad plan. British postal regulations, however, forbade any changes in postal rates without an Act of Parliament.

Faced by this apparently insurmountable obstacle, Windham devised a scheme whereby special postal stationery (envelopes and postcards) would be printed by an Aerial Mail Committee, sold in major London retail shops, stamped with regular postage by the purchaser or the store, dropped in special collection boxes at the point of purchase, and then transported to the Western District Post Office on Wimpole Street for processing. The fees collected at the retail locations for the special stationery would pay all costs, with any excess being given to charity. Processing by the postal service simply meant applying a unique commemorative cancellation to each piece of mail. The committee would then see that the collected mail was taken to the landing field, carried in planes of their hire and, finally, placed in the regular mail stream at the selected landing place. The postmaster general was even to be absolved of any responsibility for loss, delay, or damage to the mail by virtue of a small printed notice in the lower left-hand corner of each piece of air mail stationery.

In a letter to Windham dated May 15, 1911, the General Post Office granted approval for the "conveyance of letters and postcards, [but not of registered correspondence] by aeroplane between the Post Office and the Festival of Empire, Crystal Palace, and certain places in the United Kingdom to be hereafter agreed upon." The letter, signed by one Matthew Nathan, further specified that "the postage stamps would be obliterated by means of a special dated stamp which would include the words '1st U. K. Aerial Post'," and added, "You will no doubt be so good as to call here at an early date to arrange the necessary details."

The necessary details were many. Windham was joined in his enterprise by D. Lewis Poole, Secretary of the Royal Aero Club, and together they arranged for an artist, William W. Lendon, to

create the pictorial design for the envelopes and cards. They then arranged to have eleven different commercial firms handle the sale of the special stationery, each firm being supplied with a bright red, wooden aerial mail collection box, manufactured by Windham's own airplane factory at Clapham Junction.

The route of the flights, the choice of pilots, and calendar matters were then considered. Originally, it was felt that the Crystal Palace vicinity in London would be a good terminal point for the post because the coronation-related "Festival of Empire" was to take place in this noted exhibition hall over a number of weeks in the summer of 1911. In line with this plan, Windham obtained royal permission to land the mail at Windsor Great Park in the shadow of Windsor Castle, located just over twenty miles from the center of London. However, when it was realized that the preparations for the post would take more time than expected, the London terminus was shifted from Crystal Palace to London's only air field at the time, the Aerodrome at Hendon. The date for commencing air mail flights between London and Windsor was finally set for September 9.

The organizers wanted to secure the services of the colorful American flyer, Colonel S. F. Cody, who had only recently obtained British citizenship. Unable to do this, Windham and Poole approached the Grahame-White Company, a firm that owned and operated the Hendon aerodrome. Directed by the handsome, well-to-do exhibition pilot, Claude Grahame-White, who had succeeded in winning the second international Gordon Bennett trophy race in the United States the previous year, the Grahame-White Company, it was agreed, would put together a team of pilots and a small fleet of planes that over a period of days would carry whatever air mail was collected from the public.

The team of pilots lined up for the Coronation Air Post included Gustav Hamel, Clement Greswell, Charles Hubert, and E. F. Driver. Windham was elated over Grahame-White's choice of fliers. He later said, "I reckoned we had the best team that could be assembled at the time." Hubert and Driver, a Frenchman and a South African respectively, were well known around Hendon for their fine piloting skills; Greswell, a graduate of the Grahame-White flying school, was then an instructor using a biplane produced by Windham's firm. As for Hamel, Windham respected his ability in the air and considered him the equal of any pilot then active.

For the use of these flying postmen, Grahame-White obtained four planes, two Blériot monoplanes and two Farman-built biplanes. All the aircraft were carefully readied for their important postal task.

The design prepared by Lendon and accepted with favorable comment by the organizing officials featured a silhouette treat-

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THE CORONATION AIR MAIL SERVICE by Donald Holmes, Reprinted from *AIR MAIL an illustrated history 1793-1981* continued:

ment of a Farman-like biplane flying over Windsor Castle. The copy-line above the pictorial portion of the cachet read A. D. Coronation 1911/First U. K. Aerial Post/by Sanction of H. M. Postmaster General. In order to encourage multiple purchases of the envelopes and cards bearing the cachet, Windham had them printed in different colors—violet, scarlet, purple-brown, dark brown, deep brown, black, bright green, dull-dark green, and gray. The violet stationery was used at the discretion of the committee, but all the other colors were sold to the general public. On September 8, the first collection of this mail was made by Macnamara's postal van and taken to the Wimpole Street Post Office for the official aerial post cancel. All mail collected in advance of the first flights was dated September 9, the date of planned inaugural flights.

Once the first collections of mail were processed, it was evident from the volume of letters and cards that the first United Kingdom aerial post was going to be a great success. Windham observed that "people were so keen to send letters and cards by this first British Air Mail that in some places I found them queuing up." The public paid sixpence for the cards (or 6½ pence, if stamped) and one shilling for the envelopes (or 1 shilling, 1 pence with stamp).

Six different cancellation devices were used on the mail, all showing the same information except for the die number. Those pieces processed at the Wimpole Street office bore die numbers one through four and were most likely purchased at one of the nine announced store locations in London or at the Aerial Post Committee Secretary's Office, General Buildings, Aldwych. Dies five and six were used at the regular Hendon Aerodrome Post Office for the special mail collected there or for mail sold and deposited at two retail locations on the road from downtown London to Hendon.

Windham wrote later about the mood of people as the day of Great Britain's initial air mail experiment dawned.

Many wanted to take part in this first experiment, but there was skepticism since much was being written about the unreliability of aeroplanes, constant forced landings, and cancelled flights. But there need not have been doubts. The first day of our flying post gave striking proof that a plane handled by an expert could even at that stage of aviation be flown through a wind approaching gale force.

And so it was, when the motor van delivered twenty-three sacks of mail weighing just over 600 pounds to the Hendon Aerodrome shortly after noon on Saturday, September 9. A stiff breeze blew and it was not at all certain that airplanes would fly that day. After an hour's delay beyond the 3:30 P.M. departure time and a trial flight by another pilot, Gustav Hamel had one of the Blériots rolled out to the field to undertake the first flight.

After receiving the routine papers (a waybill and time sheets) and one bag filled with "privileged" mail—the violet-colored envelopes and cards being sent to the king and queen, other reigning sovereigns, ambassadors, and notable individuals all over the world—Hamel was on his way. All hats were respectfully doffed and a band on hand for the occasion swung into "God Save the King." After a quick pass over Hendon and the assembled crowd, Hamel turned his plane toward Windsor, with the blessing of a rigorous tailwind that pushed him swiftly through the air. The time was 4:58 P.M.

A large crowd at Windsor awaited his arrival. Among those was a postman with a bicycle, ready to carry the incoming mail to the Windsor Post Office for sorting and further dispatch. Less



The Farman biplane in flight over Windsor Castle readily identifies cards and covers from Britain's first trial air mail. Though displaying a September 9th cancellation, this slightly worn reddish-brown card flew at a later date from London to Windsor—only violet cards and covers in a "privileged" mail were carried on the first flight on the 9th. This card's special appeal is the signature it bears near the plane, E.F. Driver being one of four pilots who carried mail between Hendon and Windsor in 1911 and the pilot of South Africa's first airmail.

than fifteen minutes after departing Hendon, Hamel completed a tricky landing near the Royal Mausoleum at the Great Park in Windsor. A telegram was sent at once to the king informing him of the safe arrival of the first air mail in his realm.

As Hamel's mail was being unloaded at Windsor, aviator Charles Hubert was attempting a second carry of a portion of the mail waiting for transport to Windsor. He was piloting one of the Farman biplanes. His trip, however, was aborted when he was unable to control the plane in a freshened wind.

Since there was no intention to carry mail on Sunday, the next flights were attempted on Monday, September 11. Three airmen—Hubert, Driver, and Greswell—were prepared to make early morning flights that day, hoping to make a dent in the large pile collected at Hendon. Hubert went off first with eight mail bags, but met with misfortune during his takeoff. His machine crashed from forty feet in the air and he was very seriously injured in what would prove to be the only accident of the entire exercise. Rushed to the hospital, he was found to have two broken legs along with other less serious injuries.

Hubert's injuries were to lead to a temporary disruption of the air mail delivery on Tuesday, September 19. With three final

bags of London to Windsor mail waiting to be flown, Hamel refused to fly until the organizing committee had paid Hubert 500 pounds in compensation for his injuries. It took several days for notes and authorizations to pass back and forth on the matter and as a result, the delayed bags of mail were not flown to Windsor until September 25 and 26. On the latter date, all the mail processed at the Wimpole Street Post Office had been successfully delivered and the Coronation Aerial Post came to an end.

Mail flights were made on ten different days between September 9 and 26, with a much smaller mail being carried from Windsor to London on two of those dates. The Windsor mail was handled similarly to London's, with "Windsor" inserted in place of London on the two cancelling devices. Windsor had two

THE CORONATION AIR MAIL SERVICE by Donald Holmes, Reprinted from *AIR MAIL an illustrated history 1793-1981* continued:

die numbers, with number one being reserved for privileged mail that originated there and which filled the first bag flown to London by Greswell on Sunday, September 17. Hamel also carried one bag of mail from Windsor on the afternoon of that same day, and both he and Greswell received silver matchboxes with an engraved view of Windsor Castle from the Deputy Mayor of Windsor as a memento of their service.

In all, sixteen flights were made from London to Windsor during the period of the experiment, involving 37 bags and approximately 113,000 pieces of mail. The Windsor mail amounted to about one-tenth of the London mail.

After all expenses and the payment to Charles Hubert were deducted, the first British air mail showed a surplus of 937 pounds. This money was presented to the King Edward VII Hospital at Windsor to endow a bed, over which a brass tablet was placed recalling The Coronation Aerial Post of 1911. Aerophilatelists find that specimens of the flown cards and covers

serve today as excellent reminders of an historic series of air mail flights. Especially coveted are the violet cards and envelopes that rode with the first mail carried in each direction. Also prized are the cards that bear the signatures of the Grahame-White pilots and the cards that display commercial advertising on the reverse side. Among the companies that utilized the first air mail for advertising purposes were Schweppes, Ltd., Wright's Coal Tar Soap, and the Gramophone Company.

More than twenty years after this first extended experimental transport of mail by airplane, Lord Herbert L. Samuel, who as Postmaster General of Great Britain had authorized the temporary service, said about the effort. "It was the first airmail to be flown in the United Kingdom, and that was an event worthy to be commemorated in the history of the world's communications." A few years after the Hendon-Windsor flights the talented Gustav Hamel, Britain's first air mail pilot, flew off into the English Channel mists and was never seen again.

Centenary of the Coronation Air Mail Service



On 9 September 2011 the UK's Royal Mail issued a set of stamps as a tribute to the pioneering aviators who flew the Coronation Air Mail Service. - The four stamps feature original photography of key events of 9th September 1911:

1st Class — Pilot Gustav Hamel is handed the first bag of mail for the inaugural flight at Hendon Aerodrome.

68p — Sitting in the cockpit of his Blériot Monoplane, Hamel Ready to Leave Hendon

£1.00 — Greswell's Blériot at Windsor

£1.10 — Airmail Delivered at Windsor - A postman was dispatched to the Frogmore Mausoleum, within the grounds of Windsor Castle, where Hamel touched down. He collected the mail - and the aviator — and returned to the castle.

Centenary of U.S. Air Mail

The third listing in the "U.S. Pioneer Flight Covers 1910 -1916" section in the *American Air Mail Catalogue, Sixth Edition - Volume 1*, is:

3 1911, September 23 - October 1 — GARDEN CITY - MINEOLA, N.Y. - INTERNATIONAL AVIATION TOURNAMENT. The first official U.S. airmail was flown during the International Aviation Tournament held at the Aerodrome on Nassau Boulevard in Garden City. Postmaster General Frank H. Hitchcock authorized mail to be flown and Earle L. Ovington was sworn in as the first official airmail pilot. T.O.M. Sopwith and Capt. Paul W. Beck also flew mail during the meet.

Ovington flew mail on the first day and most covers and cards received a circular "Aeroplane Station No. 1" postmark and a 3-word ("AERIAL SPECIAL DESPATCH") cachet. Covers were postmarked during each day of the meet, but no mail was flown on September 29 or October 1 due to poor weather conditions. A total of 43,247 pieces of mail was serviced during the meet.

The U.S. Post Office issued commemorative cachets for the 20th Anniversary of the September 23rd flight in 1931, and for the 50th Anniversary in 1961, but there are no U.S. Post Office events to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the first official U.S. Airmail flight this year.

There will, however, be a privately arranged commemoration of the flight in Garden City on September 23rd, and 100 celebratory covers are being produced:



Covers are priced \$7.50 including postage in the U.S., \$8.00US to Canadian addresses. They can be ordered from:

Art Groten, P.O. Box 30, Fishkill, N.Y. 12524, U.S.A. [Email artgroten@optonline.net for more information.]

All proceeds from the sale of the covers will be used towards the purchase of a special plaque honouring Ovington that is currently planned to be installed in front of the Garden City Post Office.

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1958 – BY AIRSHIP TO THE ARCTIC, WITH AIRMAIL

David Whiteley passed on to me an obituary for Brigadier-General Keith Greenaway, RCAF. Attached to the obituary was a description of a flight to the Arctic in a United States Navy airship. I found this article fascinating both for its description of airship handling, and its comments about the Arctic. Given the positive responses to previous articles involving airships in this journal, I am including the full article below.

Following the article, was a comment that philatelic information regarding the flight had been published by Hal Vogel. I contacted Hal to try and get some illustrations of covers to add to the article about the flight. Hal kindly sent me a copy of an article he had written about the flight for *Ice Cap News*, the journal of the American Society of Polar Philatelists (ASSP). Hal's article was a wonderful account of philatelic sleuthing, and of covers not always being what they seem to be. I am therefore also including Hal's article, after the description of the flight.

Brigadier-General Keith Greenaway April 8 1916 –April 11 2010

Greenaway was a RCAF navigator who developed an international reputation as the leading expert on Arctic air navigation. He pioneered navigation techniques in high latitudes and carried out many flights north of the Canadian Arctic and was navigator, in 1958, of the U.S. Navy ZPG-2 airship *Snow Goose* the last lighter than air vehicle to visit Polar Regions. His book, *Arctic Air Navigation* (1951), is the standard textbook in the field. On retirement he continued to work for the Canadian government on the development of Canada's Arctic Regions. He was awarded the Order of Canada and many international honours. (*Polar Post*, Whole number 226, Volume 2 No. 3 September 2010 back cover)

TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD BY AIRSHIP

By WING COMMANDER K. R. GREENAWAY

(Reference: Roundel, May 1960, Vol. 12, No. 4)

(Archived by the Manitoba Military Aviation Museum at www.manitobamilitaryaviationmuseum.com/Aviators.html)

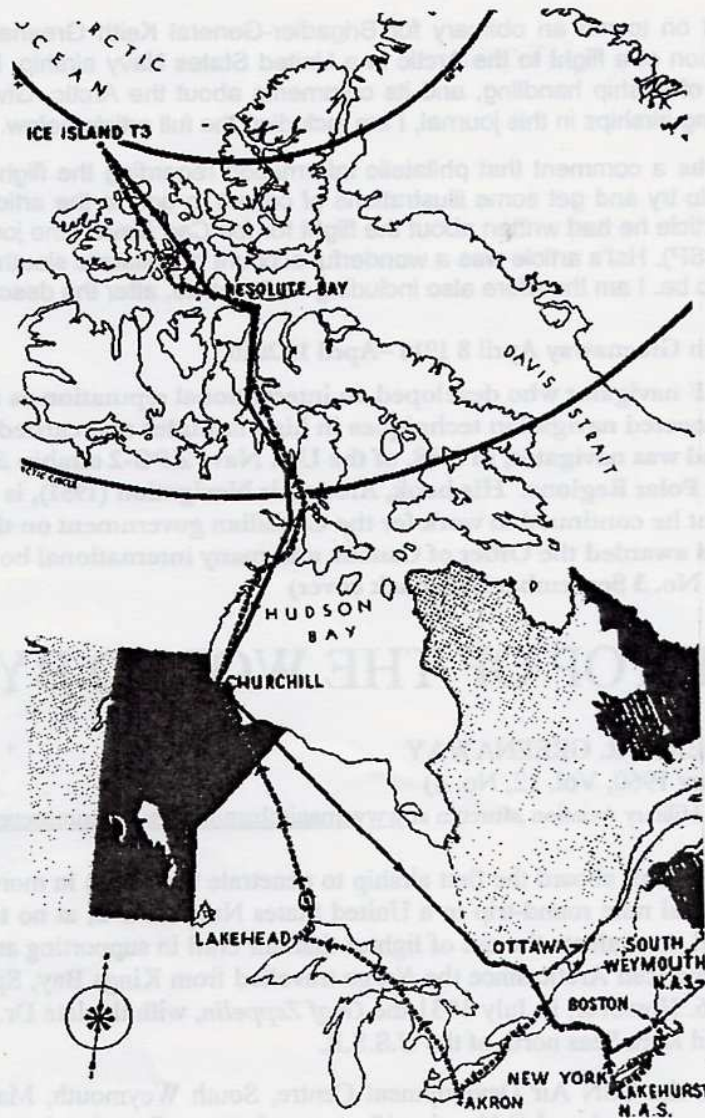
IN 1958 I was senior navigator aboard the first airship to penetrate the Arctic in more than a quarter of a century. We made the 4700 nautical mile round-trip in a United States Navy ZPG-2, at no time exceeding an altitude of 2100 feet above sea level, to evaluate the use of lighter-than-air craft in supporting arctic research. No airship had flown over the North American Arctic since the *Norge* travelled from Kings Bay, Spitzbergen, to Teller, Alaska, via the pole in May 1926. However, in July 1931 the *Graf Zeppelin*, with the late Dr. Hugo Eckener in command, flew over the Barents and Kara Seas north of the U.S.S.R.

Our departure point was the USN Air Development Centre, South Weymouth, Mass., and destination was Ice Island T-3, on which was located an I.G.Y. scientific research team. Our airship was of standard configuration, measuring 348 feet in overall length and 110 feet in height. Powered by two engines, the ZPG-2 could maintain an airspeed of 40-43 knots for 75 hours with a 14-man crew, provisions and survival equipment and about 4000 lbs (350 cu ft) of useful lift available for cargo. The still air range was 3000 nautical miles under these conditions.

ROUTES

Resolute Bay, Cornwallis Island, was selected as the northern base for the operation. Several factors had to be considered when choosing the route and planning the flight. For economical cruising an airship should be flown at low altitude on long-range flights. When the airship climbed, the pressure ceiling of the ballonets was usually exceeded and helium had to be released; this reduced the lift capability and an increase in engine power was required to offset the loss in lift, accompanied by an adverse effect on range. Ideally, the engines should be used for forward motion only. Air temperatures were another factor to be considered. An increase in temperature caused the helium to expand and when the pressure limits of the ballonets were reached, helium was released and the subsequent loss in lift was offset by an increase in engine power. An inland route via Fort Churchill was chosen because of its shorter distance and prevailing light winds, although a lower-flight altitude could have been maintained on the coastal route. However, the inland route presented no altitude problem as a detailed inspection of topographical maps revealed that the route could be flown at 2000 feet or less, above mean sea level. The increase in air temperature over the land during the day was not considered sufficient to cause trouble. This, of course, was not the case as we found later.

Continued

TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD BY AIRSHIP By WING COMMANDER K. R. GREENAWAY continued:

The route flown by W/C Greenaway and the crew of United States Navy airship ZPG-2.

PREPARATIONS

All unnecessary equipment was removed from the airship to reduce the weight, and several modifications were made to adapt the ship for high-latitude operations. The gyro magnetic compass was modified to cut out magnetic slaving of the directional gyro so that the compass system could be used beyond Churchill where the magnetic heading became unreliable. An N-1 gyro compass system was also installed as a safety measure. The extra effort to install the second compass system paid off; shortly after leaving Churchill, the primary gyro compass failed and the N-1 was used to maintain direction for the remainder of the operation. In order to use the sun for heading checks, regardless of its relative bearing, astro compass mounts were installed in four positions, two fore and two aft. A development model of the APN-77, a doppler navigation system for helicopters, was installed to provide drift and ground-speed information when over the Arctic Ocean. Unfortunately, this equipment went unserviceable before reaching the area. Neither the APS-33 search radar, which was one of the primary navigation aids, nor the driftmeter, required modifying for use in northern latitudes. During June and early July, a party from the Naval Air Development Unit visited Ottawa to arrange for the use of Churchill and Resolute Bay. Helium, mooring facilities, and ground handling personnel were required at both bases. Temporary masts were erected at Churchill and Resolute Bay; two flights were required to airlift the masts. Thirty men were needed at each site to

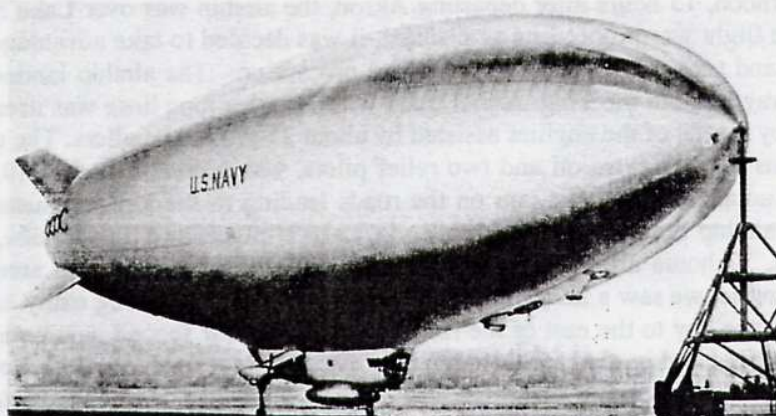
TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD BY AIRSHIP By WING COMMANDER K. R. GREENAWAY continued:

Figure 1: A US Navy ZPG-2 airship.

assist in ground handling the airship, in addition to the seven key ground handling personnel flown in by the support aircraft. Ground handling personnel were provided by the US Army First Arctic Test Centre at Fort Churchill and the RCAF at Resolute Bay. Arrangements were made to use the limited helium supplies retained by the US Army at Churchill and the US Weather Bureau at Resolute Bay, if required.

Our airship flight crew consisted of four pilots, two navigators, two flight mechanics, two riggers, two electronic technicians, one radio man, and one electrician. Two Canadian observers took part in the operation, namely, Commodore O.C.S. Robertson, RCN, Canadian Joint Staff, Washington, and Mr. N. Gray, Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys. All observers took part in the arctic portion of the flight, but several of the group travelled to and from the area with the support group personnel in a Constellation.

SOUTH WEYMOUTH TO AKRON

We planned to fly all the way to Churchill under 2000 ft. above sea level by following the Hudson Valley to Albany, the Mohawk Valley to Lake Ontario, across the Rideau Lakes to the Ottawa River, up the Ottawa Valley to Earlton, and then direct to Churchill, a distance of about 1460 nautical miles. The flying time would be 36 hours under normal cruise conditions, and without a headwind. The airship departed for Churchill at 2300 hrs. on 27 July, so as to take advantage of the lower night temperatures for the initial stage of the flight when the airship would be at maximum weight. Higher air temperatures and more widespread fog and cloud than had been forecast were encountered shortly after take-off. The possibility of navigating the Hudson Valley at the flight plan altitude of 1500 ft. was ruled out and the airship was diverted to Lakehurst Naval Air Station, the most favourable base. The ceiling at South Weymouth had dropped below minimum. Favourable winds and slightly lower temperatures were forecast for 30 July and we took off at 0500 hrs. The flight up the Hudson and Mohawk valleys was made in daylight in good visibility at an altitude of 800 ft; at noon the airship passed over Kingston, Ontario, and headed for the Ottawa Valley. Again, high air temperatures plagued the operation and helium had to be released frequently to keep within the pressure limits of the ballonets. Higher and higher power settings had to be used as the lift capability was reduced. This raised the fuel consumption beyond acceptable limits and made it impossible to reach Churchill. A decision was made to divert to Akron, Ohio, where the Goodyear Aviation Co. had suitable facilities. Cleveland was reached at dark, but severe thunderstorms along the south shore of Lake Erie throughout the night prevented mooring until 0900 hrs. the next morning. The night was spent over Lake Erie, a safe distance off shore. At Akron the ship was lightened to the maximum extent commensurate with flight safety and crew fatigue. The crew complement was reduced by one pilot and four technicians, and about 1000 lbs. of equipment was unloaded. The two failures to reach Churchill clearly indicated that another attempt should not be made until surface temperatures along the route dropped from the mid-80's to the low-70's.

AKRON TO CHURCHILL

By 2 August the temperature had dropped, and with a forecast of favourable winds the airship departed Akron airport at 0130, 3 August, and headed across Lake Erie and western Ontario to Lake Huron. The Akron-Churchill flight was planned to take advantage of the lower temperatures over the water, by following Lake Huron to Sault Ste Marie and across Lake Superior to Lake Nipigon, and then direct to Churchill. Arrangements were made by the support group, waiting at Churchill, to refuel at Lakehead Airport if fuel consumption was again higher than

TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD BY AIRSHIP By WING COMMANDER K. R. GREENAWAY continued:

predicted. In the afternoon, 15 hours after departing Akron, the airship was over Lake Superior abeam Lakehead Airport. Although the flight was proceeding as planned, it was decided to take advantage of the excellent weather at Lakehead Airport and take on extra fuel as an added precaution. The airship landed on the runway and was refuelled on the taxiway without mooring. A fuel truck with an extra long hose was used to refuel and the airship was kept in position by means of the engines assisted by about 25 ground handlers. The operation, which included taking on 1000 gallons of fuel, extra oil and two relief pilots, was accomplished in 40 minutes, much less time than that required to untangle the traffic jam on the roads leading to the airport caused by the airship's arrival. After refuelling, the airship departed for Churchill via Lake Nipigon and Trout Lake, arriving at 0730 on the morning of 4 August, 32 hours after leaving Akron. While circling the Churchill area, waiting for the ground handling crew to assemble, we saw a herd of at least 200 white whale, including many calves, in the mouth of the Churchill River and in the bay to the east of the river mouth. After our second pass over the river mouth at 50 ft. the whales became alarmed and headed for the open bay. The airship provided an excellent platform for observing their activities. By 0900 the mooring operation had been completed. High winds delayed our departure for Resolute Bay for two days. Normally, local high winds would not have affected take-off; however, due to a deep ditch and rough ground near the mast, the airship could not be safely manoeuvred. Several times during the delay gusts up to 50 m.p.h. were measured. Although the temporary mast was not designed to withstand winds over 30 m.p.h., it held the airship with no apparent difficulty. A crew remained aboard during the blow in case an emergency arose.

By the morning of 7 August, the winds had decreased to almost a calm and the en route weather was favourable; nothing worse than a crosswind component was forecast. The flight plan distance via Roes Welcome Sound was 1080 nautical miles and the flying time was estimated to be about one day. Take-off was made in fog. At 500 ft. the airship emerged on top and we set course for Roes Welcome Sound. In the vicinity of Marble Island the fog and cloud dissipated and the weather remained clear until we reached the Gulf of Boothia. Shortly after leaving Churchill, the primary compass system failed and the N-I system, installed for such an emergency, was used for the remainder of the flight. We noticed several polar bears on the pans of ice off Chesterfield Inlet. As soon as the airship approached, they became panic stricken, diving and swimming first in one direction and then the other. One bear dived into the water dragging a partially eaten seal. Roe Isthmus was crossed in twilight and clear weather. On entering Committee Bay, fog covered the water area and the remainder of the flight was made at 800 ft. while flying between the fog bank and intermittent layers of stratus. The N-I Gyro held a steady heading during the many hours when no sun sight was possible. It was fortunate that the primary direction system failed when in good weather over Hudson Bay and not while flying between layers in Prince Regent Inlet. Radar bearings from prominent landmarks were used to maintain track. At Resolute Bay the ceiling was 300 ft. and the radar was used to assist the instrument approach. An excellent landing was made under adverse conditions at 0830 on 8 August, 24 hours after departing Churchill.

RESOLUTE BAY VIA T-3 TO CHURCHILL

The temporary mooring mast had been erected 300 yards to the west of the Resolute Bay runway. The RCAF personnel, on short notice, had done an excellent job of grading the mooring area and preparing a taxiway. In the process, however, the permafrost had been exposed and the surface was muddy and soft in spots. Taxiing to the mast and the mooring was carried out without difficulty, but the problem of getting the airship, with maximum fuel load, back to the runway over the soft taxiway caused some concern. Several flights out of Resolute Bay had been planned, but in view of the poor condition of the taxiway, it was decided to make only one 40-hour flight: crossing the Archipelago to T-3 at 79N 121W and then proceeding to Ellesmere Island before returning to Resolute Bay. Light winds and clear skies were forecast for the next 36 hours for the western part of the Archipelago and along the route to T-3. Hence, only a 12-hour stop was planned and take-off was set for 0900 local time. As had been expected, difficulty was experienced in getting the airship from the mast to the runway. At one point, even a forklift was used to help extract the starboard undercarriage from a soft spot in the taxiway. As a result, the take-off was delayed four hours. On reaching an altitude of 500 ft. we set a westerly heading for the southwest tip of the Bathurst Island group. When off Cape Cockburn, we set course direct to Mackenzie King Island passing to the east of Byam Martin Island. This route was the shortest low-altitude flight path across the Archipelago to T-3. Ideal weather prevailed, the winds were light and the visibility unlimited. No open water or leads were seen between Byam Martin Island and Mackenzie King Island. Six caribou were observed a short distance inland from the east coast of Mackenzie King Island. Low stratus and fog covered most of the remainder of the route to T-3. Tops of the clouds and the fog varied between 300-800 ft. No icing was encountered when

TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD BY AIRSHIP By WING COMMANDER K. R. GREENAWAY continued:

flying through the ragged tops of the layers as the air temperature was several degrees above freezing. The fog and clouds were broken sufficiently to permit drift observations and to make heading checks by using the reflection of the sun on open patches of water. The configuration of the airship prevented observing the sun direct when checking the heading. The final alteration of course was made with the aid of a radio compass bearing on the beacon at T-3. On reaching T-3, altitude was reduced to 200 ft. but visibility was poor and no attempt was made to unload the scientific gear; however, bags of mail were dropped. After spending about an hour in the vicinity of T-3, we headed for Resolute Bay via Borden Island, the Findlay Group and the Bathurst Islands. By returning direct to Resolute Bay we had sufficient fuel to continue on to Churchill if the weather were favourable, thus avoiding the hazardous ground conditions at Resolute Bay. Stratus cloud and fog, topped at 500-800 ft., prevailed until reaching Borden Island where the skies became clear. We observed 12 caribou on Loughheed Island, and eight muskox and a polar bear inland from the head of May Inlet, Bathurst Island. Seventeen hours after departing, the airship was again over Resolute Bay. After consultation with the meteorological officer by radio, we decided to proceed direct to Churchill as 36 hours fuel remained and the flight time to Churchill was estimated to be 27 hours in good weather. The flight crew, as well as the support personnel, were greatly relieved at not having to face a second landing at Resolute Bay with the possibility of encountering serious trouble taxiing to and from the mast. Weather conditions were excellent along the return route, and on the evening of 10 August Churchill came in sight, 44 hours after the original departure from Resolute Bay.

CHURCHILL TO SOUTH WEYMOUTH

Radio reports received while approaching Churchill indicated that the favourable flight weather over Ontario would hold for another 36 hours. As a result, it was decided to depart for South Weymouth immediately after refuelling. The airship was held on the runway by the engines and ground handling personnel. Sufficient fuel for the flight to South Weymouth was pumped on board. I checked the weather charts and filed the flight plan during the refuelling. At 2240 hrs. we cleared Churchill and set course for South Weymouth. Shortly after sunrise, the Severn River was crossed and at noon the airship passed over Cochrane, Ontario, causing considerable excitement. Nearly everyone in town was out in the streets. During the evening, several thunderstorms were circumnavigated north of Mattawa, Ontario, but otherwise the flight across Ontario and down the Ottawa River, across the Rideau Lakes to Lake Ontario, and down the Mohawk Valley and Hudson Valley, was uneventful. At 0825, 12 August we landed at South Weymouth, 32 hours after departing Churchill, and almost 78 hours of continuous flight after taking off from Resolute Bay on 8 August.

The operation demonstrated that a ZPG-2 airship can provide low altitude, slow speed, visual and photographic reconnaissance over a wide radius in the Arctic, and, in addition, it is an excellent platform for scientific investigations.

Brigadier-General Keith Greenaway April 8 1916 – April 11 2010

COVERS FROM THE ARCTIC FLIGHT OF THE SNOW GOOSE, 1958

This is a slightly abridged version of an article published by Hal Vogel in *Ice Cap News* Volume 41, No 224 April to June 2006 pp 48-56. – It appeared in his column "B.U.T." – Back Up Tidbits.

I have omitted some introductory comments that overlapped the previous description of the flight, and endnotes 1 to 18, which gave very specialized information.

The U.S. Navy received permission on 2 July 1958 for its proposed lighter-than-air (LTA) flight. It would be over western and northern Canada to the Arctic Ocean where it would hover above Fletcher's Ice Island T-3. A ZPG-2 helium-filled blimp (BUNO 126719), then undergoing repairs at Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey, would be named *Snow Goose* for this mission that would originate from the U.S. Naval Air Development Unit (Project Lincoln) at Naval Air Station South Weymouth, South Weymouth, Massachusetts.

Senior officer for the flight would be Commanding Officer, Naval Development Unit, South Weymouth, Captain H.B. Van Gorder. Lieutenant Commander Henry Collins flew as senior pilot.³

This significant polar aviation event might have eluded postal documentation had not its impending departure been mentioned in the 17 July 1958 issue of the *New York Times*. Apparently this was the first awareness that seasoned mail servicers had of this anticipated polar flight feat.⁷

Continued

COVERS FROM THE ARCTIC FLIGHT OF THE SNOW GOOSE, 1958 by Hal Vogel continued:

This also spurred Dr. Neil D. Josephson, ASPP's first Secretary, back to polar philatelic action. He just had served polar postal history and ASPP well by servicing mail that today represents just about the only philatelic documentation of *Skate* and *Halfbeak's* participation in the under ice and North Pole cruise that included *Nautilus* becoming the first vessel ever to make the very top of the world (3 August 1958).⁸

A few others also had mail carried by *Snow Goose*. We see addresses to those who are recognized as the most active polar philatelists at that time (ex. fig. 2). The archetypical aeropostal documentation for this flight would seem to be figure 2a. This also suggests that Dr. Josephson, fresh from his recent mass servicing and cachet design success for *Skate-Halfbeak's* NP cruise, to have done similarly for the *Snow Goose* flight. B U T - -

Dr. Josephson does not recall having serviced more than his customary three covers for this flight. Neither does he recall having made either of the applied cachets, believing that at least one was supplied by the USN and guessing that the other possibly came from the Canadians.⁹

This might be somewhat supported by figures 2 and 2a. The late John Herguth was an involved ASPPer then, succeeding Dr. Josephson as ICN's second editor in 1961. If ASPP had organized the cacheting, it is unlikely that Herguth's figure 2 would have lacked one of the markings (top straight line cachet) found on Josephson's figure 2a. One might also conjecture this would be even further evidenced by figure 2b to Herguth. Why would he have bothered to type an annotation form, if one already existed as an "ASPP"-provided cachet?

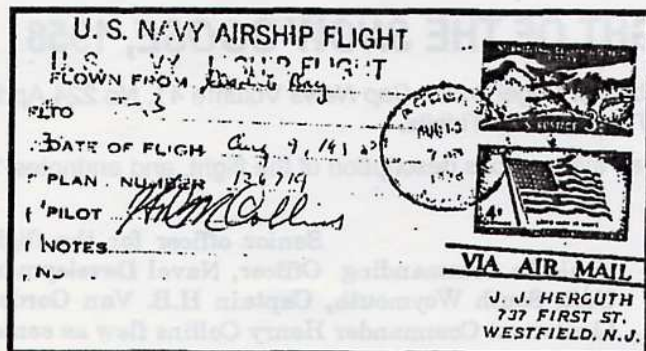


Figure 2

Of course, those having known John Herguth could counter that he was prone occasionally to differently service two covers for the same event documentation.

He also could have serviced figure 2b before becoming aware of the cachet found on figure 2a.

If Dr. Josephson, or anyone else affiliated with ASPP, had not group-serviced covers for *Snow Goose* carriage or provided markings found on its covers, then who did? It would appear then that the stamped flight documentation cachet typically found on these covers came from those directly associated with the flight.

This would help explain Captain Van Gorder's line in his letter to *Ice Cap News* shortly after the flight, where he hoped "that the special 'flight cachet' impressed on the many pieces of mail that was carried on this Polar Flight will be treasured."¹⁰
B U T - -

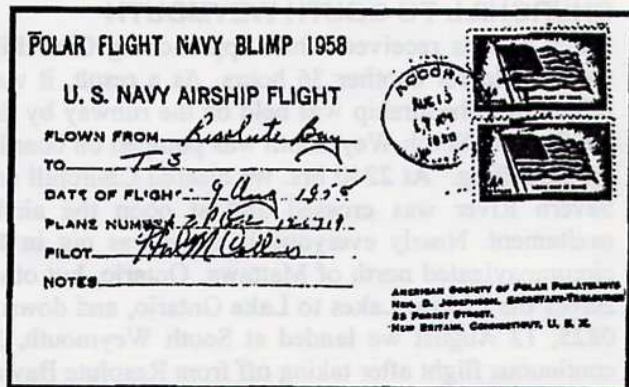


Figure 2a

assuming that the stamped itinerary cachet was officially made and impressed on carried mail, were there really two different cachets available to the *Snow Goose* crew for impressing on mail? Looking at spacing atop Figures 2a and 2c, we see that the upper stamped line on both obviously was from a separate device. Figure 2 is an example of those that make even more obvious that the "Polar Flight Navy Blimp 1958" straight line indeed was a second, distinct marking. It was not applied to figure 2 at all (the two lines of text at the top actually are from a double impression of the flight documentation cachet's first line).

So it seems as if the flight cachet may have been a thoughtful consideration by those in charge of the mission. In the absence of any other explanation, it may even be accepted that the officials made two different cachets, one of which was an auxiliary single-line marking that sometimes (when there was room?) was impressed above the flight documentation cachet.

Continued

COVERS FROM THE ARCTIC FLIGHT OF THE SNOW GOOSE, 1958 by Hal Vogel continued:

Captain Van Gorder acknowledged carrying "approximately three hundred pieces of mail." He further said that these were placed aboard before the flight's departure.¹¹ This would imply that nothing was received en route, though later we will see that at least one observer may have prepared a cover while aboard the airship, using the documentation cachet that may have been available for anyone's use.

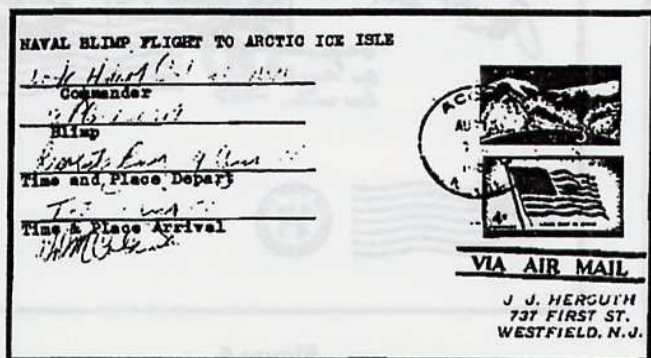


Figure 2b

Although manuscript annotations on some of the flown mail (ex. fig. 3) indicate having been carried on certain legs, it would appear that all the carried mail was treated similarly. From the project commander's statement and the cancellation date on the round-trip carried mail (Accord, MA, 13 Aug. 1958), it would seem that it all was placed aboard in South Weymouth and retained until return to NAS Weymouth, where the batch of mail was entered into the mail system at nearby Accord.¹²

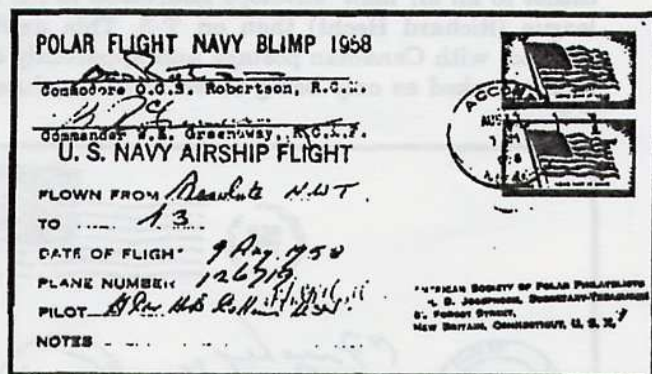
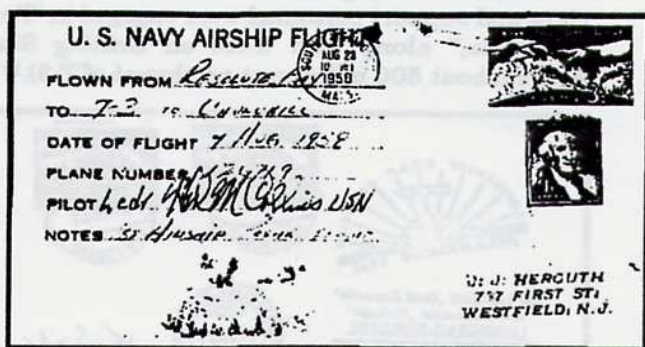


Figure 2c

Thus figure 3 was carried from Churchill to Weymouth (whether the sender meant this to refer to the return flight or that portion of the inward flight and the remainder back to Weymouth) — as was all the round-trip mail. It (and its 300 or so companions) also was carried from Weymouth to Weymouth via

Lakehurst, Akron, Lakehead, Churchill, Resolute, over T-3 and back over Resolute to Churchill.



The 1931 Zepp flight often is described as having had drop mail when it rendezvoused with *Malyguin* at Franz Josef Land. This even was one of the cover servicing options. One specifically could subscribe for drop mail "to (the) Russian icebreaker" (from *Graf Zeppelin*) either from Berlin or Friedrichshafen.¹³ B U T --

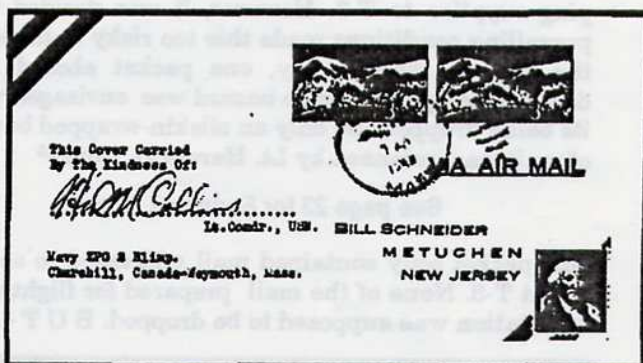


Figure 3

though anticipated and planned, the only thing that ever was dropped from the Zepp in the Arctic — was any attempt to drop mail there. Mail was transferred between the Zepp and the Russian icebreaker meeting it in the Arctic (figs. 4 & 4a).¹⁴ However, the mail exchange was made laterally, while the two "ships" were adjacent to each other.¹⁵ B U T --

there still was an airship Arctic mail drop. It just wasn't from *Graf Zeppelin*. The first and only midair delivery of mail from an airship in the Arctic occurred during the flight of *Snow Goose*.

It was able to lower to an altitude of several hundred feet while making a series of midmorning passes over the floating ice island on 9 August. T-3 then was situated in the Arctic Ocean at about 78°N 123°W,

Continued

COVERS FROM THE ARCTIC FLIGHT OF THE SNOW GOOSE, 1958 by Hal Vogel continued:

roughly 500 miles north-northwest of Resolute, N.W.T., Canada (fig. 5).¹⁶ Its USA scientists, technicians and support personnel were engaged in "Project Ice Skate," along with those on Drifting Station Alpha (about 500 miles west-northwest of T-3).¹⁷



Figure 4

The flight had intentions of either free or line-dropping supplies to T-3. However, it was decided that prevailing conditions made this too risky to those on the ground. Fortunately, one packet aboard was deemed "so light," that no hazard was envisaged with its being dropped. So only an oilskin-wrapped bundle of mail was released by Lt. Harold D. Koza.¹⁸

See page 23 for Endnotes 18 on.

This packet only contained mail addressed to someone at T-3. None of the mail prepared for flight documentation was supposed to be dropped. B U T - -



Figure 4a

some was. Most of the dropped mail probably had been personal and official postings that ordinarily would have been conventionally air delivered to those at T-3 once their landing strip could accept aircraft again. The runway on the island comprised entirely

of ice was too slushy in summer for this service. Any of this sort of mail from the air drop would have been indistinguishable from that mail that would have arrived later under more normal means of delivery. However, any mail prepared for delivery via *Snow Goose* might have borne flight markings. And did!

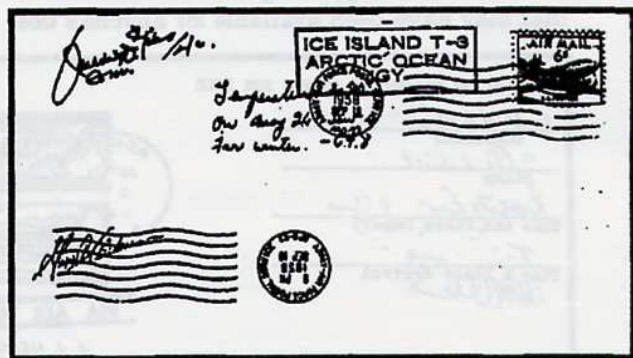


Figure 5

Figure 7 appears to have been one of those few (if only) pieces of mail aboard *Snow Goose* whose truncated routing (only one leg of the total route) manuscript annotation truly reflects its actual passage. It also is one of the few pieces of air-dropped mail to be positively identified as having had this means of delivery.

Onboard observer Guy Harris, from the Navy's Underwater Sound Laboratory, New London, Connecticut, impressed the flight documentation cachet to an air mail envelope addressed to his colleague (Richard Hecht) then on T-3. This mail is franked with Canadian postage and apparently correctly marked as only being flown from Resolute to T-3.



Figure 6

COVERS FROM THE ARCTIC FLIGHT OF THE SNOW GOOSE, 1958 by Hal Vogel continued:

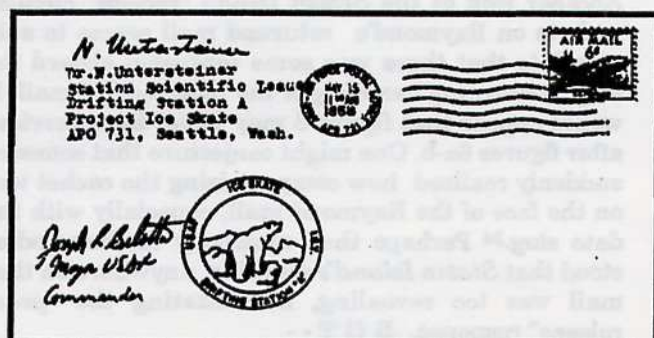


Figure 6a

Certainly its T-3 cachet would certify its having been delivered (air dropped) there on 9 August 1958. Too bad it appears to have been water-damaged. Or is this smearing actually fortuitous, vividly demonstrating a characteristic of its unusual postal history? This becomes more evident when understanding the postal story of figure 8 and its "relatives."

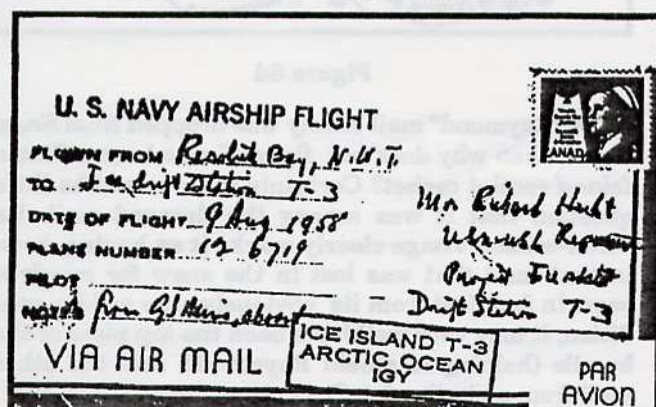


Figure 7

Gale Raymond, one of the seven original ASPPs, also prepared mail for carriage aboard the historic *Snow Goose* flight. He didn't rely upon anyone else's cachet or servicing. Neither did he intend for his mail to be carried as everyone else's.

Using a modified "poste restante" method of addressing, the then resident of Memphis, Tennessee, addressed several envelopes for delivery to a person ON T-3 via *Snow Goose* (with a request on their rear flap that they be returned to sender).¹⁹ He was successful in getting his covers (he had two addressed to himself [Figs. 8 & 8a] and at least one addressed to a friend [fig. 8b]) to pilot Collins. They were carried, as the annotations attest. BUT -

after a year, they still had not been returned. One can surmise that the veteran philatelist resigned himself to one of those sending losses that even the best sometimes experience. Then 13-months after having been on the *Snow Goose* flight, Gale Raymond read what had happened to his mail. He read about them in the newspaper!

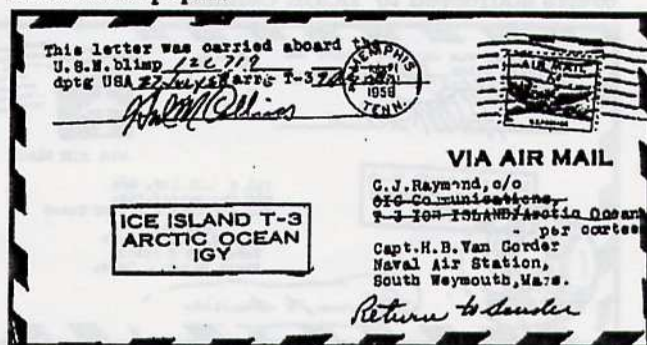


Figure 8



Figure 8a

According to the United States Navy press release, upon which the article was based, a Navy icebreaker (*Staten Island*), presumably on a classified mission, had picked up mail on 2 September 1959 at T-3.²⁰ The collector's *Snow Goose* deliveries were among them. It is conjectured that nothing ever would have been said, had the ship's modified cachet not been applied to some of the forwarded mail.²¹ This identified that ship at an extreme northerly place where no other surface ship had been. It couldn't be ignored, which may account for why the Navy announced its mail retrieval before collector Raymond even had received back his returned mail.

Figure 8c displays a normal "finger pointing" return to sender stamp used at many USA post offices. The press release stated that it had conveyed its outgoing T-3 mail to the Point Barrow Post Office. Among

Continued

COVERS FROM THE ARCTIC FLIGHT OF THE SNOW GOOSE, 1958 by Hal Vogel continued:

these was mail that had been dropped from *Snow Goose* -- and lost for a year in the snow. The release stated that the lost mail packet had been located in the summer of 1959. Since many of the addressees no longer were on T-3, their mail had to be returned to sender, since (it said) they had left no forwarding addresses. Shown were several of Gale Raymond's covers addressed to LCDR Collins.



Figure 8b

The release continued by saying that some of the retrieved mail (showing figure 8a) now was underpaid, but still was accommodated since it had paid the rate at the time of its use (having been mailed at Memphis 21 July 1958, before the domestic air mail rate was increased to 7 cents on 1 August 1958).²² BUT --

had they looked carefully at the *other* cover shown in the release and reprinted (fig. 8b), they would have had an even more exciting philatelic story. It is franked with the new rate's stamp. BUT --

that stamp wouldn't have had its first day of issue (31 July 1958) for another ten days. Raymond used it on mail 21 July 1958 -- ten days before it was authorized for sale to the public.²³

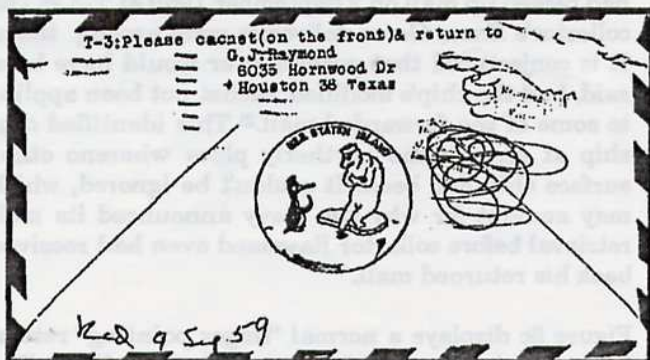


Figure 8c

Another look at the *Staten Island* "receipt" circular cachets on Raymond's returned mail seems to substantiate that there was some confusion aboard the ship concerning handling of the received T-3 mail. It would appear that figure 8 may have been serviced after figures 8a-b. One might conjecture that someone suddenly realized how compromising the cachet was on the face of the Raymond mail, especially with the date slug.²⁴ Perhaps then somebody further understood that *Staten Island's* marking anywhere on that mail was too revealing, necessitating the "press release" response. BUT --

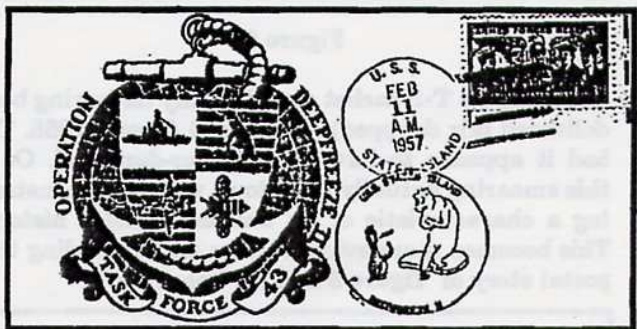


Figure 8d

if the "Raymond" mail surely was dropped from *Snow Goose*, then why does not figure 7 also bear a *Staten Island* receipt cachet? Certainly there would be little question that it was among the dropped mail. Its water-soaked visage clearly marks it as having been in that mail that was lost in the snow for nearly a year. In fact, just from its obviously once sodden condition, it may very well have been the top piece of the bundle (helping to shield Raymond's and the other mail from a similar fate?).

Its place in the mail drop further is enhanced by what was transferred onto its reverse. The contents of what must have been in the next envelope clearly show it was atop something from another person, sending greetings to a radio operator who appears to be the same as the lower left signer of figure 5.

Several rationales can be conjectured about the lack of ship receipt marking on figure 7:

1. Whoever was receipt stamping the T-3 mail aboard *Staten Island* may have ceased doing it before coming to figure 7 (or any of the others?).
2. The recipient (Hecht) still was there to receive his own found mail. This is unlikely, since a tour of duty was less than a year and the Underwater Sound Lab (USL) person returning aboard *Staten Island* on 2 September 1959 was not Mr. Hecht.

Continued

COVERS FROM THE ARCTIC FLIGHT OF THE SNOW GOOSE, 1958 by Hal Vogel continued:

3. Since those USL personnel rotated for T-3 duty probably all came from the same office and knew each other, the returning USL person took back the mail addressed to his known predecessor.

4. Mail addressed to known individuals was repackaged for delivery in bulk to their research or military organizations for late distribution.

5. A method, other than redistribution through the US Post Office had to be found, since figure 7 has no return address. Hence, it would have been useless putting it with the other mail going with *Staten Island* for return to known senders via the Point Barrow PO.

So there is drop mail from *Snow Goose*. B U T - -

it is surprisingly challenging to identify. The normal mail cannot be readily distinguished for this purpose. One or two of the more obvious pieces (ex. figure 7) would not be fully apparent without some further investigation and knowledge about the event.
B U T - -

thanks to the several daring Raymond flown servicings, there not only is *Snow Goose* flight mail with return-to-sender and ship retrieval markings, indicating having been taken from the island (and thus obviously dropped there by the airship), B U T - -

also reprinted USN press releases with photographs to positively substantiate their - - and *Snow Goose's* - - mail drop history.

=====

Acknowledgements to Joe Lynch who had begun to investigate this topic many years ago, as well as to the Rev. Dr. Gale Raymond for his unusual postal recording of this flight. Gratitude also to Herb and Janice Harvis for sharing portions of their collection and Dr. Neil D. Josephson for his comments relative to the servicing of *Snow Goose* mail.

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ENDNOTES

This is a slightly abridged version of the article published in *Ice Cap News* Volume 41, No 224 April to June 2006.

Endnotes 1 to 17 have been omitted as they gave very specialized information.

18. Lynch, 153. This was not an afterthought or consolation plunge by Lt. Koza. A mail drop had been in the flight's plan (Mulligan 12-31 August 1958).

19. Once popular, especially in Europe, and now believed to be in disfavor with most postal administrations, "Poste Restante" servicing had the sender address his mail to a fictitious person at the place where he wanted his covers cancelled. Careful that the sender had *his* return address on the mail, whose *fictitious* addressee could not be found, virtually ensured that the mail would be delivered back to the preparer - - without needing to have been sent under cover. This saved postage (or deprived some postal administration of postage revenue). However, it also could be used judiciously and justifiably to record a circuitous routing or receive a necessary type of marking that otherwise might not have been possible. For example, in the case of figure 8, it would not have been possible to receive fully documented arrival mail at T-3 without having had the carried mail also returned to the sender from there.

20. "ICE ISLAND," U.S.S. *Staten Island* (AGB-5) Public Information Office press release, 2 and 14 September 1959.

21. Figure 8c (reverse of figure 8) clearly shows what seems to be a modification of its Operation Deepfreeze II circular cachet (used during its service in the Antarctic 1956-57) seen on figure 8d. "Deepfreeze II" has been obliterated or cut out by the time it was used eighteen-months later on the reverse of figure 8.

22. "ICE ISLAND," 1.

23. Figures 2a and 2c also have a franking anomaly, since they are overfranked for both the new and old domestic surface, air and any rate to Canada. It is possible that he used two stamps for the new domestic rate just to be cautious during an uncertain rate increase transition period.

24. Figure 8 has the ship circular cachet on its reverse side *without* any date slug.

Many thanks to Hal Vogel for sending me a copy of this article.

For more information, and/or a copy of the full article, contact Hal at halvogel@aceweb.com

For more information about the American Society of Polar Philatelists, check their website www.polarphilatelists.org

In looking for pictures to illustrate these articles, I found a website <http://battleblimps.com/ops2.html> that offered Larry's U.S. Navy Airship Picture Book as a pdf file for: \$3.95US. - I bought a download, and highly recommend it to anyone who wants more, very readable information about how airships were operated.

THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AIR MAIL SERVICE: 1927 TO 1939 (Part 4)

by Richard Beith

This article was originally published in *Air Mail News*, the journal of the British Air Mail Society, in May 2008. It is reprinted with permission of the BAMS.

The article has been updated by Richard with information obtained since 2008.

Part 1, which covers events up to the end of 1927, was published in the June 2009 issue of *The Canadian Aerophilatelist*. It has also been posted on the CAS website: www.aerophilately.ca

Part 2, covering 1928 and 1929, was published in the March 2011 issue of *The Canadian Aerophilatelist*, and Part 3, covering 1930 to early 1932 in the June 2011 *Canadian Aerophilatelist*.

July 12th 1932

On 12 July the first official mails were flown from Ottawa to Bradore Bay for diverse destinations, or onto the Straits for the *Empress*. About 40,000 letters were sent, most of them philatelic. Some showed first day usage of the 6 cents airmail stamp, newly released to commemorate the Imperial Economic Conference (IEC) in Ottawa. Other covers used combinations of the 3 cents, 5 cents, and 13cents that were also released on July 12th to commemorate the IEC. A slogan cancellation: 'By Air/from/Ottawa to Belle Isle/ 1/3 of shortest route/to Europe', was used and a commemorative cachet was applied. See Figures 11 and 12. (Illustrations are numbered in sequence from Part 1.)



Figure 11. Ottawa 12th July 1932 to Kispest, Hungary. Rate to Europe was 10 cents.
Cover franked with 1 x 5 cents + 2 x 3 cents IEC stamps = 11 cents.

Flights were:

Ottawa - Rimouski
Rimouski - Harve St Pierre
Harve St Pierre - Bradore Bay and Red Bay

F/L D A Harding (Steerman 'CCH)
F/L de Nirverville (Vancouver)
Sgt F J Ewart (Bellanca 'UY)

Continued

THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AIR MAIL SERVICE: 1927 TO 1939 (Part 4) by Richard Beith continued:

Halliday and Malott recorded that of the 317 pounds of mail carried from Montreal, 300 pounds (six bags) were off-loaded at Bradore Bay, so a modest 17 pounds was carried on to Red Bay for Europe. Figure 12 shows a registered philatelic cover destined not for the United Kingdom, but for Texas. It bears a Bradore Bay PQ backstamp for 13 JUL 32 and only passed through Quebec again on 23 JUL 32 indicating a return by surface transport. It reached its destination, Manor TX, on 29 July.



Figure 12. Correct Rate = 6 cents airmail to USA + 10 cents registration = 16cents.

Cover is franked with a complete set of the IEC stamps totalling 27cents, so is over franked by 11 cents.

On the 17th July the first return flight was made from Red Bay with mail collected from the incoming *Empress* on which many conference delegates had travelled. 34 bags of mail weighing 800 pounds were collected by HMCS *Festaubert* and passed to two Bellancas, piloted by Grandy (in 'UZ') and Ewart (in 'WX'). At Harve St Pierre the mail was transferred to two Vancouvers, piloted by Ogilvie-Forbes (in 'VQ') and de Niverville (in 'VR'). Bad weather slowed down the departure of the two Fairchildes with F/O Ernest McNab and Bowker in charge. At Montreal the mail was split. Some 500 letters were for the USA; they were despatched on 18 July via Colonial Airways. Some of the remaining mail was for Montreal, some for Ottawa and points further west. Harding in a Steerman completed the delivery carrying 24 bags of mail, 596 pounds, of which 464 pounds were for Ottawa, much of the mail being for the Conference participants. This mail included letters from Dublin, now at a 4d rate, see Figure 13. Vogt reported four Smye despatches from 13 August franked at 7d. It would appear that Irish Free State rates were not available and franking here, as in 1931, followed the whim of the sender.

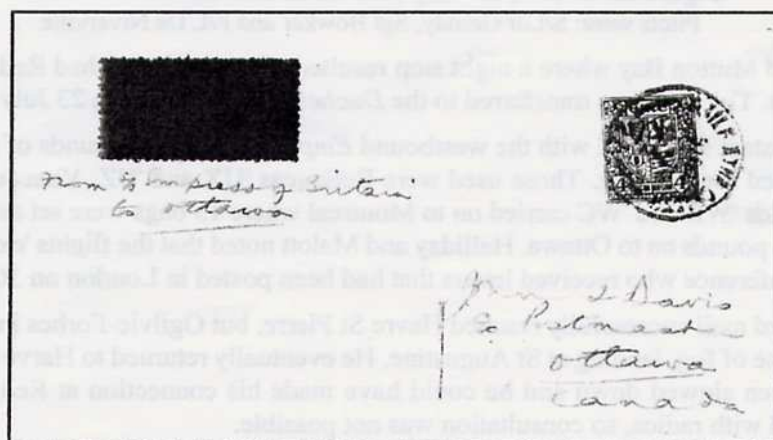


Figure 13. Irish acceptance.

Continued

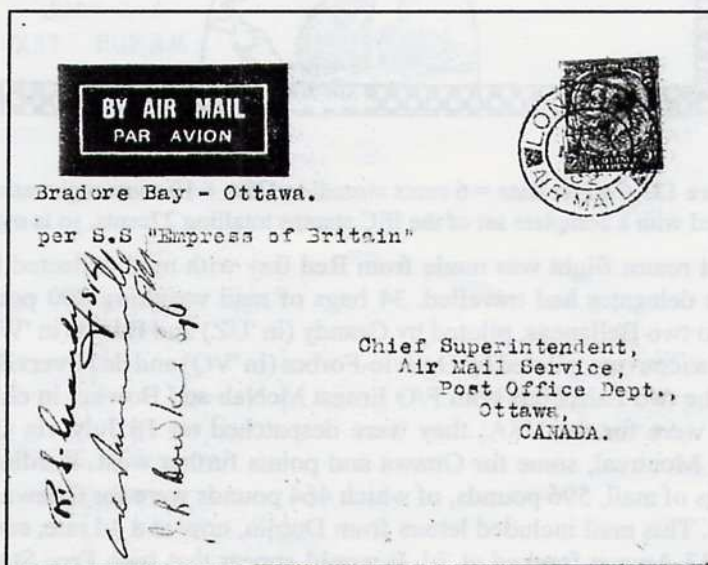
THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AIR MAIL SERVICE: 1927 TO 1939 (Part 4) by Richard Beith continued:

Most incoming mail received a Montreal, Ottawa or Winnipeg machine backstamp with the slogan: BY SEAPLANE/FROM STRAIT OF BELLE ISLE/1/3 OF SHORTEST ROUTE FROM EUROPE, see Figure 14. Mail is known signed by a selection of the RCAF pilots, see Figure 15.

The 21 July flight to connect with the eastbound *Empress* was less successful. Harding left Ottawa in a Stearman with 46 pounds of mail which was increased to 600 pounds at Montreal. Bower flew on to Rimouski, de Niverville proceeding to Harve St Pierre in Vancouver 'VR. Ewart in Bellanca 'UX left for Red Bay, but heavy fog resulted in



Figure 14.

Figure 15. London, 13th July 1932 for air mail service to Ottawa.

Pilots were: S/Ldr Grandy, Sgt Bowker and F/L De Niverville

stops at Natashquan and Mutton Bay where a night stop resulted. Ewart only reached Red Bay at midday of 22 July and missed the *Empress*. The mail was transferred to the *Duchess of Richmond* on 23 July.

On 3 August further contact was made with the westbound *Empress*. As 1,000 pounds of mail was discharged, two planes were again needed for each leg. Those used were Bellancas 'UX and 'UZ, Vancouvers 'VR and 'VQ on the second leg, and Fairchild's 'WB and 'WC carried on to Montreal where 15 bags were set aside with 'WB carrying the final nineteen bags, 685 pounds on to Ottawa. Halliday and Malott noted that the flights 'excited great interest among the delegates to the Conference who received letters that had been posted in London on 30 July'.

On 7 August the outward mail successfully reached Havre St Pierre, but Ogilvie-Forbes in Bellanca 'UZ was unable to reach Red Bay because of fog, landing at St Augustine. He eventually returned to Harve St Pierre unaware that the *Empress* herself had been slowed down and he could have made his connection at Red Bay. None of the planes involved were equipped with radios, so consultation was not possible.

The final inward flight from the *Empress of Britain* on 17th August, was again delayed by bad weather, but 850 pounds of mail was carried to Montreal where it was passed to Ottawa by train. In spite of the delays, delivery was still accelerated by 15-20 hours. This mail again included Irish Free State despatches. A further outward flight was planned

THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AIR MAIL SERVICE: 1927 TO 1939 (Part 4) by Richard Beith continued:

for 21 August, but the *Empress* herself was held up at Quebec, so the mail flight was not needed, nor was there an inward flight on 8 September.

In a report dated 29 June, one day after the first test flight, S/L Grandy pointed out that:

'Present aircraft are considered entirely unsatisfactory for regular runs over this route. ... The coast is too rough for float planes such as the Bellancas and the Vancouvers are too slow. ... The writer would prefer a large flying boat with at least three engines fitted with two-way radio and facilities for receiving bearings on radio beacon. The absence of radio in the aircraft is keenly felt.'

So ended the last flights on the 1/3 of the way to Europe route. The Conference delegates may have been impressed but the Canadian authorities and the RCAF must have been profoundly relieved that no serious accident resulted during the short life of this brave demonstration. It is suggested that the AAMS references 3231 and 3233 be expanded in the light of the above information.¹

Flights from 1933 to 1939

The main references: Arfken and Plomish, Baldwin, Malott, Muller and Stanley-Smith, did not list any St Lawrence ship-to shore flights after 1932. Proud, however, gave the annual start/stop dates up to 1938:

Service started	Service ceased	Steamer on first service
12 April 1933	15 November 1933	<i>Duchess of Atholl</i> on 14 April 1933
14 April 1934	17 November 1934	<i>Duchess of Atholl</i> on 21 April 1934
13 April 1935	16 November 1935	<i>Duchess of York</i> on 13 April 1935
10 April 1936	November 1936	?
1 April 1937	November 1937	<i>Duchess of York</i> on 10 April 1937
31 March 1938	3 November 1938	<i>Duchess of Bedford</i> on 9 April 1938 (Last service by <i>Empress of Britain</i> .)

The *Air Mail* Leaflets of the British Post Office continued to list air mail rates via the Rimouski-Montreal service every year up to April 1939. However, no flights took place on the Rimouski - Montreal service in 1939.

In some years, these *Air Mail* Leaflets gave dates when the service was suspended for the winter, that is, when the Canadian Pacific transatlantic steamers started to terminate their voyages at Halifax, Nova Scotia. The following references to combined postage rates and service availability were found:

Leaflet date	Letter rate			Suspended for winter
	First ½ oz	extra ½ oz	Postcard	
May 1933	2½d	1½d	-	from 15 November 1933
May 1934	2½d	1½d	2d	from 16 November 1934
April 1935	2d	2d	2d	from November 1935
April 1936	2d	2d	2d	from 13 November 1936
April 1937	2d	2d	2d	?
April 1938	2d	2d	2d	?
April 1939	5d	3d	3d	-

The 12 April 1939 *Post Office Circular* of the British Post Office stated that:

The rate of 2d per ½ oz (postcards 2d.) Which has previously been available for conveyance by the summer seasonal air service from Rimouski to Montreal, and thence by such air services as were formally available within Canada, has been withdrawn.

The same circular announced the rate of 5d for 'By sea to USA or Canada and Onward Air Transmission'. This was

¹ Baldwin, p.59; Malott, pp.136-137; Muller, p.156; Proud, p.225; Announcement, Post Office Department, Canada, June, 1932; Stanley-Smith Part 2, pp.7-9; P/O H A Halliday and F/L R K Malott, 'The Red Bay to Ottawa Experiments, 1932', in *The Airpost Journal*, January 1962, pp.98-101 and in *Jack Knight Air Log*, May 1962, pp.35-38. The *Airpost Journal* and *Jack Knight Air Log* texts also cite a 1932 report 'Operation Red Bay' by S/L R S Grandy. 'Irish Acceptances on Accelerated Mail Service for 1932 Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa', *O.E.* 78, Vol 8 No 2, April 2006, p.29; Vogt, 10 November 2007.

THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AIR MAIL SERVICE: 1927 TO 1939 (Part 4) by Richard Beith continued:

in fact an extension of a rate that had applied to mail carried by sea to the USA and onward transmission by air since January 2 1935. The rate now also applied to service by sea to Montreal, and air conveyance by the new Montreal to Vancouver air service.

The GPO leaflet for April 1939 noted that the latest times of posting were as for the mid-week USA mail and for the weekend direct Canadian mails.²

It would appear that very little mail has been recognised or collected from the 1933 - 1939 period, even though the GPO continued to publicise the service. For example, it was noted in an unidentified newspaper cutting from 12 April 1935 headed *AIR MAILS IN CANADA* that:

'The Postmaster-General announces that with the opening to navigation of the St Lawrence River, correspondence marked 'By Air Mail' for Canada sent by week-end sailings of the Canadian Pacific Company's steamers from Glasgow or Southampton will again receive onward conveyance by air from Rimouski on the St Lawrence to Montreal, thereby gaining about one day to Montreal, Ottawa and Winnipeg and up to two days to British Columbia. The first dispatch for this service will be by the 'Duchess of York' sailing from Glasgow tomorrow. The inclusive air postage rates are letters 2d per 1/2 1/2 oz; postcards 2d.'

Covers in the writer's collection from this period are limited to three examples, all from 1934, two of which were philatelic in origin, including one posted at the APEX air mail exhibition in London, see Figure 16.



Figure 16

No eastbound covers have been seen from 1933 onwards. That the service was regarded as useful can be shown by a registered cover from Bishops Waltham to Winnipeg. Unfortunately it was posted in a February (1934). The air mail etiquette has been crossed through and the cover bears a boxed handstamp: 'Service suspended during winter months', see Figure 17.

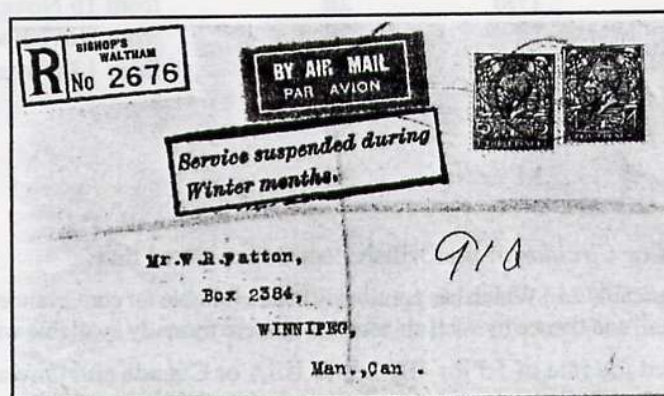


Figure 17

Continued

² Proud, p.225; Airmail Leaflets, in POST 50/2. Thanks to Chris Hargreaves, John Rawlins, and Richard Saundry for information and comments provided after this article was originally published in *Air Mail News*.

THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AIR MAIL SERVICE: 1927 TO 1939 (Part 4) by Richard Beith continued:**A Request**

The diligent reader will realise that copious information exists for a few of these flights, but is minimal for others. For some years no record has been found. The author would be delighted to receive comments, corrections, additions and amplifications. Copies of covers that illustrate the missing years would be particularly welcome. Please communicate via the Editor: Chris Hargreaves, 4060 Bath Road, Kingston, Ontario K7M 4Y4

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Appendix 1: Summary Postal Rates via Rimouski-Montreal and vv.

Canada to the United Kingdom:

- 1927: 3 c per ounce, Empire surface rate. No air surcharge.
- 24 August 1928: 5 c per ounce including all air fees
- March 1930 : 7c per ounce including all air fees
- February 1931 : 5 c per the first ounce, 10 c per each subsequent ounce including all air fees
- 1 July 1931 : 6 c per the first ounce, 10 c per each subsequent ounce including all air fees
- 1932 to 1939: 6 c per the first ounce, 5 c per each subsequent ounce including all air fees

Canada to mainland Europe:

- 1 March 1930: France, 7 c per ounce; other countries, 13 c per ounce - excluding air mail carriage from the UK.
Rates varied by country if air carriage beyond the UK was required.
- 2 February 1931 to 1939: 10 c per ounce, including air mail carriage from the UK.³

United Kingdom to Canada

- 1927-1929: No air surcharge
- 1930 (April-November): 4d per half ounce air fee
- 1931 (May-November): 2½ d for the first ½ ounce, 1½d for each additional ½ ounce
- 1932: As 1931, 2d postcard rate introduced 8 August
- 1933 and 1934: As 1932
- 1935 - 1938: 2d per ½ ounce, 2d postcards
- 1939: 5d per ½ ounce, 3d postcards, included trans-Canada air service.⁴

Appendix 2: The Mail Steamers

All the mentioned mail steamers were operated either by Canadian Pacific Steamships Ltd or by the White Star Line.

Canadian Pacific vessels:

- Duchess of Atholl* (20,123 gross tons, built Clydebank, 1928)
- Duchess of Bedford* (20,123 gross tons, built Clydebank, 1928)
- Duchess of Richmond* (20,022 gross tons, built Dalmuir, 1929)
- Duchess of York* (20,021 gross tons, built Clydebank, 1928)
- Empress of Britain* (42,348 gross tons, built Clydebank, 1931)
- Empress of France* (18,481 gross tons, built Glasgow, 1914)
- Empress of Australia* (21,498 gross tons, built Stettin, 1913 as the *Tirpitz*)
- Empress of Scotland* (24,581 gross tons, built Stettin, 1905, as the *Kaiserin Auguste Viktoria*)

Continued

³ Whiteley, pp.15-30

⁴ Proud, pp.223-225

THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AIR MAIL SERVICE: 1927 TO 1939 (Part 4) by Richard Beith continued:**Appendix 2: The Mail Steamers continued**

Canadian Pacific vessels continued:

Montroyal (14,189 gross tons, built Glasgow as the *Empress of Britain*, 1906, name changed to *Montroyal* in 1924)

Montnairn (17,282 gross tons, built Tecklenborg as the *Prinz Freidrich Wilhelm*, 1907)

White Star vessels:

Calgaric, (16,063 gross tons, built Belfast, 1918)

Doric (16,484 gross tons, built Belfast, 1923)

Megantic (14,878 gross tons, built Belfast, 1909)

Regina (16,314 gross tons, built Glasgow, 1918)

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Many thanks to Richard for a very comprehensive article. - If you can provide further information, please send it to the editor: Chris Hargreaves, 4060 Bath Road, Kingston, Ontario K7M 4Y4. (Email: hargreavescp@sympatico.ca)

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