An Unlisted Air France Cachet: Bahia (Brazil) 1934

Dan Gribbin

On December 11, 1934, the Air France flying boat Santos-Dumont, a four-engine Blériot 5190, lifted off from St. Louis (Dakar) Senegal with a load of mail for South America. This was the second westerly crossing by this aircraft, with Lucien Bossoutrot as chef de bord, a flight designated 10A in the Labrousse catalog (1). Included in that mail was a private letter mailed to a recipient in the Barra neighborhood of Salvador, the capital city in the Brazilian state of Bahia. The letter was posted on December 7 in the English town of Princes Risborough. The postmark includes the name of the “county town” (Aylesbury) in Buckinghamshire (Figure 1). Arriving in Natal on the evening of December 11, the cover received a backstamp in Bahia at 9 a.m. on December 12 (Figure 2).

Of particular interest here, on the reverse side of the cover, is the purple, boxed cachet indicating full airmail service: a speedy mail flight across the Atlantic rather than a four-day boat trip. The two-line cachet reads: “Transportada inteiramente / por via aerea – Air France.” It should be noted that, at the end of 1934, Air France had not yet achieved its goal of weekly all-airmail service between Europe and South America. But their nearly bi-weekly, full-air service must have been deemed worth touting, as the cachet indicates. The letter reached its destination in Brazil five days after being mailed in a rural town in England, nothing to be sneezed at, indeed.

Examples of these full-air cachets, applied both on outgoing and incoming mail to signify the expedited service, are reproduced in Labrousse, as well as in Collot and Cornu (2), with the latter source providing somewhat more extensive coverage. None of the cachets included in Labrousse’s catalog were applied at Bahia. Collot and Cornu do show...
a cachet applied in Bahia on outgoing mail in 1934-35, an example of which can be seen on the 7R cover (flown on the third round trip of the Croix du Sud, in Figure 3. But neither catalog shows a receiving cachet for mail processed at Bahia. Thus, the purple cachet depicted in Figure 2 might be considered worthy of note, an unlisted variety.

On the other hand, we may have, among our readers, collectors who have encountered other sources that list Air France cachets. If they would contact the editor with that information, or with other examples of unlisted cachets from Bahia or elsewhere, we will gladly publicize the information.

References

---

**FAM 34 First Flight**

Paul Petrosky

The United States Post Office Department designated any contract air mail flown by an airline to or from a foreign country to or from the United States a “Foreign Air Mail” route. The Foreign Air Mail routes became known as FAMs.

In 1928, financier Thomas E. Braniff, with his brother, World War I pilot Paul Revere Braniff, founded Paul R. Braniff, Inc., a combination flying school, aircraft parts supplier and airline.

On June 20, 1928, passenger service began on a 116-mile route between Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In April 1929 Braniff was sold to Universal Aviation Corporation, a conglomerate cross-country air-rail network. A new independent Braniff airline operation was incorporated on November 3, 1930, under the name Braniff Airways with Tom as president and Paul as secretary-treasurer. Throughout the 1930s Braniff Airways expanded its route system and in early 1947 changed its name to Braniff International Airways.

The FAM 34 contract was awarded to Braniff International Airways and on June 4, 1948, flying a Douglas DC-6 piloted by Don L. Hurst, it inaugurated flight service from Houston, Texas, to Lima, Peru. Its first stop was Havana, Cuba.

Reference
http://aerodacious.com/ (also photo credit)

---

SHARE AEROPHILATELY . . .

Write about it in our APJ!

DECEMBER 2016

PAGE 522

PAGE 521