1932 Graf Zeppelin Mail Service

The Graf Zeppelin South America flights of 1932 created the first scheduled mail and passenger service across the Atlantic Ocean which went entirely by air.

OPENING OF COMMERCIAL AIRMAIL SERVICE

New Procedures - In March 1932 German Post Office zeppelin mail procedures were changed to facilitate commercial use of the new airmail service to South America.

Published Airmail Schedule - Departures of the first four zeppelin flights between Friedrichshafen and Recife were published in a Post Office directive dated 26 February.

Lower Postal Rates - The zeppelin transatlantic airmail fees were reduced to RM 1.25 per 5 grams to Brazil or 1.50 per 5 grams beyond Brazil, plus surface postage and other fees.

Easier Mailing - Zeppelin mail to South America could now be mailed anywhere in Germany, instead of being forwarded under cover to Friedrichshafen or Berlin - Special services, such as express delivery, pneumatic mail, and streetcar mail could also be used.

Foreign Acceptances - New agreements with the German Post Office now allowed more than 25 nations in Europe to use the new commercial zeppelin service to South America.

FIRST 1932 OUTBOUND FLIGHT

	Friedr.	Recife
Zeppelin	21 Mar	23 Mar

Posted in Hamburg Streetcar Mailbox - Mailboxes placed on Hamburg streetcars allowed mail to be posted for rapid delivery within the city for an extra fee - Note minutes in Eilbriefe (express) postmark - this type of streetcar mailbox postmark was in use 1927-34 - Postage RM 1.25 airmail, .25 surface, .05 fee for Hamburg streetcar.

	Friedr.	Recife
Zeppelin	21 Mar	23 Mar

Reduced Rates for Special Classes of Mail

Special classes of mail were allowed on zeppelin flights when the regular service began in 1932 - Business papers, samples without value, mixed sendings, small packets, and printed matter were carried at reduced airmail and surface rates.

Reduced Rates for Business Papers (Geschäftspapiere) - Business mail sent between branches of an international electronics company - Boxed marking reads "Contents not subject to customs! Documents!" - Weight 30 grams - Postage RM 3.55 = 3.00 airmail (2 x 1.50 per 25 grams beyond Brazil), .25 minimum surface for business papers, .30 registration - Letter mail postage would have been RM 9.70.

Early Meter Franking for Zeppelin Mail - Not officially sanctioned in the German Postal Bulletin until the third flight of 1932, but a few items from earlier flights are known.

1932 Graf Zeppelin Mail Service
Opening of Commercial Service

FIRST 1932 OUTBOUND FLIGHT

Zeppelin	Freidr.	Recife.
	21 Mar	23 Mar

Radio Ocean Letter - Wireless message from passing steamer printed to create an on-board letter - A standard procedure for German ship mail here adapted for airship use - Postage RM 1.50 airmail beyond Brazil, .25 surface.

FIRST 1932 RETURN FLIGHT

Zeppelin	Recife	Friedr.
	25 Mar	29 Mar

Passenger Mail to Egypt
Card sending good wishes to a business firm in Alexandria - Postage 1.25 zeppelin airmail, .15 surface card.

Written and posted on the outbound flight but held for processing on the return flight in order to carry the card back to Europe.

Sent by surface from Germany to Egypt.

First Foreign Acceptances for Commercial Service - International airmail agreements between the German Post Office and European postal administrations allowed postal patrons in other nations to prepay the zeppelin postage in the country of origin.

Posted in Belgium - Business mail from Antwerp - Postage 12.50 francs per 5 grams airmail, 1.75 surface.

Netherlands Meter Franking - Reduced Rates for Samples without Value - Wrapper for parcel weighing 75 to 100 grams - Postage 1.05 gulden = 1.00 per 25 grams airmail beyond Brazil, .05 per 50 grams surface.

	Rio	Recife	Friedr.
Condor	24 Mar	25 Mar	
Zeppelin		25 Mar	29 Mar

First Commercial Return Flight. - The German-financed Condor airline flew zeppelin airmail from cities in South America to the zeppelin base at Recife - After a layover of two days, the zeppelin returned to Germany carrying commercial mail for Europe.

From the Brazilian Office of a German Business Firm - Violet cachet and direction marking show both the connecting flight by Condor flying boats and the transatlantic flight by zeppelin - Postage 3$500 airmail, 700 surface.

Envelope with All-over Advertizing

From a company selling guarana, an herbal pain reliever for flu and colds.

Postage 3$500 zeppelin airmail, 700 surface.

1932 SCHEDULE AND ROUTES

Schedule - Nine flights to South America and back left Germany every other Monday in the Spring and Fall - The schedules were published in advance in the German Postal Bulletin.

Spring departures	*Autumn departures*
1. 20 March	5. 29 August
2. 5 April	6. 12 September
3. 17 April	7. 26 September
4. 2 May	8. 9 October
	9. 24 October

Zeppelin Mail Route - The Graf Zeppelin flew mail between Friedrichshafen and Recife, on the eastern tip of Brazil - Even when the zeppelin continued on to carry passengers to Rio, mail was exchanged at Recife.

Deutsche Lufthansa (DLH) Flights in Europe - Specially scheduled connecting flights carried mail between Berlin and the zeppelin base at Friedrichshafen - On outbound flights, only late postings and some foreign mail received this special handling.

Condor Flights in South America - Flying boats of Condor airline flew mail between Recife and the major cities along the coast as far as Buenos Aires.

Quantities of Mail - About 20,000 letters per crossing.

	Friedr.	Recife	B. Aires
Zeppelin	5 Apr	7 Apr	
Condor		7 Apr	9 Apr

SECOND 1932 OUTBOUND FLIGHT

Green zeppelin cachet

Netherlands Meter Franking - By zeppelin to Recife then by Condor flying boats to Buenos Aires - Postage 1.12½ gulden = 1.00 airmail beyond Brazil, .12½ surface.

THIRD 1932 OUTBOUND FLIGHT

	Fried.	Recife	Montevideo
Zeppelin	18 Apr	20 Apr	
Condor		20 Apr	21 Apr

Brown zeppelin cachet

Belgium - Personal Letter to Uruguay - By rail to the zeppelin base at Friedrichshafen - Postage 14.25 francs = 12.50 airmail, 1.75 surface.

	Recife	Friedr.	Berlin
Zeppelin	22 Apr	27 Apr	
DLH		27 Apr	27 Apr

THIRD 1932 RETURN FLIGHT

Red Berlin airmail arrival marking

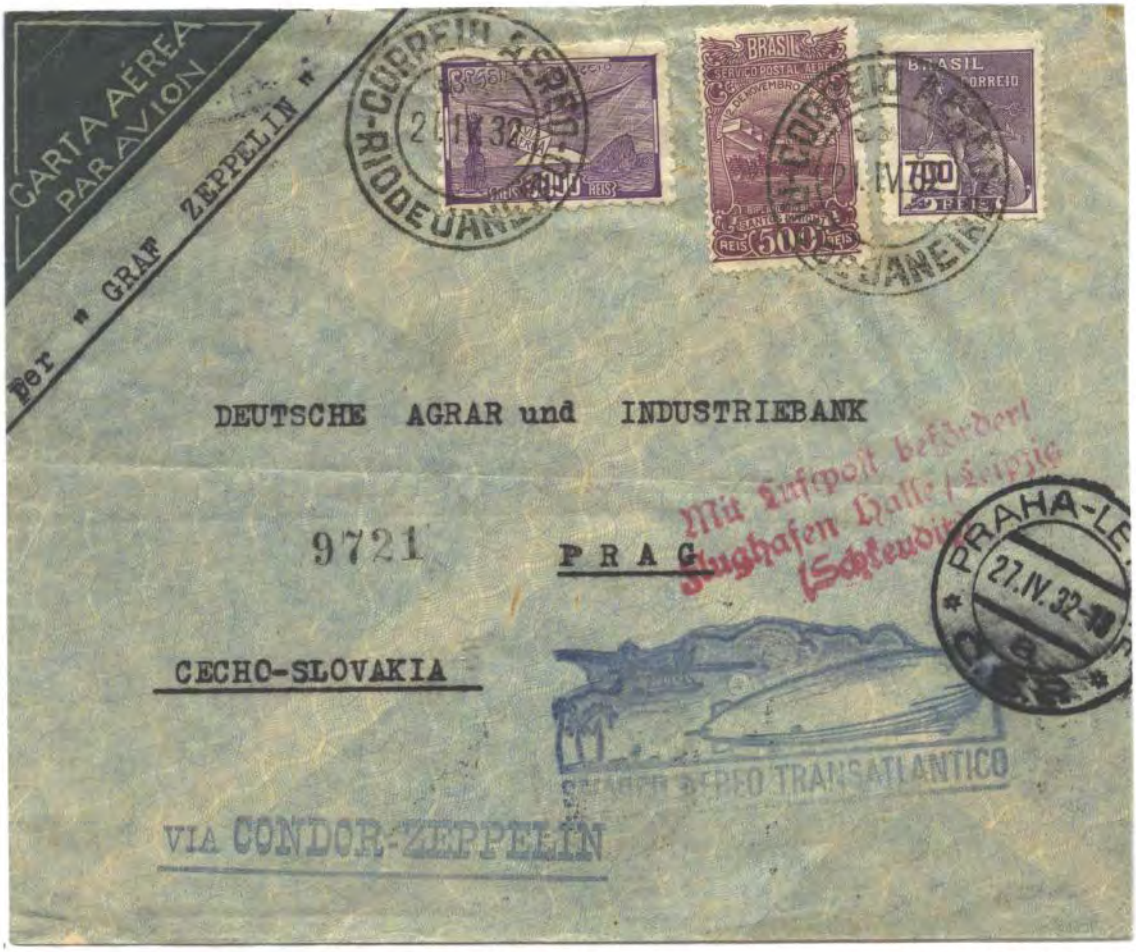
for Deutsche Luft Hansa connecting flight

Passenger Mail to China - Personal message to Shanghai, forwarded to Canton - Flown by DLH Friedrichshafen to Berlin then sent by surface to China - Postage RM 1.25 airmail, .15 surface card.

THIRD 1932 RETURN FLIGHT

	Rio	Recife	Friedr.
Condor	21 Apr	22 Apr	
Zeppelin		22 Apr	27 Apr

Telegraph office transit postmark on back

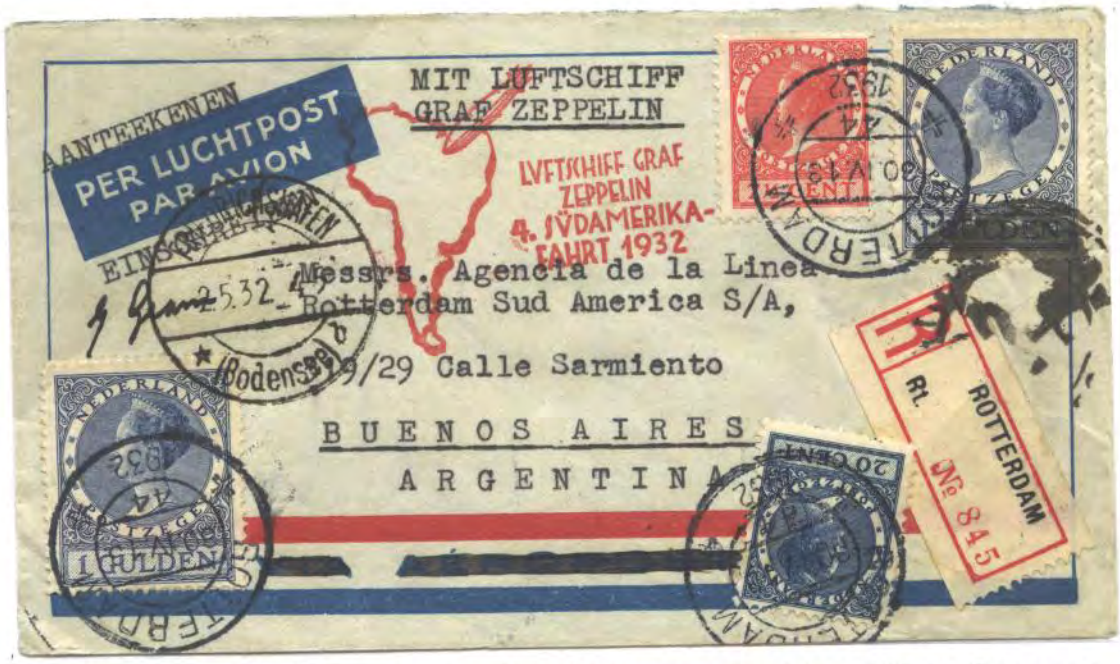


Delivered by Pneumatic Mail within Prague - Black sequence number "9721" and telegraph office transit postmark show delivery by pneumatic tube to speed delivery of arriving airmail without charge - Brazilian postage 3$500 airmail, 700 surface.

Bolivia - From a professor to his family in Germany - No special markings other than Friedrichshafen back stamp - Postage 1.50 boliviano airmail, .25 surface.

FOURTH 1932 OUTBOUND FLIGHT

	Friedr.	Recife	B. Aires
Zeppelin	2 May	5 May	
Condor		5 May	7 May



Netherlands - Weight 9 grams - Postage 2.00 gulden airmail (2 x 1.00 per five grams beyond Brazil), .10 registration, .12½ surface.

Berlin Connecting Flight

	Berlin	Friedr.	Recife
DLH	2 May	2 May	
Zeppelin		2 May	5 May

DLH connecting flight from Berlin

Great Britain - Flown Croydon to Berlin and then sent on the Deutsche Lufthansa connecting flight to Friedrichshafen - Postage 3s 6d per half ounce airmail to Brazil.

FOURTH 1932 RETURN FLIGHT

	Rio	Recife	Friedr.
Condor	5 May	6 May	
Zeppelin		6 May	10 May

Improper Use of Zeppelin Cachet to Cancel Stamps - A procedural error on mail sent from the small city of Theophilo Ottoni - Postage 3$500 airmail, 700 surface.

Red crayon direction "Por Graf Zeppelin" by the postal clerk

Santiago zeppelin cachet

Chile - Business Letter to Germany - Flown by PANAGRA to Buenos Aires and by Condor to Recife - Postage 5.00 pesos airmail, .50 surface.

	Friedr.	Recife	Rio
Zeppelin	29 Aug	1 Sep	
Condor		1 Sep	2 Sep

France - From Paris to a Rio Business Firm - French use of the zeppelin airmail service is unusual, since the French normally preferred to use their own nation's Aéropostale service to South America - Postage 10.00 Franc = 8.50 airmail, 1.50 surface.

Police Censor during 1932 Revolution in Brazil - Opened by Brazilian Federal Police in transit from Recife to the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, during an uprising in Sao Paulo from July to September 1932 - Postage 3s 6d airmail to Brazil.

FIFTH 1932 RETURN FLIGHT

	Recife	Friedr.	Berlin
Zeppelin	3 Sep	7 Sep	
DLH		7 Sep	7 Sep

Backstamp from receiving office 65

Delivered by Pneumatic Mail within Berlin - Red crayon destination office "65" and minutes in postmarks show transport by pneumatic tubes to speed delivery of arriving airmail within the city - Postage 1.80 pesos (10 x .18 per gram) airmail, .15 surface.

Meter Franking Plus Stamps - Airmail stamps pay 7$000 double airmail fee, meter pays 700 surface - In Brazil airmail fees had to be paid with airmail stamps.

SIXTH 1932 OUTBOUND FLIGHT

	Friedr.	Recife	Montevideo
Zeppelin	12 Sep	15 Sep	
Condor		15 Sep	17 Sep

Norway - To the Captain of a Norwegian Ship in Montevideo - Red marking for the connecting flight from Berlin - Postage Kr. 2.00 airmail, .30 surface.

FLOWN ON TWO ZEPPELIN FLIGHTS

Passenger Mail from a Previous Flight - Written and dated on the fifth return flight to Europe and held on board for delivery to Brazil by the sixth outbound flight - Postage RM 1.25 airmail, .15 surface card.

	Recife.	Friedr.
5th flight	3 Sep	7 Sep

Fifth return flight:
Written and dated 6 Sep.

	Friedr.	Recife
6th flight	12 Sep	15 Sep

Sixth outbound flight:
Flown to Brazil and postmarked on board 14 Sep.

SIXTH 1932 OUTBOUND FLIGHT

	Stuttgart	Friedr.	Recife
DLH	12 Sep	12 Sep	
Zeppelin		12 Sep	15 Sep

Red cachet for connecting flight from Stuttgart

Connecting Flight from Stuttgart to Friedrichshafen - Posted in Stettin and sent by rail to Stuttgart, where it was put aboard the connecting flight to reach Friedrichshafen before the zeppelin departure - Postage RM 1.25 airmail, .15 surface postcard.

SIXTH 1932 RETURN FLIGHT

	Recife	Friedr.	Vienna
Zeppelin	18 Sep	21 Sep	
Airmail		21 Sep	22 Sep

Telegraph Office Backstamp

Destination Office 40

Delivered by Pneumatic Mail within Vienna - Blue crayon destination office number "40", telegraph office transit postmark, and minutes in postmark times show delivery by pneumatic tube to speed delivery of arriving airmail to outlying districts of the city - Brazilian postage 3$500 airmail, 700 surface.

SEVENTH 1932 OUTBOUND FLIGHT

	Friedr.	Recife	B. Aires
Zeppelin	26 Sep	29 Sep	
Condor		29 Sep	1 Oct

Special Classes of Mail

The zeppelin carried non-letter mail, including printed matter, samples, and commercial papers at reduced rates.

Shipping Documents from the Netherlands - Special airmail rate for commercial papers of 1.00 gulden per 25 grams beyond Brazil - Postage for 200 grams was 8.00 gulden airmail, .12½ surface, and .15 registration.

Cruiser Karlsruhe

Brazilian zeppelin cachet

Mail from German Navy Light Cruiser Karlsruhe - The Graf Zeppelin flew crew mail from this German Navy ship as a favor after her crew assisted the airship during a storm - Navy postmark DMSP Nr. 28, 29 September 1932.

Postage 12 pfennig German domestic surface letter rate for Navy ship mail, with no airmail fee charged.

EIGHTH 1932 RETURN FLIGHT

	São Paulo	Recife	Friedr.
Condor	15 Oct	16 Oct	
Zeppelin		16 Oct	19 Oct

Old Cachet Used during Revolution - The special cachet for the return flight was not available at São Paulo because of an uprising, so a cachet remaining from the Spring of 1932 was used instead.

Radio Ocean Letter - Wireless message from south-bound steamer sends greetings to fellow workers in Zürich - Printed during north-bound airship flight to create on-board letter - Postage RM 1.25 airmail, .25 surface.

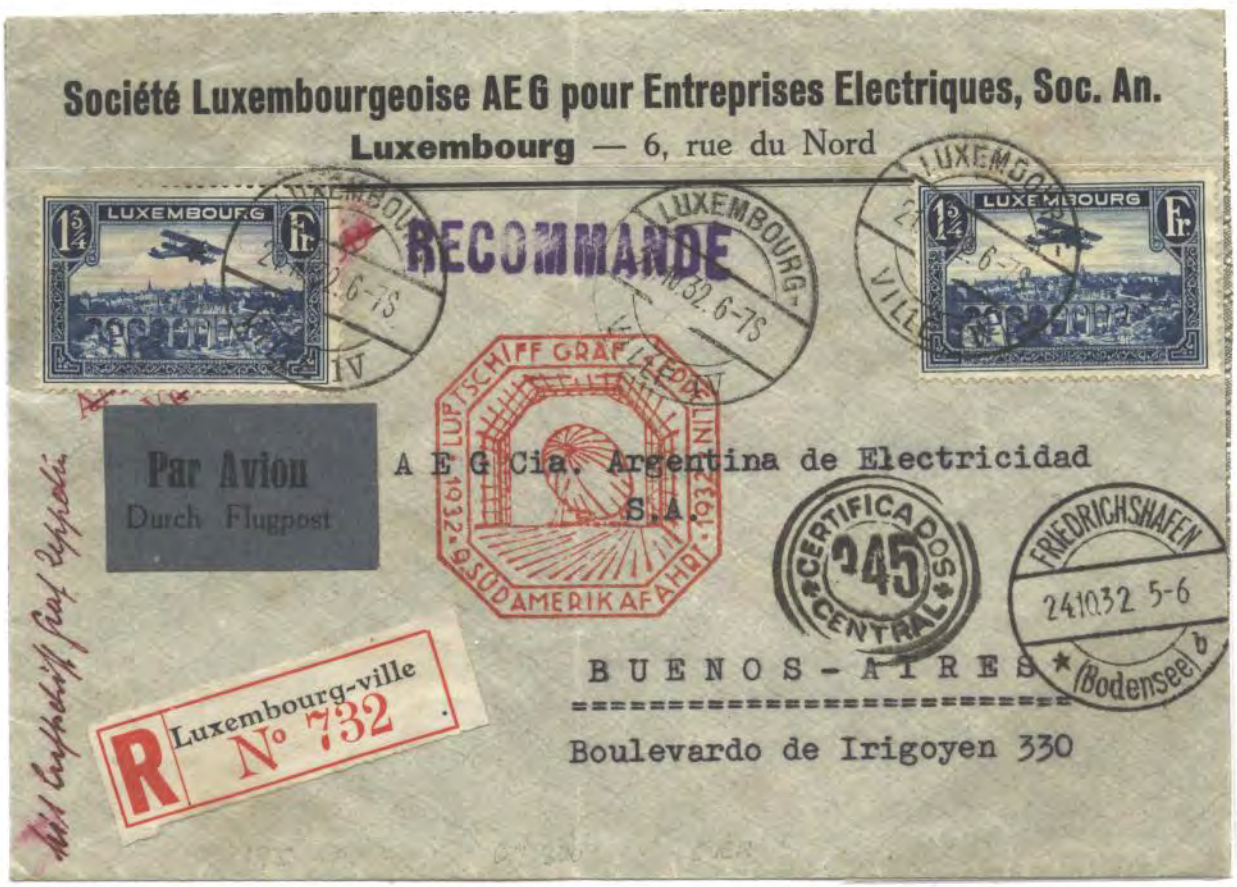
	São Paulo	Recife	Friedr.
Condor	15 Oct	16 Oct	
Zeppelin		16 Oct	19 Oct

Old Cachet Used during Revolution - The special cachet for the return flight was not available at São Paulo because of an uprising, so a cachet remaining from the Spring of 1932 was used instead.

Business Letter from Paraguay - Zeppelin postage in Paraguay was accounted for separately and was paid using special stamps - In 1932 the zeppelin fees were paid using triangular stamps, which are here found on a commercial cover - Postage 20.00 peso airmail, 2.50 surface on back.

	Friedr.	Recife	B. Aires
Zeppelin	24 Oct	27 Oct	
Condor		27 Oct	29 Oct

Photocopy of reverse



Business Letter from Luxembourg - Mixed Franking with German Stamps - The contract between Luxembourg and the German Post Office did not provide for the payment of zeppelin airmail fees with Luxembourg stamps.

Postage RM 3.00 airmail (2 x 1.50 per five grams beyond Brazil) paid in German stamps, 1.75 franc registration, 1.75 franc surface paid in Luxembourg stamps.

	Friedr.	Recife
Zeppelin	24 Oct	27 Oct

Radio Ocean Letter - Wireless message from passing steamer printed to create an on-board letter - A standard procedure for German ship mail is here adapted for airship use - Postage RM 1.50 airmail beyond Brazil, .25 surface.

	Friedr.	Recife	Montevideo
Zeppelin	24 Oct	27 Oct	
Condor		27 Oct	29 Oct

Purple Uruguayan cachet used as receiving mark

Passenger Mail to Uruguay - Postage RM 1.50 airmail beyond Brazil, .15 surface card.

NINTH 1932 RETURN FLIGHT

	B. Aires	Recife	
Condor	28 Oct	30 Oct	
Zeppelin		30 Oct	3 Nov

Argentina - Multiple Weight - Postage 3.23 pesos = 4 x .72 airmail, .15 surface, .20 registration.