

# Development of Swiss Airmail to 1940

## Synopsis of the Exhibit

*George Struble, May 2008*

This exhibit tries to tell a comprehensive story of the development of the Swiss airmail system. It's a fascinating story, with elements not duplicated in other countries. Of course, I can't be complete about that even by limiting my scope to the period up to 1940. I think most of the interesting developments took place in this period, which is why I have concentrated on it, and 1940 makes a natural stopping point.

The greatest strength of this exhibit is the 1913 Flugspende flights. The exhibit includes mint stamps of all of the Flugtage that issued stamps, and flown covers or cards of all the Flugtage. Many of the cards shown are unusual, e.g. printed matter rate, several foreign destinations, postage due, and soldier mail. I show all five types of the Laufen stamps and *all ten* positions of the Lugano sheet. Of the Olten attempts, the exhibit includes the stamp for the August attempt and (unused) postcards with both cancels prepared for the May attempt. The Lausanne cards include the feeder flights from both Vevey and Montreux.

Most of the pages of the exhibit show the routes of the developing network of the Swiss airmail system. Most routes are represented by first flight covers, including some *to* Switzerland. Covers of all legs of the 1919 service are included, and representative covers of the 1920 to 1922 airmail routes that were recognized by the Swiss postal system. While the exhibit does not include a cover illustrating *every* route 1923-1940, it includes several elusive covers, including

- Aug. 20, 1923: Handley-Page Basel-Zürich (36 flown)
- August 17, 1925: Basel-Stuttgart (41 flown)
- April 19, 1926: Karlsruhe-Basel (33 flown)
- October 4, 1926: second flight Basel-Lausanne (6 flown)
- May 14, 1928: Basel-Munich and Munich-Basel
- May 14, 1928: Lausanne-Le Locle (24 flown)

This exhibit includes a section on the 1923-1940 stamps. Among the special items in this section are

- three essays of 1923-1930 stamps
- first-day cover of the six 1923 airmail stamps
- imperf 20 and 50 Rp. on grided paper
- Z. F4y 20 Rp. without the blue-green color
- the 1935 10/15 inverted overprint *mint and on cover*

While I'm mentioning stamps, the exhibit also includes proofs of the 1919 propeller overprint on *both* 2 ½ and 3 rappen stamps (a total of 34 exist).

References:

- Schweizerisches Luftpost-Handbuch*, 2000 edition, Roland Kohl, editor
- Roland Kohl, *Die Schweizerischen Flugpost-Zuschlagstaxen ab 1919*

*(see other side for the exhibit outline)*

# Exhibit Outline

*(Page numbers will probably change before May!)*

## *Pages*

- |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| 2 – 28    | 1913 Flugspende flights   |   |
| 29 – 32   | Flieger-Abteilung; this WW I “air force“ was the beneficiary of the Flugspende campaign, and in 1919 was contracted to fly Switzerland’s first airmail service  |   |
| 33 – 42   | 1919-1920 flights; first attempts at airmail service  |   |
| 43 – 48   | 1920-1922; after the early enthusiasm, this was a quiet period, with only a few recognized connections to other nations’ flights  |   |
| 49 – 56   | 1923-1924; 1923 marked the beginning of regular serious airmail service   |   |
| 57 – 63   | 1925  |   |
| 64 – 74   | 1926  | These sections show covers flown on the           |
| 75 – 88   | 1927-1928   | ever-expanding network of airmail routes.         |
| 89 – 96   | 1929  | The exhibit also includes covers of some special  |
| 97 – 101  | 1930  | flights, such as Walter Mittelholzer’s Balkan and |
| 102 – 105 | 1931-1934   | Africa flights                                    |
| 106 – 111 | 1935-1937   |   |
| 112 – 115 | 1938-1940   |   |
| 116 – 124 | 1923-1940 stamps; the exhibit includes some first-day covers  |   |
| 125 – 130 | Airmail service to the US. This is a special case, the exhibit traces development enabled by the technology advances, including catapult and Zeppelin mail  |   |
| 131 – 144 | Airmail farther afield. This section is new since the last time this exhibit was shown; it includes a sampling of covers that went beyond the direct routes negotiated to and from Switzerland. These too are part of the story of the developing worldwide network of airmail service and Switzerland’s place in it. |   |