

Today in History - June 11

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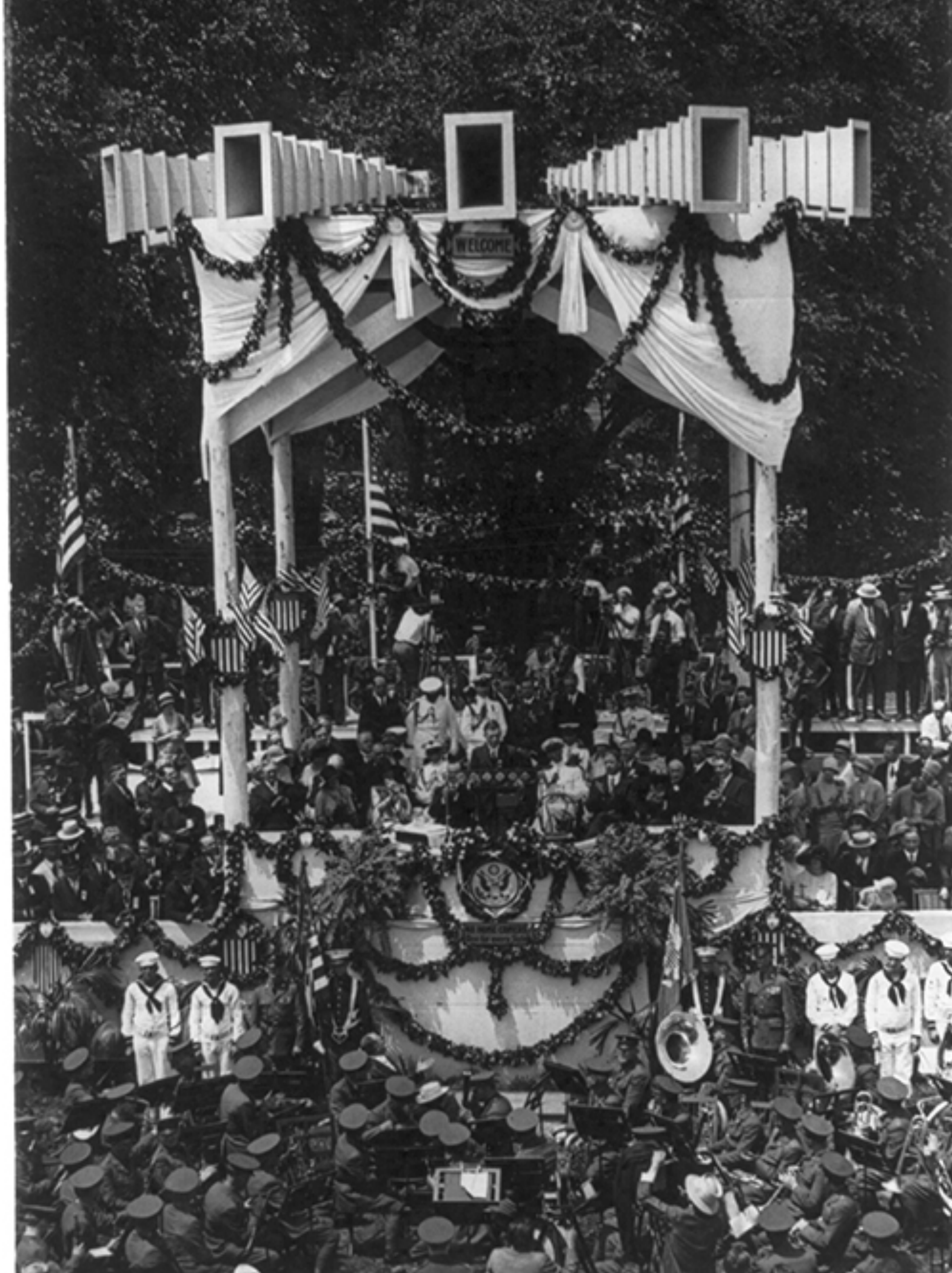
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Today's Stories: [Lindbergh Honored](#)

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Lindbergh Honored

On **June 11, 1927**, [Charles Lindbergh](#) received the first Distinguished Flying Cross ever awarded. Since 1927, aviators honored with this medal have included World War II pilots [President George H. W. Bush](#), [Senator George McGovern](#), and [astronaut Virgil "Gus" Grissom](#), who flew one hundred missions during the Korean War.



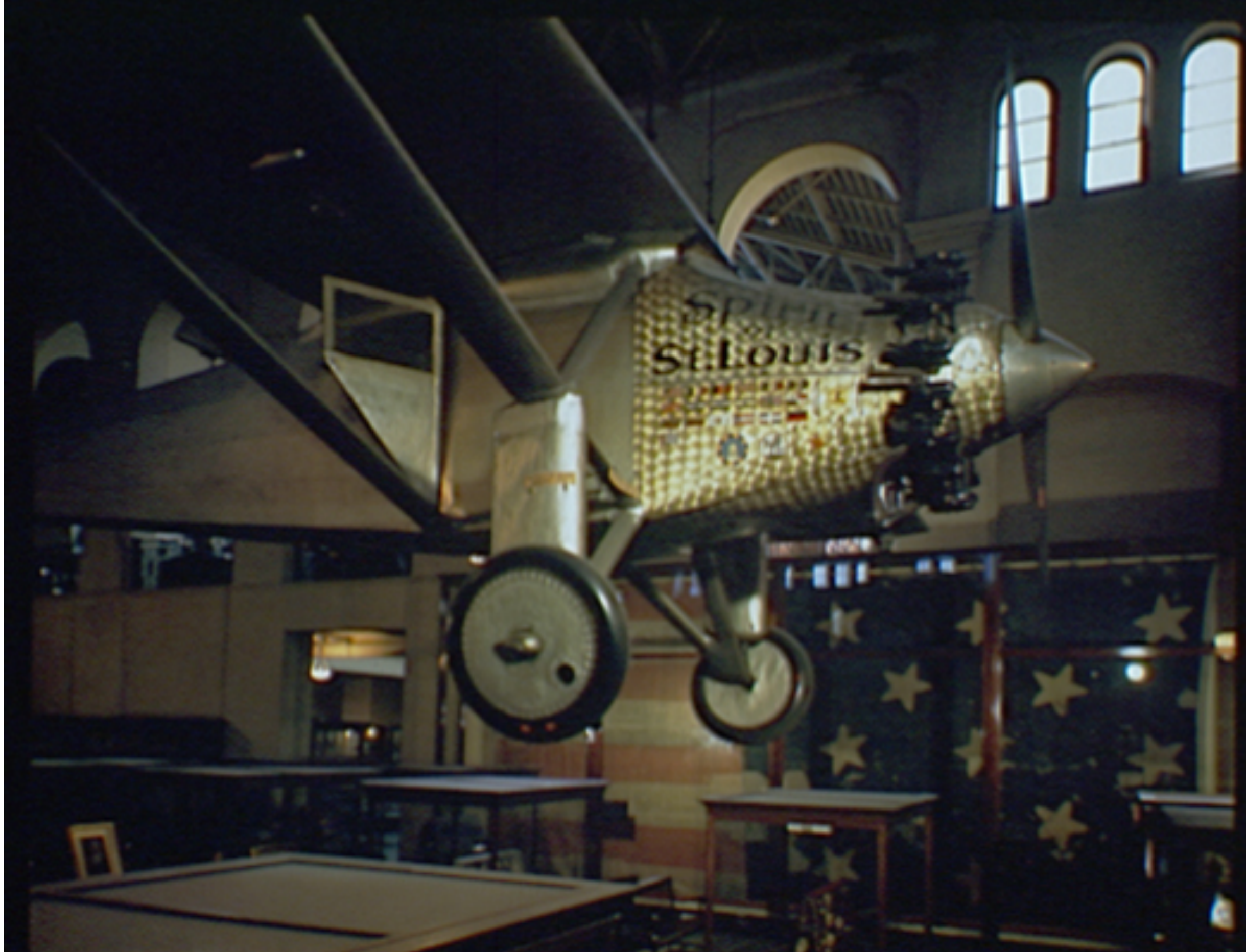
Charles Lindbergh on podium on Washington Monument grounds during his Wash., D.C. reception.... June 11, 1927. National Photo Company Collection. Prints & Photographs Division

Lindbergh's nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic on May 20-21, 1927, made aeronautical history. The stunt-flyer-turned-airmail-pilot's flight was underwritten by a group of St. Louis businessmen. Flying his monoplane, [Spirit of St. Louis](#), Lindbergh captured the \$25,000 prize offered for the first flight between New York and Paris.

"Lucky Lindy's" arrival in Paris after thirty-three-and-one-half hours in the air was celebrated on both sides of the Atlantic. At the award ceremony in Washington, D.C., [President Calvin Coolidge](#) remarked:

On a morning just three weeks ago yesterday, this wholesome, earnest, fearless, courageous product of America rose into the air from Long Island in a monoplane christened "The Spirit of St. Louis" in honor of his home and that of his supporters. It was no haphazard adventure. After months of most careful preparation, supported by a valiant character, driven by an unconquerable will and inspired by the spirit of his Viking ancestors, this reserve officer set wing across the dangerous stretches of the North Atlantic. He was alone. His destination was Paris. Thirty-three hours and thirty minutes later, in the evening of the second day, he landed at his destination on the French flying field at Le Bourget. He had traveled over 3,600 miles and established a new and remarkable record. The execution of his project was a perfect exhibition of art.

Calvin Coolidge. "Address...Bestowing Upon Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh the Distinguished Flying Cross," Washington, D.C., June 11, 1927. [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office: 1927]. [Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921-1929](#)



Smithsonian Institution Building. *Spirit of St. Louis* exhibit... Theodor Horydczak, photographer, ca. 1920-ca.1950. Horydczak Collection. Prints & Photographs Division



Col. Lindbergh with his mother and President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge... [Washington, D.C.] June 12, 1927. National Photo Company Collection. Prints & Photographs Division

Coolidge went on to commend Lindbergh's "absence of self-acclaim, [his] refusal to become commercialized, which has marked the conduct of this sincere and genuine exemplar of fine and noble virtues."

From Washington, Lindbergh traveled to New York City where he was honored with a [ticker tape parade](#). Over the next several months Lindbergh and the *Spirit of St. Louis* visited eighty-two cities in forty-eight states. Hailed as a national hero, Lindbergh became an influential spokesperson for the emerging aviation industry.

Following his record-breaking flight, Lindbergh married Anne Spencer Morrow in 1929; she became a well-known author. Their life together was marked in its early years by the avid interest in the public and the press and by the notorious kidnapping and murder of their son, [Charles Augustus Jr.](#) in 1932.

Later in his life, Lindbergh was a consultant to commercial airline companies and became a wildlife conservationist. He worked for both the U.S. Department of Defense and the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. His Pulitzer Prize-winning book, [The Spirit of St. Louis](#) (1953), describes his historic flight. Charles Lindbergh died on August 26, 1974.



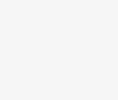
Lindbergh Day, Springfield, Vt., July 26, 1927. Hayes Bigelow, cAugust 1, 1927. Panoramic Photographs. Prints & Photographs Division

Learn More

- See more photographs of the man and his plane. Search the Library's [collection of prints and photographs](#) on [Lindbergh](#) and [Spirit of St. Louis](#).
- Search on the name *Lindbergh* in the collection [Denver Public Library Digital Collections: Photographs](#).
- Learn more about the early years of flight by exploring the [Wilbur and Orville Wright Papers at the Library of Congress](#), which includes a [subseries of general correspondence](#) to and from Lindbergh.
- Read newspaper articles documenting the development of aviation through the historic newspaper database, [Chronicling America](#). For example see [Wright Brothers: Topics in Chronicling America](#), [Stunt Fliers: Topics in Chronicling America](#), and [Early Women in Aviation: Topics in Chronicling America](#).
- Lindbergh's father, Charles August Lindbergh (1859-1924), was a lawyer and congressman from Minnesota, whose career is also well-documented in [Chronicling America](#). [Search](#) the collection for "[Charles A. Lindbergh](#)".
- Known as "Lady Lindy," [Amelia Earhart](#) made her solo flight across the Atlantic on May 20-21, 1932. In 1935, she became the first person to complete the even longer flight from Hawaii to California. Palmist Nellie Simmons Meier prepared an Earhart [palm print and character analysis](#) in June 1933. This unusual document is noted in the research guide [Amelia Earhart: A Resource Guide](#) which compiles materials available in the collections of the Library as well as selected external web sites.

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