

A MISDIRECTED CATAPULT COVER

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THE ILLUSTRATED COVER was dispatched on 30 April 1936 from Hamburg and was intended for airmail service to New York. In early 1936 the only Trans-Atlantic airmail service was by zeppelin LZ-129 HINDENBURG whose first flight was due to depart from Friedrichshafen the following week on 6 May 1936. The cover was correctly franked for a 5-10 gram zeppelin cover: 25 Pfg international letter rate + 2 x 50 Pfg zeppelin surcharge (50 Pfg/5 gram).



But instead of waiting for the zeppelin departure a full week later the cover ended up on the North German Lloyd steamer SS BREMEN which left Bremerhaven on 2 May 1936 for New York. The SS BREMEN was the ship from which the Trans-Atlantic catapult flights had departed from 1929 till 1935. With the cessation of the catapult flights the Trans-Atlantic airmail service was then continued in 1936 by the North American flights of LZ-129 HINDENBURG.

On board the SS BREMEN the seapost official took notice of the misdirected airmail cover. He stamped the cover with a red cachet indicating that the catapult flights had been suspended and also with a three-bar-boxed marking over the airmail label indicating that no further airmail transmission was possible. The official also added the red Expres label as a substitute for the paid zeppelin transmission. This cover reached New York on 8 May 1936 one day before the zeppelin landed at Lakehurst. ■