

**A Non-Treaty Postal Agreement
of the US Post Office Department
with the British Post Office
as an early significant step
towards the development
of US airmail to European, African, Asian,
& Australian destinations**

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2 June 2016

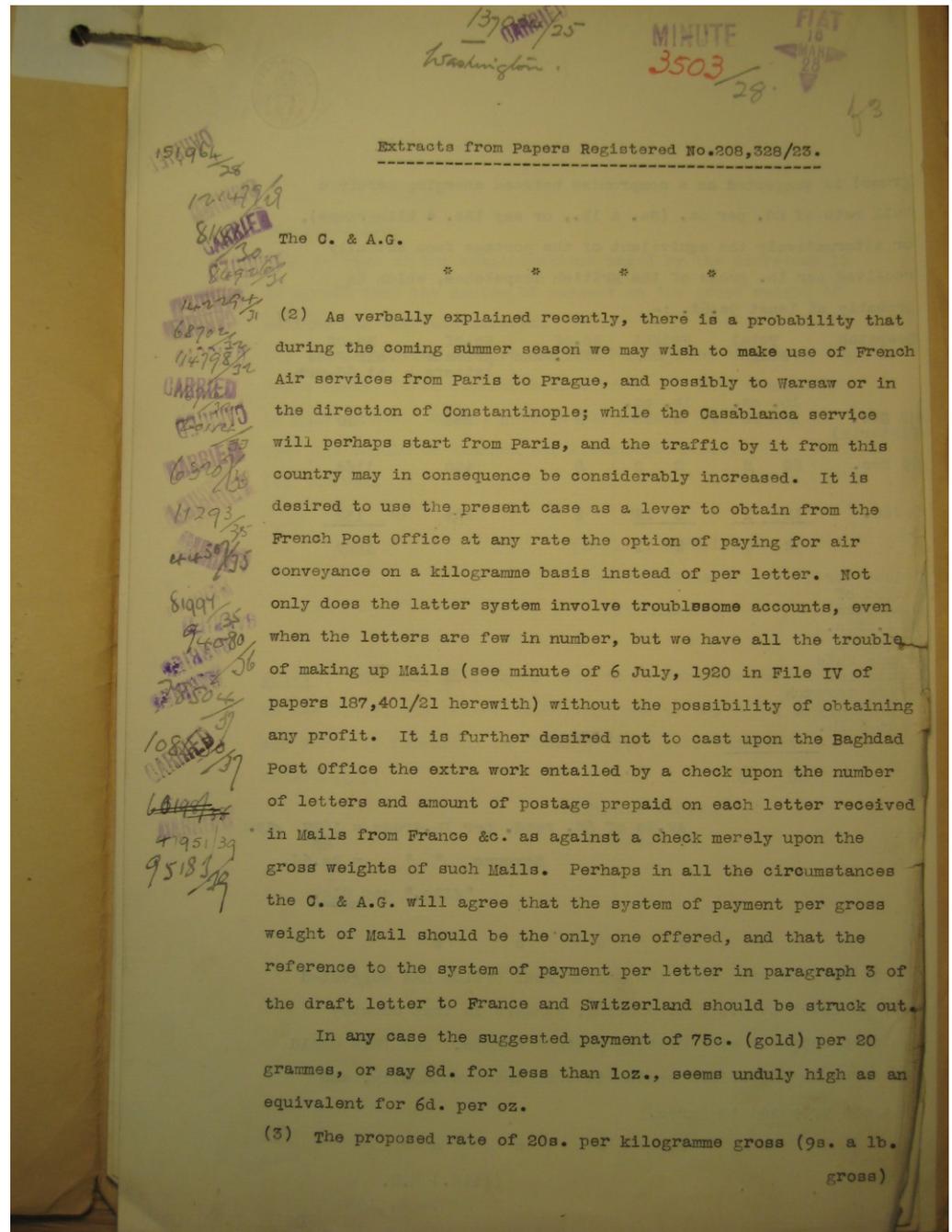
Origins of US - foreign air service

- Not until 1920 UPU Congress (Madrid), did the UPU recognize air transport sector.
- Following ratification of UPU Article 4b, US could enter an agreement with another postal administration for air service.
 - *Aerial services established for the conveyance of correspondence between two or more countries are considered extraordinary services....*
- Earliest US Post Office Department agreement for air service was made with the British Post Office (1922). It permitted air service for US letters from Cairo to Baghdad.

British Post Office

January 1922

- Make use of French air service for further European and African destinations
- Kilogram basis instead of letter basis
 - Less complex accounting
 - Reduce risk of financial losses due to low mail volume
 - May overwhelm Baghdad check for each letter for postage



British Post Office

January 1922

- To simplify accounting, German Post Office proposed German senders to use British postage stamps.
- British Post Office believed that this would create “an impossible system to work internationally”.

gross) is suggested as a compromise between charging merely a bulk rate of 6d. per oz. (8s. a lb., or say 18s. a kilogramme), or alternatively the equivalent of the postage fees actually received per lb. gross of the British despatches, which is probably at least 9s.6d. :-

Despatch of	Total Weight	Weight of bags	No. of offl. Pkts	No. of private letters	No. of air fees at 6d. each
23 Dec. (interim)	lb. oz. 17 13	lb. oz. 0 13	2	148	310
29 Dec.	62 2	2 2	2	428	1164
6 Jan.	<u>12 1</u>	<u>0 12</u>	2	134	<u>153</u>
	92 0	3 11			1627

Deduct for weight of unprepaid offl. pkts. including at any rate 1 Colonial office despatch of probably at least 6 lb.

<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
85	0

Av. No of 6d. recd. per lb. gross = $\frac{1627}{85} = 19.1$
 Revenue " " = 9s.6d.

"Kilo." say 21s.

* * * * *

(4) It will be seen that the German Post Office has suggested that, in order to avoid accounting, senders in that country should be supplied with British postage stamps. But this would seem to be an impossible system to work internationally, and it is not proposed to agree.

* * * * *

(Itld.) L.S.

7 Jan., 1922

The

British Post Office

January 1922

- British Post Office allowed US and Canadian postal administrations access to Cairo-Baghdad air service at 9s 6d.
- Forms sent to US and Canada Post Office.

The Secretary,

(2) In view of the considerations urged by the Secretary it is agreed that the system of payment on the gross weight of mail be the only one offered.

(3) As accounting with France and Switzerland is now on a gold franc basis, it is desirable to express the rate chargeable in gold francs. 22 Fr. gold is the present equivalent of 20s. and should be charged per kilogramme gross.

(4) Agreed.

* * * * *

(Sd.) S. Barratt.

for Acct.General.

19 Jan.1922.

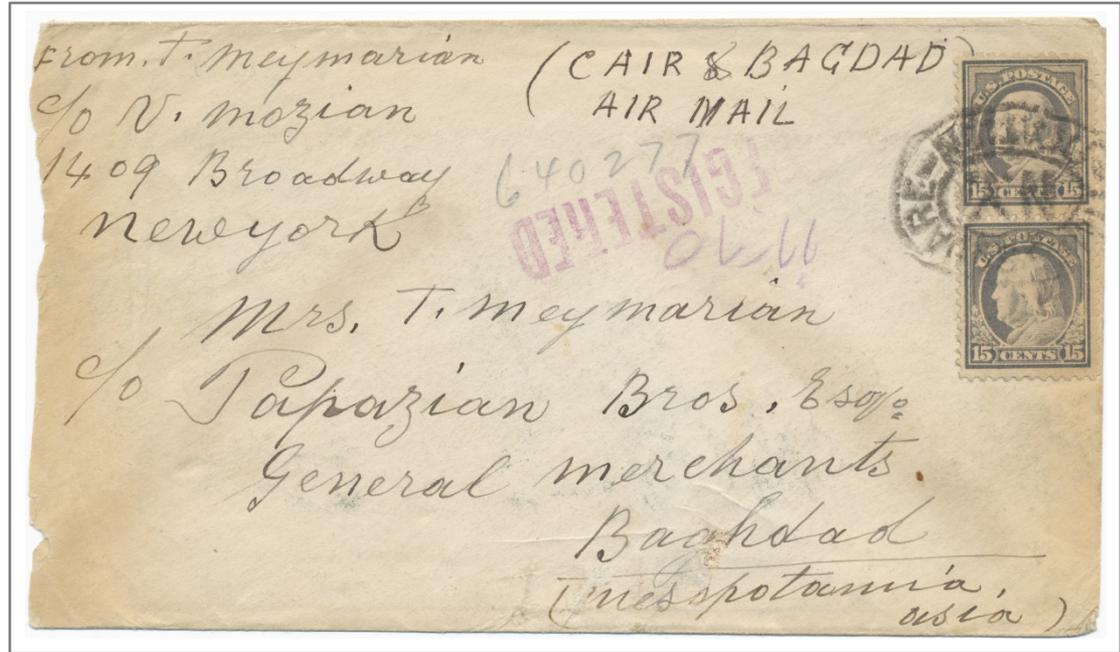
Note. General Williamson decided to make the charge to the U.S.A. and Canada 9s.6d. instead of 9s. a lb, and the Forms II forwarded to those Offices were amended accordingly.

(Itld.) A.R.H.

21/1.

Cairo-Baghdad air service

- Earliest known US cover using British air service
- Only known registered cover using 1922 rate (with correctly franked US stamps).



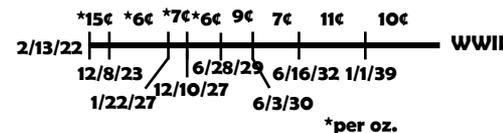
2 June 1922

Surface mail (NY to England to Egypt, UPU rate): 5¢
 Airmail (Egypt to Iraq, 15¢/oz.): 15¢
 Registry fee: 10¢



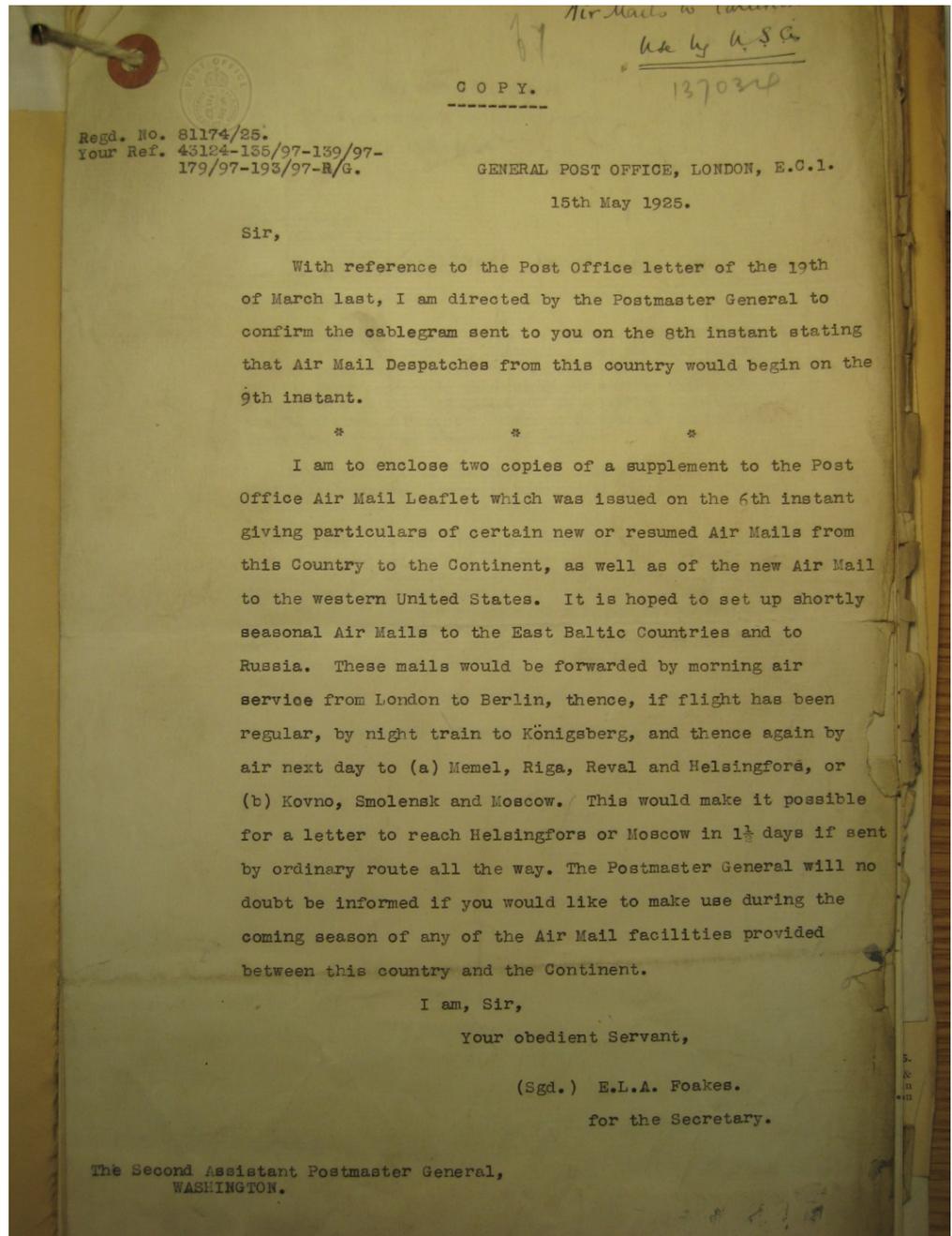
Total transit time 25 days

From London to Basra, transit time was 5 days



British Post Office Offer

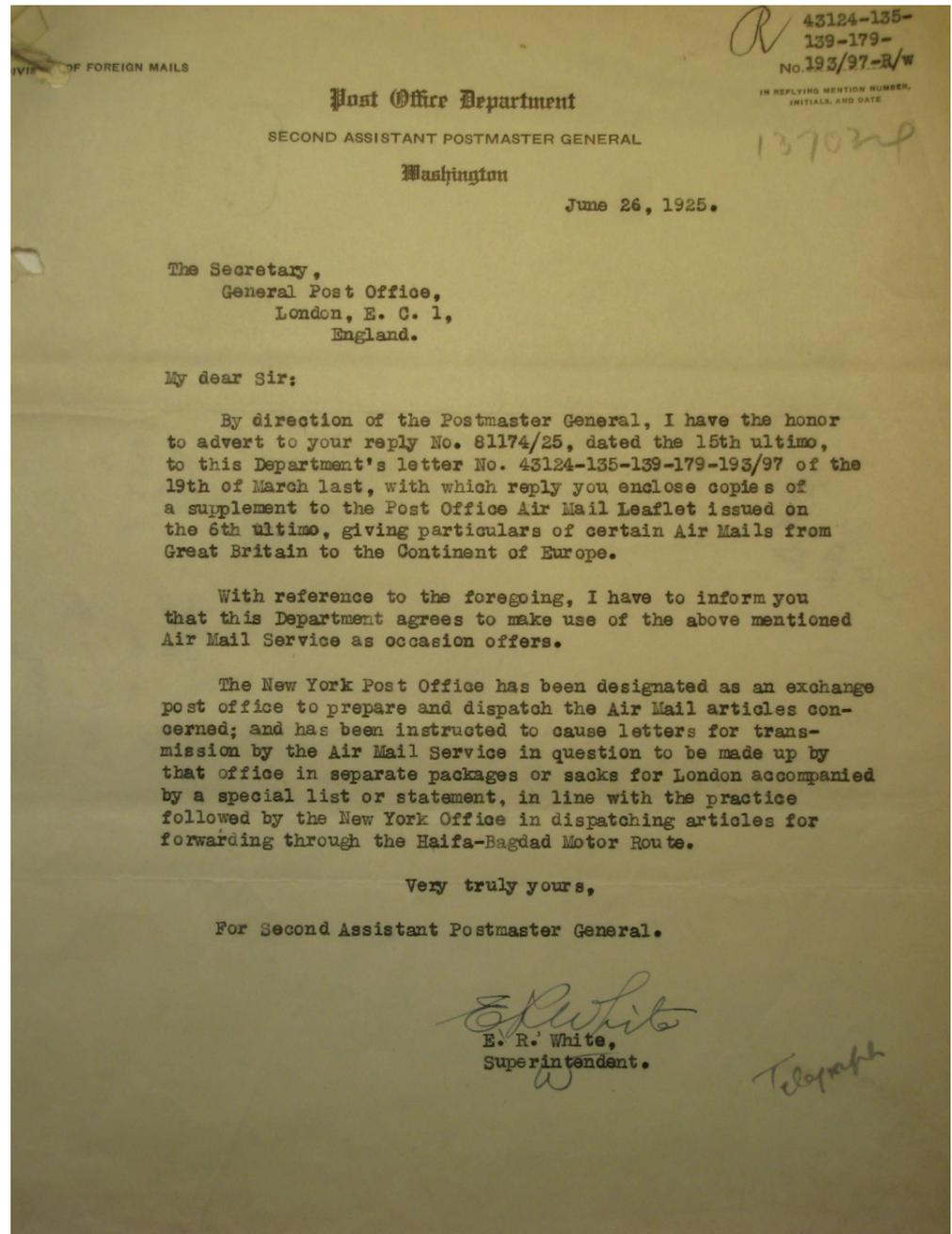
10 May 1925



US Post Office Department Acceptance

26 June 1925

- New York Post Office designated as an exchange post office to prepare and dispatch airmail articles.
- Airmail to be placed in separate sacks for London with “special list”.



NY Post Office Daily

29 June 1925

Announcement of air service via England to Continental Europe, Morocco, and western Algeria

Air Mail Service, London to Continental Europe.

SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
WASHINGTON June 26, 1925.

This Department has accepted the offer of the postal administration of Great Britain to accept ordinary and registered letters and articles prepaid at the letter rate for transmission from London to the countries mentioned below according to the following air mail schedule from London:

A. Leave London daily except Sunday at 6.15 a.m. for *France, Switzerland*, and beyond; offering delivery in Paris the same afternoon, and in most of Switzerland by first delivery the next morning. By connecting at Bale with the night mail train thence to Italy, this air mail also offers accelerated delivery of letters *throughout Italy*, e. g., at Milan by first delivery on the morning after departure from London.

B. (1) Leave London daily except Sunday at 6.15 a.m. for *Germany* (Hamburg and district) *Denmark, Norway* (east) and *Sweden*; offering delivery at Hamburg by first delivery the next morning, in Copenhagen the same evening, in Stockholm and Oslo the next forenoon and afternoon, respectively.

B. (2) Leave London daily except Saturday at 6.00 p.m. (for onward transmission by air from Rotterdam to Copenhagen next morning) to *Germany* (Hamburg and district), *Denmark, Norway* (east), and *Sweden*; offering delivery at Hamburg next afternoon, in Copenhagen next evening, in Stockholm and in Oslo during the forenoon and the afternoon of the third day (inclusive).

C. Leave London at 6.15 a.m. for *Morocco* and *western Algeria* (additional to the existing 6 p.m. dispatch); offering delivery at Tangier, Casablanca, and Oran on the third morning, inclusive.

The air mail postage required in addition to the international letter rate of postage is as follows:

On letters to France, 4 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof; to Germany (unoccupied), Switzerland and Italy, 6 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof; to Denmark, Norway and Sweden, 8 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof; to Morocco and western Algeria, 5 cents an ounce or fraction thereof, *the air mail fee and the postage to be fully prepaid by postage stamps affixed to each piece.*

Mail matter intended for dispatch by the above mentioned air mail service *should be prominently marked in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope or cover with the words "Air Mail—London to Continent,"* so that the articles in assorting may not be overlooked.

All mail articles for this service will be dispatched to New York for onward transmission from that exchange post office.

PAUL HENDERSON,
Second Assistant Postmaster General.
—Dept. Bull. 13811.

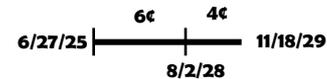
British air service to Continental Europe

Earliest known US
cover using British air
service to Europe.



20 August 1925

Surface mail (\$F to NY to England, UPU rate): 5¢
Airmail (England to Italy, 6¢/oz.): 6¢



US Post Office Department

3 July 1925

- NY exchange office prepares registered and ordinary mail for dispatch.
 - Registered mail contained in smaller inner sack
 - Special mail sack labeled "London Transit Air Mail"
- First sack dispatched per S.S. AQUITANIA on June 30th

Administration des Postes de la Grande Bretagne.
Post Office of the United Kingdom.

Correspondance avec l'Office
Correspondence with the Post Office.

of ENGLAND

Stamp of the Despatching Office. **NEW YORK** 2 July '25

BULLETIN DE VÉRIFICATION
VERIFICATION NOTE

Stamp of the Receiving Office. **LONDON TRANSIT**

Expédition No. du 19 à h. m. du 19
Despatch No. of 19 at m. by S.S. "

ERREURS OU IRRÉGULARITÉS DIVERSES
ERRORS OR IRREGULARITIES.

(Manque de la dépêche, manque d'objets recommandés ou de la feuille d'avis, dépêche spoliée, lacérée, ou en mauvais état, etc.)
(Failure of the Mail, failure of Registered Articles or of the Letter Bill, Mail broken open, torn, or in bad condition, &c.)

In connection with the despatch of articles for onward transmission by Air Mail from London to Continental Europe, please note that this office is now making up a separate sack containing registered and ordinary articles for despatch by said Air Mail Service. The sack is labelled "LONDON TRANSIT AIR MAIL", but if this title is not appropriate, please advise as to any change desired. The first London Transit Air Mail sack was despatched per S.S. "AQUITANIA" June 30.

Registered articles will be enclosed in an inner sack and despatched in the sack containing ordinary articles.

Separate Air Mail Statement (consecutively numbered) showing the number of letters and rates included in each division of weight (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 ounces etc.) according to destination, as well as the total credit involved will be forwarded with each despatch of registered and with each despatch of ordinary articles. Statements Nos. 1 and 2, for registered articles and for ordinary articles despatched by steamers "Aquitania" June 30 1925 and "President Harding" July 1 1925, respectively, are submitted herewith and it is kindly requested that these statements be accepted in lieu of the form of statement which accompanied said mails.

Please advise whether or not the packages of letters labelled "Cairo-Bagdad Air Mail" and "Haifa-Bagdad Motor Mail" should also be included in the above mentioned sack.

Information is also desired as to what other countries may be included under column "Rate 4 cents", under column "Rate 3 cents", under column "Rate 5 cents" and under column "Rate 6 cents".

At the 19. At the 19.

Les employés du bureau d'échange destinataire.
Receiving Officers.

(Signed)

Le Chef du bureau d'échange expéditeur.
The Chief of the Despatching Office.

(Signed)

REPLY

NY to London Transit form

20 July 1925

Letter sent... August 1, 1925
Mr. Nichols (2)

No.

AIR MAIL STATEMENT -- NEW YORK, N.Y. TO LONDON TRANSIT
Ordinary-Registered Mail for onward dispatch by "Air Mail Service"

Steamer.....Date.....1925.

Weight	L E T T E R S					Total
	: 1 oz	: 2 oz	: 3 oz	: 4 oz	: oz	
Section 1 :	:	:	:	:	:	:
4¢ per ounce:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Section 2 :	:	:	:	:	:	:
6¢ per ounce:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Section 3:	:	:	:	:	:	:
8¢ per ounce:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Section 4 :	:	:	:	:	:	:
12¢ per ounce	:	:	:	:	:	:
Section 5 :	:	:	:	:	:	:
16¢ per ounce	:	:	:	:	:	:
Section 6 :	:	:	:	:	:	:
Algeria and	: 1/2 oz letters and...weighing over 3/4 oz, or...rates at 6¢					
Morocco	: ...letters weighing between 1/2 oz and 3/4 oz or ...rates at 12¢					

Recapitulation: : List of countries with sections in which included.

.....rates at 4 cents....	: Algeria (6)	: Iraq (2)
	: Austria (2)	: Italy (2)
.....rates at 6 cents....	: Belgium (1)	: Latvia (4)
	: Bulgaria (1)	: Lithuania (4)
.....rates at 8 cents....	: Czechoslovakia (2)	: Mesopotamia (2)
	: Danzig (2)	: Morocco (6)
.....rates at 12 cents....	: Denmark (3)	: Netherlands (1)
	: Estonia (4)	: Norway (3)
.....rates at 16 cents....	: Finland (4)	: Persia (2)
	: France (1)	: Poland (2)
Total Credit \$ _____	: Germany	: Russia (5)
	: unoccupied (2)	: Spain (1)
	: occupied (1)	: Sweden (3)
	: Greece (1)	: Switzerland (2)
	: Holland (1)	: Turkey (1)
	: Hungary (2)	: Yugoslavia (2)

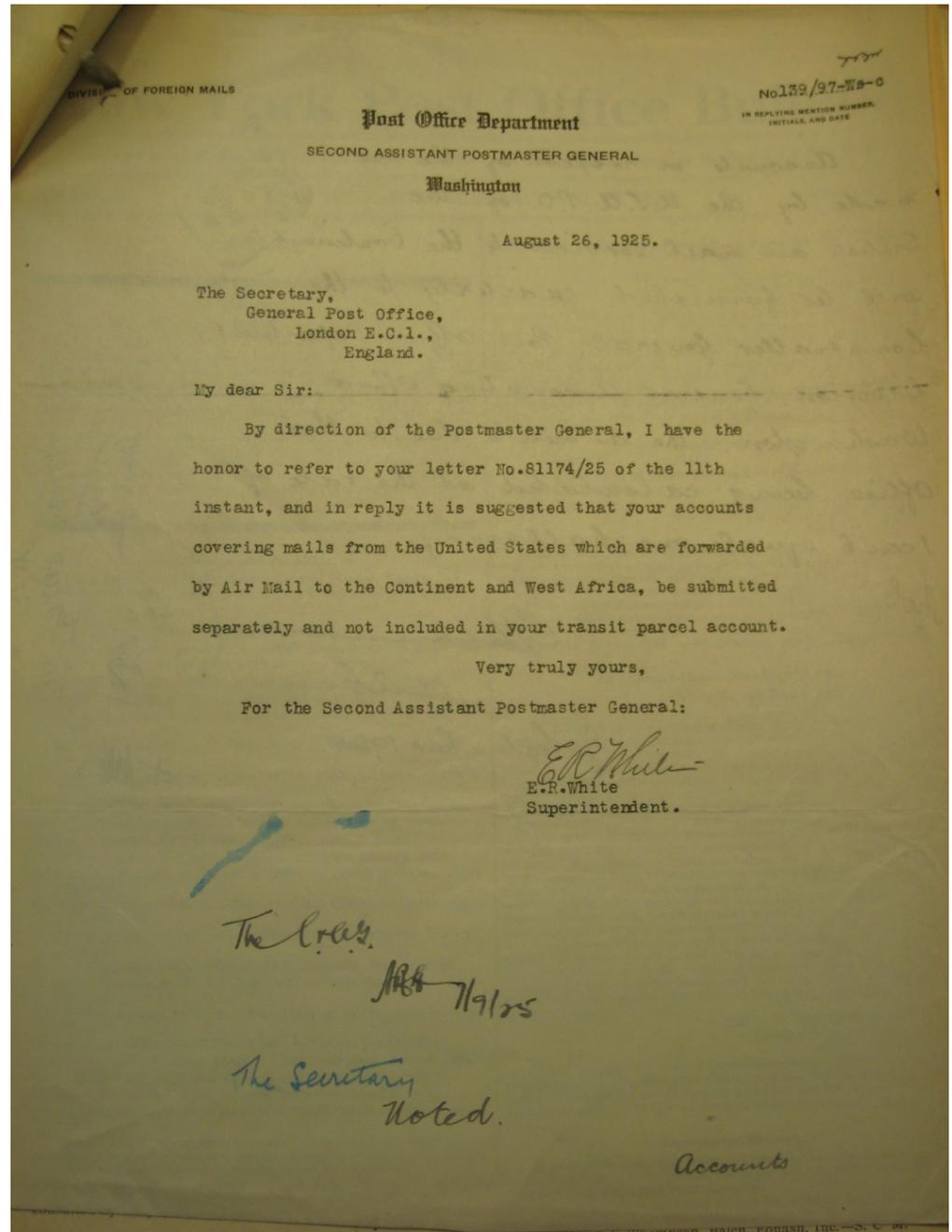
Signature of Despatching Officer. Signature of Receiving Officer.

D-146-7/20/25

US Post Office Department

26 August 1925

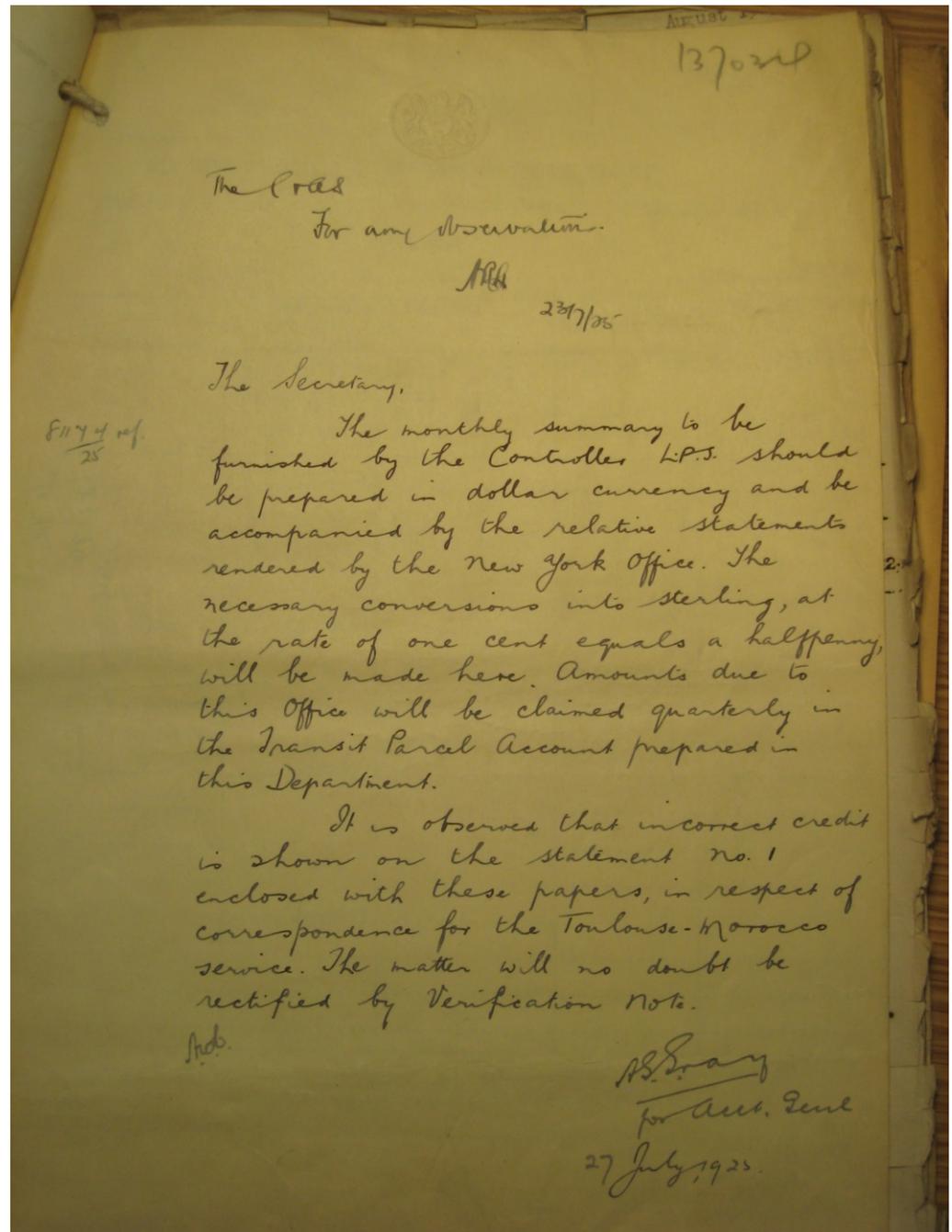
- US mail for air service to the Continent and West Africa to be submitted separately from parcel account



Internal British Post Office note

23 July 1925

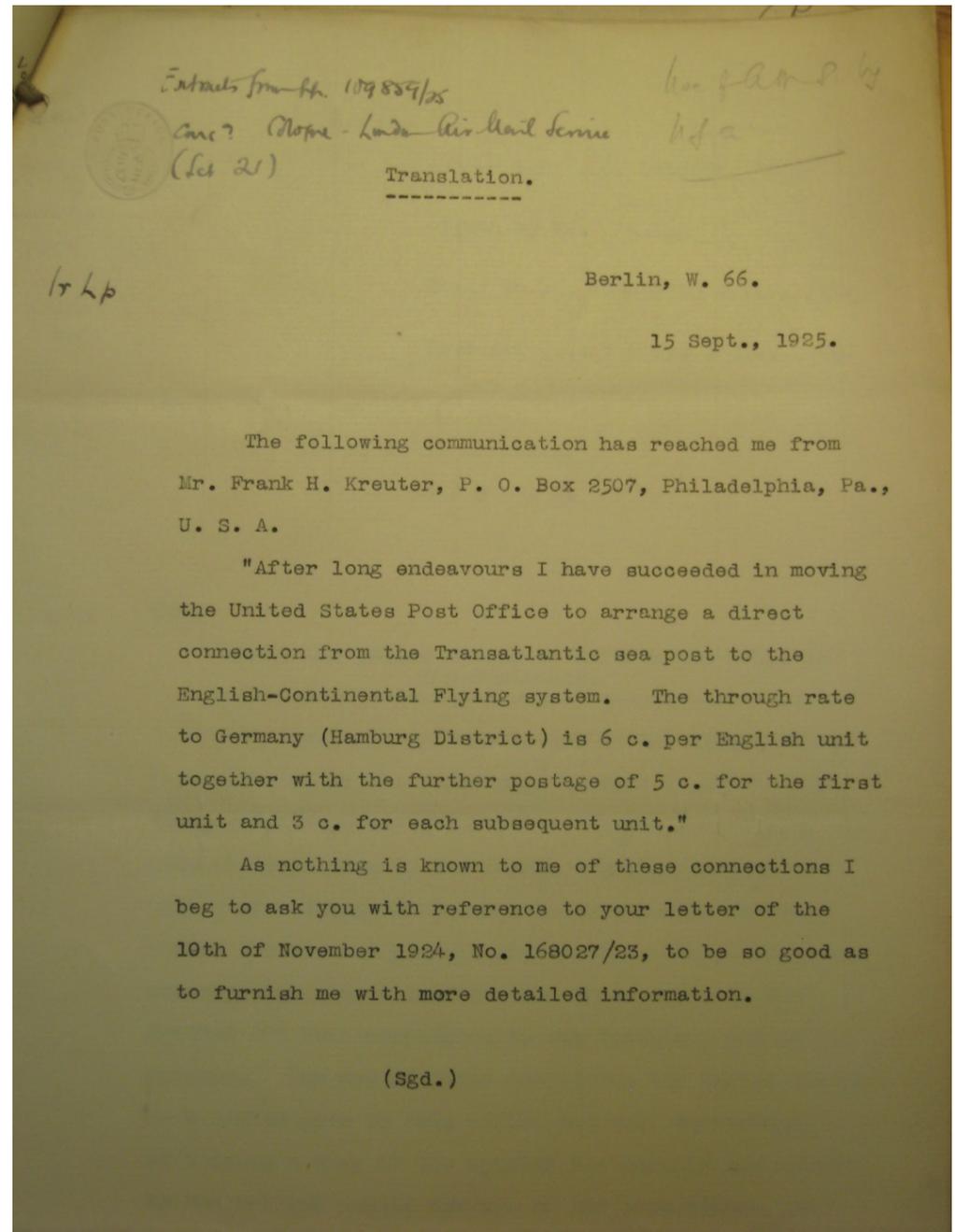
- Monthly statement prepared in US dollars based on NY transit forms.
- US Dollars converted to British Sterling (one pence to ½ cent)
- Amounts due to British Post Office will be billed quarterly in the Transit Parcel Account



German Post Office, Berlin

15 September 1925

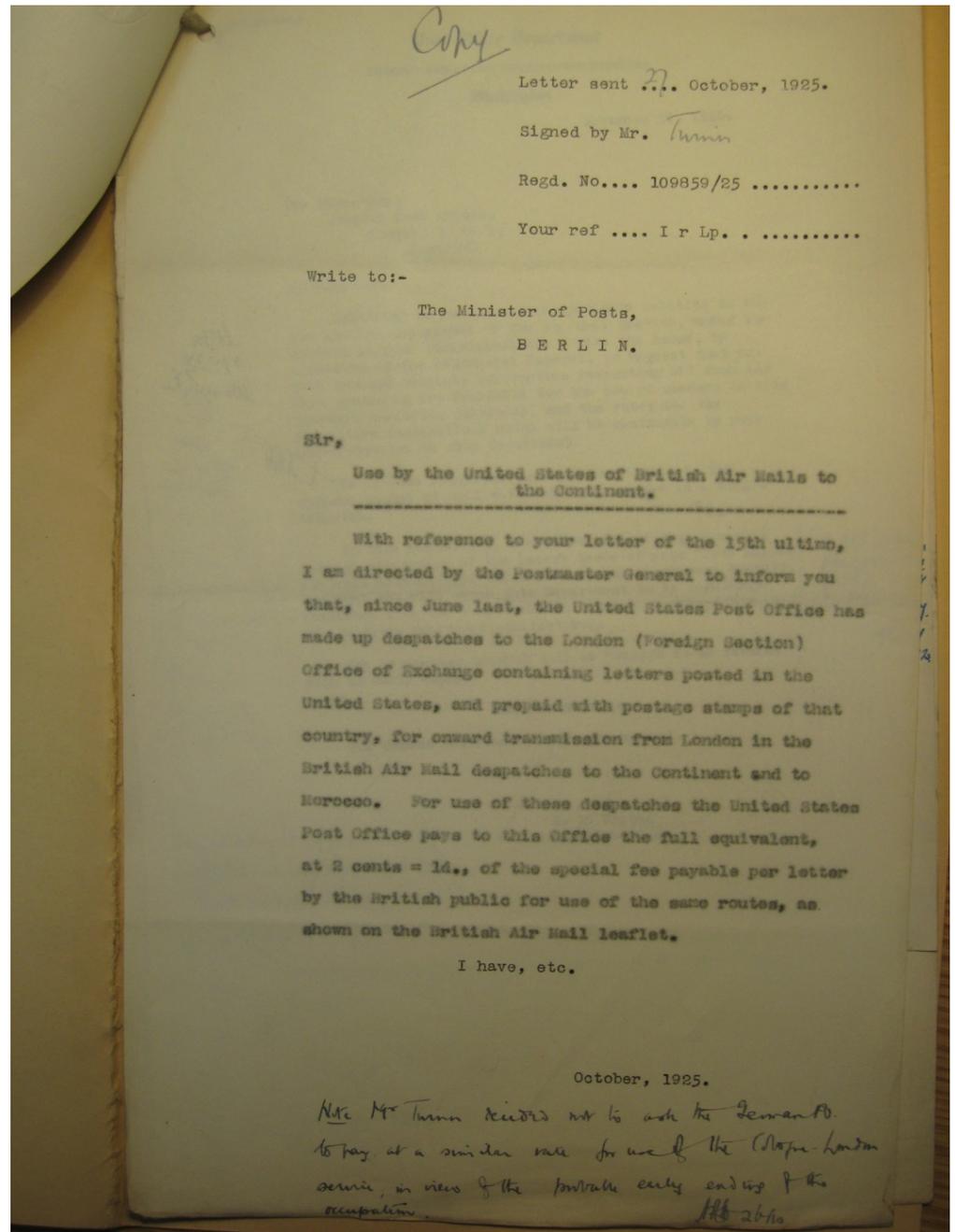
- Following letter from Frank Kreuter (Philadelphia), “nothing is known” of Agreement regarding air service.
- GPO asks for details about US-British air agreement.



British Post Office reply

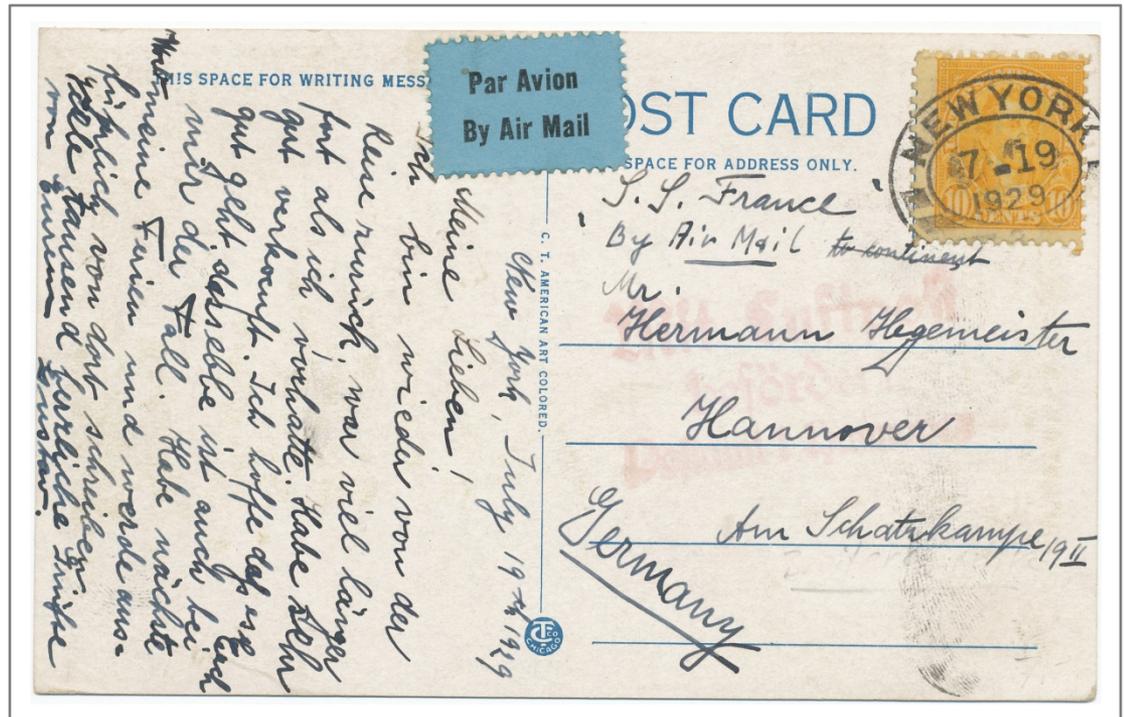
October 1925

German Post Office
formally informed of
US-British air service
agreement of June.



British air service to Continental Europe

- Only known use of UPU surcharge rate supplementary fee paid on an airmail post card.
- Black Type G supplementary mail marking with pier code #3 was applied shipside
 - French Line, Pier 88, North River, West 48th Street



19 July 1929

Surface mail (NY to England, UPU surcharge rate): 3¢
 UPU surcharge rate, supplementary fee: 3¢
 Airmail (England to Germany, 4¢/oz.): 4¢

British air service to Africa

- Airmail to South Africa did not exist in 1931, so it traveled by air as far as possible (likely Sudan), then by surface.
- Per records of the US National Archives, \$2.97 was paid by the US to the British for airmail services that was sent to Khartoum.
 - from October 1930 to September 1931



28 November 1931

Surface mail (NY to England, UPU rate): 5¢
Airmail (England to Khartoum, 12¢/half oz.): 12¢
Surface mail (Khartoum to South Africa): --



Transit time was 23 days

British air service to Asia

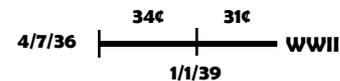


14 January 1938

Surface mail (NY to England, UPU rate): 5¢
Airmail (England to Hong Kong, 34¢/half oz.): 68¢



17 day transit time

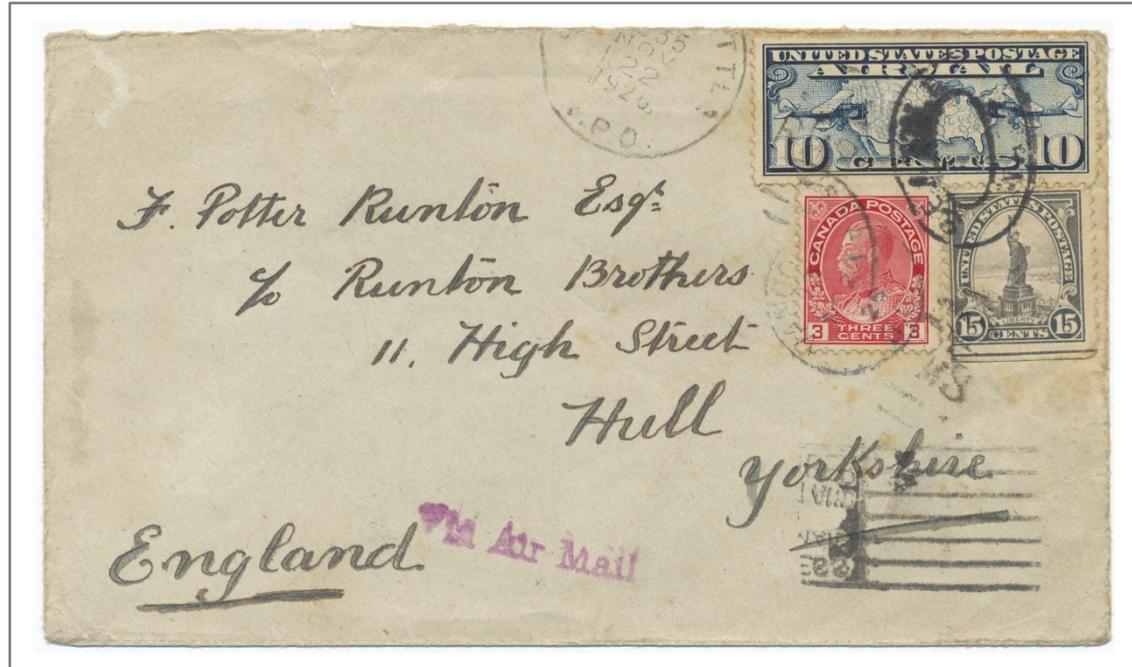


Use of mixed franking needed until UPU regulations were ratified.

- **No rules applied to international mail via airways unless an agreement between postal administrations existed.**
- **If one did not exist, some postal administrations demanded that postage be paid at dispatch to receive air service.**

Canada via US airmail to England

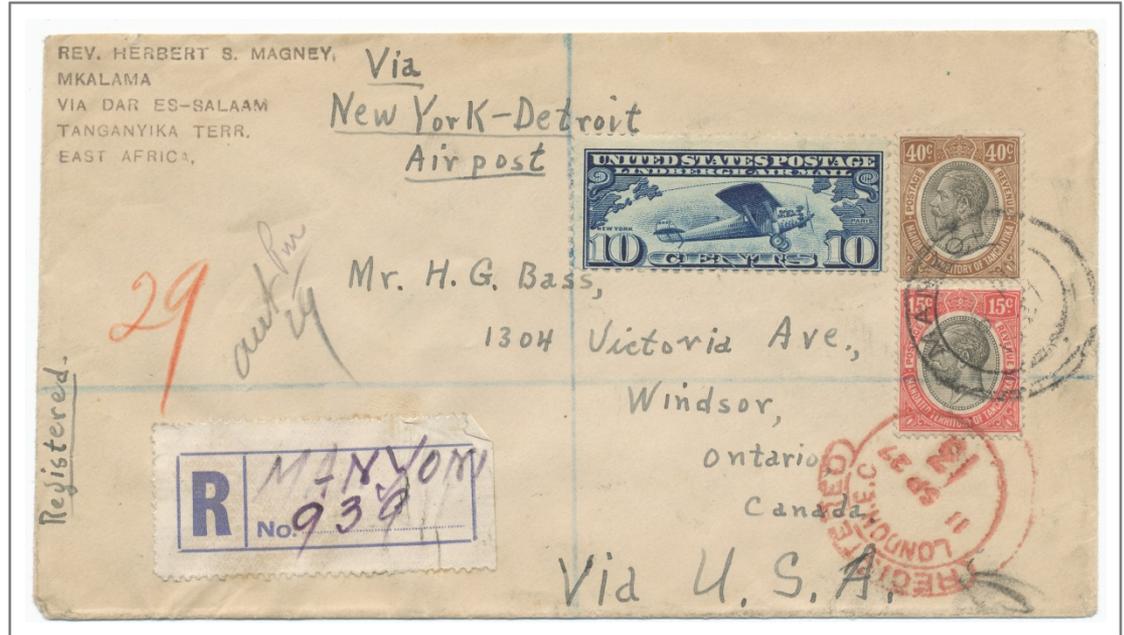
Expedited mail
from/to central and
western areas of
Canada since
Canadian trans-
continental air routes
did not exist at the
time.



22 November 1926

Surface mail (Vancouver to Seattle, 1¢ overpaid): 2¢ (Canada)
Airmail (Seattle to SF, CAM route, <1000mi., 10¢/oz.): 10¢ (US)
Airmail (SF to NY, 3 zones, 5¢ per zone/oz.): 15¢ (US)
Surface mail (NY to England, treaty surcharge rate): --

Tanganyika via US airmail to Canada



17 August 1927

Surface mail (Tanganyika to London to NY, UPU rate): 25¢ (Tanganyika)

Airmail (NY to Detroit, 10¢/half oz.): 10¢ (US)

Surface mail (Detroit to Canada): --

Registry fee: 30¢ (Tanganyika)

Austria via early US FAM airmail to Nicaragua



31 October 1929

Surface mail (Austria to NY, UPU rate): 40 groschen (Austria)
Airmail (NY to Miami to Nicaragua, 25¢/half oz.): 25¢ (US)
Registry fee: 60 groschen (Austria)



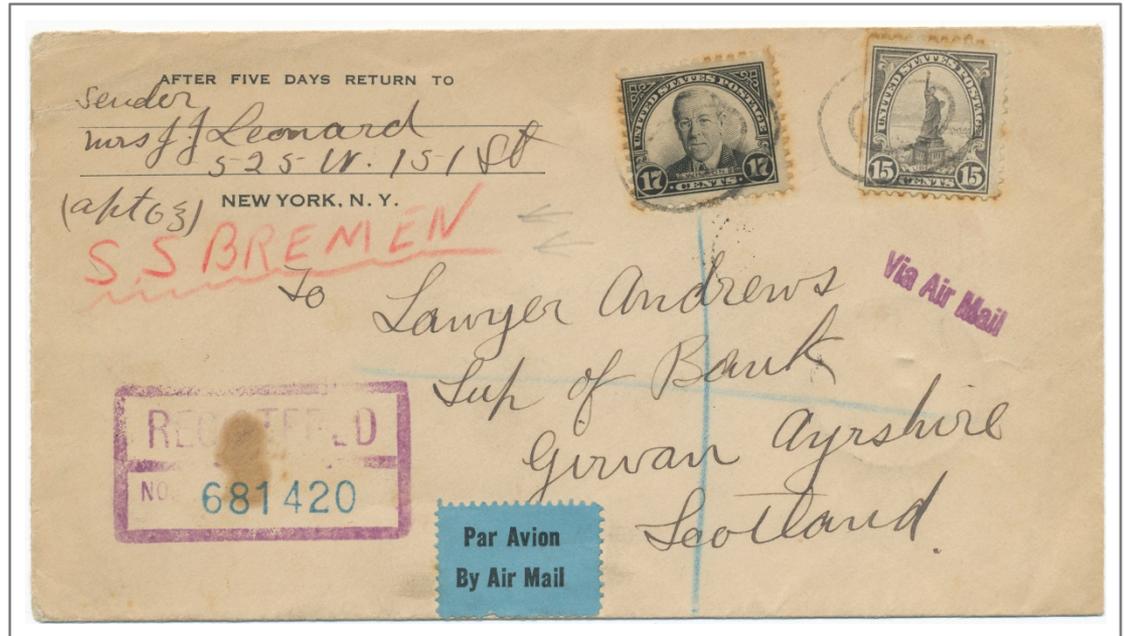
Total transit time was 17 days; transit was 5 days from NY to Nicaragua

Special Conference at The Hague

- With the increasing number of air services, the UPU called a special conference at The Hague (September 1927).
- It provided international air mail with a system of universal regulation.
- Ratified at the 1929 UPU Congress (London), three basic areas of agreement were ratified:
 - (1) "freedom of transit" through any UPU member country;
 - (2) establishment of the airmail fee;
 - (3) regulations describing how and when airmail payments are made.

French air service to Europe

- In 1928, US Post Office Department entered into an agreement with French Postal Administration.
- French air service for certain routes to European destinations became available (previously accessed only via England).

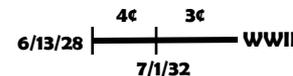


23 December 1930

Surface mail (NY to France, UPU rate): 8¢
 Airmail (France to Scotland, 4¢/oz.): 8¢
 Registry fee: 15¢
 1¢ overpaid

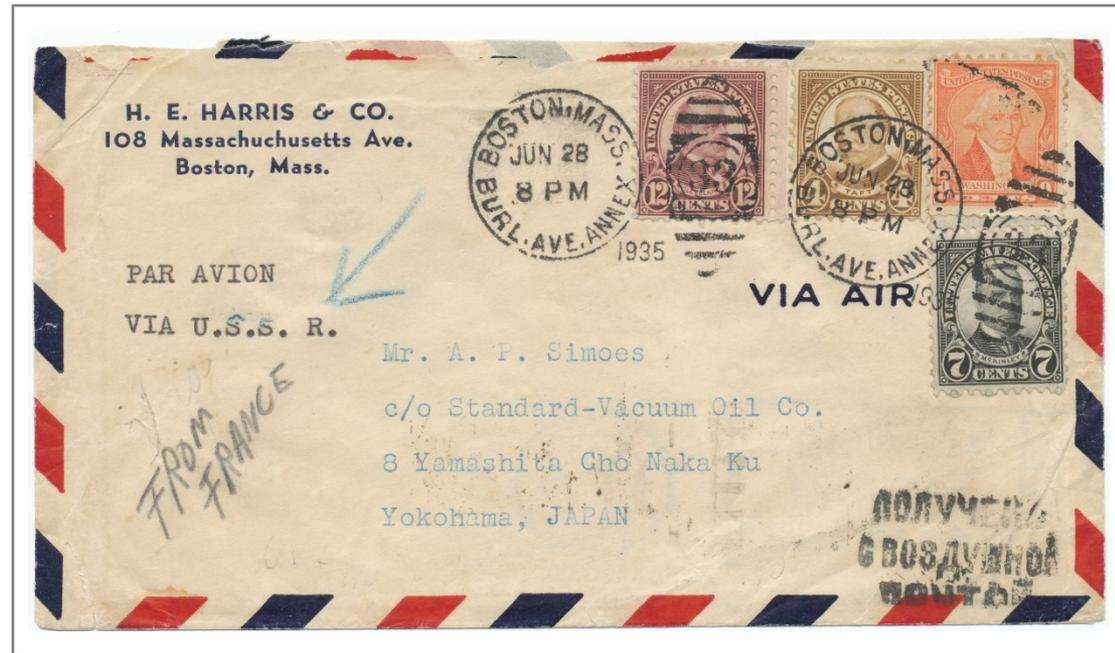


Transit time was 9 days



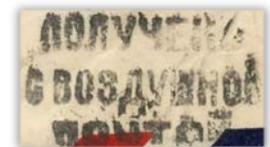
French air service to Europe (then surface mail to Japan)

Only known US airmail letter that traveled to Asia via airmail to the USSR then surface mail to Japan.



28 June 1935

First class mail (Boston to NY): --
Surface mail (NY to France, UPU rate): 5¢
Airmail (France to Eastern USSR via Berlin, 27¢/half oz.): 27¢
Surface mail (Eastern USSR to Japan): --



"Received with airmail"

French air service to Asia

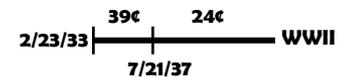


3 March 1937

Surface mail (NY to France, UPU rate): 5¢
Airmail (France to French Indochina, 39¢/half oz.): 39¢



Transit time was 22 days



French air service to Africa



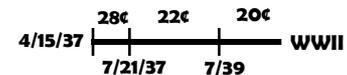
3 May 1937

Surface mail (NY to France, UPU rate): 5¢ (postage due)
Airmail (France to Liberia, 28¢/half oz.): 28¢



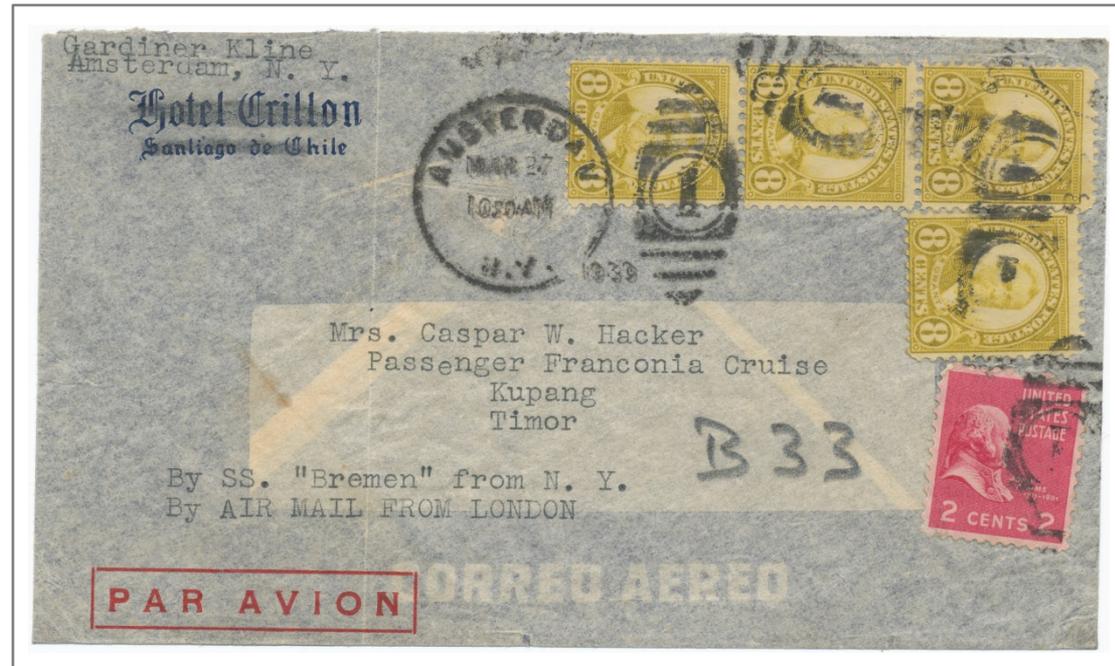
Transit time was 15 days

Short-lived rate lasting 13 weeks



Dutch air service to Asia

Although instructions were written to travel via London, it actually traveled via Amsterdam and paid the correct rate.



27 March 1939

Surface mail (Amsterdam to NY to England, UPU rate): 5¢
Airmail (England to Dutch East Indies, 29¢/half oz.): 29¢
Surface mail (Dutch East Indies to Timor): --

THANK YOU