

## Why is San Diego's International Airport named Lindbergh Field?

In 1927 San Diego played a leading role in one of history's most significant and dramatic aviation achievements. In that year, the young aviator Charles A. Lindbergh came to town and commissioned Ryan Airlines to build a special aircraft that could complete the first nonstop New York to Paris flight.

Inspired by Lindbergh's courage and vision, Ryan's skilled craftsmen, under the direction of Frank Mahoney, set their hearts and talents to the task of designing, building and testing the new plane in just sixty days. The design was initially based on Ryan's successful model M-2 monoplane, which designer Donald A. Hall modified to include greater wingspan, more fuel capacity and a powerful new Wright J-5 Whirlwind engine to enable the aircraft to cover the unprecedented distance required. To honor his hometown financial backers, Lindbergh named his new Model NYP monoplane the "Spirit of St. Louis".

Following a series of test flights from local airfields, Lindbergh and his Spirit of St. Louis took off from San Diego on May 10, 1927, bound for St. Louis, New York, Paris and aviation history. The success of his solo transatlantic flight on May 20-21 electrified the world and sparked a tremendous surge of public interest in aviation nationally and abroad—especially in San Diego where Lindbergh's Paris flight really began. That interest locally led to the passage of a bond issue in 1928 for the construction of a municipal airport. Lindbergh himself supported this endeavor and agreed in a rare instance to lend his name to the new airport. The result was "Lindbergh Field", which continues to serve millions of San Diego air travelers to this day.

## Did you Know?

- The Spirit of St. Louis had no windshield because a large fuel tank was located directly forward of the cockpit. A small periscope was fitted for forward vision, but Lindbergh normally navigated by looking out the side windows.
- The wings and the fuselage of the Spirit of St. Louis were built in a two-story building that was formerly a fish cannery. The structure still stands in what is now the Solar Turbines complex at Laurel Street and Harbor Drive, which is across the street from the southeast corner of Lindbergh Field. Final assembly of the plane took place at the Ryan hanger located on Barnett Avenue, near where the post office on Midway Drive now stands.
- Sixty days after construction began, the Spirit of St. Louis made its first test flight on April 28, 1927, during which Lindbergh engaged a Navy Curtiss Hawk pursuit plane in a mock dogfight over North Island. The Navy fighter, which was faster, could not shake the more maneuverable Ryan plane off its tail. Lindbergh broke off the engagement.
- Henry Ford's first airplane flight was a jaunt in the Spirit of St. Louis with Charles Lindbergh. Until then Ford didn't think airplanes had much future.

- Lindbergh's first night landing in the Spirit of St. Louis was his touchdown at Le Bourget Field in Paris at the end of his transatlantic flight, 10:22 P.M. on May 21, 1927.
- The NYP-15 on display at Terminal 2 is a non-flying reproduction, which externally is faithful to the original in every detail. It's engine, however, is an authentic and rare nine-cylinder, 237-horsepower Wright J-5C Whirlwind engine identical to the one that powered the Spirit of St. Louis and Lindbergh nonstop across the Atlantic Ocean.
- The airport's NYP-15 was built by a team of over 40 volunteers from the San Diego Aerospace Museum. Construction, which was financed by the Port of San Diego for \$50,000, took just over a year and was completed on time and on budget.
- Bob Greenaway, one of three generations of Greenaways who have ties to the Spirit of St. Louis, was in charge of building this reproduction. Greenaway's father, Alfred, painted the name "Spirit of St. Louis" on the nose of Lindbergh's plane in 1927. Greenaway's son, Rob, part of the team that built the current NYP-15, continued the family tradition by painting the name on this plane as well.

*San Diegans built the Spirit of St. Louis: Ryan employees pose with Charles Lindbergh prior to the flight into history.*



## Are you a Lindbergh buff?

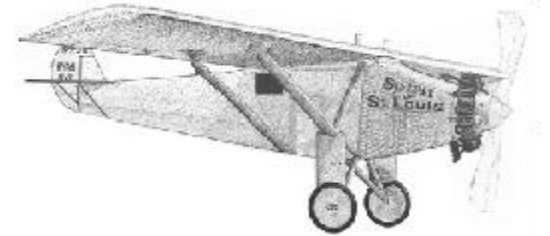
1. In 1918, New York hotel owner Raymond Orteig offered a prize for the first nonstop airplane flight between New York and Paris. What was the prize?
2. What is the distance from New York to Paris?
3. When the Orteig Prize was offered in 1918, no planes existed that were capable of the nonstop flight. How many years passed before such an attempt was made?
4. How did Lindbergh raise the money needed to build the Spirit of St. Louis?
5. What was Lindbergh's flying background before he piloted the Spirit of St. Louis?
6. How much did it cost to build the Spirit of St. Louis?
7. When Lindbergh made his historic flight, how many others had tried and failed?
8. How old was Charles Lindbergh when he made his dramatic transatlantic crossing?
9. How many gallons of gasoline did the Spirit of St. Louis have to carry for the flight?
10. What was the total official time for Lindbergh's New York to Paris flight?
11. What once popular dance was named after Charles Lindbergh?
12. What actor played Lindbergh in the 1958 film *The Spirit of St. Louis*?
13. Can you identify Charles Lindbergh in the group photo on the reverse side of this brochure?

ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS  
ARE ON THE BACK PAGE

## LINDBERGH BUFF QUIZ ANSWERS

1. \$25,000
2. 3610 miles, almost 2000 of which are over the ocean.
3. Seven years.
4. After entering his own savings of \$2,000, Lindbergh convinced a number of influential business men from St. Louis to contribute to the production of a plane capable of winning the Orteig Prize. These men believed in the future of aviation, and many of them had taken flying lessons from Lindbergh.
5. Lindbergh gained flight experience as a daredevil barnstormer, an army air corps pilot in the Missouri National Guard, and as an airmail pilot for Roberson Aircraft Corporation on the St. Louis to Chicago route.
6. \$10,580
7. Six men died trying to win the Orteig Prize.
8. 25 Years old
9. 450 gallons of gasoline weighing 2,750 pounds. (The Spirit of St. Louis only took off once with a full load of fuel.)
10. 33 hours, 30 minutes and 29.8 seconds
11. The Lindy-Hop
12. Jimmy Stewart
13. He's seventh from the left (with hat).

Learn more about the Port of San Diego and  
its Public Art Program on the web:



## Lindbergh Lore

Facts about Charles A. Lindbergh and  
the Spirit of St. Louis

This information is provided by  
the Port of San Diego's  
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For more information, call  
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