

Sonla – Hanoi
2 January 1923

On 2 January 1923, three military planes left Dien Bien Phu made a stop at Sonla and reached Hanoi in the early evening. At Sonla, with the approval of the local representative of the Post and Telegraph Office, 60 letters were taken on board the plane piloted by Lieutenant Guertiaux. A special cachet was applied in blue.



POSTAL MARKINGS
SONLA TONKIN 2 JANV 23
flight cachet
REVERSE
HANOI TONKIN 3 JANV 23

Saigon – Hanoi
11 April 1923

Equipped with supplementary fuel tanks, a Breguet 14 A2 piloted by Lieutenant Dumas accomplished a 1300-kilometer nonstop flight from Saigon to Hanoi in 7 hours 40 minutes. Dumas carried 130 letters. The cachet for Cochinchina-based Squadron 2 was struck in black on the covers.

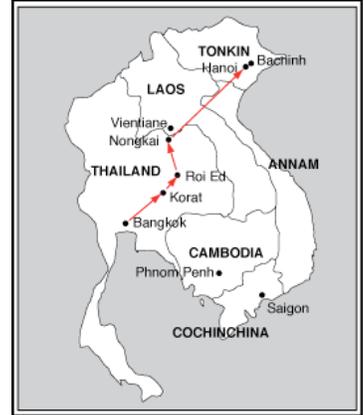


POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 10-4 23
REVERSE
HANOI TONKIN 11-4 23

Bangkok – Bacninh
December 1923

In the 1920s, Thailand had been more successful than Indochina in establishing regular internal airmail service. By late 1923, the Royal Aeronautical Service linked Bangkok with Nong Khai (Nongkai) on Thailand's northern border with Laos.

Addressed to Haiphong, this regular mailing went by air from Bangkok to Nong Khai then overland via Savannakhet, Laos as no airmail was available beyond Nong Khai.



POSTAL MARKINGS

BANGKOK 1
NONG KHAY

REVERSE

SAVANNAKHET LAOS 16-12 23
HANOI TONKIN 26-12 23
HAIPHONG TONKIN 26-12 23

Vientiane – Bangkok – Europe
January 1924

Regular airmail services were not available from Vientiane until well into the 1930s. The registered cover shown here was posted by airmail in at the very beginning of 1924. The mailing was a 4 cent Local Currency Native Women envelope uprated with seven copies of the 4 cent Local Currency Native Woman stamp. The framed "PAR AVION" may have been a private marking as the post office was unlikely to have such a handstamp at this time. Handwritten instructions said that the letter should go via airmail between Nong Khai and Korat. Nong Khai was in Thailand just across the border from Vientiane. The letter arrived at Bangkok on 12 January 1924 as indicated by the transit postmark on the reverse – high-speed service considering the time that a combination of overland and sea mail would take!



POSTAL MARKINGS

VIENTIANE LAOS 3 JANV 24
framed R with manuscript registration number
framed "PAR AVION"

REVERSE

BANGKOK 2 12.1.24

Saigon – Savannakhet – Hanoi
3-8 April 1926

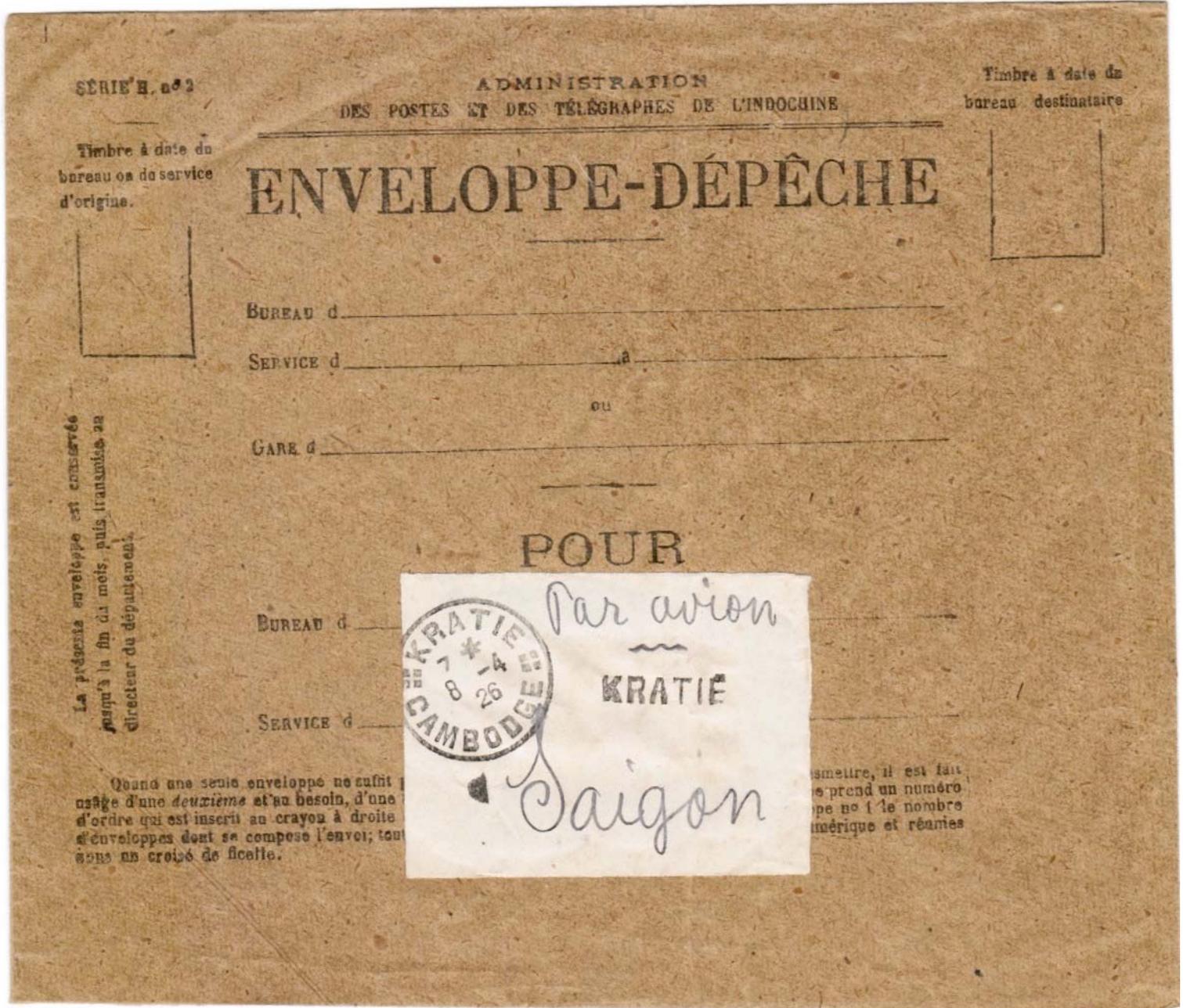
The military's airmail service from Saigon to Kratie linked with the Kratie-Savannakhet airmail route. Addressed to Hanoi, a handwritten notation on the reverse indicates that "No airmail service beyond Savannakhet."



POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 3-4 26
REVERSE
SAVANNAKHET LAOS 8-4 26

Kratie – Saigon
8 April 1926

In April 1926, the military began flying between Saigon and Kratie. The flights were curtailed in July with only a small amount of mail carried (21 letters and 41 printed items in total).



POSTAL MARKINGS
KRATIE CAMBODGE 8-4 26
REVERSE
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8-4 26

Bangkok – Bacninh
May 1926

In the 1920s, Thailand extended internal airmail service throughout the country. By 1926, the Royal Aeronautical Service linked Bangkok with regular service to Nong Khay (Nongkai) on Thailand's northern border with Laos.

Addressed to Tonkin, this registered envelope went by air from Bangkok to Nong Khay in 4 days and then overland via Savannakhet, Laos to Bacninh near Hanoi (10 days).



POSTAL MARKINGS

BANGKOK 14.5.26

printed airmail envelope, registration label, airmail label and airmail handstamp

REVERSE

NONG KHAY 18|5.26

SAVANNAKHET LAOS 23 MAI 26

HANOI TONKIN 27-5 26

BAC-NINH TONKIN 28 MAI 26

Bacninh – Bangkok
June 1926



A return cover addressed to Bangkok was also marked “via Nongkai.” Despite the two airmail markings, the mailing had no immediate access to airmail service. The cover went by sea via Saigon (partial postmark on the reverse) to Bangkok. The transit time was 22 days, a time indicative of typical maritime transport.



POSTAL MARKINGS

BACNINH TONKIN 8-6 26
printed airmail envelope and airmail label

REVERSE

HANOI TONKIN 9-3 26
BANGKOK 30.6.26

Paris – Saigon
May 1928

Trying to better his 1924 time, pilot Pelletier Doisy with copilot Gonin and navigator Carol attempted to set a new speed record from France to Indochina. They left from Villacoublay near Paris on 8 May in their Potez 29.

At Calcutta, they were given 121 letters and postcards for carriage to Rangoon. Several markings including a label and two handstamps distinguish these covers. On 16 May, the plane crashed in a rice paddy near Akyab, Burma. All letters were given a red handstamp noting the accident.

**PLANE CRASHED AT AKYAB.
16th MAY, 1928.**



POSTAL MARKINGS
CALCUTTA G.P.O. 14 MAY 28

France – Indochina
Accident of 19 February 1929

Despite the rivalry between former partners Dieudonné Costes and Joseph LeBrix to see who would be the first to reach Indochina, both were to be frustrated in February 1929. The crew of Costes, Codos and Bellonte took off from Le Bourget but crashed soon after takeoff at Bondy completely destroying the airplane. The mail was rescued and returned to senders with a large violet cachet.

Here two crewmembers, Costes and Codos, signed the front of one of the crash covers.



RAID INTERROMPU
PAR ACCIDENT
Retour à l'envoyeur

POSTAL MARKINGS

BOURGET-AVIATION SEINE 16-2 29
LE BOURGET BANLIEUE NORD 16-2 29
POSTE AERIENE FRANCE-INDOCHINE 19-2 29
airmail label and accident handstamp

REVERSE

PARIS-GARE-P.L.M. ETRANGER B 17-2 29
LE BOURGET BANLIEUE NORD 28-2 29

France – Indochina
 Accident of 19 February 1929

The plane was named the “Dragon of Annam.” A small number of covers were handstamped with a cachet noting that this was the first airmail connection from France to Indochina.



POSTAL MARKINGS
 PARIS 43 R. LITRE 16-2 29
 POSTE AERIENNE FRANCE-INDOCHINE 19-2 29
 registration label, airmail label and accident handstamp
 REVERSE
 PARIS-GARE-P.L.M. ETRANGER B 17-2 29
 PARIS XIV DISTRIBUTION 28-2 29

PAR AVION
 “DRAGON DEL'ANNAM”
 Équipage COSTES
 (1^{re} Liaison Poste Aérienne)
 FRANCE - INDO - CHINE

France – Indochina
Accident of 19 February 1929

The stamps on mail submitted for the trial flight were supposed to receive the special postmark. However, this letter was canceled at Pelissanne prior to reaching the Le Bourget Airport. The postmarks were “canceled” with an “ANNULÉ” handstamp on each stamp. Replacement postage was affixed on the reverse and postmarked with the POSTE AERIENNE postmark. Of the 10,000 letters submitted for the flight, only 542 were treated in this manner.

ANNULÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

PELISSANNE B^{CHES} DU RHONE 16-2 29
ANNULÉ and accident handstamps

REVERSE

PELISSANNE B^{CHES} DU RHONE 16-2 29
POSTE AERIENNE FRANCE-INDOCHINE 19-2 29

France – Indochina
Accident of 19 February 1929

Marked "PERSONNEL", this cover was addressed to Pierre Pasquier, at the time the Governor General of Indochina. The 1929 crash cover was prophetic for Pasquier was to die in the 1934 crash of the *Emeraude* on the return leg of its promotional round trip from France to Indochina.

RAID INTERROMPU
PAR ACCIDENT
Retour à l'envoyeur



POSTAL MARKINGS

POSTE AERIENNE FRANCE-INDOCHINE 19-2 29
registration label and accident handstamp

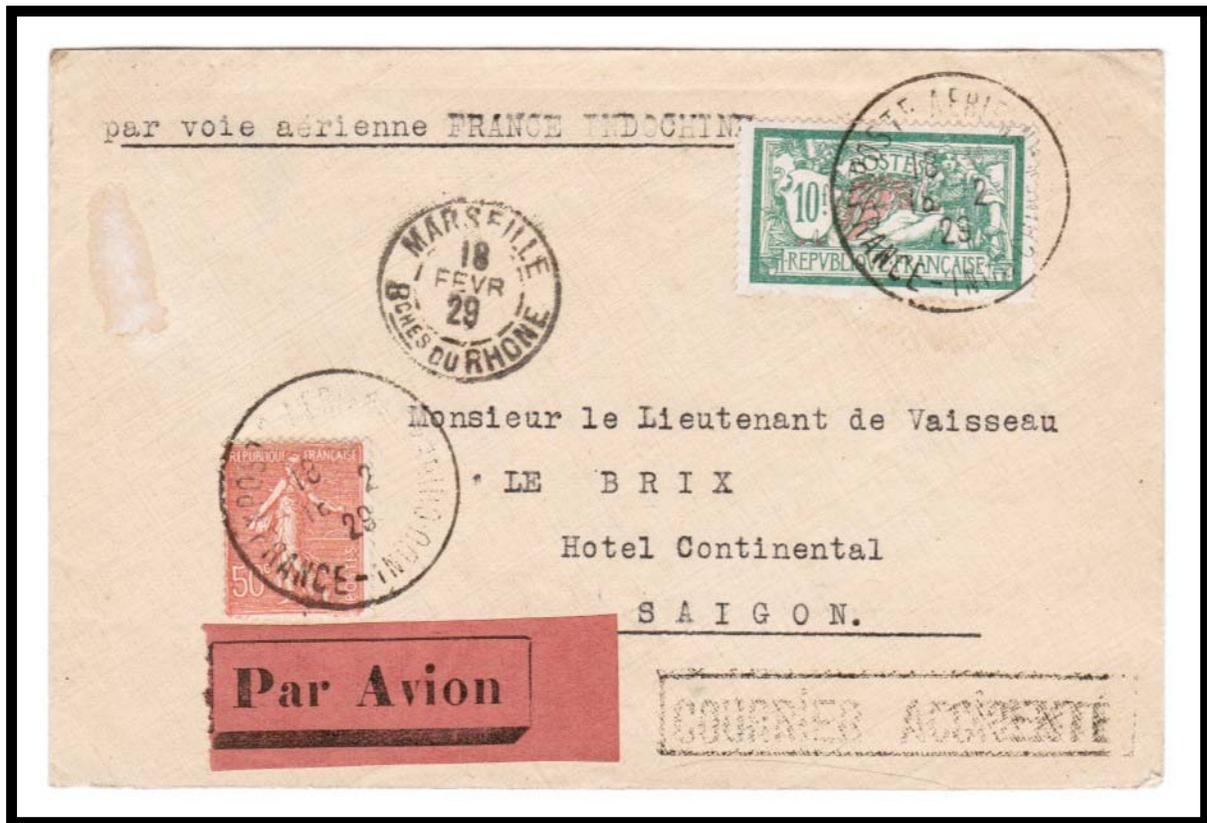
REVERSE

PARIS-GARE -P.L.M. ETRANGER B 17-2 29
BEAUVAIS OISE 28-2 29

France – Indochina
Accident of 26 February 1929

Competing against the “Dragon of Annam” was the plane “France-Indochina” with a crew of LeBrix, Paillard and Jousse. Having left Istres on 19 February, the plane reached Southeast Asia in a week. On the 26th, about 180 kilometers beyond Rangoon, the plane was forced to land in a swamp, which badly injured Jousse. LeBrix carried the mail by train to Phnompenh and then by plane to Saigon. A portion of the mail was marked with a black cachet meaning “mail accident.”

COURRIER ACCIDENTÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

MARSEILLE BCHES DU RHONE 18 FEVR 29
POSTE AERIENNE FRANCE-INDOCHINE 18-2 29
airmail label
accident handstamp

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8-3 29

Indochina – France
February 1929

Because of the crashes of inbound flights, the planned return airmail service could not be accomplished. The mail went by sea to Europe. The letters had been handstamped with a cachet consisting of stylized wings.

Both the airmail label and the cachet were lined out with a pen because airmail service could not be provided.



POSTAL MARKINGS

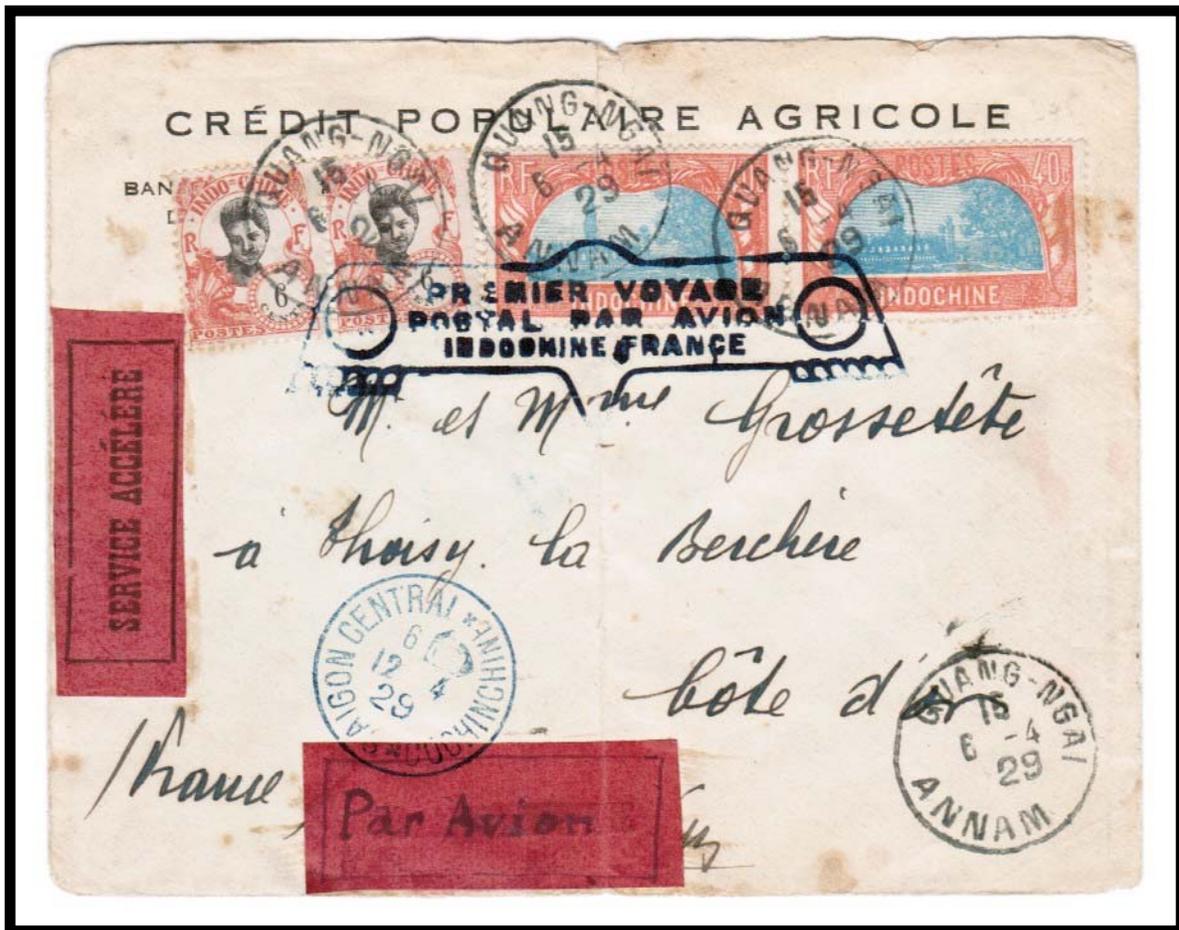
HAIPHONG TONKIN 22-2 29
airmail, registration and expedited service labels

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 25-2 29
MULHOUSE HAUT RHIN 2-4 29

Saigon – Paris
12-20 April 1929

Having reached Indochina in 10 days, plane owner Bailly and his crew of Reginensi, the pilot, and Marsot, the radio operator, decided to attempt to break the existing Indochina-France speed record. Departing on 12 April, they reached Le Bourget in 84 hours 25 minutes flying time breaking the old record established in October 1927.



POSTAL MARKINGS

QUANG-NGAI ANNAM 6-4 29
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 12-4 29
expedited service and handmade airmail labels
flight cachet

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8-4 29
PARIS GARE AVION 20 • IV 1929

Saigon – Paris
12-20 April 1929

Bailly, Reginensi and Marsot carried 5,979 letters, which had paid an airmail surcharge of 80 cents per 10 grams. The stylized winged cachet prepared for February flight was resurrected and employed for mail on this flight. In this case, blue ink was used to apply the flight cachet.



POSTAL MARKINGS

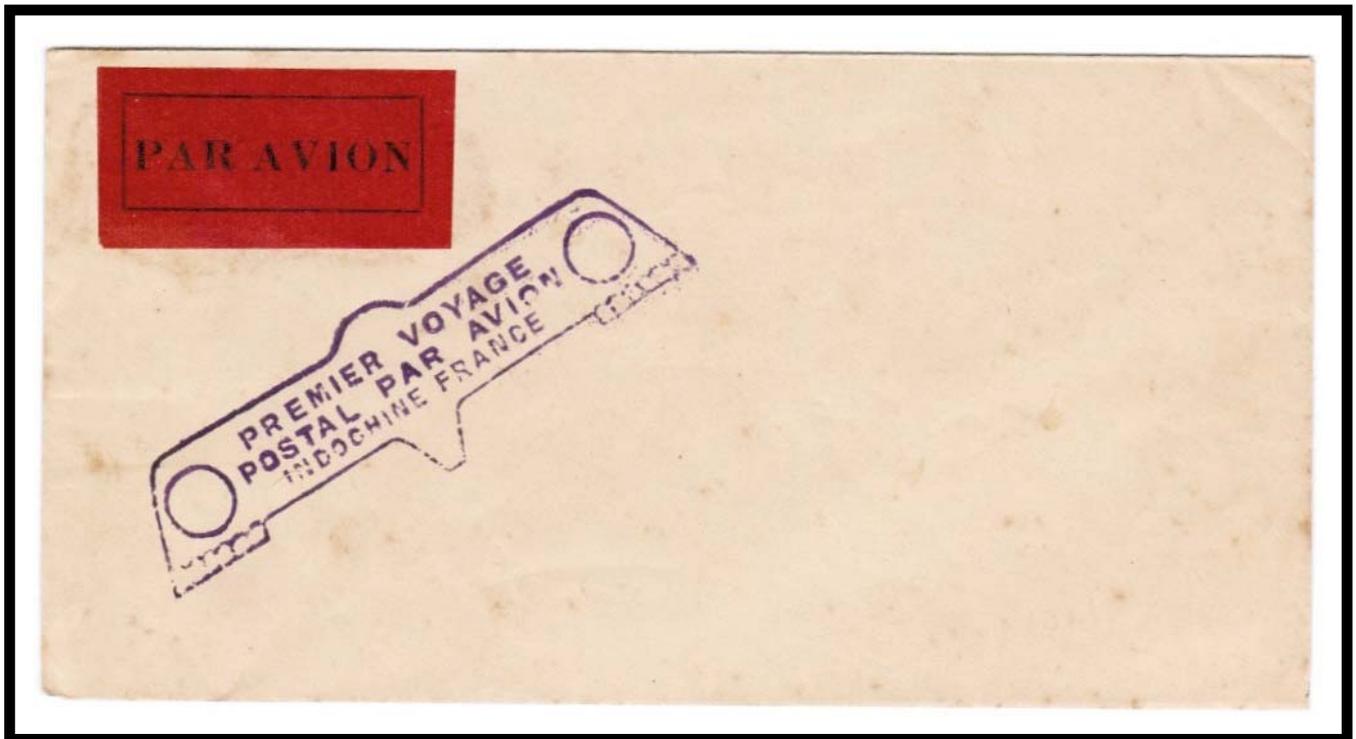
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 10-4 29
airmail and registration labels, flight cachet
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 12-4 29

REVERSE

LYON RHONE 21-4 29

Saigon – Paris
12-20 April 1929

The flight cachet was applied with both black and purple ink as these samples demonstrate.



Tourane – Hanoi
4 May 1929

After attending a ceremony in Tourane, a military plane was authorized by the Resident of France at Tourane to carry a small amount of mail on the return to Hanoi. The plane, piloted by Master Sergeant Mathis, left Tourane on 4 May and arrived back at Hanoi by midday.

This envelope bears the cachet of the Commander of the Military Aeronautical Group of Indochina. On the reverse are a number of signatures attesting that this was the first official airmail between Tourane and Hanoi.



POSTAL MARKINGS

TOURANE ANNAM 3-5 29
handwritten airmail label
expedited service label

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 4-5 29

Saigon – Hanoi
15 May 1929

Using a Schreck FBA seaplane, pilot Tixier carried Mr. Robbe, director of CAF (Compagnie Aérienne Française) from Saigon to the north of Indochina. Leaving on 15 May, they explored the Mekong valley and made several stops before reaching Hanoi in the evening.

No special markings were applied to the 190 letters that were transported to Hanoi.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 14-5 29
airmail label

boxed R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 15-5 29

Saigon – Kratie
15 May 1929

Starting their voyage to Hanoi by flying up the Mekong Valley after taking off from Saigon, Tixier and Robbe made their first stop at Kratie, Cambodia. Of the mail that they were carrying, they dropped only five letters at Kratie.

Signed “le pilot Tixier” on the reverse.



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 14-5 29
airmail and registration labels

REVERSE

KRATIE CAMBODGE 15-5 29
PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 19 MAI 29

Hanoi – Moncay – (Hong Kong)
18 May 29

Experiencing engine problems after departing Hanoi on 17 May, Tixier and Robbe started again from Haiphong on 18 May and reached Hong Kong the same day via Moncay and Fort Bayard. Eight letters were delivered to Moncay on this trial flight.

At the top right, is a manuscript notation describing the voyage along with Tixier's signature.



POSTAL MARKINGS

NAM-DINH TONKIN 14-5 29
airmail and registration labels

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 14-5 29
MON-CAY TONKIN 18-5 29
ACKOI TONKIN 21 MAI 29

Fort Bayard – Hanoi
20 May 1929

On the return trip from Hong Kong, Tixier and Robbe made their first postal stop at Fort Bayard, Kouang Cho Wan. Leaving Fort Bayard on 20 May, they arrived at Hanoi later the same day.

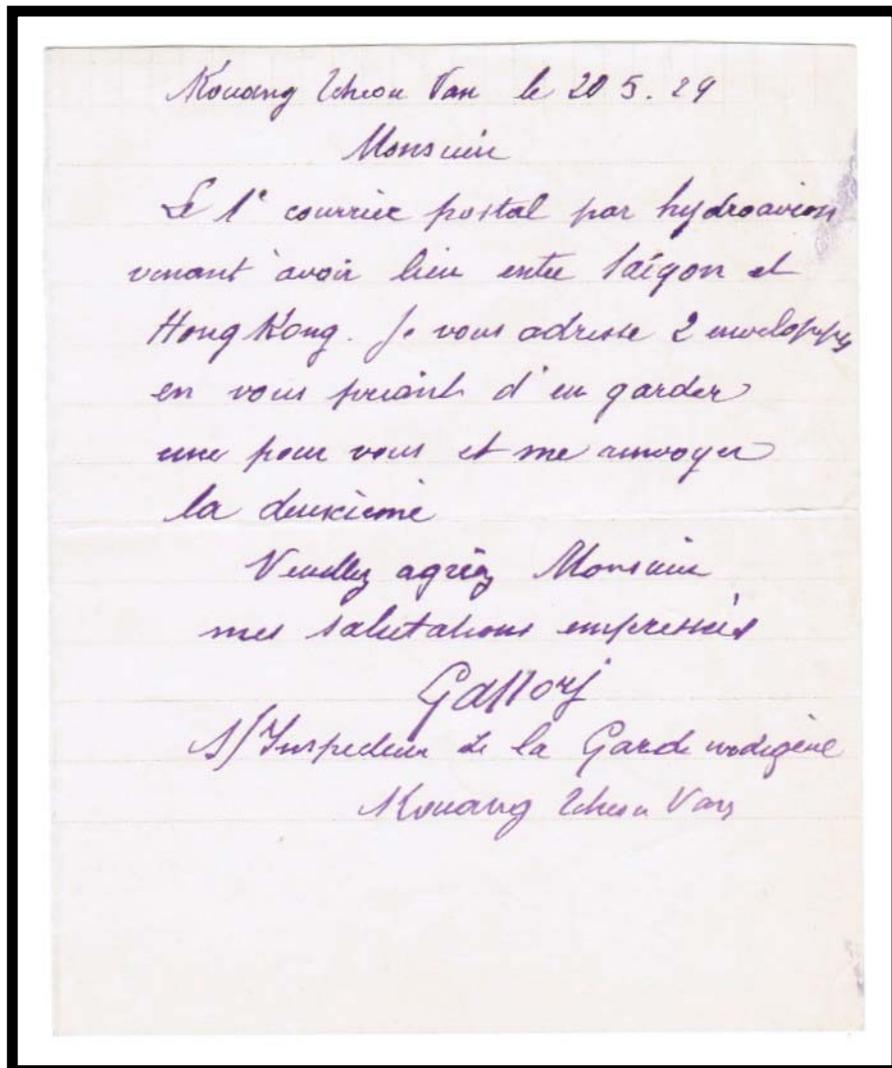
Fifty-three letters were picked up at Fort Bayard, all addressed to Hanoi. This example was signed at the bottom left by the pilot Tixier.



POSTAL MARKINGS
FORT BAYARD KOUANGTCHEOUWAN 18-5 29
REVERSE
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 20-5 29

Fort Bayard – Hanoi
20 May 1929

This note, enclosed in the preceding envelope, shows that members of the local population were enthused about the advent of airmail service. They were anxious to collect souvenirs. This note says that two envelopes were being sent to the addressee – one for him to keep and one for him to return to the sender.



Hanoi – Saigon
24 May 1929

The next leg of the return flight by Tixier and Robbe was delayed until 24 May because the seaplane's pontoon needed repairs.

The mail from Hanoi to Saigon consisted of 156 letters.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 22-5 29
airmail label

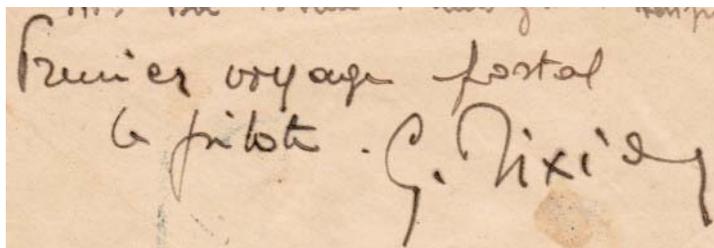
REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 24-5 29

Haiphong – Saigon
24 May 1929

The return trip of the CAF seaplane with Tixier and Robbe also transported 8 letters from Haiphong addressed to Saigon. The seaplane arrived back at Saigon and completed its journey on the evening of 24 May.

The pilot, Tixier, signed this cover on the reverse.



Premier voyage postal
à piloté - G. Tixier



POSTAL MARKINGS

HAI-PHONG TONKIN 22-5 29
registration label

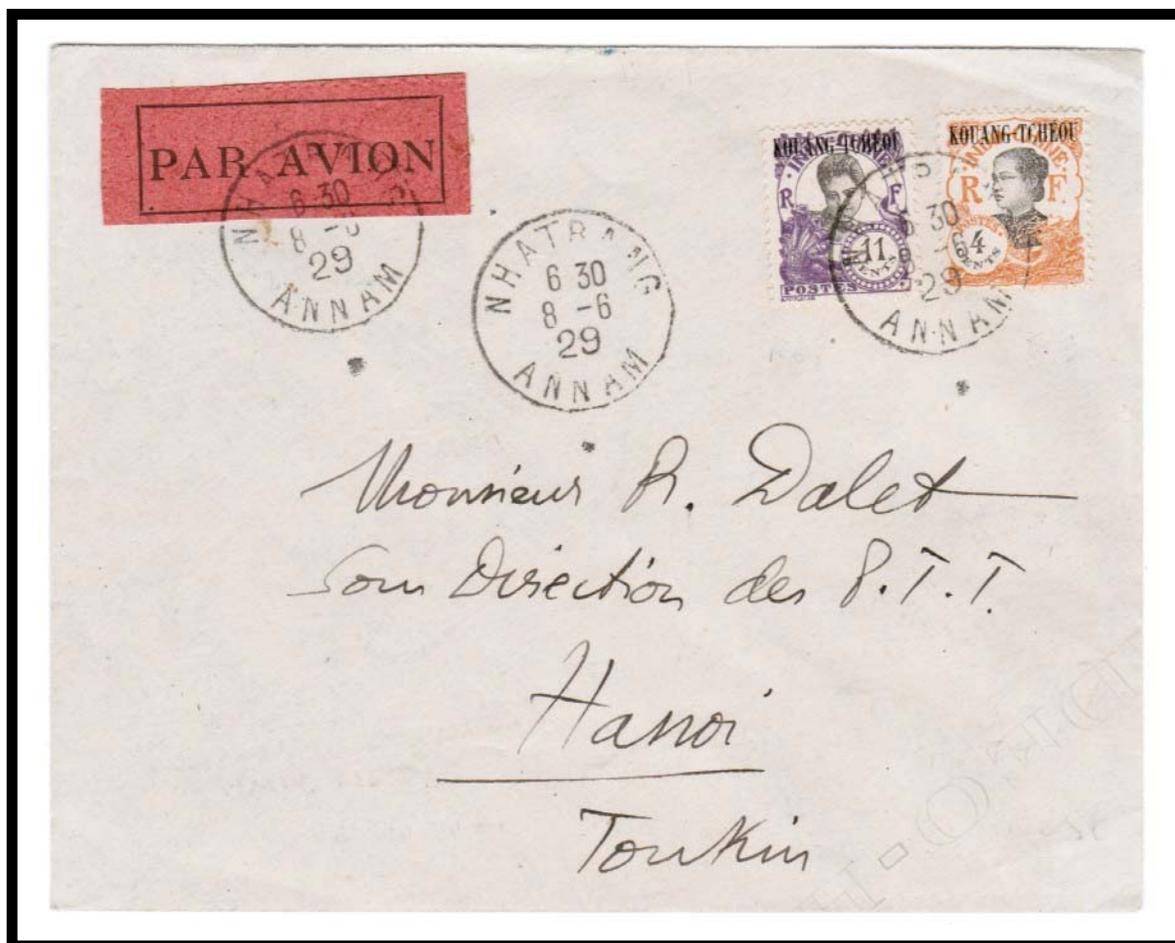
REVERSE

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 24-5 29

Nhatrang – Hanoi
8 June 1929

Under the guidance of Colonel Glaize, the Société d'Etudes et d'Enterprises Aériennes en Indochine et Extrême-Orient (S.E.A.I.E.) conducted two experimental flights during June 1929.

The pilot Bourgeois in a Potez 32 aircraft carried out the first leg of the exploratory flight from Nhatrang to Hanoi. A total of 38 letters was carried on the flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS

NHATRANG ANNAM 8-6 29
airmail label

REVERSE

HANOI TONKIN 9-6 29 (blue)

Hanoi – Nhatrang
11 June 1929

The return leg of the S.E.A.I.E. reconnaissance flight from Hanoi to Nhatrang was carried on 11 June 1929. Again under the command of pilot Bourgeois, the plane transported 47 letters.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 10-6 29
airmail label

REVERSE

NHATRANG ANNAM 11-6 29
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 12-6 29
PARIS-R.P. 4 DISTRIBUTION 13 JUIL 29

Vinh – Hanoi
15 June 1929

At the intermediate stop in Vinh for S.A.E.I.E.'s second trial flight, a small amount of mail was taken on board for transport to Hanoi, the final destination.



POSTAL MARKINGS
VINH ANNAM 15-6 29
airmail label
REVERSE
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 15-6 29

Nhatrang – Hanoi
15 June 1929

The second reconnaissance trip by S.E.A.I.E. from Nhatrang to Hanoi was accomplished on 15 June with Bourgeois piloting a Potez 32. A total of 29 letters were carried on the trial flight.



POSTAL MARKINGS

TOURANE ANNAM 15-6 29
airmail and registration labels

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 16-6 29
HAI-PHONG TONKIN 17-6 29

Hanoi – Nhatrang
20 June 1929

The return leg of the second reconnaissance flight from Hanoi to Nhatrang by S.E.A.I.E. was conducted on 20 June 1929. Again, Bourgeois was the pilot of a Potez 32 airplane. Stops were made at Vinh and Tourane. The volume of return mail for the second trip consisted of 30 letters.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 17-6 29
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 20-6 29
airmail label

REVERSE

NHATRANG ANNAM 21-6 29
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 26-6 29

Hanoi – Saigon
7 July 1929

The manuscript notation “Par avion militaire d’Hanoi à Saigon” at the top left indicates “military air mail from Hanoi to Saigon.” A flight of three Potez 25-A2 airplanes with military crews left Hanoi on 7 July carrying mail for Saigon. The service allowed the letters to connect with the mailboat SS *Metzinger* during its stopover at Saigon.



POSTAL MARKINGS
HANOI TONKIN 6-7 29
airmail labels
REVERSE
SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 7-7 29

Hanoi – Paris
17-21 November 1929

After setting a new speed record for traversing northern Asia, Costes and Bellonte established a westward record starting from Hanoi on 17 November and reaching Paris on the 21st. They carried a large amount of mail (8,889 letters), which required a surtax of 1 piaster for airmail service. The cachet, handstamped in black, indicated that the flight was for October and November although the Indochina-France return leg was completed in November.

VOYAGE
RETOUR RECORD DISTANCE
COSTES - BELLONTE
OCT. NOV. 1929



POSTAL MARKINGS

HA-NOI TONKIN 17-11 29
airmail and registration labels
flight cachet

REVERSE

PARIS 10 CHARGEMIS FRANCIS 21-11 29
GRASSE ALPES MARITIMES 22-11 29

Hanoi – Paris
12-21 November 1929

The aircrew consisted of the pilot, Dieudonné Costes, and Maurice Bellonte who was the navigator. Costes had signed this cover at the upper left.

VOYAGE
RETOUR RECORD DISTANCE
COSTES - BELLONTE
OCT. NOV. 1929



POSTAL MARKINGS

HAN-NOI R.P. TONKIN 17-11 29
registration and airmail labels
flight cachet

REVERSE

PARIS 2 CHAR G M^{IS} FRANCIS 21-11 29
BEDARIEUX HERAULT 22-11 29

Paris – Hanoi
Accident of 14 December 1929

A crew of Rebart, Lasalle and Fallot attempted to reach Hanoi from Paris in December 1929. After leaving Tunis, they disappeared. The plane had crashed into a sand hill near Syrte, Tripoltania during a storm killing the crew.

Recovered letters were returned to France and, after being given a black cachet meaning “mail accident,” were forwarded by surface mail.

COURRIER ACCIDENTÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

BOURGET-AVIATION SEINE 10-12 29
airmail, tuberculosis and registration labels
accident and “return to sender” handstamps

REVERSE

MARSEILLE-ST CHARLES B^{CHES} DU RHONE 3-1 30
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 28-1 30
BOURGET-AVIATION SEINE 18-3 29

Paris – Amsterdam – Bangkok – Saigon
12-23 December 1929

The second acceptance of French mail for KLM's Amsterdam-Bangkok service was in December 1929. Mail from Paris went to Amsterdam by train. A total of 336 letters were carried without payment of an airmail surcharge. A rectangular handstamp indicated that the mail was carried by airmail. Letters addressed to Indochina were carried by Air Asia from Bangkok to Saigon.

TRANSPORTÉE
EXCEPTIONNELLEMENT PAR AVION



POSTAL MARKINGS

PARIS GARE P. L. M-ETRANGER B 12-12 28
Exceptional Transport , Unknown and Return to Sender handstamps
PARIS XIII DISTRIBUTION 25 • I 1939

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 23-12 29

Saigon – Bangkok – Amsterdam – Paris
19-28 December 1929

An agreement was reached for a combined service via Air Asia from Saigon to Bangkok and via KLM from Bangkok to Amsterdam and Paris. The first departure from Saigon on 19 December 1929 carried a mail load of some 1,600 letters. No official markings were applied for the inaugural service.

Postage was computed as follows:

letter rate to France	.06
registration fee	.15
<u>airmail surcharge</u>	<u>1.00</u>
total	1.21



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 18-12 29

registration label

airmail label

REVERSE

PARIS-GARE DU NORD PROVINCE-A 29-12 29