

This price included the basic aircraft, a 220-hp Wright "Whirlwind" air-cooled radial engine, and an earth-indicator compass built specifically for the flight by the Pioneer Navigating Instruments Company.

The fabric-covered silver monoplane had a wing span of 46 feet and an overall length of 27 feet, 8 inches. The enclosed cockpit, which was behind the main fuel tank, had no direct forward vision. Weight was reduced in every way in order to carry the maximum in fuel. At the beginning of the flight, the plane was loaded with 450 gallons of gasoline—enough to take it an extra 1,000 miles if necessary.

Less than three weeks from the start of the project, the skeleton of the fuselage and wing took form. Sixty days after the order was placed for the "Spirit of St. Louis," Lindbergh took her up on the initial flight test from the Ryan Airfield. He taxied across Dutch Flats and was off the ground in six and one-eighth seconds or 165 feet. He drove the plane upward with a rush, flew around a few minutes, turned a couple of flips and came down grinning. Hall watched with critical eyes as the plane made her first flight.

Other tests followed. With each flight the fuel load was increased 50 gallons until the plane was carrying 300 gallons. With final adjustments made, the "Spirit of St. Louis" was ready for its journey.

Rockwell Field, the Army section of North Island, was the point of departure. At 3:55 on May 9, 1927, Lindbergh, with a confident smile, climbed into his plane

and headed east. Two Army observation planes and one Ryan monoplane escorted him as he circled North Island, the Ryan plant, the city, then left ocean and bay behind. Hall was in the Ryan plane that escorted Lindbergh to the black mountains to the east. With him were W. H. Bowlus, factory manager; J. H. Harrigan, Ryan test pilot, and J. A. Edwards, a Ryan salesman. They returned to San Diego to wait with the rest of the world.

The balance of the story is history: The "Lone Eagle" left Roosevelt Field, Long Island, at 7:52 on 20 May and traveled 3,600 miles over strange land and trackless seas. He reached Paris 33 hours, 30 minutes later, circled the Eiffel Tower and landed at Le Bourget Airport. The saga of Lindbergh's lonely hours in the sky captured the world's imagination and he became an international reflection of the finest of young America. †

The Lone Eagle—Now

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the slightest bit of attention to him.

The public impression of America's first great aviation hero is that he became a recluse, that he lives in seclusion. Nothing could be further from the truth. He travels extensively—in fact, he is a commuter. He catches a train regularly from Darien, Conn., where he makes his home, to New York City. He can be seen walking through Grand Central Station or window shopping along Lexington Avenue or strolling down

42nd Street, same as thousands of others.

He has a job, as millions of other Americans, and he goes wherever his job takes him. He's with Pan American World Airways as a consultant and he spends a good deal of his time at the concern's New York City executive offices. But his work also keeps him hopping about on a much broader scale. He not only visits various aviation plants across this country, but he also makes quite a few trips to places like London, Rome, Beirut, Saigon, Tokyo.

Few ever turn their head toward him. He is just another air traveler, another businessman in a flannel suit.

He always preferred the shadows. He was a quiet man, a man who walked alone. He was not a man of the crowds.

In the beginning, he accepted the onrush in his direction as best he could, nimbly avoiding as much of it as he could manage. But five years after his memorable ocean span his attitude toward the pushing public was to turn to one of bitterness.

The man who longed to be left alone found himself in the center of the most notorious crime of his generation. His son had been kidnapped from his New Jersey estate and murdered. Lindbergh wasn't given a moment's peace.

Most of what happened, from beginning to end, was tasteless, bizarre, deliberately sensational. It is not hard to understand why America's hero went to England to live.

He was back in the United States four years later to take up residence here again.

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