



THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY LONDON

## THE “OCEAN LETTER”



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## Introduction

The Ocean Letter, not to be confused with a ship letter or maritime letter, exists thanks to the invention of the wireless telegraph by Guglielmo Marconi in 1896. On September 11<sup>th</sup> 1911, the German company DEBEG (*Deutsche Betriebsgesellschaft für Drahtlose Telegrafie*) introduced a new cheaper telegraph service on German ships: the "OZEANBRIEF". The system worked as follows: a passenger on board a cruise ship handed the message to be transmitted to the radio officer of the ship. As the ship was usually too far from any coastline, the message was transmitted wirelessly to a ship within range, sailing in the opposite direction. The radio officer of the receiving ship wrote or typed the message on a specially designed form, and placed it in an envelope. At the first port of call, the letter was handed over to the harbour post office for registered forwarding to the addressee. In 1925, the registration became no longer mandatory and Ocean Letters could be posted in any harbour, not necessarily the first port of call.

AN OCEAN LETTER (Prefix OL) is a special class of message accepted on board ship for transmission by wireless to another vessel proceeding in the <u>opposite</u> direction. The latter vessel forwards the message to its destination by registered post from the first port of call.	A POSTE RADIOTELEGRAM (Prefix Poste) is a special class of message accepted on board ship for transmission to another vessel proceeding in <u>any</u> direction. The latter vessel forwards the message to its destination through the ordinary postal channels from a selected port of call, indicated in the address.
OCEAN LETTERS and POSTE-RADIOTELEGRAMS should not be confused with ordinary wireless telegrams, which are treated telegraphically throughout.	

*Notice on the reverse side of Ocean Letter telegram explaining the service*

Every telegraph or shipping company that wanted to operate an Ocean Letter service was required to get authorization from their postal authorities to handle letters, which normally was the privilege of the national postal authorities. Much to the consternation of Marconi, it was not until early 1913 that his company received authorization in the UK to start the Ocean Letter service. As a result, DEBEG, and the Belgian wireless telegraph company had a major advantage in introducing the service on board many ships in the period before WW1.

Enclosure 3 in No. 139.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, London, to the HIGH COMMISSIONER.

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 20th August, 1913.

In reply to your letter of the 3rd ultimo concerning the system of "ocean letters" which has been introduced by the Marconi International Marine Communication Company, I am directed by the Postmaster-General to inform you that the system was introduced in January last under his authority. It was already in operation on certain foreign ships, and the Postmaster-General would have no objection to its extension to British ships whose wireless installations are controlled by other companies. As, however, the charges are less than those authorized by the international regulations, any proposals for the extension of the system should originate with the shipowners or wireless companies concerned.

The conditions under which the system is operated on British ships are as stated in your letter, but there are further conditions as follows:—

- (1.) That the messages shall not be transmitted when either of the ships concerned is within range of a coast station;
- (2.) That only one ship-to-ship transmission is allowed; and
- (3.) That radio-telegrams accepted under the provisions of the International Convention shall not be delayed.

I have, &c.,  
E. CRABB,  
For the Secretary.

The High Commissioner for New Zealand.

*Authorisation notice of 1913 to New Zealand by the General Post Office London.*

Several telegraph and shipping companies rolled out the new service on board of their ships and developed special telegram forms and matching envelopes. Depending on the operating language of the country under which flag the ships sailed, different names were used on the telegram forms and envelopes: Ocean Letter, Ozean-Brief, Radio-Ozean Brief, Lettre-Océan, Radio Letter, Radiobrief, Radiobrev, Lettera Oceanica, Wireless Letter, Ocean Poste, Carta de Alta Mar...

Only 11 countries issued permits to shipping and telegraph companies: Austria-Hungary, Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Norway, United States of America, and New Zealand. As the on-board telegraph equipment improved rapidly in the decades following the introduction of the service in 1911, its success dwindled sharply by 1940. Only a few Ocean Letters can be found up to the mid 50's.

This handout gives an overview of a diverse selection of Ocean Letter telegram forms and envelopes per country, used by the different telegraph and shipping companies.



# 1. AUSTRIA-HUNGARY : K.k. BORDTELEGRAPHENAMT

Austria-Hungary, formally known as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, often referred to as the Austro-Hungarian Empire or the Dual Monarchy, introduced the Ocean Letter service in January 1912. The Imperial and Royal Telegraph Service (Kaiserliche und Königliche Bordtelegraphenamt) positioned their own staff on board the ships to run the Ozeanbrief service.

Die Daten im dienstlichen Eingange der mittels Typendruckapparates ausgefertigten Telegramme bedeuten: 1. den Namen des Aufgabebesetztes, 2. die Aufgabennummer, 3. die Wortzahl (eventuell in Bruchform), 4. den Monatstag und 5. die Stunde und Minute der Aufgabe. Le indicazioni nel testo di servizio dei telegrammi compilati a mezzo d'un apparato a tipi significano: 1. il nome dell'ufficio d'impostazione, 2. il numero d'impostazione, 3. il numero delle parole (eventualmente in forma di frazione), 4. il giorno del mese e 5. l'ora e minuti d'impostazione.		Gattung: { <i>Ob</i> } Classe: { } Eingangsnummer: { <i>4</i> } Numero d'arrivo: { }	Die Telegraphenverwaltung übernimmt hinsichtlich der ihr zur Beförderung oder Bestellung übergebenen Telegramme keine wie immer geartete Verantwortung. L'amministrazione dei telegrafi non assume alcuna responsabilità per i telegrammi consegnati per la trasmissione o il recapito.
K. k. Bordtelegraphenamt <i>Argentina</i> <i>Keller</i> <i>Schiffahrt 41 N. 58 H.</i>			
Dienstliche Angaben: Indicazioni d'ufficio:		Aufgenommen von { <i>Jän</i> } auf Ltg. Nr. { } ricevuto da { } sulla lin. Nro. { } am { <i>14/4</i> } { <i>3</i> } { <i>3</i> } { <i>3</i> } { <i>3</i> } { <i>3</i> } { <i>3</i> } { <i>3</i> } { <i>3</i> } { <i>3</i> } il { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { } durch { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { } da { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { } { }	
<i>Pennsylvania</i>		Telegramm — Telegramma aus — da	
Nr. { } Nro. { }		Taxw. { <i>30</i> } par. tass. { } { (W. { } ) } { (Ch. { } ) } { (P. { } ) } { (C. { } ) } { aufgegeben am { } } { impostato add. { } }	
<b>OZEAN BRIEF</b>			

K. k. Bordtelegraphenamt <i>Argentina</i>	
Nr. <i>1</i> Trieste I 465	<b>OZEAN BRIEF</b> <i>Keller</i> <i>Altwegg Berg</i> <i>Thurgau</i> <i>Schweiz</i> <i>Rekommundiert</i>
Trieste I 29 APR 1913 35 5 10	

OZEANBRIEF (telegram form and envelope) from the K.k. BORDTELEGRAPHENAMT, sent registered on April 29<sup>th</sup> 1913 from the harbour of TRIESTE to BERG (CH). Postage rate of 25 Heller for an international letter and 25 Heller registration fee. Telegram above was sent wirelessly from the steamer S.S.PENNSYLVANIA (Deutsche Lloyd, Hamburg Amerika Line) to the steamer ARGENTINA, which received the message on April 14<sup>th</sup> 1913 when it sailed about 1000 miles east of New York on its route to Trieste. This is the only known OZEANBRIEF from Austria-Hungary. The service was introduced in January 1912 and halted at the outbreak of WWI. After the war, Austria-Hungary had no longer access to any harbour (as Trieste had been annexed by Italy) and the service from this country disappeared.

## 2.1. GERMANY : DEUTSCHE OST-AFRIKA LINIE



The German East Africa Line (*Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie*) was a shipping line, established in 1890 as an alternative to the existing shipping services to East Africa, including German East Africa (1891–1919), then dominated by United Kingdom shipping lines. They introduced the Ocean Letter service in September 1911, at the same time as DEBEG (see 2.2.).





*OCEANBRIEF of the Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie (D.O.A.L.), delivered at the harbour of Lisbon by the steamship PRINZREGENT and sent registered to BRESLAU (Germany) on November 16<sup>th</sup> 1911. Postage rate 50 reis for letter in international service and 50 reis registration fee, paid by a 100 reis stamp with REPUBLICA overprint. On the right, partial copy of the verso of the letter with the logo of the D.O.A.L. arrival cancel BRESLAU 20.11.1911 and the name of the ship servicing the German colonies. The only known Ocean Letter of this shipping company, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest known.*

## 2.2. GERMANY : DEBEG (Deutsche Betriebsgesellschaft für drahtlose Telegrafie)

DEBEG, a company founded on 14th January 1911 in Berlin, developed wireless telegraphy and was very important in the history of radio technology in Germany. The shareholders were AEG Aktiengesellschaft, Siemens & Halske, Telefunken and the Brussels-based Belgian Compagnie Télégraphie sans fil (Company for Wireless Telegraphy).



*OZEAN-BRIEF of DEBEG (Deutsche Betriebsgesellschaft für drahtlose Telegrafie, type I), posted at the harbour of SWAKOPMUND (GERMAN WEST AFRICA) and sent registered on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1912 to an address in the city. Postage rate 10pf for a local letter 30pf registration fee. 40pf Deutsche Reich stamp cancelled with OST-AFRIKANISCHE HAUPTLINIE 18.2.12. Arrival date stamp SWAKOPMUND DSW 19.2.12 on the reverse side.*



*OZEAN-BRIEF sent registered on November 17<sup>th</sup> 1923 from the harbour of ALTONA to LEIPZIG. Telegram form DEBEG type 17.19. Transmitted wirelessly on November 5<sup>th</sup> 1923 from the S/S NORDFRIESLAND to the S/S BELGRANO. Postage rate 10.000.000.000Mk for a national letter and 10.000.000.000Mk registration fee. This inflation postage rate was only used during 8 days (November 12<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> 1923). The only known Ocean Letter with this extreme inflation postage rate.*



*RADIO-OCEAN-BRIEF date stamped on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1930 on board of the S/S BREMEN with the duplex cancel DEUTSCH-AMERIKANISCHE SEEPOST BREMEN-NEW YORK and delivered by catapult flight on September 4<sup>th</sup> 1930 at NEW YORK harbour from where it was forwarded as a domestic letter to PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA. Postage rate 15pf for a domestic letter and 50pf additional fee for the catapult flight.*



*Original photograph of the catapult launching station of the S/S BREMEN. The seaplane was launched when the ship was about 300 nautical miles from its port of call and landed about 2½ hours later in the harbour of New York or Southampton, shortening the travel time of the post bags by two days. Catapulting the seaplane was only performed in calm clear weather.*

<h1 style="text-align: center;">OZEAN-BRIEF</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center;">OCEAN-LETTER • CARTA DE ALTA MAR</h2>			
Aufgenommen auf D. Dresden am 16 März 1933 um 8 20/3 durch Rk.			Lid. Nr. 61.
Von D From S. S. Del vapore	bremen ddas	Nr. 4	14/21 W. Tag 16 März.1933
frau maria melchior egloffsteinerstr 35 nuernberg			

*Telegram wirelessly transmitted on March 16<sup>th</sup> 1933 from the S/S BREMEN and received by the S/S DRESDEN, both ships from the NORD-DEUTSCHER LLOYD. Telegram form where the address of the destination is written or typed in a pre-printed rectangle area. This new form comes also with a new type of envelope (see next page) with a transparent window for the address.*



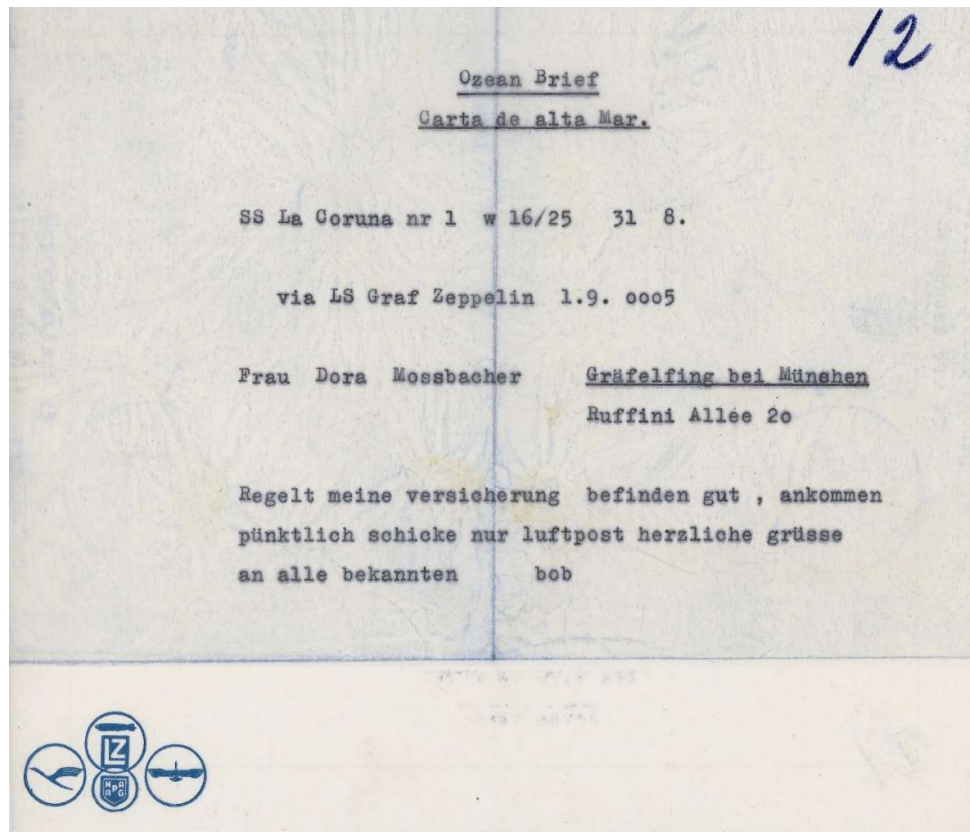


The envelope shown is date stamped April 4<sup>th</sup> 1931 on board of the S/S EUROPA with the big circle cancel DEUTSCH-AMERIKANISCHE SEEPOST BREMEN-NEW YORK and was sent per airmail from a foreign harbour (likely Southampton). Postage rate of 25pf for an international letter and 10pf airmail fee

## 2.3. GERMANY : LUFTHANSA

In 1932 and 1933, LUFTHANSA (in cooperation with DEBEG) operated an Ocean Letter service on board of the Graf Zeppelin on the route Germany-Brazil. The airship acted as the second “ship” to receive wireless telegrams from ships sailing below on the Germany – New-York route. Ocean Letters towards Argentina were flown by the Sindicato Condor airline, connecting Pernambuco (Brazil) to Buenos Aires (Argentina).

The Condor Syndikat was a German trade company, with headquarters in Berlin, that operated airline services in Brazil while also providing aircraft, maintenance, and aviation information. It is also the parent company of the Brazilian airlines Varig and Sindicato Condor, which later became Serviços Aéreos Cruzeiro do Sul. They were the two oldest airlines in Brazil.



Silk-paper watermarked telegram paper from Lufthansa with message received wirelessly from the S.S. LA CORUNA on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1932. This ship sailed about 800 km southwest of the Liberian coast (North 1°, West 16°25'). The received message was typed on the silk paper the next day, September 1<sup>st</sup> 1932.





*OZEAN-BRIEF from LUFTHANSA, telegram message received during the GRAF ZEPPELIN's 5<sup>th</sup> return trip (September 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> 1932, Recife to Friedrichshafen). Postage rate RM1.50 for airmail Brazil to Germany. Posted in Friedrichshafen on September 7<sup>th</sup> 1932 to Munich.*



*OZEAN-BRIEF from LUFTHANSA, telegram message received during the GRAF ZEPPELIN's 9<sup>th</sup> outbound trip (October 24-27 1932). Postage rate RM1.50 for airmail beyond Brazil and 25pf for surface mail in Argentina. At arrival at RECIFE on October 27<sup>th</sup> 1932, the letter was forwarded by the SYNDICATO CONDOR flight connecting to BUENOS AIRES where the Ocean Letter arrived on October 29<sup>th</sup> 1932. By surface mail to ITUZAINGO, where the letter arrived the next day.*

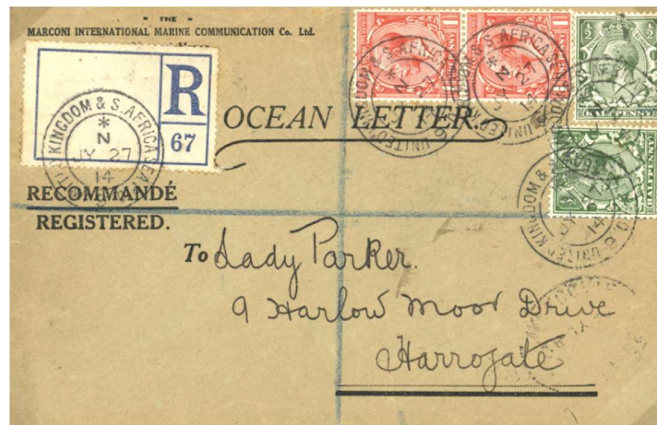
Ocean letters flown by Zeppelin are quite rare. The author's collection includes only eight Lufthansa envelopes, but only two of them have the telegram form included. Globally, there are only five combined telegram/envelope on record.

### 3.1. UNITED KINGDOM : MARCONI INTERNATIONAL MARINE COMMUNICATIONS Co. Ltd.



*Guglielmo Marconi in 1896*

The Marconi International Marine Communication Company Limited was established on April 25<sup>th</sup> 1900 as part of Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company Limited. It traded under this name until 2002 when it became Marconi Selenia Marine Company.



OCEAN LETTER from MARCONI(UK) cancelled on board a ship of the Union Castle Line on July 27<sup>th</sup> 1914. This shipping line serviced the mail transport between UK and SOUTH-AFRICA. The letter N in the inner circle of the cancel indicates that the ship was sailing NORTH. Delivered to the post office in the harbour of SOUTHAMPTON on July 28<sup>th</sup> 1914, sent registered to HARROGATE(UK). Postage rate 1d for a domestic letter and 2d registration fee. Last date on record for an English Ocean Letter before the outbreak of WW1, when the Ocean Letter service was interrupted.


### 3.2. UNITED KINGDOM : RADIO COMMUNICATION COMPANY

MARCONI UK Ltd merged in 1924 with the RADIO COMMUNICATION COMPANY but both companies kept operating under their own name. In 1930, the amalgamated telegraph companies formally merged into a new company under a new name: BRITISH WIRELESS MARINE SERVICE. See chapter 3.3.

Form No. 10.  
RADIO COMMUNICATION COMPANY, LIMITED.  
34-35, NORFOLK STREET, STRAND, W.C.2.  
(W.S.S. 104.) (865-294)

**OCEAN LETTER.**

ARMADALE CASTLE

Station.  Date 14 NOV 1923

Prefix. QZ. Number. 2. No. of Words. 29

POSTED. Cape Town. Date 19 NOV 1923. By JPR

RECEIVED. From MWS 1030. Time 1030. CHARGES. Due to own Ship. Paid out.

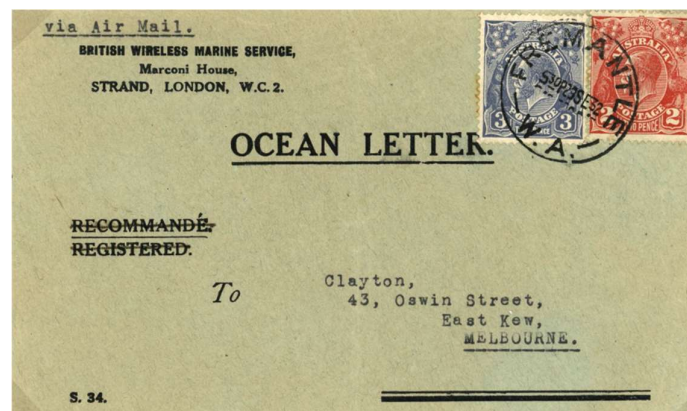
Handed in on board the S.S. Briton on 14 NOV 1923 for transmission and posting via S.S. ARMADALE CASTLE

To Eugene Marais, Box 1. Pretoria.



OCEAN LETTER telegram transmitted from the S/S BRITON on November 14<sup>th</sup> 1923, received at the S/S ARMADALE CASTLE (both ships from the Union Castle Line), sent registered on November 19<sup>th</sup> 1923 from CAPE TOWN(SA) to PRETORIA(SA). Postage rate 2d for a domestic letter and 4d registration fee. Until today, the only OCEAN LETTER on record with the very rare round SHIPPING POSTMASTER 3 / CAPE TOWN cancel.

### 3.3. UNITED KINGDOM : BRITISH WIRELESS MARINE SERVICE



OCEAN LETTER envelope posted September 29<sup>th</sup> in the harbour of Fremantle, Western Australia and sent to an address in Melbourne (New South Wales). Postage rate was 5d for an inland letter of first weight by airmail. The inland distance was over 3000km. Header BRITISH WIRELESS MARINE SERVICE, the new name of Marconi-UK.



### 3.4. UNITED KINGDOM : CUNARD STEAM SHIP COMPANY

A few shipping companies had their own telegraphists on board their ships and used their own telegram forms and envelopes. One of those companies was the English CUNARD STEAMSHIP COMPANY that operated an Ocean Letter service till 1936.

Form No. A 116

**THE CUNARD STEAM SHIP COMPANY LIMITED.**  
Wireless Department.

**OCEAN LETTER.**

S.S. BERENGARIA Date 1 JUL 1925

Prefix. OL Number. 5 No. of Words. 30

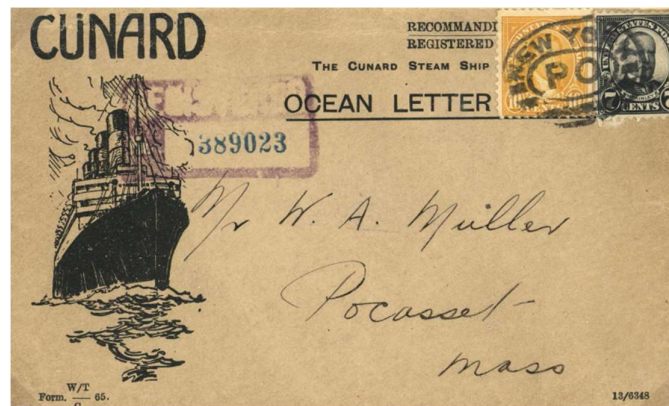
POSTED. Port \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVED. From STBX Time 13.30 By \_\_\_\_\_

CHARGES. Due to own Ship \_\_\_\_\_ Paid out \_\_\_\_\_

Handed in on board the S.S. Andani on 30 1925  
for transmission and posting via S.S. BERENGARIA

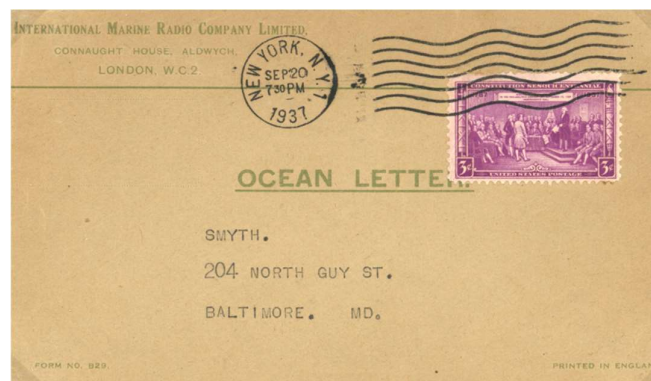
To Mr William A Muller  
Pocasset mass



OCEAN LETTER telegram and envelope. Transmitted wirelessly on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1925 from the S/S BERENGARIA to the S/S ANDANA (both ships from the CUNARD STEAM SHIP COMPANY). The letter (CUN type W/T65C) was posted on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1925 in the harbour of NEW YORK and sent registered to POCASSET, MASSACHUSETTS. Postage rate of 2¢ for the domestic letter and 15¢ registration fee (since April 1<sup>st</sup> 1925). First type of a Cunard Ocean Letter envelopes with title OCEAN LETTER SERVICE.

### 3.5. UNITED KINGDOM : INTERNATIONAL MARINE RADIO Co.

The INTERNATIONAL MARINE RADIO COMPANY Ltd was founded in London in 1883 as International Western Electric and became a daughter company of the International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) in 1925. This company offered telegraph services on board the CUNARD ships from mid-1936 onwards when CUNARD halted their own onboard telegraph services.

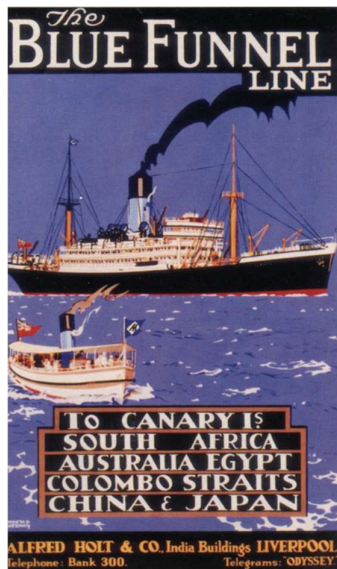


OCEAN LETTER posted by the S/S QUEEN MARY upon arrival on September 20<sup>th</sup> 1937 in the harbour of NEW YORK(US) and sent as an ordinary letter to BALTIMORE. Postage rate 3¢ for an ordinary domestic letter (since July 6<sup>th</sup> 1932).



### 3.6. UNITED KINGDOM : THE BLUE FUNNEL LINE

THE BLUE FUNNEL LINE was a shipping company, owned by ALFRED HOLT & Co. It serviced the mail ships between the United Kingdom and the Far East and acquired THE CHINA MUTUAL STEAM NAVIGATION Co. Ltd. in 1902.



200-W 20-H 4346/26. THE OCEAN STEAM SHIP CO. LTD. AND THE CHINA MUTUAL STEAM NAVIGATION CO. LTD. **THE BLUE FUNNEL LINE** (Alfred Holt & Co.) **WIRELESS SERVICE.**

RECEIVED for delivery on s/s "Patroclus" Voyage 11. PREFIX col Radio. Office of Origin Polyphemus No. of Message 1. Words 30 Handed in at date 20/8/1927 time 1700 m.

SERVICE	Charges to pay.	RECEIVED.
INSTRUCTIONS	Total	Date 20.8.27
Poste Marseilles		Time 1712
		From Polyphemus
		By H Quinn

TO Miss L Perham Droxford Cedar Road Weybridge Surrey

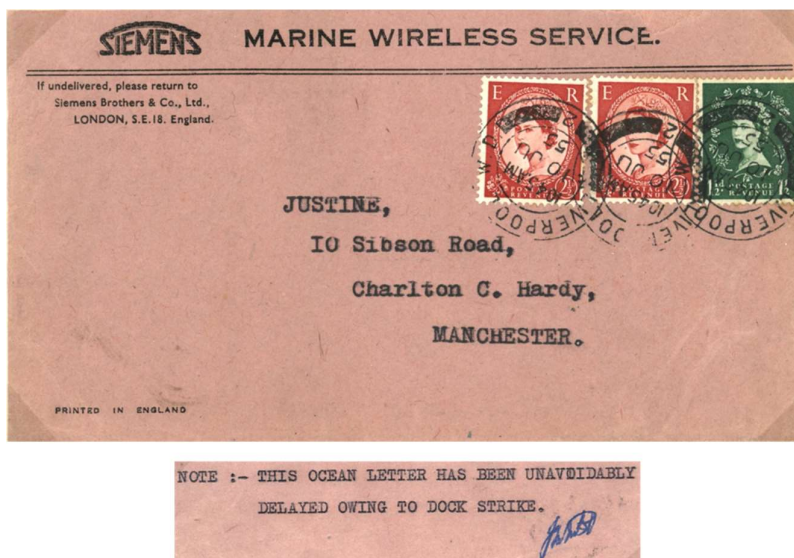
Dear Sir

Delighted to receive letter at Suez Sorry no time to answer before sailing Writing from Penang All the best

Ron

OCEAN LETTER telegram transmitted wirelessly by the S/S POLYPHEMUS on August 20<sup>th</sup> 1927 to the S/S PATROCLUS, both ships owned by the BLUE FUNNEL LINE. The telegram was posted in the harbour of Marseille (FR) and sent by post to WEYBRIDGE, SURREY(UK). The only known document from this shipping company.

### 3.7. UNITED KINGDOM : SIEMENS WIRELESS SERVICE



The last known Ocean Letter envelop from Siemens, posted in the harbour of LIVERPOOL on July 10<sup>th</sup> 1955, sent by express service to MANCHESTER(UK). Postage rate 2 ½d for a domestic letter and 4d express fee. The Ocean Letter had been delayed several days because of a strike in the docks....

### 4.1. BELGIUM : COMPAGNIE DE TÉLÉGRAPHIE SANS FIL

The Belgian Compagnie de Télégraphie sans Fil was founded in 1900 with capital from Marconi, Telefunken and the King of Belgium. The company started the Ocean Letter service on Belgian ships in 1912, but went bankrupt shortly before the outbreak of WW1.

Within a few weeks, a new company was founded to continue the Ocean Letter service: Société Anonyme Internationale de Télégraphie sans Fil (S.A.I.T.), see chapter 4.2.



COMPAGNIE DE TÉLÉGRAPHIE SANS FIL (Société Anonyme). Siège social : 13, rue Bréderode, Bruxelles

**RADIO-LETTER**

4 31

From S. S. Lusitania 25th Sept 1913 via S. S. Lapland

TO  
à Mr H S McClure  
128 Broadway  
New York

---

We	much	appreciate	the	spirit
of	your	gift	in	all
senses	and	thank	you	cordially
capital	voyage	hoping	to	meet
you	again			

Michell Miller

*RADIO-LETTER folding letter telegram. Message transmitted wirelessly on September 25<sup>th</sup> 1913 by the S/S LUSITANIA and received by the S/S LAPLAND. Both ships belonging to the famous RED STAR LINE shipping company. Posted on September 29<sup>th</sup> 1913 in the harbour of NEW YORK(US) and sent registered to BROADWAY, NEW YORK. Postage rate of 2¢ for a domestic letter, 10¢ registration fee.*

## 4.2. BELGIUM : S.A.I.T.

Immediately after the bankruptcy of the Compagnie de Télégraphie Sans Fil, a new Belgian telegraph company was founded with the name Société Anonyme Internationale de TÉLÉGRAPHIE SANS FIL, abbreviated as S.A.I.T. The company operated the Ocean Letter service on Belgian ships. When WW1 broke out on August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914, all Belgian telegraphists were moved to ships of neutral countries (The Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Spain) to continue the Ocean letter during the whole war.



*Two Belgian Radio-Letters used during WW1, the left used on a Spanish ship, the right one used on a Danish ship.*

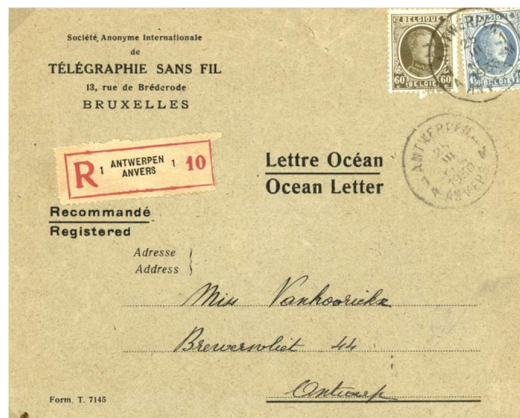




Two more Belgian Radio-Letters used during WWI, the left used on a Dutch ship, the right one used on a Norwegian ship.



RADIO LETTER type SAIT4 (unilingual title), introduced in 1926, delivered to the post office in ANTWERP harbour on December 29<sup>th</sup> 1926, sent registered to THULLIES(BE). Postage rate 50ct for domestic letter, 1Fr registration fee. Only two RADIO LETTERS of this type on record.



Form. T. 7144

Reçu le 20 MAR 1930 102.

Société Anonyme Internationale de Télégraphie sans Fil  
13, rue de Bréderode, Bruxelles

Lettre Océan-Ocean Letter				POSTÉE - POSTED			
Port	Heure	Unité	Par	Port	Heure	Unité	Par
60ct		1/2	10				

Déposé à bord du V. L'AVENIR à 10h 00

Reçu en vue de la transmission et du poste via S. S. 102. pour être transmis et posté via S. S. 102.

Miss Vanhoorick Breusselot 44 Antwerp.  
glad out being gulf longing for  
good news hugs and kind regards  
parents brother family are keeping  
smiling as you thinking of  
shiguta  
Lena

LETTRE OCÉAN / OCEAN LETTER. Message sent from sailing ship L'AVENIR to the S/S AMPETEO on March 20<sup>th</sup> 1930. Telegram form SAIT type T7144. Letter posted on March 25<sup>th</sup> 1930 in the harbour of ANTWERP and sent registered to the city. Postage rate 60ct and 1Fr50 registration fee. The only known Ocean Letter on record sent from a sailing ship.





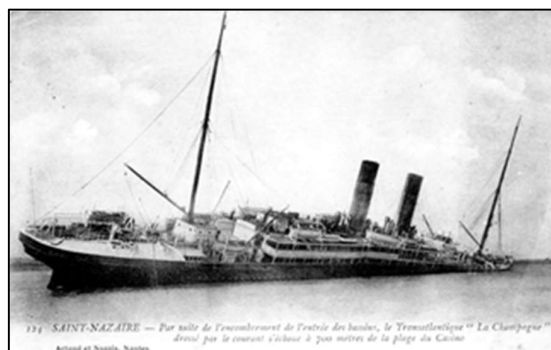
*L'Avenir (The Future) was a school ship of the Belgian Maritime Association ASMAR (Association Maritime). It was launched on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1908. In 1932, it was replaced as a school ship by the Mercator. L'Avenir was sold to a German shipping company and renamed Admiral Karpfanger. In March 1938, the four-masted school ship sank, probably somewhere southeast of New Zealand, en route to Cape Horn.*



*LETTRE OCEAN / OCEAN LETTER SAIL, sent in 1957 from NEWPORT (a Welsh harbour in the Bristol Channel) to GENOVA, Italy. The letter was sent on arrival of the ship in Newport on her voyage from New York to Antwerp. Postage rate of 4d for a letter to continental Europe. Very late usage of a Belgian Ocean Letter.*

## 5.1. FRANCE : COMPAGNIE FRANÇAISE MARITIME ET COLONIALE DE TÉLÉGRAPHIE SANS FIL

The French telegraph company COMPAGNIE FRANÇAISE MARITIME ET COLONIALE DE TÉLÉGRAPHIE SANS FIL was founded on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1903 in Paris as an associated company of the Marconi Wireless telegraph Co. of America. It started providing an Ocean Letter service in 1912. In August 1914, the service was interrupted because of the WW1. The company did not survive the war period and never restarted its services.



(previous page) Picture postcard of the ship LA CHAMPAGNE from the shipping company COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRALE TRANSATLANTIQUE that brought the Lettre Océan to Saint-Nazaire. It ran into the ground on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1915 in the harbour of SINT-NAZAIRE was scrapped right after. All passengers survived the accident.



LETTRE OCEAN cancelled on board of the mailboat LA CHAMPAGNE (see below) on the return voyage from COLON to SAINT NAZAIRE on October 14<sup>th</sup> 1913. Registration label with the cancel of the TPO and PAQUEBOT POSTE mark from the harbour post office. Sent registered to VINCENNES(FR). Postage rate of 10ct for a domestic letter and 25ct registration fee. Forwarded on October 16<sup>th</sup> 1913 (postage 15ct) to PANAMA on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1913.



Receipt for the payment of 2,25Fr for an OL of 7 words sent from the ship CARTHAGE on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1914, just days before the war stopped the Ocean Letter service on French ships. Likely UNIQUE.

## 5.2. FRANCE : SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE DE TRANSPORTS MARITIMES À VAPEUR



The French shipping company Société Générale des Transports Maritimes à Vapeur (SGTM) was founded in March 1865. It operated from MARSEILLE and was mostly active on the shipping routes to South America and the Caribbean islands. The company started operating a Lettre Océan Service in 1912. Until today, only one telegram and matching envelope has been found from this company.



SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE DE TRANSPORTS MARITIMES A VAPEUR  
70, RUE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE -- MARSEILLE

23 JAN 1928  
SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE DE TRANSPORTS MARITIMES A VAPEUR -- S.S. FLORIDA

**LETTRE OCÉAN**

Transmise du Paquetbot *Mendoza* le *23* - *1* - 192*8* à h. m.

Déposée au bureau de poste de *Rio de Janeiro* le *23* - *1* - 192*8* à h. m.

par l'Opérateur-télégraphiste du Paquetbot **"FLORIDA"**

---

ADRESSE : *Georgette Guérin Poste Restante*  
*Rio*



*LETTRE OCÉAN telegraphed wirelessly from the S/S MENDOZA on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1928 to the S/S FLORIDA. Blue date stamp from the telegraph station on board of the S/S Florida. Posted from the harbour post office of RIO DE JANEIRO with POSTE RESTANTE address in an ordinary envelope. Postage rate of 300 Reis for the domestic letter and 200 Reis for the Poste Restante service, paid with postage-due stamp.*

### 5.3. FRANCE : COMPAGNIE RADIO-MARITIME

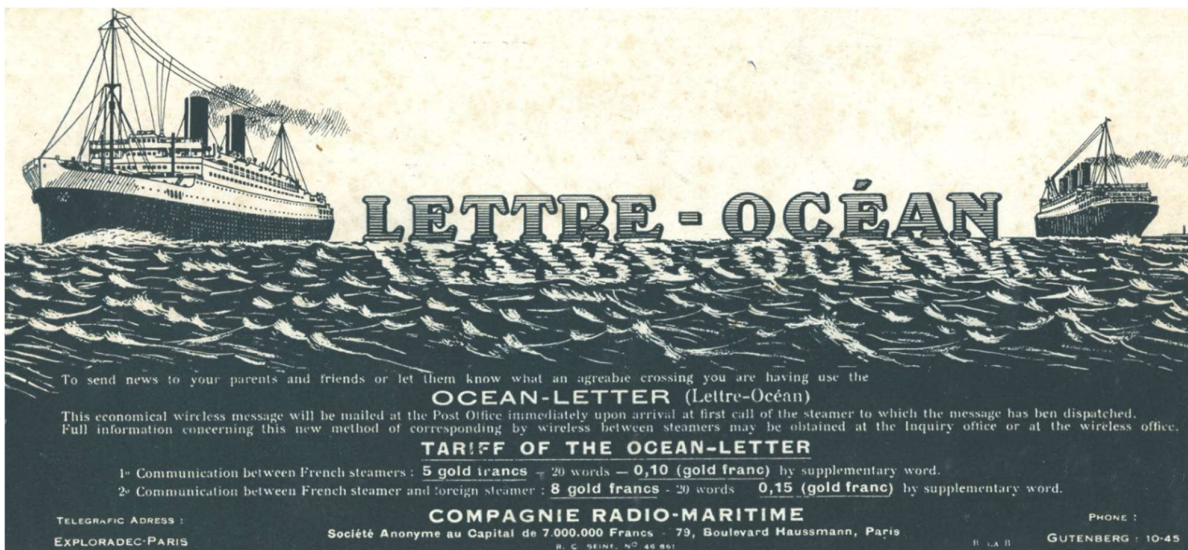
The telegraph company COMPAGNIE RADIO-MARITIME was founded in 1919 just after WW1 as a daughter of the COMPAGNIE FRANÇAISE RADIO-ELECTRIQUE. In 1923 they received from the French PTT (Administration Des Postes et Telegraphes), together with the COMPAGNE GÉNÉRALE TRANS-ATLANTIQUE, the exclusive rights to install radio transmitters on board of French ships and to the exploitation of a LETTRE OCÉAN service. With the outbreak of WW2 in 1940, all granted licenses were withdrawn and the LETTRE OCÉAN service ended abruptly.

**Next page:** a publicity card distributed among the passengers on board of French cruise ships to encourage the usage of OCEAN LETTERS. The COMPAGNIE RADIO-MARITIME used these cards around 1925-1930 to announce the tariff for sending an Ocean Letter from the ship:

- Between two French steamers: 5 gold francs for the first 20 words and 0,10 gold francs for each word extra.
- Between a French and a foreign steamer: 8 gold francs for the first 20 words and 0,15 gold francs for each word extra

The reasons for the different tariffs are simple: in the first case, all the revenues of the LETTRE OCÉAN service remained in the hands of the same company while in the second case, the profits had to be split with the foreign company.





To send news to your parents and friends or let them know what an agreeable crossing you are having use the

## OCEAN-LETTER (Lettre-Océan)

This economical wireless message will be mailed at the Post Office immediately upon arrival at first call of the steamer to which the message has been dispatched. Full information concerning this new method of corresponding by wireless between steamers may be obtained at the Inquiry office or at the wireless office.

### TARIFF OF THE OCEAN-LETTER

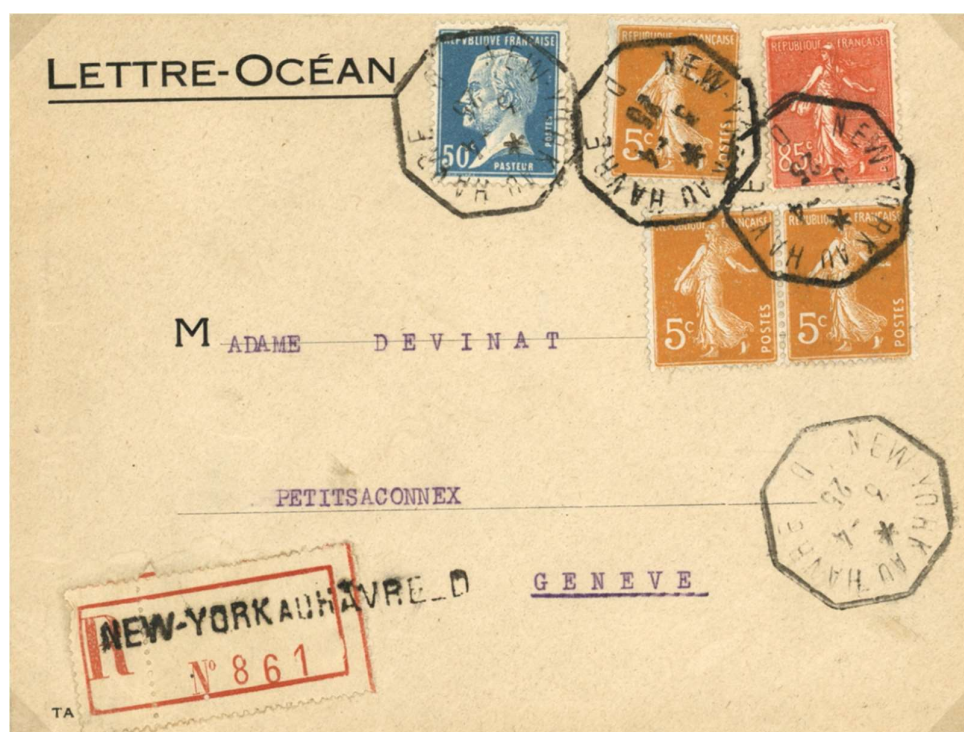
1- Communication between French steamers : **5 gold francs** - 20 words - **0,10 (gold franc)** by supplementary word.  
 2- Communication between French steamer and foreign steamer : **8 gold francs** - 20 words - **0,15 (gold franc)** by supplementary word.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS : **EXPLOADEC-PARIS**

**COMPAGNIE RADIO-MARITIME**  
 Société Anonyme au Capital de 7.000.000 Francs - 79, Boulevard Haussmann, Paris  
R. C. SEINE, N° 48.861

PHONE : **GUTENBERG : 10-45**

Publicity card with tariffs for Ocean Letters (see previous page).



LETTRE-OCÉAN CRM type TA41, posted on board of a ship of the NEW YORK – LE HAVRE line on April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1925. Posted in LE HAVRE and sent registered to GENEVE (CH). Postage rate 75ct for an international letter and 75ct registration fee.

T. A. 52.

**COMPAGNIE RADIO-MARITIME**  
 Société Anonyme, Capital 7.000.000 de Francs — 79, Boulevard Haussmann, Paris (8<sup>e</sup>)  
Registre du Commerce Seine, N° 48.861

## LETTRE-OCÉAN

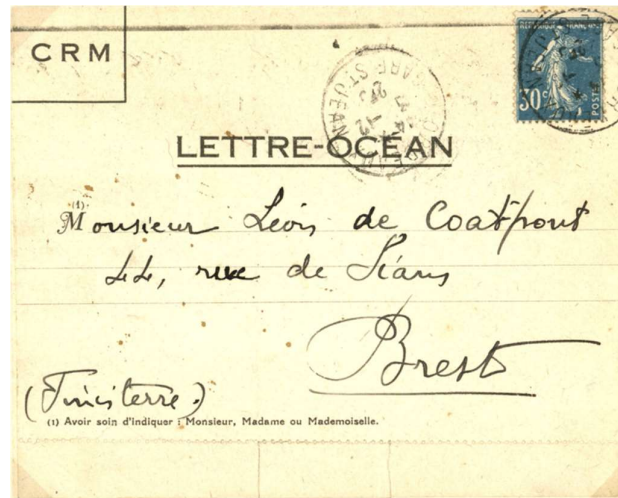
Transmise du Navire Aldran le 30 Novembre 1925 à 5 h 45 m  
 Déposée au B<sup>m</sup> de poste le — 19 — à — h — m  
 par l'Opérateur Télégraphiste du Navire **EUROPE**

---

TEXTE :

*Envoyé télégramme le 9 Bordeaux  
 N'allons pas à Ténériffe - bons baisers  
 Tous  
 Uva*

Inside of the folding telegram letter on the next page.



*LETTRE-OCÉAN CRM type TA52 folding letter telegram of the telegraph company COMPAGNIE RADIO-MARITIME. Telegraphed November 30<sup>th</sup> 1925 from the ship S/S ADRAR and received by the S/S EUROPE. Posted in the harbour of BORDEAUX on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1925 as an ordinary letter to BREST. Postage rate 30ct for a domestic letter in France.*

## 5.4. FRANCE : SOCIÉTÉ INDÉPENDANTE D'EXPLOITATION RADIOÉLECTRIQUE

This telegraph company was founded in 1928 and worked exclusively for the SOCIÉTÉ DES ŒUVRES DE MER for the exchange of LETTRE-OCÉAN between FRANCE and its fishing fleet in the areas of NEWFOUNDLAND, SAINT PIERRE & MIQUELON, ICELAND, and GREENLAND. The company was short-lived, as it was taken over by the COMPAGNIE RADIO-MARITIME in early 1930.



*LETTRE-OCÉAN envelope (SIER type 1) from the SOCIÉTÉ INDÉPENDANTE D'EXPLOITATION RADIOÉLECTRIQUE posted in a French harbour in May 1929 and send as an ordinary letter to St-SERVAN (FR). Postage rate 50ct for an ordinary domestic letter (rate since August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1926).*

The caritative SOCIÉTÉ DES ŒUVRES DE MER, a non-profit organisation supporting the French fishermen during their long campaigns in the Northern Atlantic, had worked out a preferential rate for Ocean Letters.

- From any French post office to the fishing boats: 6,25Fr per word, reduced to 4,25Fr per word if the ship was equipped with telegraph equipment from the Société Indépendante d'Exploitation Radioélectrique.
- From the office of the SOCIÉTÉ DES ŒUVRES DE MER to a fishing boat: 10Fr for 20 words, address included, 0,15Fr per additional word.
- From a fishing boat to mainland France: 6Fr for 20 words and 0,15Fr per additional word. To be paid by the shipping company at the end of the fishing campaign.



Telegrams sent under these cheaper rates were not allowed to contain any commercial information, only private messages to and from fishermen were allowed. The letter shown on the previous page is the only known LETTRE-OCEAN from this telegraph company. The letter is addressed to Madame Grumelon at St. Servan, the wife of the well-known Captain Celestine GRUMELON, of the trawler GURE-HERRIA which fished on cod during many campaigns between 1920 and 1936. This letter was first published in the book "La Grande Peche" by Joseph Bergier († 2016), former member of the French Academy of Philately.

## 6. THE NETHERLANDS : RADIO-HOLLAND

RADIO-HOLLAND is the calling name of the telegraph company, fully called *NEDERLANDSCHE TELEGRAAF MAATSCHAPPIJ RADIO-HOLLAND*. Radio-Holland was founded at the end of 1916 by a few shipowners. They installed wireless radio on board merchant ships with the aim of improving general safety. They operated an Ocean Letter service from 1924 onwards.

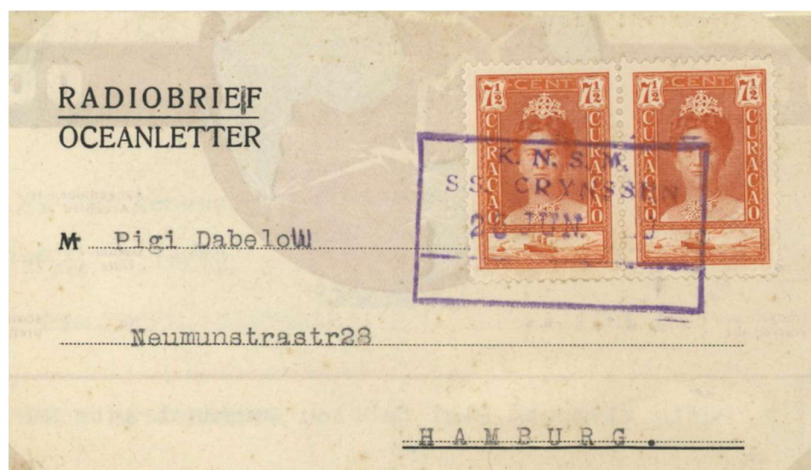


No. <i>204</i> <i>Postradio</i> <b>Nederlandsche Telegraaf Maatschappij Radio-Holland.</b>							
van R. H. 12. <b>AMSTERDAM.</b>							
<b>Radiobrieftelegram - Ocean-Letter - Radio Lettre</b>							
aangenomen a/b	S.S. <i>Rembrand</i>	datum	<i>23/5</i>	192 <i>6</i>	tijd	<i>15.55</i> m/s	
accepted o/b		date			time		
acceptée a/b		date			heure		
ontvangen door	S.S. <i>Patria</i>	datum	<i>23/5</i>	192 <i>6</i>	tijd	<i>16.05</i> m/s	
received by		date			time		
reçue par		date			heure		
nr. <i>6</i>	woorden <i>39/36</i>	door <i>2</i>	ter post bezorgd	<i>Marseille</i>	datum	<i>7/6</i> 192 <i>6</i>	
words	by	posted at	date				
mots	par	expédiée à	date				
adres	<i>Poste Marseille mevrouw vanOuwkerk</i> <i>Ramstraat 19 Utrecht Patria</i>						
address							
adresse							

RADIOBRIEF-TELEGRAM. Envelope and telegram form. Sent wirelessly on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1926 from the S/S REMBRAND to the S/S PATRIA. Posted at MARSEILLE (FR) on June 8<sup>th</sup> 1926 and sent as an ordinary letter to UTRECHT (NL). Postage rate of 1.25Fr for an international letter.

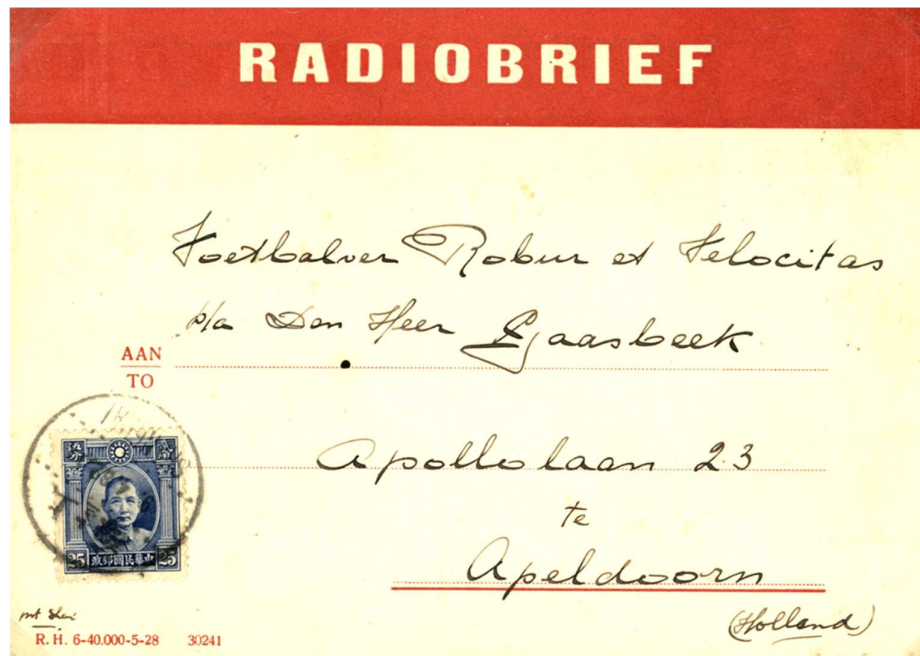


RADIOBRIEF-OCEAN LETTER folding letter telegram. Message telegraphed July 4<sup>th</sup> 1927 by the S/S STAGEN to the S/S VONDEL. Postage stamp cancelled on board of the ship with TPO POSTAGENT BATAVIA-AMSTERDAM cancel on July 24<sup>th</sup> 1927. Posted in GENOA (IT) and send as ordinary letter to VELD (NL), arrived date cancel July 25<sup>th</sup> 1927, forwarded to ARNHEM on July 28<sup>th</sup> 1927 and forwarded once more to DEN HAAG. Postage rate 12½ct, the preferential rate for international letter to the Netherlands. In accordance with the UPU rules for PAQUEBOT post, the Dutch Indies stamp was allowed to frank the envelope in Genoa to the Netherlands as they originated from "the last port of call".



RADIOBRIEF-OCEAN LETTER folded letter telegram (type RH5/6.29). Message telegraphed on June 3rd 1930 from the S/S VAN RENNELAER and received on board the S/S CRIJNSSEN, of the Koninklijke Nederlandse Stoomboot-Maatschappij (K.N.S.M.), the Royal Netherlands Steamship Company. Postage stamps cancelled on board with the ship's private date cancel on June 26th 1930. Upon arrival in PLYMOUTH harbour, sent as an ordinary letter to HAMBURG (DL). Postage rate of 15ct for an international letter. Perfect example of UPU rules for PAQUEBOT post (stamps from Last Port of Call) with stamps from Curaçao, transported with a Dutch ship, posted in England.





RADIOBRIEF. Posted on arrival in the harbour of SHANGHAI (China), sent as ordinary letter on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1932 to APELDOORN(NL). Postage rate of 25cts for an international letter from China. Franked with stamp of the 1931 issue with the portrait of SUN YAT SEN. The only known RADIOBRIEF on record, sent from China.



Reverse side of a Radiobrief (similar type as the one above) from Radio-Holland with publicity and tariffs for using Ocean Letters. Postage was not included in the telegram rate.



RADIOBRIEF posted on December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1937 in NEW ORLEANS, send by airmail to NEW-YORK, forwarded to BRUSSELS (BE) by ship. Request to deliver the letter on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1937, but because of local forwarding in Belgium, it only arrived on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1938 (date stamp on the reverse). Postage rate of 8¢ for outgoing airmail in the U.S. and 3¢ airmail fee in Europe, 1¢ convenience overpaid.



NEDERLANDSCHE TELEGRAAF MAATSCHAPPIJ „RADIO-HOLLAND” N.V.					
AMSTERDAM-C.		KEIZERSGRACHT 562			
RADIOBRIEF-OCEANLETTER					
Posten te - to post at		m/s		Datum - Date	
AVONMOUTH		ARTEMIS			
Soort - Prefix	Aangenomen a/b - Accepted a/b	No.	Woorden - Words	Datum - Date	Tijd - Time
POSTUR	S/S ROSALIA	2	71/75	29 April '38	16.15
Ontvangen Received	29 April	1938	Tijd Time	16.15	Door By
				B3	

RADIOBRIEF with telegram form. Message telegraphed on April 29<sup>th</sup> 1938 from the S/S ARTEMIS to the S/S ROSALIA. Posted in the harbour of AVONMOUTH/BRISTOL(UK) on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1938 and sent as an ordinary letter to BILTHOVEN(NL). Insufficiently franked with 1½d instead of 2½d and taxed with postage due of 10ct at arrival. Only known Ocean Letter on record with Postage Due on arrival.



## 7. ITALY : SOCIETA ITALIANA RADIO MARITTIMA

The address **VIA DEL CONDOTTI, ROMA** of the telegraph company is nothing less than the home of the famous **Guglielmo Marconi**, the inventor of wireless telegraphy, the man that made Ocean Letters possible.



FORM. 15 bis 1000 bl. - Aprile 1921

Ricevuto 18-IV-1922

**La Compagnia Internazionale Marconi per le Comunicazioni Marittime**  
Via del Collegio Romano, 15 - ROMA

Telegramma N. / Message			Prefix O. L.	Code	Radio Telegramma - Lettera	Imposted / Posted			
Ricevuto / Received						Porto / Port	Ore / Time	Data / Date	Da / By
Da / From	Ore / Time	Da / By	Ocean Letter						
144	8.40	Ward							

Accettato a bordo del Piroscafo / Handed in on board the Steamship  
per essere trasmesso e spedito per posta via s/s / for transmission and posting via s/s

Principe Udine il 18-IV-1922  
Re Vittorio -

To Lettera Raccom. Posta Genova -  
Al Franzi Acquarone 38 Genova -

Mio caro amico il nostro viaggio procede bene  
dopo qualche giorno mare agitato  
ti scriverò lunga lettera dis abbracci  
e tanti baci -  
Amicizia -

LETTERA OCEANICA with telegram form. Sent wirelessly on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1922 from the S/S PRINCIPE DI UDINE to S/S RE VITTORIO. Posted in Genova Harbour on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1922 and sent registered to an address in the city.

Franked 70 centesimi (closed letter 20ct, registration 50 ct).



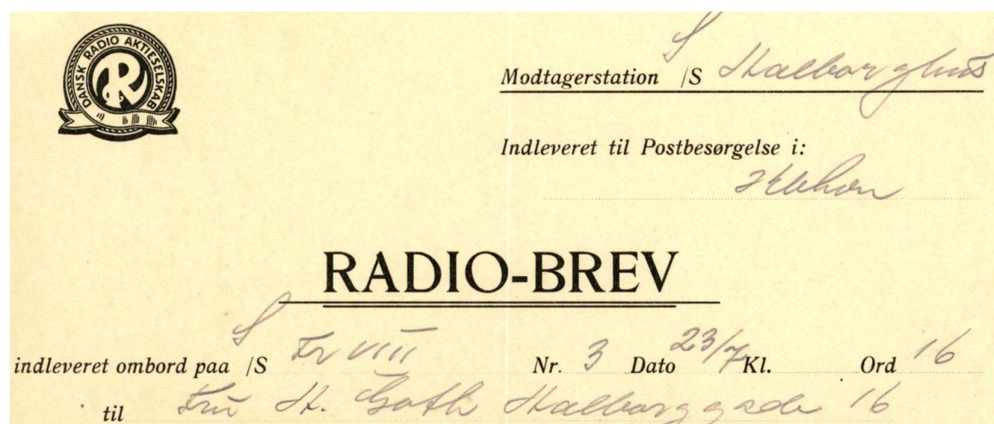
LETTERA OCEANICA TYPE 2. May 6<sup>th</sup> 1926, sent registered.  
 Franked 1.20 Lira (closed letter 60ct – registration 60ct)



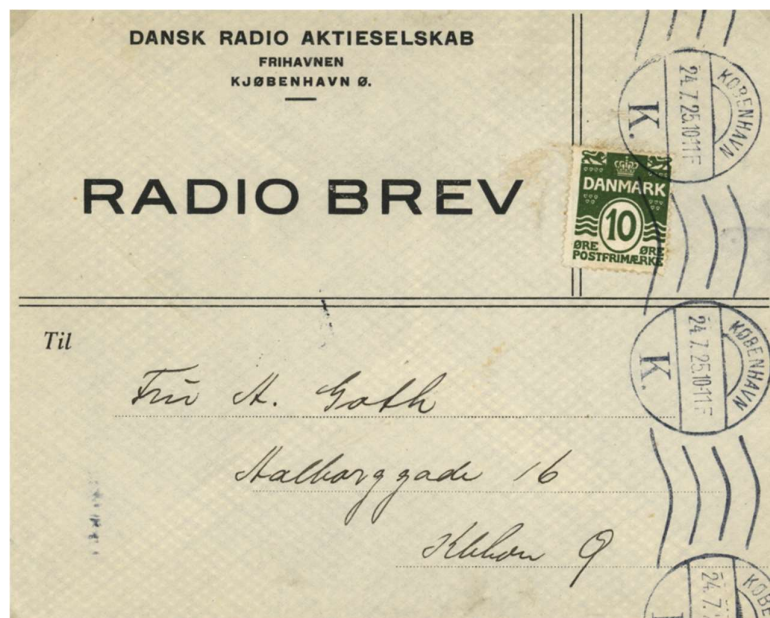
LETTERA OCEANICA posted in the harbour of NAPOLI(IT) on July 11<sup>th</sup> 1932 by the  
 M/S MOTORNAVE AUGUSTUS Sent registered to BESENA BRIANZA.  
 Postage rate 1,75Lire for a registered domestic letter.

## 8.1. DENMARK : DANSK RADIO AKTIESELSKAB

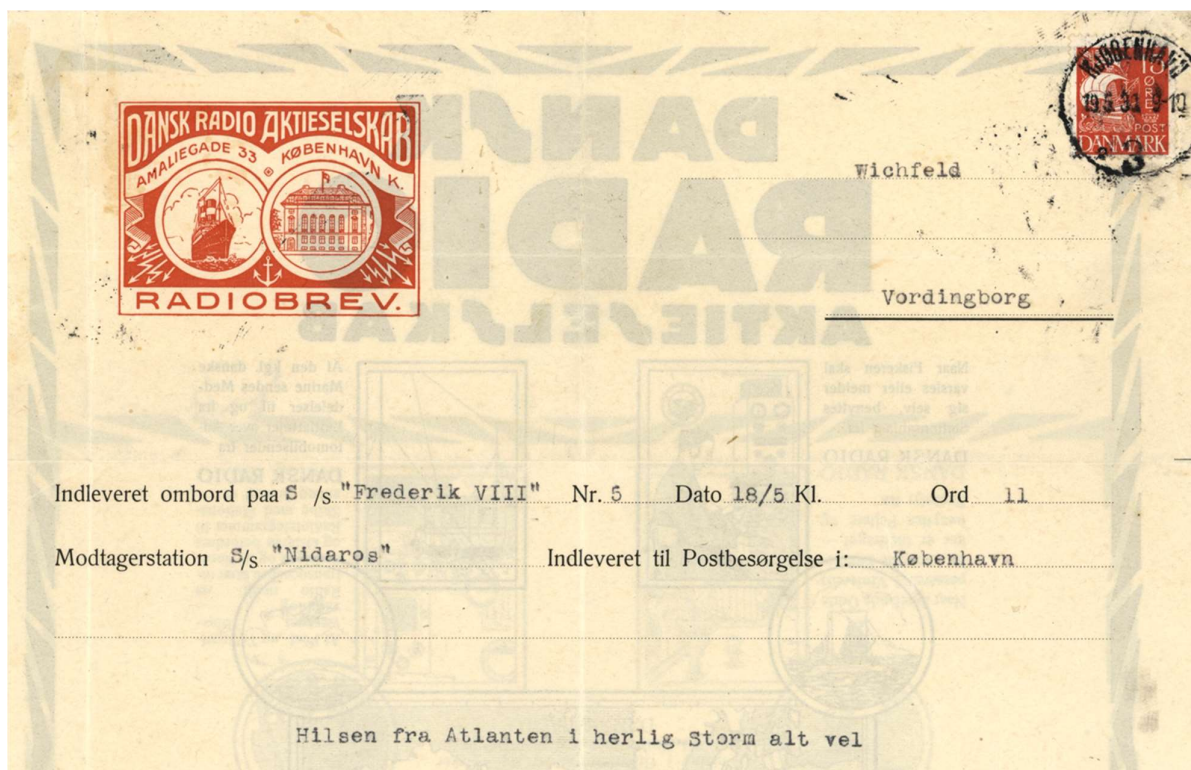
A group of Danish major shipping companies formed in 1920 the Dansk Radio Aktieselskab (Danish Radio Inc.). DRA started an Ocean Letter service in 1924 on most of the passenger ships from DFDS (Det Forende Dampskib Selskab, in English: The United Steamship Company)







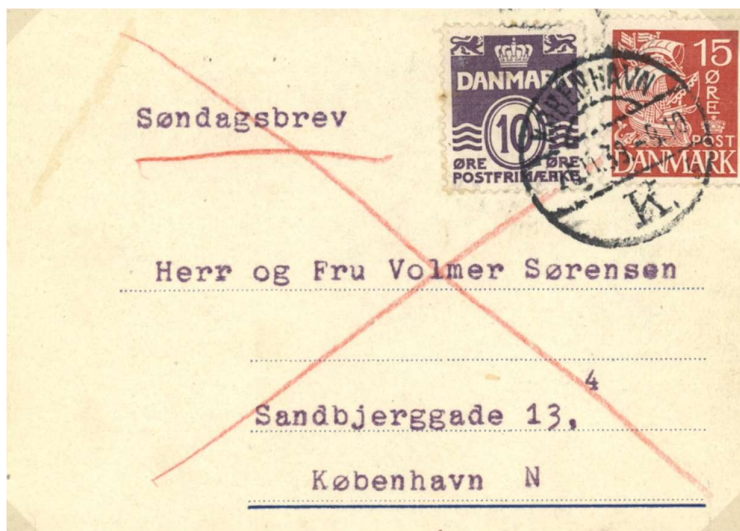
*RADIOBREV type DRA22 and telegram form from previous page. Message transmitted from the S/S FREDERIK VIII to the S/S AALBORGHUUS on July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1925. Posted on July 24<sup>th</sup> 1925 in the harbour of KOPENHAGEN and sent to the city. Postage rate 10 Øre. One of the earliest RADIOBREV from Denmark. Telegram form type DRA 9a.*



*RADIOBREV folding telegram letter type DRA25. Message telegraphed wirelessly May 18<sup>th</sup> 1931 by the S/S FREDERIK VIII to the S/S NIDAROS. Posted in the harbour of KOPENHAGEN and sent as ordinary letter to VORDINGBORG on May 19<sup>th</sup> 1931. Postage rate of 15 Øre for a domestic letter.*

*Only two of this type of RADIOBREV on record. Very late usage of a DRA-telegram because the shipping company DFDS started using its own stationery from 1928 onwards. See chapter 8.2.*

## 8.2. DENMARK : DFDS (DET FORENEDE DAMPSKIB SELSKAB)



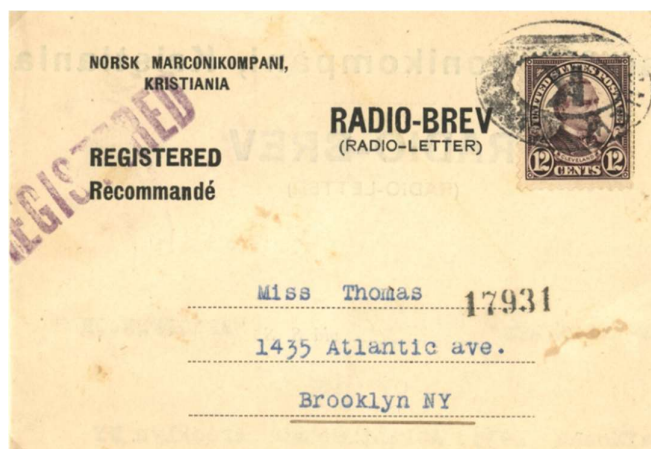
*RADIOBREV, telegraphed on November 24<sup>th</sup> 1930 from the S/S BRASILIEN to the S/S KJOBENHAVN of the DFDS. Posted in KOPENHAGEN and sent as ordinary letter to an address in the city on November 26<sup>th</sup> 1930.*

*Postage rate of 15 Øre for a domestic letter.*

*Additional 10 Øre for the SONDAGSBREV service (to be delivered on a Sunday).*

## 9. NORWAY : NORSK MARCONIKOMPANI

NORSK MARCONIKOMPANI was founded in 1919 and was a subsidiary company of the Belgian Marconi affiliated telegraph company S.A.I.T. (see chapter 4.2). It started operating an Ocean Letter service in 1924 but was not very successful. The service was abolished a few years later, which explains the rarity of RADIOBREV from Norway.

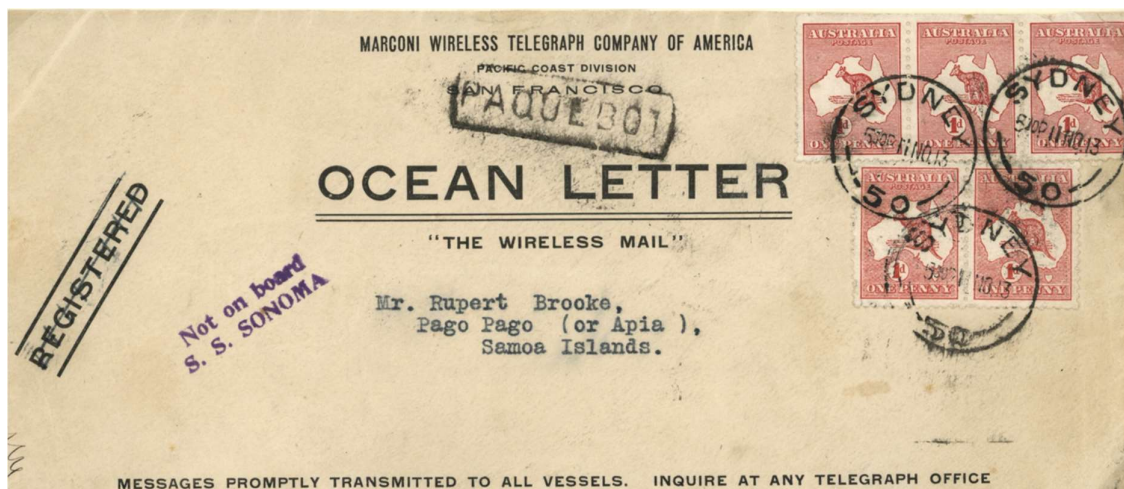


*RADIOBREV / RADIO-LETTER type NOM24. Message telegraphed on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1924 from the S/S STAVANGERFJORD to the S/S BERGENSFJORD. Posted on May 31<sup>st</sup> 1924 in the harbour of NEW YORK and sent registered to BROOKLYN, NEW YORK. Postage rate of 12ct: 2ct for the domestic letter and 10ct registration fee. Arrival cancel Brooklyn, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1924 on the reverse side. Ocean Letters from this telegraph company are rare, only 6 on record.*

## 10.1. USA : MARCONI WIRELESS TELEGRAPH COMPANY

Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America was established in 1899 as a subsidiary of the British Marconi Company. It started an Ocean Letter service in 1912, operating from its Pacific Coast Division, which served mainly the Pacific Ocean ships. The company was acquired by RCA (Radio Corporation of America) in 1920 and the Ocean Letter service disappeared, after a difficult time during WW1.





*OCEAN LETTER of the Pacific Coast Division of Marconi USA in San Francisco. Posted in the harbour of SYDNEY (Australia) where the PAQUEBOT mark was placed. Sent on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1913 as an ordinary letter to PAGO PAGO (or APIA) on the SAMOA ISLANDS. Transported with the S/S SONOMA of the OCEANIC STEAM SHIP COMPANY. Arrival cancel APIA (SAMOA) 23.11.1913 on the back. Postal rate 5d, for a letter in international service, by means of five 1d stamps of the 1<sup>st</sup> issue of Australia (1913).*

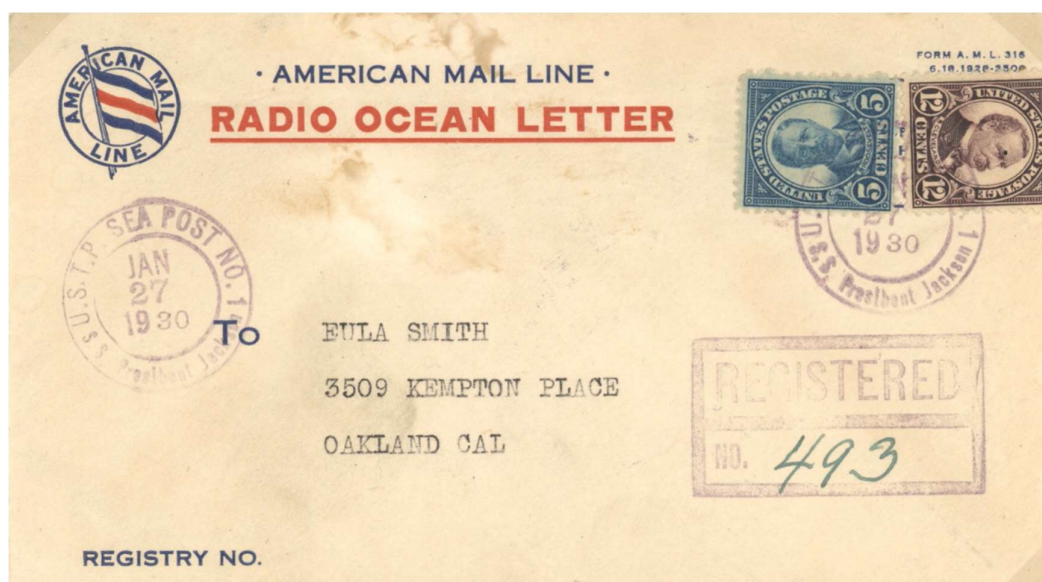
The addressee RUPERT BROOKE (~3.8.1887) was a famous British poet who started travelling in 1913 to Samoa and Tahiti. End 1914 he enlisted with the British Army but died on the boat trip to the front in Gallipoli from an infected insect bite on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1915. He was buried on the Greek island SKYROS where also a monument in his honour was erected.

Winston Churchill, Minister of Marine, wrote a big tribute about his friend Rupert Brooke in The Times.

This Ocean Letter appears in "Philatelic Gems from Australia, New Zealand and the smaller Pacific Islands" (BSAP 2012)

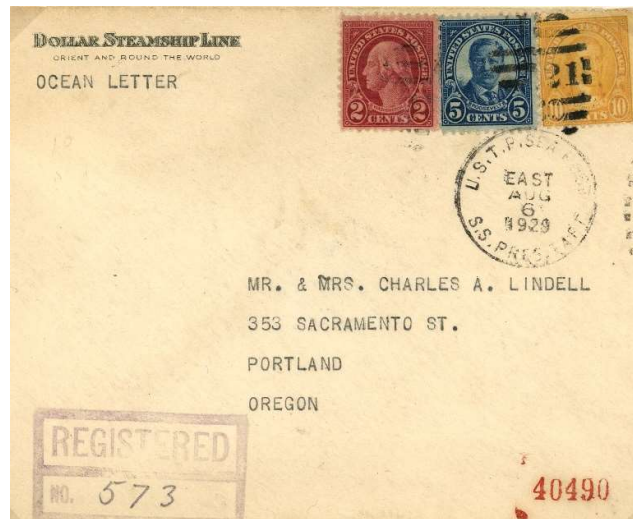
## 10.2. USA : AMERICAN MAIL LINE

AMERICAN MAIL LINE was first active under the name of ADMIRAL ORIENTAL MAIL LINE and provided mail services between Seattle and the Far East. In 1922 the company was taken over by the Dollar family (see chapter 10.3) and the name was changed to American Mail Line. Both Dollar and American Mail Lines were taken over by the Government in 1938 to protect them from bankruptcy and were renamed American President Lines. American Mail became again independent shortly after.



*RADIO OCEAN LETTER of the AMERICAN MAIL LINE posted on board of the S/S PRES. JACKSON on January 27<sup>th</sup> 1930 and sent registered from the harbour of SAN FRANCISCO on February 5<sup>th</sup> 1930 to Oakland, California. Postage rate of 17¢; 2¢ for the domestic letter and 15¢ registration fee.*

### 10.3. USA : DOLLAR STEAMSHIP LINE



*OCEAN LETTER of the DOLLAR STEAMSHIP LINE posted on board of the S/S PRES. TAFT on August 6<sup>th</sup> 1929 and sent from the harbour of SAN FRANCISCO on August 7<sup>th</sup> 1929 to PORTLAND, OREGON.  
Postage rate of 17¢; 2¢ for the domestic letter and 15¢ registration fee (from April 1<sup>st</sup> 1925).  
Precursor envelope, with the text OCEAN LETTER added by typewriter....*

O.D.R. 8-A 15M-5-35

**DOLLAR STEAMSHIP LINES**  
**OCEAN LETTER**

This message was received from the S.S. .... to be forwarded to destination  
by special delivery mail from .....

NR 3 KDUT 46 OL PRESIDENT GRANT JULY 15 NPT  
RUTH CHASE  
ALBANY ( OREGON )

RECEIVED YOUR AIRMAIL LETTER MANILA TOOK PICTURES CHINA

OCEAN LETTER telegram form from the DOLLAR STEAMSHIP COMPANY type ODRSA 15M-5-35

### 10.4. USA : STATES STEAMSHIP COMPANY

States Steamship Company was started in 1928 by Charles Dant, in Portland, Oregon and later moved to the headquarters to San Francisco. Dant started by leasing ships from the United States Shipping Board - Emergency Fleet Corporation and founded the Columbia Pacific Steamship Company in 1919. In 1928 Dant merged the Columbia Pacific Steamship Company into the States Steamship Company.

Form 525-12-25-19M-Printed in U.S.A.

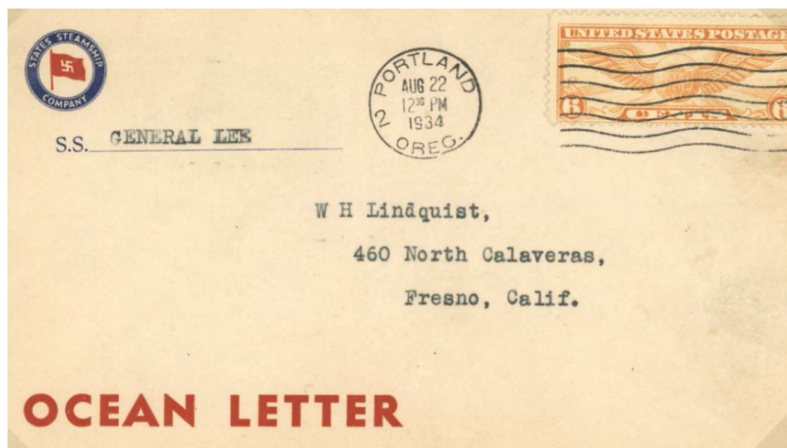
**STATES STEAMSHIP COMPANY**  
**OCEAN LETTER**

**Receiving Form**

Nr. 1 Ck. 46 Origin S/S GENERAL LEE Filed Date August 19, 1934.  
Message Received by S. S. CALIFORNIA Date: August 19, 1934. By: OEA  
For Delivery by Mail at PORTLAND OREGON Date: August 21, 1934  
TO: W H LINDQUIST 460 NORTH CALAVERAS FRESNO (CALIF)

*Telegram form of the STATES STEAMSHIP COMPANY. Details see next page.*

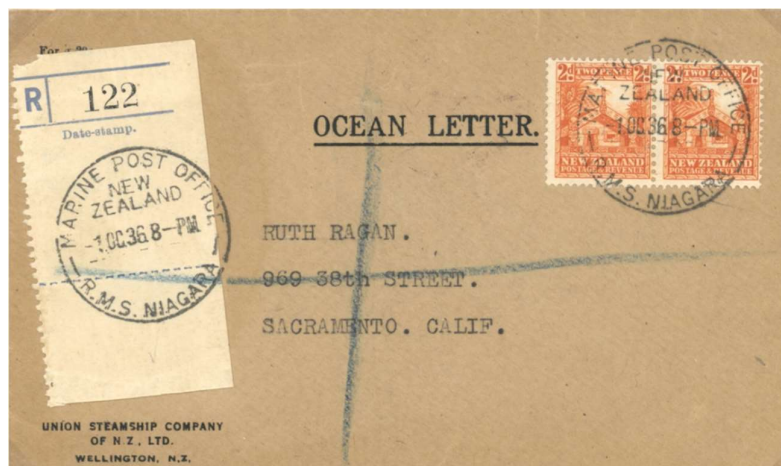




*OCEAN LETTER (telegram form on previous page) of the STATES STEAMSHIP COMPANY, telegraphed on August 19<sup>th</sup> 1934 by the S/S GENERAL LEE to the S/S CALIFORNIA. Posted on August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1934 in the harbour of PORTLAND, OREGON and sent per airmail to FRESNO, CALIFORNIA. Postage rate of 6¢; 3¢ for the domestic letter and 3¢ airmail fee.*

## 11. NEW ZEALAND : UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY

The Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand was established in Dunedin in July 1875. It started delivering an Ocean Letter Service in 1932 on its ships sailing between New Zealand, Australia, and the American Pacific Coast.



*OCEAN LETTER type 20a of the UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY OF NEW ZEALAND posted and cancelled on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1936 on board of the R.M.S. NIAGARA. Posted SEATTLE(US) harbour on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1936 and sent registered to Sacramento, California. Postage rate of 4d, domestic rate of New Zealand registered letter, UPU rules for PAQUEBOT post.*



*OCEAN LETTER of the UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY OF NEW ZEALAND posted and cancelled on board of the R.M.S. MAKURA on February 27<sup>th</sup> 1933 and sent registered from the harbour post office of PAPEETE to an address in the city. Rate of 4d for a registered domestic letter.*

## The collection

All shown letters and telegram forms are part of the collection of the author. Over a period of over 25 years, several items were acquired from other famous collections. Items acquired from Anton Voorbraak (The Netherlands), Roger Hosking (England), Prof. Shaul Ladany (Israel), Prof.Dr. Reinhard Krüger (Germany), Otto Kjærgaard (Denmark) and Michel Duguen (France) have made the collection what it is today, with over 500 documents.

## Sources

An Introduction to Ocean Letters, Roger Hosking, UK (TPO Seapost Society 2002).

Ocean Letters, A Sequel, Roger Hosking, UK (TPO Seapost Society 2006).

Wireless Ship Letters, by R.D.Harris & Diane DeBlois (Postal History Journal June 2004).

DEBEG – Archives – Berlin

Wikipedia






## A little extra

Almost all shipping companies provided passengers in their cabins with booklets of telegram Ocean Letter request forms as it was a good source of income... As the income started to dwindle in the latter part of the 30's, telegram forms were printed with various advertisings. Debeg Germany advertised for medicines from their compatriot Bayer...

OZEAN-BRIEF			
GEBÜHREN	OCEAN- LETTER	CARTA DE ALTA MAR	Lfd. Nr. Bef. am um durch an
			
Sa: _____			
Von _____	Nr. _____	W. _____	Tag _____
<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">LAST OPPORTUNITY</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Radio Letters to America</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">rm 4.25* 15 Words *Dollar..1.75</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">*Address Free*</p>			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Effeminal</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">COMPOSITUM</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">See und Luftkrankheitsmittel</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">»Bayer«</p> </div>  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Effeminal</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">COMPOSITUM</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">The Bayer remedy for</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">sea and air sickness</p> </div>  </div>			
Nr. 16 X. 20 000. 3. 36.		Bitte Beförderungsbedingungen umseitig zeichnen! Please sign the conditions on the back of this form! Rogamos a Usted firmar las condiciones de transmisión al reverso!	

Beförderungsbedingungen: Ozeanbriefe werden einem entgegenkommenden oder vorausfahrenden Schiff funktелеgraphisch übermittelt und von einem geeigneten Anlaufhafen aus als Brief weiterbefördert. Ozeanbriefe werden nur in der Radiostation zur Beförderung angenommen, wo auch Auskunft über Gebühren, Beförderungsmöglichkeiten usw. erteilt wird. Die „Debeg“ haftet nicht für irgendeinen Schaden, der durch Nichtübermittlung, Versäumnung, Verzögerung in der Bestellung usw. des Ozeanbriefes entsteht.	Conditions under which Ocean Letters are accepted: Ocean Letters are transmitted by wireless to a vessel sailing in the same or in the opposite direction and are forwarded to destination BY POST from a suitable port of call. Ocean Letters are accepted only at the radio station, where information regarding rates and routes is obtainable. The „Debeg“ will not be liable for any prejudice suffered in consequence of the non-transmission, mutilation, delay in delivery etc. of an Ocean Letter.	Condiciones de transmisión: Las Cartas de alta Mar se transmiten radiotelegráficamente a un otro buque que entrega las Cartas de alta Mar al correo en el puerto mas apropiado donde hace escala. Cartas de alta Mar sólo se admiten en la oficina radiotelegráfica. Esta informará también sobre la tarifa y mejor forma de envío. La „Debeg“ no es responsable de los daños y perjuicios originados por demoras, faltas de entrega o alteraciones que sufra la Carta de alta Mar.
„DEBEG“ Deutsche Betriebsgesellschaft für drahtlose Telegrafie m. b. H. Berlin-Charlottenburg 2, Hardenbergstr. 29		
Unterschrift _____ Signature _____ Firma _____	Adresse _____ Address _____ Dirección _____	Kammer Nr. _____ Cabin No. _____ Camarote No. _____



Schutz vor Reisebeschwerden!

Effeminal

COMPOSITUM

Das See- u. Luftkrankheitsmittel »Bayer«

Ist jahrelang erprobt und hat sich auch bei empfindlichen Reisenden als zuverlässig erwiesen gegen See-, Luft- und Eisenbahnkrankheit.

Zur vorbeugenden Wirkung genügen täglich 2-3 Dragées.

For protection against the discomforts of travel!


Effeminal

COMPOSITUM

The »Bayer« remedy for air and sea sickness.

Has been used for years and found invaluable, even in sensitive travellers, for combating air, sea and railway sickness.

For prophylaxis 2-3 dragées a day will suffice.



## The author



Luc Selis (°1957), like so many others, started collecting stamps when he started primary school. After a brief hiatus during his higher education, his interest in everything post-related continued to grow. Traditional stamp collecting was gradually replaced by studying the history of all things postal.

Besides a very extensive study on WW1, Luc also studied the mail in Congo Free State, the postal and telegraphic traffic of the French cod fishermen from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the history of the postcard and many other postal subjects, each time with a detailed historical background.

In 1980 he became a licensed private telegraphist. This explains his vast interest in telegrams and of course Ocean Letters.

Professionally, he spent the first 20 years of his career working nationally and internationally in the steel, chemical and information technology industries.

From 2001 onwards, he set up his own companies with a focus on international consulting, pharmaceutical and medical logistics. In the past few years, most of these business ventures have been successfully sold, and the professional consultancy activities are also being phased out, freeing up extra for more philatelic explorations.

Many of his collections have received Large-Gold and Gold medals at national and international competitions. He is active in most disciplines of the philatelic world and is an active member of a multitude of philatelic organisations and societies in several countries.

Vice-President Belgian Philatelic Federation  
Vice-President Netherlands Academy for Philately  
Member Belgian Academy for Philately  
National juror in Postal History, Postal Stationery,  
Literature and Picture Post Cards.