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.
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
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.
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 Marseilles until the 29th of June.
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
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
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.
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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>letter rate to France</td>
<td>15 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>airmail surcharge</td>
<td>65 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>80 cents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 5-10 45
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 INFÉRÉE 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
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
PORNICHE 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.
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
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. AFFRANCHISEMENTS 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.
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 BBDG 16/20 Juin 1946
AIR FRANCE

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
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

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

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
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
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
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
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
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
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.
Another of Air France’s prewar routes, from Saigon to Vientiane, was reestablished effective 11 August. An intermediate stop was made at Seno.
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
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
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.
In 1949, Air France began regular service between Haiphong and Saigon. The required postage for an internal airmail letter was 1$20.
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.
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. 1OC49
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
With this example, the outbound cachet was obliterated with multiple black handstamps. The cachet for the return flight was applied to commemorate the flight.

**POSTAL MARKINGS**

NOUMEA NELLE CALEDONIE 30 SEPT 49  
flight cachet  
REVERSE  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 3 10 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.

Postal Markings:
- TUNIS R.P. TUNSIE 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
HANOI-PARIS
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.

**POSTAL MARKINGS**
PARIS - 30 8o 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.”

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.
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.
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
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 SŒ 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.
(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
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.
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 ACCIDENTÉ

“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.
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.
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.
Helicopter Mail
April 1955

Troops that were isolated from the main mail distribution routes in Indochina came to rely on helicopters for transport 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