

Aviation Poster Stamps: 1909-1914



*Poster Stamp:
Reims Aviation Week 1909
Type 1*

*Postage Stamp:
5 cent postcard rate
for 5 words or less*

*Postcard:
Collotype (as are all
postcards in this exhibit)
Photographer J. Bienaimé,
Reims
Publisher L. Michaud,
Reims*


Purpose: To introduce the viewer to poster stamps, a new form of advertising and collecting in the early 20th century. Poster stamps are posters that have been reduced in size and formatted as stamps, though not every stamp is a reproduction of a full sized poster. They advertise events, products, or a point of view. They are non-denominated and privately printed. The rise of the poster stamp started around 1900, and when combined with the postal system, resulted in a new form of cheap mass market advertising. As a type of advertising, the goal was to attract the eye of the viewer. Thus many of the stamps are larger and more colorful than postage stamps of the time. This quickly led to their becoming popular collectibles and souvenirs.

Scope: The exhibit will include dated aviation event and exhibition poster stamps issued from 1909-1914. Semi-postal and fund-raising stamps are not included, since the money paid to purchase them paid for a service, and they were not purely for advertising purposes. Events with only zeppelins are excluded, since my focus is on heavier than air flight. The US is represented only minimally because of the very small number of stamps issued.

Plan: The issues will be displayed in chronological order by year. Associated text will include results and notable occurrences from the events which will outline the progress made in aviation during this period.

Rare poster stamps are outlined with a **thin red line**

Very rare poster stamps are outlined with a **thick red line**

Personal research will be preceded by 

Besides the Reims event shown on the title page, there were 8 other poster stamps issued in Europe during 1909, and one in the US.



Douai Aviation Meet 1909

Four pilots entered the Douai competition, which was the first one in Europe (above). Paulhan won the altitude contest at 492 feet. Bleriot flew the furthest distance at 29 miles. The fastest speed was 29.5 mph.



Dunkirk Aviation Meeting 1909



Hudson Fulton Celebration, New York 1909

Wilbur Wright flew around the Statue of Liberty at a demonstration in New York. The Wright Brothers were highly litigious and sued other pilots, including Europeans coming to the US for international meets. As a result, Europeans stopped coming and the number of meets dried up. Only 4 other US aviation poster stamps were issued after this prior to WWI.



Fortnight of Aviation Marseille 1909

*Poster Stamp:
Port-Aviation (Paris)
Aviation Fortnight 1909
Porte-timbre type 3*

*Cachet:
Violet Juvisy type VII*

*Postcard:
Published by F. Malcuit,
Paris*



1910

Interest in aviation reached a fever pitch in 1910, with 31 meetings promoted with stamps in Europe (compared to only 3 in the US). There were so many overlapping meetings that summer that many suffered from a lack of entrants. The top pilots wanted to enter the most prestigious events with the biggest prize money. The first significant meet was in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo. The winning altitude was 836 ft and the winning speed was 46 mph.

Poster stamp:
Heliopolis Aviation Week
1910

Postage stamp:
Egypt 2m postcard rate

Postcard:
Published by Levy Fils et
Cie, Paris



Cannes Aviation Meet
1910



Cannes 1910 missing
yellow error



Cannes 1910 brown sky
variant



Nice 1910 Type 2

Above: Cannes winners for speed and altitude were 52 mph and 679 ft. As with postage stamps, there can be rare color errors and variants.

Above far right: At Nice, just a couple weeks later, the altitude winner was 2152 ft. The winner for cumulative distance flown during the meet was 596 miles. Planes were so flimsy and engines so unreliable, it was a challenge to keep them flying, so cumulative distance flown was a major prize.



Lyon Aviation Week 1910

Above: The first pilot fatality in competition occurred at Lyon when a plane clipped a pylon and the pylon fell directly on the pilot's head.

Right: At Verona a pilot was thrown from his plane on a bumpy take off and critically injured. Pilots didn't wear seat belts because it was felt that it was safer to jump out of a crashing plane than to stay onboard.

Right: A "crossover" poster stamp which is both product advertising and an event. The Ruinart distillery offered a prize of 12,500 francs in 1909 for the first man to fly across the English Channel. Louis Bleriot was the first to do so in 1909, but he had not filled out the paperwork properly, so he was denied the prize. It was awarded in May 1910 to the 2nd man to cross the channel, Jacques de Lesseps.



Reims 2nd Channel Crossing 1910



Verona Aviation Meet 1910 Type 1

Artist: Aldo Mazza



Rouen Aviation Week 1910 Type 2

Artist: Renee Leca



Poster stamp: Rouen Aviation Week 1910 Type 5

Postcard: Published by E. Le Deley, Paris

At Rouen, Dickson (pictured above) won for the longest single flight at 88 miles. He also won for total distance flown during the meet at 464 miles. Combined with wins in other categories, he took home the most prize money of any pilot at 28,100 francs, which would be about \$140,000 today.



Rouen Aviation Week 1910 Type 1



Reims Aviation Week 1910 Type 1

Artist: Harald

The Reims meet in 1909 was so successful it was decided to have a second one in 1910. There were 76 entrants, including one woman. The longest distance flown was 139 miles. The highest altitude reached was 4540 ft. The greatest speed was 56 mph. The category of fastest time by a woman over 6 miles was entered by the only woman, Baroness Raymonde de la Roche of France. She was critically injured in a crash just short of the finish line, but it was decided to award her the 5000 franc prize anyway. She did survive.



Poster stamp: Caen Aviation Week 1910 Type 3

Postcard: Published by E. Le Deley, Paris

No new records were set at Caen, but the winner for cumulative flying time was Marcel Hanriot, shown above. He was only 16 years old and had just gotten his pilot's license the month before.

July 1910 - August 1910



Caen Aviation Week 1910
Type 1



Caen Aviation Week 1910
Type 2



Rodez Aviation Festival 1910



Pescara (Italy) Aviation Meeting 1910

Only two pilots showed up to compete at Pescara. No results were recorded.

As airplanes became (somewhat) more reliable, it was decided there should be races from city to city, rather than just fly laps around an airfield. The East Circuit was a six stage air race organized by the newspaper *Le Matin*. Pilots flew from Paris to Troyes, then to Nancy, then Charleville, then Douai, then Amiens, and finally back to Paris. The total distance was 500 miles. Each city except Douai issued a poster stamp for the event. Thirty-five pilots entered the competition, but only 10 managed to get their planes off the ground in Paris. Only 2 finished the race. The winner, Alfred Leblanc, won the equivalent of \$500,000.



East Circuit, Troyes 1910



East Circuit, Paris 1910



East Circuit, Nancy 1910



East Circuit, Charleville 1910



East Circuit, Amiens 1910

August 1910

Poster stamp:
Bar-le-Duc (France)
Aviation Meeting 1910

Artist: A. Haeg

Popey Aerodrome cachet

Postcard:
Published by Levy Fils et
Cie, Paris



Many poster stamps, and postcards, showed both monoplanes and biplanes. The two design types were equally popular prior to WWI. Monoplanes were faster and won more speed races, but were more prone to have their wings fold up or break off. Biplanes were slower, but structurally stronger, especially during high stress maneuvers. For this reason they were the dominant type of plane in WWI, where they were more likely to survive in a dogfight.

Note on these stamps that the fuselage was uncovered. It was not until 1911 that aircraft designers realized that covering the fuselage in a thin layer of canvas or wood improved both aerodynamics and structural strength.



Poster stamp:
Nantes Aviation Week
1910
Type 3

Postcard:
Published by Vassellier,
Nantes



Aviation Fortnight at Le Havre 1910 Type 1

At Le Havre, a new world record for altitude was set by Morane, at 8471 feet. At Bordeaux, the top speed was 62 mph, and the winner for cumulative distance went 1305 miles. Results at Dijon were unimpressive. The world's 1st air to air collision occurred at Milan.



Aviation Fortnight at Le Havre 1910 Type 3



Bordeaux Aviation Meeting 1910



Dijon Aviation Meeting 1910



Milan International Aviation Meet 1910
Artist: Aldo Mazza

The Wright brothers founded a flying school at Pau in southwest France in 1909 and trained many of the early pilots. The French pilot Bleriot took over the school in 1910. A private competition occurred there in October, for which the below stamp was printed. Note that the postcard sender cut the airplane out of a 2nd Pau stamp and pasted it in the sky.

Poster Stamp:
Pau Aviation 1910

Artist:
Ernst Gabard

Postage stamp:
10c rate for more than 5
words

Postcard:
Photo by Joseph Callizo



1911



London Aeroplane and Motor Boat Exhibition 1911



Amsterdam Aviation Week 1911



Lyon Aviation Week 1911 Tete-beche pair

London had a combined airplane and boat show to satisfy the public's desire to get a closer look at the planes than they could get at an airfield. There were 27 different planes on display. They were also for sale, but few could afford the average price of £ 1000.

At Amsterdam there were no competitions, just exhibition flights and some rides to paying customers.

Lyon had leftover stamps from their 1910 aviation event, and decided to use them again for 1911 by putting a row of perforations through the 1910 date.



Florence Aviation Meeting 1911

No records were set at Florence, but the King and Queen of Italy came and met with the pilots.



Paris to Madrid Air Race 1911

Above left: The Paris to Madrid race was famous for its disastrous start. One of the pilots crashed into the crowd on take off, killing the French minister of war and injuring the prime minister. Only 4 pilots managed to leave the field. The only one who finished was Jules Vedrines - he flew 842 miles in just under 15 hours.



Paris-Rome-Turin Air Race 1911 Type 2

Above right: The planned Paris-Rome-Turin race was truncated to Paris-Rome with a separate race to Turin a week later. The grand prize was the equivalent of \$1.3 million. The winner was Jean Conneau who finished in just over 82 hours. Roland Garros came in second, after crashing 2 planes enroute (substitutions were permitted).



Paris-Rome-Turin Air Race 1911 type 1 Only known multiple

The Paris-Rome-Turin stamps, types 1 and 2, the Paris-Madrid stamp, and the European Circuit stamp type 1 (below) were all printed with unusual points at the corners and ink along the separation lines. One catalog describes them as arc roulette, another as perforated, and a third calls them “printed serrations, cut”. Examination of this multiple however, indicates that this is cameo stamping with a cutting edge incorporated into the die.



European Air Race 1911 type 1



European Air Race 1911 type 3

The European Circuit went from Paris to Belgium, England and back to Paris, with various stops. A crowd of 500,000 watched 52 pilots take off. Only 9 finished the 995 mile course. Conneau, the winner of the Paris-Rome race, won again in just over 58 hours of flying time.



Creusot Aviation Meeting 1911



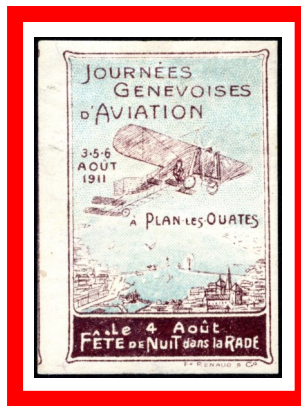
Circuit of Belgium 1911 Type 1

At Creusot a local businessman put up 1500 francs in prize money, and the town matched it, but 3000 francs in prizes only attracted 3 pilots to the event.

The Circuit of Belgium had crowd control issues, as had many previous events. Leon Parisot had to purposely crash his plane on take off at one stop because a group of children ran onto the field. No one was injured.



*Rimini (Italy)
Aviation Meet 1911
Type 2
Artist: C. Medici*



*Plan-les-Ouates
(Switzerland) Aviation
Meet 1911*

🔍 The Marquis De Medici promoted a meet at Rimini, on Italy's Adriatic coast. Three Italian pilots competed, but Romolo Manissero was critically injured on August 31st. He did survive, but the rest of the event was cancelled

🔍 Plan-les-Ouates was the first competition in Switzerland. 7 pilots were invited, but only 3 showed up. The organizers lost money, which was common at small meets.

1912

Until 1912 Germany felt that the zeppelin was the future of aviation, and there were few airplane meetings and only one poster stamp. Once other European nations started looking at military uses for planes, Germany realized they needed to put more effort into this area, and there was a significant increase in competitions and events.



*Berlin Aircraft Exhibition 1912
Artist: Julius Klinger*

🔍 At the Berlin Exhibition (above) the Albatross company appealed to the government with a sign: "2500 Albatross biplanes cost the same as one dreadnought". The Euler company exhibited a plane with a machine gun attached. The German War Department ordered it to be removed from the exhibit immediately.

At the Vienna competition (upper right) a new world record for altitude was set at 14,862 feet.

The Upper Rhine, Berlin to Vienna, and Bremen Northwest meetings were all multi-stage races.



*Upper Rhine Aviation Meeting
1912*



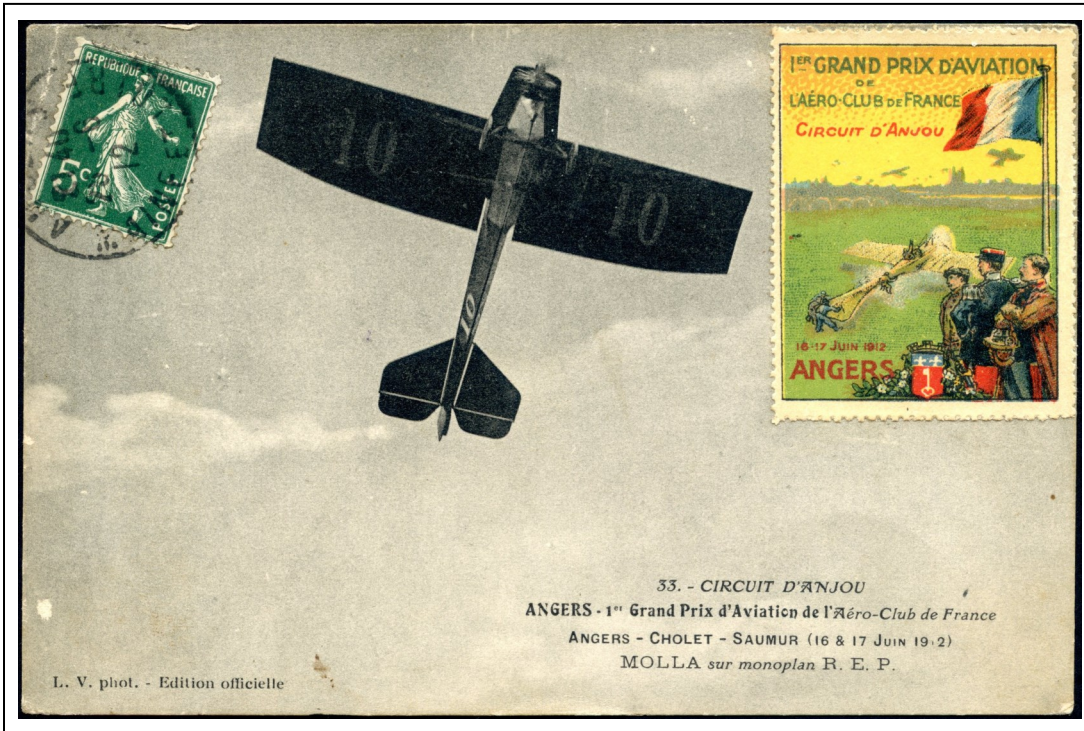
*Vienna 1st International Aviation
Exhibition 1912
Artist: A. Zapletal*



Berlin to Vienna by Airplane 1912



*Bremen Northwest
Aviation Meeting
1912*



Poster stamp:
Angers
First Grand Prix of the
Aero Club of France
Circuit of Anjou 1912
Type 1

Artist: Ernest Louis
Lessieux

Postcard:
Photo and publishing by
Leopold Verger

Up until 1912, when there was bad weather, aviation meets were usually cancelled for the day. But at the Circuit of Anjou, (above) 12 of 35 pilots took off in heavy wind, rain and hail anyway, perhaps motivated by the large prize. In spite of a compass, Roland Garros got lost and had to land in a field to ask directions from a farmer. He went on to win the race, and newspapers proclaimed that this was proof the planes could fly in all types of weather.

The French government decided to start building an air force in March 1912. In order to raise money for the project, they sponsored a number of events around the country where there would be demonstration flights, and the gate receipts would fund military aviation. Epernay (below) was one such event.

Poster stamp:
Epernay Festival for the
Benefit of Aviation 1912
Type 2 right, Type 1
below

Artist: R Leclerc

Violet cachet: Type 1





Kiel Aviation Meeting 1912
Type 1



Kiel Aviation Meeting 1912
Type 2



Temse (Belgium) Hydroplane
Competition 1912

For the Kiel circuit, rarely stamps would be issued with a tab at the bottom showing the date the pilots were scheduled to be at a given town, a corporate sponsor, or both.

🔍 Belgian officials were interested in using seaplanes on the Congo River. Temse (above right), was the first aquatic meet for pragmatic rather than sporting ends. Scoring was based on weight carrying capacity, navigability, quickness of takeoff and distance flown without stops.



Nuremberg Flight Week 1912
Type 1



Nuremberg Flight Week 1912
Type 3



Straubing
Centennial
Festival 1912
Type 1 above
Type 2 right



Artist: Edwin
Henel

🔍 Nuremberg was a stop on a one week flight across southern Germany. In addition to speed, the competition included reporting on troop movements on the ground. The army placed troops along the course for this purpose.

Flight exhibitions were planned for the Straubing Folk Festival, but given heavy rains throughout the festival, they probably never occurred.

May 1913 - August 1913

1913

Events were still occurring in France in 1913, but not nearly as many. German events ramped up, with a lot of government promotion.




Autun (France) Aviation Meet 1913



*Prince Heinrich Flight 1913
Artist: Ernst Riess*



Prince Heinrich Flight Giessen 1913

 The Prince Heinrich flight was named after Prince Albert William Heinrich of Prussia, the brother of the Kaiser. He was the first royal to learn to fly and one of the first licensed pilots in Germany. He sponsored, but did not fly in this event. The first leg was from Wiesbaden to Strassberg, with a stop in Giessen. It was a reliability test, in which time spent on the ground repairing the plane was added to the time in the air to determine the winner. The pilot who finished 8th, 39 hours off the pace, would have won if he hadn't spent 42 hours on the ground repairing his plane.




Prince Heinrich Flight Wiesbaden-Giessen-Strassberg 1913



*Flight Around Munich 1913
Artist: Edwin Henel*

The Flight Around Munich was a race of multiple laps around the periphery of the city. It was sponsored by the Bayrischer Aero Club, whose name sometimes appeared in the lower part of the stamp.

 The East Prussia Circuit started in Königsberg and was a combination speed and reconnaissance race. There was going to be a photography competition on one leg, but it was canceled due to bad weather. Only German pilots with German planes were allowed to enter.



East Prussia Circuit Flight 1913



Flight Around Berlin 1913



Johannisthal Autumn Air Week 1913



Darmstadt Model Airplane Exhibition 1913

🔍 Airplanes were still routinely disassembled and shipped over long distances, since that was safer than flying. At Johannisthal, the winners of an assembling/dismantling contest were 9 min 18 sec to assemble a monoplane, 2 min 58 sec to disassemble it.

🔍 Throughout Europe the public fascination with aviation led to the formation of many model airplane clubs. Members would show their scale models of production planes, or their own designs. They were usually powered by twisted rubber bands and hand launched. Winning results would be on the order of a minute in the air or 200 meters in distance.

1914



*Poster stamp:
Monaco Air Rally 1914*

*Postcard:
Photo by Maurice-Louis
Branger*

*Flown from Paris to
Monaco*

🔍 In the Monaco Air Rally, pilots could start at any of 8 different cities and end at Monaco. The routes were irregular, so that they were all the same distance. The winner was the pilot who finished the most courses in the shortest time during the 2 weeks - that was Roland Garros of France, who completed 7 of the courses. Postcards with the Monaco Air Rally stamp were flown from each of the cities. They were then sold to be kept as souvenirs, or to have postage affixed and mailed. The proceeds went toward the prize money.



Prince Heinrich Flight 1914 (above)
Artist: Hans Kaufman

In 1914 the Prince Heinrich flight just flew over the city of Mannheim on the first day, without landing, but a set of stamps was issued marking the event. Aviation continued to be a difficult and dangerous activity. Of the 42 planes entered, only 12 finished, with multiple crashes and 4 fatalities. Parachutes did not come into widespread use until after WW1.



Prince Heinrich Flight Mannheim 1914
(5 stamps to right and below)
Artist: Wilhelm Morano



Inaugural Celebration of the Port of Brussels and International Hydroplane Competition 1914
Type 2

Artist: Henri Lemaire

Epilogue: The hydroplane competition scheduled for Brussels in September (left) was cancelled due to the outbreak of WWI in August. The war put an end to all aviation events for the next 4 years. Events resumed after the war, but the public fascination was never as great as before.

The airplane made huge strides during the period shown in these stamps. The top speed rose from 29.5 to 126 mph. The highest altitude achieved rose from 492 to 18,405 feet. It started as a new sporting activity, but nations quickly realized and tested its potential for economic development and waging war.

Poster stamps continued to be very popular up until WWII, but when the war ended, poster stamps died out as new forms of advertising such as radio, TV and mass market magazines replaced them.