

Saigon – Marseille  
Accident of 20 January 1935

During a violent snowstorm, the westbound Air France seaplane made a forced night landing in the Adriatic Sea 45 kilometers from Santa Maria di Lucia. The passengers, crew and mail were taken aboard a tugboat and put ashore at Bari, Italy. The trip continued by train.

No distinctive markings were applied to the mail.



POSTAL MARKINGS

VINH-YEN TONKIN 8-1 35  
airmail label  
framed routing instruction

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 9-1 35  
PARIS IX RUE HIPPOLYTE LEBAS 23 - I 1936

Bangkok – Hanoi  
February 1935

Posted from the Norwegian Consulate in Bangkok, this letter was posted too late to connect with the new Air France direct service from Bangkok to Hanoi. Sent first to Saigon, the letter reached Hanoi on 10 February.



POSTAL MARKINGS

BANGKOK P.O.g 7.2.35  
registration label and "PAR AVION" handstamp

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8-2 35  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 10-2 35

Vientiane – Hanoi  
15 February 1935

Even though Vientiane was on Air France's Bangkok-to-Hanoi service, on occasion, the military carried mail between these cities. On 15 February, the military started a roundtrip flight with the Vientiane-to-Hanoi leg.



POSTAL MARKINGS

VIENTIANE LAOS 15-2 35

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 16-2 35

NINH-BINH TONKIN 16-2 35

Hanoi – Vinh – Vientiane – Bangkok  
16 February 1935

In February 1935, Air France established a branch line providing service between Bangkok and Hanoi. A registered letter sent to Bangkok by the second flight on this route was unclaimed and was eventually returned to Hanoi several months later.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 16-2 35  
airmail and registration labels  
"unclaimed" and "return to sender" handstamps

REVERSE

BANGKOK G.P.O. e 17 • 2 • 35  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 25-4 35  
HANOI TONKIN 1-5 35  
NINH-BINH TONKIN 1-5 35

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of First Flight in Indochina  
December 1935

The first airplane flight in Indochina was accomplished on 10 December 1910 by the Dutch aviator van den Born. To commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event, the Indochinese Post applied a cachet to outbound airmail letters.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 21-12 35  
commemorative cachet

REVERSE

CALCUTTA G.P.O. D.B.N. 23 DEC. 35  
PONDICHERY 26 DEC. 35

## China National Aviation Corporation

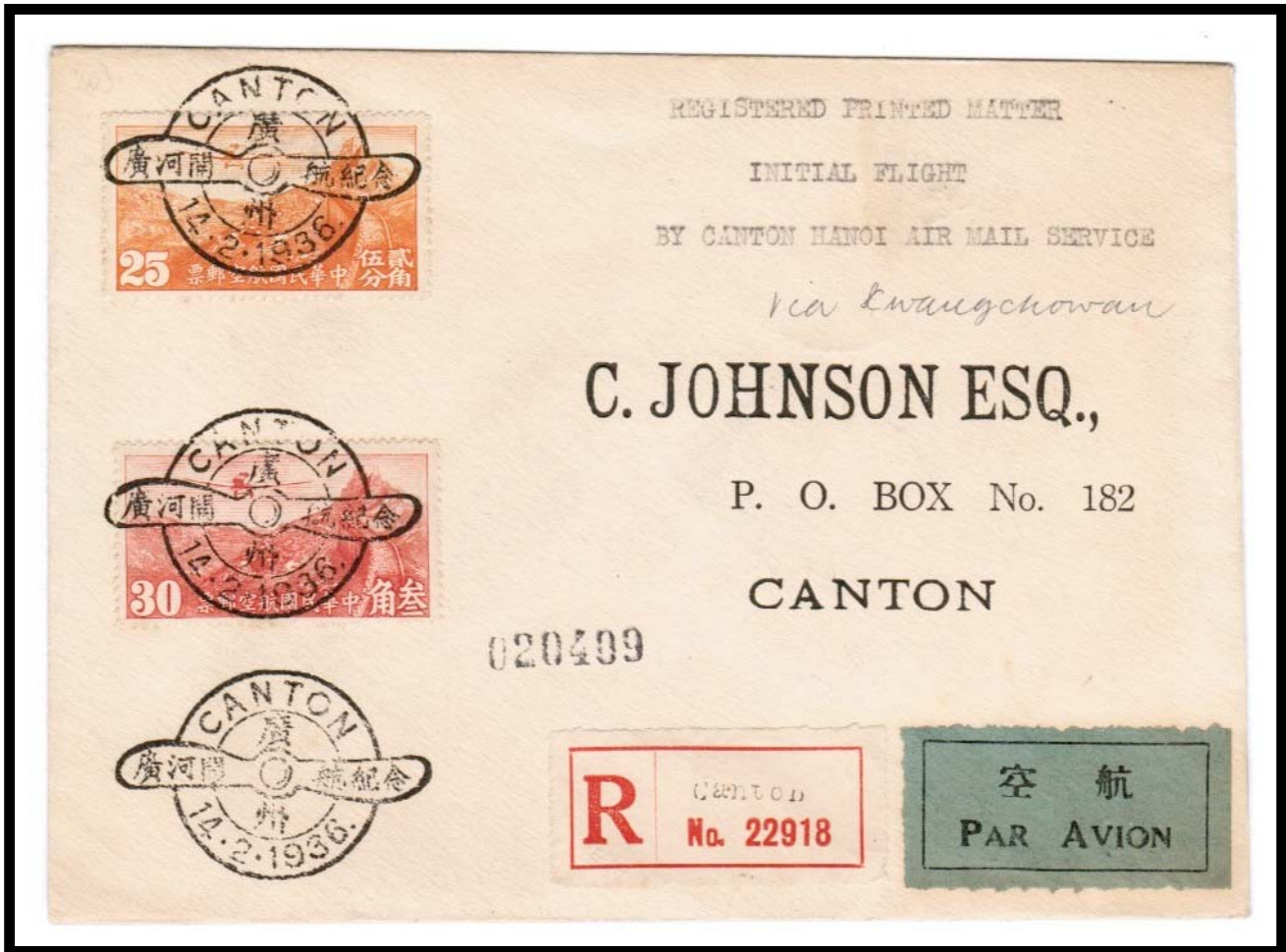
American business enterprise took the lead in advancing a program to inaugurate commercial air service in China. Curtiss-Wright, the leading aeronautical corporation in the United States at the time, founded the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) in partnership with the Chinese government in 1929. Subsequently taken over by Pan American Airways in 1933, CNAC pioneered commercial air service throughout the Middle Kingdom until the airline's demise in 1949.

In 1936, China National Aviation was one of the airlines that attempted to establish an air link to Europe by connecting with the Air France service, which terminated at Hanoi.



Canton – Fort Bayard – (Hanoi)  
14 February 1936

Effective 14 February 1936, China National Aviation Corporation announced a weekly connection to Hanoi to connect with Air France service. Covers were struck with a special postmark with propeller blades containing Chinese characters meaning "Commemorating the Opening Flight between Canton and Hanoi."



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTON 14.2 1936  
registration label  
airmail label

REVERSE

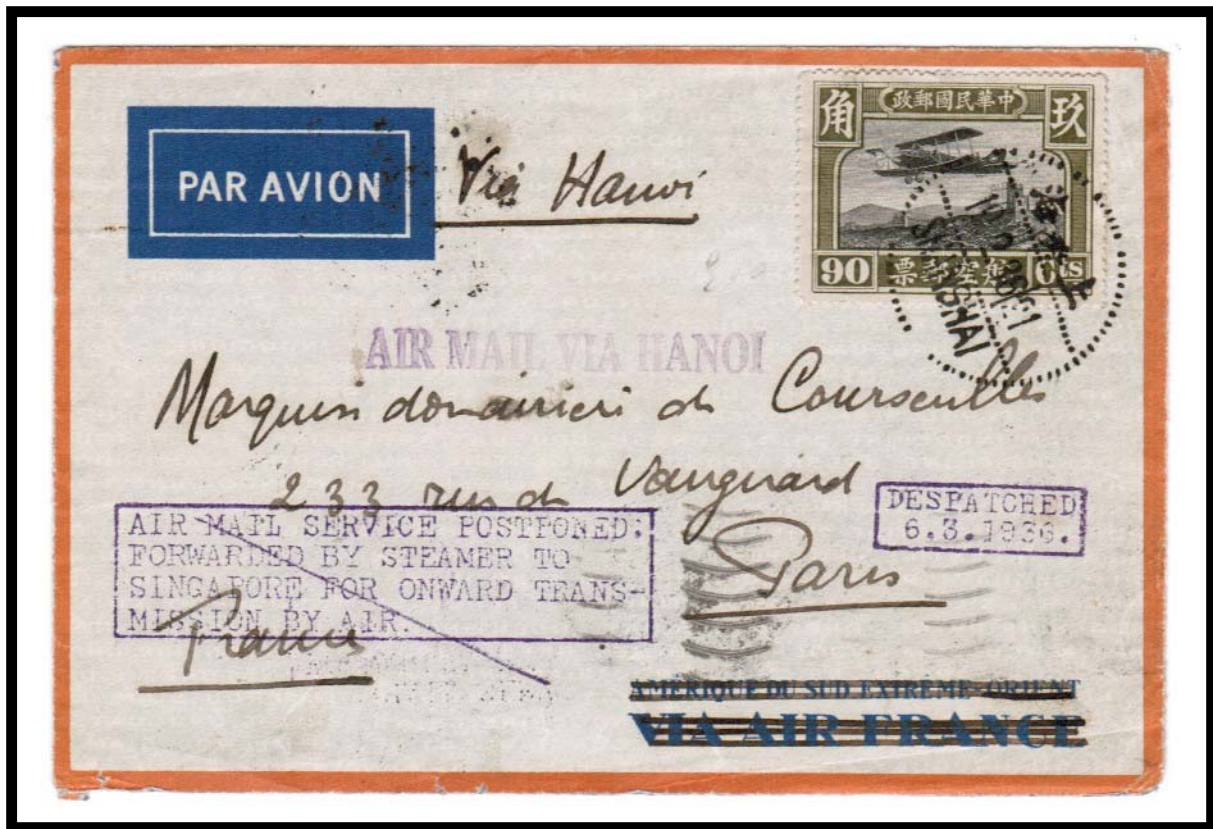
FORT-BAYARD KOUANGTCHEOUWAN 14-2 36  
flight cachet  
FORT-BAYARD KOUANGTCHEOUWAN 17-2 36

Cantho – Fort Bayard – (Hanoi)  
14 February 1936

Because of bad weather, the Chinese National Aviation Corporation plane could not go beyond Fort Bayard. As a result, the mail missed the Air France connection. For three weeks, attempts were made to dispatch the mail by air. Finally, the mail was sent on by sea mail to Singapore with markings to explain the delays.

AIR MAIL SERVICE POSTPONED:  
FORWARDED BY STEAMER TO  
SINGAPORE FOR ONWARD TRANS-  
MISSION BY AIR.

DESPATCHED  
6.3.1936.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SHANGHAI 12.2.36  
route handstamp  
delay handstamps

REVERSE

CANTON 28.2.36  
MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION BCHES DU RHONE 16 • III 1936



Cantho – Fort Bayard –  
(Hanoi)  
14 February 1936

DELAYED BY ADVERSE  
WEATHER REFORWARDED  
ON 28.2.36

For several weeks attempts were made to send the mail from Canton by air, but bad weather forced repeated delays. A red cachet first indicated onward transmission on the 21<sup>st</sup>, but it was overprinted with the 28<sup>th</sup>. Eventually, the mail went by sea to Singapore in early March.

DESPATCHED  
6.3.1936.



(Fort Bayard – Hanoi)  
14 February 1936

After leaving Canton on 14 February 1936, the Chinese National Airline Corporation trial flight to Hanoi made a stop at Fort Bayard. An attempt was made to go on but bad weather forced a return to Fort Bayard. After several days, the plane returned with the mail to Canton. Later, more attempts made to connect with Air France service were also unsuccessful.



Premier Voyage  
LIGNE AERIENNE  
HANOI-CANTON  
ESCALE DE FORT BAYARD

POSTAL MARKINGS  
FORT BAYARD KOUANG TCHEOU WAN 14-2 36  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
FORT BAYARD KOUANG-TCHEOU-WAN 17-2 36  
CANTON 17.2.25  
VICTORIA HONG KONG 18 FE 36

(Fort Bayard – Hanoi)  
14 February 1936

Cachets prepared for the return flight were struck on letters when it was decided that the plane would return to Canton. Flight cachets were struck in black ink on regular letters and in red ink for registered letters.



POSTAL MARKINGS

FORT BAYARD KOUANGTCHOUWAN 14-2 36  
registration label  
flight cachet

REVERSE

FORT BAYARD KOUANGTCHOUWAN 17-2 36

(Fort Bayard – Haiphong)  
14 February 1936

Southbound mail received a cachet reading "CANTON-HANOI." However with the delays, these letters were also taken back to Canton for processing. This letter reached Haiphong on 13 March 1936 – one month after posting.



POSTAL MARKINGS

FORT-BAYARD KOUANG-TCHEOU-WAN 13-2 36  
flight cachet and delayed mail cachet

REVERSE

CANTON 17. 2.25  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 13-3 36  
HAI-PHONG TONKIN 13-3 36

(Hanoi – Fort Bayard)  
14 February 1936

The return trip with Chinese National Aviation Corporation could not be conducted because the plane never reached Hanoi. Even though letters were given a flight cachet, they were transported by surface mail. Mail from Hanoi to the leased territory of Kwangchowan took 5 days to make the journey.

LIGNE  
AERIENNE  
HANOI –  
CANTON  
1<sup>ER</sup> VOYAGE



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 14-2 36  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
FORT-BAYARD KOUANG-TCHEOU-WAN 19-2 36

(Hanoi – Fort Bayard – Cantho)  
14 February 1936

Letters addressed from Hanoi to China were naturally unable to be transported by air as the inbound Chinese National Aviation Corporation could not reach to Hanoi. Letters prepared for the flight were sent onward by surface mail.

LIGNE  
AERIE  
HANOI –  
CANTON  
1<sup>ER</sup> VOYAGE



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 14-2 36  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HAI-PHONG TONKIN 17-2 36  
CANTON 23.2.25  
CANTON S.O. No. 4 23.2.25

London – Penang – Saigon – Hong Kong  
14-24 March 1936

Over time, the eastern route of Imperial Airways was gradually extended further into Asia. On 23 March 1936, service was started from Penang to Hong Kong via Saigon. This feeder route connected with the London-Singapore route. The first service reached Saigon on 23 March and flew on to Hong Kong on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

This letter, prepared for the inaugural Penang-Hong Kong airmail service, was postmarked at London on 13 March. Based on the backstamps, it likely traveled via the second airmail service the following week.



POSTAL MARKINGS

LONDON.F.S. AIR MAIL 13 MCH 36

REVERSE

VICTORIA HONG KONG 31 MR 36  
HAIPHONG TONKIN 7-4 36  
TOURANE ANNAM 9-4 36

Hong Kong – Saigon – Penang – London  
27 March 1936

The first return airmail on the feeder route from Hong Kong to Penang via Saigon departed on 27 March 1936. Unlike outbound mail from London, letters on the return trip received a commemorative cachet. In the case of this letter to Saigon, the pilot of the flight signed the front of the cover “John H. Lord Commander Dorado.”

FIRST THROUGH FLIGHT  
HONG KONG-PENANG-LONDON  
VIA IMPERIAL AIRWAYS  
27TH MARCH 1936



POSTAL MARKINGS

HONG-KONG AIR MAIL 26 MR 36  
airmail label and flight cachet


REVERSE

TOURANE ANNAM 27-3 36  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30-3 36




## Air France Schedule Adjustments April 1936

A postal card distributed by Air France informed the public of impending schedule changes that could affect airmail correspondence. Only minor changes were anticipated for the France-Syria-Indochina Far East service.



# AIR FRANCE



## CHRONIQUE de la POSTE AÉRIENNE

AVRIL 1936

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**HORAIRE D'ÉTÉ.**  
L'horaire d'été sera appliqué à partir du 19 avril 1936.

**FRANCE-AMÉRIQUE DU SUD.** — Le départ se fera de PARIS dans la nuit du samedi au dimanche.  
Les heures de dépôt seront donc sensiblement plus favorables à Paris et dans les régions dont le courrier est centralisé à PARIS (Nord, Ouest et Est).  
Les départs de MARSEILLE et TOULOUSE s'effectueront aux mêmes heures qu'autrefois, ce qui n'entraînera aucune modification des heures de dépôt dans ces régions.  
Aucun changement pour le service du mercredi.

**MAROC et LIGNE D'ORIENT.** — Les lignes FRANCE-MAROC et FRANCE-SYRIE-INDOCHINE ne subiront aucune modification d'horaire. Les heures de dépôt resteront donc les mêmes, sous réserve des légères modifications qui pourraient résulter de l'emploi des trains chargés de la centralisation du courrier.

**LIGNES D'ALGÉRIE-TUNISIE.** — A partir du 2 juin seulement, les liaisons PARIS-MARSEILLE-ALGER et AJACCIO-TUNIS seront assurées dans la même journée. Départ de PARIS à 7 heures. Distribution à ALGER et TUNIS le soir même.  
Les services européens sont très notablement améliorés :

**EUROPE CENTRALE.** — Le trajet PARIS-BUCAREST sera effectué dans la même journée. Départ du BOURGET à 6 heures.

**ALLEMAGNE, BELGIQUE, HOLLANDE, SCANDINAVIE.** — Une ligne postale de nuit partant à 22 heures du BOURGET, desservira ces pays qui bénéficient également d'une liaison diurne partant à 8 heures (PARIS-STOCKHOLM dans la même journée).

**PARIS-LONDRES.** — Cinq services par jour fonctionneront entre PARIS et LONDRES.

**PARIS-BORDEAUX-MADRID.** — Le départ de Paris est fixé à 10 h. 45. Le service est prolongé jusqu'à LISBONNE.

**REVUE « POSTE AÉRIENNE »**

Le numéro d'avril donnant les renseignements **Service d'été**, paraîtra exceptionnellement le 19 avril.  
Cette revue mensuelle, publiée sous le contrôle de l'Administration postale (Rédaction : 6, rue Le Goff, Paris), donnera désormais les heures-limites de réception aux bureaux chargés de centraliser le courrier aérien, de façon à éviter l'erreur commune qui consiste à déposer le courrier, en tenant compte uniquement de l'heure de départ de l'avion de l'aérodrome.

**HEURES-LIMITES DE DÉPÔT**

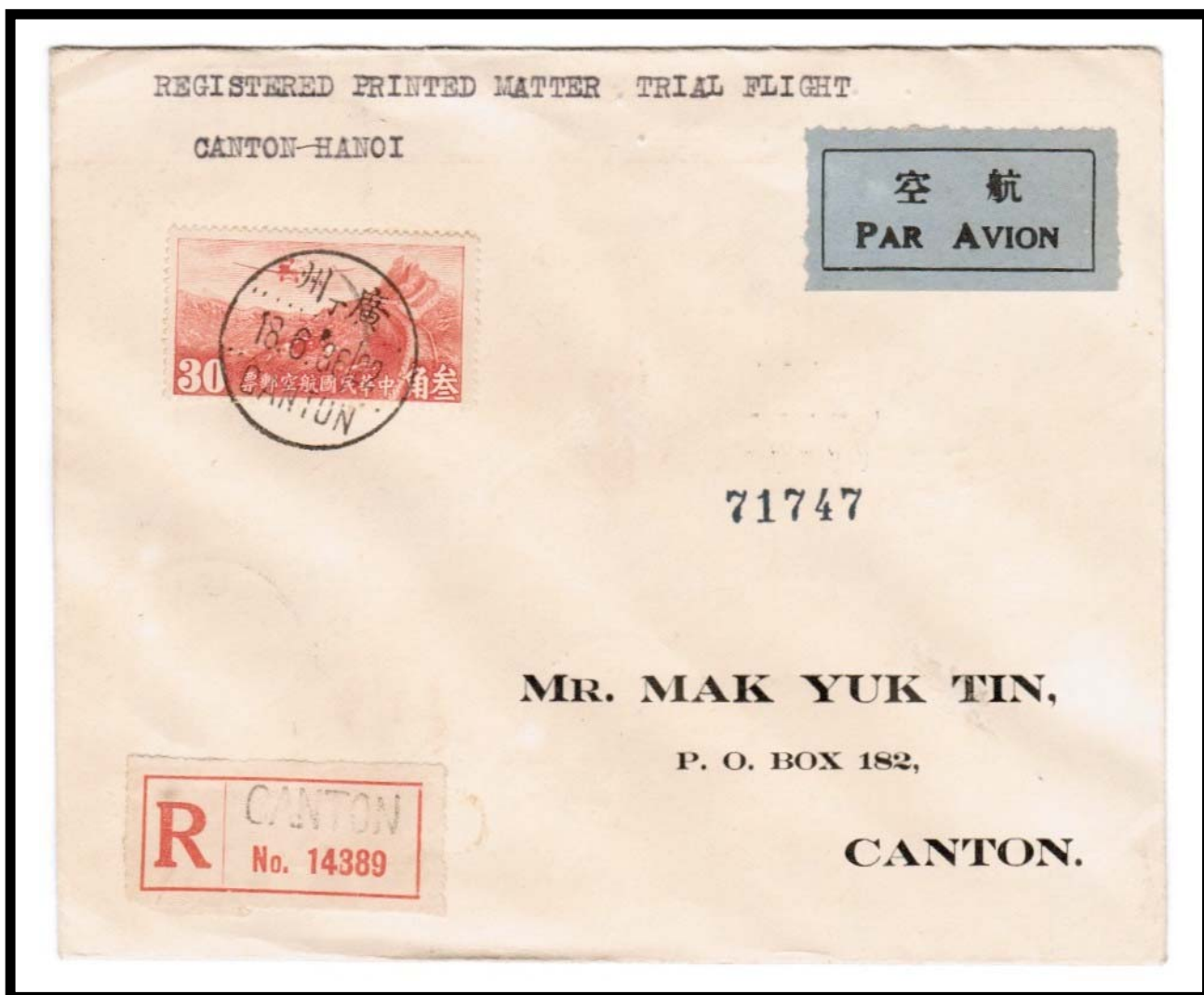
Comme les années précédentes, AIR FRANCE, dans ses Agences de PARIS, STRASBOURG, LYON, CANNES, MARSEILLE, TOULOUSE, BORDEAUX, tiendra à la disposition de sa clientèle les heures-limites de dépôt dans les principaux bureaux de PARIS et de banlieue, ainsi que dans les recettes principales des grandes villes de province.

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Pour renseignements, s'adresser à **AIR FRANCE, 9, rue Auber, PARIS (9<sup>e</sup>)**  
OPÉRA 41.00

Canton – Fort Bayard – Hanoi  
19 June 1936

Southwestern Aviation Corporation flew its first trial flight on 19 June to Hanoi by extending its normal route to Lungchow. No special markings were used at Canton but an arrival cachet was applied on the backs of covers at Hanoi.



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTON 18.6.36  
registration and airmail labels

REVERSE

CANTON 18.6.36  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 19-6-36  
flight cachet

Canton – Fort Bayard – Hanoi  
19 June 1936

The cover for Southwestern Aviation Corporation's trial flight shown on the previous page was registered at Canton. This post office receipt shows the sender and the addressee. A Canton postmark was applied below the serial number. The serial number "14389" corresponds to the number on the registry label. A red "Chop" with Chinese characters was applied with red ink at the center of the receipt.

No doubt the receipt stayed with the letter as it made the round trip from Canton to Fort Bayard and return.



Hanoi – Fort Bayard – Canton  
20 June 1936

The return of Southwestern Aviation Corporation's trial flight from Hanoi took place on 20 June. The square flight cachet, which had been prepared for the 14 February flight was first properly employed for this flight.

LIGNE  
AERIE  
HANOI –  
CANTON  
1<sup>ER</sup> VOYAGE



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 19-6 36  
flight cachet

REVERSE

CANTON 20.6.25  
CANTON S.O. No. 4 21.6.25

Hanoi – Fort Bayard – Canton  
20 June 1936

Addressed to Shanghai and posted from Nice, this mailing traveled to Indochina by Air France. Then it went via the return of the Southwestern Aviation Corporation's study flight to Canton and onward to Shanghai via Hong Kong. Thus, the letter represents the first France-China connection by this combined service.

LIGNE  
AERIENNE  
HANOI –  
CANTON  
  
1<sup>ER</sup> VOYAGE



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 19 JUIN 36

HAI-PHONG TONKIN 19-6 36

flight cachet

CANTON 20.6.25

VICTORIA HONG KONG 21 JU 36

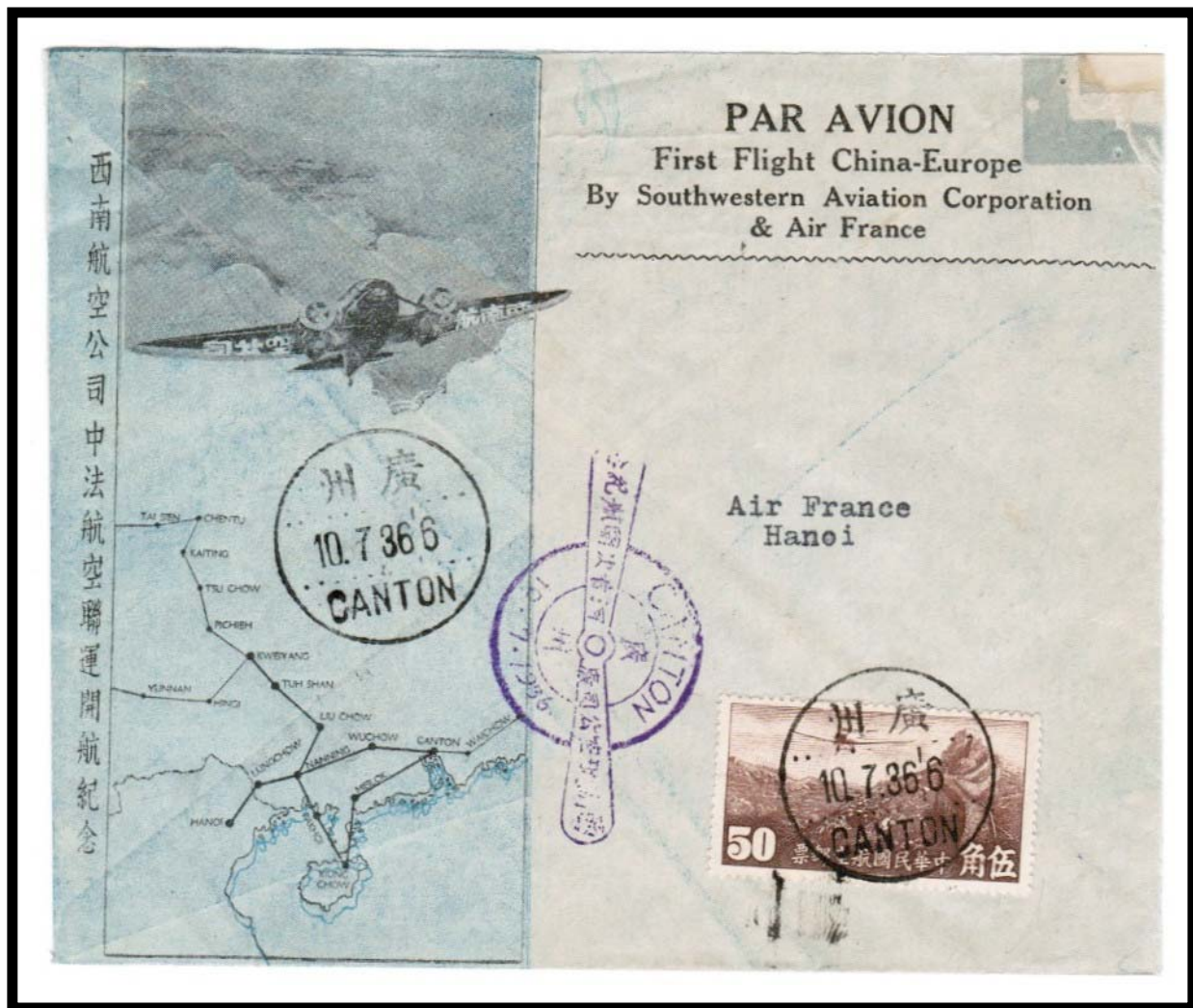
REVERSE

NICE R.P. ALPES-MARITIMES 4-6 36

airmail label

Canton – Fort Bayard – Hanoi  
10 July 1936

The first regular Southwestern Aviation Corporation connecting service was on 10 July. Specially printed envelopes were made available free of charge by the airline. Additionally, a special flight cachet was struck in purple ink to commemorate the new service.



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTON 10.7.36  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 10-7 36

Hanoi – Fort Bayard – Canton  
11 July 1936

The first regular return flight via Southwestern Aviation Corporation's service took place on 11 July. Mail was handstamped with the same cachet used previously for the cancelled flight in February 1936.

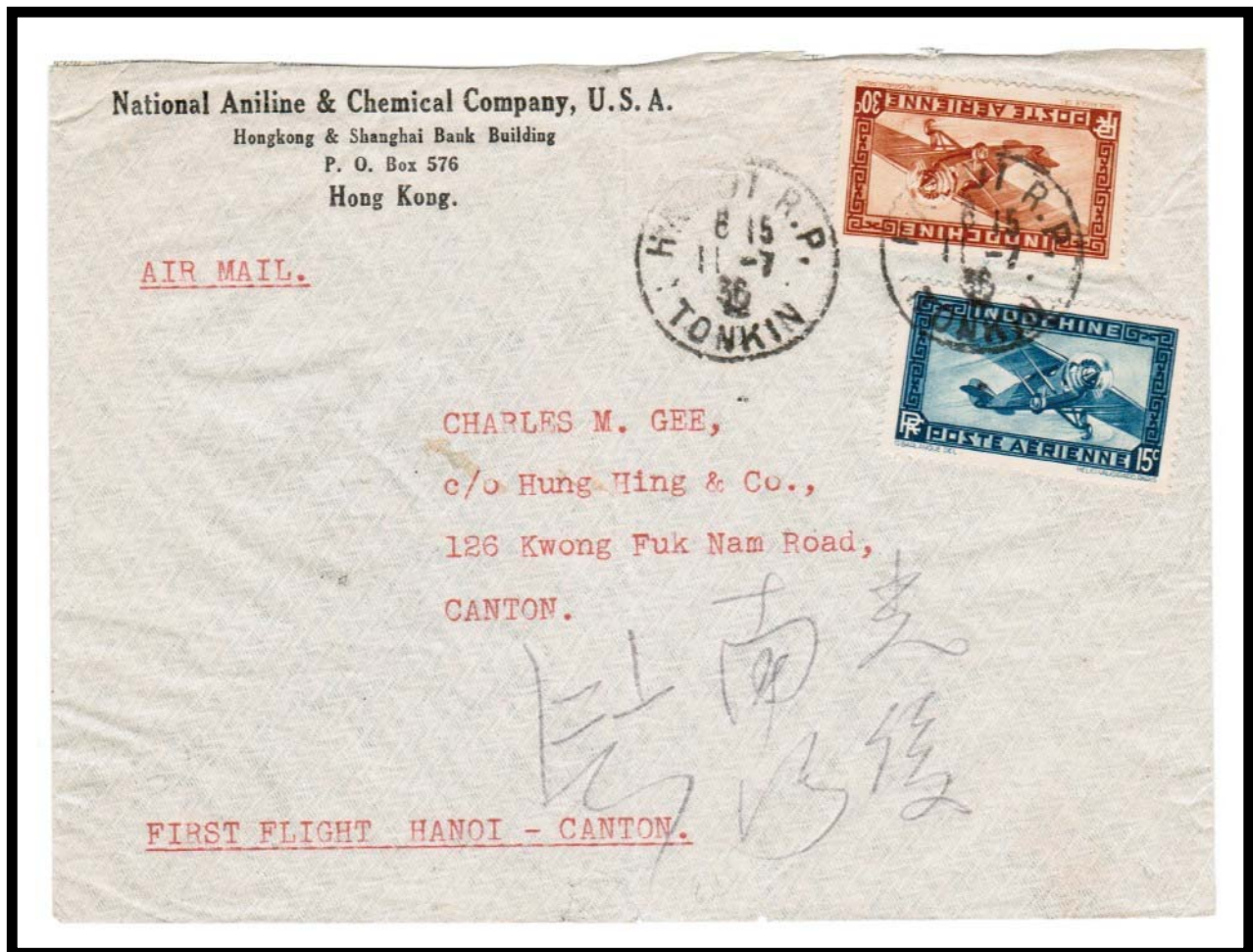


LIGNE  
AERIEENNE  
HANOI –  
CANTON  
1<sup>ER</sup> VOYAGE

POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 10-7 36  
first flight cachet  
REVERSE  
CANTON 11.7.2

Hanoi – Fort Bayard – Canton  
11 July 1936

The special flight cachet was not struck on all mail flown by first regular return of the Southwestern Aviation Corporation service of 11 July. Some commercial-looking mailings received no markings denoting the service..

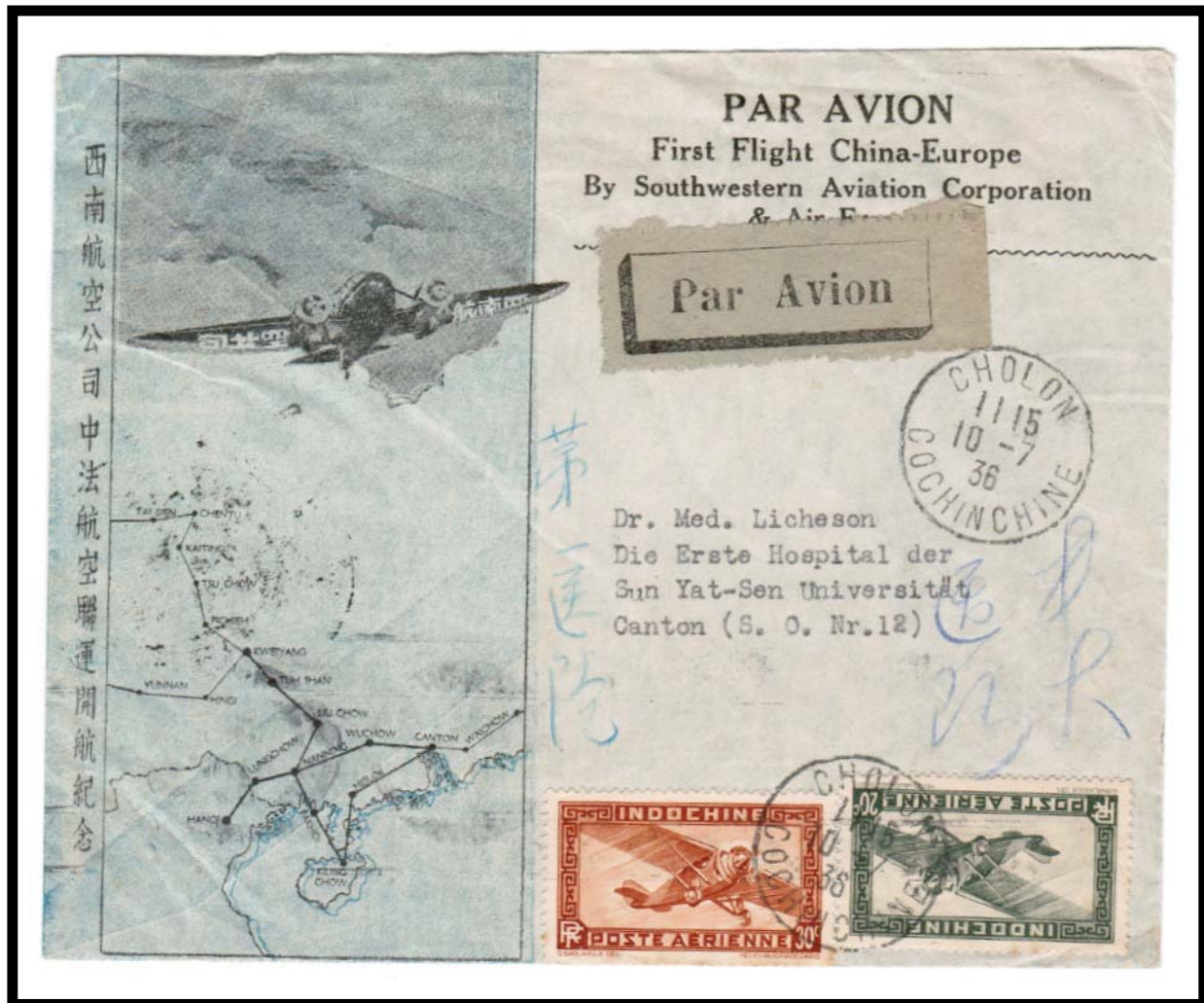


POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 11-7 36  
REVERSE  
CANTON 11.7.25



Hanoi – Fort Bayard – Canton  
11 July 1936

Although intended for the inaugural Southwestern Aviation Corporation return flight, this cover, posted from near Saigon, failed to make the connection. The arrival cachet at Canton indicates that the letter arrived more than two weeks later than the airmail items.



POSTAL MARKINGS

CHOLON COCHINCHINE 10-7 36  
airmail label

REVERSE

CANTON 19.7.25  
CANTON S.O. No. 4

Marseille – Hanoi – Canton  
10-19 September 1936

Inauguration of regular airmail service between France and China was celebrated with a special handstamp. Letters mailed from Marseille on 10 September arrived at Canton on 19 September, a transit time of 9 days.

1<sup>ER</sup> COURRIER  
AERIEN  
FRANCE  
CHINE



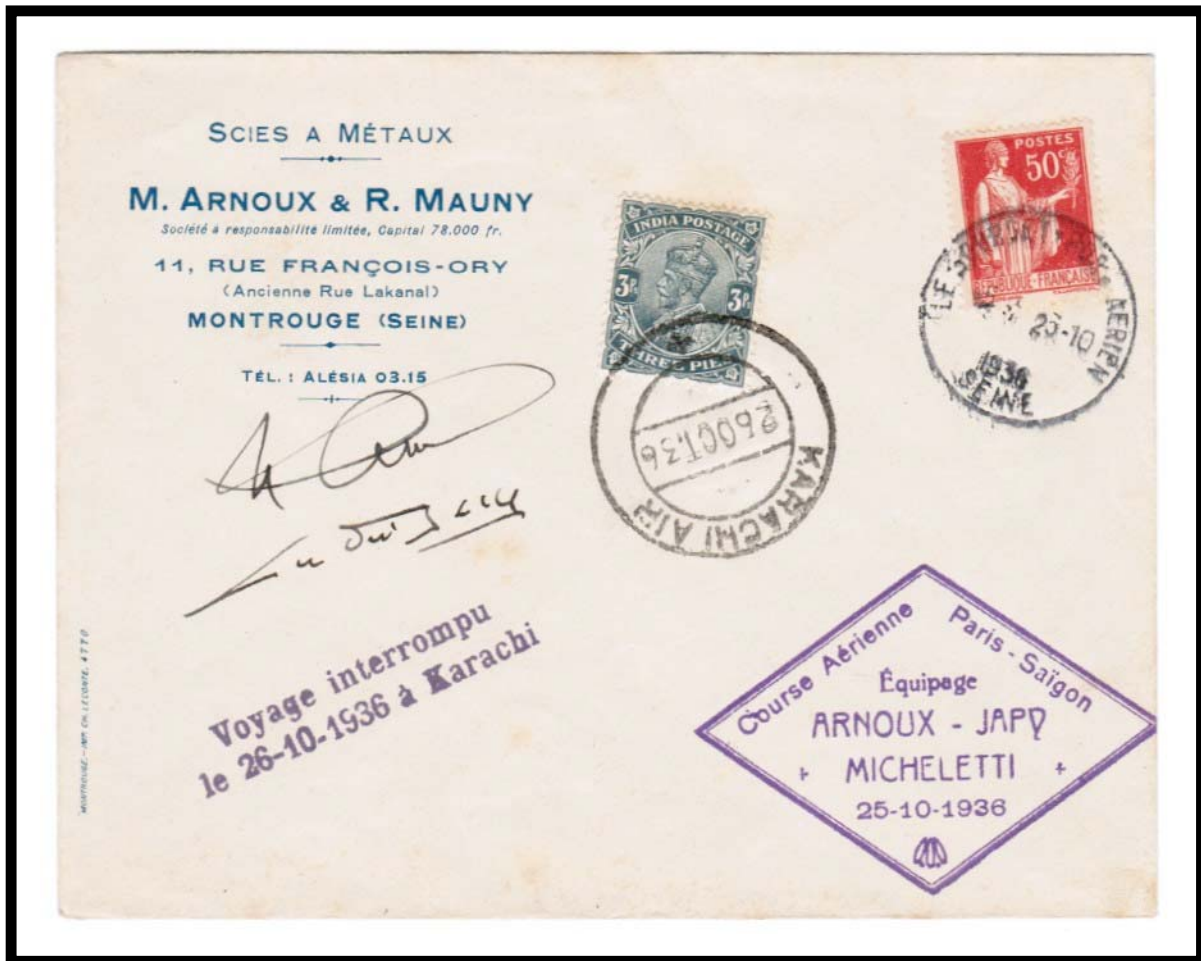
POSTAL MARKINGS  
MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION 10-9 36  
flight cachet

Paris – Saigon  
25-26 October 1936

With Arnoux, the financier of the trip, as a passenger, the crew of Japy (pilot) and Micheletti (radioman) attempted to reach Saigon in record time. At Karachi, the flight was interrupted by an accident.

Arnoux and Japy signed many of the 278 covers transported by the plane.

Voyage interrompu  
le 26-10-1936 à Karachi



POSTAL MARKINGS  
LE BOURGET - GARE AVION SEINE 25-10 36  
KARACHI AIR 26 OCT. 36  
flight and accident cachets



# New Year's Card 1937

In 1937, Air France began the annual practice of issuing New Year's cards. Each year, the picture postcards depicted different aeronautical themes. The blue airmail label on the address side was, in fact, printed on the postcard.

If the sender's message was less than 5 words, the airmail surcharge was one fifth of the airmail charge for "other objects."



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 2-1 37

Paris – Hanoi – (Tokyo)  
January 1937

The crew of Doret and Micheletti attempted to reach Tokyo from Paris in 100 hours. They made record time reaching Hanoi. However, when they landed on an island 200 kilometers from Hanoi the plane became bogged down in the sand damaging the propeller. The plane was not reparable and finally had to be abandoned. A total of fifty letters were carried but only very few were taken off at Hanoi.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
LE BOURGET-AVION SEINE 20-1 1937  
REVERSE  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 23-1 37

Paris – Hanoi – (Tokyo)  
20-23 January 1937

Some mail was taken off the airplane Doret-Micheletti record time attempt when they had reached Hanoi. Letters were franked with Indochinese stamps and postmarked at Hanoi on 23 January.

Departure and arrival times for the different legs of the trip were:

20 January	6:36	Paris (Le Bourget)	Brindisi	13:28
20 January	14:19	Brindisi	Cairo	22:30
21 January	5:27	Cairo	Bassorah	13:08
21 January	14:15	Bassorah	Karachi	23:25
22 January	2:29	Karachi	Allahabad	8:32
22 January	9:45	Allahabad	Akyab-Hanoi	5:51(23 <sup>rd</sup> )
23 January	7:54	Hanoi	Tien Yen	



POSTAL MARKINGS

LE BOURGET-AVION SEINE 20-1 1937  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 23-1 37

Fort Bayard – Hanoi  
5 February 1937

In association with the Canton–Hanoi service by Southwestern Aviation Corporation, Air France conducted a study flight from Fort Bayard, Kouang Cho Wan to Hanoi on 5 February 1937. A large rectangular cachet noted that the stop at Fort Bayard was a test. As opposed to the normal convention, postmarks were not used to cancel the postage stamps. Instead, the flight cachet was utilized for this purpose.

AIR-FRANCE  
VOYAGE D'ESSAI CANTON-HANOI  
ESCALE DE FORT-BAYARD  
5 FEVRIER 1937



POSTAL MARKINGS

flight cachet

REVERSE

HAI-PHONG TONKIN 6-2 37



Canton – Fort Bayard – Pakhoi – Hanoi  
9 April 1937

With Southwestern Aviation Corporation's realignment of its routes starting on 9 April 1937, Fort Bayard became a stop on the westbound trip that departed Canton on Fridays.

Service Hebdomadaire  
HANOI - CANTON  
ESCALE de FORT-BAYARD  
par l'avion de la S.W.A.C.  
Premiere Liaison 10 Avril 1937  
西南航空公司由河返廣-每星期航行一次  
西寧站一九三七年四月十日初航



POSTAL MARKINGS

FORT-BAYARD KOUANG-TCHEOU-WAN 9-4 37  
flight cachet

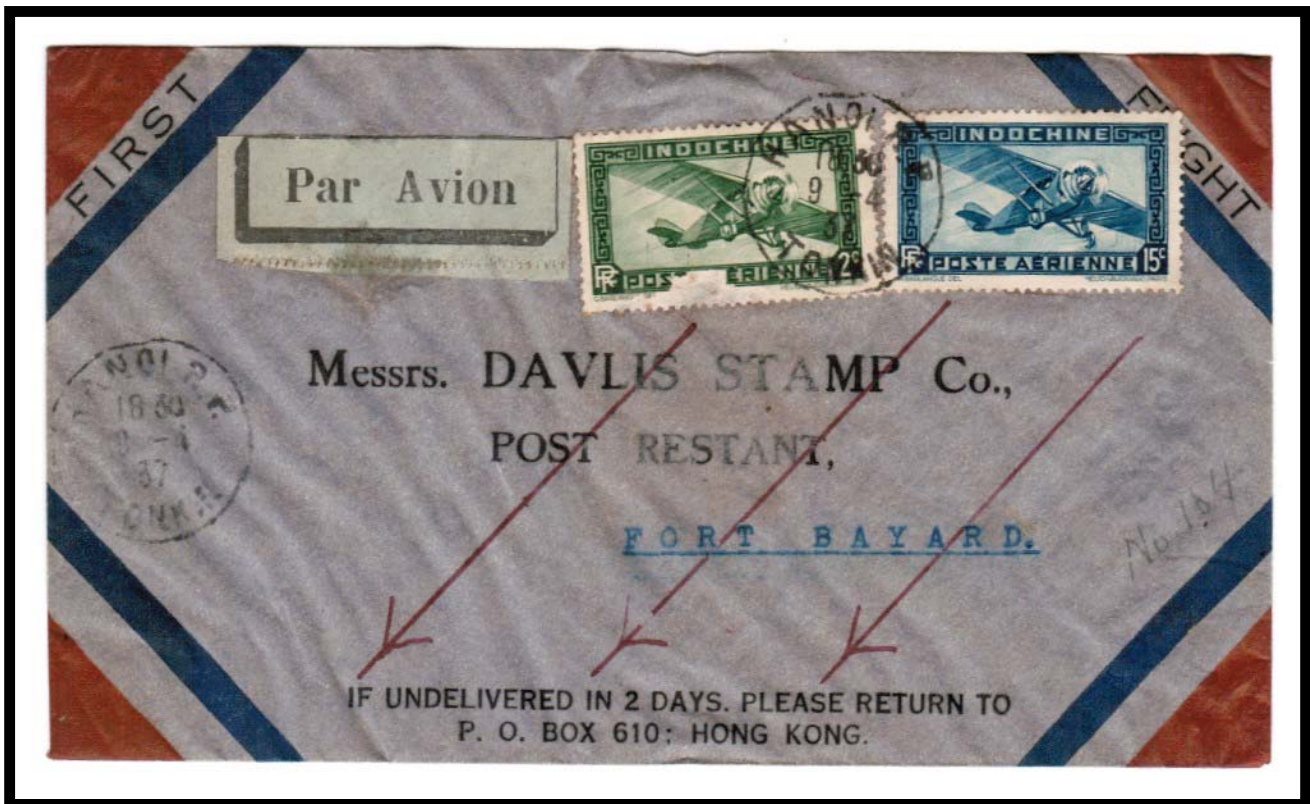
REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 9-4 37

Hanoi – Pakhoi – Fort Bayard – Canton  
10 April 1937

On Southwestern Aviation's return trip from Hanoi, mail addressed to Pakhoi was "overcarried" to Fort Bayard. A special cachet was applied on the reverse of covers making the return trip.

Service Hebdomadaire  
HANOI - CANTON  
ESCALE de FORT-BAYARD  
par l'avion de la S.W.A.C.  
Premiere Liaison 10 Avril 1937  
西南航空公司由河返廣-每星期航17-元  
西啓站-一九三七年四月十日初九



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 9-4 37  
airmail label  
flight cachet

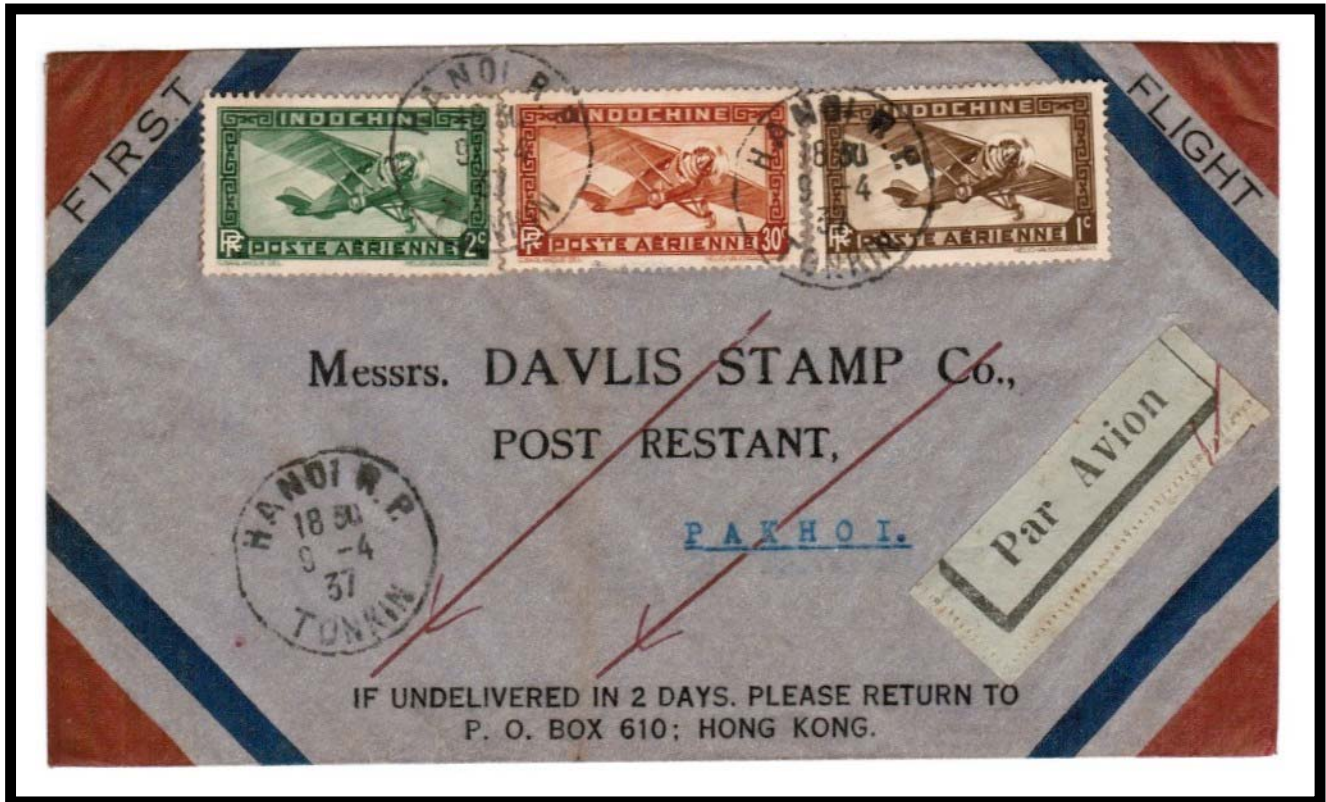
REVERSE

FORT-BAYARD KOUANG-TCHEOU-WAN 10-4 37

Hanoi – Pakhoi – Fort Bayard – Canton  
10 April 1937

The plane on Southwestern Aviation Corporation's return flight encountered bad weather and was required to spend the night at Fort Bayard. A special cachet was applied on the reverse of covers.

Service Hebdomadaire  
HANOI - CANTON  
ESCALE de FORT-BAYARD  
par l'avion de la S.W.A.C.  
Premiere Liaison 10 Avril 1937  
西南航空公司由河返廣-每星期航17-19  
西曆站一九三七年四月十日初九



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 9-4 37  
airmail label

REVERSE

FORT-BAYARD KOUANG-TCHEOU-WAN 10-4 37  
flight cachet

Hanoi – Pakhoi – Fort Bayard – Canton  
10 April 1937

The Southwestern Aviation Corporation's plane actually left Fort Bayard at 7 o'clock on 11 April and arrived at Canton at 9 o'clock. Addressed to Hong Kong, this letter arrived the next day.

Service Hebdomadaire  
HANOI - CANTON  
ESCALE de FORT-BAYARD  
par l'avion de la S.W.A.C.  
Première Liaison 10 Avril 1937  
西南航空公司由河返厦-每星期航17-庇  
西曆站一九三七年四月十日初九



POSTAL MARKINGS

FORT BAYARD KOUNAGT-CHEOUWAN 10-4 37

flight cachet

REVERSE

CANTON 11.4.26

HONG-KONG 12 AP 37

Baghdad – Saigon – Hanoi  
18-23 June 1937

Air France's first eastbound service from Baghdad departed on 18 June 1937. A commemorative cachet was struck with violet ink. Stops were made at Bouchir, Djask, Karachi, Bangkok, Saigon and Hanoi.



POSTAL MARKINGS

BAGHDAD 18-6 37  
"Unclaimed" handstamp

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. 23-5 37  
D.L.O BAGHDAD 22 DEC. 37

## Eurasia Aviation Corporation

German interests in establishing an air link with the Far East led to an agreement between Lufthansa and the Chinese government signed on 21 February 1930. This agreement led to the creation of Eurasia in February 1931 giving the Chinese government two-thirds ownership of the corporation. On 31 May 1931, Eurasia officially started her flight operations in the Far East. While the main purpose was an air link between Europe and China, the agreement did allow Eurasia to carry passengers and mail within China.

Because the Soviet Union refused overflights by Eurasia, the company explored a less direct route via Indochina, India and Greece to Germany. Operating from western China, Eurasia tried to establish a Kunming-Hanoi route in 1937.



Hanoi – Kunming  
18 December 1937

The return of the Eurasia trial flight to Canton left Hanoi on 18 December. A flight cachet was applied with blue or black ink. The “VIA AIR FRANCE” carrier indication was struck out on this envelope as Eurasia was the carrier.

PREMIÈRE LIAISON  
POSTALE AÉRIENNE  
HANOI-YUNNANFOU



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 17-12 37  
flight cachet

REVERSE

KUNMING (YUNNANFOU) 18.12 37

Kunming – Hanoi  
23 December 1937

**PREMIÈRE LIAISON  
POSTALE AÉRIENNE  
YUNNANFOU - HANOI**

For the first regular connection from Kunming to Hanoi by Eurasia, a three-line cachet was applied with black ink.

POSTAL MARKINGS

KUNMING 23.12.28  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-12-37





Hanoi – Kunming  
23 December 1937

The first Eurasia flight to establish a regular connection with Air France departed Hanoi on 23 December. A four-line cachet commemorated the new connection.

PREMIER VOL POSTAL  
AÉRIEN HANOI-KUNMING  
PAR EURASIAEN LIAISON  
AVEC AIR FRANCE



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-12 37  
flight cachet

REVERSE

KUNMING 23.12.28

Hanoi – Kunming  
23 December 1937

PREMIER VOL POSTAL  
AÉRIEN HANOI-KUNMING  
PAR EURASIA EN LIAISON  
AVEC AIR FRANCE

For the first regular  
service from Hanoi to  
Kunming via Eurasia, four-  
line cachets were struck in  
blue ink as well as black ink.

POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-12 37  
flight cachet  
KUNMING 23.12.28  
REVERSE  
KUNMING 23.12.28



# New Year's Card 1938

The wording at the upper right indicates that, for the period 1 December through 15 January, the airmail surcharge was one fifth the normal charge for "other objects" if the postcard's message was no more than 5 words. The instructions also note that the reduced rate may not be available to countries for which "other object" airmail rates had not been established.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 7-1 38

Hanoi - Paris  
Delayed Flight of 10-20 March 1938

Faced with engine problems, the crew of the Air Orient plane that left Hanoi on 10 March made a forced landing at Gwadar. After repairs, the plane reached Paris on 20 March, a significant delay from the usual weekly schedule.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI-E TONKIN 10-3 38  
registration label

REVERSE

HANOI-E TONKIN 10-3 38  
PARIS 6 DISTRIBUTION 20-3 38

Hanoi – Hong Kong  
13 July 1938

Extending Air France's route from Hanoi to Hong Kong was a natural evolution. Several trial flights were made in mid-July 1938. Mail was carried on the first exploratory flight. A rectangular cachet, struck here in red, was employed along with specially printed envelopes.

PREMIER VOL D'ESSAI  
HANOI-HONGKONG  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
13 Juillet 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 12-7 38  
flight cachet (red)

REVERSE

VICTORIA HONG KONG 13 JY 38

Hanoi – Hong Kong  
13 July 1938

No surcharge was required for the 13 July trial flight. As with this example, the flight cachet was struck in blue ink as well as red ink.

PREMIER VOL D'ESSAI  
HANOI-HONGKONG  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
13 Juillet 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 12-7 38  
flight cachet (blue)  
VICTORIA HONG KONG 13 JY 38

Hanoi – Hong Kong  
13 July 1938

Postmarks and the flight cachet were copied to produce faked covers. The thin regular lines making up the lettering in both the postmark and cachet signal the bogus nature of the markings.

PREMIER VOL D'ESSAI  
HANOI-HONGKONG  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
13 Juillet 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS

fake HANOI R.P. TONKIN 12-7 38  
fake flight cachet

REVERSE

fake VICTORIA HONG KONG 13 JY 38

Hanoi – Saigon  
30 July 1938

Effective 27 July, the intermediate stop at Vientiane was eliminated from the Hanoi - Saigon leg of Air France's Far East route. The first nonstop service from Hanoi to Saigon took place on 30 July.

A rectangular cachet noting a flying time of 5 hours was struck in blue on covers making the inaugural flight.

PREMIÈRE LIAISON  
POSTALE AÉRIENNE  
HANOI – SAIGON  
EN 5 HEURES  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
30 JUILLET 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 28-7 38  
flight cachet (blue)

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30 JUIL 38



Hanoi – Saigon  
30 July 1938

The cachet for Air France's first 5-hour service from Hanoi to Saigon was also struck with red ink.

PREMIÈRE LIAISON  
POSTALE AERIENNE  
HANOI – SAIGON  
EN 5 HEURES  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
30 JUILLET 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS

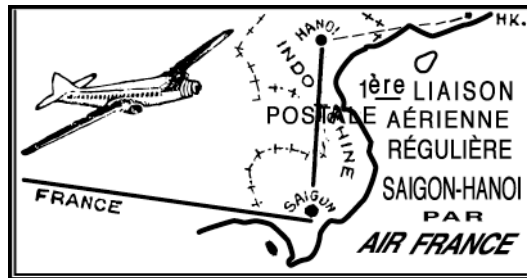
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 28-7 38  
airmail label and flight cachet (red)

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30 JUIL 38

Saigon – Hanoi  
2 August 1938

The first northbound nonstop flight from Saigon to Hanoi was accomplished on 2 August. A surcharge of 5 cents was required for airmail service between the two cities, as opposed to the normal 30 cents for airmail service to France.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 1-8 38

flight cachet

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 2-8 38

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 2-8 38

Paris – Hanoi – Hong Kong  
4-10 August 1938

Inauguration of the extended service from Hanoi to Hong Kong, with a single plane from Marseilles onward, began on 3 August. The commemorative cachet was struck in several colors including blue.

INAUGURATION  
DU SERVICE AÉRIEN  
HANOÏ-HONG KONG  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
4 AOÛT 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS

GRENOBLE R.P. ISERE 2-8 1938  
airmail label and flight cachet (blue)

REVERSE

LYON A MARSEILLE AVION C 3-8 38  
HONG KONG 10 AUG 38

Paris – Hanoi – Hong Kong  
4-10 August 1938

Letters for the new Far East service were posted from Paris on 3 August at the start of the Air France route. The Dewoitine 338 airplane left Marseille on 4 August. Here the commemorative flight cachet was struck in purple ink at Marseille.

INAUGURATION  
DU SERVICE AÉRIEN  
HANOÏ-HONG KONG  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
4 AOUT 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS

MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION -3 8 38  
flight cachet (purple)

Paris – Hanoi – Hong Kong  
4-10 August 1938

Air France's plane, called "The City of Vientiane," arrived at Hanoi and went on to Hong Kong on the same day, 10 August 1938. Here the commemorative cachet was struck using black ink.

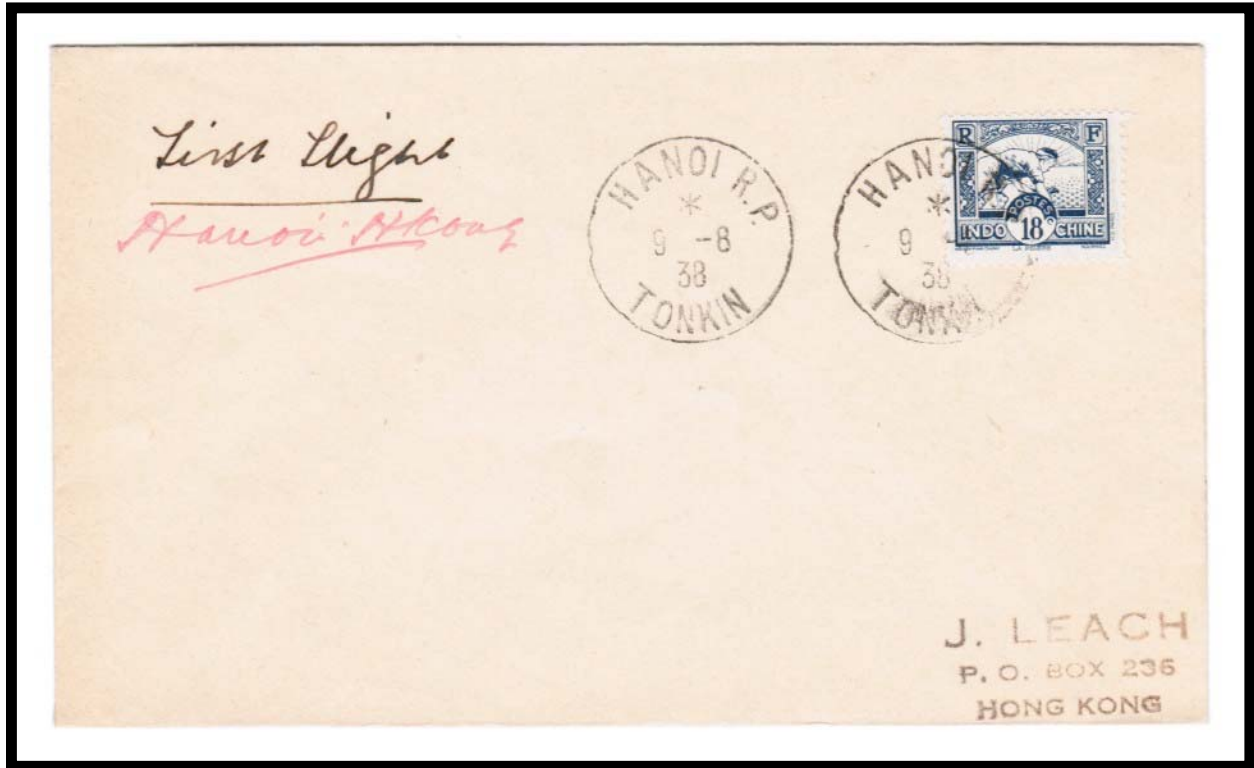
INAUGURATION  
DU SERVICE AÉRIEN  
HANOÏ-HONG KONG  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
4 AOUT 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS  
PARIS-AVIATION S<sup>C</sup>E ETRANGER 3-8 1938  
airmail label and flight cachet (black)

Hanoi – Hong Kong  
10 August 1938

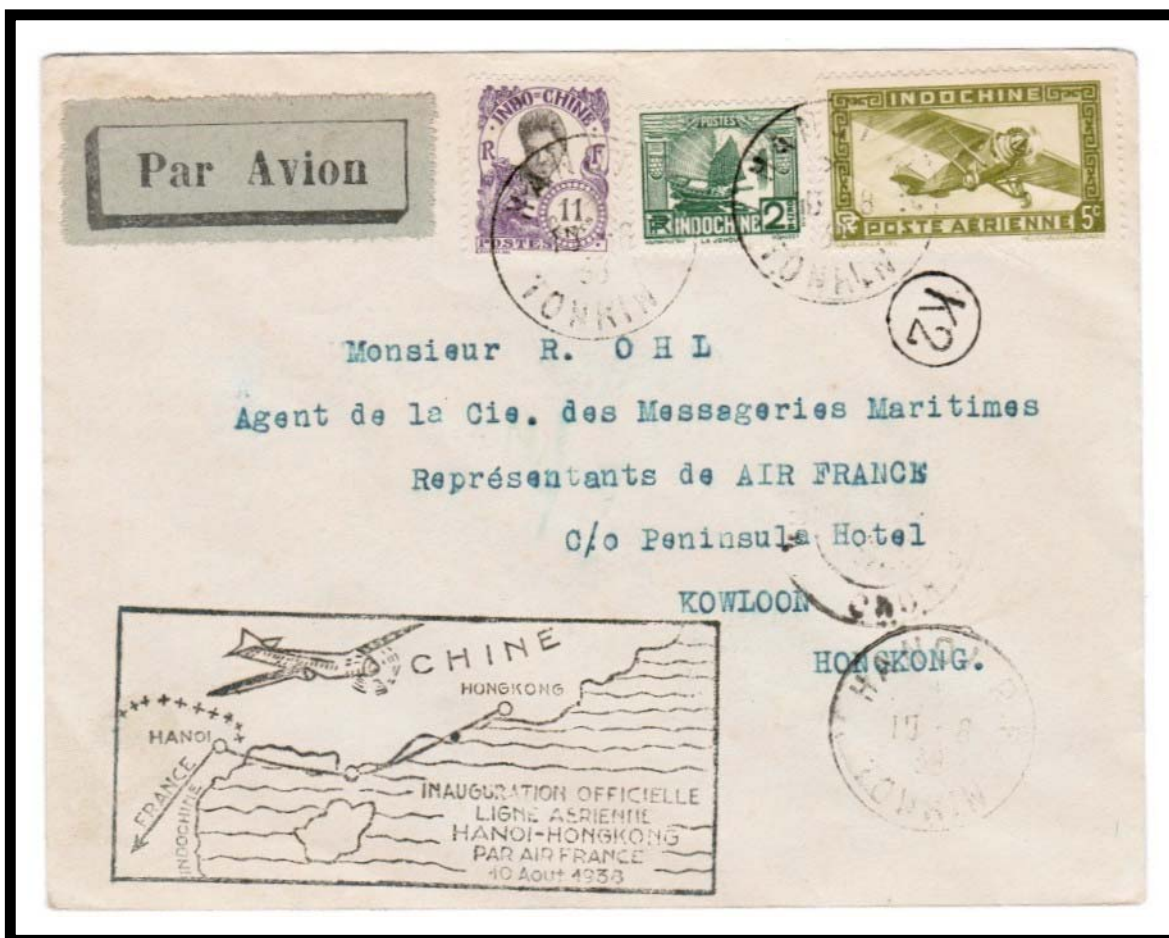
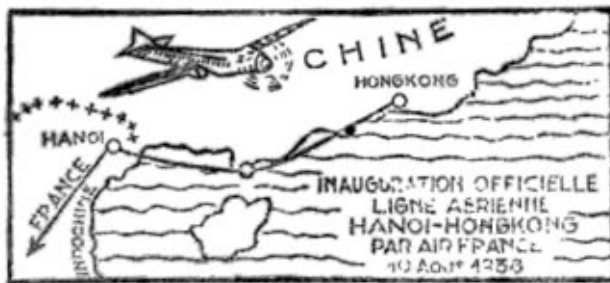
Inauguration of the extension of Air France's service from Hanoi to Hong Kong was on 10 August. The Dewoitine plane reached Hanoi at 6:45 on 10 August and completed the trip at Hong Kong at 11:45.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 9-8 38

Hanoi – Hong Kong  
10 August 1938

Some letters posted from Hanoi for Air France's opening of service to Hong Kong received a cachet showing the route over the border between Indochina and China.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI TONKIN 10-8 38  
airmail label and flight cachet  
K2 in circle

REVERSE

KOWLOON HONG KONG 10 AU 38

Batavia – Singapore – Saigon  
30 August 1938

KNILM, the Dutch airline, inaugurated a weekly service from Batavia (now Djakarta) to Saigon via Singapore. A special envelope and cachet commemorated the opening of the new air link.



POSTAL MARKINGS

BATAVIA CENTRAL 30.8.30  
flight cachet (purple)

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30-8 38



(Batavia –) Singapore – Saigon  
30 August 1938

Letters originating from Singapore were not adorned with a cachet even though the special envelopes were available.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SINGAPORE F 30 AU 1938  
REVERSE  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30-8 38

Saigon – Singapore – Batavia  
31 August 1938

The return of the first KNILM weekly service departed Saigon on 31 August. Like with the inbound flight, specially printed envelopes were employed with a commemorative cachet.

PREMIERE LIAISON  
POSTALE AERIEENNE  
SAIGON-SINGAPORE-BATAVIA  
PAR LA K.N.I.L.M  
31 AOUT 1938



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 31-8 38  
flight cachet

(Saigon – Singapore – Batavia)  
31 August 1938

Despite the special envelope, this letter was posted too late for KNILM's inaugural service to Java. A piece of paper with handwritten "By steamer" covers the printed airmail instruction. The transit time of 10 days was typical for sea mail of the period.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 10-9 38  
REVERSE  
SOERABAIA 19. 9. 38.

Saigon – Hanoi – Hong Kong  
5 October 1938

Air France's regular airmail service from Saigon to Hong Kong via Hanoi began on 5 October. The flight was accomplished in one day. The airmail surcharge was fixed at 20 cents.

PREMIER COURRIER AERIEN  
SURTAXÉ  
SAIGON-HONGKONG  
VIA AIR FRANCE



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 5-10 38  
flight cachet

(Saigon –) Hanoi – Hong Kong  
5 October 1938

Letters originating from Hanoi for the first regular Air France service to Hong Kong were struck with a distinctive triangular cachet.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 5-10 38  
flight cachet

REVERSE

KOWLOON HONG KONG 6 OC 38

Fort Bayard – Hanoi  
25 October 1938

With regular service between Hanoi and Hong Kong starting earlier in October 1938, a stop at Fort Bayard was introduced. Air France's first flight from Fort Bayard to Hanoi occurred on 25 October 1938. No special markings were applied to the limited mail.



POSTAL MARKINGS

FORT BAYARD KOUANGTCHEOUWAN 25-10 38  
airmail label

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 25-10 38  
NINH-BINH TONKIN 26-10 38

Hanoi – Kunming  
21-23 November 1938

A trial flight was made from Hanoi to Kunming in Yunnan Fou Province in November 1938. No cachets or other special markings were used but covers were postmarked upon arrival.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 21-11 38  
KUNMING (YUNNANFU) 23.11.38

New Year's Card  
1939

Continuing its annual tradition, Air France issued a special reduced rate postcard for the 1939 New Years holiday season. The airmail surcharge was reduced to one-fifth the normal fee if the card's message had 5 words or less.

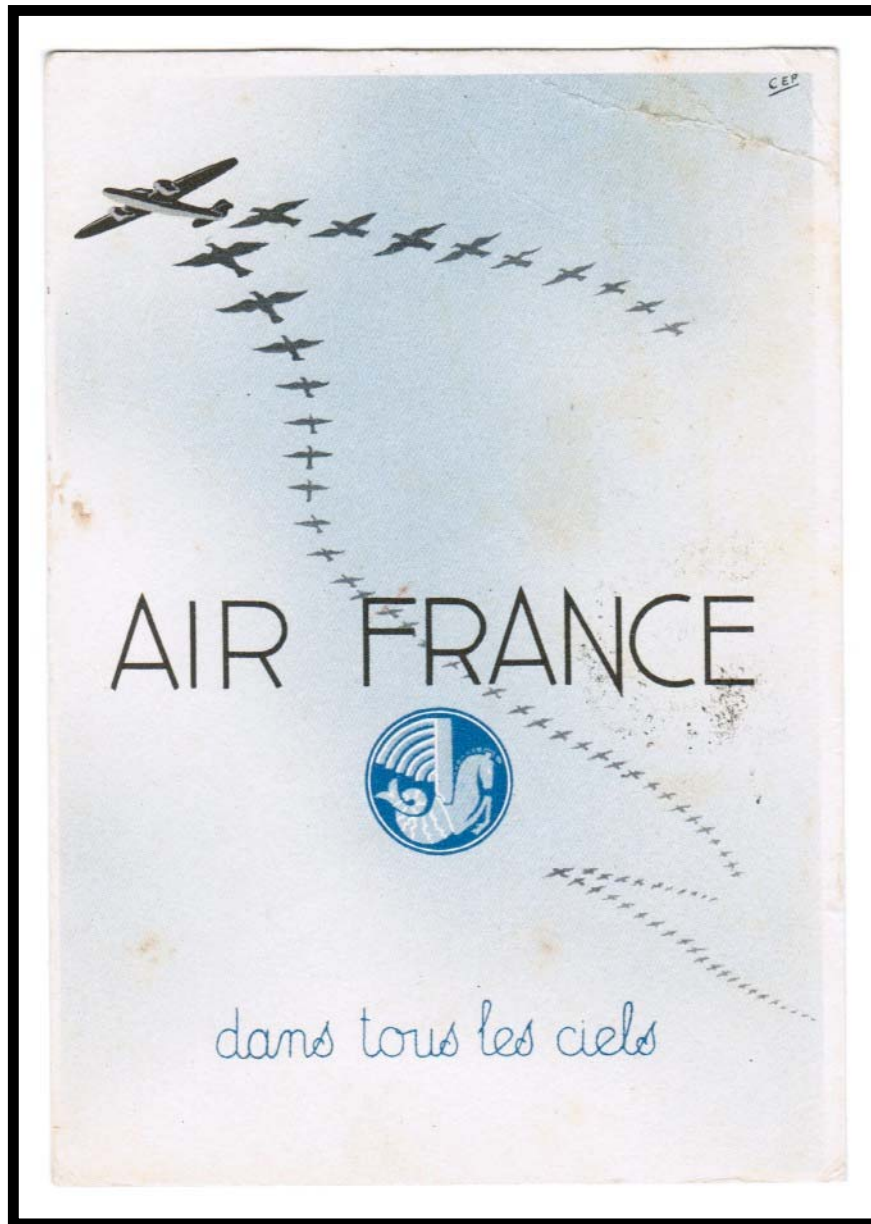


POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 13-1 39



New Year's Card  
1939

The design for Air France's 1939 New Year's postcard depicts stylized migratory birds merging into a two-engine monoplane.



Hong Kong – Hanoi – Saigon – Marseille – Paris  
10-18 March 1939

Starting 10 March, Air France began single plane service from Hong Kong to Paris via Indochina. Air France employed a number of cachets including a typical rectangular one for service as far as Hanoi.

FIRST AIR MAIL  
HONGKONG HANOI  
BY AIR FRANCE



POSTAL MARKINGS

VICTORIA HONG KONG 10 MR 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 11-3 39

Hong Kong – Hanoi – Saigon (– Marseille – Paris)  
10-18 March 1939

In addition to Air France's rectangular first flight cachet for the Hong Kong - Hanoi leg, a triangular cachet was put into service for commemorating the new service.



POSTAL MARKINGS

VICTORIA HONG KONG 10 MR 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 11-3 39

Hong Kong – Hanoi – Saigon – Marseille – Paris  
10-18 March 1939

Letters going from Hong Kong to Paris by Air France's service were given a separate triangular first flight cachet in blue ink.



POSTAL MARKINGS

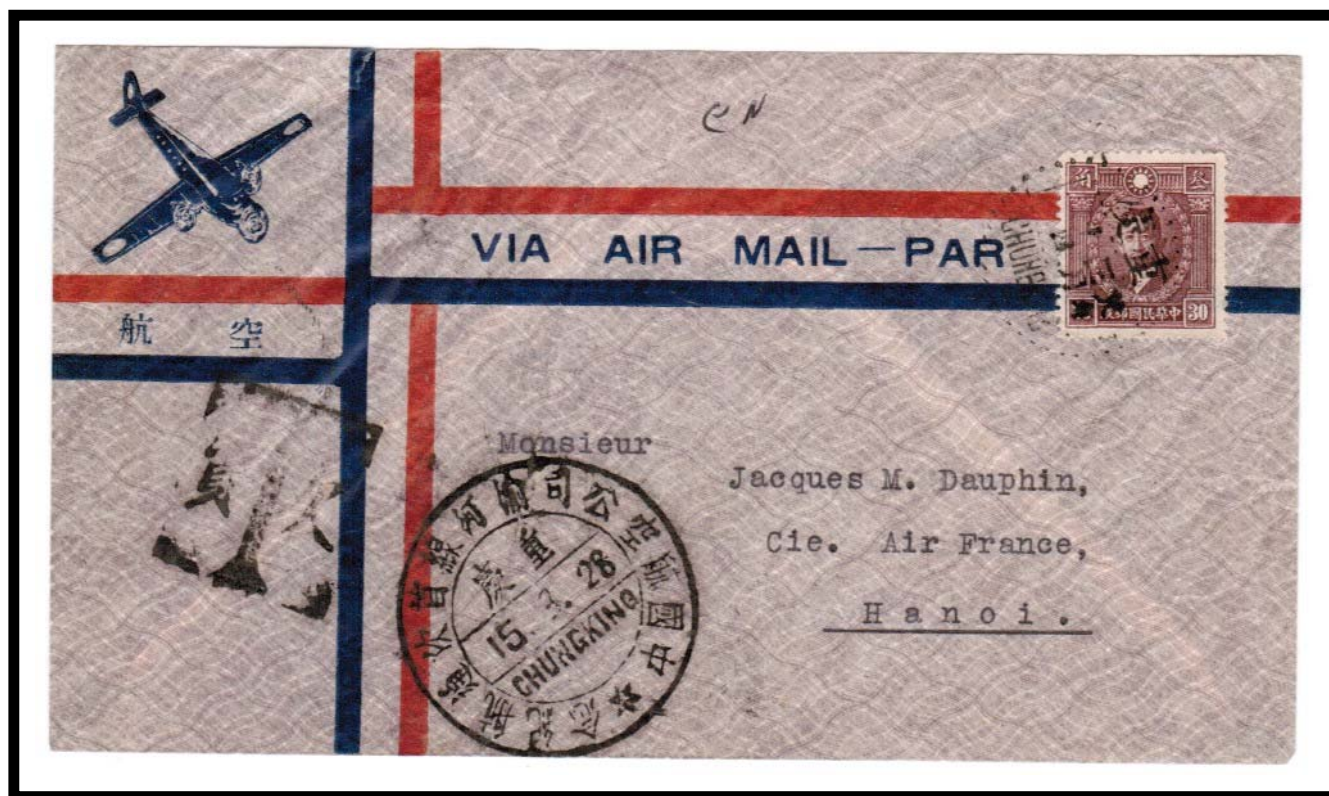
VICTORIA HONG KONG 10 MR 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

PARIS - VIII DISTRIBUTION 18-3 39

Chungking – Kunming – Hanoi  
15 March 1939

On 15 March, the Chinese National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) began regular flights to connect with Air France's service from Hanoi. The circular postmark reads "commemorating the first flight to Hanoi by CNAC."



POSTAL MARKINGS

CHUNGKING 15.3.28

"T" chop marking

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 15-3 39

Chungking – Kunming – Hanoi  
15 March 1939

The first flight by CNAC from Chungking to Hanoi was commemorated with a special postmark as well as an envelope that had been printed especially for the occasion.

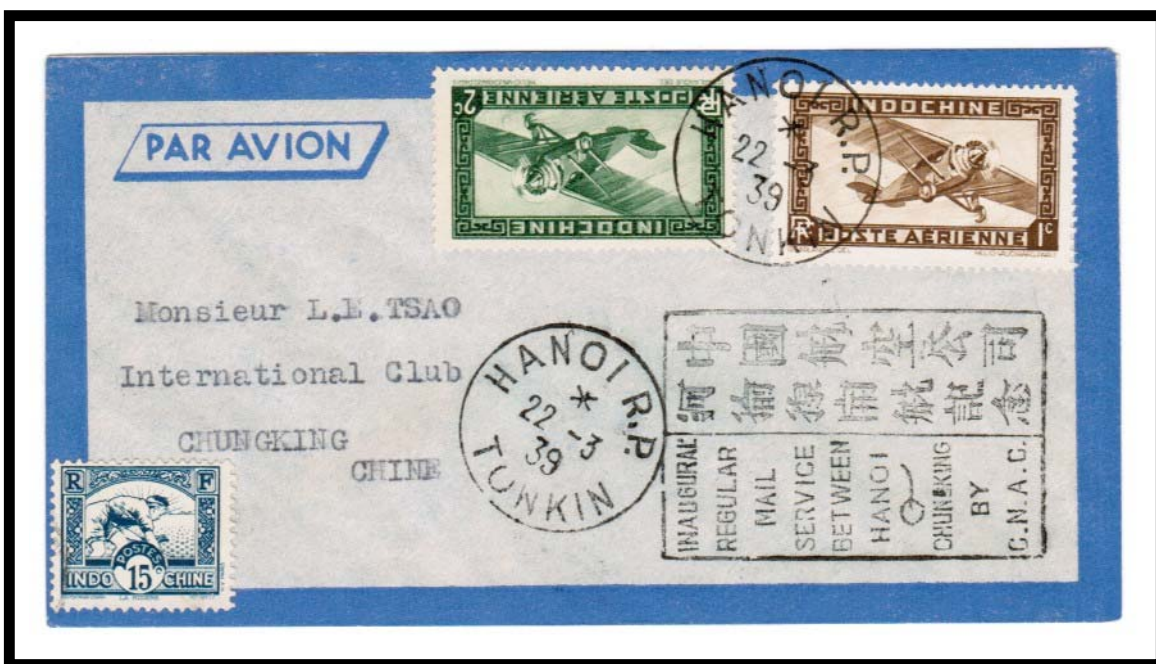


POSTAL MARKINGS  
CHUNGKING 15.3.28  
REVERSE  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 15-3 39

Hanoi – Kunming – Chungking  
22 March 1939

The northbound connection between Air France and the Chinese National Aviation Corporation began from Hanoi on 22 March. The route to Chungking included a stop at Kunming.

The bilingual flight cachet was struck in black ink on this first flight cover.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-3 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

CHUNGKING 22.3.28

Hanoi – Kunming – Chungking  
22 March 1939

Despite the fact that the new service connected CNAC with Air France, the only two languages used for the cachet were Chinese and English.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-3 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

CHUNGKING 22.83.28



Noumea – Australia – Indochina  
24 March - 4 April 1939

The first all-airmail service from New Caledonia to France was inaugurated in March 1939. Postage stamps received a special three-line handstamp. The volume of mail was as follows:

to France	1,154 letters
to elsewhere in Europe	75 letters
to Australia	373 letters
to Indochina	44 letters

1<sup>er</sup> Courrier 100% aérien  
Nelle-Calédonie – France  
via Australie



POSTAL MARKINGS

NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 22 MARS 39

REVERSE

BRISBANE 2 QLD. AUST. 25 MR 39

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 4-4 39

Hanoi – Vientiane  
22 May 1939

Air France investigated reinstating Vientiane as a regularly scheduled stop between Hanoi and Saigon in May 1939. A trial flight from Hanoi was accomplished on 22 May. Specially printed envelopes were used to celebrate the trial flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-5 39  
flight envelope

REVERSE

VIENTIANE LAOS 22-5 39  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 26-5 39

Vientiane – Hanoi  
22 May 1939

The “City of Saigon,” which made the trial flight from Hanoi, returned from Vientiane on the same day. Like the first leg, envelopes for the return trip bore an imprinted cachet noting the special nature of the flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
VIENTIANE LAOS 22-5 39  
REVERSE  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-5 39

Hanoi – Vientiane  
12 June 1939

Air France conducted a second trial flight from Hanoi to Vientiane on 12 June. No special cachets or other markings were utilized for this flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 12-6 39  
REVERSE  
VIENTIANE LAOS 12-6 39

Hanoi – Vientiane (– Saigon)  
6 July 1939

After eliminating the stop at Vientiane in 1938, Air France reestablished it on a regular basis effective 6 July 1939. The cachet was applied in blue for Air France's philatelic mail.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 6-7 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

VIENTIANE LAOS 6-7 39

Hanoi – Vientiane – Saigon  
6 July 1939

The round cachet was used on mail to Vientiane, the intermediate stop, as well as on mail to Saigon, the final stop. The plane for the new route was a Dewoitine 338 named "City of Damascus."



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 6-7 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-7 39

Hanoi – Vientiane – Saigon  
6 July 1939

For the July 1939 flight, the post office employed different ink colors for the commemorative cachet. For commercial (i.e., non-philatelic) mail, the cachet was applied with black ink.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 6-7 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-7 39  
CHOLON COCHINCHINE 7-7 39

Vientiane – Saigon  
6 July 1939

With the re-establishment of a stop at Vientiane for Air France's Hanoi-Saigon service, letters originating from Vientiane were struck with a separate first flight cachet.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
VIENTIANE LAOS 6-7 39  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-7 39



Vientiane – Saigon  
6 July 1939

Following the same practice as at Hanoi, philatelic mail was struck with a cachet in blue ink and commercial mail was struck with a black cachet.



POSTAL MARKINGS

VIENTIANE LAOS 6-7 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-7 39

Saigon – Vientiane (– Hanoi)  
7 July 1939

For Air France's first regular northbound service, with a resurrected stop at Vientiane, a rectangular cachet was struck with black ink at Saigon.

PREMIERE LIAISON  
POSTALE AERIENNE  
SAIGON-VIENTIANE-HANOI  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
7 JUILLET 1939



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-7 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

VIENTIANE LAOS 7-7 39

Saigon – Vientiane – Hanoi  
7 July 1939

For the inaugural flight, a special airmail surcharge of 5 cents was charged in addition to the 6 cents for regular internal letters.

PREMIERE LIAISON  
POSTALE AERIENNE  
SAIGON-VIENTIANE-HANOI  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
7 JUILLET 1939



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-7 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 7-7 39

Saigon – Vientiane – Hanoi  
7 July 1939

Posted from Phnompenh on 6 July, this mailing was transported first via Saigon and then via Vientiane to Hanoi thereby connecting four of Indochina's major cities in the space of two days.

PREMIERE LIAISON  
POSTALE AERIEUNE  
SAIGON-VIENTIANE-HANOI  
PAR AIR FRANCE  
7 JUILLET 1939



POSTAL MARKINGS  
PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 6-7 39  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 7-7 39

Fort Bayard – Hanoi  
19 July 1939

Air France's first official Fort Bayard – Hanoi service was marked with a large, dual-language cachet. Because Air France had not received permission to carry mail on this route, letters actually went by ship arriving three days later on 22 July 1939.



POSTAL MARKINGS

FORTBAYARD KOUANGTCHEOUWAN 19-7 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HAIPHONG TONKIN 22-7 39  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-7 39  
NINH-BINH TONKIN 22-7 39

Hanoi – Fort Bayard – Hong Kong  
26 July 1939

Inauguration of the Fort Bayard stop on the Hanoi- -Hong Kong route occurred on 26 July. A flight cachet commemorated the creation of the new stop.



POSTAL MARKINGS

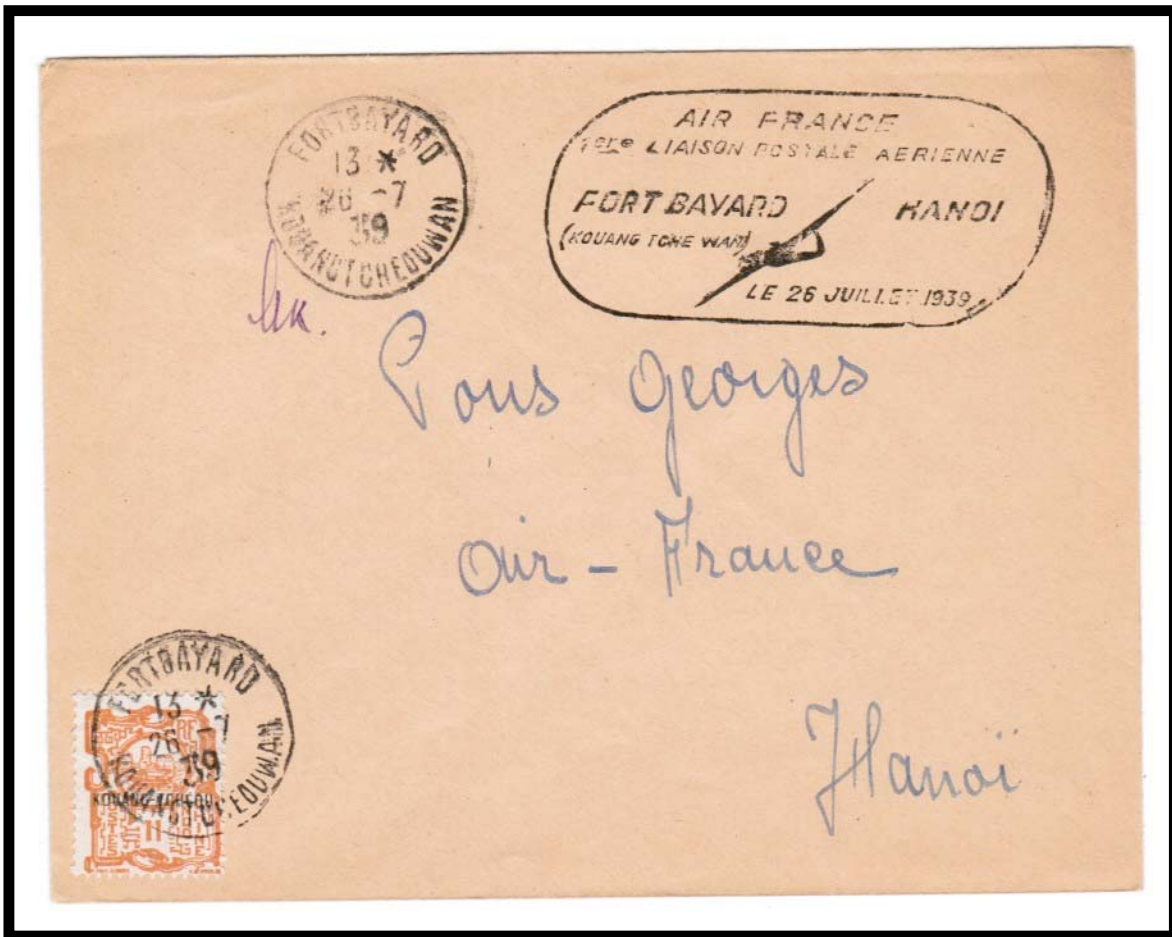
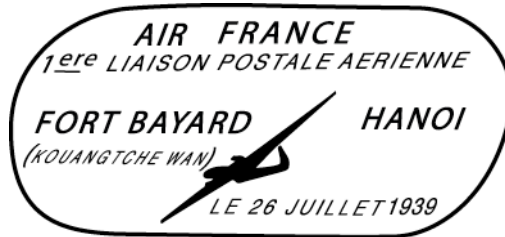
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 26-7 39  
flight cachet

REVERSE

FORTBAYARD KOUANGTCHEOUWAN 26-7 39

Fort Bayard – Hanoi  
26 July 1939

On its return, the Dewoitine 338 airplane carried mail from Fort Bayard to Hanoi and onward. A cachet, similar in design to that used for the outbound flight, marked first flight covers.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
FORTBAYARD KOUANGTCHEOUWAN 26-7 39  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 26-7 39