

Aviation on Stamps

- *Flying animals*

Famous airplanes, famous aviators

- *Unflyable airplanes*

Flying animals

Flying animals

It's hardly surprising that flying animals are featured on airmail stamps issued by many countries. The set of stamps shown below, issued by Austria in the years 1950-1953, is prized by collectors:



Clockwise from the top left row: Rooks, barn swallows, black-headed gulls, great cormorants, a buzzard, a gray heron, and a golden eagle.

Flying animals



Above, a French airmail stamp issued in 1947 and picturing a gull flying over Isle de la cité; at the right, a Japanese stamp issued for national letter-writing week and picturing....



Flying animals



Issued by Netherlands in 1953 for "special flights" by KLM Airlines, this stamp features a painting by Aart Dobbenburg titled "Crow in Flight", by Aart Dobbenburgh. A 12½-cent stamp of the same design was issued in 1938 for flights to South Africa.

Flying animals

A KLM first-flight cover posted in 1955 from Hilversum, Netherlands to Kabul, Afghanistan, franked "Crow in Flight" stamps.

The flight began May 5, A KLM Douglas DC-3 flew the Karachi - Kabul portion of the flight, leaving Amsterdam on May 5, 1955. The receiving postmark (receiver or backstamp) on the back of the cover, shown below, indicates that it arrived in Kabul a week later, on May 11.



The hand-stamped cachet in the cover's lower left corner pictures a Lockheed Constellation, which flew the route from Amsterdam to Karachi. The cachet reads, "VLUCHT GEREGELEDE KLM LIJNDIENST" (Regularly scheduled KLM flight). The French hand stamp, "Retour à l'Expéditeur" translates as "Return to the Sender," who probably was a stamp collector.

Flying animals



Three years after Charles Lindbergh's historic trans-atlantic flight, Iceland issued its first airmail stamp, in an usual format. Several nations had previously issued triangular stamps, but Iceland's stamp was the first to be designed as an inverted triangle.

The stamp pictures an Icelandic gyrfalcon before a back drop of clouds and a seaplane framed with intricate border.

The gyrfalcon is the largest bird in the falcon family, found not only in Iceland, but also in Scandinavia and the Canadian Arctic.

Flying animals



A hard-to-find block of Iceland's first airmail stamp.

Flying animals



Liberian airmail stamps issued in 1938 picture three different birds. The yellow and bright green triangular stamps feature egrets; the brown, 50-cent airmail stamp pictures an eagle, and the green and blue rectangular stamps show an albatross.

Flying animals



Archaeopteryx (Viet Nam)



Flying squirrel
(Japan)



Bat (Germany)



Bumblebee (Canada)



Bumblebee (Barbados)



Cecropia moth
(Canada)

Famous airplanes, famous aviators

Famous airplanes, famous aviators

Mankind has always dreamed of flying like birds, but his early flying machines hardly seemed birdlike. This parcel post stamp, issued by the United States in 1913, pictures an “AEROPLANE CARRYING MAIL,” probably a Wright Model E. It’s the first known postage stamp to feature an airplane.



Famous airplanes, famous aviators

When the Wright Brothers first flew at Kitty Hawk in 1903, hardly anyone knew about it at the time. Twenty-four years later, in 1927, when Charles Lindbergh flew alone across the Atlantic, virtually everybody in the “developed” world would know about it. Below, a real-photo postcard picturing “Lucky Lindy” taking delivery of the Spirit of St. Louis before he was actually “Lucky”.



Famous airplanes, famous aviators

The postcard shown in the previous slide was carried in a mail plane that Lindberg, flying the Spirit of St. Louis, accompanied on one of his many publicity flights following his New York-Paris flight. It's franked with the commemorative stamp that the U.S. Post Office Department issued June 18, 1927, just 30 days after his record-setting flight.

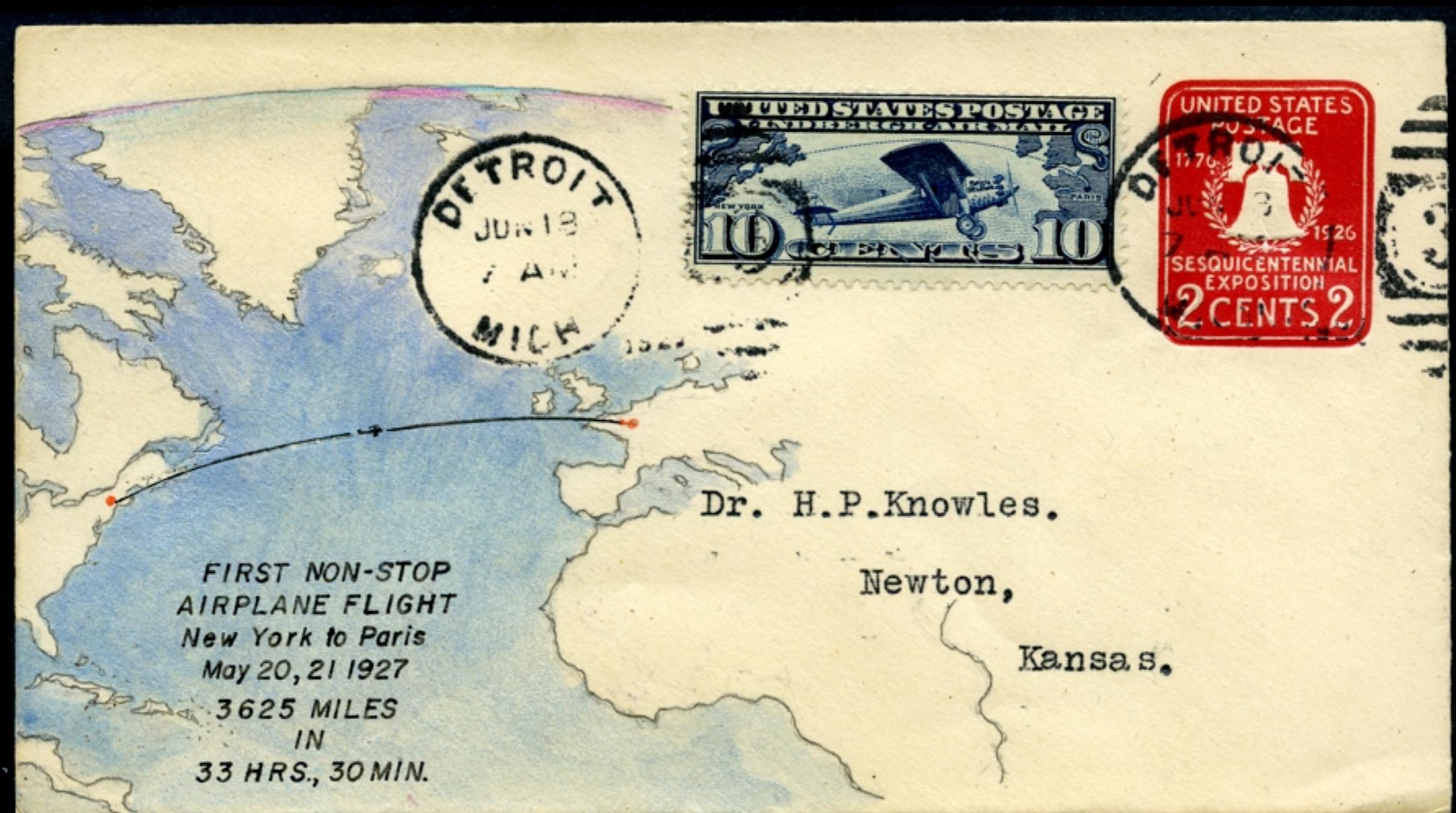


Famous airplanes, famous aviators



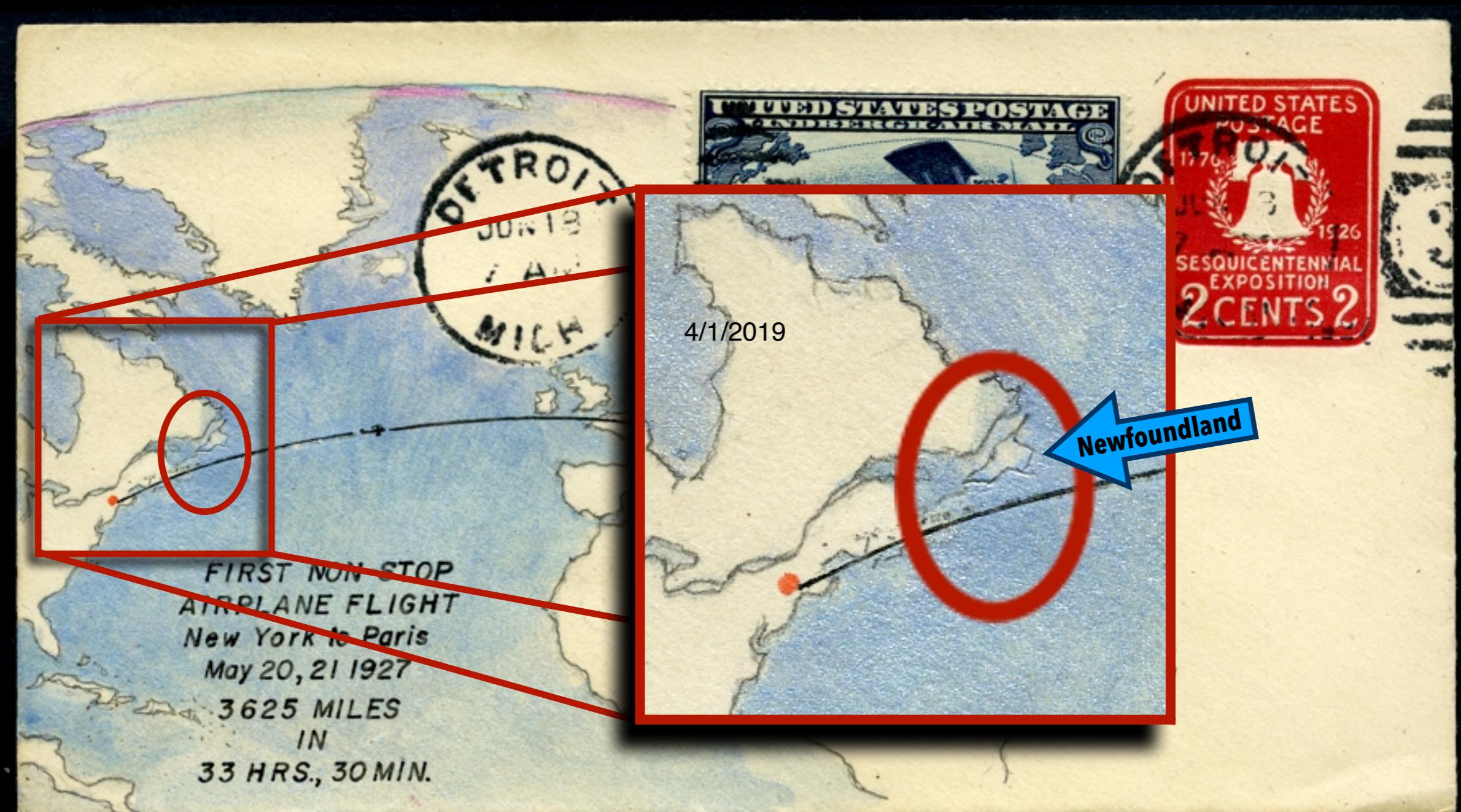
Famous airplanes, famous aviators

A hand-painted first-day stationery cover (FDC) uprated with the then-new Spirit of St. Louis commemorative stamp. (The imprinted 2-cent stamp paid the basic postage rate per half ounce, while the 10-cent airmail stamp paid for airmail service.) Note that the hand-painted map contains an error. Can you spot it?



Famous airplanes, famous aviators

Did you find the error? The painting erroneously shows the flight path over Nova Scotia, completely missing Newfoundland, whereas Lindbergh actually flew directly over St. John's, Newfoundland.



Famous airplanes, famous aviators

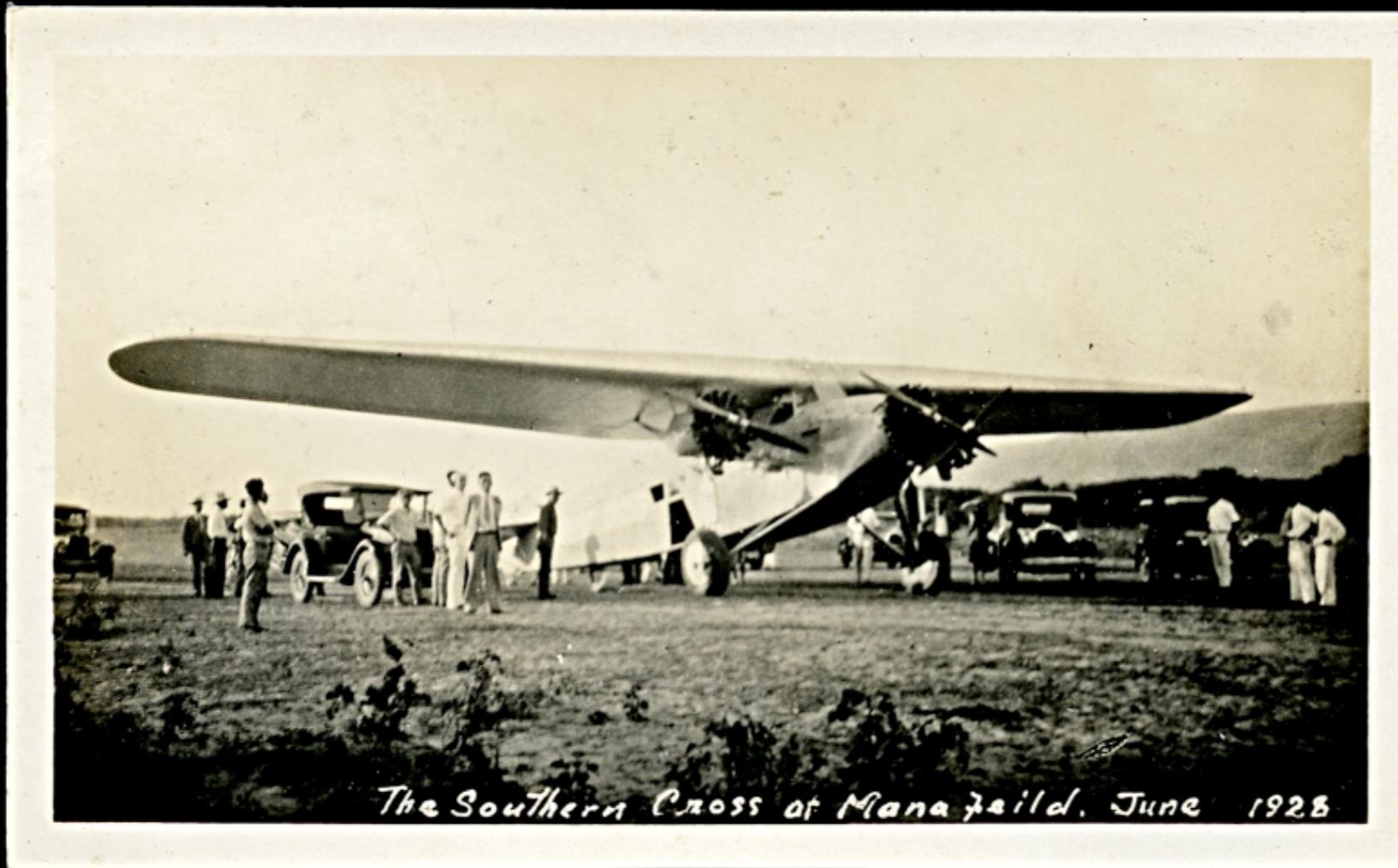
On June 9, 1928, less than a year after Lindbergh's NYC-Paris flight, Australians Edward Kingsford Smith and his co-pilot, Charles Ulm, completed the first trans-Pacific flight from Oakland, California to Australia, landing their Fokker trimotor, *Southern Cross*, at Brisbane.

The flight was in three stages, with planned stops in Hawaii and Fiji, where no aircraft had ever landed. By the time they landed in Brisbane, they had been in the air for more than 80 hours, covering approximately 11,566 kilometres (7,187 miles).



An imperforate souvenir sheet issued by Australia in 1978.

Famous airplanes, famous aviators



Above left, Southern Cross at Mana Field, Kauai; above right, commemorative stamps issued by the island nation of Nauru in 1978 contrast silhouettes of the Southern Cross with a modern jetliner.

Famous airplanes, famous aviators

The French “Lindbergh,” Jean Mermoz, made aviation history on June 12, 1929, by becoming flying from Buenos Aires across the Andes to Santiago, Chile. A personal friend of aviator/author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Mermoz pioneered airmail routes between France and South America and within South America



France commemorated Mermoz's life in 1937 by issuing two postage stamps. At the left, a memorial sculpture of Mermoz; above, Mermoz at the controls of an airplane.

Famous airplanes, famous aviators

At the right, a French stamp pictures a Potez 25, the French biplane that Mermoz flew on his epic flight over the Andes. The Potez, designed as a multi-purpose fighter-bomber, served in the air forces of some 20 countries in the 1920s and 1930s.



This photo of Santiago, Chile clearly shows the formidable barrier that the Andes presented to early pilots of low-powered, open-cockpit airplanes.



Famous airplanes, famous aviators

Mermoz's Buenos Aires - Santiago flight was not just the first flight over the Andes, but the first *airmail* flight, making the cover shown below a coveted "first-flight cover" or FFC. Mermoz signed the cover, adding significantly to its commercial value as well as its intrinsic value.



Famous airplanes, famous aviators

On December 7, 1936, on his 25th crossing of the South Atlantic, Mermoz turned back shortly after take-off to report a troublesome engine on his four-engine Latécoère 300 *Croix-du-Sud* (Southern Cross) seaplane. After a quick repair, he took off again, concerned that he would be late in delivering the mail. Four hours later, Mermoz reported that he had had to cut the power on his aft starboard engine. No further messages were received, and neither the Laté 300 nor the crew were ever recovered.



Unflyable airplanes

Unflyable airplanes

Thailand, 1969



Thailand issued this stamp to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Thai air mail service. If early Thai airmail planes were as badly designed as this one, there was no Thai airmail service! *What is wrong with this airplane?*

Unflyable airplanes

Iceland, 1934 – Plane over map of Iceland

This airplane appears to be flying despite some design deficiencies. *What does it need to overcome those deficiencies?*

There's something else about the design that just doesn't seem right. *What's wrong with it?*



Unflyable airplanes

Republic of Korea, 1949



If Koreans depended on aircraft like this one to transport their airmail, then they couldn't have had airmail service. *Why not?*

Unflyable airplanes

Lithuania, 1934 Lituanica and Vytis, the White Knight

Lituanica was a Bellanca CH-300 Pacemaker flown from the United States across the Atlantic Ocean by Lithuanian pilots Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas in 1933. After successfully flying 6,411 km (4,043 miles), it crashed 650 km (404 miles) from its destination, Kaunas, Lithuania. Both pilots were killed.

Vytis appears to be flying in formation with the Bellanca, but the chances of a long flight for the airplane seem remote. *Why is that?*



Unflyable airplanes

Spain, 1931



Thailand issued this stamp to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Thai Air Mail service. The plane is flying over the royal palace in Madrid, but he'll have to land eventually, and it's not likely to be a safe landing. *What would you do to improve its chances?*

Unflyable airplanes

Finland's 1944 airmail issue commemorates the country's air transport services and supposedly pictures a Douglas DC-2, but it doesn't really look like a DC-2 (no cabin windows, too streamlined, no landing lights in the nose). In any event, I doubt any Finns would have survived a flight in this aircraft. Why might that be?

Finland, 1944



The End

