



Carl Ben Eielson

First airmail flight, Territory of Alaska

165lbs. of mail flown 280 miles in 2 hrs. 55 min.

Fairbanks to McGrath, February 21, 1924



Farthest North Airplane Company DeHavilland DH-4BM



★ Fairbanks

McGrath ★

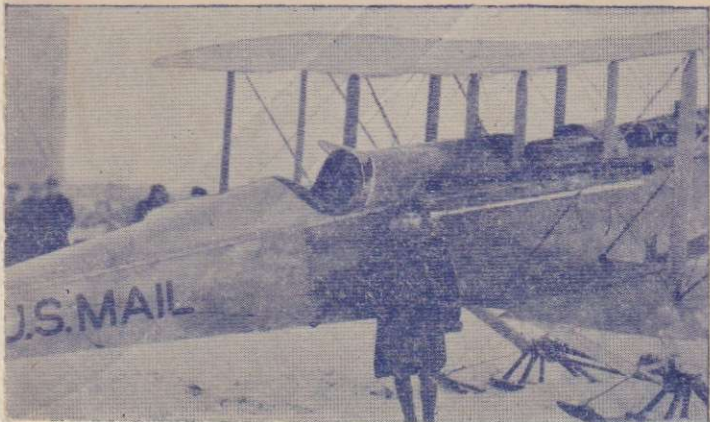




1924 Ben Eielsons first official Alaska air mail flight
and forth flight under U.S. government contract.



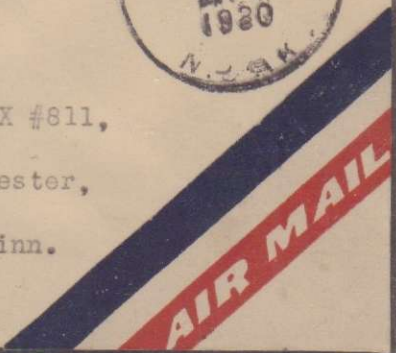
Carl Ben Eielson, first airmail pilot in Alaska, was born at Hatton, N. Dak. July 20, 1897. He piloted the first airplane in Alaska in 1923, and on February 1, 1924 received a contract to carry air mail there. He made the first air mail flight from Fairbanks to McGrath February 21, 1924, marking an important epoch in air mail history. As pilot for Sir Hubert Wilkins' Arctic and Antarctic expeditions he became world famous. He lost his life while on a rescue mission in Siberia November 9, 1929. He is shown below with the first mail plane ever used in Alaska.



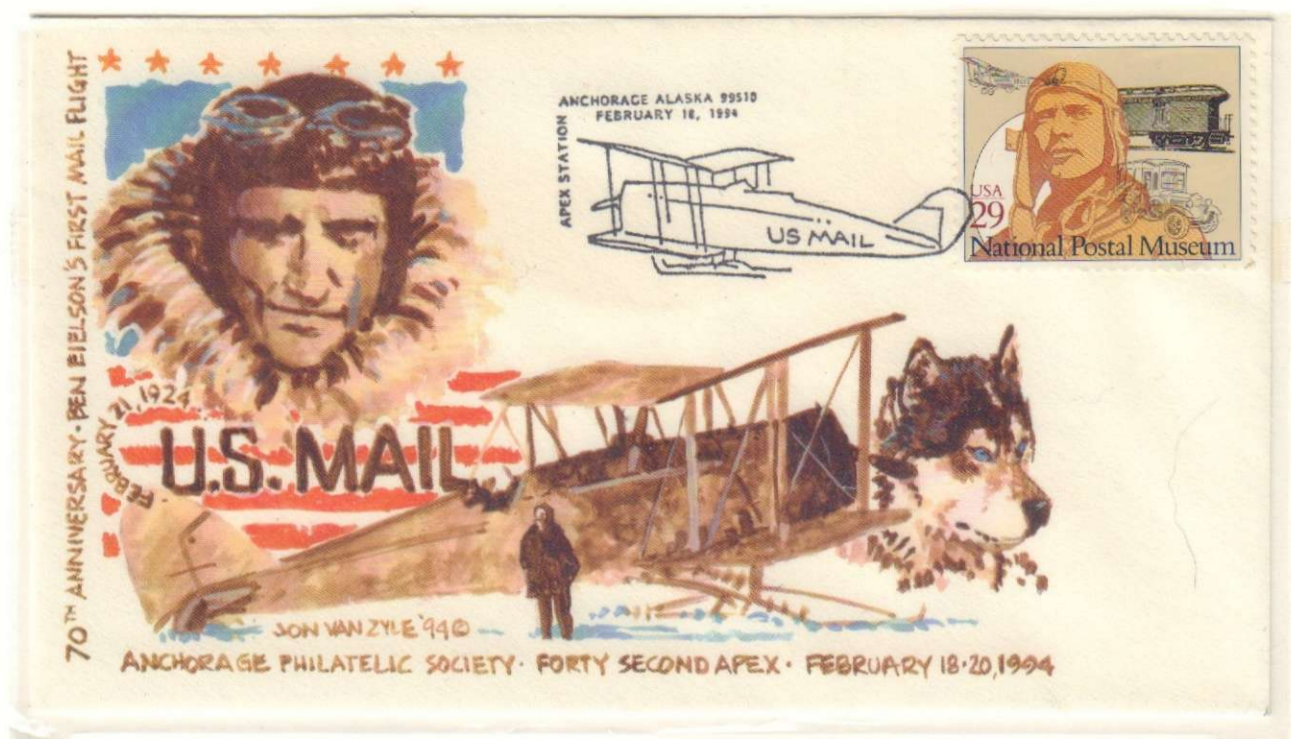
Mrs. Don Houseworth
212 Moss Building
St. Joseph
Missouri.



P.O. BOX #811,
Rochester,
Minn.







CARL BEN EIELSON - 70th ANNIVERSARY, FIRST AIRMAIL DELIVERY IN ALASKA - FAIRBANKS TO MCGRATH, ON FEBRUARY 21, 1924

Fred Milligan, veteran of twenty years of providing mail service via dog team between Fairbanks and the Kuskokwim communities of McGrath, Ophir, Iditarod and Flat, looked up from the snowy trail one fateful day in February, 1924 to watch Carl Ben Eielson's plane fly by enroute to McGrath. The trip from Fairbanks to McGrath took Milligan and his dog team twenty days. Within a few hours, Eielson again looked down on Milligan on his way back to Fairbanks.

According to Jean Potter, Milligan ~~asked~~ ^{knew} then and there that Alaska "was no place for dogs," and decided to cast his lot with "The Aviation."

Flying in those days was distinctly a 'seat of the pants' operation. Flight operations used local ball parks for landing fields, and ventures away from the local area were a journey of faith - faith that the pilot could find enough level ground on which to land.

Carl Ben Eielson had migrated to Fairbanks in 1922 from his native North Dakota to teach school. He had already been bitten by the flying bug; in 1917, when the U.S. Army Airforce had only 35 pilots, Ben had quit college to enlist. He learned to fly and was commissioned a second lieutenant just as the first World War ended.

Returning to his home town, Ben Eielson persuaded a group of businessmen to buy him a wartime Jenny, in which he barnstormed through the mid-west during the summer. Eventually, the Jenny was wrecked, and the youthful aviator returned to his studies. But flying had become his gospel, and Alaska was the ideal setting for his dreams.

His vision of the role of the airplane in Alaska's future was far ahead of most Alaskan's imaginations. He visualized Alaska as a focal point for flight routes encompassing the circum-polar nations, with the U.S. government directly involved in passenger, freight, and mail transportation.

After proving the feasibility of flying the mail in bush Alaska, Eielson teamed up with Capt. George Wilkins, an Australian Arctic explorer, in an attempt to fly over the Pole from Barrow, Alaska to Spitzbergen, Norway.

Their dogged persistence despite many mishaps, including a forced landing hundreds of miles north of Barrow on the Arctic icepack, was finally rewarded in April, 1928, when they successfully negotiated the 2,200 mile journey and landed on Spitzbergen after 22 hours of extremely difficult flying and navigation.

For this feat, Eielson was recognized as one of the world's foremost Arctic aviators. He received the Leiv Eiriksson Memorial Medal presented by Scandinavia to the "Transpolar Flier of Norwegian

Ancestry, for Viking Deed and Daring" after the trans-polar flight.

He also received the Distinguished Flying Cross of the U.S. and the Harmon Trophy, highest aviation award of the U.S. government, for the outstanding air contribution of 1928. Later, he and Capt. Wilkins flew over 1,200 miles south from the Shetlands Islands, off South America, and discovered six hitherto unknown islands. They were the first to enter Antarctica by plane.

Carl Ben Eielson's flying career ended in the fatal crash of his Hamilton aircraft off the Siberian coast in November, 1929, while he was attempting to reach the steamer Nanuk, trapped in the ice of Bering Straits. His disappearance triggered a gigantic aerial search, involving pilots and planes of both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., the first instance of aviation cooperation between these two nations.

Eielson's vision became reality, aided by the delivery of over 7,000 Lend-Lease aircraft from the States to Russia, via the Canadian Northwest staging route through Fairbanks and Nome and across Siberia.

Today, Alaska is the aerial crossroads of the world, and trans-polar flights have become commonplace. Everything flies today, and the smallest villages have regular mail and freight deliveries.

Carl Ben Eielson's historic first airmail delivery on February 21, 1924 - seventy years ago this month - blazed a trail which has been a beacon for Alaska's aviation development since that time.

- Celia Hunter

42nd Alaska Philatelic Exhibition (APEX) February 18-21, 1994

The cachet for this souvenir cover was reproduced from an original painting by Jon Van Zyle of Chugiak, one of Alaska's most noted contemporary artists. This is the sixth cachet design contributed by Van Zyle who is a honorary member of our society.

The essay "Carl Ben Eielson - 70th Anniversary, first airmail delivery in Alaska - Fairbanks to McGrath, on February 21, 1924" was written by Celia M. Hunter of Fairbanks. Ms. Hunter is a well known aviator and conservationist.

This cover is sponsored and produced by the Anchorage Philatelic Society under the Chairmanship of David Schwantes, and printed by Color Art Printing Co. Fifteen hundred covers were printed.

The Anchorage Philatelic Society, founded in 1950 and incorporated in 1981, meets at 7:00 p.m., the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at the Anchorage Senior Center, 1300 E. 19th Avenue.

The Society also sponsors the Junior Stamp Club. It meets from 1:00-3:00 p.m., the second and fourth Saturday of each month during the school year, call 333-5335. Information concerning the Society, its programs and activities, and the covers it issues periodically, can be obtained by writing P.O. Box 102214, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-2214.

HAWAII to GUAM



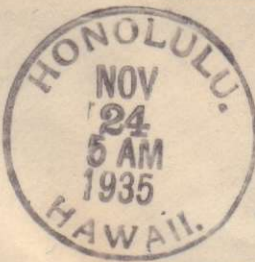
Trans-Pacific Air Mail

First day sale of the 25-cent Air-Mail stamp and the start of first flight of the Pan-American Clipper's Trans-Pacific Air Mail service took place at San Francisco, Calif., on Nov. 24, 1935. As inaugurated on that date, the route embraced the Hawaiian Islands, Wake and Guam Islands, terminating at Manila, in the Philippine Islands. A future extension of the service will make Canton, China the western-most terminus of this 8000 mi. route.

Par Avion
By Air Mail

FORM 2976

DON J. KAPNER
2185 BOLTON ST., BRONX, N. Y.



HAWAII to PHILIPPINE ISLANDS



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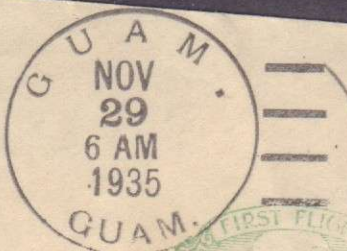
GUAM to PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.



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DAY OF ISSUE CHANGED TO NOVEMBER 22, 1935 BY ORDER OF P. M. GENERAL FARLEY.



**Par Avion
By Air Mail**

FORM 2978



DON J. KAPNER
2185 BOLTON ST., BRONX, N. Y.

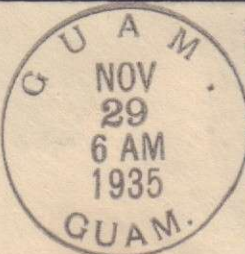
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PHILIPPINE ISLANDS to HAWAII



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PHILIPPINE ISLANDS to U.S.A.



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DON J. KAPNER
2185 BOLTON ST., BRONX, N. Y.



PHILIPPINE ISLANDS to GUAM



MANILA
DEC 2
5:30 AM
1935
P. I.



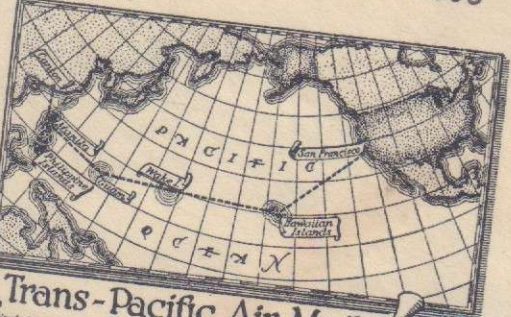
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DON J. KAPNER
2185 BOLTON ST., BRONX, N. Y.

HAWAII to SAN FRANCISCO



HONOLULU, HAWAII
DEC 5
2-PM
1935



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Par Avion
By Air Mail
FORM 2078



DON J. KAPNER
2185 BOLTON ST., BRONX, N. Y.

GUAM to SAN FRANCISCO, USA



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DON J. KAPNER
2185 BOLTON ST., BRONX, N. Y.

SAN FRANCISCO to MACAO



Trans-Pacific Air Mail

Trans-Pacific Air Mail service to Hawaii, Guam and Manila, Pt. was inaugurated Nov. 22, 1935. After subsequent months of negotiating for a port on the Asiatic mainland a base was established in Macao, a Portuguese colony on the China coast. First flight over the extended route was planned for Mar. 24, 1937 on shortly thereafter. The 20ct and 50ct Air Mail stamps were issued for this service Feb. 15, 1937; first day sale Washington, D.C.



DON J. KAPNER
2185 BOLTON ST., BRONX, N. Y.



Trans-Pacific Air Mail service to Hawaii, Guam and Manila, P.I. was inaugurated Nov. 22, 1935. After subsequent months of negotiating for a port on the Asiatic mainland a base was established in Macao, a Portuguese colony on the China coast. First flight over the extended route was planned for Mar. 24, 1937 or shortly thereafter. The 20 ct. and 50 ct. Airmail stamps were issued for this service Feb. 15, 1937, first day sale Washington, D.C.

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HAWAII to MACAO

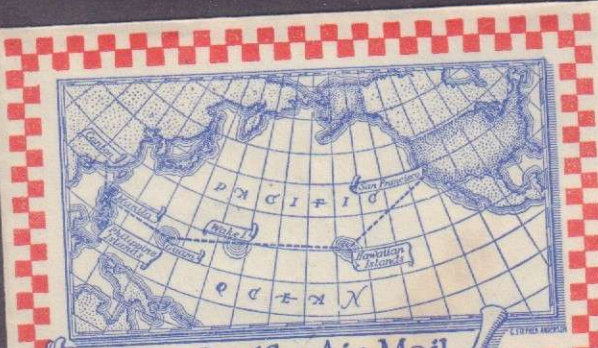


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SAN FRANCISCO to HONG KONG



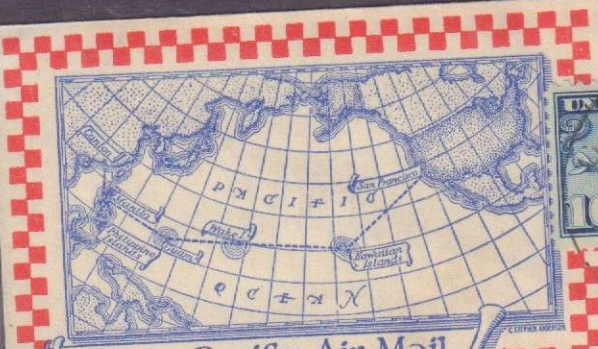


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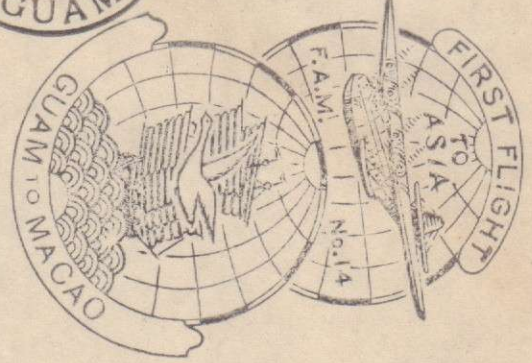


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GUAM TO MACAO



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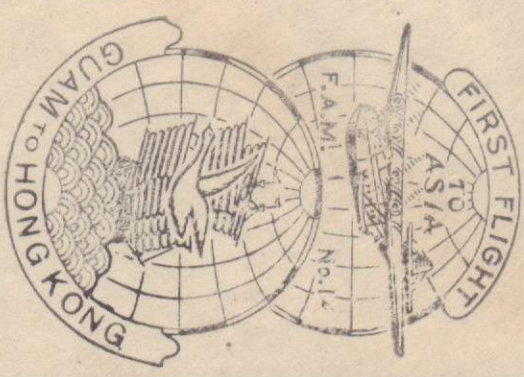
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DON J. KAPNER
2185 BOLTON ST., BRONX, N. Y.
usa

HONG KONG to MANILA, P.I.









MACAO to SAN FRANCISCO



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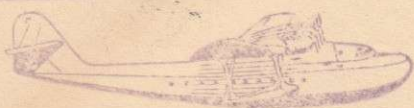


FARE AVION
FOR AVIAO

BY AIR MAIL

HONGKONG TO HONOLULU

HONG KONG TO HONOLULU



RECEIVED-FIRST FLIGHT-F.A.M.14



Mr. Charles B. Harding,
% Chas. D. Barney & Co.,
#14 Wall Street,
New York, N. Y. USA



GUAM to HAWAII

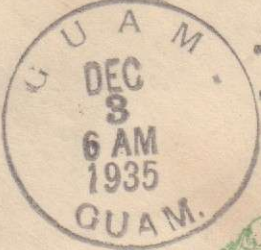


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FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

BANK OF THE MANHATTAN COMPANY
40 WALL STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y.



VIA AIR MAIL



First Flight San Francisco, Calif.
to Auckland, New Zealand.

BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES,
AUCKLAND,
NEW ZEALAND