

Lindbergh 1928 CAM 2 Air Mail Flights

By Tom Reyman

Before Charles Lindbergh completed his historic New York to Paris flight in 1927, he had spent some time developing and flying the Contract Air Mail Route #2 (CAM 2) Air Mail route between Chicago and St. Louis. On April 15, 1926, the CAM 2 flights started using a fleet of four World War I surplus de Havilland DH-4 biplanes. The CAM 2 flight team consisted of Lindbergh and three other pilots.

After his famous cross-Atlantic flight in 1927, Charles Lindbergh used his new-found fame as a world-renowned aviator to promote the benefits of air mail service. Air Mail volume increased by over 50% in the months following the historic flight. He completed several tours in the United States and in Latin America and the Caribbean to publicize aircraft and air mail.

In February of 1928, Lindbergh requested and received approval from the United States Post Office to pilot aircraft on the CAM 2 route that he had helped develop. When the proposed flight was announced, many thousands of souvenir covers were sent to Chicago and St. Louis to be flown on Lindbergh's airplane. The large volume of mail necessitated the use of four aircraft to manage the volume. At each stop along the route (Peoria and Springfield, Illinois), Lindbergh would switch aircraft so that each cover could be claimed to have been flown by him.

These are three of the many CAM 2 covers that flew on the February 20 and 21, 1928 flights between Chicago and St. Louis.



This cover was appropriately posted with the U.S. C10 stamp showing the Spirit of St. Louis airplane that Lindbergh used on his historic flight. This is the Northbound flight on Feb. 20.



This Southbound flight cover from Feb. 21 is franked with the unusual combination of the U.S. 629 “Battle of White Plains” stamp and the C4 air mail stamp to make up the required 10 cents postage.



This large envelope cover was sent by air mail from Santa Monica, California to Chicago to be carried on the Southbound Lindbergh flight on Feb. 21 from Chicago to St. Louis. Since there were two flight legs, the one 10 cent stamp was insufficient postage, and the Post Office assessed a 10 cent Postage Due penalty. Presumably, the sender was pleased to pay the extra fee just to have the cover returned to him.

Tom Reyman is a Nevada Stamp Study Society member whose collecting interests are U.S. FAM covers, general Air Mail covers, Canadian Semi-Official Air Mail stamps and covers, and Cape Breton (Nova Scotia) covers.