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The Price of Fame

**A historic flight puts a pilot
in the spotlight.**

In 1927, just about everyone in America knew Charles Lindbergh's name.

On May 21st of that year, Lindbergh became the first person to fly nonstop across the Atlantic Ocean. He flew solo from New York to Paris, France. He made the 3,600-mile (5,800-kilometer) flight in his single-engine airplane, *Spirit of St. Louis*. The transatlantic trip took just over 33 hours.

Newspapers around the country announced his feat. Within days Lindbergh was hailed as a hero. He became the most famous man in America. Wherever he went, fans surrounded him.

Fame and Fortune

Lindbergh's historic flight brought him more than fame. He also won a \$25,000 prize. It was sponsored by Raymond Orteig, a wealthy Frenchman who owned hotels in New York City. In 1919, Orteig had offered the prize to the first aviator to fly nonstop from New York to Paris, or from Paris to New York.

Eight years later, Charles Lindbergh accepted Orteig's prize. He used his fame and his fortune to promote aviation.

But by the early 1930s, Lindbergh had grown tired of the attention. He and his wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, had just had their first child, a son named Charles Jr. The pilot decided that he wanted to be alone with his family. He decided to build a home near Hopewell, New Jersey. The large house was set in

the woods at the end of a long driveway. At last, the family had privacy.

Then, on March 1, 1932, the family's peace and quiet was shattered.



Spirit of St. Louis

Charles Lindbergh made his historic flight across the Atlantic Ocean in an airplane named *Spirit of St. Louis*. The plane was tiny and not very powerful. The cockpit was only three feet (94 cm) wide and 51 inches (130 cm) high. Because it was small, the plane could not hold much. Lindbergh had to cut the top and bottom off of his flight map in order to eliminate extra weight.

Spirit of St. Louis is now on display at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.



“The Spirit of St. Louis is a wonderful plane. It’s like a living creature...”

—CHARLES LINDBERGH, 1927

Stats:

Engines: 1 (223 horsepower)
Length: 27.7 ft. (8.4 meters)
Wingspan: 46 ft. (14 m)
Height: 9 ft., 10 inches (3 m)
Weight: 5,135 pounds
 (2,329 kilograms)

