

SCOTT #573A - A GLORIOUSLY PHILATELIC ITEM

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READERS FAMILIAR with my writings know that my view of zeppelin mail is that it is *Gloriously Philatelic*. Since little zeppelin mail was commercial and most of it saved, about the only reason we discuss it today is because of its highly collectible, complex, philatelic nature. If it was meant to be saved by the recipient when created, it is philatelic mail. If it was created as a collectible item, it is philatelic. This describes most zeppelin mail.



Philatelic Correctly franked US dispatch flown from Friedrichshafen via Lakehurst to Seville.

A US Scott #C13-15 first day cover is not an item that paved the way for much in the way of future commercial airmail development; rather it was a way for the zeppelin company to raise money to stay afloat. It could be said that this was part of the developmental period of zeppelin mail, and as such US C13-15 helped finance future commercial ambitions ...and no one could see the HINDENBURG disaster before it happened. But at the end of the day, what we collect and study is overwhelmingly philatelic and provides a worthy hobby in its own right, never mind that it is primarily philatelic. For comparison, plating Great Britain #1 is also a philatelic exercise, and yet no one disparages those whom have immersed themselves into that obsession.

Thus, given the overwhelmingly philatelic nature of our hobby's focus and what we actually have in our collections, collecting attractive items becomes a major pursuit within those collections. Yes, we know the correct rates, compile them, study them, and berate an item that is not correctly franked, but since even the correctly franked item is almost certainly philatelic, what difference does it make if it is overfranked, especially if the overfranking is due to an exotic stamp? The intent of creating such an item was NOT to deliver a timely piece of mail to an exotic destination, but rather to actually use exotic franking to pay for exotic transportation. Now, keep in mind that not all exotic franking need be in the theme of zeppelin stamps.



Philatelic Exotically overfranked cover flown Friedrichshafen-Friedrichshafen.

Illustrated is a cover franked with US Scott #573a as sole franking, overpaying the \$3.90 rate for round trip US dispatches from the 1930 South America Flight. The journey this cover took is nothing special. It was posted in New York on 7 May 1930 and made the complete round trip (as evidenced by the circular handstamp on the front) to Friedrichshafen, where it received a 6 June 1930 receiving stamp. It then was returned to the US where it received the common 18 June 1930 receiver in green.

Scott #573 was the highest denomination (\$5) of what collectors call «The Fourth Bureau Issue» of 1922. This set of 23 regular issue (non-commemorative) US stamps is actively collected and exhibited, mostly by American collectors. Finding the highest denomination (the Queen) stamp in use is rare, solo use even more so, and finding it on anything other than a parcel tag is something special, but seeing it pay the fare for a flown zeppelin item gives it a turbocharged look and use that is striking. Yes, it overpays the correct rate by \$1.10, but who cares? Think about this: Is a correctly franked cover with US Scott C14-15 any less philatelic? No. There are no degrees of philatelic mail. So I say, enjoy the philately! Embrace it! Glorious philately! ■