

PHILATELIC LAXITY

by Albert Pelsser

DEPERDUSSIN

Belgian-born Armand Deperdussin was a wealthy French silk merchant when he entered the aviation business in 1910 and founded his aircraft-building company named *Société pour les Appareils Deperdussin* (SPAD). He was fortunate in employing Louis Béchereau to be responsible for the running of his company and later a young engineer named André Herbemont.



Figure 1

Both jumped several stages ahead of all their competitors by concentrating their undisputed genius on the achievement of a clean design, which was a single-wing airplane with a true monocoque built up as a three-ply shell of tulipwood, covered with fabric both internally and externally. In 1912-13, the Deperdussin racer equipped with a Gnome rotary air-cooled engine raised several times the world speed record and won trophies in

Chicago, Monaco, and Reims.

On 29 September 1913, in this type of aircraft, Maurice Prévost set the world absolute speed record for this time of over 200 km/h. In a few years, the SPAD Company had created the world's fastest pre-war airplane. Unfortunately, the company went into liquidation in 1913 when Deperdussin was arrested for embezzlement. The company was taken over by Louis Blériot who renamed it *Société pour l'Aviation et ses Dérivés* (thus retaining the same acronym) and gained fame for its products during World War I.

Seaplane versions had for their day a very neat float installation as displayed on Paraguay Scott #1938d at Figure 1. This is the only stamp from the philatelic collection related to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which since 1945 has its headquarters in Montreal, Canada, showing the Deperdussin airplane. It is to be noted that this stamp spells the name of Deperdussin with double "p", which is an error.

It is interesting to note that the seven stamps with Scott numbers 1938a-1938g were printed se-tenant in strips, with the following text in the selvage: *SELOS AVIONES MILITARES*, showing a set of military airplanes used during WWI carrying mail during wartime (as indicated on the stamps: *tambien en tiempos de guerra los aviones militares transportaban correspondencia*). Issued on the same day, Paraguay Scott #1939-1940 are airmail values (also with military airplanes) that were printed in separate sheets.

CHECKLIST

Paraguay	1938d	1980 Apr 08	Deperdussin float plane, 1913, ICAO logo
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REFERENCES

Donald, David. *The Encyclopedia of World Aircraft*. Etobicoke, Ontario: Prospero Books, 1999.
 Mondey, David. *Pictorial History of Aircraft*. Secausus, NJ: Chartwell Books, Inc., 1977.

