

Communication to the other  
side of the world

The Arrival of Airmail

## To the other side of the World:

1840 First official Post Office. Ship mail via the capes (100+ days )

1855 Ship then Panama Railway, then ship onwards but usually with a USA diversion

1857 Ship then Suez Railway, to Marseilles by packet boat then railway across France

1867 NZ linked by international cable (15/- per word to the UK)

1869 Ship through Suez Canal, to Marseilles then railway across France

1869 to San Francisco then via the transcontinental railroad

1874 Universal Postal Union, Treaty of Bern – only after this ratified was onward postal transmission by other countries assured.

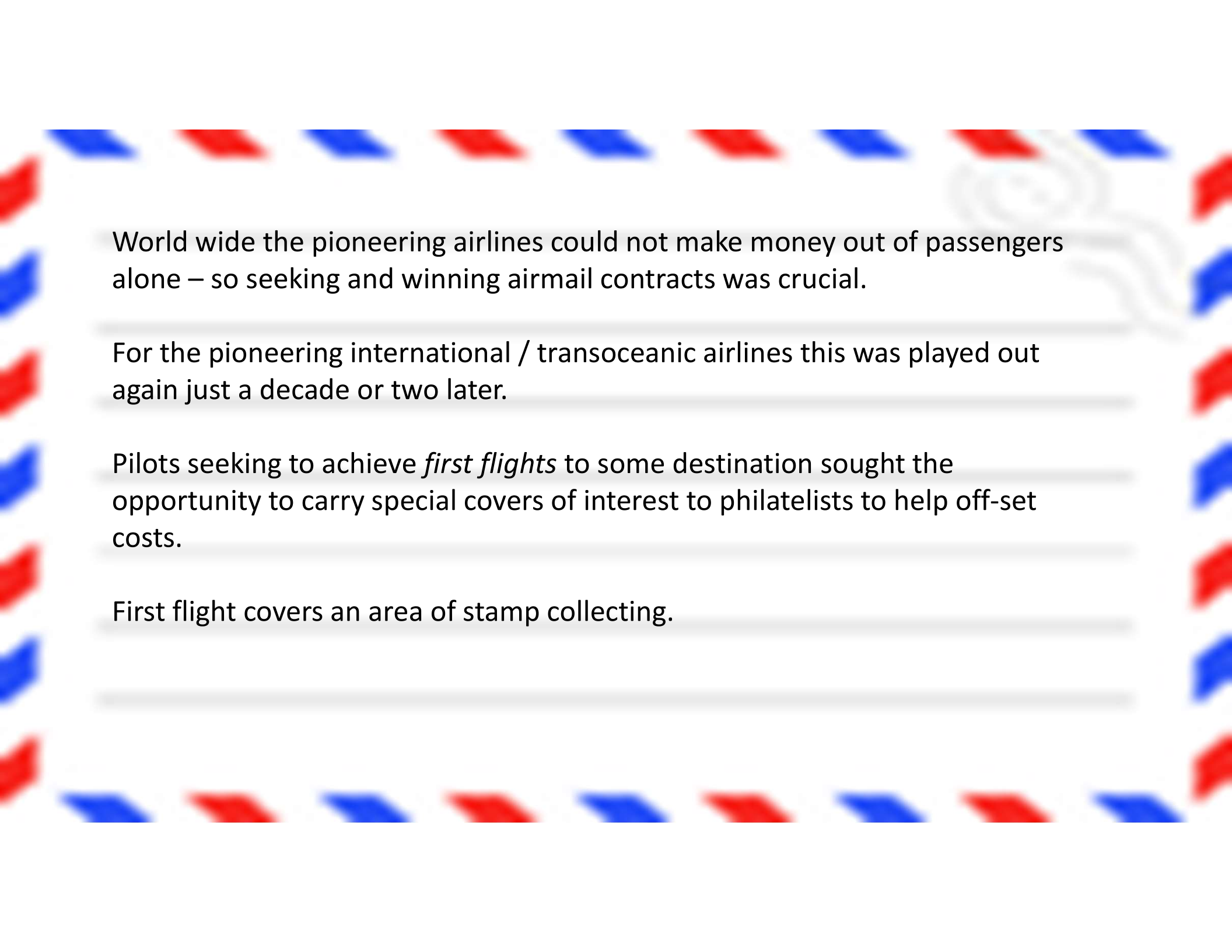
1914 Panama Canal opened but non-US ships discriminated against

1916 RMS Remuera first British ship on NZ service through the Canal

1930 onwards International voice calls available

**Mid 1930s onwards, Airmail**

1970 dedicated TELEX lines, 1971 Satellite receiving station, Early 90s WWW



World wide the pioneering airlines could not make money out of passengers alone – so seeking and winning airmail contracts was crucial.

For the pioneering international / transoceanic airlines this was played out again just a decade or two later.

Pilots seeking to achieve *first flights* to some destination sought the opportunity to carry special covers of interest to philatelists to help off-set costs.

First flight covers an area of stamp collecting.

**1933 / 1934 C T P Ulm, Faith in Australia VH-UXX  
Sydney (Dec 3 1933) - New Plymouth. Return  
Muriwai Beach (Auckland) Feb 17, 1934 - Sydney.  
*The return trip carried the first official airmail from New  
Zealand to Australia.***

Charles Ulm's Avro was originally an Avro X. The Avro X was a licence-built Fokker of the same basic model as the Southern Cross. It was one of the Avros bought by Australian National Airlines and assembled by them in Australia.

After the airline collapsed Ulm bought one of them - Southern Moon - VH-UMI, to refurbish. He had it rebuilt in Australia with a new wing and the original engines replaced by Wright cyclones, the same as powered the Southern Cross. It was re-registered after that as an "Avro K".

It ended its days as derelict at Townsville airfield, Queensland and in 1942 was bulldozed into a swamp during the Second World War airfield improvements.

Charles Ulm is fourth from the left.



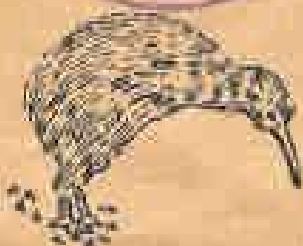
*C. T. ULM*

BY AIR MAIL  
PAR AVION

AND.  
17 FEB 39  
1  
47



Per VH-UXX "Faith in Australia"  
C. T. P. ULM, Commander



*J. G. Finney  
c/o J. G. Finney  
Warrandyte Rd  
Ringwood  
Victoria*







**1934 Kingsford-Smith's third trip to New Zealand, Southern Cross VH-USU  
Sydney to New Plymouth January 1934. Return 90 Mile Beach (Kaitaia) to Sydney March 29 1934.  
This latter flight carried the second official airmail from New Zealand to Australia.  
The time in New Zealand was spent on joy rides. His aircraft was a one-off Fokker F.VIIb-3m. It was  
earlier registered as G-AUSU.**





1934 Charles T P Ulm, Faith in Australia VH-UXX  
Second visit.

Sydney, April 11, 1934 to- New Plymouth. Return 90 Mile Beach (Kaitia) to Sydney, April 14 1934.

***This was the first official airmail flight from Australia to New Zealand.***

The New Zealand Trade Commissioner in Sydney sold New Zealand stamps for the return trip meaning many of the covers bear both country's stamps. 40,000 letters were carried to New Zealand and 20,000 on the return flight.



**Third (and last) visit. Sydney May 11, 1934 to New Plymouth. Return 90 Mile Beach (Kaitaia) to Sydney, July 2 1934. The long delay for the return was occasioned by awaiting for engine parts. Ulm flew to New Guinea after this flight. Airmail covers addressed to New Zealand on the return flight from New Guinea crossed the Tasman by sea.**



Gordon Taylor climbed on the undercarriage struts to transfer oil to the port engine.



### 1935 First Airmail New Zealand to England. King's Jubilee (George V).

This Kingsford Smith project was to fly mail from Australia to New Zealand, and return to Australia to link to the established airmail route to Britain (commenced 1931 and regularly from 1935).

Leaving Sydney on May 14 in Southern Cross it suffered an engine failure less than half way across and turned back. In an epic return journey with second engine giving trouble almost all the mail was ejected, bar seven bags.

That mail was delivered to New Zealand by steamer and the mail which was to be flown from New Zealand to Australia also went by sea across the Tasman.



**1937/ 1938 Pan American SIKORSKY S-42B *Pan American Clipper II*, NC 16734 Ed Musick. Arrived December 26th, departed January 2nd. Honolulu, Kingman Reef, Pago Pago, Auckland. This was the inaugural flight of an Auckland - Honolulu service. It connected with Honolulu - San Francisco airmails.**

***This was the first NZ to US airmail.***

**The aircraft and crew were lost off Samoa on January 12 on the next flight to New Zealand leading to the suspension of the service.**





DH 86 Express

1935 Empire Air Mail Scheme agreed – but did not start until 1938.

NZ link was by sea – SS Monowai Wellington - Sydney

1.5d rate anywhere (except did not apply just across the Tasman – that was 5d.)

QANTAS was the link across Australia to Imperial Airways. They hated it. Collapsed with the war



Malcolm Keith Carswell was born in Invercargill. In 1936 he began having flying lessons at the Invercargill Flying Club and in June his instructor arranged for him to have an interview for a short service commission.

There were no immediate vacancies so Carswell made his own way to the UK in early 1937. He joined 43 Squadron at Tangmere in January 1938.

Fought in the Battle of Britain, survived the war but did not return to NZ.







**1940 Auckland - Sydney TEA Aotearoa, ZK-AMA. 30th April.**

**Short S30 Empire Flying Boat. This flight commenced a regular Australian air service for New Zealand as part of the Empire Air Service. Some survey flights were flown earlier. The aircraft had marginal ability to service the route. If headwinds of over 15 knots were forecast the service was cancelled and often flew with reduced passenger load.**

***This was the first regular NZ- Australia airmail (and linked onwards).***

1940 Pan American, *American Clipper*, NC18606, Boeing 314. July 7th.

The Boeing 314 was the jumbo of its age.

The inaugural aircraft on the route was the American Clipper, NC18606. The route flown was San Francisco - Los Angeles - Hawaii - Canton Island - Noumea - Auckland and return. The British had earlier denied PA the use of Canton Island, forcing the earlier flights to use Kingman Reef lagoon. By 1940 they had relented.

*This was the first regular NZ- US airmail.*



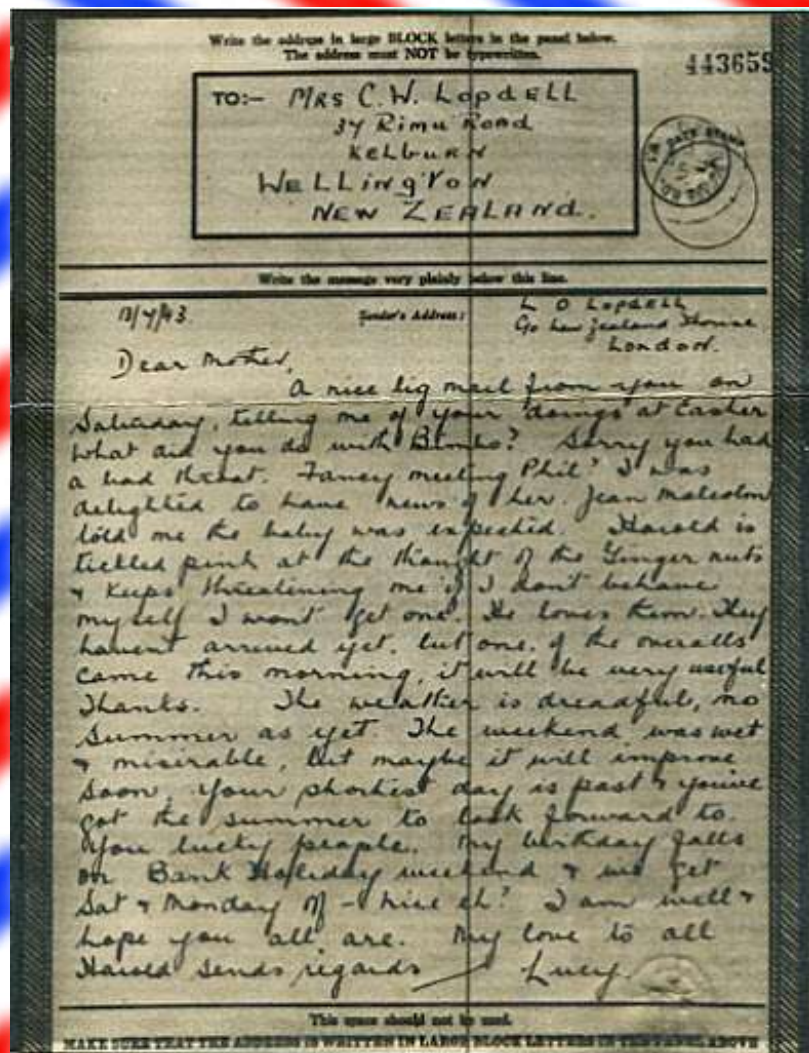


First round the world flight by a civilian aircraft was initiated in Auckland

Pan Am *Pacific Clipper* cut off in Auckland from the United States due to the bombing of Pearl Harbour.

On December 7, 1941. Captain Robert Ford was directed to strip company markings, registration and insignia from the Clipper and proceed in secret to the Marine Terminal, LaGuardia Field, New York.



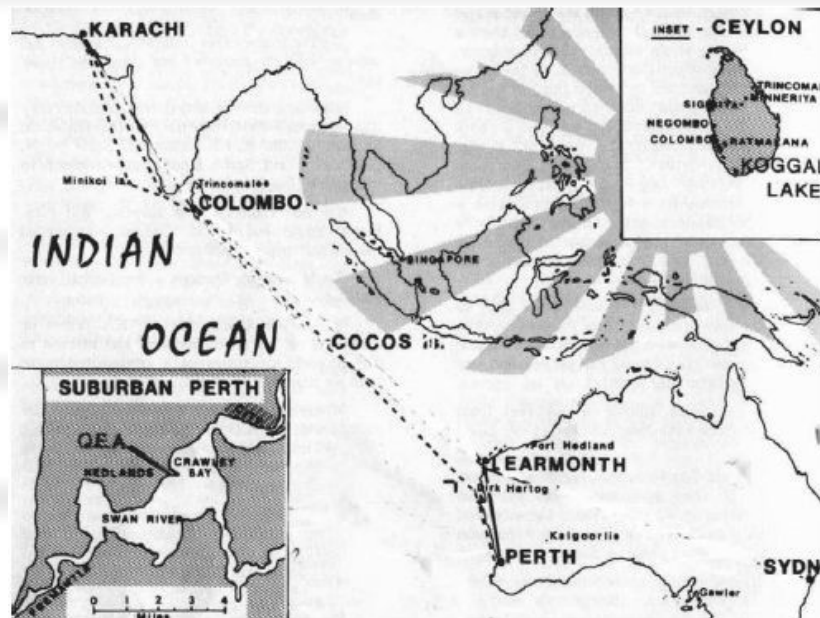


Airgraphs were developed by Kodak.

The idea was that a letter was written on a special form which was then photographed. A large number of letters could be put on a single roll of film which was then flown to its destination and printed out for delivery. 37:1 weight advantage

British started using 1941, NZ from 1942

V-Mail the US equivalent from 1942



Many carried on the Qantas Catalina 'Double Sunrise' route – then the longest in the world.

## Marking Airmail

Stickers a Post Office Requirement from the start “By Airmail /Par Avion” international standard wording via Air Mail Postal Convention at the Postal Union Congress of 1929

Red / blue bordered envelopes started in the USA in 1928 but were never a requirement there, or here.

Oldest seen on inward mail 1940.

Oldest seen on outward mail 1934, but not common until the 1950s.

# END

