

"THEY CAME ON THE WINGS OF THE MORNING"

30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST TRANS-TASMAN DIRECT FLIGHT AUSTRALIA TO NEW ZEALAND & RETURN

The title of this exhibition is aptly drawn from commemorative stone laid by Sir Henry Wigram KT, at the spot on Wigram Aerodrome, where the "Southern Cross" first touched down at 9.22am on September 11th 1928. Wigram's quote is drawn from *Psalms* 139.9/10.

*"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast".*



1928 Fokker Triplane



1958 Douglas DC6

Introduction

The New Zealand and Australian Air Leagues were the key instigators in proposing, to their respective Postal Authorities, that the 30th anniversary of the first "successful" Trans-Tasman flight be aptly commemorated. The focus of these Societies' was not only on a "stamp" itself, but on the specific timing of the reenactment of flight for postal memorabilia.

Exhibition Plan

This exhibition is structured to present the aspects of philatelic work associated with the 30th Anniversary of the First Trans-Tasman Direct Flight, although in the case of the stamp itself, specialist work is limited to the New Zealand Post Office stamp only. The exhibit structure is thus;

- A brief overview of the original 1928 flight and crew;
- The combined stamp design and first day of issue covers;
- The New Zealand 6d stamp, its sheet characteristics, perforation, varieties and freaks;
- A selection of postal covers associated with the re-enactment flights; and
- It concludes with two examples where the stamp /design has been used, post the anniversary.

Main References;

The Postage Stamps of New Zealand Volume, Chapter XXI, NZPS

Airmails of New Zealand Volume 2, "The Overseas Flights 1928-1940" compiled by Douglas A. Walker Airmail Society, New Zealand.

Charles KINGSFORD SMITH and those magnificent men, by Peter Fitzsimons- Harper Collins 2009

New Zealand Stamps, Campbell Paterson

New Zealand Post WEB SITE

THE ORIGINAL FLIGHT & CREW

The Original flight of the aircraft *Southern Cross Fokker* (G-AUSU) departed Richmond Airport Sydney Australia at 5.34pm (NSW time) 10 September 1928 and arrived at Wigram Aerodrome, Christchurch at 09.22am (NZ time) on 11 September 1928, transiting via an overhead at Wellington.

The initial flight covered the 2670 km in 14 hours 25 minutes. The return flight was made leaving Woodbourne Air Force Base, Blenheim 04:10 am 13 October 1928 arriving Richmond Airport Sydney at 1.42am on 14 October after a marathon 22hour 51minute flight flying into strong westerly winds.



Wigram Aerodrome, Christchurch, New Zealand

11 September 1928- The arrival of the Southern Cross - 9.22 am. (NZ time)

Crowds flocked to Wigram Aerodrome. They started to assemble at the aerodrome from 7.30am alerted by radio reports of the 'Cross' circling over Wellington before heading south.

By 9.00am more than 30,000 were waiting, a quarter of the city's population.

(Photo CHCH Press)

The crew consisted of; Squadron Leader Charles E Kingsford **Smith MC AFC** (Pilot); with Flight Lieutenant Charles T.P. **Ulm AFC** (Relief Pilot); Harold A **Litchfield** (Navigator); and New Zealander Thomas **McWilliams** (Wireless Operator).

Portrait: Wigram 11 Sep 1928
(L to R)

T.H. McWilliams

SQNLDR Charles Kingsford
Smith, MC AFC

FLTLT Charles Ulm AFC

H.A. Litchfield

(Photo CHCH Press)



THE STAMP DESIGN

The original concept, proposed by the Air League of New Zealand, was for a joint New Zealand/Australia stamp, however New Zealand and Australian postal authorities were of the opinion that the UPU regulations would not permit this, the outcome being both authorities agreed to a common design.

A design concept by Mr. J.E. Lylie (NZL), with parts of the designs that could be interchangeable was accepted. It was agreed by all parties that "image 2" was the 'cleaner' of the designs and this was accepted with modifications, the major ones being; the use of the helmeted Kingsford Smith ex image 1, but modified (image 4); re positioning of years (1928 & 1958); reduction in size of the country lettering; and the change in the number of points on a specific stars to match the Australian viewed southern cross constellation.

During the initial stages of printing it was identified that the aircraft registration numbers under the starboard wing (VH-USU), although belonging to Southern Cross (1931-1935), were not those of the aircraft at the time of the crossing, which in 1928-1929 were (G-AUSU). A decision was made not to correct this error.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

This stamp was issued on 27 August 1958 to commemorate the upcoming 30th anniversary of first Trans Tasman flight AUS to NZL 10/11 September 1958 and the return flight NZL to AUS 13/14 October 1958. The stamp was issued jointly with a value of New Zealand 6d and Australia 8d. The difference in pricing relating to the differential in exchange and postage rates at the time.



New Zealand



Australia

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE - 27 AUG 1958

Both NZ Post and Australia Post released their stamps on 27 Aug 1958. This was prior to the actual anniversary dates, thus enabling philatelic collectors to prepare covers for the re-enactment flights of 10/11 Sep (AUS - NZL) and 14 Oct 1958 (NZL - AUS). All covers were privately produced as no official NZ/AUS Post Covers were available.

Postmarked

27 AU 58

WIGRAM AIR
FORCE

(landing place of
"Southern Cross" 11
September 1928,

Private Cover -
Tasman Stamps
CHCH

Philatelic use



Postmarked

27AU58

BALLARAT

VIC AUST
Australia

Private Cover -
WCS Aust

Philatelic use

SHEET COMPOSITION / CONSTRUCTION

The stamp was printed by the Australian Bank Note and Stamp Printer (Melbourne), using the recess (Intag) process on NZ supplied Wiggins Teape 'Esparto' paper, with the multiple NZ and star watermark. Two plates were produced with plate identification appearing below Row 12 No's 1 & 2 and the value above Row 1 No

The New Zealand print run comprised 3,600,000 stamps 120 stamps per sheet; 12 rows by 10 columns. They were placed on issue August 27 1958 and withdrawn from sale December 31 1958, with 2,165,135 being sold and unsold stock being destroyed.



Plate 1



Plate 2



Value Block

PERFORATION

The perforations, gauging 14 x 14¼ were effected by means of a comb head working upwards from the bottom of the sheet. Using this methodology the bottom of the sheet may or may not show perforation strike – this is dependent on the machine set-up, and sheet trimming, however the top selvedge of the sheet always appear perforated to the edge of the sheet.



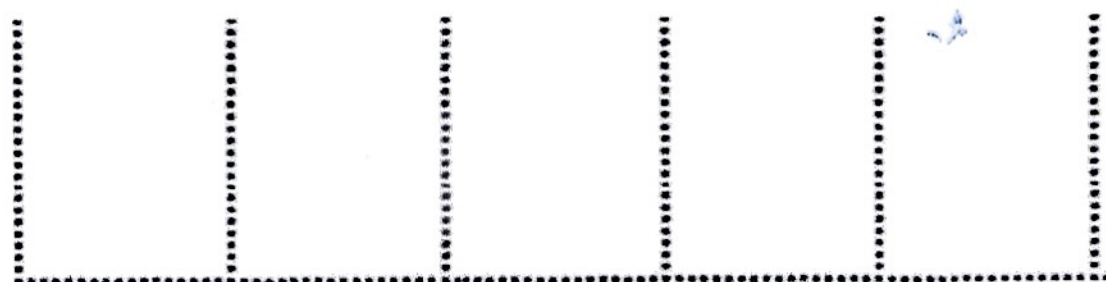
Single base strike



No base strike



Multiple base strike



Comb perforation

Above:

Example of a portion of a comb head used in the row format for working bottom up (bottom & both sides perforated)

Right:

The effect of the last strike of the perforation machine on the sheet is evident, (compared to comb perf example above). The horizontal base line caps the top of Row 1 and the vertical sides extend in the selvedge beyond the edge of the paper.



CONSTANT PLATE VARIETIES

Constant Plate Varieties are minor varieties due to imperfections in a printing plate, producing one or several stamps that are different from the rest in their sheet.

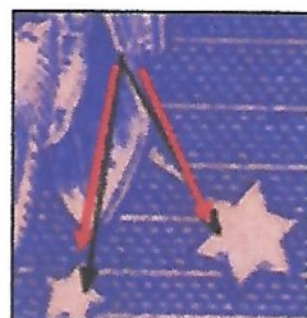
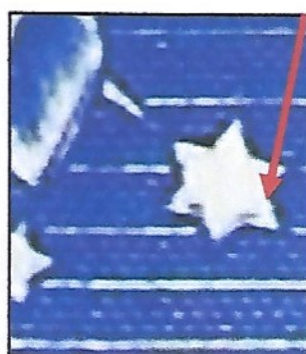
At the time of printing, four major constant plate varieties were identified on both plates Row 7 No 7; Row 9 No 5; Row 10 No 9 & Row 10 No 10.

Row 7 No 7: Doubling at the bottom of the 6 pointed star

Row 9 No 5: Doubling at the bottom of the 6 pointed star and of the five pointed star



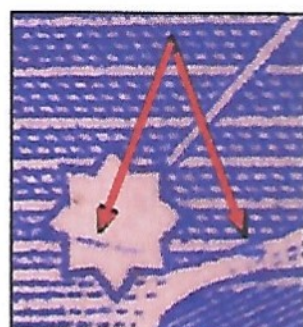
Row 7 No 7



Row 9 No 5

Row 10 No 9: Coloured dash across the 8 pointed star

Row 10 No 10: Coloured dash across the 7 pointed star to the left of 1958



Row 10 No 9



Row 10 No 10

NEW CONSTANT PLATE VARIETIES

Research by the collector has identified a further 5 constant plate varieties, Row 1 No 10; Row 4 No 5; Row No 7; Row 9 No 3; Row 10 No 3 & Row 10 No 6. Whether these developed during the printing process or were there in the first place is unknown at this stage, research continues.

Row 1 No 10:

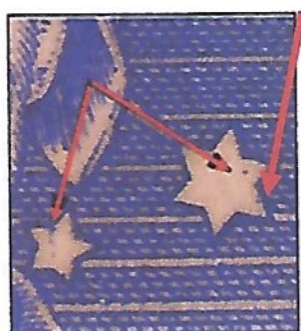
A blue vertical mark in the centre of the 5 point star and a single blue dot on the 6 point star. *Identified in; full sheet Plate 1; block of 6; block of 4; single stamp*

Row 4 No 5:

Two blue mark in the centre of the 8 point star. *Identified in; full sheet Plate 1; block of strip of 5*



Row 1 No 10



Row 4 No 5

Row 8 No 7:

A blue centre in the 5 point star. *Identified in; full sheet Plate 1; block of 6; block of 4; strip of 5 single.*



Row 8 No 7



NEW CONSTANT PLATE VARIETIES (continued)

Row 9 No 3:

A prominent vertical blue line runs the whole length of the face, on the right hand side of the head from the top of the helmet to the chin. *Identified in; full sheet Plate 1; half sheet Plate 1; Plate 2 block of 24; ; Plate 2 block of 9; block of 4; strip of 5 single*



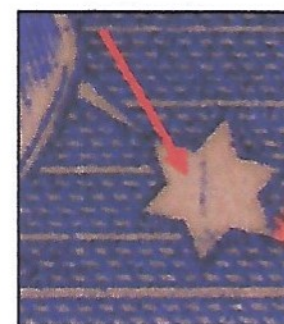
Row 9 No 3 & Row 10 No 3



Row 10 No 6

Row 10 No 3:

A vertical blue line runs through the 6 point star. *Identified in; full sheet Plate 1; half sheet plate 1; block of 24 Plate 2;*



Row 10 No 6:

A vertical blue line runs through the left hand side of the top of the helmet above goggles. *Identified in; full sheet Plate 1; half sheet plate 1; block of 24 Plate 2;*



NON-CONSTANT FLAWS and FREAKS

Additional to the previous new constant varieties, there appears a number of anomalies, identified at this time as non-constant production "Flaws or Freaks". Below are a small selection of the more prominent examples

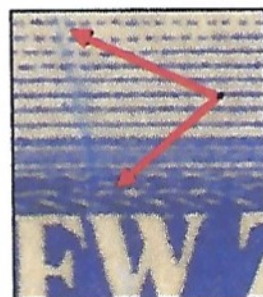
Row 12 No 5:

blue vertical lines appear in the 7 pointed star left of 1958 and on left collar to the right the helmet chin strap Plate Block #2 x4 R9/1-6 to R12/1-6 Not in



Row ? No ?:

A Blue arcing line from tail plane of aircraft to "W" of "NEW". Identified in an un-plated strip of 5;



Row ? No ?:

A vertical blue line on the left google and left cheek below the left eye". Identified in an plated strip of 5;



AUSTRALIAN/NEW ZEALAND AIR LEAGUE SPECIAL DUAL FLIGHT COVER

10 SEP 1958 - 14 OCT 1958

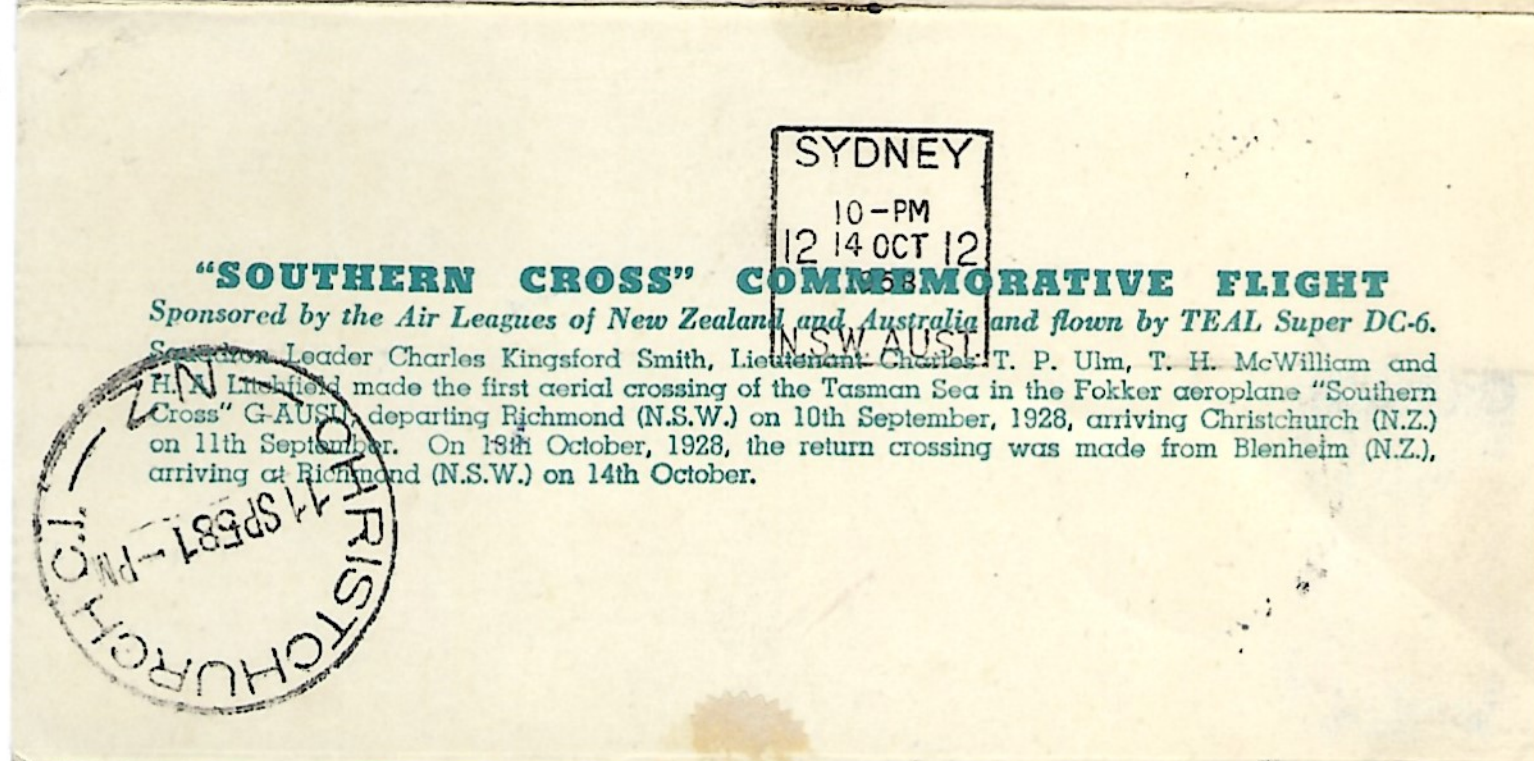
The Australian/New Zealand Air League special dual flight covers were not individually addressed but were sent to the individual Secretaries of each country's Air League. The cover/pamphlet had both the Australian and New Zealand versions of the stamp and were flown both ways by NZ's TEAL Airways, pre runner to Air New Zealand.

**INITIAL
DEPARTURE**
Sydney, NSW (AUS)
10SE58
&
Australian cachet



**RETURN
ARRIVAL**
Sydney, NSW (AUS)
14OCT58

**INITIAL
ARRIVAL**
Christchurch (NZL)
11SP58



**RETURN
DEPARTURE**
Woodbourne (NZL)
14OC58



ONEWAY COMMEMORATIVE FLIGHT COVERS - AUSTRALIA TO NEW ZEALAND

10/11 SEP 1958

The Australian Special Flight covers re-enacted the original route and date AUS to NZL (10/11 September 1958). Covers bear the Australian 30th Anniversary cachet on the front of each cover and the Christchurch receipt canceller 11 SP 58 on the reverse. They were then forwarded to the specified NZ addressee's and were not involved in the return NZL to AUS flight from Woodbourne on 14 OCT 58.

DEPARTURE

SYDNEY, NSW
(AUS)

10SE58

DESTINATION
DUNEDIN

Via
CHRISTCHURCH
11 SP58



DEPARTURE

SYDNEY, NSW
(AUS)

10SE58

DESTINATION
KAITAIA

Via
CHRISTCHURCH
11 SP58

AUSTRALAIN SPECIAL FLIGHT COVERS - RETURN

10 SEP 1958 - 14 OCT 1958

The Australian Special Flight covers re-enacted the original route and dates; AUS to NZL (10/11 September 1938) & return NZL to-AUS 14 October 1938. They also bore the Australian 30th Anniversary cachet on the front of each cover.



Cancellers on Envelope Reverse:

Initial arrival Christchurch 11 Sp58 and Final Arrival
Sydney 14 Oct 1958



FRONT

INITIAL
DEPARTURE

Sydney, NSW (AUS)
10SE58



RETURN
DEPARTURE

Woodbourne (NZL)
14OC58

COMMEMORATIVE FLIGHT COVERS - NEW ZEALAND TO AUSTALIA & RETURN

14 OCT 1958

The New Zealand Special Flight covers re-enact the original return route and date NZL to AUS to (14 Octob 1958). They were returned to New Zealand by TEAL in a special mailbag. Covers bear the NZ Post Woodbourne Air Force Special Flight canceller 14 Oct 58 and on the reverse, the Sydney receipt canceller 14 OCT 1958. However there is no canceller evidence of their return to NZ post arrival in Sydney.

DEPARTURE
WOODBOURNE AIR
FORCE (NZL)
14OCT58

DESTINATION
WELLINGTON

Via
SYDNEY
14OCT58



DEPARTURE
WOODBOURNE
AIR FORCE (NZL)
14OCT58

DESTINATION
WELLINGTON

Via
SYDNEY
14OCT58

14 OCT 1958

The New Zealand Special Flight covers re-enact the original return route and date NZL to AUS to (14 October 1958). They bear the NZ Post special Woodbourne Air Force Special Flight canceller 14 Oct 58 and on the reverse, the Sydney receipt canceller n 14 OCT 58, and are bound for Australia addressees so did not return to New Zealand.

30TH ANNIVERSARY TASMAN FLIGHT

Special Tasman Empire Airways Ltd. flight from Christchurch to Sydney on October 14, 1958, to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the First Air Crossing of the Tasman Sea by Sir Charles Kingsford Smith in "The Southern Cross."

DEPARTURE
WOODBOURNE
AIR FORCE (NZL)
14OCT58

DESTINATION
DUBBO NSW

Via
SYDNEY
14OCT58



SEVEN SEAS STAMPS
DUBBO, N.S.W.
AUSTRALIA

By Special Commemorative Flight.



Mr. J. Ewing,
12 Keith St.,
Parkdale, 12,
Victoria.



DEPARTURE
WOODBOURNE
AIR FORCE (NZL)
14OCT58

DESTINATION
PARKDALE VIC

Via
SYDNEY
14OCT58



Sept. 1928



SOUTHERN CROSS VH-USU

Sept. 1958



Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of First Tasman Sea Flight by Sir Chas. Kingsford Smith

CHISTCHURCH OWNS THE STAMP

Because of its association with Wigram Aerodrome at Christchurch, it appears the use of the NZ 1958 stamp has become synonymous with Christchurch Philatelic events



1961: The 1958 stamp used on covers in generated by the Christchurch Societies to assist in the promotion of the 1961 New Zealand Philatelic Exhibition at Christchurch



2016: An image of the New Zealand 1958 stamp and the original Christchurch Press photograph of the *Southern Cross* landing at Wigram in 1928 were used in 2016 in a mini-sheet produced by NZ Post to assist in the promotion of the 2016 Christchurch Stamp and Postcard Exhibition.