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PIONEER AIRMAIL FLIGHTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA -- 1919

By Major R. K. Malott (Retired RCAF/CAF)

The tremendous interest generated in the preparations for and completion of the first non-stop transatlantic flight in Newfoundland during 1919, was matched by great enthusiasm for daring and practical flights on the west coast of Canada. The province of British Columbia had two barriers to overcome to facilitate exterior communication and transportation — the Rocky Mountains on the east, and vast, foggy stretches of water on the west. Interest in military flying produced a crop of intrepid aviators, both Canadian and American, who accepted the challenge of flying over the confines of British Columbia.

Specific data on some of the flights are vague but the first documented air mail flight in British Columbia was that of Eddie Hubbard and William Boeing from Vancouver to Seattle on 3 March 1919. This flight was the first recorded air mail flight between Canada and the United States of America.

Unsubstantiated reference is made in aerophilatelic catalogues to 17 February, 1919 as the date of the first air mail between Canada and the U.S.A. Envelopes with a 3-line cachet "Via Airplane Mail - First Flight - Vancouver, B.C. to Seattle" were reported carried. No one has ever produced such an envelope for substantiation of this air mail flight. According to the VANCOUVER DAILY SUN, dated 18 February, 1919, there was a flight from Seattle to Vancouver on 17 February timed to coincide with an aerial derby being held in Vancouver. W. E. Boeing and Eddie Hubbard left Seattle at 1:12 p.m., Monday, 17 February, 1919, in their hydro-aeroplane destined for Burrard Inlet, Vancouver, B.C., 135 miles distance. Due to a broken rudder, the aircraft was forced to land at Anacortes, Washington. Although the flight was planned for resumption on 18 February, no further data have been found in the newspapers or the records of the Boeing Company concerning this flight. No mention of mail was ever made. Since Boeing often flew to Vancouver, it is believed that he and Hubbard were on a preliminary survey flight. W. E. Boeing was President of the Boeing Aircraft Company, and Eddie Hubbard was the Company's Chief Test Pilot.

The first air mail flight that has any substantiation is that flown from Vancouver to Seattle on 3 March, 1919, when Boeing and Hubbard flew over this route, the Boeing C-700, a commercial variation of the Boeing Model C Trainer, fifty of which had been built for the U.S. Navy in 1918. Details of this flight are in Frank Ellis' "CANADA'S FLYING HERITAGE" and Harold Mansfield's "VISION."

Mr. E. S. Knowlton, a prominent druggist of Vancouver and a director of the Vancouver War Exhibition Committee, requested permission from the Postmaster of Vancouver, Mr. R. G. MacPherson, to have mail flown from Canada to the United States as a special feature of the Exhibition. Permission was granted and Mr. Knowlton arranged to have mail flown by Boeing and Hubbard. According to Harold Mansfield, Boeing and Hubbard, in their

Boeing C-700 hydro-aeroplane, departed Seattle on 27 February for Vancouver but were forced down at Anacortes, Washington, by bad weather. On 28 February, they continued on to Vancouver and landed at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club.

On 3 March, 1919 at 12:30 p.m., Boeing and Hubbard headed back to Seattle with 60 letters constituting the first international air mail between Canada and the U.S.A. Vancouver Postmaster R. G. MacPherson sent a message to Mr. Battle the Postmaster at Seattle: "When we mount upon the wings of eagles, no line of demarcation then shows between Canada and the United States. May the first airplane mail be the harbinger of thousands more to follow." An envelope from this flight was sold by Al Zimmerman's Auction, Bronx, New York, 31 October 1973. The envelope from the Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, B.C., was cancelled at Vancouver on 3 March 1919 and addressed to Boeing Airplane Company, Georgetown, Seattle, Washington. The cachet in three lines reads "Via Airplane Mail - First Flight - Vancouver, B.C. to Seattle."

The aircraft landed at Edmonds, Washington, just north of Seattle, to refuel. About three hours after leaving Vancouver, they docked the aircraft on the ramp of the Boeing Lake Washington hangar. Eddie Hubbard remarked to his boss, "Mr. Boeing, if we can do this in the "C," it would be a cinch in the B-1 flying boat. I'd sure like to fly up there and back on a regular basis." On 15 October, 1920, a regular service was opened by Hubbard and Boeing between Victoria and Seattle. Flying a Boeing B-1 aircraft the aviators carried sixty envelopes marked "Airplane Service" over the indicated route. Mail was also carried from Seattle to Victoria. This was the first official scheduled international air mail route between Canada and the U.S.A. Hubbard thus became the first air mail pilot to fly a regular international route on the North American continent. On the flight from Seattle to Vancouver on 15 October, 1920, Hubbard carried five sacks of mail which were taken to the Japanese ship "African Maru," sailing for the Orient on the same day. The distance of 84 air miles from Seattle to Victoria was flown in



Figure 1. Boeing C-700 leaving Vancouver on 3 March, 1919 for Seattle. (British Columbia Archives)



Figure 2. First Seattle-Victoria mail, 15 October, 1920. Left to right: Eddie Hubbard, G. H. Gardiner, Assistant Postmaster and Postmaster H. F. Bishop prior to departure of the Boeing seaplane, C-700.

50 minutes and the return flight against strong head winds took one hour and 50 minutes. Hubbard flew this route almost daily for seven years.

Lt. R. Rideout and Lt. W. H. Brown

The Aerial League of Canada, Victoria Branch, sponsored the next air mail in British Columbia. A special greeting from the City of Victoria to the City of Seattle was flown by Lt. Robert Rideout and Lt. W. H. Brown in their Curtiss JN-4A type aircraft called the "Pathfinder." The aircraft, powered by a 90 hp Curtiss OX-5 engine, was capable of a cruising speed of approximately 60 mph.

Both Lt. Rideout and Lt. Brown served overseas, first as Canadian Infantry, and then in the air service. Both were wounded in action. Lt. Brown downed eight enemy aircraft and won the British Military Cross. Two other Air Force officers, Lt. Louis L. Grant, and Lt. H. D. McDiarmid, who went ahead to Seattle to prepare a landing facility, saw much action in the Royal Air Force. Lt. Grant was the Vice President of the Aerial League of Canada in 1919.

On 18 May, 1919 at 11:00 a.m., "The Pathfinder" took off from Victoria flew across the strait of Juan de Fuca, and landed at 12:20 p.m. at Coupeville on Whidby Island, because of weather conditions. At 4:40 p.m., they took off again and arrived at Jefferson Park, Seattle, Washington at 5:50 p.m. The total elapsed flying time was 2 hours and 30 minutes.

The acting mayor of Seattle, Mayor W. D. Lane, was on hand at the golf course landing field to greet the aviators and to receive the special aerial message from Mayor R. J. Porter of Victoria. The message read in part, "I am sure that you will agree with me in saying that visits of this kind should be encouraged, as they tend to further cement the friendly feelings that have always linked the citizens of our cities, and also to promote the comradeship formed on the battlefields of France and Flanders by our men in the war for justice."

The two other letters carried were as follows:

The Editor of the VICTORIA DAILY TIMES, Mr. B. C. Nicholas, wrote to the SEATTLE DAILY TIMES, "Through the courtesy of Lt. Robert Rideout, R.A.F., and Lt. H. Brown, R.A.F., of the Victoria Branch of the Aerial League of Canada, the Victoria Daily Times sends neighborly greetings to The Seattle Times on the occasion of the first aerial trip between our two cities. In doing so we trust that this adventure will open a new epoch in transportation between the two places, thereby adding fresh strength to the friendly relationship which traditionally exists between them. Already exchange visits have been made between Victoria and Vancouver, and with the successful flight to-day, the way would seem to be opened to the wider development of the possibilities of aerial navigation in their relation to communication between British Columbia and the State of Washington. With best wishes, Yours very truly, B. C. Nicholas, Editor, on behalf of the Victoria Daily Times."

The other letter also addressed to THE TIMES was from Mr. F. Forneri, Editor of THE SIDNEY AND ISLAND REVIEW, Sidney, B.C. The letter read, "This will introduce to you Lt. Brown of this city. We commend him to your friendship and protection. May this aerial delivery be the forerunner of regular service in the not far distant future. With kindest greetings, F. Forneri, Editor, Sidney and Islands Review." Including the three special letters, the aviators carried and dropped over Seattle, invitations for citizens of Seattle to visit Victoria on 24 May, 1919 — Victoria Day.

The Canadians were the centre of attraction until their take-off from the Jefferson Park Golf Links at 11:15 a.m., 19 May, 1919, for Victoria, B.C. Aboard "The Pathfinder" was another batch of letters of greeting for Victoria that were hastily written by W. E. Boeing, E. N. Gott and C. A. Berlin, all of the Boeing Company, and Flight Lieutenant Louis L. Grant of the C.A.F. A special letter from Acting Mayor W. D. Lane of Seattle to Mayor R. J. Porter of Victoria stated in part: "Your invitation from out



Figure 3. Flown Roessler cover, Victoria-Seattle, 15 October 1920 with 2 types of cachets.

of the sky was received to-day. Rest assured that it is duly appreciated by the people of Seattle.

"I agree with you that friendly exchanges between our cities should be encouraged to the end of promoting neighborly feeling which already exists in a large measure. The ties of friendship in the common struggle for humanity have been strengthened in every way. We have always been good neighbors; we should now be close friends.

"There will be a good representation of Seattle citizens with you on the occasion of your pageant."

Where are these historic letters sent between the two cities to the mayors, newspapers, and private citizens? It would be most appropriate if some of these letters could be found and displayed for all to see. These flights of 18 and 19 May, 1919 were a true pioneer endeavour to improve communications between Canada and the U.S.A.

Jack Clemence

The next recorded airmail flight lacks detail. Philatelic catalogues refer to a special flight flown by Jack Clemence from Victoria to Minoru Park, Vancouver, for air races and stunting on 31 May, 1919 in the Curtiss JN-4 aircraft "The Pathfinder" owned by the Victoria Branch of the Aerial League of Canada. The flight was supposed to have carried mail to raise funds for the Red Cross, but according to Mr. A. J. Helmchen, City Archivist of the City of Victoria, only one letter was carried to a Mr. Murrin of the B.C. Electric Railway Company and delivered to him personally. The envelopes flown, none of which appear to be in any collector's hands, were reported to be endorsed "Per Aeroplane Pathfinder" and stamped with a two-line cachet, "Aerial League of Canada, Victoria Branch, Victoria to Vancouver May 31, 1919." Mail was not flown on the return trip.

Captain E. C. Hoy, DFC

The Canadian Rocky Mountains presented such a formidable obstacle to communication and transportation for the citizens of the Province of British Columbia, that the building of a railroad through the Rockies was made a requirement before British Columbia agreed to enter Canadian Confederation.

The conquering of the Canadian Rockies by air occurred on 7 August, 1919 when Captain Ernest C. Hoy flew his Curtiss JN-4 from Vancouver, B.C. to Calgary, Alberta, via Vernon, Grand Forks, Cranbrook, and Lethbridge.

Captain Hoy, originally from Kelowna, B.C., was a member of the Royal Flying Corps during WWI. He returned to Vancouver in January 1919 and, with five other flying personnel, formed the Vancouver Branch of the Aerial League of Canada. With financial assistance from Ernest Rogers, five Curtiss JN-4 training aircraft were purchased and special flying demonstrations and flights were presented in the Vancouver region. At the same time, support for an air mail service across Canada was developing under the leadership of Mr. John Nelson, Editor of the Vancouver DAILY WORLD, Mr. Buchanan of the Lethbridge HERALD and Mr. J. W. Woods, of the Calgary HERALD. To demonstrate the feasibility of such a service, a successful flight across the Canadian Rockies was deemed essential. Arrangements were made to fly a Curtiss JN-4 aircraft powered by a 90 hp Curtiss OX-5 engine. Preparations for fuel, oil and landing facilities in open fields

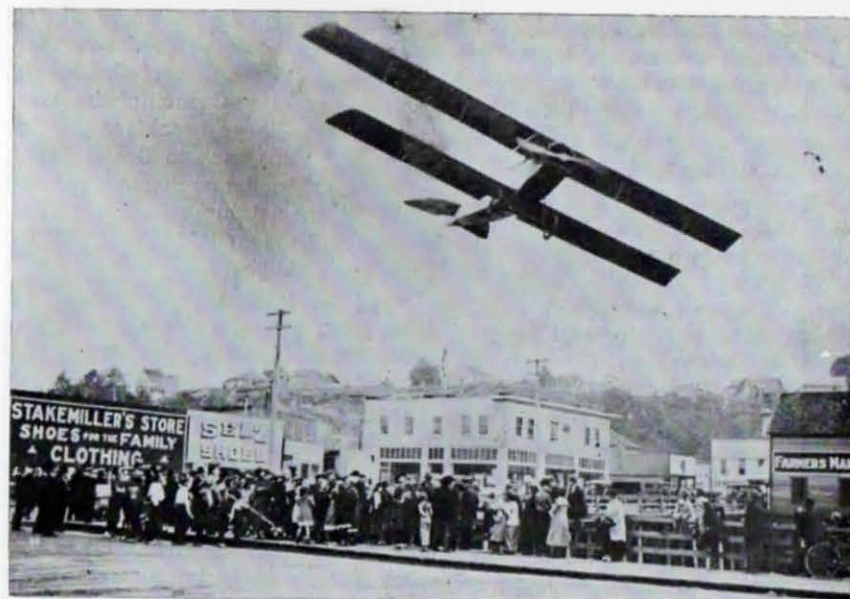


Figure 4. The JN-4A "Pathfinder" flying over Seattle, 18 May, 1919 after the flight by Lt. Rideout and Lt. Brown from Victoria across the Strait of Juan de Fuca. (Canadian Armed Forces)

or race tracks at various towns were completed. Competition was keen for the honour of attempting this first flight across the Rockies. By a random lot selection, Captain Hoy was chosen to attempt the flight. To increase the endurance of Hoy's JN-4 to four hours, a 12 gallon gasoline tank was removed from a wrecked JN-4 and placed in the front seat compartment with special hose connections to the other gasoline tank. Instruments available in Hoy's JN-4 were an airspeed indicator, an altimeter for height indication, unserviceable compass, and a Canadian Pacific Tourist map of the area. The challenge presented to Captain Hoy and his frail JN-4 was formidable.

Captain Hoy's first attempt to fly to Calgary was made on 4 August, 1919. He took off from Minoru Park, Lulu Island, Vancouver at 3:40 a.m. with his first stop destined as Vernon. Although fog forced him to fly at 1,000 to 5,000 feet for part of the journey, he had to descend to 500 feet over Chilliwack, B.C. to locate his position. Since he had to complete the total trip within 18 hours flying time, and since the fog was prevailing, Captain Hoy decided to land at Chilliwack. He returned to Vancouver to try again at a later date, Thursday, 7 August, 1919.

Captain Hoy carried aboard his aircraft several special letters from Mayor Gale of Vancouver and newspapers of the Vancouver DAILY WORLD assigned to officials at the various towns and cities along the route. The late Frank Ellis states in "CANADA'S FLYING HERITAGE" that Hoy carried aboard his JN-4, 45 envelopes from Vancouver bearing a cachet "First B.C. Alberta Aerial Post." At 4:13 a.m., the Curtiss JN-4 rose from Minoru Park, Lulu Island, Vancouver and pointed towards Vernon. The weather was perfect, the route was clearly discernible through Coquholla Pass and the

aircraft was running smoothly. Hoy landed at Mission Hall, Vernon at 7:18 a.m. Mayor Shatford of Vernon, greeted the pilot, accepted the newspapers and flown envelopes for himself, Mr. J. A. McKelvie, Editor of the NEWS, Hon. E. P. Chapman, and the President of the Executive Council of the Army and Navy Veterans, and then he treated Hoy to a large breakfast. At 8:19 a.m. the mailman aviator was again on his way, this time to Grand Forks. Captain Hoy had mail and parcels for the Mayor and merchants at Grand Forks too. He arrived at 10:34 a.m. and had special aircraft service supplied by two ex-RAF personnel, Lieutenants McLeod and Manly. At Grand Forks, another aircraft flown by a Lt. Hall circled the town while Hoy was preparing for his next hop.

At 11:15 a.m., Captain Hoy was airborne at Grand Forks. He landed at Cranbrook, B.C. at 2:05 p.m. He flew through the main part of the Rocky Mountains between Cranbrook and Lethbridge via Crowsnest Pass. His 7,000-foot ceiling allowed him a clearance of 150 feet over the Pass. He reached and landed at Lethbridge at 6:22 p.m. and took off again at 7:18 p.m. Bowness Park at Calgary was finally reached at 8:55 p.m. From Mayor Gale of Vancouver, Captain Hoy delivered newspapers and letters of greetings apparently to the mayors of all towns and cities stopped at en route to Calgary. Newspapers from the Vancouver WORLD were also delivered. Who knows if any of these letters or newspapers were retained in official archives or in private homes? Captain Hoy's successful trans-Rocky flight was heralded by the Alberta and B.C. papers as a most eventful occurrence.

The return trip to Vancouver from Calgary was planned via Banff, Field, Golden, Revelstoke and Vernon, B.C. A few letters marked "By First Aerial Mail" were prepared for the return flight — letters from Acting Mayor McCoubrey of Calgary to mayors en route, a letter from John Doe, Secretary of the Calgary Aero Club to the President of the Aerial League of Vancouver, a letter from Mayor Gale of Vancouver to the Mayor of Golden and a letter to Mrs. H. G. Lockwood of Golden from a friend in Vancouver. Newspapers were also sent from the Calgary HERALD to the Vancouver WORLD. Captain Hoy's departure was delayed because of weather conditions until 11 August. On that date, he was airborne at 9:53 a.m. and over a selected starting point at 9:46 a.m. Hoy was over Cochrane at 10:11 a.m., over Morley at 10:27 a.m. and over Golden at 12:35 p.m. He had planned to land at the local ball park but it was too small and crowded. He flew to and landed at 12:38 in a field owned by Thomas King on the west side of town. The crowd at the ball park rushed to the landing site where Hoy was proclaimed a hero. A letter of greeting from Vancouver was read to the crowd by the local government agent since there was no mayor. Prior to his departure, Hoy received from the President of the Board of Trade letters for the Presidents of the Board of Trade at Revelstoke, Vernon and Vancouver, as well as copies of the GOLDEN STAR of Golden for the Vancouver WORLD.

A good take-off despite the 2,583 foot elevation of Golden at 2:45 p.m. suddenly ended in disaster for the flight. An emergency turn to avoid trees on the field put the aircraft into a slip. The tip of the left wing hit the ground and spun the aircraft into the grassy field. Hoy crawled out suffering from a bruised shoulder and black eye. He made arrangements to ship the aircraft back to Vancouver by train and then he left himself

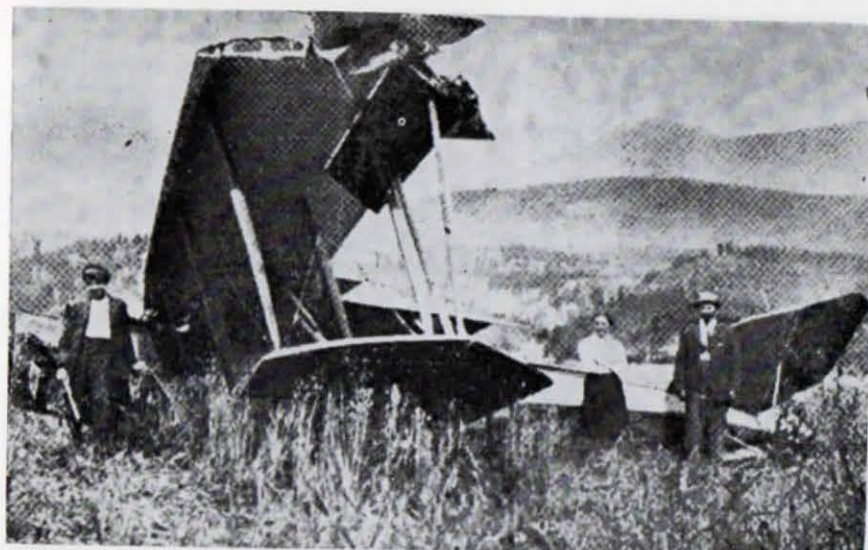


Figure 5 Captain Hoy's Curtiss JN-4 lies on the ground at Golden, B.C. after its crash there on 11 August, 1919. (Canadian Armed Forces)

by train at 3:15 p.m. Captain Hoy arrived in Vancouver Tuesday evening a tired and bruised aviator. His assignment to fly across the Rockies was, however, successfully completed.

Captain Hoy later became a member of the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada. In 1922 he married Miss Marjorie Day of Vancouver, and they have a son and a daughter. He later became the manager of the Assurance Company's office in Newark, New Jersey and then in Chicago, Illinois. In 1956, he retired to Clarksville, Georgia. In 1969, he returned to British Columbia to re-fly over the route he blazed over the Canadian Rockies in 1919.

This data on Captain Hoy's daring flight over the Rockies came from Frank Ellis' "CANADA'S FLYING HERITAGE," pages 178-180, the Calgary DAILY HERALD, dated 4, 7, 9 and 11 August 1919, the Vernon NEWS dated 14 August, 1919 and original data from Captain E. C. Hoy.

Captain James Gray and Captain Gordon Cameron

The Western Pastime Athletic Club of Nanaimo on 16 August, 1919 sponsored a one-hour flying show by two WWI aviators flying a Curtiss JN-4 trainer from the Victoria Aerial League. The crowd of several thousand were thrilled by spectacular nose dives, spiral slides, loop-the-loops and volplaning by Captain James Gray, pilot, and Captain Gordon Cameron, observer.

Earlier in the day, these two aviators took off in their Curtiss JN-4 aircraft "Pathfinder II" from the Old Willows Race Track, Oak Bay, Victoria, B.C. at 1:20 p.m., flew the 74 miles along the coast of Vancouver Island, and landed at the Colliers Farm, Nanaimo, B.C., at 2:15 p.m. The actual flying time was 55 minutes. Aboard the aircraft, packed in an official Canadian Post Office Air Mail bag, were 95 envelopes marked "Via First Air-

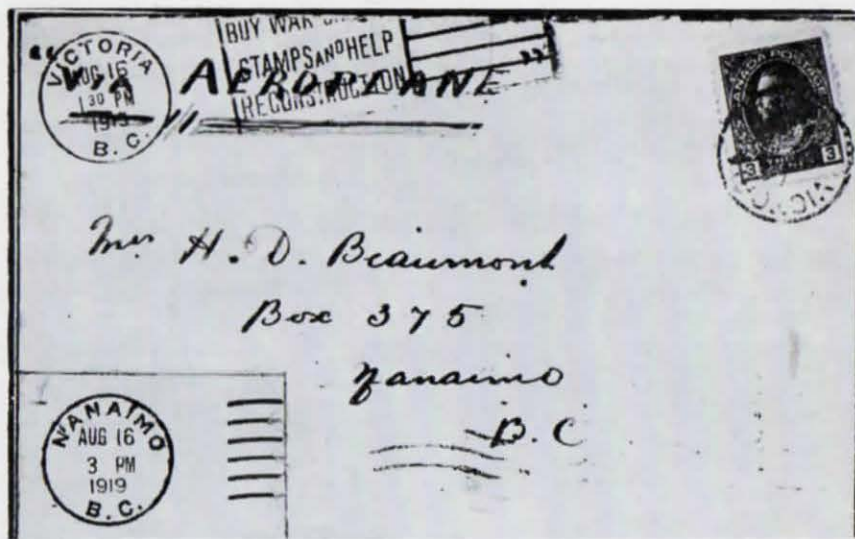


Figure 6. First flight cover flown on 16 August, 1919 by Gray and Cameron in the "Pathfinder II" from Victoria to Nanaimo, B.C. Note arrival time in inset.

plane Victoria-Nanaimo." One post card, discovered in 1967 in a shoe box full of post cards in Nanaimo, was postmarked "Victoria, August 16, 1:30 p.m. 1919, B.C.," addressed to a Mrs. L. Manson, Drawer M, Nanaimo, B.C. and annotated "Via Aeroplane Pathfinder." The card carried the following message: "My Dear Mrs. Manson: Just a card as a souvenir of first mail carried by aeroplane from Victoria to Nanaimo. I think of you so often and wonder how you all are; especially Ernie. Verne and May are with us the past 2 months. Their Darling Babe died here. We all send love. Addie M. D. Knott." A most sad message on the first official internal air mail flight in British Columbia from Victoria to Nanaimo. All envelopes were back-stamped 3 p.m. at Nanaimo, 16 August, 1919. Postmaster Bishop of Victoria sent a special message of greeting to his counterpart in Nanaimo, Postmaster Horn.

Due to some mix-up, no mail was carried on the flight back to Victoria. The "Pathfinder II" left Nanaimo at 7:55 p.m. and arrived at the Willows, Victoria at 8:45 p.m.

Captain James J. Gray served with the Canadian Infantry at the beginning of WWI, later joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1917, and flew on operations with No. 27 Squadron in France from December, 1917 to July, 1918. During that period, he was promoted to Captain. In 1920, he received a commission and rank of Flight Lieutenant in the Militia Air Force. During WWII he served his country again with the RCAF. He still resides in Victoria, B.C.

Lieutenant Gordon A. Cameron was with the 62nd Battery, 15th Artillery Brigade, C.E.F. In 1917, he was commissioned in the Royal Flying Corps as a pilot. On 15 June, 1918, he was severely wounded over Ypres and was invalided back to Canada. In 1919, he became a director of the

Aerial League of Canada and studied law. He was a Q.C. in Victoria until his death in 1967.

The special flight was recognized as a significant trial of air mail service development. The Nanaimo FREE PRESS of 16 August, 1919 stated in part, "The first Aerial Mail in Western Canada reached Nanaimo this afternoon, with letters being delivered at the ordinary postal rate of 3 cents. This is an event of some importance as the first commercial use of flying locally. A year hence we may expect to see a regular service established on the Island (Vancouver) or between Nanaimo and Vancouver, at least for special delivery letters, parcels and possibly a few passengers.

"To-day's delivery is rather in the nature of a curiosity carried out in the day's program of sport, but at the same time it is giving a practical use of flying. The novelty will be worn out inside of twelve months and by that time we may be sure that transportation companies will be vying with each other to establish air services on commercial lines."

This message was prophetic. However, the changes were effected not in 12 months but in 9 years when British Columbia Air Lines, sponsored by the Eve Brothers of Victoria, commenced their air line service in British Columbia between Victoria and Vancouver in July, 1928.

This article, with several minor changes, appeared originally in the Spring 1970 issue of the "Canadian Aviation Historical Society Journal," a non-philatelic publication.

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(Compiled by the Editor)

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HUNGARY: The First Airmail Issue

By Otto G. Schaffling

The postal history of air mail goes far beyond the issuance and use of air mail stamps. Some of the most famous postal history items are the French balloon covers. These were the only means of communication from the besieged city of Paris during the winter of 1870-71 when the Prussian army surrounded it and cut off all communications. It was not until May 20, 1917 that Italy issued the first air mail stamps, for use on the experimental flight from Turin to Rome. Austria issued the second set of air mail stamps and, in third place, was the famous U.S. 24c air mail of May 13, 1918. Hungary took a respectable fourth place in this "world series of air mail stamps" by issuing two on July 4, 1918.

In 1918, the fourth year of World War I, the situation on the western front looked bad for the Central Powers, but the eastern front was quiet. A treaty had been signed with the Kerenski government at Brest-Litovsk and the Austro-Hungarian army was deep in Russia, occupying large parts of the Ukraine, including Kiev. The long distances made air mail service a necessity. The first Austrian air mail stamps were issued for the route Vienna-Lemberg-Kiev. Later, the service was enlarged to include the route from Vienna to Budapest. It was also intended to extend the service through Ujvidek (Novisad) into Bucharest, Romania, which at this time was also occupied by the Austro-Hungarian and German armies. Two regular Hungarian stamps, Scott numbers 120 and 123, the 75 filler and the 2 korona values of the parliament issue, were overprinted with the text "Repulo Posta" (air mail) in an arc, and underneath, the new values 1k 50f and 4k 50f respectively. (Figure 1.) These stamps were announced in a postal bulletin on July 1 under postal order number 59622 with the statement that the stamps would be issued on July 4, 1918 for use on air mail letters sent on the new air mail route, Budapest-Vienna. (Figure 2.) The postal order states that there would be air service daily by the Austro-Hungarian military service and that private mail could be sent by regular or registered letter or postcard. In addition, if a telegram could be sent quicker by air mail, then these also could be included.

The total delivery cost was composed of several fees. First, the regular postage was to be paid, plus the registry fee, if desired. For transport of the letter to the airport a 1 korona fee had to be paid, and for special delivery from the airport to the destination an additional 60 fillers. For the air mail portion, the fee was 1.50 korona per distance unit for every 20 grams or fraction thereof. The Budapest-Vienna route counted as one distance unit. It is most interesting that only the air mail fee was to be paid with air mail stamps; the regular mail, transport and special delivery fees were to be paid with regular postage stamps. To explain how the fee would be calculated, the following example is given for a registered 30 gram letter from Budapest to Vienna:



Figures 1 and 2. The two denominations of the first Hungarian airmail stamps, perforate (left) and imperforate.

a) postage for registered letter	0.50 korona
b) transport fee to airport	1.00 korona
c) air mail fee (2x1.50)	3.00 korona
d) special delivery (required)	0.60 korona
	5.10 korona

Letters destined beyond Vienna were sent on by regular mail, or if air mail was available, by air mail. From Vienna then, the air mail connection was to Krakow-Lemberg-Kiev. Each intercity distance counted as one unit for the purpose of calculating the air mail fee except the last one, from Lemberg to Kiev. However, no private mail was known to have been delivered to Kiev via this service, in any event. So, for a letter from Budapest to Krakow the air mail fee was 3.00 k. for 20 grams or less. The air mail fee to Lemberg or Kiev was 4.50 k for each 20 grams, plus the above mentioned regular postage, transportation and special delivery fees which came to 1.80 k for a 20 gram letter.

If someone wanted a letter to go by air mail only between Budapest and Vienna but the rest of the route to Krakow or Lemberg by regular mail, only the air rate on the Budapest-Vienna leg had to be paid. The airplane started between 4 and 5 pm from Matyasfolder airport and arrived in Vienna around 7 pm. The plane returned from Vienna in the morning, arriving between 7 and 8 am. All letters, etc., had to be marked Repulo Posta and could be mailed only from the Budapest "4" post office (main P.O. of Budapest). The air mail fee had to be paid in cash and the postal clerk attached the air mail stamps to the letters. The post office did not



Figure 3. Cover franked with the 1.50K air mail stamp flown on the July 4, 1918 first flight from Budapest to Vienna.

guarantee regular air mail service, but if a letter was not carried by plane or, if it took longer than 12 hours between the origin and destination, the air mail fee could be refunded on request, not more than six months later. (The U.S. Postal Service would be bankrupted in one or two months by such a rule, even if the time were extended to 24 hours!) If the shipment was lost, not due to the air service but by careless handling, the sender could be refunded the entire postage. This is the essence of the postal order. It was clarified on July 16 by order number 12299 which stated that the two stamps overprinted Repulo Posta 1 k 50 f or 4 k 50 f could be used on air mail shipments only. If they were used on regular mail, they were not to be cancelled and the shipment was to be handled as not prepaid. This regulation clearly designated the two stamps for airmail use only.

The Hungarian Stamp Monograph says that 70,000 sets of the two stamps were overprinted; the 1 k 50 f on 75 f was overprinted in carmine or brick red, and the 4 k 50 f on 2 k only in dark blue. Of the 1 k 50 f value, inverted overprints exist. One sheet of these stamps with inverted overprint got into collectors' hands. Also, the two values exist imperforate, quantity unknown. These imperforate air mail stamps came from the postal archives after World War II; they were never sold regularly. (Figure 3.) At the beginning, the stamps were cancelled with the Budapest 4 post office cancelling device marked with LTi, LTn or LLz. On July 4 LTi, July 5 LTn, and from July 6 until July 23 LLz cancellers were used. On July 16 a special

canceller with the text at top Repulo Posta and below, Budapest IND, was used to cancel the air mail stamps only but some covers exist from the first day with all the stamps cancelled this way. (Figure 4.) The regular stamps still were cancelled with the Budapest 4 LTn. (Figure 5.) Upon arrival in Vienna, a Flugpost/Wien I cancellation was used on the mail, which was then promptly distributed by special delivery.

Today, very few genuine letters or postcards exist. Most covers on the market are faked; they have faked overprinted stamps with faked cancellations and faked Vienna arrival stamps on the back. All covers carrying only the air mail stamps are faked; genuine covers must also carry regular stamps in payment for the other fees.

An interesting faked cover recently came onto the market: a quantity of covers had been sent to Krakow for philatelic purposes on July 10 and 11, all addressed to Stephen Stiasny, and all naturally addressed in black ink, not with a ballpoint pen, since it had yet to be invented. But on the fake, a blue ballpoint pen was used in addressing it to Stiasny! The blue ink alone would give away the fake; all originals were written with black ink. Another faker cancelled his stamps with a faked Budapest 4 canceller dated April 24, 1918; at this time the stamps had not even been printed!

Many fake overprints exist, some very good which, without good reference material, are not easy to detect. Today, not only the most desirable covers are faked, but most mint or used stamps in circulation have fake overprints. The two basic stamps are cheap, so for the faker it is a good business to turn a stamp cataloging only pennies into a stamp (with a fake overprint) worth many dollars. There is no question that caution is essential with these two air mail stamps mint, used and on cover.

The original printing was 70,000 sets and only a fraction of these were used because the air mail service ran only until July 23, just 19 days. The

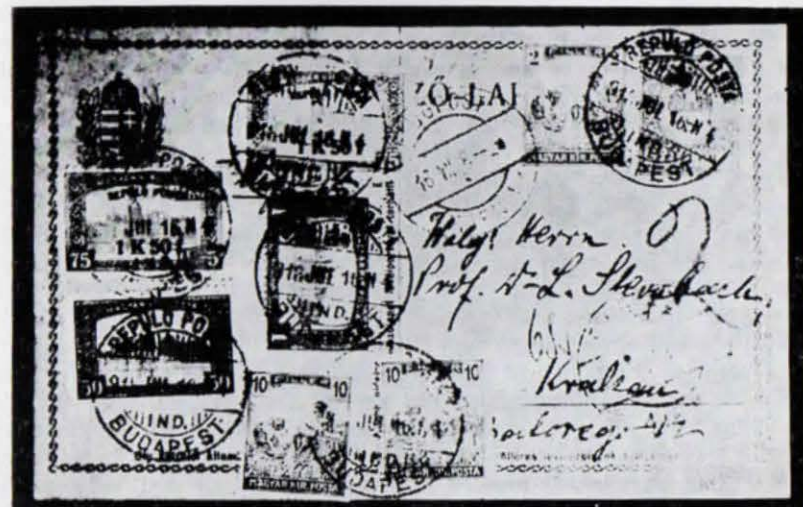


Figure 4. July 16, 1918 cover with the REPULO POSTA/IND/BUDAPEST cancellation on the 1.50K air mail stamp and used also to cancel the ordinary postage stamps.



Figure 5. July 19, 1918 cover. The BUDAPEST/LLZ 4 LLZ canceller is applied only to the ordinary postage stamps. The 1.50K air mail stamp is cancelled with the REPULO POSTA IND/BUDAPEST handstamp.

stamps were valid for air mail only and, at the beginning, were not sold to collectors. Only after the air service was discontinued, because of two airplane crashes which took four lives, were the stamps sold to collectors. They were available at the philatelic window, up to five sets per person, but not at face value due to inflation.

Now, a look at this unlucky air mail service. On July 4, 1918, the service was inaugurated; all the important persons, military and civilian, were present at the Matyasföld airport, including the Minister of Trade, József Szerényi. He made the contract with the military to obtain the airplanes and pilots with which to operate the air mail service. Also, the Postmaster General and the Austrian Minister of Trade and many others were at the airport, as the leading Budapest newspaper, the Pesti Hírlap, reported on July 5 in a long article on the historical event. The plane was piloted by Lieutenant Emil Vargha and his companion was Captain A. Raff-Marville, who at that time was the commander of the non-combatant air fleet of the monarchy. The first flight arrived safely in Vienna that same afternoon. However, the flight on July 13 ended in catastrophe; the plane crashed close to the Austrian border near Mosonmagyaróvár. Both pilots died in the accident; one was Emil Vargha who piloted the flight on July 4. The airplane did not burn, so the mail was recovered and sent to Vienna by rail. Then, on July 21, a second airplane crashed shortly after takeoff, near the airport, killing both pilots. Another plane took the mail to Vienna one hour later. The loss of human life and military planes was too much in this short period of time, thus it was decided to discontinue the air mail service. The last plane went to Vienna on July 23, and the last came from Vienna on the morning of July 24. This flight ended the first Hungarian air mail service and along with it the possibility of using the stamps. No official record exists of the date of discontinuance of the sale of the air mail stamps. The

fact is that for a few weeks the stamps were still sold to the public.

There does exist a tabulated list of how much mail was carried on the various flights. It was printed in the Hungarian Stamp Monograph as follows:

Day of Shipm. July	Pieces of Air Mail Transported						
	To Vienna			To Krakow		To Lemberg	
	Regul.	Regist.	Telegr.	Regul.	Regist.	Regul.	Regist.
4	520		1300				
5	651	431					
6	109	169	550		1		5
7	68	69					
8	428	206			2		2
9	461	249	400		1	1	4
10	436	191	500	306	4		5
11	181	125	750	70		44	
12	118	124				26	3
13	36	97	500				
14	95	34	340	1			
15	120	100		1		73	1
16	36	59	900	4	1		1
17	306	95	1400		10	13	2
18	37	60	690				1
19	43	217	1260				3
20	88	65	1327		1		2
21	11						
22	12	66		1			6
23	39	103					
Total	3795	2452	9917	383	20	157	35

Most registered letters were official government or military matters, and very few were saved. Telegrams, again, were mainly official business and because they were not franked, if any exist it is very hard to pinpoint that they were sent by air mail. Shipments to Krakow and Lemberg were extremely limited; if Stephan Stiasny had not anticipated any philatelic future in the venture and hadn't sent a lot of covers to Krakow, we would not have very much mail from this part of the route. Even Stiasny covers are rare, but the small amount of other mail which went to Krakow or Lemberg is extremely rare, and registered almost does not exist. (Figure 6.) Registered shipments were mainly government business and therefore lost to the philatelic public. If these air mail covers had not been Hungarian, but rather similar early U.S. air mail, it would be almost impossible to find any, and prices would be astronomical. But, because they are from a country which went through two inflations and Communism, which prefers not to allow personal property, the rare covers cost only a fraction as much as similar covers from any hard currency country.

It is hard to estimate how many air mail letters or postcards exist today but, based on the total of 6842 shipped to all destinations, it should

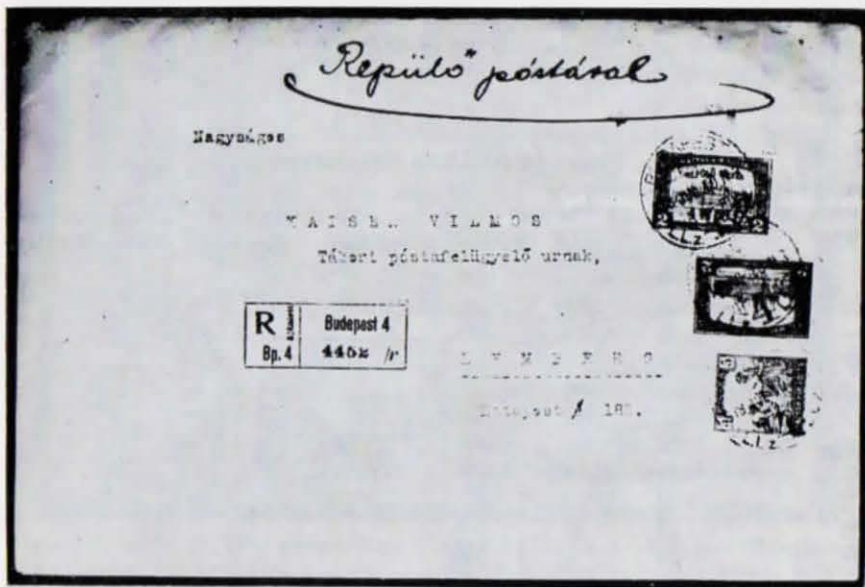


Figure 6. A rare July 10, 1918 cover to Lemberg postmarked BUDAPEST/LLZ 4 LLZ.

be reasonable to assume that less than half of the above mentioned pieces exist today, probably not more than 2500 pieces. Today, the covers are spread all over the world. Probably, more exist in foreign countries than in Hungary; because of the need of the country to get hard currency, most covers were sold on the foreign market. I do not know any collection which has all the existing flights day by day from Budapest to Vienna, much less to Krakow (other than the Stiasny covers) or Lemberg. However, if you keep your eyes open it is still possible to find some nice genuine covers here in the U.S., because most of them were sold here after the 1920 inflation.

Acknowledgement to Victor Berecz for the loan of his covers used in some of the illustrations.

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- MABEOSZ, Magyar Belyege Monografiája, IV, Budapest 1971.
 Ban, Bela Magyar Belyege Adattara, Budapest 1942.
 Pesti Hirlap, July 5, 1918. (Budapest newspaper)
 Aero Fila 67 (Air mail exhibition catalog)

The financial side of stamp collecting has been in the news lately. Many of us have received letters from so-called investment advisors offering "instant wealth" if only their stamp portfolios are acquired. Though some of philately's leading spokesmen have attacked these financial whiz kids and their pie in the sky promises, I think there is another answer. I feel that the good sense and native intelligence of most collectors will prevent them from being sucked in with such grandiose schemes. The established professionals in philately should be relied upon for investment ideas, based on their intimate knowledge of the stamp market.

— P. S.

The Editor Says . . .

In the October 4, 1927 issue of "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News" on page 512 there is a somewhat esoteric discussion by Thatcher R. Kimball about the evolution of a new philatelic byway, aero-philosemy. The Reverend Kimball may be remembered by some of the old-timers of the defunct Aero Philatelic Society of America, precursor to the **American Air Mail Society**. He was first vice president and held membership number 11 in that former organization.

Kimball indicates that aero-philosemy, a name coined by a pioneer collector, the Hon. G. G. Duffy of Dublin, Ireland, means love of the seals of the air. He says further:

Because it is not the stamp that matters so much as the cancellations or cachets placed on the envelope to mark the time and place of the beginning and end of the flight and its nature. For these are the important and vital markings and guarantee that the cover has been really carried by aeroplane and dirigible. For example, if a cover from New York is cancelled July 1 at its departure from the post office and has a receiving cancellation July 3 marked San Francisco, it must obviously have been carried by aeroplane, as by the regular mail route or by no other way could it have traversed that distance in such a short time. Therefore, since so much depends on these cancellations and cachets or seals, the name aero-philosemy seems much more fitting than aero-philately.

Putting it in the context of diverse interests, Kimball states that aero-philosemy is air cover collecting as opposed to aero-philately which describes "the collecting of special air stamps issued officially by various countries, and unofficially or semi-officially by aero organizations and promoters of flights."

From this vantage point, more than 50 years later, it will be noted that the name aero-philosemy to describe air mail cover collecting must have died aborning. Other than in the article mentioned above, I have never seen that term used to describe air cover collecting. In today's parlance, aero-philately encompasses both facets of air mail collecting, stamps as well as covers.

In his article, Kimball quotes an early poet, Freneau, who penned these words in 1790:

Come grant me a patent for making balloons —
 For I find that the time is approaching — the day
 When horses shall fail and horsemen decay.
 Post-riders, at present (called Centaurs of old),
 Who brave all the seasons, hot weather and cold,
 In future shall leave their dull ponies behind,
 And travel, like ghosts, on the wings of the wind.

Substitute airplanes for balloons and his prophecy is fulfilled.

In "Sanabria's Air Post News" for July 1939 (see No. 13, p. 6) there is an article entitled "Atlantic Flights 1919-39." Reviewing the first non-stop

airplane flight across the Atlantic Ocean by Capt. John Alcock and Lt. Arthur Whitton Brown on June 14, 1919, the author states: "The very recent Clipper trips [New York to Portugal, 1939] show the progress which has been made in trans-Atlantic flying and there are many who believe that the flying of 1959 will eclipse the flying of today, just as today's flying eclipses the 1919 attempts." How prophetic! One can imagine Mr. Sanabria's wonderment, were he alive today, at the strides that aviation has made, not only in the twenty-year period ended in 1959 he envisioned, but also in the span of years since that date. The time schedule across the Atlantic of the somewhat conventional Concorde would stagger his imagination just as it has our own. And space shuttles were not even on the planning boards 40 years ago.

— P. S.

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