

IDENTIFICATION OF ON-BOARD ZEPPELIN MAIL 1908 - 1929

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

This one frame exhibit focuses on marks identifying on-board Zeppelin mail.

BACKGROUND:

Zeppelin mail can be classified as on-board and carried. Majority of Zeppelin mail was carried in sealed bags and not handled in flight (not in scope of this exhibit). On-board mail was handled, dropped or posted by airship crew.

IMPORTANCE:

This is first recorded exhibit covering on-board Zeppelin mail from its inception. Exhibit couldn't be replicated because it includes unique and rare items essential for illustrating the subject.

RARITY AND CONDITION:

Exhibit includes 11 items recorded in less than ten examples and 2 unique items. Despite considerable challenge in acquiring rare items, exhibitor exercised great care to select material in best condition available.

TREATMENT:

Exhibit is organized in chronological order to illustrate evolution of on-board mail and its identifying marks.

TITLE:	PAGES:
First Zeppelins	2-3
DELAG	4-10
Post War Airships	11
Graf Zeppelin	12-15
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PURPLE BORDER INDICATES
PERSONAL RESEARCH ITEM

RED BORDER INDICATES
IMPORTANT ITEM



Reverse side (next page on top)

First Zeppelins

Early Zeppelin mail had few identification marks. Zeppelin picture postcards were commonly used for ground mail.



Personal research:

Identifying features of on-board early Zeppelin mail -

- Crew and passenger inscriptions or finder notes referencing Zeppelin flights
- Real LZ company seal
- Postmarks and arrival stamps with dates and locations matching Zeppelin flight records
- Zeppelin Company/DELAG stationary

Finder notes on reverse:
Card from Zeppelin aircraft flew to my head Hurrah! Stop!
Warm greetings from Zeppelin, Hermann Ringler, Straßburg.
Greetings, Else Friedel, Straßburg.
Manteuffelstrasse 6.

One of 2 recorded - LZ 4 Mainz flight, Straßburg drop
5 pf inland postcard rate

First Zeppelins

Zeppelin Company used perforated half-fold postcards for mail drops.



Limburg - Bickendorf
Cologne Drop
One of 3 recorded - LZ 5 Army delivery flight
5 pf inland postcard rate

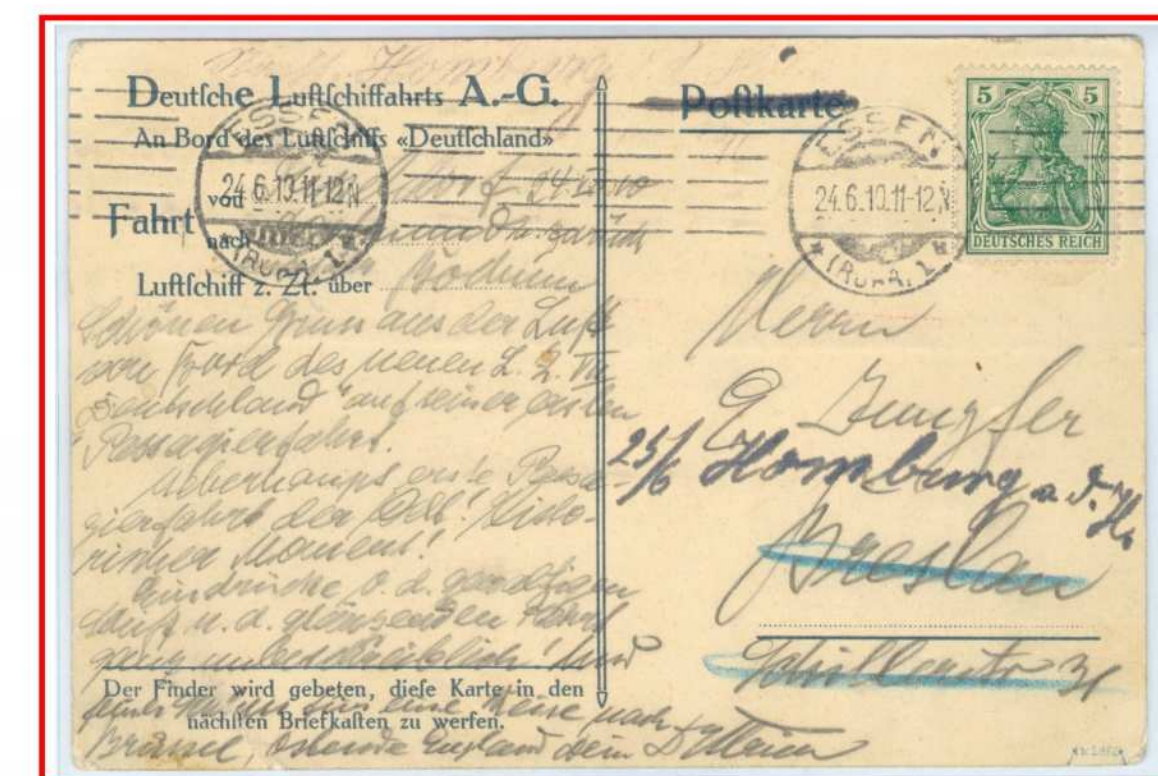
Mail from LZ-6 Kaiser presentation flight received violet arrival stamp "Schliessplatz Tegel" (Tegel Fring Range).



One of 9 recorded - LZ 6 mail - Kaiser presentation flight
10 pf inland letter rate

DELAG

DELAG was world's first commercial airline. It successively operated eight Zeppelin airships in revenue service. LZ 7 Deutschland was DELAG's first airship. On-board mail is identifiable by DELAG postcards.



Passenger mail
Düsseldorf - Ruhrgebiet
Bochum drop
One of 3 recorded - LZ 7 mail
5 pf rate

Following destruction of Deutschland DELAG postcards were overprinted "LZ 6".



Passenger greeting card
Last flight - interrupted 15 minute Oos circuit
One of 3 recorded - last LZ 6 flight
5 pf rate

DELAG

Easily identifiable Zeppelin mail was aligned with Zeppelin Company's goal of elevating its public image.



Passenger mail
Oos - Frankfurt
Unique - LZ-8 foreign mail
10 pf foreign rate

Board stamps clearly identified on-board Zeppelin mail.

First board stamp type I was used on-board LZ 8 Deutschland II on April 10, 1911. Board stamps were violet or red.



Passenger mail
Mönchengladbach drop
One of 6 recorded - Düsseldorf circuit
5 pf inland rate

Early airships did not operate on-board post office.

Airship crew collected passenger mail, marked it with board stamp and mailed from nearby post office after arrival.

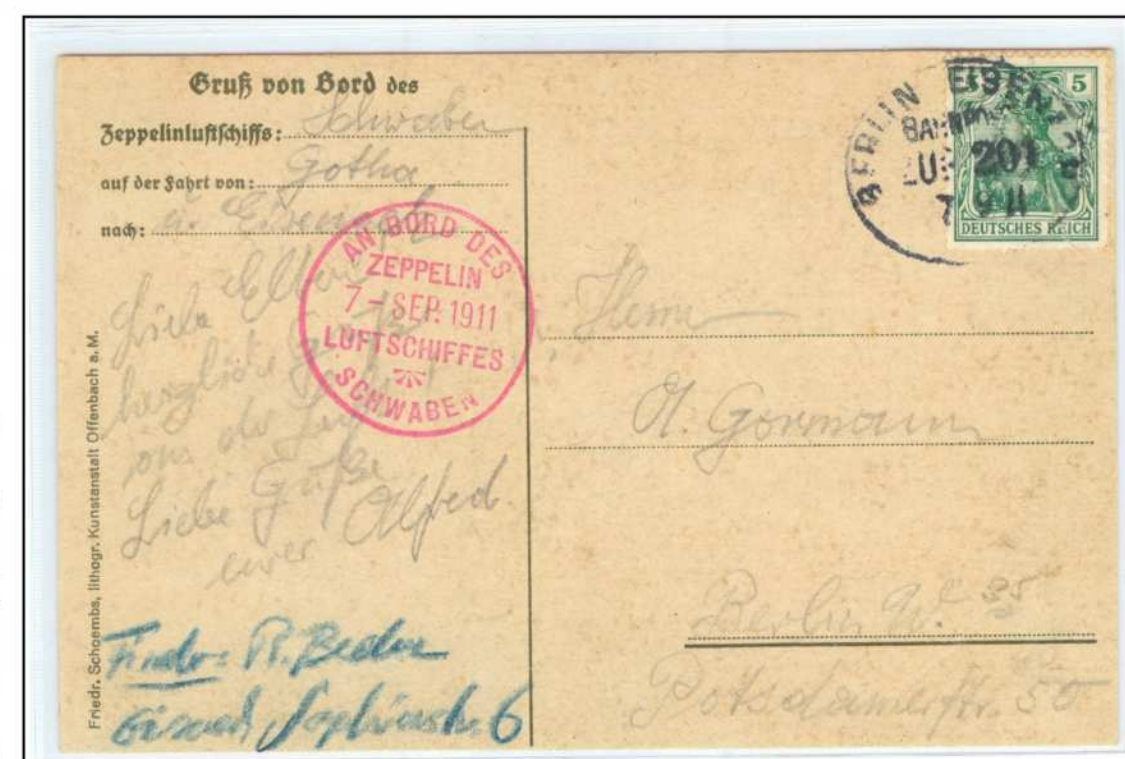
DELAG

LZ 10 Schwaben crew used three different board stamps.



Passenger mail
Frankfurt circuit
5 pf rate

Most common board stamp was type I - same as LZ 8 in same colors - violet and red.



Passenger mail
Gotha circuit
Finder note - lower left corner
Posted on Berlin train
5 pf rate

DELAG

Red board stamp type II was larger and included Delag (German Airship Travel Company) inscription.



Passenger mail
One of 3 recorded - Bregenz landing
5 heller postcard rate

Type III was similar to Type I with slightly different fonts and letter sizes. It was used for garment advertisement mail drops.



Düsseldorf Drop
Garment advertisement

DELAG

Zeppelin Company selected board stamp type I for LZ 11 Viktoria Luise and all subsequent airships.



Passenger postcard
Düsseldorf - Hamburg
One of 2 recorded - Netherlands drop
Dutch post office disallowed German stamp. Postage due 20 centimes collected in DM.

First Zeppelin Bordpoststelle was opened on-board LZ 11 by Oberpostinspektor Lindemann on July 17, 1912. Bordpoststelle was sub office of Friedrichshafen post office and operated only in flight. Mail was cancelled with black oval postmark.



Passenger postcard
Potsdam circuit
5 pf rate

DELAG

Bordpoststelle operated on-board LZ-13 Hansa since its first flight.



Passenger mail
Potsdam circuit
Bordstamp 1
5 pf rate

Two on-board postmarks used - Bordstamp 1 "Luftpost Zeppelin-Schiff Hansa" and Bordstamp 2 "Luftpost Hansa".



Passenger mail
Leipzig circuit
Bordstamp 2
5 pf rate

Airship postmarks clearly identified Zeppelin mail posted on-board.

DELAG

Bordpoststelle processed only German franked mail. Foreign franked mail received board stamp and was posted upon arrival.



Passenger mail
Oos - Vienna
5 heller postcard rate

Some mail received both board stamp and on-board postmark.



Passenger mail
Liegnitz - Haida
5 pf postcard rate to Austro-Hungary (same rate as inland)

Post War Airships

LZ-120 did not operate on-board post office. Board stamp identified on-board mail - carried mail did not get board stamp.



Passenger mail
Friedrichshafen - Berlin - Wolmirstedt
One of 7 recorded - Wolmirstedt landing mail
15 pf inland postcard rate

Board stamp was not ordered for LZ-126 - airship was built for transfer to US government.



North America flight
Greeting postcard from LZ 126 navigator Max Pruss
One of 10 recorded - Angra drop
96 Portuguese centavos foreign postcard rate

Identifying marks of LZ 126 board mail - crew members handwriting, LZ126 stamp and Angra German consulate stamp.

Graf Zeppelin

LZ 127 board stamp was first used Sep 20, 1928 on-board Graf Zeppelin 2nd flight.



Southwest Germany flight
Offenburg drop
Greeting card from LZ 127 steward Albert Lehmann
8 pf inland rate
Postage due 15 pf

LZ 127 Bordpoststelle opened March 25, 1929 as sub office of Friedrichshafen Post Office, it operated only in flight. Steel black on-board postmark (type 1) was used for only one flight (3 days) because its impressions were not clear.



First dispatch of Graf Zeppelin mail posted on-board - Rome drop
First flight confirmation stamp - LZ 127 over ephynx and pyramids
Orient flight
Passenger postcard
1 DM rate

Flight confirmation stamps did not identify board mail. They were used for all flight mail - on LZ 127 and in Friedrichshafen.

Graf Zeppelin

Rubber "small letters" black/violet on-board postmark (type 2) was used on-board LZ 127 Apr 24 - Oct 17.



Mediterranean flight
Postcard from LZ 127 chief rigger Ludwig Knorr to his wife
One of 8 recorded - Tanger drop mail
1 DM postcard rate

Cancelling foreign stamps with Graf Zeppelin postmark was against regulations.



Reverse side
North America flight
Self addressed by LZ 127 navigator Anton Wittemann
One of 5 recorded - Seaside Park drop mixed franking mail
2 DM rate

Graf Zeppelin

In October 1929 volume of "board mail" forwarded by philatelic dealers under cover sharply increased.



Occasionally board stamp was used to cancel foreign adhesive stamps.
Balkans flight - Sibul drop
50 pf rate



Balkans flight - Brasov drop
Unique violet LZ 127 board stamp
50 pf rate
Natural Light
UV
Blue-Green

Personal Research: Violet ink in above board stamp and postmark has same light reflection properties.

Graf Zeppelin

Rubber "large letters" on-board postmark had wider (type 3A) and narrower (type 3B) distance between date numerals.



Personal research:
Sieger and Michel catalogues indicate postmark 3B was used only in Friedrichshafen.
Postmark on below card is dated Oct 24 but airship left Friedrichshafen on Oct 23 and card was dropped on Oct 24 - postmark 3B had to be on-board LZ 127.
Private Spain flight stamp in violet and red was used by aerophilatelist Hermann E. Sieger.
Spain flight - Basel drop
50 pf rate
Private flight stamps were not identifying marks of on-board mail - they were applied to all philatelic dealer's mail.

Epilogue

By end of 1929 high volume of philatelic "on-board mail" forwarded under cover strained on-board post office. On-board postmark type 2 was transferred to Friedrichshafen Post Office after Oct 17, 1929 flight to process philatelic "board mail".



Mailed under cover with instructions to post on-board LZ 127.
Inscription "with LZ 127" is distinguishing mark of philatelic mail.
0.50 DM rate - Barcelona drop - overfranked 15 centavos.



50th flight
Romanshorn drop
Postmark type 3
Self addressed by LZ 127 navigator Anton Wittemann
50 pf rate

After Nov 15, 1929 flight postmark type 2 was retired, postmark type 3 was used on-board LZ 127 and in Friedrichshafen Post Office. Postmark lost its "board mail only" identity - post 1929 on-board mail can be identified only by inscriptions.

IDENTIFICATION OF ON-BOARD ZEPPELIN MAIL

1908 - 1929

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PERSONAL RESEARCH ITEM

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IMPORTANT ITEM



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First Zeppelins

Early Zeppelin mail had few identification marks. Zeppelin picture postcards were commonly used for ground mail.



Finder notes on reverse:

Card from Zeppelin aircraft flew to my head Hurrah! Stop!

Warm greetings from Zeppelin, Hermann Ringier, Strasburg.

Greetings, Else Friedel, Strasburg, Manteuffelstrasse 6.

One of 2 recorded – LZ 4 Mainz flight, Strasbourg drop

5 pf inland postcard rate

Personal research:

Identifying features of on-board early Zeppelin mail -

- Crew and passenger inscriptions or finder notes referencing Zeppelin flights
- Red LZ company seal
- Postmarks and arrival stamps with dates and locations matching Zeppelin flight records
- Zeppelin Company/DELAG stationary



Manzel - Frankfurt flight

Upper right corner Inscription:
"Shipped on July 31, 09 by latest and most modern means of transport"

One of 3 recorded - LZ 5 ILA flight

First Zeppelins

Zeppelin Company used perforated half-fold postcards for mail drops.



Limburg – Bickendorf

Cologne Drop

One of 3 recorded -
LZ 5 Army delivery flight

5 pf inland postcard rate

Mail from LZ-6 Kaiser presentation flight received violet arrival stamp "Schuessplatz Tegel" (Tegel Firing Range).



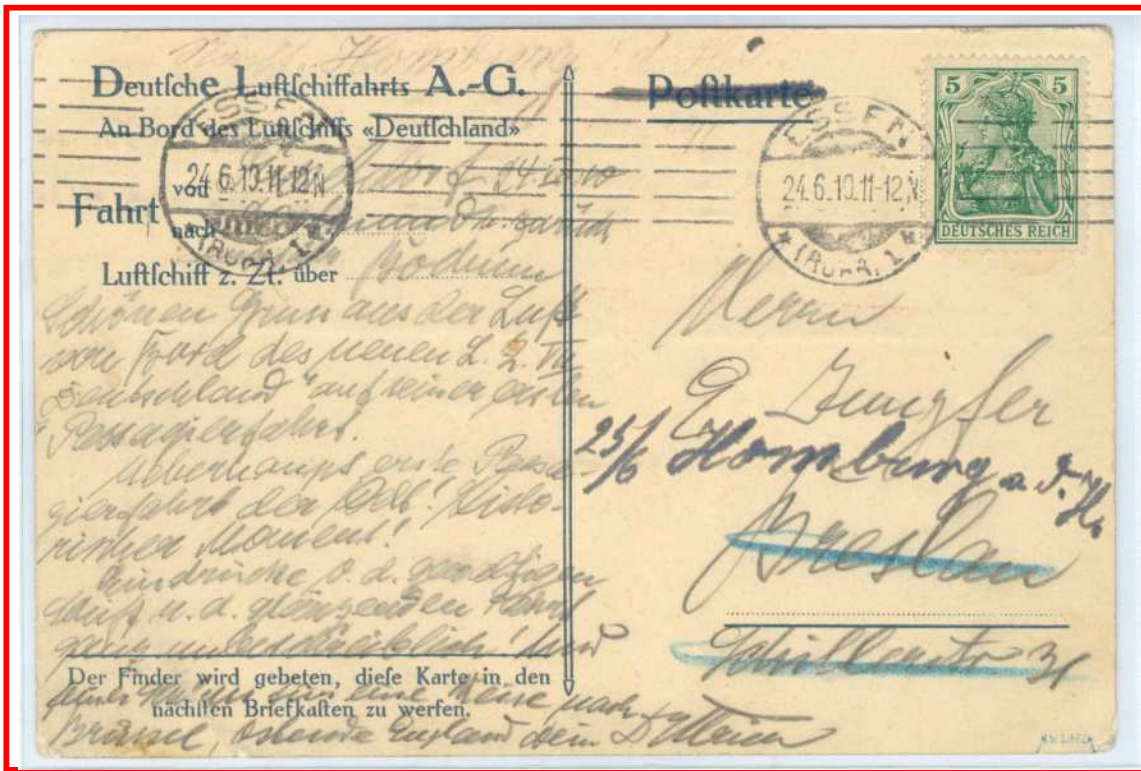
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Passenger mail

Düsseldorf - Ruhrgebiet

Bochum drop

One of 3 recorded - LZ 7 mail

5 pf rate

Following destruction of *Deutschland* DELAG postcards were overprinted "L.Z. 6".



Passenger greeting card

Last flight – interrupted
15 minute Oos circuit

One of 3 recorded -
last LZ 6 flight

5 pf rate

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Passenger mail

Oos – Frankfurt

Unique - LZ-8 foreign mail

10 pf foreign rate

Board stamps clearly identified on-board Zeppelin mail.

First board stamp (type I) was used on-board LZ 8 *Deutschland II* on April 10, 1911. Board stamps were violet or red.



Passenger mail

Mönchengladbach drop

One of 6 recorded - Düsseldorf circuit

5 pf inland rate

Early airships did not operate on-board post office.

Airship crew collected passenger mail, marked it with board stamp and mailed from nearby post office after arrival.

LZ 10 Schwaben crew used three different board stamps.



Passenger mail
Frankfurt circuit
5 pf rate

Most common board stamp was type I - same as LZ 8 in same colors – violet and red.



Passenger mail
Gotha circuit
Finder note –
lower left corner
Posted on Berlin train
5 pf rate

Red board stamp type II was larger and included Delag (German Airship Travel Company) inscription.



Passenger mail

One of 3 recorded -
Bregenz landing

5 heller postcard rate

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Düsseldorf Drop

Garment advertisement

Bordpostelle operated on-board LZ-13 Hansa since its first flight.



Passenger mail
Potsdam circuit
Bordstamp 1
5 pf rate

Two on-board postmarks used – Bordstamp 1 “Luftpost Zeppelin-Schiff Hansa” and Bordstamp 2 “Luftpost Hansa”.



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Leipzig circuit
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Wolmirstedt

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15 pf inland postcard rate

Board stamp was not ordered for LZ-126 - airship was built for transfer to US government.



North America flight

Greeting postcard from
LZ 126 navigator Max Pruss

One of 10 recorded -
Angra drop

96 Portuguese centavos
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Identifying marks of LZ 126 board mail - crew members handwriting, LZ126 stamp and Angra German consulate stamp.

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Postcard from LZ 127 chief rigger Ludwig Knorr to his wife

One of 8 recorded - Tangier drop mail

1 DM postcard rate

Canceling foreign stamps with Graf Zeppelin postmark was against regulations.



Reverse side

North America flight

Self addressed by LZ 127 navigator Anton Wittemann

One of 5 recorded - Seaside Park drop mixed franking mail

2 DM rate



Graf Zeppelin

In October 1929 volume of "board mail" forwarded by philatelic dealers under cover sharply increased.



Occasionally board stamp was used to cancel foreign adhesive stamps.

Balkans flight - Sibui drop
50 pf rate

Graf Zeppelin board stamp was red, on-board postmark was violet. On Balkans flight crew member struggling to process large volume of philatelic mail confused board stamp for on-board postmark and subsequently struck it over with postmark.

Balkans flight - Brasov drop

Unique violet
LZ 127 board stamp
50 pf rate



Natural
Light



UV



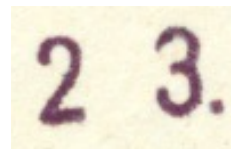
Blue-
Green



Personal Research: Violet ink in above board stamp and postmark has same light reflection properties.

Graf Zeppelin

Rubber "large letters" on-board postmark had wider (type 3A) and narrower (type 3B) distance between date numerals.



Type 3A



Type 3B

First day of use – on-board postmark 3A

Spain flight – Barcelona drop

1 DM + 1.50 francs letter rate

Personal research:

Sieger and Michel catalogues indicate postmark 3B was used only in Friedrichshafen.

Postmark on below card is dated Oct 24 but airship left Friedrichshafen on Oct 23 and card was dropped on Oct 24 - postmark 3B had to be on-board LZ 127.

Private Spain flight stamp in violet and red was used by aerophilatelist Hermann E. Sieger.

Spain flight - Basel drop
50 pf rate



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Mailed under cover with instructions to post on-board LZ 127.

Inscription "with LZ 127" is distinguishing mark of philatelic mail.

0.50 DM rate
+ 15 centavos SCADTA -
overfranked 15 centavos.

Graf Zeppelin board stamp was split in half after Nov 15, 1929 flight – use of board stamps ended.



50th flight

Romanshorn drop

Postmark type 3

Self addressed by
LZ 127 navigator
Anton Wittemann.

50 pf rate

After Nov 15, 1929 flight postmark type 2 was retired, postmark type 3 was used on-board LZ 127 and in Friedrichshafen Post Office. Postmark lost its "board mail only" identity - post 1929 on-board mail can be identified only by inscriptions.