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BULLETIN 160

March 2012

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The Study Circle website
www.belgian-congo-study-circle.be

From the Editor



In my capacity as editor I have little to say on this occasion other than express thanks to those who have contributed to this edition and confirm I will be standing for re-election at the AGM in March.

Honorary and General Secretary

For the last 15 years I have had the privilege of holding this 'Honorary' position. A visit down memory lane reminds me that at the time of my appointment Brian Hudson was President, Ray Keach the Vice President and General sales secretary, Ed Lavitt Bulletin editor, Lawrence Green the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. Time flies and unfortunately it is no longer possible for me to continue in this role. However it is with much pleasure to find that our Hon. Treasurer Dr. Charles Lloyd has accepted nomination both in his present capacity and as the Hon. Secretary, at the March AGM.

Historically and from personal practical experience, it has proved conveniently ideal that the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer is the same person. I trust but feel sure he will receive your support.

Stuart Smith

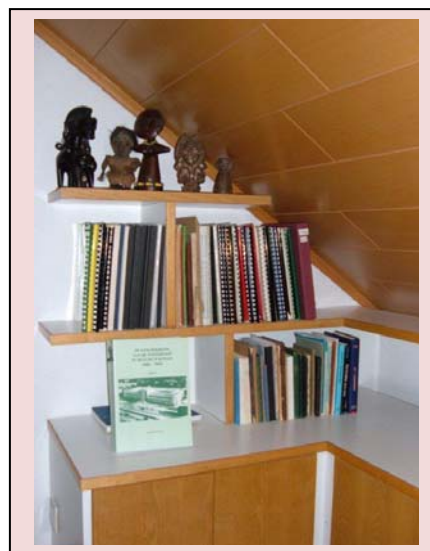
The Library and librarian – *Walter Deijnckens*



It is also with much pleasure that we can now confirm the appointment of our new librarian and that the library has been transferred to and is in the safe keeping of our former President, Walter Deijnckens.

He has let it be known that he is happy to be its guardian until his 75th birthday in six years time!

Subject to prior arrangement, the content is available for consultation between 10.00 until 17.00 hours with free coffee and impromptu Study Circle meetings.



In addition to the list of books published as a supplement to Bulletin 157 [*further copy available on request from the Bulletin editor*] the librarian has donated the following from his own personal library:

'Presidential correspondence 2003-2010'

'Bulletin 1 and catalogue of the *International Philatelic Exhibition – Malaga 2006.*'

'BCSC literature bulletins January-December 2005.'

'Palmares Fepa Competitive Exhibition Antverpia 2010.'

'BCSC literature bulletins January-December 2008.'

Henri de Moffatt; 'Les Vignettes publicitaires du Congo.'

'La Revue Postale 1965'

'La Revue Postale 1978'

Roger Vervisch 'Eléments d'expertise des 5 fr. Belge de 1878 et Congolais de 1886'

The existing facilities for borrowing remain in place and as previously a charge will be made to cover the cost of packing and posting to members of the Study Circle. All enquiries should be addressed directly to the librarian at the address displayed on the title page of this and future bulletins.

**Saturday 17th March 2012
General Meeting and A.G.M.**

at

***Hotel ERASME,
Route de Lennik 790 Lenniksebaan
B-1070 Bruxelles***

Telephone: +32 (2) 523 62 82

Fax: +32 (2) 523 62 83

0900 - Tea and Coffee will be served

0930 - AGM

10.30 approximately – Members presentations and displays

12.30 approximately - lunch in the hotel dining room

1400 approximately – Members presentations and displays

1600 - Close

*This popular and convenient venue offers accommodation at attractive rates.
The hotel is 300 metres from the 1B Erasme/Erasmus Metro terminus - a
short rail link into the city.*

Membership News

New Members

With this issue we extend a warm welcome to our three members and as always, it is hoped they are able to enjoy and benefit from their association with us.

Belgium - **Mme Juliette Courard Melis** Avenue de Ninove, 59
5580 Jemelle
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France - **Jacques Heytens** 95 Residence Sainte Claire F.-78170
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Residential and E-mail changes

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Postal facilities in the Katanga region, July 2011

Lubumbashi and Kabongo

D. S. A. Womersley

Before I left for the Democratic Republic of Congo last July, your bulletin editor and my cousin Stuart Smith, asked me to post a letter to him from there. The letter was written and the old Post Office was an imposing building right in the centre of the thriving, bustling two million strong city of Lubumbashi. I looked forward to popping in to buy stamps as I had done on many occasions in the past.

Imagine my surprise on learning that the Post Office no longer existed and the building now contains shops. It was not as though the office had moved into smaller premises as so often happens in the UK today. The Post Office was no more and no one could tell me where stamps could be bought, if at all. In this part of Congo, the mobile phone had replaced the letter and everyone seemed to have one. I did know that for some years our expatriate staff had looked for someone travelling to Zambia or Europe to take their letters for posting, strangely reverting back to what used to be done 50 years ago but I had no idea that a 'Congo' postal service – just didn't exist.

A few days later I had the pleasure of moving up country, to visit Kabongo, the centre where I was brought up from the age of three, and as requested to take a photograph of what had been the Post Office, a very small structure standing on its own. The rows of post boxes were still clearly visible on the veranda but I noticed that the place was now a rather small dwelling house.

All in all, I failed in my mission of sending a letter and of recording the scene as sadly, my digital camera was stolen the day before I left Congo with of course, the 300 or so photos I had taken.

Life in Congo is very different from the life I knew!

D. S. A. Womersley

Illustrated is a letter from the author, Harold Womersley's son. It was posted on 22nd October 1960, the day before the Kabongo office was ransacked and looted resulting in its closure.

Personal diary notes -
"The rebels entered on 20th October and there was a big battle on 23rd. Our place was looted and our house burnt down. From 23rd to 26th (October) much of Kabongo was similarly treated including the Post Office (a building standing on its own next to the Administration Offices, with all the letter boxes on the front veranda)."

Harold Womersley



Mementos of the 1894 Antwerp International Exhibition.

Jean Herreweghe

At the 1894 Universal Exhibition held in Antwerp, a diorama painted by Robert Mols and Piet Van Engelen was displayed as part of the 'Congo' exhibit. Their work consisted of six canvases in a 600 square metres area of paintings. All six were described in a souvenir album entitled '*Congo Diorama, painted by Robert Mols and Piet Van Engelen*' and the album included reproductions and descriptions of each.

It also provided a valuable source of information for René Goffin, who was later called upon and described our beloved 'Mols' stamps during his research. Furthermore, five of the paintings were subsequently the illustrative source for the engraver of the stamps in that series.

A few months ago I was able to purchase from a specialist auction website, four of six cards issued at the exhibition which illustrate some of the diorama paintings. I am able to share them with you, presented in order with descriptions of the scenes as compiled in the album by Théo Van Haesendonck.

1st Canvas - Panoramic view of the town of Matadi.



'The town stands on sharply undulating, mountainous terrain. Matadi lies on the river Congo and 150 kilometres from its estuary. It is the starting point for the railway line linking the coast to Leopoldville. The view shows the church, Dutch trading station, general warehouses, Grand Hotel, pharmacy, etc. Two steamers, surrounded by numerous canoes, advance majestically along the river Congo before making the crossing from Antwerp to Matadi. In the distance, the railway winds its way along the foot of the rocks, which can be seen on one side of the background. Native Congolese men and women give the tableau a great sense of activity. In the distant 'Benson' mountains, on the other side of the river we can see the former Vivi station, which is now occupied by a British Protestant mission. Rising above the other mountains, the 'PIC LEOPOLD' the Leopold Peak is clearly visible.'

3rd Canvas - The Inkissi Falls

‘These falls are close to the rapids across the route between Matadi and Stanley Pool. They are an impressive sight, with the water falling from a height of 30 metres into a narrow gorge, whose waters swirl to the right at the bottom of the chasm. The word ‘INKISSI’ means ‘fetish’ or ‘evil spirit’ and the falls are so named because of the many victims who have been swept to their death in them. Very few local people dare to enter this feared region.



The three natives resting on the rocks are from a distant tribe. A strange custom, which is almost an obsession for them, requires them to carry resinous branches with them at all times, in order to make a fire at every stop. Like the rest of the terrain, the rocks have a red hue and are of ‘old red sand stone’.

5th Canvas - An elephant hunt

‘Elephants live in large herds, some of which include as many as 100 individual elephants. The natives hunt them with spears. Once wounded, the animal will turn on its enemy and defend itself until it succumbs to its wounds. Natives are frequently killed during these hunts, after being gored by elephants driven mad with pain.



The local’s still hunt using traps, consisting of concealed pits into which the animal falls as it tries to escape. The Europeans hunt elephants with rifles. The locals kill elephants as a means of obtaining meat and above all for their ivory, which together with rubber, is the main commodity traded in the Congo.’

6th Canvas

The capture of Stanley Falls by Commander Tobback



‘This is a major episode in the modern history of the Congo, for which Commanders Tobback and Chaltin have been justifiably acclaimed for the great courage that they showed. The first of these two explorers held off an Arab attack for two days. His was a difficult and dangerous task. He could not be relying on the loyalty of his men, whose ranks did not include a single white man. The slightest of incidents would have meant that all was lost. Tobback then prepared his own attack with admirable presence of mind. At that very moment, Chaltin arrived from Basoko with the government ship ‘La Ville de Bruxelles’. This unexpected help saved the day.

At the head of a small force, Tobback and Chaltin marched resolutely against a large body of heavily-armed Arabs, equipped even with .32 Winchester. Thanks to their great bravery, they managed not only to resist the enemy, but to impose a crushing defeat upon them.

The right-hand side of the canvas shows the Arab town. On the left, we can see the Arab-held island, which was captured on the first day and the station belonging to the Congo Free State. During the attack, it was from here that a shell was fired which subsequently set fire to the Arab town. The Free State soldiers then immediately landed on the other shore and the town was taken by storm. The battle was to last for almost three days. The retreating Arabs left more than 800 dead, together with large quantities of ivory and rubber. A great many Arabs were taken prisoner. The victors freed more than 1,100 slaves.

The Stanley Falls can be seen in the background.’

The illustrated cards are 1.3 mm thick and measure 185 x 135 mm overall. Each shows an impression of the photograph of the relevant canvas, as well as the canvas title. They also bear the inscriptions 'Phototypie Jos. Maes, Anvers' and 'Diorama du Congo peint par Robert Mols et Piet Van Engelen'.

It should be noted that 'Joseph Maes' was not the album photographer; that was 'Wyns'.

The cards are blank on the reverse, but all of them have a 40 x 15 mm framed handstamp in blue ink - inscribed as illustrated.



I am intrigued by the word 'Entrée' which could be interpreted as an admission ticket. However the cards are too big and cumbersome to be used as such, the price is not stated anywhere and if they really were admission tickets, one would expect them to be far more common, bearing in mind the success of this exhibition.

I can only postulate as to their purpose and for what they were intended. They are too big and thick to be used as postcards and the lack of any of the usual address or message formatting would appear to confirm this.

Instead, I have arrived at the theory that these cards were sold as mementos in documentary support of the exhibit and that the word 'Entrée' refers to the sector where the diorama was displayed - in other words, in the entrance hall to that exhibit.

I have not yet been able to obtain the cards depicting Canvas N°. 2 'The railway at M'Pozo' and Canvas N°. 4 'A caravan route through the jungle'.

It should be remembered that the latter was not used as a reference for engraving the 'Mols' stamps, because of the lack of detail for postage stamp size reproduction.

Conclusion.

To complement many members interest in the 'Mols' series of stamps, I thought my recent acquisition of the above cards, whose illustrations served as a basis for the engravings, will add something new. Having never seen any other examples it would be reasonable to assume they are quite rare.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

An interesting aside is that Waterlow & Sons Limited was also represented at the exhibition, but in the British section (Class 10/14 – Photography; Class 11/19 - Typography, lithography, books and stationery.*

* Source: 'Catalogue Officiel Général de l'Exposition Universelle d'Anvers 1894, second volume.'



FAM 22 - 'Promotional Editorial'

At a recent meeting of the Dundee P.S., a presentation by Richard Beith included fascinating *Pan American Airway's promotional correspondence*, announcing the launch of the new Clipper Service to Leopoldville. He has kindly provided copy of that correspondence and whilst I have chosen not to reproduce clearly in its entirety, some extracts from it will surely be of interest. ^[1]



The 'Capetown Clipper' at Stanley Pool

Richard Beith points out that "although dated 12 December [1941], which was five days after the attack on Pearl Harbour, there is no reference to the USA being at war. This would suggest that the letters were typed up in New York and shipped out to the Congo on the outward departure of the 'Capetown Clipper' from New York [not Miami] which left one day before Pearl Harbour."

"The idea behind these letters was that Van Dusen, as head of PR for Pan Am, could send enough information about a new service or a new plane to editors throughout the Americas to enable them to write a detailed pro Pan-Am article as if they had been on the spot."

Vol. VII, No. 1
1
Leopoldville-Kinshasa
Belgian Congo
December 12, 1941

'Alo Mastah!

As us ol' natives say down here--hanging onto the edge of Africa and 8,000 miles from home!--when we're not speaking French, Flemish, or one of the 51 different dialects of the Africansese down here on the Congo.

Wish you could be here for the celebration You'd think this was the biggest day since Stanley pushed his canoe ashore Everybody's out to wave the Capetown Clipper off on her official "First Airmail Flight" from Congo across the Atlantic to the States.

Senores, this--the inauguration of the first air link between the Congo and the lands beyond the sea--is a great day. Few of us back home realize it, but this is the first country to have a direct air link with the States. It was the first country to do this in 1924 when the natural development of the U.S. again led in his never un- about the Congo led" the territory - ggs have been doing

..... you have to be down on this end to appreciate just what it means - in these nervous times - when surface links by steamer are strained or cut off ... Put against those considerations, this regularly scheduled Clipper service providing five-day schedules to the North American continent and direct connecting lines with practically every other section of the globe

regularly scheduled Clipper service providing five-day schedules to the North American Continent and direct connecting lines with practically every other section of the globe -- and you get some small idea of what this all means...and some reason behind

The Clippers land right at Stanley Pool and tie up to stout moorings. When passenger service starts travellers will come ashore in motor launches to the dock which is only two or three blocks from the hotel [Hotel ABC]. The landplane air-port is about ten minutes by taxi. It's the base of Sabena' operation - or what's left of this Belgian line. They have a staff of about 200 and some Lockheed Lodestars, Savoia Marchettis and some remarkably well kept Fokker F-7 Tri-motors. These boys have done a remarkable job of laying out a series of airways through the interior. They operate regular services to Stanleyville and Elizabethville, and parallel South African Airways down to Johannesburg also a charter service for the British to Khartoum where both Sabena and Pan American Airways-Africa connect with the trunkline British service north to Cairo, south to the Cape.

1. An emailed copy of this 3 page letter is available on request from the editor.

Just over three years ago an article entitled 'U.S.A. to the Congo Clipper Flying boat Service - the postal connection, 1941-1946' was published in bulletin 149. The paper had been prompted as a result of others by Wilson and Wilcsek. Each called into doubt and made clear "that the view of FAM 22 as a traditional air route to Africa is simply wrong and only on the rarest occasion did a Boeing 314 depart Miami for a through flight to Africa and even rarer was a continuation on to Leopoldville".

Pan American, FAM-22 and 'Special Missions' 1942 and 70 years of misunderstanding.

John Wilson

Recent studies of documents held at the Richter Library, University of Miami, the United States and British National archives and the University of New Hampshire have resolved the issue of how wartime airmails were carried between West Africa and the United States. Previously held beliefs by airmail and postal historians that there was a single channel for this mail using the route from Miami, Florida to Leopoldville, Belgian Congo, inaccurately called 'FAM-22', have been challenged and disproved.

The bulk of this mail was in fact carried by the secret *Special Mission flights* of Pan American Airways and these flights carried more than one hundred and fifty times the volume of mail carried by the Miami to Leopoldville route.

Introduction

For most of the last 70 years, airmail collectors have used the term 'FAM-22' to describe a wartime route by which mail was carried between the United States, Africa and beyond - more specifically between Miami, Florida and Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo. It has been customary, when describing the route a cover might have taken, to conclude "*thence by FAM-22 from Leopoldville*" if airmail was travelling in a westbound direction. It has also been tacitly accepted that carriage of such mail was accomplished by a regular timetable driven service, using a single Boeing 314 flying boat plying between Miami and Leopoldville on a fourteen day schedule.

These views are understandable when one considers that for many years after World War II ended, much relevant documentation remained classified as 'Secret' under the fifty year rule, and in any case resided in National Archives or the private company files of Pan American Airways. This situation changed when Pan American went into liquidation in 1991 and some, but by no means all of the Pan American files, were saved to form what is now Special Collection ASM 0341 in the Richter Library at the University of Miami. Close study of these files had made the true story of the wartime Pan American services clearer.

Timetables.

Anyone hoping to find regular timetables for these early flights is whistling in the wind. This was 1942, America was at war and Pan American crews heading for Africa were flying quite literally into the unknown. Each and every flight was a different experience and cosy civilian timetables had no relevance when the aim was to keep as many aircraft flying for as long as possible in order to get maximum utilisation. Crotty^[3] located only two printed timetables for 1942 in the Pan American archive; one with a handwritten endorsement '*Jan 1942*' and the second similarly endorsed '*Feb 1942*'. These dates are not confirmed by the printed text but one has to presume that they are correct. The '*Feb 1942*' timetable shows a service designated 101B flying from Miami to Leopoldville and return but with the dates and times blank except for a legend '*Service operating schedules not available*'. Not surprisingly, from the chaos of 1942 no other timetables for that year have been discovered at Miami. Despite this, one recent publication^[4] contains what purports to be a definitive timetable of flights on the Miami to Leopoldville route, even though on inspection the data seems to have been compiled by simply adding fourteen days to each successive flight and printing it as fact. Primary source documents in collection ASM 0341 and the US National Archive^[5] cast considerable doubt on this so-called timetable.

The wartime objective.

With some of the French African Colonies aligned with the Axis, the main objective was to ship men and materiel from the factories of the United States to the European and North African theatres of war by whatever means were available, in the fastest possible time. If speed was important then Pan American Airways were in a good position to help, having completed delivery by January 1942 of their latest Boeing 314 and A-314 flying boats. The flights from the United States to Africa would carry

military supplies and ordnance, with return flights bringing back American pilots who had flown combat aircraft from America to Africa for shuttling to the Middle East war zones. However, they also carried mail!

The engineering constraints.

When the United States entered the war, there were only two aircraft capable of lifting substantial loads across the South Atlantic gap between America and Africa; the Vought-Sikorsky VS-44A and the Boeing 314/A-314. The demand for cargo space was such that Pan American had to constantly work out complex logistical plans for best utilisation, and this situation was not helped by a relatively short period of 120 hours between major servicing brought about by engine failures [7]. As the engine problems were overcome, the flying hours were increased until the major need for return to base servicing became rectification of corrosion on the hull of the flying boat as well as engine changes [8]. Boeing became so skilled at carrying out these maintenance routines that they could turn round a Boeing 314, including changing all four engines, in two days [7].

After Pearl Harbour, the initial pattern for regular flights was of a single journey from North Beach to Lagos, returning to North Beach for engine maintenance. As the maintenance intervals lengthened, Pan American introduced the 'shuttle' concept, during which an aircraft would fly from North Beach to Lagos, 'shuttle' twice between Lagos and Natal via Fisherman's Lake and then return to North Beach. Starting in June 1942 the pattern changed again, and by restricting the 'shuttle' to trips between Natal and Fisherman's Lake rather than going all the way to Lagos, five such 'shuttles' could take place before the necessary return to North Beach.



10th May 1943 – Belgian Congo to New York.
After the end of the direct Leopoldville to Miami service, this cover travelled with Sabena to Lagos and then by the 'Special Mission' flight via Fisherman's Lake and Natal.

Why waste vital flying hours using the Boeing 314 on routes where other aircraft could be used, such as Leopoldville to Lagos which was being served by BOAC and SABENA, or flights North from Lagos that could be and were being served by land planes. Similarly, since Pan American Airways were flying regular and frequent South American services between Natal and Miami, why squander the Boeing 314 resource doing that same trip?

The puzzle.

If one is to believe that mail from Africa was routed via Leopoldville using the 'FAM-22' idea, then such mail would transit through Miami in 'bunches' separated by fourteen days. A number of experienced collectors known as 'The Group', pooled information on covers in their possession and constructed a comprehensive table showing origin, destination and most importantly the date of transit into the United States via Miami. It became obvious that far from mail arriving in discrete dated groups, such mail was arriving on almost random dates, and certainly not at fourteen day intervals as would have been the case if the flights from Africa were based on the timetable previously compiled by Proud [4].

A second and related puzzle concerns the carriage of airmail between countries up and down the coast of West Africa, particularly the route Leopoldville-Lagos-Accra-Fisherman's Lake. One hypothesis was formed on the basis that flights from Lisbon to the United States on their scheduled winter route (nominally October to May) called at Fisherman's Lake to pick up mail that had travelled up from Leopoldville and/or Lagos for carriage onward to America. At least in 1942, there is a much more plausible explanation.

The solution - 'Special Missions'

The existence of files relating to Pan American 'Special Missions' had been known for some time, and despite the fact that these had been inspected by several researchers, it would appear that the documents had not been either fully read or fully understood. A detailed page-by-page examination has revealed a surprising amount of information that to a large extent explains the actual methods and routes by which mail was carried on the USA – Africa services, and why the existing thinking about 'FAM-22' is flawed.

The 'Special Missions' were clandestine in nature, classified as *Secret* and did not work to any timetables. The records in Miami are not complete but sufficient evidence remains to confirm that these missions flew a demanding, almost non-stop schedule, throughout 1942 and the first six months of 1943, carrying heavy loads to and from the West Coast of Africa. The important fact for the purpose of this article is that the documents show the carriage of mail.



18th October 1943- Belgian Congo to London.

Long after the ending of the direct Pan American service Leopoldville to Miami, and despite being endorsed "via BOAC", the cover actually travelled from the Congo to Lagos by Sabena then 'ATC' to Fisherman's Lake → Natal → New York → Newfoundland → Foynes → London.

The 'Special Missions' were clandestine in nature, classified as *Secret* and did not work to any timetables. The records in Miami are not complete but sufficient evidence remains to confirm that these missions flew a demanding, almost non-stop schedule, throughout 1942 and the first six months of 1943, carrying heavy loads to and from the West Coast of Africa. The important fact for the purpose of this article is that the documents show the carriage of mail.

The first mission [SM1] took place as early as July 1941, and missions 1 to 5 were exploratory in nature, investigating the route from North Beach (New York), variously via Natal-Bathurst-Bolama-Lagos and Fisherman's Lake. The proving flight for a commercial route from North Beach to Leopoldville left New York on November 10th, 1941 under the command of Capt. Gray and returned on the 19th. Up to this point of course, the United States was not officially a belligerent nation and the focus, at least in the eyes of Juan Trippe, the Pan American President, was the establishing of a commercial route for breaking the British dominance of airline routes into Africa.

Richard Beith^[9] mentions a letter from Captain Masland (Captain of the first Leopoldville scheduled flight on 6 December 1941) to a colleague^[10] in which he says:

"The aircraft was of course the N-16812 (sic), then known as the Capetown Clipper, so as to advise the British of where we planned to go". The correct registration was actually NC-18612.

Up to and including SM5 the special missions were designated as 'Charter Flights' and operated under the direct control of Pan American Airways. The letter of instruction issued to Capt. Masland for SM5 contains:

"No official mail will be carried on any portion of the flight other than Company mail. You will please exert every effort to advise all passengers, in both directions that the carriage of mail for

others will constitute not only a violation of Postal Regulations, but might expose them to severe difficulty with the censors at Trinidad"^[11].

After Pearl Harbour everything changed, and the next mission SM6 was operated under the control of the US Army Air Corps, using 'Capetown Clipper' NC-18612 which left North Beach on 20 December 1941 to fly to Calcutta via San Juan-Trinidad-Belem-Natal-Fisherman's Lake-Lagos-Leopoldville-Port Bell-Khartoum-Aden-Karachi-Calcutta, returning by the same route through Leopoldville and Lagos. Significantly the cargo summary lists 10 kg of Pan American Company mail and 57 kg of Post Office mail but does not specify its origin and destination other than to show it went to "3 destinations". The summaries for other missions show Post Office mail being carried on a regular basis in increasing quantities; SM13 leaving New York via Miami on the 4th of February 1942 listing "1429 kilos, various destinations". Since the normal single letter fell within the half ounce first air fee limit, 100kg of mail could, *in extremis*, represent more than 7000 letters at American rates and more than 20,000 letters if the letters emanated from Europe with a 5g first air fee limit.

The table constructed as Appendix I shows the statistics for those flights where the Pan American files contain mail data, but it seems a reasonable assumption that carrying US Post Office mail was the norm on the Special Mission flights, except for the rare occasions when instructions were given that contract mail would not be carried between New York and Brazil. (A particular event relating to the other Pan American route, the LATI substitute service)^[12].

Pan American contract as a 'Mail carrier'

Pan American Airways operated as a 'Common Carrier' in its contracts with United States Post Office Department [USPOD]^[13], and under common carrier law the carrier (Pan American Airways) simply has to comply with contract requirements to pick up cargo at a specified point and deliver to its destination by whatever means it chooses so long as the contract is honoured.

A feature of such law is that theoretically a carrier need not actually own the means of carriage, as for example when a removal company undertakes to move furniture from England to America. The removal company may not own the ship or aircraft on which the cargo is transported, but must ensure that the cargo is delivered at the point and at the time specified in the contract.

This may seem to have nothing whatsoever to do with postal history but it has important consequences for the understanding of what happened in the various Foreign Air Mail contract dealings between USPOD and Pan American Airways. In meeting its obligations to USPOD, Pan American was free to use any resources it had, or access other airlines, to get the mail from Miami to West Africa. In the first mail-carrying flight to Leopoldville, the 'Capetown Clipper' NC-18612 flew all the way from New York, having picked up the philatelic cargo (thousands of empty first day covers) in San Juan, but Special Mission flights were already carrying mail on the Boeing 314s to the following pattern:

19 Dec. 1941 to 3 Feb. 1942.	Between Miami and Lagos via Natal and Fisherman's Lake.
7 Feb. 1942 to 6 June 1942.	Between Natal and Lagos (with two shuttles) via Fisherman's Lake, with the Natal to Miami section utilising different aircraft engaged in the South American mail service.
15 June 1942 onwards.	Between Fisherman's Lake and Natal (with five shuttles), with other aircraft, and significantly other airlines, to carry their contract mail between points in West Africa - for example SABENA between Leopoldville-Lagos-Accra, with PAA (Africa) and later USATC on the routes to Fisherman's Lake.

This is not to suggest that there were no flights from Miami to Leopoldville and back using the original concept of a single aircraft completing an exclusive single journey, but it does mean that such flights were neither the sole nor the main means of carrying increasing volumes of mail across the South Atlantic between West Africa and America. Furthermore and from the minutes of a weekly meeting of the secret Civil Aviation Progress Committee in London dated 26 March 1942, it is apparent that the British had been made aware (by Gledhill, a vice president of Pan American) of the imminent restriction on direct Boeing 314 flights to the Congo, and the intention to turn round at Fisherman's Lake.

Mail flow patterns on the West Africa route.

When Pan American Airways announced their new service from Miami to Leopoldville in late 1941 it was ostensibly a civilian route designed to prepare the way to penetrate specifically into South Africa.

The change from peace to war in December 1941 changed all these arrangements and apart from some mail services from South Africa and the southernmost East African countries using the BOAC Cairo to Lagos flying boat service, the mail flow through Leopoldville to the United States must have dwindled dramatically, particularly when the military traffic flow and the introduction of PAA (Africa) into Accra resulted in a large increase in load capacity directly between West Africa and Cairo. It is hard to see how anyone could justify using a Boeing 314 on a mail contract that involved a 2600 mile/20 flying hours round trip between Lagos and Leopoldville, especially given the lack of resource and the limited flying time available between essential maintenance visits to New York.

A further consideration is the establishment of Lagos as the primary censorship station in West Africa. All cargo carrying activities in 1942 and 1943 were dominated by the need to establish censorship 'rings' to contain Axis communications, postal, telegraph and radio, and this took precedence over flight routes, as witness the practice of diverting Axis mail destined for South America from Natal to San Juan for censorship and returning it to Natal for onward transmission ^[14]. Even mail originating in the Belgian Congo itself was passed via Lagos for examination because the Allied censorship was unhappy about the competence or commitment of the Belgian censors. Typical of the concerns expressed are shown in a secret report ^[15] sent from the Imperial Censorship in Lagos to the Director, Postal & Telegraphs Censorship, London following an inspection visit to Leopoldville. A follow-up memorandum says:

"The attached report from Fox on his visit to the Belgian Congo tends to confirm the views we have always held about the Belgian Congo Censorship, and certainly does not encourage us to place any reliance on their examination of letters transitting (sic) a British Censorship Station. We must I think continue to instruct our Overseas Station to re-examine any letters which have gone through the Belgian Congo Censorship."

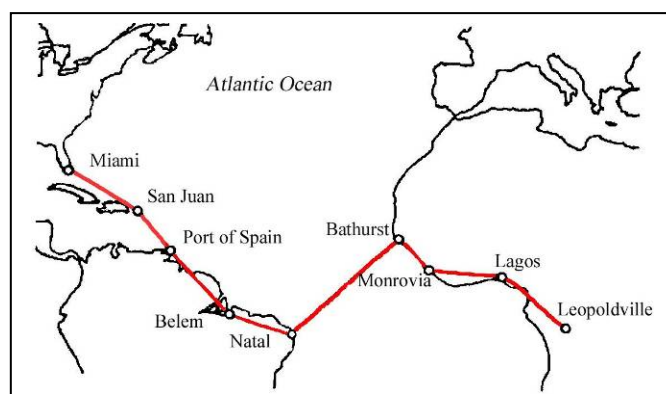
The sequence of events from the first civilian flight between Miami and Leopoldville in December 1941, to the change to wartime conditions, the need to use every resource in carrying men and materiel across the South Atlantic, the increase in traffic between Lagos/Accra and Cairo, the imposition of censorship based at Lagos, all come together to change drastically our understanding of how the USPOD FAM-22 contract was honoured and why much of what has been written and published over the last 60 or 70 years is no longer completely valid. The description of covers as being carried on 'FAM-22 via Leopoldville' is inaccurate, and such items would be better described as being carried on the 'Special Mission' flights or simply carried 'by Pan American wartime services across the South Atlantic'.

One question remains:

What was the purpose of the original Miami to Leopoldville flights – the route so inaccurately called 'FAM-22' by many collectors.

The Civil Aeronautics Board issued a Certificate of Public Necessity and Convenience in September 1941 ^[5] that allowed Pan American Airways:

"...to engage in foreign air transportation with respect to persons, property and mail as follows: Between the terminal point Miami, Florida, and the terminal point Leopoldville, Belgian Congo, via the intermediate points San Juan, Puerto Rico; Port of Spain, Trinidad; Belem, Brazil; Natal, Brazil; Monrovia, Liberia; and Lagos, Nigeria."



This was later amended to allow use of Bathurst and added “*or an airport serving Monrovia, Liberia*” when it became apparent that the Boeing flying boats would use Fisherman’s Lake.

This was not the end of the process. On 19 September the CAB issued an amended document (Docket 442) [5] showing that at a public meeting, permission to intervene was sought by American Export Airlines, Eastern Air Lines, National Airlines and Waterman Airlines. The CAB decided that:

“...the Board proceeded first to receive evidence relating only to national defence issues, which, because of its secret nature affecting national defence, was received in executive session.....we find that the national defence considerations are compelling.....immediate inauguration of the service is urgent.....examination of the economic and postal data with respect to the proposed service could not change our decision.....Accordingly the application will be determined at this time upon national defence considerations alone.”

This shows that as early as September 1941 the route to Leopoldville was to operate to a secret agenda, which lends weight to suggestions that the route had a very different purpose to that of a civilian airmail and passenger service. Beith^[9] quotes a reference to shipment of uranium ore from Leopoldville to America, and it is certainly true that the Congo was and still is one of the richest sources of precious and strategic metals including tungsten, copper, gold, cobalt, tin, manganese and zinc, in addition to the highest quality uranium found on the planet. What better way to hide minerals shipments than behind an airline mail route? With the majority of cargo and mail travelling on the frequent Special Missions, what would be the purpose of a direct service to Leopoldville? Mail, cargo and passengers to and from West Africa and the Middle East were being carried by the Special Missions. How many passengers were likely to be travelling to and from Leopoldville? How much mail would originate or transit the Congo and surely only small quantities not justifying a pointless round trip from Lagos? Yet, the direct flights did continue, seemingly utilising the ‘Capetown Clipper’ which is conspicuous by its virtual absence from the documents in the Pan American Archive when every other Boeing 314 is recorded time and time again. On the face of it the Special Mission flights did all the work, leaving the Miami-Leopoldville service to do something quite different. Could this indeed be the hidden agenda?

However, in one document located in the Pan American Archive^[16] that summarises operations on the various 1942 routes, we read:

“July 8 1942. 6015 last trip from North Beach on route 6”

Route 6 was the route shown as “*North Beach – Leopoldville and return*”, and the flights carried numbers in the 6000 series with odd numbers representing the outward flight and even numbers the return. 6015 would therefore be the eighth eastbound trip to Leopoldville and this marks the end of the traditional view of ‘FAM-22’ as the Pan American ‘Route’. However, Berry^[17] records further flights in the 6000 series up to 6023 on 17 October 1942 but significantly 6017, 6019, 6021 and 6023 are shown as carried out by ‘Capetown’ NC-18612 and include two ‘shuttles’, which makes it unlikely, although not impossible that ‘Capetown’ would have gone to Leopoldville on these flights, because of the limitation on flying hours necessitated by the return to New York for maintenance^[6].

Further confirmation of the end of the direct Leopoldville service comes where we read^[13] -

“Before the end of 1942, however, operation of the service to Leopoldville had been suspended to permit the utmost utilization of the Boeing aircraft on the “shuttle” service between Natal and Fisherman’s Lake”.

Even though the Boeing flights to Leopoldville ended with the last flight on October 17th 1942, the USPOD contract remained in force as did the CAB Docket 442 permission to fly the route.

The CAB eventually addressed this open-ended Docket, and in Order Serial No. 2702 dated 22 February 1944, cancelled the permission granted to Pan American Airways to operate between Miami and Leopoldville because “*...the continuation of the aforesaid service is no longer required in the interest of the national defence*”. The cancellation of the Docket was forward dated to 12 August 1944 and it cannot be simply coincidence that Pan American recalled the original “China Clipper” NC-14716

that was flying the route Miami-Cristobal-Kingston, to carry out a survey flight from Miami to Leopoldville. The CAB application for a resumed Miami to Leopoldville service was dated 1 August 1944, the survey flight for crew familiarization scheduled for 13 September and service to Leopoldville began on 21 September 1944, returning on 2 October.

In any event, the 'China Clipper' was lost in an accident at Port of Spain on 8 January 1945 and that was the end of that until the war ended. An interesting cover has been recorded from Douala to Florida carrying a dated Leopoldville transit mark of 29 September 1944. This must have been carried on the first return flight of the M-130 from Leopoldville and shows that the mail from Cameroun, previously routed through Lagos could now be sent via the Congo.

15th December 1944.
 Belgian Congo to
 New York and
 probably carried by
 the 'China Clipper'
 restored service from
 Leopoldville to
 Miami.



Conclusion

A meeting between Pan American Airways and the US Army Air Force was held on 13 October 1942 to discuss the payments made by the US Government to Pan American for the Special Mission flights made in the period 1 January to 31 August 1942. A detailed analysis contained in the meeting minutes reveals that revenue from the certificated Miami-Leopoldville service had been included in the figures, and because the US Government were unwilling to pay for the income from the USPOD FAM-22 contract, the FAM-22 income was deducted from the overall totals. The cold numbers then show that over the stated period, the income from "Foreign Mail" was \$2,374,236.26 (almost 2.4 million dollars), the income from mail carried by the Miami-Leopoldville service was \$14,352.92 (just over fourteen thousand dollars). This represents a ratio of 165:1 i.e. the special missions carried roughly 165 times the amount of mail carried by the Miami-Leopoldville so-called "FAM-22" service.

Where does this leave us?

- 1) The direct flights between America and Belgian Congo probably carried little mail, except possibly for that originating in Eastern, Southern and Central Africa including the Congo itself.
- 2) The direct flights effectively ended on 8 July 1942 and totally on 17 October 1942, at which date the entire South Atlantic operations were re-configured to take account of the change to winter clockwise routing of the Lisbon to New York service and the consequent changes to the 'LATI substitute' service.
- 3) The vast bulk of the mail previously considered by collectors to be 'FAM-22 via the Congo' was actually carried by the 'Special Missions' and not by the direct flights to or from Leopoldville.
- 4) Previous attempts at publishing timetables and/or schedules for this period ^[4] are probably incorrect and should be disregarded.

FAM references

All references to ASM 0341 relate to files held in the Pan American Airways archive at the Richter Library, University of Miami, Florida.

- [1] Wilcsek R.J. and Wilson J. '*FAM-22 R.I.P.*' (Air Post Journal, Journal of the American Air Mail Society. November 2008), and (Cameo, Journal of the West Africa Study Circle, October 2008).
- [2] Wilcsek R.J. '*Miami and the FAM-6 extension to Africa*' (Air Post Journal, Journal of the American Air Mail Society. January 2009)
- [3] Crotty D. '*The Confidential PAA Timetables 1942-45*'. (Airpost Journal, Journal of the American Air Mail Society, December 2007).
- [4] Proud Edward B. '*Intercontinental Airmails Volume 1*', (Proud Publications, Heathfield, Sussex).
- [5] National Archives & Records Administration (NARA). Washington D.C., Ref. 7E4, Box 6, 19/3/4
- [6] ASM 0341 Box 260 Folder 59.
- [7] Wilson J. '*The Boeing aircraft of BOAC*', (Cameo, Journal of the West Africa Study Circle, July 2009).
- [8] File AVIA 2/2385 '*Boeing Model 314 Flying Boat*'. (National Archive, Kew, London).
- [9] Beith R. '*The United States Involvement in West African Aviation and their contribution to the carriage of mails, 1941-1945*', (Cameo, Journal of the West Africa Study Circle, January 2009).
- [10] ASM 0341 Box 317 Folder 28.
- [11] ASM 0341 Box 260 Folder 8.
- [12] Wilson J. '*The LATI Substitute Service of Pan American Airways*'. (Airpost Journal, Journal of the American Air Mail Society, October 2010).
- [13] '*Exhibit PA-10, CAB Docket 1171*'. Margaret Carson Hubbard collection, Ref. MC17, Folder VIII, f10. University of New Hampshire, USA.
- [14] Wilson J. '*The San Juan Agreement: Its effects on Pan American airmail routes across the South Atlantic*'. (Airpost Journal, Journal of the American Air Mail Society, March 2009).
- [15] File DEFE 1/266 '*Belgian Congo Censorship*'. (National Archive, Kew, London).
- [16] ASM 0341 Box 260 Folder 54.
- [17] Berry Peter, M.R.Ae.S. '*The Boeing 314 Trans-Ocean Flying Boats*'. (Privately published 1998).

Acknowledgements.

This research could not have been contemplated without the assistance and advice of numerous dedicated collectors, many of them in the loose confederation known as 'The Group'. Particular mention must be made of Bob Wilcsek and Jonathan L. Johnson Jnr. in the United States, and Richard Beith, Barbara Priddy and Peter Wingent in England.

Specific thanks are due to Jonathan Brownell BA, LL.B (Yale) for advice on the subject of Common Carrier Law and to Horst Augustinovic for his ground-breaking work on the Bermuda Customs Office wartime records. However, the final dedication of this research must be to dear Laura at the University of Miami, who tirelessly answered my endless queries and copied hundreds of pages of documentary evidence from the archives. To Laura, goes my deepest appreciation.

John Wilson

Appendix I. Special Mission flights.

Details from records currently held in Special Collection ASM 0314 at the Richter Library, University of Miami.

Mail was not carried until after America entered the war, commencing with Mission 06. Where the relevant folder has no cargo summary, the folder usually contains only the official military order to carry out the mission, and the table shows "Mission order". However, since the order refers to "passengers, cargo and mail" it can reasonably be assumed that mail would have been carried. "No record" means that although Berry/Rodina list details of the flight, no documents now exist in the special mission files, nor can they be located in the Archive.

It is important to remember that bags of mail did not remain on board a single aircraft for the whole of their journeys but were transferred at many points, notably at Lagos, Fisherman's Lake and Natal

Mission	Date leaving New York	Aircraft	P.O. mail	Comments	Notes
05	23/Oct/1941	NC 18612	Prohibited	To Lagos via Bathurst. Last pre-war special mission	
CAA	10/Nov/1941	NC 18612	None	Leo Proving flight	
PAA		NC 18612	Philatelic	1st Scheduled flight	
06	19/Dec/1941	NC 18612	56 kg. Leo-Trinidad	To Calcutta and returned.	
07	25/Dec/1941	NC 18606	14.6 kg. Lagos-Trinidad	To Calcutta and returned.	
08	27/Dec/1941	NC 18611	5.2 kg. Leo-Trinidad.	To Calcutta and returned.	
09	07/Jan/1942	NC 18603	Yes. 2 tons Natal-Lisbon.	Inaugural "LATI substitute" mail from Natal to Lisbon.	
10	14/Jan/1942	NC 18612	Yes. 186 kg.	To Bombay and returned.	
11	21/Jan/1942	NC 18602	No record.	Only to Rio and returned.	
12	23/Jan/1942	NC 18611	202 kg. Fish-Lagos	Lagos via Fish Lake and return.	Note 1
13	03/Feb/1942	NC 18606	Yes. 1429 kg.	Lagos via Fish Lake and return.	
14	07/Feb/1942	NC 18609	Yes. 667 kg.	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles Lagos-Natal.	
15	10/Feb/1942	NC 18611	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles Lagos-Natal.	
16	20/Feb/1942	NC 18612	Mission order	Leopoldville-Diego Garcia and return.	Note 2
17	25/Feb/1942	NC 18606	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 3 shuttles	Note 3
18	07/Mar/1942	NC 18609	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	Note 4
19	14/Mar/1942	NC 18604	Mission order	To Rio, not West Africa.	
20	24/Mar/1942	NC 18611	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	
21	31/Mar/1942	NC 18606	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	Note 5
22	03/Apr/1942	NC 18604	Mission order	To Lough Earne, not West Africa	
23	06/Apr/1942	NC 18609	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	
24	15/Apr/1942	NC 18611	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	
25	23/Apr/1942	NC 18606		Not to West Africa	
26	25/Apr/1942	NC 18612		Not to West Africa	
27	29/Apr/1942	NC 18609	Mission order	Lagos then return to Washington	Note 6
28	04/May/1942	NC 18606	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	
29	11/May/1942	NC 18606	No record	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	
30	14/May/1942	NC 18611	No record	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	
31	22/May/1942	NC 18606	Mission order	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	
32	28/May/1942	NC 18609	Mission order	Leopoldville then Lagos 2 shuttles	Note 7
33	06/Jun/1942	NC 18609	No record	Lagos via Fish Lake and 2 shuttles	
34	15/Jun/1942	NC 18606	No record	Lagos via Fish Lake and 5 shuttles	Note 8
63	10/Dec/1942	NC 18612	803 kg. Belem-Fish Lake		
64	15/Dec/1942	NC 18606	250 kg. Various sections		

Missions continued to SM91 on 19 June 1943, following the same basic 5 shuttle pattern.

Note 1. Mission instructions contain following:

“No contract mail will originate at New York”

“From Port-of-Spain: 181 kilos of contract mail should be accommodated on departure from Port-of-Spain. This should be destined for Africa. No contract mail for Belem or Natal should be accepted”. This shows that mail for the ‘LATI substitute’ route was being carried, since the CAB certificate for the LATI substitute specifically forbade any mail to be carried from New York to San Juan, Trinidad, Belem or Natal.

Note 2. Flown by ‘Capetown Clipper’ NC-18612. Mission Order contains:

“Your flight from the United States to Leopoldville as well as your return from Leopoldville to the United States will operate as a Certificate Contract Flight”.

In other words carrying mail, but only between the terminal points specified in CAB Docket 442, and not to or from points East of Leopoldville.

Note 3. Mission order includes: *“It will be observed that you are scheduled to make three round trips between Natal and Lagos”*.

Note 4. Mission order includes: *“...making as many shuttles thereafter between Natal and Lagos as is consistent with the safe operation and maintenance of the aircraft before returning to New York, N.Y. for overhaul”*.

Note 5. Mission order includes: *“.....carry contract mail to SPA (Port of Spain) for censoring and pick up mail there for delivery to Lagos and San Juan”*.

Showing the ability of Pan American to pick up and drop off mail anywhere they wanted, as allowed by the CAB decision of September 1941.

Note 6. Mission order includes: *“Proceed from New York on April 29, 1942, to Lagos, returning thereafter directly to Washington D.C. and thence to New York for overhauling”*.

This flight apparently returned Major Elliott Roosevelt (FDR’s son) from Fisherman’s Lake to Washington D.C.

Note 7. Discrepancy between Berry information and the mission order which actually says:

“Airplane N 18612 will proceed to Natal after fulfilling her commercial mission to Leopoldville on which she is departing from New York, May 28th, and will then shuttle between Natal and Lagos, making as many trips as is consistent with the safe operation and maintenance of this aircraft before returning to New York for overhaul”.

Note 8. The first of the missions to fly the 314 between Natal and Fisherman’s Lake only, thus making five shuttles before returning to New York for overhaul. Following this first ‘5 shuttle’ trip, the same pattern was repeated at six day intervals through to mission 64 on 15 December 1942. This is according to Berry/Rodina, but none of the files except 63 and 64 appear to be present in the Archive when examined in January 2011. However, it would seem that the five shuttle pattern was well established, and from mission 34 to the last recorded mission 91 in June 1943 it seems reasonable to assume that the carriage of mail went on unabated.

Identifying the Mols plate combinations

Stuart Smith

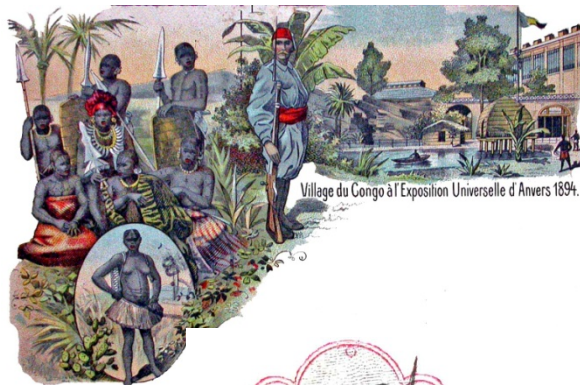
5 Francs

My review and update of B. P. Hudson's original work first published in previous issues of the Study Circles Bulletin continues.

The design of the 5 francs value was based on a photographic portrait of a warrior standing with his wife seated at his feet. The photograph was taken at the Antwerp 1894 exhibition where a native village had been created in the precincts. The warrior, presented as the chief of the village, was called Morangi and came from the Bangala tribe.

The 5 francs value is the second highest of the ten Mols values and is not uncommon. It was used mainly on parcels and registered packets. Large, genuinely used multiples are known, and were probably for sending high value registered parcels from the Congo to Belgium.

Dates prefixed 'F.C.' are those of 'File Copy' sheets previously held in the Waterlow archive.



**'Bangala' chief Morangi
and his wife**

Plate combinations

COB	SG	Date of issue			
28	23	1894	Carmine [p.15] Deep-Carmine [p.15, p.14½-15, p.16*] Rose-Carmine [p.14, p.15, p.12-14]	I1+A1	Original frame and centre plate * (perf.16 = Dull deep-carmine, F.C. 1896)
28a					
48P		1909	Carmine [p.14] <i>Combination 'I1+A2' was created for the Princes issues.</i>	I1+A2	Centres re-entered
62	67	1910	Carmine Deep carmine	II1+A3	New frame plate; centre lay marks added
71	77	1915	Bright Ochre-orange Ochre-orange Ochre-orange Dull Ochre-orange Ochre-orange Dull Ochre-orange Ochre -orange Dull Ochre-orange	II1+A3 II1+A4 (a) II2+A4 (a) II2+A4 (b)	Centres re-entered; lay-mark line removed Frame lay marks added Blurred centres
79	85	1918 Red Cross	Ochre	II2+A4(a)	

Identification

1894. Carmine, various shades

- F.C. ['Deep carmine' 2.10.1894.
'Dull deep carmine' 10.11.1896, perf.16.
'Carmine' 15.12.1897.
'Rose carmine' 16.3.1898, perf.15; 10.1.1899, perf.14.]

The first combination remained in use until creation of the 'Princes' printing. There are three distinct variations in shade as indicated above. However when examining the 'File copy' sheets, R.H. Keach recorded the following additional information.

File copy - 10.11.1896: "*centres are a dull brown black*". Note this printing is perf. 16.

15.12.1897: "*frame in bright deep carmine but not so deep in colour as the 1894 printing.*"

10.1.1899: "*frame in a paler and brighter Rose carmine.*"

The perf. 16, 'Dull deep carmine' stamp is uncommon used and very rare mint. There were only 1600 sheets printed, that is 8000 stamps in total (The author would be very pleased to hear of examples in any member's collection as well as its/their position, if known.

1909 Red-Carmine 'Princes' II+A2

This combination with re-entered centres is specific to the 'Princes' printing. The frames are a distinctive 'Reddish-carmine' rather than 'Rose-carmine' and the centres brownish-black rather than grey-black.

A readily identifiable feature of the new 'A2' centre plate is the re-engraved machete blade.



Centre plate 'A1'



Centre plate 'A2'

This and the other constant varieties of centre plate 'A2' are the same as those described below for 'A3', the only difference between the two being the additional lay marks in the latter.

CONGO BELGE overprints

Typographed CONGO BELGE overprints appear on combination I+A1 with all perforation variations of both Deep and Rose carmine as well as on the Princes combination II+A2. (No CONGO BELGE overprints are known on stamps of the perf. 16, 1896 printing.)

Bruxelles hand overprint - combination II+A1	(Deep carmine): B2, B6. (Rose carmine): B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6. (Reddish carmine): B2.
Princes – combination II+A2	(Deep carmine): L1, L3, L4, L5, L6, L7.
Local – combination II+A1	(Carmine): L7, L8. ('L8' - only 2 examples known)
Local – combination II+A1	(Rose carmine): L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, L7.

Forged overprints are common.

1910 III+A3 Carmine [F.C. 20.4.1915, 28.11.1916]

All stamps from the 1910 printings of this combination and new frame plate design are self evident by virtue of them being the first 'Bilingual issue' of this value. Centre plate 'A3', was created by the

addition of lay marks to 'A2', in the form of a black spot at the top right corner of position 22 and a rather uneven horizontal line at the top of 29.



[#22]



[#29]

In this series which concentrates on the identification of the Mols *plate combinations*, it is not usual policy to repeat the detail provided by Hudson, to assist positioning of individual stamps. However, in the case of this value the following *almost* verbatim extract from Hudson's work may aid such work and be of interest. Suffice it to say that the centre plate features are also present on 'A2', excepting the added lay marks.

"If there is a dot in the top part of '5', the position is 4, 42 or 43; if in the bottom buckle of the '5', it is 47. If there is a smudge or spot to the right of the '5', it is 15, 24, 26, 36, 41, 45 or 46. If there is a line at the top of the '5' it is 6, 19 or 30; if there is a line above the top of the '5', it is 3, 13 or 47. 1, 9 and 10 have a dot to the NE of the small upper right circle; #49 has a dot to the right of that circle. The circle is just doubled in 16, and 40.

Some positions show portions of horizontal guidelines close to the top frame line. In 17 and 28 the guide line is long. In 23 it is heavy over the first 'O' of CONGO. There is a short horizontal dash in the top margin over the left corner in 2 and over the 'N' of CONGO in 5.

Position #8. There are two very prominent and long horizontal scratches across the lower part of the sky which extends across the stamp from the left to right hand side of the native.



[#8] Enhanced

Centre plate varieties in both 'A3' and 'A2' are few and far between with one important exception which is of great help to positioning.

These are the small doubling marks which appear around the tip of the spear. Some are on the tip, some on the right and some on both sides. In positions 1, 2, 12, 14, 32, 35 and 42 there are several such marks, in different patterns in each position. They are less visible, with only one mark or sometimes two, in 6, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45, 48 and 49."

Typical examples



[#2]



[#20]



[#30]

1915 III+A3 Ochre, various shades

Stamps from this first combination are in Ochre-orange or bright ochre-orange and bear the same plate characteristics as those previously issued.

III+A4 Ochre, various shades

Whilst the prominent feature in determining this combination is the removal of the lay marks in positions 22 and 29 – Hudson expressed the opinion that “*generally speaking stamps from ‘A4’ are not easy to distinguish from ‘A3’ without positioning in the sheet*”.

As recorded by Tavano ^[1], this is no longer the situation. It is indeed possible to allay such concerns and confirm that it is in fact easy – unless a cancellation masks the important feature!

Hudson observed that the centres of ‘A3’ show clear, sharp horizontal lines in the sky above and to the right of the standing native’s head, while in ‘A4’ those lines are thickened and give a smudged impression. However, whilst relatively easy to confirm when comparing stamps from the same position, it is a subjective assessment and not necessarily obvious in every position.

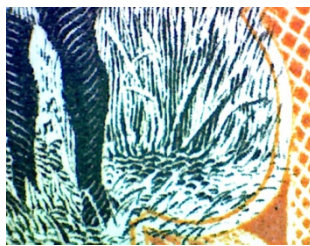


‘A3’ [#5]

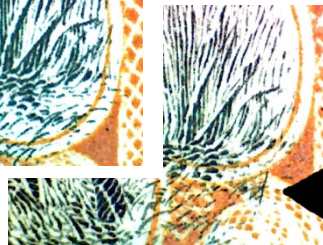


‘A4’ [#5]

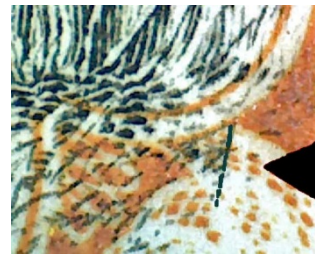
However, Tavano has observed ^[1] that in every position except one of centre plate ‘A4’, there is a small centre plate scratch mark about 3mm to the right of the standing native’s left foot .



‘A3’



‘A4’



Enlarged and enhanced

The exception to this rule is in position 1 of the ‘A4’ sheet; but that position has an easily recognisable feature, namely the ‘Boomerang’ variety as illustrated



‘A4’ [#1]

II2+A4 (Sub-states ‘A4a’ and ‘A4b’) Ochre, various shades

Frame lay marks were added in the form of a horizontal line plus dot between 13, 14, 23 and 24 and between 17, 18, 27 and 28. Except in these positions, this combination cannot be differentiated from ‘III+A4’.

Hudson identified two states of the centre plate which he categorised as sub states ‘4a’ and ‘4b’. The original combination is classed as ‘II2+A4a’, and identified by the cleaner undoubled sky lines.

II2+A4b Ochre, various shades

‘II2+A4b’ is simply a second state of the original, in which the sky is noticeably worn and blurred, particularly in the first three rows. The distinction is not as apparent in every position, as that illustrated! Stamps from this combination show a characteristic ‘Dull ochre-orange’ shade, in the author’s opinion better described by Hudson as ‘Brown-ochre’.

It has been suggested that A4b might be a re-entered state of A4a or even an electrotype reproduction of A4a, but it has not been possible to confirm either theory. Until definite signs of re-entry are found on ‘A4b’ it will continue to be regarded as a sub-state rather than as a new state of the plate which would be designated as ‘A5’.



‘A4a’ [#4]



‘A4b’ [#4]

1918 ‘Red Cross’. II2+A4a [F.C. 27.12.1917]

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

Combinations recorded on surcharged/overprinted ‘Belgian Congo’ stamps.

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda Urundi)	
II1+A3	Kigali
II1+A3	Grysolle

1916 East African	
II1+A3	S
II1+A3	L1 (o)
II1+A3	L1 (t)
II1+A3	L2
II2+A4a	L2

1921 Recuperation	
I+A1	L1
I+A1	Typo
II1+A3	

1922 Boma	
II2+A4a	
II2+A4b	

1918 Red Cross and AO	
II2+A4a	

1. Tavano *Congo Belge Emissions ‘Mols-Van Engelen’, Bilingue 1910 et Récupération 1921*

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