

## Airmail Labels

Airmail labels quickly became a popular way for the citizens to indicate airmail service for their letters. Airlines, anxious to promote the use of airmail, provided some labels featuring their names, which were distributed by the post office.



BLACK ON DARK RED



BLACK ON RED



BLACK ON DARK BLUE



BLACK ON BLUE



BLACK ON LIGHT GRAY



BLACK ON GRAY

## Airmail Labels

This colorful diamond-shaped label is really a decal for the Air Orient Company. It shows the company's logo in the circle. Eventually, Air Orient merged with other companies to form a much larger airline – Air France.



BLACK AND ORANGE ON BUFF

Later, labels became less specific only indicating "by airmail" as opposed to the specific carrier.



BLACK ON RED



BLACK ON BLUE

## Airmail Labels

These examples show various types of labels that specified airmail service by Air Orient.



BLACK BLUE-GREEN



BLACK ON LIGHT GREEN



BLACK ON BEIGE



BLACK ON LIGHT GREEN



BLACK ON BEIGE



BLACK ON LIGHT GREEN



BLACK ON LIGHT BLUE-GREEN



WHITE ON BLUE



WHITE ON RED

## Airmail Label Air Orient Service

Given to the public by the Saigon post office, this white-on-red label specified both the routing and the airline for airmail service. Line perforated, the label was distributed from 1931 through 1933 in booklets with panes of 25 (5 x5).



## Airmail Label Air France Schedule

Air France provided this label in booklet form to post offices throughout the French community of nations. The overprinted notice points out that the weekly France-Syria-Indochina service, in 1936, departed from Marseilles on Thursdays.



## Labels

Historically, the Indochinese post office had affixed labels on mailings to indicate special services that the sender had paid for. Airmail labels were provided by the post office soon after airmail service had become available.

This cover bears labels for airmail service as well as for registration and expedited delivery.



### POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 6-1 31  
registration label, expedited service label, airmail label

### REVERSE

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 9-1 31

## Handmade Airmail Label

In the early days of airmail service, labels were not widely available at Indochinese post offices. When senders could not find printed labels, they would fashion their own from available materials. This label was made by writing "Par Avion" on a piece of red paper, which had printing on the reverse.



E 1

### POSTAL MARKINGS

LONGXUYEN COCHINCHINE 23-1 31  
airmail label  
black cross obliterator

### REVERSE

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 23-1 31  
MARSEILLE-GARE B<sup>CHES</sup> DU RHONE 2 • II 1931  
BORDEAUX GIRONDE 3 • II 1931

## Handmade Airmail Label

The sender penned unusual instructions on this cover. It was to go by airmail from Saigon to Haiphong and then by sea to Marseille. The sender affixed a handmade airmail label for the limited service. The "APRÉS LE DEPART" marking was applied by the post office when the letter arrived too late for the airmail service.



### POSTAL MARKINGS

ROCAKONG CAMBODGE 27-4 30

airmail label

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30-4 30

too late handstamp

### REVERSE

PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 29-4 30

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 30-4 30



Handmade Routing Instruction Label  
1931

In the early days of airmail, senders would sometimes fabricate their own airmail labels. However, in this case of this 1931 mailing from Tong to Paris, the sender used a post office airmail label coupled with an elaborately made, five-sided label that included his airmail routing instructions.



POSTAL MARKINGS

TONG TONKIN 26-10 31

airmail label and "X" completion of airmail service handstamp

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 26-10 31

MARSEILLE-GARE B<sup>CH</sup>ES DU RHONE 9 • !! 1931

PARIS-VI R. CLER 10 • XI 1931

## Handmade Routing Instruction

Routing instructions were normally written directly on the face of the envelope. This letter posted by the branch office of the Bank of Indochina in Qui-Nhon bears a handmade label with typewritten routing instructions.



### POSTAL MARKINGS

QUI-NHON ANNAM 23-2 34  
airmail label

REVERSE

PARIS R.P. AVION 6 • III 1934

By Airmail  
Saigon, Cochinchina

The earliest airmail label was distributed by the Saigon post office from February to July 1929. The label consisted of black lettering in a black frame on glossy red paper. The label was imperforate.



E 2, FIC-A-1



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 9-4 29  
registration label  
airmail label  
flight cachet

## By Airmail

Appearing at the same time as the glossy red label was a similar design on matte red paper. This label was perforated. It was widely distributed from February 1929 through 1934.



E 3

### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 14-4 32  
framed Saigon-Marseille routing instruction  
airmail fee certification handstamp  
airmail label

### REVERSE

MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION B<sup>CHES</sup> DU RHONE 25 • 4 1932  
PARIS X QUAI VALMY 25 • IV 1932

By Airmail

The same design was printed on blue paper. It was available at all post offices from the second half of 1931 through 1934.



E 4, FIC-A-2a

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 4-3 33  
airmail fee certification handstamp  
framed Saigon-Marseille routing instruction  
airmail label

REVERSE

MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION BCHES DU RHONE 12 • 3 1933

By Airmail  
Saigon, Cochinchina

A third color for the label was gray. Others labels that shared this format were widely distributed. However, the gray label was dispensed only at Saigon.



E 4 var, FIC-A-2b

POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 12-11 31  
airmail fee certification handstamp  
airmail label

## By Airmail

The second general format to appear consisted of "Par Avion" in black lettering within a black frame that was thickened on the left and at the bottom. It was printed on blue-gray paper and was perforated. First appearing in 1932, this label was distributed through 1945.

Par Avion



E 5, FIC-A-3a

### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 20-10 34

registration label

airmail label

REVERSE

PARIS XIIe DISTRIBUTION 30-10 34

## By Airmail

Airmail labels were almost exclusively used on envelopes. Though the practice was not prohibited, labels are only rarely found on postcards because the latter's space restrictions. In the case of this postcard, the label had been trimmed down in size before it was affixed to this mailing in 1935.

Par Avion



E 5, FIC-A\_3a

### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 20-10 34  
registration label  
airmail label

### REVERSE

PARIS XII DISTRIBUTION 30-10 34



## By Airmail

One label in each sheet identified the printer. Here the imprint reads “Imp. Ngo-tu-Ha, Hanoi – 1934.” The label had serrations (left-hand side), as opposed to perforations.



E 5, FIC-A-3b

### POSTAL MARKINGS

POULO CONDORE COCHINCHINE 12-6 37  
airmail label

### REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 13-5 37  
PARIS VIII RUE CLER 22 • V 1937

## By Airmail

This label design was one of the longest lived as it was available from 1932 through 1945. After World War II, the label was printed on blue paper. Its other characteristics remained the same except that the lettering was smaller.



E 5, FIC-A-3a

POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 27-4 48  
airmail label

## By Airmail

An early variation on this design consisted of bold lettering on blue paper. This label was probably only distributed from the smaller post offices.

**Par Avion**



E 5 var

### POSTAL MARKINGS

QUI-NHON ANNAM 8-11 32

airmail label

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 10-11 32

MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION B<sup>CHES</sup> DU RHONE 22 • 11 1932

PARIS VIII DISTRIBUTION 23 • XI 1932

## By Airmail

A variation of this design employed larger lettering on imperforate red paper. It is uncertain whether this label was distributed through the Indochinese post offices.

**Par Avion**



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8-12 29

G8 window number handstamp

R with manuscript registration number

printed registration number handstamp

airmail label

REVERSE

GRAVENHAGEN 6.1 1930

## By Airmail

Yet another variation from the basic label was one that used sans serif lettering on perforated blue paper.

**Par Avion**



UNL, FIC-A-5

### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 25-4 1949

registration label

airmail label

### REVERSE

BOSTON MASS. MAY 1 1949

BOSTON MASS. ROXBURY STA. MAY 2 1949

By Airmail  
Simulated Airmail Label

The layout of a privately printed business envelope employed an airmail instruction that simulated the paste-on labels of the period.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 23-7 31  
rate certification handstamp  
black cross over airmail indication

By Airmail  
Campha, 1935-36

The border on Campha's airmail label was thickened at the bottom and at the right. While this format appeared elsewhere, blue paper was only used for Campha's airmail labels.



E 6

POSTAL MARKINGS

CAMPHA-PORT TONKIN 26-9 35  
airmail label

REVERSE

HANOI R-P TONKIN 27 SEPT 35  
BALLIEAU-LEVEQUE EURE ET LOIR 7-10 35

By Airmail  
Cambodia and Laos

This label shared format characteristics with the Campha label design (thickened border at the right side and at the bottom). The black on white label, used from Cambodia and Laos, saw very limited service.



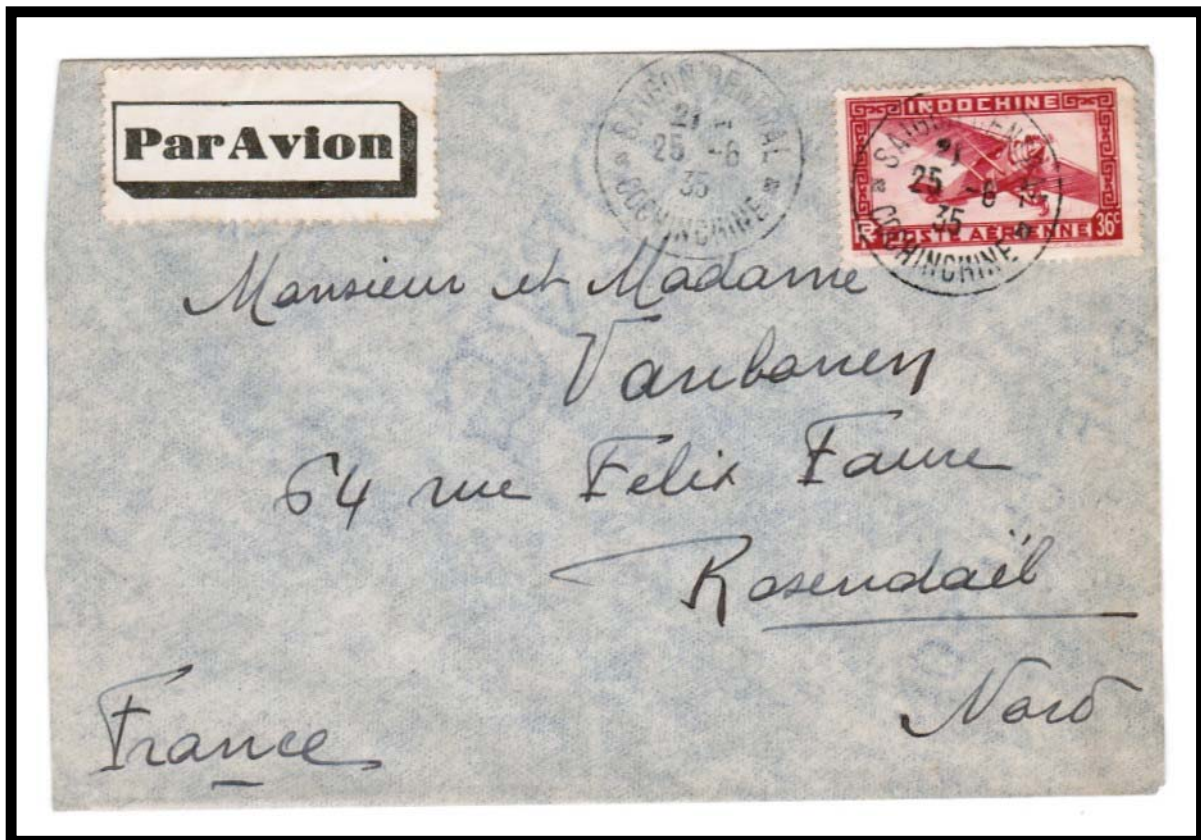
E 6 bis

POSTAL MARKINGS  
SARAVANE LAOS 25-7 36  
REVERSE  
PAKSE LAOS 25-7 36  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 3-6 36  
PARIS R.P. AVION 16 • VI 1936



## By Airmail

Although this label was distributed from post offices in Cambodia and Laos, an example found its way to be used on a letter posted from Saigon to France in June 1935.



E 6 bis

POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 25-6 35  
airmail label  
REVERSE  
PARIS R.P. AVION 7 • VII 1935

## By Airmail

Another variety of the uncommon format with reinforced border at the bottom and right hand side was printed in black on a lavender background. The label was used on an airmail letter from Hanoi in 1937.



E 6 bis var

### POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 11-6 37  
airmail label

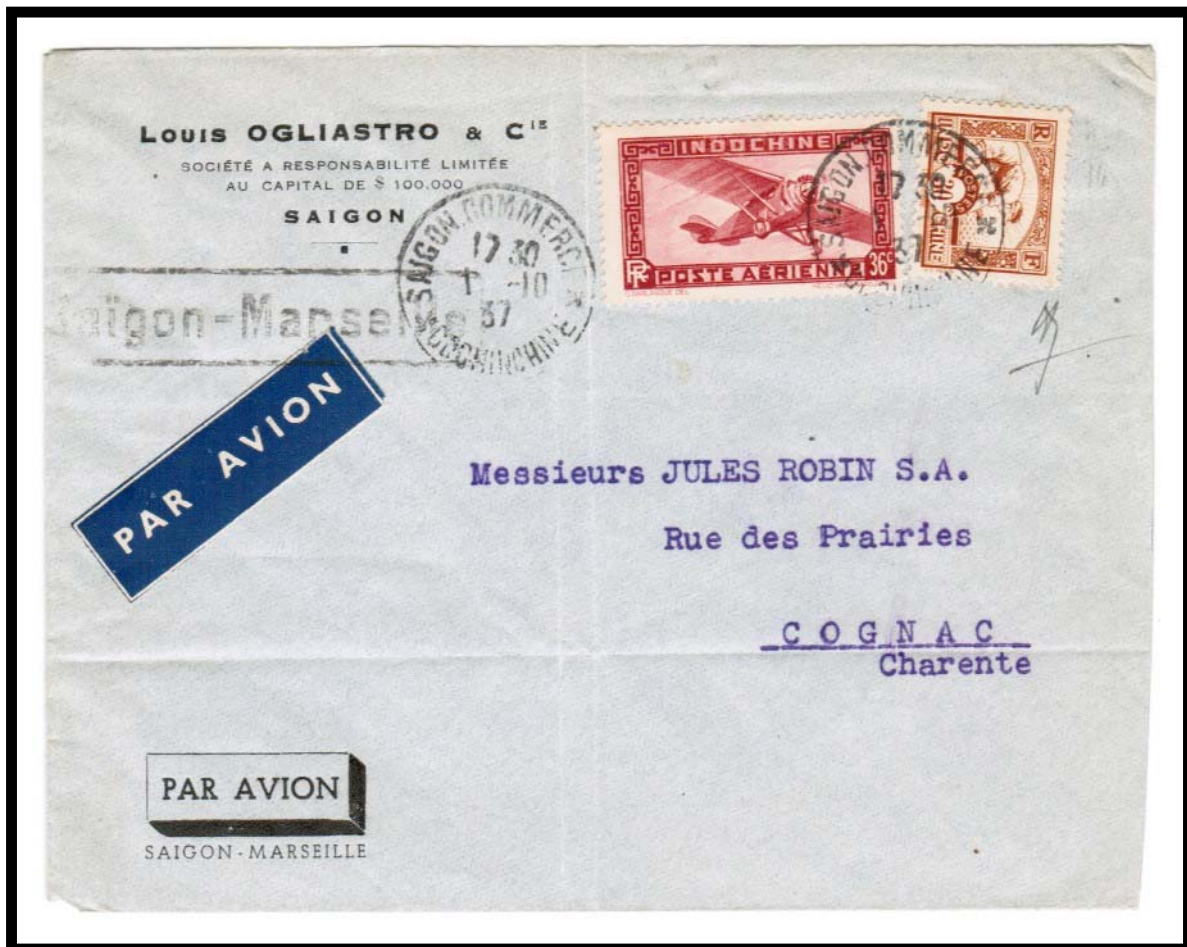
REVERSE

PARIS VIII RUE CLER 19 • VI 1937

## By Airmail

Starting in 1937, an entirely new label design was made available by the post office. It was composed of white lettering in a white frame on a dark blue background.

**PAR AVION**



E7

### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON COMMERCE COCHINCHINE 1-10 37  
framed Saigon-Marseille routing instruction  
airmail label

By Airmail  
Phnompenh, Cambodia

For only a short period in 1929, Phnompenh used a distinctive black-on-orange label to signify airmail service.



E 11, FIC-A\_15

POSTAL MARKINGS

PNOM-PENH CAMBODGE 5-11 29  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 17-11 29  
flight cachet and airmail label

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE -6-11 29  
PARIS R.P. DEPART 21 • XI 1929  
NANTES R.P. LOIRE-INFRE 22 • X1 1929

By Airmail  
Quinhon, Annam

In mid-1931, the post office at Quinhon, Annam made available a distinctive blue label with lettering in dark blue. Use of this label has only been reported from Quinhon.



E 12

POSTAL MARKINGS

QUI-NHON ANNAM 10-6 31  
airmail label

REVERSE

QUI-NHON ANNAM 10-6 31  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 11-6 31  
PARIS GARE DU NORD AVION 23 • VI 1931

## Air Routing Quinhon, Annam

Quinhon had a second distinctive airmail label. The tri-color label had blue print, a black border and pink paper. Only known from around August 1931, the label may have been a product created by the Quinhon branch of the Bank of Indochina for its own use.



E 13

POSTAL MARKINGS  
QUI-NHON ANNAM 26-8 31  
airmail label  
REVERSE  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 27-8 31

By Airmail  
Thainguyen, Tonkin

The Thainguyen post office distributed an imperforate label on red paper. The lettering for Thainguyen's label was 3 millimeters tall, much smaller than that typically seen on Indochinese airmail labels.

PAR AVION



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 8-9 32  
registration label  
routing instruction  
airmail label  
franked by sender handstamp

REVERSE

PARIS 2 DISTRIBUTION 26-9 32

By Airmail  
Kontum, Annam

The post office at Kontum, Annam prepared an imperforate label with the single word "AVION" in a rectangular frame. The blue-gray label was in service during the 1933-34 period.



E 15, FIC-A-4 var

POSTAL MARKINGS

KONTUM ANNAM 10-12 32  
airmail label

REVERSE

QUI-NHON ANNAM 20-12 32  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 22-12 32  
MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION B<sup>CHES</sup> DU RHONE 2 • I 33



By Airmail  
Kontum, Annam

Previously, it was thought that Kontum's label was printed only on blue-gray paper. This example, used in 1932, shows that labels of the same design were prepared on pink paper.

**AVION**



E 15 var, FIC-A\_4 var

POSTAL MARKINGS

KONTUM ANNAM 10-12 32  
airmail label

REVERSE

QUI-NHON ANNAM 20-12 32  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 22-12 32  
MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION B<sup>C</sup>HES DU RHONE 2 • I 33

By Airmail  
Kontum, Annam

Kontum's distinctive airmail label must have been prepared by hand. This cover shows an example of the label with the same lettering nearby handstamped directly onto the envelope.



E 15 var, FIC-A\_4 var

POSTAL MARKINGS

KONTUM ANNAM 22-8 33  
airmail label

PARIS-XVIII DISTRIBUTION 4 IX 1933

REVERSE

QUI-NHON ANNAM 24-8 33  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26 AOUT 33

## Triangular Air Mail Label

The triangular red-on-white airmail label used on 1935 letter from Mon-Cay to France was a private label, not one distributed by the post office.



### POSTAL MARKINGS

MON-CAY TONKIN 13-6 35

### REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 14-6 35  
PARIS R.P. AVION 23 • VII 1935  
CHAMBLY OISE 25-\* 35

By Airmail Via Air Orient  
Saigon, Cochinchina

Some labels went beyond simply saying "airmail." During the second half of 1931, the Saigon post office provided patrons with a label that included the airline's name –"VIA AIR ORIENT". The label employed black lettering and a black frame on a gray-green background. The label was imperforate.



E 21, FRA-B-29

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 21-1 32

airmail fee certification handstamp

routing instruction

airmail label

REVERSE

MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION BCHES DU RHONE 1 • II 1932

By Seaplane  
Air Orient Route

Some legs of Air Orient's France-Indochina service were by seaplane. This label indicates "by seaplane via Air Orient route." It consists of black lettering on perforated light beige paper.



UNL, FRA-B-24

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 3-2 31  
flight cachet  
airmail label

REVERSE

ATHIS-MONS SEINE ET OISE 17-2 31

## Via Air Orient

A separate label with only "VIA AIR ORIENT" was distributed by a number of post offices during 1931-1933. The frame and lettering were black. The perforated label was made from light green paper.



UNL, FRA-B-25

### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 3-2 31  
registration label  
airmail labels

### REVERSE

AUBERVILLIERS SEINE 17-2 32

## Via Air Orient

Use of the specialized labels was not restricted to outbound mail. Here a letter posted from France employed the "VIA AIR ORIENT" label even though only surface rate postage had been paid. Nonetheless, the post office selected the letter for free airmail service to promote its use.



UNL, FRA-B-25

### POSTAL MARKINGS

ST. JEAN DES VIRGNES SAONE ET LOIRE 20-1 33

airmail label

airmail promotion handstamp

### REVERSE

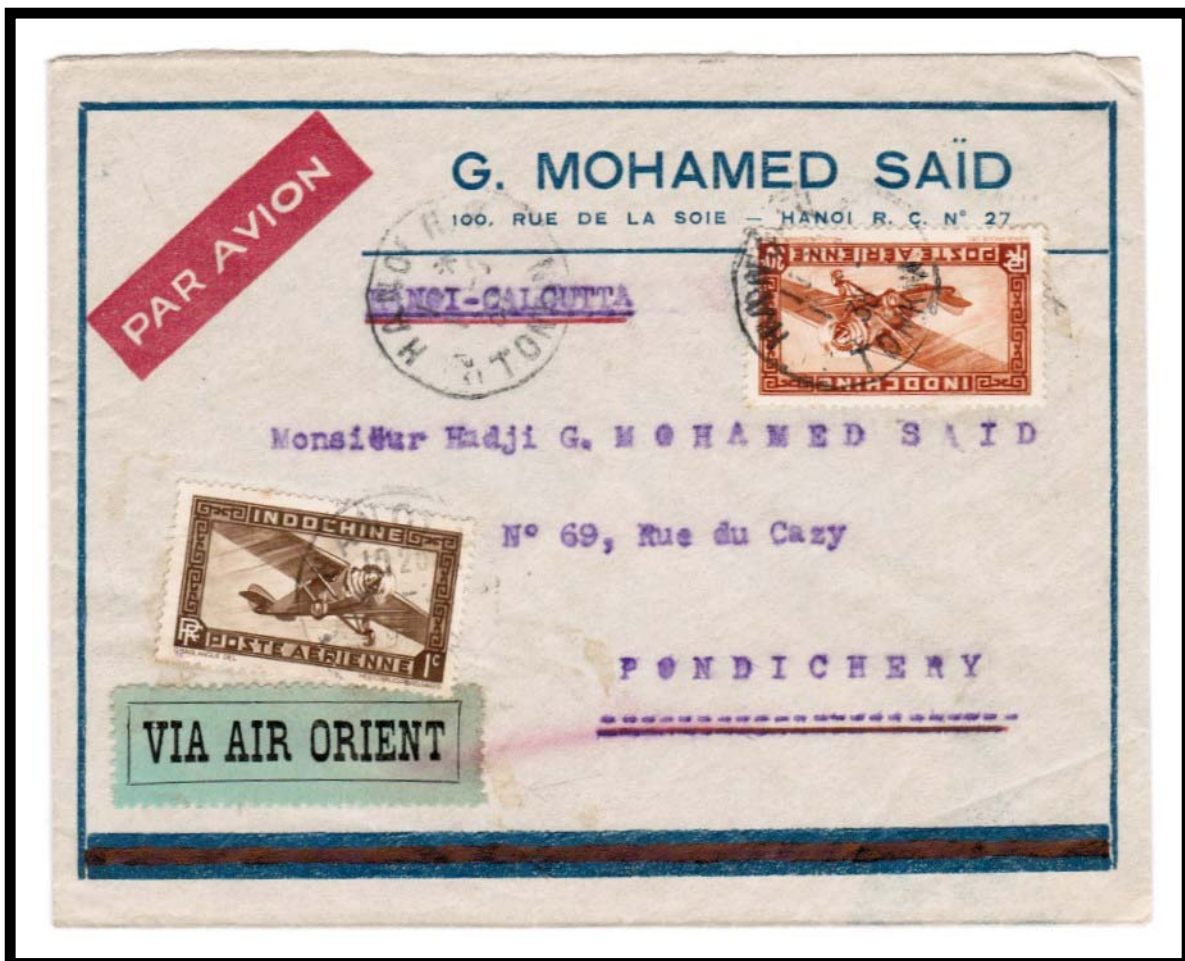
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 3-2 33

CAN-THO COCHINCHINE 4-2 33

## Via Air Orient

This variety of the "VIA AIR ORIENT" label employed a bold, serif typeface very different from the plain, sans serif lettering used on other labels of the period.

**VIA AIR ORIENT**



E 22, FRA-B-27

POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 1-2 36  
airmail label  
REVERSE  
PONDICHERRY 6 FEB. 36



## Via Air Orient

Banking correspondence from 1932 bears an example of the Air Orient label with serif text.

**VIA AIR ORIENT**



E 22, FRA-B-27

### POSTAL MARKINGS

PARIS - GARE - P.L.M. - AVION 27-7 32  
airmail label

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 7-8 32

By Airmail Saigon – Marseilles  
Via Air Orient

From 1931 through 1933, the Saigon post office provided the public with a red label with white lettering that was line-perforated. This was one of the earliest labels distributed by the post office.



E 23, FRA-N-28

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 7-5 31  
registration label and airmail label  
plain T due handstamp

REVERSE

AUBERVILLIERS SEINE 13-5 31

By Airmail Saigon – Marseilles  
Via Air Orient

The sender must have felt that this envelope already had sufficient notification for airmail service. The post office label was cut down in size so that only the "SAIGON-MARSEILLE" portion was used for indicating the desired routing.

**SAIGON - MARSEILLE**



E 23, FRA-B-28

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 28-1 32  
airmail routing handstamp  
framed Saigon-Marseille routing instruction  
airmail fee certification handstamp  
airmail label (partial)

REVERSE

PARIS - X QUAI DE VALMY 12 • II 1932

## Via Air France

An airmail letter from Sadeq, Cochinchina to Paris in November 1934 bears a plain label stipulating service by Air France. This may have been a privately prepared label as Air France was formed a year earlier on 7 October 1933 from the merger of five predecessor airlines.

### VIA AIR FRANCE



UNL

#### POSTAL MARKINGS

SADEC COCHINCHINE 30-11-34  
registration and airmail labels

#### REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 1-12-34

Far East South America  
Via Air France

This label was the first to identify Air France, which was created in 1933 by combining Air Orient with several other airlines. The label consists of blue lettering on a light mauve background. The label was imperforate.

EXTRÊME-ORIENT AMERIQUE DU SUD  
**VIA AIR FRANCE**



E 24

POSTAL MARKINGS

BACLIU COCHINCHINE 15-12 34  
airmail label

REVERSE

MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION BACHES DU RHONE 24 • XII 1934

## By Airmail

This version of the “winged globe” first appeared in 1938. Here the label was used on bank correspondence from Quinhon, Annam to Paris in 1938.



FRA-A-5a

### POSTAL MARKINGS

QUINHON ANNAM 15-12 38  
airmail label

### REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 16 DEC 38  
PARIS VIII DISTRIBUTION 25 • XII 1938

## By Airmail

As this example from 1946 demonstrates, the winged globe label continued in service after the end of World War II.



FRA-A-5a

### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 19-10 46  
airmail label

manuscript "T" with postage due stamp

REVERSE

JUAN LES PINS ALPES MARITIMES 24 10 46

## By Airmail

After World War II, Air France distributed the same label in sheet form now perforated on all four sides. Here the winged globe label was used on a mailing to Paris in 1948.



FRA-A-5a

### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 24-10 48  
airmail label



## By Airmail

Having features of the familiar “plane over globe” label, the design of this label differs in a number significant ways. Here the label was used on a 1949 airmail letter from Pnompenh to Paris.



FRA-B-80

POSTAL MARKINGS  
PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 21-10 49  
airmail label  
REVERSE  
PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 21-10 49

By Airmail

Distributed in 1941, this label was normally found on mailings between Indochina and China. Here an example was used on a post-war letter from Hanoi to Hong Kong. The postmark is that of a special Army post office established for processing civilian mails while order was being restored in northern Indochina by French troops.



CHN-A-7

POSTAL MARKINGS

B.P.M. 403 20-9 46  
airmail label

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 23-9 46

## By Airmail

English wording shows that this label was not obtained through the Indochinese post office. The routing for this mailing, "Via Bangkok", meant that it was transferred to another air carrier there for onward transport to Switzerland.



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8-6 37  
airmail label

REVERSE

BANGKOK G.P.O. 12 • 6 • 37