



# PHILATELIC BULLETIN

Sarasota Philatelic Club

## Unusual Auxiliary Markings

By Vincent Centonze

I recently came across two airmail covers with auxiliary markings that I had never previously seen. Figure 1 shows the first cover, from Chicago, IL, to Stockholm, Sweden. It is addressed to "A/B Svenska Handelsbanken." This is a large Nordic bank headquartered in Stockholm with many international operations. The cover is franked with a 5¢ James Monroe stamp from the 1938 Presidential Issue (Scott 810) and a 25¢ China Clipper airmail stamp of the series of 1935 (Scott C20). The stamps are canceled with a Chicago, IL, "OLD P.O. ANNEX" duplex handstamp dated August 8, 1940. The franking correctly paid the 30¢ per half-ounce trans-Atlantic airmail rate from U.S. to Europe. The rate was in effect from April 38, 1939, through September 30, 1946. The cover most likely traveled via Foreign Air Mail (FAM) route 18, which in the summer took a northerly route from New York, through Shediac, New Brunswick, Botwood, Nova Scotia, and Foynes, Ireland to Southampton, England. The cover was sent during the height of the Battle of Britain; therefore, from the UK, it probably traveled via surface transportation to Sweden. The cover contains a gray TRANS-ATLANTIC AIR MAIL straight-line handstamp along with another unusual gray straight-line marking which reads, "Departmental Ruling #2 Complied With" (quotation marks included in the handstamp). Figure 2 shows a cropped and horizontal close-up image of the marking.

2026

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Figure 1. August 8, 1940, transatlantic airmail cover from Chicago, IL, to Stockholm, Sweden, addressed to "A/B Svenska Handelsbanken." Cover is franked with a 5¢ Presidential Issue of 1938 and a 25¢ China Clipper airmail stamp of the series of 1935 (Scott C20). The cover bears an interesting and unusual gray straight-line handstamp "Departmental Ruling #2 Complied With".

## Stamp Quiz



**Congratulations to Bob Inderbitzen, who correctly guessed last month's**

**stamp quiz. The stamp is the redrawn Capital of Asoka Pillar stamp, India Official Scott O129, issued in 1957-58, It's the 3 np chocolate. Stay tuned for next month's Stamp Quiz!**



Figure 2. Cropped and horizontally straightened image of TRANS-ATLANTIC AIR MAIL and the "Departmental Ruling #2 Complied With" handstamp.

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## The Prez Sez ...

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Thanks to all club members who volunteered at the Stamp Show this past weekend, especially Frank Blum and Babs Noah who together kept everybody organized!

Feedback about the new venue was generally positive, with most folks coping with the crowded aisles in a friendly fashion. Personally I thought we could have done with less windy weather.

Please go the show website to see lots more pictures!



It's time to pay your 2026 dues—\$15—\$20 or more makes you a booster—send to the address at the bottom of the next page or bring to a meeting.

Our next meeting will be at the Gulfgate Library on Monday February 2nd.—this will be show and tell with preference for items acquired at the show! Pat

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## Unusual Auxiliary Markings (cont.)

Figure 3 shows the second airmail cover from New York, NY, to Stockholm, also sent on August 8, 1940, to the same addressee as the first cover. It is franked with a Pitney Bowes Type GA2 meter imprint correctly paying the 30¢ per half-ounce trans-Atlantic airmail rate. It certainly traveled on the same northerly FAM 18 route. This cover contains a single-line magenta TRANSATLANTIC AIR MAIL handstamp, and also bears a two-line dark magenta handstamp which reads, DEPT'S. RULING NO. 2 / COMPLIED WITH. Figure 4 shows a close-up, cropped and horizontally straightened image of the marking.

Here are two covers from different cities, sent to the same bank recipient, both of which have markings to the effect that they 'complied with the Department's ruling number 2.' What was ruling number 2 and why did these covers indicate compliance? The answer can be found in the February 13, 1940, edition of *The Postal Bulletin*. In a notice issued on February 9, 1940, entitled, "SHIPMENT OF ARTICLES OR MATERIALS BY MAIL UNDER THE NEUTRALITY ACT OF 1939, TO CERTAIN FOREIGN COUNTRIES," the Second Assistant Postmaster General provided the following guidance to postmasters:

*Postmasters may... accept for mailing to all destinations in the regular mails, checks, drafts, securities, documents, and other evidences of indebtedness or interest, which at the time of mailing require an endorsement or signature of a definite person for transfer or are collectible only by a definite person or his agent. This may be identified as "Dept. Ruling No. 2." For the purpose of administration mailing postmasters shall require senders of such mail articles to certify on the address side of the cover "Dept. Ruling No. 2 Complied With," in order that the articles may not be held for inquiry by the dispatching exchange office.*

Figure 5 shows the full paragraphed cropped and reproduced from *The Postal Bulletin*. It is not known whether the fact that the cover was addressed to a specific bank satisfied the Post Office's requirement that the item was "collectible only by a definite person or his agent." It is possible that the sender separately provided more specifics to the Post Office. I suspect that the handstamp was applied by the Post Office and was not a private handstamp used by the sender; however, I have not seen examples of such auxiliary markings listed for either the New York or Chicago Post Offices. Nevertheless, this handstamp was proof that the senders followed the rules; hence, the mail was approved and sent on by the postal authorities.

This is one of the many wonderful things about philately, that no matter how long we have been collecting, we always learn something new. If you have examples of the "Department's Ruling No. 2" markings or have further information about them, please let me know at: [centonzevincent@gmail.com](mailto:centonzevincent@gmail.com). Happy Collecting!

### References

*American Airmail Catalogue, 6th ed., Volume 3*, Mineola, NY: American Airmail Society, 2004.

Second Assistant Postmaster General, "SHIPMENT OF ARTICLES OR MATERIALS BY MAIL UNDER THE NEUTRALITY ACT OF 1939, TO CERTAIN FOREIGN COUNTRIES", *The Postal Bulletin*, Vol. 61, No. 17881, Washington, DC: Post Office Department, Tuesday, February 13, 1940.

Wawrukiewicz, Anthony S., and Beecher, Henry W., *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, Portland, OR: CAMA Publishing Company, 1996.

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## Unusual Auxiliary Markings (cont.)



Figure 3. August 8, 1940, transatlantic airmail cover from New York, NY, to Stockholm, Sweden. The over bears a two-line dark magenta handstamp, DEPT'S. RULING NO. 2 / COMPLIED WITH.



Figure 4. Cropped and straightened image of the DEPT'S. RULING NO. 2 / COMPLIED WITH handstamp.

2. Postmasters may, without requiring the declaration of transfer of title, accept for mailing to all destinations in the regular mails, checks, drafts, securities, documents, and other evidences of indebtedness or interest, which at the time of mailing require an endorsement or signature of a definite person for transfer or are collectible only by a definite person or his agent. This may be identified as "Dept. Ruling No. 2." For the purpose of administration mailing postmasters shall require senders of such mail articles to certify on the address side of the cover "Dept. Ruling No. 2 Complied With," in order that the articles may not be held for inquiry by the dispatching exchange office.

Figure 5. Second Assistant Postmaster General's guidance to postmasters regarding "Dept. Ruling No. 2," as it appeared in the February 13, 1940, edition of *The Postal Bulletin*.

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