

The Famous Inverted Jenny

During the 1910s, the United States Post Office had made a number of experimental trials of carrying mail by air, and decided to inaugurate regular service on May 15, 1918, flying between Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York City. The Post Office set a controversial rate of 24 cents for the service, much higher than the 3 cents for first-class mail of the time, and decided to issue a new stamp just for this rate, patriotically printed in red and blue, and depicting a Curtiss Jenny, the biplane chosen to shuttle the mail.

The job of designing and printing the new stamp was carried out in a great rush; engraving only began on May 4, and stamp printing on May 10 (a Friday), in sheets of 100 (contrary to the usual practice of printing 400 at a time and cutting into 100-stamp panes). Since the stamp was printed in two colors, each sheet had to be fed through the printing press twice, an error-prone process that had resulted in invert errors in stamps of 1869 and 1901, and at least three misprinted sheets were found during the production process and were destroyed. It is believed that only one misprinted

Initial deliveries went to post offices on Monday, May 13. Aware of the potential for inverts, a number of collectors went to their local post offices to buy the new stamps and keep an eye out for errors. Collector William T. Robey was one of those; he had written to a friend on May 10 mentioning that "it would pay to be on the lookout for inverts". On May 14, Robey went to the post office to buy the new stamps, and as he wrote later, when the clerk brought out a sheet of inverts, "my heart stood still". He paid for the sheet, and asked to see more, but the remainder of the sheets were normal. Robey began to contact both stamp dealers and journalists, to tell them of his find. After a week that included visits from postal inspectors who tried to buy it back, and the hiding of the sheet under his mattress, Robey sold the sheet to noted Philadelphia dealer Eugene Klein for US\$15,000. Klein then immediately resold the sheet to "Colonel" H. R. Green, for US\$20,000.

The philatelic literature has long stated that seven of the stamps have been lost or destroyed through theft or mishandling. However, this statement is inaccurate. In 2007, a copy came to light that had not been seen since Eugene Klein broke up the sheet, and was offered for auction that June. The number of lost stamps then became six. Several others have been damaged, including one that was sucked into a vacuum cleaner. Apparently Green's wife mailed one which, while recovered, is the only cancelled sample. Indeed, no Jenny invert is in pristine condition, because Klein lightly penciled a number on the back of each stamp so that its original position on the sheet could be identified.

A single inverted Jenny was sold at a Robert A. Siegel auction in November 2007 for US \$977,500. In December 2007 a mint never hinged example was sold for \$825,000. The broker of the sale said the buyer was a Wall Street executive who lost the auction the previous month. A block of four inverted Jennys was sold at a Robert A. Siegel auction in October 2005 for US \$2.7 million. In the wake of the 2008 financial meltdown, prices fetched by Inverted Jennys have receded. Between January and September of 2014, five examples offered at auction sold for sums ranging from \$126,000 through \$575,100.



NORMAL JENNY



PHOTOGRAPH OF INVERTED JENNY



MY 'INVERTED' JENNY

In fact a normal Jenny with **DELAWARE/OHIO** Pre-cancel applied inverted

Air Stamps

USA

1947 Issue

Intaglio printed on rotary presses.

Perf 11-10½

The three denominations were issues on separate dates

- 25c Depicting the Oakland Bay Suspension Bridge, San Francisco.
- 15c Depicting the Statue of Liberty, New York.
- 10c Depicting the Pan-American Union Building, Washington.

Issued 30th July 1947

Issued 20th Aug 1947

Issued 30th Aug 1947



Resine 23

Early Chilean Air Mail Services

Air mail flights in Chile began with a service between Santiago and Valparaiso on 3rd May 1927 using a DH Moth piloted by Luis Testart. Unissued Chile commemorative stamps were surcharged for this first air mail service, charged at a rate of 40 centavos per first 20 gr. with a sliding scale thereafter. The only aircraft crashed on 18 March 1928. The service ended and the remaining air stamps were destroyed.

On 6th August 1928 a new series of surcharged air stamps, 20 centavos to 10 Pesos value was issued by overprinting the existing definitive issue 'CORREO AEREO'. The 3 Peso & 6 Peso aero surcharge on 5c and 10c stamps were soon forged and led to an early withdrawal of these values.

Between February and May 1928, Lt. J.H. Doolittle demonstrated the possibilities of a permanent air mail service between several South American cities. Using a Curtis aircraft he made five survey flights carrying mail on each of these flights. Pan Am was a co-sponsor.

Air Mail to Europe commenced on 5th March 1928. The mail crossed over the Andes by rail to Mendoza in Argentina. From there it was flown to Buenos Aires from where it was carried on the regular scheduled Aeropostale flight to Natal in Brazil, crossing the Atlantic by fast mail packet to Dakar in Senegal, where the regular C.G.A. service flew it on to Paris.

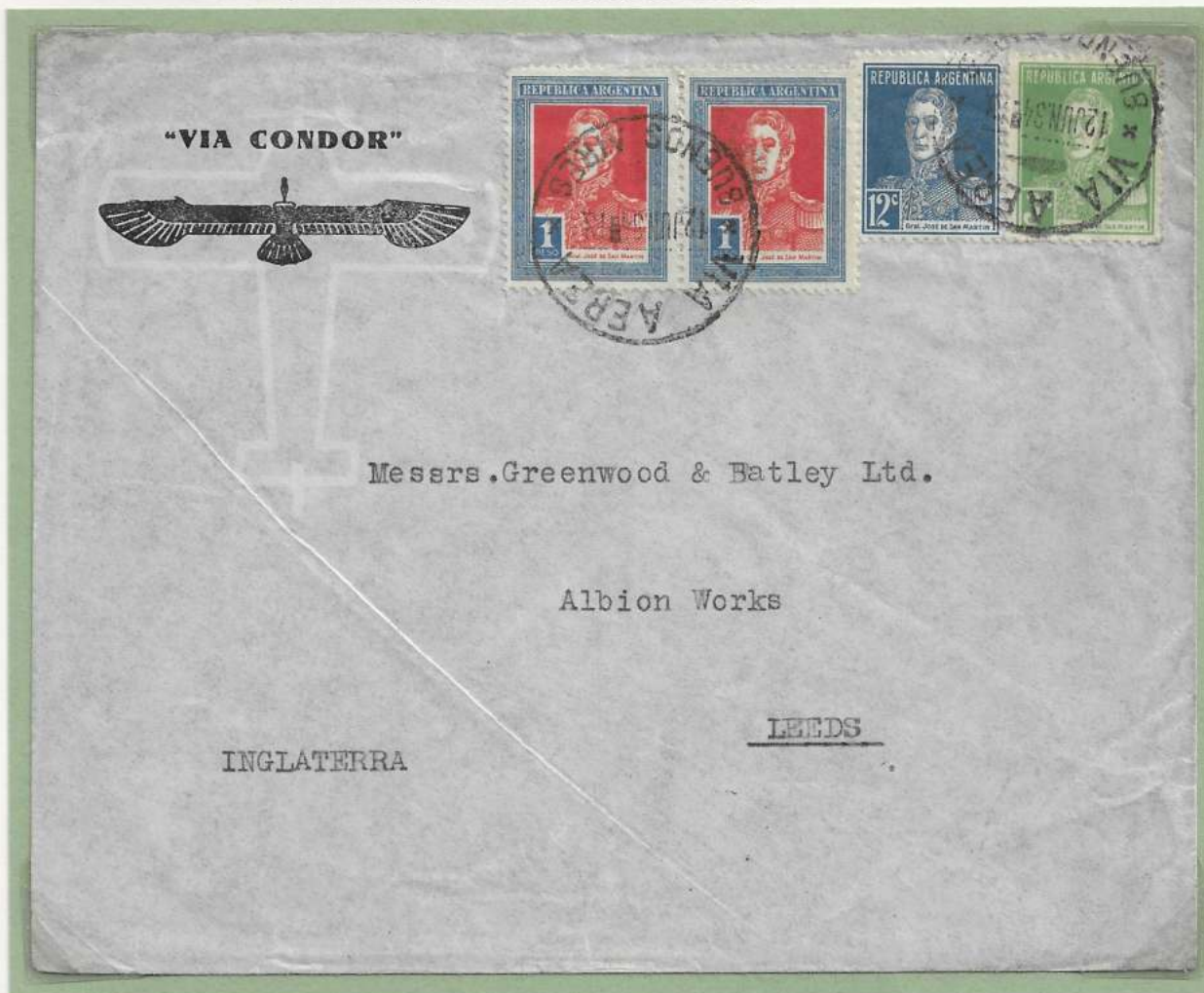
C.G.A Pilot Jean Mermoz flew the seaplane "Compte De La Vaulx" on the first commercial South Atlantic crossing to Senegal in May 1930 from where it was forwarded to France by C.G.A. on its regular Dakar - Casablanca - Toulouse service.

Air Mail services to Europe were developed over the next few years, using Zeppelins and more conventional aircraft. Catapult mail was even tried for a short period. Such mail carried very few distinguishing marks.



COVER Dated 6th Oct. 1934 flown from Valparaiso to Naples, charged 7 pesos 70 cents and franked by a mixture of commemorative and air stamps, two of which bear the surcharge overprints introduced in 1928.

1934 Commercial Air-Mail Cover flown 12th June 1934 from Buenos Aires to Freidrichshafen (Bodensee) and forwarded to Leeds.



2 Pesos 15cents postage
franked twice on departure
by circular date stamp, and
backstamped on arrival
7 days later by Zeppelin
machine cancellation.



This was probably the 2nd or 3rd South American flight of the airship L127, Graf Zeppelin. Built in 1928 it carried 20 passengers in comfort and completed 590 flights including 144 overseas before being decommissioned in 1937 following the fire which destroyed its sister ship, L129, The Hindenburg, in New York. In all the Graf Zeppelin flew over a million miles and circumnavigated the World in just under 22 days in 1929

Special Propaganda Flight of the Hindenburg



A special flight of the *Hindenburg* was arranged on 1st August 1936 when it was flown from its home in Frankfurt over the Olympic Stadium in Berlin during the opening ceremony of the Summer Olympic Games and shortly before the arrival of Adolf Hitler was to declare the Games open.

The airship crossed low over the packed stadium while trailing the Olympic flag on a long weighted line suspended from its gondola.



Special *Hindenburg* flight cover franked by contemporary stamps rather than the more usually applied special Summer Olympic Games stamps issued that day. Flown from Frankfurt to Berlin.

Tied by "Flug und Luftschiffhafen/Rhein-Main/Frankfurt" (dated: 1. 8. 36), with additional magenta cachet inscribed *Luftschiff Hindenburg Olympia Fahrt 1936* and backstamped *Berlin-Zentralflughafen 1.8.36-16.c*

VERY FINE, CERTAINLY SCARCE, POSSIBLY RARE

Ballons Monte deployed during the Siege of Paris

Ballons filled with hydrogen or helium were used to deliver mail from Paris during the siege by Prussian forces between September 19th 1870 and January 28th 1871. As the Prussian forces surrounded the city, telegraph lines were cut and messengers were captured, shot or turned back. Amongst other devices two balloon mail services were proposed, by "ballon monté" (manned balloon) and "ballon non-monté" (unmanned balloon). The unmanned balloons were unsuccessful, but altogether some 56 manned, but unguided mail balloons were successfully released from Paris, all but 5 of which landed without incident and succeeded in delivering their cargo by ongoing post to other parts of France and abroad. No other attempts were as successful as the Ballon Monté service by which mail was able to reach almost anywhere in the world.

Mail from one of the last few flights

Small lightweight Ballon Monte Envelope franked by 20c 'Ceres' in pale blue printed in emergency in Paris from old plates of 1849-52

Addressed to Lyon, and postmarked by cds dated **17 Janv 71** of *Les Batignolles* (a district within the 17th arrondissement), cancelled by large dotted diamond and endorsed *Par Ballon Monte*.



It is likely that the envelope was carried by the balloon 'Poste de Paris' (on 15-17th January) or by the 'General Bourbaki' (on 18th - 19th January). Only 3 other flights landed successfully after this before the siege was lifted some 10 days later.

Egypt began issuing stamps specifically for airmail use in March 1926. The expansion of airmail routes over the next few years and the profusion of postage rates to the many and varied destinations now covered necessitated the introduction of a new and extensive issue valid only for letters sent by airmail. In February 1933 a set of 12 values, later extended to 21 values, and printed in Lithography by the Survey Office in Cairo was issued, illustrating a Handley Page HP42 aircraft flying over the Pyramids of Giza. This pleasing design was to become one of the iconic issues of Egyptian philately.

In 1941 a new single-coloured set in a similar design was issued, with four values now printed by the Photogravure process developed by Harrisons for British stamps. Harrisons had held the contract to print Egyptian stamps from 1906 until 1926 so it is not surprising that their method of printing was adopted.

The 30m was overprinted in 1946 to celebrate the Middle East International Air Navigation Congress held at Cairo.

1st Oct. 1946

Middle East International Air Navigation Congress, Cairo.

30m Green overprinted in Arabic



Block of 4 from the bottom right corner, showing inscriptions printed sideways in the right margin
~~A/39~~ ~~A/40~~ A/41

What do these numbers represent?

Close examination suggests that ~~A/39~~ and ~~A/40~~ together with the first strikethrough were printed in photogravure, whilst the A/41 and the second strikethrough were printed in typography or perhaps litho.

If they are Cylinder numbers then 39, 40 and 41 represent an unusually large number of printing plates required for such a high value stamp, and why would the third inscription and second strikethrough not be printed in photogravure?

If they represent the printing dates, then it is unusual for these to be printed in other than typography, and in any case they pre-date the issue date of the overprinted version by 5 -7 years, and the original un-overprinted issue by up to 2 years