

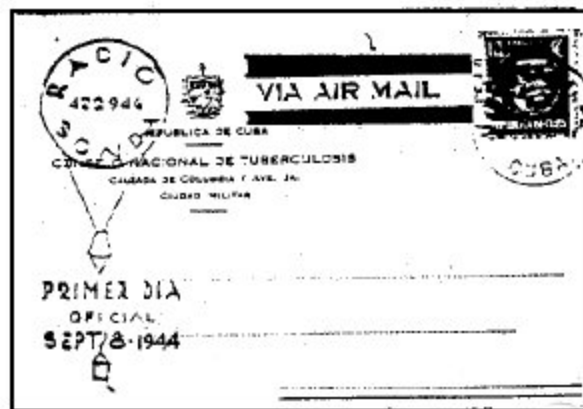
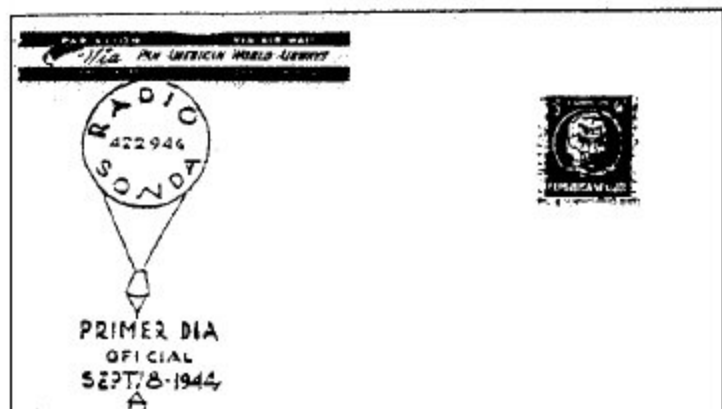
The Cuban "Radio Sonda" Souvenir Covers, September 8, 1944

by Mark R. Tyx

As part of an overall effort to expand and improve its weather forecasting capabilities, the Casablanca National Observatory near Habana, Cuba was the first weather station outside the continental United States to be linked up with the U. S. Weather Bureau's network of 63 other stations employing weather balloons to collect data on upper atmospheric conditions. The eyes and ears of these weather stations is a small instrument package equipped with a radio transmitter called a radiosonde which measures and reports temperature, humidity and barometric pressure to a ground station every twelve hours, usually at midnight and at noon Greenwich Mean Time. The influx of raw data reported from aloft as well as the atmospheric conditions supplied at ground level by weather stations allowed the U. S. Weather Bureau in Washington, D. C. to improve weather prognostications, deepen its understanding of atmospheric phenomena and warn inhabitants of certain areas about potentially dangerous atmospheric conditions.

It is against this historical background that the Casablanca National Observatory under the directorship of Dr. Carlos J. Millas became the 64th member of the upper atmospheric weather reporting network when a balloon carrying radiosonde 422946 was sent aloft and registered a temperature of - 60° F at an altitude of 18,000 meters on September 8, 1944. Among the guests invited to the inaugural ceremonies were two eminent Cuban philatelists, Dr. Tomas A. Terry and Dr. Ernesto Bello, who seized the opportunity to prepare a small quantity of cards and envelopes bearing a special violet cachet commemorating the launch of Cuba's first radiosonde instrument package. Many of the souvenir covers from this event were franked with Cuban postage and received a September 8, 1944 Habana cancellation.

Although these "Radio Sonda" souvenir items may not be as spectacular as Cuba related "Graf Zeppelin" and "Hindenburg" covers, they do serve as a symbol of the domestication of lighter than air devices for the benefit of mankind.



PAR AVION VIA AIR MAIL

Via PAN AMERICAN WORLD AIRWAYS

CORREO AEREO CORREO AEREO



Radio Sonda Souvenir.

For first time was used in Cuba in the inauguration of this service by the Cuban Observatory some covers and letters in connection with Dr Tomas Terry, cuban philatelist and writer of many interesting literature about Rockets and Pigeon flights.

PRIMER DIA
OFICIAL
SEPT/8-1944



VIA AIR MAIL



REPUBLICA DE CUBA
CONSEJO NACIONAL DE TUBERCULOSIS
CALZADA DE COLUMBIA Y AVE. SA.
CIUDAD MILITAR

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SEPT/8-1944

SERVICIO DE RADIO SONDA

El día 8 de Septiembre quedó inaugurado en nuestro Observatorio Nacional el moderno equipo de Radio Sonda que se utiliza para obtener datos meteorológicos en la atmósfera hasta grandes altitudes.

El Globo lanzado se elevó 18 Kilómetros sobre la Ciudad de la Habana y se lanzó desde Casablanca; la mayor temperatura registrada fué de 60 grados bajo cero.

El Globo tenía el número 422946, y fué lanzado por el Jefe de la Marina de Guerra Cubana, Comodoro Aguila Ruiz; el Ingeniero Millás, quien tuvo la gentileza de invitar al Club, que estuvo represen-

tado por los Dres. Tomás A. Terry y Ernesto Bello, firmó varios sobres Souvenir del acto celebrado.

La aparición del Globo sobre la ciudad dió origen a muchas especulaciones, anunciándose que diariamente se realizarían estos experimentos, sin que haya motivo de alarma, pues el equipo va provisto de un paracaídas que hace que, cuando se termina el gas, descienda despacio; el costo del funcionamiento anual es de unos 20,000 pesos.

Esta experiencia, la primera oficial en Cuba, y segunda en América Latina, nos pone a la cabeza de los países progresistas, pues Cuba tiene el record de haber inaugurado Ferrocarril y Telégrafos primero que su antigua metrópoli; el primer experimento oficial de los Cohetes, de tanta actualidad, y el Tren Aéreo Internacional, precursor de los deslizadores utilizados en la invasión de Europa.

