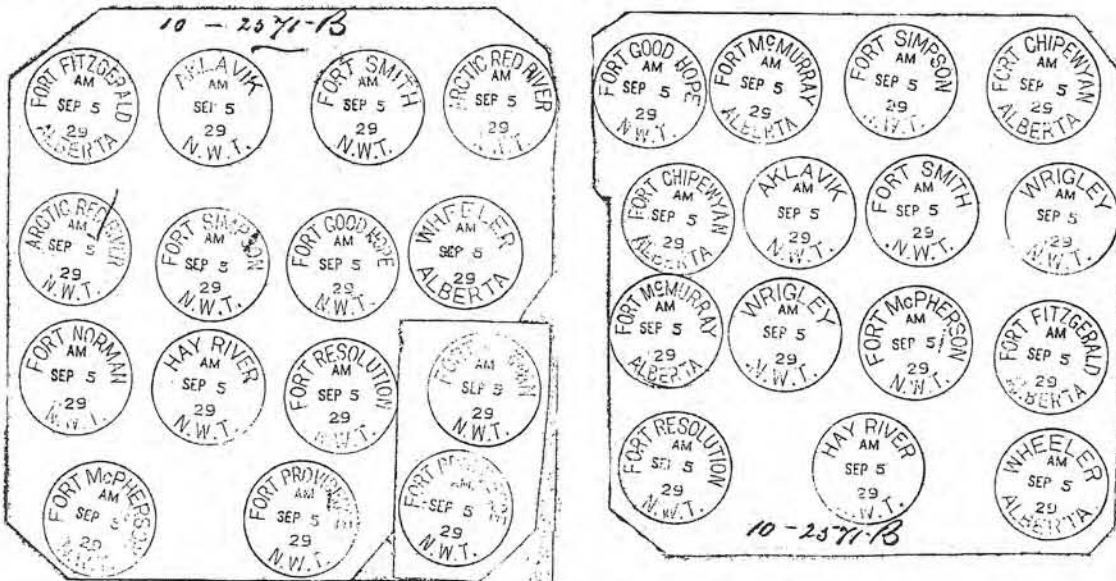


COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



In August 1929, the Post Office Department announced the commencement of regular air mail service between Fort McMurray and Aklavik and that special cachets would be used on covers to and from Fort McMurray and any of the intermediate points or Aklavik. Covers were to be sent undercover to the District Superintendent of Postal Services, Edmonton by October 31 and were to be prepaid at the airmail rate. No cachets would be put on any mail between the intermediate points. Registered and special delivery mail was also accepted. Special cachets were prepared and proofed in August 1929 for the 26 segments of the service.

The philatelic mail accounted for 1,270 lbs. (or about 120,000 covers) and was sent from Edmonton to Fort McMurray on November 26 in 26 special bags, having been cacheted and stamped (the cover above was carried as part of this dispatch). The commercial mail carried on these flights totaled 7,677 lbs. including parcel post. The total cost for these flights to December 31, 1929 was \$7,500 for two months service plus an additional amount of \$2,703.08 at a rate of 0.5417 cents/mile for extra trips for philatelic mail (one trip from Fort McMurray to Fort Simpson and return, and another trip from Fort McMurray to Aklavik and return).



Pages from Post Office Department Proof Books (reduced to 75%)

In addition to the cachets, two sets of new circle date stamps were proofed on September 5 for all 14 post offices. Two additional date stamps prepared for Wheeler, Alberta (as the starting point for the winter mail service points) but this office closed on May 1, 1929 and was not a point to be served on the air mail flights. A set of new registration boxes for the same offices was also proofed in November. One set of the circle date stamps was intended to replace the broken circle date stamps generally in use at the northern post offices. The other set appears to have been carried by Postal Inspector Walter Hale, who accompanied the flights, and were used exclusively on the philatelic mail, mainly those covers that also received the cachet. The cover above bears one of the new circle date stamps for Fort McMurray and shows that some of the southern offices received these before the flight began in December 1929.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 10 McMurray to Chipewyan (AJQ Becker, AKI May); Dec. 10 Chipewyan to McMurray (AJQ Becker, AKI May); Dec. 11 McMurray to Chipewyan (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May); Dec. 12 Chipewyan to Fitzgerald (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)



Inbound: Dec. 11 McMurray to Chipewyan (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
Dec. 12 Chipewyan to Fitzgerald (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
Dec. 12 Fitzgerald to Smith (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)
Outbound: Dec. 13 Fitzgerald to McMurray (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)

Philatelic non-cacheted covers carried between intermediate points Fort Chipewyan, Fort Fitzgerald and Fort Smith showing the progress of the flights and use of the regular date stamps (B2). A special interpost mail bag of 50 lbs. was carried by Postal Inspector Hale in which these covers were handled.



Inbound: Dec. 11 McMurray to Chipewyan (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
 Dec. 12 Chipewyan to Fitzgerald and on to Smith (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
Outbound: Dec. 13 Fitzgerald to McMurray (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)

Covers carried to and from Fort Fitzgerald. Both covers carried in on December 11 from Fort McMurray by Becker in CF-AJQ, despite signature from Wop May on the top cover. Top cover shows the circle date stamp B1 used on the cacheted flight covers and sent out on a later flight (likely Dec. 19 McMurray to Edmonton by AAL with Becker as pilot). Bottom cover shows circle date stamp B2 and the return flight on December 13.



Inbound: Dec. 9 Edmonton to Chipewyan (SM Dickins); Dec. 10 Chipewyan to Fitzgerald (SM Dickins)
Outbound: Dec. 13 Fitzgerald to McMurray (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May); Dec. 13 McMurray to Edmonton (AAL Burbidge)

Self-addressed philatelic cover at first class rate carried from Fort Fitzgerald. If the December 11 date is correct on the regular circle date stamp, the cover was carried in before the Commercial Airways flights started. On December 9 Punch Dickins flew in Western Canada Airways Super Fokker G-CASM from Edmonton to Fort McMurray to Fort Chipewyan carrying one pound of mail. He flew on to Fort Fitzgerald the next day and points further north. This cover could have been part of this small mail. It was returned on December 13 to Edmonton on a special flight by Pilot Burbidge in the Commercial Airways Vega. The use of the regular circle date stamp also proves that these date stamps (proofed in September 1929) were carried into the southern post offices prior to the first regular official flights.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 14 McMurray to Chipewyan (AKI May)
Outbound: Dec. 23 Chipewyan to McMurray (AJQ Lumsden)



Inbound: Dec. 14 McMurray to Chipewyan (AKI May)
Outbound: Dec. 19 Chipewyan to Resolution (AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May); Dec. 20 Resolution to Simpson (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May); to Aklavik and return on Jan. 2 (AKI May)

Philatelic non-cacheted covers carried to Fort Chipewyan on December 14 and showing use of the regular date stamps (B2). Top cover returned to Fort McMurray on a later flight while the bottom cover shows scarce late use of Fort Smith B1 circle date stamp on the return flight from Aklavik (this was actually applied by Postal Inspector Hale after the flights as the plane did not stop in Fort Smith). On December 14 all of the aircraft ended up in Fort Fitzgerald.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 11 McMurray to Chipewyan (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
Dec. 12 Chipewyan to Smith (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)
Outbound: Dec. 15 Smith to McMurray (AKI May)



Inbound: Dec. 11 McMurray to Chipewyan (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
Dec. 12 Chipewyan to Smith (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)

Philatelic non-cacheted covers carried to Fort Smith on December 12 and showing use of the regular circle date stamps (B2) and a duplex on the bottom cover (D1). Both cover likely carried out to Fort McMurray on December 15 when all the Pacemakers returned.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 11 McMurray to Chipewyan (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
 Dec. 12 Chipewyan to Smith (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)
 Outbound: Dec. 13 Fitzgerald to McMurray (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)



Inbound: Dec. 11 McMurray to Chipewyan (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
 Dec. 12 Chipewyan to Smith (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)
 Outbound: Dec. 15 Fitzgerald to McMurray (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
 Dec. 19 McMurray to Edmonton (AAL Becker)

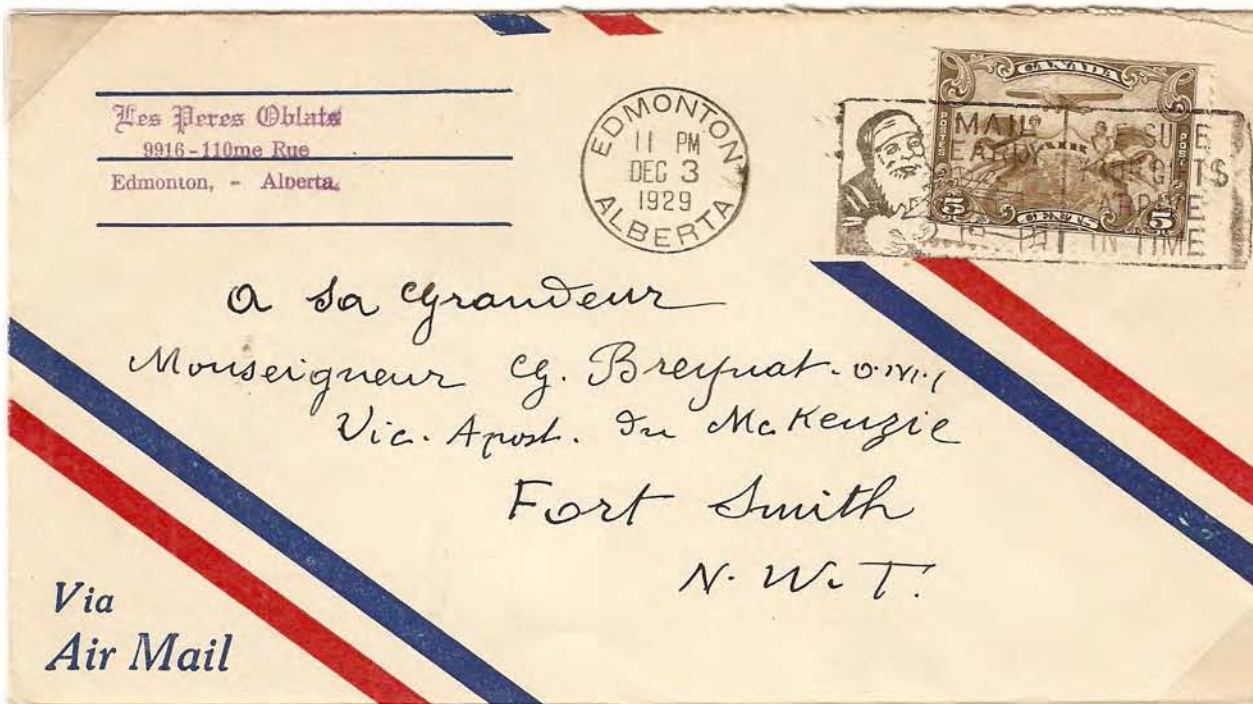
Philatelic cacheted covers carried from Fort Smith. Top cover shows registration box (R2) specially prepared for these flights and known used only on this date. Stamps cancelled with regular circle date stamp B2 (as appears to be the case with all registered mail carried on these flights) and cover transported to Fort Fitzgerald overland for the flight south the next day. Bottom pilot-signed cover addressed to the District Postal Superintendent and likely carried out on a different flight. Note the use of the B1 special circle date stamp.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 14 McMurray to Smith (AKI May)

Commercial air mail cover sent to a Catholic from his order office in Edmonton. This cover was received in Fort Smith on December 14 and was likely carried in on a flight by Pilot May from Fort McMurray via Fort Chipewyan that day. The air mail cover was postmarked in Edmonton on March 24, 1929. It could have been sent sooner via the regular summer steamer service but was held for the opening of regular air mail service as the sticker service for Western Canada Airways began on March 20.



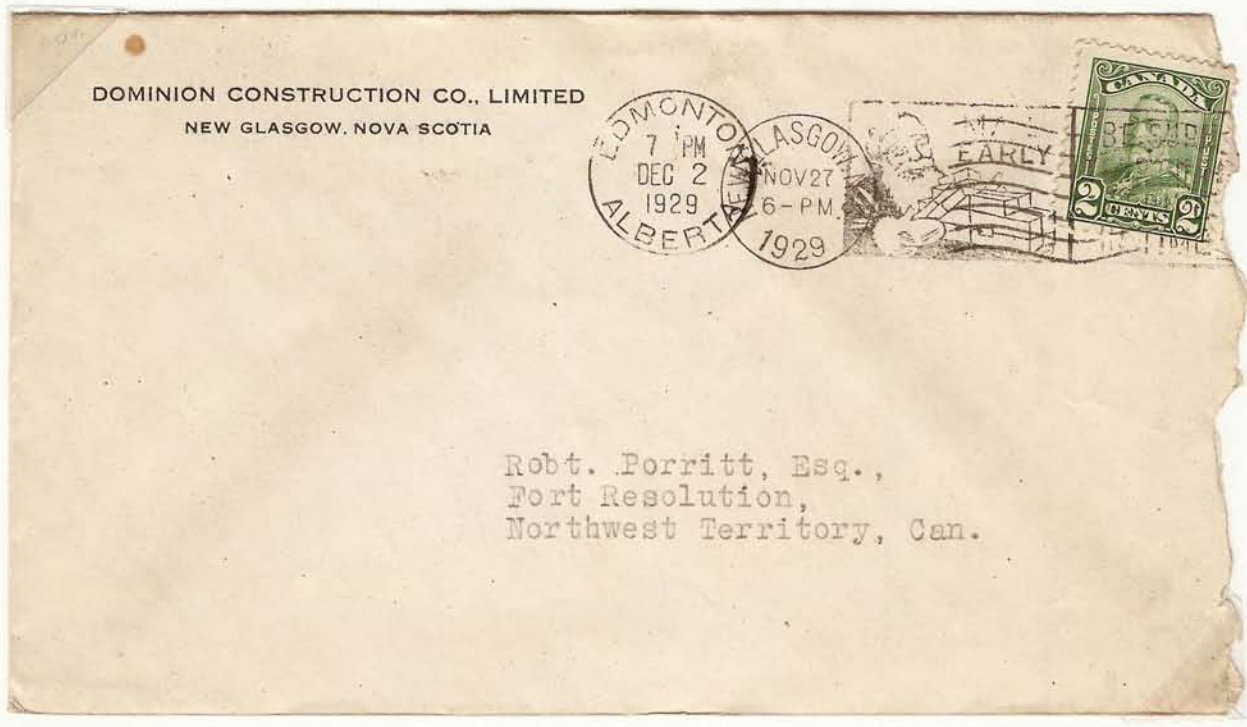
Inbound: Dec. 14 McMurray to Smith (AKI May)

Commercial air mail cover sent to the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Mackenzie from his order office in Edmonton. This cover was received in Fort Smith on December 14 and was likely carried in on a flight by Pilot May from Fort McMurray via Fort Chipewyan that day.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Outbound: Dec. 15 Resolution to McMurray (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)



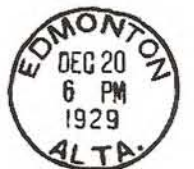
Inbound: Dec. 16 McMurray to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AKI May)

Top cover overpaid commercial mail from the medical doctor at Fort Resolution but no transit or receipt markings. Likely carried out on December 15 when all three Pacemakers returned to Fort McMurray from Fort Resolution. Note the use of the regular circle date stamp (B2). This indicates that these date stamps (proofed on September 5) were sent to at least the southern post offices before the first regular flights began. Bottom incoming commercial cover paid at letter rate and flown in on December 16 from Fort McMurray.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 14 McMurray to Fitzgerald (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
 Dec. 15 Fitzgerald to Resolution (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)



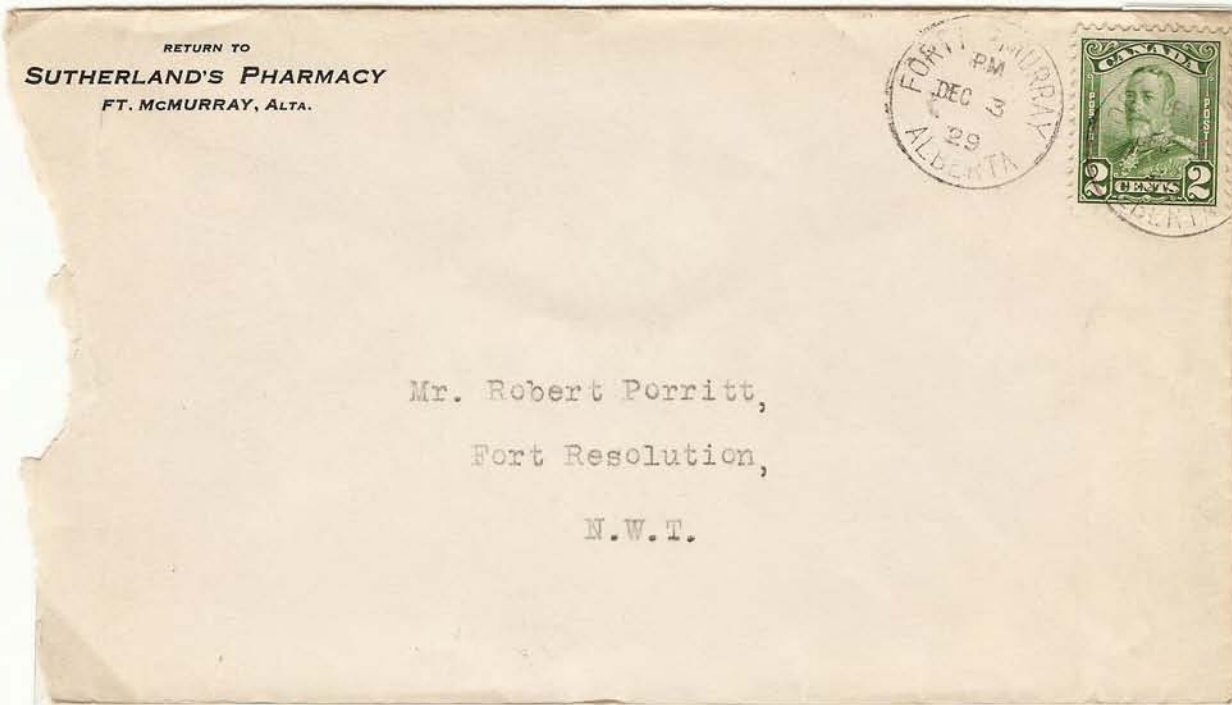
Outbound: Dec. 15 Resolution to McMurray (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)
 Dec. 19 McMurray to Edmonton (AAL Becker)

Philatelic cacheted covers carried to and from Fort Resolution showing use of the special circle date stamp (B3) used mainly on philatelic cacheted covers. This date stamp was used later on cacheted first flights from Fort Resolution in 1932. Top cover shows unusual use of Edmonton circle date stamp rather than the machine cancel and signatures of Pilot May and Postal Inspector Hale. This cover was carried into Fort Resolution on December 15 when all three Pacemakers arrived from Fort Fitzgerald. Bottom cover addressed to Commercial Airways and returned the same day to Fort McMurray.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 16 McMurray to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AKI May)



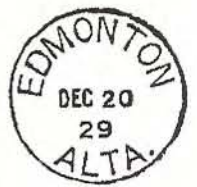
Inbound: Dec. 16 McMurray to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AKI May)

Two commercial incoming covers. Top cover paid at air mail rate while bottom one paid at letter rate but both flown in on December 16 from Fort McMurray.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



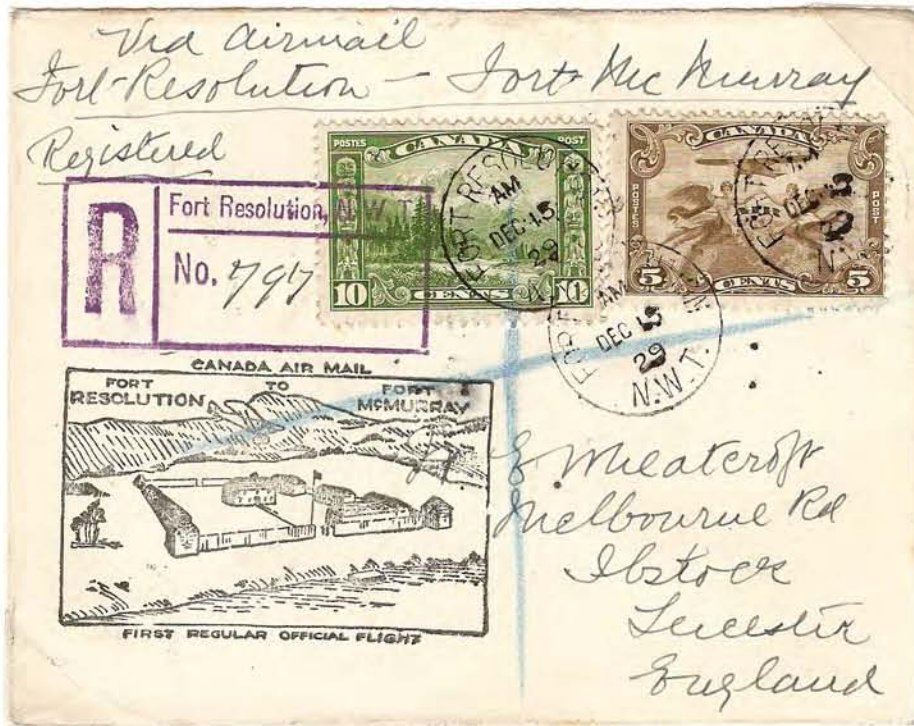
Outbound: Dec. 15 Resolution to McMurray (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)
Dec. 19 McMurray to Edmonton (AAL Becker)



Outbound: Dec. 15 Resolution to McMurray (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)
Dec. 19 McMurray to Edmonton (AAL Becker)

Top commercial letter rated cover carried from Fort Resolution showing use of the regular registration box (R1 proofed in March 1928) and regular circle date stamp (B2). This cover was postmarked on November 18 and held for the outgoing air mail flights to begin in December 1929. Bottom philatelic air mail cover signed by Pilot Wop May and R.W. Hale, Postal Inspector and returned at same time as the above cover but bearing a different Edmonton circle date stamp showing that philatelic mail was treated differently.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 14 McMurray to Fitzgerald (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
 Dec. 15 Fitzgerald to Resolution (AJQ Becker, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)
 Outbound: Dec. 15 Resolution to McMurray (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May)



Inbound: Dec. 16 McMurray to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AKI May)

Top philatelic cacheted registered cover carried from Fort Resolution showing use of the special registration box (R2), used only on this date and on December 6, 1932 on first flight covers to Great Bear Lake, and regular circle date stamp (B2). This cover was carried back to Fort McMurray on December 15 when all three Pacemakers returned to base. Bottom philatelic air mail cover shows an item flown to Fort Resolution on December 16 from Fort McMurray. It was then dispatched by a dog team (in charge of Louis Lafferty) on December 18 across Great Slave Lake where it was received three days later.



Inbound: Dec. 16 McMurray to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AKI May)

Outbound: Dec. 18 Resolution to McMurray (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AAL Burbidge)

Self-addressed philatelic cover at letter rate carried from Fort Resolution. Likely carried out on December 18 when all of the aircraft returned to Fort McMurray. Note endorsement at bottom left. Rutledge Air Services had helped Commercial Airways in purchasing new aircraft and winning this air mail contract.

First Flight

No. 799



To Professor James Nelson Gowanloch
Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
By His Majesty's Aerial Mail

Inbound: Dec. 16 McMurray to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AKI May);
Dec. 17 Resolution to Hay River (AJQ Becker, AKI May)

Outbound: Dec. 17 Hay River to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
Dec. 18 Resolution to McMurray (AAL Burbidge, AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts)

AFTER FIVE DAYS RETURN TO

VIA AIR MAIL

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS LIMITED

RECREATION BUILDING
10042 - 101ST STREET
EDMONTON, ALTA.



McMurray - Hay River



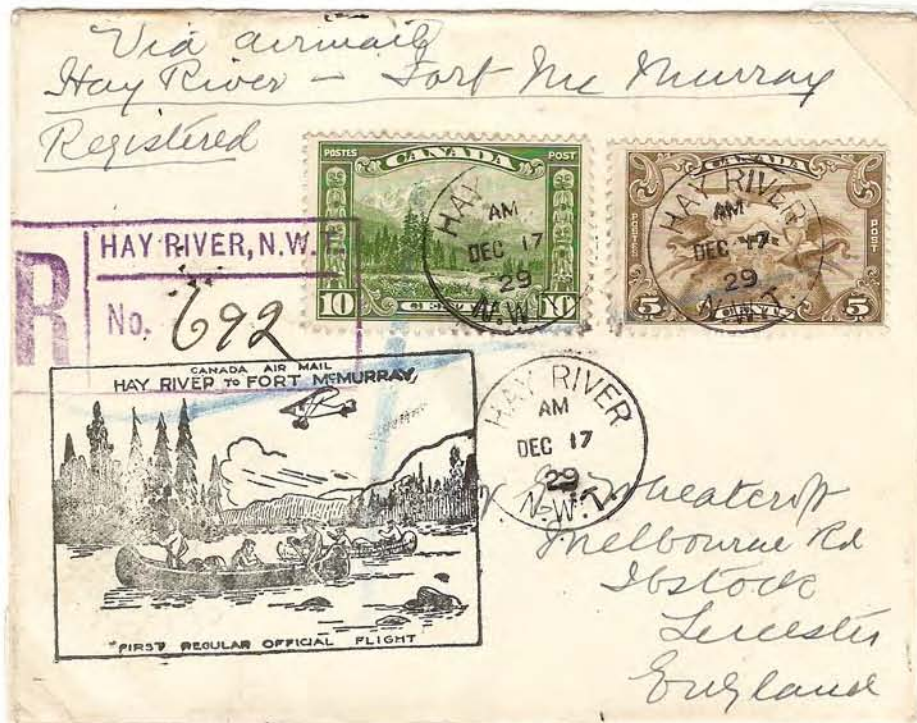
Mr. I. W. C. Solloway,
c/o Solloway - Mills,
Montreal, Que.



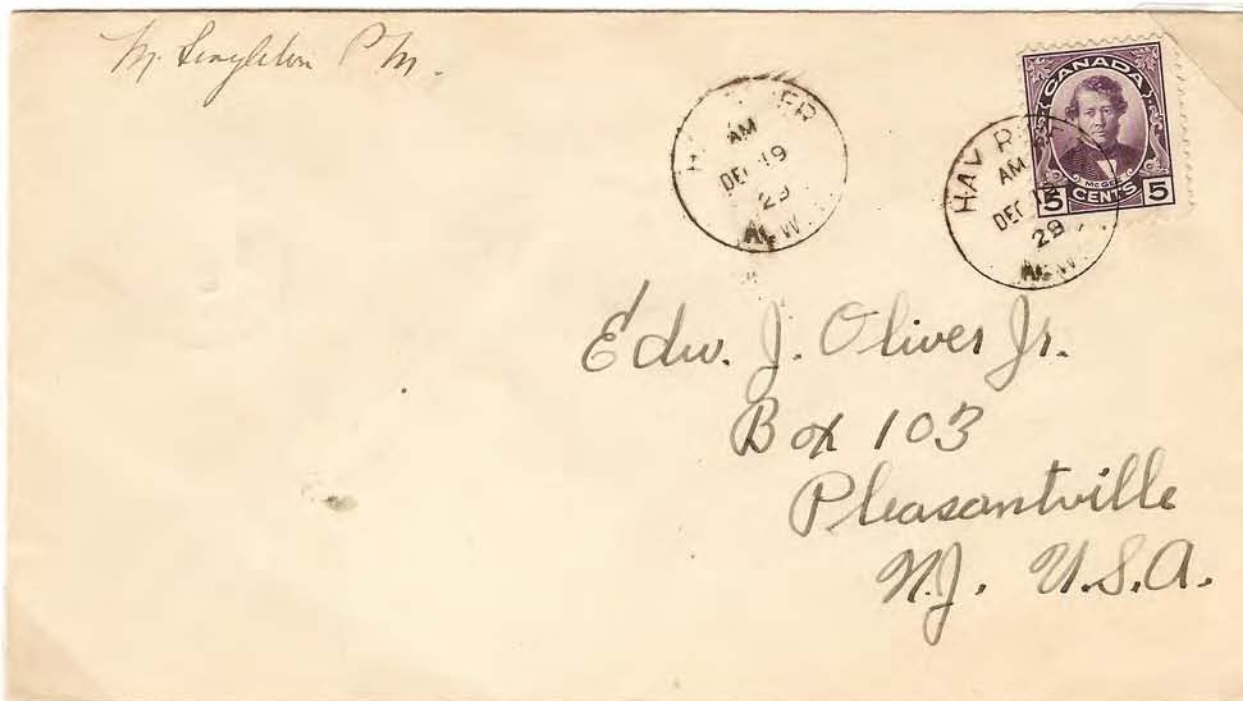
Inbound: Dec. 16 McMurray to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AKI May);
Dec. 17 Resolution to Hay River (AJQ Becker, AKI May)

Philatelic cacheted covers carried to and from Hay River. Top registered cover shows use of the regular circle date stamp (B2). Bottom cover has a Commercial Airways stamped return address and was sent to one of their financial backers. It has a special circle date stamp (B1) receiver. It is not clear how these cover were returned but likely on the following day to Fort McMurray when most of the aircraft returned.

COMMERCIAL AIRWAYS—DECEMBER 1929



Inbound: Dec. 16 McMurray to Resolution (AJQ Lumsden, AKI May);
 Dec. 17 Resolution to Hay River (AJQ Becker, AKI May)
Outbound: Dec. 17 Hay River to Resolution (AJQ Becker, AKI May);
 Dec. 18 Resolution to McMurray (AAL Burbidge, AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts)



Outbound: Dec. 19 Hay River to Resolution (AKI May);
 Dec. 20 Resolution to Simpson (AJQ Lumsden, AJR Glyn-Roberts, AKI May);
 Dec. 22 Simpson to McMurray (AJR Glyn-Roberts)

Philatelic covers from Hay River. Top cover shows use of the regular circle date stamps (B2) and special registration box (R2) used for these flights and known used only on this date. It was carried back to Fort McMurray the next day from Fort Resolution. Bottom cover was carried out on a later flight and signed by the Hay River postmaster.