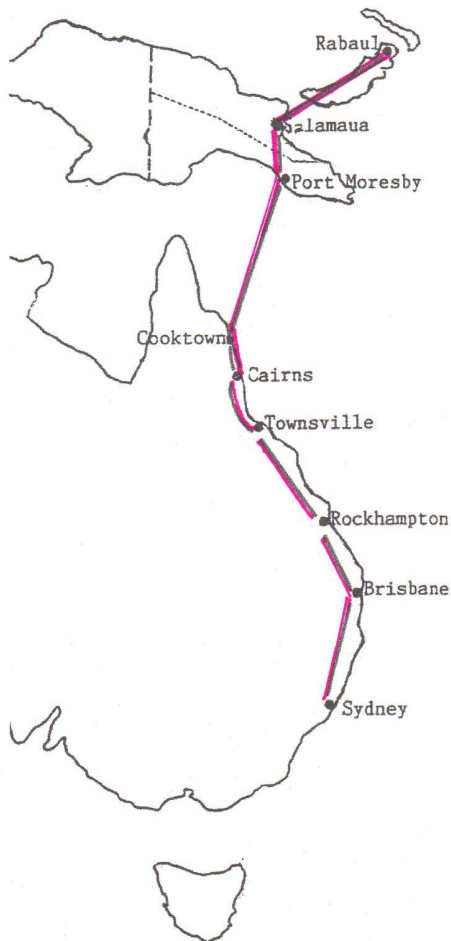


FIRST OFFICIAL AIRMAIL SERVICES FROM AUSTRALIA TO NEW GUINEA



The de Havilland DH86b Express VH-UYU RMA "Carmania" at Archerfield in 1938.



Plan

The first regular official air mail services between Australia and New Guinea via Papua and other intermediates provided a much faster and regular delivery of mail between those destinations than via ship. This exhibit details the inaugural outward and return flight in 1938 together with the history of W. R. Carpenter Airlines and the pilots of that flight.

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References

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- 'Aerophilately – Vol. 2, Contacts with New Guinea to 1967' by Robert. A. Tobin
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- Brisbane Telegraph, Tuesday March 15, 1938 "Trial Flight over Air Route from Sydney to New Guinea"
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W. R. Carpenter Airlines, Aircraft and the Pilots

Sir Walter Randolph Carpenter (1877-1954) registered W. R. Carpenter & Co. Ltd. in September 1914. In 1933 he established W.R. Carpenter & Co. (Aerial Service), the first air service between Salamaua and Wau with two De Havilland Fox aircraft. In 1938 He tendered and won the Australian Government's route between Australia and Rabaul. Pilots Ken Jackson and R.O. Mant joined W.R. Carpenter Airlines in 1938 and flying the de Havilland DH86b Express VH-UYU RMA "Carmania", established the first airmail service between Sydney and Rabaul.

Survey Flights

Prior to the inaugural official air mail service flight from Sydney to Rabaul, there were two survey flights. The first was on 15th. March 1938 with R.O. Mant as the pilot of the RMA "Carmania". The second survey flight was on the 18th. to 20th. April 1938 and again R.O. Mant was the pilot but in a sister plane, RMA "Caronia".



*First survey flight cover of the RMA "Carmania", Rabaul/Salamaua leg of the flight. No other return leg to Sydney covers are known to exist.
1 of 50 covers flown*



*Second survey flight cover Sydney to Rabaul by the RMA "Caronia". Signed by R.O. Mant, pilot
1 of 75 covers flown*

“Sydney to New Guinea in Two Days”

The aircraft was used for both airmail and passenger flights which was one of the conditions of the Government contract. Billy Hughes, the then Australian Minister for External Affairs, was on the inaugural flight. At the peak of his political career some 16 years earlier, he had been Prime Minister of Australia. Although the route for this flight terminated at Rabaul, some of the mail was offloaded at Port Moresby.



Cover posted at Jamberoo NSW that joined the flight at Sydney. After arrival in Salamaua, New Guinea on 31st May 1938, it went via one of the regular scheduled internal flights to Wau in the New Guinea Highlands.



Commercial cover posted in Sydney and offloaded in Salamaua on 31/5/38. It then flew via an internal to Wau. It was redirected from there to Madang. It was further redirected back to Salamaua then via sea back to Sydney

SYDNEY TO NEW GUINEA IN TWO DAYS

On 30th May, 1938, a direct air mail service will be inaugurated between Sydney and Rabaul, calling at Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, Cooktown, Port Moresby and Salamaua. The frequency will be once a week in each direction and mail will be conveyed to intermediate stopping places. Air mail from Australia will be accorded transmission over existing air services in New Guinea without extra charge.

Any postal article, other than a parcel, will be accepted for transmission, and each is to bear the blue air mail label.

The charges are 3d. per 1/2 oz. air mail fee, plus ordinary postage.

Normal Schedule

Normally, the airliner will leave Sydney at 7 a.m. each Tuesday, and is due to arrive in Rabaul 10 a.m. each Thursday. The return flight will commence at 1 p.m. each Friday and the plane is scheduled to arrive Sydney at 5.30 p.m. Sunday.

Mails will close at the G.P.O. as follows :-

Registered articles - - Monday 6 p.m.
Unregistered articles - Tuesday 6 a.m.

No Late Fee.

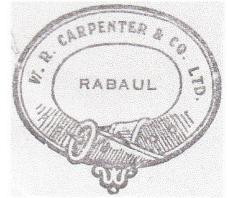
*Official PMG
flyer announcing
the first official
airmail service
to New Guinea*



Cover from Melbourne to Sydney, flown from there to Rabaul thence via paquebot to Kavieng on New Ireland

Return Flight - New Guinea & Papua to Sydney

The return flight left Rabaul on 3rd. June 1938 landing at Port Moresby, Papua the same day. It arrived back in Sydney on 5th. June 1938.



Scan of W.R. Carpenter logo on rear of this cover

Commercial over from W.R. Carpenter & Co. Ltd., Rabaul to R. B. Carpenter in Sydney



Commercial cover from Rabaul to Commonwealth Bank, Works Branch, Sydney

Return Flight - New Guinea & Papua to Sydney



Cover from Rabaul to Sydney thence Western Australia. Correct 5d. rate paid.



Salamaua, New Guinea to Sydney thence to Melbourne

Return Flight - New Guinea & Papua to Sydney



Commercial cover from the Bank of New South Wales, Salamaua to Commonwealth Bank Granville, NSW



Registered cover from Port Moresby, Papua to well-known philatelist Hamilton Croaker in North Sydney

"Boomerang" Return Flights - Sydney to New Guinea & Return

The majority of airmail covers especially "boomerang" types are philatelic rather than commercial. The covers carried on this flight were no different.



Cover sent by well-known philatelist Alec Rosenblum from Melbourne to Rabaul and return. Insufficient postage both ways (4d. instead of 5d.) and "Taxed" crayon applied but erased. No postage due stamps evident.

Inaugural Flight
Australia-New Guinea Air Mail Service
Via Rabaul

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



J. A. Crockett, Esq.,

C/o Sandy Creek Gold Sluicing Ltd.,

15 Hamilton Street,

SYDNEY.

N.S.W.

Commercial cover from a gold dredging company in Sydney to Rabaul and return

"Boomerang" Return Flights - Sydney to New Guinea & Return



Scan of NSW Parliament logo on cover rear

Commercial cover sent from the NSW Parliament to Salamaua, New Guinea thence to Prudential Investors Ltd., Hobart. Only the New Guinea 2d. stamp was valid, the 3d. Papua stamp wasn't cancelled and no tax applied.



Registered "Boomerang" special cover produced for the flight by WRC Airlines and signed by R. O. Mant

“Boomerang” Return Flights - Sydney to Papua & Return



“Boomerang” cover sent from the Imperial Service Club, Sydney to Port Moresby, Papua and return.



Registered “boomerang” cover from to Canberra to Port Moresby, Papua and return.
8d. correctly paid the 3d. registered and 5d. airmail rates.

Australian Intermediate Points of Call – Brisbane

The quantities of mail both loaded and offloaded at all intermediate stops are unknown. It is however possible to assume that the Brisbane quantities were the highest as this was a main point for flights to Darwin which, in turn, was the hub for the Australia to England airmail service.



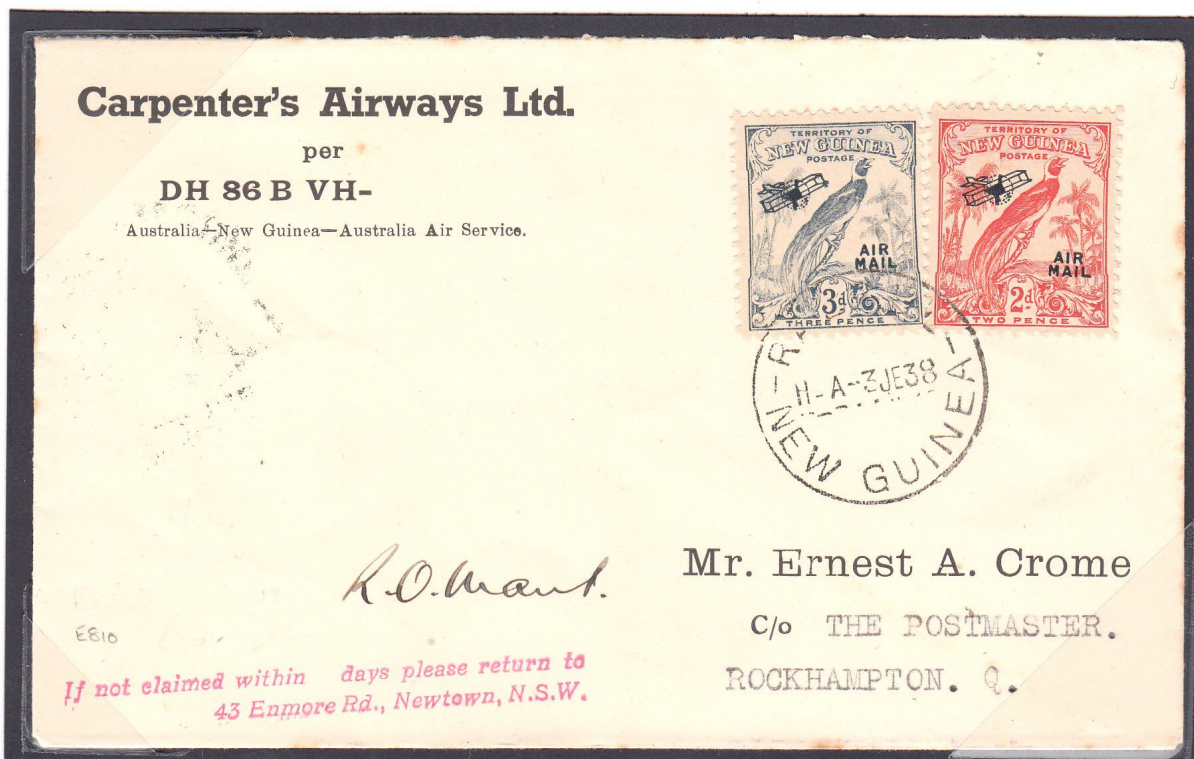
Commercial/philatelic cover from Brisbane to the Bank of NSW, Salamaua, New Guinea



Commercial/philatelic "boomerang" cover from the National Bank in Brisbane to Rabaul and return

Australian Intermediate Points of Call – Rockhampton and Townsville

The quantities of mail to the other Australian intermediate ports of call on the flight were relatively small and proportional to the population of each town. The July 1934 Australia to Papua and New Guinea flight of the "Faith in Australia" had a total quantity of items loaded similar to this flight. Of the approx. 25,000 items on that 1934 flight, quantities loaded were Brisbane (2,344), Rockhampton (284), Townsville (188) and Cairns (625). In practice though, covers to intermediates on the 1938 flight are far rarer than the 1934 flight, indicating that the majority of mail on this flight was from Sydney direct to New Guinea and Papua and return.



Carpenter's Airways pilot cover signed by R.O. Mant and flown from Rabaul, New Guinea to Rockhampton.



*Cover from Rabaul,
New Guinea to Townsville*

Australian Intermediate Points of Call – Cairns and Cooktown



Commercial/philatelic cover from Rabaul, New Guinea to Cairns



A rare cover from Port Moresby, Papua to Cooktown

(Cooktown had the lowest population of any of the intermediate stops in 1938. Doubtless that less than 100 covers were carried on the forward flight and perhaps a handful were flown from Port Moresby to Cooktown)

Overseas Connections – Indirect Routing

Direct airmail connections from Papua to overseas destinations on under W. R. Carpenter's contract weren't possible. Mail had to originate in New Guinea then be flown to Brisbane on the return flight where it was loaded onto the next scheduled overseas flight. The PMG affixed indirect routing labels on the rear of those covers.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

It is regretted that the provisions of the
Postal Convention do not permit of the
desired indirect routing of this article.

Scan of indirect routing PMG
label affixed to cover rear



Flight cover from Adelaide to the U.S. with Papua stamp uncanceled as direct routing wasn't possible.
Note rare W.R. Carpenter First Flight cachet.



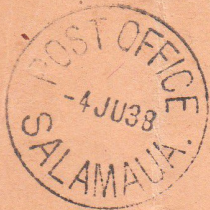
Cover from Sydney to Port Moresby thence Scotland with Papua stamp uncanceled, PMG label affixed to rear.

Overseas Connections

Rabaul via Brisbane to Germany with 1/9d. airmail rate to Europe paid. Postal crayon marking indicates "Italy"?



Per Air Mail. Rabaul - Sydney - London.



Miss Joan McCay.
Care. Delamore McCay Esq.
Sydney Morning Herald.
Fleet Street.
London.
GREAT BRITAIN.



Commercial cover from Wau, flown to Salamauva to connect with this flight then offloaded at Brisbane to link with the regular Australia-England service. 3/- postage affixed so double 1/6d. 1/2 oz. rate to the UK.

Overseas Connections



Missionary cover from Finschhafen on the Huon Peninsular of New Guinea to Brisbane by sea connecting with the regular Imperial Airways Australia-Singapore-England service thence via Greece to Germany. (note Greek receiving handstamp).

Epilogue

In February 1942 the RMA "Carmania", piloted by Captains Edwin Crisp and Clive Roberts, crashed near Cairns and the aircraft was destroyed.

In 1946, Qantas Empire Airways acquired W.R. Carpenter Airlines, the services of Captains Ken Jackson and R.O. Mant, their fleet of DH86 aircraft, and their airmail and passenger services.