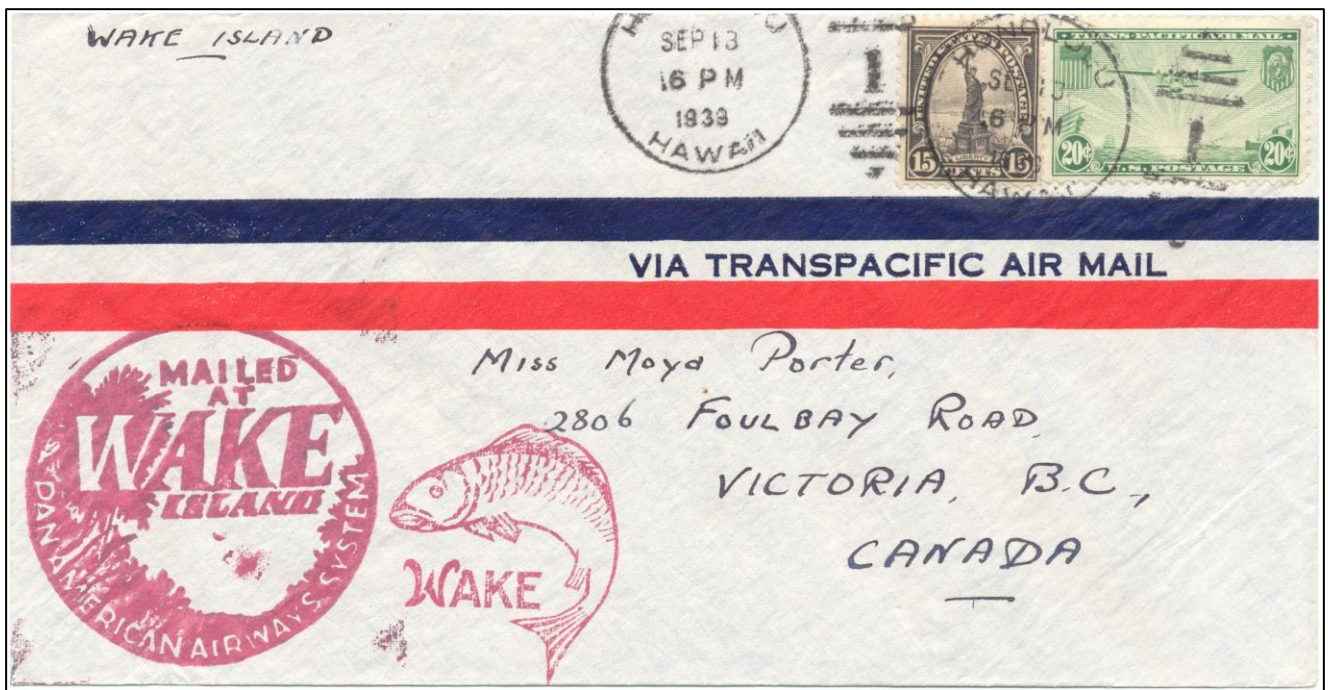


# Cable Repair in the Pacific: 1937–1942



Cover from Wake Island to Victoria, September 1939.

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# Cable Repair in the Pacific: 1937 to 1942

Ian Kimmerly and Gray Scrimgeour

## Summary

This article describes mailed items from an extensive correspondence (1937–1942) involving Henry Porter, a trans-Pacific cable repair worker based in Victoria, British Columbia. Most of the correspondence is between Porter while he was travelling and his family in Victoria. There also are some cable-work related covers. Most of Porter's trips were aboard the Cable Ship *Restorer*, the repair ship owned by the Commercial Pacific Cable Company. These voyages are verified by information from contemporary newspaper articles. Porter's mail—from places such as Honolulu, Midway, Wake, Guam and Manila—usually was sent by air mail via U.S. Foreign Air Mail (FAM) Route 14, the Pacific Route of Pan American Airways (PanAm). For Canadian postal history, this correspondence, which remarkably has been kept intact for four-fifths of a century, provides extremely rare examples of Canadian mail across the Pacific.

## Introduction

The Commercial Pacific Cable Company (CPCC) provided the first cable across the Pacific Ocean between the west coast of North America and Asia<sup>1-3</sup> (Figure 1). The cable between San Francisco and Honolulu was completed in December 1902, and in 1903 cable was laid from Honolulu to Midway, from Midway to Guam, and from Guam to Manila. By 1906, the cable was connected to Singapore, and via Guam to Shanghai and Japan. Guam was to become a communications hub, a role that it retains<sup>4</sup>. Use of this American Pacific cable started on July 4, 1903. Until then, most news from Asia to North America travelled slowly, by ship, or went by a slow telegraphic route through Russia to London<sup>5</sup>. With availability of the American Pacific cable, the American agency Associated Press replaced the British agency Reuters as the major source of news from Asia—particularly news from Hawaii and the Philippine Islands<sup>5</sup>. New York, not London, became the centre for news from the Far East. At least part of this CPCC cable route was used until 1951. The Cable Ship *Restorer* and her crew maintained this important cable. The 358-foot, 5,500-ton displacement *C.S. Restorer* (Figure 2) operated on the Pacific Ocean from 1903 to 1951<sup>1-3</sup>, mostly for the CPCC.

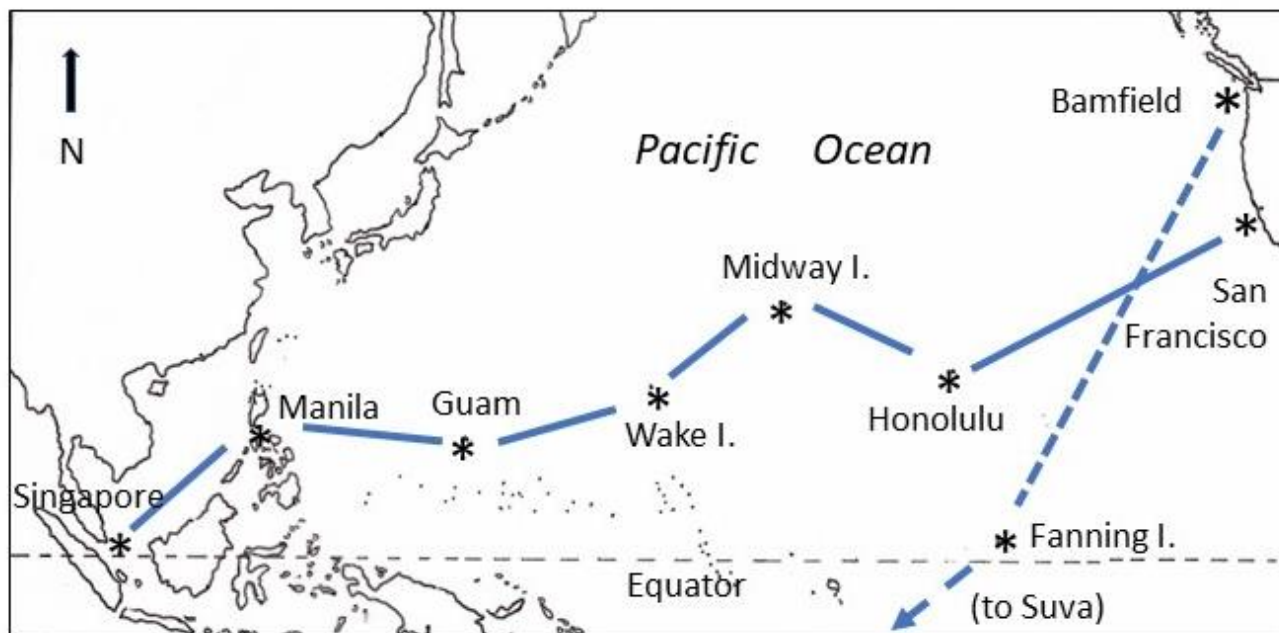


Figure 1. Map showing the routes of the American Pacific (CPCC) cable and the northern end of the British Pacific Cable Board cable to Australasia via Fanning Island. The Pacific route of PanAm (FAM14) followed the same path as the CPCC cable between San Francisco and Manila.

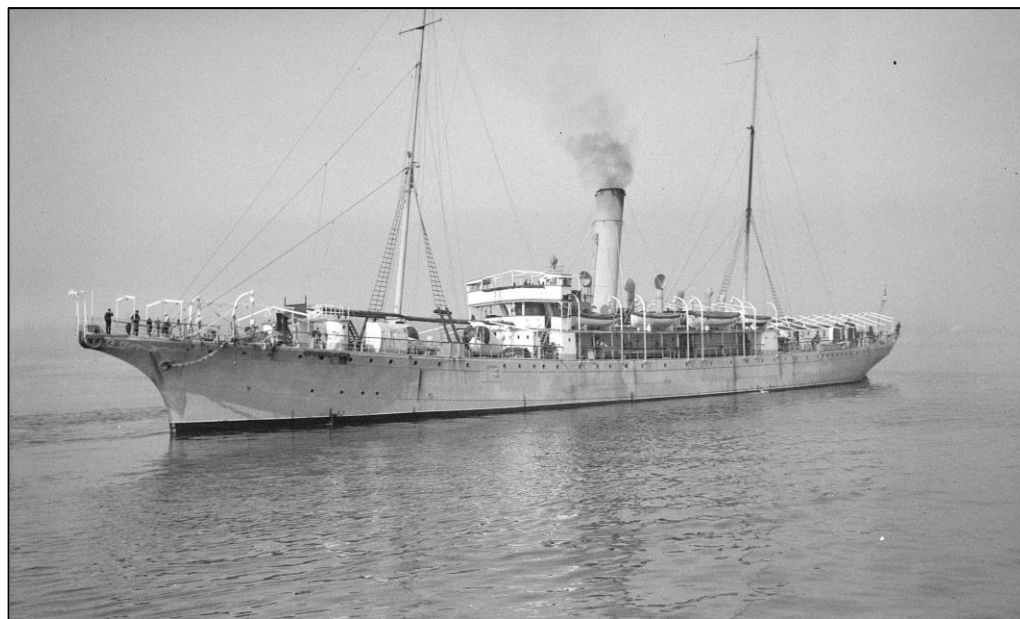


Figure 2. Cable ship *Restorer* at Vancouver, October 5, 1933. Walter Frost photograph, Vancouver City Archives.

The *Restorer* was built in 1903 by Armstrong Whitworth and Company, Newcastle upon Tyne for the Eastern Extension, Australasia and China Telegraph Company. She was to have been a cable repair ship for that company but was sold to CPCC in 1904 to replace their wrecked cable ship *Scotia*. From April 1905, *Restorer*—under a British flag—was based in Honolulu, Hawaii. In 1908, she was transferred to Victoria, British Columbia for economic reasons. To fly a neutral flag, in 1914 she moved to Seattle to obtain American registry. She was used as a U.S. training vessel during World War I. Soon after the war, the *Restorer* performed several cable-repair trips to Midway, then was back to Seattle. In March 1922, her home port again became Greater Victoria, where she berthed until 1941. From 1942 to 1945, she served in Alaska and the Pacific from Seattle. She was back to Victoria from 1945 to 1951.

This article describes covers from the correspondence between 1937 and 1942 of Henry Percy Porter (1896–1971) who was an electrical engineer working aboard the *Restorer*. According to Jupp<sup>2</sup>, from the late 1920s, Porter was Chief Electrician of the *Restorer* and later was Chief Engineer. Porter had a major role in the ship’s operation, providing technical advice and direction regarding submarine cable installation, operation, testing, and maintenance. While Porter travelled, his wife Madeleine (nee O’Sullivan) and their daughter Moya were in Victoria. Porter wrote to them frequently when he was on voyages. Moya was a stamp collector, so Porter often sent attractively-franked envelopes. After a few years of relative inactivity, the *Restorer* made three long voyages during the 1937–1939 period. In addition, Porter—apparently without the ship—made several additional trips to the mid-Pacific. Porter’s five dozen covers outline his voyages. Our covers show that Porter remained with the *Restorer* until at least 1942. A 1945 photograph shows him working on the *Restorer*. Jupp<sup>2</sup> says that Porter remained “in marine electric communication even after the *Restorer* was no more” (i.e., past 1951).

### **Pacific Islands**

Between Hawaii and the Philippine Islands, there are three islands located on both the route of the CPCC cable and PanAm’s air route FAM14: Midway, Wake and Guam.

Midway is a circular atoll, a ring-shaped barrier reef enclosing several sand islets—located about 1300 miles west northwest of Honolulu, Hawaii. It is about half way between California and Japan. A CPCC cable station was built there in 1903. It was an overnight stopover on the PanAm trans-Pacific air route.

In 1935, hangars, employee quarters, a power plant and a desalination plant were installed at Midway. Prefabricated, solar-powered 45-room hotels were assembled on both Midway and Wake in 1936. Midway is the nesting site for most of the world's Laysan albatrosses (called Gooney birds).

The atoll Wake Island, 2300 miles west of Honolulu, was uninhabited until 1935. In that year, a seaplane base was built for overnight stops on PanAm's trans-Pacific flights. Although the CPCC cable touches Wake, there is no cable station there. Wake had no post office until the 1950s.

Guam—about 1600 miles east of Manila and 5800 miles west of San Francisco—is the largest and most populous of the Marianas Islands. It is an unincorporated territory of the United States. The U.S. captured Guam from Spain in 1898. CPCC built a cable station on Guam in 1903, and in 1935 PanAm established a seaplane base there.

### **Pan American Airways**

Pan American World Airways (PanAm) was founded in 1927 when Juan Trippe chartered a seaplane to carry mail the 90 miles between Key West, Florida and Havana, Cuba. In the 1930s, the company expanded with routes to the Caribbean Islands, Mexico and Central and South America. In 1934, Trippe obtained traffic rights to land for refueling and overnight stays at Pearl Harbor, Midway Island, Wake Island, Guam and Manila. PanAm dredged lagoons for landing at Midway and Wake. In March 1935, PanAm carried by merchant vessel equipment and construction supplies to provision each island where their seaplanes would stop overnight.

For the Pacific route, PanAm used aircraft that landed on water, called "flying clippers." Initially, three Martin M-130 four-engined flying boats—the *China Clipper*, the *Hawaii Clipper* and the *Philippine Clipper*—were used. They flew at 130 miles per hour. These planes had the speed, size and range to profitably carry mail and passengers across the Pacific. These three M-130s were the only planes of this model to be built. The load of fuel needed to reach Honolulu from San Francisco was so high, though, that only about eight passengers could be carried on that leg. From February 1939, the Martin Clippers were replaced by Boeing B-314 Clippers, which were faster and more comfortable.

The first mail-carrying flight (with no passengers) took place when the *China Clipper* departed from San Francisco for Manila on November 22, 1935 (see the photo below). The entire trip (8746 miles) took six days—59 hours 48 minutes of flying time. The fastest ships required two weeks for this trip. The longest single hop was from San Francisco to Honolulu, which took 21 hours. Passenger service to Honolulu and Manila started October 21, 1936. PanAm added Macao and Hong Kong to the route in 1937.



PanAm's Martin M-130 *China Clipper* departing from San Francisco on November 22, 1935 on the first westbound flight of Foreign Air Mail Route 14 (FAM14). [Wikipedia; public domain.]

### Trans-Pacific Air Mail Postage Rates

Many of the Porter covers were Trans-Pacific letters sent by air mail. The Pan American Airways [PanAm] San Francisco–Manila air route (FAM14) commenced on November 22, 1935<sup>6</sup>. The U.S. Post Office announced that it would accept air mail from Canada for this route on January 23, 1936<sup>7</sup>. On April 21, 1937, the postal rates from mainland United States to Hawaii, Guam and Manila were lowered to the charges listed in Table 1. The rates from Canada to these destinations via FAM14 (see Table 2) were *not* reduced in 1937. All the trans-Pacific air mail covers described here were mailed after April 1937, so the rates listed in these tables should apply. Rates for mail from the U.S. to Midway Island and Wake Island were not published in the *US Post Office Postal Bulletin*; their values listed in Table 1 are based on published observations of actual covers. Rates for letters from Canada to Midway and Wake also have not been published.

Table 1. US Air Mail Letter Rates Starting April 21, 1937

USA to	Hawaii	20¢ per ½ oz
	Midway Island	30¢ per ½ oz
	Wake Island	35¢ per ½ oz
	Guam	40¢ per ½ oz
	Philippine Islands	50¢ per ½ oz
	Malaya	70¢ per ½ oz
To US from	Philippine Islands	1 peso (50¢) per ½ oz
	Guam	40¢ per ½ oz
	Wake Island	40¢ per ½ oz
	Midway Island	40¢ per ½ oz
	Hawaii	20¢ per ½ oz

References for Table 1:

*Foreign Air Mail Service effective July 1, 1938*, US Post Office Department,

<https://www.americanairmailssociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FAMS-1938.pdf>

T.H. Boyle, Jr., *Airmail Operations During World War II*, American Air Mail Society, Mineola, NY (1998) pp. 36 and 37.

R.W. Helbock, "All Over the Map: 1926-27 Map Airmails Paying Postage to Overseas Destinations", *La Posta* (May 2004) pp. 9–20.

E.B. Proud, *Intercontinental Airmails, Volume One, Transatlantic and Pacific*, Proud Publications Ltd., Heathfield, East Sussex (2008) p. 477.

Table 2. Canada Air Mail Letter Rates in Canadian Cents Starting in 1936

Canada to	Hawaii	25¢ per ½ oz
	Midway Island	?
	Guam	50¢ per ½ oz
	Manila	75¢ per ½ oz
	Singapore*	90¢ per ½ oz

References for Table 2:

R.C. Smith, *Selected Canadian Postage Rates, 1859–present*, Ottawa (2000).

D.E. Crotty, *Canadian Air Mail Rates Domestic and International*, D.E. Crotty, Ludlow KY (2019). Available online at:

<https://www.americanairmailssociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CanadaAirMailRates.pdf>

E.B. Proud, *Intercontinental Airmails, Volume One, Transatlantic and Pacific*, Proud Publications Ltd., Heathfield, East Sussex (2008) p. 544.



This correspondence (some six dozen covers) is the largest reported accumulation of commercial airmail covers between Canada and the central Pacific. Commercial air mail in the late 1930s from Midway Island and other locations is not common, so those in the Porter correspondence provide valuable information.

### **Midway and Wake: Way Mail**

Neither Midway nor Wake had a government post office during the late 1930s. Eastbound mail from these islands was carried by the PanAm pilot and postmarked at Honolulu, westbound mail at Guam<sup>8</sup>. The July 27, 1939 issue of *The Postal Bulletin* contains a timetable for FAM14, the Trans-Pacific air mail route to and from San Francisco. In this table, beside both Midway Island and Wake Island is a number for a footnote that reads “No post office”. [A digitized copy of the applicable *Postal Bulletin* is available at the website: *The Digitized U.S. Postal Bulletin (Postal Bulletin) and U.S. Postal Laws and Regulations*:

<http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/pdfsearch.aspx?pid=1&Group=48&id=48#y1939>

The Porter correspondence contains 10 examples of this type of way mail from Midway. The sole Porter cover from Wake also was postmarked in Honolulu. For most of these way-mail or courtesy covers, the point of origin was determined from newspaper information about the location of the *Restorer* or of Porter. In addition, most of these way-mail air-mail covers bear a higher amount of postage than would be required if they had originated in Honolulu [20¢ per ½oz from Hawaii]. Several covers from Midway and Wake bear cachets or handstamps showing their point of origin.

### **Cachets and Handstamps**

Murphy<sup>9</sup> describes unofficial cachets and handstamps applied at Midway and Wake. He writes that Midway Figure 2.1—the Gooney bird cachet—was applied at Midway to eastbound mail that was cancelled at Honolulu or to westbound mail that was cancelled at Guam. Murphy lists the known dates as November 9, 1938 to August 23, 1940. We have seen 14 examples online dated from February 21, 1936 to April 7, 1941 (Honolulu postmark dates). The Gooney bird cachet was applied at PanAm’s hotel on Midway<sup>10</sup>.



Midway 2.1

Another unofficial cachet applied at Midway is the three-line MAILED AT/MIDWAY ISLAND/-PACIFIC OCEAN- handstamp [Murphy's Midway 2.2] applied by PanAm at Midway to mail cancelled at Honolulu or Guam. Dates recorded by Murphy go from July 11, 1939 to November 1, 1940. We have seen three examples online dated between May 4, 1937 and April 7, 1941.



Midway 2.2

In the Porter correspondence, there is one cover from Wake Island (postmarked September 13, 1939 at Honolulu). It bears two cachets: Murphy's Wake 2.3 and a fish with the word WAKE (not listed by Murphy). Wake 2.3 was applied to letters mailed by PanAm on Wake Island but cancelled at Honolulu or Guam. Lukens<sup>11</sup> has recorded use of Wake 2.3 from November 25, 1937 to October 30, 1941.

Wake 2.3



The WAKE fish cachet (shown below) is not described by Murphy. We have seen six examples online. Their dates extend from August 15, 1939 to October 15, 1940.



### The Voyages

On August 8, 1937, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* reported that the cableship *Restorer* was expected to leave Victoria for Guam on Monday [August 9<sup>th</sup>] or Tuesday [August 10<sup>th</sup>] to seek and repair an interruption in the trans-Pacific cable. "The cableship has not left port on a big repair job for nearly three years." Porter mailed a picture post card (Figure 3) written in Vancouver to his daughter Moya, postmarked Victoria August 12<sup>th</sup>, saying they "expect to leave for Guam at 2 a.m. Thursday" [August 12<sup>th</sup>]. The *Restorer* departed from Vancouver and passed Victoria at 10:20 a.m. on August 12<sup>th</sup> bound for Guam.

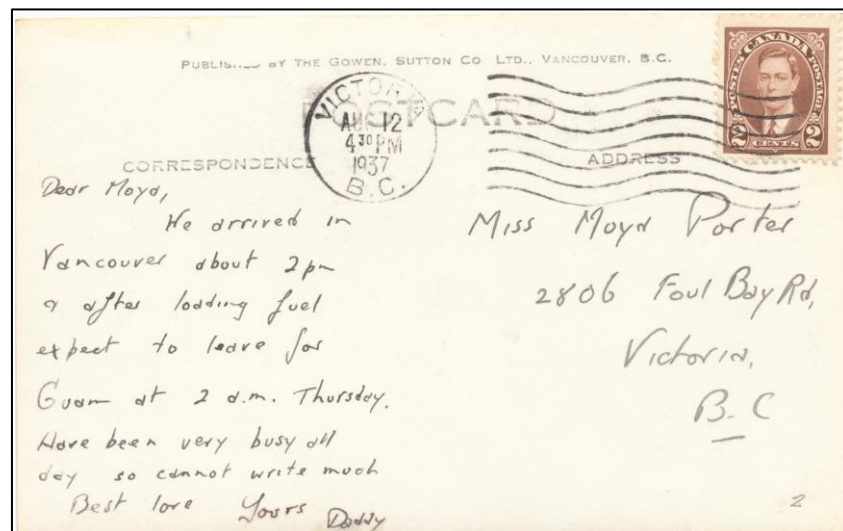


Figure 3. Picture post card sent on August 12, 1937 before the *Restorer* left for Guam.

Porter sent three covers from Guam. The earliest—mailed September 2, 1937—is shown in Figure 4. The envelope is a CPC Co. corner card. The letter was sent by air mail, with 46¢ postage. [This seemingly anomalous rate is discussed later.] Note the 20¢ Golden Gate definitive (issued in 1923) and the attractive use of the 1¢ Army Issue stamp from 1936. The *China Clipper*, carrying this cover, departed from Guam on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and reached San Francisco on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

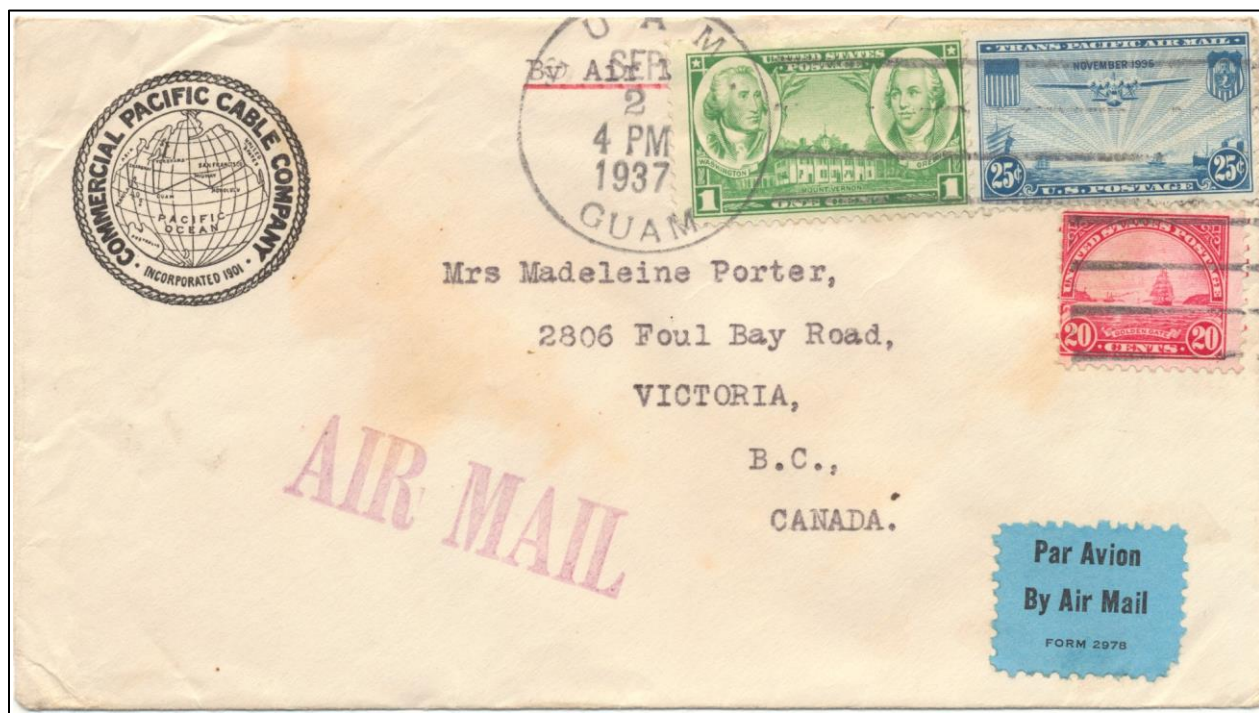


Figure 4. Air mail cover mailed to Victoria at Guam on September 2, 1937

The September 5, 1937 *Colonist* reported that the *Restorer* had left Guam for Manila. Porter left two letters at Guam before the ship departed. Both were postmarked on September 8<sup>th</sup> at Guam. Their envelopes (Figures 5 and 6) were designed by cachet maker Walter G. Crosby (1881–1947). From the late 1920s, the Crosby Photo-Cachet Cover Service supplied commemorative envelopes for collectors. His covers often have photographs pasted on them. These covers bear photos of Pan Am Clippers. The online catalogue of Crosby first day covers at <https://www.wgcrosbyfdcs.com/> includes a series of similar 1937 air mail covers. These two covers were carried from Guam to San Francisco in the *Hawaii Clipper*, which departed from Manila on September 10<sup>th</sup> (two days late), probably left Guam on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and reached San Francisco on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Both of these covers bear 46¢ postage.



Figure 5. Large-size Crosby commemorative envelope mailed by Porter at Guam, dated September 8, 1937.



Figure 6. Another Crosby commemorative envelope mailed by Porter at Guam, also dated September 8, 1937.

Figure 7 shows the front of an air mail cover mailed at Victoria on September 7, 1937 to Porter at Manila. It was carried west by the *China Clipper*, which departed San Francisco on September 15<sup>th</sup> and reached Manila on September 21<sup>st</sup>. The 75¢ Canadian postage paid agrees with Table 2.



Figure 7. Front of an air mail cover that was mailed in Victoria on September 7, 1937 to the *Restorer* at Manila, Philippine Islands.

Porter mailed two letters home from Manila by PanAm *Clipper* on September 16, 1937. In one (Figure 8) there is a letter to Moya thanking her for her letter of September 6<sup>th</sup> (presumably the cover mailed September 7<sup>th</sup>, shown in Figure 7). The *Philippine Clipper* departed from Manila on September 20<sup>th</sup> with this letter and arrived in San Francisco on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

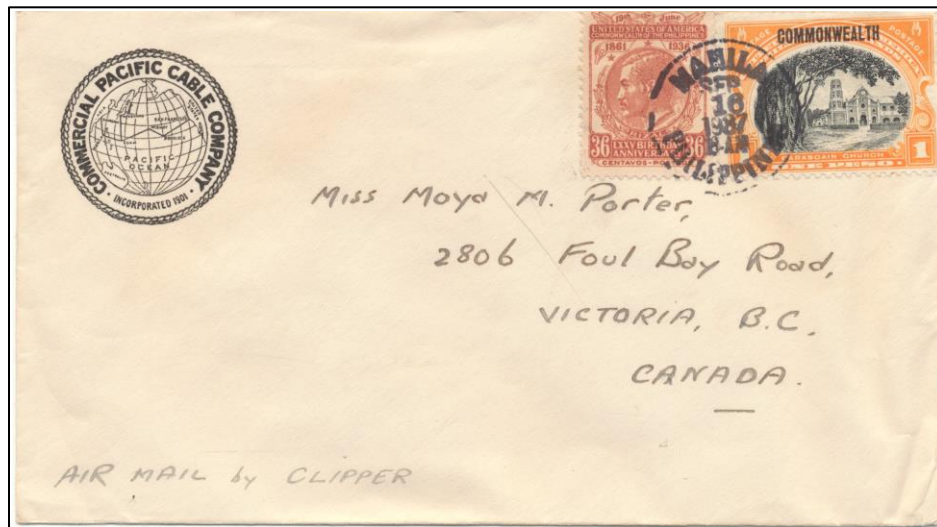


Figure 8. September 16, 1937 air mail cover from Manila to Victoria.

The postage rate for the cover shown in Figure 8 is 1 Peso airmail to San Francisco, then 36 centavos (18 cents) air mail from San Francisco to Canada. The *Restorer* left Manila on October 2, 1937 for the Hie Shan Islands (beyond Taiwan) where the crew repaired a broken cable. After this repair work, the *Restorer* proceeded to Singapore.

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, Madelaine Porter mailed a letter to her husband at Manila (Figure 9). Its arrival date in Manila was October 5<sup>th</sup>—three days after the *Restorer* left Manila. This letter was presumably forwarded to Singapore by CPCC in Manila.



Figure 9. Letter addressed to Manila, mailed in Victoria on September 27<sup>th</sup>. It bears a Manila backstamp dated October 5<sup>th</sup>.

## Singapore

Singapore was the westernmost port reached by the *Restorer* on this voyage. She was there from some time in early October until November 16<sup>th</sup>. Air mail between Singapore and Victoria could proceed by either a trans-Pacific route or a trans-Atlantic route. The letters to Porter were trans-Pacific; the mail he sent to Victoria was trans-Atlantic (the less expensive route). We will first describe the trans-Pacific mail.

Porter's wife sent two air mail letters to him at Singapore via the trans-Pacific Clipper route, on October 4<sup>th</sup> and October 18<sup>th</sup>. These covers bear Hong Kong transit postmarks; neither has a Singapore receiving mark. Both covers were paid 90¢ per ½ ounce postage (see Proud, *Volume One*, pp. 477 and 566). Although the air mail rate from Canada to Singapore is not listed, it would be the same as the rate to Hong Kong: 90¢ per ½oz These covers are illustrated in Figures 10 and 11.



Figure 10. Air mail cover from Victoria to Henry Porter in Singapore, mailed October 4, 1937. The cover bears a Hong Kong transit postmark dated October 18, 1937.



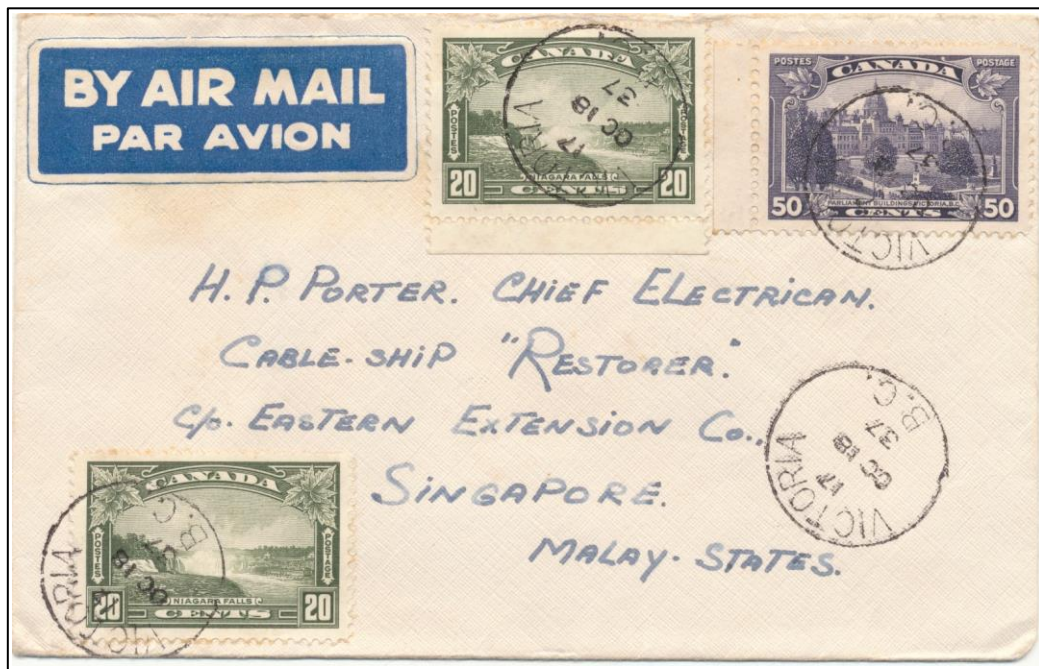


Figure 11. Air mail cover from Victoria to Henry Porter in Singapore, mailed October 18, 1937.

These covers definitely were carried in PanAm *Clippers* to Hong Kong. Lacking receiving postmarks, their route from Hong Kong to Singapore is uncertain. On April 21, 1937, FAM14 had been extended from Manila to Hong Kong and a connecting flight to the Straits Settlements was started. From 1936 through November 1937, Imperial Airways provided a weekly Hong Kong Feeder Service between Hong Kong and Penang, Straits Settlements, departing from Hong Kong on Friday and arriving at Penang on Saturday. [Proud *Volume Two*, p. 578 and p. 587]. At Penang, air mail from Hong Kong for Singapore was transferred to the next eastbound Imperial Airways flight to Australia. A postal clerk in Hong Kong would decide—based on the First-Packet Principle—if this all-air route was faster than carriage of a letter to Singapore in a convenient ship (a four- to six-day voyage). We can only report the maximum elapsed time—by air, based on flight times.

The cover in Figure 10 was mailed in Victoria on October 4, 1937. The *China Clipper* took it from San Francisco on October 6<sup>th</sup>, reaching Hong Kong on October 17<sup>th</sup> (verified by an October 18<sup>th</sup> [Monday] transit mark). There had been a five-day delay at Guam. The first available weekly feeder flight to Penang was on Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>; the next Penang–Singapore flight [3 hours 25 minutes duration] was Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. That would produce a

maximum of 20 days in transit from Victoria, slowed by delays at Guam and a 1-week connection from Hong Kong.

The *Philippine Clipper* departed from San Francisco on October 20<sup>th</sup> with the cover in Figure 11; after encountering delaying bad weather at San Francisco and at Wake, it arrived at Hong Kong on October 26<sup>th</sup>. This cover has a Hong Kong transit postmark of October 27<sup>th</sup>. There was a feeder flight to Penang on Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup> and a Southampton–Brisbane flight through Singapore on Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup>. This cover was considerably faster than the previous, taking only 13 days from Victoria and 4 days from Hong Kong.

Between October 23 and November 16, 1937, Porter mailed five air mail letters and a picture post card from Singapore to Victoria. All of them took the trans-Atlantic route: air to Great Britain, then surface to and across Canada. None have receiving dates. Their postage was less than if they had been sent trans-Pacific. Three items were endorsed for carriage by Imperial Airways and two for KLM (Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij, Royal Dutch Airlines). Both KLM covers were mailed the same day, October 30, 1937.

The *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* (August 28, 1937, p. 12) summarizes the air mail service from Singapore to Europe as follows:

Mails are despatched for Medan Jask [*Airport*], Amsterdam and London by Dutch air mail every Wednesday and Saturday at 1:30pm.

Mails are despatched... by Imperial Airways every Tuesday and Saturday at 10pm.

The above times must be closing times at the Singapore post office because Proud [*Volume Two*, p. 83] lists Imperial Airways leaving Singapore at 06.00 Wednesday and Sunday.

The earliest cover (Figure 12, next page; mailed Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>) has no endorsement. It bears a 25¢ Straits Settlement currency stamp (paying the ½-oz air mail charge to Britain by Imperial Airways) and has a London jusqu'à marking (red bars indicating the end of air service and the start of surface service). Imperial Airways departed Singapore with this cover on October 24<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Southampton on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

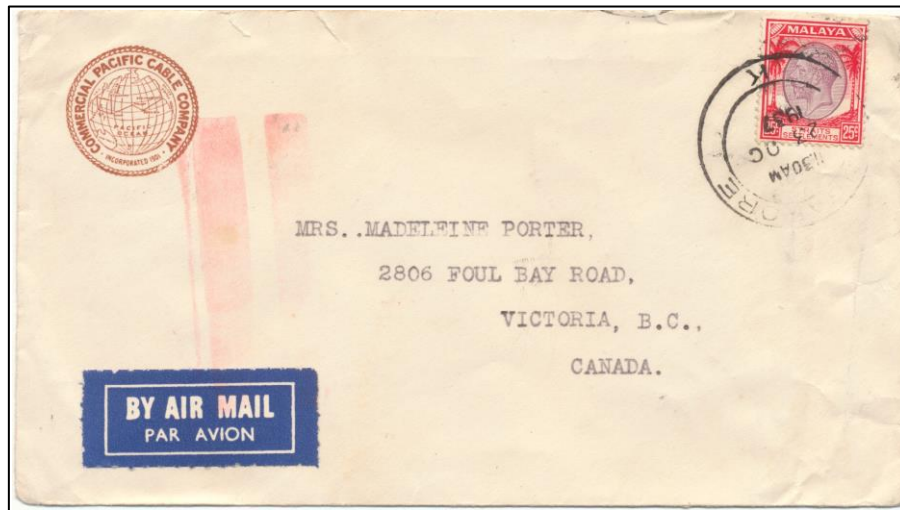


Figure 12. Cover mailed at Singapore to Madeleine Porter on October 23, 1937.

The covers carried by KLM (for example the cover shown in Figure 13) bear Montreal backstamps. This cover was mailed at Singapore to Moya Porter on October 30, 1937, endorsed for KLM. It departed from Singapore on October 30<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Amsterdam on November 5<sup>th</sup>. It transited Montreal on November 12<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Victoria about November 17<sup>th</sup>—ca. 19 days from Singapore. Postage was paid with two 30¢ Straits Settlements adhesives (60¢ per ½oz). The envelope contains a picture post card with a long message.

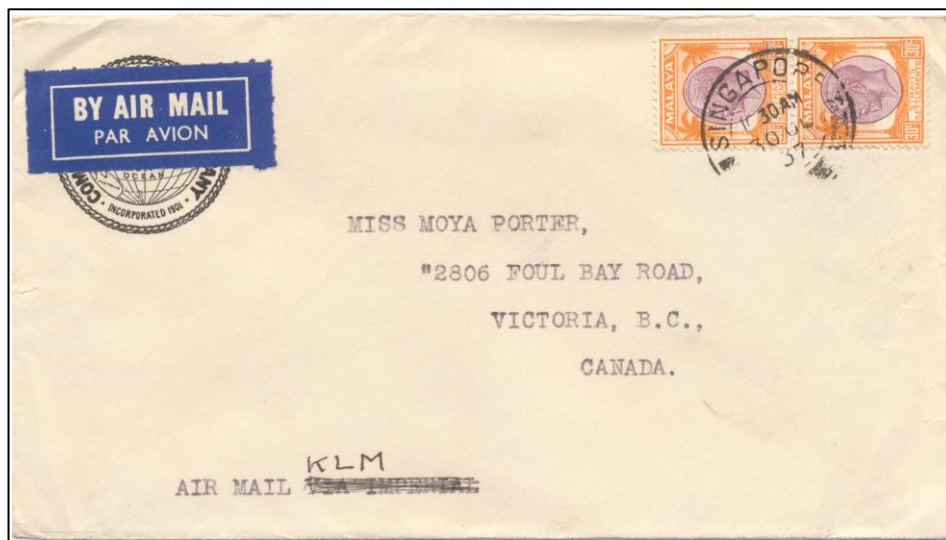


Figure 13. This cover to Victoria was mailed at Singapore on October 30, 1937. Carried by KLM, it arrived in Amsterdam on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

Porter mailed three more covers at Singapore to his wife: one via KLM (also posted on October 30<sup>th</sup>; paid double weight \$1.20 Straits Settlement; Montreal transit November 12<sup>th</sup>) and two by Imperial Airways (November 6<sup>th</sup>, double weight, paid 50¢ Straits Settlement, and November 16<sup>th</sup>, single weight, paid 25¢ Straits Settlements).

Porter sent a picture post card to his daughter on November 16, 1937 (Figure 14). It is docketed "via Imperial", bears a BY AIR MAIL sticker and has a London jusqu'à marking. From December 1, 1934, the air mail rate for post cards from Malaya to Great Britain was 15¢ Straits Settlement currency [Proud, Volume Two, p. 639]—as seen on this card. The Imperial Airways flight carrying this card left Singapore on November 17<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Southampton on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Travel from Britain to Victoria by surface would take about 10 days.

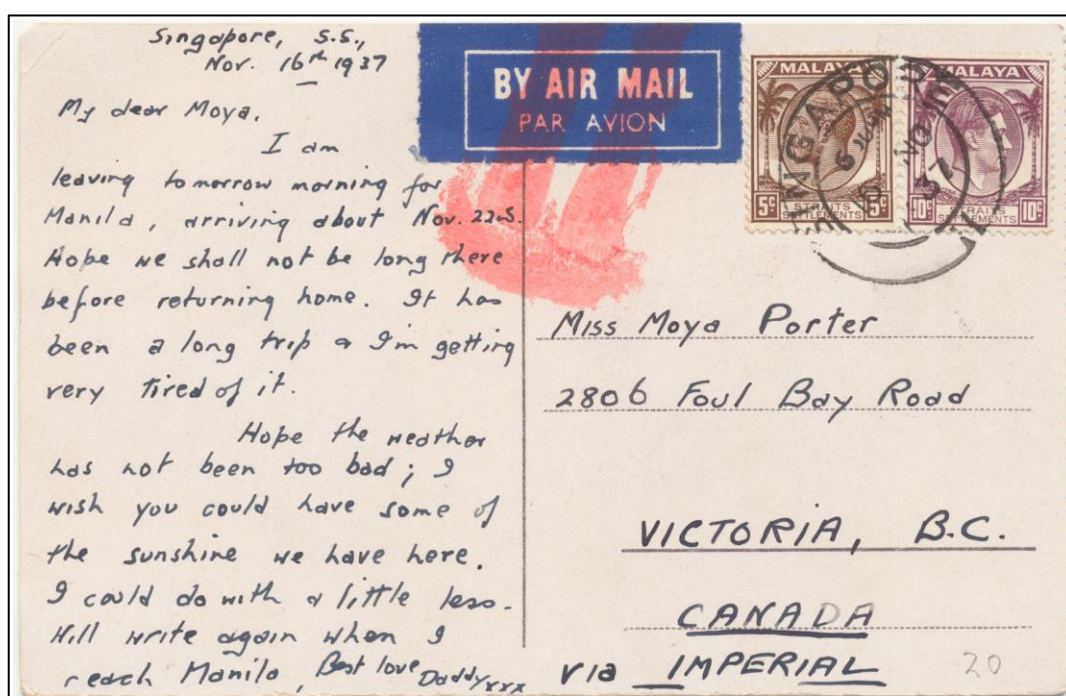


Figure 14. Picture post card sent from Singapore to Victoria, by Imperial Air to Great Britain, then surface to its destination. Note the jusqu'à marking that was applied at London.

With so few examples and lacking receiving postmarks, it is difficult to compare the transit times of trans-Pacific Porter covers to those of trans-Atlantic Porter covers. The Pacific mail was slowed by storms by several days. The postage was lower for the trans-Atlantic route than for the trans-Pacific route. In 1937, KLM mail from Singapore to England was a day or so faster than Imperial but its postage rate was higher. Helbock<sup>12</sup> has compared the speed and costs of the KLM and Imperial services post-1934, when both airlines began carrying mail directly between Singapore and Europe. Air transport by Imperial was 25¢ Straits Settlement

per ½oz then; KLM’s charge was 60¢ per ½oz. However, many customers chose KLM for “money well spent to have your letter reach its destination three–four days earlier”. [The time advantage of KLM over Imperial decreased by one day in early 1937 when Imperial was able to cut a day from its schedule. KLM mail to Canada would require one day to reach Great Britain from Amsterdam. These factors should still allow a one- to two-day advantage for KLM over Imperial for mail to Canada.]

### Manila

The *Restorer* departed from Singapore for Manila on November 16, 1937. The correspondence has four covers sent from Manila to Victoria by Porter (between November 29<sup>th</sup> and December 28<sup>th</sup>). Two (probably both Christmas cards) were mailed December 3<sup>rd</sup> by surface mail and two were sent air mail by Pan American (on November 29<sup>th</sup> and December 28<sup>th</sup>). The former (e.g., Figure 15) were probably carried in the *Empress of Asia*, which left Manila on December 6<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Victoria on December 27<sup>th</sup>.

Figure 16 (next page) shows the last existing Porter cover from the *Restorer*’s long voyage across the Pacific. It is a CPC Company corner-card envelope mailed at Manila on December 28, 1937. Postage of 1 peso 36 centavos was paid with two 50 centavo stamps and a 36 centavo stamp. The *Hawaii Clipper*, which departed from Hong Kong on December 27<sup>th</sup>, carried this cover from Manila to San Francisco, arriving there January 3, 1938. The date at Manila is not available.



Figure 15. Surface-mail cover mailed at Manila on December 3, 1937.



Figure 16. Air mail cover from Manila (December 28, 1937) to Victoria. Note the VIA CLIPPER handstamp.

The *Restorer* departed from Manila on January 1, 1938 for Midway, where several weeks of work was performed. The ship left Midway on February 2, 1938, and arrived in Victoria on February 14<sup>th</sup> after her long, six-month voyage.

#### **Porter to Midway, then *Restorer* there later in March**

The *Restorer* was in Victoria for only a short time. A month of boiler repairs was scheduled following her return on February 14<sup>th</sup>. However, the February 19, 1938 issue of the *Victoria Times* reported that H.P. Porter—*not* the cable ship—was leaving on February 20<sup>th</sup> for San Francisco. Porter had been home less than a week! At San Francisco, he would board a PanAm *Clipper* to Midway Island, where he would “try and effect the required repairs”. He was to leave San Francisco on February 24, 1938. Porter sent letters home from San Francisco (postmarked February 22<sup>nd</sup>; see Figure 17, next page) and Honolulu (February 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>; see Figures 18 and 19). The cover in Figure 18 bears the correct 20¢ postage for air mail. However, only 6¢ postage was paid on the cover two days later (Figure 19). There is no indication of postage due, and without a receiving postmark, one cannot tell if it was carried by surface or by air. The *Hawaii Clipper* departed from San Francisco on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and

reached Honolulu the next day. Its flight to Midway did not leave Honolulu until March 1<sup>st</sup>. Porter reached Midway on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. *Restorer* and her apparatus were needed for the cable repairs, so the ship left Victoria for Midway on March 9<sup>th</sup> and reached Midway on March 25<sup>th</sup>.



Figure 17. Cover sent by Porter from San Francisco on February 22, 1938.

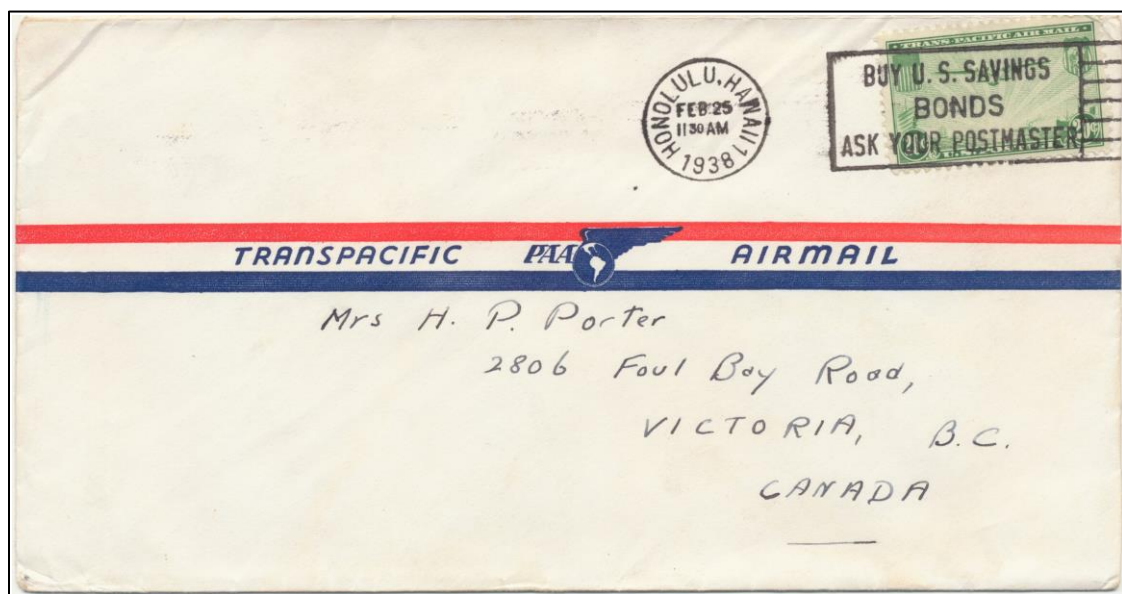


Figure 18. Cover sent by Porter from Honolulu on February 25, 1938, with 20¢ postage.



Figure 19. Cover sent by Porter from Honolulu on February 27, 1938. Note that only 6¢ postage was paid.

Meanwhile, Porter sent three air mail letters home from Midway before the *Restorer* arrived there. These envelopes—way mail, as discussed above—were postmarked at Honolulu on March 13<sup>th</sup>, March 19<sup>th</sup> (Figure 20) and March 24<sup>th</sup> (Figure 21, with its fancy cachet). Postage on each was 45¢. The airmail rate from Midway to North America then was 40¢ U.S. currency per ½ ounce, so each cover appears to be attractively overpaid by 5¢.

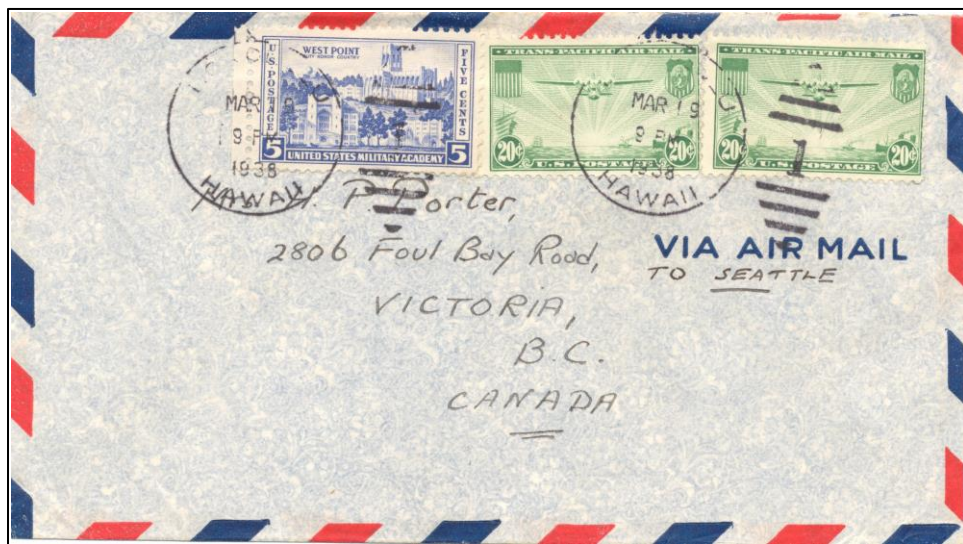


Figure 20. Cover from Midway Island postmarked at Honolulu on March 19, 1938.





Figure 21. Cover from Midway Island postmarked at Honolulu on March 24, 1938. Note the Midway Gooney Bird cachet.

The *Restorer* departed from Midway on April 4<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Esquimalt at 8a.m. on April 15, 1938. After this hurried trip, she returned to the Yarrows plant in Esquimalt.

### Porter Back to Midway

While the *Restorer* remained in Victoria, Porter was needed at Midway Island. He travelled to Honolulu aboard the *R.M.S. Niagara*, which departed from Victoria on May 11, 1938 and reached Honolulu on May 18<sup>th</sup>. [As discussed below, the *Restorer* did not go to Midway; only Porter went there. The cable ship remained in Victoria until June 26<sup>th</sup>.] Porter sent his wife a letter on the day he arrived in Hawaii (Figure 22; postage paid on this cover was 20¢ U.S. currency), and he sent Maya a picture post card from Honolulu on May 20<sup>th</sup>. On the card, he wrote "I had quite a nice trip on the Niagara altho the weather was not very good..." The first available flight from Honolulu to Midway for him was the *Hawaii Clipper*, which departed from Honolulu on May 20<sup>th</sup> and probably reached Midway the next day (Proud does not list an arrival date).

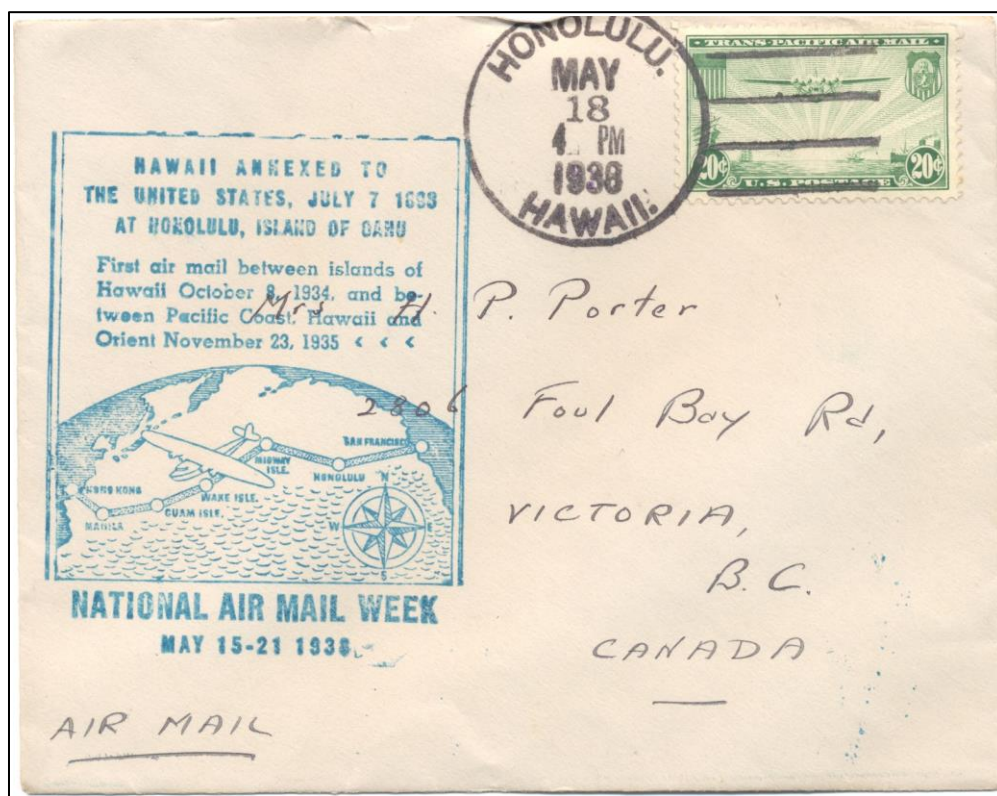


Figure 22. Cover (an envelope from the *R.M.S. Niagara*) mailed at Honolulu by Porter on May 18, 1938. Note the green National Air Mail Week, May 15-21, 1938 cachet.

Over the next two months, there are a dozen covers to or from Porter. The earliest from Porter is dated May 23, 1938 at Honolulu—a PanAm air mail envelope with postage 40¢ paid (Figure 23). It was carried to San Francisco in the *China Clipper*, which departed from Midway on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and arrived at San Francisco on May 25<sup>th</sup>. About a week later, he sent another letter (dated on May 31<sup>st</sup> at Honolulu). This time he paid 45¢ U.S. postage (Figure 24). The date when the *Hawaii Clipper* carrying this cover left Midway is not known, but it arrived in San Francisco on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Porter sent a similar cover to his wife that was postmarked in Honolulu on June 6<sup>th</sup>. It also bore 45¢ postage.

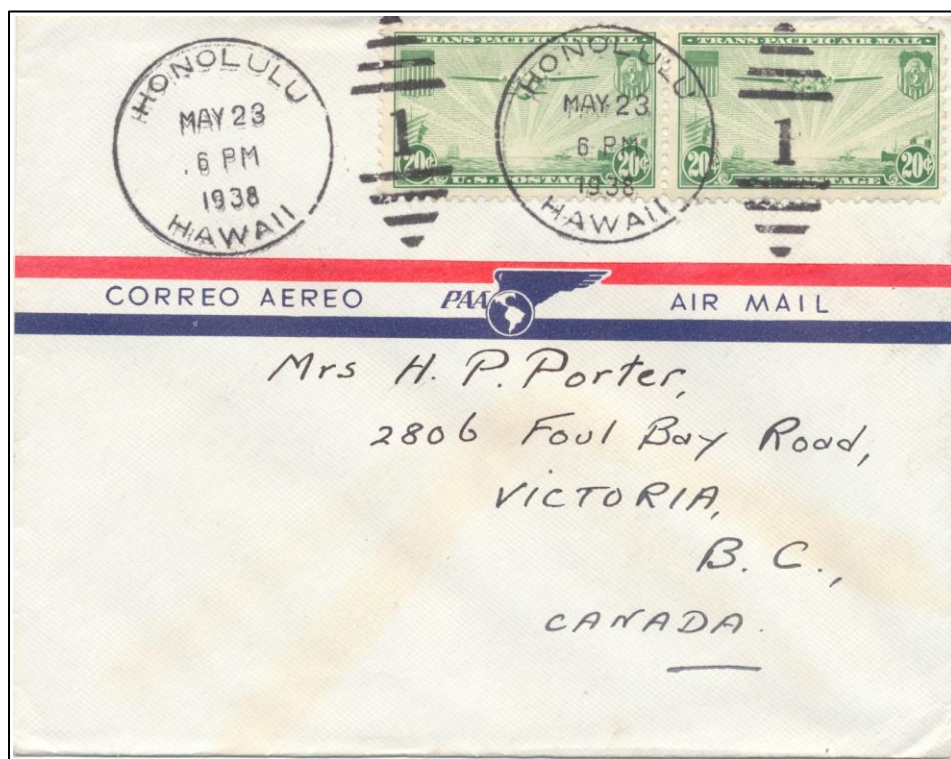


Figure 23. Air mail cover to Victoria from Midway postmarked May 23, 1938 at Honolulu.

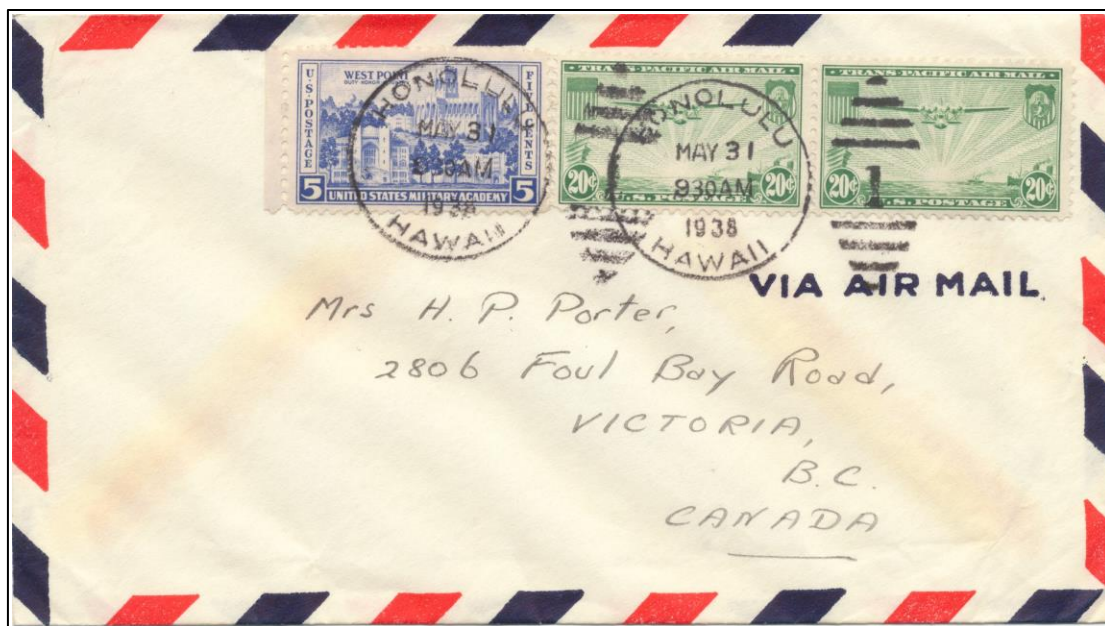


Figure 24. Air mail cover to Victoria from Midway postmarked May 31, 1938 at Honolulu.

From this trip, there are five covers from British Columbia to H.P. Porter addressed to him at Midway. Four bear postage of 25¢, the ½-oz rate from Canada to the Hawaii Islands. One had 26¢ postage paid. None show any sign of postage due. The first—mailed at Courtenay, B.C. on June 12, 1938—is a cover front only, addressed to Cableskip 'Restorer', Midway, Hawaiian Islands (Figure 25).



Figure 25. Cover addressed to Porter at "Midway, Hawaiian Islands", mailed at Courtenay, B.C. Postage paid: 25¢ Canadian.

Porter's wife sent four covers to Porter, addressed to Midway "c/o Superintendent, Commercial Pacific Cable Co., Bishop St., Honolulu." They were mailed in Victoria on June 21, 1938 (Figure 26, paid 25¢), June 28<sup>th</sup>, July 11<sup>th</sup> (Figure 27; paid 26¢), and July 18<sup>th</sup>. There are no transit or receiving dates on these four covers. Their Canadian postage to Honolulu was fully paid. Perhaps the CPCC had an arrangement with PanAm to carry mail from their Honolulu office to Midway as way mail, without charge.



Figure 26. Cover from Victoria (June 21<sup>st</sup>) to Porter at Midway sent via the CPCC office in Honolulu.



Figure 27. Cover from Victoria (mailed July 11<sup>th</sup>) to Porter at Midway sent via Honolulu.

The correspondence contains two U.S. commercial covers sent to Porter while he was at Midway on this trip. The first (Figure 28) was from New York City, from an apartment building at 302 West Twelfth Street, addressed “c/o Superintendent, Commercial Pacific Cables Company, Honolulu, T.H. Please Forward.” The cover bears 30¢ postage—the correct U.S. rate for Midway. The *Hawaii Clipper* started west with this cover on June 29<sup>th</sup> but broke a wing strut on take off and returned to its San Francisco base. The plane (and the cover) reached Honolulu on July 4<sup>th</sup>.



Figure 28. Cover to H.P. Porter at Midway Island, mailed at New York City on June 24, 1938.

The other U.S. commercial cover is shown in Figure 29. It was mailed at San Francisco on June 27<sup>th</sup> and was carried by the same *Clipper* as the cover in Figure 28. Although it bears two 10¢ stamps, it is addressed to Porter, CPCC, Midways Islands, North Pacific Ocean. The 20¢ in postage paid its way to Hawaii; It is shortpaid 10¢ for Midway (apparently not charged).



Figure 29. Cover from San Francisco (June 27<sup>th</sup>) to Porter at Midway.

Porter sent his wife a letter from Midway, postmarked July 5<sup>th</sup> at Honolulu (Figure 30) with 40¢ postage paid. The *Philippine Clipper* left Honolulu on July 5<sup>th</sup> and arrived at San Francisco two days later.

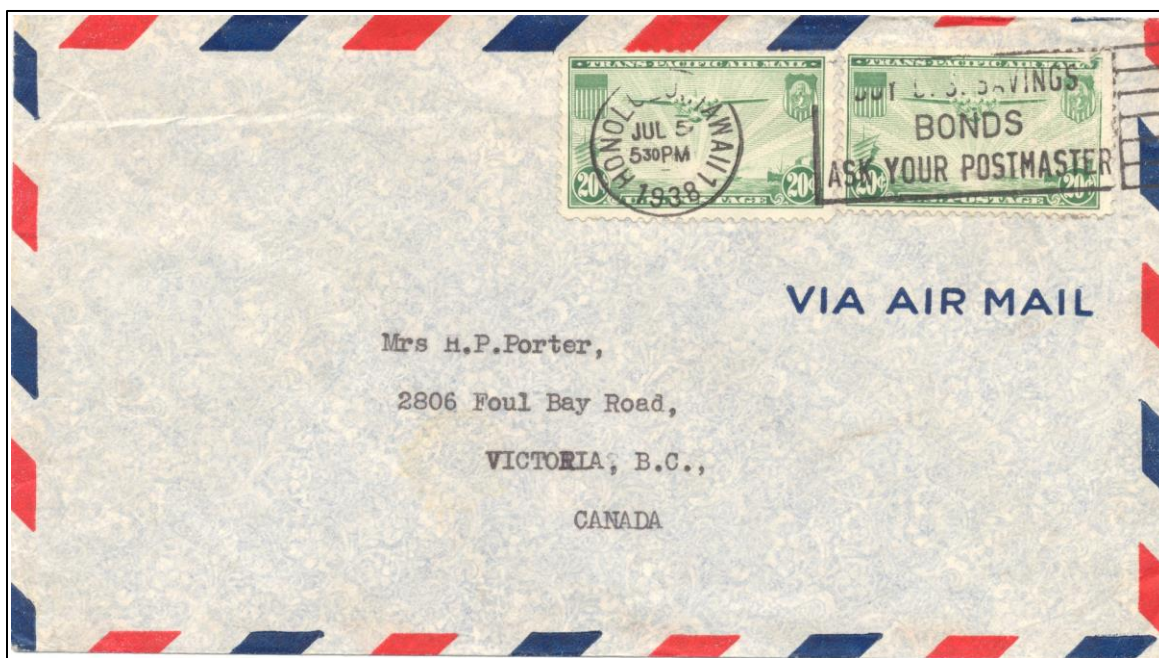


Figure 30. Cover from Midway to Victoria, postmarked July 5, 1938 at Honolulu.

Porter was at Midway until at least mid July, as indicated by the cover in Figure 31, postmarked July 16<sup>th</sup> at Honolulu. Note the MAILED AT / MIDWAY ISLAND / -PACIFIC OCEAN- handstamp and the inverted MIDWAY ISLAND Gooney Bird cachet. Note that this is the only cover sent from Midway on this trip by Porter that shows the Island as the point of origin. Also note the 40¢ U.S. postage paid.

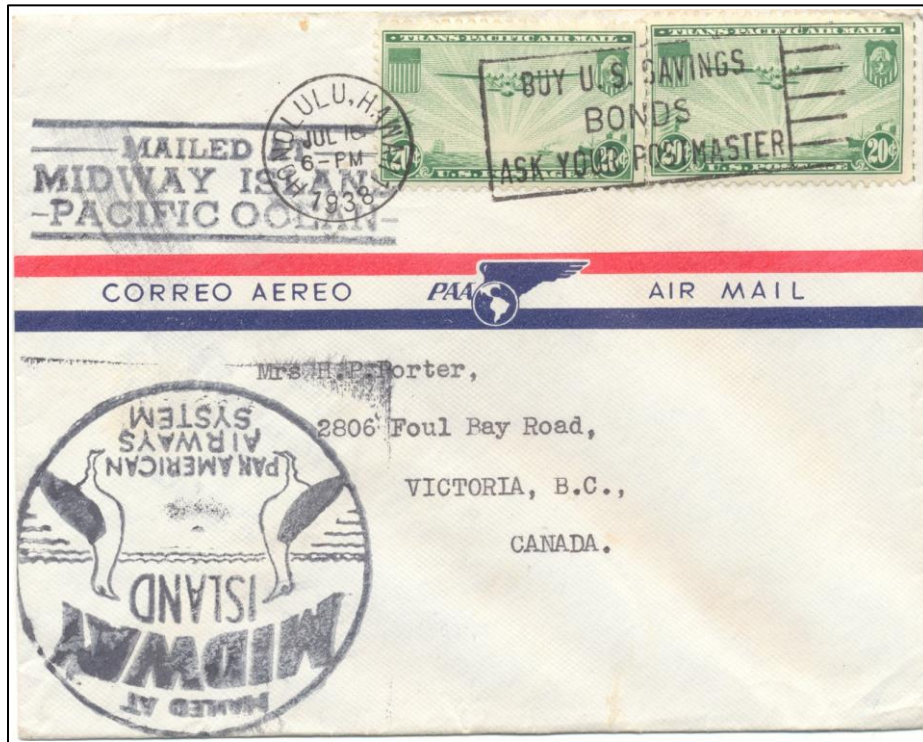


Figure 31. Cover sent by Porter to Victoria from Midway Island. The cover entered the mail stream at Honolulu on July 16, 1938.

We do not know when or how Porter returned to Victoria from Midway. A cover (Figure 32) sent to him from Victoria on July 30, 1938 c/o the Commercial Pacific Cable Co. in San Francisco “To await arrival” was forwarded to him at Victoria on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Proud’s tables show that PanAm eastbound flights departed from Midway on July 16<sup>th</sup>, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, and July 28<sup>th</sup>. Porter probably was on one of these flights, likely the latest—that reached San Francisco on July 30<sup>th</sup>. Normally, if he had taken either of the other flights, he would have been home before the August 3<sup>rd</sup> letter was written. If Porter returned to Victoria by Canadian Australian Line steamship, the *Aorangi* departed Honolulu on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and arrived in Victoria on July 28<sup>th</sup>. If Porter had been on board, we doubt that the July 30<sup>th</sup> letter would have been sent.





Figure 32. Cover from Victoria (July 30, 1938) to H.P. Porter, CPCC, San Francisco readdressed to him in Victoria and forwarded on August 3, 1938.

### Cablesip *Restorer* to Fanning Island

Fanning Island is a coral islet in the Line Islands—now part of Kiribati—in the Central Pacific Ocean (see the map in Figure 1). It is the closest British territory between Bamfield, British Columbia and Suva, Fiji on the “All Red” route of the Pacific Cable<sup>13</sup>. This cable between Canada and Australasia connected Britain to her major southern colonies. The 4,000-mile continuous under-water cable between Bamfield and Fanning Island was completed November 1, 1902. It opened for commercial use on December 8, 1902. A second, improved cable was laid between Bamfield and Fanning Island in 1927. These cables operated until 1962.

The Friday, June 24, 1938 issue of the *Victoria Daily Times* says that the cablesip *Restorer* was to be dispatched to Fanning Island to repair a break in the cable on the western side of Fanning Island. She departed on June 26<sup>th</sup> and reached Fanning Island on July 10<sup>th</sup>. She remained off Fanning Island for a week, performing her work, and after an 11-day voyage, was back in Victoria on July 29<sup>th</sup>.

In the Porter correspondence, there are three covers (one is shown in Figure 33) postmarked at Fanning Island. All are addressed to Mr. H.P. Porter, and all are dated July 17, 1938. All three bear receiving postmarks applied at Victoria on July 29, 1938. Each contains a blank sheet of paper. They must have been carried to Victoria in the *Restorer*. Porter was

working at Midway most of the time while the *Restorer* separately made this trip to Fanning Island and back to Victoria.

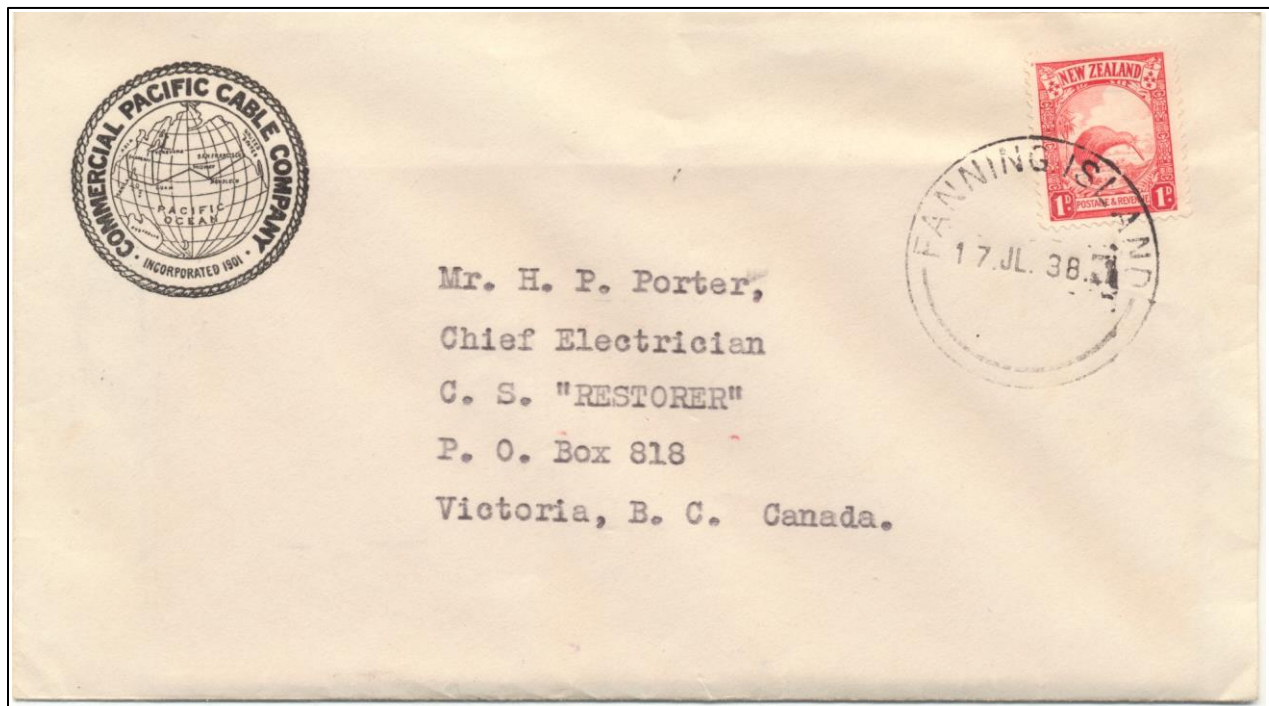


Figure 33. Cover from Fanning Island (July 17, 1938) addressed to Victoria to H.P. Porter, who was at Midway Island and missed the *Restorer's* trip to Fanning Island. Postage was 1d New Zealand; the postmark is FANNING ISLAND.

#### ***Restorer to Midway in April 1939***

In April 1939, the *Restorer* was ordered to Midway Island for repair work at the station there. She departed from Victoria on April 15<sup>th</sup> and reached Midway on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Having completed her work, she departed from Midway on May 17<sup>th</sup>. She diverted to Bamfield on Vancouver Island to place two telegraph buoys before arriving at Esquimalt on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The sole surviving cover from this voyage is shown in Figure 34. It is a Pan American Airways envelope sent by Porter to his wife postmarked at Honolulu on May 10, 1939—during the time the *Restorer* was at Midway. Postage paid on this cover was 40¢.



Figure 34. Cover to Victoria sent while the *Restorer* was at Midway Island, postmarked May 10, 1939 at Honolulu.

The *Colonist* (April 26, 1939) contained the news that—on the way to Midway on this voyage—the crew of the *Restorer* were on the lookout for any sign of travel-writer Richard Halliburton and his vessel, the Chinese junk *Sea Dragon*. After leaving Hong Kong for San Francisco on March 4, 1938, Halliburton was due at Midway in early April. The *Sea Dragon* didn't ever arrive there, and was probably lost at sea in a typhoon. The last word from Halliburton was sent on March 24<sup>th</sup> to the Mackay Radio & Telegraph Co.; this company had a wide-spread network of telegraph and radio communications.

### Porter to Mid Pacific Again—August 1939

Henry Porter made another trip to the mid Pacific in the late summer of 1939, while the ship apparently remained in Victoria. We do not know the dates when he travelled, but he sent home letters from San Francisco on August 19, 1939 and August 22, 1939—presumably on his

way west. A cover sent from Victoria on September 10<sup>th</sup> to him at Honolulu (with 25¢ Canadian postage; Figure 35) was readdressed and remailed to Guam on September 14<sup>th</sup>. U.S. Postage (20¢) was added in Honolulu to pay for the remaining<sup>14</sup>.



Figure 35. Cover from Victoria (September 10, 1939) to H.P. Porter at Honolulu, readdressed there on September 14<sup>th</sup> to Guam.

On this trip, Porter sent at least three letters home from the Pacific Islands. The first (Figure 36) is a CPCC envelope postmarked Honolulu on September 1, 1939 (with 30¢ U.S. postage). The *China Clipper* arrived at Honolulu from Hong Kong on September 1<sup>st</sup>. We do not know where this cover was written. The second cover is postmarked Honolulu September 13<sup>th</sup> but bears two Wake Island cachets (35¢ U.S. postage; Figure 37). The *Honolulu Clipper* left Wake Island on September 10<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Honolulu on September 13<sup>th</sup>. Commercial mail originating at Wake Island is rare. The third was postmarked at Guam on September 23<sup>rd</sup> (46¢ U.S. postage; Figure 38). This cover was probably carried to San Francisco in the *Philippine Clipper*, which reached San Francisco on October 5<sup>th</sup>. From these covers, we assume that Porter worked at both Wake and Guam.



Figure 36. Cover sent by Porter, postmarked September 1, 1939 at Honolulu.

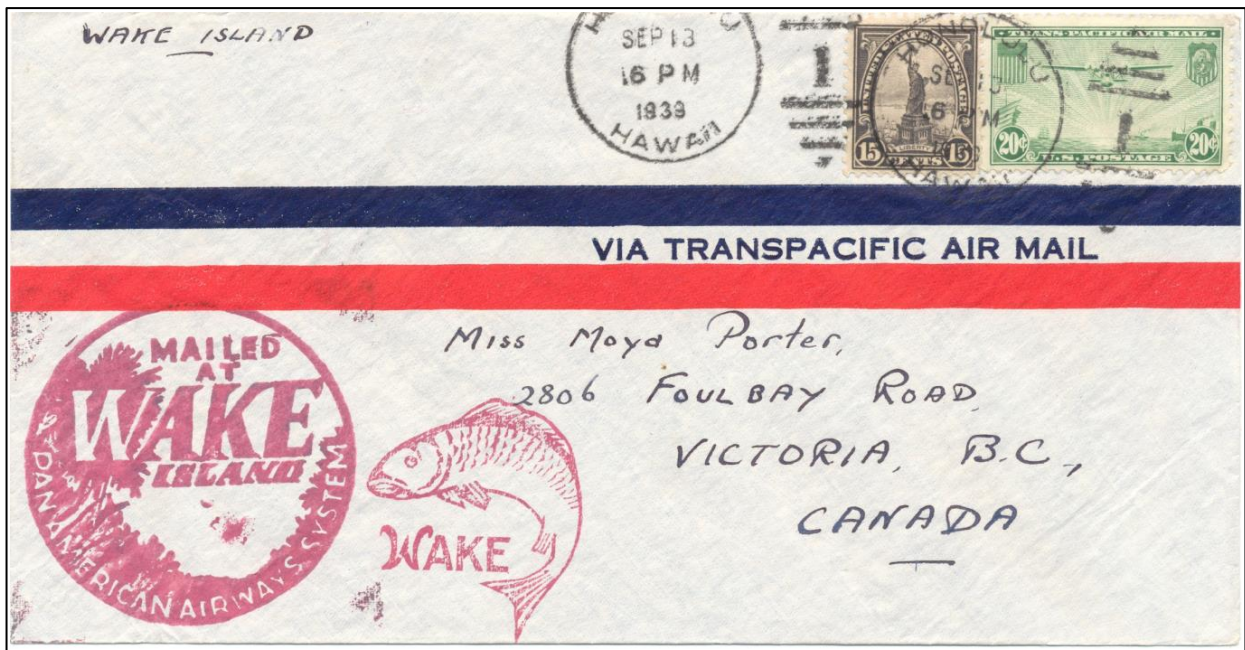


Figure 37. Cover mailed at Wake Island that entered the postal stream at Honolulu on September 13, 1939 (35¢ U.S. postage).

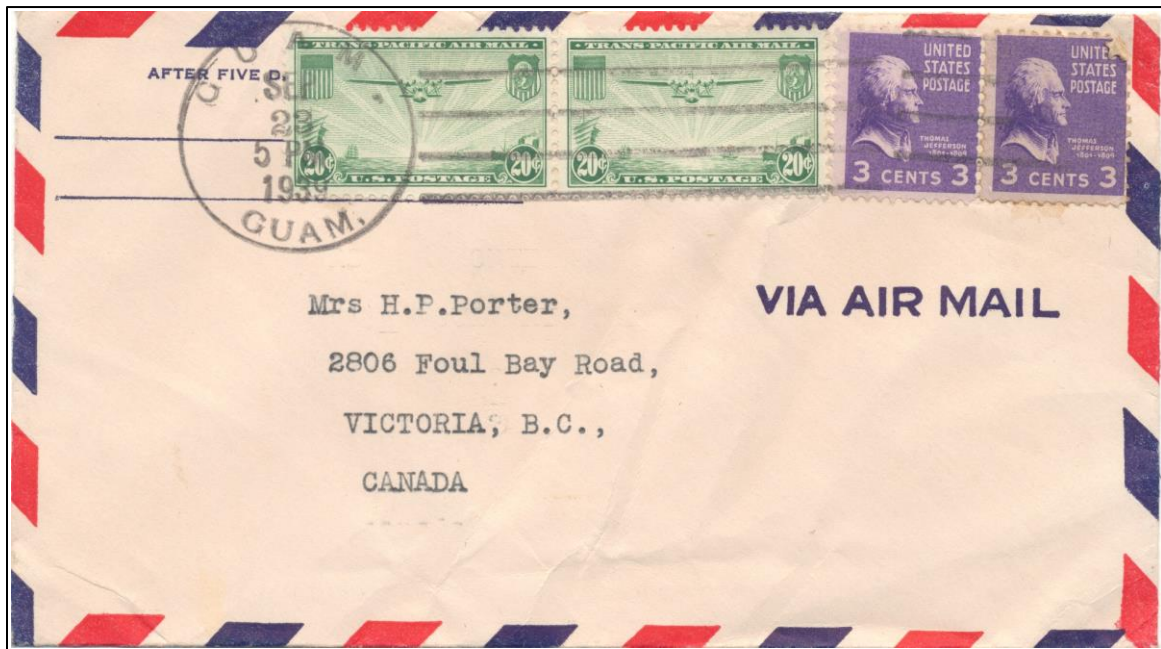


Figure 38. Cover mailed by Porter on September 28, 1939 at Guam (46¢ U.S. postage).

Van Oudenol<sup>1</sup> reports that the next move for the *Restorer* was to proceed to Seattle to be out of British waters during World War II. We cannot confirm this because movements of ships were removed from Canadian newspapers in early September 1939. The ship seems to have returned to Victoria periodically because the Porter correspondence contains inbound covers addressed to the ship in Victoria. For example, Figure 39 illustrates an air mail cover mailed in Manila on October 2, 1939 addressed to H. Porter Esq, Cablesip Restorer, Victoria.

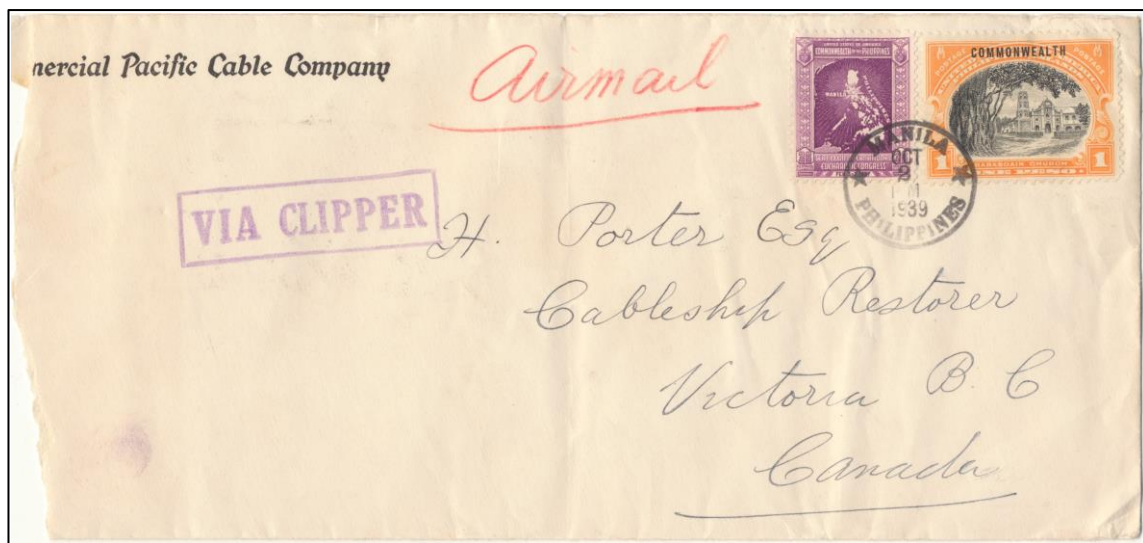


Figure 39. Cover from Manila (October 2, 1939) addressed to Porter, Cablesip Restorer, Victoria, B.C, Canada.

## CPCC Covers

A group of covers not sent *by* Porter but sent *to* him in Victoria add to this trans-Pacific story. There are 16 covers with CPCC corner cards addressed to the 'Electrician, Cablesip "Restorer", Victoria, B.C.' or to a similar address, mailed between March 1939 and March 1941. All were opened roughly. All were mailed at a surface-postage rate. None have backstamps. These covers were mailed at Honolulu (four), Guam (six) and Manila (six).

The earliest cover in this group is from Honolulu (March 14, 1939; Figure 40). The return address "Honolulu, Hawaii" is typed on the envelope. Interestingly, postage was paid with a 1937 Hawaii Territorial Issue U.S. commemorative stamp. Other covers were mailed at Honolulu on September 13, 1939, April 17, 1940 and March 8, 1941. At that time, surface transport of mail from Honolulu to the west coast of North America was both frequent (at least weekly) and quick (five or six days).

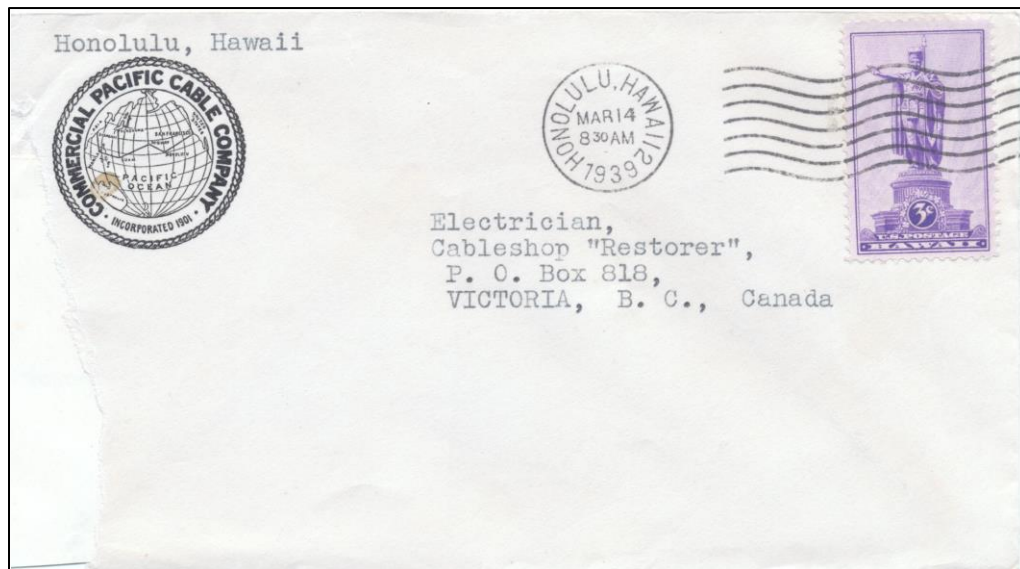


Figure 40. CPCC cover from Honolulu (March 14, 1939) sent to 'Electrician, Cablesip "Restorer", P. O. Box 818, Victoria, B. C., Canada'.

The half dozen covers from Guam to Victoria all have GUAM typed as a return address. The U.S. postage paid on each cover is 5¢, in all cases paid with a stamp from the Famous Americans Issue. Guam duplex postmarks date all of the covers. Mailing dates were August

1, 1940 (two covers), August 15, 1940, January 10, 1941, January 15, 1941 and February 21, 1941. One of the August 1, 1940 covers is shown in Figure 41

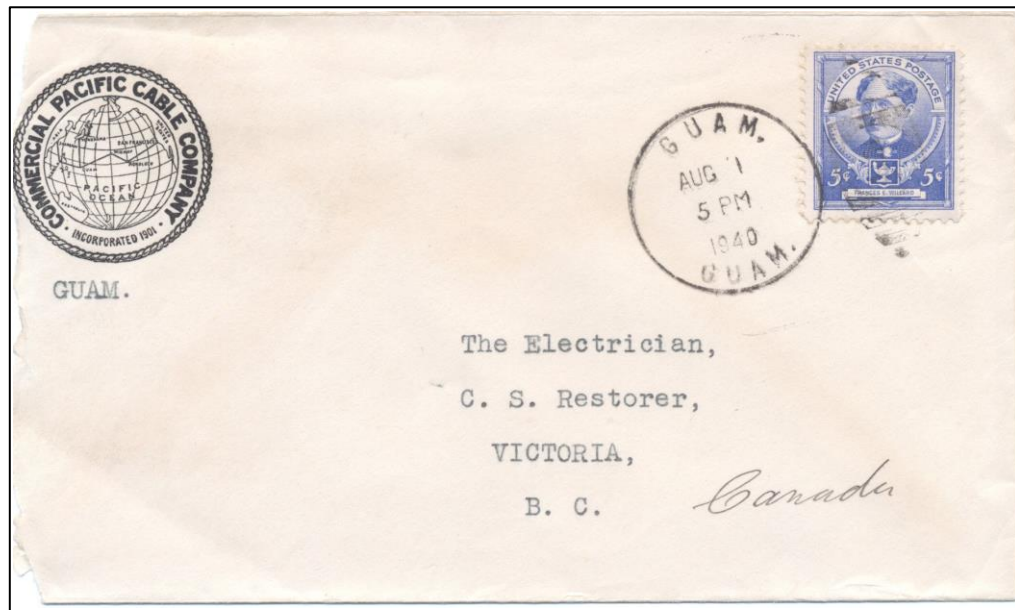


Figure 41. CPCC cover from Guam (August 1, 1939).

We do not know the routes for these six covers from Guam. Surface mail to and from Guam was infrequent—usually carried by ships supplying the U.S. Navy base there. The trans-Pacific mail steamers of the American President Line were not scheduled to call at Guam. Perhaps the Commercial Pacific Cable Company arranged with PanAm to carry surface-paid mail by air to San Francisco as a courtesy.

The six covers from Manila also have typed return addresses, as seen on the cover in Figure 42. This cover was mailed on March 26, 1941; it is the latest of this group of surface-mail covers from Manila. Other covers were posted on April 17, 1940, August 14, 1940, September 13, 1940, October 4, 1940 and February 5, 1941. Postage paid on each was 12 centavos per ounce, the single-weight surface rate to Canada. Steamship service from Manila to North America was fairly frequent in 1940 and 1941. Canadian Pacific *Empresses* operated from Manila every four weeks until the end of 1940. In 1940 and 1941, the steamships of the American President Line sailed from Manila to California every three weeks.



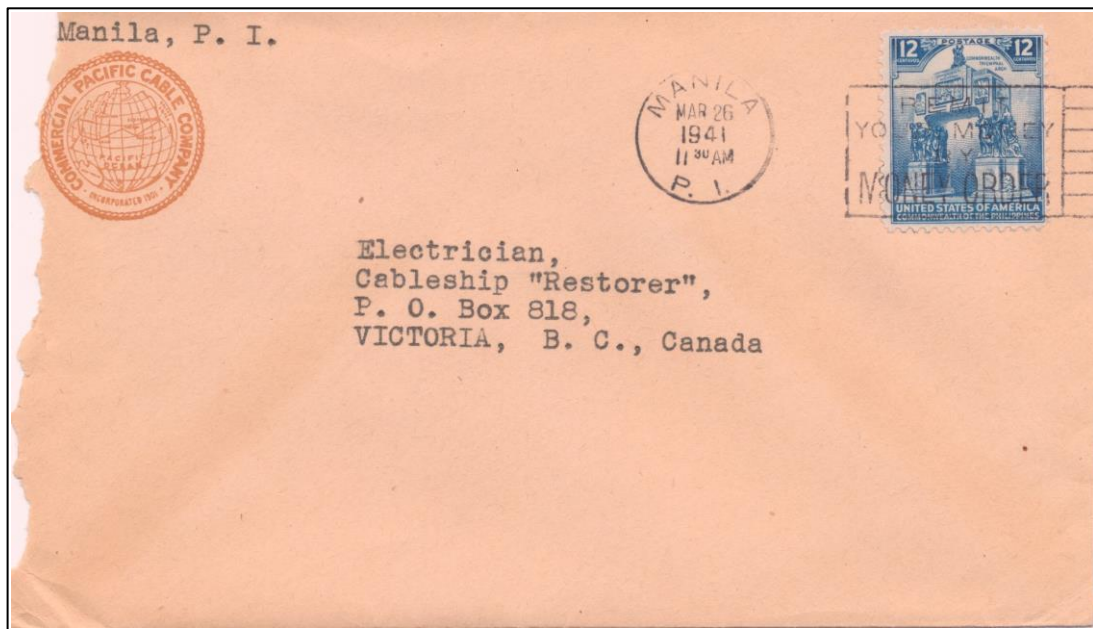


Figure 42. CPCC cover from Manila (March 26, 1941).

### ***Restorer* 1940 to 1951**

Van Oudenol<sup>1</sup> wrote that the *Restorer* was assigned to the United States Maritime Commission in 1941 and that the ship repaired the Alaska Communication System Seattle–Alaska cable. He has reproduced information from U.S. Navy reports between March 1942 and November 1945 that document the ship's locations then.

In the Porter correspondence, there are five covers mailed from late 1940 through 1942 that help indicate Porter's and/or the *Restorer's* location. Two covers are related to work at Guam. The earlier is a November 1940 cover from the CPCC office in Manila to the 'Electrician, Cablesip "Restorer", Commercial Pacific Cable Co., Guam' (Figure 43). It was readdressed to Victoria, B.C. on January 24, 1941. Porter mailed a PanAm air mail envelope to Victoria on March 22, 1941 while he was at Guam (Figure 44). We have found no records reporting voyages of either Porter or the *Restorer* during 1941.

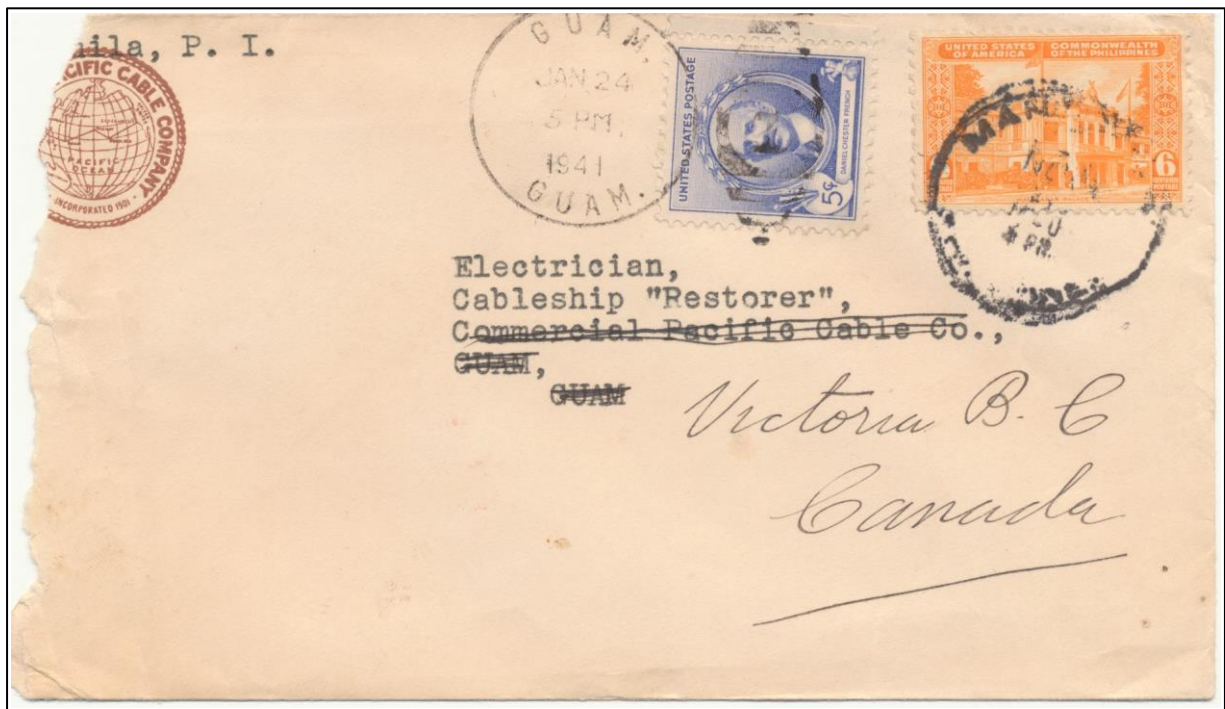


Figure 43. Cover mailed at Manila on November 27 (?), 1940 to the Cablesip "Restorer", CPCC, Guam. At Guam, the cover was readdressed on January 24, 1941 to Victoria.

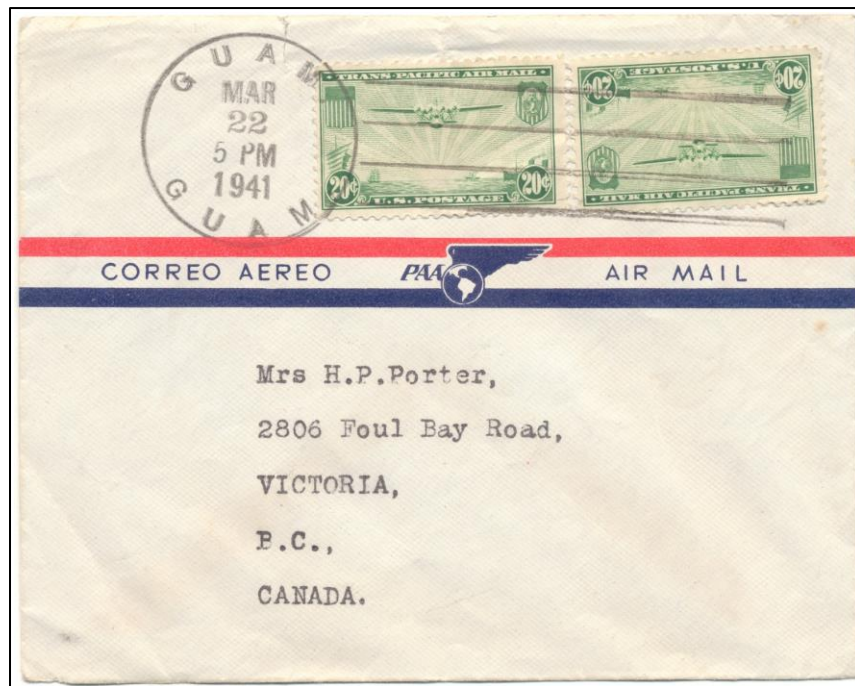


Figure 44. Cover mailed to Victoria by Porter at Guam on March 22, 1941.

Next is a CPCC cover from the cableship *Dickenson* in Honolulu mailed on March 11, 1941 addressed to H.P. Porter, Electrician, C.S. "Restorer", P.O. Box 818, Victoria (Figure 45). As shown by the dated cover shown in Figure 44, Porter was in Guam on March 22<sup>nd</sup>—not long after this letter from Honolulu would have reached Victoria.

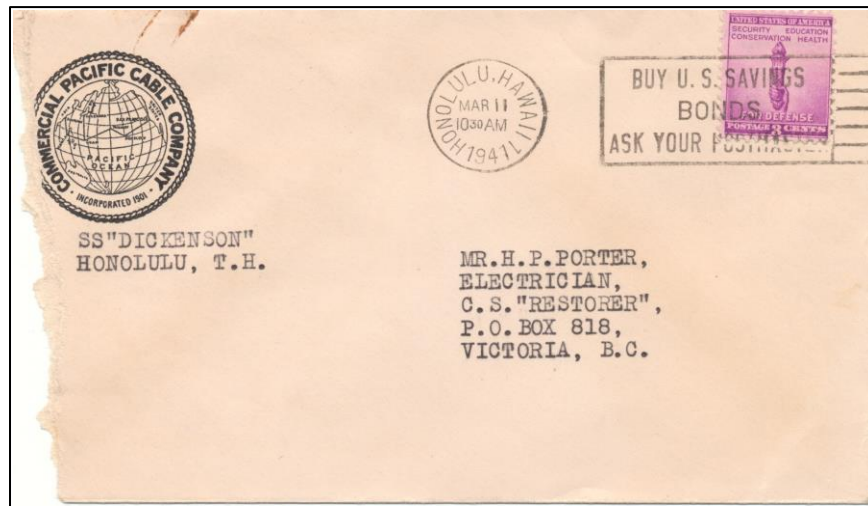


Figure 45. Surface-mail cover from Honolulu addressed to H.P. Porter in Victoria, mailed on March 11, 1941.

The US Maritime Commission took over operation of the *Restorer* in December 1941<sup>1</sup>. Activities were directed by officers of the U.S. Navy, of the U.S.A. Signals Corps, and of the ship itself. They assigned the ship to work on the Alaska Communication System cable connecting Alaska to Seattle. Van Oudenol<sup>1</sup> has reproduced the 1942–1945 Naval Armed Guard Reports that detail much of the ship's war time activities. At that time, the Alaskan cable system had been in disrepair. In 1941 and 1942, the *Restorer* was the only cable ship in Alaska service<sup>1</sup>. The *Restorer* departed Victoria for Alaska on October 7, 1941<sup>2</sup> and returned on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Porter sent a letter to his daughter in Victoria on October 27, 1941 from Seward, Alaska (Figure 46). The envelope used for this letter bears a W.G. Crosby cachet labelled "Alaska – United States – via PAA". From April to July 1942<sup>2</sup>, the *Restorer* "worked along the Alaska coast and out into the Aleutians", returning to Victoria on August 6<sup>th</sup>. From this voyage, Porter sent a cover from Juneau on June 18, 1942 (Figure 47). This is the latest cover in the Porter correspondence.



Figure 46. Cacheted cover mailed at Seward, Alaska on October 27, 1941.

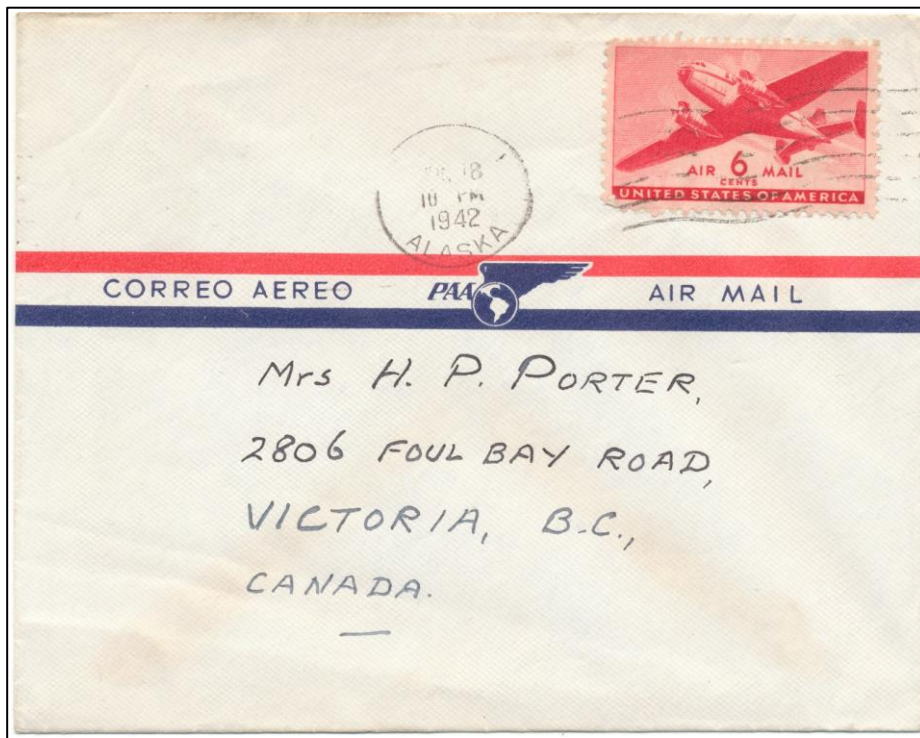


Figure 47. The latest cover in the Porter correspondence, mailed at Juneau, Alaska on June 18, 1942. The return address is c/o ACS [Alaska Communication System], Juneau, Alaska.

The January 14, 1945 issue of the *Colonist* carries an article about the *Restorer* helping to repair the Guam–Midway cable. The article includes a photograph of Chief Engineer Henry P. Porter localizing a cable fault (Figure 48). The cable had not been working for two and a half years. It was severed in 1942 by U.S. Navy technicians as a security measure. Guam was captured by the Japanese in December 1941. When American forces reoccupied Guam in July 1944, plans were made to reestablish the wire service. *Restorer* was assigned this task.



Figure 48. Chief Engineer Henry P. Porter on board the *Restorer* in 1945.

According to an article in the March 21, 1946 *Colonist*, the *Restorer* returned to Esquimalt on March 7, 1946 after four years of war service in Alaska, the Aleutian Islands and the South Pacific. The ship was serviced at Yarrows shipyard for peacetime duties. After nine months at Esquimalt, the renovated *Restorer* set out for work in the Pacific [*Colonist*, January 9, 1947].

Between then and July 29<sup>th</sup>, the ship visited Honolulu, Midway, and Manila, where she stayed a month. Next were Hong Kong, Singapore, Guam, Honolulu and Fanning Island. The *Restorer* returned to Esquimalt on January 26, 1948 but departed five days later for the Marianas Trench to repair a break in the cable. Then she went to Guam, and home to Esquimalt on April 29, 1948. *Restorer* was again working in the Pacific from August to December 1948. After a refit, her last working trip was a short visit to Guam in February 1950. Later in 1950, everything of value was removed from the ship and in June 1951 she was towed to San Francisco for scrapping.

The cover shown in Figure 49—*not* from the Porter correspondence—was mailed by someone on board the *Restorer* on January 9, 1950, just before the ship's final voyage to the mid Pacific. The cover is addressed to Dirk van Oudenol, *Restorer* crew member in 1947 and 1948 and author of the online book *C.S. Restorer (1902–1951)* (Reference 1).

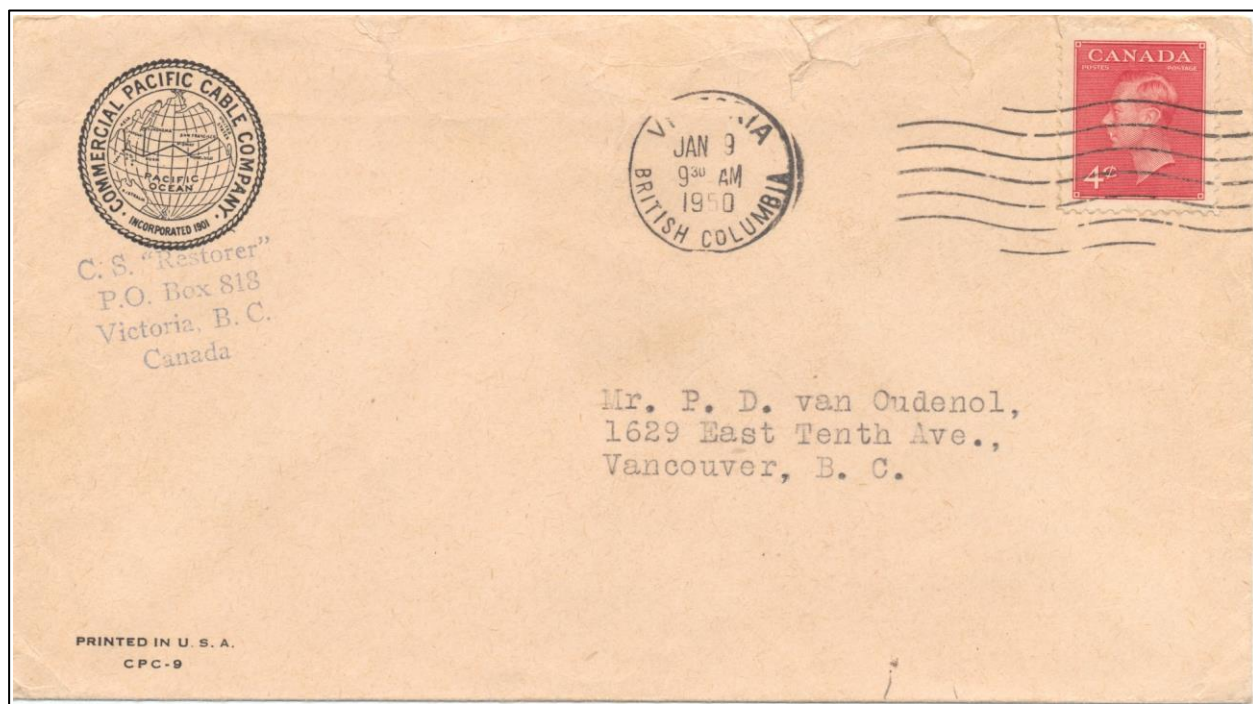


Figure 49. Cover from the *C.S. Restorer* (January 9, 1950) addressed to Dirk van Oudenol.

## Conclusions

This remarkable Porter correspondence spans just five years. It presents mail both to and from a part of the world that has previously yielded little commercial Canadian mail. Cable-repair work took H.P. Porter as far west as Singapore, and his trips included several visits to Midway Island. Neither Midway Island nor Wake Island had a post office at this time, so air mail from these islands entered the mail stream at Honolulu as way mail. We know that his air mail letters originated at Midway or Wake because of information in relevant newspaper articles. They also can be quickly spotted because their postage is higher than that on covers originating at Honolulu. Although most of the air mail covers have no transit or arrival postmarks, most of their routes can be traced using the flight data published by Proud.

Porter often paid a higher postage than the United States air mail letter rates listed in Table 1. Table 3 lists the postage that he paid on his trans-Pacific air mail letters to Victoria. Air postage from San Francisco to Victoria (6¢ per ounce) is included as the last line of this table.

Table 3  
Air Mail Letter Payments Observed to Victoria  
from the American Pacific Islands (1937–1939)

To Canada from	Philippine Islands	1 peso 36 centavos per ½oz (5)
	Guam	46¢ U.S. per ½ oz (4) 40¢ U.S. per ½ oz (1)
	Wake Island	35¢ U.S. per ½ oz (1)
	Midway Island	45¢ U.S. per ½ oz (5) 40¢ U.S. per ½ oz (5)
	Hawaii	20¢ U.S. per ½ oz (2) 6¢ U.S. (1)
	San Francisco	6¢ U.S. per oz (3)

In the right column, the numbers in parentheses are the number of covers in the Porter correspondence at this postage.

The rate for air mail from the Philippine Islands to Canada in 1937 was 1 Peso (50¢ U.S.) airmail to California (see Table 1) and then an additional 36 centavos (18¢ U.S.) for air mail from California to Canada. A regulation authorizing this airmail rate from the Philippines to Canada has not been published by the Philippine postal authorities but this supplementary air mail rate to Canada has been documented by Abe Luspo and Eugene Labiuk (Eugene Labiuk, personal communication). Porter sent five letters at this rate.

Four of the five covers from Guam bear 46¢ U.S. postage—6¢ more than the Guam–San Francisco rate per ½oz listed in Table 1. Of the ten covers originating at Midway Island, five were paid 45¢ and five were paid 40¢. We suspect—but have no way of proving—that the covers paid 46¢ and 45¢ were carried by airmail all the way to Victoria, and those paid 40¢ were flown to San Francisco and then proceeded by surface mail. We know of no published postal regulation authorizing a supplement of postage to the trans-Pacific rate to pay for air mail carriage in North America for air mail destined for Canada. Less likely, the addition of five or six cents extra could simply have been a mistake on the part of either Porter or a postal clerk at Guam or a PanAm official at Midway. We have no explanation of why five cents was added to some covers and six cents to others. Tom Watkins has seen a few other examples of this type of apparently supplementary postage on air covers to Canada.

The one cover from Wake Island, with its 35¢ U.S. postage, is an anomaly. We would expect it to bear at least 40¢ in postage (see Table 1)—the same as that for Guam and Midway.

The letters that Porter mailed at Singapore travelled air mail to Europe, then surface mail to and in Canada. Verifying this conclusion, three of the four covers carried by Imperial Airways from Singapore to London bear *jusqu'à* markings applied at London. The covers carried by KLM (to Amsterdam) do not have these *jusqu'à* markings. They probably were bagged in Amsterdam for Montreal and thus escaped the London *jusqu'à* marking; they probably were carried to the west coast by train.

The time span of the Porter correspondence covers peacetime and part of World War II. As expected, none of the wartime letters were censored; none from across the Pacific were mailed after December 7, 1941 (when trans-Pacific airmail west of Hawaii ceased).

Maintenance and repair of the trans-Pacific cables took the *Restorer* and H.P. Porter to many Pacific locations. Porter's, his wife's and their CPCC's preserved mailings provide a wonderful view of both surface and airmail services between Canada and the Pacific islands.



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