

DELAG - The World's First Airline: Development of Airmail Service 1910-1919

Purpose/Scope: This eight-frame aerophilatelic exhibit presents a comprehensive study of DELAG's mail. Following a brief introduction of pre-DELAG Zeppelin mail (1908–1909), the exhibit explores mail flown onboard all DELAG airships, from *Deutschland* in 1910 to *Bodensee* in 1919.

Organization: Exhibit is organized by airships (as chapters) and by years (as subchapters) - chronologically for each airship. Mail flown on pioneer DELAG airships is combined in its chapter due to short duration of airmail services. Chapters begin with maps of mail routes detailing airfields, overflights, landings and mail drops. Titles of chapters and subchapters are shown in the upper left corners of the subsequent exhibit pages. When first introduced, chapter titles have a blue background and subchapter titles a gray background.

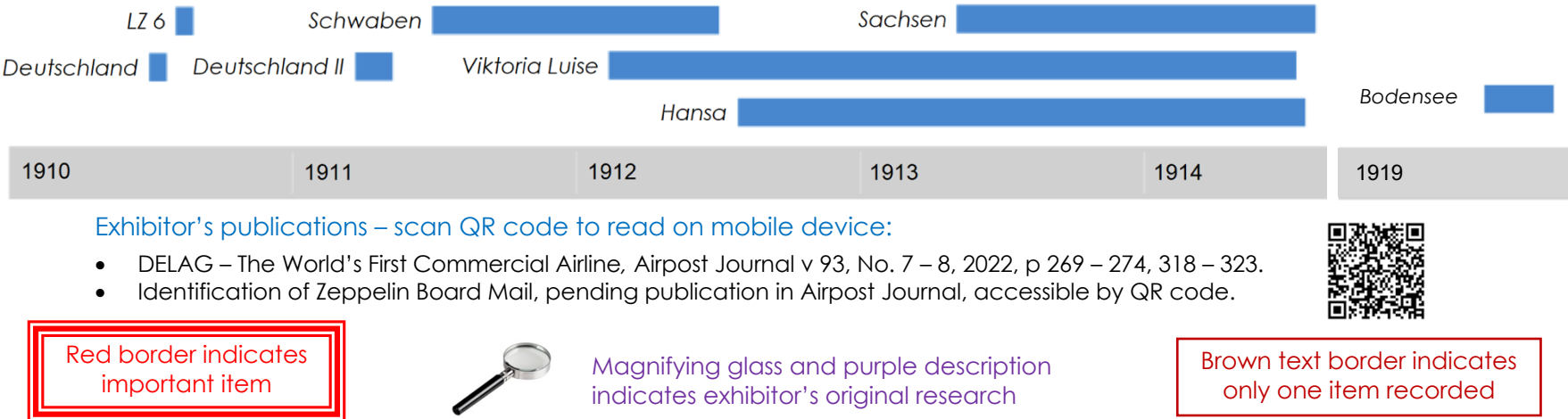
Personal Research: Each exhibited item was researched using flights records to determine origin, destination and route. Discoveries were made – 6 exhibited items not listed in Sieger. Exhibit highlights personal research: DELAG's years of operation, identification of onboard vs eyewitness mail, airships names mail references, June 1912 postcard week *Schwaben* mail flights, color variations of onboard postmarks and cachets.

What is DELAG? DELAG (Deutsche Luftschiffahrts-Aktiengesellschaft) was the world's first airline - transported ticketed passengers and processed their mail during the flights. DELAG operated giant, lighter than air German airships named after their inventor, Count Zeppelin. DELAG mail primarily consisted of passengers' postcards (less than 24 passengers on each flight, sometimes only 3-4 passengers on short flights), with occasional items from the crew. Small fraction of flights carried mail prepared in advance. DELAG never carried philatelic mail.

Importance: DELAG was the world's first airline and operated the world's first airborne post offices onboard three of its airships. It pioneered airmail logistics, policies, and procedures. DELAG flights' high media profile increased airmail's popularity and use.

Rarity: This exhibit contains essentially all existing rare, iconic and important DELAG airmail items - the most significant assembly known. It can not be replicated: includes 23 items recorded as only one example and 114 items recorded in fewer than 10 examples.

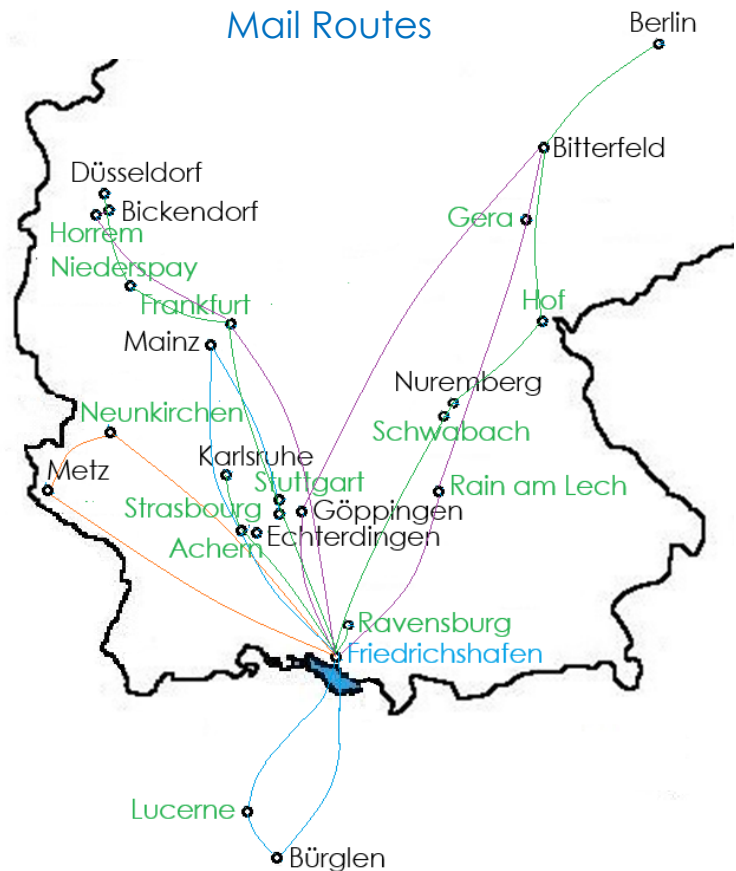
Exhibit Plan:	Frame
Pre-DELAG Zeppelin Mail	1
1. Pioneer DELAG Mail	1 - 2
2. <i>Schwaben</i>	2 - 3
3. <i>Viktoria Luise</i>	4 - 5
4. <i>Hansa</i>	5 - 6
5. <i>Sachsen</i>	7
6. <i>Bodensee</i>	8
Epilogue	8



- Important Notes:**
- All Items without rates are German postcards correctly franked with 5 pfennig postage to pay 5 pfennig inland postcard rate. Rates are provided for all other items.
 - Items without specified mail type are passenger postcards. Mail type (crew mail, carried mail, official DELAG mail) is listed for all other items.
 - Mail drop locations are displayed in green color.
 - Brown text indicates less than 10 recorded items.
 - Orange text indicates unusual item.

Pre-DELAG Zeppelin Mail

Mail Routes



The first Zeppelin flight of airship LZ 1 on July 2, 1900 and later flights of LZ 1 and LZ 2 did not generate or carry mail. LZ 3 crew did not use mail until 1909.

The earliest recorded Zeppelin mail was air dropped from LZ 4 on July 1, 1908 (next page).

- Airfields
 - Overflights/landings
 - Mail Drops
- Mail Routes:
- Z I
 - Z II
 - Z IIa
 - Z III

Z I (LZ 3) - 1909



Friedrichshafen - Metz
June 29 - July 3

Crew mail from engineer Muller

Mail drop over Neunkirchen
one of 5 recorded