

Balloon Mail, Ballons Montes, and Zeppelin Mail

By Chev Dr Alfred Bonnici KM. MD.

Part 1

Balloon Mail

Balloon Mail is defined as the transport of mail, by means of unguided hydrogen, or helium filled balloon.

Normally, because of weight reasons, the mail is sent in the form of a post card, on which there is written the name of the sender.

As this type of balloon was not controlled, many were lost, and did not reach their destination. However when a balloon was found, it was requested that it be returned to the sender by ordinary post, with an indication where it was found, so that the sender could determine how far the balloon flew.

Balloon Mail has been used to spread information, and propaganda literature, where a despotic regime was in place.

THE SIEGE OF METZ

When Marshal Baseline's army was surrounded at Metz, a surgeon, by name Dr Papillion, had the idea of using balloons to send messages, passed this idea to the chief pharmacist Doctor Julien.F.Jeannel who constructed the first balloons from tracing paper coated in varnish.

Between the 5th and 15th September, fourteen small balloons carried 3000 items, but only half of these items arrived at their destination.

Because of this success General Coffiniers de Nor deck, the commander of Metz, made available to the public, soldiers, and even prisoners, the use of this new facility.

A special post office was opened at the H.Q.of the Fifth Division and the following notice was published.

**“In order to take advantage of dispatch by balloon,
Correspondence should be set out on onion skin paper,
Bear the address on one side, and should not exceed
Ten cm in length and Five cm in width”**

Metz surrendered on the 27th October.

The following commemorative plaque was fixed to a wall of the former military hospital at Metz, in honor of Dr JULIEN F JEANNEL

**The balloons which constituted the first
Airmail service were produced,
And launched, from the military hospital
At Fort Moselle,
On the 5th September 1870,
At the instigation of
DOCTOR JULIEN F. JEANNEL**

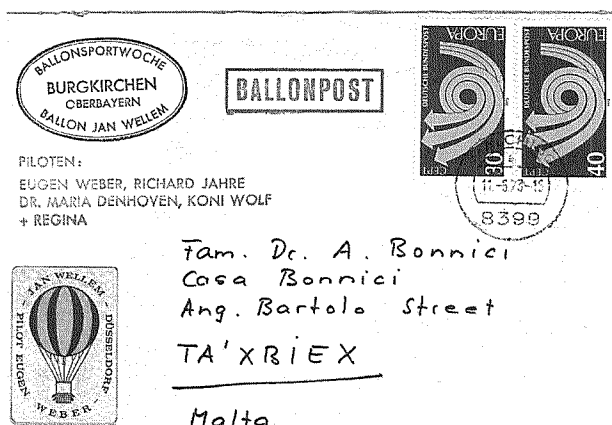
1814-1896

PHARMACIST IN CHIEF TO THE IMPERIAL GUARD

**With the participation of officers of the Medical
Corps**

*No correspondence by "Balloon mail", to Malta OF THIS PERIOD has
ever been recorded.*

11 May 1973 **BALLONPOST** to Malta



Hot Air Balloon card issued in aid of the **PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED REHABILITATION FUND MALTA**, signed by the wife of the First President of The Republic of Malta, Mrs Margret Mamo. Malta became a Republic on the 31st March 1975, with a new coat of arms. However this card is illustrating the Independence 1964 coat of arms.



POSTA BIL-BALLUN TA' L-AJRU

FLIGHT CANCELLED
DUE TO
WEATHER CONDITIONS



16. DEUTSCHER KINDERDORF SONDER - BALLONFLUG

1. BALLOON-FLIGHT FOR CHILDRENS AID

Posta bil-ballun ta' l-ajru għall ġid ta' PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED REHABILITATION FUND MALTA. Din il-kartolina No 262 intbagħtet bil-Ballun ta' l-ajru minn Ta' Qali, il-pcst tat-tluġh u ġiet imwassla bil-posta għal-lok ta' nżul.

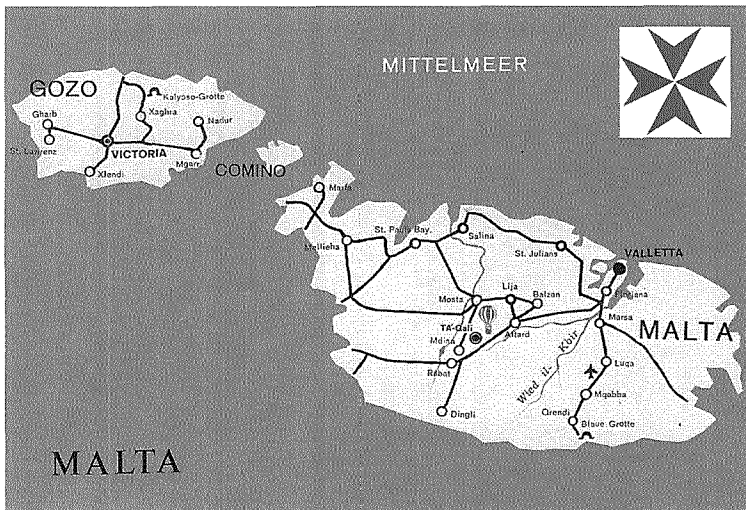
Bdot: *Posta għall-ajru ta' l-ajru: Lok ta' nżul:*

The Hon. Dr. Alfred Bonnici
B. Pharm., M.D., M.R.S.H., M.P.
Casa Bonnici
Augustus Bartolo Str
Pa X-bies
Malta G.C.



Margaret Mamo

First President's Wife



During the siege of Paris, between 23 September 1870 and 1871, 65 unguided mail balloons were discharged, of which only two went missing.

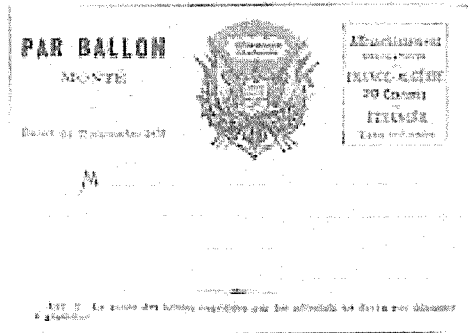
BALLONS MONTES (*Paris siege 1870*)

Because this service was not a reliable one, during the Paris siege French Aeronauts suggested to the head of the French Post Office, that manned balloons should be used to communicate with the provisional government at Tours, and the outside world.

The Post Office accepted this suggestion, and on September 23, the professional aeronaut Jules Durouf departed from the Place St Pierre in Montmartre in the balloon Le Neptune with 227 pounds (103 kilograms) of mail. Later they ascended from the city's centre - usually the Gare du Nord - and the Gare d'Austerlitz at regular intervals.

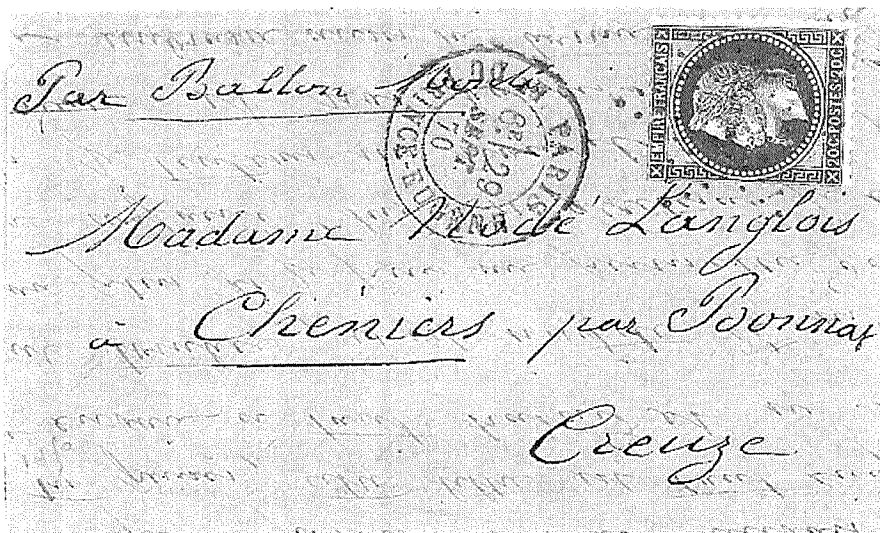


France Airmail issue (1971) showing a Paris siege balloon rising from the Gare d'Austerlitz railroad station.



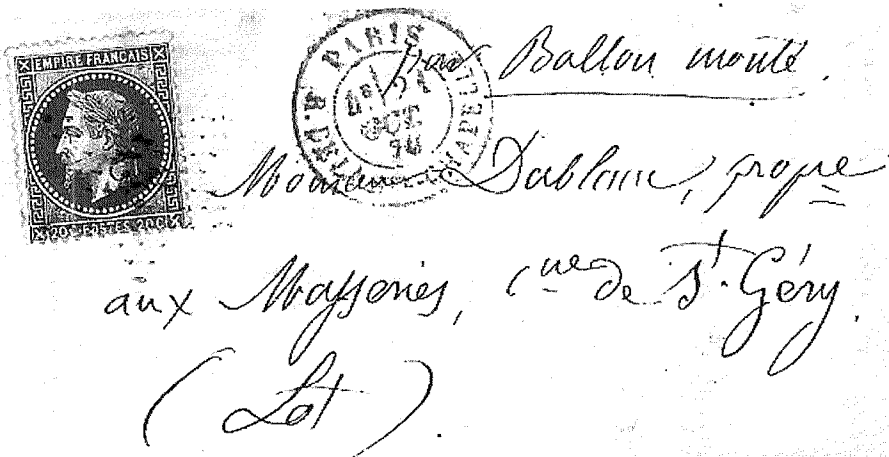
The address side of a ballon post card from the 1870 siege of Paris

Special balloon postcard 10 x 7 cm weighing 4g, manufactured on thin green paper. They carried an address, and it was hoped that the finder of a balloon would forward it through conventional mail. Twenty cents were charged for postage, more for outside France.



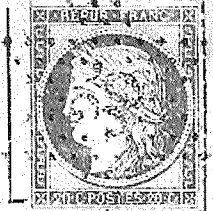
Entire written on 29.9.70 leaving Paris on same day, for Creuze, 6 days after first flight.

It traveled on board Ballon Monte **LE NON DENOME** No1

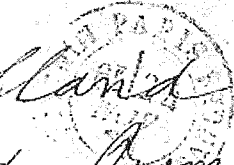


Entire leaving Paris on 21 OCT 70, arriving at St GERY 2 NOV 70
It traveled by means of Ballon Monte **LE GARIBALDI**.

PAR BALLON MONTÉ.



M^r Prolland
78 rue de Rome
à Marseille



La Ville d'Albi

Entire leaving Paris on 24 NOV 70, arriving in Marseille on 23 DEC 70
It traveled on board Ballon Monte **LE JACQUARD**.

Par Ballon

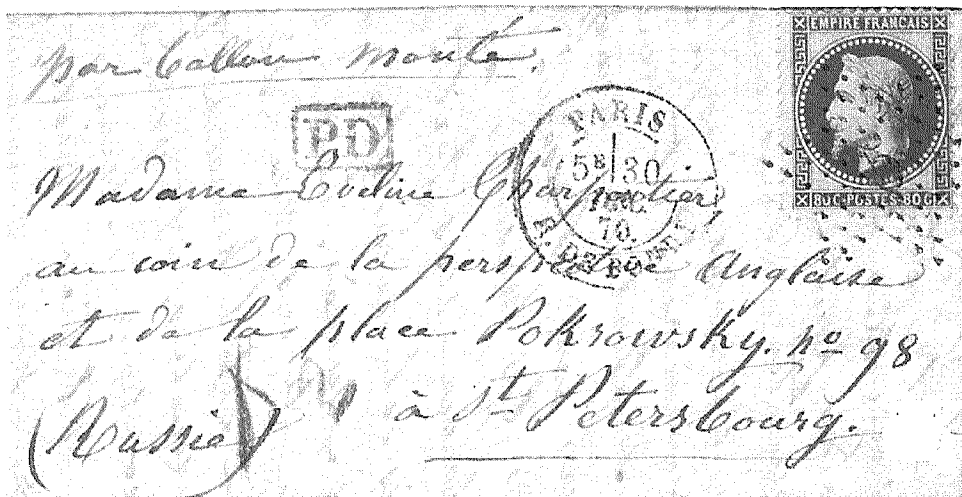


Messieurs Heusinger
au Logebach
par Colmar.
pour remettre à M. Lamasse (Haut Rhin)
au d. M. Schwoerer



LE NEWTON

Entire leaving Paris on 31 DEC 70 for COLMAR.
No arrival hand stamp.
It traveled by means of Ballon Monte **LE NEWTON**, and was taxed 30 centimes on arrival.



Entire to St Petersburg - Russia by Ballon Monte, 80 centimes stamp, leaving Paris on the 30 DEC 70.



BALLON MONTE; 80c rose cancelled dots No 38 PARIS R FEUILLANTINE 18 Nov 70, to KIEV / RUSSIA

This entire was sent by means of Ballon Monte **GENERAL ULRICH**.

Réponse à la dernière
lettre de Ma tante Emilie,
en date du 22 Octobre 1970,
et qui ne m'est parvenue que
le 2. 11. 1970.

Bordeaux

à Mlle Emilie.
Boulevard Franklin 13,

Sous le couvert

Minute

M. Alphonse Feillet
Du service postal ccccy
Destination de Paris, à
de Gousses.



Monsieur de Montcheuil
44 - Place Dauphine
Bordeaux
Gironde

179
effectuons que tu m'as
la date du 22 octobre, et
de te donner de nos nouvelles
espérons que ce fut mon
toi, car Paris comme

Entire leaving Paris on 27 OCT 70 arriving in Bordeaux on the 2 NOV 70. The reply was written on the same day, and sent by courier Alphonse FEILLET who was in charge of the postal service at TOUR.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the office of the Secretary of the Board of Education, since the last meeting of the Board, on the 1st of October, 1870.

Ich habe die Ehre, Ihnen hiermit zu schreiben, dass ich die
 Ehre habe, Sie zum Mitglied der Kommission für die
 Reorganisation der Schulen in Zürich ernannt zu haben.
 Ich bitte Sie, Ihre Zustimmung zu dieser Ernennung
 mir zu bestätigen. Ich bin, mit hochachtungsvoller
 Grüßen,
 Ihr ergebener Diener,
 Dr. J. J. Schuler

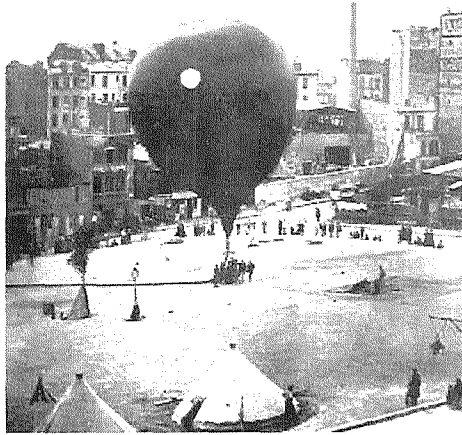
PAID 10 CENTS
 10
 Dr. J. J. Schuler
 10 November 1870
 Zürich
 Suisse

105
 105

PARIS
 1 NOV 70
 HUEA


Entire leaving Paris on the 1 NOV 70, arriving Zurich, on the 3 NOV 70.
 It traveled on Ballon Monte **LE FULTON**.

During the siege a total of 66 balloons left Paris, 58 landing safely. They delivered more than two million pieces of mail as far away as Tours, 125 miles (201kilometers) to the south of Paris, together with about 102 people, more than 500 pigeons, and five dogs, which were supposed to return to Paris carrying microfilm. They did not return.

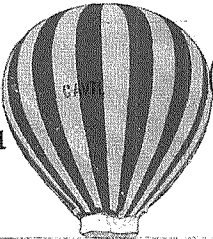


An early photo of the first balloon out of Paris 18.9.70


29th November 1970, 1st British hot air balloon flight to Malta from HMS Arc Royal at sea, commemorating first flight out of Siege of Paris 18. September 1870.



**H.M.S.
Ark Royal**




FLY NAVY



**HMS ARK ROYAL
FIRST
HOT AIR BALLOON
LANDED MALTA**

**First
British
Hot Air
Balloon
Flight at Sea**



FLIGHT COVER

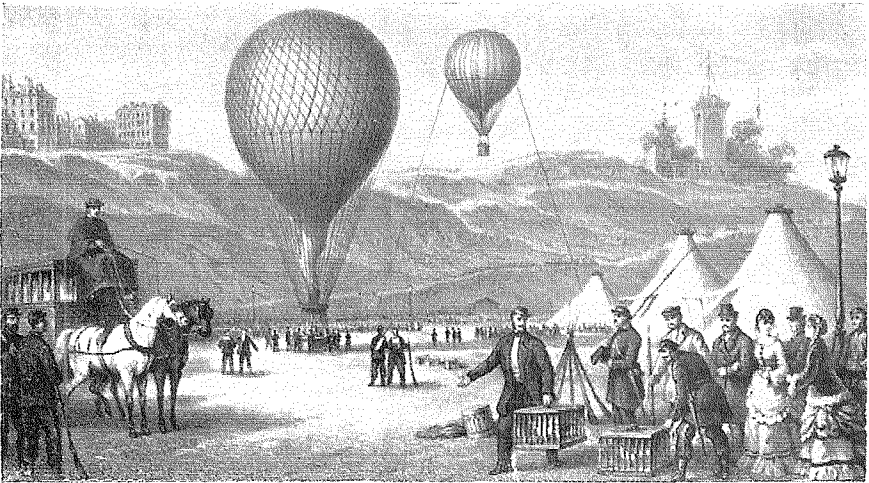
The Hon. Dr A. Bonnici, M.D., M.P.,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
The Palace,
VALLETTA.

TO COMMEMORATE
THE FIRST HOT-AIR
BALLOON POST
PARIS 1870

HMS ARK ROYAL - MALTA
1970



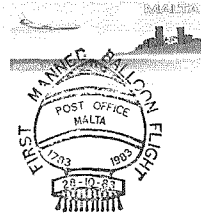
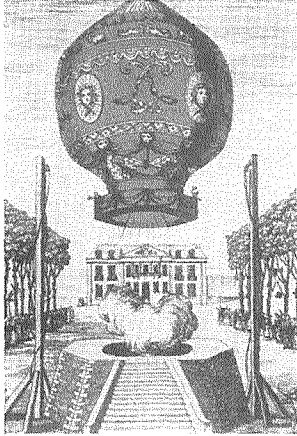
HMS ARK ROYAL
FIRST
HOT AIR BALLOON
LANDED MALTA



Centenary of the first Hot-Air Balloon Post used during the Siege of Paris (Sept. 18th, 1870 – Jan.28th, 1871) HMS Ark Royal launched a Hot-Air Balloon to Malta.

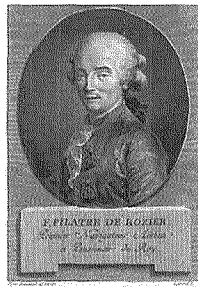
This is also the first British Hot-Air Balloon Flight at sea. A limited quantity of mail was carried in the balloon.

Illustration is from a contemporary lithograph showing the balloon launching field at place de Saint-Pierre. The small departing balloon is "The Strasbourg". The mail coach bringing letters for dispatch by balloon is on the left, whilst baskets of carrier pigeon for loading, to be used in distributing letters are seen on the right.



FIRST MANNED
BALLOON FLIGHT
1783 - 1983

Card issued in 1983, by Messrs Said, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the first manned balloon flight by Jean Francois Pilatre de Rozier and Marques d'Arlandes from Paris on the 21st November 1783.



Jean-Francois Pilatre de Rozier, was born in Metz on the 30th March 1754, and died when he was attempting to cross the English Channel together with his companion Pierre Romain, in his balloon, a combination of hydrogen and hot air, which exploded on 15th June 1785, becoming the first known victims of an air crash.

In June 1783 he was present at the unoccupied balloon ascension of the Montgolfier brothers.

On 21 November 1783 he made the first manned free flight in history, accompanied by the Marquis d'Arlandes. During the 25 minute flight using a Montgolfier hot air balloon, they traveled 12 kilometers from the chateau

de La Muette to the Butte aux Cailles near Paris, attaining an altitude of 3000 feet.

Mail on the Ville d'Orleans

The 33rd balloon was named the “*Ville d' Orleans*” in honour of the town recently liberated by French Forces, which was recaptured by the Germans two months later.

On the 24th November 1870 carrying four post bags, around 250 kilos, and an important message addressed to the French Minister of the Interior Leon Gambetta, who had escaped from Paris on October 7th by balloon, and was now residing with the rest of the government in Tours, lost itself in the night, and when dawn broke up on the 25th they nearly descended into the sea, but by jettisoning all heavy material including one heavy mail bag, they lifted again, and drifted towards Norway. They finally descended in a place called Lifjell about 100 kilometers southwest of Oslo, and with difficulty they managed to bail out of the balloon's basket into the snow, without being able to secure the balloon, which drifted away with the remaining mail, pigeons and their food. However by means of Norwegian help they reached Christiania (Oslo) on the 29th.



Entire carried by the Ville d'Orleans from Paris.

In the mean time the large mailbag had been retrieved from the sea on November 27th by fisherman from the Mandal area and, after the mail being dried by blotting paper from a Mandala bookshop, was sent to the

French consul in Christiana (Oslo), who on the 28th November placed it on a boat to Scotland reaching London, on the 2nd December.

This mail is known among us philatelists as the “Mandal Mail”.

The balloon was found on 25th November on a hillside near Tunet, and the remaining post from this salvaged balloon is known as the “Tunet Mail”

Specialists in the Franco-Prussian war are able to allocate letters to individual balloons by the date stamps of their acceptance and their arrival date stamp applied by the post offices.

To identify mail from the “Ville d’Orleans” one must look for the Paris departure date stamps between the 20-24th November, 1870. Mail from the sack dumped in the sea has an en route 2 December 1870 London date stamp. Items from all the sacks bear arrival date stamps between December 6-23, apart from items with a final destination of London, which have arrival date stamps between December 2-12.

ALBERTO SANTOS-DUMONT



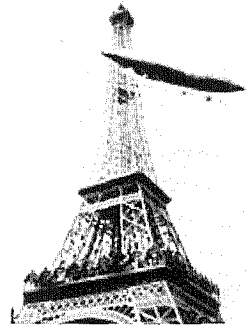
Santos-Dumont

Albert Santos – Dumont was a Brazilian aviation pioneer. He was born in Brazil on the 20th July 1873, and on the 4th July 1898 his first spherical balloon Brazil, 113 cubic meters, having in its lower part a wicker basket made its first ascent in Paris.

His second balloon America, having 500 cubic meters capacity, won the Aero Club of Paris award. Twelve balloons had participated in this

competition but America reached a greater altitude and remained in the air for 22 hours.

He devoted afterwards his time in solving the problem of steering the balloons, and after three attempts Santos Dumont 3 ascended on the 13th November 1890. It circled a few times the Eiffel Tower, headed for the park and from there finally headed towards the Bagatelle field where it landed safely.



Brazil stamps commemorating Santos Dumont achievements.

On the 19th October 1901 Santos Dumont won the “Deutsch Prize” when Dirigible No 6 took off from Saint-Cloud circumnavigated the Eiffel Tower and returned to the starting point in less than thirty min.

Dirigibles Nos - 7, 8, 9 followed and on 4th July 1903 Santos Dumont maneuvered over Long champs, where a military parade was being held in commemoration of Bastille Day.

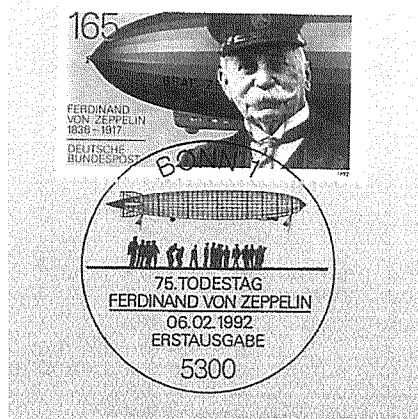
Once he solved the problem of steering the lighter-than-air vehicle he devoted himself to the heavier-than-air problem. After several failed attempts, on November 12th, 1906 Santos Dumont’s aero plane the 14-BIS, flew a distance of 220 meters at a height of 6 meters and a speed of 37.358 km/h. This feat won him the “Archdeacon Prize”

He died in Brazil on the 23rd July 1932.

No recorded mail has been recorded as having been on board Santos Dumont flights.

ZEPPELIN MAIL

Count Ferdinand Adolf Augustus Henrich von Zeppelin was the father of air passenger services and of the rigid airships. He was born on the 8th March 1838 in Constance – Baden, and died on the 8th March 1917 at Charlottenburg near Berlin.



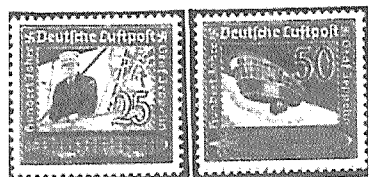
He is portrayed in the left stamp, issued on 6th February 1992, with full white mustachios, and showing also behind him, his company's most successful aircraft, LZ 127 *Graf Zeppelin*. The special post mark commemorating this occasion, shows the LZ 127 being held down for anchoring purposes, by a group of men.

A more or less similar design appears on the 3



marks stamp of the 1934 German air set

In 1938, to commemorate the centenary of his birth a 25pfenning and



50pfenning set was issued. The 25pfenning value shows the pioneer himself traveling in the car of one of his early ships, while the 50pfenning value shows the car and the elevation of a contemporary airship.

As a young man, he observed balloons used militarily in the American Civil war (1861-65), and had his first balloon flight at St Paul, Minnesota. He was astounded by the successful and widespread use of manned balloons (*Ballon Monte*) to carry both men and mail, during the siege of Paris, in the Franco – Prussian War (1870-71, when Paris was completely surrounded by the Prussians.

*Stamp issued in 1955 showing **Balloon Monte** lifting from Paris*



This fact gave him the idea of a rigid airship, and after leaving the army in 1891 he devoted himself with developing this idea. Probably he was influenced by the work done by Alberto Santos-Dumont.

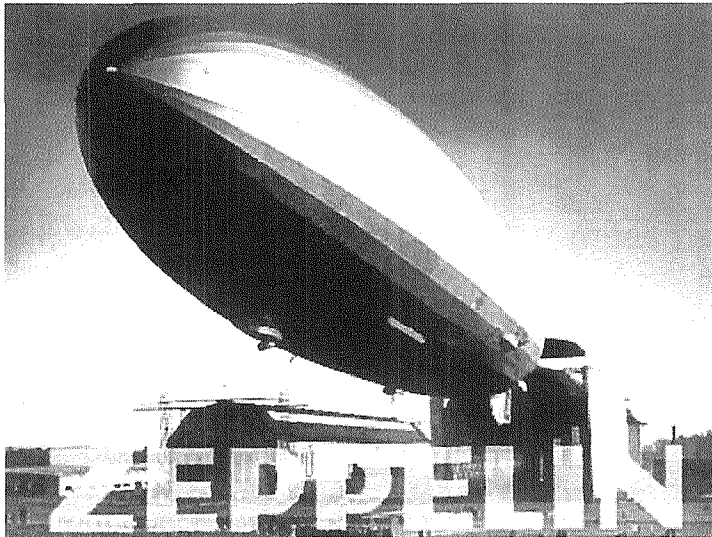
He was helped by Hugo Eckener (b 10 August 1869), who joined him in developing the rigid airship, and helped train pilots.

Ludwig Durr was his Chief Engineer who was responsible for the overall designs of the Zeppelins, the name given to the duralumin-internal-framed, dirigibles

Count Zeppelin flew his first airship the L.Z.1 from a floating hanger on Lake Constance on 2 July 1900.



Hugo Eckerer



The Zeppelins were used in carrying mail, but were used in both war and peace, logging over a million miles of passenger travel without loss of life, before the Hindenburg disaster which occurred on the 6 May 1940.

Passenger service started in 1911, but the Company's greatest years were from 1928 to 1936; in that time over 100 distinct Zeppelin stamps were issued by almost 20 different countries ranging from the Aegean to the USA.

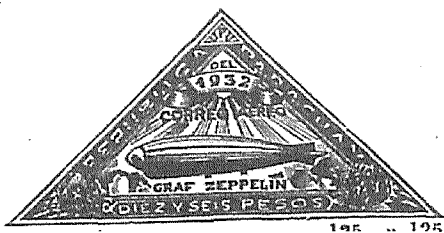
These fall into two categories; those that depict a Zeppelin in their design, usually **L.Z 127 Graf Zeppelin**, and those that have other overprints to honour "**Graf Zeppelin**", in general, or to commemorate some particular memorable flight.



Example of the first kind is the above stamp which is Egypt's 20 mill stamp, issued in 1933 as part of the International Air Congress set.

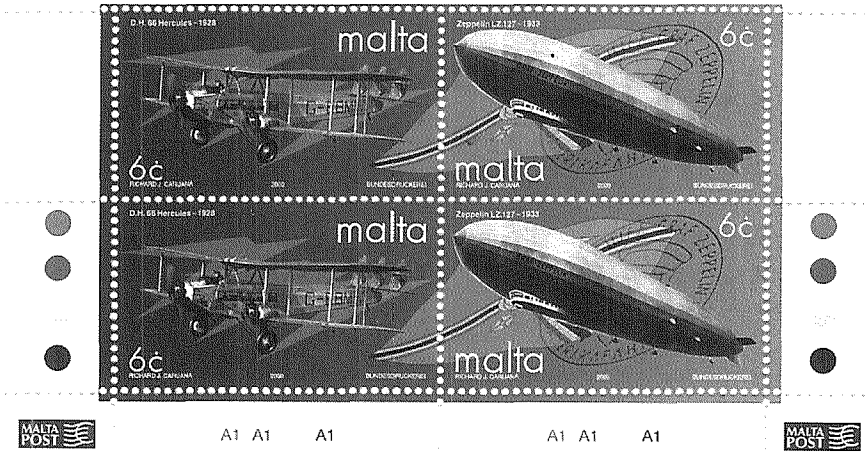
An example of the second type of overprint printed in 1930, on the 1924 Bolivia set commemorating the voyage of **L.Z. 127 Graf Zeppelin**.

CORREO AEREO
R. S. 6-V-1930
5 Cts.
3 5 c. s. 10 c. vermillon (V) 500 a 500
CORREO AEREO
R. S.
6-V-1930



One of the 1932 Paraguay triangular set of five

Among other countries issuing commemorative Zeppelin stamps, we find Finland – Germany – Greece - Russia – USA – Malta.



29 June 2000. Air transport set designed by Richard J Caruana. One of the stamps depicting the L. Z. 127 Graf Zeppelin.

TRANSPORT BL-AJRU



MALTA
POST

FDC No. 6
28.VI.2000

MALTA AME
01
CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT



TRANSPORT BL-AJRU
PHILATELIC
BUREAU



*Chev De Alfred Bonnici. M.D., K.M.
Chief Medical Officer.
Aero Medical Section.
Dept of Civil Aviation.
Luqa. Malta.*

The reason that **L.Z.127 Graf Zeppelin** has been so often shown on stamps is that it was remarkably successful and had the longest career of all Zeppelins. Just 775 feet long with a gas capacity of nearly 4 million cubic feet it carried passengers and twelve tons of freight including mail, at 60 mph for 60,000 miles non stop.

Launched in 1928, she made the last of her 650 passenger flights in 1937, and was then used in 1939 to investigate British radar installations.

She flew the Atlantic 144 times, covering over one million miles carrying mail and 18,000 passengers.

She was replaced by the **L.Z.129 Hindenburg**, which was put into service by the company in 1936, shown on the Germany 1936 set, and on the Lichtenstein 1 frank air stamp of 1936. It remained in use until its disaster in 1937,



1936 issue **L.Z.129 Hindenburg**

Zeppelin mail

Zeppelin mail was mail carried on the Zeppelin, the German airship that saw civilian use from 1908 to 1939.

First Period 1908 to 1914.

The first Zeppelin to carry mail was **L.Z. 4**, in 1908, followed by **L.Z. 5**.

The early flights did not use any special markings:

The first was an oval reading “**LUFTSCHIFF / SIGNALPOST**” around the edge and “**Z III**” in the centre, used on **L.Z. 6**, from August to October 1909.

By 1911 a number of different confirmation cachets were in use, such as: “**AN BOARD DES / ZEPPELIN / LUFTSCHIFFES**”, with a date in the centre, and the name of the Zeppelin at the bottom. These were actually applied on board the Zeppelin at a small postal station, while in flight.

The zeppelins were taken into military service in 1914, and did not carry civilian mail, although military commanders had a special hand stamp applied to their mail.

1919 to 1939

In late 1919, **L.Z. 120 BODENSEE**, resumed flights and carrying mail, using postmarks much as before the war, until 1921, when it was given to Italy as war compensation.

L.Z.126 carried mail briefly in 1924, before it was given to the United States and renamed the **Los Angeles (ZR-3)**, which carried mail between Lakehurst, New Jersey, Bermuda, and Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, several times.

No MALTA mail has been recorded carried on these Flights.

The L.Z. 127 Graf Zeppelin (For Malta Mail see Vol 35/1)

Within weeks of its first flight, the *Graf Zeppelin* carried the first airmail from Germany to the U.S.A., and vice versa. Germany issued special 2-mark, and 4 mark stamps for the occasion. In 1929 Graf Zeppelin circled the Globe.