

# DIFFERENT FRIEDRICHSHAFEN POSTMARKS USED

By Werner Helms

SEPTEMBER 18, 2003 MARKED THE 6TH ANNIVERSARY of the first Zeppelin NT flight and also the 75th anniversary of the first flight of the airship LZ 127 GRAF ZEPPELIN. Two reasons for the Pestalozzi Kinderdorf charity organisation to fly special NT-Zeppelin mail.

It was a sunny and warm day when the Zeppelin NT BODENSEE took off from Friedrichshafen with the Zeppelin mail on board. After a round trip over the western part of Lake Constance, the airship returned to Friedrichshafen where the mail bag was offloaded. Then the Friedrichshafen central post office postmarked the flown mail with the arrival marking FRIEDRICHSHAFEN 1/88045/18.-9.03-18.



**Varieties** On the first sight the only difference of these two cards seems to be the address. A closer look unveils two different Friedrichshafen arrival postmarks showing the letters «a» or «b» in the top segment.

The flown Pestalozzi Kinderdorf postcards from that flight appear with several pre-printed addresses, which is not unusual. But it is very unusual that two different Friedrichshafen postmarks can be identified: The most obvious criteria to differentiate the two postmarks are the letters «a» or «b» in the top segment.

The Friedrichshafen postmark with the little letter «a» appears in black colour, and the handstamp used was a steel handstamp with a relief of the postmark being visible on the back side of the card. This postmark with the letter «a» is the regular postmark of the post office Friedrichshafen as it is used at the counter. The Friedrichshafen «a» postmark does not appear on any other NT Zeppelin mail from the 2003 flight season.



The Friedrichshafen postmark with the little letter «b» appears in dark blue or dark purple colour, and this postmark was obviously a rubber stamp since no relief is visible on the back side of the card. It looks like that this postmark with the letter «b» is a special postmark not in general use but probably used only at special occasions: When e.g. large quantities of collectors mail have to be postmarked, this Friedrichshafen «b» rubber postmark comes in use with a special cancelling machine. The Friedrichshafen «b» postmark can be found on almost all of the flown Zeppelin-NT covers from the 2003 flight season when a Friedrichshafen postmark was applied.



Why two different postmarks were used to postmark this Zeppelin NT mail, might be explained with a reception of the «Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen» which was held in the evening of September 18, 2003, the same day as the special Pestalozzi Kinderdorf flight. Also the Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen was celebrating the 75th anniversary of the first flight of LZ 127 GRAF ZEPPELIN and the 6th anniversary of the first Zeppelin NT flight.

During that reception of the Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen, the first flown postcards of the special Pestalozzi Kinderdorf flight from earlier that day were sold to the honourable guests. And it looks like that this flown NT-mail sold during that reception is the one postmarked with the Friedrichshafen «a» marking since these cards only have received a special handling: Immediately after the NT flight landed, the few postcards intended to be sold at the reception were taken out of the mail bag and rushed to get postmarked to be handy for sale at the Zeppelin Museums´ reception. The letter «a» has been found only on cards bearing the address «Freunde der Kinderdorf Flugpost, Pestalozzi Kinderdorf, D 78333 Stockach».

The remaining postcards of the mail bag from the special Pestalozzi Kinderdorf flight were postmarked later that day, without any rush. But this large quantity of mail was accidentally postmarked with a different Friedrichshafen arrival postmark, with the one showing the letter «b» in the top segment. This mail then was sold through the regular sales channels of the Pestalozzi Kinderdorf charity organisation. ■