

The 1912 Rhein-Main Zeppelin Airmails

The German Reichspost granted permission for a "Postcard Week" to be held from 10th to 16th June 1912, to raise funds for the "Mother and Baby Care Charity". This charity had raised funds over a number of years to found and run homes for mothers and babies in the city of Darmstadt. This particular "Postcard Week" had special mail consignments carried by air either on the Zeppelin airship Schwaben (LZ 10) or the Euler biplane "Gelber Hund". These were the first airmail flights made with the permission and cooperation of the Reichspost, who also agreed to recognise the unofficial airmail stamps sold on behalf of the charity and to allow these stamps to be cancelled. As well as the obvious charity support, this postcard week was a clear demonstration of the zeppelin capability to carry large quantities of mail and an early indication of commercial capability.

Exhibit Purpose: Recording the first time a Zeppelin was used to collect, transport and deliver official airmail, with the cooperation of the German Reichspost.

Deutsche Luftschiffahrt AG (DELAG) of Frankfurt-am-Main was a subsidiary company of Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH. It was the first airline in the world, being founded for the purpose of conducting flights between the larger German cities and excursion flights over scenic regions. Schwaben was the tenth zeppelin airship, built in July 1911, and it went on to have 218 flights and carried a total of 1500 passengers before burning on the ground in June 1912, just after the close of the "Postcard Week".

The postcard week was so successful it was expanded to include flights the following week with the final flight on 23rd June.



Exhibit Scope: Mail carried by Schwaben (Zeppelin LZ10) from each of the five major cities of the German Grand Duchy of Hessen, during the Postcard Week from June 10 to 16th June 1912, and further extended to June 23rd.

The five cities are Frankfurt-am-Main, Darmstadt, Mainz, Offenbach and Worms.

Exhibit Plan; Mail from each of the major participating cities, presented chronologically by date.

The main sponsor for the Charity "Postcard Week" was the Grand Duchess Eleonore of Hessen und bei Rhein. This is one of a set of "Royal Family" postcards, photographed by court photographer Steinacker and produced to raise money for the charity during postcard week.

Mint Card, pre-franked with semi official 10pf Charity Week adhesive, card face featuring the Grand Duchess Eleonore of Essen und bei Rhein.