

PHILATELIC BULLETIN



Sarasota Philatelic Club

2025

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Stamp Quiz



Congratulations to Ken Martin for correctly identifying the stamp in last month's Stamp Quiz. It is a Jamaica, 1 penny carmine definitive of 1906

(Scott 59). The coat of arms is the same as used in the definitive issue of 1903, but the rest of the design is different and this one is printed in a single color. Stay tuned for next month's Stamp Quiz.



Returning First Flight & Souvenir Covers to Senders — Part 1

By Vincent Centonze

Thanks largely to collectors, there is ample record of first flights, airport dedications, and other special and commemorative events involving airmail. The vast majority of such items are philatelic in origin. Although there are those who disdain items that were created purely for philatelic reasons, it must be acknowledged that in the realm of aerophilately, reliance upon

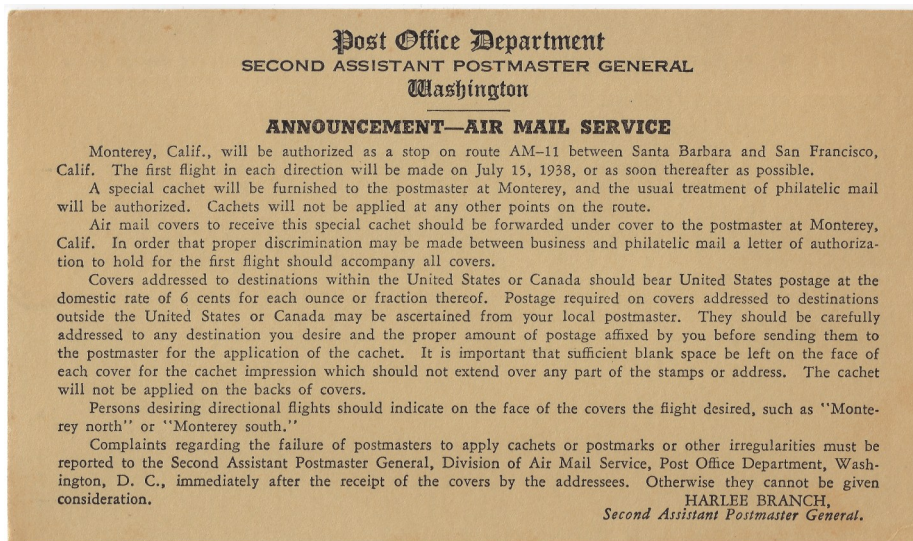


Figure 1. Post Office announcement of a first flight. The notification contains instructions on how collectors should prepare their covers.

commercial mail would have left a dearth of material to record many airmail events. Certain aspects of aerophilately that are often overlooked or taken for granted include the ways in which philatelic items were returned to the collectors who created them. Philatelists may admire a first flight cover from 1935 that traveled from Eldoret to Njoro, Kenya, all in care of some collector named John Q. Smith from a Podunk town in the U.S., but we rarely stop and wonder how Mr. Smith was able to mail the cover in Eldoret and retrieve it in Njoro. Surely old Mr. Smith didn't travel to Africa in January 1935 to mail his covers, then drive to every stop along the air route to retrieve them. So how exactly were they sent and retrieved? An article in last month's newsletter discussed how a post card collectors club was likely involved in the return of souvenir items to the senders. This month, we present the first of a two-part article which delves deeper into other ways collectors may have retrieved their prized souvenirs.

In the U.S., post offices sent first flight notifications on cards or enclosures to collectors. They also had announcements posted on the walls or bulletin boards. To receive a first flight cachet, collectors were told to forward air mail covers under additional cover to the post office from which they wished to receive a special cachet. They were told to include a letter to the postmaster requesting to hold the cover for the respective first flight. Collectors might send such covers to each post office along the route to receive the full gamut of cachets. Figure 1 shows one such Post Office announcement which contains instruction on how collectors should submit their first flight covers for proper servicing and retrieval. The message reads as follows:

Continued on next page



The Prez Sez ...

Dear Club members -

At the last Club meeting Jim Mazepa favored us with comments about his experience at attending the FIP Show in Uruguay and the adventures his exhibit endured in getting back to him.

The program was supposed to be Valery Palubok discussing some aspects of one of his collecting interests—however there was a problem is liberating his album from the trunk of his car!!

Fortunately Jim Mazepa had brought a backup—a topic that he has recently been pursuing—that of mail into and out of Poland in the first few months of World War II—and the routes, censors and markings denoting mail items held for the “duration”. I know I always am fascinated when history and postal history intertwine!

Here’s hoping Valery can get his album freed and we will enjoy a talk from him. In any case I need all of you to

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday April 1st at 6:30

Unitarian Universalist Church

think about bringing a few items to share with the group—contact me at sns-exhibits@comcast.net and let me know.

Pat

Returning First Flight & Souvenir Covers to Senders — Part 1 (cont.)

Monterey, Calif., will be authorized as a stop on route AM-11 between Santa Barbara and San Francisco, Calif. The first flight in each direction will be made on July 15, 1938, or as soon thereafter as possible.

Further on, the announcement reads:

Persons desiring directional flights should indicate on the face of the cover the flight desired, such as “Monterey north” or “Monterey south.”

Figure 2 shows an AM-11 first flight cover from Monterey. The flight occurred on 7/20/38, and not 7/15/38, albeit the post office announcement didn’t commit to 7/15/38 and added “*or as soon thereafter as possible.*” The cover is franked with Scott C23 paying the correct 6¢ per ounce first-class domestic airmail rate.

Sometimes, when collectors wanted to have souvenir covers returned to them from first flight destinations, they might address the covers to individuals living at destinations on the air route along with a letter graciously asking them to return their souvenir mail. Figure 3 shows such an example. It is a registered air-mail cover from El Malakanazu, Egypt, sent by Flight Lieutenant Robert R. Greenlaw to Sir R.S.D. (Richard Sims Donkin) Rankine, British Resident, Zanzibar. The cover is dated 4/2/36. In this instance, Greenlaw sent several covers to Rankine and offered to let Rankine keep one for himself, which was probably a customary courtesy. Rankine was the British Colonial Administrator in Zanzibar from 1930-1937. There is an enclosed letter dated 4/2/36 from Greenlaw, stationed at Headquarters RAF, Villa Victoria, Cairo, to Rankine which reads as follows:



Figure 2. First flight cover for AM 11 extension including Monterey, CA, as stop between Santa Barabara and San Francisco.

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Returning First Flight & Souvenir Covers to Senders — Part 1 (cont.)

Sir, as a keen collector of First flight covers I take the liberty of addressing to you three envelopes by the first Nairobi – Dar-es-Salaam service. Will you please be so kind as to return two covers to me under cover and keep one for yourself as a souvenir of this flight. Thanking you I am yours respectfully, Robert R. Greenlaw, Flight Lieutenant, .A.F.

I get the impression that Greenlaw was a stranger to Rankine, and was therefore taking a chance; however, it is hard to believe that Rankine would have ignored the request, especially since he was the Colonial Administrator. The cover is cancelled with an EL MALAKANAZU R&P handstamp dated 4/2/36. The R&P handstamps were used to cancel both parcels and registered mail. The cover is franked with 10 millimes (m), 30m, and 40m airmail stamps from the Airplane over Giza Pyramids issue of 1933-38 (Scott C15, C17, C18; Nile Post A13, A15, A16), for a combined franking of 80m. This correctly paid the 15m per 20 gram surface rate to foreign British Empire destinations, plus 20m registration fee, plus 45m per 20 gram airmail surcharge.²

It is docketed with a notation stating that it was to be sent: "BY NAIROBI-DAR-ES-SALAAM AIR SERVICE. IMPERIAL AIRWAYS & WILSON AIR LINE. FIRST DAY SERVICE 2ND APRIL, 1936." The cover is backstamped with Cairo and Zanzibar registry handstamps.



Figure 3. First flight cover postmarked 4/2/36 for service from Nairobi to Dar-es-Salaam service.

Despite the docketed notation and the dated letter, according to John Sears' *The Airmails of Egypt*, the first day of the service to Zanzibar, transferred at Nairobi from the Imperial Airways' Cairo to Cape Town route, was 4/3/36 and not 4/2/36. At Nairobi, the mail was placed on a Wilson Air Lines flight to Mombassa, Tanga, Zanzibar, and Dar-es-Salaam. However, Sears claims that the service to Zanzibar through Nairobi was actually initiated four years earlier on 9/18/32.³ Therefore, there must have been some disruption of the service, because Sears writes that the service was *restored*, rather than established, on 4/3/36.⁴ Also, in William Colley's *The Airmails of East Africa (second edition)*, the author shows an almost identical letter from Greenlaw to an addressee in Dar-es-Salaam.⁵ Colley acknowledges that the cover is puzzling as there was no first day service on 4/2/36 and suggests that the date may refer to a 'closed' bag to Dar-es-Salaam, but it is impossible to prove if that was the case.⁶ Nevertheless, thanks to the good services of Sir Richard, Flight Lieutenant Greenlaw probably received his souvenirs back, no matter what the covers actually commemorated. It is possible that Greenlaw sent similar covers to individuals in Mombassa and Tanga so that he would have received first flight souvenir covers from each stop along the Nairobi – Dar-es-Salaam Wilson Air Lines route.

Next month, in Part 2, we'll explore some other ways collectors retrieved their first flight and souvenir covers. If you have any comments or would like to discuss your favorite first flight cover, contact me at: centonzevincent@gmail.com. Happy collecting!

References

1. Smith, Peter A.S.: *Egypt Stamps and Postal History*, James Bendon Ltd., 1999, page 515.
2. Eriksson, Sven: "Extracts from the Postal Guide of Egypt and from the U.P.U. Congress", *The Quarterly Circle (QC)*, Egypt Study Circle, Dec 2003, page 196.
3. Sears, John: *The Airmails of Egypt*, 2nd ed., John Sears, 1991, page 56.
4. Sears, page 67.
5. Colley, W: *The Airmails of East Africa to 1952*, 2nd ed., The East Africa Study Circle, 2009, page 94.
6. Colley, pages 48-49.

Collectors Club Honors Dr. Yamil Kouri Jr. With Lichtenstein Award



The Collectors Club in New York has named the newest honoree of its Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award for Distinguished Service to Philately. He is **Dr. Yamil H. Kouri Jr.** of Sarasota, Fla. The award was announced at the club's annual meeting in New York on Jan. 8, 2024.

This richly deserved honor reflects Kouri's long list of accomplishments in philatelic exhibiting, writing and organizing, as well as his tireless work in recent years to broaden the appeal and reach of the hobby by leading the organization of Boston 2026 World Expo, next year's once-a-decade international stamp show.

Kouri was a 2020 signatory of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists and winner of the American Philatelic Society's Luff Award, among numerous other awards. He is a numbered member of the Real Academia Hispánica de Filatelia, the highest honor in Spanish philately.

Born in Cuba, Kouri began collecting stamps during his childhood in Mexico and Puerto Rico, naturally focusing on the Spanish Caribbean area, particularly the history of its maritime mails. He has published over 200 articles in some 20 different philatelic journals, and his first book, *The Postal History of Spanish New Orleans*, appeared in 2004; it has since been followed by half a dozen other books and 10 specialist monographs, most recently *Mails of the 1861-1867 European Intervention in Mexico* (with Steve Walske), published in 2022. Kouri was also the editor of *The Cuban Philatelist* and other journals.

An active philatelic exhibitor since his teenage years, Kouri has garnered Large Gold and Gold medals at numerous international shows with a handful of different exhibits, culminating in the A.P.S. Champion of Champions award in 2019 for "The First Postal Issues of the Spanish Antilles (1855-1865)." Kouri is also an internationally accredited postal history judge and has presented at dozens of shows and conferences around the world.

His leadership positions have included vice-president of the A.P.S., chairman of the board of the Spellman Museum of Stamps and Postal History, and v.p. of the Federación Interamericana de Filatelia (FIAP).

In his spare time, he keeps busy as an oncologist and hematologist in Sarasota, Fla. where he moved with his wife, Suzanne in 2022 after living in the Boston area for three decades. Their five children range in age from 24 to 35.

Kouri expressed his gratitude for the recognition bestowed on him by the award and touched on the real rewards philately has brought him.

"The friendships I have in the hobby have enriched my life incredibly," Kouri said. "I am incredibly grateful." Congratulations to Dr. Kouri!

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