



The Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposia

Select Papers from the Seventh,
Eighth, and Ninth Symposia

*Edited by
Susan N. Smith*

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ABSTRACT

Smith, Susan N., editor. *The Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposia: Select Papers from the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Symposia*. Smithsonian Contributions to History and Technology, number 58, viii + 142 pages, 125 figures, 17 tables, 2020. — Writers in the field of postal history have incredibly diverse interests and approaches. As a result, the postal history symposia have been organized around themes. The three themes represented in papers here are mail and the Civil War (2012), the development of transoceanic air mail service (2014), and the influence of postal treaties on post office reforms (2016).

The American Civil War affected mail in many ways, particularly in the Confederate States of America, which faced the challenge of quickly developing its own postal system as well as shortages of supplies, including paper. The mail itself can be used to tell the story of the conflict through the examination of patriotic and propaganda images on envelopes and through the study of shifts in mail routes and practices as the war progressed.

The histories of aviation and of mail delivery are intertwined. Pressure to deliver mail faster and more efficiently helped to propel investment in aviation innovations. In turn, developments in flight opened new possibilities for carrying the mail. The development of transoceanic air mail from its very early days in the 1920s through the rise of military air mail services during World War II is examined.

Throughout much of history, mail has been the primary means of communication both within and between nations; thus, the regulations and agreements concerning what may be mailed, and for what cost, have had a profound effect on a population's access to information. Postal reform, and particularly the creation of national postal systems, required that immediate needs as well as political and economic visions of the future be considered and addressed legally and structurally during state-building. Cases of the United States in the revolutionary era and Brazil in the nineteenth century are examined.

Cover images: (*Left*) Abraham Lincoln and George B. McClellan featured on envelope for use by Union soldiers (Figure 9 in essay by Steven R. Boyd; Boyd Collection). (*Center*) Brazilian thirty reis stamp from the 1843 *Olho de boi* series (detail from Figure 3 in essay by Pérola Maria Goldfeder Borges de Castro; courtesy of the National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution). (*Right*) June 1945 cover sent from an attack transport in the Alaska area to a civilian address in New Zealand (Figure 23 in U.S. Navy essay by William C. Fort III; author's collection).

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Welcome Letter

It is my great pleasure to present select papers from the Postal History Symposia, 2012–2016. The first of these symposia, held at the National Postal Museum in 2006, was named after Winton M. Blount, who served as postmaster general in Pres. Richard M. Nixon’s cabinet. In 1971, the Post Office Department became the United States Postal Service, and Blount oversaw the transition and served as the director of this non-profit, government-owned corporation.

From the beginning, the American Philatelic Society, the American Philatelic Research Library, and the National Postal Museum have jointly sponsored the symposia. The Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum (NPM) is dedicated to the preservation, study, and presentation of postal history and philately, the American Philatelic Society (APS) serves stamp collectors and promotes American philately worldwide, and the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL) houses one of the world’s largest and most accessible collections of philatelic literature.

The symposia themselves have generally alternated between the NPM and the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. The ten symposia convened to date were as follows:

- “What is Postal History?” (Washington, D.C., 3–4 November 2006)
- “Further, Farther, Faster: Transportation Technology and the Mail” (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, 21–22 October 2007)
- “When the Mail Goes to War” (Washington, D.C., 27–28 September 2008)
- “Post Office Reform” (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, 30 October–1 November 2009, in conjunction with a philatelic exhibition hosted by the United States Philatelic Classics Society)
- “Stamps and the Mail: Imagery, Icons, and Identity” (Washington, D.C., 30 September–1 October 2010)
- “How Commerce and Industry Shaped the Mails” (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, 16–18 September 2011, in conjunction with a philatelic exhibition hosted by the United States Philatelic Classics Society)
- “Blue and Gray: Mail and the Civil War” (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, 2–4 November 2012)
- “Development of Transoceanic Air Mail Service” (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, 12–14 September 2014, in conjunction with a philatelic exhibition hosted by the American Air Mail Society)

- “How Postal Treaties Influenced Post Office Reforms” (New York, New York, 2 June 2016, in conjunction with the World Stamp Show – NY2016)
- “World War I and Its Immediate Aftermath” (Washington, D.C., 1–2 November 2018; select papers yet to be published)

We thank the Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press for publishing these papers and making them freely available; Tara E. Murray, former librarian at the APRL, for her contributions

here and at the symposia; and Susan N. Smith, the Winton M. Blount Research Chair at NPM, for her work with the authors and the press on this publication.

We hope you enjoy these papers as much as we have.

Elliot Gruber
Director, National Postal Museum
20 April 2018

Preface

More than a decade ago, a conversation between David L. Straight, then director of the American Philatelic Society (APS), and Cheryl R. Ganz, then curator at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum (NPM), led to the beginnings of the Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposium. The symposia have had a consistent goal: to provide a forum for philatelists, academic scholars, postal historians, and the interested public to present and discuss research that integrates philately or the history of postal operations into the broader context of world history. The APS, NPM, and the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL) sponsor the symposia.

The first Blount Symposium was held in 2006 at the NPM in Washington, D.C., with the theme “What Is Postal History?” Indeed, one of the challenges in bringing together philatelic scholars and academic historians is the two groups’ varying definitions of postal history. This was highlighted more recently in a lively discussion following historian Joseph M. Adelman’s keynote at the 2012 symposium. Despite the differences, though, the symposium series participants and attendees are all motivated by an intellectual curiosity about mail and postal services and their role in historical events.

In its first decade, the symposium has been held alternately at the NPM in Washington, D.C., and in conjunction with philatelic exhibitions at the American Philatelic Center, home of the APS and APRL, in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. In 2016, the symposium was held in a third location, at the World Stamp Show – NY2016 in New York City’s Jacob Javits Convention Center.

The symposium themes have included transportation technology and the mail; mail in times of war and conflict; postal treaties and post office reforms; how commerce and industry shaped the mails; the development of transoceanic air mail service; and the imagery, iconography, and identity of stamps and the mail.

Selected papers from the first six symposia have been published in *The Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposia: Select Papers, 2006–2009* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2010) and *The Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposia: Select Papers, 2010–2011* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2012). Both are available online at www.sil.si.edu/smithsoniancontributions as Smithsonian Contributions to History and Technology numbers 55 and 56. Details on each of the symposium themes and information about all of the papers presented are available at www.stamps.org/postal-history-symposium.

This third volume includes selected papers from the symposia held in 2012, 2014, and 2016:

- “Blue and Gray: Mail and the Civil War” (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, 2–4 November 2012, in conjunction with a philatelic exhibition hosted by the United States Philatelic Classics Society)
- “Development of Transoceanic Air Mail Service” (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, 12–14 September 2014, in conjunction with a philatelic exhibition hosted by the American Air Mail Society)
- “How Postal Treaties Influenced Post Office Reforms” (New York, New York, 2 June 2016, in conjunction with the World Stamp Show – NY2016)

Participants in the symposia have included professors, graduate students, and philatelists; they have come from as far away as Brazil and Australia to present their research. Their papers reflect the breadth and depth of postal history and bring a variety of perspectives and methodologies to the topic.

Tara E. Murray
Librarian for Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures
Pennsylvania State University;
former Director of Information Services and Librarian
American Philatelic Research Library

2012 Symposium

Blue and Gray: Mail and the Civil War

Introduction to the 2012 Symposium

Tara E. Murray

The American Civil War affected mail in many ways, particularly in the Confederate States of America, which faced the challenge of developing its own postal system quickly—after the United States Postal System ceased services for the Confederacy—as well as shortages of supplies, including paper. Mail can also be used to tell the story of the conflict, whether through patriotic and propaganda images on envelopes or by using the mail as an economic indicator. Participants in the seventh Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposium addressed how postal systems and local post offices met the challenges of providing mail services during wartime in both the North and the South. They looked at soldiers' mail and patriotic envelopes, as well as non-military mail during and after the war. The symposium was held at the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, in conjunction with an exhibition called “U.S. Classics 2012” by the United States Philatelic Classics Society that included displays of Civil War-era stamps and postal history.

Union and Confederate Soldiers' Stationery: Their Designs and Purposes

Steven R. Boyd

ABSTRACT. Between 1861 and 1865 printers in the North and South published thousands of pictorial envelopes commonly known today as patriotic envelopes, a label that obscures the fact that these envelopes served a broader purpose than simply promoting patriotism. This study of designs intended for soldier use shows that printers made available a wide variety of designs different from those intended for civilians and that they served different purposes. Soldier-used envelopes served as a way for men in the field to allay the legitimate concerns of loved ones at home of the safety of their brethren in the field. They also served an informational purpose by providing detailed images of battles in which their loved ones had served. Finally, soldiers' envelopes offered recipients at home assurances of their soldier's safe return at the end of the war. Soldiers' envelopes bear different images in part because men in the field exercised a degree of agency in the design and content of some of them. Soldiers were not merely passive purchasers of designs offered by civilian publishers; they influenced the content of many of the envelopes they mailed. Given the varying functions of these envelopes, I propose they be labelled in the philatelic and historical literature as "Civil War Era Pictorial Envelopes."

From the outset of the Civil War, printers in the North and South published what have become known as patriotic covers. Identified at the time as "Union," "national," or "pictorial letter" envelopes in the North and "Confederate" or "flag" envelopes in the South, these items of popular culture were purchased, mailed, and sometimes saved by individuals in both regions. Postal historians owe a great deal to those nineteenth-century individuals as well as the cataloguers of thousands of different designs that appeared in the North and a substantially smaller number in the South. In the course of cataloguing those designs, however, the compiler of the first major collection used the term *patriotic covers*, a label that has come to define the genre and implies that the purpose of these designs was to promote patriotism in the North and South.¹ In a monograph on these covers, I use the phrase *patriotic envelopes*, but my recent research suggests that this label obscures an important aspect of these covers.² They served a number of different functions, as shown by an analysis of covers intended principally for use by Union and Confederate soldiers. It is time to reconsider how we label and catalogue Civil War pictorial envelopes.

First, a review of the images on several types of cover designs shows that printers targeted soldiers as a specific market. Envelopes bearing a particular unit's name, a military logo or design, camp and battle scenes, or designs referencing thoughts of home all suggest military clientele. Sutlers were civilian merchants who sold supplies to individual soldiers or their unit commanders in the field or on post. Analysis of marketing by publishers and wholesalers to sutlers reinforces the idea that these were soldier-intended designs.

An envelope and matching letter sheet intended for a soldier's use are shown in Figure 1. In this design, the printer, likely James Magee of Philadelphia, included the unit

Department of History, University of Texas at San Antonio, One UTSA Circle, San Antonio, Texas 78249, USA.

Correspondence: msbenterprises@earthlink.net

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FIGURE 1. Seventeenth Massachusetts Regiment envelope and letter sheet. James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History* (Lake Forest, Ill.: Northbrook Publishing, 2007), 64, fig. 4-20.

name, “17TH MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT!” and location, “CAMP ANDREW,” a post just outside Baltimore, Maryland. Civilians used covers with designs similar to this one, but the inclusion of regiment and camp information identify this envelope as one designed for the use of a particular Union unit. This envelope served its intended purpose: Dr. I. F. Galloupe, a physician in the Seventeenth Regiment, mailed a letter to his wife in their hometown, Lynn, Massachusetts.

Corner cards, which philatelists so label because the imprint is often in the envelope’s upper left corner, were likewise created for specific military units. In 1863 a design was made for “BATTERY ‘D’ of the 1st West Va Lt Artillery” (Figure 2) commanded by Capt. John Carlin, a Mexican–American War veteran. Carlin

also served as postwar commander of the West Virginia Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Known as the Wheeling Battery because most of its members came from that area, the unit served from 1862 until June 1865, principally in western Virginia.³ Although the letter contained in the envelope is no longer extant and therefore the sender is unknown, the design of the envelope and the Wheeling postmark of December 1863, a time when the unit was stationed there, both imply soldier usage.

A third type of design bore an image of a specific unit badge. These badges were created in 1863 by Union commanders for soldiers to wear on their caps to aid in recognition of troops in the heat of battle. Spheres, trefoils, crosses, diamonds, and other shapes in red, blue, and green quickly appeared on Union



FIGURE 2. Envelope of Battery "D." First West Virginia Light Artillery. James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History* (Lake Forest, Ill.: Northbrook Publishing, 2007), 64, fig. 4-21.



FIGURE 3. Envelope of the Army of the Potomac Sixth Corps, Third Division. James Magee, printer. New York Historical Society and Library of Congress National Digital Library Program, *Civil War Treasures from the New York Historical Society* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2001), <https://lcn.loc.gov/2011655092> (accessed 10 May 2017).

envelopes used by soldiers. Figure 3 shows an example of a corps cover with a blue cross on a white background printed by James Magee of Philadelphia. Mailed from Washington, D.C., to Cayuga County, New York, the blue cross identifies the mailer as a member of the Sixth Corps of the Army of the Potomac; in

this instance, a pencil notation, "3^d" Division, was added. The sender, although not identified, was likely George W. Peck, age nineteen, who had enlisted in the regiment in fall of 1864. The letter home, no longer extant, is addressed to his mother, Mrs. Mary J. Peck.⁴

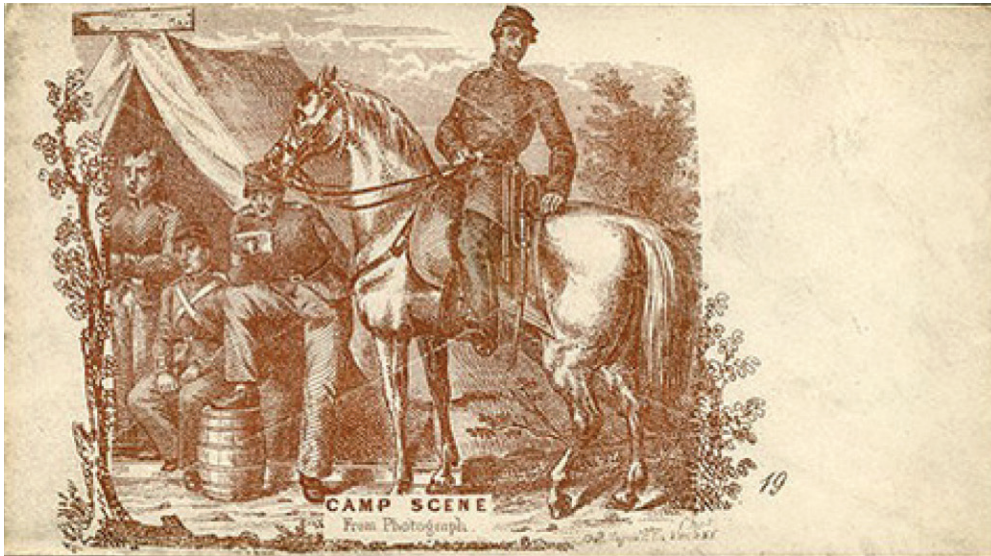


FIGURE 4. Camp scene number nineteen. Charles Magnus, printer. Boyd Collection. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), fig. 5-12.

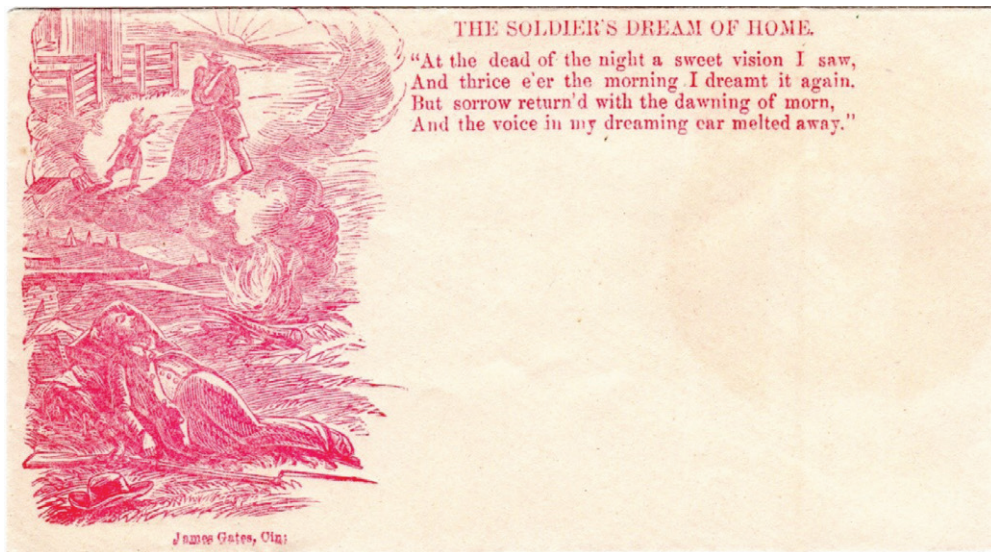


FIGURE 5. The Soldier's Dream of Home. James Gates, printer. Boyd Collection.


“Camp scene” covers like those marketed by Charles Magnus of New York and Washington, D.C., also support the idea that they were soldier-intended designs.⁵ One bears an image of a group of men standing in front of a “refreshment” tent in an unspecified camp (Figure 4). One soldier stands to the side reading a letter. Issued in both single and multicolor formats, these covers focus on small clusters of men, often in front of a tent, and are labeled “Camp Scene,” numbers one through twenty. The envelopes bear Magnus’s imprint and New York City address, although they were also sold in Washington, D.C., to troops from

across the nation; the designs identify neither the individuals nor the specific unit illustrated.

A final group of design envelopes that focused on soldiers and their loved ones at home also illustrates that publishers created envelopes specifically for soldiers to use. These designs include men in uniform bidding farewell to a loved one at home and soldiers in camp fondly recalling “Home Sweet Home” or asleep dreaming of those they had left behind.⁶ “THE SOLDIER’S DREAM OF HOME” (Figure 5) shows an unidentified soldier asleep in his bedroll, dreaming of his safe return to the

WINSLOW'S
Army and Variety Stationery Package.

PRICE 30 CENTS, CONTAINING

<p>6 Sheets Com. 1 Note Paper, 6 Buff Letter Envelopes, 6 Sheets Octavo Note Paper, 1 Fine Steel Pen, 1 Pen Holder, 1 Patriotic Song Book.</p>		<p>6 Red White & Blue Envel'ps 1 Sheet Blotting Paper, 1 Paper of Pins, 1 Skein Linen Thread, 2 Needles, 1 Pair Pocket Combs.</p>
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ALSO, SOME ONE OF THE FOLLOWING GIFTS IN EVERY PACKAGE:

1 Pen Knife, retail price \$.25	1 Set Gold Studs. \$2.00	1 Gold Pencil, retail price, \$5.00
1 Ladies' Ivory Pen Holder, .25	1 Band Bracelet, 1.00	1 Gold Tooth Pick, 3.00
1 Gold Ring, 1.00	1 Gold Cross Charm, 1.00	1 Silver Thumbie, .50
1 Set Plated Sleeve Buttons, 1.00	1 Gold Locket, 5.00	1 Gents Breast Pin, 1.00
1 Set Plated Studs, .75	1 Ladies Breast Pin, 1.50	1 Gold Pen and Pencil, 3.00
1 Set Gold Sleeve Buttons, 3.00	1 Ladies Charm Locket, 2.50	

Agents Wanted, Address W. L. WINSLOW, Bookseller & Stationer, Syracuse, N. Y.

FIGURE 6. Army and variety stationery package. W. L. Winslow and Co., distributor. James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History* (Lake Forest, Ill.: Northbrook Publishing, 2007), 106, fig. 4-101.

arms of his welcoming wife and children. The design itself establishes the intended soldier audience; the same design also exists with a specific unit caption.

In addition to such envelopes, which are representative of a group of designs intended for soldiers' use, select stationery packet wrappers, circulars, and newspaper and magazine advertisements offer further evidence of printers' intentions. Numerous printers and distributors offered stationery kits intended for soldiers. Today, some packages or wrappers that held the kits exist, made by printers in Syracuse, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Cincinnati, Ohio; St. Louis, Missouri; Nashville, Tennessee; and Covington, Kentucky. Of the fifteen stationery kits so far identified, five targeted soldiers specifically.

W. L. Winslow and Co. of Syracuse, New York, offered an Army and variety stationery package (Figure 6). The central image on the envelope shows a man with a hammer in hand nailing the red-white-and-blue flag to a flag pole.⁷ The image alludes to the defense of the U.S. flag, a common motif in 1861 with numerous covers calling for its protection. The stationery kit included note paper and envelopes, a steel pen and holder, pins, pocket combs, and a patriotic song book, as well as a gift that could presumptively be given to a loved one "left behind."

A "SOLDIER'S UNION STATIONERY" kit by James Gates, a Cincinnati printer, also contained envelopes and letter paper, pens, and a pencil as well as "One Union pin or other piece of jewelry" (Figure 7). The soldier who purchased the packet presumably gave the pin or jewelry as a memento to a loved one before his departure. Some Union envelopes contained therein would be used as shown in the images on the kit envelope itself, by a soldier, at a desk in the lower left corner, to write a loved one at home, in the bottom right side.

Printers of soldiers' envelopes and kits also advertised their products in newspapers, on circulars, in magazines, and on the envelopes themselves. A Mumford and Sons advertisement appeared in the Columbus *Daily Ohio State Journal* throughout October and November 1862. A 12×18-inch circular from S. C. Rickards & Co. of New York City, which would have been posted in their shop window on Nassau Street, provides an example of a circular promoting both soldier- and civilian-intended stationery kits. Rickards described its business, today largely unknown to historians, as "The Oldest and Largest Prize Package House in the United States." The 1861 company circular shown in Figure 8 identifies four different packages, two clearly intended for the soldier market. The "NEW UNION Prize Stationery and

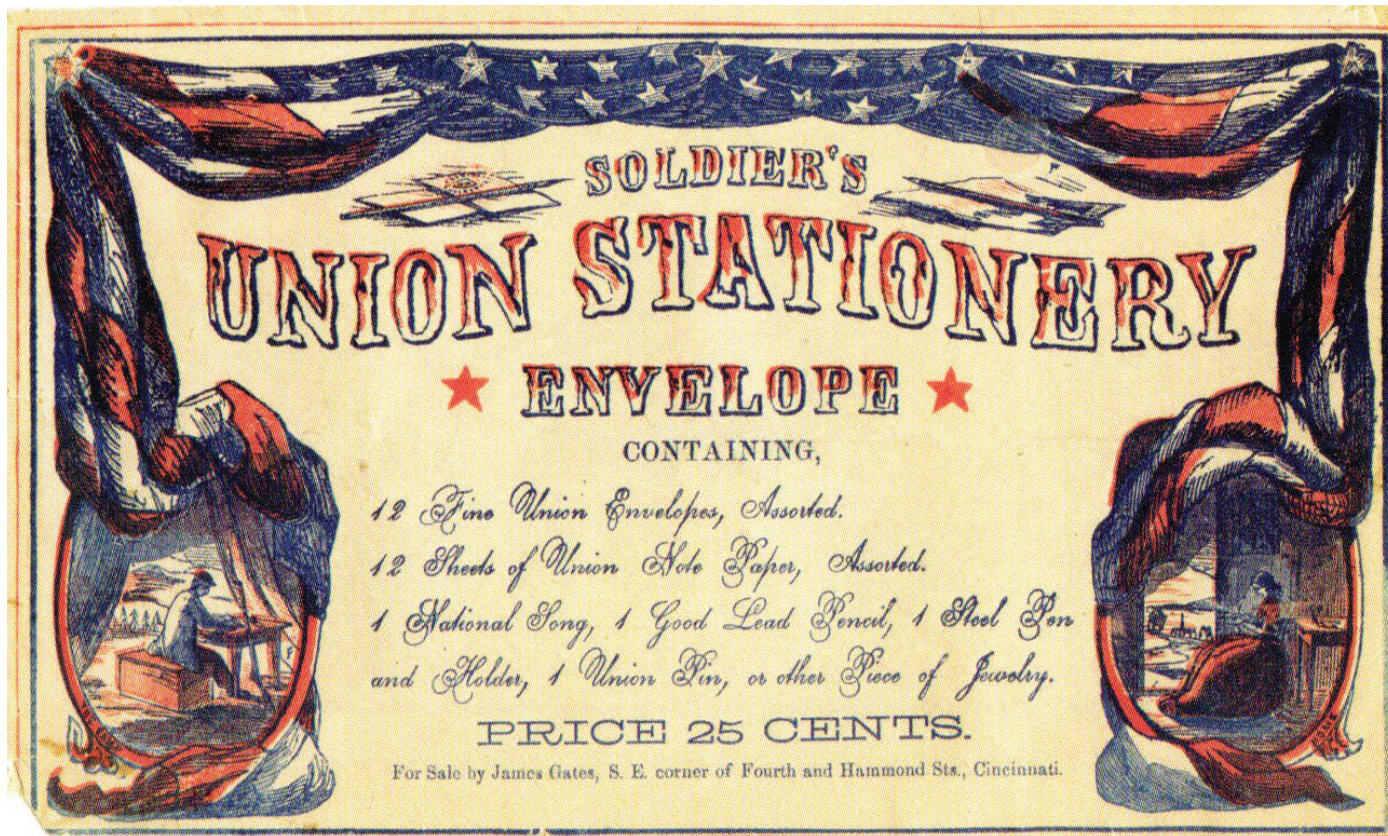


FIGURE 7. Soldier's Union stationery kit. James Gates, printer. Boyd Collection. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), fig. 1-1.

Recipe Package, FOR THE CAMP AND THE HOUSEHOLD," included "Letter Paper Expressly for Soldiers use," a 6×10-inch engraving of "our Chief, Maj. Gen. Geo. B. McClellan," "Best quality Army Envelopes," a copy of *Soldiers Camp Companion* by "an old Campaigner," and a number of other supplies. A second package, the "NEW Monitor" contained similar items as well as a copy of the *Soldiers Pocket Guide*. Rickards's circular is directed toward retail book and stationery sellers as well as other agents including sutlers—the Monitor is described as "the Package for Sutlers." An advertisement in the 14 July 1863 *Harper's Weekly* describes the firm (now S. C. Rickards, Cately & Co., at the same address) as "an old established and reliable business house and persons in the army who may transact business with them will be honorably dealt with."⁸

If publishers in the North and South intended some types of covers primarily for soldiers' use, clearly these covers served a somewhat different purpose than did their civilian counterparts. Granted, the primary function of any envelope was to carry a letter. Envelopes intended for civilian use also promoted the respective causes of the North and South.⁹ Soldier-intended envelopes, without denying the horrors of war, nonetheless

sought—through images of commanders, camps, battle scenes, and "Soldier's Dream" designs—to inform friends and family of their loved ones' situations, whether in camp or near a battlefield, and simultaneously to allay their legitimate concerns about the well-being of their particular soldiers in several ways beyond those that any letter would have provided.

Images on envelopes of military and civilian leaders reassured the recipients of the letter enclosed that they were in the best hands possible because they were led by such distinguished and capable men. Gen. George B. McClellan appeared on more envelopes than any other military commander. Designs ranged from straightforward headshots to ornate images of a soldier on horseback. Others show McClellan paired with other military personnel and civilian leaders, even President Lincoln (Figure 9).¹⁰ These designs served to identify a man largely unknown to the public before his elevation to command of Union armies. Furthermore, by making McClellan an iconic figure through the printing of literally thousands of miniature portraits, design envelopes implicitly assured civilians at home of his capabilities as a military commander more than the celebratory civilian-intended envelopes of such figures as Col. Elmer Ellsworth, the first Union casualty of the war, would

PRIVATE

CIRCULAR

S. C. RICKARDS & CO'S GREAT, UNEQUALLED PRIZE & STATIONERY PACKAGES

The greatest Money-Making Business of the Age.

In Submitting this Circular for your perusal, we respectfully call attention to our NEW UNION PRIZE STATIONERY AND BROUPE PACKAGE, for CAMP AND HOUSEHOLD (which to prevent imitation we have copyrighted according to Law,) a far different article to all others in point of QUALITY OF WRITING PAPER, ENVELOPES, and the various other articles contained. This new Package we have got up in first class style for the purpose of placing a REALLY GOOD and reliable article in the hands of those who keep Book and Stationery Stores, and wish to supply their regular Customers with a superior article and give satisfaction. Especial attention has been paid to the Stationery, all of which is of the finest quality, heavy and superior to any heretofore used in this business; it has been the practice of Agents and others to order inferior goods because of their cheapness wholesale, which they retail at the same prices (25c) as good, for the purpose of making enormous profits, but the honest business man who has Regular Customers, and wishes to sell to again, will see the advantage of Selling a Really good article, and one that will ensure him a second call, and give entire satisfaction to those who buy.

FOR THE SOLDIER—This Package is *Fit for a King*, as its Contents are adapted for his use, as well as the Civilian, and contains ALL the information he needs in relation to CAMP LIFE, "his pay," Rations, Clothing, "allowances," how to "Commute" for them, Bounties, how to obtain them, Penalties, &c., &c., compiled from all the Late U. S. Laws, also many valuable Receipts, Hints on mode of Life, Wounds &c., by an "old Campaigner," this alone is worth to the Soldier or any of his Relations more than four times the price paid for the Package and will create a demand for it in the Camp never approached by any article of the present day.

THE FINE PAPER used in this package is "beautifully printed in three colors" with various Union "emblematic Designs," all original as is also the Envelopes.

The Paper and Envelopes cannot be bought at any Store for 25 cents.

THE SLENDID ENGRAVING (6x10) of the acknowledged Chieftain of the present age MAJOR GENERAL GEORGE B. McCLELLAN, is the most perfect likeness ever taken, and so acknowledged by all the DISTINGUISHED OFFICERS of the army and members of HIS STAFF, and is alone worth the Price of the Package.

THIS SUPERIOR PACKAGE Containing as it does, nothing but articles of the FINEST DESCRIPTION, will become a STANDARD ARTICLE and be sought for years after all other packages have been forgotten. In placing this *Fine article* before the Public we hope to retain our REPUTATION for SUPERIORITY which we justly feel proud of, and feel quite willing to STAKE THAT REPUTATION upon the merits of the UNEXCELLED EXCELLENCE of this "New Package." It will be seen by examining our various Packages and Prices as described in our circulars, that we can supply agents with Packages at "any price" he may desire. We are also prepared at any time to get up for Wholesale Dealers Packages of any "required description," suitable in quality and quantity for any Locality, with Contents as per order and with the names and place of Business of Parties ordering printed on Portfolios in place of ours, if desired. Thousands of Packages put up by us in this style are sold throughout the Country, but in such cases orders must be for not less than 500 at one time. Read the contents of each of the following Packages carefully, and with scrutiny; COMPARE THE PRICES and the QUANTITY, VARIETY and QUALITY of the GOODS, with any other Packages ever issued in the United States, and we are convinced that you will acknowledge them to be UNEQUALLED for MONEY-MAKING to Agents.

The Union Prize Package,
Price \$15 per 100.

The NONPAREIL,
Price \$14 per 100.

The MONITOR,
Price \$11 per 100.

**RICKARDS' NEW UNION
Prize Stationery and Broupe Package,
FOR THE CAMP AND HOUSEHOLD.**

PRICE 35 CENTS.

CONTENTS:

- 6 Sheets Imperial Laid Letter Paper Expressly for Soldiers use, Beautifully Illustrated with Union Emblems.
- 6 Sheets Superior Pearl Finished Large Note Paper.
- 6 Sheets French Glass Commercial Note Paper.
- 1 Accommodation Pencil Pen Holder.
- 1 Best quality No. 2 Lead Pencil.
- 1 Extra Finest Faded Steel Pen.
- 1 Fine Engraving (6x10) of Gen. Geo. B. McClellan.
- 6 Best quality Army Envelopes, White, Beautifully printed with Union Designs.
- 6 Extra Fine Cases, also Embellished with Union Designs.
- 6 Superior Style Steel Barrels.
- 1 Sheet Heavy Business Blotter.
- 1 Copy Soldiers Camp Companion, with important information. How to obtain them, what they are, Pay, Rations, Articles of War, how to commute, &c., &c., by an old Campaigner.

Also a Gift of Rich and English Jewelry of fine quality for Ladies and Gentlemen, consisting of Gold Pins, Rings, Ladies Lave, Coral, Cameo and Rosette Sets, Lockets, Charms, &c., &c., the whole forming the most valuable Prize Package ever manufactured.

**RICKARDS' Nonpareil Prize Package,
PRICE ONLY 25 CENTS.**

CONTENTS: \$100.

- 6 Sheets Dool Letter Paper.
- 6 Sheets Dool Com'l Note Paper.
- 6 Sheets Super Laid Note Paper.
- 6 Sheets Ladies Six Pin Bill Paper, 1 New and Splendid Design for Boys' Note Paper.
- 6 Fine White Envelopes.
- 6 Fine Ladies White Envelopes, new 1 Unique Design for Ladies Work Book.
- 6 Fine Candy Envelopes.
- 1 Accommodation Pen Holder.
- 1 Best quality No. 2 Lead Pencil.
- 1 Extra Fine Faded Steel Pen.
- 1 Fine Engraving (6x10) of Gen. Geo. B. McClellan.
- 6 Best quality Army Envelopes, White, Beautifully printed with Union Designs.
- 6 Extra Fine Cases, also Embellished with Union Designs.
- 6 Superior Style Steel Barrels.
- 1 Sheet Heavy Business Blotter.
- 1 Copy Soldiers Camp Companion, with important information. How to obtain them, what they are, Pay, Rations, Articles of War, how to commute, &c., &c., by an old Campaigner.

And One Free Gift of Rich and Fashionable Jewelry, for Ladies and Gentlemen, valued at from 25 cents to \$20.

**RICKARDS' NEW
Monitor Prize Package and Soldiers' Companion,
PRICE 25 CENTS.**

CONTENTS:

- 6 Sheets Extra Large Note Paper.
- 6 Sheets Ladies' Pearl Laid Note Paper, a complete camp companion containing all the information he needs. Bounties, Penalties, Pay, Rations, Clothing, allowances, &c., &c.
- 6 Fine White Envelopes, New Style.
- 6 Superior Candy Envelopes.
- 6 Heavy quality Business Envelopes.
- 1 Accommodation Pen Holder.
- 1 Fine New Faded Steel Pen.
- 1 Sheet Blotting Paper.
- 1 Copy Soldiers Pocket Guide.
- 1 Sheet Ladies' Pearl Laid Note Paper, a complete camp companion containing all the information he needs. Bounties, Penalties, Pay, Rations, Clothing, allowances, &c., &c.
- 1 Accommodation Pen Holder.
- 1 Fine New Faded Steel Pen.
- 1 Sheet Blotting Paper.
- 1 Copy Soldiers Pocket Guide.

S. C. RICKARDS & CO., 102 Nassau St. New York,
Agents Wanted in every town.

**RICKARDS' MULTOMICROON.
PRICE 25 CENTS.**

CONTENTS:

- 6 Sheets Extra Large Note Paper.
- 6 Sheets Ladies' Pearl Laid Note Paper, a complete camp companion containing all the information he needs. Bounties, Penalties, Pay, Rations, Clothing, allowances, &c., &c.
- 6 Fine White Envelopes, New Style.
- 6 Superior Candy Envelopes.
- 6 Heavy quality Business Envelopes.
- 1 Accommodation Pen Holder.
- 1 Fine New Faded Steel Pen.
- 1 Sheet Blotting Paper.
- 1 Copy Soldiers Pocket Guide.
- 1 Sheet Ladies' Pearl Laid Note Paper, a complete camp companion containing all the information he needs. Bounties, Penalties, Pay, Rations, Clothing, allowances, &c., &c.
- 1 Accommodation Pen Holder.
- 1 Fine New Faded Steel Pen.
- 1 Sheet Blotting Paper.
- 1 Copy Soldiers Pocket Guide.

A PRESENT OF FINE JEWELRY.

EVERY FIVE HUNDRED PACKAGES ORDERED AT ONE TIME, WE WILL PUT AT THE SAME RATE WE SELL THEM AT BY THE THOUSAND AND PRINT YOUR NAME ON THEM AS SOLE AGENT FOR YOUR SECTION.

The facilities we have for purchasing Stationery, by our long experience and untiring energy, have enabled us to attain a celebrity unknown by any other firm, and have entitled us to a popularity hitherto unapproached, and in which we take the lead of ALL REGULAR ESTABLISHMENTS.

The VALUE and VARIETY of our SUPERB JEWELRY GIFTS demand no commendations from us; their REPUTATION is all the praise they need. The patterns are all in ARTISTIC TASTE; comprising over ONE HUNDRED attractive styles, and adapted to the wear of LADIES and GENTLEMEN, YOUTHS and MISSES, CHILDREN and INFANTS, consisting in part of FINE EAR RINGS, FLORENTINES, CAMEO, LAVA, SHELL, GARNET, MOSAIC AND PLAIN BREST PINS, BOSOM PINS, FINGER RINGS, EAR DROPS, BELT PINS, CUFF PINS, STUDS AND SLEEVE BUTTONS, LOCKETS, NECKLACES, SLIDERS, CHAIN BRACELETS, MAGIC LOCKETS, CHARMS, CHATELAINES, IMITATION.

All the Fine Jewelry we use is from our own Manufactory, made from our own Private Patterns and under our own immediate Supervision, and as we supply the Smaller Gift Package firms with Goods it will be readily seen that we can put up a Finer article than those who buy from us.

The Nonpareil Package.—In calling your attention to our "NONPAREIL PACKAGE," please notice the following UNEQUALLED INTERESTS. It is the LARGEST Package ever put up. It contains the GREATEST VARIETY of and more value than any other two Packages. It is afforded at a LOWER PRICE per 100, taking into consideration its contents, than any Two Packages put up by any other firm.

Our valuable receipts are a novelty, and will be found invaluable in the sick room, kitchen, parlor, garden, or workshop, and are alone worth four times the price asked for the whole package, and can be obtained in no other way.

The LETTER WRITERS INSTRUCTOR will be found invaluable for any young man wishing to engage in business; any young lady who desires to write a letter to a friend; anybody who would write correctly, grammatically, and with fluency.

The ENGRAVED DESIGNS for LADIES' and CHILDREN'S WEAR are by the best PARISHIAN MODESTIES, and form a feature entirely new, COMPREHENSIVE and valuable to any family, renewed every month.

THE GAMES FOR THE HOUSEHOLD combine instruction with mirth, and are indispensable for the amusement of a well-regulated household.

Our HINTS FOR POCKET MONEY, we have compiled from sources of information and experience which will not be disputed, when they are read. Thus it will be seen our New Packages are not only UNEQUALLED but entirely BEYOND COMPETITION.

Our Union Package will become the STANDARD ARTICLE throughout the United States.

The outside cover to the Union Prize Stationery and Broupe Package, is got up in an attractive manner; printed in different colors, (representing the Red, White and Blue) with a beautiful Union design, also printed in various colors, presenting a handsome appearance.

The Stationery in the above is embellished with splendid new designs, got up expressly by us, and printed in beautiful colors.

THE NEW MONITOR PACKAGE is a perfect Monster in point of Size for the Price and will sell quick among the Soldiers on account of the SOLDIERS POCKET GUIDE. No Package Containing 18 sheets of good paper and 18 Envelopes was ever put up for the extremely low price to Agents of \$11.00 per 100. This is the Package for Soldiers.

THE MULTOMICROON is a very Large Package, and the cheapest ever manufactured. The agents makes 15 cents profit out of every 25 cents a per centage never equaled.

The GREAT NEW UNION PACKAGE we sell at \$15 per One Hundred, \$140 per One Thousand.

The NONPAREIL PACKAGE we sell at \$14 per One Hundred or \$130 per One Thousand.

The NEW MONITOR PACKAGE we sell at \$11 per One Hundred or \$100 per One Thousand.

The MULTOMICROON PACKAGE we sell at \$10 per One Hundred, \$90 per One Thousand.

IN ALL CASES, CASH WITHOUT DISCOUNT.

Write your name, town, county and State, PLAINLY, say by which Express you wish your goods sent, and be particular to give the NAME OF THE PACKAGE you order.

Those ordering 100 can have them neatly packed in a substantial wooden box which will insure their delivery in good order, by sending us 20 cents extra.

For All Parties ordering goods to be Collected on Delivery, must enclose Two DOLLARS for each hundred ordered which will be deducted from the amount of their bill. This request is made simply as a guarantee that the goods will be taken from the Express Office.

Persons sending for a single package are notified that the postage on it is 23 cents, which must be paid in advance.

FIGURE 8. Stationery packet advertising flyer. S. C. Rickards, printer. Boyd Collection.



FIGURE 9. Abraham Lincoln and George B. McClellan, Review of the Army. Charles Magnus, printer. Boyd Collection. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), fig. 5-8.

have assured them. Soldiers who utilized McClellan or other commander envelopes could mail letters home inside an envelope that identified their revered and respected military and civilian commanders even as they placed their lives in their hands.

A second type of military design, the “camp scene,” also sought to assure loved ones at home of the well-being of those away by showing scenes of well-ordered, clean camp sites dominated by the routine of daily life. Linus and Max Rosenthal of Philadelphia, for example, published sixty-five different Union camp designs. Each features a single regiment and consists of a four-page letter sheet and a matching envelope. For each of the Rosenthal designs, an artist from the firm visited the camp in order to provide an accurate image. In a letter enclosed in a Seventh Massachusetts Infantry envelope dated 18 October 1861 (Figure 10), William O. Stowell, a twenty-year-old private, explains that the artist had sketched the image “last Sunday morning.” Stowell commented on how the artist captured in detail that morning’s events, including noting the officer of the day on horseback and a “prisoner serving his time on a Barrill [sic].” He went on to assure his wife, Lydia, that he was alive and well and, in a final rather lighthearted tone, added that there were all kinds of activities around the camp and that soldiers, too, “can have fun,” even on a rainy evening in October 1861 far from home.¹¹

Like camp scene designs, “battle scene” covers focused explicitly on a specific place—often a battle in which the writer participated—but provided news and sometimes were intended to instill pride rather than a sense of normalcy. One series of twenty-six black-and-white designs by an unknown printer provided significant, if somewhat implausible, details about individual battles. The series includes Cedar Mountain, Second Manassas, Shiloh, and less well-known engagements. Dubbed the “Battle Series” by James Milgram, these designs exist as both letter sheets and envelopes.¹² One of these covers, the “BOMBARDMENT OF FORT HENRY” (Figure 11), offers a very detailed image of the damage that the Union navy, commanded by Capt. Andrew Foote, inflicted on the Confederate position. The design’s contents—the billowing smoke of cannon fire, the corpses of Confederate soldiers, and the densely packed scene—all hint at the chaotic nature of the conflict in a manner not matched by either the photographs of the era or the more pacific Union designs often utilized by civilians.

Battle scene covers lack an explicit patriotic theme. Instead, they serve an informational purpose with news about specific conflicts, sometimes including battles overlooked by East Coast magazines like *Harper’s Weekly*. In the level of detail and type of information conveyed, letters frequently mirrored covers.

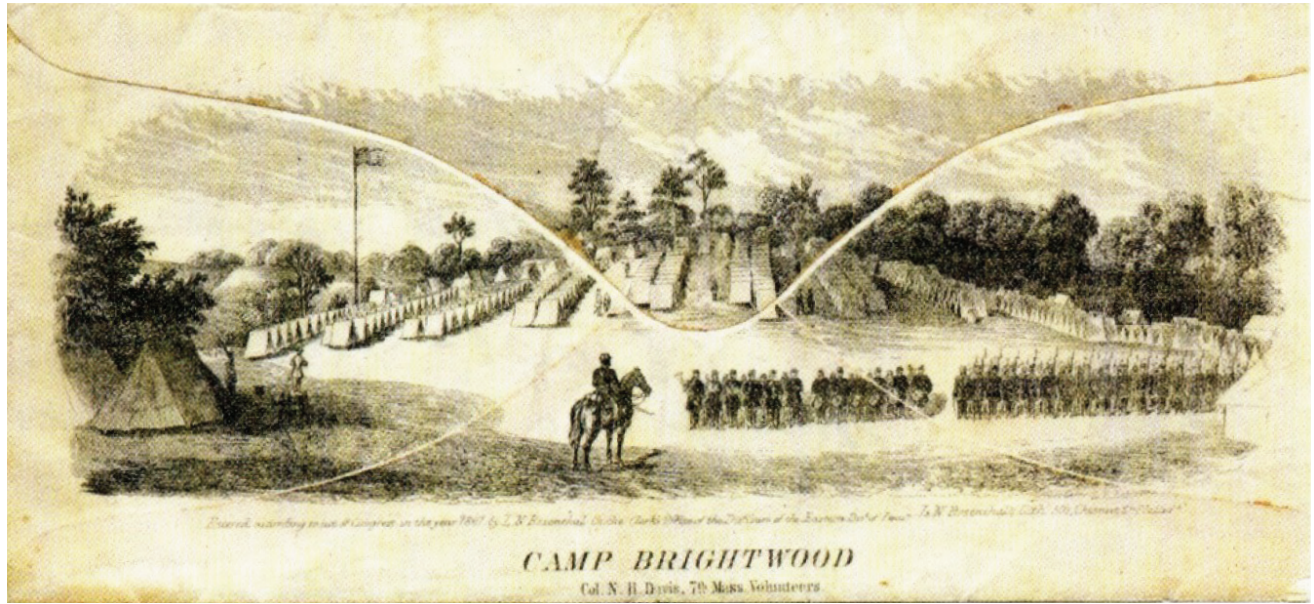


FIGURE 10. Camp Brightwood, Seventh Massachusetts Volunteers envelope. Linus and Max Rosenthal, printers. James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History* (Lake Forest, Ill.: Northbrook Publishing, 2007), 67, fig. 4-26.



FIGURE 11. Bombardment of Fort Henry, 1862. James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History* (Lake Forest, Ill.: Northbrook Publishing, 2007), 62, fig. 4-17.

William G. Ray, a sergeant in the Seventh Iowa Infantry, wrote at least two such letters, including them in the envelope illustrated (Figure 11), which contained detailed descriptions of the Union capture of Forts Henry and Donaldson. The letter communicated his ardor and pride as an individual soldier engaged in those battles, even as he reassured friends of his own survival. He also acknowledged in the letter that his overall health was “very poor and I think it will be no better as long as I am exposed so much” to bad weather.¹³ It should also be noted that men, rather than wives or other female loved ones, were the recipients of many battle scene covers and that the content in letters to women often downplayed the carnage of the battle in favor of lauding the Union troops’ achievements.

Women too, in letters to men in the field, of course could choose designs that de-emphasized the negative consequences of a soldier’s absence from home and instead stressed their support for the war. On an unposted example of one of the few designs that features a woman (Figure 12), the seated figure declares, “Our hearts are with our brothers in the field.” A second female design envelope stipulates “My only support – both boys gone to the war. I wonder if they would take me?” Both envelopes clearly indicate female support for the war and willingness to endure the discomforts of the home front or even greater sacrifice by volunteering to “nurse the sick” (note, not the wounded), as another female design

envelope expressed it. War wreaked havoc on the lives of men and women, but in their choice of envelopes, soldiers and civilians sought to downplay the adversity they faced in favor of calm reassurances to those from whom they were temporarily separated.

Another group of soldier-intended designs, “Corps covers” with a modified cross, trefoil or diamond specific to a particular unit, conveyed a dual message. A soldier utilizing a cover similar to that of the Ninety-Ninth Pennsylvania Volunteers (Figure 13), demonstrated pride in the achievements of the company even as he communicated a message of strength and endurance to family and friends at home. Recruited almost exclusively from the Philadelphia area, the men of the Ninety-Ninth engaged in ten major actions in the period from the reorganization of their regiment in February 1862 through November 1863. Their demonstrable pride in that record, suggested by the list of battles engaged, ranging from Second Bull Run through Gettysburg to Mine Run, assured the recipient that the soldier mailing the letter in such an envelope would live to fight again. It also implicitly communicated a message that he would eventually return home safely.

A final group of design envelopes made explicit that latter message. These designs include men in uniform bidding farewell to a loved one at home, in camp fondly recalling “Home Sweet Home” or asleep dreaming of those they had left behind. The cover shown in Figure 14 combines two of these themes.



FIGURE 12. Female support for the war. Boyd Collection. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), fig. 4-26.

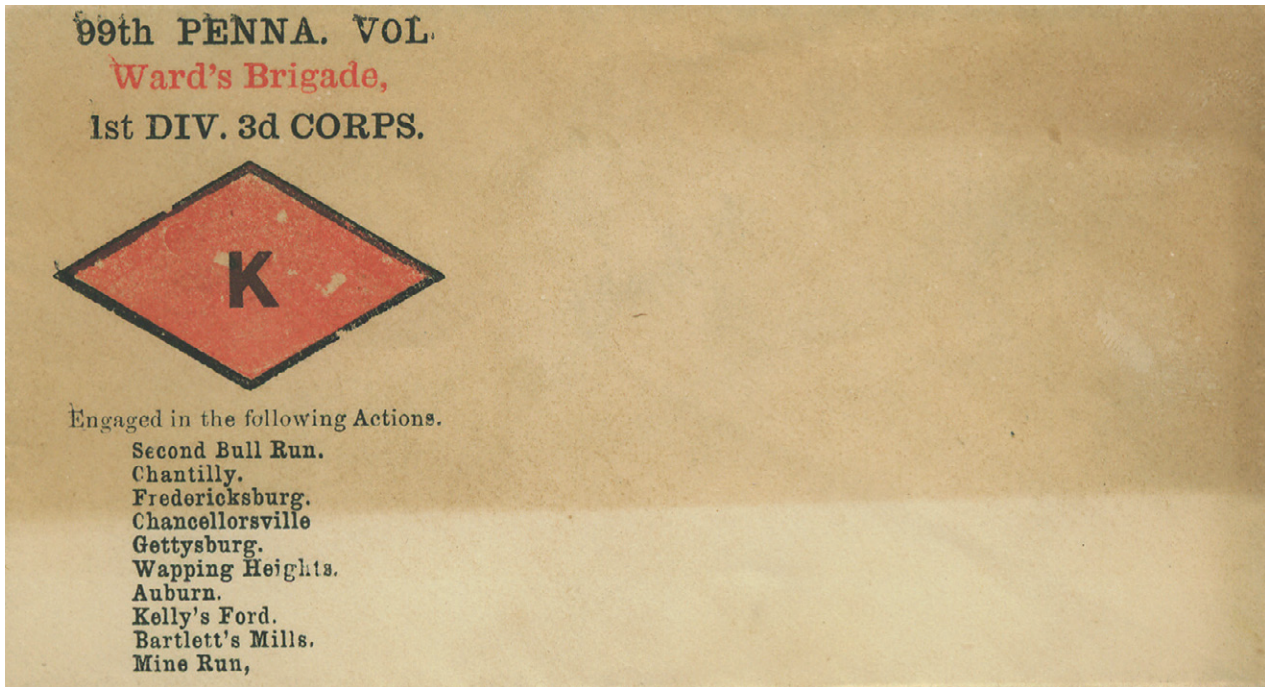


FIGURE 13. Ninety-Ninth Pennsylvania Volunteers, Ward's Brigade. Boyd Collection. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), fig. 5-20.



FIGURE 14. The Union Volunteer, Departure and Return. Boyd Collection. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), fig. 4-21.

In “THE UNION VOLUNTEER,” the left image shows “The DEPARTURE,” as a Union soldier embraces his wife with children in the background “The RETURN,” right side, shows the same soldier returning to the arms of his welcoming wife and children. Both images affirm the soldier’s recurring thoughts of home even as he pledges through the envelope design to return safely. The various types of envelopes intended for soldier use clearly served numerous functions.

In addition, soldiers not only utilized these envelopes but also played a role in their development and dissemination—a role that has hitherto been unrecognized. They exercised a degree of agency in the design of the envelopes themselves. Ironically, we know more about this aspect of the envelopes of the South than the North in part because of files created after the war that document civilian contributions to the Confederate war effort. The “Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms” in the National Archives contain official Confederate States of America (CSA) receipts, vouchers, and other records of civilian service to the CSA. The collection does not have records of printers that designed and published Confederate envelopes for the general public. They document specific cases when Southern printers provided envelopes for unit commanders or other military personnel.

In one such case, Louis E. Pradat, who served as Confederate postmaster and the proprietor of the Gothic Store in Pass Christian, Mississippi, printed both paper scrip and at least two Confederate pictorial envelopes. Col. Hamilton Mayson, of the Seventh Mississippi Volunteers, purchased two boxes of envelopes from Pradat. Stationed in Pass Christian in fall of 1861, and likely familiar with Pradat and his civilian eleven-star Confederate flag cover, Mayson apparently commissioned Pradat to prepare for his regiment a second cover (Figure 15), as it is clearly designed for soldier, not civilian, usage.¹⁴

Other Southern printers likewise printed envelopes for specific units that reflected the fervor of the individual soldiers and



FIGURE 15. Seventh Regiment Mississippi Volunteer. Louis Pradat, printer. Benjamin Wishnietsky, *Confederate Patriotic Covers and Their Usages* (North Miami: David G. Phillips Publishing, 1991), 80, fig. 126.

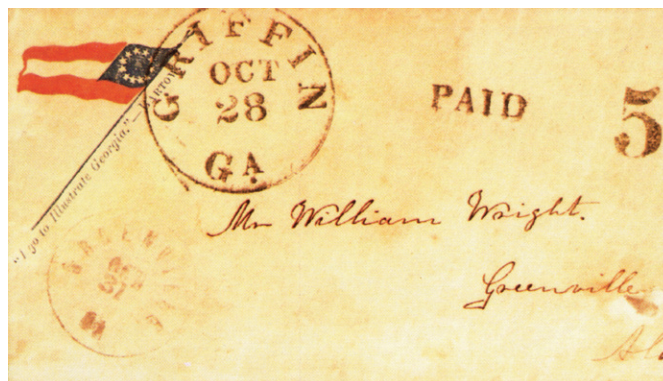


FIGURE 16. Eleven-star Confederate flag envelope. J. W. Burke, printer. Benjamin Wishnietsky, *Confederate Patriotic Covers and Their Usages* (North Miami: David G. Phillips, 1991), 67, fig. 101.

their pride in the incipient Confederate nation, their specific unit, and its commanders. An example is an eleven-star Confederate flag cover that cited the statement, “I go to illustrate [i.e., defend] Georgia,” of Col. Francis Bartow, who died in the First Battle of Manassas. Members of Bartow’s regiment asked J. W. Burke, a Savannah bookstore owner, to supply them with a commemorative envelope (Figure 16).

Burke’s experience also provides a partial explanation of the relative paucity of Confederate unit designs. In “Bartow Envelopes,” an article in the Savannah *Daily Morning News*, Burke replied to criticism of his activities in an earlier, untitled, article signed simply “Oglethorpe” in an issue of the Savannah *Republican* (not known to be extant).¹⁵ “Oglethorpe” had chastised Burke for introducing “Yankeeisms” into Georgia—that is, the sale of printed envelopes to troops for personal profit. In his rebuttal, Burke denied the allegation, insisting that he sold the envelopes at the request of members of Bartow’s regiment “for accommodation, and at a price that will scarcely return me the money I paid out.”¹⁶ Scarce resources, of course, curtailed the number of Confederate envelopes available to troops or civilians, but cultural differences between the North and South clearly also played a role.

The “Yankeeisms” of which “Oglethorpe” complained reached its apex with J. A. Howells, a printer in Jefferson, Ohio. During 1863 and 1864, Howells published more than 100 different poem envelopes, many clearly intended, judging by their titles, for soldiers to mail to loved ones at home.¹⁷ Titled “ARMY HYMN,” (Figure 17) the mailer of this envelope was William J. Dean, postmaster for the Twenty-First Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. In his diary entry for 13 July 1864, he noted that he had “received a lot of paper and envelopes from J. A. Howells and Co.”¹⁸ The item in Figure 17 may have been one of those envelopes, mailed months later to his mother, Lurana Rebecca Dean, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Howells aggressively marketed his covers. In the cover shown, the notation “Twenty Envelopes of various sizes, colors and songs sent by mail free of postage for TEN CENTS” appears. The circumstances of Dean’s acquisition of this lot of envelopes are unclear. Perhaps he ordered them from Howells for personal or unit use, consciously selecting soldier-intended designs. It seems unlikely he purchased them from a sutler in camp as he stipulated that he received the envelopes from Howells and Co. as did thousands of soldiers who ordered envelopes that served their particular needs when writing home.

Although we know relatively little about the publishers of most envelopes, North and South, we know even less about the men and women who designed them. There is a caricature Union design of a man hunched over a drafting board labeled “The Individual Who Designs the Comic Union Envelope.”¹⁹ A more informative exception is pictured in Figure 18. This Union design is unusual in that it includes the name of the designer, Frank Carr, likely the Frank Carr, who enlisted in the Indiana Fourteenth Volunteer, Company B, in June 1861. The Fourteenth had organized at Camp Vigo, near Terra Haute, in May of that year.²⁰ Precisely how his artwork became the basis for this envelope, likely by the only known Terra Haute publisher, Devoe and Crampton, remains uncertain. The design, nonetheless, suggests a soldier-initiated image that reflects the pride and enthusiasm of a young man who early in the war shared with many Union designers and soldiers an enthusiasm to see Confederate president Jefferson Davis executed.

It is clear that soldiers, like their civilian counterparts, utilized design envelopes when available to write to family and friends. Many of those envelopes were intended solely for soldiers’ use and bore different messages than the more “patriotic” designs intended for civilians. Soldiers also played a small role in the composition and design of some envelopes intended for their use.

The implications of this analysis are twofold. First, the patriotic envelope label needs to be reconsidered. It is inconsistent with

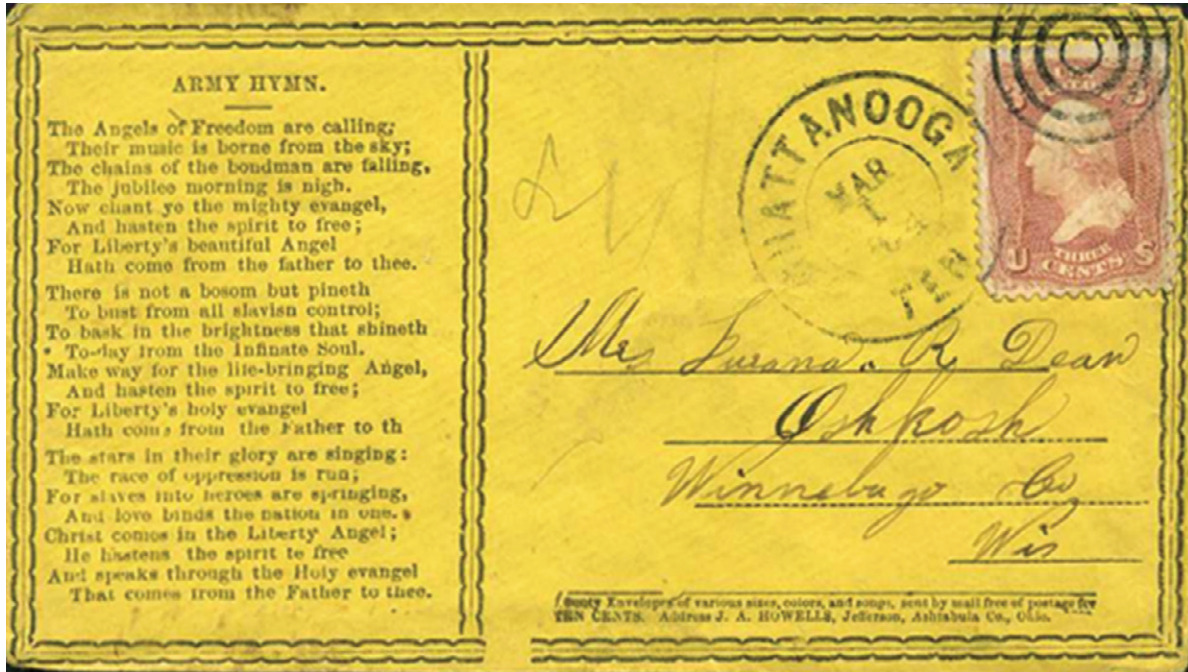


FIGURE 17. “Army Hymn” poem design with advertising. J. A. Howells, printer. Boyd Collection. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), fig. 5-24.



FIGURE 18. The Fate of All Traitors by Frank Carr, Charcoal Artist. Devoe and Crampton printers. Boyd Collection.

most nineteenth-century usage and does not encompass the totality of envelope designs associated with the genre. During the war, the descriptors for these envelopes varied. Occasionally the phrase “patriotic envelope” did occur, but more often, labels such as “national,” “national portrait,” “Union,” “pictorial letter,” “flag,” and “illustrative” accompanied “envelope,” along with a host of other adjectives. In the South the envelopes were referred to simply as “Confederate” or “Flag” envelopes. At the end of the nineteenth century, a printer offered these same design envelopes to GAR and other fraternal groups as “war time Union envelopes.”²¹

Second, the patriotic envelope label unduly narrows how we think about these envelopes. Undoubtedly, many of them bore designs intended to promote patriotic sentiment, in both the North and the South as mailed envelopes and in the North as souvenirs to collect and preserve. In fact, there are likely far more unmailed Union envelopes than those utilized to carry letters. Nonetheless, the design envelopes also served more specialized purposes. Some advertised a business or product, including the envelopes themselves. Others promoted candidates for public office, most often presidential nominees. A third group, as this paper argues, specifically served soldiers. I propose, therefore, that we label all these envelopes Civil War era pictorial envelopes—a term that is more consistent with nineteenth-century usage and better encompasses their multiple purposes.

Even if the label patriotic envelope is too well entrenched to be changed, I would nonetheless encourage postal historians and cataloguers to recognize explicitly our unduly narrow focus on the patriotic element of these designs. This focus is, in part, a consequence of the arrangement of the first major catalogue. When Robert Laurance created *The George Wolcott Collection of Used Civil War Patriotic Covers*, he arranged them on the basis of their designs. Most contemporary catalogues utilize this arrangement, with some modifications, and archival collections are organized on the basis of those catalogues. An unintended consequence of that arrangement is that it shapes, to some degree, how we approach these covers analytically.

A different catalogue arrangement could encourage us to ask additional questions about the envelopes and expand the focus of scholarly analysis in a manner that could integrate the postal history of the Civil War era more fully into traditional scholarship. The major catalogues are organized on the basis of envelope design. Male, female, flag, caricature, scene, and a number of other categories are used. This format implicitly treats each individual item as equal to every other one. There is no reckoning with such facts as that there are, in aggregate, far more different flag than female designs, and more covers that feature poems than African Americans. The lack of a census or any calculation of how many instances of a specific design are known precludes any consideration of the ratio of intracategory designs printed (certainly not all flag designs appeared in the same number). Likewise, while “used” covers formed the entirety of the Wolcott collection and are the primary focus of most postal historians, no analysis has been made of the significance of the preponderance of some designs, such as flags or prominent men, and the paucity of others, such as African

Americans or identifiable women. The implications of the imbalance in the number of mailed and unposted African American covers have also escaped notice. Because most catalogues only identify the publisher of the cover by name and place of publication, no one seems to have asked if there were regional variations in the subjects of northeastern (i.e., New York and Philadelphia) designs compared with midwestern or western ones.

The point is that our thinking about these envelopes is circumscribed by our philatelic interests in postal usage and individual designs. Catalogue and collection arrangements based on those designs reinforce this focus. If my analysis of soldiers’ covers is sound, it is time to ask more questions, like those outlined above, of the design covers.

In addition, further modifications in catalogue format should be considered as catalogues are prepared. (I am personally aware of two proposals to post all known covers on the worldwide web.) Existing design categories should be expanded to include usages such as advertising, campaigns, and soldiers, and another category added for related advertising, wrappers, and kits, among others items. Future catalogues could also include a census, to the degree possible, of each design both posted and unposted.

Finally, cataloguers could emulate the more inclusive and analytical *Handbook of Civil War Patriotic Envelopes and Postal History* (unfortunately, now defunct), which provided more information about publishers, their emphases, and their locations. This expansion could trigger greater interest in these objects of American culture among scholars who are currently not part of the philatelic community, and such scholarly work could enhance our breadth of understanding of various aspects of postal history.

NOTES

1. Robert Laurance, comp., *The George Wolcott Collection of Used Civil War Patriotic Covers* (New York: self-pub., 1934).
2. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).
3. “West Virginia in the Civil War, Battery D, West Virginia Light Artillery,” www.westvirginiacivilwar.com/union-regiments/battery-d-west-virginia-light-artillery/ (accessed 13 September 2017). See also Linda Cunningham Fluharty and Edward L. Phillips, *Carlin’s Wheeling Battery* (Baton Rouge, La.: self-pub., printed by Morris Publishing, 2010).
4. New York Muster Roll Abstracts, “1861–1890,” http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gl=allgs&gss=sfs63_home&new=1&crank=1&cmsT=1&gsfn=George%20W&gsfn_x=1&gsln=Peck&gsln_x=1&msypn__ftp=Moravia%20New%20York&msypn__ftp_x=1&msbdy_x=1&msbdy=1844&cp=0&catbucket=rstp&MSAV=1 (accessed 13 September 2017).
5. Robert W. Grant, *The Handbook of Civil War Patriotic Envelopes and Postal History*, (Hanover, Mass.: self-pub., 1977), ch. 4, 27–39.
6. For examples of the various designs see William R. Weiss Jr., *The Catalog of Union Civil War Patriotic Covers* (Bethlehem, Pa.: self-pub., 1995), 210–212.
7. In a presentation at the Seventh Annual Postal History Symposium, “Decorated Envelopes as Weapons of War,” Ken Lawrence addressed this same image. His paper and presentation can be found at Ken Lawrence, “Decorated Envelopes as Weapons of War,” Postal History Symposium. Blue & Gray: Mail and the Civil War: Seventh Annual Postal History Symposium and U.S. Classics, 2012, <https://stamps.org/postal-history-symposium> (accessed 30 September 2019).
8. S. C. Rickards, Cately & Co., advertisement, *Cavalier*, 14 July 1863, “118thRegiment New York Volunteer Infantry Civil War Newspaper

- Clippings,” New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center, <https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/118thInf/118thInfCWN.htm> (accessed 16 February 2018).
9. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes*, 22–23.
 10. Weiss identifies 148 designs in the category “Famous Persons—George McClellan.” Weiss, *Catalog*, 84–103. Additional designs are illustrated in various other categories throughout the *Catalog*.
 11. Quoted in James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History* (Lake Forest, Ill.: Northbrook Publishing, 2007), 67.
 12. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History*, 59.
 13. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History*, 232.
 14. CSA Receipt, November 1861, “Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms,” in the National Archives, accessed 17 November 2011, www.fold3.com/browse/249/hchCF9X8wgBwH2COL6874hSrHP-ccUODUdAZmNW92. Steven R. Boyd, “New Light on a Confederate Patriotic Envelope Publisher,” *Confederate Philatelist*, 54(4) (October–December 2009): 9–10.
 15. Oglethorpe, untitled article, (Savannah) *Republican*, 31 July 1861, n.p. In contrast, a note in the *Macon Telegraph* praised the “New and Handsome Envelope,” as a “beautiful specimen of the Confederate Flag envelope.” *Macon Telegraph*, 26 July 1861, 1.
 16. J. W. Burke, “Bartow Envelopes,” (Savannah) *Daily Morning News*, 31 July 1861, 1.
 17. See Weiss, *Catalog*, 686–691, for a list of Howell’s titles.
 18. William J. Dean, “Diary,” The Civil War, Oshkosh Public Museum, accessed 12 September 2017, www.oshkoshmuseum.org/Virtual/exhibit/e30073a.htm.
 19. Weiss, *Catalog*, 448–449.
 20. “Indiana Civil War Soldier Database Index, 1861–1865,” http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?_phsrc=olf73&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&gl=39&gss=angs-g&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=Frank&gsfn_x=1&gsln=Carr&gsln_x=1&msypn__ftp=Terra%20Haute%20Indiana&msypn__ftp_x=1&msbdy_x=1&msbdp=5&msbdy=1840&cp=0&catbucket=rstp&MSAV=0&so=2 (accessed 10 September 2017).
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American Civil War Postage Due: North and South

Harry K. Charles Jr.

ABSTRACT. The American Civil War was a very traumatic period in the history of the United States. Not only were brothers fighting brothers and whole families being torn apart by geographic location and political differences but also there were grave problems in communication between the North and the South, especially from soldiers in the field or in prisoner-of-war camps. The mail was the major form of communication for individuals and businesses in the United States (and the world for that matter) during this time period. This article traces the flow of mail both within and between the North and the South. In particular, the flow of postage due mail becomes the major focus of the discussion, since the Confederacy did not recognize Union stamps as postage, and the Union did not accept Confederate stamps for mail delivery in the North. A large portion of the mail handled during the American Civil War was postage due, especially mail that had to cross the border between the United States and the Confederate States of America. A detailed look is taken at the rates and penalties applied to Civil War postage due mail. The route that the mail followed as it traveled from a sender in the North to a recipient in the South, or vice versa, is explored. Flag-of-truce mail involving prisoners on both sides is a major discussion topic as well as the operation of the Dead Letter Offices for both the North and South.

INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War (1861–1865) was a seminal event in the history of the United States. Since the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), when the United States won its independence from England, the United States struggled with two fundamental questions or issues: (1) rights of individual states versus the federal government (i.e., was the United States a dissolvable confederation of sovereign states united for a common good or was it an indivisible nation); and (2) whether a nation, founded on the premise that all men are created equal, would continue to exist as the world’s largest slave holding country.

As the United States expanded westward across North America during the nineteenth century, tension increased between the free states (non–slave holding states) in the North and the slave holding states in the South over states’ rights and the prohibition by the national government of slavery in the territories that were being considered for admission as states in the union. When Abraham Lincoln won the presidency in 1860 on a platform that opposed slavery in the territories, seven Southern slave states seceded and formed the Confederate States of America (CSA). Lincoln and most people in the North opposed secession, fearing that it would discredit democracy in the world and lead to fragmentation of the United States into small, squabbling countries.

The Civil War began on 12 April 1861, when Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor (South Carolina) and ultimately forced the federal troops to surrender. Lincoln called out the federal militia to suppress the insurrection. After

Johns Hopkins University, Applied Physics Laboratory, 11100 Johns Hopkins Road, Laurel, Maryland 20723-6099, USA.

Correspondence: harry.charles@jhuapl.edu

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Fort Sumter, four more states joined the CSA, and the Civil War spread—by the end of 1861, nearly a million soldiers were in conflicts across a 1,200-mile front from Virginia to Missouri.

During 1861 there were several skirmishes and small battles, but the fighting began in earnest in 1862. Major battles such as Shiloh (Tennessee), Gaines' Mill, Second Manassas, and Fredericksburg (all in Virginia), and Antietam (Maryland) set the stage for much larger battles in the years to come, including Gettysburg (Pennsylvania), Vicksburg (along the Mississippi River), and Chickamauga and Atlanta (Georgia). It was clear by 1862 that the original war to restore the Union had given way to total war to destroy the South and the institution of slavery. For three long years (1862–1865), the war raged with many horrific battles leading to victories on both sides, but due to the superior numbers of troops and equipment, the North finally prevailed. The capture of Gen. Robert E. Lee, the supreme commander of all Confederate forces, in April 1865 essentially ended the military conflict. Jefferson Davis, the Confederate president, was captured on 10 May 1865, and the Civil War was over—but at what cost? Nearly 625,000 American men (both Confederate and Union) lost their lives, and it took the nation many decades to recover from the scars left by the war. Some would even say that after almost 160 years, we still have not fully recovered.

IMPACT ON THE MAIL

The American Civil War was a traumatic period in the history of the United States. Not only were brothers fighting brothers and whole families being torn apart over geographic location and political differences, but also there were grave problems in communication between the North and the South, especially for soldiers in the field or in prisoner-of-war camps. The mail was the primary form of communication for individuals and businesses in the United States and worldwide. After the Southern states began seceding from the Union, starting with South Carolina's secession on 20 December 1860, the United States Post Office Department (USPOD) maintained mail service throughout the entire country for approximately five months.

Once fighting started on 12 April 1861 with the firing on Fort Sumter at Charleston, South Carolina, the USPOD began experiencing difficulties in handling the mail within and across the borders of the CSA. Escalating hostilities, coupled with the U.S. government's desire to inflict hardship on the Confederacy, led the U.S. postmaster general, Montgomery Blair, to suspend all mail service to, from, and within the CSA as of 31 May 1861. Thus, while intra-Union mail was handled with relative ease and efficiency by the existing U.S. postal system, mail between the North and the South and within the Confederacy was handled by a newly formed, resource-limited postal system under Confederate postmaster general John H. Reagan. The Confederate postal system had been formed in March 1861 and took over operations on 1 June, immediately after the USPOD ceased that portion of its operations. Reagan built the Confederate postal system in just

a few short weeks by recruiting experienced USPOD employees who sympathized with the South to fill key administrative positions. In general, however, the Confederate Post Office was under-supplied, its rates were high, and its operations were limited—all due to a lack of funding from the Confederate government, which struggled to pay for the war. Not surprisingly, the efficiency of mail delivery was tied to the progress of the war and, to some extent, to the will of the military commanders.¹

This article traces the flow of mail both within and between the North and the South, focusing on the flow of postage due mail because the Confederacy did not recognize Union stamps as postage and the Union did not accept Confederate stamps for mail delivery in the North. A large portion of the mail handled during the Civil War, especially mail that had to cross the border between the Union and the Confederacy, was postage due. This article discusses Civil War postage due mail in terms of the rates and penalties applied, the method of delivery, and the route that the mail traveled from a sender in the North to a recipient in the South or vice versa. Flag-of-truce mail from prisoners on both sides to their families and friends at home is also addressed, along with dead letter offices within both the North and South.

The peaceful secession of South Carolina on 20 December 1860 started the runaway train toward Southern independence and ultimately the Civil War. Quickly following on South Carolina's heels, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas all seceded within a six-week period. Each of these states acted separately, and their status after secession was as independent states. Most Americans still felt that the issues driving secession would be resolved quickly and peacefully. Although the aforementioned states declared their independence, the U.S. government still considered them part of the Union and, as such, allowed them to continue to use the U.S. postal system for mail service within their states and to outside destinations. Since most of the states that seceded were involved in forming or joining the CSA very shortly after secession, often within a month, mail from their independent state period is relatively rare.²

Figure 1 shows a letter from South Carolina posted during that state's independent period (20 December 1860–4 February 1861). Even after the states began joining the Confederacy on 4 February 1861, there were still no real impediments to the delivery of mail. During the 1860s mail in the form of letters was the primary form of communication for both individuals and businesses.

Following the start of hostilities with the bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor on 12 April 1861, many postal routes between the United States and the CSA were closed—often simply abandoned due to both the danger to personnel from the armed conflict and the threat of confiscation of the ships, trains, and wagons that transported the mail. However, mail between the North and the South was still exchanged using several routes, including the main route between Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Virginia. On 23 May 1861, the Union army seized and occupied Alexandria, Virginia, thereby effectively closing this route between the national capital and Richmond, which was named

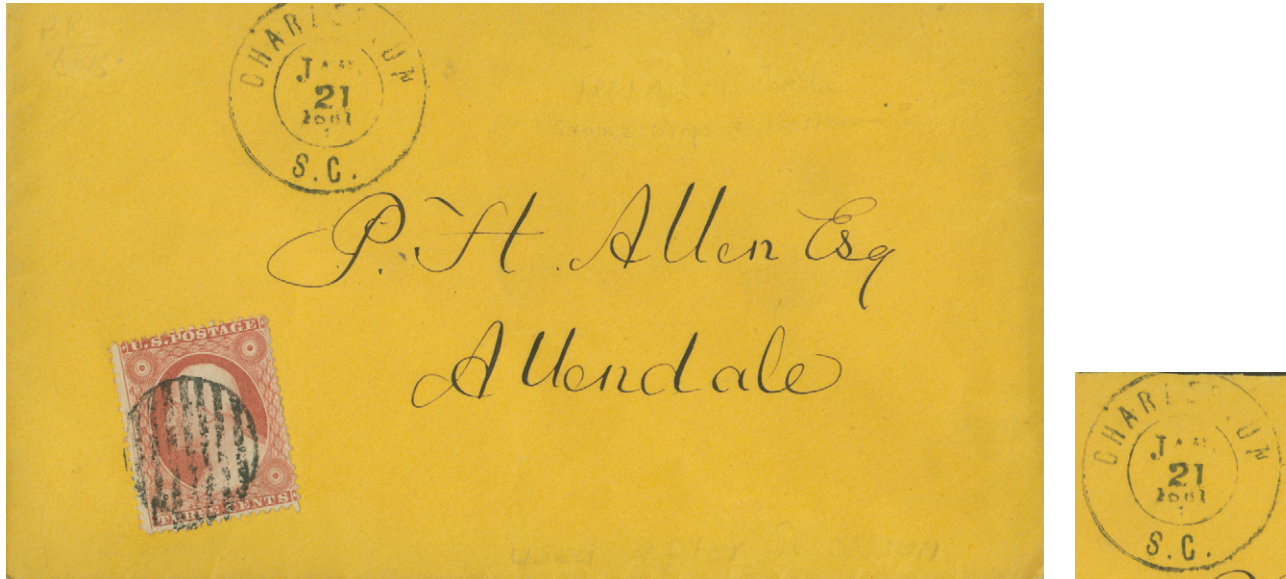


FIGURE 1. Cover posted in South Carolina during its independent period. The cover was postmarked in Charleston, approximately one month after South Carolina seceded. The cover was franked with a U.S. Scott No. 26 stamp* and addressed to P. H. Allen, Esq., in Allendale, a small South Carolina town that was burned to the ground during the war: (left) entire cover; (right) detail of the circular date stamp. Author's collection. *Stamp numbers are taken from the Scott Catalogue, courtesy of Scott Publishing (see Notes).

the capital of the Confederacy a week later, so Washington, D.C., was then considered the Union capital. After this time, mail continued to flow along other North–South routes farther west, primarily between Nashville, Tennessee, and Louisville, Kentucky. It should be noted that Tennessee did not join the Confederacy until 2 July 1861 and Kentucky remained Union throughout the war, despite internal turmoil. The increasing hostilities and the U.S. government's strategic desire to inflict hardship on the Confederacy caused the U.S. postmaster general, Montgomery Blair, to issue a decree on 27 May 1861, in which he suspended all mail services in the seceded states effective 31 May 1861.³ For a few more days, service, especially in the west, continued, but essentially all North–South mail exchange between U.S. and CSA post offices was halted by mid-June 1861. Table 1 shows key postal events between the date of South Carolina's secession in December 1860 and the first Confederate stamp issue in late 1861.

SEPARATE MAIL SYSTEMS

The CSA formed its own postal system under the direction of Confederate postmaster general John H. Reagan who was appointed to his post on 6 March 1861 by CSA president Jefferson Davis.⁴ At the same time, it was announced that the CSA Post Office would begin official operations on 1 June 1861. In order to build the Confederate postal system in just a few short weeks, Reagan recruited experienced USPOD employees who sympathized with the South to fill key administrative positions.

Was it coincidence or planning that Blair suspended service on 31 May and that the Confederate Post Office Department began mail operations on 1 June? Blair remained silent on the subject, even after the war. While indeed Blair may have been influenced by the CSA Post Office Department announcement (in March) of the assumption of postal service in the seceded states on 1 June, Confederate postmaster general Reagan insisted until his dying day that he and Blair had never coordinated the event's timing. Thus, effective 1 June there were two separate, noncommunicating mail systems operating in this country, each with its own regulations and fee schedules (Table 2).

Prior to the Civil War, the U.S. Post Office experienced a significant annual monetary deficit, mainly due to unprofitable postal routes in the South. With the war's elimination of these unprofitable routes, the U.S. Postal Service was actually showing a profit by 1863. This return to profitability led to a number of postal reforms including the uniform three-cent rate and the city home delivery of mail.⁵ Even mail over the Rocky Mountains, which had been charged a ten-cent fee per half ounce, was henceforth delivered for the three-cent rate.

In the Confederacy, things were quite different. Supply shortages and rising delivery costs forced the Confederate Post Office to abandon its initial rate of five cents per half ounce under 500 miles (805 km) after about a year and to adopt a uniform ten-cent rate regardless of distance—a rate that encompassed most Confederate citizens' mail. Services were also curtailed to the point that mail delivery only occurred three days per week at most post offices.⁶

TABLE 1. 1860–1861 Civil War timeline featuring key postal events.

Date	Event	Comments
12 Dec 1860	South Carolina secedes	U.S. Post Office Department continues to deliver mail.
4 Feb 1861	Confederate States of America (CSA) established	Seceded states (South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana) join immediately. Texas follows on 2 March 1861.
21 Feb 1861	Confederate Post Office established	—
6 Mar 1861	John H. Reagan appointed CSA postmaster general	Appointed by CSA president Jefferson Davis. Reagan recruits from within ranks of U.S. Post Office Department.
12 Apr 1861	Fort Sumter	CSA demands Fort Sumter surrender. Fort does not surrender; CSA fires at fort. Civil War begins. Mail becomes increasingly difficult to deliver in South due to disruption of railroads and confiscation of post office transportation equipment by CSA troops.
19 Apr 1861	Call for blockade	Lincoln calls for a blockade of southern coast—3,500 miles (5,633 km) of coastline with >200 harbors. Anaconda Plan by Gen. Winfield Scott blockades coast; disrupts mail travel by ships, further cutting communication with South.
7 May 1861–21 May 1861	More states secede and join CSA	Arkansas, North Carolina, and Virginia secede and join CSA.
13 May 1861	Reagan Proclamation	Reagan announces that Confederate Post Office will take over mail delivery on 1 June 1861.
24 May 1861	Suspension of Washington–Richmond postal route	Federal troops seize Alexandria, Virginia, and prevent North–South flow of mail. Northbound mail is diverted to CSA Dead Letter Office (DLO) in Richmond. Southbound mail is diverted to U.S. Post Office DLO in Washington, D.C.
27 May 1861	Blair Decree	In his decree, U.S. postmaster general Montgomery Blair suspends all mail service from and within the CSA effective 31 May 1861.
31 May 1861	Suspension of mail	All mail service between North and South and within CSA is ordered stopped, effective 31 May 1861.
1 Jun 1861	CSA Post Office operational	Confederate postal system begins to take over mail delivery in South. Transition period lasts several days. Even into July, mail trickles North, especially by western routes.
1 Jun–2 Jun 1861	DLO policy change	CSA decides to forward some northbound mail, especially through western routes, rather than send it to DLO.
1 Jun–12 Oct 1861	CSA without stamps	CSA postage stamps are on order but not delivered. Old U.S. stamps are not to be used. Postmaster general orders postmasters to use handstamp markings or create their own provisional stamps or stationery. More than 110 types of CSA provisional adhesive stamps and press-printed envelopes are known.
15 Jun 1861	Suspension of western routes	Federal post office in Memphis closes on 7 June 1861; the one in Nashville closes on 14 June 1861.
15 Jun 1861	Louisville postmaster holds mail	Louisville, Kentucky, postmaster (John Speed, M.D.) holds accumulating mail still being sent north via the western routes; requests instructions from Washington, D.C., as to how to mark and where to forward the mail.
24 Jun 1861	Washington, D.C., responds	Speed is instructed to forward mail to addressees with postage due after removal of stamps or other methods of prepayment. Speed creates “Southn. Unpaid Letter” handstamp.
2 Jul 1861	Tennessee officially secedes and joins CSA	A small amount of cross border mail continues to make its way North.
12 Oct 1861	Confederate stamps	First Confederate stamp is issued: a five-cent Jefferson Davis stamp (Scott CSA No. 1)

TABLE 2. Civil War postal rates by region and time period.

Region and rate	Time period and comments
North, United States (Union)	<i>Prior to 1 July 1863</i>
3¢	Per ½ oz., east of Rocky Mountains
10¢	Per ½ oz., west of Rocky Mountains
1¢	Drop letters, newspapers, and circulars
	<i>After 1 July 1863</i>
3¢	Per ½ oz., regardless of domestic distance
2¢	Drop letters, newspapers, and circulars
South, CSA	<i>Prior to 1 July 1862</i>
5¢	Per ½ oz., under 500 miles (under 805 km)
10¢	Per ½ oz., over 500 miles (over 805 km)
2¢	Drop letters, newspapers, and circulars
	<i>After 1 July 1862</i>
10¢	Per ½ oz., regardless of distance
	<i>After Spring/Fall 1863</i>
50¢	Preferred express mail rate, trans-Mississippi
40¢	Trans-Mississippi

After 14 June 1861, even the western North–South routes were officially closed and all North–South postal communications were banned by the Union. Nevertheless, small amounts of mail trickled across the borders into early July. On 19 April 1861, Pres. Abraham Lincoln announced the blockade of the Southern coast stretching from Virginia to Texas. Blockading a 3,500-mile long coastline with over 200 harbors was a formidable, if not impossible, task.⁷ The federal strategy was to blockade or capture the major deep-water ports, thereby undermining Southern shipping and commerce. By mid-1862, all but four of these harbors were closed by the Union occupation of the port city itself or control of key forts in the harbor. Wilmington, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; Mobile, Alabama; and Galveston, Texas, remained active sites for blockade runners for most of the war. Three foreign ports—Bermuda; Nassau, Bahamas; and Havana, Cuba—acted as staging points for Confederate supplies and mail. Because Texas was remote compared to the rest of the Confederacy, few blockade runners operated out of Texas. Moreover, Texas mail routes out of Galveston only connected with Havana and Mexico, while most supplies and mail from

Europe to the Confederacy were routed via the British colonies, the Bahamas and Bermuda. Mobile, Alabama, suffered from similar problems as Galveston. Thus, the most active blockade-running ports were Wilmington and Charleston. It is estimated that about 90% of the blockade-run mail went through Wilmington (50%) and Charleston (40%).⁸

The Confederacy was divided east and west by the Mississippi River. At the beginning of the war, trans-Mississippi mail flowed freely, and the normal Confederate postal rates applied. After the fall of New Orleans in late spring 1862, the Union gunboats plied the Mississippi River making it difficult to cross and forcing the mail to be moved by clandestine means. Trans-Mississippi routes were perilous; the significant risks included being captured and the physical peril of small boats on dangerous waters at night. Thus, in March 1863, the Confederacy raised trans-Mississippi rates to forty cents per half ounce. The siege and ultimate fall of Vicksburg on 4 July 1863 gave the Union complete control of the Mississippi River, making trans-Mississippi mail transport nearly impossible.

Except for soldiers' mail and official post office correspondence, the Confederate Post Office required prepayment of postage. Even the Confederate president and vice president did not have the free franking privilege. When prepayment was not possible, as for mail coming from the United States, Europe, and the West Indies, the mail was accepted as postage due. Thus, the Confederacy rated most incoming blockade-run mail postage due. Blockade-run mail also contained a two-cent fee for the ship's captain (as did regular ship mail in the United States), so "Due 12" and "Due 22" markings are common on blockade-run mail. It should be noted; however, that blockade run mail is very scarce with only 371 documented pieces (216 inbound and 155 outbound) known today.⁹ Figure 2 shows a piece of Confederate official mail with a "FREE" frank.

Did the suspension of all across-the-lines routes, mean that all mail stopped between the North and the South? Absolutely not! Special mail routes developed, and many continued operations throughout the duration of the war (Table 3), as Walske and others discuss.¹⁰ These routes allowed mail to traverse the lines between the North and South, penetrate the Union coastal blockade of the Southern states, cross the Mississippi River, despite the presence of Union gunboats, and maintain Confederate mail communications lines with Mexico.

STAMPS IN THE NORTH

When the Confederate postal system began official operation on 1 June 1861, it had no usable stamps, yet approximately \$250,000 worth of U.S. stamps were still in former U.S. post offices in the South—now being utilized as Confederate post offices. Confederate postmaster general Reagan ordered Southern postmasters not to use these Union stamps on Confederate mail after official operations began on 1 June. Prior to that, on

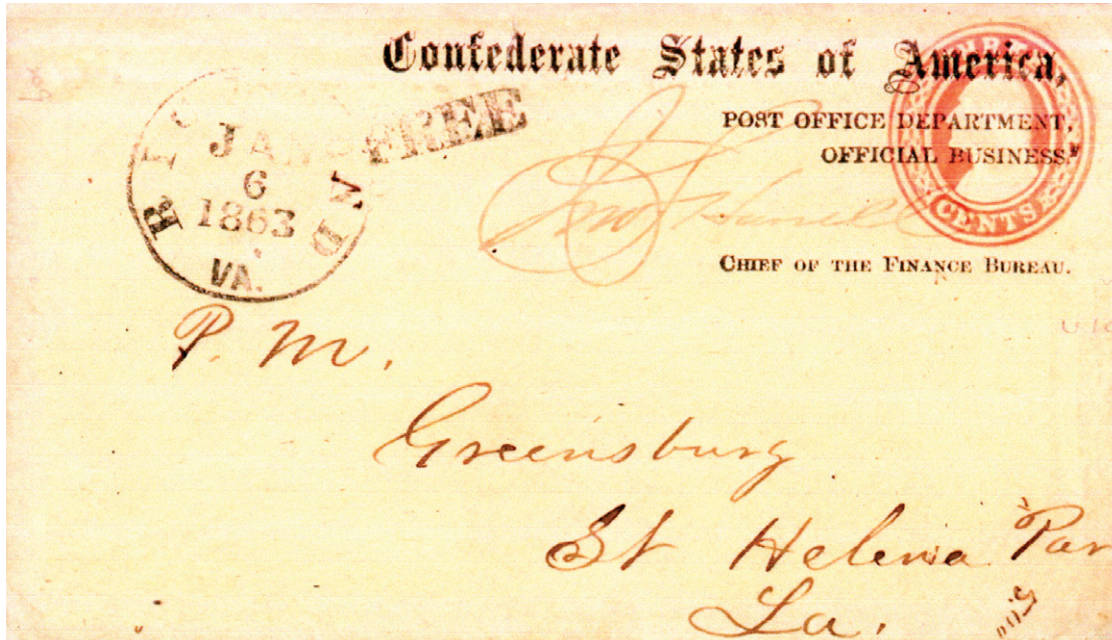


FIGURE 2. Confederate States of America official postal stationery illustrating the post office department's free franking privilege. The stationery was created by overprinting a U.S. three-cent stamped envelope (Scott No. U10). The envelope was signed by "Jno L. Harrell" who was the Confederate chief of finance for the post office department. The cover was addressed to the "P. M., Greensburg, St. Helena Par(ish), La." Author's collection.

TABLE 3. Civil War mail routes throughout the war.

Time period	Description	Comments
Late May–early Jun 1861	Transition mail	Mail was still being delivered by local and regional post offices during this period despite a federal government requirement that prewar post office routes be suspended between the North and South.
Feb 1861–Jun 1865	Express company mail	Private express companies supplemented regular mail service both across state lines and within CSA and Union states. Cross-line mail ceased after 26 August 1861 ban by United States on all communications with South.
Sep 1861–Jun 1865	Flag-of-truce mail	Prisoner-of-war mail exchange was maintained by both North and South mainly for benefit of captured soldiers (and limited number of civilians). There were several exchange locations, but main one was in southern Virginia (Old Port Comfort–Fortress Monroe).
Apr 1862–Apr 1865	Trans-Mississippi mail	Operated by express companies and CSA Post Office after Union took control of Mississippi River and maintained effective blockade.
Sep 1861–Jun 1865	Covert mail	Private mail systems (individuals) performed cross-the-lines mail delivery using secret routes (inland waterways) to avoid Union troops. Women went so far as to carry mail and other contraband in their undergarments.
May 1862–May 1865	Blockade mail	Small, fast ships (that could outrun Union blockade ships) used to connect key CSA ports with British-held ports in Bermuda and West Indies. Havana, Cuba, was also involved in blockade runs across Gulf of Mexico. Blockade runs along Gulf Coast may have started as early as September 1861. Blockade running allowed for exchange of international mail.
Jul 1861–Jun 1865	Trans-Rio Grande mail	Mail transport between Texas and Mexico allowed international mail to be sent and received by CSA.

13 April 1861—the day after the Civil War began—Reagan ordered Southern postmasters to ship all U.S. stamps back to Washington, D.C., and to settle their accounts. While most postmasters kept their accounts current, many did not return stamps.

The U.S. government realized that this hoard of U.S. stamps in the South could cause monetary issues for the Union. For example, the stamps could be sold to Confederate sympathizers in the North who could distribute them for use on mail; and smuggled Southern letters bearing U.S. stamps could be dropped in the U.S. mail system and delivered for free. The U.S. government therefore decided to withdraw all existing stamps and postal stationery and to demonetize them, thus making them invalid for payment of postage anywhere, and to issue a new series of stamps and stationery for use only in the North. The then-current U.S. postage stamp contract was with Toppan, Carpenter & Company of Philadelphia for printing the 1857 issues, including the three-cent Scott No. 26; that contract expired on 10 June 1861. The U.S. government negotiated a new contract with the National Bank Note Company of New York to produce new stamps for exclusive use in the North. These stamps (Scott Nos. 63 to 72) took about two months to produce and were first available on 19 August 1861. Because prewar U.S. stamps and stationery were in widespread use by Union postmasters, the USPOD phased out the old stamps and stationery as it issued the new ones. First, supplies of the new stamps were issued to major post offices such as Philadelphia. The post office would advertise an exchange of the old stamps

for the new ones, and after a short exchange period (nominally one week), the old stamps would no longer be valid. In Philadelphia, the new 1861 issue adhesive stamps were announced as available on 19 August 1861, and the exchange period ended on 25 August; embossed envelopes were available on 8 August and the exchange ended 13 August.

Figure 3 shows an envelope with a three-cent stamp (Scott No. 65) from the new series. The three-cent rate was the common Union letter rate (Table 2). Many people still possessed old series stamps and stationery after the withdrawal announcement and very short redemption period and tried to use them. U.S. post offices, however, rejected all old stamps and stationery. Using them on letters meant that the letter arrived with postage due. Often such letters, in addition to the postage due markings, received a handstamp reading “OLD STAMPS NOT RECOGNIZED” (Figure 4). The envelope shown in Figure 4 has the old three-cent stamp (Scott No. 26). Figure 5 shows mint examples of the old and new three-cent U.S. stamps.

STAMPS IN THE SOUTH

With the Confederate ban on using U.S. stamps, Confederate postmasters were left without government-issued stamps. Postmaster General Reagan had issued contracts for Confederate stamps before 1 June, but the orders were not filled until several months later. Reagan told Confederate postmasters that they



FIGURE 3. Envelope (left) mailed with the new three-cent stamp (right, Scott No. 65) from Worcester, Massachusetts, on 17 April 1862. It was addressed to Lieutenant Colonel Sprague of the Second Map Artillery (connected to the Twenty-First, Twenty-Third, and Twenty-Fourth regiments from Massachusetts) in New Berne, North Carolina. He was part of the New Berne conflict that began on 17 March 1862 and, after the Union victory, was part of the occupation forces. Author's collection.



FIGURE 4. Cover mailed in Philadelphia on 26 August 1861 to a soldier at Camp Seward in Washington, D.C.: (left) full cover; (right) handstamp detail. The stamp used was an 1857 three-cent issue. Because it should have been exchanged for the new three-cent stamp by 25 August, the Philadelphia post office did not accept the old stamp and marked the cover “OLD STAMPS NOT RECOGNIZED” and rated it “DUE 3.” Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, *United States and Confederate Postal History*, Sale 927, Wednesday, 20 December 2006, Lot No. 1170, p. 53.



FIGURE 5. Old and new three-cent stamps: (left) Scott No. 26 in dull red (older version); (right) Scott No. 65 in rose. Both stamp designs measure 19.5 mm wide × 24.5 mm high. Author’s collection.



FIGURE 6. Confederate postmaster provisional stamps from New Orleans, Louisiana: (left) New Orleans two-cent postmaster provisional stamp (Scott 62X1), blue, with design measuring 19.0 mm × 24.5 mm. It was printed by John V. Childs, an engraver and printer located at 10 Camp Street, New Orleans, using the stereotype printing process under the authority granted by Postmaster John L. Riddell of New Orleans. (right) Confederate five-cent postmaster provisional stamp from New Orleans (Scott 62X5), brown, measuring 18.6 mm × 23.7 mm, also printed by John V. Childs. Author’s collection.

could locally create provisional stamps or resort to manuscript (handwritten) and handstamped markings.¹¹ Figure 6 shows examples of postmaster provisional stamps from New Orleans, Louisiana. In all, there are more than 110 distinctly different Confederate postmaster provisional adhesive stamp and press-printed stationery designs originating from about fifty cities and towns listed in the current *Scott Catalogue*.¹² Many of these items are quite rare, with only one or two copies known.

Hillsboro, North Carolina; Madison Court House, Florida; and Nashville, Tennessee, even created U.S. three-cent

provisional stamps to use between the date their home state seceded and the start of Confederate postal operations on 1 June. Nashville, however, never used these interim stamps on mail. As an alternative to provisional adhesive stamps or press-printed postal stationery, about 100 more towns created handstamped postal stationery that could be purchased in advance and used when needed.¹³ The majority of post offices including those in Richmond used handstamps to indicate the payment of postal charges. Figure 7 shows covers with “Paid 5” and “Paid 10” Confederate handstamp markings.



FIGURE 7. Confederate covers showing (top) "Paid 5" and (bottom) "Paid 10" markings. Author's collection.

Five cents and ten cents were the Confederate letter rates during the early stages of the war (Table 2). The first Confederate stamp (CSA Scott No. 1) was issued on 16 October 1861. It was a five-cent green stamp with a vignette depicting CSA president Jefferson Davis. A ten-cent blue Thomas Jefferson stamp (CSA Scott No. 2) appeared shortly thereafter on 8 November. Figure 8 shows an envelope with CSA Scott No. 1.

The first Confederate stamps were printed using the stone lithography method and, like all succeeding Confederate stamps, were issued imperforate.¹⁴ As the war progressed, typography and, finally, line engraving replaced stone lithography for the printing of stamps. The Confederacy issued and used thirteen different stamps (CSA Scott Nos. 1 to 13).¹⁵ Three of them each had two different printers, increasing the number of recognizable varieties of the issued stamps to sixteen, neglecting color variations and plate flaws. Overall, the Confederacy issued approximately 146 million stamps. More than 96% of them were five-cent (64 million) or ten-cent (77 million) values; the rest were two-cent Andrew Jackson stamps (approximately 2.5 million) for drop letters and twenty-cent George Washington stamps (approximately 2.4 million) for heavier letters and trans-Mississippi rates. More than half of the five-cent stamps were the blue Jefferson Davis stamp (CSA Scott No. 7) issued 25 July 1862, produced using typography by Archer and Daly (Richmond, Virginia) as shown in Figure 9 (left). Of the ten-cent stamps, the line-engraved printed blue-to-green Jefferson Davis stamps (CSA Scott Nos. 11 and 12) printed by Archer and Daly constituted about 62% (Figures 9, center). If the dark blue versions (Figure 9, right) of these Jefferson Davis stamps (CSA Scott Nos. 11 and



FIGURE 8. Folded letter (left) mailed on 17 April 1862 using a five-cent Jefferson Davis CSA Scott No. 1 (right). It was mailed in Mobile, Alabama, by the cashier of the Bank of Mobile acknowledging receipt of payment from the addressee in Marion, Alabama. Author's collection.



FIGURE 9. Blocks of the most widely issued Confederate stamps: (left) blue five-cent Jefferson Davis stamp (CSA Scott No. 7), of which about 36 million were printed by the firm of Archer and Daly; (center) blue ten-cent Jefferson Davis (CSA Scott No. 11) stamps printed by Archer and Daly by line engraving; (right) same design in a deeper blue (CSA Scott No. 12) printed by Keatinge and Ball. The combined printing total of these three stamps was almost 100 million or about 68% of all the Confederate stamps printed. Author's collection.

12) printed by Keatinge and Ball of Columbia, South Carolina, are included, the total rises to about 81% of all ten-cent stamps.

SOLDIERS' MAIL

Mail was the key, and generally only, method for soldiers to keep in contact with their families. Soldiers in the field often did not have ready access to stamps, so they were allowed to send letters into their respective postal systems as postage due if the letters were endorsed "Soldier's Letter" and contained the senders rank and unit. Sometimes the soldier's commanding officer was required to endorse the envelope attesting to the fact that the soldier was in his unit. Both the U.S. and CSA post offices allowed soldiers this privilege. The worried families and friends at home gladly paid the postage due. Despite the ability to send letters postage due, the Union soldier was expected to prepay the letter with a three-cent stamp. Figure 10 shows a prepaid Union soldier's letter sent through Old Point Comfort, Virginia, (a town near Fort Monroe that remained a Union stronghold throughout the war).¹⁶ The envelope bears the corner card of the U.S. Christian Commission and features its dove of peace symbol and the preprinted identification as a "Soldier's Letter."¹⁷ Other Christian charity groups also provided pens, paper, and envelopes to the soldiers.

In the Union if soldiers did not pay with a 3-cent stamp, then the cover was sent as "Due 3" if it was properly endorsed



FIGURE 10. U.S. Christian Commission soldier's letter cover franked with U.S. Scott No. 65 (three-cent Washington issued in 1861) and canceled on 17 August in Old Port Comfort, Virginia. This Union cover addressed to Mrs. Thomas L. Bailey is probably from her husband, Corp. Thomas L. Bailey of C Company of the Twenty-First Regiment Connecticut Volunteers. His dates of service were 21 December 1862–3 June 1865, so this cover is from 17 August 1863 or 1864. Author's collection.



FIGURE 11. Examples of “Due 3” and “Due 6” markings on Union covers: (top) the “Due 3” cover was mailed from Gallipolis, Ohio, to an address in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as an unpaid soldier’s letter; (bottom) the “Due 6” letter was mailed in New Orleans after Union occupation of the city to an address in Iowa. Author’s collection.

“Soldier’s Letter,” bore the sender’s rank and unit, and, if required, contained the unit commanding officer’s signature. Otherwise, the letter was rated “Due 6”: three cents for the missing postage plus a three-cent penalty. Figure 11 shows a stampless soldier’s letter with the “Due 3” marking and a similar cover without proper endorsement rated as “Due 6.”

The postage due soldiers’ mail, allowed by both Union and Confederate post offices, did more than address the lack of viable postage stamps. In fact, it became a necessity: even if soldiers in the field had access to stamps, they did not have money. Soldiers’ pay was low and often lagged many months behind (if they received any at all). Postage due letters shown in Figures 12 and 13 illustrate the plight of Confederate and Union soldiers, respectively. Each contains a poem or phrase reflecting lack of money (and food).

Mail to and from Confederate and Union prisoners of war was exchanged at designated points under a flag-of-truce;

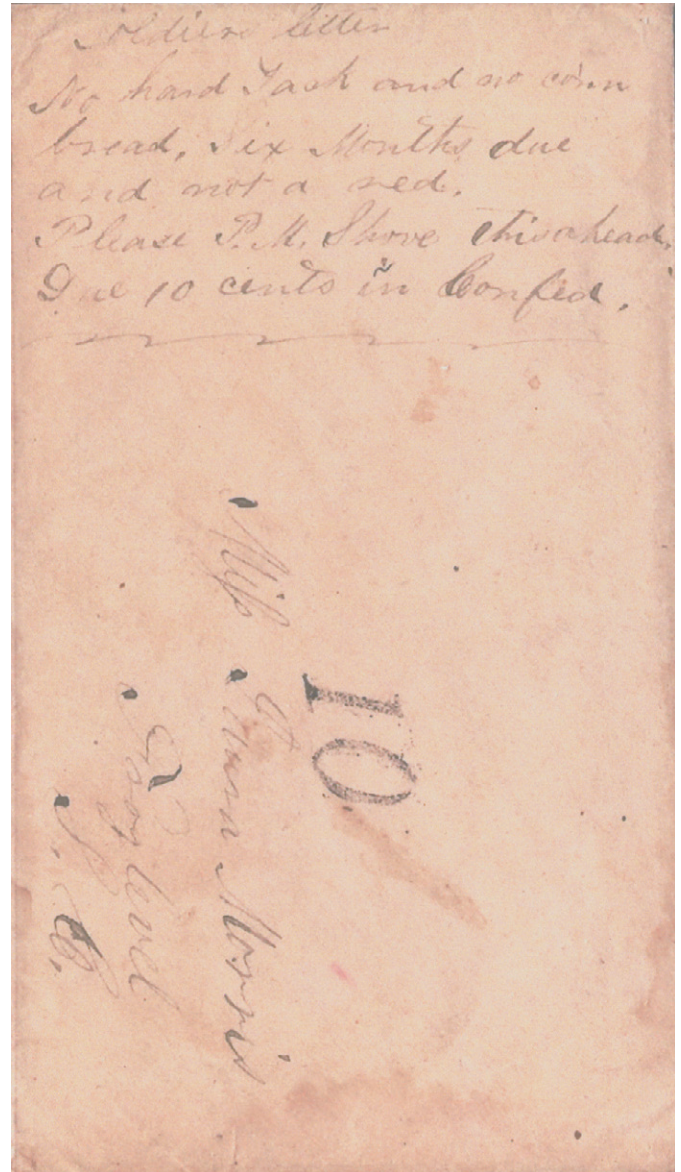


FIGURE 12. Confederate postage due cover capturing the plight of the common soldier and the recognition of the need for postage due. Poem is on the cover’s left side. The cover was addressed to Frog Level (now Prosperity), South Carolina, and rated ten-cent postage due. Collection of Lewis Kaufman.

*Soldiers letter
 No hard tack and no cornbread,
 Six Months due
 and not a red.
 Please P.M. Shove this ahead,
 Due 10 cents in Confed.*



FIGURE 13. Union postage due cover with verse lamenting lack of money and food. Poem is on the cover's left side. The cover was addressed to Lewisburg, Union County, Pennsylvania, and rated three cents postage due. Collection of Lewis Kaufman.

*Soldiers Letter
Nary red hard tack
in plase of bred [sic].*

the receiving postal system forwarded it postage due. The letter home from a Confederate prisoner in a Union prison camp (Figure 14) was mailed with a current U.S. three-cent stamp at Johnsons Island, Sandusky, Ohio, and addressed to a person in Alabama. In a flag-of-truce arrangement the U.S. mail carried the letter to the main exchange point at Fortress Monroe, Old

Point Comfort, Virginia, and exchanged it under a flag-of-truce. The letter then entered the Confederate mail stream via Richmond and was rated "Due 10" cents, the rate for an unpaid letter within the Confederacy.

Early in the war, prisoner exchanges between the Union and the Confederacy kept the prison camps mostly empty. In 1863 the prisoner exchange system collapsed, and prison ranks swelled. During 1864–1865, the last two years of the war, prisons camps held more than 410,000 soldiers. The need to write letters home and receive mail from loved ones was paramount. Both sides proposed and supported mail exchanges under flag-of-truce arrangements, which continued through most of the Civil War. The Union suspended exchanges, however, from September 1862 to June 1863, suspecting that the Confederacy was using these sanctioned mail exchanges to send espionage data. Flag-of-truce exchanges took place at several locations (Table 4). But the Old Point Comfort exchange point, which handled the largest volume of mail, was by far the most important.

Regulations required that flag-of-truce letters be placed in unsealed envelopes addressed to the final destination. These unsealed inner envelopes were then placed in outer envelopes, on which postage had been paid to the exchange point. At the exchange point, the outer envelope was removed, and a military examiner read the letter in the inner envelope. Examiner-approved letters were exchanged and sent on their way to their destination. Delivery from the exchange point to the final destination required the postage of the other side. Senders typically lacked that postage, so they enclosed coins in the outer envelope to pay it or requested that the letter be forwarded postage due. Because the inner envelopes were only handled by the postal system of the receiving side, they have postal markings and franking only of that side. Senders, however, rarely followed the two-envelope rule and instead used one envelope containing a final address, along with instructions to exchange the letter at a certain place under a flag of truce. Such letters bear markings of both postal systems (dual-franked). They are franked with appropriate postage in the sending system and are typically marked postage due in the receiving system. True dual-franked envelopes with both Union and Confederate stamps are extremely rare. On the flag-of-truce cover shown in Figure 14, a prisoner in a Northern camp at Johnsons Island, Ohio, used a U.S. three-cent stamp to mail his letter to Old Point Comfort, where it was accepted as postage due (the "Due 10" handstamp) in the Confederate system.

People expressed their support of the war in many ways. One of the most visible was the use of patriotic covers, especially in the North. Paper shortages and a lack of printing supplies prevented their widespread use in the South, although Southern patriotic covers exist. It has been estimated that at least 15,000 designs of Union patriotic covers exist compared to about 250 Confederate designs.¹⁸ Figure 15 shows one design on two covers. A Union soldier, operating around Port Royal, South Carolina, sent one of these (Figure 15, top left) to his family in Ohio. The cover is stampless and rated "Due 3"



FIGURE 14. Letter from a Johnsons Island prisoner of war mailed 15 February 1863 in Sandusky, Ohio, with a U.S. three-cent Washington (Scott No. 65) stamp. It was sent to Fortress Monroe, where it entered the Confederate mail system under a flag-of-truce for delivery to its final destination in Plantersville, Alabama. It was rated as “Due 10” by the CSA mail system. Author’s collection.

TABLE 4. Dates and places for flag-of-truce prisoner-of-war mail exchanges between the North and South.

Dates	Exchange points	Comments
Jul–Aug 1861	None	No flag-of-truce mail
Sep–May 1862	Norfolk–Old Point Comfort	Norfolk captured by Union on 9 May 1862
May–Sep 1862	Petersburg (Richmond)–Old Point Comfort	Petersburg replaced Norfolk
Sep 1862–Jun 1863	None	Prisoner-of-war mail exchanges suspended by North (fearing southern espionage use)
Jul 1863–Jun 1865	Various (multiple) ^a	Flag-of-truce exchanges resumed in volume

^a Exchange points were established in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Although exchanges usually took place between two cities or areas on dry land, an exchange route in Texas was established between Galveston and the U.S. blockade ships. The Petersburg (Richmond)–Old Point Comfort Route was still the most important, handling the largest volume of mail.

as a soldier’s letter. It is interesting that the design was printed on an embossed corner card envelope from a produce and commission merchant in Cleveland, Ohio. Another cover (Figure 15, bottom right) is captured stationery that a Confederate soldier used to send a message home to Port Gibson, Mississippi. This cover is also stampless and rated “Due 10” for the missing

Confederate postage. Thus, we have two Union patriotic design covers that were both rated postage due, one printed on an Ohio merchant’s embossed envelope that a Union soldier used and the other on captured Union stationery that a Confederate soldier used. Also shown are enlargements of the patriotic envelope design elements.

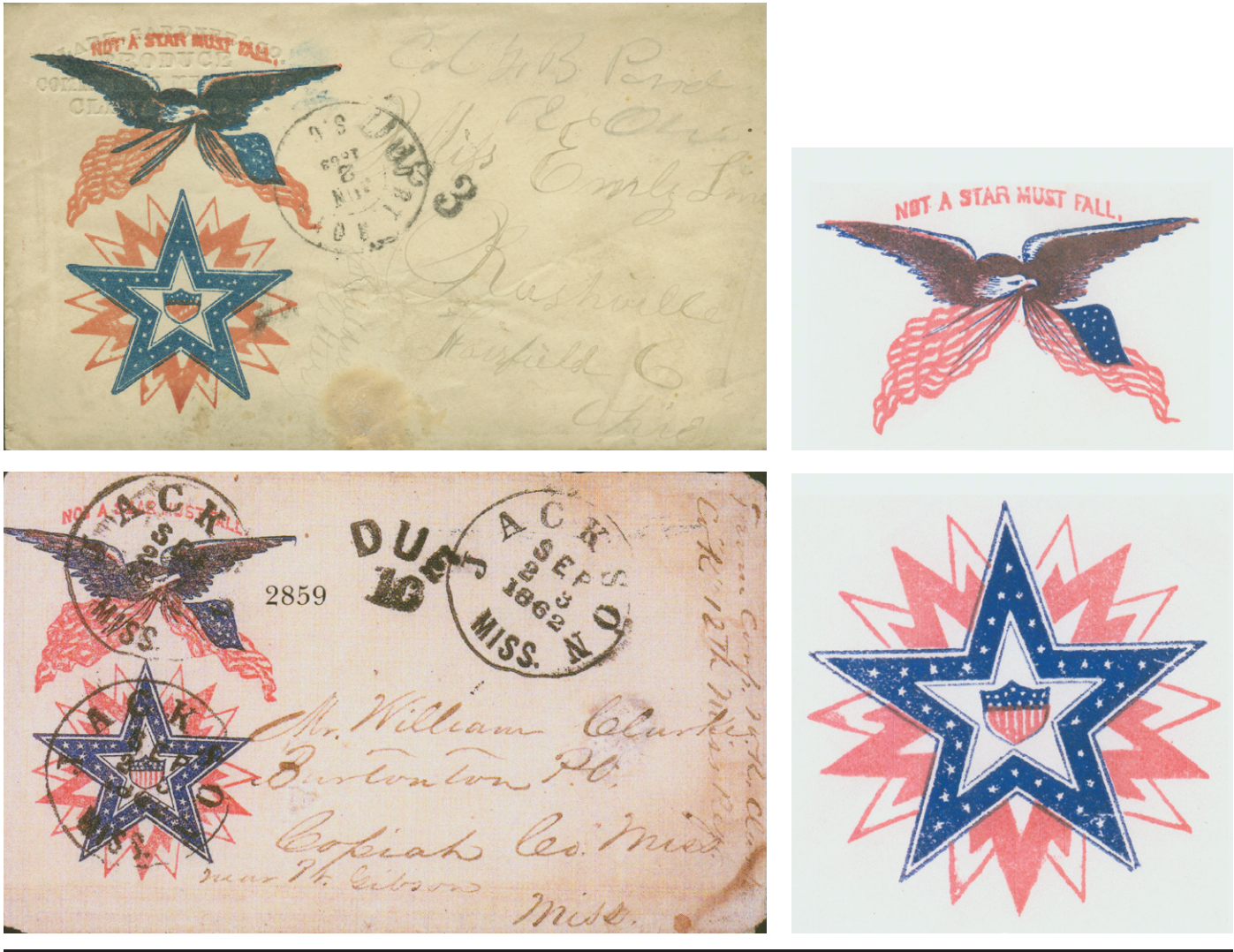


FIGURE 15. Civil War patriotic cover design “Not A Star Must Fall”. (Top left) Cover mailed by a Union soldier from occupied Port Royal, South Carolina, to his family in Ohio, postmarked 2 June 1863 and rated “Due 3,” printed over an embossed advertising cover: “Clark Gardener & Co., Produce, Commission Merchants, Cleveland, O.” (Bottom left) Cover of same design, captured Union stationery used by a Southern soldier for mailing a letter home to Mississippi, rated “Due 10” by the CSA postal system; postmarked 23 September 1862. When the letter was received in Jackson, Mississippi, the post office there not only applied the Jackson circular date stamp (CDS) but also used the CDS to try to obliterate the Union patriotic design. Both envelopes measure approximately 78 × 140 mm. (Top and bottom right) Enlargements showing design details. Ohio cover and cachet art, Author’s collection. Jackson, Mississippi, cover, Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.

DEAD LETTER OFFICES

The Dead Letter Office (DLO) of the USPOD had been in operation for many years before the Civil War. The DLO handled all undeliverable mail or unclaimed letters, with the focus of returning letters of value to the senders. The DLO’s definition of “value” included currency, securities, legal documents, family records, and irreplaceable papers. Only circulars, advertisements, and routine personal letters were destroyed; no attempt was

made to return these letters.¹⁹ Letters could be sent as postage due with the cost of delivery collected from the recipient until an 1856 law was enacted that required all mail to be prepaid using postage stamps.

This law had a profound effect on the USPOD in general and the DLO in particular. It required that all unpaid letters in the mail stream be held for postage. An identified sender would be notified of the postage due, and if it were paid, the mail would be sent on its way. If unpaid, after thirty days to three months,

depending on whether the letter was advertised or not, the letter would be sent to the DLO. At the start of secession, the U.S. mail and the DLO operated relatively normally, despite a few changes in postal law regarding the frequency of returning dead letters to Washington, D.C., and a reduction in the hold time of advertised mail from three months to two months. Once the war started and the Blair decree was implemented, two major situations arose that had lasting impact on the DLO.

First, because soldiers could rarely buy stamps, the DLO was inundated with unpaid letters from soldiers and their families. Eventually, soldiers were allowed to send letters collect or postage due (at normal postal rates if properly endorsed or double rate if not); but receiving thousands of unpaid, improperly endorsed soldiers' letters still overwhelmed the DLO, causing long turnaround delays. Second, after Blair suspended all federal mail service in the seceded states on 31 May 1861, the DLO received a large number of letters sent from Northern addresses to the Southern states. Although the number of such letters declined as the war progressed, it still averaged more than 40,000 letters per year.²⁰

To return dead letters, the U.S. DLO used special preprinted envelopes that reflected the amount of postage due for the return, determined by the perceived value of the original letter.²¹ Figure 16 shows an example of a "Due 3" envelope. Note the envelope refers to the "Return Letter Office." Others have "Dead

Letter Office" or "Returned Letter Office" imprinted on them. According to Wegner, the letter "X" in the lower left corner of the DLO envelope in Figure 16 is a clerk identifier.²² Each clerk was assigned a letter and was expected to use similarly marked envelopes in returning mail. A count of the envelopes used allowed the clerk's productivity to be measured. The "H" signifies it was used by another clerk who was assigned the letter "H." DLO envelopes are known as "Due 6," and the author has seen them hand corrected to reflect other amounts of payment due. Originally, ordinary letters and valuable letters were returned at double and triple the rate, "Due 6" and "Due 9," respectively. After 1 July 1863, the charge was reduced to single rate and double rate for ordinary letters and valuable letters, respectively. The author has not seen a preprinted "Due 9" envelope. A special "Soldier's Letter" preprinted "Due 3" envelope is also known. The U.S. DLO also had special handstamps, examples of which are shown in Figure 17.

The CSA Post Office Department also operated a DLO located in Richmond. After the Richmond–Washington, D.C., mail route was closed on 23 May 1861, all northbound mail from the eastern Confederate states was diverted to the CSA DLO until about 1 June. Two types of Confederate DLO markings are known. The first is a horizontal oval double-ringed handstamp with a manuscript notation insert, "M-78-1" ("M" is the

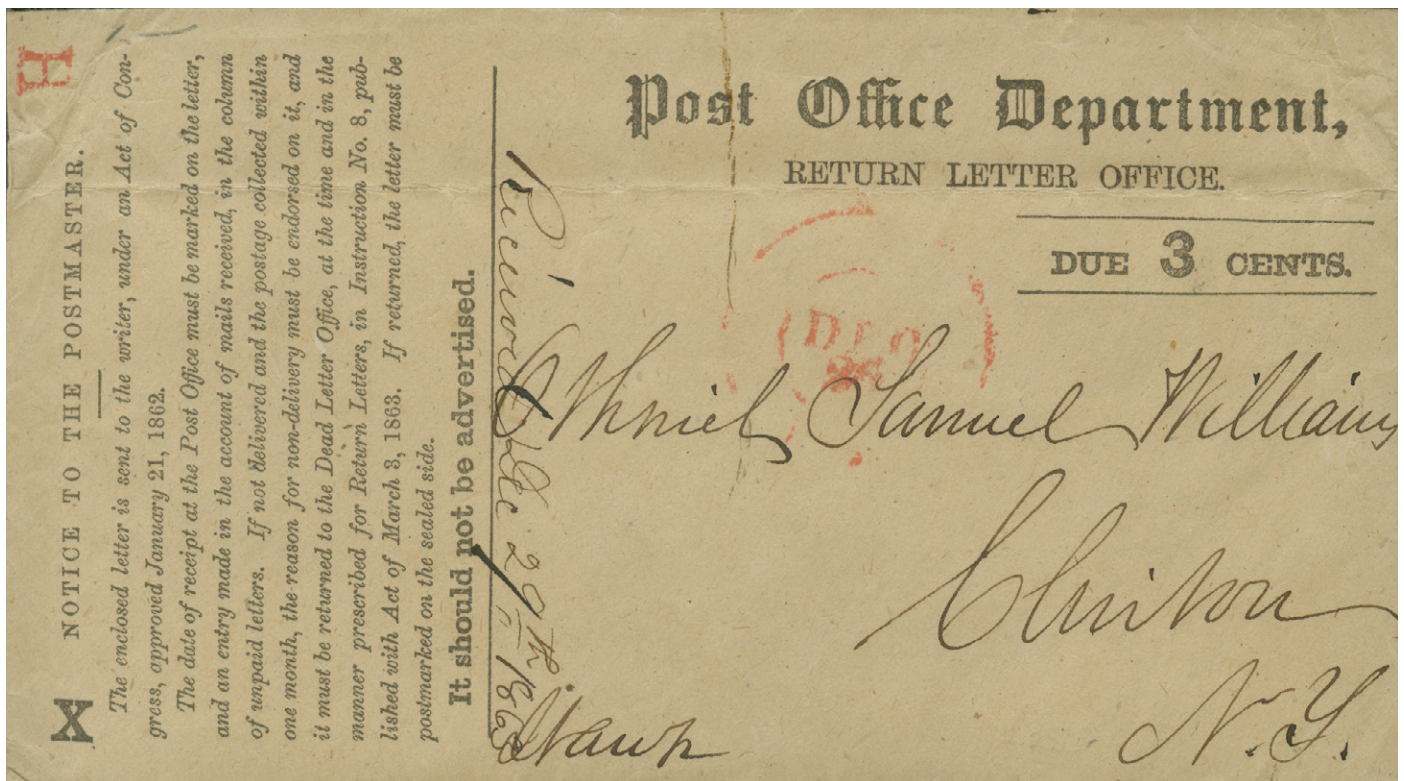


FIGURE 16. United States Post Office "Due 3" DLO envelope used during the Civil War. It was received on 29 December 1863. This object, like other DLO envelopes, measures 159 wide × 89 mm high. Author's collection.

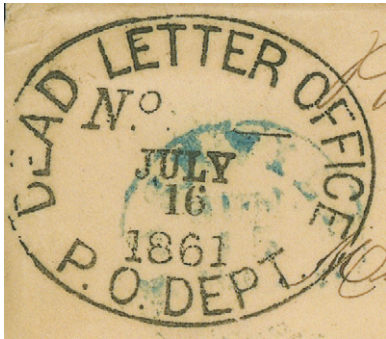


FIGURE 17. Five Northern DLO handstamps. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.

starting letter of addressee's last name [Merchant's Bank, Baltimore] and "78-1" is probably for tracking or clerk identification purposes). One such cover (Figure 18) was mailed 22 May 1861 from a bank in Athens, Georgia, to a bank in Baltimore, Maryland. Reaching Richmond on the evening of 23 May 1861, with the mails closed, it was diverted to the Confederate DLO the next day. The Confederate DLO oval handstamp, however, was applied on 23 August 1861, three months later. The second



FIGURE 18. Cover with form enclosed, mailed 22 May 1861 from the Bank of the State of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, to Merchants Bank in Baltimore, Maryland. The letter was diverted to the Confederate Dead Letter Office, which applied its oval date stamp on 23 August 1861 along with the manuscript M-78-1 record identifier. The envelope is Scott No. U26, three-cent red-on-white with star. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., *The Steven C. Walske Collection of Special Mail Routes of the American Civil War*, Sale 988, Lot No. 24, Thursday, 27 May 2010 (New York: Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.), 27.

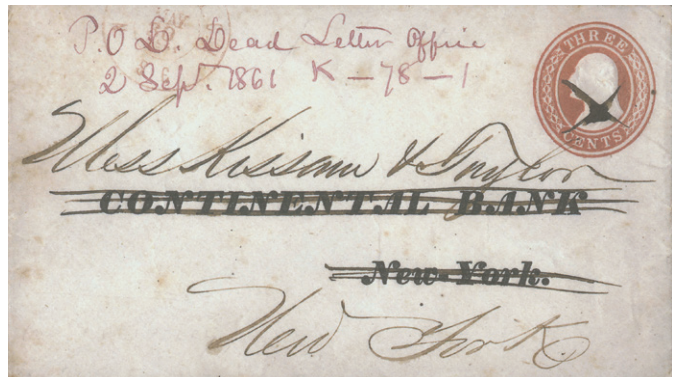


FIGURE 19. Cover mailed from Newberry, C. H., South Carolina, on 30 May 1861. It was a repurposed envelope (Scott No. U9, three-cent red-on-white Nesbit envelope) addressed to Kissam & Taylor, New York City. The letter was forwarded to the Confederate DLO, where on 2 September 1861 it received a manuscript DLO marking with a K-78-1 record identifier all in red ink. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., *The Steven C. Walske Collection of Special Postal Routes of the American Civil War*, Sale 988, Lot No. 26, Thursday, 27 May 2010 (New York: Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.), 28.

marking type is illustrated on the cover in Figure 19. It is an all manuscript marking that reads "P. O. D. Dead Letter Office" followed by the date "2 Sept. 1861" and "K" for Kissam & Taylor (New York City) and "78-1." This cover was addressed to New York from Newberry, South Carolina, and was postmarked on



FIGURE 20. A cover stamped with two New Orleans five-cent provisional stamps to pay the Confederacy the ten-cent postal rate and a U.S. three-cent stamp (Scott No. 26) for the Union rate. This letter was received in Louisville between 17 and 25 June 1861 and released on 25 June without the Louisville CDS. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., *The Steven C. Walske Collection of Special Routes of the American Civil War*, Sale 988, Lot No. 32, Thursday, 27 May 2012 (New York: Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.), 34–35.

30 May 1861. Arriving in Richmond after the closure and before the change in Confederate policy on handling northbound mail, it was diverted to the Confederate DLO, which applied the manuscript markings on 2 September 1861. Confederate DLO cover markings are very rare for several reasons. They were apparently applied only to northbound or foreign mail; there is no evidence of Confederate DLO markings on mail sent within the Confederacy.²³ In addition, the quantity of northbound mail waned as the war progressed and the postal and communications bans took effect. Most mail, especially soldiers' mail, that reached the Confederate DLO during the war, was apparently destroyed, although spotty records make this difficult to determine. United States Post Office records include evidence that between 1 November 1861 and 31 October 1862 about 4,000 pieces of northbound mail were received from the Confederacy. While some may have included some Confederate DLO markings, the Confederate DLO handstamp may have been used only during 1861.²⁴

On or about 1 June 1861, the Confederate Post Office Department policy on forwarded northbound letters changed. Rather than sending them to the DLO in Richmond and other eastern post offices, forwarded northbound letters were sent to key western interchange points such as Memphis and Nashville (Tennessee), then North via Louisville, Kentucky. This route was

used until 6 June 1861; from 7 to 12 June, only Nashville forwarded mail to Louisville. After the Nashville federal postmaster, W. D. McNish, resigned and the U.S. mail agent withdrew from the route, the Louisville postmaster, John J. Speed, began to hold northbound mail from the then-discontinued Nashville federal post office rather than send it to the U.S. DLO. After wiring the USPOD in Washington, D.C., about how to handle this rapidly accumulating mail on 24 June, Speed received wired instructions to “forward letters from the South for the loyal states as unpaid after removing the postage stamps.” It was difficult and time consuming to remove the stamps from the approximately 5,000 accumulated letters without damaging them.²⁵ Postmaster Speed created the “SOUTH^N. LETTER UNPAID.” handstamp marking, which explained to the addressee why the stamps were invalid for postage and hence the mail was postage due. Figure 20 shows an example of a “SOUTH^N. LETTER UNPAID.” cover sent postage due “Due 3” to Eddyville, Kentucky. The Louisville post office started using the “SOUTH^N. LETTER UNPAID.” handstamp on 25 June 1861. While the first batch of letters so handled did not receive a date stamp, all subsequent batches also had the Louisville CDS applied in addition to the special “SOUTH^N. LETTER UNPAID.” handstamp.²⁶ Twenty-nine examples of the “SOUTH^N. LETTER UNPAID.” markings are known to exist, but one has been verified as a fake.²⁷

SUMMARY

In this essay our look at Civil War mail systems and stamps, both Union and Confederate, has focused on the flow of mail between the North and the South, especially mail that was rated postage due. Before the 1850s, most mail was sent unpaid with the cost to be paid by the recipient, and hence was postage due. After the postal reforms of the 1850s, which required prepayment, postage due was relegated to the secondary role of fee collection due to missing stamps or underpaid postage on stamped mail. A large fraction of Civil War mail involved soldier's correspondence. By mutual agreement, soldiers' mail was allowed to be sent postage due because stamps were generally unavailable in the field or prison camps. Postage-due rates of three cents and six cents, marked by "Due 3" and "Due 6," were common on soldiers' mail in the North, and "Due 10" became the common Confederate marking. During the war's first year, the South used "Due 5" for the five-cent per half-ounce rate under 500 miles, but soon raised it to ten cents as mail service costs increased. Flag-of-truce mail exchanges usually resulted in dual-franked envelopes because the two-envelope process, although required, was usually ignored. In considering the role and scope of the DLOs on both sides, we have seen that letters were examined and destroyed or returned postage due. The North even created special envelopes for this return process. For the entire country, the Civil War was a period of turmoil, which was reflected to a large degree in the mail systems and routes that evolved to meet the demands of war-time correspondence. Beyond this brief glimpse, more detailed studies of Civil War mail, especially the postage due letters, remain to be done.

NOTES

* Stamp numbers are taken from the Scott Catalogue, courtesy of Scott Publishing Company, *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* (Sidney, Ohio: Amos Media Co., 2017). The marks SCOTT and SCOTT'S are Registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and are trademarks of Amos Press, Inc., dba Scott Publishing Company. No use may be made of these marks or of material in this publication that is reprinted from a copyrighted publication of Amos Press, Inc., without the express written permission of Amos Media Co., Sidney, Ohio 45373.

1. L. R. Garrison, "Administrative Problems of the Confederate Post Office Department," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 19(2): 125–127.
2. Several first day of independence and first day of the Confederacy covers were offered as Lots 1 to 18 in the 2012 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Sale No. 988, *The Steven C. Walske Collection of Special Postal Routes of the American Civil War*, Thursday, 27 May 2012 (New York: Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.), 9–19.
3. Abraham Lincoln appointed Montgomery Blair as U.S. postmaster general, a position he held from 5 March 1862 until 24 September 1864.
4. John Henninger Reagan, a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Texas, was the CSA's postmaster general from 6 March 1861 until the end of the war. The Confederate Post Office Department was abolished on 10 May 1865.
5. Prior to and at the beginning of the Civil War, people had to pick up their mail at the post office. As the war continued, there were long lines of family members crowding post offices seeking letters from their loved ones, and as casualties mounted, there was a growing concern that the soldier death notifications, which were sent by mail to the next of kin, would be received (and probably read in) the post office lobby. It was felt that the notification of the death of a loved one should not be received in such a public setting. Under the direction of postmaster general Blair, the free home delivery of city mail began on 1 July 1863 in cities where post office income was more than sufficient to pay for the service (see *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Post Office Department . . . FY 1863*, 32). For rural citizens, home delivery of mail would not be available until 1896 with the passage of the Rural Free Delivery Act. H. K. Charles Jr., "Appendix R: Background on the Parcel Post System," *The United States Postage Due Essays, Proofs, and Specimens 1879–1986* (Chicago: Collectors Club of Chicago, 2013), 271.
6. Dave Gorski (amhistoryguy), "Postal Service during the Civil War," *Civil War Talk*, 12 March 2007, <http://civilwartalk.com/thread/postal-service-during-the-civil-war.73909/> (accessed 23 February 2012).
7. Jochem H. Tans, "The Hapless Anaconda: Union Blockade 1861–1865," *Concord Review* 6(1): 13–30.
8. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., *Steven C. Walske Collection*, 239–240.
9. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., *Steven C. Walske Collection*, 239–240.
10. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., *Steven C. Walske Collection*, 7–8.
11. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., *The D. K. Collection of Southern Postmaster's Provisionals of the American Civil War*, Sale 1022, Wednesday, 28 March 2012 (New York: Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries), 9–10.
12. Scott Publishing, *2017 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* (Sidney, Ohio: Amos Media, 2017), 1010–1024.
13. Scott Publishing, *2017 Scott Specialized Catalogue*, 1010–1024.
14. Confederate stamps were all issued imperforate and had to be cut from the sheets by scissors or a sharp knife or razor. A few of the CSA Scott No. 11 and 12 were experimentally perforated 12½ by the Confederate Post Office Department. Postmasters were also known to have privately perforated or rouletted very small quantities. Thus genuine perforated or rouletted Confederate stamps are very rare. J. L. Kimbrough and C. L. Bush, "An Introduction to Confederate States Stamps and Postal History," *Scotts' Stamp Monthly* 17(1): 71–72, 74–75.
15. De La Rue printing firm (London, England) prepared with typography a one-cent yellow/orange stamp (Scott No. CS14) with John C. Calhoun's image. The quantity printed was 400,000, but the stamp was never issued. Kimbrough and Bush, "Introduction," 74.
16. Old Point Comfort is located on the Virginia coast just north of Norfolk and across Hampton Roads (a natural harbor formed by the confluence of the James and Elizabeth Rivers). Located at Old Point Comfort was Fortress Monroe, a large, well-built fort that was part of the prewar coastal defense system of the United States. During the Civil War, the Union maintained continuous control of the fortress and the entire Old Port Comfort area. Thus, an Old Point Comfort, Virginia, postmark signifies Union usage and not Confederate. Old Point Comfort and Fortress Monroe served as the main exchange point for flag-of-truce mail between the North and the South.
17. The United States Christian Commission (USCC) was formed by the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) at the start of the Civil War (after the first battle of Bull Run) to provide supplies, medical services (in cooperation with the United States Sanitary Commission), and religious literature and support (social services) to Union soldiers. M. H. Cannon, "The United States Christian Commission," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 38(1): 61–80.
18. Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 1–11.
19. Richard B. Graham, "The U. S. Dead Letter Office and the Civil War" *S. P. A. Journal* 45(7): 689–700.
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22. Wegner, "Dead Letter Office Return Envelopes," 154.
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2014 Symposium

Development of Transoceanic Air Mail Service

Introduction to the 2014 Symposium

Tara E. Murray

The histories of aviation and of the mail delivery are intertwined. Pressure to deliver mail faster and more efficiently helped to propel investment in aviation innovations. In turn, developments in flight opened new possibilities for carrying the mail. The development of commercial transoceanic air mail service meant that communication times between the continents could be measured in hours rather than days or weeks. Papers presented during the Eighth Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposium examined the development of transoceanic air mail from its very early days in the 1920s up through U.S. Army and Navy air mail services during World War II. They also analyzed the development of air mail across both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans and in the Americas, Europe, and Africa. The symposium was held at the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, in conjunction with an international exhibition on air mail, called “Aerophilately 2014” by the American Air Mail Society.

Development of U.S. Navy Transport Routes Used to Carry Transpacific Airmail during World War II

William C. Fort III

ABSTRACT. This paper documents the development by the U.S. Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) of transpacific transport routes and accompanying airmail service, during World War II. The NATS supported marine and naval fleet actions as well as naval construction personnel working to build airfields and supporting facilities on islands throughout the Pacific. The evolution of transport routes is placed in the context of the war. Route maps and representative examples of airmail carried on each route are included to illustrate route development.

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the establishment and operation of the U.S. Navy's Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) and its role in carrying transpacific airmail from 1942 to 1945. Its focus, which combines aspects of both military history and airmail postal history, is on transport route development in the context of the war.

Pan American Airways (PAA) was the only airline crossing the Pacific prior to 1942, and, as such, PAA held the foreign airmail (FAM) contracts to carry transpacific mail. The airline initiated FAM-14 service to Hawaii in 1935, extended the route via the Central Pacific to the Philippines and China in 1937 and to Singapore in 1941. It also added the South Pacific (FAM-19) route to New Zealand in 1941. Pan American used Martin M-130 and Boeing 314 flying boats, which it called "Clippers," for long-distance over-water flights.

Pan American Airline's transpacific services west of Hawaii were terminated after the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, airmail service west of Hawaii clearly did continue as witnessed by the large number of airmail covers sent by U.S. servicemen from ships and island bases throughout the Pacific. This airmail was carried by army and navy air transport services. The story of the army's efforts is given in a companion article in this publication, "U.S. Army Transport Routes Used to Carry Transpacific Airmail during World War II."

Thomas Boyle has given an overview of worldwide army and navy transport routes and airmail services.¹ R. M. Startup covered wartime South Pacific airmail services from the perspective of New Zealand.²

This paper presents the first comprehensive account of transpacific airmail carriage by the U.S. Navy's transport services. It is based in large part on narratives of the service that document routes and schedules for air transport from the U.S. West Coast to the South, Southwest, and Central Pacific in 1942, 1943, 1944,³ and 1945.⁴ These documents, compiled in 1945, constitute the year-by-year histories of the NATS. They include the NATS Pacific Schedule Notices, which were the route schedules published at

P.O. Box 2052, Fairfax, Virginia 22031, USA.

Correspondence: wcfortiii@aol.com

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the initiation of each route and route revisions as changes were made. Each schedule notice includes the effective date of the schedule, the name of the route (e.g., Gilbert–Samoa Shuttle), the route number(s), the day(s) of the week initiated, the responsible operating organization (PAA, VR-11, etc.), the type of aircraft used, and the projected departure and arrival times at each point along the route (northbound, southbound, or circular). In the absence of the flight logs of the aircraft in use, these schedules are the best indications of transport flights actually completed.

For purposes of this paper, the information in the schedule notices, given in reference documents cited in notes 3 and 4, has been extracted and organized chronologically by similar routes (e.g., Central Pacific Routes) into six tables (Tables 1–6). Effective dates are given, along with the operator, the aircraft type, the stations (starting point, intermediate stops, and endpoint), the number days in transit each way, and the number of trips flown each week.

The connecting routes between the NATS and the Army's Air Transport Command (ATC) transport routes are derived from a map cited in note 4 that shows those routes as of 1 March 1945. The Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) operated many if not all of these connecting routes.⁵

These tables allow the reader to see how the routes evolved with the need for transport services. Changes in routings indicate the need to follow the fighting front, which generally moved from the South Pacific (staging on islands and Australia) in the early stages to the Southwest Pacific (fighting in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea) and finally into the Central Pacific (island hopping toward Japan). Increases in numbers of flights along a route indicate a buildup in supplies and personnel for the next stage of fighting.

The NATS supported sailors on ships, Naval Construction Battalions on land, and marines before and after landings. Pairing information on the locations of ships and personnel over time with the tables and maps in this paper allow the reader to trace the most likely route that an airmail letter to or from an individual serviceman traveled. This method has been used to identify the routings taken by the covers shown in this paper.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RAPID TRANSPORT AND MAIL SERVICE

After the United States entered the war, the military was faced with the urgent need to deliver war materials, fighting units, construction units, and support personnel to the Pacific. The vast majority of personnel, materials, and mail went by ship. However, World War II was the first war where long-range air transport was possible, and the military services were quick to take advantage of air transport to deliver critical personnel, equipment, supplies, and airmail.

Rapid delivery of mail to and from servicemen outside the country was given very high priority by the military services. Most servicemen could send letters back home for free if by

surface mail and for the low rate of six cents per half ounce if by air. By contrast, before the United States entered the war, a sailor in the Philippines paid fifty cents to send an airmail letter home, compared to only six cents afterward. The huge influx of service personnel into the Pacific theater and the granting to them of low preferential airmail rates combined to create an unprecedented demand for transpacific airmail services. In response, the army and navy transport systems carried massive volumes of airmail throughout the war. The vast majority of this mail went to and from service personnel, but there was also some commercial and civilian airmail.

The ATC was first to establish regular air transport service, using landplanes, from the U.S. mainland through the South Pacific to Australia. The NATS followed using flying boats on an essentially parallel route. Both the ATC and the NATS operated scheduled transport services over route networks that evolved to follow the progress of fighting and to connect with each other, with intratheater air transports, and later with the RNZAF transport system.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NAVAL AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE

Prior to the United States' entry into the war, widely dispersed local navy utility squadrons supplied air transport in support of naval operations. Clearly, this decentralized arrangement would not be adequate to meet the demands of war on air transport. In response, on 12 December 1941, five days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the navy established the NATS, reporting to the chief of naval operations (CNO). The NATS's mission was to provide rapid air delivery of critical equipment, spare parts, and specialist personnel to naval activities and fleet forces worldwide.

Organization of the NATS, buildup of its facilities and equipment, training of personnel, and acquisition of long-range transport aircraft took much of 1942. The first NATS fleet logistics support squadron (VR), VR-1, was commissioned on 9 March 1942 at Norfolk with four land-based transports to operate along the Atlantic coast. The second squadron, VR-2, was commissioned on 1 April 1942 at Alameda with a single flying boat to provide transoceanic service from the Pacific coast to Honolulu. Air Transport Squadrons (Pacific) was established on 31 October 1942 and consisted of all NATS squadrons based in the Pacific and those on the West Coast flying the Mainland–Hawaii route.

From the beginning, the navy anticipated utilizing PAA's experience, personnel, facilities, and aircraft to help develop and supplement their own transport operations. Contracts with PAA were completed in mid-August 1942. The NATS South Pacific route was to be finalized following a survey flight conducted by PAA.

Pan American Airways began service for the NATS on 7 October 1942. Concurrently, the NATS–Pacific wing was created

under the commander in chief, Pacific (CNCAPAC). The NATS–Pacific coordinated the operations of both the PAA–Transpacific Division and VR-2 for operations between the Mainland, Hawaii, and the Southwest Pacific. Later, on 1 March 1943, Air Transport Squadrons, West Coast (NATS West Coast Wing) was established at Naval Auxiliary Air Station (NAAS) Oakland to control all NATS squadrons west of the Mississippi, except those servicing the Mainland–Honolulu route.

Three more air transport squadrons became active in the Pacific theater during the war. In June 1943, VR-5 was established at Seattle to provide transport service to Alaska, and VR-11, based in Oakland, was established in September 1943 for South Pacific service. Both used landplanes. The VR-11 eventually grew into the largest squadron. Finally, VR-13 was established in 1944 at Los Negros (Admiralty Islands) as a landplane squadron to supplement transport operations northward from Australia. Worldwide, the NATS eventually developed thirteen squadrons operating more than 429 aircraft with 26,000 personnel.⁶

On 2 March 1945, the NATS was reorganized as a fleet command with headquarters at NAAS Oakland and under the immediate direction of the CNCAPAC and the CNO. The NATS's activities shrank after the surrender of Japan, and by June 1948 it was combined with army and air force transport organizations to form the Military Air Transport Service (MATS).

HONOLULU–MAINLAND TRANSPORT SERVICE

TABLE 1

Before the NATS transport squadrons became active, PAA continued FAM service between Honolulu and its Treasure Island terminal in San Francisco Bay. The first trip, only three days after the Pearl Harbor attack, was flown by the Boeing B-314 *American Clipper* and carried medical supplies, government officials, and priority (official) mail. The B-314 *South Atlantic Clipper* returned (via the Atlantic) from New Zealand in early January to help with the emergency aid flights.

On 12 December 1941, the military purchased all of the large PAA clippers and allocated them between the army and the navy. The navy assigned the B-314 *Honolulu Clipper* and the Martin M-130 *Philippine Clipper* to VR-2 for Honolulu–Mainland transport service to be operated by PAA (Table 1). The demand for airmail service was rapidly increasing, and every day another 1,500 pounds of airmail accumulated at San Francisco. The available clippers together made an incredible (and unsustainable) fifty round trips to Hawaii in January 1942.⁷ Figure 1 shows an official mailgram cover carried by PAA from Honolulu to San Francisco in early March 1942.

Most navy flying boats capable of carrying large loads of mail and cargo were assigned to patrol and utility squadrons and were not available to the NATS. Navy Transport Squadron 2 (VR-2) began operations in April 1942 with only a single prototype four-engine Sikorsky XPBS-1 flying boat. On 15 May, VR-2

made its first flight to Honolulu. The NATS anticipated that VR-2 would make at least two round trips per week. However, VR-2's Sikorsky was put out of service in late June after hitting floating debris in San Francisco Bay.

In the summer of 1942, PAA and VR-2 began receiving new flying boats. They were two-engine Martin PBM-3 Mariners and four-engine Consolidated PB2Y-3 Coronados. Both types had been conceived as patrol bombers and were now pressed into transport service. The first Mariners were transferred to PAA in early July and to VR-2 in August. In September, PAA began receiving Coronados; VR-2 began receipt in early November. By the end of 1942, PAA and VR-2 had twelve Mariners and three Coronados, in addition to the Martin M-130 *Philippine Clipper* and two Boeing B-314s. However, the *Philippine Clipper* was lost in a crash in California on 21 January 1943. Later, two more B-314s, *Dixie Clipper* and *California Clipper*, were added to PAA's Pacific inventory, significantly increasing trip frequency.

The establishment of the VR-11 transport squadron in Oakland in September 1943 brought four-engine Douglas R5D landplanes to the Honolulu–Mainland service. The R5Ds had greater reliability than the clippers and greater load capacity than the patrol bomber types. By the end of 1943, the PBM-3s were reassigned to squadrons west of Honolulu.

The pace of operations increased with added aircraft. Published schedules effective 25 November 1943 show 24 trips per week—seven by VR-11, three by VR-2 in PB2Y-3s, seven by PAA in PB2Y-3s, and seven by PAA in B-314s. Figure 2 shows a registered cover sent from Brazil to a civilian contractor at a naval air base in Hawaii. It was carried by PAA or VR-2 from San Francisco to Honolulu in early December 1942.

Total trips increased with every new schedule to a peak of 109 per week in January 1945, with the R5Ds progressively taking on more of the load. The prototype Martin XPB2M-1R Mars transport was also used from January 1944 to March 1945, making 78 round trips between San Francisco and Honolulu.⁸ The Mars set a record on March 10, 1944 carrying 23,864 pounds of airmail from Honolulu to San Francisco.⁹

Airmail loads on the Mainland–Honolulu route are largely unknown. Of course, all airmail between the mainland and the Central and South Pacific went through Honolulu. During 1943, the three B-314 clippers alone flew 1.3 million miles (over 2,092,000 km) and carried 1.3 million mail-ton miles on the route, an average of one ton of airmail on each flight.

SOUTH PACIFIC TRANSPORT ROUTES

TABLE 2

In May 1942, Navy Patrol Squadron 13 (VP-13) began an irregular transport service between Honolulu and Sydney via Canton Island and Fiji, a route similar to the FAM-19 South Pacific route established by PAA in May 1941. The route skirted the areas occupied or threatened by Japanese attack. They used

TABLE 1. Mainland–Honolulu routes. A dash (—) indicates info is unknown.

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Trips/week
Dec 1941	PAA	B-314, M-130	San Francisco–Honolulu	—
Jan 1942	PAA	B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	—
Apr 1942	VR-2	XPBS-1	San Francisco–Honolulu	2+ planned
Summer 1942	PAA, VR-2	PBM-3, PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	—
Feb 1943	PAA, VR-2	PBM-3, PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
25 Nov 1943	VR-11	R5D	Oakland ^a –Honolulu	7
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda ^b –Honolulu	3
	PAA	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	7
		B-314	San Francisco ^c –Honolulu	7
1 Mar 1944	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	7+
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	7
	PAA	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	3
		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
23 Mar 1944	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	12
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	10
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
1 May 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	14
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	10
	PAA	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	14
20 May 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	14
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	10
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	14
15 Jun 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	14
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	17
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	12
7 Jul 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	14
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	17
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	12
10 Aug 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	14
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	18
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	12
10 Sep 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	25
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	18
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	12
1 Oct 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	25
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	28
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	19
1 Nov 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	28
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	17
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	21
1 Dec 1944		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland–Honolulu	33
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda–Honolulu	21
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco–Honolulu	21
		B-314	San Francisco–Honolulu	7

(continued)

TABLE 1. (Continued)

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Trips/week
1 Jan 1945	VR-11	R5D	Oakland-Honolulu	49
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda-Honolulu	25
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco-Honolulu	28
1 Feb 1945		B-314	San Francisco-Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland-Honolulu	49
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda-Honolulu	17
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco-Honolulu	28
1 Mar 1945		B-314	San Francisco-Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland-Honolulu	49
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda-Honolulu	17
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco-Honolulu	28
1 Apr 1945		B-314	San Francisco-Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland-Honolulu	28
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda-Honolulu	25
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco-Honolulu	28
1 May 1945		B-314	San Francisco-Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland-Honolulu	35
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda-Honolulu	38
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco-Honolulu	28
1 Jun 1945		B-314	San Francisco-Honolulu	7
	VR-11	R5D	Oakland-Honolulu	35
	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Alameda-Honolulu	38
	PAA	PB2Y-3	San Francisco-Honolulu	28
		B-314	San Francisco-Honolulu	7

^a Naval Auxiliary Air Station Oakland.

^b Naval Air Station Alameda.

^c San Francisco airport, Mills Field.

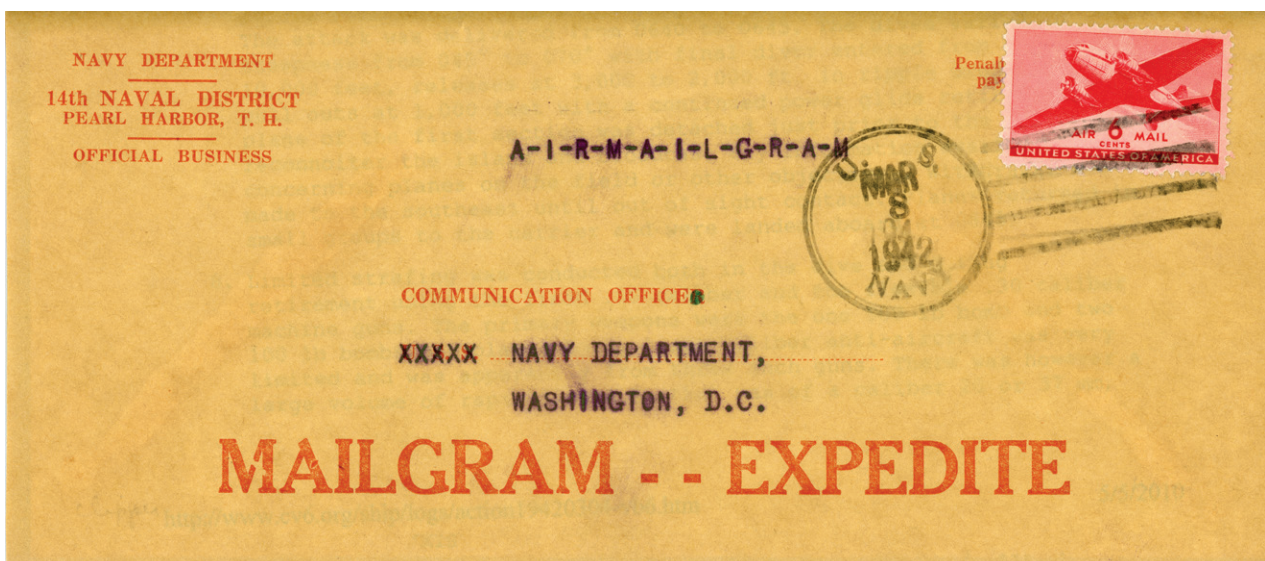


FIGURE 1. Official air mailgram carried by Pan Am from Honolulu in March 1942. Author's collection.



FIGURE 2. Registered cover from Brazil carried by Pan Am or VR-2 from San Francisco to Honolulu. Author's collection.

PB2Y Coronados for the service, which became more regularized during the summer with ten days to two weeks between trips. It was supplanted by scheduled NATS transport service to Australia and New Zealand starting in September (Table 2).

NATS SOUTH PACIFIC SURVEY FLIGHT

Planning to establish regular transport service between San Francisco, Brisbane, and Auckland, PAA and NATS conducted a survey flight through the South Pacific from 2 August to 18 September 1942. A PAA PBM-3 Mariner piloted by Capt. J. Tilton made the trip. Passengers included PAA, army, and navy personnel. The objectives were to choose bases, confirm availability of facilities and support personnel, and leave key operations personnel at stations along the way. The outbound route was Oakland–Honolulu–Palmyra Island (Line Islands)–Canton Island–Suva (Fiji)–Noumea (New Caledonia)–Brisbane, and the return route was Auckland–Suva–Tongatabu (Tonga)–Upolu (Samoa)–Penrhyn Island–Palmyra Island–Honolulu–Oakland. One passenger, PAA operations manager William Mullahey, prepared a small number of philatelic covers and carried them from Australia on the return trip (Figure 3.)

FIRST SCHEDULED NATS SOUTH PACIFIC ROUTES

Scheduled NATS transport service between Honolulu and Brisbane began in September 1942, operated by PAA and VR-2, initially using Mariners. Stops were made at Palmyra Island, Canton Island, Wallis Island (Samoa), Suva (Fiji) and Noumea (New Caledonia) (Figure 4). A modification of the route terminated in Auckland instead of Brisbane. Figure 5 shows a cover flown by a PBM-3 from Brisbane to San Francisco in late December 1942.

The first Hawaiian Islands–Australia–New Zealand schedule, published in the last days of 1942, shows four trips per week. The Auckland route was to be flown every third trip. Round trips flown by Coronados took six days, while Mariner trips took ten days. The NATS actually made twenty-two trips in the period from 17 February to 30 March 1943, for an average of almost four trips per week.

SOUTH PACIFIC ROUTE VIA ESPIRITU SANTO

A more northerly branch from the main South Pacific route proceeding from Canton Island to Noumea via Funafuti (Gilbert

TABLE 2. South Pacific to Hawaii–Australia–New Zealand routes. A dash (—) indicates data are unknown.

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Days one way	Trips/week
Hawaiian Islands–Australia–New Zealand					
May 1942	VP-13	PB2Y	Honolulu–Canton–Suva–Sydney	a	1/2
Aug 1942	PAA, VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea–Brisbane or Auckland	5	a
31 Dec 1942	PAA, VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea–Brisbane or Auckland ^b	5	2
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea–Brisbane or Auckland ^c	3	2
19 Apr 1943	PAA	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea–Auckland ^d	4	1 ^e
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea–Brisbane ^d	3–4	1 ^e
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea	3	1
10 Sep 1943	PAA	PBM-3R	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea–Auckland ^d	4	1
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea–Brisbane ^d	3–4	1
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea	3	2
Fiji–New Hebrides–New Caledonia					
21 Dec 1942	VR-2	PBM-3	Suva–Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea ^f	1	2
Hawaiian Islands–New Caledonia–New Hebrides–Ellice Islands					
31 Dec 1942	—	PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Canton–Suva–Noumea ^g	3	1
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Wallis–Suva–Espiritu Santo ^h	3	4
Hawaiian Islands–New Caledonia (via Espiritu Santo)					
19 Apr 1943	PAA, VR-2	PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Espiritu Santo–Noumea ⁱ	3	1
15 Jun 1943	PAA, VR-2	PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Espiritu Santo ⁱ	3	3
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Espiritu Santo–Noumea ⁱ	3	3
Noumea–Brisbane–Auckland					
10 Sep 1943	VR-10	PBM-3	Noumea–Brisbane	1	1
			Noumea–Auckland	1	1
South Pacific Shuttle					
25 Nov 1943	—	PBM-3	Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea	1	4
			Noumea–Auckland	1	2
			Noumea–Brisbane	1	2
1 Mar 1944	—	PBM-3	Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea ^k	1	7
			Noumea–Auckland	1	5
			Noumea–Brisbane–Sydney	1	4 ^l
Southwest Pacific					
1 May 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Noumea–Sydney	1	5
			Noumea–Brisbane–Sydney	2	2
			Noumea–Auckland	1	7
			Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea ^m	1	14
15 Jun 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea ⁿ	1	21
			Noumea–Sydney	1	7
			Noumea–Brisbane–Sydney	2	3
			Noumea–Auckland	1	7
7 Jul 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea ⁿ	1	14
			Noumea–Sydney	1	7
			Noumea–Brisbane–Sydney	2	3
			Noumea–Auckland	1	7

(continued)

TABLE 2. (Continued)

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Days one way	Trips/ week	
10 Aug 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea ⁿ	1	7	
			Noumea–Brisbane–Sydney	2	7	
			Noumea–Auckland	1	3	
10 Sep 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea ^o	1	3	
			Noumea–Brisbane–Sydney	2	4	
			Noumea–Auckland	1	1	
South Pacific						
25 Nov 1943	—	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea	3	2	
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Wallis–Suva–Noumea	3	1	
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Noumea–Auckland	3	1	
1 Mar 1944	—	PBM-3, PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2–3	8	
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Canton–Espiritu Santo–Brisbane ^p	2	2	
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea ^q	2	1	
		PBM-3, PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	1–3	14 ^r	
1 May 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea	2	1	
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	4	
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	4	
15 Jun 1944	PAA	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	7	
			PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Brisbane ^p	2	3
			PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea	2	1
10 Aug 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	2	
			PAA	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	7
			PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Brisbane ^p	2	4
16 Aug 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra	1	2	
			PAA	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea	2	1
			PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	6
10 Sep 1944	PAA	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	4	
			PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Brisbane ^p	2	4
			PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra	1	2
1 Oct 1944	VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea	2	1	
			PAA	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	7
			PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	2
1 Oct 1944	PAA	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Brisbane	3	2	
			PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Brisbane	3	2
			PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea–Brisbane ^s	3	2
1 Oct 1944	PAA	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Noumea–Auckland	3	1	
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	1	
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea	2	1	
			Honolulu–Palmyra	1	1	

(continued)

TABLE 2. (Continued)

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Days one way	Trips/week
1 Nov 1944	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea	2	1
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea–Auckland	3	1
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea–Brisbane ^s	3	1
1 Dec 1944	PAA	PB2Y	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Brisbane	3	2
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea–Auckland	3	1
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Efate–Noumea ^q	3	2
1 Jan 1945	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	3
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Suva–Noumea–Auckland	3	1
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Noumea	3	2
1 Mar 1945	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	3
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo–Noumea	3	2
			Honolulu–Palmyra–Canton–Funafuti–Espiritu Santo	2	3

- ^a No regular schedule.
- ^b One trip in three went to Auckland. Brisbane trips bypassed Wallis.
- ^c Auckland trips bypassed Suva. Brisbane trips bypassed Wallis.
- ^d Return trips bypassed Wallis.
- ^e Twenty-two trips flown from 17 February to 30 March 1943.
- ^f Stopped at Efate when cargo warranted.
- ^g Some Noumea trips bypassed Suva.
- ^h Some Espiritu Santo trips bypassed Palmyra, Funafuti, Wallis, or Suva.
- ⁱ Return trips bypassed Espiritu Santo, Wallis and Palmyra.
- ^j Some outbound trips bypassed Espiritu Santo. Return trips bypassed Espiritu Santo, Wallis, and Palmyra.
- ^k Efate was a flag stop on outbound or return flights.
- ^l Five trips per week from 23 March 1944.
- ^m Efate was bypassed on half of the trips.
- ⁿ Efate was bypassed on two of three trips.
- ^o Efate was a flag stop.
- ^p The “CANNONBALL” run from Hawaii to Brisbane was achieved in two days with only one overnight stop, in Espiritu Santo.
- ^q Palmyra was a flag stop on return flights from 26 March 1944.
- ^r Twelve trips per week from 23 March 1944.
- ^s Efate was a flag stop on outbound and return flights.



FIGURE 3. Philatelic cover returned with the August–September 1942 NATS South Pacific survey flight. Author’s collection.

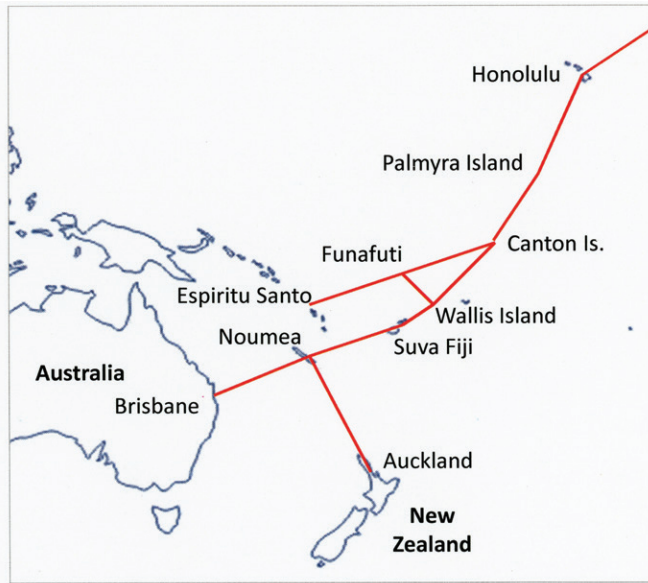


FIGURE 4. Initial NATS South Pacific transport routes served by NATS flying boats. Author's figure.

Islands) and Espiritu Santo (New Hebrides) was also established at the end of 1942. Espiritu Santo was to become a major Allied base, vital to the support of the Guadalcanal, New Georgia, and Bougainville campaigns. Figure 6 shows a cover mailed in early January 1943 by a marine on Guadalcanal and carried to Espiritu Santo by the South Pacific Combat Air Transport (SCAT) service for connection to the South Pacific Route.

By June 1943, the main South Pacific route had shifted to the more northerly branch via Espiritu Santo. Flights were operated by PAA and VR-2 using a mixture of Coronados and Mariners, and, by March 1944, the number of trips peaked at fourteen per week. In November 1943, Funafuti became the focus support of and transport of wounded from Tarawa. Figure 7 shows a letter sent in late December from an officer on the battleship USS *Indiana* off Tarawa, carried by aircraft of the Central Pacific Combat Air Transport Service (CenCATS) to Funafuti and by NATS to San Francisco.

HEYDAY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC ROUTES

A two-day "Cannonball" service from Honolulu to Brisbane was initiated on 1 March 1944. The route passed through Palmyra, Canton, Funafuti, and Espiritu Santo. Only one



FIGURE 5. Late December 1942 cover from a submarine tender at Brisbane, most likely carried by the first scheduled northbound NATS flight from Australia. Author's collection.



FIGURE 6. Cover from a marine on Guadalcanal. Carried by SCAT to Espiritu Santo for connection to the NATS South Pacific route. Author's collection.

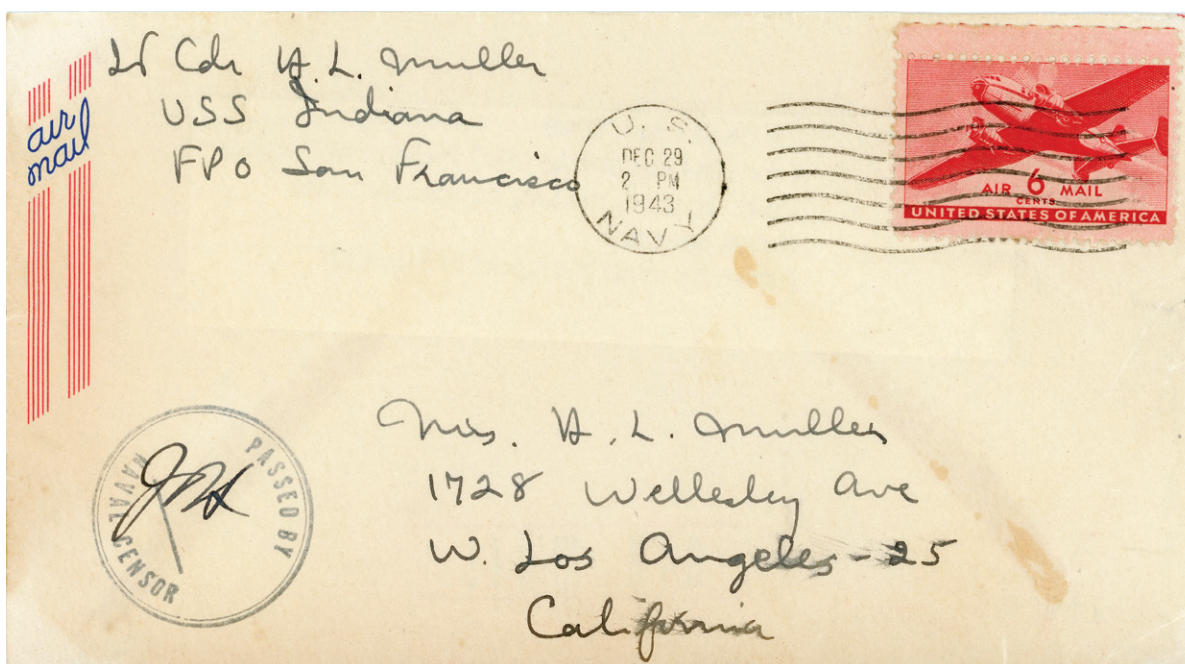


FIGURE 7. Cover sent by NATS from the battleship USS *Indiana* on station off Tarawa. Carried by CenCATS aircraft to Funafuti and by NATS to Hawaii. Author's collection.

overnight stop was taken, at Espiritu Santo. The PB2Y-3 Coronado transports were used. The “Cannonball” service temporarily speeded up delivery of airmail and critical personnel and cargo, but it was terminated with reversion to three-day flights in mid-August 1944.

Sydney was added as a South Pacific route destination from May until October 1944. The frequency of flights to Brisbane, Sydney, and Auckland via the South Pacific route peaked in June 1944 with, respectively, seven, ten, and seven trips per week. The Canton–Suva–Noumea–Auckland portion was discontinued in March 1945 because the navy’s war had moved northward, and demand for transport service to Australia and New Zealand had diminished as the result. The entire NATS South Pacific route was eliminated after 1 May 1945. The ATC, however, continued their South Pacific route.

FIJI-TONGA-SAMOA SHUTTLE ROUTES

TABLE 3

Concurrent with the start of the South Pacific route to Australia and New Zealand, in August 1942, VR-2 began operating weekly shuttles using PBM-3 Mariners between several islands surrounding Fiji (Table 3). The original Suva–Espiritu Santo–Noumea–Upolu (Western Samoa)–Suva route could be flown in two days. In January 1943, the circular Suva–Tongatabu (Tonga)–Upolu–Suva route, also completed in two days, replaced the original route.

The VR-2 route was replaced on 17 April 1943 by a Suva–Espiritu–Efate (New Hebrides)–Espiritu Santo–Noumea–Efate–Espiritu Santo–Suva–Upolu–Tongatabu route flown weekly in Mariners by VR-10, originally a maintenance squadron based in Honolulu. See Figure 8 for the route, which took six days to complete.

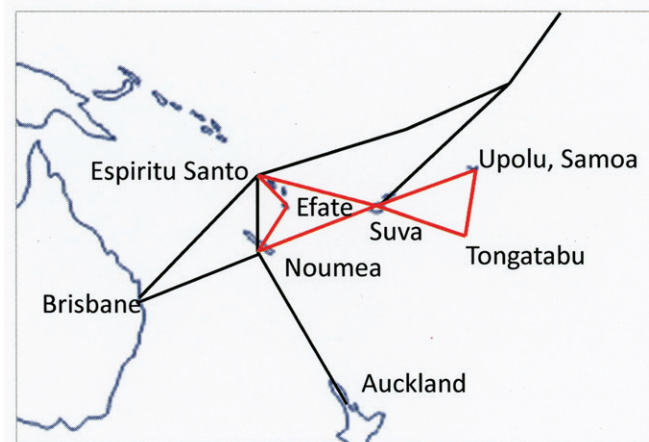


FIGURE 8. Early 1944 NATS transpacific transport routes. Author’s figure.

Figure 9 shows a May 1943 letter from a soldier on Efate carried by NATS via Espiritu Santo or Noumea to San Francisco. This route was discontinued on 4 May 1944, after which RNZAF took over South Pacific interisland transport services.

CENTRAL PACIFIC TRANSPORT ROUTES

TABLE 4

As the war progressed, the fighting moved northward and NATS routes were added accordingly. The Central Pacific routes, initiated in early 1943, grew rapidly during 1944 and 1945 to support the fast pace of the military’s island hopping across the Pacific, reaching the Solomons, New Guinea, the Mariana

TABLE 3. Fiji–Tonga–Samoa routes. A dash (—) indicates data unknown.

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Days one way	Trips/week
Fiji–New Hebrides–New Caledonia–Tonga–Samoa					
Aug 1942 ^a	VR-2	PBM-3	Suva–Espiritu Santo–Noumea–Upolu–Samoa	—	—
17 Apr 1943	VR-10	PBM-3	Suva–Espiritu Santo–Efate–Espiritu Santo–Noumea–Efate–Espiritu Santo–Suva–Upolu–Tongatabu ^b	3	1
15 Jun 1943, discontinued 4 May 1944	VR-10	PBM-3	Suva–Espiritu Santo–Efate–Espiritu Santo–Noumea–Efate–Espiritu Santo–Suva–Upolu–Tongatabu ^c	3	1
Fiji–Tonga–Samoa–Fiji					
21 Dec 1942; discontinued 17 Apr 1943	VR-2	PBM-3	Suva–Tongatabu–Upolu–Suva	2 ^d	1

^a No regular schedule.

^b Upolu bypassed on outbound trip.

^c Santo and Upolu bypassed on outbound trip.

^d Circular route completed in two days.

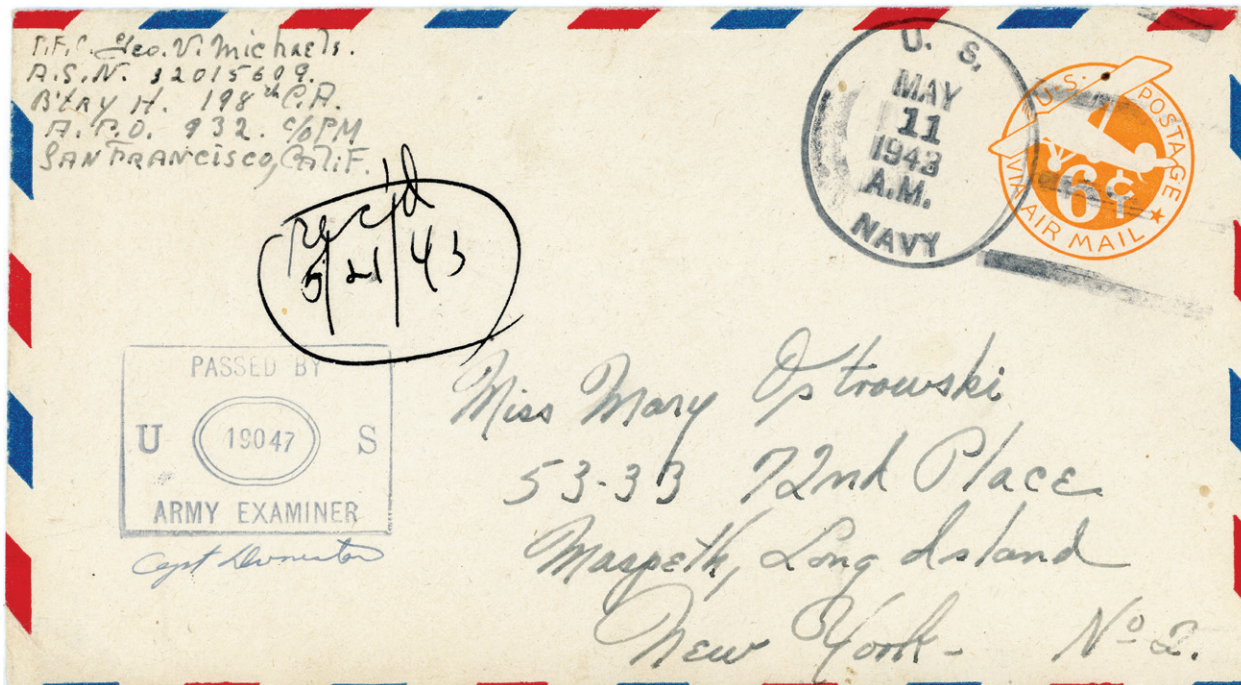


FIGURE 9. Cover from an army private on Efate, New Hebrides, carried by NATS to San Francisco. Author's collection.

TABLE 4. Central Pacific routes.

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Days one way	Trips/ week
Midway-Honolulu-Johnston					
15 Jun 1943	VR-10	PBM-3	Honolulu-Midway Island	1	1
			Honolulu-Johnston Island	1	1
Central Pacific Shuttle					
25 Nov 1943	VR-10	PBM-3	Honolulu-Midway	1	2
			Honolulu-Johnston	1	1
			Honolulu-Palmyra	1	1
5 Feb 1944	VR-10	PBM-3	Honolulu-Midway	1	2
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Tarawa	1	2
	VR-10	PBM-3	Honolulu-Palmyra	1	1
1 Mar 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Tarawa-Guadalcanal	2	2
		PBM-3	Honolulu-Palmyra	1	3
		PBM-3	Honolulu-Midway	1	3
23 Mar 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Tarawa	2	3
		R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Tarawa-Guadalcanal	2	2
		PBM-3	Honolulu-Palmyra	1	3
15 Apr 1944	VR-11	PBM-3	Honolulu-Midway	1	3
		R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Tarawa	2	5
		R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Tarawa-Guadalcanal	2	2
		PBM-3	Honolulu-Palmyra	1	3
		PBM-3	Honolulu-Midway	1	3
		R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Tarawa	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Tarawa-Guadalcanal	2	2

(continued)

TABLE 4. (Continued)

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Days one way	Trips/ week
20 Apr 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	2	2
		PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra	1	3
		PBM-3	Honolulu–Midway	1	3
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	2	2
26 Apr 1944	VR-2	PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	1	1
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	2	2
		PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra	1	3
		PBM-3	Honolulu–Midway	1	3
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	1	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Majuro	1	1
Central Pacific Shuttle					
1 May 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Majuro	1	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	1	5
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal–Milne Bay	2	2
	VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra	1	2
		PBM-3	Honolulu–Midway	1	3
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	1	7
		Central Pacific			
15 Jun 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Majuro ^a	1	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal–Manus	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein ^a	1	7
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal–Milne Bay	2	2
	VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra	1	2
		PBM-3	Honolulu–Midway	1	3
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	1	3 ^b
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok	1	3
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok	1	3
7 Jul 1944	VR-11 ^c	R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	1	4
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok–Saipan	2	3
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok–Saipan	2	3
	VR-2 ^d	PBM-3	Honolulu–Palmyra	1	2
		PBM-3	Honolulu–Midway	1	3
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	1	3
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok	1	3
10 Aug 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	2	5
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Manus	2	2
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok	2	3
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok–Saipan	2	7
	VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Midway	1	4
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	1	7
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Manus	2	2
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Manus	2	3
10 Sep 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	2	6
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Manus	2	3
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok	2	3
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Eniwetok–Saipan	2	7
	VR-2	PBM-3	Honolulu–Midway	1	4
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein	2	4
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Manus	2	7
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Manus	2	7
1 Oct 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Manus	2	10
		R5D	Honolulu–Johnston–Kwajalein–Manus	2	10

(continued)

TABLE 4. (Continued)

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Days one way	Trips/ week
		PB2Y-3	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	2	7
		R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guadacanal	3	3
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Eniwetok-Saipan	2	9
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Eniwetok	2	3
			Honolulu-Midway	1	2
20 Oct 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam-Peleliu	2	3
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam	2	7
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus-Guam	2	1
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Eniwetok	2	3
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	1	7
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guadacanal	2	3
			Honolulu-Midway	1	2
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Saipan-Ulithi	3	3
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	2	4
1 Nov 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam-Peleliu	2	4
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Saipan	2	7
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam	2	7
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus-Guam	2	1
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Eniwetok	2	2
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	2	4
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guadacanal	2	3
			Honolulu-Midway	1	2
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	2	7
1 Dec 1944	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam-Peleliu	2	4
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Saipan	2	7
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam	2	14
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus-Guam	2	2
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Eniwetok	2	3
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	3	12
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	3	7
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guadacanal	2	6
			Honolulu-Midway	1	2
1 Jan 1945	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Saipan	2	11
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam	1	28
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus-Guam	2	11
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	1	7
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	1	7
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guadacanal	2	4
			Honolulu-Midway	1	2
1 Feb 1945	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Saipan	2	14
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam	1	35
			Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus-Guam	2	1
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	1	14
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guadacanal	2	4
			Honolulu-Midway	1	2
1 Mar 1945	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam-Samar	2	14
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Saipan	2	14
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guam	1	28
	VR-2	PB2Y	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Manus	1	14
	VR-11	R5D	Honolulu-Johnston-Kwajalein-Guadacanal	2	3
			Honolulu-Midway	1	2

^a Discontinued 28 Jun 1944.

^b Six trips per week from 28 Jun 1944.

^c Schedule tables incomplete. Continuation of schedule from 14 Jun 1944 assumed.

^d Schedule tables missing. Continuation of schedule from Jun 1944 assumed.

Islands, the Caroline Islands, the Philippines, and Okinawa (Table 4). The NATS increasingly changed routes to service islands sooner after their liberation, reflecting ongoing expectations of faster service and the weakening ability of the Japanese to interfere.

MIDWAY AND PALMYRA

The NATS established the regular routes of Honolulu–Midway Island and Honolulu–Johnston Island by June 1943, initially operated by VR-10 using PBM-3 Mariners. Johnston Island was to become a very busy hub for westward route extensions.

The Honolulu–Midway route was flown two to four trips per day by PBM-3s from VR-10, VR-11, and finally VR-2. In January 1945, VR-11 R5Ds replaced the Mariners. Figure 10 shows a letter sent in early January 1944 by a marine on Midway Island to an APO address in England.

Mariners also serviced a Honolulu–Palmyra route added after 25 November 1943. The Honolulu–Palmyra flights ended after 10 August 1944.

EXTENSIONS FROM JOHNSTON ISLAND

The Honolulu–Johnston route was extended by VR-11 R5Ds in three directions starting 5 February 1944 (Figure 11).

The northernmost branch was to Kwajalein (Marshall Islands). U.S. Marines had liberated Kwajalein on 3 February, just two days before scheduled transport flights began. Between May and July, Kwajalein was the terminus of daily R5D flights.

The central extension was to Majuro (Marshall Islands), which the Japanese had abandoned. The VR-11 used both R5D and RY-2 (converted army C-87 Liberator Express) transports on this branch. Figure 12 shows a letter sent from the light cruiser USS *Mobile* at Majuro to a civilian in Auckland. It was most likely sent to Honolulu on the Central Pacific Route and then south to Auckland on the South Pacific and Southwest Pacific shuttle routes. Majuro flights ended after 10 August 1944 as Kwajalein became the local hub.

The southernmost extension from Johnston Island reached Tarawa (Gilbert Islands) and was extended on 1 March 1944 to Guadalcanal. Marines had liberated Tarawa in November 1943. By May 1944, Tarawa became the northern terminus of the Samoa–Ellice–Gilberts–Marshalls shuttle route. Figure 13 shows a cover sent in early June 1944 to the mainland by a sailor on Tarawa.

EXTENSIONS TO NEW GUINEA AND THE ADMIRALTIES

Further extensions were made by VR-11 and VR-2 from Guadalcanal to Milne Bay, on the eastern tip of New Guinea, on 1 May 1944, and to Manus (Admiralty Islands) on 15 June. Milne Bay had been secured in September 1942 and developed into a major support base for the New Guinea campaign. In mid-May 1944, U.S. Army forces had liberated Manus. Manus became the connection point between the Central Pacific and the Australia–New Guinea–Philippines transport routes, with the pace of service reaching seventeen weekly flights from Honolulu in October. With the Manus connection consolidated, Milne



FIGURE 10. Cover sent by a marine on Midway Island to an APO address in England. Author's collection.

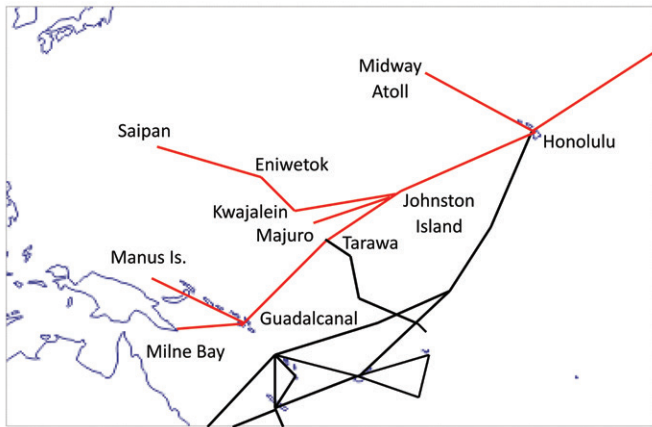


FIGURE 11. Development of NATS Central Pacific transport routes. Author's figure.

Bay was dropped from the Central Pacific route structure by August 1944. Figure 14 shows a letter from a Naval Construction Battalion on Pavuvu (Russell Islands) in June 1944 that was carried by a marine aircraft to Guadalcanal for connection to the NATS route.

EXTENSIONS TO THE MARIANAS, THE CAROLINES, GUAM, AND THE RYUKYUS

On 15 June 1944, VR-2 began PB2Y-3 Coronado service to Eniwetok Atoll (Mariana Islands). In late February, U.S. Marines had liberated Eniwetok, which was to become a major fleet anchorage. The VR-11 R5D service from Eniwetok to Saipan (Mariana Islands) began after 7 July, just as army and marine forces completed its liberation. Eniwetok received weekly or more frequent service until direct Kwajalein–Saipan service began in October 1944, after which flights to Eniwetok fell to two or three per week. Figure 15 shows a letter sent in August



FIGURE 12. Registered cover from the light cruiser USS *Mobile* at Majuro, Marshall Islands, to Auckland, New Zealand. The sender was required to pay fifty cents FAM rate for a letter sent to a civilian address in a foreign country (overpaid by twenty-two cents). Author's collection.



FIGURE 13. Double weight cover sent by a sailor on Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands. Carried by NATS via Johnston Island and Hawaii. Author's collection.

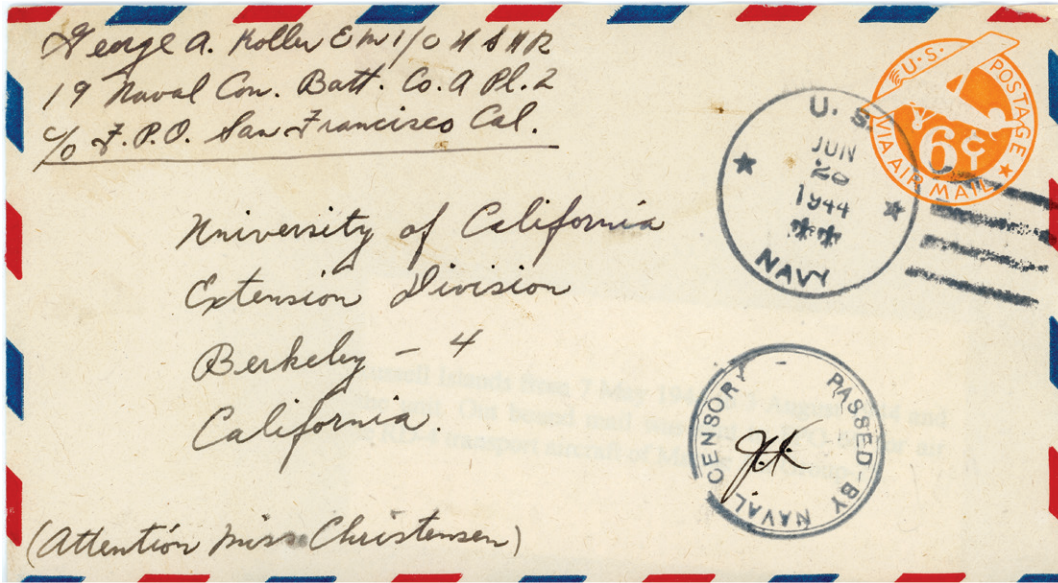


FIGURE 14. Letter from a marine corporal training on Pavuvu, Russell Islands, for the invasion of Peleliu. Carried by NATS from Guadalcanal via Tarawa and Johnston Island to Hawaii. Author's collection.



FIGURE 15. Cover from a sailor on the battleship USS *Iowa* at Eniwetok. The cover was carried by NATS to Hawaii via Kwajalein and Johnston Island. Author's collection.

from the battleship USS *Iowa* at Eniwetok. The letter took seven days to reach its destination on the mainland. The NATS service to Eniwetok ended in January 1945.

After 20 October 1944, VR-11 began R5D service to Guam (Northern Mariana Islands) and Peleliu (Western Caroline

Islands). U.S. Army and Marine forces had secured Guam only ten days before. Guam was also serviced by R5Ds from Manus until March 1945. Guam became a major base, receiving as many as thirty-six flights per week from Honolulu. Figure 16 shows a letter posted by a marine on Guam. Flights to Peleliu began

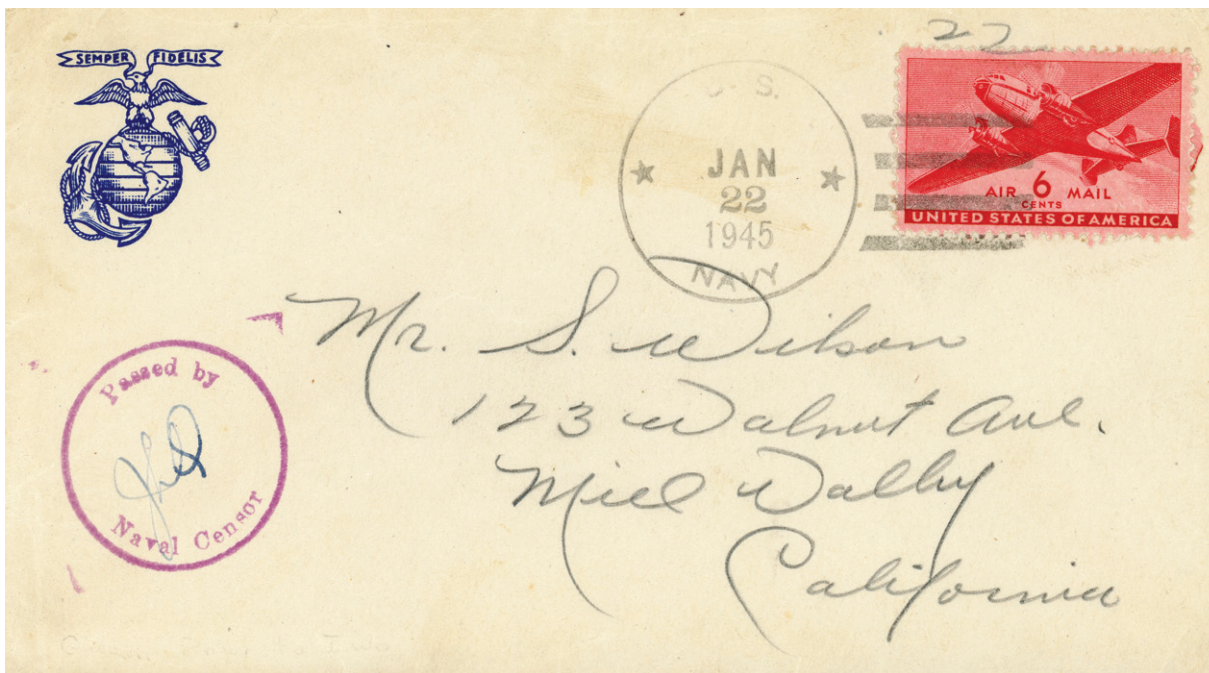


FIGURE 16. Cover from a marine on Guam. Author’s collection.

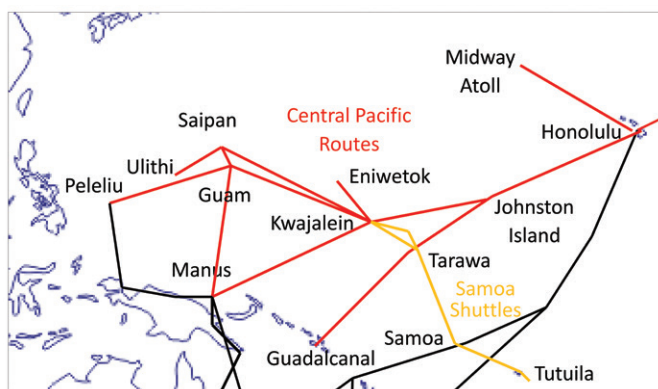


FIGURE 17. Development of NATS Central Pacific routes by late 1944. Author’s figure.

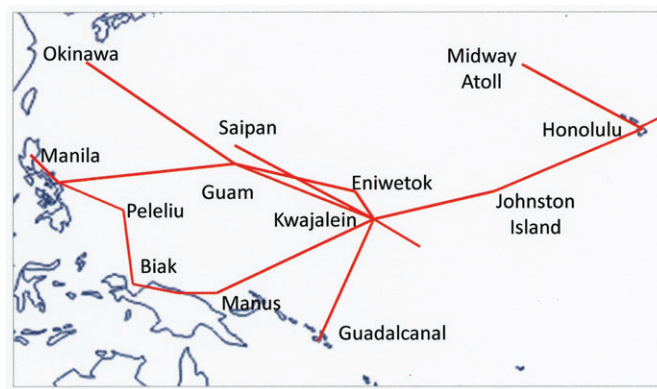


FIGURE 18. Extension of North Pacific routes and elimination of South Pacific NATS routes by mid-1945. Author’s figure.

before the island had been completely liberated. The Honolulu-Peleliu connection ended in January 1945, when Peleliu became a stop on the transport route from Australia to the Philippines.

Ulithi atoll in the Caroline Islands was serviced from Saipan by VR-2 Coronado’s three times per week from 20 October to 1 November 1944. The Japanese had ignored Ulithi, but it became a major navy staging area for the allied invasion of the Philippines. Figure 17 shows the routes as of mid-November 1944.

Okinawa, the southernmost of the Ryukyu Islands, began receiving NATS R5D transports from Guam by May 1945

(Figure 18), before the last remnants of Japanese forces were defeated. Transports from Guam and Saipan also serviced Iwo Jima, which fell on 27 March.

The available route schedules do not extend past March, so the operators, equipment, and service frequency are not known. However, it is most likely that VR-11 R5D service was extended from Guam to the Japanese home islands after Japan surrendered. Figure 19 shows a cover sent by a sailor on the battleship USS *North Carolina* in Tokyo Bay at the time of the formal surrender ceremony.



FIGURE 19. Cover from a sailor on the battleship USS *North Carolina* in Tokyo Bay for the surrender of Japan. Author's collection.

SAMOA–ELLICE ISLANDS–GILBERT ISLANDS–MARSHALL ISLANDS SHUTTLE ROUTES

TABLE 5

Two shuttle services connecting American Samoa and Tarawa (Gilbert Islands) to the South Pacific and Central Pacific routes were initiated after 4 May 1944 (Table 5; Figure 17). The first route from Tarawa to Funafuti (Ellice Islands) via Apamama (Gilbert Islands), Nanomea (Ellice Islands) and Nukufetau (Ellice Islands) took one day each way. The second route extending from Funafuti to Wallis Island, Upolu (Western Samoa), and Tutuila (American Samoa) took two days each way. Both were flown weekly by VR-11 R4D transports. The NATS flew several variations on these routes until November 1944.

Starting in November 1944, the routes were simplified and extended northward to Kwajalein (Marshall Islands). Roi (Marshall Islands), Majuro, and Makin (Gilbert Islands) were also included in the several route variations. Traffic was heavy with fifteen trips through Kwajalein shown in the February and March route schedules. The route was reduced to Roi–Kwajalein–Majuro–Tarawa by May 1945. Figure 20 shows a cover sent by a marine in early January 1945 from Roi to Kwajalein for connection to the NATS Central Pacific route.

AUSTRALIA–NEW GUINEA–PHILIPPINES ROUTES

TABLE 6

From the latter half of 1944, these routes supported the push of Allied forces northward from Australia to the Moluccas, the Philippines, and Japan. The service was flown exclusively by VR-13 using R4D and, on a limited basis, RY-2 transports (Table 6).

The first route Brisbane–Townsville (Australia)–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Manus was initiated on 5 August 1944. The round trip took two days and was completed seven times per week. Slightly modified routes connecting at Manus with the NATS Central Pacific route and at Brisbane with the South Pacific route were flown seventeen times weekly by 12 September.

Sydney and Hollandia (Dutch New Guinea) were included in the route by 12 October 1944. The routes were extended to Owi Island (near Biak Island, Dutch New Guinea) and Peleliu by 17 November. Peleliu became the second point of connection to the Central Pacific routes. By this time, Manus, Hollandia, and Peleliu were termini for, respectively, fourteen, twelve, and three trips per week. Figure 21 shows a cover mailed by a sailor on Eil Malk Island in Palau, which was carried by NATS via Biak Island and Hollandia to Australia.

By 1 December 1944, Leyte in the central Philippines was reached from Manus. Figure 22 shows a cover from the engine repair ship USS *Culebra Isle* in Leyte Gulf, sent in early January 1945 via Peleliu, Biak Island, and Hollandia to connect with the Central Pacific route. The route schedule for 17 January 1945 shows three flights per day to Leyte. Further extension of NATS routes in the Philippines continued through May 1945.

NATS CONNECTIONS TO OTHER PACIFIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND

The NATS and the ATC operated with almost complete independence during the early part of the war, even though army and navy post offices operated side by side at many locations where army and navy forces were stationed. Cooperation and coordination of activities increased as the war wore on. The NATS or the ATC transport services, depending on which was

TABLE 5. Samoa–Ellice Islands–Gilbert Islands–Marshall Islands routes. All routes were flown by R4D transports.

Started after	Operator	Stations	Days one way	Trips/week
Gilbert Islands–Samoa Shuttle				
4 May 1944	VR-11	Tarawa–Apamama–Nanomea–Nukufetau–Funafuti	1	1
		Tarawa–Apamama–Nanomea–Nukufetau–Funafuti–Wallis–Upolu–Tutuila	2	1
14 Jul 1944	VR-11	Tutuila–Funafuti	1	1
		Tutuila–Funafuti–Nukufetau–Nanomea–Apamama–Tarawa	2	1
10 Aug 1944	VR-11	Tutuila–Funafuti	1	1
		Tutuila–Funafuti–Apamama–Tarawa	2	1
10 Sep 1944	VR-13	Tutuila–Funafuti	1	1
		Tutuila–Funafuti–Nanomea–Apamama–Tarawa	2	1
1 Oct 1944	VR-11	Tutuila–Funafuti–Nanomea–Apamama–Tarawa ^a	2	2
Marshall Islands–Gilbert Islands–Ellice Islands–Samoa				
1 Nov 1944	VR-11	Tutuila–Funafuti–Tarawa–Kwajalein	2	1
1 Feb 1945	VR-11	Tutuila–Funafuti–Tarawa–Kwajalein	2	1
		Tarawa–Makin–Majuro–Kwajalein ^b	1	7
		Majuro–Roi–Kwajalein	1	7
1 Mar 1945	VR-11	Tutuila–Funafuti–Tarawa–Kwajalein	2	1
		Tarawa–Majuro–Kwajalein	1	7
		Majuro–Roi–Kwajalein	1	7

^a Nanomea and Apamama were flag stops in both directions.

^b Makin was a flag stop in both directions.



FIGURE 20. Cover from a marine air group on Roi, Marshall Islands, carried by NATS from Kwajalein to Hawaii. Author's collection.

TABLE 6. Australia–New Guinea–Philippines routes.

Started after	Operator	Equipment	Stations	Days one way	Trips/week
Australia–Admiralty Islands					
5 Aug 1944	VR-13	R4D	Brisbane–Townsville–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Manus	1	7
12 Sep 1944	VR-13	RY-2	Brisbane–Townsville–Manus	1	3
		R4D	Manus–Hollandia	1	7
			Brisbane–Townsville–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Manus	1	7
Australia–Admiralty–New Guinea					
12 Oct 1944	VR-13	R4D	Sydney–Brisbane	1	7
		RY-2	Brisbane–Manus	1	3
		R4D	Manus–Hollandia	1	7
			Brisbane–Townsville–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Manus	1	7
Australia–Bismarck Sea–Palau Island					
17 Nov 1944	VR-13	R4D	Sydney–Brisbane	1	7
			Brisbane–Townsville–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Manus	1	7
			Manus–Hollandia	1	7
		RY-2	Brisbane–Manus	1	5
		R4D	Manus–Hollandia	1	7
16 Dec 1944	VR-13	R4D	Manus–Hollandia–Biak Island (Owi)–Peleliu	2	3
			Sydney–Brisbane	1	7
			Brisbane–Espiritu Santo	1	2
			Brisbane–Townsville–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Manus	1	7
			Manus–Hollandia	1	7
		RY-2	Brisbane–Manus	1	4
		R4D	Manus–Hollandia	1	7
17 Jan 1945	VR-13	R4D	Manus–Hollandia–Biak Island (Owi)–Peleliu–Leyte	2	7
			Sydney–Brisbane	1	2
			Brisbane–Espiritu Santo	1	2
			Brisbane–Townsville–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Manus	1	7
			Manus–Hollandia–Biak Island (Owi)–Peleliu–Samar–Leyte ^a	1	21

^a Samar was a flag stop in both directions.



FIGURE 21. Cover sent by a sailor in Palau to Sydney. It was carried by NATS to Australia via Biak Island and Hollandia. Author's collection.



FIGURE 22. Cover from an engine repair ship in Leyte Gulf, Philippines, carried by NATS via Peleliu, Biak Island, Hollandia, Manus, and Kwajalein. Author's collection.

more convenient or faster, would have carried individual airmail letters sent by army or navy personnel later in the war.

ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE

Indeed, the coordination went beyond the American military branches; the RNZAF also operated a dedicated air transport system that interfaced with both the NATS and the ATC in the South Pacific. Before NATS was up and running, the RNZAF provided irregular airmail service between Auckland and the locations of New Zealand forces stationed in the Pacific.¹⁰

By mid-1943, the RNZAF was equipped with C-47 transports and was conducting scheduled transport services that eventually stretched to New Caledonia, Espiritu Santo, Guadalcanal, Los Negros, Fiji, Tarawa, Tonga, and Samoa, all points of interface with NATS or ATC routes. By March 1945, the NATS and the ATC were joined by several connecting routes, most if not all of which were RNZAF routes. The routes included Roi-Eniwetok-Saipan, Eniwetok-Guam-Peleliu, Auckland-Norfolk-Noumea-Espiritu Santo-Guadalcanal, Auckland-Noumea-Espiritu Santo-Guadalcanal, Auckland-Suva-Espiritu Santo, and Tutuila-Tongatabu-Suva-Espiritu Santo. Figure 23 shows a cover posted in June 1945 from the attack transport USS *Ormsby* on station in the Alaska area. The cover was most likely carried by NATS to Guadalcanal and by the RNZAF to New Zealand.

SOUTH PACIFIC COMBAT AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND

The extension of NATS transport routes necessarily followed movements of the fighting fronts, in most cases by weeks or months. Freight, personnel, and airmail carried to the front from NATS main routes required other means of transport. In many cases, utility squadrons attached to fighting commands provided intratheater air transport.

The prototype example was the SCAT command, which was an amalgamation of marine and army transport squadrons flying R4D and C-47 transports. The SCAT got its start during the Guadalcanal campaign flying fuel and ammunition, critical equipment and personnel, evacuees, and mail. The NATS and the ATC initially connected with SCAT on Espiritu Santo and New Caledonia. Figure 6 shows a cover from Guadalcanal carried by SCAT to connect with the NATS route at Espiritu Santo.

Between November 1942 and November 1943, SCAT handled 1,141 tons of mail at New Caledonia. The SCAT moved with the front up through the Solomons to New Georgia and Bougainville, leading the extension of NATS and ATC routes.

CENTRAL PACIFIC COMBAT AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE

Similar to SCAT, the Central Pacific Combat Air Transport (CenPAC) Service provided service to forward combat units fighting at Tarawa. CenPAC was established at Tutuila in early November 1943 and had accessed Tarawa via Funafuti by late



FIGURE 23. June 1945 cover sent from an attack transport in the Alaska area to a civilian address in New Zealand. It was most likely carried by NATS to Guadalcanal and to New Zealand by the RNZAF. The sender paid fifty cents FAM rate postage for a letter addressed to a nonmilitary address in a foreign country. Author's collection.

November. It further moved to support the consolidation of Kwajalein in early February 1944. CenPAC routes intersected with NATS routes at all of these points.

CONCLUSIONS

The NATS was a major airmail carrier during the war years, focusing on serving navy and marine forces on ships and on land. The history of NATS documents the transition from flying boats to landplanes for long-range overwater air transport. Several factors contributed including the increasing reliability of aircraft combined with the realization that flying boats that made emergency landings at sea could seldom be recovered and the construction of runways capable of handling large landplanes even at remote locations around the world.

A few monthly summaries of the amounts of airmail carried by the NATS in the South Pacific are the only statistics known to the author.¹¹ In July 1943, the NATS carried 130,000 pounds of mail. By February 1944 the amount carried had increased to 202,000 pounds. One year later, in February 1945, they were carrying 545,000 pounds. By June 1945, that amount went to 1,350,000 pounds. These increases indicate a surge from mid-1943 until mid-1945, likely due to a combination of the increase in the numbers of personnel in the Pacific and the increase in the capacity of the NATS transport system. This is a subject for further research.

The NATS continued transport and airmail service for sailors and marines serving overseas. It was eventually combined with the army and air force transport organizations in 1948.

NOTES

1. Thomas H. Boyle, *Airmail Operations during World War II* (Mineola, N.Y.: American Air Mail Society, 1998), 120–133.
2. R. M. Startup, *Wartime Airmails, The Trans-Pacific Route, 1942–1945* (Perth, Scotland: Chavril Press, 1997).
3. History of Naval Air Transport Service, Pacific: Subject Histories for 1942, 1943, and 1944, Memorandum from Commander, Naval Air Transport Service, Pacific Wing to History Unit, Op-33-J-6, Office of Editorial Research, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., 1945.
4. History of Naval Air Transport Service, Pacific: Subject Histories for First Quarter of 1945, Memorandum from Commander, Naval Air Transport Service, Pacific Wing to History Unit, Op-33-J-6, Office of Editorial Research, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., 1945.
5. Startup, *Wartime Airmails*, 12–19.
6. Nicholas M. Williams, *Aircraft of the United States' Military Air Transport Service 1948 to 1966* (Leicester, England: Midland Publishing, 1999), 18.
7. M. D. Klaas, *Last of the Flying Clippers: The Boeing B-314 Story* (Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer Publishing, 1997), 233.
8. Williams, *Aircraft of the United States' Military*, 18.
9. Boyle, *Airmail Operations*, 128.
10. Startup, *Wartime Airmails*, 22.
11. Startup, *Wartime Airmails*, 26.

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U.S. Army Transport Routes Used to Carry Transpacific Airmail during World War II

William C. Fort III

ABSTRACT. This paper documents the development by the U.S. Army of air transport routes and accompanying airmail service during and immediately after World War II (WWII). The evolution of army transport routes is placed in the context of prosecution of the war. Route maps and representative examples of airmail carried on each route are included. Prompt delivery of mail was considered critical to maintain the morale of personnel serving overseas during WWII, and carriage of airmail by the transport services was given high priority. The large number of personnel serving in the Pacific theater combined with the granting of a reduced airmail postage rate led to huge increases in demand, with airmail volumes far surpassing prewar levels. The army's Air Corps Ferrying Command initially carried transpacific airmail to Australia. The Air Transport Command, organized in mid-1943, transported personnel, materiel, and mail in support of army operations throughout the Pacific.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the United States' entry into World War II, Pan American Airways (PAA) was the only transpacific airmail carrier. PAA's commercial transpacific services west of Hawaii were afterward terminated for the duration of the war. However, hundreds of thousands of U.S. servicemen stationed on land and on ships in the Pacific area west of Hawaii sent and received airmail letters. The vast majority of this transpacific airmail was carried by the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy, each of which established transport airlines that carried airmail on regular schedules and on established routes that evolved to follow the fighting through the Pacific.

The U.S. military considered prompt mail service for servicemen essential to maintaining good morale, and, as such, mail delivery was given very high priority. Servicemen were granted the privilege of sending surface mail to and within the continental United States at no charge. Those serving overseas could send airmail to U.S. addresses at the low rate of six cents per half ounce. Equivalent rates for civilians sending mail from overseas were five cents for the first ounce for surface mail and between ten and seventy cents per half ounce by airmail. By April 1942, about 80,000 American personnel were spread across the Pacific from Hawaii to Australia. The huge influx of service personnel into the Pacific theater and the low airmail rate combined to create an unprecedented demand for transpacific airmail services. To meet the demand, the army and navy transport systems carried increasing volumes of airmail throughout the war for service personnel. They also carried limited amounts of commercial and civilian airmail on a space-available basis.

One innovation introduced during the war was the use of Victory Mail, or V-Mail. Adopted from the British, the V-Mail system involved collecting and microfilming letters written by servicemen on one-page forms. The microfilms were then flown to facilities in the United States where approximately half-size facsimiles of the original letters

were photographically printed and mailed to the recipients. The same process worked in the opposite direction. Use of V-Mail effectively converted surface mail into post-free airmail, with the limitation on the size of the message that could be sent. The V-Mail system greatly reduced the volume of mail that had to be transported from overseas, and it speeded up delivery of letters that would otherwise have been sent by sea. Both the army and the navy used V-Mail.

The role of the air transport during the war is much less appreciated and documented than the roles of the bombardment and fighter wings of the military services, and this chapter in airmail postal history has received only limited attention in the philatelic press. Thomas Boyle gave an overview of worldwide army and navy transport routes and airmail services.¹ R. M. Startup covered South Pacific airmail services, from the perspective of New Zealand.² The author provides a separate article in this volume about development of the equivalent navy transport system: “Development of U.S. Navy Transport Routes Used to Carry Transpacific Airmail during World War II.”

This paper describes the establishment and operation of the army’s Air Corps Ferrying Command (ACFC) and its successor Air Transport Command (ATC) in the Pacific during World War II and their roles in carrying airmail to and from military personnel in the Pacific. This chapter focuses on the development of the air transport routes over which the mail was carried.

The route tables and maps in this paper are derived primarily from the information in the *Chronology of Trans-Pacific Routes* prepared by the U.S. Army Air Force in 1945.³ That reference contains route maps from June 1943 until April 1945 along with notes on operating frequency and types of aircraft used. Much of this information has been reorganized chronologically into tables by route (e.g., South Pacific routes). The accompanying maps show individual routes in the context of the overall transport network at critical points in time.

Air transport routes generally evolved to follow the fighting front. Early routes through the South Pacific to Australia served the need to build up forces for operations in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea. The routes shifted northward with time as the army focused more on retaking the Philippines and on securing islands in the Central Pacific for the later attacks on Japan. Increases in the numbers of flights each week on a route indicated buildups of personnel and material in anticipation of a large operation.

By matching the location of an individual serviceman when sending or receiving an airmail letter (usually established via the U.S. Army Post Office [APO] number in the address or return line) with information in the route tables, the reader can readily establish the most likely routing taken by the letter.

AIR CORPS FERRYING COMMAND SOUTH PACIFIC ROUTE

The army created the ACFC in May 1941 to deliver lend-lease aircraft from U.S. factories to British forces in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

After the United States entered the war, it urgently needed to send heavy bombers and transport aircraft to Australia, the East Indies, and the Philippines. Ferrying them across the Atlantic, Africa, and Asia would result in considerable attrition. A secure route was needed from Hawaii through the South Pacific to Australia.⁴ The army initiated a rapid program in late 1941 to prepare adequate airfields for its large landplanes on islands roughly along PAA’s prewar South Pacific seaplane route to New Zealand.

The resulting ACFC transpacific route, shown in Figure 1, extended from San Francisco to Hickam Field (Oahu) to Christmas Island (Line Islands), Canton Island, Nandi (Fiji), and Tontouta (New Caledonia) to Sydney. The route was located well to the south of Japanese-held areas, and there was limited likelihood of meeting the enemy. The primary concern of ferrying pilots was finding their tiny island destinations after long over-water flights with the limited navigation aids then available. The longest leg was more than 2,300 miles (3,700 km) and operated between San Francisco and Honolulu.

The first scheduled ACFC flight of four-engine B-17 bombers bound for Java flew the Hickam–Sydney route during the first two weeks of 1942, detouring to the Naval Air Station (NAS) on Palmyra Island because the Christmas Island airfield was not quite ready. It is not known whether mail was carried on this first flight. Aircraft reaching Sydney were then flown to Java or the Philippines. Figure 2 shows an early cover flown on an ACFC transport from San Francisco to Sydney and destined for an airmail in the Philippines.

Aircraft deliveries quickly outpaced the supply of available military pilots. The ACFC contracted with Consairway, Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Corporation’s transport division, to provide additional transport and to return ferrying pilots from

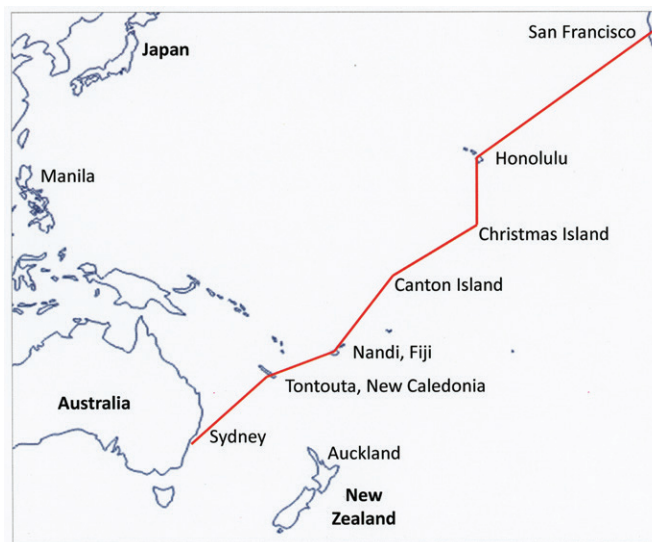


FIGURE 1. Air Corps Ferrying Command (ACFC) South Pacific route to Australia, January 1942. Author’s drawing.

the South Pacific. Consairway initially used Consolidated LB-30 aircraft, an early model of the B-24 bomber. Before Pearl Harbor, Consolidated had been flying B-24 bombers from its factory in San Diego across the Central Pacific to Java and the Philippines.

Consairway started its transport service for the ACFC on 23 April 1942. U.S. forces were rapidly building up in Australia and New Caledonia. During May 1942, ACFC/Consairway made fifteen trips to Sydney, carrying nearly a ton of mail, in addition to 120 passengers and almost thirteen tons of freight.⁵ Figure 3 shows an airmail cover flown in June 1942 by Consairway from Christmas Island.

AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND SOUTH PACIFIC ROUTES

In recognition of the increasing global need for air transport, on 20 June 1942, the army combined the ACFC with several other U.S. Army Air Force groups to form the ATC. The War Department charged the ATC with (1) ferrying all aircraft worldwide, (2) transporting personnel, material and mail for all War Department agencies, and (3) controlling, operating, and maintaining facilities on air routes outside of the United States.⁶ The ATC did not include general troop carrier units.

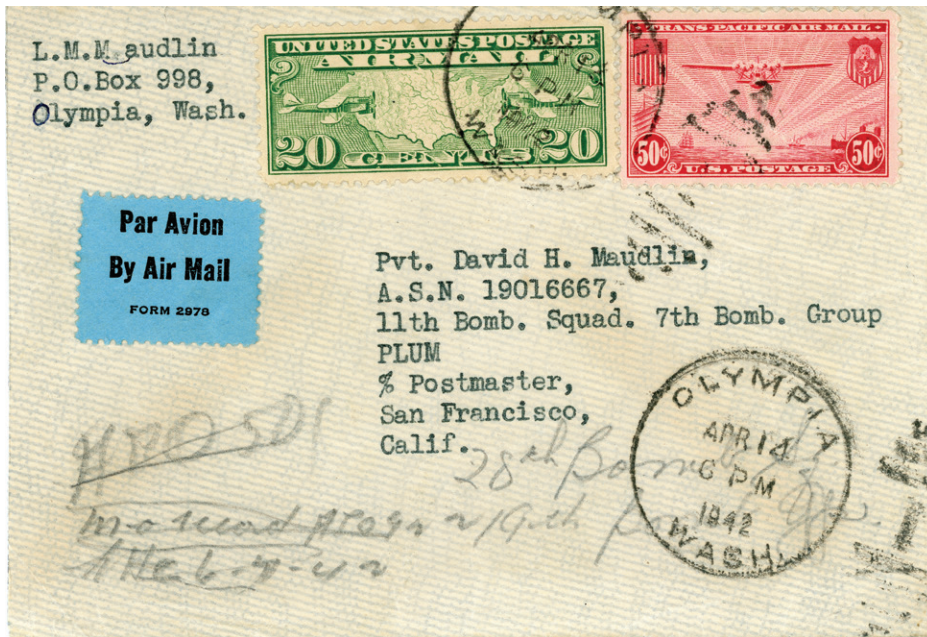


FIGURE 2. Cover addressed to an army air forces private in the Philippines (Code Address PLUM) and delivered to him after his evacuation to Australia. Carried by ACFC bombers to Sydney. Author's collection.



FIGURE 3. Cover from a soldier on Christmas Island, carried by a Consairway transport. Author's collection.

The ATC began with five divisions or “wings,” including the South Pacific Wing for operations from the West Coast. In early 1943, the South Pacific Wing was divided into the Pacific Wing and West Coast Wing, which operated only between the West Coast and Hawaii. The two wings were recombined by the end of 1943 in order to better coordinate service.

The ATC continued transport operations with Consairway on the ACFC South Pacific route (Table 1). Beginning 15 June 1943, the main route from Hawaii to Australia was changed to Hickam Field–Canton Island–Plaines des Gaiacs (New Caledonia)–Amberley Field (Brisbane). Every fifth southbound flight flew the old Hickam–Christmas Island–Tutuila–Nandi route, bypassing Canton Island. Plains des Gaiacs became a major air support base for the Solomon Islands campaigns. Airmail was flown between Guadalcanal and Plains des Gaiacs by the South Pacific Combat Air Transport Command (SCAT), a combined army and marines operation established in Guadalcanal in late 1942 to expedite the supply of critical personnel and materials and to evacuate the wounded. As demands for air transport continued to grow, the ATC contracted with United Airlines to supplement its transpacific services.⁷ United began operating flights from Hawaii to Australia on 23 September 1943. Consairway

and United continued as operators with fourteen trips scheduled each week between California and Australia using fifteen Liberator-type (B-24, LB-30, and C-87) aircraft and Douglas C-54 (reinforced DC-4) Skymaster transports. The C-87 Liberator Express was the purpose-built transport version of the B-24.

Effective 6 October 1943, all ATC transpacific routes originated from Hamilton Field (north of San Francisco). The original route was flown eleven times monthly, and the route through Canton Island fourteen trips weekly. A third route was added with four weekly trips. On this route, southbound flights followed Hamilton Field–Hickam Field–Canton Island–Plaines des Gaiacs–Amberley Field, and northbound flights also stopped at Nandi. Consairway and United continued as operators on all of these routes, and additional routes were added in February 1944 including Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands) and Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) to better support operations in New Guinea and northward.

THE “MILK RUN” ROUTE

Another South Pacific route was started in April 1943. This so-called Milk Run served additional South Pacific islands on an

TABLE 1. Air Transport Command (ATC) South Pacific routes. A dash (—) indicates information is unknown.

Dates	Route	Operator	Equipment	Trips/week
20 Jun 1942–Jun 1943	San Francisco–Hickam–Christmas Island–Canton Island–Nandi–Tontouta–Sydney or Brisbane ^a	ATC, Consairway	B-24, C-54	—
15 Jun–5 Oct 1943	San Francisco–Hickam–Canton Island–Plaines des Gaiacs–Amberley ^b	Consairway United ^c	B-24, LB-30, C-87 C-87	14
6 Oct 1943–22 Feb 1944	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Plaines des Gaiacs–Amberley ^d	Consairway United	B-24, LB-30, C-87 C-87	14
	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Plaines des Gaiacs–Amberley	Consairway, United	B-24, LB-30, C-87	4
	Hamilton–Hickam–Christmas Island–Tutuila–Nandi–Plaines des Gaiacs–Amberley	Consairway, United	B-24, LB-30, C-87	~3
23 Feb–Nov 1944	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Nandi–Plaines des Gaiacs–Amberley	Consairway	B-24, LB-30, C-87	11
	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Funafuti–Guadalcanal–Townsville–Port Moresby–Guadalcanal–Canton Island–Hickam–Hamilton ^e	United	C-54, C-87	7
	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Guadalcanal–Townsville	United	C-54, C-87	7
1 Nov 1944–1 Sep 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Christmas Island–Canton Island–Nandi–Tontouta–Amberley	ATC Consairway ^f	C-54 LB-30	2

^a Brisbane from 2 September 1942.

^b Every fifth trip flies Hamilton–Hickam–Christmas–Tutuila–Nandi–Tontouta–Amberley.

^c United from 23 September 1943.

^d Return trips stop at Nandi.

^e Circular route.

^f Consairway replaced ATC from 15 December 1944.

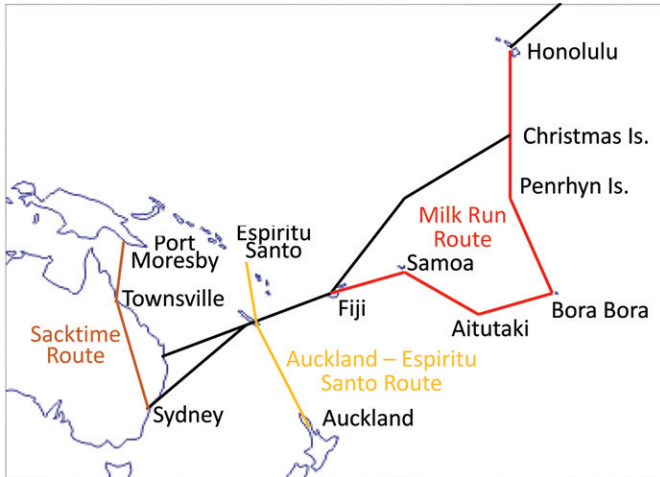


FIGURE 4. ATC Routes, July 1943, the “Milk Run,” New Zealand–Espiritu Santo, and “Sacktime Shuttle” routes in relation to the main South Pacific route. Author’s drawing.

alternate more southerly route.⁸ From April 1943 to 10 February 1944, ATC crews flew the route Hickam Field–Christmas Island–Penrhyn Island (Cook Islands)–Bora Bora (Society Islands)–Aitutaki (Cook Islands)–NAS Tutuila (American Samoa)–Nandi every seven to ten days using a C-87. From 10 February to August 1944, ATC flew Hickam Field–Canton Island–Nandi–Tutuila–Aitutaki–Bora Bora–Penrhyn–Christmas–Hickam every ten days. Figure 4 shows the Milk Run with other ATC routes in early July 1943.

The Milk Run carried supplies and mail to army and navy personnel stationed on the route. Figure 5 shows a cover mailed by a soldier on Bora Bora that was carried on the Milk Run.

Regular service on the route ended in August 1944, reflecting movement of the fighting farther north.

ATC REST AND RELAXATION SHUTTLES

The army initiated two intratheater shuttle routes during 1943 to ferry personnel to Australia and New Zealand for rest and recreation.⁹ These shuttles carried mail in addition to troops.

Auckland–Espiritu Shuttle

The Auckland–Espiritu Shuttle carried soldiers and marines stationed on Guadalcanal and neighboring islands to New Zealand. From February 1943, just after the evacuation of Japanese forces, to November 1944, United Airlines operated the route with C-87 Liberator Express transports. The initial route was Espiritu Santo (New Hebrides) to Auckland via Plaines des Gaiacs (Figure 4). Personnel were flown between Guadalcanal and Espiritu Santo on SCAT transports.

The initial Auckland–Espiritu Santo route was extended northward in January 1944 to Guadalcanal and was flown by ATC pilots when more C-87s became available.

“Sacktime” Shuttle

The “Sacktime” shuttle carried soldiers stationed in the New Guinea area to Australia. It was operated from July 1943 with five Douglas C-47 aircraft (cargo versions of the DC-3) flown by ATC crews on the Port Moresby–Townsville–Sydney route (Figure 4). Figure 6 shows an example of a cover carried on the shuttle. A medical corpsman stationed in Port Moresby mailed the cover. The route was later extended to Nadzab Airfield, near Lae on the northeastern coast of New Guinea after territory in



FIGURE 5. Milk Run cover carried by ATC transports from APO 919 in Bora Bora, French Polynesia. Author’s collection.

that area had been consolidated. Other non-ATC transport assets eventually took the place of ATC.

TARAWA EVACUATION ROUTES

The ATC evacuated casualties after the November 1943 invasion of Tarawa (Gilbert Islands) on a new route from Funafuti (Ellice Islands) to Hickam via Canton Island. The ATC operated this route with C-47s from 15 November 1943 to 5 January 1944. By 5 January 1944, the ATC flew directly into Tarawa using C-54s. Tarawa was to become a stop on the ATC's Central Pacific routes. In February 1944, Tarawa became the terminus of a direct route from Hickam Field via Johnston Island, designed

to speed up evacuation of wounded from the Kwajalein (Marshall Islands) invasion.

SHIFT TO THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC

By late 1943, Allied forces had taken most of the Solomon Islands and made significant gains in New Guinea. A review of Pacific transport operations highlighted the fact that the war had moved northward and the ATC services had not kept up.¹⁰ This prompted a series of reorganizations of the ATC. ATC rapidly began to rearrange existing routes and add new routes to the Southwest and Central Pacific areas (Table 2). Figure 7 shows the routes in September 1944.



FIGURE 6. Cover from an army medic in an evacuation hospital at Port Moresby, New Guinea that was carried by the ATC on the Sacktime route to Brisbane for connection to the South Pacific route. Author's collection.

TABLE 2. Air Transport Command (ATC) Southwest Pacific routes via Canton Island. A dash (—) indicates data unknown.

Dates	Route	Operator	Equipment	Trips/week
10 Feb 1944–1 Nov 1944	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Funafuti–Guadalcanal–Port Moresby–Townsville ^a	United	C-54, C-87	7
5 Aug 1944–14 Nov 1944	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Guadalcanal–Nadzab	Consairway, United	B-24, LB-30, C-87, C-54	14–32
5 Aug 1944–30 Apr 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Guadalcanal	ATC	C-54	5
1 Nov 1944–31 Dec 1944	Guadalcanal–Los Negros (Admiralty Islands)	ATC	C-47	—
15 Nov 1944–31 Jan 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Canton Island–Guadalcanal–Biak	Consairway, United	B-24, LB-30, C-87, C-54	28
1 Aug 1945–?	Fairfield–Hickam–Canton Island–Guadalcanal	Consairway	LB-30	7
	Fairfield–Hickam–Canton Island–Guadalcanal–Biak	Consairway	LB-30	7

^a Funafuti was dropped and Nanomea added after 25 February.

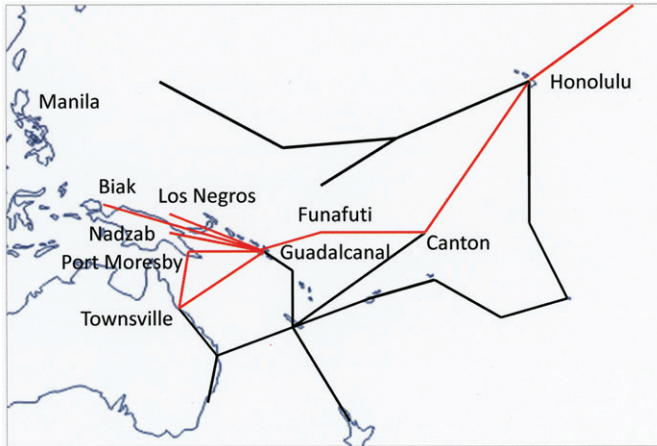


FIGURE 7. ATC route extensions to the Southwest Pacific via Canton Island, September 1944. Author's drawing.

The Japanese had been pushed into the western end of Dutch New Guinea by February 1944. The ATC began the reorganizations by shifting the termini of the transpacific transport routes from the South Pacific northward to Guadalcanal and Port Moresby, which by then were large bases with significant concentrations of servicemen wanting airmail service. With these changes, the ATC could more directly support the campaigns in New Guinea, Bougainville (from November 1943), New Britain

(from December 1943), and the Admiralty Islands (February–May 1944).

The initial Southwest Pacific route (Hamilton–Canton Island–Funafuti–Guadalcanal–Port Moresby–Townsville) was initiated on 10 February 1944 (Table 2). Additional routes fanning out from the Guadalcanal reached Nadzab (Dutch New Guinea) in August and Los Negros (Admiralty Islands) and Biak (Schouten Islands, Dutch New Guinea) by November. The Hamilton–Amberley South Pacific route continued to be flown eleven times weekly by Consairway, and two new Hamilton–Townsville (Australia) routes via Hickam, Canton Island, and Guadalcanal were flown fourteen times weekly by United. On half of these, Port Moresby was inserted as a stop between Guadalcanal and Townsville (Tables 1, 2).

Figure 8 shows a cover sent from a Netherlands East Indies Air Force APO in Hollandia (Dutch New Guinea) to Curacao (Dutch West Indies) in October 1944. Local air transports carried the letter to Nadzab, and the ATC carried it over the Nadzab–Guadalcanal–Funafuti–Canton–Hickam–Hamilton route. As the letter was addressed to a nonmilitary addressee in a foreign country, the sender was required to pay the commercial twenty-five-cent per half ounce postal rate (actually overpaid by five cents) for airmail service from Miami to Curacao.

NEW GUINEA ROUTES

ATC transport service to Port Moresby was late in coming, as the fighting had moved to the north side of the island.



FIGURE 8. Cover from a Netherlands East Indies Air Force sergeant in Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea to Curacao in the Dutch West Indies that was carried by local transports to Nadzab. The sender overpaid the required twenty-five cents foreign air mail rate postage for carriage from Miami to Curacao. Author's collection.

Transport was needed off the north coast of New Guinea, at Nadzab airfield, which had been secured before the end of 1943. Cargo offloaded from ATC aircraft at Port Moresby had to be lifted 200 miles (322 km) across New Guinea by local U.S. Army and Australian transports.¹¹ Figure 9 shows a cover carried by intratheater army transports across New Guinea from Oro Bay on the northeast coast to Port Moresby in June 1943.

Simultaneous with initiation of the Southwest Pacific routes, in June 1944, the ATC started a New Guinea shuttle, flying C-47 transports four trips daily on the route Sydney–Amberley–Townsville–Port Moresby–Nadzab (Table 3), parallel to the Sacktime shuttle route. In September, the shuttle was extended to Hollandia on the north coast of Dutch New Guinea (Figure 7). From August 1944, ATC operated a third shuttle between Brisbane and Hollandia on alternate days using C-54 transports. Another shuttle flew the route Nadzab–Lae–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Dobodura (New Guinea northeast coast). Figure 10 shows a cover flown by the ATC in September 1944 on the New Guinea shuttle route to Nadzab and on the Southwest Pacific route to Hamilton Field via Guadalcanal, Funafuti, Canton, and Hickam Field.



FIGURE 9. Cover carried by ATC to Port Moresby and by intratheater army transport across New Guinea to Oro Bay before the ATC’s route extensions into New Guinea. Author’s collection.

After yet another round of reorganization, the Far Eastern Air Forces, made up from elements of the Thirteenth and Fifth Army Air Force assets, took over the Australia–New Guinea shuttles, which were extended to Leyte (the Philippines) after the U.S. invasion in October 1944.

Between September 1944 and January 1945, the ATC evacuated wounded from the Palau (Caroline Islands) campaign from Manus (Admiralty Islands) via Los Negros (Admiralty Islands) to Guadalcanal. A second ATC shuttle from Nadzab to Dobodura Airfield, near Buna in eastern New Guinea, was operated in September and October 1944, also using C-47 transports.

On New Year’s Day 1945, Fairfield–Suisum Army Air Base northeast of San Francisco became the point of origination for ATC transport flights to Guadalcanal, New Guinea, and Australia. Hamilton Field remained the base for trips to the Marianas and the Philippines.

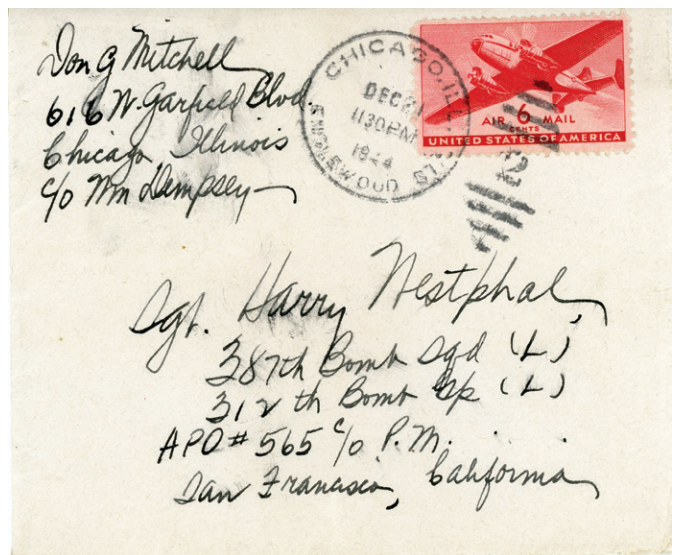


FIGURE 10. Cover mailed in December 1944 to an army air forces sergeant in Hollandia and carried on the ATC Southwest Pacific route to Port Moresby or Nadzab and by the New Guinea shuttle route to Hollandia. Author’s collection.

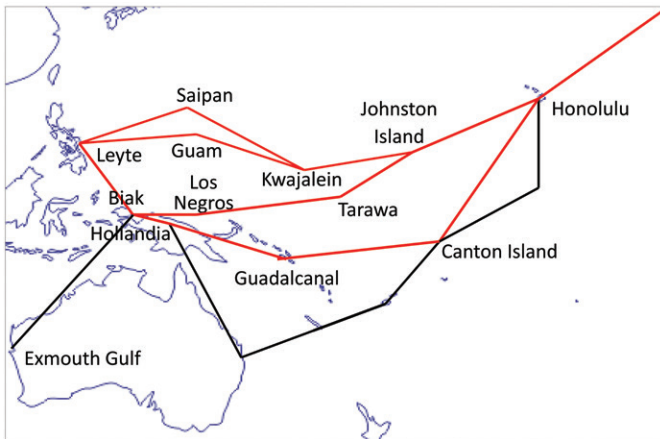
TABLE 3. New Guinea shuttle routes. A dash (—) indicates data unknown.

Dates	Routes	Operator	Equipment	Trips/week
Jun 1944–Aug 1944	Sydney–Amberley–Townsville–Port Moresby–Nadzab	ATC	C-47	28
Sept 1944–Oct 1944	Sydney–Amberley–Port Moresby–Nadzab–Hollandia	ATC	C-47	—
Sep 1944–Oct 1944	Nadzab–Lae–Milne Bay–Finschhafen–Dobodura	ATC	C-47	—
Aug 1944–?	Hollandia–Brisbane	ATC	C-54	3½ ^a

^a Operated on alternate days.

TABLE 4. Air Transport Command (ATC) Southwest Pacific routes via Johnston Island.

Dates	Routes	Operator	Equipment	Trips/week
1 Nov 1944–Apr 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal	ATC	C-54	5
1 Jan 1945–31 Jan 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Tarawa–Guadalcanal–Biak	ATC	C-54	14
1 Feb 1945–31 Mar 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Tarawa–Guadalcanal–Los Negros–Biak	ATC	C-54	14
1 Feb 1945–28 Feb 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Tarawa–Los Negros–Biak	Consairway ATC	LB-30 C-54	28
1 Mar 1945–31 Mar 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Tarawa–Los Negros–Biak–Leyte	Consairway ATC	LB-30 C-54	28
1 Apr 1945–?	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Tarawa–Los Negros–Biak–Leyte	Consairway ATC	LB-30 C-54	21



SOUTHWEST PACIFIC VIA JOHNSTON ISLAND

A new Southwest Pacific route to Guadalcanal via Johnston Island and Tarawa was initiated on 1 November 1944 (Table 4). The route was operated by the ATC using C-54 transports with five trips weekly. The route connected with the South Pacific route from Canton Island and Funafuti. Fourteen additional weekly through trips to Biak and Los Negros were added during January–March 1945 and to Leyte by the first of April. Figure 11 shows these routes at the end of February. Figure 12 shows an official registered letter from Los Negros to San Francisco in April 1945 on the Johnston Island route.

FIGURE 11. Revised Central Pacific ATC routes including connections to the Southwest Pacific from Johnston Island and Guadalcanal, 28 February 1945. Author’s drawing.

NEW GUINEA–INDIA ROUTE

A milestone in postal history was achieved when the ATC opened its New Guinea–India route on 22 January 1945. For the first time, a single airline could carry an airmail letter completely around the world on regularly scheduled routes. The connecting

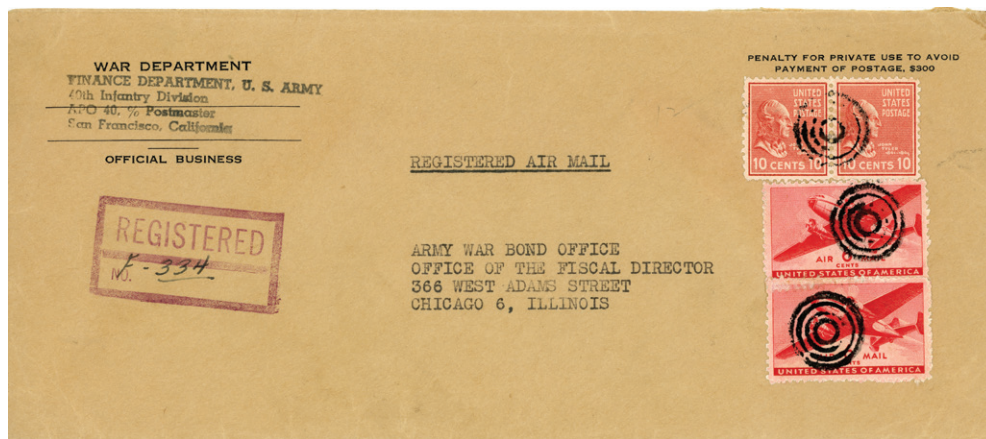


FIGURE 12. Official registered letter from Los Negros, Admiralty Islands, carried on the ATC Southwest Pacific route via Tarawa and Johnston Island in April 1945. Author’s collection.

route was Calcutta–Colombo (Ceylon)–Exmouth Gulf (Australia)–Biak. Perth was designated as an alternate for Exmouth Gulf. The initial schedule included twice weekly flights in C-54 transports piloted by ATC crews.

ATC CENTRAL PACIFIC ROUTES

The review of Pacific transport operations in late 1943 and the initiation of the island-hopping strategy in the Central Pacific caused the ATC to rapidly add new Central Pacific routes. A characteristic of these new routes was the short time between the clearing of an island and its becoming a transport route stop. Increasingly, airmail could be sent more directly from the points of conflict rather than by intermediate transport to stops along the ATC routes.

MARSHALL ISLANDS, MARIANAS ISLANDS, AND THE PHILIPPINES

The Marshall Islands campaign began in December 1943 with attacks on Kwajalein and ended with the capture of Eniwetok in late February 1944. Saipan (Mariana Islands) was liberated in early July, Guam was liberated in late July, and Leyte was invaded on 20 October. ATC scheduled services began to catch up with the opening of a new route from San Francisco to Kwajalein in late May 1944 (Table 5).

The ATC extended regular transport service to Saipan by mid-August 1944. The movement of the new B-29 Superfortress

bombers to Saipan, Guam, and Tinian (Mariana Islands) began in November 1944, and the ATC assisted with ferrying and with staging of spare parts and supplies for their maintenance. Figure 13 shows a cover carried by the ATC from a B-29 squadron on Saipan to an APO address in France in late November 1944.

The ATC Pacific routes extended to Tacloban Airfield in Leyte by early November 1944, soon after the invasion in October. The ATC C-54 transports flew this route fourteen times weekly, reduced to seven times weekly after mid-December. The routes to Leyte saw several variations in the early months of 1945 and additional flights including Manila were added in March. The routes from Johnston Island to Leyte are shown in Figure 11.

Regular transport service to Guam began on 18 January 1945. Guam was soon established as the major ATC base for supporting the invasion of Iwo Jima (Ryukyus Islands) in February and of Okinawa (Bonin Islands) in April. The ATC was heavily engaged in evacuation of wounded servicemen eastward, while carrying cargo westward. Figure 14 shows a cover sent from Iwo Jima on the last day of battle.

The ATC evacuation flights from Okinawa to Guam started on 8 April 1945. Service from San Francisco to Okinawa began on 15 April, before the island was completely secure. Figure 15 shows a cover sent from Okinawa in mid-June 1945.

NORTH TO JAPAN

The ATC transport service was further beefed up in preparation for operations against the Japanese home islands later in the

TABLE 5. Air Transport Command (ATC) Central Pacific routes. A dash (—) indicates information unknown.

Dates	Routes	Operator	Equipment	Trips/week
10 Feb 1944	Hickam–Johnston Island–Tarawa	ATC	C-54	7
End of May–mid-Aug 1944	Hickam–Johnston Island–Kwajalein	ATC	C-54	—
Mid-Aug–Nov 1944	Hickam–Johnston Island–Kwajalein–Saipan	ATC	C-54	—
Early Nov–14 Dec 1944	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan–Leyte	ATC	C-54	14 ^a
15 Dec 1944–1 Jan 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan–Leyte	ATC, United	C-54	14
1 Jan–28 Feb 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan or Guam–Leyte	ATC, United	C-54	14
1 Mar–30 Apr 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan–Leyte	ATC	C-54	7
		ATC, United	C-54	7
30 Apr–1 Aug 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan or Guam–Leyte	ATC, United	C-54	7
	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan–Leyte	—	—	7
	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Okinawa	—	—	14
1 Aug–1 Sep 1945	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan or Guam	ATC	C-54	63
	Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan or Guam	—	—	21
	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Okinawa	—	—	35
	Hamilton–Hickam–Johnston–Kwajalein–Saipan or Guam–Manila	—	—	35
	Saipan or Guam–Manila	—	—	7

^a Seven weekly trips after 15 December.

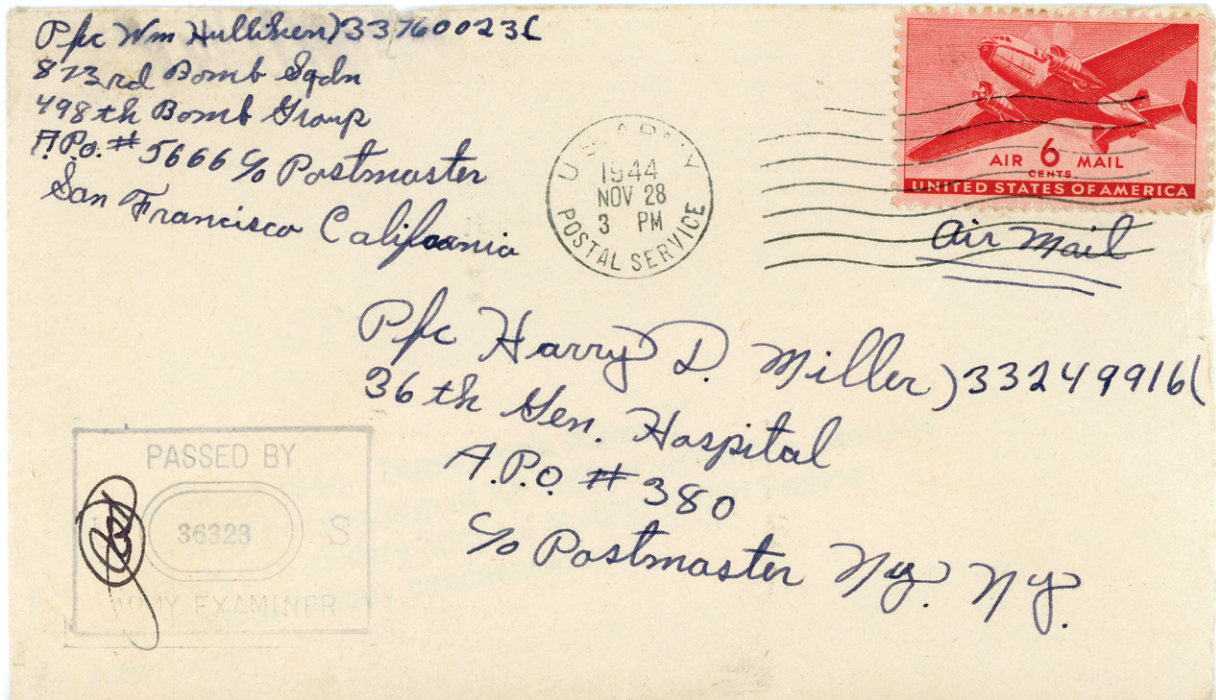


FIGURE 13. November 1944 cover from a B-29 squadron on Saipan to an APO address in France. Author's collection.



FIGURE 14. Cover sent by an army air force lieutenant from Iwo Jima on the last day of battle and carried over the ATC Central Pacific route. Author's collection.

year. The ATC schedules for 1 August 1945 included six daily shuttle flights with C-54 and LB-30 transports between Hamilton Field and Hickam Field, twelve daily C-54 flights from Hamilton to the Marianas, five to Okinawa, and five to Manila. An additional shuttle linked the Marianas with Manila.

Everything changed with the prospect of the early conclusion of the war by use of the atomic bomb. The ATC's C-54 aircraft were withdrawn from the Australia and New Guinea

area and moved northward, leaving Consairway and United to continue those services. The ATC prepared for the surrender of Japan and made its first flights into Atsugi Airport in Tokyo on 28 August, beginning the occupation of Japan. Over a period of thirteen days, the ATC completed 1,336 flights into Japan, carrying more than 23,000 troops, 924 jeeps, 9 liaison aircraft, 329 other pieces of equipment, 2,348 barrels of gasoline and oil, and more than 900 tons of rations.¹² Figure 16 shows an airmail



FIGURE 15. Cover from an army private on Okinawa to a mail order house selling "Cheesecake" photos. Author's collection.

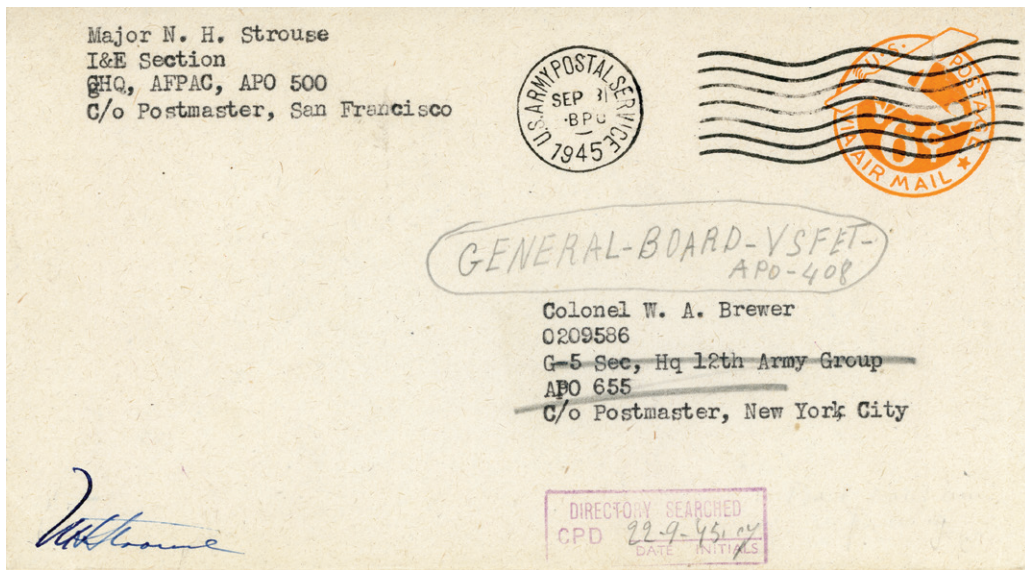


FIGURE 16. Cover carried by ATC transports from Yokohama to Germany after the surrender of Japan. Author's collection.

cover mailed from Yokohama six days after the formal surrender of Japan and carried by the ATC to APO addresses in Germany.

Connections from Guam to Tokyo and from Manila to Cuming (China) were added to the ATC routes by 1 September 1945.

ATC POSTWAR OPERATIONS

Of interest to postal historians, by the end of World War II the ATC was one of the largest airlines, if not the largest, in the world in terms of capacity and global span of operations. The amounts of airmail carried by the ATC on its various routes are not yet known and await further research. Well after the end of the war, the ATC provided commercial transpacific passenger and airmail service across the Pacific, until PAA services were eventually restored in 1946 and 1947.

NOTES

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Aéropostale and Air France: A Decade of South Atlantic Airmail

Daniel V. Gribbin

ABSTRACT. On 1 September 1939, the German invasion of Poland effectively ended a remarkable period of almost three years during which two European airlines cooperated to offer twice-weekly transatlantic airmail service between Europe and South America. Germany's flagship airline, Deutsche Lufthansa, had taken the lead in 1934 by establishing dependable biweekly, all-air service that eventually became a weekly service. The French effort to achieve such consistency took considerably longer. My purpose here is to describe the gradual progress that the French made during the 1930s in establishing weekly all-airmail service to South America, as well as to discuss the formidable obstacles—some of them self-imposed—that they encountered.

ROUTE DEVELOPMENT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

The story of Aéropostale/Air France begins in 1918, with Pierre Latécoère's Christmas flight over the Pyrenees from Toulouse, France, to Barcelona, Spain—the first leg in his envisioned route to Dakar, Senegal, then in French West Africa.¹ A cover prepared nearly five years later commemorates what amounts to a survey flight on the leg from Casablanca, Morocco, to Dakar (Figure 1). The cachet by the Aéro Club of Morocco rather grandly designates it as the “inauguration of the line.” Three Breguet 14 aircraft traversed the distance of 2,760 km between Casablanca and Dakar with six refueling stops at stations down the northwest coast of Africa.² This was not friendly territory, and at various times over the next decade, desert tribes captured and held pilots for ransom, among them Jean Mermoz. The three aircraft employed in this 1923 flight were not particularly reliable; in fact, their return flight from Dakar to Casablanca took ten days, with one plane having to be sent back ignominiously by ship.³

Remarkably, in 1923, nearly three million letters and 1,400 passengers were flown between France and Morocco.⁴ The daily Toulouse to Casablanca flight left southwest France in the early morning and landed in Morocco at four the next afternoon, barring mishap. Within two years, mail and passengers were routinely flown to Dakar, and by 1928, a full network of airmail routes was in place on the eastern side of the Atlantic.

On the western side, in South America, Marcel Bouilloux-Lafont became the point man for the monumental task of securing landing rights and establishing airfields in Brazil, from Natal in the north down the coast to Rio de Janeiro. This network eventually extended to Buenos Aires, Argentina, and farther south, as well as west from Argentina across the Andes to Santiago, Chile. In March 1928, Jean Mermoz and Henri Guillaumet were among the many pilots involved in the rollout of what was touted as a nine-day service between Paris and Buenos Aires. By that time, Marcel Bouilloux-Lafont had

126 Key Colony Court, Daytona Beach, Florida
32118, USA.

Correspondence: bluzeman1@hotmail.com

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FIGURE 1. Cover flown in May 1923 from Casablanca, Morocco, to Dakar, Senegal. Author's collection.

signed tentative agreements with the governments of Brazil and Argentina, so the pressure was on to move the mail as quickly as possible. Former World War I hero and airmail pilot Didier Daurat was the iron hand in charge of maintaining the schedule.

Figure 2 shows a cover carried on the inaugural flight of the new service. On 1 March, Mermoz flew the mail north from Buenos Aires but ran into mechanical problems and arrived late in Rio the next day.⁵ Pierre Deley then made a beeline for Recife in northern Brazil with the mail bags, which included the cover shown here, from Rio addressed to Paris. Unfortunately, as it carried the mail across the Atlantic, the ship (an “*aviso*,” a swift ship employed exclusively by the airline for mail service) also developed mechanical problems. The arrival backstamp of 14 March in Paris attests to a twelve-day airmail journey and thirteen days for mail from Buenos Aires.

Mail moving from France to South America on this 1928 inaugural effort included postcards, such as a registered postcard canceled in Nice on 29 February, with a special cachet in blue, dated 1 March, prepared by the “Friendly Aérophilately Club” of Nice (Figure 3).

The flight south left Toulouse on 2 March, and all went well for a while. But there was a two-day delay to retrieve mail out

of Casablanca from an aircraft that had run into high winds and gone down in the desert. After yet another aircraft malfunction, the *aviso Lunéville* departed from Cape Verde with the mail bags early on 7 March.⁶

What occurred after the bags arrived in Recife, Brazil, was an exercise in ineptitude that must have left the French wondering if they would ever catch a break. The mail bags from the second west-to-east trip up the coast from Buenos Aires were to be loaded onto the *Lunéville* for its return voyage to Africa. While sitting on the dock, however, those bags got switched with the bags from Europe that had just been offloaded from the *Lunéville*. The postcard from Nice, therefore, went chugging back toward Africa in those bags, which should have been flying to Buenos Aires. It was some time before pilot Pierre Deley noticed. While offloading the mail he had picked up in Recife to fly south to Buenos Aires, he realized he had the wrong bags. A subsequent radio dispatch to the *Lunéville*'s captain instructed him to turn back to Recife to correct the exchange of mail bags. The European mail finally arrived in Buenos Aires, with Mermoz flying the final leg, on 17 March, completing a bizarre fifteen-day journey from Toulouse to Buenos Aires. Aéropostale's much ballooned inaugural flight turned out to be nothing to boast about,



FIGURE 2. Cover created by Aéropostale for the March 1928 flight. Author's collection.

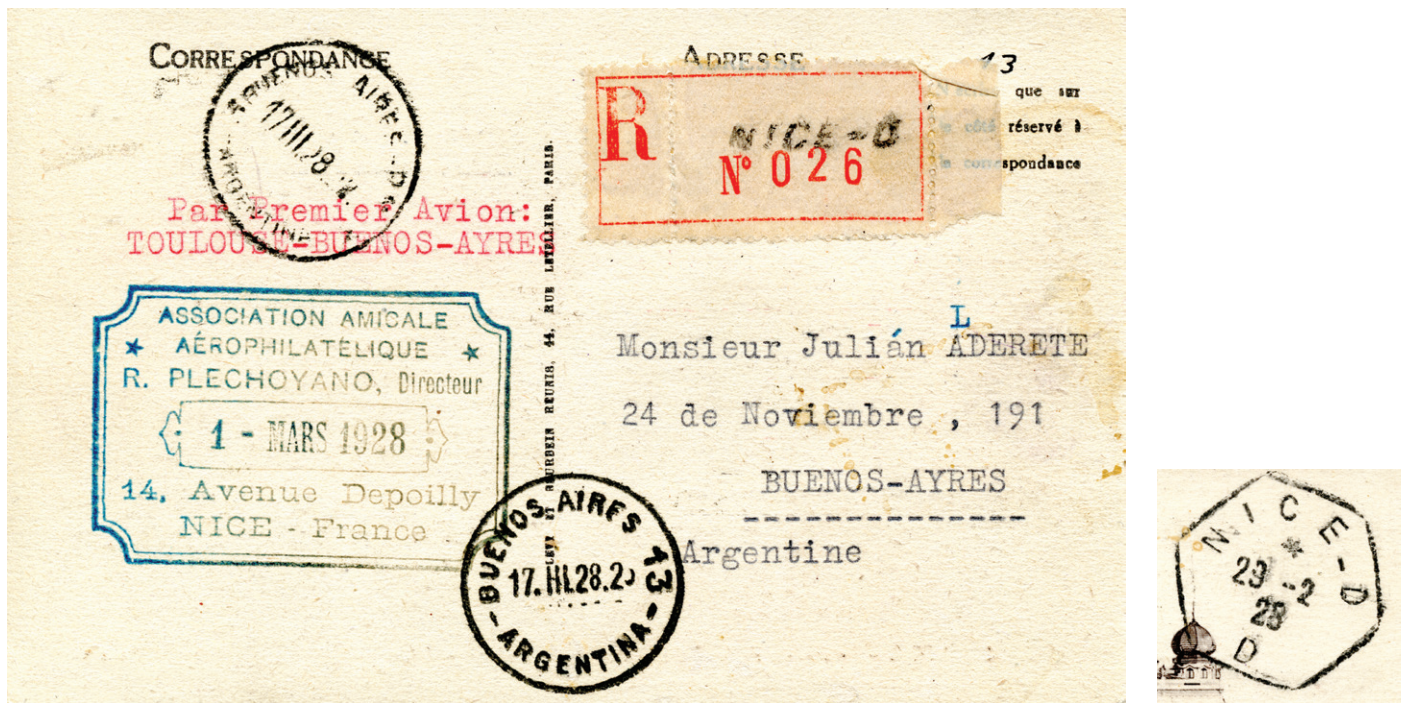


FIGURE 3. Picture postcard carried on the March 1928 inaugural: (left) address side and (right) cancel from picture side of the card. Author's collection.

but at least it could be said that the networks on both sides of the Atlantic were in place in anticipation of transatlantic flights.

A DAZZLING TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHT

Two years later, the first airmail flight across the South Atlantic left St. Louis, near Dakar on 12 May 1930. Flying for Aéropostale, Jean Mermoz and his crew of two—copilot Jean Dabry and radioman Léopold Gimie—took twenty-one hours to traverse the 3,200 km to Natal, Brazil in a single-engine float-plane, the Latécoère 28.⁷ Mail bags were offloaded at Natal and loaded onto a Latécoère 25, which Raymond Vanier flew down the coast to Rio de Janeiro. The flight included a registered cover canceled on 10 May in Paris and addressed to radioman Gimie (Figure 4). This cover was backstamped upon arrival in Natal rather than in Buenos Aires.

Mermoz, Dabry, and Gimie were to remain in Natal for the return flight to Europe; they may have wanted to have these precious souvenirs of their accomplishment in hand. Figure 5 shows another cover that made the full trip down to Buenos Aires,

backstamped there on 13 May and bearing a special cachet for the flight. The cachet was not applied to registered mail—hence its absence from the cover shown in Figure 4. Both covers were signed by Raymond Vanier, probably some years later.

This first transatlantic mail flight was obviously a great coup for the French as it came at the beginning of the new decade and heralded a new era for flying the mail. Yet not until 1936 did the French stamp a cachet on envelopes touting weekly all-air service for transatlantic mail (Figure 6). There were several reasons for this lag. One was that in 1933 Didier Daurat, then director of operations for Aéropostale, was fired. Another was the government's betrayal of Marcel Bouilloux-Lafont, who established the network of routes in South America, only to be denied the funding that was promised in 1933. The government liquidated Aéropostale in a move to consolidate five French airlines under the rubric of Air France. The year 1936 also brought the loss of two crews, including that of Mermoz, just at the point of realizing the goal of dependable service. These losses resulted in the phasing in of multiengine land-based aircraft rather than flying boats, a process begun as an experiment in 1935 but accelerated in 1936 and beyond.⁸



FIGURE 4. Cover carried by Jean Mermoz on the first transatlantic airmail flight: (left) front; (right) arrival backstamp applied on May 13 at Natal. Author's collection.



FIGURE 5. Paris to Rio cover from first transatlantic flight: (top) front, with address; (bottom) official flight cachet on reverse of cover. Author's collection.

MERMOZ ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE

To get a sense of the obstacles that initially confronted those who dreamed of flying the mail across the South Atlantic, we need only observe what followed the 1930 inaugural transatlantic mail flight. The twenty-one-hour, nonstop transatlantic flight from Senegal to Brazil went a long way toward establishing Jean Mermoz's legend. This dashing figure became known as one of

the most extraordinary pilots in aviation history. The return flight from Natal to Dakar, however, was far more typical of the difficulties of transoceanic flight. After three days and thirty-five fruitless attempts, beginning 8 June, to get the floatplane—laden with fuel and mail bags—to lift off the water, Mermoz reluctantly gave up, and the mail was loaded onto an aviso for the transatlantic passage.⁹ The mail included a postcard bearing the cachet for the anticipated return flight (Figure 7).



FIGURE 6. Cachet in red celebrating weekly all-airmail service. Author's collection.



FIGURE 7. Paraguay dispatch prepared for the aborted 8 June return flight by Jean Mermoz. Author's collection.



FIGURE 8. Cover carried on Jean Mermoz’s 8 July return flight: (left) front; (right) 16 July arrival backstamp. Author’s collection.



Exactly one month later, on 8 July, on the fifty-third attempt to take off from Natal, Mermoz did succeed in getting the aircraft to break loose from the surface of the water. Once airborne, he flew for fourteen hours, at which point an oil leak developed, forcing him to land the plane in the open ocean near one of three support ships positioned at intervals along the flight’s route. From there, the mail and the crew were ferried the final 900 km to the African coast, where the mail bags were loaded onto another aircraft and flown on to Casablanca and Toulouse.¹⁰ In a final indignity, one of the floats on the Latécoère 28 developed a leak, and Mermoz’s now-famous aircraft, the *Comte de la Vaulx*, disappeared beneath the waves. Understandably, there was no special cachet applied to the retrieved mail. Figure 8 shows a 4 July cover from Buenos Aires with the receiving backstamp applied in Paris on 16 July, identifying it as having been carried on that return flight.¹¹ Transatlantic mail flights are numbered here using Pierre Labrousse’s system. The 12 May flight from east to west is designated “1A,” and the 8 July return flight is “1R.”¹²

It would be three years before the French deployed the Couzinet 70 *Arc-en-Ciel*, a three-engine, land-based aircraft. Mermoz led a five-man crew and even brought on aircraft designer René Couzinet. A card commemorating flight 2A features images of the crew members and the aircraft (Figure 9).

By 1933, the aircraft was ready; dependable runways were not. Runways were often unpaved, and their problems included uneven ground caused by termite mounds and frequent muddy conditions. The German practice was to stick to flying boats,

FIGURE 9. The Couzinet 70 *Arc-en-Ciel* and its crew, with René Couzinet at left and Jean Mermoz at top right. Author’s collection.



FIGURE 10. Commemorative first-day cover featuring the four-engine Latécoère 300 *Croix du Sud*. Author's collection.

obviating the need for landing fields. Deutsche Lufthansa had also used catapult flights launched from ocean liners; it parlayed that experience into a system whereby a Dornier Wal was mounted on a catapult rail on a specially outfitted ship. Leaving the African coast at Bathurst, British Gambia (now Banjul, the Gambia), the ship steamed west for the better part of a day, and the mail plane was launched from it; as the plane neared the opposite coast, it landed on the water near a similar ship that would retrieve it with a deck-mounted crane. The mail was then sped to port in Brazil. The return flight proceeded along similar lines.¹³

In 1934, Deutsche Lufthansa was using the catapult system on twice-monthly flights. Air France, however, largely carried mail across the Atlantic by ship. Mermoz's inaugural 1933 flight in the *Arc-en-Ciel* took less than fifteen hours—an obvious leap forward. Because of problems with unpaved runways, however, it was months before he was able to make the return trip. The value of a multiengine aircraft became evident on return flight 2R on 15 May 1933. After one malfunctioning engine was shut down, the flight proceeded safely and took less than eighteen hours.¹⁴ Air France completed eight round-trip transatlantic mail flights in 1934, compared to twenty-three German flights, plus twelve more by the *Graf Zeppelin*.¹⁵ Three of the Air France round-trips were completed by Mermoz in the *Arc-en-Ciel*. Another three were completed in a newly developed four-engine flying boat, the sleek Latécoère 300; its first example was the *Croix du Sud* (Figure 10). The final two trips of 1934, in November and December, were carried out in the Blériot 5190

Santos-Dumont, a four-engine flying boat (Figure 11). Nicknamed “the ugly duckling,” this aircraft would achieve a perfect record for dependability; yet only a single example was put into service, as France's air ministry, always leaning toward Pierre Latécoère, favored his ill-fated design.

INFIGHTING AND TRAGEDY

The airline business involves complicated negotiations with foreign governments and extensive and expensive infrastructure. The businessman who heroically worked to establish the network of routes that gave Aéropostale a strong foundation in the late 1920s and early 1930s for flying the mail between Europe and South America was its director, Marcel Bouilloux-Lafont. Unfortunately, the French government pulled the rug out from under him in refusing to deliver on the promise of continued financial support. Aéropostale was summarily snatched from Bouilloux-Lafont's grasp. In October 1933, the five French airlines were nationalized and grouped under a single name, Air France.¹⁶ The purple boxed cachet on the cover shown in Figure 12 reflects the new designation, though obviously there were plenty of Aéropostale envelopes to be used up.

Treachery in high places also struck the aircraft manufacturers, as the government eventually sold out two other firms in favor of Latécoère. In 1934, the young designer René Couzinet signed a contract to produce an updated version of his model 70, the three-engine, land-based, transatlantic aircraft that Mermoz

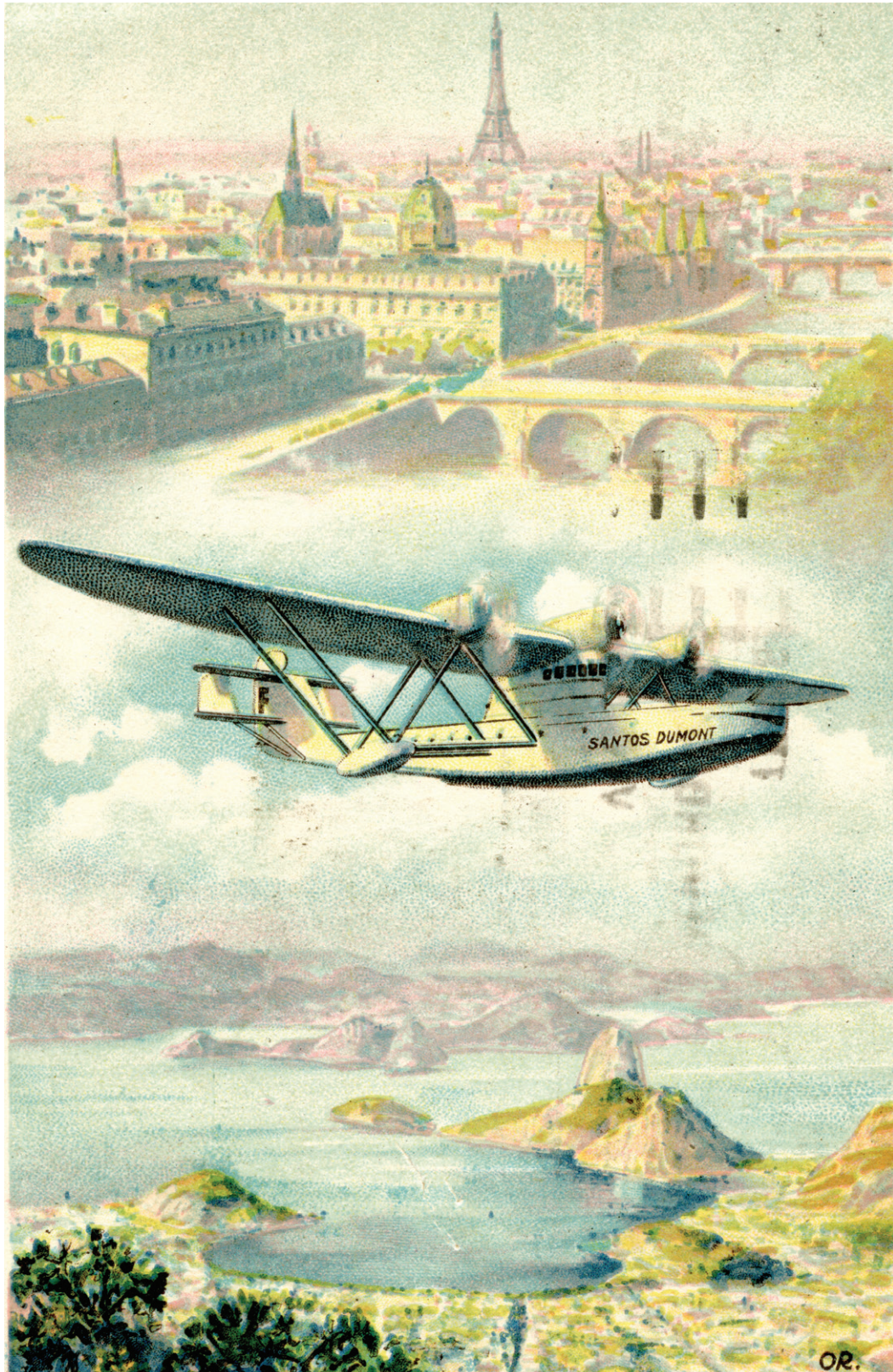


FIGURE 11. Air France postcard featuring the four-engine Blériot 5190 *Santos-Dumont*. Author's collection.



FIGURE 12. Leftover *Aéropostale* envelope stamped “Via ‘Air France’” in June 1934. Author’s collection.

so warmly endorsed. Within a year, the government reneged on the contract. Likewise, la Société Blériot Aéronautique contracted to produce three more specimens of the 5190, the dependable flying boat that ultimately shared with the Couzinet 70 the distinction of never having failed on a transatlantic mission. At this same time, Louis Blériot borrowed five million francs and set up production under a contract that was suddenly declared null and void. That left Blériot—the first man to fly the channel between France and England and a revered national hero who had been awarded the Legion of Honor—financially destitute. He died of a heart attack in 1936.¹⁷

The unfortunate political infighting that resulted in the demise of *Aéropostale* and the birth of Air France demoralized the staff of administrators and pilots. It is unsurprising that Air France struggled mightily in 1934 to complete eight roundtrip transatlantic mail flights as it strove to emulate the consistency of its German competition. And yet, a cover carried by Mermoz on flight 4A demonstrates Air France’s potential for success during that pivotal year; this letter was posted in Nice at 4:30 p.m. on 25 May and addressed to Buenos Aires (Figure 13).

France’s internal airmail network did not include Nice until 1938. This cover traveled by train to Marseilles, where it was backstamped at 11:30 p.m. the same night, 25 May. The mail destined for South America was flown via the long-established route through Barcelona and Casablanca before being loaded onto the Couzinet 70 aircraft for the transatlantic flight. Flight 4A departed from St. Louis, the airfield at Dakar, Senegal, very early on the morning of 28 May, with Jean Mermoz at

the controls of the Couzinet *Arc-en-Ciel*. His crew included the two men who had made the historic 1930 flight with him, Dabry and Gimié, and his favorite mechanic, Collenot. Pierre Labrousse lists the flying time to Brazil for flight 4A as sixteen hours and ten minutes—an excellent run by Mermoz in his favorite aircraft on its second east-to-west transatlantic journey. The letter was backstamped upon arrival in Buenos Aires at midnight on 29 May, capping a four-and-one-half-day journey from Nice. Clearly, the potential was there for the French to realize their dream.

The winning company for the contract to make Air France’s aircraft was Latécoère. It was founded in 1918 by Pierre Latécoère, whose vision lay behind the coastal African routes that *Aéropostale* developed. The French government paid the manufacturer of the Latécoère 300 *Croix du Sud* to build three more of the four-engine flying boats; the new ones, designated model 301, were completed and entered service during 1935–1936.¹⁸

Two of the four 300/301 aircraft would be lost in the open ocean in 1936, along with two of Air France’s most talented pilots, Jean Ponce and Jean Mermoz. Indeed, scarcely had the fanfare in January 1936 over the inauguration of weekly all-air transatlantic service subsided when Jean Ponce and his crew went down off the coast of Brazil in bad weather on 10 February.¹⁹ Among those lost was the mechanic Alexandre Collenot, the man who had found a way to patch their aircraft and repair the engine when they crashed on a frozen ledge high in the Andes in 1929.²⁰ Then, as that first year of weekly transatlantic flights drew to a close, Mermoz was lost. On the morning of

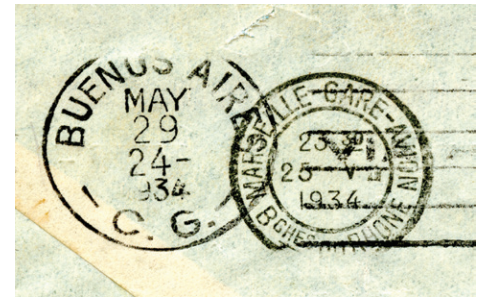


FIGURE 13. Cover posted in May 1934, Nice to Buenos Aires, delivered by Air France in less than five days: (left) front; (above) transit backstamp applied at Marseille and receiving backstamp applied at Buenos Aires. Author's collection.

7 December 1936, Mermoz departed from Dakar only to turn back for repairs after encountering an engine malfunction. An oil leak had fouled the electrical system in one engine. Rather than wait for a replacement aircraft, Mermoz took off after the oil was sopped up. If the engine had to be shut down in flight, so be it—they would continue with three good engines. One-third of the way across the Atlantic, the crew radioed that the engine was being shut down and the propeller “feathered” (allowed to turn freely). A violent noise was heard before the radio transmission cut off. That was the last transmission received before the aircraft went down, never to be found.²¹

COMPETITION GIVES WAY TO COOPERATION

In one early year of transatlantic round-trip flights, 1934, the Germans completed almost three times as many as the French: twenty-three compared to eight. In 1935, the French came much closer to achieving biweekly service, completing twenty-one round-trip flights, but the Germans moved toward weekly service with thirty-nine total round trips.²² That year, the French and Germans signed an agreement to cooperate in their transatlantic efforts.²³ And in 1936, Air France completed forty-one of forty-three trips attempted, while Deutsche Lufthansa completed a comparable number, forty catapult round trips.²⁴ That total was supplemented by mail-carrying round trips by their airships, the *Graf Zeppelin* and the *Hindenburg*. In 1937, the French finally achieved the goal of weekly airmail flights between Europe and South America.

By that year, the French and Germans had developed a coordinated system: Air France and Deutsche Lufthansa staggered their flights to depart and return three or four days apart. Those of us who have been bitten by the bug of collecting South Atlantic airmail covers have learned a rule of thumb for this period of cooperation: a cover received in Europe or down the coast of South America on a Monday is likely to have been carried by Deutsche Lufthansa; one with a Thursday-receiving backstamp was likely carried by Air France.

The two airlines continued twice-weekly service until 1939. After invading Poland on 1 September 1939, Germany ceased airmail flights to South America. One piece of commercial mail that was postmarked in Poland on 18 August 1939, barely two weeks before the German invasion, was carried by Air France on flight 213A, which left Dakar on 21 August (Figure 14). The cover has a receiving cancel of 23 August in Buenos Aires, confirming that it was then possible to expect five-day service between Poland and Argentina—a feat that might be hard to match today. The sobering thought, however, is that within two weeks of the posting of this letter, business as usual essentially ended for the embattled Polish people.

Despite the outbreak of World War II, the French would continue their weekly transatlantic mail flights for ten months more, as indicated by a commercial letter posted in Valparaiso, Chile, on 7 June 1940 (with the typed endorsement “Via Air France!”) carried on flight 253R, which left Natal on June 10 (Figure 15). Typically for mail addressed to England, there is no receiving backstamp, but the cover’s glaring feature is a wartime marking, the British censor’s tape. It might be noted that, despite their flair for design, for transoceanic mail flights the



FIGURE 14. Cover sent from Poland to Argentina in five days, via Air France, August 1939: (left) receiving backstamp, 23 August; (right) postmark on front, 18 August. Author’s collection.



FIGURE 15. Air France cover from Chile censored in England, June 1940. Author’s collection.

French came to employ the Farman 2200 aircraft, which was dependable to a fault but singularly unattractive. It was an adaptation of a military bomber that never saw wartime service because the French government capitulated to the Germans in 14 June 1940.

CONCLUSION

Given France’s terrible experiences during World War II, it is not surprising that the 1930s airmail triumphs, which are typically referred to as “Ligne Mermoz,” continue to be fervently celebrated up to the present time. With figures discussed here—Jean Mermoz, Henri Guillaumet, and Didier Daurat—as well as pilot and author Antoine de St. Exupéry—burning so brightly in its aeronautical pantheon, French aviation, in particular the effort to move the mail across the South Atlantic, has left an amazing legacy despite the many different risks and complications that overwater flight imposed in the 1930s. Establishing an extensive system of airmail delivery across three continents and rendering transatlantic airmail flight a routine affair, as the French did between 1937 and 1940, is undeniably an achievement to be celebrated.

NOTES

1. Gerard Collot and Alain Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz: Histoire aérophilatélique, Latécoère, Aéropostale, Air France, 1918–1940* (Paris: Editions Bertrand Sinais, 1990), 9.
2. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 35.
3. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 36.
4. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 31.
5. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 96.
6. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 89.
7. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 148.

8. See Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 195, regarding Mermoz's differences with France's air ministry over the virtues of land-based aircraft. For an account of Mermoz's feelings about the Latécoère 300 flying boat, see Benoit Heimermann and Olivier Margot, *L'Aéropostale: La fabuleuse épopée de Mermoz, Saint-Exupéry, Guillaumet* (Paris: Artaud, 2003), 177.
9. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 152.
10. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 154.
11. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 155.
12. Labrousse originally presented this system in 1974. Pierre Labrousse, *Répertoire des traversées aériennes de l'Atlantique Sud par l'Aéropostale et Air-France, 1930–1940* (Libourne: Self-pub., 1974), 12–13.
13. James W. Graue and John Duggan, *Deutsche Lufthansa: South Atlantic Airmail Service, 1934–1939* (Ickenham, England: Zeppelin Study Group, 2000), 6–7.
14. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 193.
15. Labrousse, *Répertoire des traversées aériennes*, 12–13; Graue and Duggan, *Deutsche Lufthansa*, 150–154, 186–190.
16. Guillemette de Bure, *Les secrets de l'Aéropostale: Les années Bouilloux-Lafont, 1926–1944* (Toulouse: Editions Privat, 2006), 153–325.
17. Heimermann and Margot, *L'Aéropostale*, 175–176.
18. Heimermann and Margot, *L'Aéropostale*, 176.
19. Collot and Cornu, *Ligne Mermoz*, 216.
20. For a version of this event based on interviews with Mermoz, see Joseph Kessel, "Le plateau des trois condors," in *Mermoz* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938; folio edition, 1965), 288–310.
21. Heimermann and Margot, *L'Aéropostale*, 177.
22. Labrousse, *Répertoire des traversées*, 14–17; Graue and Duggan, *Deutsche Lufthansa*, 155–160, 191–197.
23. James Graue, president of the American Airmail Society, has indicated to me that he found the agreement in the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin Archiv: 17/0445 in the Zeppelin Museum in Friedrichshafen, Germany. (Personal communication, April 2015.)
24. Labrousse, *Répertoire des traversées*, 17–23; Graue and Duggan, *Deutsche Lufthansa*, 161–167, 198–204.

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The Development of Air Mail in Yugoslavia and Its Importance within Europe and to North America in the Early Years of World War II

Ratomir Zivkovic

ABSTRACT. Not much is known about the airmail from southeastern European countries like Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey, or from the Middle East during the early years of World War II. This article explores the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's role. Strategically located in the southeast of Europe, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia played a significant role in the expansion of the European airline system between the two World Wars. It served as one of the most important links between Western Europe and Greece on the air routes to West Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. It also created/supported the only regular airline service from southeastern Europe through Italy to Lisbon in Portugal, which created a connection to Pan American Airways's intercontinental service to the United States during the initial stages of World War II in Europe.

INTRODUCTION

As early as 1938, there were visible signs that war on European soil was imminent. World War II broke out the following year with the German attack on Poland on September 1, 1939. On September 3, 1939, France and Great Britain entered the war. This paper discusses the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's position and role in the expansion of the European airline system between the two World Wars, as well as its connection with the newly established Pan American Airways (Pan Am) transatlantic service through Italy in the initial stages of World War II in Europe.¹ The beginning of the war not only disrupted civil aviation within Europe but also resulted in the temporary discontinuation of transatlantic service between Europe and the United States, which Pan Am had just established. On September 6, 1939, Pan Am changed the terminus of its southern route. Under "US Foreign Contract Air Mail Route No. 18" (FAM-18), the company replaced Marseille, France, with Lisbon, Portugal, a neutral country. The Italian airline, Ala Littoria already had a service from Lisbon to Rome, whence the route east to Belgrade, Yugoslavia, and Bucharest, Romania, was serviced jointly with the local airlines, the Yugoslav Aeroput and Romanian Lares. In addition, Rome was linked by Ala Littoria service south to Greece and the Middle East, and north to Germany. These became the sole remaining European west-to-east airmail links that had a regular connection with the Pan Am service to the United States from Lisbon. Additional service by Italian Avio Linee Italiane SA, Yugoslav Aeroput, and Romanian Lares from Bucharest, Romania, to Belgrade and Zagreb,

40 West 86th Street, New York, New York
10024, USA.

Correspondence: ratkoz10@aol.com

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Yugoslavia, west to Trieste and Venice and Milan, Italy, and continued with Ala Littoria from Rome to Lisbon. Romanian, Yugoslav, and Italian companies serviced this so-called “route of the 45th parallel.”² Advantageously positioned on this route, Yugoslavia played a role in providing mail service from eastern Europe and Turkey to the United States and South America.

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AIRMAIL IN THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

FRENCH AIRLINES: THE COMPAGNIE FRANCO-ROUMAINE DE LA NAVIGATION AÉRIENNE (CFRNA) AND THE COMPAGNIE INTERNATIONALE DE LA NAVIGATION AÉRIENNE (CIDNA)

After World War I ended, a group of young Serbian veteran pilots who had fought for the French army in the war realized the importance of air transportation and airmail service. On October 22, 1921, in Belgrade, they formed Our Wings Aero-Club (Aeroklub Naša Krila).³ Its initial goal was to establish international airmail service to and from the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca), which

would, in January 1929, be renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Kraljevina Jugoslavija).

Stretched between central and southeastern Europe, Yugoslavia had a good geographical position but had weak infrastructure. It strived to develop airmail service and a domestic airline company. Commercial airplanes frequently had to land there for refueling. Moreover, because aircraft could only fly during daylight hours at that time, pilots flying over Yugoslav territory easily followed the path of the Danube River east to Belgrade and Bucharest, Romania, and the Morava and Vardar River valleys south to Salonika and Athens, Greece. The map in Figure 1 traces the first transcontinental air service by CFRNA, from Paris to Istanbul through Belgrade.

The Compagnie Franco-Roumaine de la Navigation Aérienne, CFRNA, a French-Romanian airline, formed on January 1, 1920. Within two years, it had created the first intercontinental air service connecting Paris to Bucharest and to Istanbul, Turkey. In the early 1920s, air routes avoided high mountain ranges and had to make frequent stops. CFRNA decided to develop a route between Paris and Istanbul as the final destination with stops in Strasbourg, France; east to Nuremberg, Germany; Prague, Czechoslovakia; Vienna, Austria; and south to Budapest,

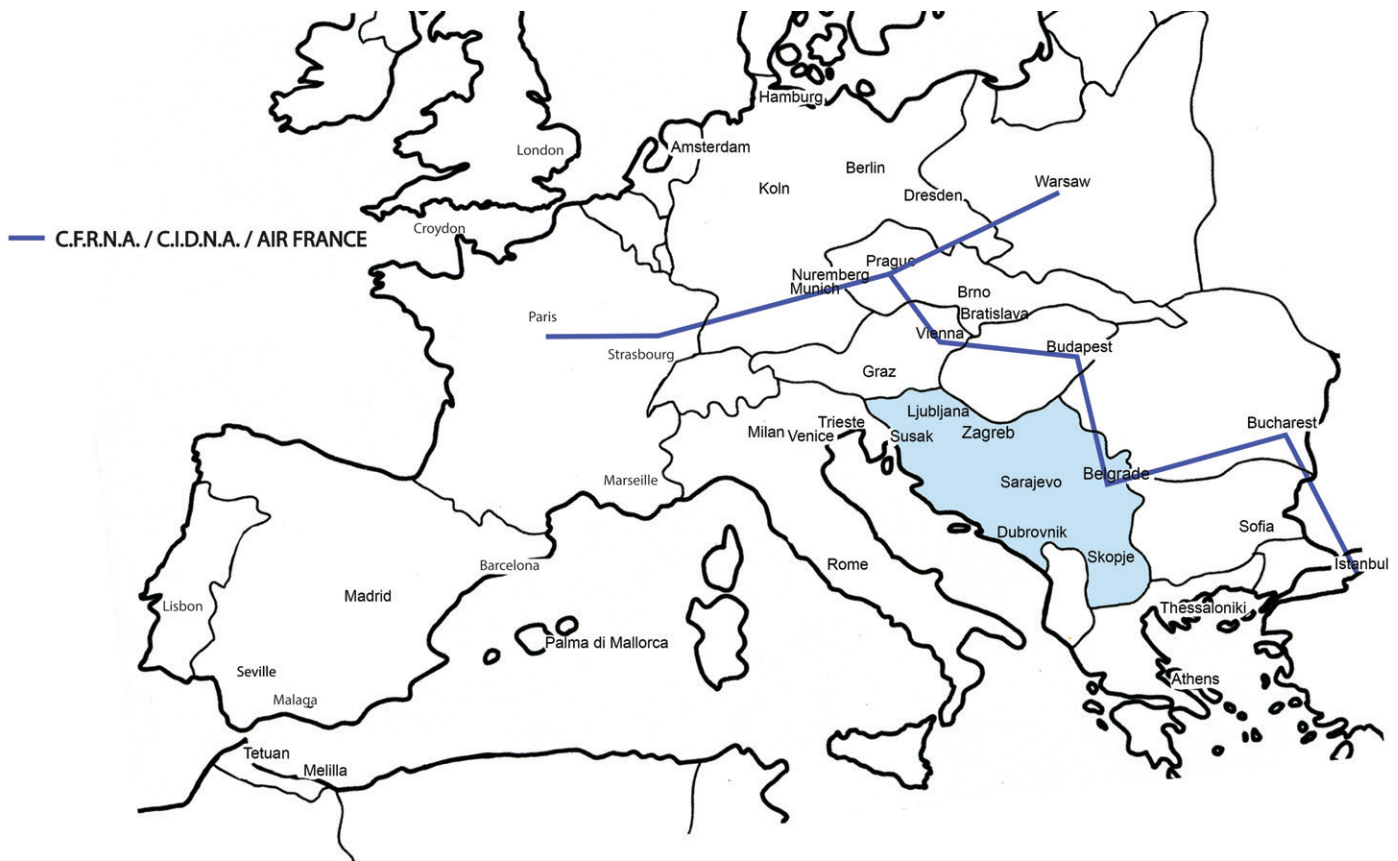


FIGURE 1. A map of the first transcontinental air service by CFRNA, from Paris to Istanbul through Belgrade. Created by the author with assistance from Bill Buralow.

Hungary; Belgrade, Yugoslavia; and Bucharest, Romania. An additional service went west and connected Prague with Warsaw, Poland. After protracted negotiations, in March 1923 the Yugoslav government granted a concession to and signed an agreement on air carriage with CFRNA, which enabled the airline to launch the service on April 15, 1923, from Belgrade's temporary airport in Pančevo, incorporating this stop into its Paris–Istanbul route. Figure 2 shows the only known postcard flown on the first Belgrade to Paris flight on April 16, 1923.

Within Yugoslavia, mail was flown only from Belgrade to cities along the route to Paris, so mail originating from other Yugoslav cities had to be taken to Belgrade by land first. The post office in the city of origin canceled the international postage, and the post office in Belgrade canceled, in red, the airmail surcharge (Figure 2). In 1926, the Yugoslav government renewed its initial agreement with CFRNA, whose name changed to Compagnie Internationale de la Navigation Aérienne (CIDNA), and, in 1933, they renewed the agreement with Air France, the successor of CFRNA and CIDNA.

In 1926, the Yugoslav government also signed an agreement with the Deutsche Reichpost to use Belgrade's Pančevo Airport for airmail parcels to Germany. CIDNA flew mail to Nuremberg then through Germany and other cities serviced by Deutsche Luft Hansa A.G. (Luft Hansa), the German airline.

THE YUGOSLAV DOMESTIC AIRLINE: AEROPUT

A domestic commercial airline, Air Transportation Association Ltd. (Društvo za vazdušni saobraćaj AD), or Aeroput, was formed on May 29, 1927, largely through the initiative and tremendous effort of the Naša Krila Club's members. Aeroput ordered its first two Potez 29 airplanes from France. Its first domestic flight took place on February 15, 1928, from Belgrade to Zagreb. Daily service from Zagreb provided an Aeroput feeder service for international flights from Zemun Airport near Belgrade. The new Zemun Airport, which had opened in March 1927, replaced the Pančevo temporary airport. Figure 3 shows the cover from the first Aeroput flight between Belgrade to Zagreb, which was flown on February 15, 1928.

Soon after it began operations, Aeroput became a member of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The company's long-term goal was to connect all the major domestic cities by air and to expand service internationally by flying in cooperation with other European airlines, thereby linking Vienna and central Europe to Athens in southern Europe. In 1929, another new airport opened in Skopje, Macedonia, then the southern part of Yugoslavia. This airport enabled necessary landings for the Athens flights. In the northwest, airports in Sušak/Rijeka, Croatia, and Ljubljana, Slovenia, opened in 1930 and 1933



FIGURE 2. The only known postcard flown on the first Belgrade to Paris flight on April 16, 1923. Due to severe weather, the flight took five days to reach Paris. Author's collection.



FIGURE 3. The cover from the first Aeroput flight between Belgrade to Zagreb, which was flown on February 15, 1928. The same-day Zagreb arrival cancel is on the back. Author's collection.

respectively, providing additional connections to Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Following the signing of “The Hague Protocol” at the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Administrative Conference on Air Mail in the Hague in September 1927, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia established a comprehensive system of airmail postal rates.⁴ In 1930, Yugoslavia introduced intercontinental airmail surcharge rates for the first time.

EUROPEAN AIRLINE SERVICE TO THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA, 1929–1937

In the late 1920s, major European airlines started expanding their networks in eastern and southern Europe, aiming to reach Athens in order to extend operations to their colonial possessions and to gain new markets in the Far East and East Africa. Athens became a hub for all major airlines flying east and south. These routes frequently required airlines to use Yugoslavia's airspace and airports. As Eda Kranakis highlighted, “despite national sovereignty over airspace and the growing dominance of subsidized national airlines, civil aviation in interwar Europe was nevertheless a transnational project in which international routes were often pooled. Yet the pools and other forms of aviation co-operation were largely invisible to general public. Such co-operation amounted to a form of hidden integration.”⁵

Both CIDNA, the French carrier, and Imperial Airways, the British airline that later became the British Overseas Air Company (BOAC), were already flying to Athens. In addition, Germany's Luft Hansa and other European airlines introduced trial flights and negotiated the use of the Yugoslav airspace and airports. These developments matched Aeroput's long-term goal of becoming one of the international air companies connecting western and southeastern Europe.

In 1929, Aeroput and the Austrian company *Österreichische Luftverkehrs AG (ÖLAG)* agreed to start temporary air service on a route between Belgrade and Zagreb in Yugoslavia and Graz and Vienna in Austria. Trial flights were carried out between October 9 and 11, 1929. ÖLAG, Aeroput, and CIDNA signed a pool agreement.⁶ Regular service, which created a link between Vienna and Athens, began on March 31, 1930. During 1933, Ljubljana and Sušak/Rijeka in northwest Yugoslavia were added as destinations to the ÖLAG and Aeroput pool service.

In July 1930, *Airpost Journal* announced “The Vienna-Zagreb-Belgrade-Scopia (Uskuub) line, operated by a Yugoslavian company, was extended to Salonica on May 2nd 1930. . . . Airmail from Central and Northern Europe for Greece will now be carried over this route. At the Belgrade collecting point Zemun Aerodrome, a triangular (Yugoslavian-French) postmark is applied to the mail.”⁷ Figure 4 shows a cover from an October 9–11, 1929, Zagreb–Graz–Vienna flight.



FIGURE 4. Mail cover flown on the experimental flight Zagreb–Graz–Vienna on October 9 to 11, 1929, in one of the first pool arrangements for international flights between Aeroput and Austria’s ÖLAG. Author’s collection.



FIGURE 5. Commercial cover Belgrade–Dresden flown on June 30, 1930. Arrivals cancel in Berlin and Dresden on the back are dated July 2. Author’s collection.

On March 21, 1927, Luft Hansa inaugurated Line 017, a new service from Berlin, via Dresden and Prague to Vienna, planning to extend it over the Balkans to Belgrade and to Istanbul, Turkey. Figure 5 shows a cover from a Belgrade–Dresden flight on June 30, 1930. Trial flights to Yugoslavia and Turkey were

carried out between October 25 to 29, 1929. On May 5, 1930, Luft Hansa extended a regular southbound service of Line 017 from Vienna to Budapest, Hungary; Belgrade; Sofia, Bulgaria; and, finally, Istanbul, Turkey.

In 1932, Luft Hansa extended its Balkan service from Belgrade with a leg to Athens, where it linked to the French, English, and Dutch services to the Far East and Africa. In 1937, ÖLAG joined the pool service with Deutsche Lufthansa (as the airline was known beginning in 1933) and Aeroput, adding service to Sofia, Bulgaria, and to Salonika and Athens, Greece.

Other airlines also used Yugoslav airspace. Czechoslovakoslovenski Statni Aerolinie (CSA) started operating a service to the Croatian coast during the summer of 1930 with a line from Prague, Brno, and Bratislava to Zagreb. Croatia and its beautiful Adriatic coast were very attractive to Czechoslovakian tourists, and this new service proved very successful. The domestic airline Aeroput connected Sušak Airport (Rijeka) to this route. The CSA proposed to the Yugoslav authorities to extend its service to Split and Dubrovnik, but rights were not granted to this foreign airline. The Dutch airline, Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij (KLM), also used Yugoslav airspace, landing in Belgrade for refueling on the route from Amsterdam to Batavia, Netherlands East Indies (now Jakarta, Indonesia).

In late 1929, the British Imperial Airways decided to change the route from Croydon/London to Athens, switching from the southern, Mediterranean route through Italy to a more northern one through central Europe that required that it to use Yugoslav airspace. The reason for this change was a disagreement with the

Italian government, which led to the Italians' refusal to allow British airplanes to enter Italy from France. During the winter of 1929, Imperial Airways started operating the London–Athens line through Cologne, Nuremberg, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Skopje, and Salonika. The planes of the time could not stay in the air very long and frequently touched down to refuel, because of poor weather conditions, or to avoid high mountains. Yugoslavia was well positioned as an access point for flights to Greece. However, poor weather impeded regular service, and most mail to Athens was carried by rail. In 1931, Imperial Airways resolved the disagreement with Italy and decided to return to flying its Mediterranean route to Athens from Brindisi, Italy.

EXPANSION OF ITALIAN AIRLINES IN THE 1930S

By 1936, all the major European airlines had service to Yugoslavia, and many of these lines were flown in pool with the Yugoslav company Aeroput. Italy was the only neighboring country without direct air service to Yugoslavia. Figure 6 shows

the network of European airline service to Yugoslavia and southeastern Europe in 1936.

In the mid-1930s, the Italian government decided to affirm its strength in the field of aviation. In 1934, Ala Littoria, a new, government-owned company, was created through the merger of four existing private companies: Società Aerea Mediterranea, Società Anonima Navigazione Aerea, Società Italiana Servizi Aerei, and Aero Espresso Italiana. The only private airline left in operation in Italy was Avio Linee Italiane SA (ALI), which Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino (FIAT) had formed in 1926 (ALI primarily flew national routes but also serviced some routes to western and northern Europe).

Ala Littoria was formed to establish new international routes in Europe, northern Africa, and the Middle East. One of its goals was to expand its network in eastern and southern Europe by starting services to Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary, Albania, and Greece. In eastern Europe in the late 1930s, German influence was growing while Italy tried to extend its political reach. The Italians already had a strong position in parts of Yugoslavia, Albania, and Romania. Developing air service to these countries was considered extremely important.

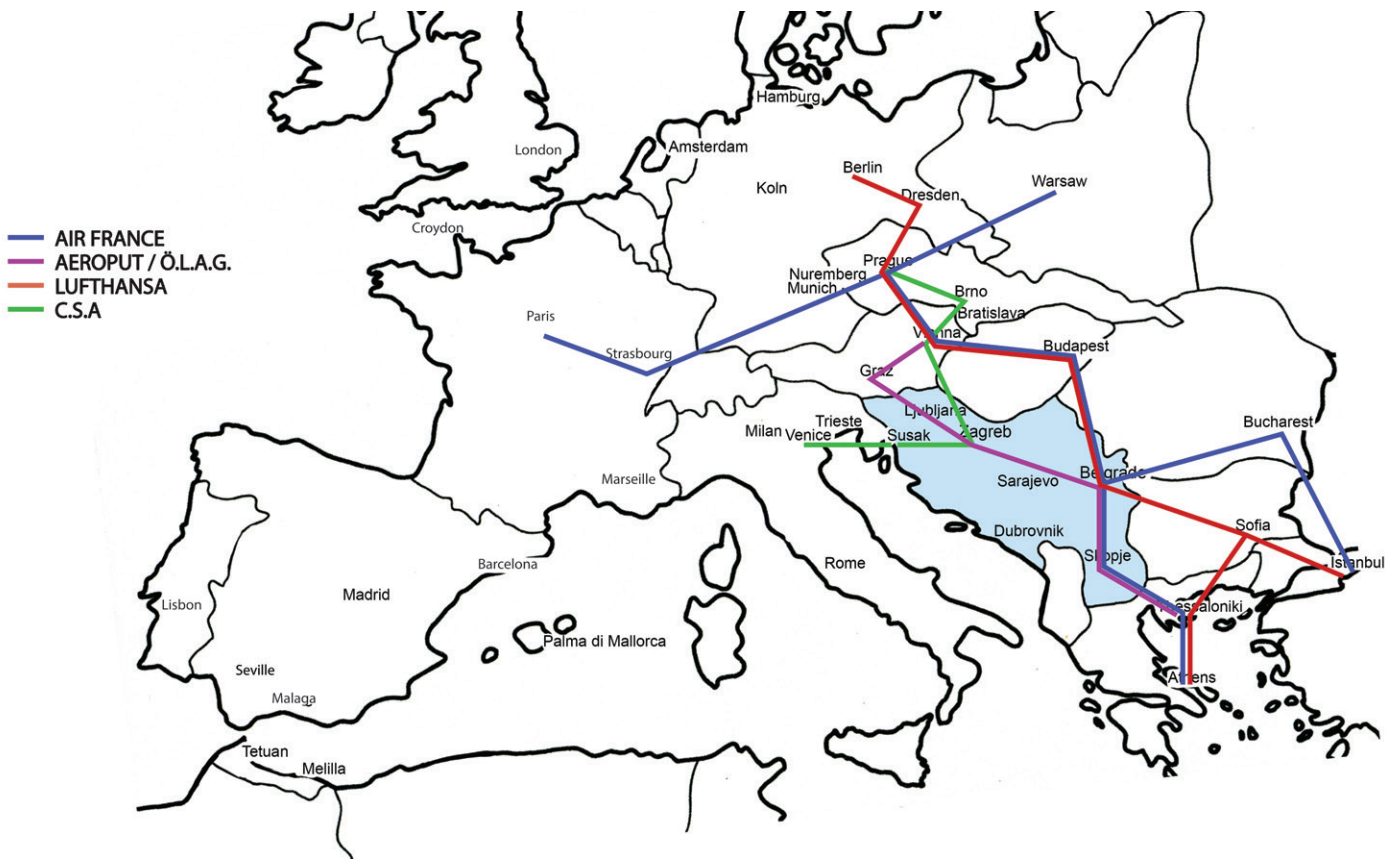


FIGURE 6. The network of European airline service to Yugoslavia and southeastern Europe in 1936. Created by the author with assistance from Bill Burcalow.



FIGURE 7. Front and back of First-Day card with the logos of Ala Littoria, Aeroput, and Lares commemorating the flight from Rome to Belgrade and Bucharest on October 5, 1937. Author's collection.



Count Ciano, Italy's minister of foreign affairs at the time and Benito Mussolini's son-in-law, visited Belgrade on May 25 and 26, 1937, meeting with his Yugoslav government counterparts to sign an agreement for five years of peace in the Adriatic. He also presented a proposal to open two new airmail routes from Italy to Yugoslavia and Romania. In September 1937, an agreement was signed among the Italian, Yugoslav, and Romanian government agencies in charge of air transport. They decided to establish a direct service from Rome to Belgrade and Bucharest within no more than two years. This direct route was to be serviced in partnership among Ala Littoria, Aeroput, and the Romanian airline Lares. They also agreed on a second feeder service, a so-called "route of the 45th parallel" from Turin through Milan and Venice, Trieste, Zagreb, and Belgrade to Bucharest; this was a pool between ALI, Aeroput, and Lares. Italy pushed hard for the initiation of the service to Yugoslavia and Romania as an addition to its existing service to Greece, Palestine, and East Africa.

The first flight on the new Line 425 from Bucharest to Belgrade and Rome took place that same year, on October 4, 1937. Later that month, flights started on Line 560 from Turin through Milan, Venice, Trieste, Zagreb, and Belgrade, where they connected with Line 425 to Bucharest. Figure 7 shows cards commemorating the first flight from Rome to Belgrade and Bucharest.

The two new southern European services intersected in Belgrade with Air France's west to east, Paris to Athens, service. They also crossed paths with Lufthansa's north to south Lines 17, 117, and 107 from Berlin via Munich, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, and Belgrade to Athens with an extension from Budapest to Bucharest and Istanbul. Service between Bucharest and Istanbul

replaced the service between Belgrade, Sofia, and Istanbul, which was reestablished again in 1940.

At about the same time, Ala Littoria began a service on its Line 405/480/481 from Rome to Lisbon, Portugal via Palma di Mallorca, Melilla, Malaga, and Seville—all of these cities were part of Spain at the time except Melilla, which was a Spanish possession bordering Morocco. Because Italy could not reach an agreement with France, this service ran south through Melilla. The new Italian services created a southern corridor between southeastern Europe and the Atlantic Coast.

The detour from Palma, on the island of Mallorca, Spain, in the Balearic Sea, to Melilla in North Africa, was necessitated by the Spanish Civil War. Spanish republican forces controlled Barcelona and the Catalan littoral until the very end of the civil war. Nominally neutral France sympathized with the Spanish Republic and refused the use of its air space to the Italian carrier.

In 1938, their first year of service, both lines between Italy, Yugoslavia, and Romania operated from May 1 to October 1 without much fanfare. It did not seem, however, that the lines' service had commercial value, because routes operating between eastern and western Europe via the shorter northern route through Austria, Germany, and France were more established. It

seems that both the Bucharest–Belgrade–Rome service and the “route of 45th parallel” through Zagreb, Trieste, and Milan operated only in support of the Italian government's politics and of the prestige and position in the Balkans that Mussolini was craving.

In 1939, flights on both lines started on April 17, and the Italian, Yugoslav, and Romanian airlines agreed to operate them until October 7. Following the outbreak of the war in September, the Italian government realized the importance of its eastern European services. At a meeting in Rome organized with the heads of the Greek, Romanian, Hungarian, and Yugoslav air companies, Italy proposed to continue the operation of the lines during the winter. The Yugoslav government agreed and sustained its operation until November 14, 1939. Between November and April, mail from Istanbul, Sofia, Bucharest, and Belgrade was flown exclusively with Lufthansa service to Vienna and then from Munich to Rome. Lufthansa operated six flights per week year-round. Service from eastern Europe to Rome and on to Portugal became crucial as western European air service was severely disrupted by the expanding war. The map in Figure 8 traces the Ala Littoria service from Bucharest and Belgrade to Rome and on to Lisbon, and feeder service through Trieste and Venice.



FIGURE 8. Ala Littoria service from Bucharest and Belgrade to Rome and on to Lisbon, and feeder service through Trieste and Venice. The route from Rome to Lisbon changed several times between 1938 and 1941. Created by the author with assistance from Bill Burcalow.

THE CLOUDS OF WAR

In the 1920s and 1930s, airmail from Europe was flown to Paris or Berlin, and thence sent to the United States by fast transatlantic ships from Dunkirk, Boulogne, Le Havre, St. Nazaire, France; Southampton, England; or Bremen, Germany. Using this service, mail to or from the United States and eastern European destinations took ten days to two weeks.

During the 1930s, Pan Am negotiated with Imperial Airways and Air France to develop new North Atlantic routes. On May 20, 1939, Pan Am's inaugural United States–Europe flight was carried out by Boeing B-314 registration NC18603, the *Yankee Clipper*, on the southern route from New York via the Azores and Lisbon to Marseille. June 24 was the date of the inaugural northern route flight: New York via Shediac and Botwood, Canada; Foynes, Ireland; to Southampton, England. Figure 9 shows a cover from Zagreb that Pan Am's *Dixie Clipper* flew from Marseille to New York in July 1939.

In a presentation to the Royal Aeronautical Society in London on June 17, 1941, Juan Trippe, then president of Pan Am, discussed and explained the company's efforts to develop

transatlantic service. Trippe used the terms “Mid-Atlantic Route” and “Great Circle Route” for what postal historians and philatelists now refer to as the southern route and northern route, respectively, of the North Atlantic clipper services. In his speech, Trippe noted that although the studies of potential routes across the Atlantic had determined the most efficient routes by 1937, it was only on “June 24th [1939, that] scheduled service had been inaugurated across both the Great Circle and mid-Atlantic routes. By July passengers as well as mail were being carried in both directions on regular weekly schedules to Southampton and Marseilles.”⁸

Due to increasing immigration, expanding business relations, and the desire for greater expediency, Pan Am's establishment of clipper service was immensely important for transatlantic airmail out of Yugoslavia and eastern Europe. Moreover, the decreasing number of sea voyages after the war began also encouraged the use of transatlantic airmail. For many in eastern Europe, airmail was a critical link to the free world, offering the possibility to stay in communication with relatives and friends, to submit visa applications, and perhaps, eventually, to escape the expanding terrors of the war in Europe. Figure 10 shows a



FIGURE 9. Cover flown from Zagreb to Paris on July 10, 1939, crossing the Atlantic on Pan Am's *Dixie Clipper* (Boeing 314, registration NC18604) from Marseille to New York, flight No. 6 on July 16, 1939. Author's collection.

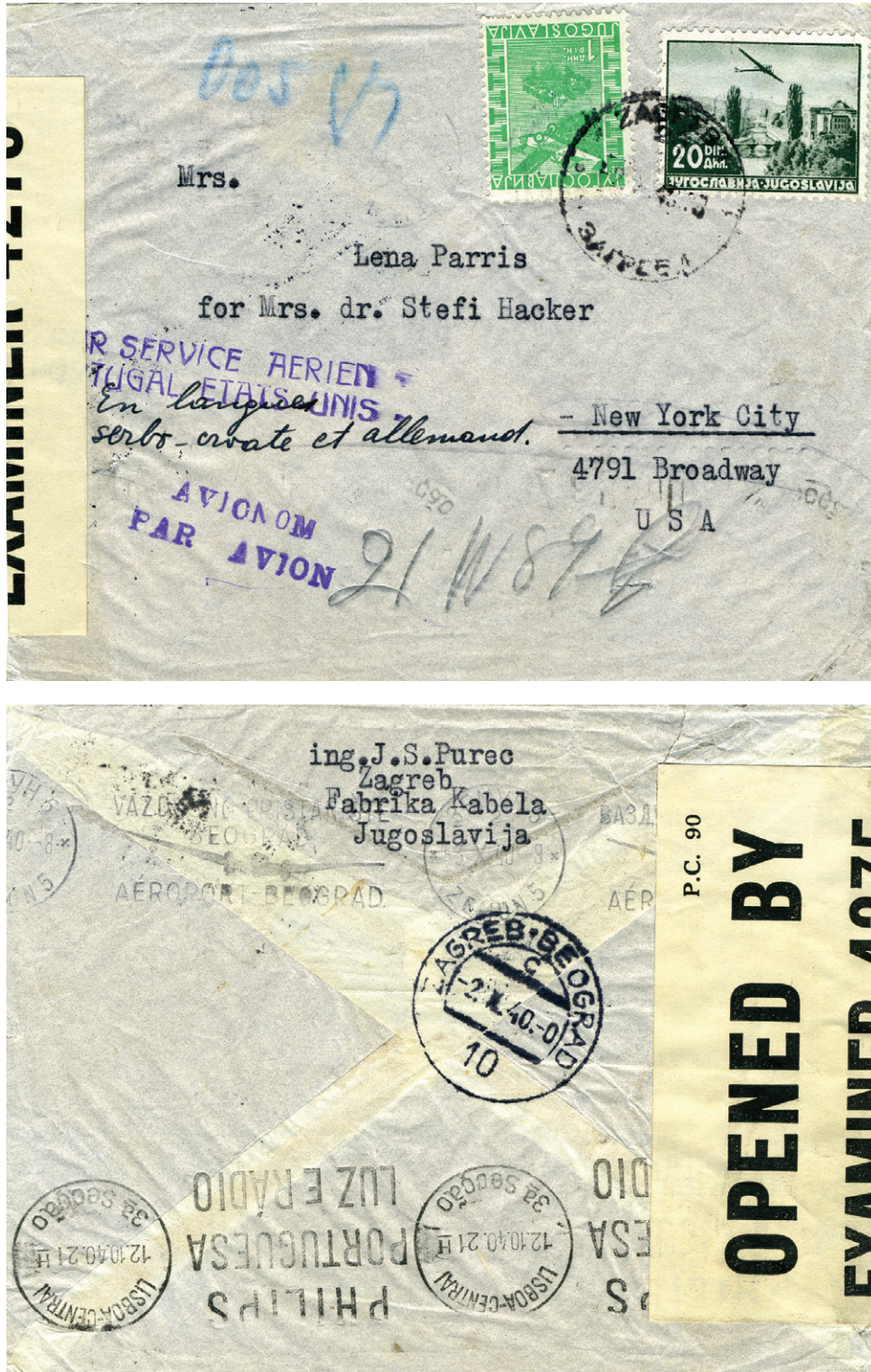


FIGURE 10. Front and back of cover from Zagreb that crossed the Atlantic by *Dixie Clipper* (Boeing 314, registration NC 18605), Flight 220, or *Atlantic Clipper* (Boeing 314, registration NC 18605), both October 17–18, 1940. Censored in Bermuda October 18, 1940. The upper two-line purple stamp in French on the front reads “Par Service Aerien Portugal Etats Unis.” Author’s collection.

cover from Zagreb that Pan Am flew from Lisbon to Bermuda and New York.

On September 6, 1939, however, the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) issued a directive to Pan Am to stop flying to Marseille on the southern route and Southampton on the northern route. Lisbon, Portugal, and Foynes, Ireland, were then made the southern and northern route termination ports, respectively.

After the German attack on Poland on September 1, 1939, and the formal beginning of military operations, Lufthansa suspended its K22 service to Lisbon because its flights over France were no longer possible. Air France also suspended the Marseille–Lisbon service. Carriers such as KLM and others attempted flights from England to Lisbon, but sending mail from continental Europe to England was problematic.

In contrast to these difficulties, mail from eastern Europe had no problem reaching Italy. Ala Littoria services from Rome—which ran west to Lisbon, east to Belgrade, Budapest, and Bucharest, south to Athens, and north to Berlin—remained the only regular service connecting with Pan Am service to the United States. When mail from eastern and central European cities reached Lisbon, it was transferred to Pan Am flights to New York, or, in poor weather or during winter, to Baltimore or Miami.

Following the outbreak of war in Europe, people in the United States sought clarification about the continuation of airmail to Europe. The CAA response included a U.S. Postal Supplement from December 1939 that addressed the problem of transatlantic mail to Europe:

An Italian service makes connection with the American service in Lisbon and transports the mail for points in Spain and for Italy and beyond, including points in Africa and Asia. Trains are utilized to give the mail onward dispatch to various western European points. . . . The mails for Eastern and Southeastern Europe are given onward dispatch by air from Lisbon to Italy and onward from Italy by air where air service is available; otherwise by ordinary means. On account of war conditions, the air mail service in Europe is largely suspended. However, air service is in effect between Lisbon and Rome and from Italy to Germany and Southeastern Europe.⁹

The U.S. Postal Service clearly understood that the mail flow in Europe was possible from west to east using Italian service to Rome and then on to eastern Europe by using pool service by Italian, Yugoslav, and Romanian companies. After the war in Europe began, the only way for mail from southeastern Europe or Turkey to connect to Pan Am service was for Ala Littoria, Aeroput, and Lares to carry it through Belgrade to Rome and Lisbon. Consequently, Ala Littoria's Rome–Lisbon line, with its connection to Belgrade and Bucharest, became a major link between eastern Europe and the Western Hemisphere. In 1939, Ala Littoria service flew from Rome via points in Spain (Palma,

Melilla, Malaga, and Seville) to Lisbon; this was designated Line 405/482/480/483/481 (Figure 8).

The Rome to Melila route was later used for the service to South America by a newly formed Italian company, Linee Aeree Transcontinentali Italiane (LATI), which started a service from Rome to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on December 21, 1939. Beginning in the early spring of 1940, the Italian, Yugoslav, and Romanian pool service to Rome connected eastern Europe to both North and South America.

Mail from Italy, Germany, and countries under their control mostly used LATI service to South America rather than the Pan Am service via the United States from Lisbon, as the authorities of those countries aimed to avoid British censorship at Bermuda, where Pan Am flights stopped on the route from Lisbon to New York. Mail from eastern Europe to Latin America used both Pan Am service through the United States and direct LATI service to Rio de Janeiro. Figure 11 shows a cover flown from Chile via LATI service.

The following year, the operation schedule was finalized in Rome on February 23–24, 1940. Ala Littoria, ALI, Aeroput, and Lares pool services to eastern Europe, ran from May 1 through September 24, 1940. After the end date in September, Ala Littoria continued operating direct routes to Belgrade and Bucharest, while Aeroput continued the service on the feeder line with its new Lockheed Electra planes bought from the United States and flew this route until October 22, 1940. As war intensified, ALI operated feeder service for three more weeks until November 12, 1940. Ala Littoria also operated service from Rome to Venice to Budapest to Warsaw that flew over Yugoslav territory. During the winters of 1939–1940 and 1940–1941, Lufthansa Line 117/107/17 flew mail from Belgrade to Vienna, and Lufthansa/Ala Littoria service K9/31 flew mail via Munich and Venice to Rome. Thus, the flow of mail to Lisbon and New York continued uninterrupted. Figure 12 shows a cover from the U.S. embassy in Belgrade mailed to U.S. in the winter of 1940.

After acquiring 12.5% of the Spanish airline Iberia at the end of the Spanish Civil War, Ala Littoria shortened its route to Spain and Portugal. Beginning on May 2, 1940, the flights flew from Rome and landed to refuel and to drop off and pick up mail in Palma, Barcelona, Madrid, and Seville before reaching Lisbon on Line 405/409/427. Later the route was further revised as line 411 and went directly from Rome to Barcelona and Lisbon. During winter, mail from eastern Europe and Turkey was flown by the Lufthansa Istanbul–Belgrade–Budapest–Vienna service, and then through Munich by Lufthansa/Ala Littoria to Rome.

After development of the joint Lufthansa/Ala Littoria/LATI service, the British Embassy in Belgrade concluded it would not be in the British interest to relinquish control of airmail routes to the Axis powers. It approached the Yugoslav government on October 4, 1940, with a proposal to start a line from Egypt to Turkey that would have connected Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The Italian invasion of Greece came at the end of October, however, and the idea never came to fruition. Thus mail from Italy continued to be flown by Lufthansa and Ala Littoria.



FIGURE 11. Front and back of cover from the Yugoslav Embassy in Santiago, Chile, bearing the inscription "Via Condor-LATI." The cover took only eleven days, from October 8 to October 19, 1940, to reach Belgrade. It was flown by LATI aircraft type SM 83 with registration I-ATOS. The transatlantic crossing took place on October 12. Author's collection.



FIGURE 12. Front and back of cover sent by the Foreign Service of the United States in Belgrade. The Atlantic crossing was carried out by *Atlantic Clipper* (flight No. 244) on December 21, 1940. The flight was held at Horta in the Azores for eight days. Author's collection.

Figure 13 shows a cover flown by Lufthansa/Ala Littoria through Belgrade and Rome to connect with Pan Am in Lisbon.

CONCLUSION

On April 6, 1941, Germany, Italy, and Hungary, aided by Bulgaria and Romania, attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Despite the occupation of Yugoslavia, the annexation of some parts of the country, and the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska), for a short period of nine months people could still correspond by airmail using Italian and German carriers and the transatlantic services of Pan Am to the United States and LATI to Brazil. Mail originating from occupied Yugoslavia was censored by German and Italian censors on departure or in transit, and by Allied censors when the

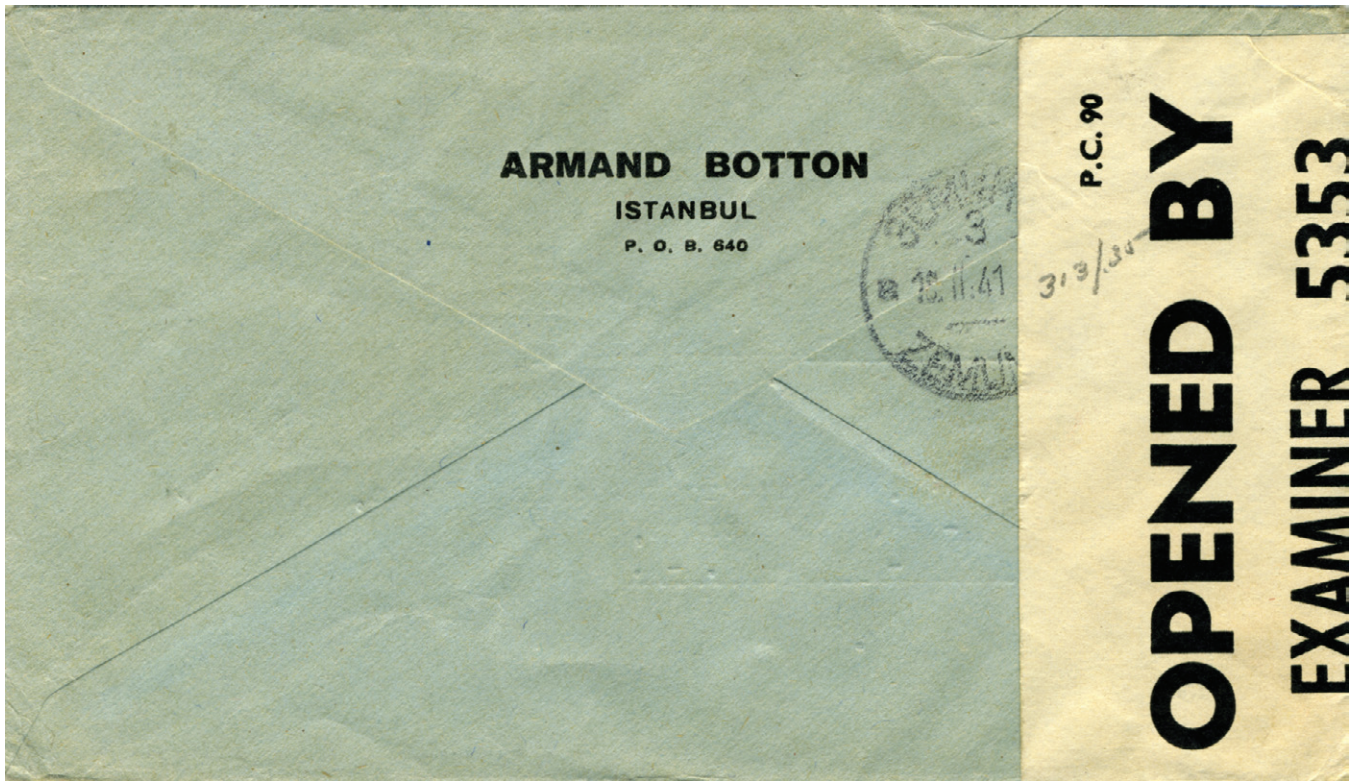


FIGURE 13. Front and back of cover flown from Istanbul to New York, mailed on February 15, 1941. It was flown via the Belgrade Zemun Airport on February 18. The handwritten inscription in red reads "Par avion de Beograd-Rome-Lisbone." Author's collection.

mail transited through the island of Bermuda or San Juan, Puerto Rico, when flown by Pan Am to the United States. With the tightening grip of occupation, the volume of mail to the free world and the United States declined and almost completely ceased. Today, extant overseas correspondence from these routes is very rare (Figure 14). Wartime circumstances generated uncommon mail items and caused mail to take peculiar routes or lengthy

periods of time to arrive at its destination; in some cases, mail was delivered only after the war ended. Figure 15 provides an example of a cover that traveled from August 28 to October 13, 1941. Flown by Panagra (the Latin American arm of Pan Am) and Pan Am via Cristobal, Canal Zone, and Miami, it arrived in New York on September 1. It was flown across the Atlantic by one of Pan Am's flights (numbered 407-423) between September

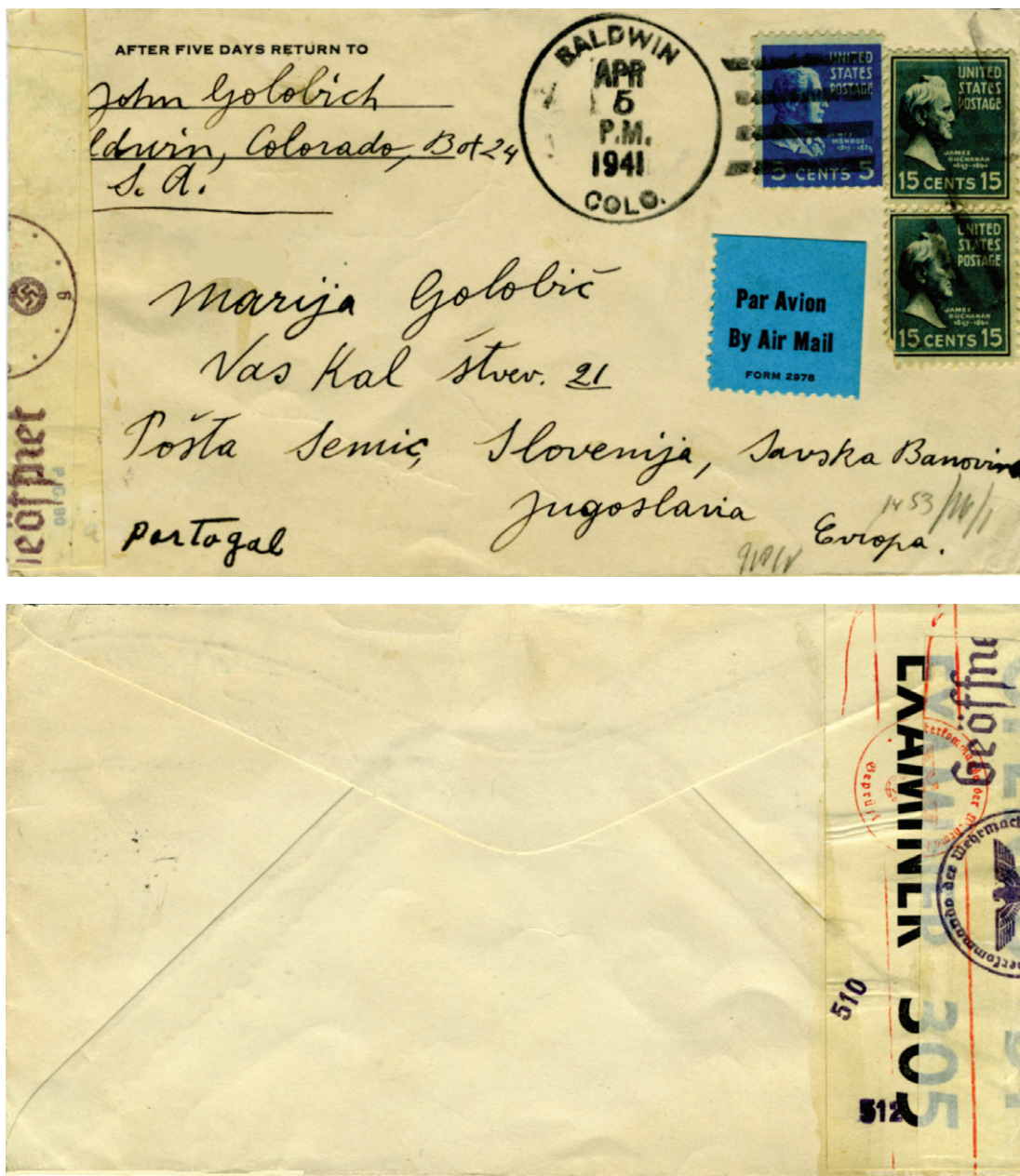


FIGURE 14. Front and back of cover sent from Baldwin, Colorado, USA, to Semič, Slovenia, on April 5, 1941, a day before the German attack on Yugoslavia. It was censored by both the British censors in Bermuda and by the German Oberkommando der Wehrmacht OKW, (High Command of the Armed Forces) in Vienna. Author's collection.



FIGURE 15. Front and back of cover sent from Iquique, Chile, to Sušak/Rijeka in occupied Yugoslavia by a sailor on the Yugoslav freighter *Bosiljka*, which sank in 1942 in the Caribbean. Author's collection.

4 and 28, 1941. British authorities censored it in Bermuda and Italian authorities in Turin.

On December 11, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. A few days later and on the instructions of U.S. authorities, Pan Am ceased to accept mail from Axis-controlled countries. Service to South America was suspended by LATI on December 19, 1941, thus curtailing overseas air links with occupied Yugoslavia and eastern Europe.

NOTES

1. Parts of this publication first appeared in "The Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Southeast European Air Mail Connection to North America 1939-1941," *Acta Philatelica Nova*, 2014, 59-70; these are reprinted here with permission.
2. Cedomir Kronic, *Civilno Vazduboplovstvo Karļevine Jugoslavije, Prva Knjiga* (Civil aviation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, book 1) (Belgrade: Cedomir Kronic, 2010), 375. "[The] program of the air service between Italy, Yugoslavia and Romania for 1940 was agreed upon in Rome on February 23-24. During this meeting, which was organized on the initiative of Italian

companies Ala Littoria and ALI, it was also agreed that the service on route Milano–Venice–Zagreb–Belgrade–Bucharest will start on May 1 and will operate until October 22, 1940. They also discussed the option to extend service to Marseille, France on ‘route of the 45th parallel’ as the service between Milano, Venice, Zagreb, Belgrade and Bucharest was called.”

3. The club’s original name was Srpski Aeroklub, Serbian Aero-club.
4. The Hague Protocol, officially the “Protocol to Amend the Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules Relating to International Carriage by Air.” The Postal History of ICAO. Air Mail Conference—The Hague—September 1927. Official Website of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), https://applications.icao.int/postalhistory/the_air_post_conferences.htm (accessed July 4, 2020).
5. Eda Kranakis, “European Civil Aviation in an Era of Hegemonic Nationalism: Infrastructure, Air Mobility, and European Identity Formation, 1919–1933,” in *Materializing Europe: Transnational Infrastructures and the Project of Europe*, ed. Alec Badenoch and Andreas Fickers (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 301.
6. Kronic, *Civilno Vazduhoplovstvo Karljevine Jugoslavije*, 341. As Kronic wrote, “the interest of the two airlines, especially Aeropot, was to start the air traffic between Belgrade and Vienna. After a few trial flights, the governments of Yugoslavia and Austria were prompted to officially accept the start of this service. The French company CIDNA was also interested in entering the pool arrangement with Aeropot and Österreichische Luftverkehrs AG (ÖLAG), as . . . for six years, it had been servicing the line between Paris and Istanbul with stops at Strasbourg, Prague, Vienna, Belgrade, and Bucharest.”
7. “Airpost Chronicle,” *Airpost Journal* 1 (July 1930): 7.
8. Juan T. Trippe, “Ocean Air Transport. The Twenty-Ninth Wilbur Wright Memorial Lecture,” Royal Aeronautical Society, London, June 17, 1941, 15.
9. “Postal Supplement December 1939,” in *International Air Mails, Postilion Series of Primary Sources*, vol. 1, comp. Robert Dalton Harris (Fishkill, N.Y.: Printer’s Stone, 1989), 292–293.

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2016 Symposium

How Postal Treaties Influenced Post Office Reforms

Introduction to the 2016 Symposium

Tara E. Murray

All previous symposia have been held either at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C., or at the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. In 2016, the Ninth Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposium took place in a third location, at the Javits Center in New York City. The symposium was held during World Stamp Show – NY2016, a ten-day international stamp show attracting thousands of people from around the world. The symposium addressed an inherently international theme: postal treaties and their influence on postal reforms. The opening keynote speech focused on the most obvious example, the formation of the Universal Postal Union in the 1870s, but the papers look at time periods from the seventeenth century through the present day. Throughout much of history, mail has been the primary means of communication both within and between nations; thus regulations and agreements concerning what may be mailed and for what cost have a profound effect on a population's access to information.

Newspapers in the Mails: Strategic Unification under the Franklin/Hunter Dual Postmaster Generalship

Diane DeBlois and Robert Dalton Harris

ABSTRACT. The British Crown's struggle with France for dominion over colonies in North America was accompanied by two strategic postal innovations. The first was a line of postal communications overland among the colonies, as represented in a map of 1715. The second was the 1758 decision by Benjamin Franklin and William Hunter as joint postmasters general to include newspapers in the mail at cheap, prepaid rates. Both innovations were distinct from postal practice in Great Britain, and both persisted after 1792 in the U.S. postal system.

INTRODUCTION

Benjamin Franklin is considered the “father of the US postal system” because, while serving as postmaster general under the Continental Congress from 1775 to 1776, he translated the British colonial postal arrangements for the nation to be. For three generations, postal historians' scholarship has covered this period, but no one has yet examined in detail the earlier period when Franklin held the position of joint postmaster general with William Hunter under the Crown.¹ When the Royal Mail took responsibility for the mail of the British North American colonies from the assignees of the Neale patent in 1711,² it set up a line of communication that crossed the established links by sea between colonial ports and London, and allowed for communication among British colonies without transmission through England. This cross post served local, social, and commercial interests; in England, the Royal Mail did not administer such cross posts. In the colonies the strategic innovation was described as a weekly postal route from Philadelphia through New York and Boston to Piscataway and was shown as a road from Piscataway in the colony of Massachusetts south to Charleston in the colony of South Carolina on a map by Herman Moll published in 1715 (Figure 1).³

A STRATEGIC LINE OF POSTS

Maps by Herman Moll featuring details of British postal arrangements in North America are known in many editions.⁴ The 1715 edition dramatized the strategic importance of these postal arrangements—a context that is lost in the subsequent versions (Figure 1).⁵

The map is dedicated “to the Honourable Walter Dowglass [*sic*] Esqr. Constituted Captain General and Chief governor of all ye Leeward Islands in America by her late Majesty Queen Anne in ye Year 1711” (Figure 2). Although the large and colorful coat of arms belonged to another man, Walter Douglas (1670–1739) was, indeed, governor of

Postal History Society, P.O. Box 477, West Sand Lake, New York 12196, USA

Correspondence: agatherin@yahoo.com

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FIGURE 1. 1715 map by Herman Moll, *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America* (Library of Congress. Geography and Map Division. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3300.ct000232>).

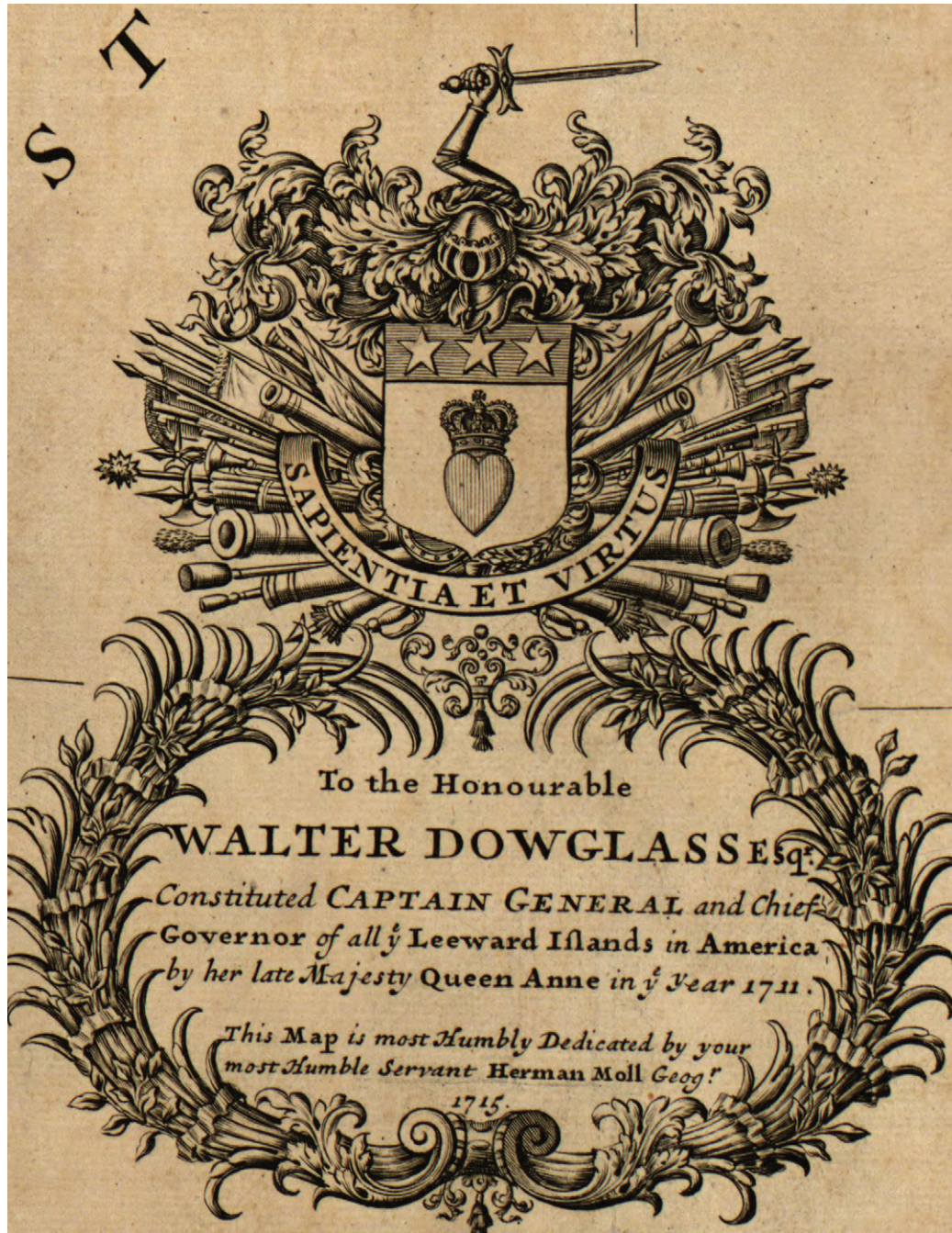


FIGURE 2. Detail of Figure 1 showing the cartouche and the dedication to the Governor of the Leeward Islands.

the Leeward Islands, having been appointed after the assassination of his predecessor in 1710.⁶

Why, in 1715, would such a handsome map be dedicated to a fairly obscure Scot, governor of a handful of small islands? At the bottom right of the map is an inset of the whole of known North America, with the Leeward Islands prominently labeled.

Two other insets enlarge a portion of the Carolinas and identify in great detail the strength of the fortifications at the port of Charles Town (Figure 3). The presence of these insets emphasized the commercial importance of these particular British colonies. The British Crown had established a packet service to serve, specifically, this port and these islands, and the postal

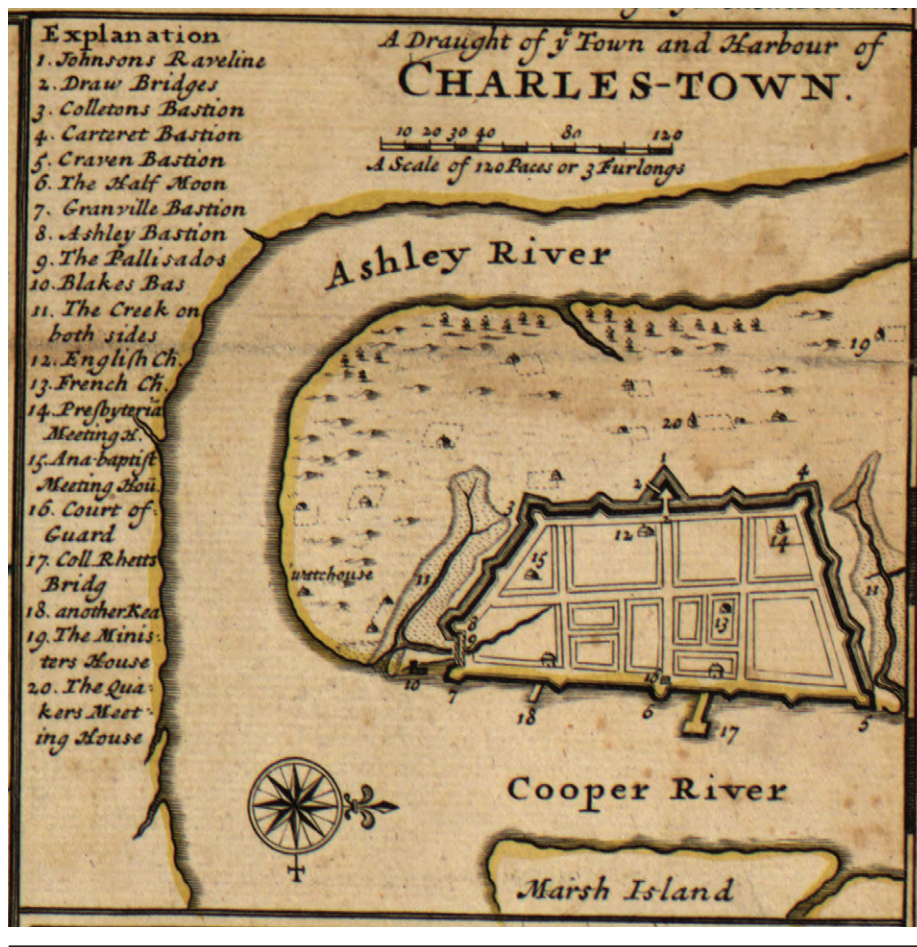


FIGURE 3. Detail of Figure 1 showing the “Town and Harbour of Charles-town.” Emphasis on the fortifications of the important British port served as a reminder of the successful defense of the city against a combined French and Spanish fleet in 1706.

business of the packet ships was, compared with that of the other colonies, very large.⁷ The plantation economy capitalized upon slave labor to grow sugar and tobacco that were exchanged for English manufactured goods.

This map was created in the wake of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) that formalized with other European countries, particularly Spain, a 1711 peace agreement between France and Great Britain.⁸ The coloring of versions of the map, despite being accomplished by different hands, clearly indicates the ceding to Great Britain of Newfoundland and New Scotland (the southern part of Nova Scotia) while France retained the greater part of what is now Canada, including Cape Breton Island (Nova Scotia's northern part), St. John's Island (Prince Edward Island), and other islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The paragraph printed on the map just above the compass rose describes the complex fishing arrangements in this area (see Figure 4).

Laying the foundation for what would be known as the French and Indian War (1754–1763) was the treaty's requirement

that the French recognize the British alliance with the Iroquois. On the map, the text that spans Maryland and Pennsylvania details the background to this alliance.⁹ Moreover, the text in the inset on the bottom left seems to underscore the potential threat the Indian allies of the French might pose, as it shows “the South Part of Carolina, and the East Part of Florida, possess'd since September 1712 by the French and called Louisiana; together with some of the principal Indian Settlements and the Number of the Fighting Men According to the account of Capt. T. Nearn and others.”¹⁰ Indicated on the inset is a pattern of Indian paths that, like the British line of posts, traced strategic communication routes.

THE ACTUAL LINE OF POSTS

The double line indicated on Moll's map—the King's Road from Piscataway to Charleston—was a humble tract¹¹ (Figure 5). The post riders' experiences just before Queen Anne's act

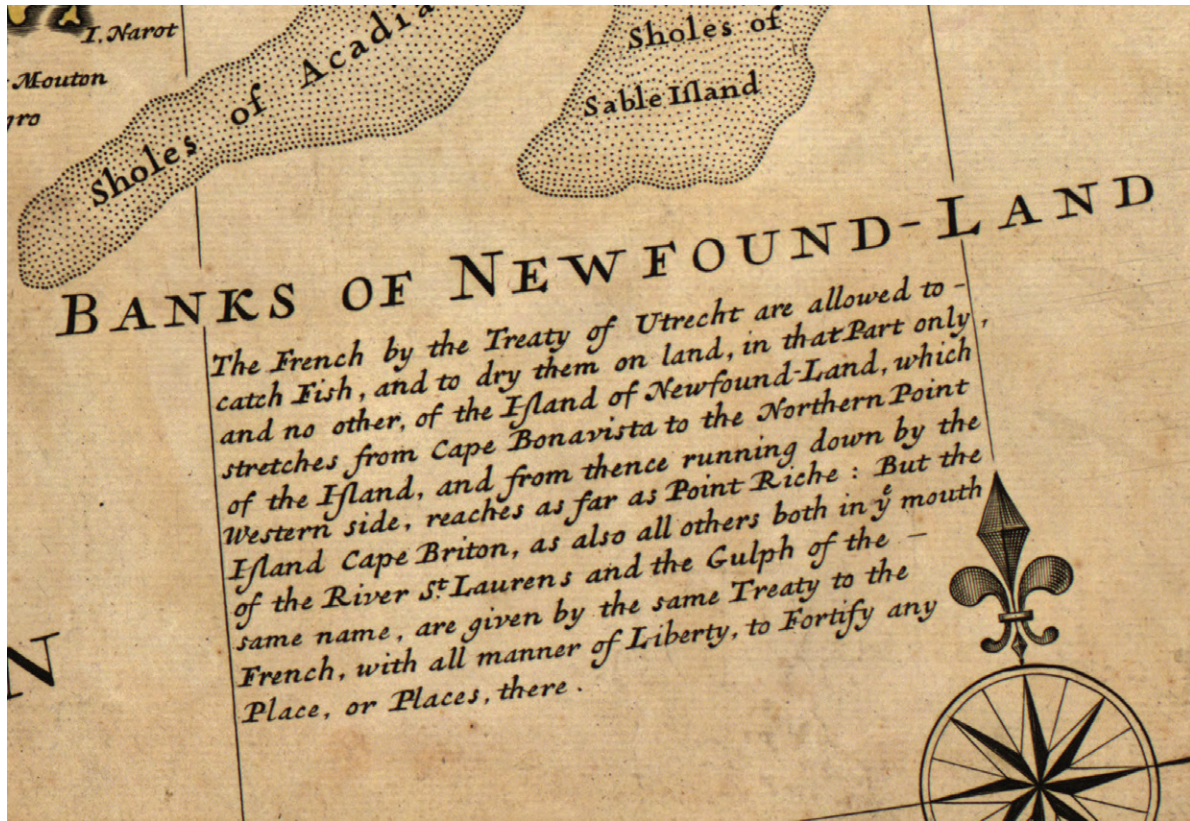


FIGURE 4. Detail from Figure 1 showing paragraph from above the compass rose, describing fishing rights.

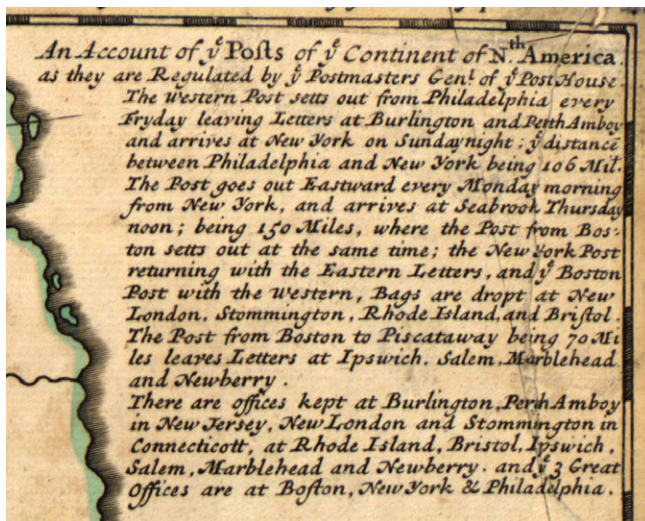


FIGURE 5. Details of Figure 1. (Left) Paragraph from map's upper right describing the line of posts, Philadelphia to New York and Boston, and onward to Piscataway, listing fifteen post offices. Supplementing the packet lines serving southern plantations is a line of posts on land, north of Philadelphia. (Right) A faint double line marks the route, showing the approximate path of the post road indicated by a double gray line in the engraving, with red dots added to indicate five of the places mentioned in Sarah Kemble Knight's 1704 overland journey by horse, from north to south: Dedham, Providence, New London, Stonington, Seabrook.

established the British colonial post in North America in 1711 is best imagined by reading Sarah Kemble Knight's recounting of her 1704 horseback journey from Boston to New York, accompanied for part of the way by successive post riders, whom she called "guides."¹² She met her first post rider south of Boston at Dedham where the so-called Western Post then met the Eastern Post. (According to Moll's map, a post rider with the western mail from New York exchanged with a post rider carrying the eastern mail at Seabrook, or Saybrook, on Long Island Sound). Knight and the post rider crossed the Providence River by canoe—with difficulty—at Providence near the Narragansett Bay. To make about 20 miles (32 km) per day, they sometimes traveled into the night, trees pressing in from both sides of the narrow path. Knight let the post rider cross the Paukatoug River without her because the water was very high. She stayed on the east side before venturing over to Stonington at low tide. Knight's journey shows that this first line of posts did trace a path, probably an Indian trail, over which colonists could travel with difficulty, although post riders were not deterred.

These post riders carried the mails and also accepted other commissions. By arrangement with subscribers or postmasters, they carried newspapers imported from Europe. The Boston postmaster published the first newspaper in North America the same year as Knight's journey, but Knight did not record any newspapers among the objects that her guides carried.¹³

TOWARD A DUAL POSTMASTER GENERALSHIP

The British North American line of posts as mapped by Moll had, by midcentury, lost its colonial postmaster general. The British postmaster general, overseeing the Royal Mail at home and in the colonies, had appointed a succession of colonial postmasters general from the wealthy colony of Virginia. We believe that the choice to pair Benjamin Franklin, a non-Virginian, and William Hunter can be partially explained by examining their respective backgrounds and their networks of association.

CANDIDATES

Two Printers/Publishers

After gaining sufficient experience through a printing apprenticeship in Boston, work in a print shop in Philadelphia, and typesetting work in London in the 1720s, Benjamin Franklin imported a press from England and became the official printer for the province of Pennsylvania. Along with printing colonial currency and carrying out other government commissions, he introduced in January 1741 a monthly publication that promised to publish information from colonies other than Pennsylvania: the *General Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, for All the British Plantations in America*. He also published the newspaper of record, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Figure 6), and operated as a job

printer often engaged in his own projects, such as *Poor Richard's Almanack*, begun in 1733. In 1748, Franklin sold his press and retired as a printer at the age of forty-two, although he continued as a publisher.

William Hunter was a generation younger than Franklin, but his career in Williamsburg, Virginia, paralleled Franklin's in Pennsylvania in several ways. In 1745 Hunter was apprenticed to the official printer for the colony of Virginia, William Parks, with whom Franklin had collaborated in building a paper mill that was completed at Williamsburg in 1743. Two years after Parks's death in 1750, Hunter took over as the official printer. As did Franklin, he split his publishing efforts between public works (*A Collection of All the Acts of Assembly, Now in Force, in the Colony of Virginia*), the newspaper of record (the *Virginia Gazette* [Figure 6] from 1751 onward), and job printing (*Virginia Almanack*, beginning in 1751). He too imported his printing supplies from London. Although geography separated, Franklin and Hunter were known to one another and had associates in common; their joint postmaster generalship was not a marriage of strangers.

Two Postmasters

Both Franklin and Hunter were postmasters. Franklin was commissioned by Postmaster General Alexander Spotswood in Philadelphia in 1737 and was made comptroller for the British colonial post by Postmaster General Elliot Benger in 1744. He instigated a measure of accountability by printing "post bills" that postmasters filled out to accompany mail between offices, resulting in a more well-organized postal system.¹⁴ Hunter received his commission as postmaster of Williamsburg in 1750.

Franklin served under three successive postmasters general who were all from the colony of Virginia: Spotswood until 1739, Head Lynch until 1743, and then Benger. Virginia was the end of the line of posts. Although not a central location for a postmaster general, it was favored for its proximity to the lucrative exchanges of tobacco from the Virginia plantations for the manufactures of England. Figure 7 illustrates an example of tobacco trade correspondence that dominated the Virginia mails.

Mention of Benger's death was made in a letter of 21 May 1751 from Virginia tobacco planter Francis Jerdone, who put forward himself as a candidate to succeed Benger as postmaster general.¹⁵ Hunter would have been another likely possibility both by virtue of being a Virginian and because his older half-brother was an influential tobacco factor. Franklin, in a well-known letter to Peter Collinson of the same date as Jerdone's application, made the case that he would be a better choice for the postmaster general appointment than a Virginian: "I need not tell you that Philadelphia being the Center of the Continent Colonies . . . is by much a fitter Place for the Situation of a General Post Office than Virginia."¹⁶ Moreover, he was confident that Collinson could help arrange the appointment through his contacts at the Royal Society in London, which included the two British postmasters general: Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester, and Everard Fawkener.¹⁷



FIGURE 6. Postmaster/printer mastheads. (Top) *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Philadelphia, 9 May 1754, “Containing the Freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestick,” published by Benjamin Franklin. Serial and Government Publications Division Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/franklin/images/bf0002p1s>. (Bottom) *The Virginia Gazette*, September 5, 1755, “With the freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic,” published by William Hunter. CWF Rockefeller Library Special Collections, SCNPVAGAZ17550905, with permission.

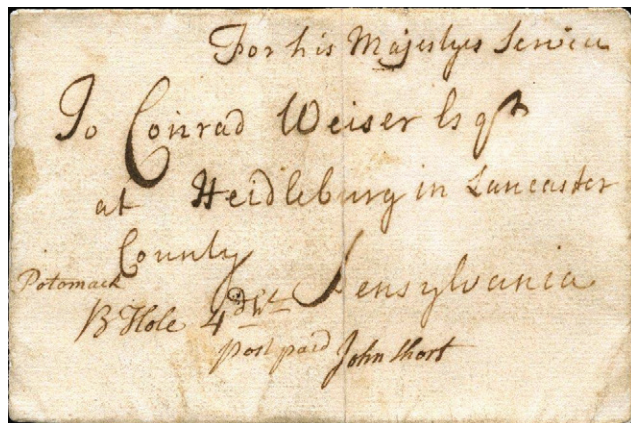


FIGURE 7. Cover to a 1744 letter “post paid” from John Short to Conrad Weiser in “Heidleburg” in Lancaster, Pennsylvania [sic], entering the colonial mail (“For his Majestys Service”) at B[oyd’s] Hole, Virginia (on the “Potomack” [sic] River), rated 4dwt (statutory rates expressed in sterling silver were converted to the weight of coined silver; 1 penny weight, or 1dwt, = 24 grains; 4dwt = 1 shilling). Boyd’s Hole was a tavern and, like Heidelberg, was not a post office,¹⁸ making this a “way letter” that a post rider picked up as a commission.¹⁹ Weiser was responsible for negotiating every major treaty between the colonial settlers in Pennsylvania and the Iroquois Nations from 1731 to 1758. Given that tobacco was such a powerful cash crop for British interests in Virginia, it is germane that Weiser was a cigar maker and John Short grew tobacco. The delivery of this letter from Short to Weiser shows the willingness of post riders to ac-

cept mail at intermediate points on the line of post and is the only recorded example of a Boyd’s Hole postal marking from the period. Collection of Tim O’Connor.

STRATEGIC PLAN OF UNION

While Franklin was angling for the postmaster generalship, he wrote to James Parker of New Jersey on 20 March 1751:

A voluntary Union entered into by the Colonies themselves, I think, would be preferable to one imposed by Parliament; for it would be perhaps not much

more difficult to procure, and more easy to alter and improve, as Circumstances should require, and Experience direct. It would be a very strange Thing, if six Nations of ignorant Savages should be capable of forming a Scheme for such an Union, and be able to execute it in such a Manner, as that it has subsisted Ages, and appears indissoluble; and yet that a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a Dozen English Colonies,

to whom it is more necessary, and must be more advantageous; and who cannot be supposed to want an equal Understanding of their interests.²⁰

Franklin's suggestion for a political union of the separate British colonies against the French parallels his administration of an established strategic asset: the line of posts.

Yet, no colonial postmaster general was named after Benger's death in 1751; there was an interregnum until August 1753. Celebrated by some of the most powerful men in London, Franklin was elected a member of the Royal Society and given its Copley Medal for outstanding scientific research, specifically "on account of his curious Experiments and Observations on Electricity."²¹ Franklin became more well-known in the colonies during a 1753 survey of postal routes, which he had ordered in his Benger-appointed role as comptroller and which he also carried out in person. While Franklin was surveying the New England routes, both Harvard and Yale took the opportunity to give him honorary degrees for his work with electricity. Franklin's scientific achievements and the publicity from the broad scope of his travels had revealed him as "arguably the smartest man in colonial America and beyond any doubt the most ambitious."²² The two-year interregnum, caused by the Crown's indecision, allowed for a wider recognition of Franklin and the distribution of his views in both Great Britain and the colonies, strengthening his bid for the postmaster generalship.

The appointment of a postmaster general for the North American colonies was evidently embroiled with other preparations in London for war with the French in those colonies. In August 1753, Privy Councilors Lords Halifax, Newcastle, and Bedford were "adamant on the necessity of stopping French expansionism in the New World." Bedford instructed "all colonial governors to prevent, by force, these [encroachments] that may be made by the French, or by the Indians in the French interest." That same month, Bedford's successor dispatched a special set of instructions to Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia to acquire artillery for protection when erecting western forts.²³

Although there is no explicit documentation of the reason for the delay in appointing the colonial postmaster general, the timing of the appointment suggests a strategy to take advantage of colonial assets such as the postal line of communications. In August 1753, the Crown appointed Franklin and Hunter joint "Deputy Postmasters General and Managers of all his Majesty's Provinces and Dominions on the Continent of North America, at a salary of £300 [each] per annum for overseeing the postal routes, Rates, Procedures, and Post Riders of the several Colonies."²⁴

Once the postal system was under their joint command, Franklin and Hunter continued to improve the communication links among the colonies. They became involved as well with strategies for a defensive political union. Franklin published his "Join, or Die" cartoon in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of 9 May 1754 (Figure 8), along with the announcement of a three-week "Conference of Albany," where representatives from



FIGURE 8. Cartoon by Benjamin Franklin, appearing in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of 9 May 1754. The cartoon encouraged the colonies of New England (at the head), New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina to join together to fight the French and their Indian allies.

Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island would discuss better relations with Native American tribes and common defensive measures against the French. At the conference, Franklin presented his "Short Hints towards a Scheme for a General Union of the British Colonies on the Continent." Reporting on Maj. George Washington's defeat at Fort Necessity, Hunter noted the "Join, or Die" cartoon in the *Virginia Gazette* of 19 July 1754: "Surely this [defeat] will remove the infatuation of security that seems to have prevailed too much among the other colonies [and] enforce a late ingenious Emblem worthy of their Attention and Consideration."²⁵

From their positions of authority, Franklin and Hunter could offer more than propaganda. In 1755 General Braddock planned an anti-French campaign that involved moving troops from Alexandria, Virginia, to Fort Duquesne in Pittsburgh. Postmaster General Franklin approached him to provide for the surveying and building of a road and provisioning and transporting the troops, as well as connecting the advancing army with a line of posts from Philadelphia. Although Franklin enabled Braddock's route, the outcome was a British defeat at the Battle of the Wilderness in which Braddock died.²⁶

NEWSPAPERS IN THE MAIL

The English press, if not its treatment by the postal authorities, was the model for colonial printers such as Franklin and Hunter. Even though the Stamp Act of 1712 had levied duties on both paper and advertisements, by 1720 London had a large and vibrant press with twenty newspapers reaching thousands



†† An Account of Canada, and the adjacent Countries; containing, a particular Description of the Country, Savages, European Settlements, Bays, Rivers, Lakes, Fortresses, and general Produce of those Parts, in respect of Traffick and Navigation, and the Commodities proper to be exported thither; with a Map of the whole. To which, will be an Appendix, containing the Conquest of Acadia; with a Journal of the Expedition under Major-General Hill, and Admiral Walker, for the Reduction of those Colonies by Her Majesty's Arms; With the Expulsion of the French, from North America. As also an Original Treaty between King Charles I. and some of those Savage Nations. Printed for J. Moxham near Stationer's-Hall.

This Day is publish'd,

Plymouth, Sept. 18. Yesterday pass'd by this Port, the homeward-bound Virginia Fleet. Came in 2 Ships of and for this Place, from Virginia. Last Night sail'd to the Westward, Her Majesty's Ship the Torbay, Dragon, Chichester, and Penzance.

Bristol, Sept. 19. Last Night arriv'd here 2 Vessels in Seven Weeks from Virginia, as did this Morning the Union Fregat from Zant, but last from Gibraltar, in 25 Days.

FIGURE 9. The *Post Boy*, a London newspaper, 22 September 1711: masthead (top) and two paragraphs from page 2 advertising a book published about Canada (bottom left) and news at Plymouth and Bristol about vessels bound for and arriving from Virginia (bottom right). British newspapers were keen for news of the colonies. Authors' collection.

weekly (Figure 9).²⁷ Custom allowed for the transmission of any newspaper as a perquisite of the clerks of the road. Newspapers capable of surviving the heavy taxes tended to be politically conservative, catering to the wealthy. A popular press, including pamphleteering, developed in a London coffee-house culture that Benjamin Franklin much admired.²⁸ Other, cheap newspapers, printed on unstamped paper and distributed out of the post, were seditious and often suffered legal consequences.²⁹

Franklin and Hunter had benefited from a colonial press free of stamp duties; now, they wished newspapers to be "mail matter."³⁰ Under the security and regulation of the mail, news would be protected from private post rider arrangements and carried along with letters as part of an official post rider's responsibility. Franklin and Hunter's formal edict of 10 March 1758, issued from the general post office while both men were in London, represented a very important and early postal reform, serving the seventeen newspapers printed in ten of the twenty-eight postal towns of the period.³¹ Isaiah Thomas, the first historian of the press in America and founder of the American Antiquarian Society, estimated that each weekly paper reached an average of six hundred subscribers. This suggests that there were perhaps ten thousand subscribers to the newspapers of North America and half a million newspapers per year at this time.³²

Contemporaneously, annual postage totaled about £1,000, accounting for about twenty thousand letters (i.e., one letter for every twenty-five newspapers). Therefore post riders were much more likely to be employed in the distribution of newspapers to country subscribers than in carrying the post.

Franklin and Hunter's edict, deconstructed and quoted in full, reads as follows:

Additional Instructions to the Deputy-Post Masters of North America. Whereas the News-papers of the several Colonies on this Continent heretofore permitted to be sent by the Post free of Charge, are of late Years so much increased as to become extremely burthensome to the Riders, . . . who demand additional Salaries or Allowances from the Post Office on that Account, and it is not reasonable, that the Office which receives no Benefit from the Carriage of News-papers, should be at any Expence for such Carriage.³³

Although no mention was made of them in Queen Anne's 1711 act, newspapers in England accompanied the mail for free, giving the clerks of the post roads the right to sell them to postmasters for rural distribution. In the colonies, there were no

clerks of the road. Considering just the exchange copies of four weekly newspapers printed in Boston to each of thirteen printers elsewhere, there would have been at least fifty-two newspapers sent weekly within the Boston mails, in each direction (whatever the service to distant subscribers).³⁴

And Whereas the Printers of News-papers complain, that they frequently receive Orders for News-papers from distant Post-Offices, which they comply with by sending the Papers tho' they know not the Persons to whom the Papers are to be directed, and have no convenient Means of collecting the Money, so that much of it is lost; and that for Want of due Notice when distant Subscribers die, become Bankrupt, or remove out of the Country, they continue to send Papers some Years directed to such Persons, whereby the Posts are loaded with many Papers to no Purpose, and the Loss so great to the Printers, as that they cannot afford to make any Allowance to the Riders for carrying the Papers: And whereas some of the Riders do, and others may demand exorbitant Rates of Persons living on the Roads, for carrying and delivering the Papers that do not go into any Office, but are delivered by the Riders themselves.

To remedy these Inconveniences, and yet not to discourage the *Spreading the News-papers, which are on many Occasions useful to Government, and advantageous to Commerce, and to the Publick*], you are, after the first Day of June next, to deliver no News-papers at your Office (except the single Papers exchange'd between Printer and Printer) but to such Persons only as do agree to pay you, for the Use of the Rider which brings such Papers a small additional Consideration per Annum, for each Paper, over and above the Price of the Papers; that is to say, for any Distance not exceeding 50 Miles, each Paper is carried, the Sum of 9d Ster. per Annum, or an Equivalent in Currency. For any Distance exceeding 50 Miles, and not exceeding One Hundred Miles, the Sum of One Shilling and Six pence Ster. per Annum; and in the same Proportion for every other Fifty Miles which such Paper shall be carried; which Money for the Rider or Riders, together with the Price of the Papers for the Printers, you are to receive and pay respectively once a Year at least, deducting for your Care and Trouble therein, a Commission of Twenty per Cent [emphasis added].³⁵

Franklin and Hunter had made 50 miles (80.5 km) the primary unit of distance, rather than the 60-mile/100-mile scheme that Queen Anne's act had set for letters. This enabled a uniform rate by distance at 9d (nine pence) per 50 miles per year, to be paid to each post rider in carriage fee for every newspaper. The 9d translates to something less than a farthing (a quarter of a

penny) per copy for each 50 miles of carriage. This uniform and low rate for the transportation of newspapers seemed especially radical when compared with the high postage paid for letters—a rate that would remain in place until the British reforms of 1765. With an emphasis on postmasters receiving a commission for taking on the responsibility of the financial transactions among printers, subscribers, and post riders, Franklin and Hunter gave their confederates more responsibility, in turn entailing more financial risk, in collecting carriage fees. Importantly, however, they also ensured that newspapers enjoyed the security and certainty provided by carriage in the mail.³⁶

And you [the postmasters] are to send no Orders to any Printer for Papers, except the Person to whom the Papers are to be sent, [who] are in your Opinion responsible and such as you will be accountable for. And you are to suffer no Riders employ'd or paid by you, to receive more than the Rates above mentioned, for carrying any Papers by them delivered on their respective Roads; nor to carry and deliver any papers but such as will be accountable for to the Printers, in Consideration of an Allowance of the same Commissions as aforesaid for collecting and Paying the Money.³⁷

The new system reduced some of Franklin and Hunter's frustrations as printers who distributed their newspapers to distant subscribers beyond the range of a single post rider. Although both Franklin and Hunter signed the "Instructions," the chain of accountability comports with Franklin's other innovations as comptroller.

And as some of the Papers pass thro' the Hands of several Riders between the Place where they are printed and the Place of Delivery; you are to pay the Carriage-money you collect for the Riders, to the several Riders who have carried such Papers, in Proportion, as near as conveniently may be, to the Distance, they have been carried by each Rider respectively.³⁸

This proportional "Carriage-money" was a particular innovation (and a boon) for post riders in the colonies.³⁹

These changes in the colonial post were radically American; guaranteeing that any and all newspapers would be handled equally in the protection of the mail, they were tailored to the greater distances of America and directly compensated the mail carriers. Almost a century before the mid-nineteenth-century postal reforms in both England and the United States, these changes offered cheap, uniform, prepaid postage onailable printed matter. It is important to emphasize that, despite their strategies to bring the colonies closer together, neither Franklin nor Hunter could be called a political revolutionary at this point in time; both were solidly on the side of Britain in the colonial conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The Pennsylvanian Benjamin Franklin (printer, publisher, postmaster, Royal Society scientist) and the Virginian William Hunter (printer, publisher, postmaster) wished to strengthen communication for the transportation of both people and mail among the colonies for protection in war and spreading news “useful to Government, and advantageous to Commerce, and to the Publick.” These men introduced newspapers to the mail at a uniform cheap prepaid carriage fee. They also expanded the British line of posts in North America. As they intended, together their decisive actions not only installed a distinctly American postal system under the Crown but also fostered a stronger identification among colonists and colonies.⁴⁰

NOTES

1. Wesley Everett Rich, *The History of the United States Post Office to the Year 1829* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1924); Alex L. ter Braake, *The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America* (Stage College, Pa.: American Philatelic Research Library, 1975); Richard R. John, *Spreading the News* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).
2. Rich describes the monopoly granted Thomas Neale in 1692 with a patent from the Crown to set up and maintain post offices in each of the American colonies for twenty-one years. This right was referred to as a “farm,” a concept that had been used in reference to British post since 1516. Rich, *History of the United States Post Office*, 25.
3. D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America*. Vol. 1, *Atlantic America, 1492–1800* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), 262. Meinig pointed out that each of the constituent colonies of the British Empire depended on an individual connection with London rather than on communication with one another.
4. In 1711, Herman Moll ([1654?]-1732), a lowlander who emigrated to London, began an *Atlas Geographus*, which would, in the following six years and five volumes, include a full geographical representation of the known world. In 1715, he issued *The World Described*, a collection of thirty maps, one of which is the map illustrated here. All the 1715 maps can be read as propaganda for British policy and regional claims, and they all included elaborate images, such as the scene in Figure 1 of beavers building a dam near Niagara Falls. According to William P. Cumming, the descriptive text “according to ye French Accounts” is accurate, but the scene copied from a map produced by the cartographer to the French king in Nicholas de Fer’s 1713 *Carte de La Mer du Sud & de La Mer du Nord* is fairly fanciful. William P. Cumming, *British Maps of Colonial America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 10, 12.
5. The 1729 edition of the Moll map, from his *Atlas Minor*, has been consistently misidentified as the “earliest known map relating to post routes in the United States.” Philip Lee Phillips, *List of Geographical Atlases in the Library of Congress*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1909); Harry M. Konwiser, *Colonial and Revolutionary Posts* (Richmond, Va.: Press of Dietz Printing, 1931; Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe, *The Colonial Posts in the United States of America 1606–1783* (London: Robson Lowe, 1967), 4. The 1715 Moll map was identified as the earlier map to show the British colonial posts by Robert Dalton Harris in “The Beaver Map,” in *P.S. No. 4: A Postal History Quarterly* (Wynantskill, N.Y.: aGatherin’, 1977), 11–17.
6. Douglas was replaced in 1716 after being found guilty of bribery and extortion.
7. Begun in 1705, these arrangements were also noted in the Preamble to the 1710 “Act for establishing a General Post Office for all Her Majesties Dominions” (commonly identified by its practice date of 1711). By 1715, these packets had been discontinued because of cost, but their strategic importance was noted. Howard Robinson, *Carrying British Mails Overseas* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 39. Packet-boat receipts for two years ending January 1706 were £10,112 pounds; the contract was for five vessels of 140 tons each, with 26 men and 10 guns, with the contractor earning £12,500 a year. William Smith, *The History of the Post Office in British North America 1639–1870* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 30.
8. The Treaty of Utrecht was actually a series of peace agreements signed over two months by the belligerents in the War of the Spanish Succession. On one side were France and Spain (whose monarchs were related), Great Britain, Sardinia, Portugal, and the Netherlands were on the other.
9. Text on the Moll map read “The Iroquois consist of four Cantons, Govern’d by so many Kings and are all hearty friends to ye English: those Princes came into England in 1710 to offer their service agt. ye French in Canada, and had it not been for ye miscarriage of our Expedition to Quebec in 1711, those People would have been of great service to us, for they joyn’d General Nicholson with 2,000 men on his March to attack Montreal.” Herman Moll, *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America* [. . .], Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3300.ct000232>.
10. For instance, the text on the Moll map notes “Cherecies” just west of the Appalachians having 3,000 men. Moll, *A New and Exact Map*.
11. Eric Jaffe, *The King’s Best Highway: The Lost History of the Boston Post Road, the Route That Made America* (New York: Scribner, 2010) 32–33. Jaffe reproduced Philip Lea’s ca.1690 map of New England, which showed the post road following a path closer to Knight’s route.
12. Sarah Kemble Knight, *The Journal of Madam Knight* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1920; repr. of 1825 edition), 22–30. The post riders were then carrying mail not for the Crown but for the “farm system” under the Neale Patent.
13. The British colonies’ first newspaper, the *Boston News-Letter*, appeared 24 April 1704, published by the Boston postmaster and bookseller John Campbell.
14. Ruth Lapham Butler, *Doctor Franklin Postmaster General* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1928), 72–81. Butler gave a thorough description of the advantages the accounting system that Franklin instituted as comptroller.
15. Benjamin Franklin was the source of the assumption that Benger died in 1753. *The Autobiography by Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Vintage Books, 1990; repr. of 1793 edition), 125. This error has since been repeated by postal historians: Rich, *History of the United States Post Office*; Butler, *Doctor Franklin*, 34; Konwiser, *Colonial and Revolutionary Posts*, 29; Thomas Coulson, “Benjamin Franklin and the Post Office,” in *National Philatelic Museum*, vol 3, no. 1 (Philadelphia, 1950), 25; Horowicz and Lowe, *Colonial Posts*, 4; and ter Braake, *Posted Letter*, B-30. Fairfax Harrison, however, noted the death and footnoted: “On August 6, 1751, Dorothea Benger qualified as administratrix of the estate of Elliott Benger, deceased.” Fairfax Harrison, “The Colonial Post Office in Virginia,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, April 1924, 90. Other scholars also correctly noted Benger’s death: J. A. Leo Lemay, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 3, *Soldier, Scientist, and Politician, 1748–1757* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 315; and Mary Goodwin, “The Colonial Postal System in Virginia” (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library research report series, RR-53).
16. Jerdone’s letter was footnoted in Harrison, “Colonial Post Office,” 90. Franklin to Collinson, letter 119, from the complete letters of Benjamin Franklin, Morgan Library, quoted in Albert Henry Smyth, *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 48.
17. Lemay, *Life of Benjamin Franklin*, 336–337, detailed the influence of Collinson and other powerful Britons in Franklin’s appointment.
18. Lemay, *Life of Benjamin Franklin*, “Appendix 7. Post Office Expansion,” 627.
19. Butler, *Doctor Franklin*, 68: “In America, the collection of way-letters was one of the main services.”
20. “Philadelphia, March 20, 1751,” in Franklin, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 4, 1750–1753, (July 1753–March 1755) (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1961; franklinpapers.org, accessed 17 October 2016), 117. Lemay, *Life of Benjamin Franklin*, 613–623, offered a comparison of the texts of Franklin’s plans of union, beginning with this letter.
21. Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, updated 21 June 2016, topic “Copley-Medal,” www.britannica.com/topic/Copley-Medal, updated 21 June 2016 (accessed 1 May 2017).
22. Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2000), 80.
23. Anderson described the strategic thinking of John Russell, the fourth duke of Bedford, *Crucible of War*, 36–37.
24. “General Post Office: Appointment of Franklin and Hunter, 10 August 1753” in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 5, 1753–1755 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1962; franklinpapers.org, accessed 17 October 2016.), 18.

25. Andrew Pettegrew called this plausibly the first cartoon on the North American continent and an “inspired piece of pro-British propaganda.” Pettegrew also described the reprinting of the cartoon in New York and Boston, and then its rediscovery at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, when it became “one of the most potent patriot rallying cries.” Arthur Schlesinger went further and showed the cartoon used in 1774, reprinted in the *New-York Journal* of 23 June, followed by an appearance in the *Massachusetts Spy* of 7 July with the addition of a dragon symbolizing Great Britain and another variant in the *Pennsylvania Journal* on 27 July. Andrew Pettegrew, *The Invention of News* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014), 334–335. Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain 1764–1776* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1980; repr. of 1958 ed.), 197. *Virginia Gazette*, CWF Rockefeller Library Special Collections.
26. Perhaps the best description of Franklin’s involvement with the Braddock expedition comes from his autobiography. Franklin, *Autobiography*, 130–137.
27. Pettegrew, *Invention of News*, 306. Pettegrew called the duty on advertisements a “swinging fee[,] . . . probably a greater cause of newspapers failing than the stamp itself.”
28. During his exciting sojourn in London as a young man, November 1724 to July 1726, Franklin frequented coffee houses that were the haunts of his favorite authors Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, who were in turn friends with the cartographer Herman Moll. Dennis Reinhartz, *The Cartographer and the Literati: Herman Moll and His Intellectual Circle* (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellon Press, 1997). On his return to Philadelphia, Franklin in 1727 established the Junto club to replicate the stimulating conversation of the London coffee houses. Paul Leicester Ford, “The Many-Sided Franklin,” *Century Magazine*, 57, no. 6 (April 1899): 467–469.
29. Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communication* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 39.
30. John, *Spreading the News*, 25. We disagree with John’s view: “In the seventeen-year period between 1775 and 1792, the American postal system was little more than a mirror image of the royal postal system for British North America as it had existed in the period prior to 1775. Like the royal postal system, it was expected to generate a revenue that could help the central government defray its routine expenses; like the royal postal system, it was confined to a chain of offices that linked the major port towns along the Atlantic seaboard; and like the royal postal system, it offered no special facilities for the press” [emphases added]. Although administered by the Crown, the line of posts in British North America prior to 1775 did not just link port towns but was a cross post orthogonal to the spokes of empire, and, as we show, the 1758 provisions offered special facilities for the press in several ways.
31. Lemay, *Life of Benjamin Franklin*, 627.
32. Data compiled by the authors from Thomas’s text. Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America, with a Biography of Printers and an Account of Newspapers*. (New York: Imprint Society, 1970; repr. from 1874 ed.), 215.
33. The whole instruction as published in Hugh Gaine’s the *Mercury* of 29 May 1758 is quoted in Paul Leicester Ford, ed. *The Journals of Hugh Gaine, Printer: Biography and Bibliography* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1902), 38–39.
34. Richard Kielbowicz, *News in the Mail* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989), 142, credited Franklin and Hunter with codifying the policy of newspaper exchanges in 1758, but he did not acknowledge provision for subscriber newspapers.
35. The whole instruction as published in Hugh Gaine’s the *Mercury* of 29 May 1758 is quoted in Ford, *Journals of Hugh Gaine*, 38–39.
36. Postmasters were the first printers/publishers of newspapers in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Williamsburg. In five of the ten post towns that had newspapers in 1758, the publisher was at least nominally the postmaster. The publisher was the postmaster in Annapolis, Charleston, New Haven, New York, and Williamsburg, but postmasters were no longer involved in Boston and Philadelphia. New London, Newport, and Portsmouth papers began in 1758 but without postmaster involvement. See Thomas, *History of Printing in America*, 216; and Lemay, *Life of Benjamin Franklin*, 630.
37. The whole instruction as published in Hugh Gaine’s the *Mercury* of 29 May 1758 is quoted in Ford, *Journals of Hugh Gaine*, 38–39.
38. The whole instruction as published in Hugh Gaine’s the *Mercury* of 29 May 1758 is quoted in Ford, *Journals of Hugh Gaine*, 38–39.
39. According to a Williamsburg souvenir publication, *Klapper’s New Letter*, created 4 July 1958, Hunter was especially solicitous of his post riders, providing sleeping quarters for several of them in the shop where he had his printing and post office.
40. In describing the role of the newspaper in preparing for the American Revolution, Arthur Schlesinger reviewed the history of colonial newspapers as a “traditional nexus of journalism and the mails.” He summarized Franklin and Hunter’s 1758 edict: “The new regulations established fair and uniform rates for all, with only exchange copies between editors going free; and they also allowed a postmaster a one-fifth commission for collecting money from subscribers and held him financially responsible for any orders he himself sent in. It was doubtless no coincidence that the *New-York Mercury*, for example, could boast four years later that outside its own colony it entered ‘every Town and Country Village’ in Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Jersey as well as all the provincial capitals from Nova Scotia to Georgia, not to mention such remoter places as the West Indies, the British Isles and Holland. This wider reach of the press greatly enhanced its influence in the coming war of words with Britain.” Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence*, 54–55.

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Behind the Bull's–Eye: Brazilian Postal Reforms in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

Pérola Maria Goldfeder Borges de Castro

ABSTRACT. The construction of Brazilian statehood in the nineteenth century included the development of an administrative machine capable of expanding governmental authority over the territory. An analysis of institutional and financial aspects characterizing Brazilian postal reforms between 1829 and 1844 is germane to the study of how the state was consolidated. The process of postal reform exposed different attitudes toward public administration as well as different conceptions of monarchy and government.

INTRODUCTION

The institutionalization of the postal system in Brazil occurred simultaneously with similar processes in Europe and North America and even relatively early in comparison to many countries. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Brazilian postal administration introduced institutional reforms such as the creation of the *Diretoria Geral dos Correios* (General Post Office) in 1829.

At that time, Brazil was a recently created constitutional monarchy composed of eighteen provinces covering the same territory that Portugal had colonized in the sixteenth century. The national capital, Rio de Janeiro, was the major port of the southern region, where trade with Brazil, Africa, and Europe was concentrated.

During the invasion of Portugal by Napoleonic troops at the end of 1807, the Portuguese court fled to Brazil, settling in Rio de Janeiro in early 1808.¹ This move led to a process of institutional modernization in Brazil and, in turn, to political separation from Portugal. That process was also part of the liberal, constitutional wave, known as *vintismo*, that spread across the Iberian world in the 1820s.

In 1821, city of Porto leaders ordered the return of King João VI to Portugal to swear to uphold the constitution. Before leaving Rio, the king appointed as regent his eldest son, Pedro, to represent royal interests in Brazil. Disagreements between the constituent assembly in Lisbon and the prince regent in Brazil deepened the political crisis of the Portuguese empire and resulted in the consequent emancipation of the Brazilian territory, culminating in the proclamation of independence on 7 September 1822.

Pedro I's reign in Brazil lasted from 1822 to 1831, when he abdicated the throne in favor of his son, Pedro de Alcântara, then only five years old. The Regency, the period between the abdication of Pedro I (7 April 1831) and the majority of Pedro II (23 July 1840), was a key moment in the consolidation of Brazil's constitutional monarchy. During these years, moderate sectors of Brazilian elites emerged on the national political scene to defend the autonomy of the provinces within a liberal and unitary political framework. During that period as well, several slave revolts and urban uprisings occurred

Graduate Program for Economic History, University of São Paulo, 717, Lago St., Butatã, São Paulo, 05508–080, Brazil.

Correspondence: perolagold@yahoo.com.br; perolagoldfeder@gmail.com

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throughout the Brazilian Empire, highlighting the political and racial contradictions that characterized nineteenth-century Brazilian society.²

After Brazil gained its independence, the political system consisted of three independent branches: the executive, judicial, and legislative. The fourth, moderator branch, established by the 1824 constitution, was charged with directing the executive branch and ensuring harmony among the other branches. During the nearly sixty-seven years of monarchy in Brazil (1822–1889), the moderator branch’s power was exercised by the two aforementioned monarchs, who, among other duties, appointed high-level state officials. By acting more broadly as “moderators,” the monarchs decisively contributed to the definition of the state’s role in Brazilian public life.

POSTAL EXPANSION IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

The government had been concerned about the flow of communication among the states of the Portuguese empire since the late eighteenth century. In 1798, a royal act created an organization subordinate to the Department of the Royal Treasury that would be responsible for mail delivery between Brazilian lands and the court in Lisbon.³ This document also forbade land mail delivery by private carriers—the popular postmen called *estafetas* or *caminheiros* (Figures 1 and 2)—and subjected post office employees to strict rules, even mandating prison sentences for those who committed the crime of opening letters.

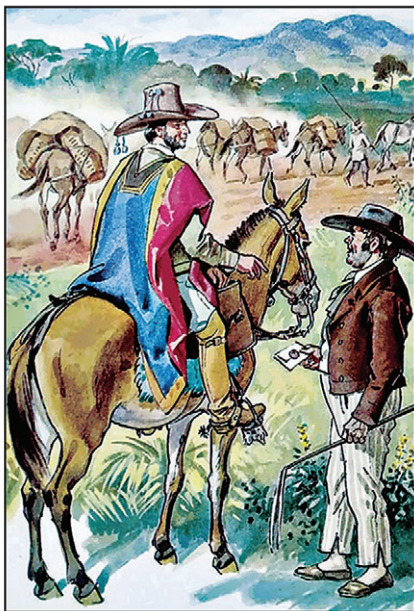


FIGURE 1. Brazilian *estafeta* [private postal carrier by horseback] representation, ca. 1888. Credit: Brazilian National Postal Museum.



FIGURE 2. Brazilian *caminheiro* [private postal carrier on foot] representation, ca. 1888. Credit: Brazilian National Postal Museum.

The 1808 flight of the Portuguese royal family to Rio de Janeiro caused an increase in the volume of mail, and the imperial postal system had to adapt to a new administrative reality.⁴ King João VI created the *Administração Geral dos Correios da Corte* (Court’s General Postal Administration), which increased the post office staff and improved communications in the Brazilian hinterland. After Brazilian independence, this postal system remained in place but with some new features.⁵ On 5 March 1829, Pedro I created the General Post Office. It was based in the court of Rio de Janeiro and had branch offices all over the country.

This measure was part of the territorial integration policy pursued by Pedro I, who sought to connect the Brazilian provinces with the court in a national system. It should be emphasized that, while Hispanic American national identities were shaped in opposition to the political heritage of colonization, Brazilian national identity rested on the Portuguese heritage represented by territorial unity and the monarchical form of government. In addition, in nineteenth-century Brazil the concept of “nation” meant not only an ethnic unit, and as such was frequently used to designate a person’s place of birth, but also a civic unit “political body of citizens” linked to the Brazilian state through public institutions, such as the post office.⁶

As an important state apparatus, the General Post Office supervised, directed, and promoted the improvement of postal practices in the country, as well as managed the finances of the court’s post offices. Its head, the *diretor geral dos correios* (postmaster general), was in charge of “monitoring, promoting and directing the General Administration of all the Post Office; and proposing to the Government by means of the Ministry of the

Imperial Affairs all means that might prove suitable for improving the aforementioned management.”⁷ The provincial postal officers, in turn, reported administratively to the postmaster general and financially to provincial presidents.⁸ Local postal clerks were subject to all of these spheres of power and the municipal councils.⁹ This trilevel hierarchy ensured that decisions about the postal service were made by people within the spheres of power linked to the executive branch rather than to elected bodies such as the Brazilian Parliament.

The 1829 Postal Law also established that each provincial capital would have a postal officer who would serve as both the bookkeeper and the department head. Moreover, the national government decided that every city and town would have a postal clerk and that the municipal councils would be responsible for the provision of material and human resources for the local offices.

Like the 1792 U.S. Post Office Act, the 1829 Brazilian Postal Law granted free franking privileges to congressmen and government members for mail they sent in the public service rather than their private interests. This measure may have sought to curb one of the major flaws of postal systems at that time: the abuse of the franking postage for political gain on mail designed to defame opponents and manipulate information during election periods.

These internal improvements represented the Brazilian government’s efforts to expand its authority over the national territory while modernizing its postal system as other countries were doing. They also reveal that the government sought to answer the demands of regional elites for participation at the federal level: the distribution of postal service positions favored the wealthy, as they had the financial means to bear the costs of implementing the postal apparatus in their cities and villages.

AMENDMENTS TO POSTAL LAW DURING THE REGENCY

Drafted on 5 March 1829, the Postal Law was partially adopted by parliamentary decree on 7 June 1831. This delay likely resulted from the monarchical crisis that led to Pedro I’s abdication in 1831. That same year, Parliament’s work started again.

One of the most substantial changes made by parliamentarians to the 1829 Postal Law concerned the circulation of newspapers. Common to liberal regimes was the assumption that the dissemination of news played an important role in shaping public opinion. Consequently, liberal regimes considered freedom of the press one of the foundations of a representative government. Therefore, Brazilian lawmakers believed that, in order to improve the circulation of newspapers throughout the country, specific postage policies for this type of printed material had to be developed.

In this, they followed their American counterparts, as the United States in 1792 became the first nation to include newspapers in the postal system. Historian Richard John argues that this policy was based on the republican belief that the postal

system played a prominent role in political life by disseminating news, customs, and opinions. It thus contributed to the realization of the ideal of “informed citizenry” so dear to the U.S. founding fathers.¹⁰ Historian Arthur Hecht noted that “the importance of wide and efficient distribution of mail, and specially newspapers, was early recognized as a potent factor in the maintenance and spread of the democratic way of life.”¹¹

Elsewhere, the idea of mailing newspapers also acquired political overtones. In England in the 1830s, publishers of newspapers were excluded from mail delivery service and presented their complaints and demands to Parliament, an incident that became known as the “War of the Unstamped.” This dispute coincided with the campaign for cheap postage initiated under Rowland Hill’s leadership and carried out by Parliament in 1839.

In Brazil, in a similar attempt to maintain news flow across the national territory, the 1831 Postal Decree authorized free-franked national newspapers, whether addressed to individuals or to libraries, archives, and other public institutions. Only foreign newspapers not addressed to such institutions would pay postage. These provisions suggest that the monarchy wanted to shape postal policies that were in line with liberal principles and practices prevailing in civilized nations of that time. In this effort, some administrative procedures had strong political connotations and revealed contradictions to the founding aims. The amendments to the 1829 Postal Law should, therefore, be seen as a key element in shaping the postal system’s role in Brazil’s apparatus of statehood.

FROM PENNY BLACK TO THE BULL’S-EYE

Notably, the diversification and improvement of postal services owed much to the modernization of transport, which began in the United States and Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. According to historian Eric Hobsbawm, “the system of mail-coaches or diligences, instituted in the second half of the eighteenth century and vastly extended between the end of the Napoleonic wars and the coming of the railway, provided not only relative speed—the postal service from Paris to Strasbourg took thirty-six hours in 1833—but also regularity.”¹² Neither technological innovations nor stagecoaches, however, were sufficient to encourage increased volumes of mail, in part because the majority of Europeans could not afford the high postage rates that, in most countries, were distance based.

England was the first country to adopt low postage. In 1839, the English Parliament passed a bill presented by Rowland Hill. The bill established a unified rate of one penny for every single letter, regardless of the distance it traveled. The sender would pay this rate in advance, and a postage stamp would identify the prepayment. This stamp—the penny black—first went on sale in 1840.

In a report published in 1837, the year of Queen Victoria’s coronation, Hill summarized his argument for low postage. The high cost of postage, he maintained, was the result of a complex

and inefficient administrative arrangement, which favored governmental revenues to the detriment of the quality of the service provided. Therefore, inexpensive postage and prepayment were indispensable conditions for achieving not only the reduction of costs but also an increase in mail flows that could generate profits for the post offices.¹³

Hill's project divided opinions in both Parliament and the press. On one hand, Whigs supported cheap postage, believing that it would contribute not only to an increase in trade relations but also to the promotion of societal morals and the progress of civilization, since the habit of sending letters would contribute to increasing literacy. On the other hand, Tories rallied against the measure, predicting that it would bring financial ruin to the British postal system because it would be unable to generate higher revenues after the implementation of low postage.

British postal reform in fact had contradictory effects on the Royal Mail's finances. While the volume of mail eventually increased considerably, from 92,000 to 327,000 items by 1850,

there was a significant drop in profits in the years following the adoption of low postage. In 1841, the volume of mail dropped by half compared to previous year, bringing in only £500,789. This was a shock to the government, as "the British post office was expected to generate a large annual surplus—which, invariably, it did—which the treasury used to cover the costs of running the government."¹⁴

Indeed, Brazil adopted postage stamps only after Britain and its empire and the Canton of Zurich, where postal reform took place in 1840. In March 1842, the Brazilian government fixed at sixty reis (plural for the Brazilian monetary unit, real) the posting of letters weighing less than four *oitavas* (ounces) and conducted by land, adding another thirty reis for each succeeding two *oitavas* (Table 1).¹⁵ In that same year, Decree No.255 required the prepayment of such postage, to be identified by a postage stamp, which became popularly known as the *olho de boi* (bull's-eye; Figure 3).

Two years after the establishment of the low rates, the government took several measures to prevent fraud in stamp production and trade. The government stipulated, for example, that postal items should be "printed on very thin paper, and affixed to letters and other papers with glutinous substance which makes their separation difficult without that seal."¹⁶ This decree also levied a fine of 100 reis and three months in prison for those who falsified stamps and fines of 10 to 20 reis for those who sold any stamps without the government's permission.

As the United States had done in 1792 when it instituted a reduced postal rate for books and newspapers, the Brazilian government stipulated a single postage rate of twenty reis for printed materials but only if the materials were sealed and addressed. This measure aimed to reduce fraudulent practices such as the inclusion of personal letters and objects between newspaper sheets.

The benefits of low postage also extended to "the letters sent by settlers to their relatives that still reside in the country that

TABLE 1. Brazilian postal rates (1842).^a Values are expressed in Brazilian currency, reis (plural of real).

Weight	Land mail	Maritime mail
Less than 4 <i>oitavas</i> ^b	60 reis	120 reis
4–6 <i>oitavas</i>	90 reis	180 reis
6–8 <i>oitavas</i>	120 reis	240 reis
Each additional 2 <i>oitavas</i>	30 reis	60 reis

^a Source: Decree No. 254, 29 November 1842, Empire of Brazil, *Brazilian Empire's Collected Laws and Regulations*, <http://www.planalto.gov.br> (accessed 12 September 2017).

^b *Oitavas* = ounces.



FIGURE 3. 1843 *Olho de boi* series: (from left) stamps of thirty, sixty, and ninety reis, respectively. Courtesy of the National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

they have emigrated from.”¹⁷ One can imagine that this measure benefited not only foreign settlers (mostly European immigrants) but also their employers who, eager to attract more agricultural labor, saw in this postal policy an incentive for their enterprises, as settlers’ mail could be used to encourage other settlers.

POSTAL FINANCES DESCRIBED IN MINISTERIAL REPORTS

Financial and statistical data contained in the reports of the Ministry of State and Imperial Business allows an analysis of the status of public finances in the context of Brazilian postal reforms.¹⁸ These sources also reveal how the imperial government regarded postal services within the whole apparatus of statehood.

Concerns about the revision of postal laws appeared in several ministerial reports after the Regency. At that time, one of the main challenges that the Brazilian postal service faced was the cost of undeliverable mail, which was incinerated. In Minister of Imperial Affairs Joaquim Vieira da Silva e Souza’s opinion, this problem was due to a lack of home delivery—a problem that was “improper to a vast city” such as Rio de Janeiro and caused “considerable damage of public finances”¹⁹ because there were no dead letter offices in Brazil, unlike in England, and the cost of burning was paid by the government.

Searching for solutions to this and other postal issues, Brazilian ministers turned to Europe. In an 1835 report, Minister of Imperial Affairs José Ignacio Borges affirmed the necessity of a home delivery system similar to the French *petite poste*, which had been working since the late eighteenth century. He recognized, however, that “to carry out such a reform, beyond the difficulties in overcoming the effect of our habits, we would have to get the Regulations there [France] following in this regard, and apply them judiciously to the state of our civilization, which cannot be the work of a moment.”²⁰ Under the pretext of the underdevelopment of roads, illiteracy, and other social problems, such as slavery, the Brazilian government thus postponed important improvements in the postal system.

Nevertheless, news about Rowland Hill’s cheap postage campaign soon came to the attention of the Brazilian government. In 1840, Minister of Imperial Affairs Cândido José de Araújo Viana reported that a British diplomat had proposed to some Brazilian authorities the adoption of certain policies to reduce mail costs. The diplomat also said that Queen Victoria wished that the use of cheap postage were “extensive, for reciprocal arrangements with foreign countries.”²¹ It did not take long for this British postal policy to become legislation in Brazil: the 1842 Budget Law (No. 243 of 30 November 1841) authorized the imperial government to spend 180,000 reis on postal improvements such as printing stamps at a lower rate.

In his second term, Araújo Viana wrote a full parliamentary report about the General Post Office’s situation. According to the minister, this branch of the public service showed a debt of 380,000 reis, more than five times its revenue. He outlined

several causes for this. First, he highlighted the low profitability of maritime mail. Prior to the 1842 Postal Reform, there had been a minimum rate of 120 reis for this kind of mail, but now a simple letter from Rio de Janeiro to the province of Pará would cost the sender only 20 reis. This fee contrasted with the high costs of the maritime delivery system, which the minister gave as about 200,000 reis a year. It was necessary, therefore, to raise postage rates because it was “reasonable that the General Post Office’s cost be at the expense of the correspondents, to whom such letters are mostly directed, and mostly serve.”²²

Second, Araújo Viana’s report highlighted poor surveillance. Apparently, it was impossible to verify the exact number of letters received and distributed, despite the postal officers’ diligence. The large volume of postal materials gave rise to fraud and loss, as observed by the comptroller responsible for reviewing postal finances in Rio de Janeiro:

If in a branch as the Court’s Post Office a similar operation [postal surveillance] is subject to the faith of those who practice it, the concept is as if the same operation were developed in a management or agency where one individual meets the qualities Administrator, Accountant, and Treasurer. According to an account of such a nature no resource has an official in charge of it. . . . All researches will be frustrated in view of the nature of income.²³

Third, Araújo Viana mentioned the disparity in the budgets of provincial postal agencies, as in the following case: “Compare Postal expenses in Piauí with the same in Ceará: in Piauí, a province which sends just one congressman to the Parliament, mail costs 3,198,000 reis where as in Ceará, which is represented by eight congressmen, expenses do not exceed 2,254,000 reis.”²⁴ This quote suggests a correlation between political representation in the provinces and the volume of mail exchanged with the court of Rio de Janeiro.

Given the above concerns, Araújo Viana’s report recommended the adoption of several measures, starting with home delivery and prepayment of postage with stamped paper. These innovations were justified by the following arguments:

Prepayment does not harm taxpayers but also prevents abuses, and makes for faster work at the Post Office. Furthermore, home delivery offers more likelihood of getting letters to their destination, and will save time and labor lost in transmission delays within the mail Administrations. . . . The swindlers will no longer have the power to fine anybody by sending to them injurious papers. . . . By this means, no curious or malicious person will receive other’s correspondence, and penetrate family secrets, honor and fortune. Finally, the new prepayment and sealed paper system will not just make the inspection possible in this maze of Public Service, but also make it easy in order to convert to days a task that,

TABLE 2. Revenues and expenditures of the Brazilian Post Office (1840–1850).^a Values are in Brazilian currency (reis). A dash (—) indicates data not available.

Year	Budgeted revenue ^b	Collected revenue	Budgeted expenditure	Effective expenditure
1840	62,869	63,727	180,000	136,910
1841	63,578	66,206	131,000	123,221
1842	64,445	63,947	139,000	123,567
1843	68,700	85,508	150,000	146,086
1844	60,200	115,816	180,000	— ^c
1845	74,000	114,104	180,000	—
1846	74,000	146,050	190,000	170,423
1847	120,000	142,586	190,000	186,070
1848	152,085	148,680	189,002	204,529
1849	—	143,017	—	211,617
1850	—	143,249	—	204,245

^a Source: Annual Reports from Ministry of State and Empire Affairs (1821–1860), Ministerial Reports from the Secretary of State and Empire Business (1821–1860), <http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil/ministerial> (accessed 12 September 2017).

^b Empire of Brazil, *Brazilian Empire's Collected Laws and Regulations*, <http://www.planalto.gov.br> (accessed 12 September 2017).

^c Brazilian historical sources show a gap in the effective expenditure for the years 1844 and 1845.

according to the current system, would take months to be accomplished, and in an unsatisfactory way.²⁵

The minister also estimated that this reform would result in an increase in income for the General Post Office from 60 million reis to more than 300 million reis without having to increase the costs fixed by the 1842 Budget Law.²⁶

Starting in 1840, most of the ministerial reports provided financial and statistical data about the mail, revealing the growth in postal revenues over that decade (Table 2). At first glance, data from the years following the 1842 postal reform seem to confirm Minister Joaquim Marcelino de Brito's 1846 statement that cheap postage "has greatly improved the Post Office service, both in respect to its regularity, and to its taxation."²⁷ However, when examined more closely, they reveal a more complex fiscal reality

First, one can observe that the budgeted revenue was always smaller than that earned, reaching a positive difference of 72,049,866 reis in 1846 (Figure 4). However, the budgeted expenditures invariably were higher than the actual expenditures of the post office, with the exception of 1848 when the difference between these two values was negative 15,527 reis (Figure 5).²⁸ How can these discrepancies be explained?

In an article about the financial life of some Brazilian municipalities in the first half of the nineteenth century, historians Anne Hanley and Luciana Suarez Lopes warned about the risks of using budgetary sources for that period. According to the authors, the values contained in the budgets were often overestimated, which affected the provision of public goods to the population. They concluded that "the published budgets reflected an idealized projection of municipal financial health that had little to do with

the reality of fiscal management of local government."²⁹ The difference between the municipal and postal budgets is that those of municipalities usually reflected the aldermen's optimistic view of the public accounts, while those of the postal system were governed more by prudence, even underestimating the fiscal capacity of the postal system. One hypothesis is that, according to a standard accounting procedure of that time, the positive differences that resulted from both the revenue and the budgeted expenditure were used to balance the accounts of post offices, reducing, at least fictionally, their chronic deficits (Figures 4, 5).

A more accurate estimate of postal finances can be made based on annual accounts. The 1842 Postal Reform probably led to the considerable increase of 47% in income, resulting in an income of 148,679,873 reis in 1848. However, this amount was not enough to cover the costs of this public service, which the minister evaluated in the same year at 176,126,941 reis. The result was a deficit of 55,849,127 reis.³⁰

Nevertheless, the early 1850s witnessed a significant increase in the Brazilian Post Office's revenue, which reached the sum of 236,192,971 reis in 1855. Chief among the sources of income was the sale of blue and black stamps, popularly named *olho de gato* (cat's eye) and *olho de cabra* (goat's eye), respectively (Figures 6, 7). The first sale category, that of black stamps, represented 55.73% of total revenues for 1855 (Figure 8).³¹

There was a budgetary change toward the decade's end: expenses increased 7.78% over the previous year, reaching 373,139,090 reis in 1857. Not even with its huge growth of 25.34% could postal revenues offset expenses, leaving a deficit of 94,850 reis, one of the largest in the Brazilian postal system's history until then. In the 1857 report, Postmaster General Thomaz José Pinto Serqueira attempted to explain the large increase in

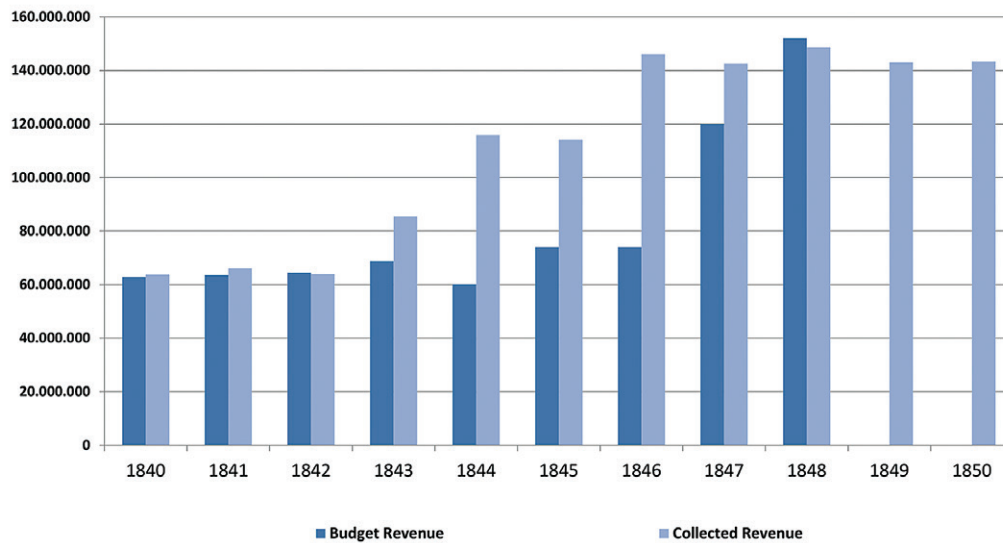


FIGURE 4. Revenues of the Brazilian Post Office (1840–1850) compiled from Ministerial Reports from the Secretary of State and Empire Business (1821–1860). Brazilian Ministerial Reports from 1821 to 1960 are digitized and available at the Center for Research Libraries of the University of Chicago. <http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil/ministerial> (accessed 12 September 2017).

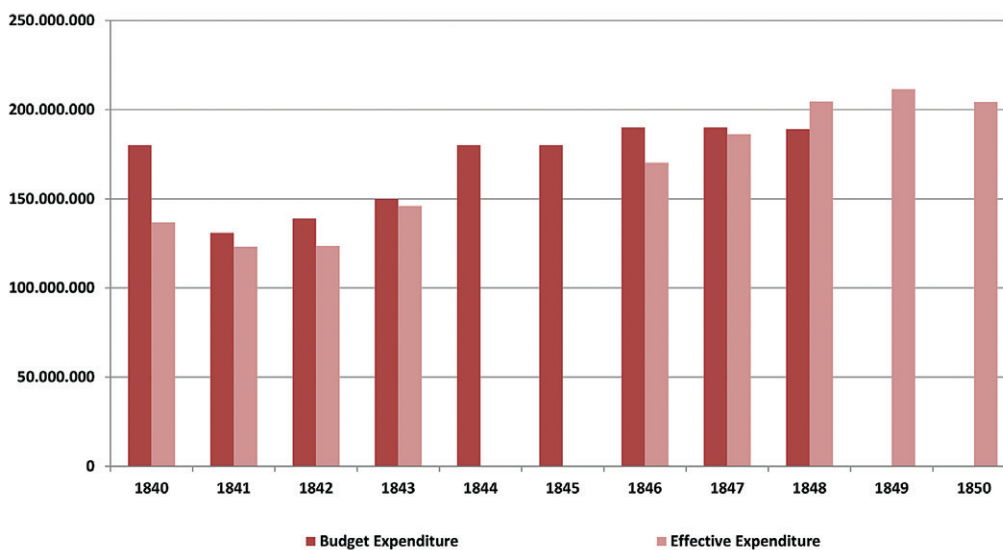


FIGURE 5. Expenditures of the Brazilian Post Office (1840–1850) compiled from Ministerial Reports from the Secretary of State and Empire Business (1821–1860).

expenditures and detailed his department's financial and organizational situation. He attributed the large increase to the creation of lines and agencies, renting properties for local and provincial branches, increasing postmen's salaries, and increasing the percentage of the post office's profit granted to agents (Figure 9).³²

Analyzing these data, one can distinguish two expenditure categories: administrative and infrastructural. The first includes expenses such as wages, bonuses, and payouts/dividends to the stakeholders in the profits of offices under management. In 1857, administrative expenses represented 86% of the General Post



FIGURE 6. Blue stamp of ten reis, 1850 *olho de gato* series. Courtesy of the National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution.



FIGURE 7. 1850 *olho de cabra* series: (from top) Stamps of 180, 300, and 600 reis, respectively. Courtesy of the National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Office's total expenditure. The second category, infrastructure, consisted of the creation and maintenance of postal routes and the purchase of supplies (e.g., stamps, glue, paint, letterhead). Infrastructural expenses accounted for only 23.87% of the annual expenditure in 1857, a typical year, totaling 117,829 reis.³³

The expenses for *estafetas* and other categories of postal carriers required special attention. According to Decree No. 303 of 1843, hiring these employees was the responsibility of provincial postal officials, who reported to the postmaster general and provincial presidents. This document set these employees' daily rate of pay at 800 reis for postmen, 1,280 reis for *estafetas* when in service, and 640 reis for the same *estafetas* during periods when they were not working due to low demand for delivery. The importance of delivery services is evident in the emphasis given to public spending on mail deliverers: between 1855 and 1858, salaries increased by 55%, accounting, in the last year, for 52.32% of the post office's total debt.³⁴

Given that infrastructure expenditures accounted for less than a quarter of the post office's expenditures, one might expect that the ministerial reports would reveal problems in postal infrastructure. In 1850, Minister José da Costa Carvalho complained:

In almost all provinces Postal Administrations are accommodated in houses so skimpy, barely lending themselves to the necessary work; but above all, it seems impossible that in a house where rooms are only 25 feet wide, anyone could in a timely manner, without fuss and disorder, provide the weighty services of mail departure, to check and return in a few hours five and six thousand letters, entering at once, while at the same time preparing various bags for many different points.³⁵

The financial gap between the costs of fulfilling administrative and infrastructural needs shown above suggests a need to explain how postal administrators organized and distributed the postal receipts.

In a study about the nineteenth-century provisioning of public goods in some Brazilian municipalities, Anne Hanley revealed the inadequacy of municipal revenues for covering people's basic expenses, such as housing, food, and water. According to the author, municipalities in financial straits tended to prioritize the payroll, as it was the main source of their political patronage. This implies that municipal officials failed to make sufficient investment in infrastructure, for which expenditures were not fixed in the provincial budget law. It should be noted, moreover, that there was no general budget law for the whole Brazilian territory, so each province had its own law.³⁶

Just as in the municipalities that Hanley studied, the expenditure pattern adopted by the Brazilian General Post Office in the nineteenth century apparently privileged payroll over infrastructure. The reason was probably political. Richard John noted about U.S. Post Office appointments: "The existence of such a rich source of potential political patronage, mostly in the formal mail contracts and postmasterships, made the postal

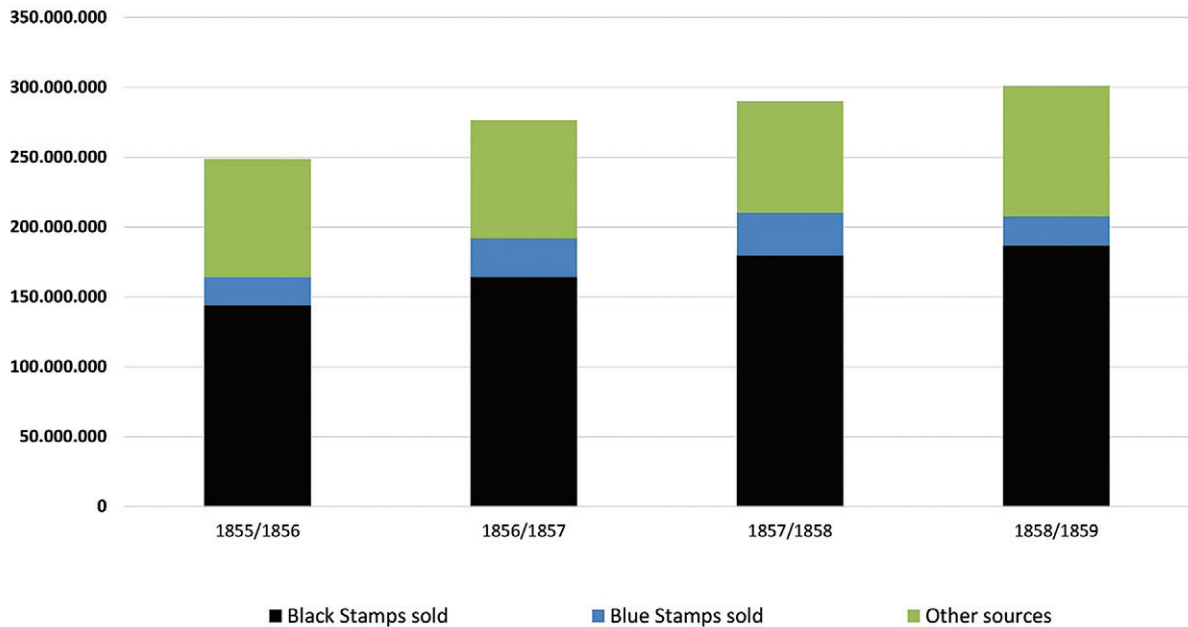


FIGURE 8. Brazilian post offices income sources (1855–1859). Author’s creation based on Ministerial Reports from the Secretary of State and Empire Business (1821–1860). Displayed on: <http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil/ministerial> (accessed 12 September 2017).

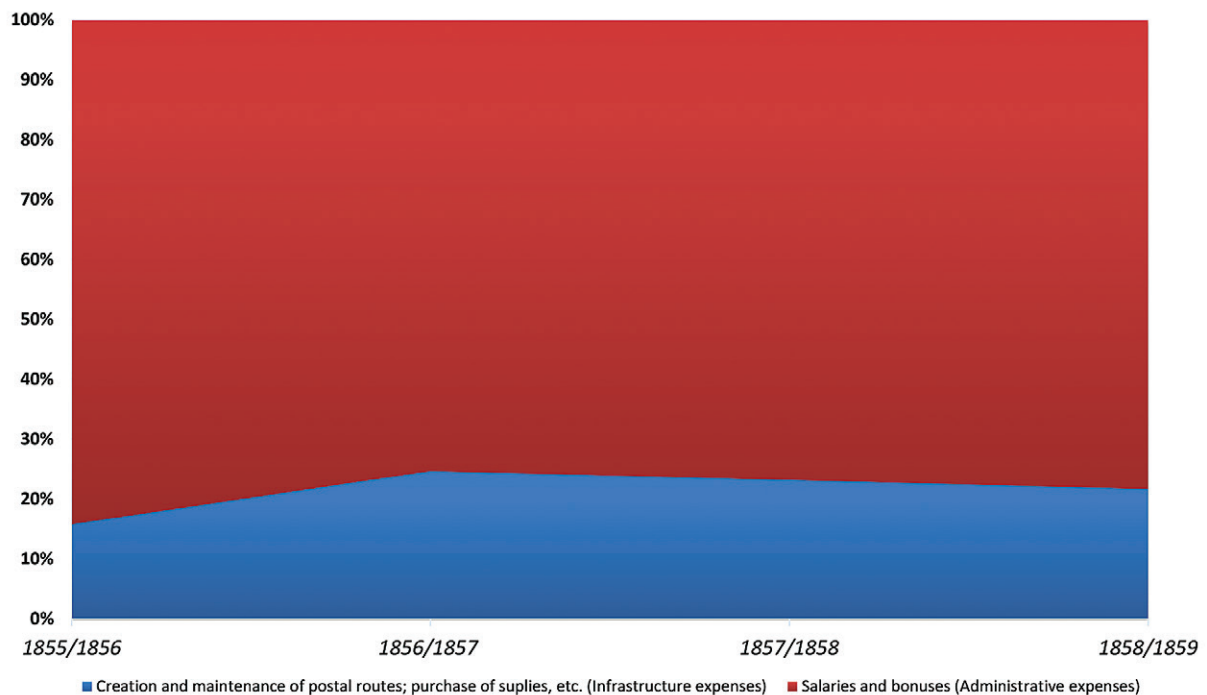


FIGURE 9. Brazilian Post Office’s main expenses (1855–1859), based on Ministerial Reports from the Secretary of State and Empire Business (1821–1860). Displayed on: <http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil/ministerial> (accessed 12 September 2017).

system an obvious target for ambitious public figures intent on building apolitical organization that would have a life of its own.”³⁷

Regional elites’ demand for participation in the process of building national statehood may explain, therefore, why the executive branch opted for the conservation of postal services in all provinces of the Brazilian Empire in spite of the financial burden that this division placed on the imperial public coffers. Providing the Brazilian elite with an institutionalized channel such as the post offices was necessary for maintaining patronage, as many members of this elite occupied positions in this branch, and frequent contact with the central government.

CONCLUSION

“Nothing has His Imperial Majesty so firm in mind as to do away with the distances that isolate Him from his vassals, and even, if possible, to gather them all around His throne, and this proposed measure is not a small step to achieve this August commitment.”³⁸

With these words, Minister Cândido José de Araújo Viana justified the 1841 institution of postage based on the weight of the object being mailed. He said it was not fair to “require higher rates of taxpayers only because they reside farther away.” Besides, for many people, uniform postage would not greatly matter because, in the minister’s words, “payment for the greater number of local letters, will be offset by the fewer sent to remote places.”³⁹

Reflecting on the spatial aspect of postal reforms, French historian Léonard Laborie suggested that uniform postage was adopted in some nation states “to strengthen the national territorial dimension related to the Mail.”⁴⁰ According to Laborie, contemporaries would have seen this type of reform as a measure of territorial justice because it provided the most remote communities with a direct communication channel with the central government.

When applied to Brazil, Laborie’s hypothesis acquires other dimensions, suggested in this paper: first, it is necessary to assess the real impact of the 1842 postal reform on the financial structure of the Brazilian postal system, given that the empire had a territory of colossal dimensions. One must next assess this reform’s role in the transformation of ordinary postal practices, as Brazil’s slaveholding society displayed much lower rates of literacy and educational outcomes than European and North American societies. One may summarize that, by simultaneously investing in the improvement of transport connections and reducing the costs of the postal delivery service to the consumer (even if it meant deficits in the postal service’s finances), the imperial government sought to align its postal policies closely with those of European countries, thus promoting the internal integration of the Brazilian Empire through the expansion of the postal system.

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NOTES

1. French troops invaded Portugal during the conflicts fought between France under Napoleon Bonaparte and other European nations between 1799 and 1815. As Portugal was a trading partner of Great Britain, France’s main enemy, João VI, attempted to keep Portugal neutral, but eventually, it became embroiled in the European conflicts. The Napoleonic Wars also spilled over into Egypt, the United States, the Antilles, and South America.
2. The term *Brazilian Empire* has a historiographical specificity as used in this article. After the 1808 transfer of the Portuguese royal family to Rio de Janeiro, several Luso-Brazilian intellectuals, such as the minister Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho and the journalist Hipólito da Costa, saw an opportunity to regenerate the decaying Portuguese empire. After Brazil gained independence in 1822, the contemporary political repertoire extended this utopian vision of a powerful Brazilian empire into the consolidation of a huge national territory. It should be emphasized, however, that Brazil never possessed the type of geopolitical configuration of other modern empires, such as the British and Austro-Hungarian, with noncontiguous territories scattered all over the globe. For further discussion, see Maria de Lourdes Viana Lyra, *A utopia do poderoso império: Portugal e Brasil: Bastidores da política (1798–1822)* (São Paulo: Sette Letras, 1994), 15.
3. Between 1796 and 1801, the Ministry of the Navy and Overseas Domains was under the administration of Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho (Count of Linhares), one of the most notable representatives of the Portuguese Enlightenment. Historians have attributed to him several measures then taken to rationalize administrative practices, including the establishment of communications between the colony of Brazil and the Portuguese metropolis. For further information about Coutinho’s postal projects, see Margarida Sobral Neto, *As comunicações na Idade Moderna* (Lisbon: Fundação Portuguesa das Comunicações, 2005), 86.
4. The Portuguese royal family’s flight to Brazil, signaling the end of the colonial period, triggered many changes in Portuguese America, including the establishment in Rio of several key institutions, such as the Royal Bank, Royal College of Nobles, Royal Typography, Military Hospital, and Royal Library—a process that some scholars call the “internalization of the metropolis.” See Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias, *A interiorização da metrópole e outros estudos* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2005), 32.
5. During the nineteenth century, several European and American states sought to justify their sovereignty based on nationalist arguments, such as common territory, language, culture, and religion, no matter what form of government prevailed in the country. According to Benedict Anderson, “since the end of the eighteenth century, nationalism has undergone a process of modulation and adaptation, according to different eras, political regimes, economies and social structures.” Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 157. In

- Brazil, nation-statehood was created by monarchical institutions such as the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute (IHGB), an official lecture chair created in 1834 to promote national history and report on the country's natural resources.
6. Antonio de Moraes Silva, *Dicionário da língua portuguesa* (Lisbon: Imprensa Régia, 1858), 332.
 7. Empire of Brazil, *Brazilian Empire's Collected Laws and Regulations*, <http://www.planalto.gov.br> (accessed 12 September 2017).
 8. The presidencies of provinces were created by law on 20 October 1823 as regional units of the executive branches. The Imperial Affairs Ministry was directly responsible for their appointment, which confirmed the central government's role in administrative issues such as provincial income, security, and communication networks.
 9. The municipal councils were administrative bodies that the Portuguese metropolitan government instituted in the sixteenth century to improve colonial administration. After Brazilian independence, these council gradually lost their administrative and financial autonomy and were made responsible to other spheres of regional power, such as the provincial legislative assemblies and provincial presidents.
 10. Richard R. John, "Governmental Institutions as Agents of Change: Rethinking American Political Development in the Early Republic, 1787–1835," *Studies in American Political Development* 11 (1997): 371.
 11. Arthur Hecht, "Pennsylvania Postal History of the Eighteenth Century," *Pennsylvania History* 30(4) (1962): 442.
 12. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789–1848* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), 26.
 13. Rowland Hill, *Post Office Reform: Its Importance and Practicability* (London: Charles Knight, 1837), 8.
 14. Richard R. John, "The Political Economy of Postal Reform in the Victorian Age," in *The Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposia. Select Papers, 2006–2009*, ed. Thomas Lera (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2010), 4. [Smithsonian Contributions to History and Technology, 55.]
 15. *Oitava* (ounce) was the unit of measure used in the Brazilian Imperial Post Office to check the weight of mail in general. It was equivalent to: 128 pounds; 18 carats; 4 grams. Instituto de Pesquisa Economica Aplicada, <http://www.ipeadata.gov.br> (accessed 6 March 2016).
 16. Empire of Brazil, *Brazilian Empire's Collected Laws*.
 17. Empire of Brazil, *Brazilian Empire's Collected Laws*.
 18. Brazilian Ministerial Reports from 1821 to 1960 are digitized and available at the Center for Research Libraries of the University of Chicago. In this same collection, one can find the *Annual Reports from Ministry of State and Empire Affairs*, <http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil/ministerial> (accessed 12 September 2017).
 19. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports from Ministry of State and Empire Affairs*, <http://www-apps.crl.edu/brazil/ministerial> (accessed 12 September 2017).
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 24. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 25. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 26. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 27. After 1848 the annual ministerial reports did not provide post office budget data, only general data about the Ministry of Imperial Affairs.
 28. No data on spending for years 1844 and 1845 could be found by this research in ministerial reports.
 29. Anne G. Hanley and Luciana Suarez Lopes, "Can Public Accounts Be Trusted? Evidence from the Historical Record in São Paulo, Brazil 1836–1850," paper presented at the Eleventh International Congress of the Brazilian Studies Association, September 2012, 5.
 30. The chronic deficit was not purely a Brazilian problem. In a classic study on the development of U.S. postal rates for 1845–1955, historian Jane Kennedy identifies the factors that made the United States Post Office unprofitable. According to her, between 1850 and 1860 the combination of large reductions in postage and the rapid westward expansion of the postal service brought the first large postal deficits into being. For more details see Jane Kennedy, "Development of Postal Rates: 1845–1955," *Land Economics* 33(2) (1957): 107.
 31. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 32. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 33. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 34. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 35. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 36. Anne G. Hanley, "A Failure to Deliver: Municipal Poverty and the Provision of Public Services in Imperial São Paulo, Brazil 1822–1889," *Journal of Urban History* 39(3) (2012): 520.
 37. John, "Governmental Institutions," 373.
 38. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 39. Empire of Brazil, *Annual Reports*.
 40. Léonard Laborie, "Mondialisation postale: innovations tarifaires et territoires dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle," *Histoire, économie e société* 2, 26^e année (2007): 17.

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About the Contributors

Steven R. Boyd, PhD, is a professor of history emeritus at the University of Texas at San Antonio and the author of *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge, 2010). He may be reached at msbenterprises@earthlink.net.

Harry K. Charles Jr., PhD, is a principal staff engineer and manager at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. Combining his academic background with his lifelong interest in philately, he has authored numerous articles and written three books on aspects of the material in his collections. His first book, *United States Savings Stamps* (United States Stamp Society, 2012), examines the postal and treasury savings stamp systems both during peacetime and war. His second book, *The United States Postage Due Essays, Proofs, and Specimens* (Chicago Collectors Club, 2013) traces the evolution of the postage due stamps in the United States. His most recent book, *United States Possessions: Postage Due Stamps and Covers* (United States Stamp Society, 2020), explores the use of postage due stamps in the United States Possessions and Trust Territories. In addition to authorship, Charles is an award-winning exhibitor and frequently lectures on stamps at local, national, and international forums. He is a member of several stamp societies including the Royal Philatelic Society London, American Philatelic Society, United States Stamp Society, Baltimore Philatelic Society, and American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors. He may be reached at harry.charles@jhuapl.edu.

Diane DeBlois, MA education, is an independent scholar and editor who has made communications history her vocation and passion for more than three decades. She and coauthor Robert Dalton Harris work together as antiquarians (*aGatherin'* Historical Paper) and editors (*Postal History Journal*). She may be reached at agatherin@yahoo.com.

William C. (Bill) Fort III, PhD, is a lifelong stamp collector and postal historian. He exhibits transoceanic airmail and is an American Philatelic Society accredited judge. He is the vice president of National Philatelic Exhibitions and secretary of the American Airmail Society. He may be reached at wcfortiii@aol.com.

Pérola Maria Goldfeder Borges de Castro is a doctoral student in the Graduate Program for Economic History at the University of São Paulo. She received a scholarship from the São Paulo Research Support Foundation (FAPESP). She is a specialist in topics related to economic history, the history of administration and public finance, the formation of the postal system, municipalities, and regional elites and national state-building in nineteenth-century Brazil. She may be reached at perolagold@yahoo.com.br.

Daniel V. Gribbin has studied and written about aerophilately since he first joined the American Airmail Society in the 1970s. On a visit to Toulouse, he happened upon a stamp shop where he first encountered covers flown by the great heroes of French aviation, and he was hooked. He frequently visits Paris and Toulouse to consult with experts and to obtain new material. He earned his BA from Tulane University and his MA and PhD from University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. After thirty-five years of teaching at Ferrum College in Virginia and the University of Central Florida, he retired with his wife, Martha, to Daytona Beach Shores, where he writes music and photographs shore birds. His affiliations include the American Airmail Society, British Airmail Society, and Cercle Aérophilatélique Français. He may be reached at bluzeman1@hotmail.com.

Robert Dalton Harris, PhD, theoretical physics, is an independent scholar and editor who has made communications history his vocation and passion for more than three decades. He and coauthor Diane DeBlois work together as antiquarians (*aGatherin'* Historical Paper) and editors (*Postal History Journal*). He may be reached at agatherin@yahoo.com.

Tara E. Murray, MLIS, is the librarian for Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures at Penn State. She previously served as the director of information services and librarian for the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL) (2010–2019). During her tenure at the APRL, she oversaw the renovation of new space for the library, developed the library's first digital collections, and served as a co-organizer of the Postal History Symposium. She was recognized as a Fellow of the Special Libraries Association

(SLA) in 2017 and is the 2020 president of SLA. She may be reached at tem10@psu.edu.

Susan N. Smith, PhD, history, MAIS, is the Winton M. Blount Research Chair at the National Postal Museum (NPM), Smithsonian Institution. She works with both NPM staff and external researchers to develop and promote philatelic and postal studies. Before joining the NPM staff in 2016, Smith taught European and Russian history and museum studies, and she published on Russian museum practices and networks. She may be reached at smithsu@si.edu.

Ratomir Zivkovic is the president of Ferrum International Ltd. in New York and has researched and exhibited airmail and postal history of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He is a member of the American Philatelic Society (APS), American Air Mail Society, American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors, Collectors Club of New York, Royal Philatelic Society of London, American Philatelic Research Library, Philatelic Society of Croatia, and Philatelic Society of Serbia. He is the national delegate for the Republic of Serbia in the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie Commission for Aerophilately. His exhibit on airmail of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia won gold and large gold medals at APS World Series exhibitions. He has published on the history of air mail, including *1933 Graf Zeppelin Chicago Flight Cover to Philippines* (Jack Knight Air Log—The Zeppelin Collector, 2012) and *The Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Southeast European Air Mail Connection to North America 1939–1941* (Acta Philatelica Nova Croatian Philatelic Almanac, 2015). He may be reached at ratkoz10@aol.com.

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