

SCADTA Mail to and from Switzerland

SCADTA, the Sociedad Colombo-Alemana de Transportes Aereos – the Colombian-German Society for Air Transport – was among the earliest airlines in South America. Formed by German – *Alemana* is "German" in Spanish – and Colombian investors but mostly bankrolled by German and Austrian money, it was operated by German aviators, who by post-world-war treaties had no opportunities in Germany. It was formed in December 1919, made its first flights in 1920, and started scheduled operation and received a needed infusion of additional investment in 1921.

SCADTA had the advantage of geography, able to fly people, mail, and freight from the Colombian coast to the interior and avoid an arduous trip of close to two weeks! It had a franchise agreement and government cooperation, but it had neither a government subsidy nor a postal service contract to carry mail. Colombian stamps therefore could not pay for airmail postage, so SCADTA issued its own stamps – which could only apply to air transport within Colombia. When its early success made people in the rest of the world want to use SCADTA services, SCADTA made its stamps available to them, since it had no standing with the Universal Postal Union. These stamps and their use from and to Switzerland are the main subject of this exhibit.

SCADTA stamps were denominated in Colombian pesos and centavos. International currency markets were unstable in the early 1920s; to prevent international currency speculation, from 1923 to mid-1929 SCADTA had its stamps overprinted to designate the country they were to be sold in, and sold through Colombian consulates. They were so designated for 21 countries; the overprint for Switzerland was **S**. In 1929 SCADTA adopted a different solution to the currency problem: its new stamps were denominated in American gold dollars -- at the time very close to a Colombian peso.

In 1932, SCADTA finally got a government mail-carrying contract, so Swiss stamps were able to pay for SCADTA carriage.

Since Liechtenstein's postal operations are tied closely with Switzerland's, we include here some SCADTA mail from Liechtenstein.

The sections of this exhibit are

SCADTA Mail from Colombia to Switzerland 1921 to 1929

SCADTA Mail from Colombia to Switzerland 1929 to 1940

Switzerland to Colombia using Overprinted SCADTA Stamps: 1921 to 1929

Switzerland to Colombia using Gold-Dollar Stamps: 1929 – 1931

Switzerland to Colombia: 1932 – 1939

SCADTA Mail from Liechtenstein

1940: Nationalization: the End of SCADTA

Context information is printed in blue, and boxed

1919: SCADTA founded

1921: Start of scheduled operation

1923: SCADTA stamps overprinted for use from Switzerland; first hand-overprinted, then by machine

1929: Gold-dollar stamps replace overprints

1932: government contract; SCADTA stamps no longer needed

1940: SCADTA nationalized