

VOLUME 1, No. 4

APRIL, 1954



# THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

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★ ★ A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY ★ ★

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## *This Issue Features:*

● SEMI-OFFICIAL AIR MAIL STAMPS

ARGENTINE

AUSTRALIA

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APRIL 1954

THE AERO  
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## SEMI-OFFICIALS

This number of THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS is unusual because the contents are devoted almost exclusively to SEMI-OFFICIAL air mail stamps. It was *not* so planned. In the gradual accumulation of manuscripts written for publication, the time came when suddenly it was realized that enough articles were on hand to have a SEMI-OFFICIAL NUMBER. A check of previous airmail publications, both domestic and foreign, shows that, unless some were possibly overlooked, no publication devoted to aero-philately has ever issued a magazine on these non-governmental stamps.

We believe that there is a reason why we have been able to bring out a number like this. Interest in Semi-Official Air Mails has shown a recent, great growth. This is understandable because most of these stamps represent souvenirs from the early pioneering stages of air mail. Packed with so much historical interest, obviously more and more collectors are seeking Semi-Officials. After acquisition, the owners are able to locate very little background information about them. Good comprehensive, specialized air mail catalogs like Sanabria and Silombra list and price Semi-Officials in an acceptable, satisfactory manner. But such catalogs do not nor are they expected to supply anything but a few factual text notes. Thus collectors, having had their curiosity aroused, begin to inquire around, to seek further information on the fascinating history behind these issues.

Unfortunately, Semi-Official stamps are not appreciated or understood by many. This is understandable because a less-experienced aero-philatelist must proceed slowly in his acquisitions. This usually means that a less-mature aero-philatelist's guide is a restricted catalog like Scott wherein the only stamps listed are those purportedly issued under a complete government monopoly. Consequently, any stamp not in Scott is regarded as

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### SEMI - OFFICIALS

some sort of a label or non-collectable piece. Of course, this is wrong. Then again such collectors bypass non-Scott listed stamps as of little or no value. Furthermore, many have been misled by uninformed and incorrect articles appearing in stamp papers. Right before us are clipped articles out of the popular stamp press on fake and bogus items. Believe it or not, among the specified *phoney* items to be shunned by careful collectors are the very desirable Colombia and Ecuador Scadta Company air mails. The writers have lumped these with counterfeit and bogus stamps.

Too few properly understand stamps that may not be listed in Scott nor do they bother to find out more about them.

Actually if our assumption about a catalog like Scott is correct, then this book lists many air mail stamps that are not 100% governmental while excluding similar issues. Air mail at this very moment still is not a 100% monopoly in some countries. For instance, in Colombia the aviation companies handle all air mail and sell air stamps, not the Government. Thus there is little difference between the Scott air mails C1 to C143 and the Sanabria listed issues from 1920 to 1932. Argentine's Graf Zeppelin issues (C20-29) is another instance of where the Government did not handle the stamps exclusively.

Another illustration of this confusion exists with the Graf Zeppelin issues of Bolivia and Brazil. Scott lists two separate Bolivia Graf Zeppelin sets, those overprints on the Government stamps C11 to C23 and those on the L. A. B. Company stamps Scott C24-26. But with Brazil, Scott lists only the Government stamps C26-27, C29-30 and not the Condor Co. Zeppelin issues, found only in Sanabria as Nos. C10 to C20. All this was brought out in research articles published in *The Aero Philatelist News*, Vol. III, Nos. 7 and 8.

Returning to Colombia, it amuses us to see covers with Colombia Scott C56 or C104. The only way that we have ever seen these Souvenir Sheets used on mail is with a *philatelic use*. In contrast, one should study covers with any stamps like Sanabria 36-46, 63-74 and 81-94. These Scadta Company issues have been profusely used on commercial mail. In fact, philatelic usage with any of these stamps is quite exceptional. How does one correlate this situation with the oft-found statement in Scott "issued primarily for postal purposes"?

Our object with the above remarks is not totally in the spirit to criticize the Scott Catalogue, but rather to stress that a clear line of distinction between Official and Semi-Official has not been drawn. Now it is timely to quote from the Foreword in the Sanabria Catalogue:—

"The term SEMI-OFFICIAL is applied in blanket form, to stamps that do not fall into the GOVERNMENT group, but, nevertheless have some degree of *official* sanction or approval, tacit or implied. We especially call attention to the fact that the status of these stamps is as varied as the conditions under which many of them have been issued. In some cases their claim to recognition is admittedly hardly more than tenuous . . ."

Although a division is not always sharp and clear, the Semi-Officials listed in Sanabria tend to fall into two main categories. The first and foremost is an issue from the pioneer days of aviation usually before the mid-1920's. A parallel can be drawn with our United States stamps. In the beginning of postage stamps, private carriers handled the mail. Thus there is that desirable group of U. S. Local and Independent Mail stamps. Later our Government secured its postal monopoly and drove the private carriers out of business. So it was in a similar sense in the early stages of air mail. Governments were not prepared to transport mail by air. Usually some barnstormer or a small group of adventuring aviators started an air mail route. In order to defray the expenses and have the users of air mail pay the costs, the government allowed stamps. A general custom was

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to have the stamps sold and postmarked in the post offices by the trained post office personnel. But the proceeds from the sale of the stamps went to the private entrepreneurs. Conditions of sale and use differed in most every country. But this in substance explains the apt name SEMI-OFFICIAL AIR MAIL STAMPS.

The other group is far more philatelic in concept. A private aviation company or an individual sponsored some special aeronautic event or flight. To help finance the project, labels for stamp collectors were printed and sold. A government allowed the use of such stamps under certain conditions. Most of these are the later-day issues.

As you read about the various stamps detailed in this magazine, you will perceive the varied conditions under which they were issued and used. But remember with many of these Semi-Officials that they represent the effort of private carriers to show the feasibility and necessity of air mail. Philatelic sale was secondary in many instances. These pioneer carriers wanted to be financially successful through the transport of mail rather than the sale of stamps to collectors. (H. M. G.)

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### Sanabria No. 501 An Air Mail?

By IRA SEEBACHER

In emphasizing the advances aviation has made in its first 50 years, someone pithily pointed out that length of the Wright Brothers first flight was less than the wingspread of some of the giant modern planes. While a half century may be short in reckoning the growth of aviation, still in delving back into the records of 40 and 50 years ago frequently



Fig. 1. The front of the post card with the affixed adhesive.



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Fig. 2. One of the three known types of official cards depicting the lower half of the picture side.

rewards the researcher with only the sketchiest of data. Often the mixture of fact and fiction is so tangled, there is little one can do about separating the various threads of the fabric to be found.

Recently, this writer was asked whether he owned a flown card bearing the 1912 Semi-Official stamp of Argentina (Sanabria No. 501). We acknowledged not owning such a gem nor, for that matter, ever having seen one. In our collection, however, there are three different unused official cards, all bearing the stuck-down adhesive in the correct position indicated by a printed oblong frame in the top left-hand corner of the address side of the cards. The right hand corner has a frame for placing a regular postage stamp. (Fig. 1)

These official cards are comparatively common. (Fig. 2) Most that this writer has seen have the blue stamp or label attached in unused condition. But flown cards, if they exist, are very rare. We say "if they exist" because the premise of this article is that these stamps were not semi-official, were not used in connection with any flights and are, therefore, merely labels.

If, however, flown covers bearing these labels do exist in spite of this writer's contrary opinion, their rarity is certainly reflected by the Sanabria Catalogue which prices the mint copy of No. 501 at 25 cents but one on cover at \$200. Moreover, the catalogue supplies the additional information that this stamp was "used on flights to Rosario on September 14, 20, 26 and 30". This is essentially the same information to be found in "D. Field's Air Post Catalogue" which has this to say in a footnote: "Genuinely flown covers are extremely rare and should be purchased with discretion as at later periods this propaganda stamp was frequently affixed to letters dispatched by ordinary post."

The 1928 edition of "the Champion Poste Aérienne Catalogue" is a bit more baffling since it states this stamp was issued in August 1912, then anachronistically states that it was used on flights of March 24, September 14, 20, 26 and 30, 1912. Obviously some





Fig. 3. Enlargement of the cover illustrated in the "Dr. Cole" auction sale of October 26, 1939, Lot #155.

(Photos by Boutrelle)

one of Champion's facts must be incorrect. A later edition (1937) of this catalogue adds additional dates for flights on which this stamp was used. The following dates are appended to the earlier list: March 12 and 14; September 14, 20, 26 and 30.

So much for the data gleaned from the catalogues. As for covers alleged to be genuine, one was sold some years ago by F. W. Kessler when the Dr. Philip G. Cole collection was auctioned (Lot No. 155, sale of October 26, 1939). This particular cover purportedly was flown. It was dated March 14, 1912 and No. 501 is tied to cover as well as two regular postage stamps. The cover was mailed to Switzerland and is illustrated here (Fig. 3).

Assuming that the cover is of genuine postal use, and there is no reason to doubt it, then it definitely establishes the existence of this stamp or label as early as March 14, 1912. There are, however, NO markings to indicate that the cover had ever been flown to Rosario, Argentina or anywhere else. It reached its destination obviously by surface mail and it is, we feel convinced, nothing more than a cover with a label attached, said label having been cancelled as well as the franking stamps that carried the letter to Switzerland.

It is this writer's suspicion that this and similar covers, if they exist, are the sole basis for the belief that these labels were Semi-Officials for use on special flights.

To revert to Champion, he did have something further to state of great significance. He wrote: "This stamp, sold over the Post-Office counter of itself had no franking power, and was on cover in addition to the ordinary postage. It is very rare on aerogram actually of the time of issue. The known dates of the flights are the following: March 24, September 14, 20, 26 and 30, 1912. On the other hand, it can be found on ordinary



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covers passed later through the post: it was allowed, in addition to the regular postage, by way of propaganda in favor of aviation". Note that Champion points out these labels were used for propaganda and, additionally, existed on non-flown or "ordinary" covers.

Thus, the older authorities are in agreement that flights did take place in March and/or September but all reference to the flights is vague.

Our search then carried us to contemporary issues of "Revista de la Sociedad Filatelica Argentina". Surely if anything as important as a flight or flights for which Semi-Official stamps were used, mention would have been made in the leading Argentinian stamp journal. Finally we found a brief report in the September 1912 issue, as follows:

"Here, as in almost all countries of the world, it is desirable to have a good air fleet and in order to augment existing material, there has been set up a commission with that object in mind. It has issued the stamp which we reproduce here and which the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs has permitted to be sold in post offices. The stamp will be cancelled when used on letters with other stamps with franking power."

Illustrated here (Fig. 4) is the original article in Spanish to show graphically how little was told about this item from the country of origin, at the time of its appearance.

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REVISTA DE LA SOCIEDAD FILATELICA ARGENTINA

Aquí, como en casi todos los países del mundo, se desea tener una buena flota aérea. y, á fin de crear recursos para aumentar el material existente, se ha constituido una comisión popular, la cual, con aquel objeto, ha emitido la estampilla que reproducimos y ha conseguido que la Dirección General de Correos y Telégrafos permita se venda en sus oficinas y que las que se coloque en las cartas, sean inutilizadas junto con los sellos de franqueo.



Su color es azul celeste sobre blanco, y ha sido grabada en acero, según el dibujo del señor J. M. Lubary. La impresión ha sido hecha en la Compañía Sud Americana de Billetes de Banco.

Fig. 4. A photostat of the 1912 article in "Revista De La Sociedad Filatelica Argentina", the only reference found in any contemporary South American philatelic journal to this 1912 issue.

The lone reference in this Journal to No. 501 makes no mention of flights either in March or September or any other time. Nor does any mention appear of any sports or aero clubs which sponsored any flights to or from Buenos Aires and Rosario. Nor does the article state these stamps were semi-official in nature, a strange omission if such, in truth, were their nature. It does say quite definitely one could buy these labels at the post office and attach them to letters along with other stamps for franking purposes and that all would be cancelled. Presumably some sort of a commission was in existence or else how account for the printing of the labels.

This label was designed by J. M. Lubary and recess printed by the South American Bank Note Company. Mint copies of it apparently are scarcer than the stuck-down uncanceled adhesives on unused cards. The cards indicate that the commission was a joint cooperation of the "Sociedad Sportiva Argentina" and the "Aero Club Argentino." There seems to be no reason to doubt this though neither is mentioned in the article quoted from the journal "Revista".

To sum up, if anything as noteworthy as a flight or flights had been made in connection with the appearance of this propaganda label, it would be logical that some reference



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to such flights would have appeared in philatelic "Revista" or in contemporary aeronautical periodicals. No such references are known to the writer although a flight in Argentina at that early date would have been front-page news, at least in South American periodicals and papers.

Since no references were made, it may well be because no flights were made. Thus covers bearing these labels cancelled very likely were not flown covers. In any event, these labels could not and did not frank mail. If, then, these labels are to continue to be considered semi-official, it can be only in light of new and substantiating evidence. In the interest of furthering knowledge on these interesting and little known adhesives, an invitation is extended to anyone who can shed further light on the matter.

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### The 1920 Semi-Officials

A look into the Sanabria catalog under Australia discloses that there are four 1920 Semi-Official air mail stamps listed. Some further information is on hand about two of them, which is the subject of this article.

The first to be discussed is Sanabria No. 503, the so-called PALS stamp (Fig. 1). This vignette, as Sanabria names it, was used in connection with an advertising campaign run by the Melbourne newspaper, "The Herald & Weekly Times", in connection with a boys' paper called "Pals". As we understand it, as a promotional stunt, these vignettes were used on flights in the latter part of 1920 throughout portions of Australia.

Illustrated is a pair from the bottom of a sheet. An examination of the sheet margins discloses that these vignettes were printed in miniature sheets, only two stamps on one horizontal row. It is believed that the entire sheet contained 20 stamps (10x2), although some hold that the sheet had only 10 stamps (5x2).



Fig. 1. A pair of the PALS vignette, Sanabria No. 503, from the bottom of the sheet.

The other item is listed as Sanabria No. 504 (Fig. 2). The philatelic history of this one is interesting. It was listed first by Sanabria in their June, 1953 "Supplement", previous editions of the catalog not listing it. However, the stamp had been known in the United States because a copy was in a famous collection of air mails sold back in 1939. In the Dr. P. G. Cole Collection auction sale of F. W. Kessler held on October 26, 1939, the following description and illustration can be found:

Lot 166 D. Field Catalogue ga. 1922, April 17. Special Semi-Official Vignette, blue on white paper, issued by "The Melbourne Herald" for the Geelong-Melbourne

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Fig. 2. The newly listed HERALD AIR MAIL Sanabria No. 504 shown with a pair from the top of the sheet.

Flight. Rare in mint condition. A used copy lists in Field's Catalogue at £10 (\$48.00). (See illustration Plate 6).

It does seem strange that this item remained unlisted in the Sanabria catalog from then until a year ago. So some of the foreign air mail catalogs were consulted to learn if any, outside of the British "D. Field", mentioned or listed this vignette. Neither French catalog, the former "Champion" or the present "Silombra", have this in their respective Semi-Official sections. Also it was wondered if the famous "Sir Lindsay

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Everard" Collection sold last October by H. R. Harmer's London auction contained any of these Australian Semi-Officials. Lot 23 is described as follows:

*Semi-Official 1920* (July 30) "Herald and Weekly Times" purple on yellow used on small piece; 1920 (Aug. 10). "Herald and Weekly Times" brown on buff, and a similar stamp but blue on white, both part o. g. Estimated value £3.

*Lot 23 sold for £20*, almost seven times this experienced auctioneer's estimate and far above their prices in the 1953 Sanabria catalog!

The pair illustrated (Fig. 2) is from the upper left portion of the sheet, positions Nos. 1 and 2. Comparing this pair with the "Pals" one (Fig. 1), a different sheet layout is seen, because the "Herald Air Mail" pair has only the sheet margins on the top and at the left. It has not been determined finally, but present opinions maintain that this vignette was printed also in sheets of 20. But instead of being a 10x2 layout as the "Pals", this sheet was 5x4. If perchance this eventually is proved to have printed instead in sheets of 10 only, then the layout will be 5x2.

More information on these 1920 Australian air mails remains to be published. But the few matters disclosed in this article may stimulate the writing of a much more thorough work giving both an accurate historical background along with the philatelic facts.

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## AUSTRALIA

### The Ross Smith Stamp



The Ross Smith Air Mail (Sanabria No. 1). An unused copy with complete sheet margins that Sanabria prices thus for \$750.00. Courtesy of F. W. Kessler.

This famous air mail vignette (Sanabria No. 1) needs little introduction. By this time, it has become one of the ranking gems of aero-philately. Although not listed in either of the American or British Standard Catalogues, Scott and Gibbons, this item, when offered for sale realizes a price of several hundred dollars at auction in the United States and sells for even more in Britain.

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What has prompted this article is the finding on the stall of an used book dealer in New York City a copy of "The National Geographic Magazine", the March 1921 number. The feature article is "A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF THE FIRST AERIAL VOYAGE HALF AROUND THE WORLD . . . FROM LONDON TO AUSTRALIA BY AEROPLANE" by SIR ROSS SMITH K.B.E. The article covers 110 pages, has 85 illustrations and a double-spread map showing the course of the flight.

Stamp collectors may have referred to this number of "The National Geographic Magazine" around the time of its publication or known about it later on, but we have been unable to find any reference to the article in either the American or British philatelic press.

Oddly enough throughout this entire personal narrative of the flight by Sir Ross Smith, there is not one reference to the commemorative vignette issued for his historic feat. Probably just as with other pioneer famous aviators, Sir Ross Smith dismissed any philatelic connection with his flight as of little consequence and certainly not noteworthy. At this time now, it is doubtful if this omission would be repeated.

Should any aero-philatelic writer be inclined now or in the future to write about the Ross Smith air mail of Australia, all must be put on notice that their efforts will be wholly incomplete without reference to and quotations from this 1921 article. Thanks to Mr. Harry Holman, who found the magazine and presented it to THE AERO PHILATELISTS' archives.

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## BRAZIL

### Why the Holes On These VARIG COMPANY Stamps?

This mystery arose last October 1953 when Mr. B. D. Harmer of H. R. Harmer, Inc., showed to AERO PHILATELISTS' New York Chapter some of the air mail material from the collections of Sir Lindsay Everard and others that were to be sold at auction by his firm later in that month.

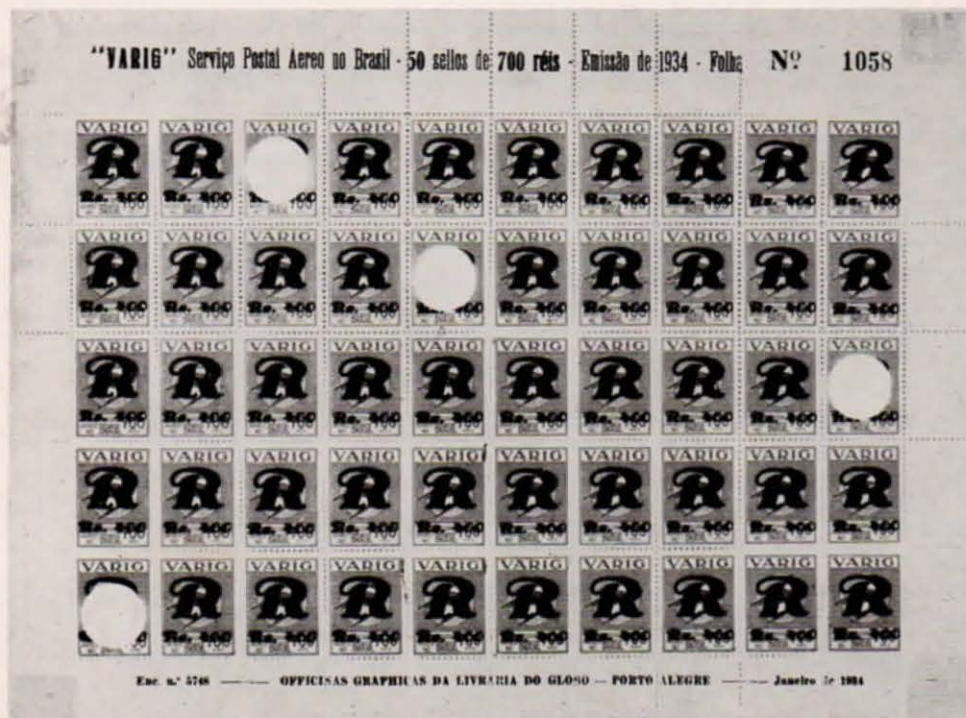


Fig. 1. The Registration stamps.

Among the lots exhibited were two full sheets of Brazil's VARIG Company issues (Sanabria Nos. V52-53). A full sheet of 50 (10x5) stamps of the 400 Rs./350 Rs. Registration Stamp (San. V52) is illustrated (Fig. 1). Notice the *four* large holes punching out the stamps on positions 3, 15, 30 and 41 in the sheet. Also shown (Fig. 2) is a full sheet of the Special Delivery stamp (San. V53), the 1000 Rs./350 Rs. Here *five* holes have been punched on positions 4, 14, 18, 21 and 26. Thus the Registration stamp has *four* holes while the Special Delivery has *five* holes, but *each on entirely different positions* in the sheets. Obviously, this shows that no uniform plan was followed for this punching.

The question logically arose:—why was this done? Mr. Harmer explained that after the first inspection the answer seemed easy. Mistakes had been made in the surcharging, so those positions with the errors were removed. But a closer examination disproved this theory. Notice, as Mr. Harmer did, in Figs. 1 and 2 that enough of the surcharge has remained to show in the remaining portions of the surcharges that there is no error.

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A new theory was propounded that the large letters "E" and "R" might have been transposed in some of the settings when the plate was made for surcharging. No, because again close examination reveals that enough of these initials have remained beyond the holes to prove that this did not occur. At this point, Mr. Harmer was stumped. So were others who examined these sheets.

When the lot with these two sheets came up for sale—and the mystery still remained unsolved—an enthusiastic collector bought them making the remark that he would turn them over to AERO PHILATELISTS for further study. So the patient with the mysterious ailment was turned over to the "doctor" for diagnosis. The step-by-step results of the work that followed is herewith recorded because it offers some idea of the great amount of time and effort that the solution and study of a philatelic problem involves. Very few properly appreciate this.

The first inspection of both sheets confirmed Mr. Harmer's previous findings. The next step was to visit the two best philatelic libraries in America, both located in 22 East 35 Street, New York City to see if anything has been previously written about these Varig Co. stamps. Both the index cards of the *Library of the Collectors Club* and the volumes in the *Luff Library of the Philatelic Foundation* were consulted. In the latter was found a 60-page handbook devoted solely to the Brazil Varig Co. air mails. It was in Portuguese, profusely illustrated and in addition at the end has a fold-in chart with descriptions and photos of each stamp issued. Its full title is "Catalogo historico e descriptivo dos sellos da 'VARIG' S. A. Empresa de Viagao Aerea Rio Grandense, Organizado Pela. Uneas Filatelica Porto Alegre." It was published September 20, 1935. On pages 37 and 38 we found quite lengthy descriptions of both the Registration and

(Continued on Page 120.)

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- Our Mr. Frank O. Vinson has just returned from Cairo, Egypt, where he participated in the Egyptian-sponsored auction of the world famous renowned PALACE COLLECTION of Egypt.
- As the Largest purchaser of all attending dealers, Mr. Vinson was honored by the Egyptian Government with a personally autographed photograph of the President of Egypt, Gen. Mohamed Naguib.
- We have acquired a truly unusual collection of scarce and unique stamps never before offered in the market.
- This outstanding collection will be divided into approximately 2500 lots and offered to our customers in a Public Auction to be held the first week of June 1954.

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### SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE ARE:

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## BRAZIL

Special Delivery surcharged stamps. This is a literal English translation of what is stated about the punched holes:

A Commission was appointed to examine the sheets and it noted that the printer, in order to obtain well centered overprints, and to avoid tearing the sheets during the course of operations, perforated certain stamps with a punch 16 mm. in diameter.

The more one thinks about this explanation, the more skepticism arises about it. One wonders why a printer would have wasted his time to punch some sheets differently than others to avoid the same thing. Besides both stamps were printed in the same size sheet which makes it difficult to account for four holes punched in various positions on the Registration stamp in contrast to the five holes with their different locations on the Special Delivery stamp. Consequently we asked ourselves if this explanation is the solution.

In this Brazil handbook, at the end of each stamp's description is a bibliography stating the sources from which the information had been taken. Five sources are given, all from specialized philatelic journals of Brazil. Our next step was to search for these journals and read the original articles, if available. Fortunately, Index Cards were found in the *Collectors Club Library* for three of these Brazil journals. All were located on the upper shelves of the bookcases. The books were dust-covered indicating that no one had used these bound volumes from Brazil for years. This search was a disappointment because none of the three articles, although authored by different writers, offered anything more than originally located in the Varig Handbook. One of the magazines had illustrated one of the full sheets with the holes punched exactly similar to our Fig. 2.

Now it was decided to leave all Brazilian sources and consult the older specialized air mail catalogs such as D. Field and Champion. The stamps were found first listed in the 1934 edition of "Champion Catalogue Poste Aérienne" but without any accompanying text notes. Knowing the care exercised by Champion, we theorized that he may have received data directly from his sources in Brazil and published it in his supplements which were issued monthly. Since these two stamps were issued in January, 1934, it was decided to consult "Champion's Buletin Mensuel" for that year. In the section titled "Vois de Mois" reference to these stamps was found in the April 1934 number. Champion refers to his source in Brazil without name stating that it is reported that holes were punched in the sheets to remove stamps with errors and irregularities. But most interesting are the editorial remarks that follow in this April 1934 "Buletin Mensuel". A disbelief is expressed about this explanation for the holes in a rather sarcastic tone. Unfortunately, it only implies skepticism but offers no other theory in rebuttal.

The 1934 edition of Champion's air mail catalog was followed by the 1937 edition. On page 60 these text notes are found and the following is the translation we made from the French:

It is noted that the printer, in order to obtain well centered surcharges and to avoid tearing the sheets during the course of operation, perforated certain stamps in the middle with a 16 mm. diameter punch. The sheet of 50 of No. 41 carries as a consequence four holes on the following stamps Nos. 3, 15, 30 and 41; and a similar sheet of No. 42 carries five holes: Nos. 4, 14, 18, 21 and 26. The total run of 20,000 of each stamp was consequently reduced to the amounts of 18,404 and 17,910 respectively, when one takes into account the 1,596 and 2,040 stamps perforated and destroyed.

This question comes to mind:—what caused Champion to change between 1934 and his 1937 editions? So all of his "Buletin Mensuel" from 1934 through 1937 were read for a clue, but nothing was found between the April 1934 number and the last of 1937. The logical assumption then is that Champion had referred to the 1935 Brazil Handbook and been satisfied with the explanations therein.



# BRAZIL

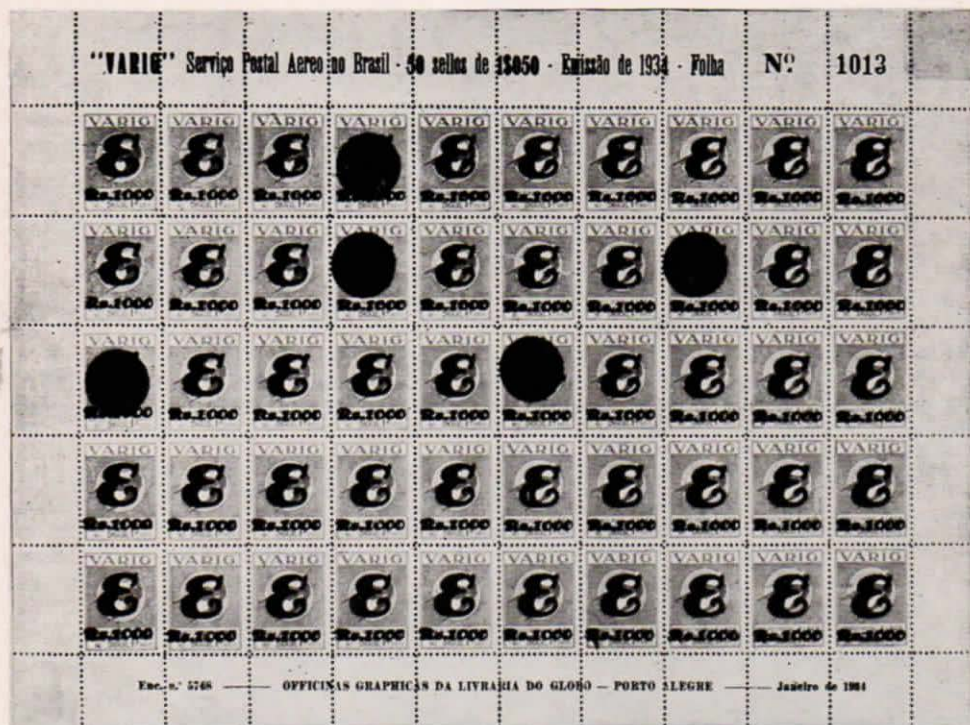


Fig. 2. The Special Delivery stamps.

No other books, periodicals or catalogs have been located that even mention these stamps. The early editions of the Sanabria catalog simply list and price these two stamps. No text notes are offered. And Scott, of course, never has listed these stamps because it considered that they were not sold and used under 100% government monopoly.

So the matter now rests at this point. A thorough and careful search of past references discloses that two very authoritative sources account for these holes as a practical step by the printer to assure care in the surcharging of the sheets. This is plausible because the sheet with full gum would buckle, so in order to have them lay flat, the large holes were punched. Why four holes in certain positions on one and five holes in different positions on the other is difficult to account for at this time. But it is possible that there was some very good reason for these different operations back in 1934 when the work was being done.

If one still questions this explanation, then he must come up either with another previous source that offers a different account or offer a theory that all can and will accept. No doubt philatelic students in Brazil may assist, but it is well to remember that the 1935 Varig Catalogue is probably the most authoritative source for these stamps. It gave the names and articles by others from whom it took its information. The chances of errors from so many sources so close to the scene is very remote. Furthermore, a careful philatelist like Mr. Theodore Champion of France accepted it.

Our thanks to Messrs *Winthrop S. Boggs* and *B. D. Harmer* for their advice and helpful suggestions; to *Adrian Boutrelle* for the fine photos he took of the sheets; to Mr. *Robert J. Lyon* of *Nicolas Sanabria Co. Inc.* and *Mrs. E. Bradford*, Librarian of the Collectors Club for their Portuguese-English translations; and finally to *John J. Britt*, the present owner of those two sheets. (*H. M. G.*)



## THE AIRMAIL BAG

(Under this heading a regular feature will be run with correspondence from Members. Names in full will be used unless a contrary request is specified when a correspondent will be identified by initials only. Nothing unsigned will be used.)

Here is a coincidence that might be worth recording.

I received an Air Letter from Burma dated January 1, 1954 from a party who wrote:

"I have an air letter folder postmarked 'SALVAGED MAIL—Comet Crash Near Calcutta' 2nd May 1953".

When I turned over the Burma Air Letter on the other side in red is handstamped "DAMAGED BY SEAWATER—COMET MAIL".

What a coincidence! The Air Letter discussing one COMET CRASH then should be on a more recent COMET CRASH.

Feb. 12, 1954

Bernard D. Harmer  
32 East 57th Street  
New York 22, N. Y.

Your articles are very timely and helpful . . .

Now I ask you, how is a collector to know that many more South American countries will NOT issue counterfeits? Especially as the prices are going up on the rare ones. What about Colombia C1, C1A to C1N; Uruguay's Pegasus issues and Mexico C61? Have these been counterfeited to your knowledge?

A. R. Jansen  
Brazil, Indiana

Governments except for a very exceptional reason do *not* issue counterfeits. This is done usually by criminals operating outside the country of origin, as witness the recent counterfeit of the U. S. \$2.60 Zeppelin (Scott C15). This is reliably reported as counterfeited in Europe (See *Aero Philatelist's News*, Vol. VIII, No. 12).

Of those you mention, only Colombia C1 is known counterfeited. There was a bogus issue of Uruguay's Third (1933-37) Pegasus Issue (Sanabria 78-97). This was done on the European Continent. The bogus issue was illustrated and described in "*The Aero Philatelist News*", Vol. 1, No. 14. As far as we know these bogus stamps never reached the United States.

Even with our efficient and alert Secret Service, counterfeited United States paper money is being made and distributed every year. Similarly, crooks will counterfeit rare stamps for collectors or make forgeries to deceive the post offices. But stamp collectors need not be stuck by the purchase of imitations. Besides an informative press, there are Expert Committees for this service. Among the most active and respected in the world is that of the Philatelic Foundation, 22 East 35 Street, New York, N. Y. This Expert Committee has examined and issued Certificates on hundreds of rare air mail stamps within the last eight years.

I have just read with interest your article on "The First Air Mail Issue of Ethiopia" in Vol. 1, No. 3 of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS. I think it might interest you to know that I have a cover just like the one shown in Fig. 1 with the registration No. 421. It was cancelled August 22, 1929 at Addis Abeba. It has seven stamps on it. The interesting thing is that in contrast to the cover shown by you arriving in New York on January 17, 18, 1930, my cover arrived in New York, September 17, 18, 1929 according to the backstamps.

My cover possibly made a faster boat or perhaps was flown part way, although this seems unlikely as no other backstamp appears.

Arnold O. Jackson  
Nutley, N. J.

The joy of philatelic writing! Our article brought to light another *First Day Cover*. Oddly the one shown from the "Luff Reference Collection" was registered No. 422 while Mr. Jackson's is No. 421.

But far more interesting is the fact that Mr. Jackson's cover reached New York four months ahead of the one in the "Luff Collection". Member Jackson is right, neither cover was flown. The "Luff Collection" cover must have caught a "slow boat to China".



# ITALY

1933

## Air Mail Essay

By SAM L. BAYER

During the Holy Year of 1933, an event took place that to the best of my knowledge has not been made known to philatelists. In connection with the Holy Year celebrations, a special flight was made on April 1, 1933, from Rome, Italy to Jerusalem. The Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem prepared specially printed envelopes and cards to be carried on this flight to His Eminence, Monseigneur Luigi Barlassino, the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem. One of these special covers is shown here (Fig. 1). Also illustrated because of its interest is part of the back of this cover. It shows on the top the Maltese Cross, the insignia of this Holy Society, which is engraved in red ink on the back flap of the envelope. In the lower left corner is the seal rubberstamped in purple ink by the Office of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem upon the cover's arrival in Palestine (Fig. 2).



(Photos by Boutrelle)

Fig. 1. The specially printed envelope for use solely by members of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem on the Rome-Jerusalem special First Flight of April 1, 1933.

## ITALY



Fig. 2. A part of the back of the envelope shown in Fig. 1.

Of special interest to aero-philatelists is the one stamp at the bottom right on the cover indicated with the arrow. Fig. 3 is an enlargement of this stamp where one can see a six-line black overprint applied on Italy Scott No. 294. The overprint reads:—

Ordine Equestre  
del S. Sepolcro  
Anno Santo  
1933-34  
Primo Volo Roma-  
Gerusalemme

The sponsor of this special Rome-Jerusalem Holy Year Flight was the director of the Italian aviation magazine, "L'Aviazione". He suggested having some special aviation event in the 1933 Holy Year like a first aerial link between Rome and Jerusalem in the Holy Land. The Minister of Posts was approached with the idea. The Postal Minister in 1933 was Count Costanzo Ciano, the father of a much more famous son, Benito Mussolini's son-in-law, Count Galasso Ciano. Official circles accepted the idea and plans got underway. A specially overprinted stamp was prepared and one sheet of 50 was made for approval. But delay was encountered, so no stamps were ready for public sale when the flight took place on April 1, 1933.

The mail carried on this Flight consisted of a few hundred letters and about 1000 post cards. The bulk were prepared and used by the public. A small part were sent by the Order of the Knights of Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem such as the cover illustrated here. The cards also are interesting because they too were specially printed, being the folded double type.



## ITALY



Fig. 3. An enlargement of the overprinted stamp which was prepared for use on this First Flight but was not ready for public sale.

For some unexplained reason, *two* copies of the overprinted stamp were used on this mail. For a long time I believed that my cover was unique until Ira Seebacher found another at a stamp bourse in New Jersey several years ago. It is doubtful if there are any more. No unused specimens of this essay have been found and none are known to the best of my knowledge.

This overprinted stamp, therefore, is an *ESSAY* of an issue that was being prepared but never sold or used by the public. No catalog, American, Italian or foreign, lists this item. But here it is shown for the record.

It should be stressed in this account that the entire project was an aviation promotion. At no time were any philatelists connected with either the preparation, organization or the operation of this special event.

My thanks to your editor, Henry M. Goodkind, for his helpful assistance in preparing this story for publication, and to Mr. Sol Rozman for his loan for the material to be photographed.

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## Recent COUNTERFEITS Of Air Mail Stamps

As far as can be determined by contacting some of the leading collectors and dealers in New York, counterfeits of air mail stamps listed below have not been sold over here. Such counterfeits are known abroad because we read recently printed accounts of some of them. Being aware of the possibility that such imitations may be imported into America, we now are putting our members on notice that the following counterfeits are being circulated abroad.

1. ECUADOR. The highest denomination of the 1929 issue, the 10 Sucres, orange red (Scott C8, Sanabria 20).
2. ECUADOR, the 10 Sucres of the 1930 series with the same design as the one above (Scott C14, Sanabria 42).

### COUNTERFEITS

3. NEW GUINEA. The two high denominations of the 1935 set (Scott design AP1, Sanabria design 4) and the highest denomination of the 1939 set (Scott design AP2, Sanabria design 5). These are:  
£2 violet (Scott C44, Sanabria 44)  
£5 emerald green (Scott C45, Sanabria 45)  
£1 greenish gray (Scott C59, Sanabria 59)
4. SURINAM. The 1931 Dornier Do-X set (Sanabria Nos. 8-14, Scott C8-14). Not only have the overprints been counterfeited on unused basic stamps, but England reports these same counterfeits stuck to a cover and struck with fake Do-X cancels in addition to a close imitation of the Special Flight Cachet.
5. SURINAM. The 5 Gld. of the 1941 *Batavia* Printing (Sanabria No. 24, Scott C18) also has been counterfeited according to word reaching here from the South.
6. UNION SOUTH AFRICA, the complete 1925 set of four (Scott C1-4, Sanabria 1-4). A detailed description and illustrations of these have been published in the "South African Philatelist" November 1953.

All these are deceptive counterfeits so it is advisable to check these stamps before purchasing them on the chance that you may be offered such fake material. *The Philatelic Foundation*, 22 East 35 Street, New York 16, N. Y. has been sent very helpful data describing these counterfeits. It is hoped that by publishing this information our readers will be put on guard against acquiring such worthless, spurious material.

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# AERO PHILATELIC SHOWCASE

## CANADA

### An Unlisted Variety Of A Semi-Official Stamp

Canada's last semi-official stamp was issued in December 1932. It is listed as Sanabria No. 549, an issue of the CANADIAN AIRWAYS, Ltd. As seen from the Sanabria design No. SO27, the stamp is without value, although this catalog indicates 10 cents in parenthesis to show that it covered the 10-cent per oz. air mail fee.



This Semi-official was printed in two operations, one for the orange and a second for the blue color. An interesting but unlisted variety of this stamp is in the collection of Dr. R. Hasbrouck Shradly. An enlargement of this copy is illustrated showing where the orange portion has been misplaced, being shifted way to the top. Dr. Shradly does not consider this variety a valuable item, but just an interesting example of a philatelic curiosity, one of those things that many a collector enjoys adding to his album.

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### Inexpensive Air Mail Stamps Elusive On Flown Covers (Part 2)

About a year ago, we published a short article about our own experience in trying to find inexpensive air mail stamps on flown covers. This appeared in "*The Aero Philatelist News*", Vol. VIII, No. 3. By popular request, we have been asked if we could extend upon the first list because so many have had fun trying to find the covers listed last year. So here we oblige.

But before we do, it is advisable to caution those none too familiar with cover collecting to be careful. One member showed us some covers that he had purchased with stamps on the Part 1 List. Far too many of them were *not* genuinely flown covers, but simulated ones, whereby some schemer had taken the commoner unused stamp, affixed it to a cover and applied a fake cancel. If you care to go after these items, make sure that you know something about postmarks and proper postal use.

# AIR STAMPS ON COVER

Again the maximum price limit placed upon inexpensive stamps are those cataloguing for less than \$2. Only Sanabria numbers and prices are used, because this catalog in many instances gives a cover price, which has been added on the following list in brackets.

<i>Country</i>	<i>San. Cat. No.</i>	<i>San. Used Price</i>	<i>(San. Cover)</i>
Aegean Is. (Rhodes)	30-33	.60	( \$6.00)
Bolivia	54, 55	.55 each	—
Canal Zone	11	.20	—
Dominican Rep.	40	.85	—
Fezzan	4	.50	—
	5	1.00	—
Germany	21-25	.50	( \$5.00)
Ghadames	1-2	.90	( \$3.00)
Guatemala	16-17	.35	—
Haiti	8	.35	( \$1.50)
	10-11	.80	—
Honduras	159	.25	( \$1.00)
Hungary	42-43	.45	—
Iceland	3	.25	( \$20.00)
Indo-China	18	.10	( \$1.00)
	20-22	.40	( \$1.00)
Ionian Islands	1	.20	( \$1.00)
Jugoslavia	21-25	1.40	( \$2.00)
Liberia	13-22	1.30	( \$10.00)
Lithuania	32-35	.95	( \$2.50)
Manchukuo	1-4	1.80	—
Memel	11-32, less 21	.55 each	—
Mexico	69	.10	—
Monaco	1	1.65	( \$15.00)
Netherlands	9	.10	( \$1.50)
	12	.10	—
Netherlands Indies	11	.30	( \$1.00)
	16-17	.40	( \$4.00)
New Zealand	14-16	1.05	—
Norway	8	.10	( \$1.00)
	9	.05	( \$.50)
Panama	18	.35	( \$2.00)
	19	.40	( \$2.00)
	21	.15	—
	23-24	.50	—
	25	.50	—
Paraguay	49-50	1.30	( \$15.00)
	51-55	1.85	( \$7.50)
Peru	46-49	.85	( \$3.00)
Philippines	59-62	.85	( \$7.50)
Romania	4-6	1.20	( \$2.50)
	24-28	.50	( \$5.00)
Russia	53-55	1.95	( \$20.00)
	66-68	.90	( \$4.00)
Saar	1-2	.70	( \$2.00)
	12	.65	( \$2.00)



# AIR STAMPS ON COVER

Country	San. Cat. No.	San. Used Price	(San. Cover)
Salvador	34-36	.85	( \$2.00)
	53	.10	—
Spanish Guinea	3	1.50	( \$2.50)
Surinam	15-17	.90	( \$7.00)
Switzerland	42	1.10	—
Tunisia	2	.25	( \$.75)
Turkey	24-29	1.15	—
Uruguay	33	1.75	—
	35	1.25	—
	117	1.10	—
Venezuela	15-16	1.10	(\$25.00)

This is your list No. 2; Happy Hunting! (H. M. G.)

## COSTA RICA SEMI-OFFICIALS

The stamps are the 1921 Semi-Officials of Costa Rica (Sanabria Nos. 501-2). Some members of the New York Chapter of AERO PHILATELISTS have been studying this issue with the eventual hope of writing them up in this magazine. But further progress is impossible without more material or information. Covers with these stamps are most important. Used copies might be helpful, while unused (mint) stamps are not needed.

So you can help if you have any covers. Please send them to the editor of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS for loan to study. Also if you know of any information, articles or sources of information on these stamps, please notify us.

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Anyone interested in a copy of this handsome work, remit to Jules L. Wacht, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y., his check along with the exact instructions for the printing of his name in gold letters on the outside cover. The price is \$20.00 to members and \$30.00 to non-members.

Single copies of back numbers of THE AERO PHILATELIST'S NEWS are available at 25c each. For these, please remit to Aero Philatelists, 1860 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

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## **TWO HANDBOOKS AVAILABLE**

In 1950 and 1951, AERO PHILATELISTS distributed to its members and then sold to the public two exceptionally informative handbooks on some of the most interesting and historical air mail stamps ever issued. A small supply is still available for any one interested. When ordering, please send cash to:

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## CATALOG AND BOOK REVIEWS

*Catalogue of Spanish Colonies including Cuba, Puerto Rico and Philippines.* Edition 1954.  
Edited by M. Galvez—Principe 1—Madrid (Spain). Price \$1.00.

Since the Galvez 1951 Specialized Catalogue of Spanish Colonies has appeared, most of the prices have changed. So it was necessary to bring out a revised edition in which the prices would better reflect the actual demand in the Spanish philatelic market.

This new 1954 edition confines its listings to the normal variety only, excluding all errors or other minor numbers. But even as a "straight" listing, the new edition consists of 220 pages with 1326 reproductions, listing a total of 4,764 stamps and having 10,630 prices. We have not checked him, but Mr. Galvez maintains that over 80% of the prices show increases.

Out of the total number of collectors in Spain, it is reported that a good percentage collect air mail stamps. Although this catalog includes all stamps, there are many air stamps listed and priced. It is interesting to see how differently they are treated in comparison to our American catalogs. It may reflect the collecting custom in Spain, but it struck us that the prices of the used copies were consistently set at a lower percentage of the unused rather than in relation to the actual market.

More collectors in the United States should consult a catalog like this occasionally. The best sources of information come from the country of origin. Logically if one wants to know the truest indication of the value of Spanish air mails, a look at Galvez will be instructive. Far too many over here collect stamps for years without ever consulting a foreign catalog for their edification.

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Any person of good character interested in Aero-Philately, over the age of twenty-one, of good moral character, and who will be an asset to the Society, may become a member. Application for membership shall be in writing, and shall be accompanied by annual dues on the basis of \$5.00 per annum.

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Only Collector Members vote or hold office.

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# Air Post Realizations

... FROM ...

## H. R. HARMER'S February 23-25 Auction

		Catalogue	Realized
<b>United States:</b>	1927 New York to Berlin by Chamberlin (AAMS 1056) .....	\$175.00+	\$ 82.50
	1930 Graf Zeppelin set in plate No. blocks of four .....	560.00	330.00
<b>Chile:</b>	1927 set of five, o. g. ....	310.00	155.00
<b>Colombia:</b>	1919, 2c on piece .....	135.00	70.00
	1932 "Correo Aereo", part o. g. set ....	104.10	43.00
<b>France:</b>	1928 lie de France, 10 fr on 1.50 fr., o. g. ....	300.00	170.00
<b>Fr. Guiana:</b>	1921 75c red on bluish, used. San. 3 .....	125.00	65.00
	75c black on salmon, unused, San. 9 .....	100.00	58.00
	Same, used .....	100.00	55.00
<b>Honduras:</b>	1925 5c light blue, blue opt., o. g. ....	100.00	42.00
	50c black opt., o. g. ....	100.00	42.00
<b>Iceland:</b>	1930 Balbo set on Reg. cover .....	110.00+	105.00
<b>Italy:</b>	1933 Balbo, 39 autographed covers of diff. pilots' names. San. \$775 ....	267.50+	650.00
	Aegean Islands: 1933 Balbo, 2 vals. on autographed covers. San. \$85 ....	12.50	62.50
<b>Liberia</b>	1936 set of three, never hinged .....	200.00	100.00
	1941 without bars, 50c on 1c, on FD cover .....	75.00+	50.00
<b>Mexico:</b>	Official 1929 1p, o. g. ....	275.00	165.00
<b>Newfoundland:</b>	1919 Hawker 3c, o. g. but off center and tiny pin hole .....	2,200.00	770.00
	1921 Halifax 35c, inverted opt., o. g. ....	400.00	220.00
	1932 DO-X \$1.50, mint blk of four ....	220.00	105.00
<b>New Zealand:</b>	Great Barrier Pigeongram on flimsy, San. 4 .....	75.00	76.00
<b>Syria:</b>	1920 H. C. ptg., o. g. set of three .....	125.00	60.00

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