

# The 1929 Inauguration of Union Airways Service Routes. South Africa's First Commercial Airmail Service.

This is a one frame aerophilately exhibit detailing the August 1929 inauguration of the first commercial air service within South Africa. The exhibit describes the initial Northern and Southern routes followed by subsequent additions to various South African cities and towns. Incoming and outgoing international mail is also shown. Text is Palatino Linotype 11. Route and rate details are provided in Arial 9 font. Important items are double matted in maroon and white. Route symbols used:  
by ship  $\approx$ , by plane  $\rightarrow$ , by train  $\#\#\#\#$ , by regular post  $\boxtimes$ .

## Forerunner Service - 1925

The first internal air service in South Africa was not private, rather it was run by the government beginning on February 23, 1925. Special airmail stamps were designed and were the first postage stamps printed in South Africa. Owing to unavoidable circumstances the first flight actually occurred on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The first experimental route was Cape Town to Durban with stops at Oudtshoorn, Port Elizabeth and East London, later including a stop at Mossel Bay. Mail designated for the service required an air rate of 1d over ordinary postal rates. In addition, an orange bilingual airmail label was required. The airmail rate could have been paid with ordinary postage, which led to the ultimate failure of the stamps' use; airmail service terminated June 15; the stamp issue discontinued June 30, 1925.



Left, first government flight.  
Post card, Cape Town to Durban,  
Despite February 25 and 26 cancels the mail was held and the actual flight took place on  
March 2, 1925.  
1d airmail rate + 1d post card rate.

Cape Town  $\rightarrow$  Oudtshoorn  $\rightarrow$  Port Elizabeth  $\rightarrow$  East London  $\rightarrow$  Durban