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President's Message by Gary Little

We begin Year 12 with an overview of Luxembourg *Exprès* (special delivery) covers for your reading enjoyment. Next time we hope to have an interesting article on the use (both legal and illegal) of the (unoverprinted) German 1 Rpf Hindenburg stamp in occupied Luxembourg. As usual, we welcome your submissions on any Luxembourg collecting topic that interests you — others will surely be interested in what you have to say about the stamps of our favorite, yet underappreciated, country.

My most interesting recent acquisition has been a group of pairs of Charlotte profile stamps that were issued in 1930. Each stamp is overprinted SPECIMEN and each has a small circular hole punched out. (These are the kinds of stamps you collect when you've collected almost all of the regular issues and you're getting bored!)



These stamps are from the archives of the American Bank Note Company and although they are unusual they are not particularly rare since I seem to find them for sale quite often.

Proofs and specimens interest me because you don't often see collections of them. That's all the incentive I need: I want to try to form a collection that hardly anyone else is likely to duplicate. One of these days I promise to write up my discoveries.

Special Delivery Mail in Luxembourg

by Gary Little

According to Basien & Hoffkamp (*Tarife der Briefpost in Luxemburg 1852-2002*) special delivery mail service in Luxembourg, at least for mail sent to some neighboring countries (notably Germany), was available as soon as postage stamps were first issued in 1852. For inland mail, however, the service seems to have begun on January 1, 1866. By April 1, 1879 there was a standard rate for mail sent to UPU countries (usually 30 centimes).

Early special delivery covers are exceedingly rare. I've been collecting Luxembourg material for over 20 years and the earliest cover I have is from 1916.



Censored special delivery cover sent from Luxembourg to Switzerland on January 11, 1919. The 70c franking pays the rate for a 20-40 g letter (40c) + 30c for the special delivery service. Note the use of **EXPRES** and **Per Eilboten** rubber stamps and the **Durch Eilboten. / Expres.** label.

The earliest special delivery indicium was a straight line "EXPRES." rubber stamp marking. *Exprès* is the French word for "special delivery." In the first quarter of the 20th century, you often see bilingual red labels affixed as well. They read "Durch Eilboten. Exprès." *Durch Eilboten* is the German for "by Special Delivery."

Sometime in the 1920s the use of the EXPRES. rubber stamp marking ceased and a unilingual magenta EXPRÈS label was used. Apart from the World War II occupation period, use of this label, or similar variants, continued until special delivery service was discontinued in early 1995.



Special delivery cover sent from Luxembourg to France on July 31, 1930 illustrating an early use of the magenta **EXPRÈS** label. The 4.75 F franking pays the 1.25 F letter rate to France plus the 3.50 F special delivery surcharge.

Special delivery rate to foreign countries were raised six times in the inflationary 1920s: from the original 30 centimes surcharge to 3.50 F. The surcharge remained unchanged in the 1930s. During the Nazi occupation of 1940-1944, the surcharge to foreign countries was 50 Rpf.



Special delivery cover sent from Luxembourg to London on August 1, 1938 (one month before the outbreak of World War II). The 5.25 F franking pays the 1.75 F letter rate plus the 3.50 F special delivery surcharge. Note the boxed **EXPRESS FEE PAID** marking applied in England.



Censored special delivery cover sent from Nazi-occupied Luxembourg in 1943 to Belgium. The 62 Rpf franking pays the 12 Rpf letter rate plus the 50 Rpf special delivery surcharge.

In the 50-year period following the war, surcharges for the special delivery service eventually rose from 5 F to 50 F. A challenge would be to collect a set of covers illustrating all seven rates during this half century: 5 F (April 6, 1945), 7 F (October 1, 1945), 8 F (July 1, 1953), 12 F (January 1, 1966),

25 F (July 1, 1971), 30 F (July 1, 1981), and 50 F (July 1, 1988). For your enjoyment, I've included a few examples from my own collection.

Special delivery service was ultimately discontinued in Luxembourg on January 31, 1995. By this time use of the service must have diminished considerably: overnight couriers and email had become the favored modes of delivery for rapid communication.



Special delivery cover sent from Luxembourg to Switzerland on December 18, 1945 (a very early post-war use). The 10.50 F franking pays the 3.50 F UPU letter rate plus the 7.00 F special delivery surcharge.



Special delivery cover sent from the Kons Hotel in Luxembourg to Zurich on October 30, 1947 (a very early and rare use of the 10 F Patton stamp on cover). The 10.50 F franking pays the 3.50 F UPU letter rate plus the 7.00 F special delivery surcharge.



Registered special delivery cover sent from Luxembourg to Germany in 1952. The single-stamp 15 F franking pays the 4 F letter rate + 4 F (registration fee) + 7 F (special delivery surcharge).



Special delivery cover sent from Esch-sur-Alzette to Greece in 1964. The 14 F franking pays the 6 F UPU letter rate plus the 8 F special delivery surcharge.



Special delivery cover sent from Hosingen to Rotterdam in 1968. The 18 F franking pays the 20-100 g letter rate to The Netherlands (6 F) plus the 12 F special delivery surcharge. The EXPRESSE rubber stamp marking was probably applied in The Netherlands.



Registered, airmail, special delivery cover sent from Luxembourg to Houston in 1976, apparently weighing 45-50 g. The 77 F franking pays the 12 F UPU letter rate + 20 F (airmail surcharge: 2 F per 5 g) + 20 F (registration fee) + 25 F (special delivery surcharge).



This cover was sent from Bascharage to Japan on the last day Luxembourg offered Special Delivery service. It pays the correct rate of 72 F — 22 F for the letter plus 50 F for the special delivery service.