

Trans-Atlantic Air mail

Pan American "Double Atlantic" from China to England via Lagos 1942.



Chengtu to New Barnet 1942. Registered airmail cover carrying a route instruction : "By airmail, China, Calcutta, Cairo and Port Bell – Entebbe. By South African Airways to Leopoldville. Thence by PAA to destination." Despatch Chengtu 24th September 1942, arrival London R.L.D. 24th November 1942. Unusually, not censored in India, and no transit markings of the type often seen on mail by this route.

The route listed was in force for only 10 days from 30th June 1942 to 10th July 1942, and the rate paid corresponds to the more usual route via Khartoum and Lagos to join the PanAm "Special Mission" service, then the double Atlantic crossing. The PC 90 Type 1A censor label has the original number carefully removed and a handwritten "138" applied tying the label to the cover. Wike records No.139 used in Trinidad, which suggests that the cover may well have travelled "Double Atlantic".

CAA records show that all South African Airways operations to Leopoldville ended on 1st July 1942, but Sabena operating under charter to SAA still ran a service from Entebbe to Leopoldville. It is my belief that NO China mail was ever carried on this route by South African Airways, and this cover actually followed the "usual" trans-Africa route via Lagos.

Rate paid \$13.70 = \$1 registration + \$1 surface rate + \$11.70 airmail surcharge (14th July to 23rd October 1942).