

**A SURVEY OF TYPES AUSTRALIAN STAMPLESS / FORMULAR  
AIR LETTERS AND AEROGRAMMES  
AND NEW HEBRIDES USAGE 1947—1970**

Stampless or formular airletters and aerogrammes without indicia or printed face value were produced and distributed by the Australian postal authorities. They were prepared for use in the dependencies and in other areas of the south-west Pacific including Christmas Islands, Cocos Islands, Nauru, Norfolk Island, British Solomon Islands, Fiji, Gilbert & Ellice Islands, & New Hebrides where the appropriate endemic adhesive or adhesives were attached as payment for the prescribed postage rate.

The introduction and transmission of these air letters was a direct consequence of the development of new air services and parallel air postage rates throughout the Pacific resulting in the need for a light weight letter form.

Nine different & distinct stampless airletters and aerogrammes, designated SA-1 to SA-9 can be identified, all modelled on contemporary Australian definitive types. All were printed and prepared between 1945 and 1970 by the Australian Note Printing Branch in Melbourne as were their definitive counter parts.

Types SA-6, 7 and 8 have not been chronicled or catalogued listed.

New Hebrides was chosen for this survey exhibit because it was the only postal administration that used all nine types. Four of these types AS-6, 7, 8 & 9, are only found appropriately used in New Hebrides. These four forms are modelled on aerogrammes produced after decimal currency was introduced in February 1966.

The demise and discontinuance of the stampless species was the result of the introduction of the endemic aerogramme by variously defined postal authorities in the Pacific.

New Hebrides issued its first domestic aerogramme 13 July 1971.



*The Australasian Stamp Catalogue*, 20<sup>th</sup> edition. [Nita Wilson]  
Hals N. & Collas P. (1967), *The New Hebrides; their Postal History and Postage Stamps*  
Kellow G. (2003), *Archival Records of Australian Aerogrammes, 1944-1965*, *Postal Stationary Collector*, February, pp 99-105  
Klinger Roland NH aerogramme listing and images, <http://www.ro-klinger.de/NH/>  
Proud E.P. (2006), *The Postal History of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands and New Hebrides*.  
Stein R. (1984), *The Aerogrammes of Australia and Its Dependencies*, The American Philatelic Society.

## SA-1 (ASC-AP1, Stein AS-1,2\*)

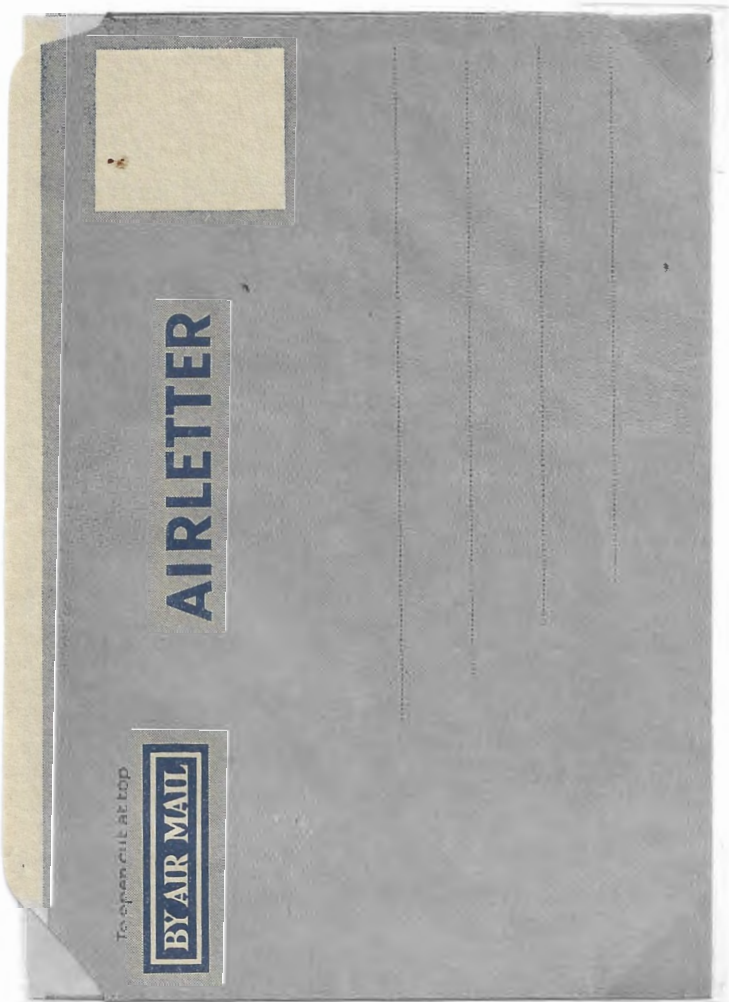
Stampless species, 'AIRLETTER', on buff paper (1947-1950) and subsequently on blue paper (1950-1954).

Derived from Australia definitive (A-2) by removing the head of King George VI & part of the dotted overlay area surrounding the indicium leaving a blank rectangle (22x25mm). The occurrence of the accent on A of MAIL flaw, only in the stampless species & not on the corresponding Australian airletter definitives indicates that new plates were manufactured especially for the printing of this formular air letter.

Archival records state that four 'Electros for air letter form (no denomination)' were prepared October 1945 and in July 1949 a 'Copper original for air letter (no denomination)'. [Kellow, p101]

The earliest date found used is from Norfolk Island, 2 October 1947.

Buff Paper



Blue Paper



### Earliest usage SA-1:

**Fiji:** Gary Watson Sale No. 46, June 1986. Lot # 637 PS 'AIRLETTER' AP 1 commercial usage from 'LAUTOKA/ FIJI' to USA on 9DEC47.

**Nauru:** Philatelic to Mildred Hodson, Scotland, 25 Oct 51. Kellow G. (2005), The Supply of Unstamped Aerogrammes to Nauru, ACCC Bulletin, August, p99.

**BSIP:** Gary Watson Sale No.73, July 1997. Lot # 1649 PS 1952 (May) commercial usage of Australian Territories stampless 'AIRLETTER' ASC AP1 with message headed 'Bilua' and 1/- cancelled Honiara.

**New Hebrides:** AIRLETTER (SA-1) type, buff paper, to France, Blue, French 30cg *Outriggr Canoe* PORT VILA, NOUVELLES HEBRIDES, 11. OCT 47. Philatelic 5 Dec 1950 blue paper.

**Norfolk Island:** 2 Oct 1947 Properly used? [Stein p17].

**Gilbert and Ellice Islands:** February 1948, annular postmark, 'POST OFFICE TARAWA', [Stein, p20].

This form was also overprinted 'ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE' for official use by the PMG department.

\* Stein subdivides this species into two categories viz. AS-1 on buff paper (1947-1950) & AS-2 on blue paper (1950-1954).

**SA-1** (ASC-AP1, Stein AS-1,2)

Stampless type (Stein) [ASC]	Australian definitive aerogramme model ASC/Stein #(value)	Fiji	Nauru	British Solomon Islands	New Hebrides	Norfolk Island	Gilbert & Ellice Islands
SA-1 (1947) (AS-1,2) [AP1] Earliest date	'AIRLETTER' KG VI portrait Buff & blue paper A-2,3 (7d)	A 9/12/47	A 25/10/51	A May 1952	A 11/10/47	A 2/10/47	A February 1948

Legend:  
A= Non philatelic, flown with message

**New Hebrides Buff paper**

'The first airletters were of Australian pattern, but unstamped, introduced in September, 1947'. [Hals & Collas] The few surviving properly used airletters is partially the result of the low numbers sold from Post Offices for the needs of a small population<sup>1</sup> inclusive of a tiny component of Europeans. The earliest usage recorded is 11 October 1947, one of three extant examples on buff paper stock<sup>2</sup>



27 September 1947

It is desired to inform all who may be interested of the introduction of the "AIR LETTER" Service from the New Hebrides.

The Air letter service will operate to all countries of the world and the rate of postage for each form has been fixed at:-

30 Centimes (Gold)

Air letter forms will be available from Post Offices, Port Vila, French District Agent, Tanna and Condominium District Agent, Santo The issue of forms will, however, be restricted to the number of 30 Centimes postage stamps purchased.

[Proud, p231-2]

11 October 1947 > France, French 30cg blue definitive, *Lopevi Island and Outrigger Canoe*, attached, post marked circular, annular datestamp; PORT VILA NOUVELLES HEBRIDES, 11 OCT 47.

Postage Rates [Klinger]

- 1947 September 27th: 30cg
- 1953 June 1st: 25cg
- 1963 January 1st : colonial destination: 25 cg -- non-colonial: 30 cg
- 1970 July 1st: all destinations: 35cg

Air Route: A useful service from Sydney to New Caledonia, New Hebrides, and occasionally the Solomons, is provided by, the Trans-Oceanic Company with a large flying boat. At the end of October, the plane carried 21 passengers in comfort to Noumea and Vila. In the absence of ships, the service – which is not on a regular schedule – is appreciated by the islanders. [Pacific Islands Monthly, December 1947, p26]

<sup>1</sup> Population 46,000 in 1947, 54,000 in 1952, 60,000 in 1960 & 70,000 in 1970. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The other two extant examples; 14 November 1947, from Mère Marie Alexis > France (Ted Proud, Golden Sale 2002) and 22 January 1948 > France from a doctor at Norsup hospital, the 1938 French 30c stamp (M. Blanc coll.) [Klinger]

**SA-1** (ASC-AP1, Stein AS-1,2)

**New Hebrides Blue paper**

There was probably two deliveries of this stampless aerogramme type to New Hebrides; 'buff paper' 1947 & 'blue paper' 1950. The earliest date noted on blue paper stock, Vila 5 December 1950, philatelic. Usage between 1951 and 1954. About 10 properly used examples extant. A new, red and blue rhombi border type, stampless form was introduced in 1954.



18 March 1952

> U.S.A.

British 30cg blue definitive, *Lopevi Island and Outrigger Canoe*, attached.

**VILA,  
NEW HEBRIDES  
18. MR52**



March 1954

> England

French 25cg olive, *Native Carving*, definitive attached

**SANTO  
NOUVELLES HEBRIDES  
(March) 54.**

Other 'Suchocki' airletter correspondence extant.

Postage Rates Note these two airletters with different postal rates viz. from 1947 September 27th, 30cg and from 1953 June 1st reduced to 25cg

Air Route: From 1950 Qantas Empire Airways operated a flying boat, regular service from Sydney to the New Hebrides via Noumea. The service was discontinued in July 1955. By 1951 a Constellation service from Sydney, six weekly, was provided by Qantas and British Airways, to London via Zurich or Rome.

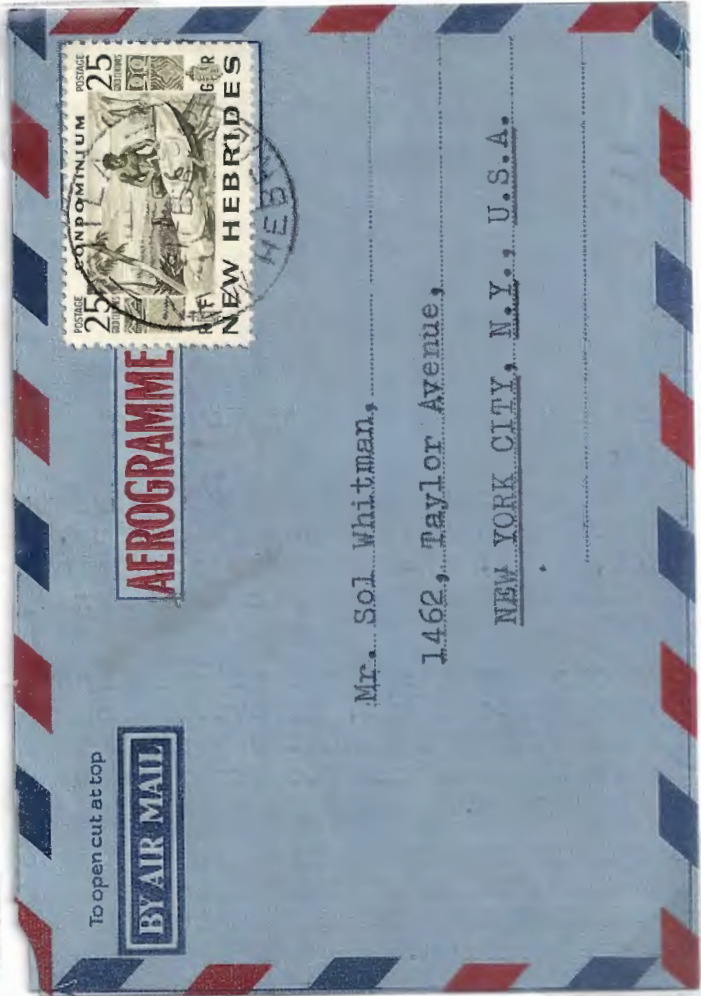
**SA-2** (ASC 80-AP2, Stein AS-3)

Stampless 'AEROGRAMME' red and blue bicoloured border lozenges. Derived from the Australian definitive aerogramme (A7), issued 31 March 1954, by removing the red 'plane on globe' indicium leaving an outlined blank, rectangle. First day Honiara, Solomon Islands, 17 June 1954.

Stampless type (Stein) [ASC]	Australian definitive aerogramme model ASC/Stein #(value)	Nauru	Christmas Island	British Solomon Islands	New Hebrides	Norfolk Island	PNG
SA-2 1954 (AS-3) [AP2]	'AEROGRAMME' Plane on globe Red & blue rhombi A-7 (10d)	A	A	A	A	A	A

**New Hebrides usage:** 'The [second New Hebrides] airletters were of Australian pattern, but unstamped, ... in two colour edging, being introduced in 1954.' [Hals & Collas] The earliest date recorded from New Hebrides, 22 October 1954. Usage noted until November 1965 with more than 10 examples extant.

Qantas Flying Boat service, until the service ended July 1955, meant that Condominium had no air link with the outside world until the French airline, TAI from March 1957, instituted a twice weekly service between Vila, Santo & Noumea. This service connected with Qantas in Sydney via Noumea, and to the TAI service between Paris, France (and European countries) via Auckland. From May 1960 included was a TAI/ Air France timetable via America departing Vila. [Proud, p210-13]



Archival records indicate that four 'Electros for aerogramme (no stamp)' were prepared March/April 1954 [Kellow, p101] by modifying existing definitive electros.

21 February 1956 > U.S.A. (via Burns Phillip ship to Sydney)

**VILA NEW HEBRIDES 21FE56.**

Contents, 'The Aerogramme forms presently being used by this Administration are those supplied by the Australian Postal Service... For our use we issue the Aerogramme forms with 1 x 25cg postage stamp affixed.' H. T. RICHARDS, Condominium Postmaster.

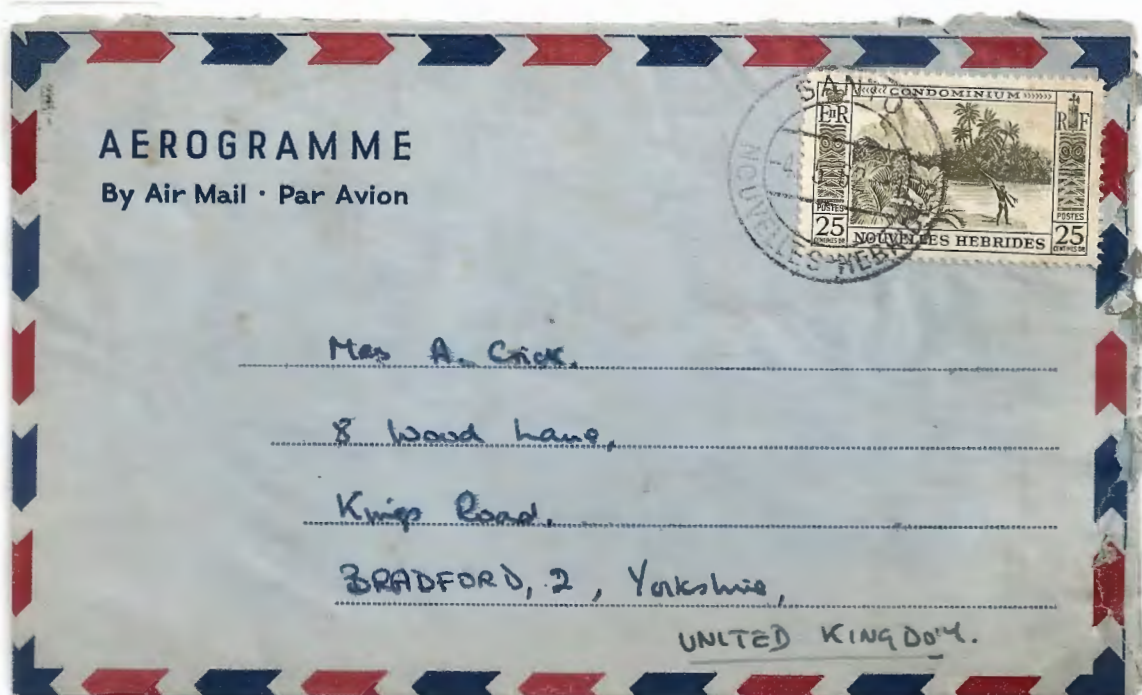
**SA-3 (ASC 80-AP3, Stein AS-4)**

Adaptation of Australia 10-pence definitive, jet in rectangle, aerogramme (A-11) with border alternate red and blue arrows, (no 'Overseas Service' above AEROGRAMME in top left corner) and red printed folding directions added on writing panel.

First day, unknown but probably 1960. Australian jet in rectangle definitive with red folding instructions issued 21 October 1959. Earliest date sighted 8 August 1960, Christmas Island.

Stampless type (Stein) [ASC]	Australian definitive aerogramme model ASC/Stein #(value)	Christmas Island	British Solomon Islands	New Hebrides	Norfolk Island
SA-3 1960 (AS-4) [AP3]	'AEROGRAMME' Plane in rectangle Red & blue arrows A-14 (10d)	A	A	A	A

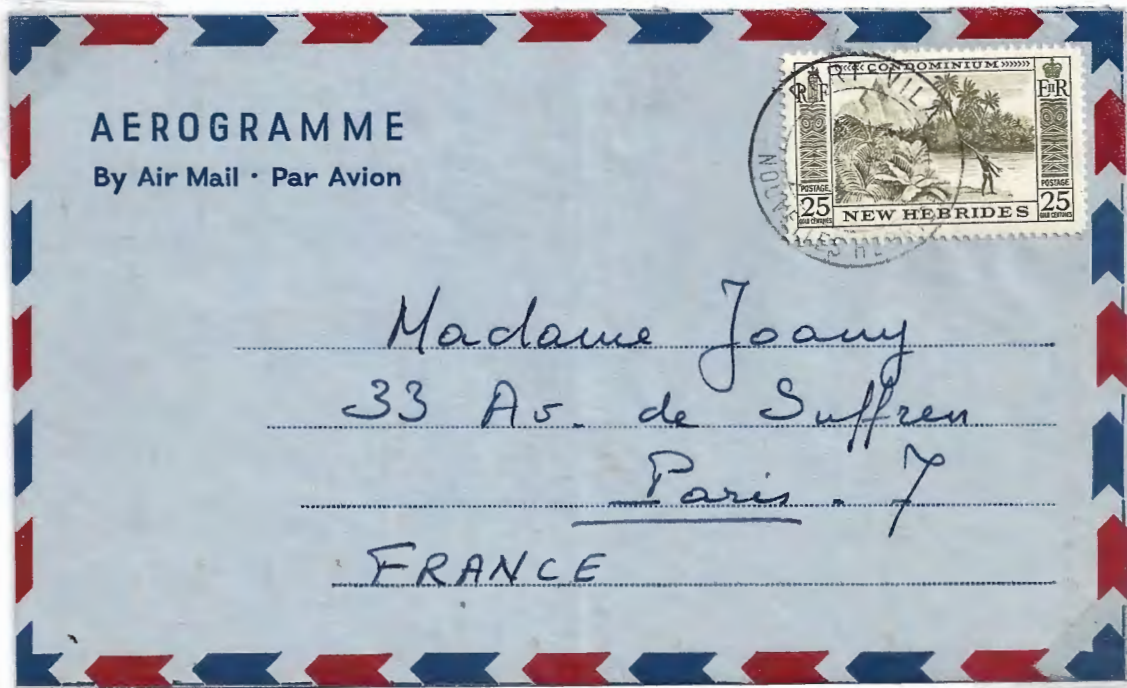
**New Hebrides usage:** These stampless aerogramme forms from New Hebrides are relatively common and are seen used between 1962 and 1964; the earliest date noted is 4 May 1962.



4 May 1962  
Earliest date

> United Kingdom

**SANTO  
NOUVELLES/  
HEBRIDES**  
-4. 5.62.-1



10 April 1964 >France **PORT-VILA NOUVELLES HEBRIDES**  
Olive, Fr. 25cg definitive *River Scene and Spear Fisherman* attached. For Colonial destination France or United Kingdom the aerogramme rate 25cg.



24 June 1964 > Germany. Olive, Fr. 25cg definitive, *River Scene and Spear Fisherman* attached postmarked double-circle: **SANTO NOUVELLES HEBRIDES 24. 6.64.**—1. Manuscript tax notation added, in red crayon, 'T. 0,10<sup>OR</sup>' ('OR' French for gold) i.e. 0.1 Gold Franc (U.P.U.), = 10 centimes.

Aerogramme taxed because the rate to 'non colonial destinations' including Germany was 30cg therefore short paid 5cg, double deficiency 10cg, deemed equivalent to 10 centimes. There is no evidence of the surcharge being collected in Germany.

This is the only taxed aerogramme from New Hebrides sighted and an exemplar of the correct application of the two-tiered airletter rate applicable from January 1963.

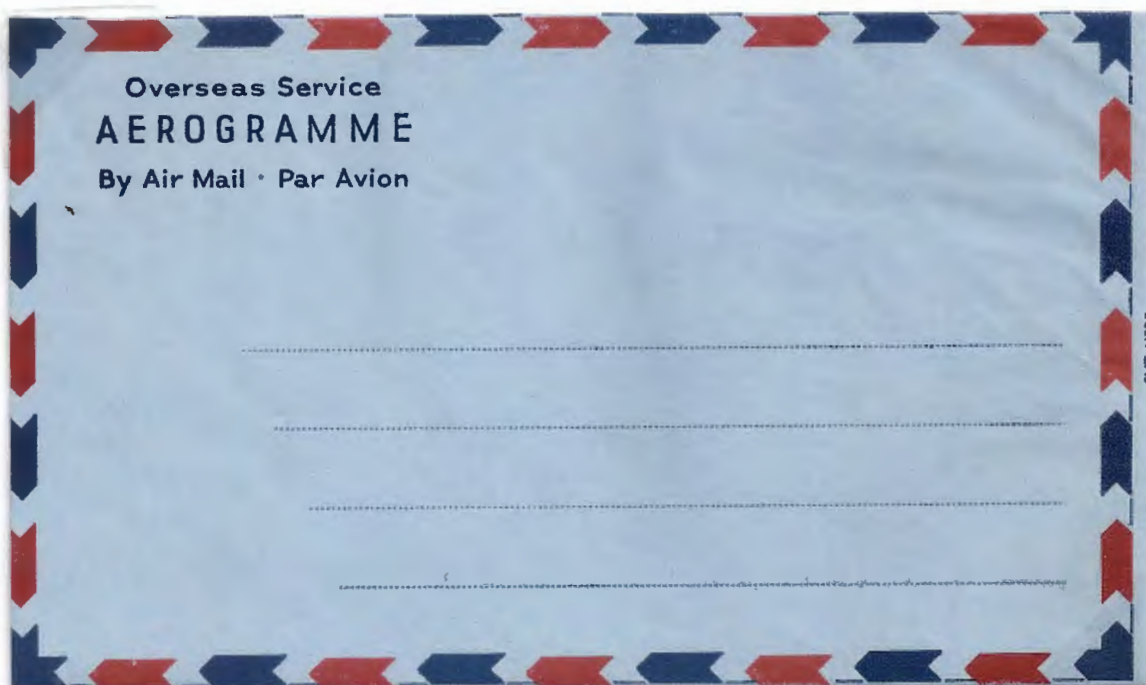
SA-4 (ASC 80-AP4, Stein AS-5)

**Overseas Service / AEROGRAMME** Jet in Rectangle' indicium removed from the Australia 10-pence definitive aerogramme (A-14); defining features, red and blue arrows border, and 'Overseas Service' above 'AEROGRAMME'. Back panel, two-line admonition closely spaced.

First day, unknown. Earliest date, September 1962, Solomon Islands. The Australian 10d, 'Jet in Rectangle' definitive of the same type was issued on, 15 December 1960 and replaced by the 10d, 'Jet Tail' indicium, definitive in 1965.

These 'Overseas Service' formular, aerogrammes are known used from Solomon Islands [<5], New Hebrides [3], Christmas Island [1] and Norfolk Island [2]; properly used examples are scarce to rare from these entities.

**New Hebrides usage** Only three used 'Overseas Service' type aerogrammes have been sighted from New Hebrides. The earliest date from New Hebrides is 3 November 1964 (> France).



16 March 1967 > France.  
SANTO NEW HEBRIDES 16. MAR 67 -- 1

**SA-5, 6 & 7** 1965—1969 Stampless 'Jet Tail' **AEROGRAMME** / BY AIR MAIL . PAR AVION

Adaptation of Australian 'Jet Tail' definitives. The unframed indicium/ 'AUSTRALIA'/ denomination, and the flying kangaroo motif with or without 'OVERSEAS SERVICE' all removed for these formulars. For the stampless versions the inscriptions, admonitions, folding directions, address & front panel frame, lines remain the same together with fonts and printing colour, to the 'Jet Tail' definitives. All three types are scarce to rare. The stampless aerogrammes SA-6 and SA-7 are not chronicled or catalogue listed.



Jet Tail Indicium Denomination Catalogue #	10d (April 1965) A-22 Flying kangaroo motif/ <i>OVERSEAS SERVICE</i>	9c (Feb 1966) A-25 Flying kangaroo motif	10c (October 1967) A-27 Flying kangaroo motif/ <i>OVERSEAS SERVICE</i>	10c (March 1968) A-29 Flying kangaroo motif
Stampless #	SA-5	SA-6	No stampless	SA-7
Colour	Dark blue	Dark blue	Bright blue/ aqua	Bright blue/ aqua
Length of front panel address lines	89mm	66mm	66mm	89mm
Pacific Territory/ Dependency Number examples [ ]	CI <sup>1</sup> [2] NH [5] NI <sup>2</sup> [2] PNG <sup>3</sup> [1]	NH [3]		NH [3]

**Table:** Comparison of the 'Jet Tail' definitives and correlative stampless aerogramme types between April 1965 and March 1968. This series straddles sterling and decimal periods. Replaced by the new 'Jet Silhouette in Rectangle' aerogramme including a stampless version from October 1968.

SA-5 census, (no NH)

<sup>1</sup> Christmas Island, commercial(?) 15 April 1967. [Stein, p152]

> England, 8 August 1968 [Clifford collection]

<sup>2</sup> A commercially used Norfolk Island Gary Watson Sale No. 40, 14 September 1987 (Lot #1022) "1965 Stampless type with revised text AP5 with 1c Flower 4c Barnabus & 4c Xmas used to South Africa 20DE66 from Doll Sanders."

Abacas, Auction 256, May 2024, Lot # 2408. "1969 (April 16) social/commercial usage of Australian Territories formular 'Overseas Service' Aerogramme to Scotland...NORFOLK ISLAND"

<sup>3</sup> An aero- philatelic form from Papua and New Guinea, 3 July 1967, with Amelia Earhart, postmark and legend. [Stein, p150]

SA-5 (ASC 80-AP5, Stein AS-6<sup>1</sup>)

Stampless dark blue printing **AEROGRAMME / BY AIR MAIL . PAR AVION**. Adaptation of the Australian 10d definitive (A-22) with the unframed indicium, 'AUSTRALIA' and '10D' denomination, in addition to flying kangaroo motif / 'OVERSEAS SERVICE' all removed. Legends, folding directions, address & front panel frame lines, are identical in setting, as with the fonts & colour to the 10d definitive species. Length of front panel, address lines 89mm.

Earliest date New Hebrides 15 August 1966 (> England). Distribution of the 10d definitive counterpart began April 1965. This definitive and stampless type replaced after February 1966 by the decimal 9c 'jet tail', definitive and matching formular. This suggests the '10D' stampless form produced from late 1965.

New Hebrides with five examples chronicled.

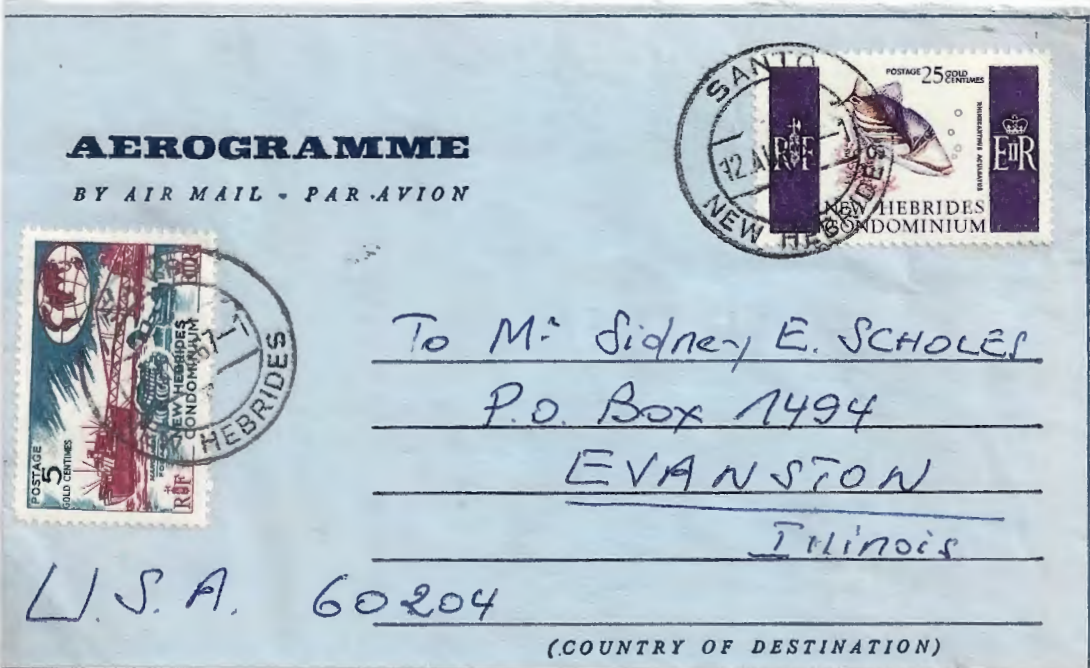


27 January 1967

> U.S.A.

**PORT-VILA  
NOUVELLES HEBRIDES  
27.2.67**

A chatty letter that begins, 'At long last I am successful in obtaining an aerogramme for you. Apparently the French Postal Authorities do not use this form of correspondence, so I am sorry I couldn't help your collection.'



12 August 1967

> U.S.A.

**SANTO  
NEW HEBRIDES  
12 AUG. 67-1.**

<sup>1</sup> Stein incorrectly states this stampless form derived from the 9c definitive 'Jet Tail' aerogramme

**SA-6** (Unrecorded type)

Stampless printing in dark blue **AEROGRAMME / BY AIR MAIL . PAR AVION** Adaptation of the Australian 9c definitive by removing the unframed indicium / 'AUSTRALIA' / '9c' value & flying kangaroo motif. But in all other respects identical in setting to the 9c definitive species. Length of front panel, address lines 66mm.

First day unknown. Distribution of the 9c definitive counterpart began February 1966. The definitive and stampless type replaced after March 1968 with the decimal 10c 'jet tail', definitive (A-29) and matching formular.

**New Hebrides** This type only used in New Hebrides with three examples recorded.  
Earliest date 2 January 1968.



2 January 1968

> France

VILA  
NEW HEBRIDES  
2.1.68- -2



15 October 1968

> France

PORT VILA  
NOUVELLES HEBRIDES  
15.10.68

**SA-7** (Unrecorded type)

Stampless, bright blue (aqua) on azure paper, **AEROGRAMME** / *BY AIR MAIL. PAR AVION.* Adaptation of Australian 10c definitive (A-29) with unframed indicium, 'AUSTRALIA' and '10c' value together with the 'flying kangaroo' motif all removed. Length of front address lines 89mm.

Distribution of the 10c definitive began March 1968. Earliest date seen for the formular type, 23 September 1968 (> France) [Klinger]. The definitive form and stampless type replaced by the new 'Jet Silhouette in Rectangle' aerogramme (A-31) type after October 1968.

Only known used from New Hebrides. Three properly used examples extant.



16 December 1968

Flown without message, 25c Fr. *Concorde*, adhesive attached and tied by postmark, **PORT VILA NOUVELLES HEBRIDES 16.12.68--2**. Addressed to Mr. H. H. Jackman, Officer from Department of District Services and Native Affairs, Port Moresby, PNG. Rectangular framed SERVICE DES POSTES cachet in violet on the back panel.



24 December 1969

> France  
**PORT VILA  
NOUVELLES HEBRIDES  
24.12.69--2.**

**SA-8** (Unrecorded)

Adaptation of the Australian 10-cent blue and orange definitive jet silhouette aerogramme (A-31) effected by removing the stamp impression. This aerogramme definitive and stampless equivalent introduces a new 'short form' format; vertical alignment of three writing panels with three sealing flaps. Easily identified by two-line admonition on back panel. Viewed from the front SA-8 and the subsequent SA-9 form are similar. For SA-8 the left edge of the 4 address lines is in line with the vertex of the second A in AEROGRAMME. For SA-9 the left edge of the 4 address lines is in line with the dot between BY AIR MAIL and PAR AVION First day of corresponding Australia definitive species 1 October 1968. Earliest date of use Port Villa, 28 April 1969 (France).

← SLIT OPEN HERE →

**AEROGRAMME**  
BY AIR MAIL • PAR AVION



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COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

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POSTCODE

IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED OR ANY TAPE OR STICKER ATTACHED, THIS FORM MUST BEAR POSTAGE AT THE RATE FOR AIRMAIL LETTERS.

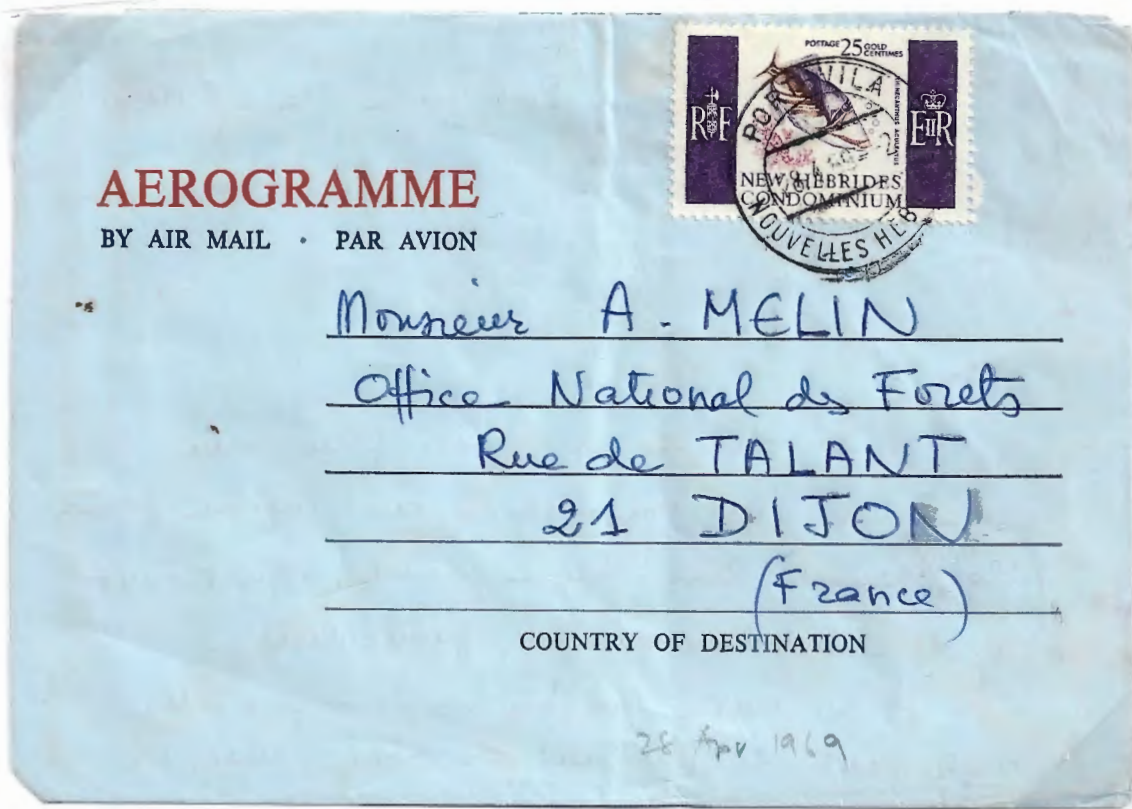
SECOND FOLD

FIRST FOLD

SA-8 (Unrecorded)

Adaptation of the Australian 10-cent blue and orange definitive jet silhouette aerogramme (A-31) effected by removing the stamp impression. First day of corresponding Australia definitive species 1 October 1968. Earliest date of use Port Vila, 28 April 1969 (> France). Example from Christmas Island extant, cancelled-to-order 10 November 1970.

New Hebrides: with only three used examples chronicled.



28 April 1969

> France

PORT VILA  
NOUVELLES/  
HEBRIDES  
-28.4.69 -2



7 January 1970

> Solomon Islands

PORT VILA  
NOUVELLES/  
HEBRIDES  
-7.1.70 -1

**SA-9 (Stein AS-7)**

Adaptation of the Australian 10-cent blue and orange definitive jet silhouette aerogramme (A-33) effected by removing the stamp impression. New three-line admonition on rear panel with additional top line, 'PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO ADDRESS THIS FORM', best defines this stampless species type and the corresponding Australian definitive. Different settings known; distance between 'AEROGRAMME' and 'BY AIR MAIL . PAR AVION', 3.5mm, 5.5mm or 6.0mm. Other settings are possible. The definitive type exists with similar setting differences. Australian definitive type issued 30 October 1969.

**AEROGRAMME**  
BY AIR MAIL · PAR AVION

CONDOMINIUM  
R F E R  
POSTAGE  
NEW HEBRIDES GOLD CENTIMS

15.10.70-2  
NEW HEBRIDES

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
POSTCODE

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO ADDRESS THIS FORM.  
IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED OR ANY TAPE OR STICKER ATTACHED,  
THIS FORM MUST BEAR POSTAGE AT THE RATE FOR AIR MAIL LETTERS.

SECOND FOLD HERE  
FIRST FOLD HERE  
SECOND FOLD HERE  
FIRST FOLD HERE

SA-9 (Stein AS-7)

Adaptation of the Australian 10-cent blue and orange definitive jet silhouette aerogramme (A-33) effected by removing the stamp impression. Australian definitive type issued, 30 October 1969. Earliest date from New Hebrides 15 July 1970. An example from Christmas Island extant, cancelled-to-order 14 December 1970.

**New Hebrides:** Only one, plus a front, example sighted. The postal rate for aerogrammes was increased from July 1st 1970 from 25cg to 35cg to all destinations.

New Hebrides issued its first domestic aerogramme on the 13 July 1971.



15 July 1970 [Front]

> France

**PORT VILA  
NOUVELLES/  
HEBRIDES**

-15.7.70 -2

Provenance:

Roland Klinger



28 December 1970

> England

**SANTO  
NOUVELLES/  
HEBRIDES**

-28.12.71 -1

Provenance:

Roland Klinger