



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

FIRST ALL AUSTRALIAN AIRMAIL FLIGHT FROM AUSTRALIA TO UK  
NOVEMBER 1931

**First All Australian Airmail Flight from Australia to UK - November 1931**

*Author: L Millar, December 2021*

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 1931 a tri-motor “AVRO 10” aircraft, operated by Sir Charles Kingsford Smith’s, Australian National Airways, left Tasmania to carry out the first all Australian airmail service from Australia to England and return.

The aircraft the *Southern Sun* was piloted by G.A. “Scotty” Allen with two crew members, one passenger and carried some 52,000 letters to be delivered in time for Christmas.

After leaving from Brighton racecourse the aircraft picked up mail from Launceston, Melbourne and Sydney and left Australia via Darwin.





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**The *Southern Sun* at Western Junction**



**Pilot Scotty Allen**

While taking off from Alor Star in Malaysia on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November, the *Southern Sun* failed to gain flying speed on a boggy runway, struck an embankment, and crashed into a rice paddy. The four occupants escaped serious injury, but the aircraft was damaged beyond repair.



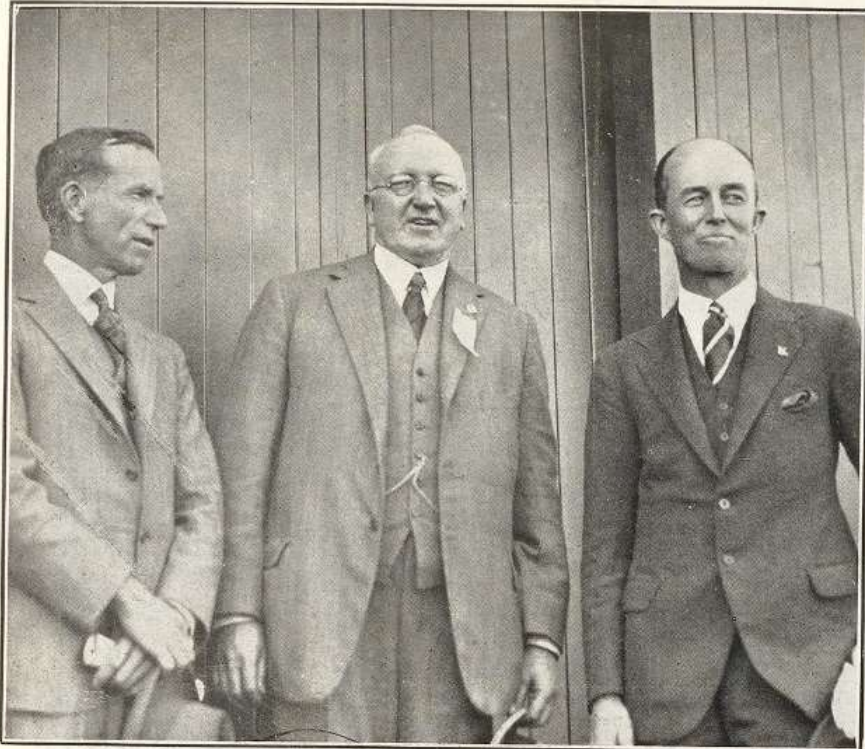
***The crashed Southern Sun at Alor Star***



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The passenger on the flight, Lt. Col. H.C. Brinsmead was the Controller of Civil Aviation in Australia. Lt. Col. Brinsmead had been in Tasmania on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1931 to officially open the Western Junction aerodrome.



Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. Brinsmead, O.B.E., M.C. (Controller of Civil Aviation), who opened the Aerodrome; Dr. J. Ramsay, C.B.E., President of the A.A.C. (Tasmanian Section); and Air Commodore R. Williams, C.B.E., D.S.O.

**This photo of Lt Col Brinsmead (R), Dr J. Ramsay, president of the Aero Club, (C) and Air Commodore R Williams, chief of the RAAF (R) was taken at the opening.**

Kingsford Smith then departed from Sydney in a second "AVRO", the *Southern Star*, picked up the mail and completed the flight to England on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1931, in time for the mail to be delivered for Christmas.

Brinsmead decided not to wait for "Smithy" and left on a KLM flight to Amsterdam. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December this aircraft crashed on take-off from Bangkok, killing three crew, two passengers and critically injuring Lt. Col. Brinsmead. He died in 1934 from complications related to his injuries.

The *Southern Star* departed with mail from London on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 1932 and arrived in Melbourne on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January completing the round trip.



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This Air Mail letter was posted in Launceston and carried on the flight.

To learn more about the mystery around this letter, follow the link our [website](#).



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Although this was the first all-Australian airmail flight to the UK and return, it was not the “first”.

The first airmail from England to Australia was initiated by Imperial Airways. Departing London on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1931, the mail travelled on many legs by Imperial aircraft. The aircraft flying the last leg was a Fokker F. V11 *City of Cairo*. Unfortunately, the aircraft ran short of fuel, crashed and was destroyed at Koepang in Indonesia on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April.

Kingsford Smith then flew his famous *Southern Cross* to Indonesia on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April to pick up the stranded mail and completed the delivery to Australia on the 25<sup>th</sup>. He then assisted Imperial Airways again with the return mail from Australia to England. He flew the *Southern Cross* with the return mail from Australia to Burma, where Imperial Airways completed the journey to England.

The mail was again transferred to Imperial aircraft and finally arrived at Croydon aerodrome in London on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1931.

A Miss Flinders historical side note:

The *Southern Star* departed London on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 1932 and arrived in Melbourne on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1932.

Jeffrey and Jenkins left London in G-ABOM (later *Miss Flinders*) on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1931 and arrived in Melbourne on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1932.

So somewhere over Africa or the Middle East, the *Southern Star* would have overtaken G-ABOM on the flight to Australia.