

# New Year's Card 1940

Since 1937, Air France had issued a special reduced rate postcard for the New Year's holiday season. If the message had 5 words or less, the airmail surcharge was reduced to one-fifth the normal fee.

Because of World War II, issuance of Air France's New Year's postcards was discontinued after 1940. The practice did not resume after the conclusion of the war.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 21-12 39

## New Year's Card 1940

In 1940, a break with tradition occurred. Instead of a single postcard design, Air France prepared two different designs for the holiday season. The least common design depicts a twin-engine plane above a stylized globe. Flowers and the Air France logo are in the foreground.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 3-1 40

New Year's Card  
1940

The second holiday card for 1940 bore the distinctively Indochinese image of Hanoi's Mot Cot Pagoda, which means "pagoda on a pillar." This pagoda had also been the central design element on Indochina's commemorative stamps for the Golden Gate Exposition of 1939.



POSTAL MARKINGS ON REVERSE  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 5-1 40



Last Air France Flight from Indochina  
15-29 June 1940

The last westbound Air France flight left Hanoi on 15 June and spent the night at Saigon before departing for France. The flight did not reach Marseille until the 29<sup>th</sup> of June.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
CHOLON COCHINCHINE 13-6 40



Tokyo – Hanoi  
15 July 1940

The weekly airmail service between Japan and Thailand began in June 1940. After prolonged negotiations with the French authorities, the service added a stop at Hanoi in mid July. The first flight on Japan Air Lines making the Hanoi connection departed Tokyo on 15 July 1940.



POSTAL MARKINGS

TOKYO NIPPON 14. 7. 40  
airmail label

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 16-7 40  
HANOI R.P. bis TONKIN 16-7 40

Hanoi – Bangkok  
16 July 1940

In July 1940, Japan Air Lines obtained permission to carry mail to Hanoi on its Tokyo-Bangkok service. Letters posted from Hanoi to Bangkok on the first service received no official cachet to commemorate the new air service.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI-A TONKIN 16-7 40

REVERSE

HANOI R. P. BIS TONKIN 16-7 40

HANOI R. P. TONKIN 16-7 40

BANGKOK G.P.O. 17. 7 40

Hanoi – Tokyo  
21-5 July 1940

The first return flight of Japan Air Lines service from Hanoi to Tokyo departed on 21 July 1940. As with the outbound trip, the Japanese Philatelic Society had prepared special envelopes to mark the inaugural flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 21-7 40  
airmail label

REVERSE

HANOI R. P. bis TONKIN 21-7 40  
TOKYO 15. 7. 25



Hanoi – Tokyo  
21-5 July 1940

The HANOI R.P. bis postmark belonged to the censor agency within the Hanoi Post Office. Normally, the postmark was only applied to the reverse of envelopes to indicate that the censors had seen the item.

Here, the censor postmark was used to cancel the stamps on what appears to be a souvenir for postal officials.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. bis TONKIN 21-7 40  
REVERSE  
TOKYO 15.7.25

Canton – Hanoi  
5 September 1940

On the eve of World War II in Asia, Japan had a firm grip on much of China. Japan Air Lines, which had been flying between Tokyo and Bangkok, continued to explore alternate routes. On 5 September 1940, Japan Air Lines made the first Canton-Hanoi-Bangkok flight. No special markings were used to mark the flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTON 5. 9. 40  
registration label

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. BIS TONKIN 6-9 40  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 7-9 40

Canton – Hanoi  
25 February 1941

After having made the first flight connecting Canton-Hanoi-Bangkok on 5 September, the official opening of the Canton-Hanoi route was on 25 February 1941. A simple cachet marked the event.

CANTON – HANOI  
FIRST FLIGHT



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTON 25. 2. 41  
registration label and flight cachet

REVERSE

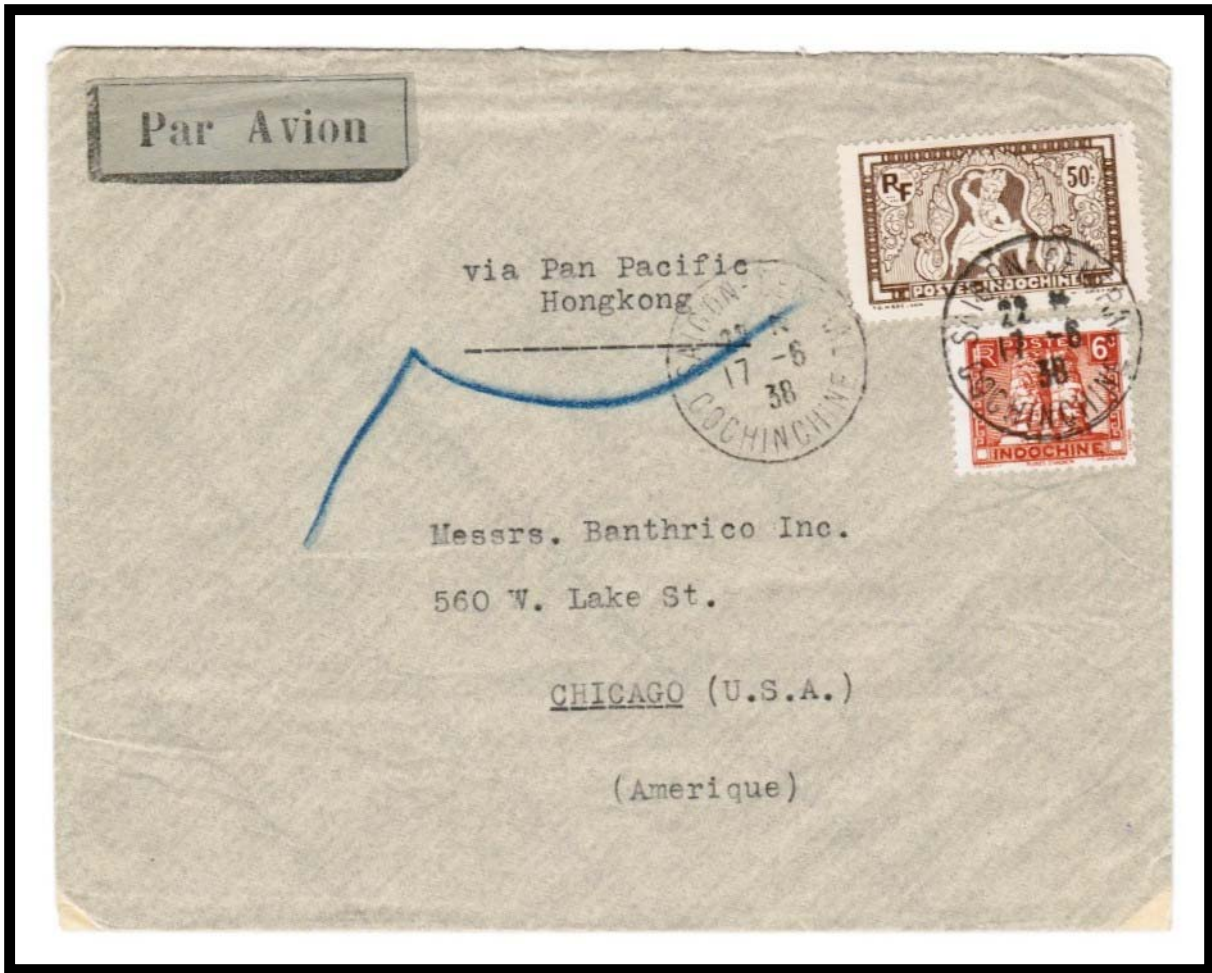
CANTON 25. 2. 41  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 7-3 41  
HANOI R.P. BIS TONKIN 7-3 41  
HAI-PHONG TONKIN 8-3 41



Transpacific Airmail  
June 1938

By the late 1930s, airmail routes had become well established across the Pacific Ocean. This airmail letter went via Hong Kong and across the Pacific to Chicago.

The blue crayon marking certified that the proper airmail fees had been paid.



POSTAL MARKINGS

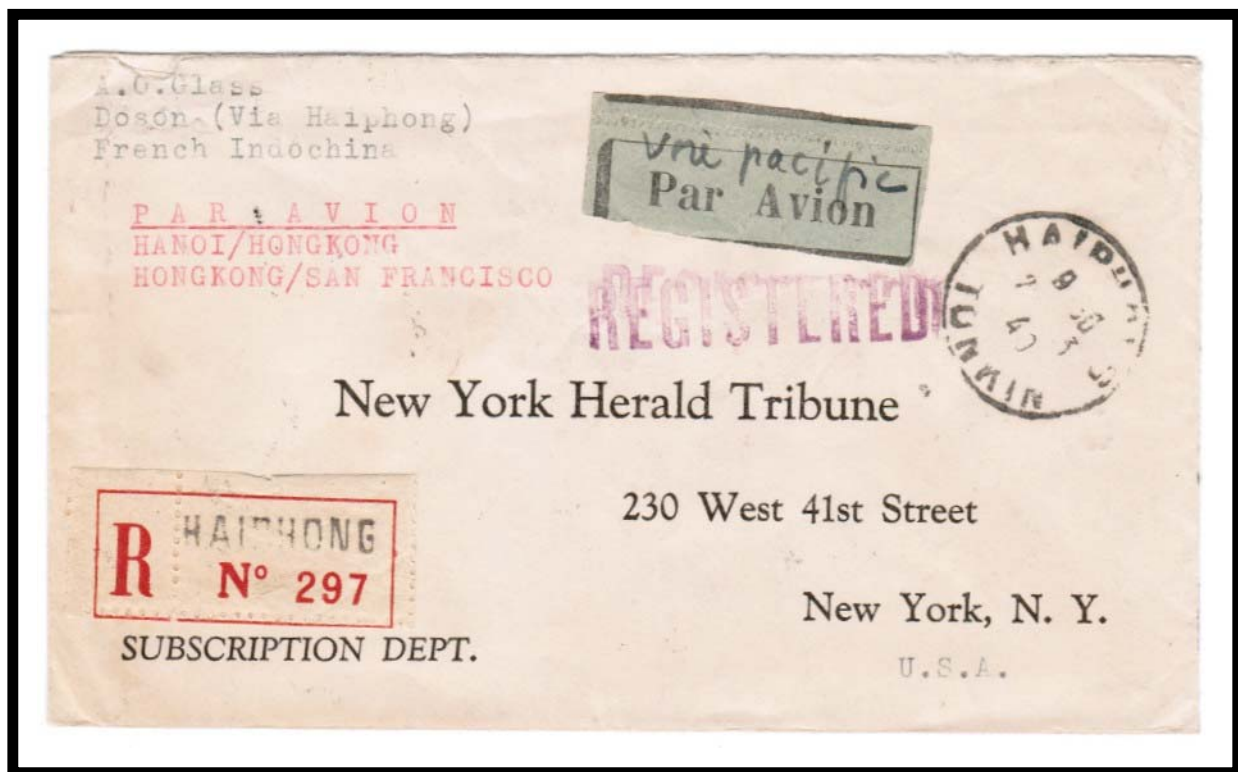
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 17-6 38  
airmail label and certification marking

REVERSE

VICTORIA HONG KONG 22 JU 38

Transpacific Airmail  
March 1940

Sent by registered mail, the sender provided ample instructions about transpacific airmail service. The total transit time from Haiphong to New York was 19 days.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HAIPHONG TONKIN 2-3 40  
airmail and registration labels  
REGISTERED handstamp (purple)

REVERSE

HAIPHONG TONKIN 2-3 40  
REGISTERED G.P.O. HONG KONG 26 MR 40  
HONOLULU, HAWAII REGISTERED APR 2 1940  
NEW YORK, N.Y. (TIMES SQ. STA.) REGISTERED APR 11 1940 (purple)

Transpacific Airmail  
June 1941

This 1941 airmail letter to New York had typed instructions for both transpacific and transatlantic services despite the fact that the destination was New York City. Perhaps because it was common practice to specify this routing for European destinations, the sender had unconsciously typed it on this envelope.



POSTAL MARKINGS

XUANLOC COCHINCHINE 27-6 41  
PASSED BY CENSOR 37 A (Singapore)  
"G" and "27" in circles (Singapore)

REVERSE

XUANLOC COCHINCHINE 27-6 41  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 27 JUIN 1941  
PASSED BY CENSOR 37 A



Transpacific Airmail  
July 1941

Specially printed envelopes were prepared for Pan American Airways's transpacific and transatlantic service to neutral Lisbon, Portugal for transfer through military authorities to unoccupied France.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 28-7 41

Transpacific Airmail  
August 1941

Pan American Airway's transatlantic and transpacific service was also available westbound. Posted from Morocco, this mailing went via Lisbon and Macau to Haiphong taking a little over 5 weeks in transit. The handwritten routing instructions were for service via "Tanger-Lisbonne-San Francisco."



POSTAL MARKINGS

CASABLANCA-BOURSE MAROC 14-8 41

REVERSE

LISBON-CENTRAL 20.8.41

MACAU 17-IX-41

HAIPHONG TONKIN 22-9 41

Saigon – France  
6 October 1945

The first postwar flight to carry airmail from Saigon was a military plane that left on 6 October 1946. It took all the mail that was waiting at the main post office in Saigon. Letters were postmarked on the 5th of October.

Even though the carrier was a military airplane, an airmail surcharge of 65 cents was required on letters.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 5-10 45



Saigon – France  
6 October 1945

At the conclusion of World War II, the letter rate to France was 15 cents. The fee for airmail service was 65 cents. Hence, the postage for this letter carried on the first westbound airmail service was calculated as follows:

letter rate to France	15 cents
<u>airmail surcharge</u>	<u>65 cents</u>
total	80 cents



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 5-10 45

France – Saigon  
10-17 December 1945

By the end of 1945, a mixture of military and commercial flights carried the mail to Indochina. In December 1945, a military flight carried letters, free of the airmail surcharge, from France to Indochina reaching Saigon on the 17th.



POSTAL MARKINGS

PORNICHET LOIRE INFRE 6-12 45  
SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 26-12 45  
“unclaimed” and “return to sender” handstamps

REVERSE

SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 18 DEC 45  
PORNICHET LOIRE INFERIURE 28-2 45

France – Saigon – Dalat  
10-21 December 1945

After leaving France, a military airplane made the first postwar air connection between Saigon and Dalat carrying French authorities sent to reestablish political control. Because the military carried the mail, there was no surcharge required for airmail service from France to Indochina.



POSTAL MARKINGS

PORNICHET LOIRE INFRE 6. 12 1945

REVERSE

SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 18-12 45  
DALAT ANNAM 21-12 45



France – Indochina  
11-14 June 1946

When Air France reestablished service from France to Indochina in June 1946, covers were handstamped with a commemorative cachet depicting the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and Angkor Wat in Cambodia.



POSTAL MARKINGS

PARIS-AVIATION SCE ETRANGER 10-6 1946  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 14-6 46



France – Indochina  
11-14 June 1946

In addition to black, first flight cachets were struck in violet ink. In this case, the letter also bears a black cachet on the reverse.



POSTAL MARKINGS

PEYREHORADE LANDES 8•6 1946  
flight cachet (purple)

REVERSE

flight cachet (black)  
SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 14-6 46  
PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 17-6 46

Tunis – Saigon  
10-14 June 1946

Connections between French colonies were quickly reestablished after World War II. One of the earliest flights to Indochina after the war originated in Tunis. A simple three-line cachet noting resumption of services was applied to letters.

REPRISE DU SERVICE AERIEN  
POUR L'INDO-CHINE  
10 JUIN 1946



POSTAL MARKINGS

TUNIS R.P. AFFRANCHEMENTS IV 10-6 46

flight cachet

registration label

"unknown" and "return to sender" handstamps

REVERSE

SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 14-6 46

Saigon – Paris  
16-20 June 1946

The first postwar westbound service by Air France left Indochina on 16 June. The mail arrived at Paris on 20 June. No official markings were applied to commercial mail.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 15-6 46  
registration label



Saigon – Paris  
16-20 June 1946

Although no official markings were applied to mail from Air France's first postwar westbound service, the airline handstamped some of the philatelic mail with an explanatory marking on the reverse.

Aucun cachet officiel n'a été  
utilisé lors de la réouverture de  
la ligne Indochine / France par  
DC. 4 F.BBDG 16/20 Juin 1946  
AIR FRANCE

REVERSE



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 16-6 46

PARIS AVIATION 20-6 46

REVERSE

explanatory handstamp



Paris – Tunis – Saigon – Shanghai  
10-17 January 1947

In reestablishing its Far East service, Air France sent a study flight via North Africa in January 1947. The DC-4 departed Tunis on the 10th of January and arrived at Shanghai on the 17th.

Liaison Aéro-Postale  
PARIS-TUNIS-SAIGON-SHANGHAI  
VOYAGE D'ÉTUDE  
Escale de Tunis-10 Janvier 1947



POSTAL MARKINGS

TUNIS R.P. AFFRANCHISSEMENTS IV 10-1 47

registration label

SHANGHAI 19 1. 36

SHANGHAI 25 1. 47

"unclaimed" handstamp

REVERSE

SHANGHAI 25 1. 47

Shanghai – Saigon – Paris  
20-24 January 1947

The return of Air France's study trip departed Shanghai on 20 January. No special markings were used except for an instructive marking on the reverse. The plane and its mail reached Paris in only four days on the 24th.

AUCUN CACHET OFFICIEL N'A ÉTÉ  
UTILISÉ LORS DU VOYAGE D'ÉTUDES  
SHANGHAI/SAIGON LE 20/1/47 PAR  
F. BBDE AIR FRANCE

REVERSE



POSTAL MARKINGS

SHANGHAI 20 1. 47

REVERSE

instructive marking (red)  
PARIS AVIATION 24-1 47

Saigon – Shanghai  
4 March 1947

To commemorate the reopening of Air France's route to Shanghai in March 1947, letters were handstamped with a cachet depicting the temples at Angkor and a Chinese pagoda.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 3 3 47  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SHANGHAI 4. 3. 47



Saigon – Shanghai  
4 March 1947

The commemorative cachet was typically struck with black ink but purple was used as well. Here Saigon's postmark was also struck with purple ink.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 3 3 47  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SHANGHAI 4. 3. 47

Saigon – Shanghai  
4 March 1947

This cover was faked with postmarks and cachets to appear to be a first flight cover as indicated by: 1) the crude nature of the markings 2) the absence of an address and 3) the low value of the affixed postage.



POSTAL MARKINGS

fake SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 3 3 47  
fake flight cachet

REVERSE

fake SHANGHAI 4. 3. 47

Saigon – Manila  
4 March 1946

Philippine Airways performed a trial return flight from Saigon to Manila on 4 March. Only 40 letters were carried. No distinctive postal markings were applied by the post office or the airline.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 4 3 47

REVERSE

GENERAL DELIVERY MANILA POST OFFICE MAR 17 1947





Shanghai – Saigon –  
Paris  
6 March 1947

Reopening of Air  
France's return service  
from Shanghai to Paris via  
Saigon occurred on  
6 March 1947.

POSTAL MARKINGS  
SHANGHAI 4.3.47

Saigon – Manila  
13 March 1947

Philippine Airways conducted its second trial flight from Saigon to Manila starting on 13 March 1947. Exactly like the first flight, only 40 letters were reported to have been carried on the second flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 13-3 47

Paris – Tunis – Saigon – Shanghai  
30 March - 3 April 1947

The new route from Paris to Saigon and Shanghai went via Tunis, Cairo, Basorah, Karachi and Calcutta. Mail deposited at Tunis was struck with a cachet noting the stop there.

OUVERTURE DE LA LIGNE  
PARIS-TUNIS-SAIGON-SHANGHAI  
*Escale de Tunis - 30 Mars 1947*



POSTAL MARKINGS  
TUNIS R.P. DEPART TUNISIE 30 3 47  
flight cachet  
SHANGHAI



Saigon – Hong Kong  
3 April 1947

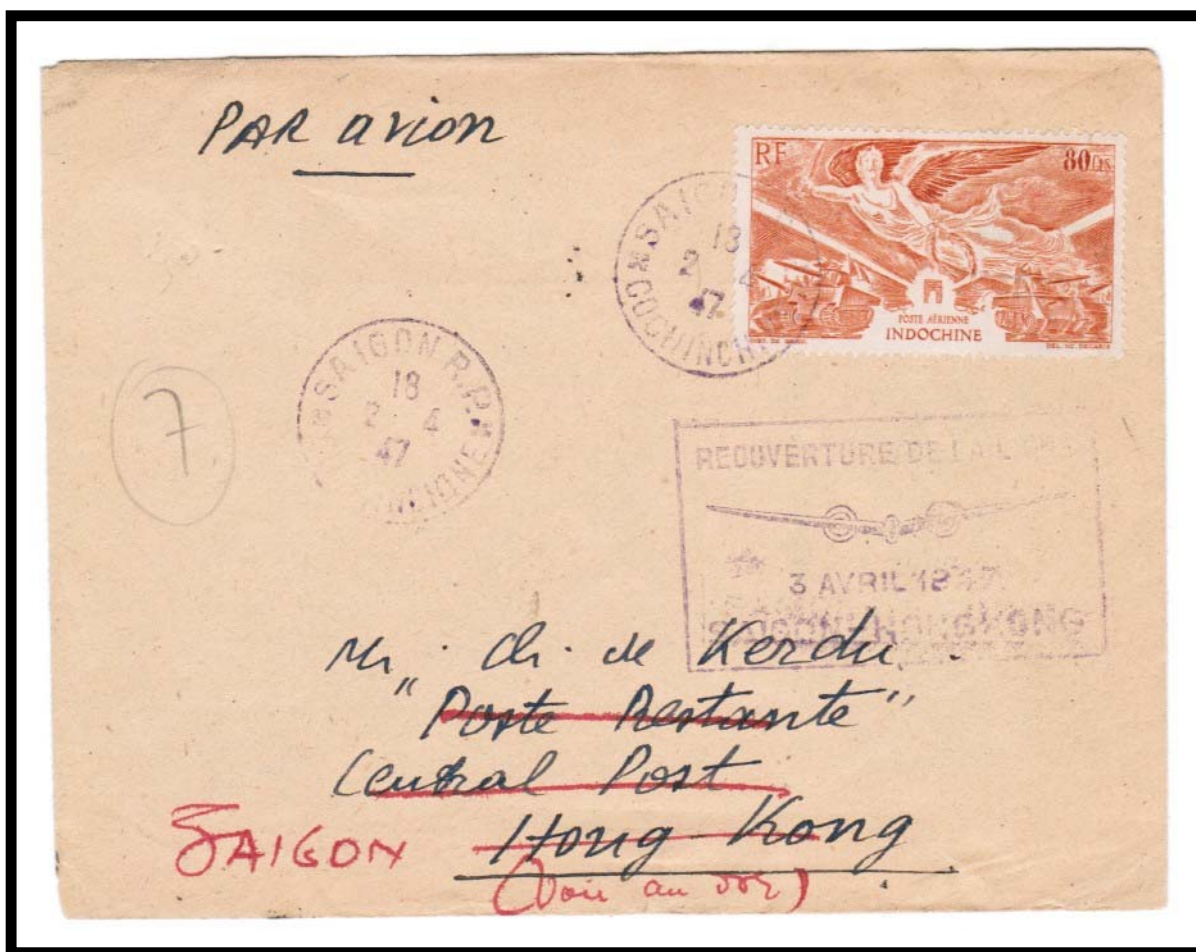
Air France resumed service between Saigon and Hong Kong on 3 April 1947. A violet cachet was applied to first flight covers to celebrate the re-establishment of this important prewar service.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 2 4 47  
flight cachet

Saigon – Hong Kong  
3 April 1947

Air France resumed service between Saigon and Hong Kong on 3 April 1947. A violet cachet was applied to first flight covers to celebrate the re-establishment of this important prewar service.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 2 4 47  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HONG KONG 16 3 AP 47  
HONG KONG 5 21 AP 47  
"return to sender" handstamp

Hong Kong – Saigon – Paris  
5-9 April 1947

Letters posted from Hong Kong for the resumption of Air France's service received the same violet cachet independent of destination. Mail arrived at Paris on the 9th of April.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HONG KONG 3 5 AP 47  
flight cachet

REVERSE

PARIS AVIATION 9-4 47



Hong Kong – Saigon – Paris  
5-9 April 1947

Reopening of Air France's westbound service commenced on 5 April. A violet cachet commemorated the resumption of a regular flight connection.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HONG KONG 3 5 AP 47  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 5 4 47

Algeria – Tunisia – Indochina  
27-30 April 1947

Air France's first direct service from Algeria to Indochina via Tunisia departed on 27 April 1947. The total amount of first flight mail was 450 grams.



POSTAL MARKINGS

ALGER-GARE SECTION AVION 27-4 47  
framed "Unknown" and "Return to sender" handstamps

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 30-4 47

Saigon – Pnompenh – Bangkok  
9 June 1947

Revival of regular service by Air France from Saigon to Bangkok began on 10 June 1947. A rectangular violet cachet, typical of the period, marked the event.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 9-6 47  
flight cachet

REVERSE

BANGKOK G.P.O. 10. 6. 47



(Saigon –) Phnompenh – Bangkok  
9 June 1947

Mail originating from Phnompenh for Air France's reinstated service to Bangkok did not receive any distinctive markings to denote the resumption of airmail service.



POSTAL MARKINGS

PHNOMPENH CAMBODGE 9 JUN 47

REVERSE

BANGKOK G.P.O. 10. 6. 47

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 25--9 47

PHNOMPENH CAMBODGE 28-9 47

Pnompenh – Saigon  
11 June 1947

The eastbound return trip for the revived Bangkok-Saigon service occurred on 11 June. Letters posted from Pnompenh did not receive any special markings to commemorate the event. Fifty letters from Pnompenh were carried on the inaugural flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
PHNOMPENH CAMBODGE 11-6 47  
REVERSE  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 11-6 47

Amsterdam – Saigon  
December 1947

Starting from Holland, KLM Airlines made, via Saigon, a special flight to Morotai, in the eastern portion of the Dutch Indies at the end of 1947. No special cachets were used. A card for the flight is endorsed “By Spec(ial) Dutch Flight” at the upper left.



POSTAL MARKINGS

AMSTERDAM CENTRAL STATION 22. XII. 1947  
framed "Return to Sender"

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 5-1 48



Paris – Saigon  
December 1947

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the claimed first mechanical flight, specially printed covers were flown from Paris to Saigon in December 1947.

POSTAL MARKINGS

EXPOSITION DES AILES  
BRISÉES PARIS 11 • 12 • 47  
registration label

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE  
19-12 47



France – South America  
1948

A letter posted from Saigon and addressed to Brazil traveled via France. The mailing was given markings in both France and Brazil commemorating the twentieth anniversary of airmail service across the South Atlantic.



(REVERSE)



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 2-3 48  
flight anniversary commemorative handstamp (Brazil)

REVERSE

flight anniversary commemorative handstamp (France)  
CORRIEO AERIO BRASIL 9 III 48



# Round-the-World January 1948

A round-the-world flight in 100 days originated at Miami on 13 January 1948. Postmarked at Saigon on 24 February, the aerogram reached New York on 15 April. Covers were sold to support cancer research.





Hanoi – Haiphong – Hong Kong  
10 May 1948

After Air France routes were established at Saigon, the secondary routes were reconstituted. Service from Hanoi to Hong Kong via Haiphong resumed on 10 May 1948.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI TONKIN 9-6 48  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HANOI TONKIN 9-6 48  
SHANGHAI 11. 5. 48

Hanoi – Haiphong – Hong Kong  
10 May 1948

At least some of the mail posted from Haiphong, the intermediate stop, was struck with the same flight cachet used at Hanoi to mark the reopening of the air route.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HAIPHONG TONKIN 9 5 48  
flight cachet

REVERSE

HONG KONG 10 MY 48

Hanoi – Haiphong – Hong Kong  
10 May 1948

Based on the cachet applied to this cover, the flight reopening Air France's Hanoi-Haiphong-Hong Kong service had originally been scheduled for 26 April 1948. Evidently, conditions forced a postponement until 10 May. The delay resulted in the cover receiving a second cachet for the day of the actual flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI TONKIN 9-5 48  
flight cachets

REVERSE

HONG KONG 10 10 MY 48



Hong Kong – Haiphong – Hanoi  
10 May 1948

Air France's inaugural return service from Hong Kong to Hanoi via Haiphong occurred the same day as the outbound flight, 10 May 1948. The Hong Kong post office applied a large rectangular first flight cachet to mark the event.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HONG KONG 10 MAY 1948  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
HAIPHONG TONKIN 10-5 48

Air Post Rally  
12-13 June 1948

A serial numbered, commemorative envelope sent from Saigon to France celebrated the first air post rally held at Angers on 12-13 June 1948.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 6 48  
flight cachet

Hanoi – Kunming  
11 June 1948

Curiously, the date for Hanoi's cachet is one day later than that of Haiphong. Envelopes posted at Hanoi were handstamped with a first flight cachet typical of the period.

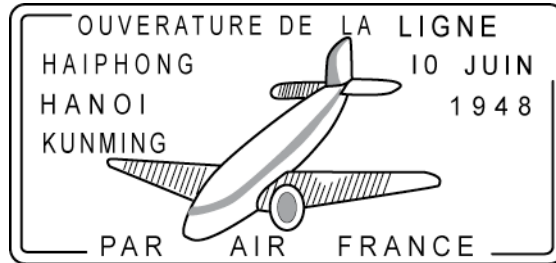


POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI TONKIN 10-6 48  
flight cachet  
KUNMING 14. 6. 48



Haiphong – Kunming  
10 June 1948

Extension of Air France's service into China from Indochina began in June 1948. Letters that originated at Haiphong received a unique cachet that pictured a twin-engine airliner of the period.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HAIPHONG TONKIN 10-6 48

flight cachet

KUNMING 14 6. 48

"incomplete address" and "return" handstamps

Kunming – Hanoi – Hong Kong  
14 June 1948

The inaugural return flight from Kunming to Hanoi occurred on 15 June. Unlike the typical practice of the period, no first flight cachet was employed for this flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS

KUNMING 14. 6. 48  
HANOI TONKIN 15-6 48

Kunming – Hanoi – Hong Kong  
14 June 1948

Although no cachet was prepared for the opening of the Kunming-Hanoi-Hong Kong service, Air France made specially printed envelopes available to the public.





Saigon – Seno – Vientiane  
11 August 1948

Another of Air France's prewar routes, from Saigon to Vientiane, was reestablished effective 11 August. An intermediate stop was made at Seno.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 10-8 48  
flight cachet

REVERSE

VIENTIANE LAOS 11-8 48

Vientiane – Seno – Saigon  
12 August 1948

Resumption of the Vientiane-Saigon air link occurred on 12 August. A rectangular cachet with a stylized airplane, the typical format of the period, marked the first flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
VIENTIANE LAOS 12-8 48  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 12-9 48

Saigon – Noumea  
24 November - 1 December 1948

Using a DC-4 airplane, Air France made a trial flight from Saigon to Noumea, New Caledonia starting on 24 November. The route was via Singapore, Batavia, Macassar, Darwin, Sydney and Brisbane.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 24-11 48  
flight cachet

REVERSE

NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 1 DEC 48  
NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 2 DEC 48



Noumea – Saigon  
8-14 December 1948

Air France's return flight from Noumea to Saigon via Sydney departed on 8 December and arrived at Saigon on 14 December.



POSTAL MARKINGS

NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 8 DEC 48  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 14-12 48

Noumea – Saigon  
8-14 December 1948

The cachet for Air France's trial flight from Noumea to Saigon was usually struck with black ink on registered mailings. Here the cachet was applied with blue ink for a regular letter.



POSTAL MARKINGS

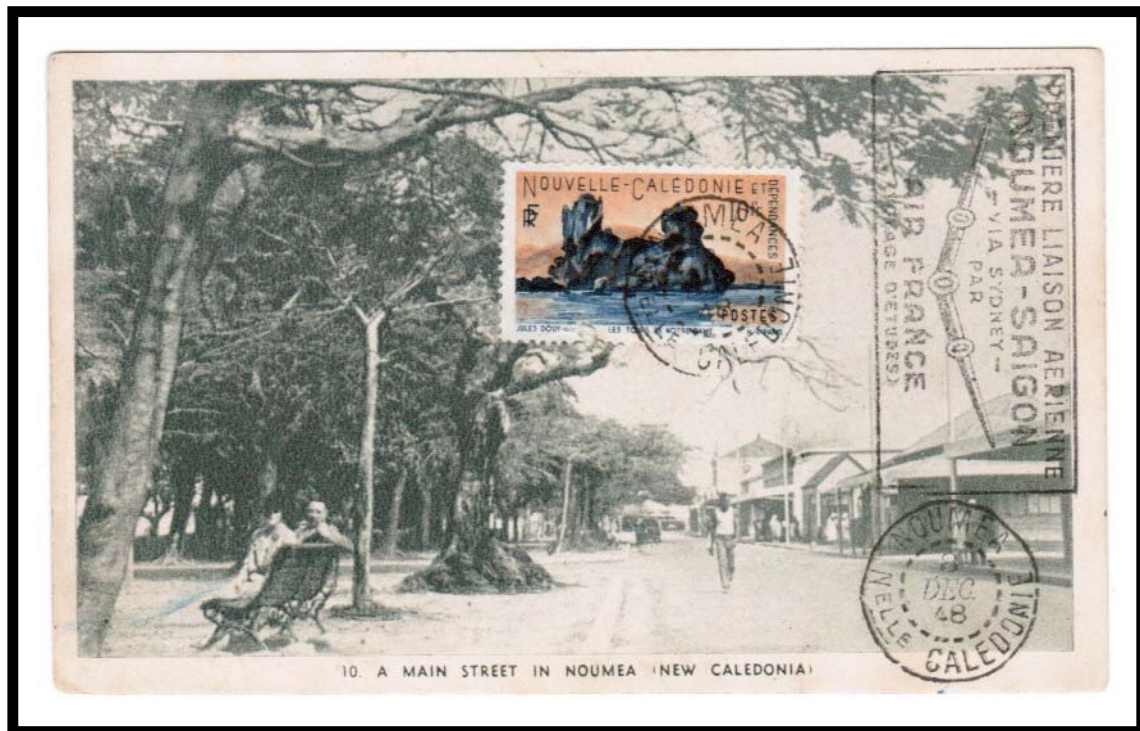
NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 8 DEC 48  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 14-12 48

Noumea – Saigon  
8-14 December 1948

Mailings for first flights were typically envelopes. Here, the first air service from Noumea carried a picture postcard to Saigon and then onward by Air France to Paris.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 8 DEC 48  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
PARIS AVIATION SERVICE INTERIER 17-12 1948



Haiphong – Saigon  
19 February 1949

In 1949, Air France began regular service between Haiphong and Saigon. The required postage for an internal airmail letter was 1\$20.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HAIPHONG TONKIN 19-2 49  
REVERSE  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 19-2 1949

Saigon – Haiphong  
19 February 1949

Both directions of the direct service occurred on the same day, 19 February. Arthur Walthausen, a prominent philatelist in Saigon, prepared printed commemorative envelopes.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 19-2 1949  
REVERSE  
HAIPHONG TONKIN 19-2 49

Saigon – Noumea  
24 September 1949

The cachet for first flight mail from Saigon to Noumea was normally struck with black ink. In the case of this regular letter, the cachet was printed with blue ink.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. 24-9 1949  
flight cachet (blue)



Saigon – Brisbane – (Noumea)  
24 September 1949

Air France's new route from Indochina to New Caledonia went via Australia. This envelope was carried by the inaugural service as far as Australia. Since the addressee could not be found, the letter was eventually returned to Saigon.



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTHO. COCHINCHINE 23-9 1949  
BEXLEY N.S.W. 10C49

REVERSE

flight cachet  
AIR MAIL BRISBANE QLD. AUST 27SE49  
SAIGON RP SUD VIETNAM 11-12 1949

Noumea – Saigon  
30 September - 4 October 1949

The return flight from Noumea to Saigon departed 30 September. A black cachet commemorated the new service.



POSTAL MARKINGS

NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 30 SEPT 49  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 3 10 1949



Noumea – Saigon  
30 September - 4 October 1949

With this example, the outbound cachet was obliterated with multiple black handstamps. The cachet for the return flight was applied to commemorate the flight.

Premier voyage régulier  
**NOUMÉA-PARIS**  
par Air France  
—  
30 sept. — 4 oct. 1949



POSTAL MARKINGS

NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 30 SEPT 49  
flight cachet

REVERSE

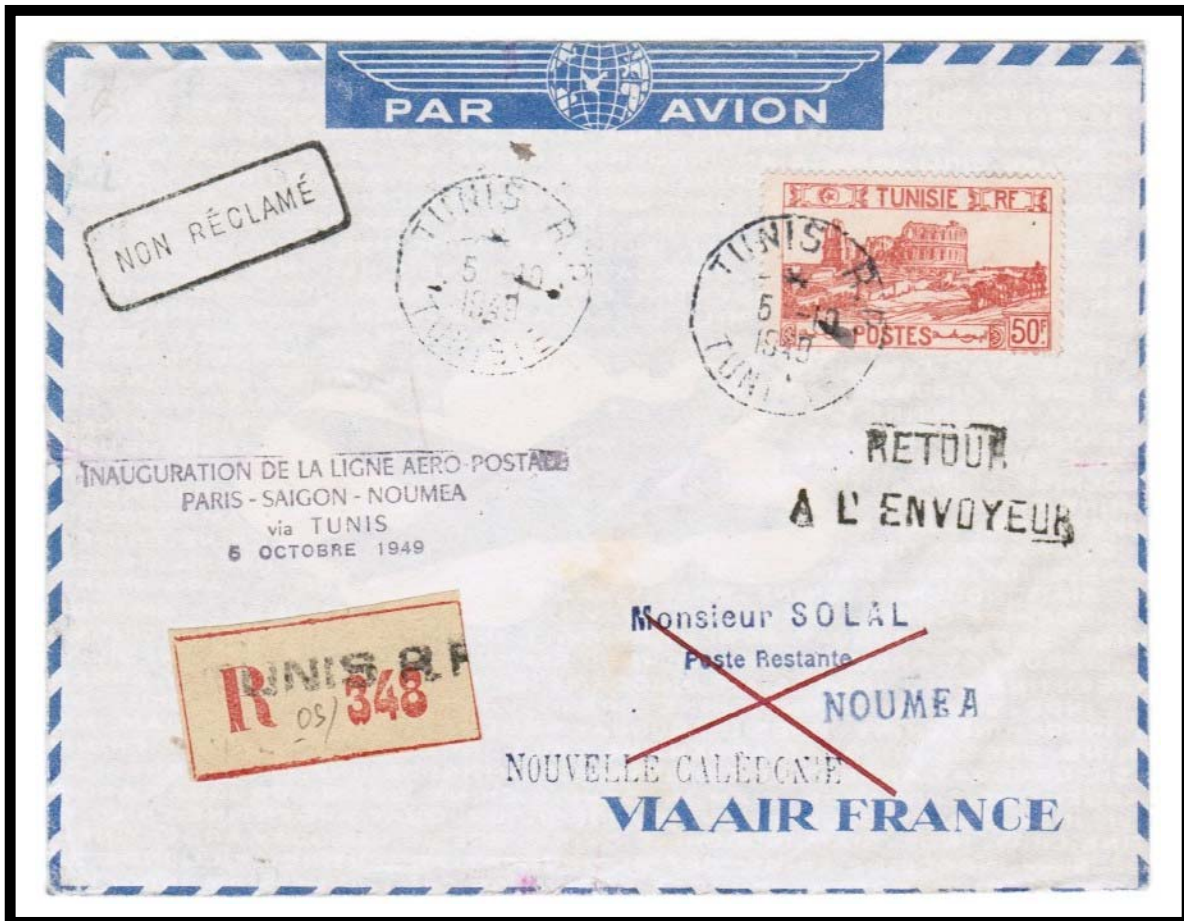
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 3 10 1949



Tunis – Saigon – Noumea  
5-11 October 1949

In October 1949, Air France changed the routing of its Far East service by instituting a stop at Tunis. A total of 450 letters were posted for the first service to Noumea via Saigon.

INAUGURATION DE LA LIGNE AERO-POSTALE  
PARIS - SAIGON - NOUMEA  
via TUNIS  
5 OCTOBRE 1949



POSTAL MARKINGS

TUNIS R.P. TUNISIE 5-10 1949  
registration label  
flight cachet  
framed "Unclaimed"  
unframed "Return to sender"

REVERSE

NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 11 OCT 49  
NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 26 OCT 49  
TUNIS RP CABINE 17-2 1950

Hanoi – Paris  
8 October 1949

Direct service from Hanoi to Paris began on 8 October 1949. A two-line cachet was applied with violet ink to first flight covers.

LIAISON DIRECTE  
HANOÏ-PARIS



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOÏ R.P. NORD VIET NAM 8-10 49  
LIAISON DIRECTE HANOÏ-PARIS

Paris – Saigon  
1 March - 3 March 1950

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of air service between Paris and Saigon, the French post office authorized a commemorative four-line cachet with black ink.

20° ANNIVERSAIRE  
DE LA LIAISON AÉRIENNE  
**PARIS - SAÏGON**  
1930 - 1950



POSTAL MARKINGS

PARIS - 30 80 DIDEROT 28-2 1950  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. SUD VIETNAM 3-3 1950



Paris – Saigon  
1 March - 3 March 1950

At the time of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Paris-Saigon connection by air, Air France began using Lockheed Constellation aircraft on the route. Specially printed envelopes identified the airplane company as “LOOKHEAD.”

20° ANNIVERSAIRE  
DE LA LIAISON AÉRIENNE  
**PARIS - SAÏGON**  
1930 - 1950



POSTAL MARKINGS  
P.L.M. AVION 8 1-3 1950  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
SAIGON R.P. SUD VIETNAM 3-3 1950

Paris – Saigon  
1-3 March 1950

The 20th anniversary handstamp was normally struck with black ink. Here it was applied with red ink.

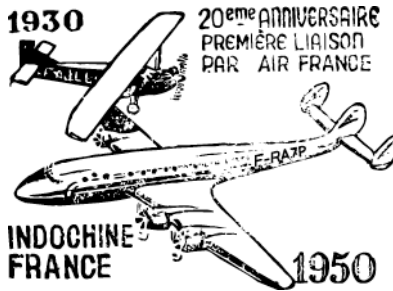
20° ANNIVERSAIRE  
DE LA LIAISON AÉRIENNE  
**PARIS - SAÏGON**  
1930 - 1950



POSTAL MARKINGS  
PARIS 31 PALAIS BOURSON 28-2 1950  
flight cachet

Saigon – Paris  
4 - 6 March 1950

To commemorate 20 years of regular air service, mail originating from Saigon was handstamped with a pictorial cachet contrasting 1930s vintage aircraft with the Lockheed Constellation of 1950.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 4-3 1950  
flight cachet and airmail label

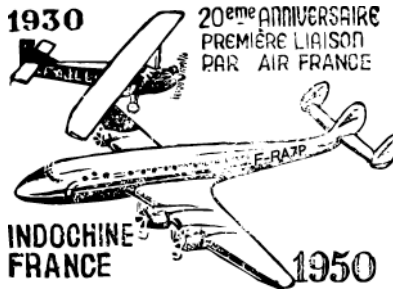
REVERSE

NEW YORK, N.Y. REG'Y DIV. 3-8 1950



Saigon – Paris  
4 - 6 March 1950

Use of the cachet was not limited to envelopes. Postcards, such as this picture postcard depicting a Lockheed Constellation flying over Paris, also received the commemorative handstamp.

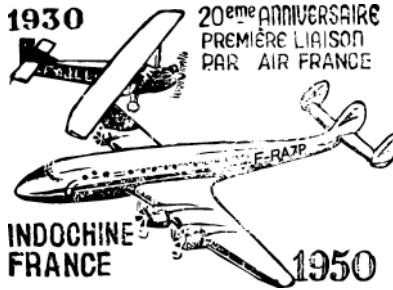


POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 4-3 1950  
flight cachet

Saigon – Paris  
4-6 March 1950

The commemorative handstamp was applied to mail that originated throughout Indochina, such as this letter posted from Phnompenh.



POSTAL MARKINGS

PHNOMPENH CAMBODGE 3-3 1950  
flight cachet

REVERSE

PHNOMPENH CAMBODGE 3-3 1950  
SAIGON R.P. SUD VIETNAM 4-3 1950  
TIZIOUZOU ALGER 8-3 1950

Saigon – Paris  
4 - 6 March 1950

Privately printed envelopes were used in connection with the inaugural service. The wording identified the company that produced the Constellation as “LOOKHEED” correcting an error on previous flight covers. The cachet was struck in purple ink as well as black ink.

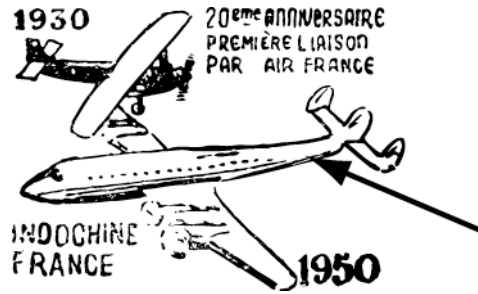


POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 4-3 1950  
flight cachet



Saigon – Paris  
4 - 6 March 1950

Local fabricators copied the 20th anniversary cachet but they neglected important details from the original such as the plane's identification number near the rear of the fuselage.



POSTAL MARKINGS

fake SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 4 3 1950

fake flight cachet

REVERSE

fake PARIS VIII DISTRIBUTION 7-3 1950

Paris – Saigon – Noumea – Tahiti  
22 March - 9 April 1950

Inauguration of Air France's direct service to Tahiti via Saigon in 1950 was commemorated with a yellow label on first flight covers from France.



POSTAL MARKINGS

PARIS RP AVION SCE ETRANGER 22-3 1950  
first flight label and registration label  
framed "Unknown" and framed "Return to Sender"

REVERSE

PAPEETE TAHITI 29-3 1950

(Paris –) Saigon – Noumea – Tahiti  
24 March - 9 April 1950

Air France flew a trial flight from Paris to the South Pacific via Saigon. Mail posted at Saigon was struck with a black cachet.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 24-3 1950  
flight cachet

REVERSE

PAPEETE TAHITI 9 AVRIL 1950





(Paris –) Saigon – Noumea – Tahiti  
24 March - 9 April 1950



The flight cachet for the 1950 South Pacific trial flight was locally copied in Saigon in order to produce fake souvenir covers to sell tourists and stamp collectors.

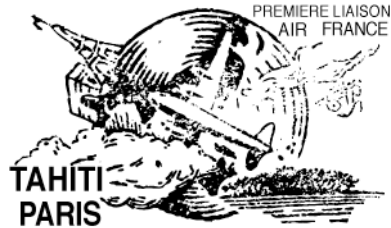


POSTAL MARKINGS

fake SAIGON PHILATELIE INDOCHINE 24-3 1950  
fake flight cachet

Papeete – Saigon – Paris  
31 March - 7 April 1950

Saigon was a major stop on the return portion of the return flight from Papeete to Paris. A pictorial cachet was struck in black on return mail.



POSTAL MARKINGS

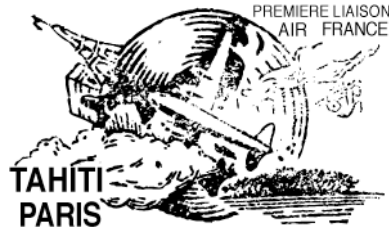
PAPEETE ILE TAHITI 28-3 1950  
flight cachet and registration label

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. SUD VIET-NAM 7-4 1950

Papeete – Saigon – Paris  
31 March - 7 April 1950

In addition to the cachet, privately printed envelopes commemorated the trial flight from Tahiti to Saigon by an Air France DC 4.



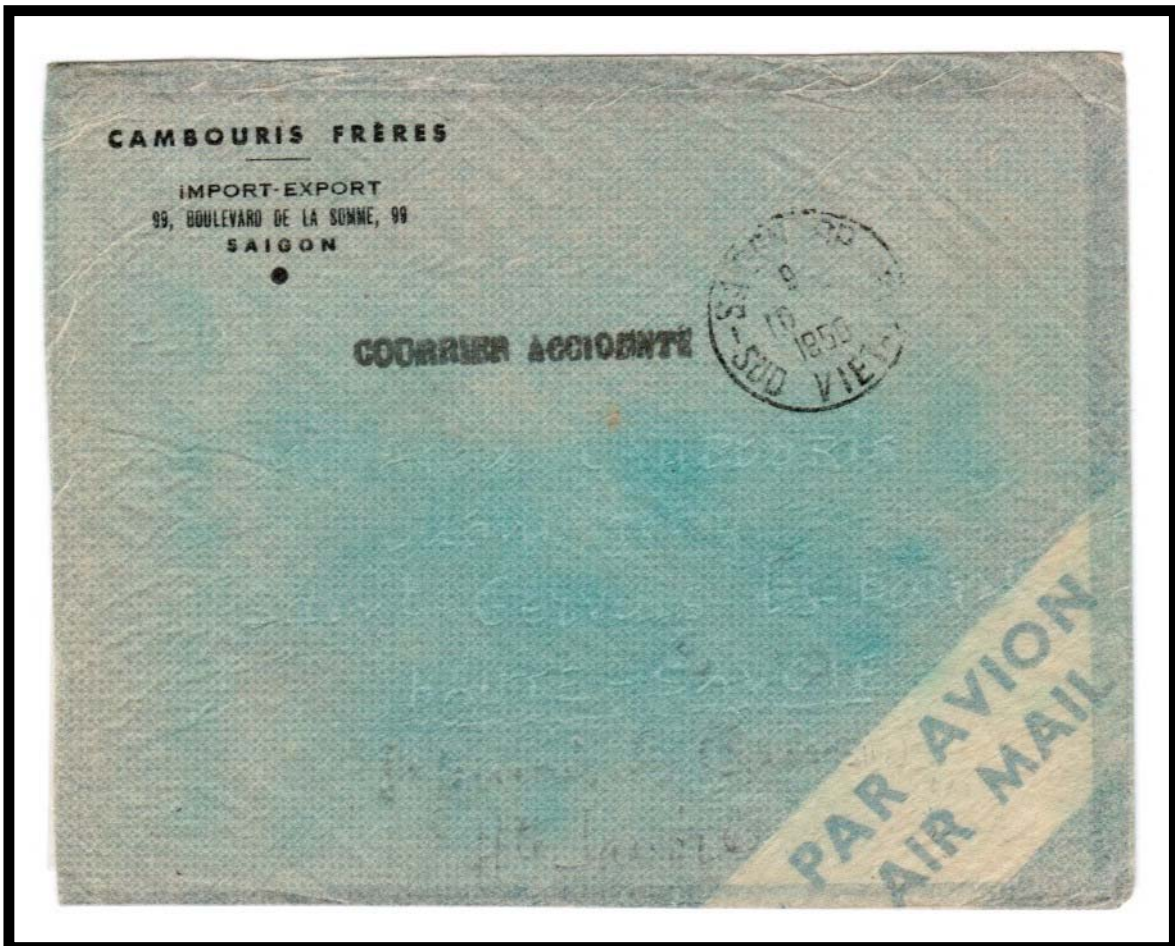
POSTAL MARKINGS  
PAPEETE ILE TAHITI 31-3 1950  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
SAIGON R.P. SUD VIET-NAM 7-4 1950



Saigon – Paris  
Accident of 12 June 1950

The Air France plane flying from Saigon to Paris crashed in the sea when landing at Bahrain Island in the Persian Gulf. Letters were soaked causing stamps to lift off and inks to run. A black one-line “COURRIER ACCIDENTE” handstamp let recipients know the circumstances behind the condition of the letters.

COURRIER ACCIDENTE



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 10-6 1950  
accident handstamp

REVERSE

post office sealing label

Saigon – Paris  
Accident of 12 June 1950

Besides the black, one-line “COURRIER ACCIDENTÉ” handstamp, an additional handstamp was applied to some letters that were missing postage to avoid citation for postage due.

COURRIER ACCIDENTE

Correspondance pervenue à  
Paris-Aviation démunte d’une  
partie de ses figurines.  
Procès-verbal établi.

“Correspondence received by Paris-Aviation missing  
some of its stamps. A report has been prepared.”



POSTAL MARKINGS  
VIENTIANE LAOS 9-6 1950  
accident handstamps

Saigon - Paris  
Accident of 14 June 1950

Within the period of only one week, a second Air France plane crashed near Bahrain while flying from Saigon to Paris. Of the 51 people on board the plane, only 14 were rescued.

A framed handstamp was used to inform recipients as to why their letter was in a deteriorated condition.

AVION  
ACCIDENTE



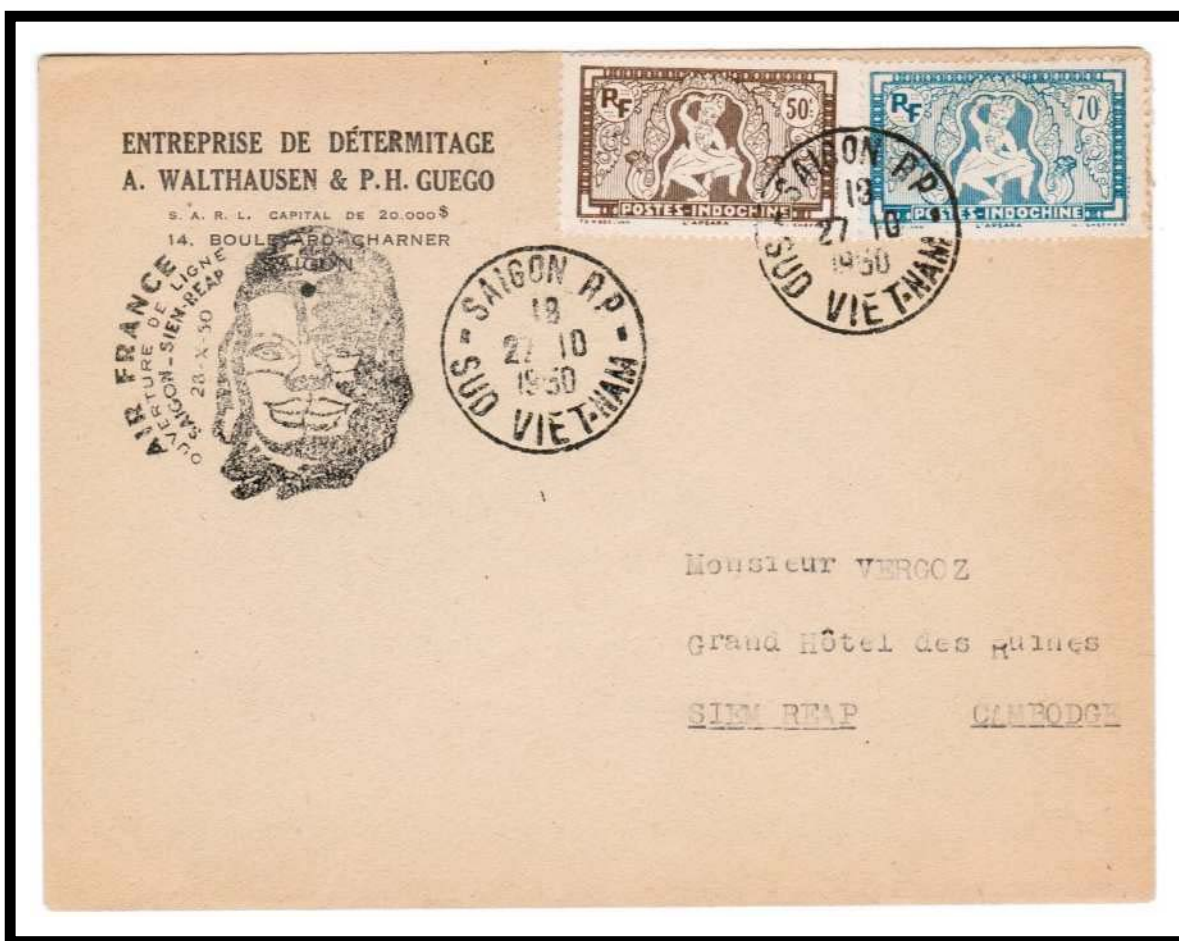
POSTAL MARKINGS  
POSTE AUX ARMEES T.O.E. 8-6 1950  
framed AVION ACCIDENTE



Saigon – Siemreap  
27 October 1950



In 1950, Air France continued to extend its network in Indochina. A new route between Saigon and Siemreap, Cambodia opened on 27 October 1950.



POSTAL MARKINGS

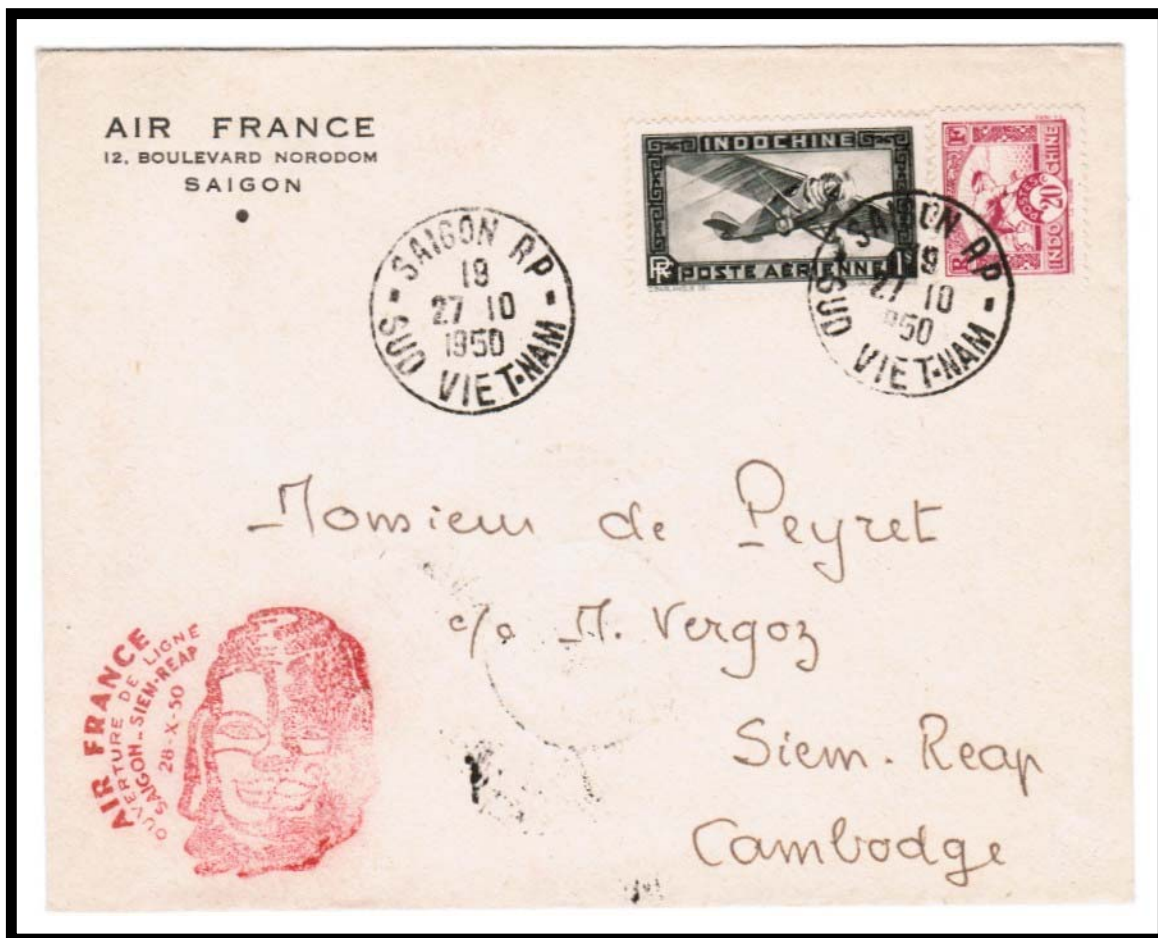
SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 27 10 1950  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SIEMREAP-ANGKOR CAMBODGE 28-10 1950

Saigon – Siemreap  
27 October 1950

While the cachet was almost always applied with black ink, red ink was also employed for a small portion of the mail.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 27 10 1950  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SIEMREAP-ANGKOR CAMBODGE 28-10 1950

Siemreap – Saigon  
27 October 1950

The return of Air France's inaugural connection with Siemreap occurred the next day on 28 October. No cachet or other distinctive marking was employed for the return flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 27 10 1950  
flight cachet

REVERSE

SIEMREAP-ANGKOR CAMBODGE 28-10 1950



Helicopter Mail  
April 1955

Troops that were isolated from the main mail distribution routes in Indochina came to rely on helicopters for transport of the mail. When helicopter transport began, special markings were used to mark the service.

PAR  
HÉLICOPTÈRE MILITAIRE  
T. E. O.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
POSTE AUX ARMEES T.O.E. 17-4 1955  
transport handstamp