

LZ127 - Graf Zeppelin - and its connections with Egypt

Introduction

Illustrating the 1929 'Orientfahrt', which did not land in Egypt, despite the pyramid and sphinx cachet; and the 1931 'Ägyptenfahrt' that did. The latter included a Cairo to Cairo 'Rundfahrt' to Jerusalem and a return trip from Cairo to the Zeppelin base at Friedrichshafen.



*Ägyptenfahrt cachet, 1931 flight
Probably a proof or a trial pull.*

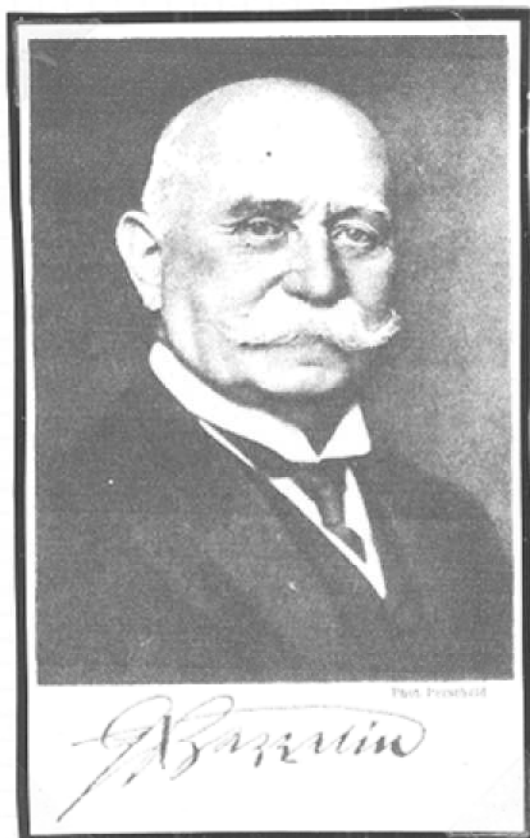
Highlights

- Sheet 2: Postcard with the steel 'Orientfahrt' cachet.*
- Sheet 4: Unusual private cachet struck in the 'lounge'.*
- Sheets 7, 8 and 9: Covers with the 'Ägyptenfahrt' cachet - only struck on board during the Rundfahrt.*
- Sheet 10: Cover with the 'error' overprint 1951 for 1931.*
- Sheet 15: Piece with the sought after Suez cancellation.*

The Personalities

Count von Zeppelin and Dr. Hugo Eckener

Reproductions of Zeppelin-Eckener fund postcards sold to support the airship company with facsimile signatures.



*Count Ferdinand von
Zeppelin*



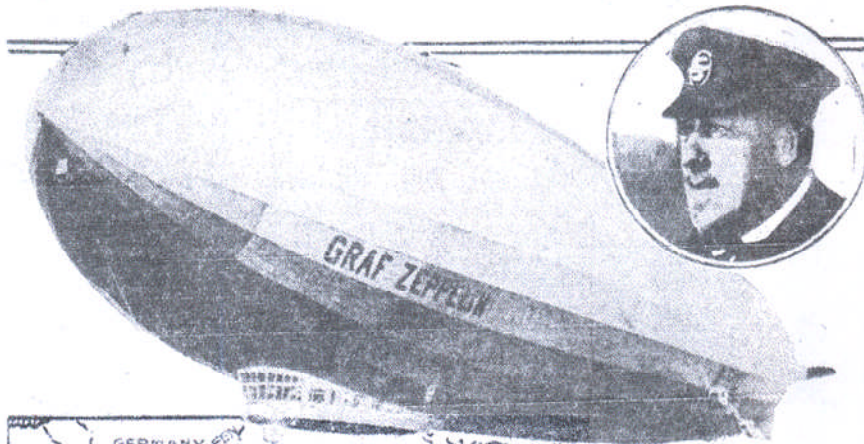
Dr. Hugo Eckener

Dr. Hugo Eckener took over the company Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH following the death of von Zeppelin during World War I. He led the fund-raising, rebuilt the company's finances, and was commander of LZ127 standing on the flight-deck during all its difficulties.

The Publicity

THE CLEVELAND PRESS, March 25, 1929

SEEKS NEW DIRIGIBLE RECORD



Dr. Hugo Von Eckener, inset, commander of the German Graf Zeppelin, today was well on his non-stop flight to Palestine and return to Berlin, to set a new distance record for lighter than air craft. The map below shows what is believed to be the course he will follow in the five-day, 5000-mile trip.

Reproduction from a newspaper, The Cleveland Press, in Ohio, United States, giving details of the forthcoming Orient flight. An error - Friedrichshafen is, of course, not Berlin and the return journey had to be changed by Eckener due to bad weather - compare to other map.

THE ORIENT FLIGHT

on board official cachets and destination transits/receivers

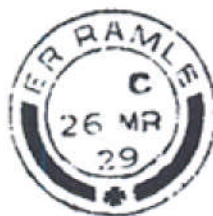


Orientfahrt cachets

The Orientfahrt cachet was the first pictorial cachet used by the Zeppelin company on its mail. It was applied to mail passing through Friedrichshafen and to mail posted on board the airship during flight. (33½ mm)



A second **Orientfahrt** cachet was manufactured of steel. Its impression was thinner and the design was very slightly different. It was unsatisfactory in use. Only a small proportion of the mail was marked with this steel cachet. This included mail passing through Friedrichshafen, and **Bord-post**. All mail bearing this cachet is more valuable than that bearing the rubber-resin one. (34½ mm)



Er Ramle postmarks

Four hand cancelers were in use at Er Ramle on the mail dropped from the **Graf Zeppelin** airship. These two double-circle designs are the "C-left" and the "C-right."



Two more of the four hand cancelers in use by the postal clerks at Er Ramle. These single circle designs are the "cross-right" and "cross-left."



Mittelmeerfahrt cachet

The design of the **Orientfahrt** cachet, with sphinx and pyramids, had proved an embarrassment to the Zeppelin company when permission to overfly Egypt was denied them. For the next big trip the design was kept simple and ambiguous.

The Orient Flight

The two reichsmarks letter rate
Ingoing mail



Private cachet, undated by Sieger, but used on board
and apparently available only in the airship lounge.



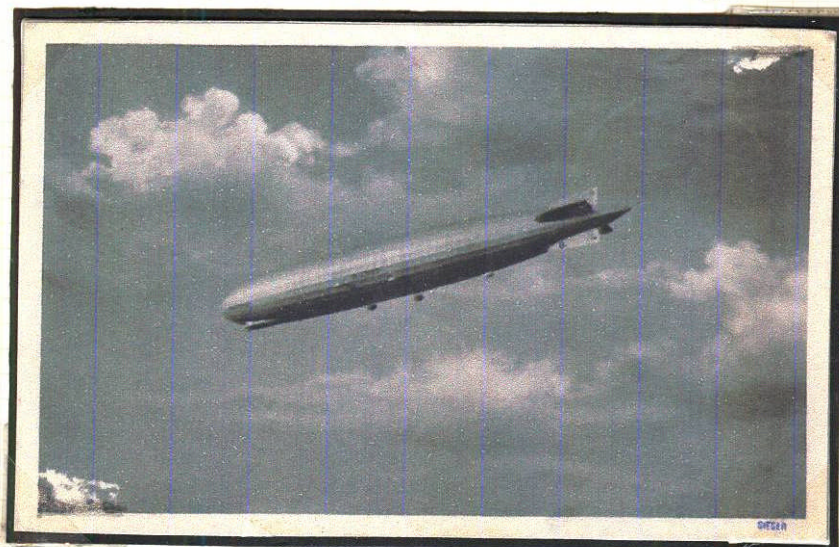
Cover from Stuttgart to a P.O. Box in Cairo with Luft-
post datestamp of Friedrichshafen, private undated
cachet, cerise resin Orientfahrt cachet 33½ mm, and on
the reverse, a Cairo roller cancel dated 28th March.
Probably dropped at er-Ramla and by rail to Cairo.

The Orient Flight

The one reichsmark postcard rate



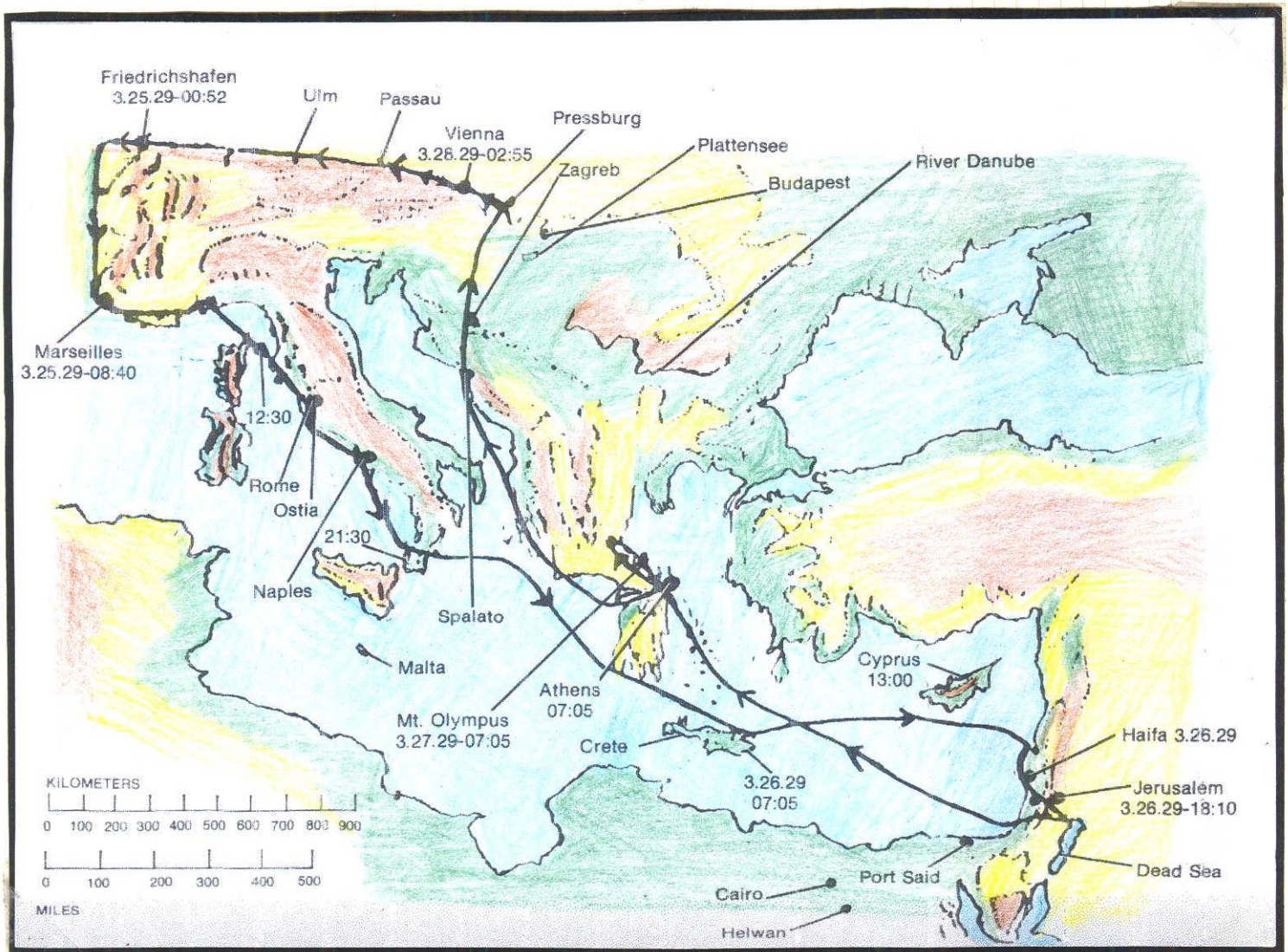
Bordpost postcard from Friedrichshafen to Lorch in Württemberg addressed to Hermann Sieger, author of the Zeppelin Post Katalogs. The red on board cachet is the steel one measuring 34½ mm - very few exist.



Reduced scan of the postcard illustrating Graf Zeppelin

The Orient Flight

LZ 127 left Friedrichshafen early on 25th March, 1929, overflew Marseille at 8:40, Rome and Naples, to eastern Crete at 7:05 am next day. South of Cyprus at 1 pm, she passed Haifa at dusk to circle the old city of Jerusalem arriving at 6:10 pm. Mail dropped over Jerusalem was 'unofficial', the scheduled mail-drop being at er-Ramle.



The return journey lay over Athens, north to Split, Pressburg and Vienna arriving at 2:55 on the 28th then west to Friedrichshafen at midnight - 8000 kilometers.

The Egypt Flight

The Ründfahrt



Cairo postmark Index P (night).



Port Said postmark. On all known pieces of mail.



Postmarks known of 9, 10, of April.



Arrival postmark of forwarded mail from Cairo.



Arrival postmark on mail carried back to Germany and redirected to Jerusalem



Haifa backstamp on Zeppelin mail forwarded from Cairo.



Mail forwarded from Cairo received the 12 AP 31 arrival postmark.

These cancellations were used in Egypt, and in the Holy Land (Palestine) as well as on forwarded mail.

THE EGYPT FLIGHT

Illustrations from Blau and Deighton of postmarks used on the Egypt flight



All pieces of mail going through Friedrichshafen before the flight started received this postmark.



Postmark applied upon return of the Airship.



The On board cancellation. Dates 10, 11, and 13, April.

*Offenbar gemacht
per 1.-3.4.10.4.1931*



Postage Paid IM.



Postmark Alexandria.
(too small)

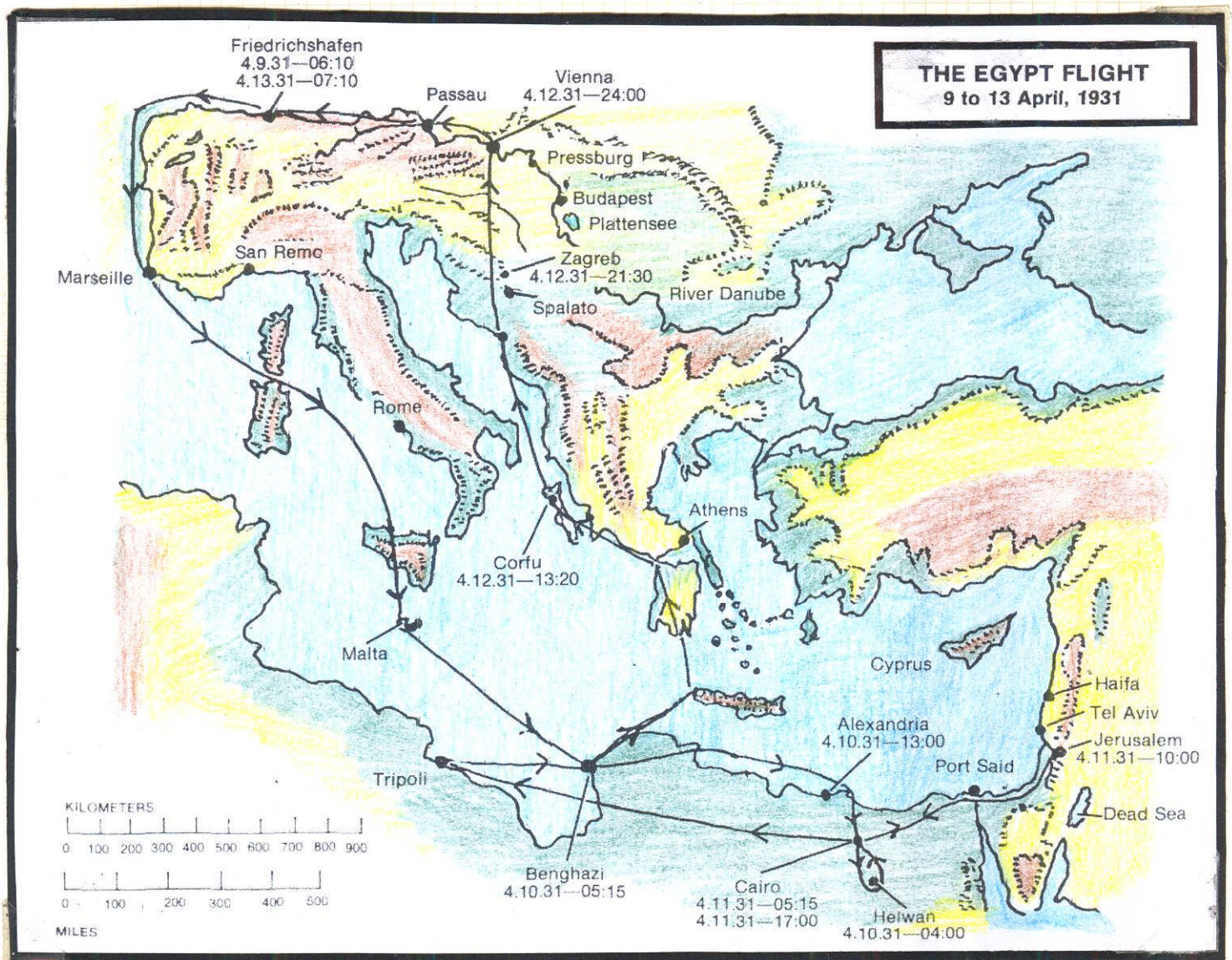


Postmark used on the first arrival of the airship, Index A Morning.

These cancellations were used at Friedrichshafen, on board the airship on the outward trip and on arrival

The Egypt Flight

LZ 127 left Thursday 9th April at 06:08 am. On Saturday, about 08:00, the airship will be in Cairo. After exchange of passengers, the airship will immediately make a round trip over Egypt and Palestine... on Saturday night the airship will depart for Friedrichshafen where it is expected to arrive on Monday morning"



The round trip from Friedrichshafen and back took in three continents, fourteen countries, a total of 5596 miles.

THE EGYPT FLIGHT

official announcement by German Postal Authority

Amtsblatt des RPM Nr. 133

Postal Carriage with the airship "GRAF ZEPPELIN"

The cruises of the airship GRAF ZEPPELIN may be used for the carriage of mail under the following regulations:

1. Regular cards and letters may be sent to chosen destinations.
2. The weight must be under 20 grams.
3. The fee for a card is 1 RM, for a letter 2 RM.
4. The mailings must have the full value of airmail stamps, or other stamps. Insufficiently franked mail will be returned to sender.
5. The mailings must be clearly marked "MIT LUFTSCHIFF GRAF ZEPPELIN" and sent to the post office in Friedrichshafen, Bodensee in an envelope franked in accordance with domestic postal charges. On the envelope must be written "Sendungen für das Luftschiff Graf Zeppelin - Postamt Friedrichshafen, Bodensee." (Mail for the airship Graf Zeppelin-Post office Friedrichshafen Bodensee).
6. The sender must provide full return addresses.

For the future the following long cruises are planned:

- a) 28-30 March. Hungarian Flight. Interim landing and postal exchange with Budapest.
- b) 9 - 13 April. Egypt Flight. Interim landing and postal exchange in Cairo, probable mail drop over Jerusalem.

Amtsblatt des Reichspostministerium Nr. 133

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 164
Friedrichshafen to Cairo

Franked 101 pfennigs with the 3 pf Pres. Ebert issue of 1928 more than making up the 1 reichsmark postcard rate with the 1930 Charity issue, all cancelled on board.

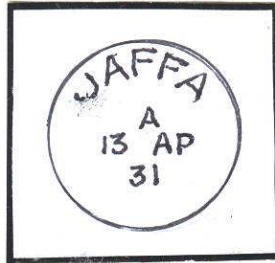


Mail unloaded in Cairo and returned by surface post

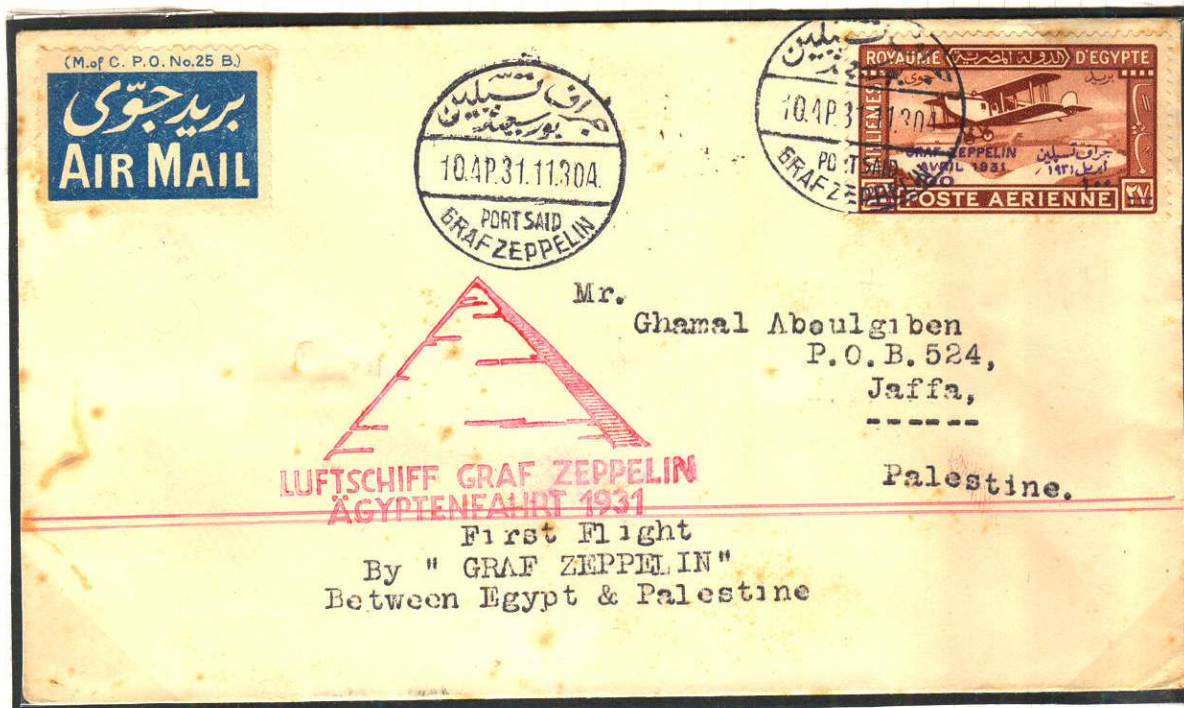
Postcard to Switzerland with Caire Graf Zeppelin date stamp applied on the first arrival of the air ship at Cairo; the red triangular cachet was struck on mail on the Ründfahrt - the round trip to Jerusalem.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 165
The Rundfahrt



Jaffa backstamp on mail forwarded from Cairo on the reverse of the cover



Correctly franked 100 milliemes cover posted from Port Said to Jaffa by the round trip flight Cairo back to Cairo - it was not dropped at Er-Ramle - and thence by rail evidenced by the 13th April 31 Jaffa receiver.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 164
Friedrichshafen to Cairo

Franked 101 pfennigs with the 3 pf Pres. Ebert issue of 1928 more than making up the 1 reichsmark postcard rate with the 1930 Charity issue, all cancelled on board.



Mail unloaded in Cairo and returned by surface post

Postcard to Switzerland with Caire Graf Zeppelin date stamp applied on the first arrival of the air ship at Cairo; the red triangular cachet was struck on mail on the Ründfahrt - the round trip to Jerusalem.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 165
The Ründfahrt

Overfranked cover with both adhesives cancelled at Port Said; Blau and Deighton state that "all known pieces of mail" from Port Said were dated 10th April, but this item is dated one day earlier. The stamps were on sale from 6th April at Alexandria, Port Said and Suez as well as Cairo. Port Said mail is not common.

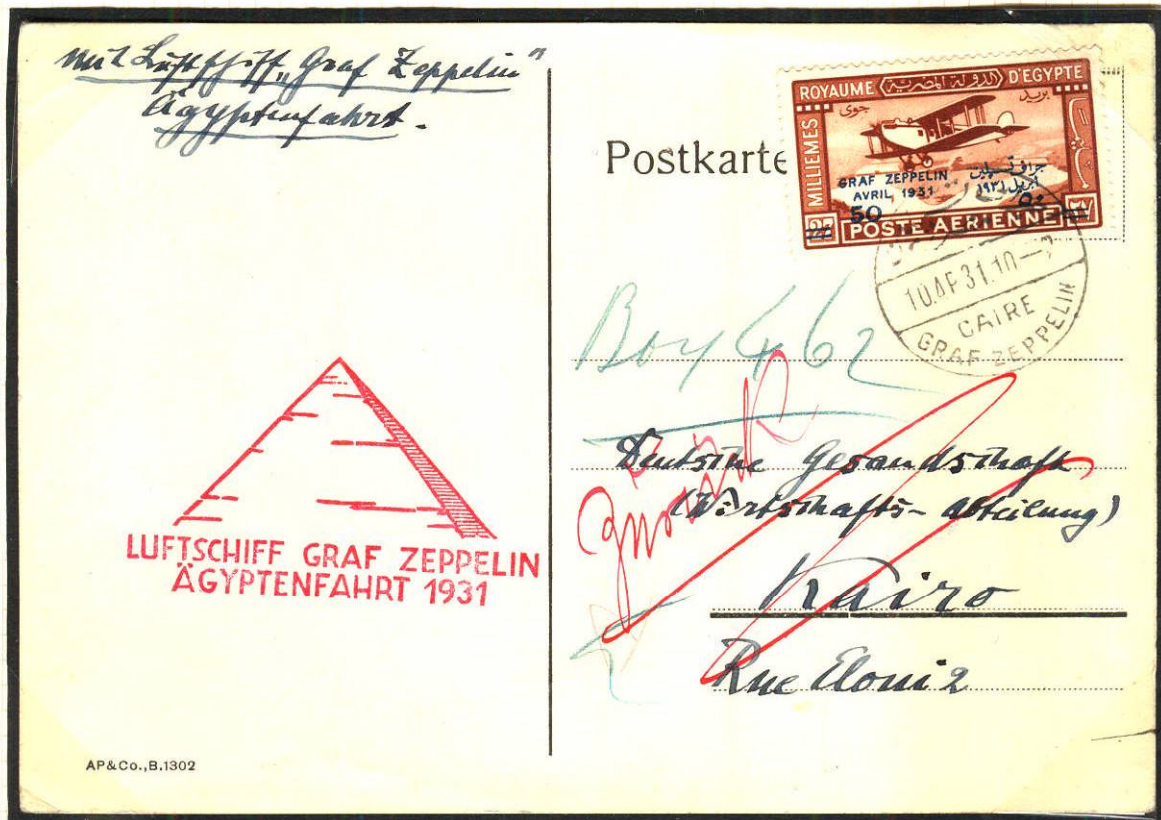


In the absence of the red triangular cachet, this cover probably never flew, so the cancellations must be considered 'par complaisance'; no receiving mark.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 165
The Ründfahrt

Correctly franked 50 mills overprint for the postcard rate posted at Cairo the evening before the arrival of the airship. Addressed within the city itself, it was re-addressed to Bremen and received the triangular red cachet on board during the Ründfahrt. Most mail was franked with both the Egyptian adhesives.



Flight 165 departed Cairo at 04:18 on 11th April and arrived back at 17:04 on the same evening. Timed at 10 hours 46 minutes, the airship covered 1,027 kms.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 165
The Ründfahrt

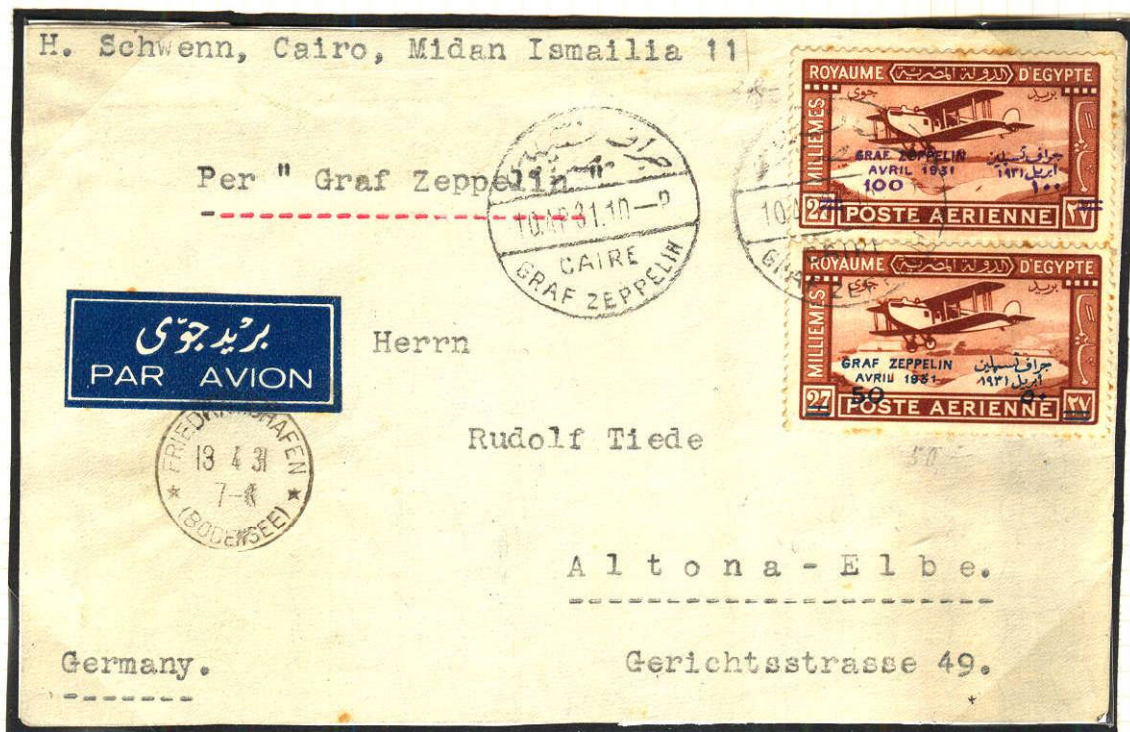


Cover franked both adhesives - only the 100m was required - sent from Port Said to Jerusalem. Reverse shows the Cairo transit 10 APR 31 and Jerusalem roller receipt dated 13 APR 31.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 166
The Return flight

The overprinted adhesives were produced with the surcharging undertaken in Arabic and French Languages. They were valid only until 11th April 1931 and, the overprinting being done in a rush, many varieties exist, but the well-known 'error' 1951 for 1931 is not a typesetting error but a deformed figure 3. It occurs to varying degrees on 9 positions on a sheet.



Cover with 1951 for 1931 on 50 milliemmes

Overfranked cover from Cairo to Germany with both overprinted adhesives - only 100 mills was required - a dual language airmail etiquette matching languages.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 165
The Rundfahrt



Cover franked
both adhesives
- only the 100m
was required -
sent from Port
Said to Jerus
alem. Reverse
shows the Cairo
transit 10 AP 31
and Jerusalem
roller receipt
dated 13 APR 31.

The Egypt Flight

*Flight No. 166
The Return flight*

The sender says: "Discovered in 1820. Lay for some time on road between Bedrechain and Mit Rahina until nearly covered in mud. It was moved to its present site by Col. Bagnold of the Sappers about 1884. It is 42 feet high and is cut in hard limestone". There is now a museum building surrounding this colossal statue of Ramesses II, the second king of the 19th Dynasty.



Correctly franked 50 milliemes to pay the postcard rate, the above card would have been loaded at Cairo after return from the Rundfahrt for transit to Rochester, Kent.

The Egypt Flight

Suez Graf Zeppelin



This is by far the rarest cancellation of the four post offices issued with the overprinted airmail stamps. Blau and Deighton state that only four items of Suez mail known from the Rundfahrt actually exist; that leaves return flight and by favour cancellations of which very few are documented. A neat example on piece.



Unused real photo postcard of the airship over Giza.

The Egypt Flight

Contracting State Mail

Contracting State Mail occurred when seven European postal authorities, Austria, Danzig, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Saar and Switzerland, all agreed specific postal rates for transmission aboard the Graf Zeppelin. Swiss rates were 1fr 40 cents for postcards and 2fr 70 cents for letters.

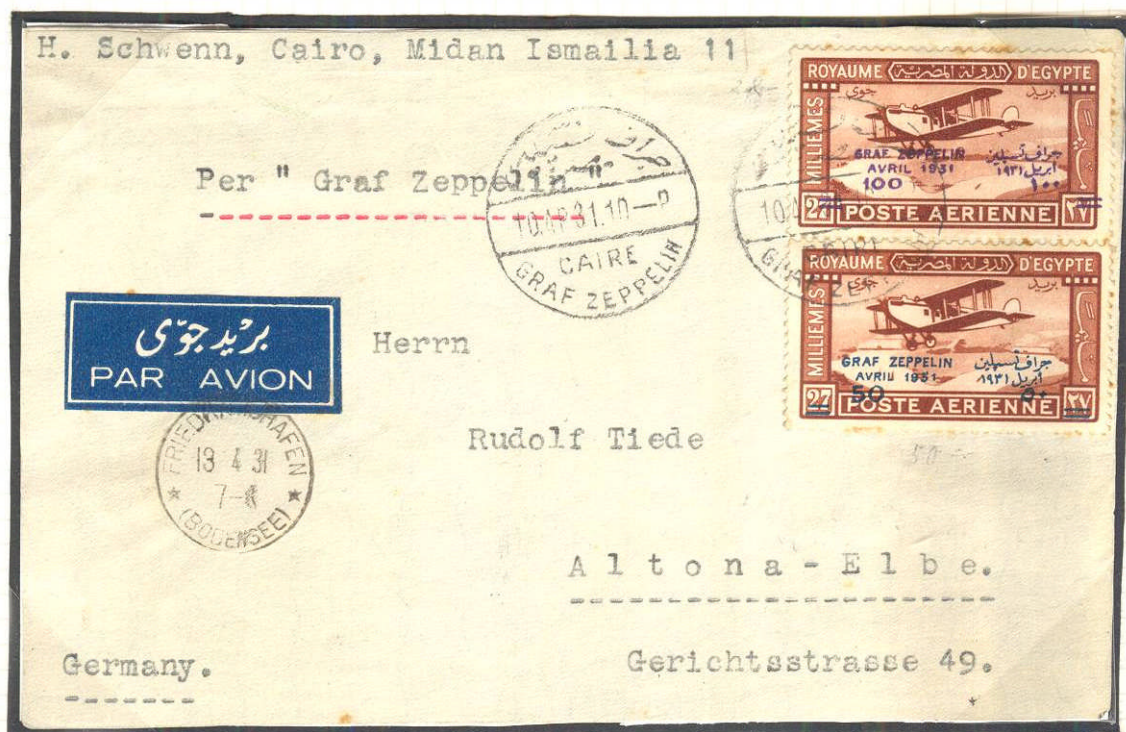


carried on the Rindfahrt thereby surface to Budapest, 20 cents Swiss postal stationery card with added 20 cents and 1 franc stamps to make the 1fr 40 cents rate. Romanhorn to Hungary via Friedrichshafen and Cairo to Cairo.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 166
The Return flight

The overprinted adhesives were produced with the surcharging undertaken in Arabic and French Languages. They were valid only until 11th April 1931 and, the overprinting being done in a rush, many varieties exist, but the well-known 'error' 1951 for 1931 is not a typesetting error but a deformed figure 3. It occurs to varying degrees on 9 positions on a sheet.



Cover with 1951 for 1931 on 50 millimes

Overfranked cover from Cairo to Germany with both overprinted adhesives - only 100 mills was required - a dual language airmail etiquette matching languages.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 166
The Return flight

The two transit marks below, taken from the reverse of the cover, show that, posted in Alexandria on 7 AP 31 in the evening, it could have been on the Rindfahrt as it was received in Cairo in time. The lack of the red triangular cachet proves it to be Return flight mail.



Correctly franked cover posted Alexandria to Rotterdam.

Commemorative

Graf Zeppelin

Issued as the top value of a set to commemorate the International Aviation Congress held in Cairo in December 1933, the 20 milliemes blue depicts the Graf Zeppelin. The 20 milliemes would prepay the foreign letter rate or the foreign fee for registration.



A registered commercial cover from Cairo, most probably addressed to Dresden since it is business postal stationery. Franked 40 milliemes to meet the registration fee of 20 mills and the surface foreign letter rate.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 166
The Return Flight

Flight 166 departed Cairo at 17.30 in the early evening of 11th April 1931 and reached the airship base at Friedrichshafen at 7.00 in the morning of 13th April. The final leg had lasted 37 hours 30 minutes and covered a distance of 3313 kms.

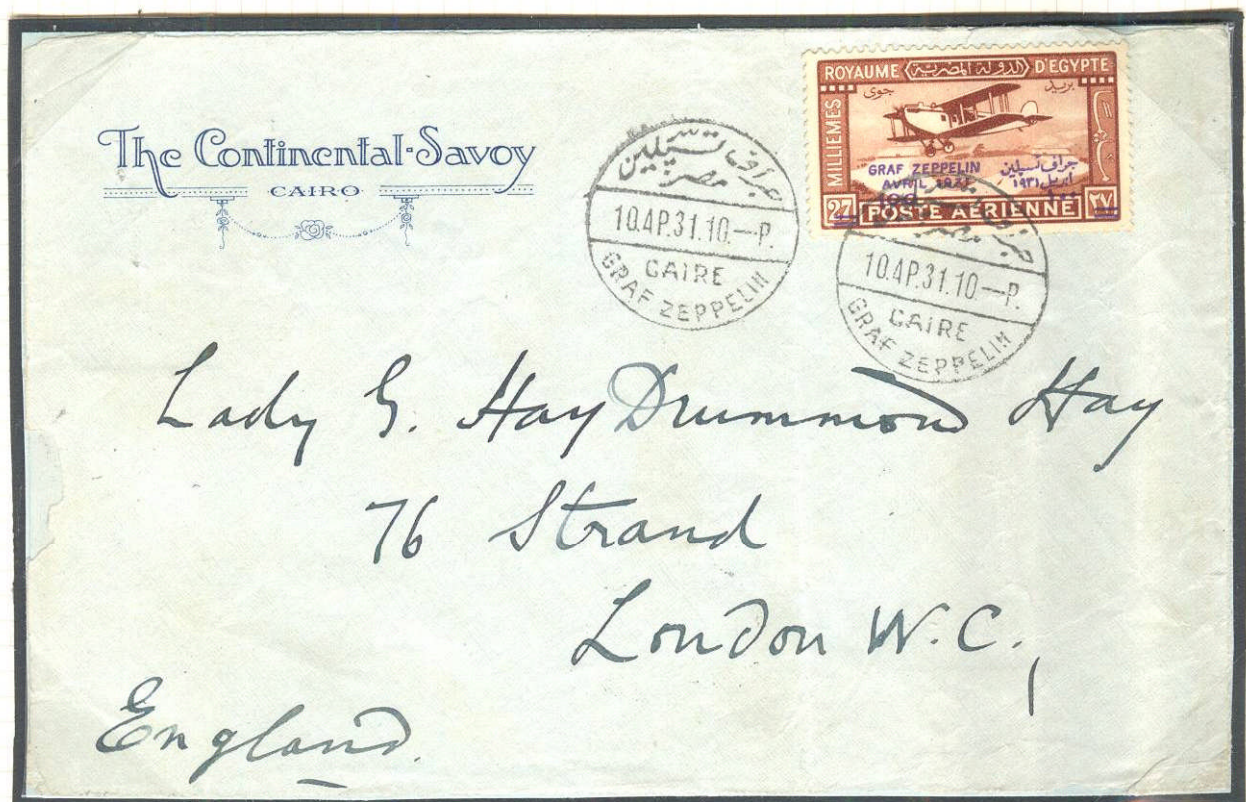


Correctly franked 50 milliemes postcard (of the Pyramids at Giza) sent from Port Said to Cairo to catch the airship's return flight to Germany from where the card travelled surface to Berlin.

The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 166
The Return flight

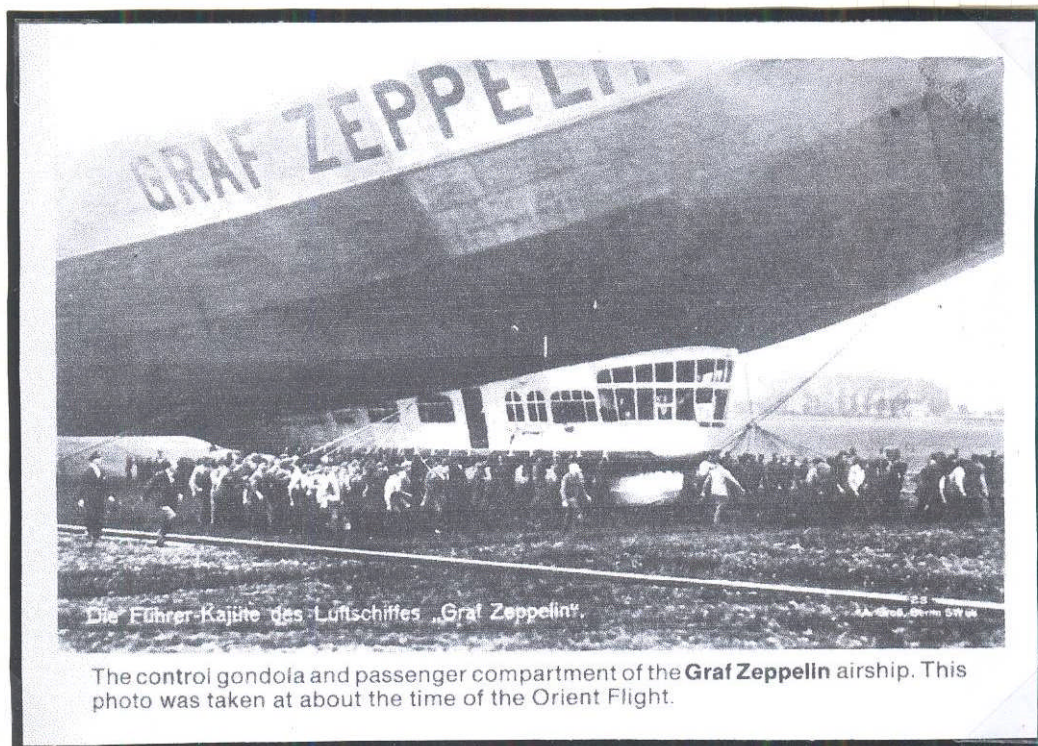
The addressee, Lady Hay Drummond Hay was a travel journalist specializing in early air travel. She had herself been a passenger on the Orient Flight of Graf Zeppelin and is recorded as having assisted in the on board post room, possibly using the steel cachet.



Correctly franked 100 mills letter rate on a postal stationery envelope of the Continental Savoy hotel facing Opera Square, Cairo; with evening date stamp.

LZ 127-GRAF ZEPPELIN

Originally scheduled for 24th February 1929 when the temperature at Friedrichshafen was 11° below zero, in the coldest winter in Europe for forty years, the Orientflight was postponed until late March. LZ127 took off shortly after midnight on 25th March 1929.



The airship spent 17,177 hours 48 minutes in the air; she travelled 1,695,272 kilometres, she carried 34,000 people, 39,422 kilos of freight and 39,219 kilos of mail. As well as Eckener LZ127 had five captains: Lehmann Fleming, von Schüller, Wittmann and Pruss respectively.

The Egypt Flight

*Flight No. 166
The Return flight*

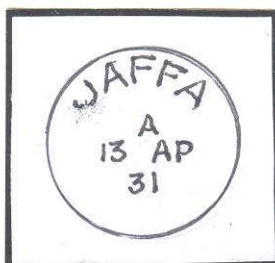
The sender says: 'Discovered in 1820. Lay for some time on road between Badrechein and Mit Rahina until nearly covered in mud. It was moved to its present site by Col. Bagnold of the Sappers about 1884. It is 42 feet high and is cut in hard limestone.' There is now a museum building surrounding this colossal statue of Ramesses II, the second king of the 19th Dynasty.



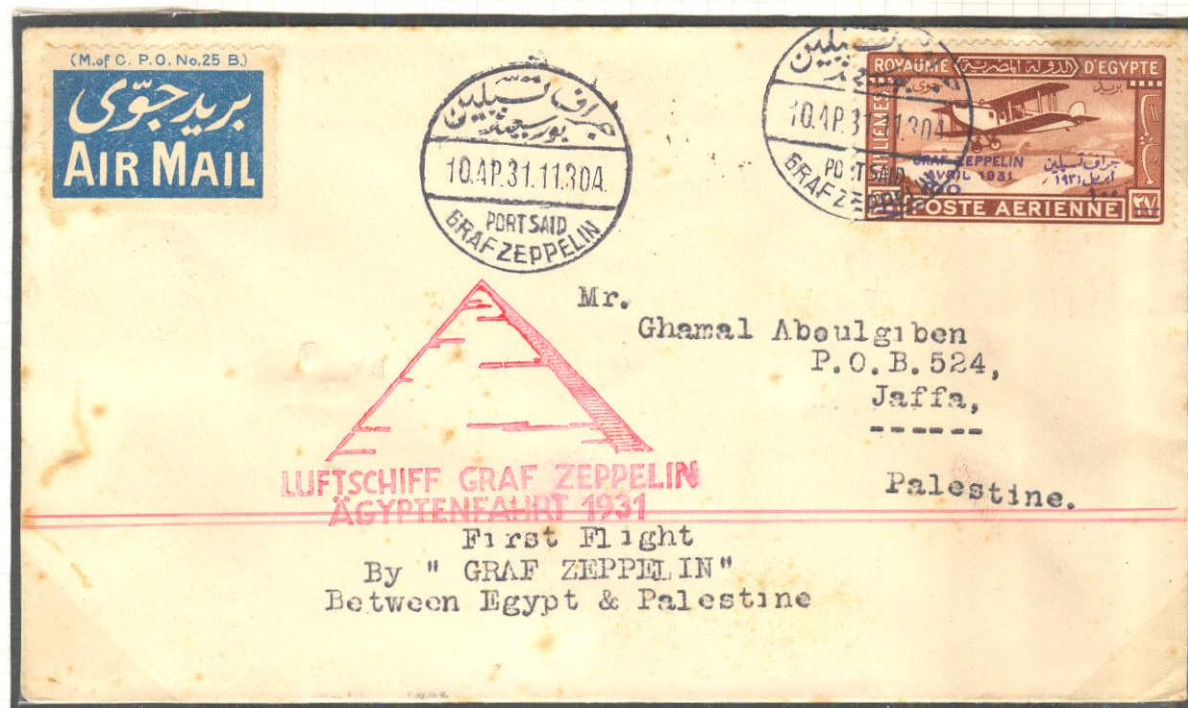
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The Egypt Flight

Flight No. 165
The Rundfahrt



Jaffa backstamp on mail forwarded from Cairo on the reverse of the cover



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The Zeppelin Overprints

The announcement of a second special trip to the Holy Land, this time via Cairo, prompted the Egyptian Post-master General, Mohammed Charara Pasha, to issue two stamps to commemorate the visit and to pre-pay postage. Two thousand sheets of the 1929 27milliemes chestnut were sent for surcharging to Bulacq. The 50 mills was for postcards, the 100 mills was for letters.



As the overprinting plate was hand set from type fonts available, several flaws resulted; the main flaw is the error '1951' for 1931 on the 50 mills value on up to thirteen stamps but, most noticeably on sheet positions 1 and 3. The 100 milliemes plate was a new one so '1951' does not occur.



The Egyptian Post Office permitted sale of only 10 stamps.

The Egypt Flight

Contracting State Mail

Contracting State Mail occurred when seven European postal authorities, Austria, Danzig, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Saar and Switzerland, all agreed specific postal rates for transmission aboard the Graf Zeppelin. Swiss rates were 1 fr 40 cents for postcards and 2 fr 70 cents for letters.



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