

# 100 YEARS BORDSTEMPEL

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ON 10 APRIL 1911, AIRSHIP LZ-8 DEUTSCHLAND was scheduled to be transferred from Baden-Oos to Düsseldorf. Under the command of Dr. Eckener, the airship departed Baden-Oos at 11 a.m. to fly in northern direction towards Düsseldorf. At 11.20 a.m. the airship passed Karlsruhe and reached Heidelberg at 12.25 p.m. The flight continued via Darmstadt and at 1.36 p.m. the airship landed at Frankfurt. At 2.56 p.m. the transfer flight was resumed in northern direction but after only 17 kilometers the airship returned over Bad Homburg to fly via Offenbach back to Frankfurt to land there at 4.15 p.m.

Officially it was bad weather which prevented the airship to fly from Frankfurt to Düsseldorf. But the note in the flight log by Dr. Hergesell gives a different reason: «Flight aborted due to too little water ballast and too many passengers (22).» On the following day 11 April 1911, the flight was resumed from Frankfurt and LZ-8 landed safely at Düsseldorf.



This story of the aborted positioning flight from Baden-Oos via Frankfurt to Düsseldorf in April 1911 makes this flight a very interesting flight. But there is more to say about this flight: For the first time, the round zeppelin on-board cachet (German: Bordstempel) came in use. This cachet is inscribed (transl.) «On board the zeppelin airship Deutschland.» It was a non-postal cachet, its purpose was to document the presence on board the airship.

Both the *Sieger-Zeppelinpostkatalog* and the *Michel Zeppelinpostkatalog* state 10 April 1911 as the first day of usage, although they provide different information about the first flight on which the cachet was used. The Michel catalogue lists the first usage for the Baden-Oos to Frankfurt flight while Sieger states that the cachet probably came on board the airship first at Frankfurt with a first usage therefore on the following round trip over Frankfurt.

As contradictory as these two statements are, as simple is the answer to that problem. Mail was dropped on the Baden-Oos to Frankfurt flight over the cities of Karlsruhe and also over Darmstadt, and both Karlsruhe and Darmstadt mail drops come with the purple round on-board cachet dated 10 April 1911. This is a clear evidence that the on-board cachet must have been taken on board the airship at Baden-Oos as Karlsruhe and Darmstadt were passed only on the Baden-Oos to Frankfurt flight.



**Mail drop Karlsruhe** Passenger postcard from the Baden-Oos to Frankfurt flight with the new on-board cachet.



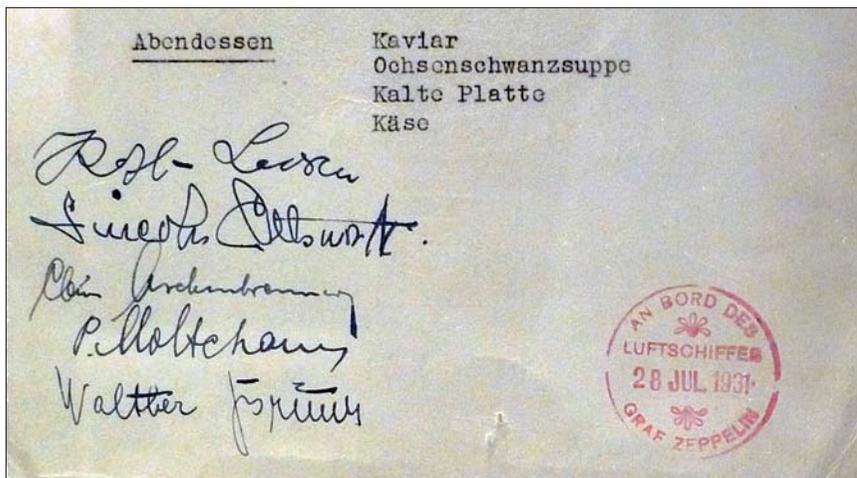
**Mail drop Darmstadt** Drop mail from the same passenger with new on-board cachet and finders notice (vertical black Darmstadt cachet in top left corner).

## MARKING

Airship LZ-8 DEUTSCHLAND was irreparably damaged at Düsseldorf on 16 May 1911, but the design of the on-board cachet survived airship LZ-8 DEUTSCHLAND. Similar on-board cachets with the same design but altered name of the airship were used on other later airships as well: LZ-10 SCHWABEN had such an on-board cachet as well as LZ-11 VIKTORIA LUISE, LZ-13 HANSA and LZ-17 SACHSEN. And even after World War 1, the on-board cachet was used on two further airships: On LZ-120 BODENSEE and on LZ-127 GRAF ZEPPELIN.

The last day of usage of the on-board cachet on LZ-127 GRAF ZEPPELIN was on the 50th flight, a Swiss flight on 15 November 1929 which was also the last flight in 1929. The discontinuation of the usage of the on-board cachet from 1930 onwards was officially ordered by the German Post Office Department at Berlin: According to their letter from 23 March 1930, the usage of markings on zeppelin mail was restricted to official markings only which were previously approved by the German Post Office Department. This was the end of the numerous private markings which were used quite frequently on 1929 zeppelin mail. Also the zeppelin on-board cachet was a private marking, owned by the zeppelin company Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH.

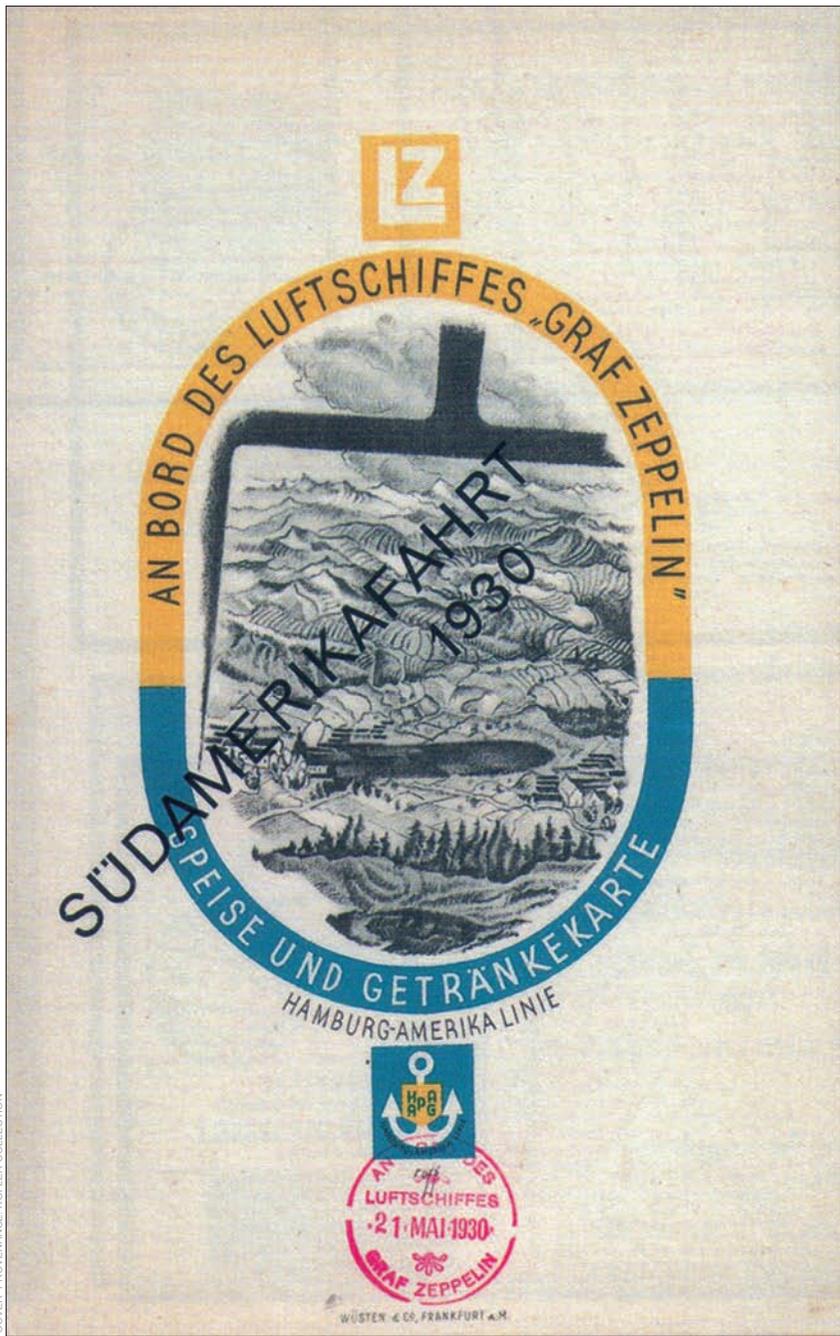
According to a footnote on page 94 of the *Sieger-Zeppelinpostkatalog*, the red on-board cachet of LZ-127 was withdrawn and destroyed end of 1929. But this is not quite right - the on-board cachet was not destroyed as the two illustrated strikes from 21 May 1930 on a menu from the 1930 Pan-America Flight and from 28 July 1931 on a menu from the Polar Flight document.



(top) **Polar Flight 1931** Menu (extract) with on-board cachet from 28 July 1931 and signatures of the scientists on board.

(right) **Pan America Flight 1930** Menu with on-board cachet from 21 May 1930, leg Seville - Recife.

COVER PROVENANCE: KOFLER COLLECTION

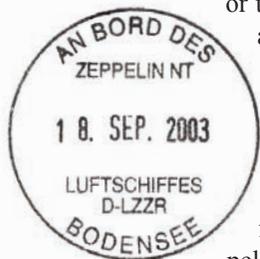


## MARKING

As one can see with the strikes on the 1930 and 1931 menus, the on-board cachet was not really destroyed but only horizontally and vertically notched so that the outer ring is broken. And the past-1929 usage of the on-board cachet on exclusively non-postal artifacts was within the new order set by the German Post Office Department in early 1930.

The 28 July 1931 usage is so far the last documented usage of the LZ-127 GRAF ZEPPELIN on-board cachet, and the last usage of any on-board cachet prior to World War 2: The other two airships LZ-129 HINDENBURG and LZ-130 GRAF ZEPPELIN II were flying without any private on-board cachet.

And today, 100 years after the first usage of the on-board cachet on LZ-8 DEUTSCHLAND on 10 April 1911? The design is still alive and was adopted for modern on-board cachets of the new-technology zeppelin airships. The first modern on-board cachet came back on board the zeppelins on 18 September 1997 with the first flight of the new-technology zeppelin D-LZFN FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, obliterating the zeppelin on-board labels became the new purpose of the modern on-board cachets. These on-board cachets are used on all four NT airships D-LZFN FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, D-LZZR BODENSEE, D-LZZF BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG and D-LZNT EUREKA. ■



**First Flight** First usage of a modern on-board cachet on zeppelin NT D-LZFN first flight cover from 18 September 1997.