

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—MARCH 1929



Inbound: Mar. 18 McMurray to Resolution (SQ Dickins, Flights 82-85)

The Post Office Department ended the winter air mail service on March 16, 1929 with little warning to the company or public. The last flights under this arrangement took place on March 12-13 from Waterways to Fort Resolution and return. After March 16, Punch Dickins made a private, unauthorized arrangement with the Waterways Postmaster to carry any mail for northern points and to charge recipients five cents a letter for this service. For southbound mail from northern points, Dickins collected five cents from the sender and gave two cents to the Waterways Postmaster to cover first class onward transmission. Dickins estimated that he collected about 90 cents per pound of mail carried in this manner, helping to recoup some of the lost revenues from the earlier contract. It appears this interim unauthorized arrangement lasted only from March 18 until March 20 when a sticker service by Western Canada Airways was approved or until about April 3 when the stickers first went on sale in Edmonton.

These two covers appear to have been carried during this short and unauthorized air mail service. Top cover was sent to the Northern Traders manager at the airmail rate but is not backstamped. Bottom cover sent by a well-known philatelist at air stage rate and returned, likely by dog team given the transit time to Montreal and the fact that winter flights stopped on April 12 due to spring break-up.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—APRIL 1929



(reduced to 70%)

**Outbound:** Apr. 10 Resolution to McMurray (SQ Dickins, Flights 146-148)

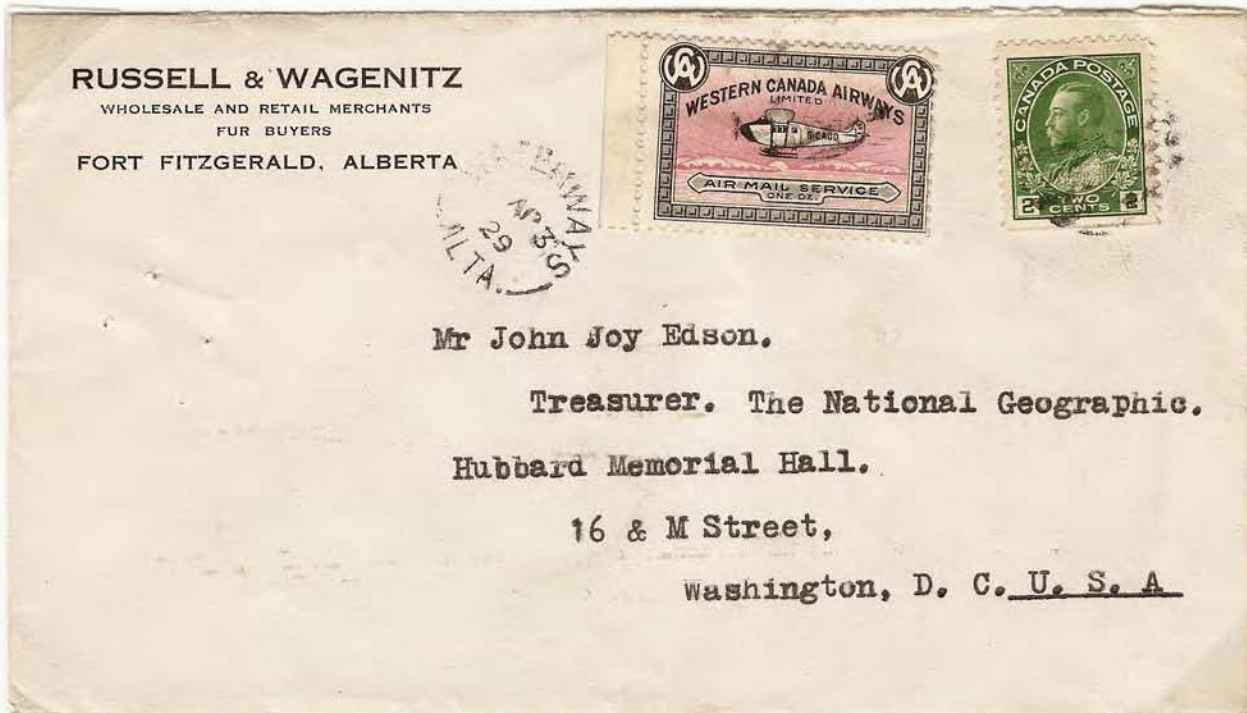
Commercial registered, air stage-rated cover that likely carried currency weighing between 2 and 3 oz. The air mail fee was paid using a Western Canada Airways sticker and the cover was placed in the mail at Waterways.

The contract with the Alberta and Arctic Transportation Company for mail service to the Mackenzie River area was set to expire on October 31, 1929. The Post Office Department began preparation of a new mail service tender in March 1929. After the winter air mail contract ended on March 16, 1929 Western Canada Airways requested permission to require the use of stickers for its Mackenzie air mail service on March 20, similar to their operations in eastern Canada. Authority was granted by the Post Office Department the same day subject to the airline being responsible for all mail carried up to its delivery at a post office at the final destination. Ordinary rates of postage were applied and registered mail could be carried, all at the sender's risk.

Stickers could be purchased from the pilots, company agents or postmasters in the region for 10 cents per ounce and were to be placed on the reverse of mail. The company gave northern postmasters a 10% commission on the sale of its stickers in this region. The sticker service was advertised on an Edmonton radio station and in the March 30 Post Office Weekly Bulletin as a semi-weekly service between Waterways and Fort Resolution (including intermediate points), weekly service from Fort Resolution to Fort Simpson (including intermediate points), and as occasion offered between Fort Simpson and Aklavik. The stickers were placed on sale in Edmonton at the main post office on April 3.

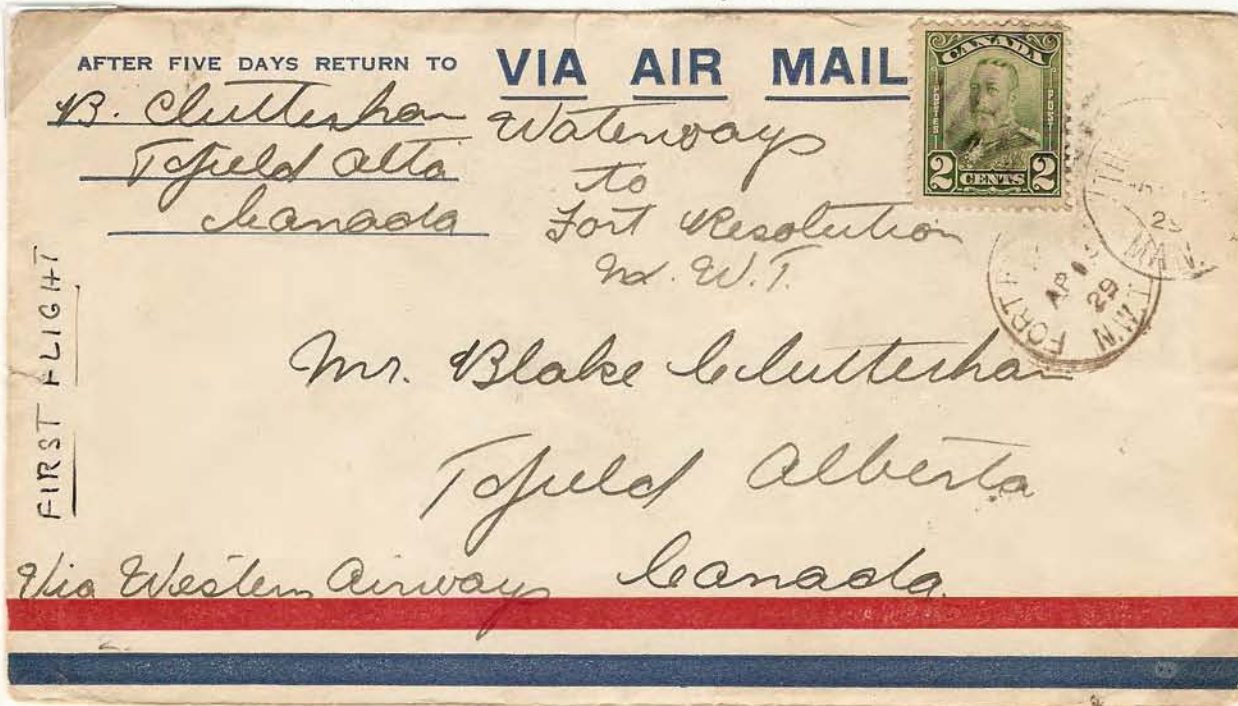
The stickers were of general use across the entire operations of Western Canada Airways and not a specific issue for this region. After an initial shipment of unknown quantity, a total of 7,500 stickers were sent to the Waterways office of Western Canada Airways from May to August 1929 for use in the region. Sales were stopped on December 16, 1929 following a telegram from the Winnipeg headquarters of the company. The quantity used in the region was a significant portion of the entire printing of 56,600 stickers. The stickers were generally cancelled by northern postmasters with obliterations or date stamps and may also be found with pen cancels, although the company used a date stamp at its Edmonton office starting in August 1929.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—APRIL 1929



**Outbound:** Apr. 4 Fitzgerald to Waterways (SQ Dickins, Flights 120-121)

Commercial, air stage-rated commercial cover with the earliest recorded use of a Western Canada Airways sticker on the Mackenzie River route. The air mail fee was paid using a Western Canada Airways sticker and the cover was placed in the mail at Waterways. The sender likely purchased a sticker from the pilot or an agent in Fort Fitzgerald. The Canada Post Office Department insisted that the sticker be placed on the back although it was common for commercial users to place them on the front as shown by this cover.



**Outbound:** Apr. 10 Resolution to Waterways (SP Buchanan, Flight 64);  
Apr. 13 Waterways to Le Pas (SP Buchanan, Flights 65-66)

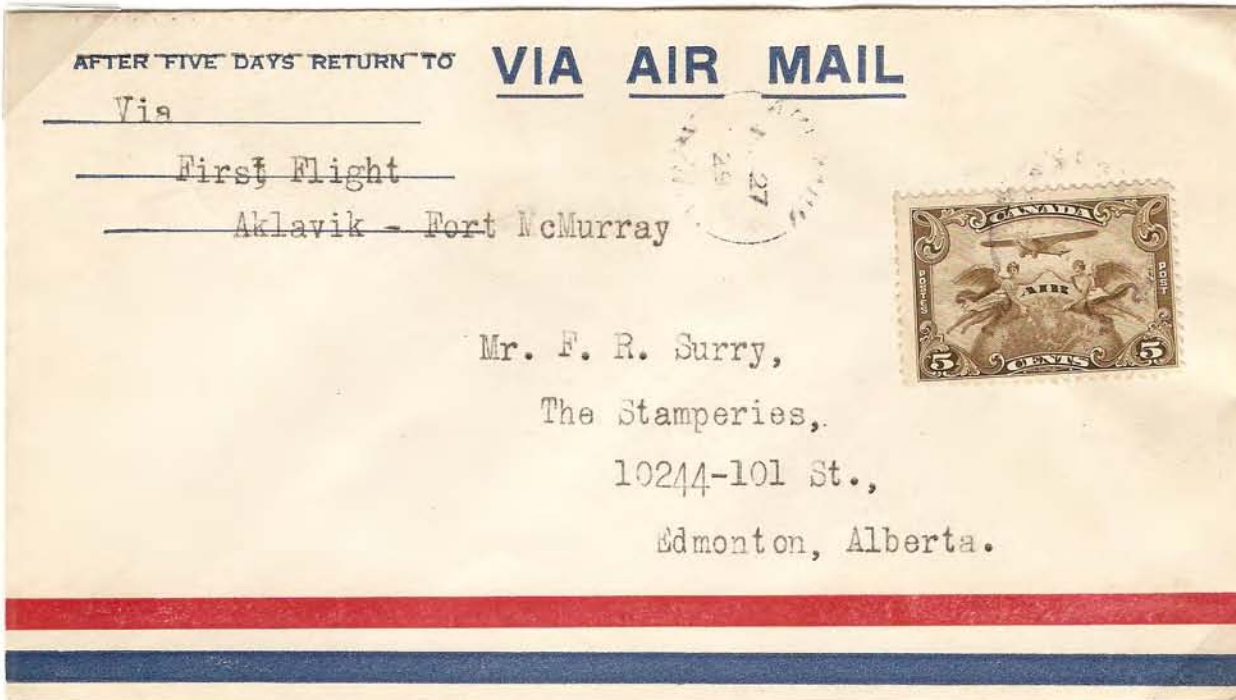
Only recorded cover carried on the Western Canada Airways Fokker Super Universal (G-CASP) that was brought north to assist with additional freight and passengers as a result of the boom in mineral exploration in the spring of 1929. Pilot W.J. Buchanan and T. Gilmour served as the crew on the five northern flights made by this aircraft from April 2-13, 1929 from Edmonton out to Le Pas.

MACKENZIE RIVER MAIL SERVICE—APRIL 1929



**Inbound:** Winter Service to Aklavik

Air stage cover carried by rail to Fort McMurray and possibly flown as far north at Fort Simpson on April 5-6, where it would have been carried by dog team to Aklavik. Note that the cover was then returned to the sender and the "Via Air Mail" endorsement at upper left was crossed out. It is not clear how and when the cover was returned.

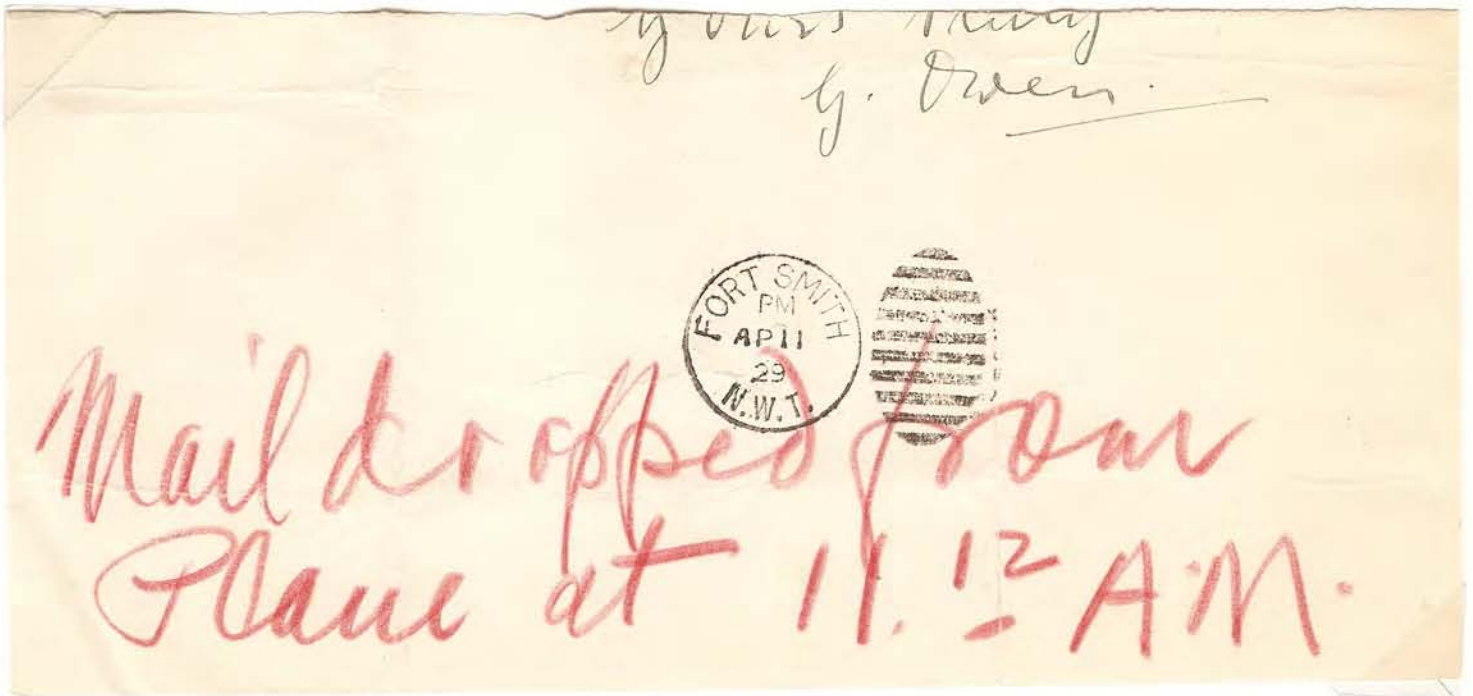


**Inbound:** Winter Service to Aklavik

**Outbound:** July 2 Aklavik to Simpson (SM Dickens, Flight 286-291);  
July 3 Simpson to McMurray (SM Dickens, Flight 286-291)

Unusual philatelic air mail cover carried under cover to Aklavik in the late winter of 1929. Cover postmarked at Aklavik on April 27, 1929 and carried out on the first air mail during the summer of 1929.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—APRIL 1929



Inbound: Apr. 11 Waterways to Fitzgerald (SQ Dickins, Flights 149-150)

Philatelic cover paid at letter or air stage rate to postmaster at Fort Smith with Western Canada Airways sticker tied on the back. Part of a letter from the sender with a note from the postmaster is shown below indicating that the mail was dropped from the plane. Flight records do not show a landing at Fort Smith but one at nearby Fort Fitzgerald on these flights that went as far north as Yellowknife.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—APRIL 1929

AFTER FIVE DAYS RETURN TO

**VIA AIR MAIL**

A.P. Harrold

Waterways a/c. to Fort Smith - N.W.T.  
by Western Canada Airways.

Tofield

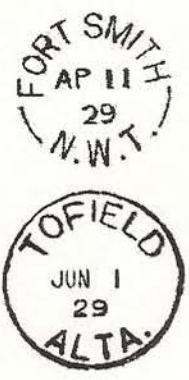
Alberta

Mr. A.P. Harrold

Tofield

Alberta

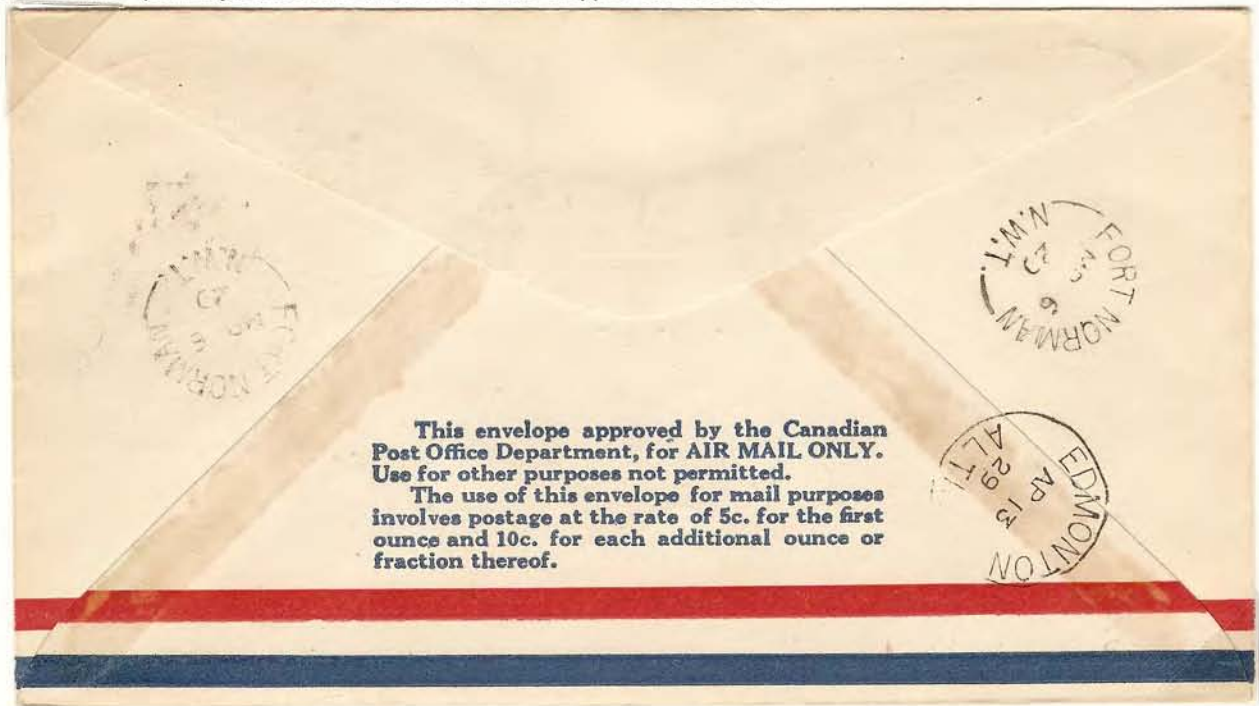
Canada.



**Inbound:** Apr. 11 Waterways to Fitzgerald (SQ Dickins, Flights 149-150)

**Outbound:** May 30 Fitzgerald to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flight 209)

Philatelic cover paid at air mail rate with Western Canada Airways sticker tied on the back. The cover arrived in Fort Smith and was flown out again from nearby Fort Fitzgerald on May 30, after the break-up. By this point another Fokker Super Universal, G-CASM, had been fitted with floats and was being used on the Mackenzie River route. The last flight on skis was April 12, just after the above cover was dropped at Fort Smith.



**Inbound:** Mar. 2 McMurray to Fitzgerald (SQ Dickins, Flights 56-57);

Mar. 3 Fitzgerald to Simpson (SQ Dickins, Flights 58-61);

Mar. 5 Simpson to Wrigley (SQ Dickins, Flight 62); Mar. 6 Wrigley to Good Hope (SQ Dickins, Flight 63)

**Outbound:** Apr. 12 Resolution to Waterways (SQ Dickins, Flights 156-160)

Philatelic cover to commemorate the first flight from Fort Norman to Fort McMurray but the mail was dropped from the air as a landing could not be made due to the weather. Cover returned by dog team to Fort Resolution where it was carried by air on the last winter flight of the season by Dickins in G-CASQ

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—MAY 1929



During the spring break-up of 1929, mail was likely taken from Fort McMurray by horse sleighs to as far as Fort Smith. The last scheduled departure of mail from Edmonton for points up to Fort Smith was April 9. The spring of 1929 was relatively late with the first steamer departing Waterways on May 15 but it was turned back at Lake Athabasca due to ice.

Top philatelic letter rated cover to Fort Resolution with a Western Canada Airways sticker and received at Fort Smith on May 19 and on to Fort Resolution where it was redirected back to Toronto. This cover was likely taken from Waterways by steamer to Fort Chipewyan and on to Fort Smith by small boat or courier. The cover was eventually returned to the sender, likely in late May with the beginning of the summer air service.

Bottom commercial cover paid at the airmail rate and received at Waterways. Likely held until break-up was completed for onward transmission by water to Fort Resolution (no receiver markings) as there was no sticker for air mail service.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—MAY 1929



This envelope approved by the Canadian Post Office Department, for AIR MAIL ONLY. Use for other purposes not permitted. The use of this envelope for mail purposes involves postage at the rate of 5c. for the first ounce and 10c. for each additional ounce or fraction thereof.

Outbound: June 5 Chipewyan to McMurray (SM Dickins Flight 220)

Philatelic air mail cover received and posted from Waterways on April 10, 1929. It may have been carried into Fort Chipewyan the next day by plane or was carried in on the steamer *Athabaska River* that left Waterways on May 15. The cover was likely carried out of Fort Chipewyan on the return leg of the third set of flights to the north for the summer season.



Outbound: May 30 Fitzgerald to McMurray (SM Dickins Flight 214)

Commercial cover carried on the return leg of the first summer flights of the season. No postage stamps on the cover and no postage due charged. Western Canada Airways sticker cancelled at Lac La Biche, a major centre on the railway south from Fort McMurray where the mail from this flight may have been checked.



WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—MAY 1929



**Inbound:** May 28 McMurray to Fitzgerald (SM Dickins, Flight 197)  
**Outbound:** May 30 Fitzgerald to Waterways (SM Dickins Flight 209)



**Inbound:** May 28 McMurray to Fitzgerald (SM Dickins, Flight 197);  
 May 29 Fitzgerald to Providence (SM Dickins, Flights 202-203)  
**Outbound:** June 16 Providence to Hay River (SM Dickins, Flights 240-241); June 17 Hay River to Resolution (SM Dickins, Flight 242); June 21 Resolution to Cooking Lake (SM Dickins, Flights 243-246)

Two philatelic covers, paid at letter or air stage rate, flown on the first series of flights down the Mackenzie River after break-up. Both covers have the Western Canada Airways sticker on reverse, while the top cover also bears the company cachet in blue. Top cover taken to and from Fort Smith across the portage. The bottom cover appears to have been returned on a later trip south from Fort Providence and ending at Cooking Lake, just outside Edmonton. These flights north to Aklavik were part of the summer service using another Fokker Super Universal fitted with floats. Western Canada Airways found it difficult to compete with the river steamer service but continued to operate.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—JUNE 1929



Inbound: June 8 McMurray to Hay River (SM Dickins, Flights 221-224)  
Outbound: June 17 Hay River to Resolution (SM Dickins, Flight 242); June 21 Resolution to Cooking Lake (SM Dickins, Flights 243-246)



Outbound: June 21 Resolution to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 243-245)

Two philatelic covers rated for air stage service with Western Canada Airways stickers on the reverse. Top cover appears to have been flown into Hay River on Flights 221-224. This was the fourth series of summer flights from Waterways. The cover appears to have been held for return Flights 242-245 on June 17 to Fort Resolution and on to Fort McMurray on June 21. Mail to and from Hay River on the summer service is scarce. Bottom cover flown from Fort Resolution on Flights 243-245 and bears the first Fort Resolution circle date stamp (B1).

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—JUNE 1929



**Inbound:** June 13 Waterways to Resolution (SM Dickins, Flights 232-235)  
**Outbound:** June 21 Resolution to Cooking Lake (SM Dickins, Flights 243-246)



**Inbound:** June 13 Waterways to Smith (SM Dickins, Flights 232-234)  
**Outbound:** June 25 Smith to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 256-260)

Two philatelic covers rated for air stage service with Western Canada Airways stickers on the reverse. Top cover was flown into Fort Resolution on Flights 232-242. This was the fifth series of summer flights from Waterways. Bottom cover flown to Fort Smith on Flights 232-234 and returned on Flights 256-259. It bears the first Fort Smith broken circle date stamp (A1).

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—JUNE 1929



**Outbound:** June 16 Simpson to Hay River (SM Dickins, Flight 241); June 17 Hay River to Resolution (SM Dickins, Flight 242); June 21 Resolution to Cooking Lake (SM Dickins, Flights 243-246)



**Inbound:** June 13 McMurray to Resolution (SM Dickins, Flights 232-235); June 16 Resolution to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 238-240); June 16 Simpson to Hay River (SM Dickins, Flight 241); June 17 Hay River to Resolution (SM Dickins, Flight 242); June 21 Resolution to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 243-245);  
June 24 McMurray to Smith (SM Dickins, Flights 248-250)

**Outbound:** July 3 Smith to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 296-297)

Top cover is commercial mail from Fort Simpson likely carried out on the second southbound flight from that point on June 16 and back to Fort McMurray on June 21. Bottom philatelic cover illustrates some of the obscure intermediate routings available on the summer flight covers. This cover appears to have been flown into Fort Simpson on June 16 on Flights 232-240 and ended up in Fort Smith on June 25 and was eventually returned from Fort Smith on to Fort McMurray on July 3.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—JULY 1929



Inbound: June 30 McMurray to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 268-272); July 1 Simpson to Wrigley (SM Dickins, Flight 273)  
Outbound: July 12 Wrigley to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flight 323); July 13 Simpson to Cooking Lake (SM Dickins, Flights 324-330)



Inbound: June 30 McMurray to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 268-272);  
July 1 Simpson to Good Hope (SM Dickins, Flights 273-275)  
Outbound: July 2 Good Hope to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 289-291); July 3 Simpson to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 292-297)

Two philatelic air mail rated covers carried on the final push to Aklavik, the eighth summer trip north out of Waterways/Fort McMurray. Top cover carried up to Wrigley but not returned until the following series of flights from Wrigley in connection with a charter to take a judicial party from Fort Resolution to the SS *Distributor* on the Mackenzie River. Bottom cover carried up to Fort Good Hope and returned on July 3.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—JULY 1929



**Inbound:** June 13 McMurray to Resolution (SM Dickins, Flights 232-235); June 16 Resolution to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 238-240); July 1 Simpson to Norman (SM Dickins, Flights 273-274)  
**Outbound:** July 2 Norman to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 290-291);  
 July 3 Simpson to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 292-297)



**Outbound:** July 2 Arctic Red River to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 288-291);  
 July 3 Simpson to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 292-297)

Philatelic covers showing the summer flights by Western Canada Airways. Top cover flown into Fort Simpson and held until July 1 for onward transmission to Fort Norman. It was likely carried out on July 2 with the return trip from Aklavik. Bottom cover flown from Arctic Red River to Fort Good Hope.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—JULY 1929



**Outbound:** July 2 Aklavik to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 286-291);  
July 3 Simpson to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 292-297)

Commercial registered cover with the Western Canada Airways cachet in violet rather than the normal blue. Cover registered at Fort McMurray as it likely contained cash. This was the first flight that far north. Considerable revenues were raised by offering joy rides to the local Inuit in Aklavik.

A. Fielding,  
R. C. MOUNTED POLICE,  
AKLAVIK, N.W.T.  
CANADA

75,000-10-24.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS—JULY 1929



**Inbound:** June 30 McMurray to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 268-272);  
 July 1 Simpson to Aklavik (SM Dickins, Flights 273-278)

**Outbound:** July 2 Aklavik to Wrigley (SM Dickins, Flights 286-290); July 12 Wrigley to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flight 323); July 13 Simpson to Cooking Lake (SM Dickins, Flights 324-330)



**Inbound:** June 30 McMurray to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 268-272);  
 July 1 Simpson to McPherson (SM Dickins, Flights 273-277)

**Outbound:** July 2 Fort McPherson to Simpson (SM Dickins, Flights 286-291); July 8 Simpson Fitzgerald (SM Dickins, Flights 304-307); July 9 Fitzgerald to McMurray (SM Dickins, Flights 308-309)

Philatelic covers showing the summer flights by Western Canada Airways. Top cover flown from Aklavik to Wrigley but not returned until the following series of flights from Wrigley later in July. Bottom pilot autographed cover shows outgoing mail from Fort McPherson to at least Fort Simpson but not returned until a later flight.