

Air Mail, History, & Pan Am



This envelope in Ken Sanford's collection is one of only three letters recovered from the crash of the famous China Clipper off Trinidad in 1945.

American Airmail Society

When people become fascinated by the rich historical legacy of Pan Am, it's not uncommon for them to arrive via their exploration of airmail history. For many, it's an unending source of fascination, and you don't have to have deep pockets to own a piece of airmail history.

There are various points of entry to "aerophilately" as airmail collecting is sometimes known. One such is the venerable [American Airmail Society \(AAMS\)](#).

The AAMS is sponsoring a comprehensive event -- *Aerophilately 2014* -- in Bellefonte, PA on the weekend of Sept. 12–14th, 2014. The convention offers a chance for collectors and enthusiasts to get together to explore their mutual passion for history and the tangible links to the past represented by airmail.

For example, some of the topics of presentations at the symposium include: *World War Two Transpacific Airmail by the U.S. Navy; North Atlantic catapult flights 1928-1935; Trans-ocean Balloon Flights; and, Pan Am Builds a Seaport in the Jungle*. The often detailed and deeply researched particulars of aviation's past come alive when viewed through the lens of airmail history. The significance of old envelopes and the markings they've been covered with is revealed in the hands of the knowledgeable folks who've made a study of them.



Ken Sanford, AAMS Convention Coordinator is giving a talk on his specialty: *Air Crash Covers of Pan Am*. The envelope (above) from Ken's collection is one of only three letters recovered from the crash of the famous China Clipper off Trinidad in 1945.



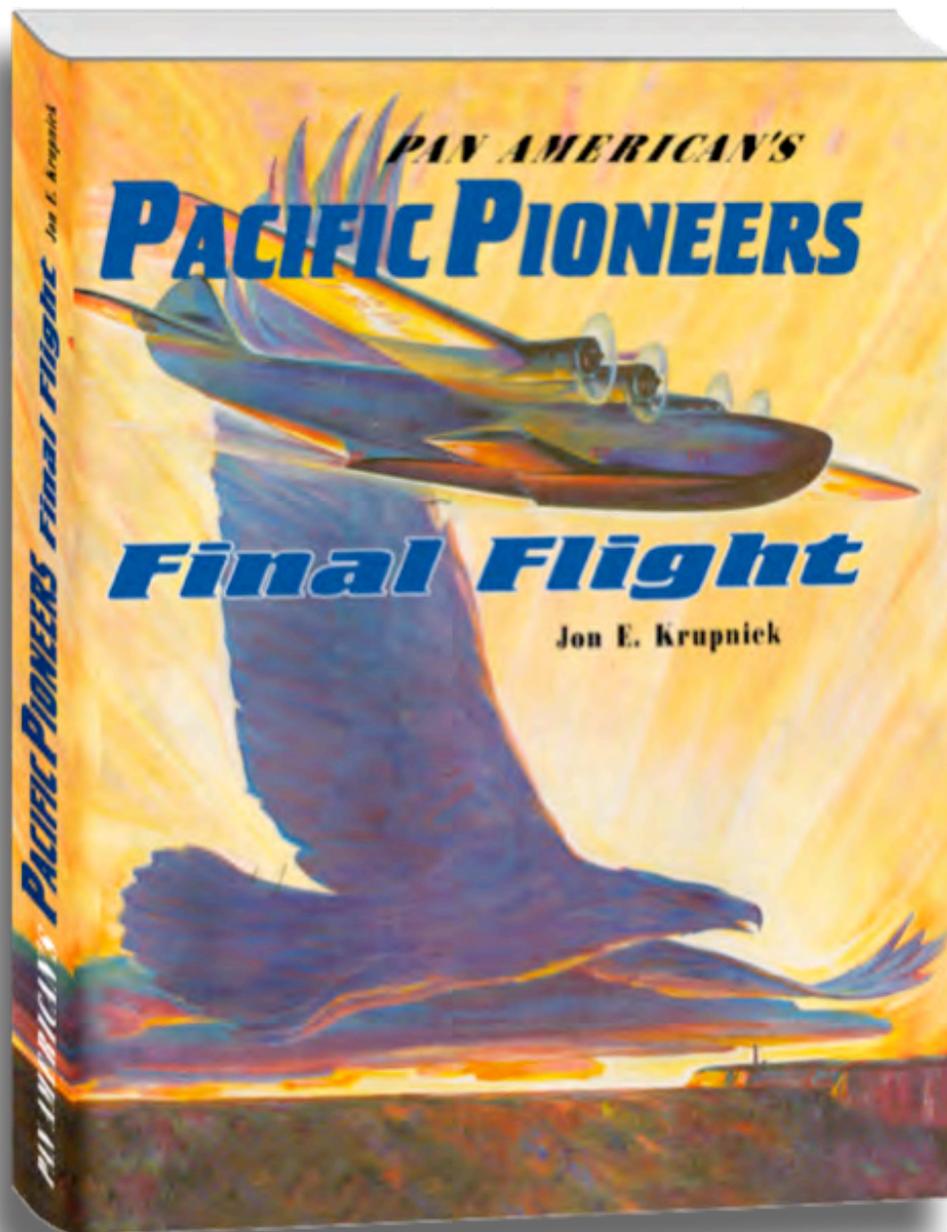
The keynote speech at the event: *A Pan Am Flight Cover Changed My Life*, will be given by Jon Krupnick, historian and author of two excellent books about Pan American's epic opening of transpacific air routes.

Keynote

The keynote speaker at the convention, Jon Krupnick, explains:

"After 40 years of collecting, I am still making new and exciting discoveries about Pan Am's history, particularly from these old envelopes that we collectors call "covers" that were flown on the early Pan Am flights in the Pacific. When I speak to a group I am always asked 'What's the fascination that has held your interest all these years?'

It's simple – the flight covers all tell a story! The more you learn about the airplanes, the flight crews that flew them, and the world politics that shaped Pan Am's early development the better story they can tell. The best covers are those signed by the pilots and flight crews. They carry the DNA of the men who actually created the history--they are a living link with Pan Am's romantic flying boat era."



Jon is currently working on a third book about Pan Am's Pacific pioneering, "FINAL FLIGHT", which he hopes to have published by 2016. If you have stories about Pan Am's history, or want more information about his books, please check out his website: <http://pacificpioneers.com/>. He can be reached via email: jonpac@aol.com

If you can make it to Bellefonte, you'll find the trip well worth your while, and you may come back with a piece of history in the form of an old piece of airmail.

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