

THE TYPES AND USES OF THE INTERNATIONAL "AIR-MAIL SAVES TIME" SLOGAN CANCEL – 1924 to 1941

Following the first World War, the Post Office Department began efforts to develop an airmail service. After experimental flights were made, a significant milestone was reached with on July 1, 1924, with regularly scheduled flights on the transcontinental airmail route stretching from New York City to San Francisco.

The new airmail service faced many challenges. Planes often crashed, there was confusion in cities not on the new route as to rates and schedules, trains still carried the mail quickly and efficiently, and the added expense was difficult for most users to justify. The Post Office Department not only had to overcome these problems, but in an era when governmental advertising was virtually unknown and almost universally opposed, promoting the new service was a serious problem.

The International Postal Supply Company seized on this situation to promote its cancelling machines, and rushed a new slogan cancel to post offices on the transcontinental route. The 'AIR MAIL SAVES TIME' cancel was a slogan designed to promote the new service. It was apparently provided without cost to the postmasters of the cities on the new route.

Purposes

This exhibit illustrates and describes every type of the International biplane cancellation using the slogan "AIR-MAIL SAVES TIME". The exhibit shows, for the first time anywhere, the many re-cuttings of these cancels. It also demonstrates that, rather than being just another period slogan cancel, the slogan was designed and used specifically to promote use of the new airmail service. Neither the promotional purpose nor the re-cuttings have been previously described.

Organization and Presentation

The 32 types illustrated in this exhibit, used in 16 cities, are numbered in chronological sequence based on their first reported uses. The re-cuttings of these types are grouped together with the original

type for clarity and to help illustrate the promotional use of these cancels and the movement of the cancels between machines, post offices and cities.

The identifying characteristics of each type are illustrated by scanned images. The designs of the planes as well as the lettering in the slogan clearly identify each type, and the exhibit pages illustrate those differences. Identification of the re-cuttings is made by examining the width and depth of the lines and also occasionally resulted in noticeable alterations to the design.

The exhibit demonstrates the close correlation between the introduction of the early types and re-cuttings and a significant milestone in the development of the new airmail service. The early cancels were only used in cities where significant public use of the service was possible, and in the absence of direct Post Office Department advertising, they were designed to generate public awareness of the advantages of using airmail.

The exhibit is divided into these sections:

- Part 1 Transcontinental Airmail Service – 1924-5
- Part 2 Contract Airmail Service – 1926-7
- Part 3 5c Flat Rate and Foreign Airmail – 1928-30
- Part 4 Special Event Covers – 1931-41

Highlights

- Types 16 and 25 are new discoveries and have never been previously described.
- The re-cuttings of original engraved cancels have not previously been described or illustrated. 56 different re-cuttings are included here.
- No philatelic literature or exhibits have, to my knowledge, previously described the correlation between this slogan cancel and major developments in the airmail service of the time.

Challenge

A major challenge has been to describe and organize these cancels by type and usage in relation to developments in the airmail service. The difficulty in assembling the 89 varieties in this exhibit has, contrary to reasonable assumption, been difficult and taken 40 years of effort. Dealers do not stock these as a separate category, clear cancels

are the exception, and covers used for common postal purposes were not generally saved. This increases the challenge because airmail was a special service and not machine cancelled until the 1930's, and examples corresponding with airmail developments are very elusive.

Research

There were limited resources available for this exhibit. The Machine Cancel Society has published the only materials dealing with the International machine cancel. Those materials focused on the machines using the cancel and the Society has never published an article defining each type. The only other significant resource for the types was Vandenboom's article published by *Linn's* with hand drawn images of the different types (see Table of Types). I was unable to find any articles describing the relationship between the slogan cancels and their use for promoting the new airmail service. The limited information available about the official effort to promote the airmail service is found in the 1924-5 Monthly Supplements to the United States Official Postal Guide.

References

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3. An Anthology of Machine Postal Markings, Vol. 6 – Aero-Marcophilately, A.J. Savakis, ed., Machine Cancel Society (2001).
4. Washington, Thomas., Air-Mail Saves Time; Machine Cancel Forum; Jan. 1982, p. 1321-29. drawing of the date dial on page 2].
5. The Dworak Specialized Catalogue of U.S. Air Mail Covers, Charles E. Jandrue, Jr., ed.; Gossip Printery, 1930 [for maps of C.A.M Routes].
6. Vandenboom, Vi; "Airmail slogan cancels classify U.S. biplane and monoplane types"; *Linn's Stamp News*, March 5, 1979; p.94.
7. Morris, Reg, The International Postal Supply Company of New York 1882-1905; Machine Cancel Society, 1982 [for patent drawing of postmarking die on page 2].
8. Machine Cancel Forum, Vol 108, p. 1591 (1983) [International Biplane Special Events]

Table of Types

Type	Date	Traditional Type Number (Vandenboom)	City
1	1924	12	Chicago
2	1924	5B	Chicago
3	1924	5D	Chicago
4	1924	4	Chicago
5	1924	3	New York
6	1924	2	New York
7	1924	5A	New York
8	1924	5Da	San Francisco
9	1924	5Da	San Francisco
10	1924	5D	New York
11	1924	5A	New York
12	1926	7	Miami
13	1926	9A	Pittsburgh
14	1926	9Ba	Cleveland
15	1926	9B	St. Louis
16	1926	--	St. Louis
17	1928	16A	Cincinnati
18	1928	19	Houston
19	1928	6	Cleveland
20	1928	14	Pensacola
21	1928	12A	Washington, DC
22	1928	18	Washington, DC
23	1928	16B	St. Louis
24	1928	20	Washington, DC
25	1928	--	Philadelphia
26	1928	16	Miami
27	1929	17	Philadelphia
28	1929	10	Detroit
29	1929	15	St. Louis
30	1931	8	Grand Forks
31	1932	11	Washington, DC
32	1932	11A	Baton Rouge