

Pan American Airways LATI substitute service 1942

Mail handling and interception January to July.

The Italian 'LATI' airline carrying Axis unexamined mail, strategic materials and enemy agents between Rome and South America was closed down in December 1941 by American pressure on Brazil. A Brazilian condition of this agreement was that the Allies provide an equivalent air mail service to and from Europe. Only Pan American Airways had aircraft capable of carrying substantial loads across the Atlantic, and it was to Pan American that the Allies turned to provide the "LATI substitute" service.

An important aspect of this service was that the Allies could now intercept enemy mail that previously had been carried by LATI unexamined. A small British Imperial Censorship team was sent from UK to Bathurst, Gambia, arriving there on 12th February 1942, but by then the first Pan American flights from Natal to Lisbon had taken place, bypassing Bathurst and carrying Axis mail unintercepted in both directions. Only a few of the later flights actually called at Bathurst, and examples of examined mail are difficult to find. In late July 1942 the interception and censorship operation was transferred to San Juan, Puerto Rico and the Bathurst team eventually transferred to Lagos, Nigeria.

The exhibit shows examples of the differing mail treatment of intercepted, unintercepted and diverted mail from this short but important period in WW2 aviation postal history.

- 1) Mail carried from South America to Europe prior to Bathurst censors.
- 2) Mail from South America to Europe unintercepted.
- 3) Mail from Europe to South America unintercepted.
- 4) The alternative route.
- 5) Arrival of the Bathurst censor team.
- 6) Axis mail from South America to Europe diverted to UK.
- 7) Axis mail from Europe to South America diverted to UK.
- 8) Mail from South America to Europe opened and re-sealed in Bathurst.
- 9) Mail from Europe to South America opened and re-sealed in Bathurst.

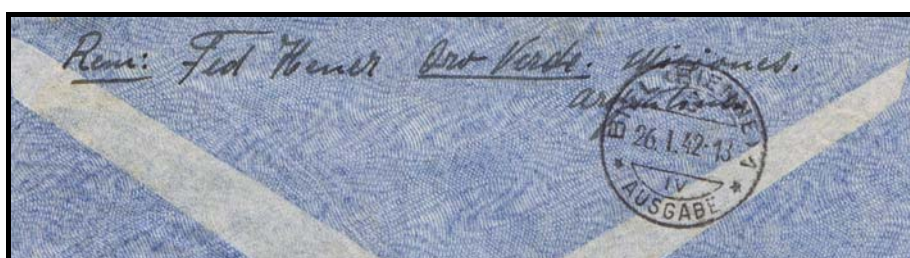
The stars of the show were, of course, the Boeing 314 Clippers of Pan American Airways.



Mail carried before Bathurst Censors arrived
Argentina to Switzerland



PanAm Special Mission 9 returning from Rio de Janeiro was diverted at Natal to become Flight 5001, the first 'LATI substitute' flight. The aircraft picked up South American mail that had accumulated at Natal and carried it to Lisbon, arriving there on 16th January 1942.



Posted 29th December 1941, carried to Lisbon by flight 5001 then by rail via unoccupied France to avoid German interception, arriving Biel 26th January 1942.

Rate: Original LATI rate. 20c. surface, 20c. registration, 125c. air fee. Total 1.65 Pesos.

Mail carried before Bathurst Censors arrived
Argentina to Austria



PanAm Special Mission 9 returning from Rio de Janeiro was diverted at Natal to become Flight 5001, the first 'LATI substitute' flight. The aircraft picked up South American mail that had accumulated at Natal and carried it to Lisbon, arriving there on 16th January 1942.



Posted 13th January 1942, carried from Natal to Lisbon by flight 5001 then by Lufthansa to Berlin for censorship before forwarding to Vienna. Absence of transit censorship confirming carriage by 'LATI substitute' on flight 5001.

Rate: Original LATI rate. 20c. surface, 125c. air fee. Total 1.45 Pesos.

Unintercepted mail from South America to Europe
Argentina to France. Argentina to Switzerland



Pan American flights regularly failed to call at Bathurst for mail examination. Postage remained at LATI rates.



Argentina to France despatched 28th February 1942
French censor Marseille WK2 on arrival. Flight bypassed Bathurst.



Argentina to Switzerland despatched 18th May 1942. Flight bypassed Bathurst.

Unintercepted mail from South America to Europe
Argentina to Bulgaria



Pan American flights regularly failed to call at Bathurst for mail examination. Postage remained at LATI rates.



Argentina to Bulgaria despatched 14th March 1942, arrive Sofia 15th April.
Rate: 20c. surface, 20c. registration, 125c. air fee. Total 1.65 Pesos. Original LATI rate.

Unintercepted mail from Europe to South America
France to Argentina



PanAm flight 5002 departed Lisbon 16/17th January 1942. Flight 5003/Special Mission 14 dropped its mail at Bathurst and flew south to Lagos, not to Lisbon. Therefore there was no flight 5004 from Lisbon. Next flight # 5005 arrived Lisbon 23rd February and 5006 departed 24th, bypassing Bathurst and arriving Natal 26th February.



Posted 10th February 1942, carried from Lisbon to Natal by flight 5006. Censored in Marseille WK2. Absence of transit censorship confirming carriage by 'LATI substitute'. Rate: 4 Fr. surface, 18 Fr. air fee. Total 22 Fr.

Unintercepted mail from Europe to South America
Switzerland to Argentina



Mail from Europe to South America routed via FAM-18 would always be intercepted and examined at Trinidad, Bermuda or New York. Absence of interception is a good indicator of carriage by "LATI substitute".

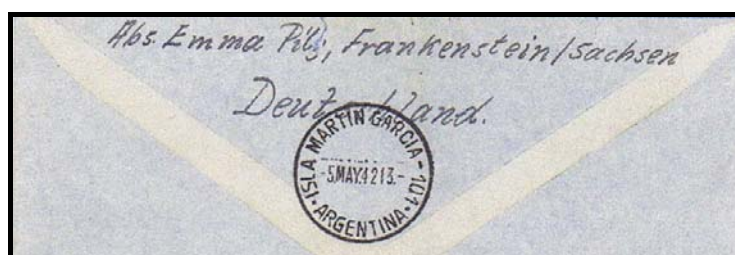
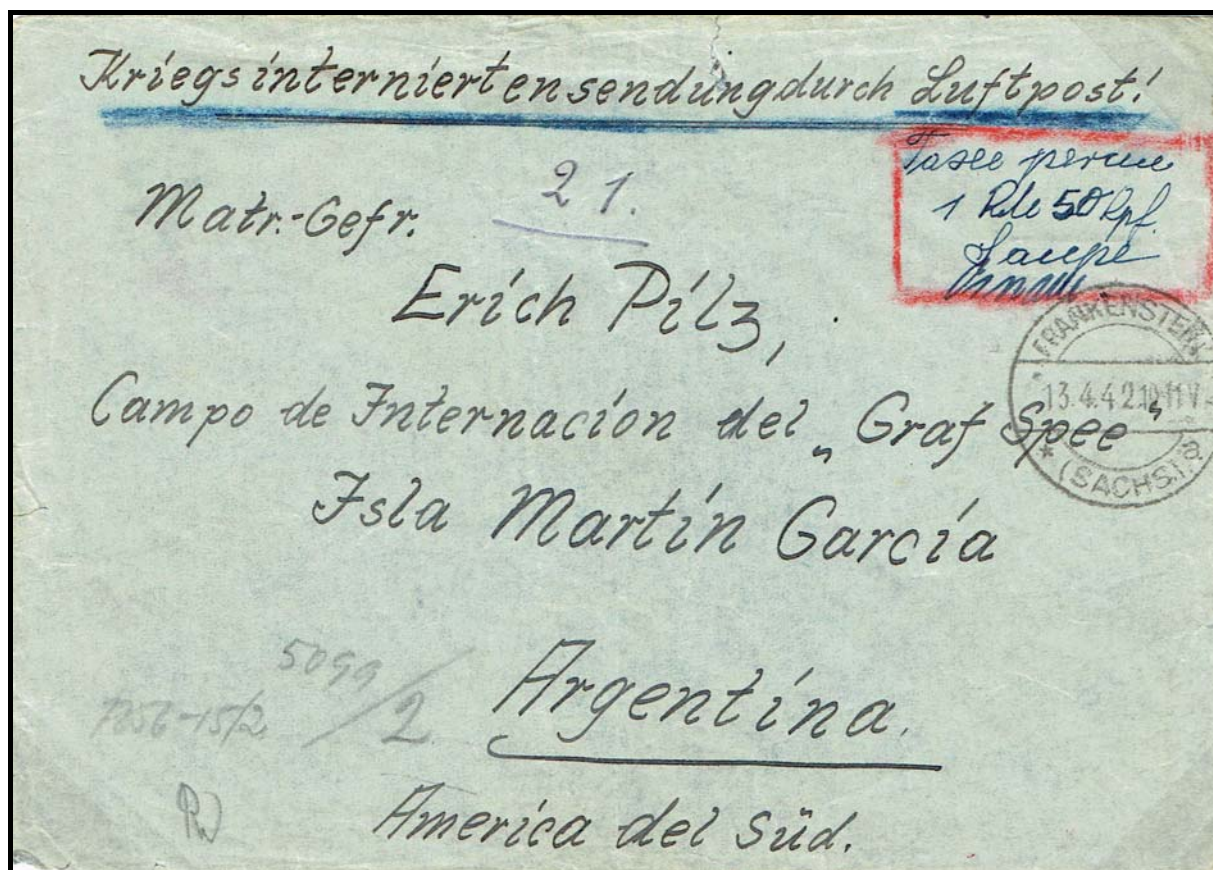


Posted 23rd February 1942, carried to Lisbon by rail, then flight 5008 departing 10th March 1942. Despite "Via New York" endorsement as per Swiss Post Office Bulletin, actually carried by "LATI substitute". Swiss Post Office instruction changed to "Via Bolama" in April 1942. Rate: 30c. surface (20g), 20c. second step, 30c. registration, 7 x 150c. air fee. Total 11Fr. 30c.

Unintercepted mail from Europe to South America
Germany to Argentina. Internee mail.



Mail from Europe to South America routed via FAM-18 would always be intercepted and examined at Trinidad, Bermuda or New York. Absence of interception is a good indicator of carriage by "LATI substitute".



Posted 13th April 1942, Frankenstein to Graf Spee internee on Martin Garcia Island.
Carried surface rate free (POW) endorsed "Taxe Percue 1RM 50Rpf" by German postal clerks
(two signatures required by regulations).
Actually overpaid since the POW rate was reduced to 95Rpf in Luftpostliste of 10th January 1942.

The alternative route from South America to Europe
The Route is in the Rate



Northbound mail from Argentina to Europe could use an alternative route via FAM-6 through New York then FAM-18 to Lisbon. Route was determined by the rate: 1.70 Pesos via New York compared to 1.45 Pesos "Via Natal".



Posted 30th May 1942, carried to Miami by FAM-6 then to New York and FAM-18 to Lisbon. Transit censorship in Trinidad, examiner 8016 IE and then in Bermuda examiner 3432 IC. Despite endorsement "Via Natal" the rate of 1.70 Pesos routed the cover via New York.

**British Censor Team at Bathurst
Liverpool to Gambia**



Team of five Examiners and one clerk sailed from Liverpool aboard 'Jaarstroom' in Convoy OS-17 bound for Freetown, Sierra Leone. Freetown to Bathurst aboard a British Navy corvette, arriving 12th February 1942

"JAARSTROOM"	Dutch	Allocated to Elder, Dempster Lines Ltd.	VAN OS	1494	-	-	FOREIGN
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I hereby Certify that the Provisions actually laden on board this Ship are sufficient, according to the requirements of the Merchant Shipping Acts, for..... Statute Adults for a voyage of.....days.

Date of Departure.....19..... (Signature *Robinson* for Master. Date.....19.....

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF.....

(1) Contract Ticket Number	(2) Port at which Passengers have contracted to land	(3) NAMES OF PASSENGERS	(4) CLASS Whether 1st, 2nd, Tourist or 3rd)	(5) AGES OF PASSENGERS						(6) Last Address in the United Kingdom	(7) Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	(8) Country of last Permanent Residence*					(9) Country of Intended Future Permanent Residence*
				Adults of 12 years and upwards		Children between 1 and 12		Infants				Payable	White	Black	Other parts of the British Empire	Foreign Countries	
				Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females								
Δ 6 875	FREETOWN	Mark McFarlane	Cabin	38						"Croft Cottage, Dark Lane, Kingsley Cheshire.	Govt. Official	1					GAMBIA
✓6 873	FREETOWN	William W. Cramb	Cabin	55						58, Sewerby Street, Moss Side, Manchester	Govt. Offl.	1					GAMBIA
✓6 872	FREETOWN	Richard George Bale	Cabin	33						28 Brompton Av., Liverpool, 17.	Govt. Offl.	1					GAMBIA
✓6 877	FREETOWN	Frederick Edward Warren	Cabin	40						"Oakland", Irby Rd. Heswall, Cheshire	Govt. Offl.	1					GAMBIA
✓6 874	FREETOWN	Edward Oswald Jacobs	Cabin	55						11, King's Avenue, Meots, Wirral, Ches.	Govt. Offl.	1					GAMBIA
Δ/6 876	FREETOWN	Kenneth Martin Frederick Quintaba	Cabin	20						24, Highlands Gdns. Ilford, Essex.	Govt. Offl.	1					GAMBIA



Each Censor had an allocated number: five in all: 5453, 5524, 5960, 6185, 7219.
 Boxed handstamps P202 and P203 in hands of Chief Examiner E.O. Jacobs only.
 Framed "INN" known for all numbers. Unframed "INN 5960" recorded on only one cover.
 British PC-90 resealing labels with the five numbers also used on examined covers.

British censor team at Bathurst.
Argentina to Spain. Uruguay to Switzerland



Northbound mail deemed to be non-Axis was marked as unopened in transit by use of the P202 and P203 personal handstamps of the Chief Censor Bathurst.



Argentina to Spain despatched 28th February 1942
Arrive Barcelona 13th March. Only so far recorded cover.



Uruguay to Switzerland despatched 18th February 1942.
No Zurich arrival date. Only so far recorded cover.

Mail from South America to Europe diverted to UK
Argentina to Germany



Northbound 'Enemy' mail off-loaded at Bathurst was forwarded by BOAC flying boat to UK for detailed examination. Such mail often shows 'three-side' opening and resealing by UK censor label. 'Significant' mail was detained and forwarded after WW2 ended.



Posted 20th May 1942, Intercepted Bathurst and forwarded to UK. Examiner 5098 Liverpool. Condemned and released only after WW2. Explanatory label applied in Germany.

Mail from Europe to South America diverted to UK
Germany to Argentina



Southbound 'Enemy' mail off-loaded at Bathurst was returned by BOAC flying boat to UK for detailed examination. Such mail identified by censor label confirmed as in UK. Mail often delayed by examination.

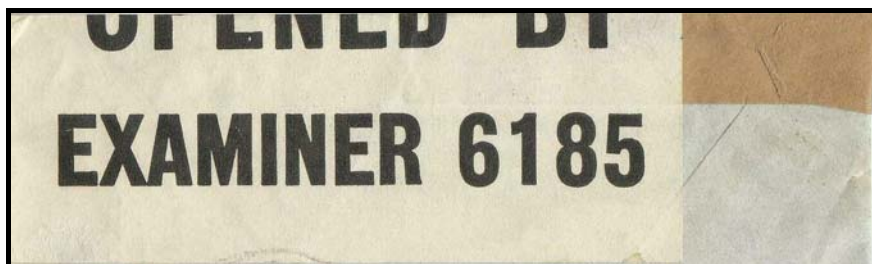


Posted 7th July 1942, Intercepted Bathurst and forwarded to UK. Examiner 1622 London.
Addressee endorsement received 19th February 1943, showing delay by censors.
Rate: 25Rpf. surface fee, 90Rpf. air fee. Total 115Rpf. Rate introduced 4th May 1942.

Mail from South America to Europe examined at Bathurst
Argentina to France



Northbound non-Axis mail to Europe was examined at Bathurst and resealed using one of the five Bathurst numbered labels. Mail was examined on a limited basis and covers are rare.



Posted 23rd May 1942, examined Bathurst by Examiner 6185 and forwarded via Lisbon.
Examiner numbers 5453, 5524, 5960, 6185, 7219 never used again after location at Bathurst.
Rate: 20c. surface, 20c. registration, 125c. air fee. Total 1.65 Pesos.

Mail from Europe to South America examined at Bathurst
Switzerland to Argentina



Southbound non-Axis mail from Europe to South America was examined at Bathurst and resealed using one of the five Bathurst numbered labels. Mail was examined on a limited basis and covers are rare.

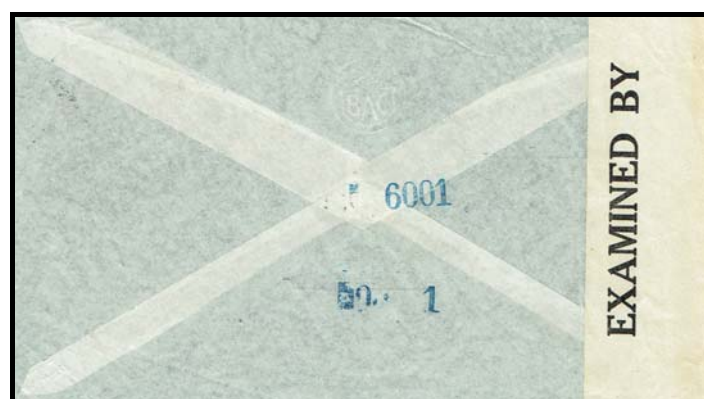
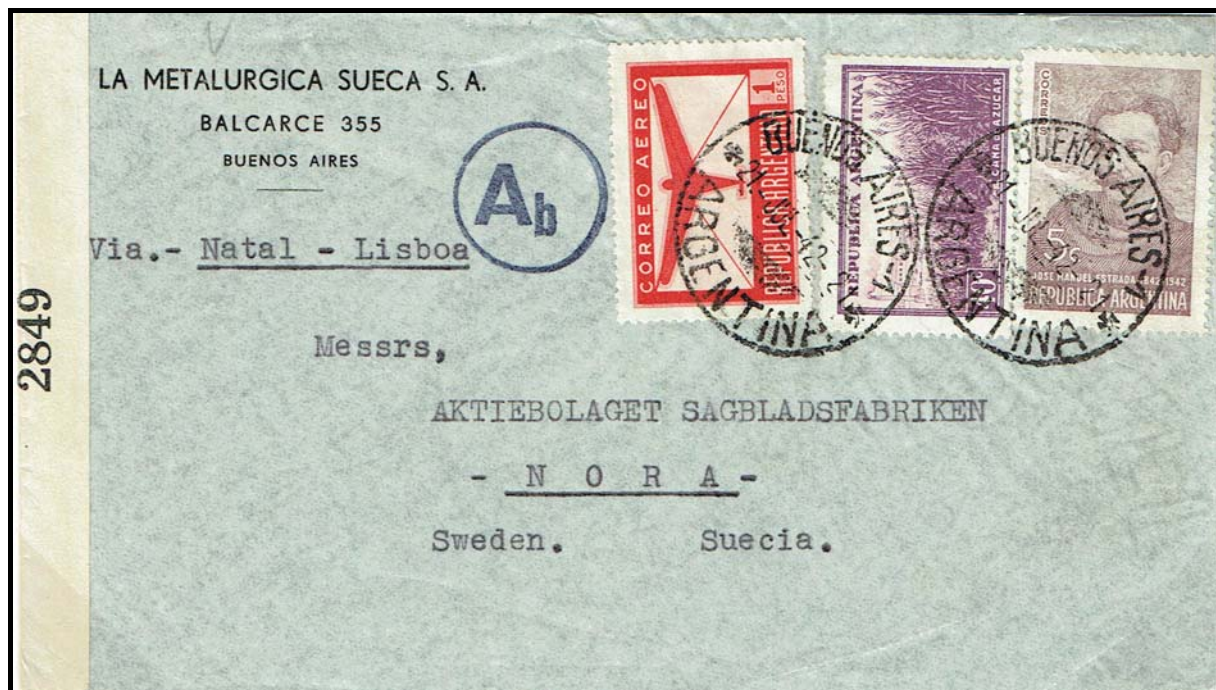


Posted 30th June 1942, examined Bathurst by Examiner 5453 and forwarded via Natal.
Examiner numbers 5453, 5524, 5960, 6185, 7219 never used again after location at Bathurst.
Rate: 30c. surface, 30c. registration, 1Fr.50c. air fee. Total 2Fr. 10c.

Censorship transfer from Bathurst to San Juan
Argentina to Sweden. The first mail bag.



At the end of July 1942 censorship operations were transferred to San Juan, where a joint Anglo-American censor station had been established. Mail from South America was carried to San Juan by Pan American FAM-6 scheduled flights and forwarded after censorship by first available flight according to the "San Juan Agreement".



Posted 21st July 1942, carried to San Juan by FAM-6. Opened by US examiner 2849. Covers were marked with bag and batch numbers to aid reassembling original contents. Mail bag numbers began at 6001 and batch numbers at 0001. This cover from first bag. Censored in transit to Sweden by German examiner in Berlin "Ab"