

# French African Airmail Routes, World War II

## French Republic, Vichy France, and Free French

The purpose of this Aerophilatelic Postal History Exhibit is to show the development and changes in French African Air mail routes in Africa as the tides of war shifted back and forth from pre-war to 1945..

To establish the actual routes required collating the spotty literature and combining with evidence on covers. Establishing that a given cover traveled on a specific route requires specific dates and markings, and in some cases there are first Flight Covers. It is a difficult subject, as the wartime route changes were not well documented, if at all. The references are scanty and often conflicting. Some of the routes reported never actually existed. This is the only known exhibit and no literature that puts together the entire story.

Some of the items a quite rare, such as mail on the only Vichy flights between Brazzaville and Algiers and the Fezzan covers.

### Plan:

- A. The Republic era.** This will be a snapshot of the entire pre-war network of French routes that touched Africa. Basically from 1939-June 22, 1940, the date of surrender. It is arranged geographically.
  1. Atlantic & North Africa
  2. Sahara Route
  3. West Coast
- B. Vichy France.** This group will chronologically show the build up of African routes after the "Armistice", and the gradual pull-back as the Allies gained ground. June 1940 to May 1943, when the last Vichy mail left Tunis.
- C. Free French.** This is also chronological, and will show the growth of the Free French air routes. From the first (unrecorded) flight in August, 1940 to the end of 1945.

### Notes:

1. The color key to routes is at the bottom of the page. Most important, routes existing at the time are shown in Blue, and in **Red is shown the route discussed on that page**. Green for abandoned routes, and dashed blue for temporary routes.
2. Route start dates are approximate, except when an announcement or used FFC exists. Covers are chosen to prove route, not date. Data and literature may disagree, I show both, where needed.
3. Route stop dates during the war were not announced, and must be deduced

— Route discussed this page — French Network 1939.

— Abandoned route

--- Temporary route.



### AIR FRANCE GREETING CARD

2 April 1939, Algeria to France

All French Airlines were part of the same government department, no matter the names, which changed often.

So 'Air France' is a catch-all name.