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Overprint error “Zeppelin 1830” Helsinki - Stockholm – Friedrichshafen, 24 September 1930



In September 1930 the airship Graf Zeppelin, LZ 127, carried out a survey flight around the Baltic Sea. The round trip was called the “Fahrt rund um die Ostsee 1930.” The start took place at Friedrichshafen, Germany, and the flight went further over the Baltic States, Finland and Sweden and then back to Germany. During the trip mail was delivered at several places but it was only in Finland that mail was received for further transport to Germany. At Helsinki three bags, 58.8 kg, of Finnish mail were received. 4,760 letters and 3,709 postcards were hauled up to the Graf Zeppelin which could not land in Finland. For this occasion the Finnish Central Post Office had prepared a special overprint “Zeppelin 1930” which they applied on certain stamps they had in stock from an earlier issue. These overprinted stamps were to be used for mail which was sent from Finland. The Central Post Office applied the overprint on 500 sheets of 100 stamps each, thus 50,000 stamps were overprinted.

A mistake was made, however, in position 86 of each sheet, where the overprint read “Zeppelin 1830” instead of “Zeppelin 1930.” 500 stamps with this error were thus prepared, and, although the error was found rather quickly, many sheets had already been sent out to post offices in Helsinki and about half of the stamps with the error had been sold to the public. After having noted the error the Central Post Office asked all post offices to return immediately the remaining stamps with the error.

Most of the stamps with the overprint error are today preserved in mint condition or have been glued on letters which were not carried with the Graf Zeppelin. A

very small portion of the stamps were used on letters which were sent with the Graf Zeppelin and were then stamped on arrival at Friedrichshafen. The letter shown is one of these very rare letters which were carried with the Graf Zeppelin to Germany with the overprint error "Zeppelin 1830" and which have been stamped on arrival at Friedrichshafen. In order to have the correct franking two Zeppelin-stamps were needed. The second Zeppelin-stamp on the letter has the correct overprint "Zeppelin 1930."

After arrival at Friedrichshafen the letter was transferred and sent further by air service to Hamburg, where a 5-lined red Hamburg arrival handstamp was applied. For letters which were to be carried further by air from Friedrichshafen an additional franking of 2 Finnish Marks was required.

