

Rio 2016 – about Olympic airmail

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Meanwhile also the aerophilatelists got some offers (or have been participating in it), and it's worth to have a look on them.

As often before the organized¹ German aerophilatelists have been active. They started with a special airmail delivery² at Aug 1st, when a part of the German team flew to Rio.



Special cover of the common collectors club „Gemeinschaft für Gegenwartsphilatelie“ (Community for temporary philately), permanently available special postmark for the German Sports Aid and cachet of the organizing airmail collectors club ILA (*Interessengemeinschaft Lufthansa Aerophilatelie e.V.*) with arrival postmark in Rio.³

And also at the opening day such a special airmail dispatch has been organized from Frankfurt/Main.

Special cover from the same collectors community, but now with imprinted personalized stamp⁴ and special postmark (ordered by that club). The cachet with the flight details was applied again by the club ILA.



Have a look at the arrival postmark. The post-office (AC) *Vendas a Distancia* has been responsible for the equipment and service of the special Olympic post-office in the IOC hotel *Windsor Marapendi*. There also the special postmark – rather rare at Olympic collectors' mail from that TPO – has been used. All reports from Olympic collectors who have been in Rio confirmed, that the Olympic postmarks in all four equipped offices⁵ have even not been available there at the opening day of the Olympics.

It seems far away from the reality, that an additional Olympic postmark has been kept in the certain post-office, also the covers won't be mailed to the temporary office in the hotel, as the covers have been correctly addressed to the *AC Vendas a Distancia*, situated far away from the hotel.

At the closing day again a special airmail dispatch with Lufthansa has been organized by the club ILA. There remains the question how the cancelation of Aug 21st has been arranged. May be – using the old contacts from 2014 – the cancelation has been realized in the TPO by the staff, which switched from the basic post-office (*AC*) *Vendas a Distancia* to the TPO for serving some days “in the outlet”.



special cover from the ILA club, which also contributed the cachet (remembering the 60th anniversary of the Lufthansa connection to Rio, too.)

Also apart from this open question here we found airmail which has been sent at a regular way in the surrounding of the Olympic Games.

This can't be said from some other offers found at ebay, made by private collectors using the offers.

At which usual “closed” postal stream this cover should have found it's way to Rio (and then back to Frankfurt/Main)? It has been posted at a stamp & coin fair in Dublin in April! ⁶



Two further deliveries are known from Dublin by the same origin from July 27th and Aug 5th using the arrival cancellation arrangements of the ILA.



From both flights there are covers mailed from Dublin to Rio, which should be accepted. But apart from this the “maker“ could not resist to produce some „connection“ mail from abroad – see above the cover from Japan (22.6.2016) “via Dublin GPO” to Rio as one example among others offered.



But the negative highlight have been 3 offers from the same German ebay dealer - covers mailed with the Irish team flight to Rio – posted in Hongkong, Papeete/Tahiti and Portugal. Recipe of the dealer: Keep some covers from the philatelic postal service centers, add an other label covering the old original address, send it under cover to your partner (somebody inside the post-office?) who feeds them into the normal postal stream – without paying any fee to Irish post! ⁷

Also if the last seen cachets are probably not made by a club, the responsible people in air mail collectors' clubs should be aware - when adding their own cachets – that such covers are not a good reputation for the aerophilately and can destroy the image.

A very special cover comes from the very active community of the French Concorde collectors. At the AIR FRANCE line Paris-Aéroport Charles de Gaulle (CDG) to Rio de Janeiro-Aeroporto Galeao (*Tom Jobim*), usually operated with Airbus A330, this time the comfortable A380 has been flying, still a rare bird in Latin America. Air France, official airline of the French team and sponsor of the Club France in Rio, started at Monday, August 22nd, to bring back the French Olympic team (PARIS CDG 13:30 local time → Rio GIG 20:15 local time / Rio GIG 23:45 local time → Paris CDG next day at 16:05). Further 3 airplanes have been involved in this project.

"It has been a real disco, there was music, everybody has been excited, we have been dancing with the team. It was the first team that I had a flight, where everybody did stand." – so it should have been described by Teddy Riner, gold medal decorated judoka after the arrival in Paris. This board mail cover, one of totally 240 ones, has been aboard at the both flights.



For these special covers, also remembering the „40th anniversary of the first commercial supersonic flight Paris – Dakar – Rio“, stamps personalized for this special flight have been used. There have been produced 3 stamps with different face values respectively defined usages. Apart from the cachet and the marking of the Aéroport Charles de Gaulle (CDG) an unknown Olympic „postmark“ can be seen at a – more symbolically affixed, because not necessary, like described later – Brazilian stamp. The postmark has a fixed

date, from the day after the closing. At first look it seems to be an Olympic postmark, but this deludes. There is no relation to the Brazilian post (like the abbreviation “AC” for post-office or “Correios”). And how the posting in Rio should have been handled after landing at 8:15 p.m. and departure 3 hours later? The French Concorde aficionados gave me the confirmation, that it is not a Brazilian postmark, although rather similar in design, but one created by the AF airmail team.

It is a nice item, documenting the flight of the French Olympic team by philatelic means, and it has been aboard indeed. But wouldn't have there been an other solution to prevent misinterpretations in connection with the pseudo-Brazilian postmark?

For airmail collectors a reliable source: the activities of the Czech and Hungarian Olympic collectors. These sister societies – OLYMPSPORT and MOSFIT – used the contacts to the NOC to let mail fly aboard to the Olympic hosting cities in the last years.



This time the Hungarian collector friends sent airmail to Rio at July 30th at the common postal way, when the bigger part of the Hungarian team started in Budapest. Unfortunately only now, in late March 2017, some covers, mailed “poste restante”, came back.

The cachet pictures the water polo and canoeing as disciplines which have been for Hungarians successful ones in the Olympic history.



The OLYMPSPORT group provided again a postal meter for the departure of the Czech Olympic team, but because of a logistical problem the mail stayed in Prague and did not run with the team to Rio.

The canoeist Josef Dostál, in London 2012 decorated with a bronze medal, was as motif a good choice: In Rio he added in the K-1 race over 1000m a silver medal, in the K-4 at the same distance a bronze.

Unfortunately the Austrian airmail collectors society (ÖFSV) did not extend its “Olympic activity” with Austria Post to 2016, so we miss some traditional good items.

¹ There are different clubs for airmail collectors in Germany (ILA - Lufthansa, IAPC berlin, APCD, EAPC), resulting from the history of airmail collecting here. They collaborate, but didn't agree to unite.

² It means they applied for a special dispatch with that certain flight at the IPZ at the airport in Frankfurt/Main, the sorting centre for all the international mail. The collectors (club members) get the announcement before and can send prepared mail to the club. The club sends then the bundle to the IPZ for further handling. Also pre-cancelled mail can send in under cover to the club. The mailing of that bundle with the certain flight is confirmed by a postal document.

³ It looks strange, as collectors in Rio during the Olympics never saw this postmark before Aug 6th. The explanation is, that there have been contacts established for special airmail for the soccer World Cup in 2014. These contacts have been refreshed, and so it has been possible to get the postmark with a wished date (this happens in Brasil, as we know from the Aug 5th cancelations, too). The special Rio postmark was used by that postal agency which operated the temporary office in the IOC hotel. The mail has been collected and postmarked later (after the Olympic or Paralympic (?) closing) there, and send back as bundle to the ILA.

⁴ This is an online offer from German Post called „Plusbrief-Individuell“

⁵ These were the temporary offices in the Olympic Village, the Main Press Centre, the IOC hotel and the regular philatelic counter in the main post-office.

⁶ It has been sent from Dublin probably to the „maker“, from him then later to the ILA for further handling.

⁷ The other possibility of handling would be: After adding the Baila Àtha Cliath postmarking (it means Dublin in Irish language) by an insider within the post (or at least with good connections to the Irish post), these covers have been sent with others in a shelter cover to the Rio post-office.