

DOUGLAS WRONG WAY CORRIGAN

Douglas Corrigan flew from Long Beach, California to New York on 9th July 1938 in a somewhat dilapidated Curtiss Robin single engine monoplane. He then took off from Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn on 17th July on the return journey to California but landed the following day in Baldonnel airport, just outside Dublin, Ireland. His flight lasted 28 hours and 13 minutes. Hence the nicknames "Wrong Way" and "Non Stop" were born. Corrigan claimed that it was a navigational error that caused him to fly in the wrong direction, heavy cloud combined with misreading his compass where the needle which he thought was pointing west was actually pointing east. If Douglas Corrigan did in fact make this mistake, he is a very lucky man; if he made no mistake, then he joins the band of all time great navigators

Exhibit Scope and Plan

Exhibit looks at the detail of the historic flight on 17th July 1938 and the fame that followed Corrigan's achievement.

1. Corrigan's Flight
2. Leaving Ireland, returning to New York
3. Riding the wave of heroism – ticker tape parades
4. The Flying Irishman - film of the famous flight
5. The final landing – a lifetime of fame



Pre-stamped postcard sent under cover to Corrigan, requesting his signature and that card be returned to sender by post. Returned to sender on 27th July 1928

Douglas Corrigan at the time of this flight was already an experienced pilot. He was born to American Irish parents in Galveston, Texas but settled in Los Angeles with his mother, brother and sister. He made his first solo flight on 25th March 1926 at the age of 19, the same year he started working for the Ryan Aeronautical Company whose base was at the airfield where he took his first flight. However, he was based at their San Diego plant.

Corrigan rotated through several jobs as an aircraft mechanic and eventually received his transport pilot licence in October 1929. The following year, he teamed up with his friend Steve Rich to establish a passenger service between small towns on the East Coast.



Douglas Corrigan at Roosevelt Airport with his Curtiss Robin OX-5 plane, International News Photos, 16th August 1938.



Corrigan was involved in the wing assembly and fuel tank installation of Charles Lindbergh's "Spirit of St Louis". He was also part of the team that extended the wing of this plane to 10 feet and he proudly relates in his autobiography how it was he who pulled the chocks from Lindbergh's plane when he took off from San Diego on the flight to New York, in preparation for the planned flight across the Atlantic

Left: US 1977 commemorative for the 50th anniversary of the first transatlantic flight in which Charles Lindbergh soloed from New York to Paris.

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Souvenir cover posted on board the U.S.S Cachalot in New York on 18th July 1938, the date of Corrigan's landing in Dublin.



Stamp (Four block) issued (one of two) to commemorate the first 50 years of Aer Lingus operation, established two years before Corrigan's flight.

Designed by Robert Ballagh, lithographed by Irish Security Stamp Printing Ltd.
Perf 14¼ x 14¼

Corrigan's flight is perhaps best captured a few years later by the US journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner, H.R. Knickerbocker: "You may say that Corrigan's flight could not be compared to Lindbergh's in its sensational appeal as the first solo flight across the ocean. Yes, but in another way the obscure little Irishman's flight was the more audacious of the two. Lindbergh had a plane specially constructed, the finest money can buy. He had lavish financial backing, friends to help him at every turn. Corrigan had nothing but his own ambition, courage and ability. His plane, a nine year old Curtiss Robin, was the most wretched-looking jalopy. As I looked it over at the Dublin aerodrome I really marvelled that anyone could have been rash enough even to go in the air with it, much less fly the Atlantic. He built it, or rebuilt it, practically as a boy would build a scooter out of a soapbox and a pair of old roller skates. It looked it. The nose of the engine hood was a mass of patches soldered by Corrigan himself into a crazy-quilt design. The door behind which Corrigan crouched for twenty-eight hours was fastened together with a piece of bailing wire. The reserve gasoline tanks put together by Corrigan, left him so little room that he had to sit hunched forward with his knees cramped and not enough window space to see the ground when landing".



Associated Press photograph dated 18th July 1938 with notation "Here's Douglas Corrigan known now as "Non Stop", as he signed a release just before he took off from Floyd Bennett Field Sunday morning, for what Air Inspector George Schloer (left) and everybody else thought was a flight home to California. Instead "Non Stop" landed near Dublin, Ireland, and remarked when asked for his landing papers, "Forget it, I thought it was California all the time".

(NY13) NEW YORK, July 18—CORRIGAN SIGNS OUT FOR A FLIGHT—Here's Douglas Corrigan, known as "Nonstop," as he signed a release just before he took off from Floyd Bennett field Sunday morning for what Airport Inspector George Schloer (left) and everybody else thought was a flight home to California. Instead "Nonstop" landed near Dublin, Ireland, and remarked when asked for his landing papers, "Forget it, I thought it was California all the time." (AP Wirephoto) (K0013355cor)38



1928 US airmail issue with *Spirit of St Louis" plane. Flat plate printing, perf 11.

DOUGLAS WRONG WAY CORRIGAN

Leaving Ireland – Arriving New York



U.S. aviator Douglas Corrigan being greeted at the Glanmire Railway Station by the Lord Mayor James Hickey, T.D., prior to leaving for Cobh to join a US-bound liner

Left: The American Aviation authorities were very unhappy with Corrigan's "mistake" but his pilot's certificate was only suspended for 14 days. Corrigan attended many functions and dinners in Dublin and travelled by train to Cork where he was met by the Lord Mayor James Hickey (Cork Examiner 31st July 1938) and paraded through the city to Cobh port where he boarded the Manhattan steamship bound for New York, arriving on 4th August just as his suspension was complete. The ship also carried his plane back to New York.

Below: As New York's welcome to Corrigan began down the Bay, Douglas Corrigan is lifted high on the shoulders of admirers on the deck of the liner *Manhattan*, as cameramen and reporters press forward to hear his reaction to the great reception accorded him by the welcoming craft, as the liner slowly moved up the bay to her dock. ACME Press Photo 4th August 1938.



Left: Souvenir cover posted in New York on 4th August the day Corrigan arrived by ship. Similar covers also posted from Long Beach, San Diego, when Corrigan flew his plane home the following month.

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Above: Associated Press photo, 5th August 1938. New York ticker tape parade.

This was the first of several parades, where American Airways arranged a tour to Philadelphia, Boston, St. Louis, Newark, as guests of each of the mayors. This was followed by parades in both Chicago and Washington. A month after his return, Corrigan attended The National Air Races in Cleveland where the commemorative covers carried the hand stamp CORRIGAN Day



Left: Souvenir of New York Welcome Committee, where Corrigan was the guest of New York's Mayor LaGuardia, The following day, Corrigan was treated to a hero's ticker tape parade in New York, where he perched on the back seat of an open phaeton, waving to the thousands who jammed the sidewalks and the windows of the surrounding buildings and who created a confetti blizzard as tons of torn telephone books came out the windows. There were two central cars in the parade, the first which Corrigan rode with Mayor LaGuardia and his reception committee and the second which carried members of his family

Ticker Tape Welcome Parades



Corrigan Postcard, published by Long Studio, Norfolk, using a real photograph with manuscript Corrigan "Wrong Way" Flier of the Atlantic arrives in Norfolk Aug 30 1938.



Cover with the 1938 National Air Races in Cleveland cachet which also has hand stamp CORRIGAN DAY. Cover is signed by Douglas (Doug) Corrigan and posted on 3rd September 1938 to West Virginia.

DOUGLAS WRONG WAY CORRIGAN



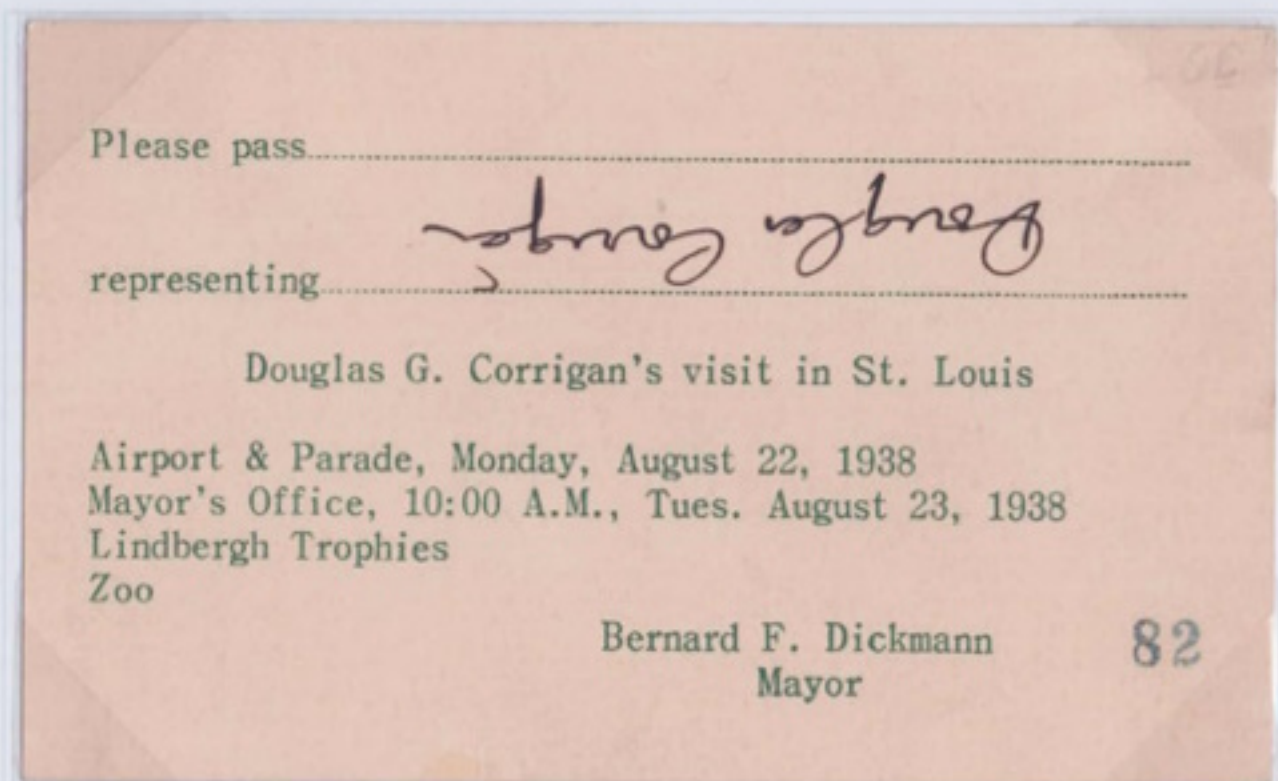
Postcard published by W.J. Gray, Los Angeles in 1938, using a real photograph. Card details the distance flown of 3150 miles and the flight time of 28 hours and 13 minutes.

Corrigan purchased the used 1929 Curtiss Robin OX-5 plane for \$310. He initially modified the plane's engine using two old Wright Whirlwind J6-5 engines (increasing the HP from 90 to 165) and he installed additional fuel tanks. By 1935 he made his first application to the Bureau of Air Commerce to make a non stop flight from New York to Ireland, the first of many applications to be rejected as the plane was not considered robust enough for a transatlantic flight. It was certified only for inland flights, for which the requirements were less arduous. Repeated modifications and applications for permission to fly across the Atlantic were refused, by this time he had invested a total of \$900 in the Curtiss Robin and had been certified for inland flights and specifically for a return transcontinental flight from Los Angeles to New York. The first leg of the journey on 9th July flight took 27 hours, at a cruising speed of 85 miles per hour. Corrigan's flight plan indicated he would return to Los Angeles on 17th July, and he aimed to fulfil that by taking off at 5:15 with 320 US gallons of aviation fuel and 16 US gallons of oil.

Riding the Wave of Heroism



Autographed picture of 10th August Washington parade. Darvick Certificate of Authenticity to certify that picture reproduced was signed by Douglas Corrigan.



Pass to attend reception for Corrigan's visit to St. Louis on 22nd / 23rd August 1938.

Pass signed (upside down) by Corrigan.



Corrigan enters Washington D.C., August 10, 1938. Commemorative cover posted on 10th August, signed by Douglas Corrigan and Washington Postmaster.

DOUGLAS WRONG WAY CORRIGAN

Corrigan's autobiography "That's My Story" was published in Liberty Magazine with Part 1 appearing on 5th November 1938 and in book form on 15th December 1938. He went on to act as himself in the movie biography "The Flying Irishman" in 1939 for which he earned \$75,000, thirty years his salary as an aircraft mechanic. He married his childhood sweetheart, schoolteacher Miss Elizabeth Marvin on the first anniversary of his transatlantic flight on 17th July 1939.



"THE FLYING IRISHMAN" — An RKO Radio Picture

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Still from *The Flying Irishman*, An RKO Radio Picture, released to promote the 1939 movie. Corrigan rotated through several jobs as an aircraft mechanic prior to his transatlantic flight and eventually received his transport pilot licence in October 1929. The following year, he teamed up with his friend Steve Rich to establish a passenger service between small towns on the East Coast. The most successful part of this business turned out to be short tourist rides allowing the customers to experience the magic of flight. This is well depicted in a still from the 1939 RKO motion picture which details his life, love of flying and of course his "erroneous" transatlantic flight

The Flying Irishman



1939 Magic Lantern slide to promote the RKO movie in which Corrigan starred as himself.



Photographic card, autographed by Corrigan and posted San Diego to Iowa, June 1939.

Photograph taken by Frickson, San Diego. Used often by Corrigan to send copy of his signature.

DOUGLAS *WRONG WAY* CORRIGAN

— FOR GOVERNMENT IN THE —
AMERICAN WAY

ELECT



WRONG WAY
 DOUGLAS
CORRIGAN
 — FOR —
U. S. SENATOR

Elect—
Wrong Way

The Plane People's
 Candidate
For U. S. SENATOR



Aviation will be important in the future of the U. S. A.

California, as the leading aviation state, should have a flyer in the Senate.

As the U. S. Senate is the highest branch of our Government, it should consist of older men.

Here are the ages of the three candidates to their nearest birthday:

CORRIGAN	40
Knowland	38
Rogers	34

AGE MEANS EXPERIENCE
 VOTE FOR THE OLDEST MAN



ELECT

CORRIGAN

UNITED STATES SENATOR

DOUGLAS CORRIGAN



HELP WRONG WAY'S CAMPAIGN
 —HAND THIS TO A FRIEND

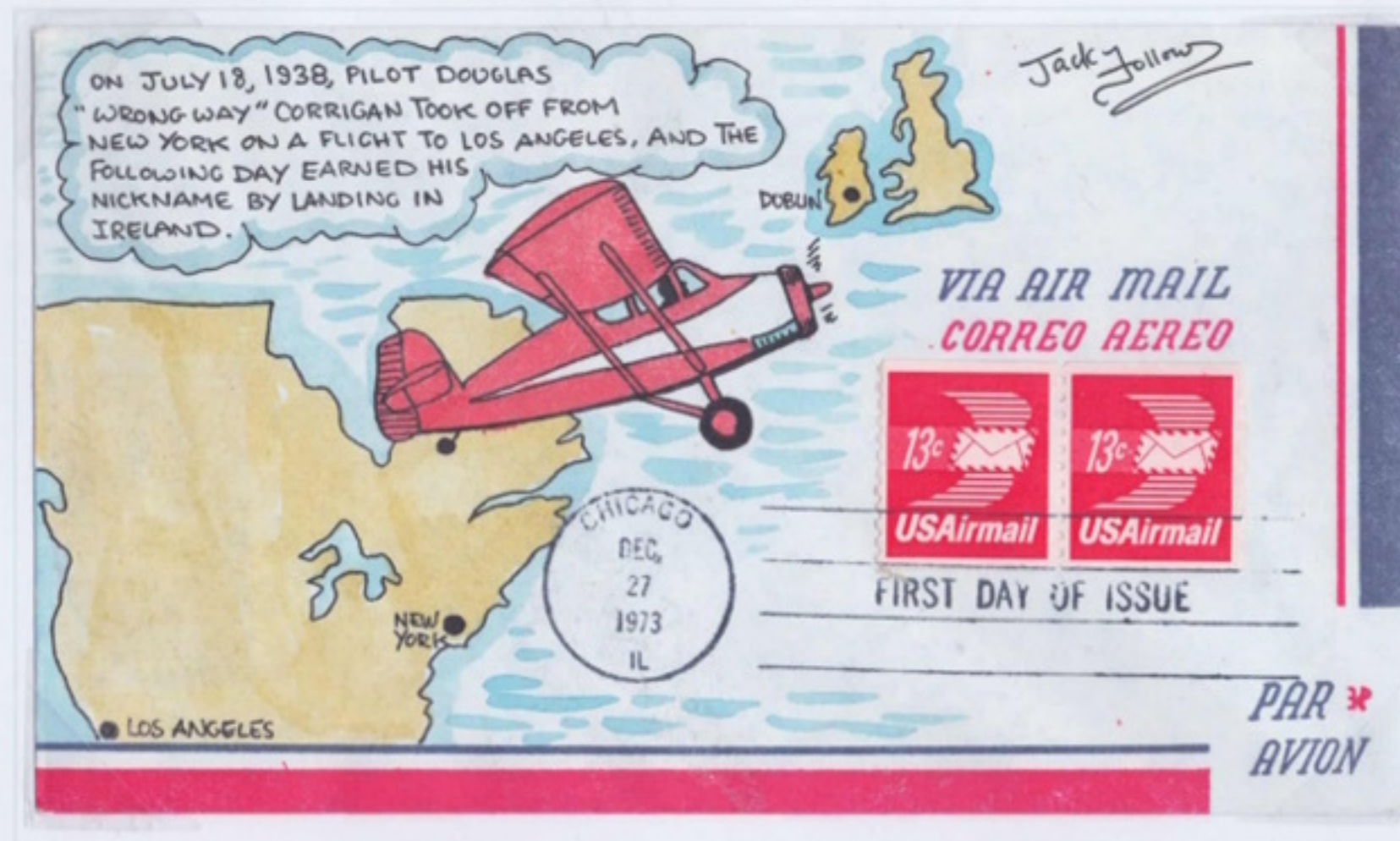
AMERICAN WAY COMMITTEE
 232 W. Ellis - Inglewood, Calif.

Above: Corrigan ran for U.S. Senate in California in 1946, on behalf of the Prohibition Party but he gained less than 2% of the vote.

Right: 1998 First Day postcard featuring Pioneers of Irish Aviation. 32p value depicts Col James C. Fitzmaurice. Postcard issued by An Post (No 6 in 1998) and printed in Ireland. Card also features Douglas "WRONG WAY" Corrigan and his plane.

His Final Landing

Corrigan retired from aviation activities in 1950 and settled in an 18 acre orange and lemon grove in Santa Ana, California. However, he remained a celebrated personality throughout his life, with no shortage of product or service promotional opportunities. He also continued to inspire many philatelic tributes to his famous flight such as the 1973 John Follows illustrated cover below. Corrigan always maintained publicly that he had made the flight by mistake, right up to his death on 9th December 1995. His plane now resides in the Planes of Fame museum in Chino, California, where it is displayed, albeit in a dismantled state.



Cachet maker *Jack Follows* First Day Cover on Corrigan's transatlantic flight, posted from Chicago on 27th December 1973.

