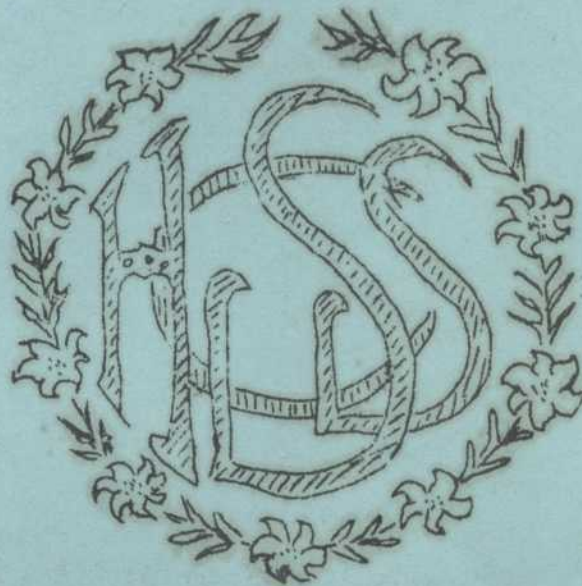




# BULLETIN

VOL. VI



NO. 11

„Helvetia“

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SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND

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BULLETIN

"HELVETIA" SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND

EDITOR: Gustave A. von Gross  
317 So. 15th. Street  
PHILADELPHIA, 2, PENNSYLVANIA

VOLUME VI

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No. 11

HONOR-ROLL OF "HELVETIANS" IN SERVICE:

Pfc. Frank J. Zeltman

Major A.M. Wilson

1st. Lt. Edward H. Lewandowski

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EDITORIAL

This is another Dr. Max Kronstein edition and we are indebted to him for the knowledge gained from his untiring efforts of "ABRO PHILATELY".

- - -

Another year approaches its close and again we stand at the threshold to elect the Officers for 1944.

Although the nominating committee prepared a slate for your convenience, REMEMBER, this does not prevent you from naming your own candidate. Use enclosed ballot to express your choice, and more important, don't neglect to send it to our Secretary's new address:

Thomas F. Harrison  
451 Prospect Road  
Springfield, Del. Co., Pa.

Absolve your duty and give a vote of confidence to your favorite candidate.

G.v.G.

\* \* \*

Accepted into Helvetia:

Fritz Billig

151-14 Eighty-Fifth Ave.,

Jamaica, 2, N.Y.

\* \* \*

Report of the Nominating Committee

Chairman George W. Caldwell reported that his Committee presented the following nomination for Officers for the ensuing year:

	President .....	Mr. Gustave A. von Gross
1st. Vice	" .....	Mrs. Sophie Buser
2nd. "	" .....	Mr. Mortimer de Groot
	Treasurer .....	Mr. Vincent Domanski, Jr.
	Secretary .....	Mr. Thomas F. Harrison
	Governor .....	Mr. George W. Caldwell
		Mr. Jerome Marcus (Mr. Caldwell proposing the latter)

Only one Governor is to be elected.

Anyone desiring to make any further nominations for any of these offices will please forward them to the Secretary at once.

Thomas F. Harrison  
Secretary.

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 The Projected Olten and Altdorf Airmeetings 1913  
 Research Findings  
 by  
 Dr. MAX KRONSTEIN

In the airmail catalogues a Swiss vignette has often been mentioned which shows the silhouette of the city of Olten and a monoplane in the air, and the inscription "50 - Flugpost 1913".

In spite of the year given there, the vignette is listed sometimes with the date "1914, May 4 th"; this for instance in D. Field's Air Mail Catalogue 1934, and in Sanabria's Air Post Catalogue 1942.



The catalogues further mention that the vignette was prepared as the air-mail stamp for the airpost flight by the Swiss pilot Ernst Rech, but that 24 copies only have been printed.

All of these informations are quite confusing

According to contemporary newspaper reports, the pilot Ernst Rech had indeed agreed to make several public flights from Olten on May 4, 1913. There was no advance publicity in out of town papers, since the young pilot was not as nationally known as Bider, Maffei, or others. Even the Berner "Bund" did not publish any advance notice about the Olten Aviation Day, nor about a projected airmail flight as done for several of the other Swiss airmails in 1913.

But the fact of the projected Olten Aviation Day was revealed when on May 3, 1913, at 2 P.M., Ernst Rech started from the aviation field at Dubendorf, Zurich for an overland flight to Olten for his Olten exhibition flights. He crashed at that start as he had reached an altitude of about 100 meters. - A few hours later he died in the Zurich Cantonal Hospital. He was buried in his home town Langenthal, and the representatives of the Aero Club, and of the National Aviation Collection participated in the ceremonies.

In the crash the plane was completely wrecked. The plane was not Rech's own; it was the monoplane of his friend Kunkler which Rech had used previously on other occasions.

These facts confirm the catalogue reports that the aviation day at Olten had actually been organized, and that it had to be abandoned by the deadly crash of the pilot.

Well known Swiss aerophilatelists report also that the Swiss Postal Archives still are in the possession of the postal die which had been prepared

for use on an airmail courier which was projected to be flown on that occasion from Olten to Oensingen. - The die was <sup>not</sup> actually used, but a few commemorative prints were made by the post office, about 15 years ago, for the members of the Swiss Aerophilatelic Society. Aside of this, a so-called committee cachet was prepared. Both are described in the D. Field Catalogue as follows:

"Two cancellations had also been prepared, circular (large) in black, "Flugtag in Olten - Arms - 4 and 5 Mai 1913" and a smaller double circular in violet (or blue), "Flugpost Olten - 5. V. 13 - Oensingen".

The existence of the Olten - Oensingen die in the Swiss Postal Archives confirmed the fact; that an airmail was scheduled to be flown at that occasion, as it was in Langnau at the same time. "The correct text of the double circular cachet reads: " - 1. Flugpost Olten - Oensingen \* 5. V. 13 - ".

Many catalogues proceeded therefore to assume that the vignette was also scheduled to be used as airmail stamp on this mail. I personally could not follow this course for the following reasons:

The pilot crashed on the actual start to Olten. His safe arrival would have been the first main feature of the Olten Aviation Day. Since the 1913 airmail stamps have been issued by and for the National Aviation Fund of the Swiss Military Department, efforts had to be made to sell as many as possible. The arrival of the pilot would certainly have been an incitation to the public to buy the stamp and to mail the airpost cards for the coming day. It must be assumed that the committee in charge would have taken care that the stamps were available at that hour. But if the catalogue informations are correct that about two dozen vignettes only have been prepared, they were not even printed when the pilot was already on his way to Olten.

Further: Two dies are reported in Field's catalogue. There is no other

airmail flight in 1913 in Switzerland when airmail stamps and at the same <sup>time</sup> two different cancellations or cachets were used. But there are two cachets used at the same time when no airstamp was used, as for instance, one month later at the airmail from Biel to Berne, on June 8, 1913, when one served as the airmail cancellation; the other giving at the same time the name of the two places of departure and destination. This is quite the same as on the Olten dies. The existence of two projected cachets therefore seemed to show that the Olten airmail of the Rech flight was to be as airmail with special postal airmail cancellation and descriptive cachet, but without an airmail stamp.

These deductions have proven to be correct. Twenty years ago already Zumstein's "Great Swiss Philatelic Handbook" reported that the vignettes of Olten were not even planned until several months after the Rech airmailing and the projected airmail flight of May 1913. This was overlooked by the other general cataloguers.

It was at the end of August 1913, when Olten aviation friends began to plan another aviation day at that city. - This time they hoped that Borrer, the airmail pilot of Solothurn and Laufen would be willing to make exhibition flights there on August 31, 1913. Immediately the design of an airmail stamp came about in similar form as the two previous Borrer postflights. One sheet of the essai was printed by a local printer. It was divided later into 12 single copies, and three blocks of four. With a few more proofs a total of 32 of these essays were reported, also a few proofs in different colors. But the matter did not proceed further, since Borrer was not willing to use the Olten airfield at all. The same date, Aug. 31, 1913, Borrer flew in Grenchen instead and there, according to the Berner "Bund" of Sept. 1, 1913, made seven flights. Finally, at 5:30 P.M., he started with the Grenchen airmail for Solothurn. The report

called the Grenchen meeting a very successful one.

These are the events which never let the Olten essai become an airstamp and the catalogues should list it as an essai, or as a proof, but certainly not the same way as the 1913 airmail stamps. The catalogue of the Swiss Aero-philatelic Society for instance lists all the other 1913 airstamps as stamps, but the Olten vignette under "Aerophilatelic Documents", even when it makes then use there of the word stamps instead of using the word essai or vignette.

The present studies revealed another interesting result also.

About 15 years ago the writer strolled the Interlaken promenade along and in entering a great store of picture cards, he discovered a single copy of one of the official cards of the Swiss Military aviation 1913, but with a black imprint "Flugtag Altdorf - 1913".

Neither the card nor the aviation day was listed in Swiss catalogues at that time. But he sent the card to a few collectors and the card was than listed as of a projected Altdorf airmeeting 1913 afterwards. Nothing else was known about the matter.

Now it becomes evident that the abandonment of the Altdorf Airmeeting was directly connected with the crash of the pilot Rech on his flight to the airmail day at Olten.

The Berner "Bund" of April 29, 1913 reported:

"An Aviation Day at Altdorf.

For the benefit of the Military Aviation an Aviation Day at Altdorf has been announced for May 12th., the second day of the Whitsuntide Holidays. The successful pilot Kunkler from St.Gallen will make several flights at that occasion". Now it might be mentioned again, that Ernst Rech did not crash with his own plane, but with the monoplane of his friend Kunkler. That means that



it was the same plane which Kunkler expected to use about one week later for the Altdorf flights.

That is why both meeting could not take place when Rech crashed on May 3, 1913.

We do not know if an airmail was projected for the Altdorf meeting as had been before at Olten. The commemorative card, or at least proofs for such a card were already prepared as the one copy shows which I discovered myself on a peaceful summer day at one of Switzerland's most famous spots, in view of the Jungfrau peak.

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