

THE DELIVERY AND SURVEY FLIGHTS OF AOTEAROA

TEAL 1939 - 1940

**Announcement of the formation of Tasman Empire
Airlines 24 August 1938/Appointment Turnill**

TASMAN SEA AIR LINE

**A TRIANGULAR SERVICE
CONTEMPLATED**

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT
WELLINGTON, AUG. 24 1938

The Prime Minister, Mr. Savage, announces that an agreement has been signed between the Government and Union Airways under which the company will act for the Dominion in the formation of the company to operate the trans-Tasman air service.

The agreement for the formation of the company, and the letting of the contract, is the subject of communications between the New Zealand, British, and Australian Governments. New Zealand will have two out of the six directors. It is intended to operate a triangular service calling at Auckland, Wellington, and Sydney as soon as facilities are available at Wellington. Ultimately there will be three flights weekly each way, but Auckland will be the initial New Zealand terminal and the flights will be made at first twice a week.

Plans are under way for the construction of a modern base, with provision for wireless facilities at Auckland, which is also the northern terminal of the inter-island air services, linking the four main cities of New Zealand, which are conducted by Union Airways.





IMPERIAL AIRWAYS LTD
(AND/OR SUBSIDIARY AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES)
AIR PORT OF LONDON
CROYDON
Telephone: CROYdon 4422 (14 lines)
Telegrams: Flying, Telex, Croydon
Codes: BENTLEY'S & IATA.

Please reply to:—
Stafford Road,
Waddon, Surrey

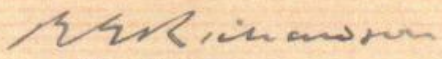
SM1/P/891 18th January, 1939

Dear Sir,

I write to confirm the terms under which you are proceeding to New Zealand for temporary duty for a period of approximately six months to assist in connection with the inauguration of the Tasman Service.

As from the date you leave this country, namely 20th January, 1939, you will be paid your existing basic rate, i.e. £3.18.0d. per week, plus Foreman's Allowance of £1.10.0d. per week plus Licence Allowance of £1.5.0d. per week, and in addition you will be paid a special temporary allowance of £293.5.0d. p.a. which will bring your total remuneration up to a figure at the rate of £640 per annum sterling. This will give you £800 per annum in New Zealand currency, and the special allowance of £293.5.0d. p.a. sterling will be continued until the date of your return to England.

Yours faithfully,
for and on behalf of **IMPERIAL AIRWAYS LIMITED**


STAFF MANAGER

Mr. L. E. Turnill,
c/o Chief Service Engineer.

JED

Len Turnill Engineer who supervised the construction of the Air Base Mechanics Bay, New Zealand

WITH
IMPERIAL AIRWAYS
COMPLIMENTS

PRESS DEPARTMENT
CHARLES STREET, S.W.1
TELEPHONE: VIC. 2323

22nd April, 1939.

NEW EMPIRE AIR TERMINAL
Progress in New Zealand

Mr. L.E. Turnill, of Imperial Airways, has arrived in Auckland and begun work at the new air base there for the terminal of the England-New Zealand air line.

Mr. Turnill, who installed the equipment at Imperial Airways' new base at Bermuda, is a ground engineer of the widest experience and is in New Zealand to superintend the installation of the equipment for the station which is already in an advanced stage of construction.

Auckland will be the New Zealand end of the 1,360 mile stage from Sydney which will complete the 14,500 mile air route from Southampton.

At Mechanics' Bay, Auckland, a large workshop and modern control buildings are being erected by the New Zealand authorities.

The administrative offices will be housed in the control building which also has a flat observation roof to accommodate spectators who wish to see the arrival and departure of the trans-Tasman flying-boats. This building will be two storeys, and the top storey and observatory tower will be occupied by meteorological offices.

On the ground floor will be the Airport Superintendent's Office and other administrative departments including the passenger lobby and accommodation for Customs and Health officers.

Press release announcing the arrival of Turnill and below detail in the final 2 paragraphs the construction of the Braby pontoon.

The repair workshop is alongside the control building and occupies an area of 100 ft. by 120 ft. It will house an engine repair shop at one end and an aircraft repair shop at the other with a store room between the two. Both buildings are now practically complete so far as walls and roofing are concerned.

It is reported also that the New Zealand Public Works Department will shortly begin construction of a large hangar for the Imperial flying-boats at Hobsonville air base.

A new type of floating jetty, previously used only at Southampton, is to be used in Auckland for the berthing of the flying-boats.

It consists of two twin sections joined in an arc underneath the water and the flying-boat is warped back into position between the two sections so that embarkation of passengers and loading of mails and freight can proceed from both sides.

FLIGHT TO NEW ZEALAND
FLYING BOAT LEAVES FOR AUCKLAND TO PREPARE
FOR NEW TRANS-TASMAN SERVICE

The Empire flying-boat Aotearoa will leave Southampton at four thirty on Wednesday morning (August 16th.) on a 14,000 mile flight to New Zealand.

When she reaches Auckland, the flying-boat will be delivered to a new company, formed recently to operate an air-mail service across the Tasman Sea between Sydney, Australia, and Auckland, New Zealand.

Aotearoa is one of three new flying-boats built specially for this service. The others are Awarua and Australia.

From Southampton to Singapore, Aotearoa will follow the normal summer schedule of the Imperial Airways' flying-boats used on this route. Night-stops will be made at Athens, Basra, Karachi, Calcutta and Bangkok. She will wait for a day in Singapore and then make night-stops at Sourabaya, Darwin and Townsville on her way to Sydney.

The flight to Auckland will take about twelve days. It will take about ten hours to cross the Tasman Sea.

With the addition of the trans-Atlantic and trans-Tasman services to the present Empire air route, there will be a continuous air route 17,853 miles long operated by Imperial Airways and its associate companies. This will be the longest commercial air route in the world.

The Aotearoa will carry a crew of nine. They will all remain in New Zealand.

The Commander will be Captain John Weir Burgess, who was born at Dunedin, New Zealand, thirty years ago and came to England at an early age. He served for four years with the Royal Air Force and joined Imperial Airways as First Officer in May, 1935.

In 1937, Captain Burgess surveyed the route from England to New Zealand in the Imperial Airways flying-boat Centaurus. The round flight covered a distance of 32,488 miles. He will remain in New Zealand as chief pilot in charge of the trans-Tasman operations.

Imperial Airways Press Release confirming details of the flight of the 'Aotearoa'.

Mr LE Turnill - Career

Below is a photo of the 'Awarua' (nearest) and 'Aotearoa' at their moorings off the TEAL block. In the foreground is the Braby pontoon, the second to be constructed and the first to be used in the Southern Hemisphere.

Newspaper article describing his career to date at the time of the survey flight Auckland to Sydney



AIR CHIEF'S *Sept. 24th 1939* RISE: NOT FLIER

On the Aotearoa this week, Mr. L. E. Turnill, supervising engineer of Tasman Empire Airways, Ltd., came to Sydney across the Tasman. Twelve years ago, a humble motor mechanic, he emigrated to Australia from England.

Though he has been in the aviation industry for 12 years, Mr. Turnill cannot fly himself, and will not consider learning.

"It's too boring," he said to-day. "I'd rather have a gun licence than an A pilot's licence."

The story of his rise is one of hard work and endurance. But it is a romantic story, for it covers almost the whole world.

His first job in aviation was that of a mechanic on "Smithy's" pioneer air services between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. When the Southern Cloud was lost, he flew with "Smithy" in search of her, and he was in "Smithy's" machine when it crashed at Holbrook.

When the service collapsed shortly after, Mr. Turnill left for England, and joined Imperial Airways. For two years he worked at Croydon airport, and then was sent to Cairo. He worked there on early types of flying-boats, forerunners of the modern Empire machines.

Into Underground River

From Cairo he went to South Africa, still with Imperial Airways, and a few months later was transferred to East Africa.

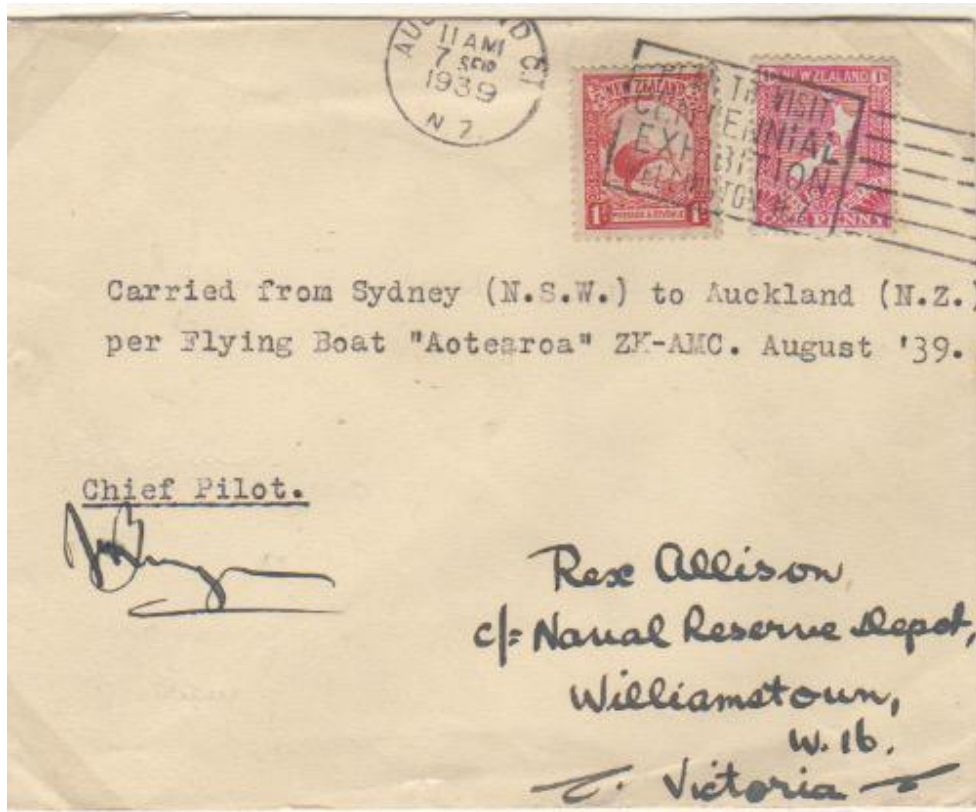
He returned to England for a time. When at Hanworth aerodrome he saw a giant 42-passenger Handley-Page airliner crash through a reinforced surface into an underground river. It took six weeks to get the plane out.

From England he went to Karachi, then to South Africa, and next to Kenya. He returned to London to do a flying-boat course at Short Bros. (builders of the Empire flying-boats), and received there the first complete flying-boat licence, covering engines, aircrews and the aircraft itself.

He was sent then to Bermuda, where he supervised the establishment of the flying-boat base, and the assembling of the Cavalier, which later came down in mid-Atlantic, through ice forming on the wings, several lives being lost.

Early this year Mr. Turnill was sent to New Zealand on loan from Imperial Airways.

Short S30 Flying Boat ZK-AMA 'Aotearoa'



They arrived at Sydney on August 26 1939
departing 2 days later for Auckland.

The aircraft was assembled under Imperial Airways G-AFDA 'Cumberland' and renamed at launch as 'Awarua'. The first flight was on the 10 May 1939 and the certificate of airworthiness granted on the 12 May. It was then transferred to TEAL under registration ZK-AMC. After representations by the NZ Government who wanted the first available aircraft to be named Aotearoa. The plane was then finally registered as ZK-AMA 'Aotearoa'.



BACK FROM SYDNEY. *Sept. 24. 1939. 12.15* AOTEAROA'S FLIGHT.

SURVEY CROSSINGS.

TAKE-OFF BEFORE DAWN.

Completing another survey flight, the British flying boat Aotearoa reached Auckland yesterday afternoon, crossing from Sydney in 9 hours 10 minutes. The machine had travelled from Auckland to Sydney the previous Sunday in 8 hours 25 minutes. Both trips were uneventful.

During her stay in Sydney the flying boat was hauled up the slipway at the base and placed in the hangar, where an inspection of her hull was carried out. This revealed the machine to be in first-class condition.

A line of flares was used to mark the runway when the machine took off from Sydney Harbour at 4.14 a.m. yesterday on the return flight to Auckland, and the flying boat was 100 miles or more out to sea before sunrise. Light variable winds, with easterlies predominating, provided perfect flying conditions.

Navigation was highly accurate, based on half-hourly sights and radio bearings, and the clear visibility enabled a first glimpse to be obtained of New Zealand when the flying boat was 60 miles off the coast. Kaipara Heads provided the landfall and the machine shortly afterwards alighted on the Waitemata Harbour, disembarking her crew and passengers by means of the control launch.

Those who made the trip included Mr. E. Maurice Clarke, manager of Union Airways; Mr. L. E. Turnill, chief engineer at the Auckland air base; Squadron Leader A. G. Gerrard, service manager of Union Airways; Mr. L. N. Larsen, officer in charge of the Government meteorological station at Auckland; Mr. J. Paul, chief accountant of Union Airways; Mr. F. L. Williams, radio operator at Auckland, and Mr. E. D. Nicholl, radio technician at Auckland.

Survey Flight 'Aotearoa' – Auckland – Sydney and return 24-30 September 1939

The First survey flight of the Aotearoa left Auckland for Sydney on the 24 September 1939. Captain Burgess was again at the controls with a crew of 2nd Office FG Craig, GW Cussans and R Phillips with passengers 12 persons in all were on the flight.

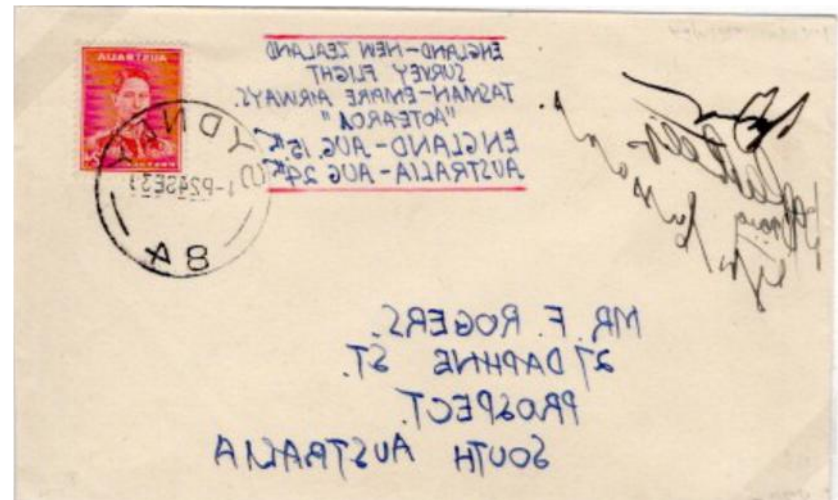
The passengers included – F Maurice Clarke, Manager of Union Airways and

co-pilot on the survey flight to Fiji and Tonga. **Mr LE Turnill**, Chief Engineer at Auckland Airbase, Squadron Leader AG Garrard service Manager of Union Airways, Mr LN Larsen, Officer in charge of the Government's meteorological station at Auckland, Mr J Paul Chief Accountant Union Airways, Mr FL Williams radio operator at Auckland and Mr ED Nicholl radio Technician at Auckland.

The flight to Sydney took 8 hours and 25 minutes with the return flight on the

30 September taking 9 hours and 10 minutes. Both flights were uneventful.

An announcement had been made that no mail would be carried on either flight a few courtesy coves have been recorded such as this which was flown from the UK to New Zealand and back to Australia. Mr LE Turnill was in fact on loan from Imperial Airways to construct the flying boat base at Mechanics Bay.



‘Aotearoa’ Survey Flights – Fiji 7-10 September and 21-23 October 1939

Whilst waiting for Tasman Empire Airways to complete its formation work and for the arrival of a second flying boat. Captain Burgess was tasked with making a survey flight to Fiji.

Fiji was to be the first leg of a proposed British

Trans-Pacific air service once the Trans Tasman Service was established.

The majority of the mail carried on the first survey

flight and the first official mail to be despatched from the Island received no special marking or was charged an air fee as it had accumulated awaiting the next steamer service. As a result very little mail has been identified from the approx. 1,000 items flown.

A further flight with Captain Burgess again in

command left Auckland on the 21 October for Fiji.

This time Tonga was included in the stops made arriving the same day at Nukualofa, Tonga.

2,000 letters are recorded from Suva to Auckland and beyond. 25 letters were carried in addition from Suva to Nukualofa all of which were addressed to Government Officials.

Postage Rate 2d. Backstamped the days after arrival

2 OC 39 11.30am.



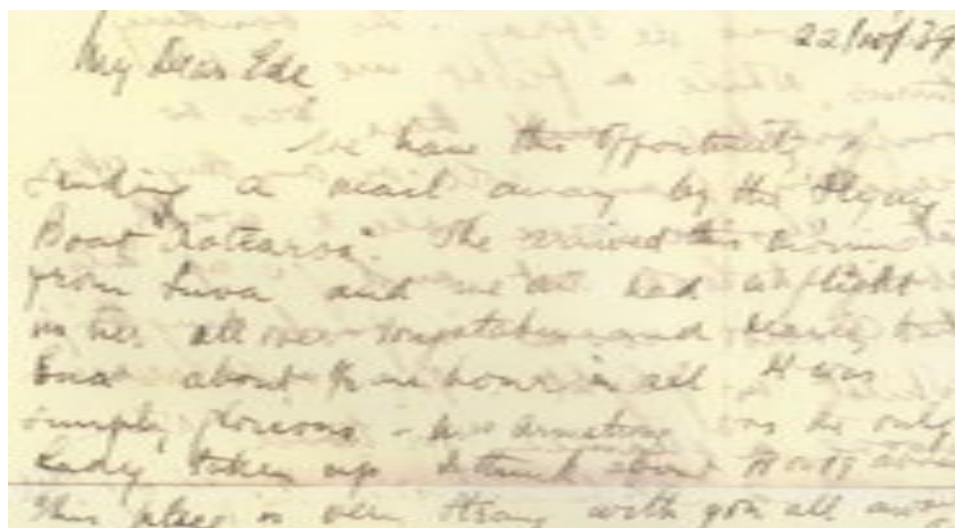
‘Aotearoa’ Survey Flight – Tonga – New Zealand

The Aotearoa arrived at Nukualofa, Tonga on the 21 October and left on the 23 October For New Zealand. This is one of approx. 250 covers carried and was part of the late mail accepted receiving the cachet ‘Nukualofa 23 Oct 4am’.

The plane again collected the mail that had accumulated due to the reduced frequency of the steamer service in war time conditions. There was no surcharge for the air service mail being charge at the surface rate of 2 1/2d. The majority of mail carried was for onward transmission from Auckland by the mail steamer to Sydney.

The letter it carried is of interest as it was sent by one of the guests on the flight over the island the previous day- ‘we have the opportunity of sending a mail away by the flying boat Aotearoa. She arrived this morning from Suva and we all had a flight in her all over Tongatabu and nearly to Suva about . an hour in all. It was simply glorious – Mrs Armstrong was the only lady taken up. I think about 18 or 19 aboard....

If you had one cruise in one of these flying boats you would not have any further fear of them – coming down was simply perfect and we touched the water and taxied along without the slightest hiccup of any kind – in fact the only way to tell that we had touched the water again was the spray. The banking turns while in flight are quite comfortable and there was no sensation of any roll or anything like that. Also we were able to walk about and look out and go up into the control room in fact anything while in flight. You would never choose a steamer for travel when you had experienced the flying ship.’



Tasman Empire Airways - TEAL



Formed on the 25 April 1940 as a joint company between the NZ Government, Union Airways, Qantas and BOAC in order to operate a weekly service between Sydney (Rose Bay) and Auckland (Mechanics Bay). Union Airways was to operate local services between the main cities within New Zealand with the UK Government providing Flying Boats to operate across the Tasman. The Agreement had been announced in 1938 but had been delayed due to the need for Imperial Airways to replace aircraft damaged in a series of accidents.

Congratulations Telegram from Fergus McMaster Chairman Qantas Empire Airways

T.G. 42B		COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA — POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT		Office Date Stamp	
Funds may be quickly, safely and economically transferred by MONEY ORDER TELEGRAM (PLEASE TURN OVER)		RECEIVED TELEGRAM. <i>This message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations. The time received at this office is shown at the end of the message.</i>		Sent at..... On..... At.....	
Sch. C 2233—11/1938		The first line of this Telegram contains the following particulars in the order named.		No.....	
Office of Origin.	Words.	Time Lodged.			
T Z 199 BRISBANE 48 11-55 A HUDSON FYSH 3187 CARE QANTAS SYDNEY ALL OLD QANTAS SHAREHOLDERS AND DIRECTORS WILL BE HAPPY THAT YOU HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN ONE OF THE FIRST PASSENGERS ON THE REGULAR TASMAN AIR SERVICE BUT ALSO FOR YOUR SOUND POLICY IN KEEPING THE OLD QANTAS COMPANY IN EMPIRE AVIATION ... FERGUS MCMASTER <i>Fergus McMaster</i>					

First Regular Trans Tasman Flight – Mail from New Zealand to the UK



After TEAL was formed on the 25 April 1940 the PO's in NZ and Australia announced that mail would be accepted and expedited over local air services where required. A special purple cachet was to be added to the covers. Postage Rate to the UK 1/6 per . oz. Postcards 9d. Approx 41,000 items of mail were carried.

The aircraft departed 30 April 1940

arriving at Sydney 9 hours later.



First Regular Trans Tasman Flight – Mail between Australia and New Zealand



Mail for Australia was 5d per . oz and was back stamped in Sydney 3pm 30 April 1940.

The return flight was made on the 2 May

Pilot JW Burgess and First Officer D Craig.

Landing in Auckland 8 hours later. No

special cachets were applied to the mail. Unusually below a luggage tag was used. Walker mentions the twin to this in his book External Airmails of NZ.



FAM 14 – Hong Kong – San Francisco



Introduced to connect to Imperial Airways Services and China

FAM 18 – Transatlantic Mail

The US PO announced on 10 May 1939 a new service from 20 May 1939 from New York to Marseilles via the Azores and Lisbon as an alternative to via Hong Kong.

Cover backstamped Marseilles 22 May was

transferred to Air France to Croydon then Imperial Airways possibly SE130 that left Southampton on the 25 May arriving Sydney 3 June 1939.



DUNGAN, HOOD & Co., INC.

FINE KID LEATHERS

CABLE ADDRESS "DUNHOOD"
A, R. C. 4TH & 5TH IMPR. EDITIONS. LIEBER
TANNERS COUNCIL-TYBO-BENTLEY & APPENDIX
WESTERN UNION UNIVERSAL AND 2 LETTER EDITIONS

AMERICAN AND SUSQUEHANNA AVENUE

PHILADELPHIA, PA., U. S. A.

May 20, 1939.

Dear Mr. McGrea,

The first American trans-atlantic air mail will probably take place on May 20. I am, therefore, addressing 4 covers to you, of which kindly keep one as a souvenir of what will probably be the longest commercial flight ever made, i.e. Pan American Airways to Europe, thence by Imperial Airways to Australia and beyond. Kindly return the other three covers to me, using a large enough envelope so that it will not be necessary to fold them.

I understand that air mail service from San Francisco to Auckland may be inaugurated in the very near future, although no official word has yet been received, either about time of departure of first flight or rate of postage. It will probably be 70¢ for half an ounce. If I hear about it in time, I shall send 6 covers in your care to be returned to me.

If on that occasion, a first flight cachet will again be applied on mails carried from New Zealand to Hawaii, shall appreciate your sending me 6 covers. Thanking you for your kind cooperation, I am,

Yours very truly,

FRANK H. KREUTER

Via Australia, Hong Kong, USA and Lisbon 20 June 1940 – 19 July 1940



The only 'All Air' option in this period was TEAL to Australia then BOAC to Hong Kong where mail was transferred to PAN AM FAM 14 to San Francisco, FAM 18 New York to Lisbon and finally BOAC to Heston.

One of only 2 recorded covers cancelled Wellington 2 July 1940 receiving censor marks in New Zealand and Hong

Kong. Postal Rate 8/- per . oz. It would have been carried by TEAL on AW81a that left Auckland for Sydney on the 10 July in the Aotearoa.

Then transferred to BOAC WS4 to Bangkok arriving on the 14 July in Cameronian. The following day it was flown to

Hong Kong in the Dardanus on BOAC service BH253. Back Stamp Victoria 15 July.

The next weekly Pan Am flight departed on the 17 July arriving San Francisco 23 July.

FAM 19 Auckland to San Francisco 20 July 1940 -



First Flight cover rate 6/3 all air to the UK. Purple cachet applied to mail.

Boeing B-314A – Anzac Clipper used on the route June-December 1941.



India – Auckland - USA

Postcard rate were increased
wef 23 May 1941 to R1.1
inclusive to the USA.

Potential route –

BOAC NE90 left India on the
6/7 June arriving in Sydney on
the 12 June in the Cooee.

Trans Tasman AE78 to
Auckland 14/15 June in the
Aotearoa.

Pan Am FAM19 departed

Auckland 21 June arriving in
San Francisco on the 25 June
followed by an internal flight
to New York

The reverse of the card

comments on the restrictions
placed by the Indian
Government on the import of
stamps and albums
EX Proud

