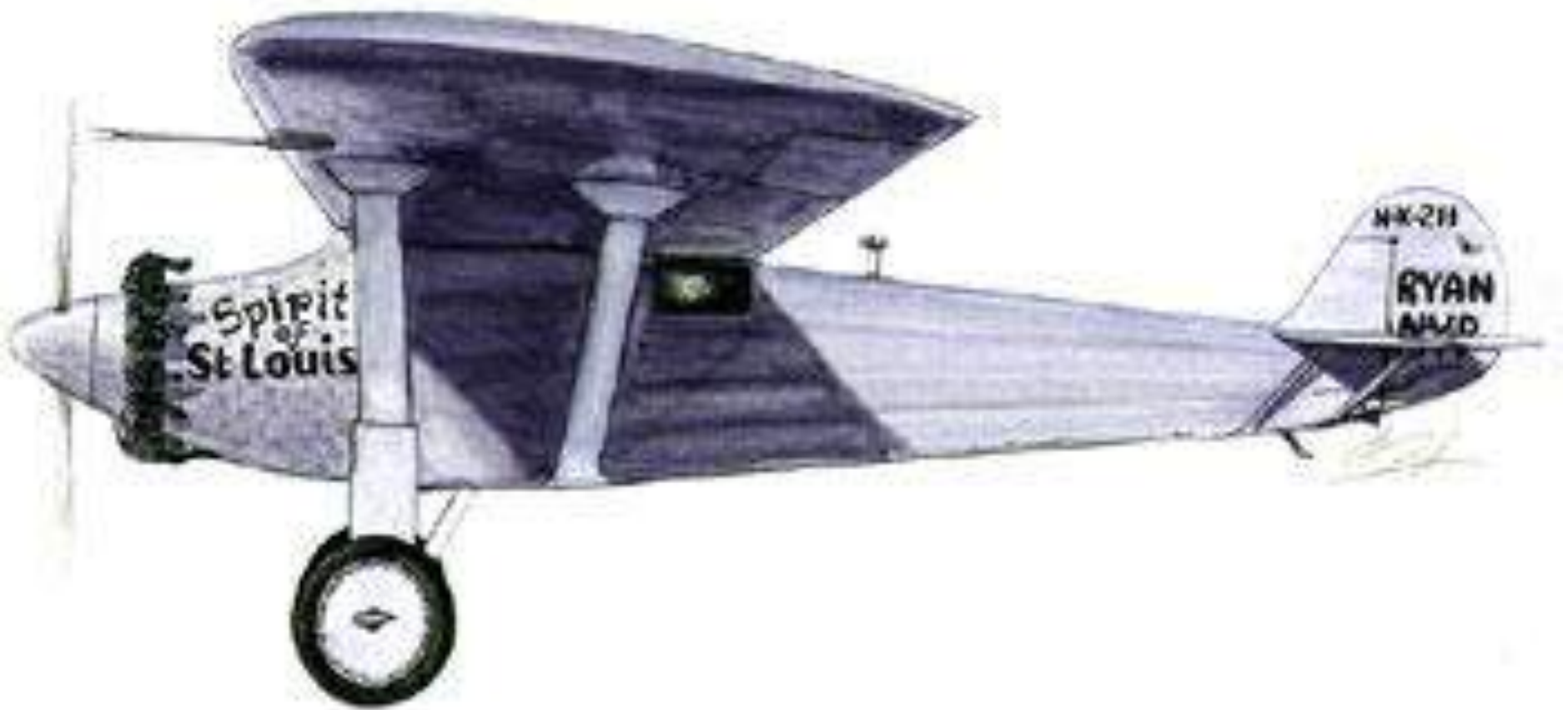


The Spirit of St. Louis



This drawing of the Spirit of St. Louis gives a side profile of the aircraft that flew nonstop across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

When we go to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum...



This image is courtesy of thegeekwithin.com.

...and enter the front lobby, the most important aircraft in American aviation history are on display.



This image is courtesy of talkinginallcaps.com.

You will probably ignore these aircraft at first, because you will be anxious to eat lunch at McDonalds, and you will walk right by them and underneath them.



In this picture, we would enter the doors in the background take go to the right. This image is courtesy of [washingtonian.com](http://washingtsonian.com).

The first American spacecraft to take a man (John Glenn) into orbit is on display.



This picture shows President John F. Kennedy, and behind him astronaut John Glenn, peering into Glenn's spacecraft, Friendship 7. This image is courtesy of airandspace.si.edu.

The Command Service Module from Apollo 11, that transported the first Americans who walked on the moon is on display.



This picture shows Apollo 11's Command Service Module, Columbia, which is on display in the Lobby of Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum. This image is courtesy of airandspace.si.edu.

One of the most interesting aircraft on display is the Spirit of St. Louis.



This Spirit of St. Louis hangs in the front lobby of Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

It was flown by Charles Lindbergh, nonstop, 3600 miles across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927.



Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974), was 25 years old at the time he flew across the Atlantic Ocean. He was the first pilot to accomplish the feat. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

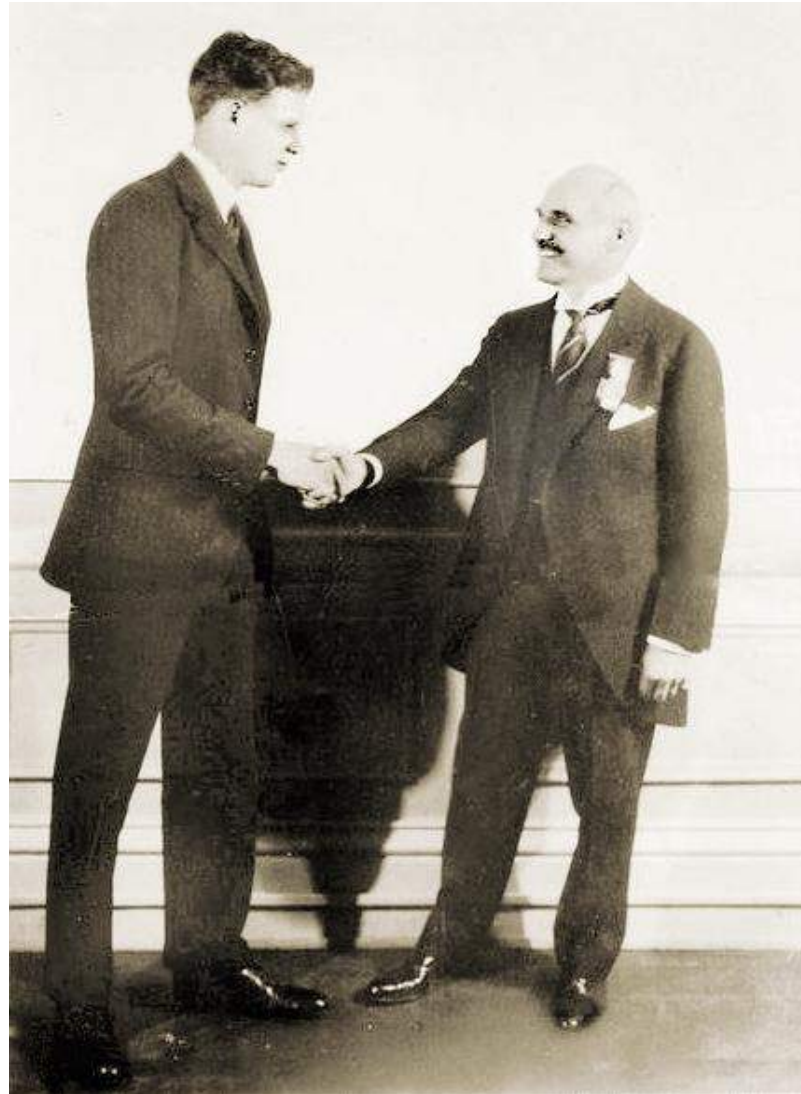
With this feat, Lindbergh went from being an unknown U.S. Airmail pilot to one of the most well-known people in the world.



After Colonel Charles Lindbergh returned from his flight to Paris he came back to Springfield and flew the air mail once again. This picture was taken of "Sindy" as he loaded mail into the plane.

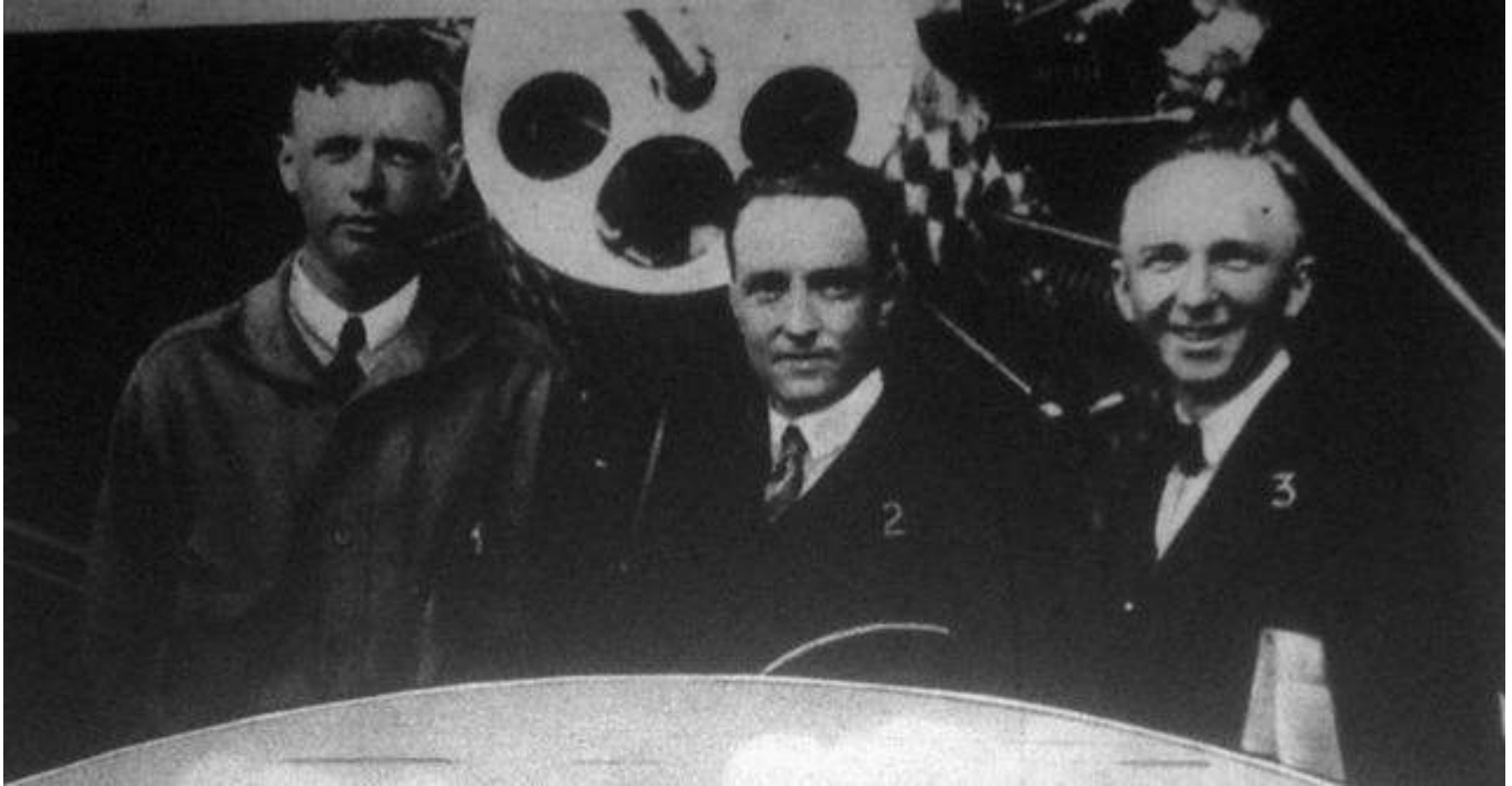
This image shows Lindbergh loading mail bags in a U.S. mail plane in Springfield, Illinois in 1927.. This image is courtesy of charleslindbergh.com.

Lindbergh's feat occurred because he and other pilots were competing for the \$25,000 Orteig Prize.



New York hotel owner Raymond Orteig had offered the prize in 1919 to the first aviator to fly non-stop from either New York to Paris, or from Paris to New York. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Lindbergh would have two competitors in the United States, and one in France for the transatlantic crossing.



This image shows Lindbergh on the left with Richard Byrd, center, and Clarence Chamberlin, right, his two American competitors. This image is courtesy of huszadikszazad.hu.

One of Lindbergh's American competitors was Lieutenant Commander Richard Byrd of the U.S. Navy.



This image shows Lt. Com. Richard E. Byrd in front of a Vought VE-7 Bluebird seaplane. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

The previous year, 1926, Byrd had received credit for being the first person to fly over the North Pole.



Photo International Newsreel

COMMANDER RICHARD BYRD AND THE FOKKER NORTH POLE PLANE

This was the first airplane to fly over the North Pole, May 9, 1926.

Later historians would dispute this claim. Byrd accomplished the flight with a co-pilot, Floyd Bennett. This image is courtesy of goldenageofaviation.org.

Now Byrd will attempt to fly over the Atlantic in an airplane with three engines, and four people, all acting as pilots.



This is a Fokker Tri-Motor Airplane. Richard Byrd and the three other pilots flew a plane similar to this to France, and landed on July 1, 1927. This image is courtesy of airminded.net.

Byrd's ship was named "America."



This is the plane that Byrd flew to France, and landed on July 1, 1927. This image is courtesy of timeandnavigation.si.edu.

Another person that Lindbergh competed against was Clarence Chamberlin.



Clarence Chamberlin was born in Iowa, owned a Harley-Davidson dealership, and became an army pilot during World War I. However, the war ended just as he was going to be sent overseas. He later became a stunt flier and won several air races. He and co-pilot Bert Acosta had set an endurance record for staying in the air for over 51 hours, which was 18 hours longer than they would need to get to Europe. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Clarence Chamberlin was ready to take off in his one engine Bellanca, named the “Miss Columbia,” but arguments with the plane’s owner and his navigator led to the plane being grounded by a court order.



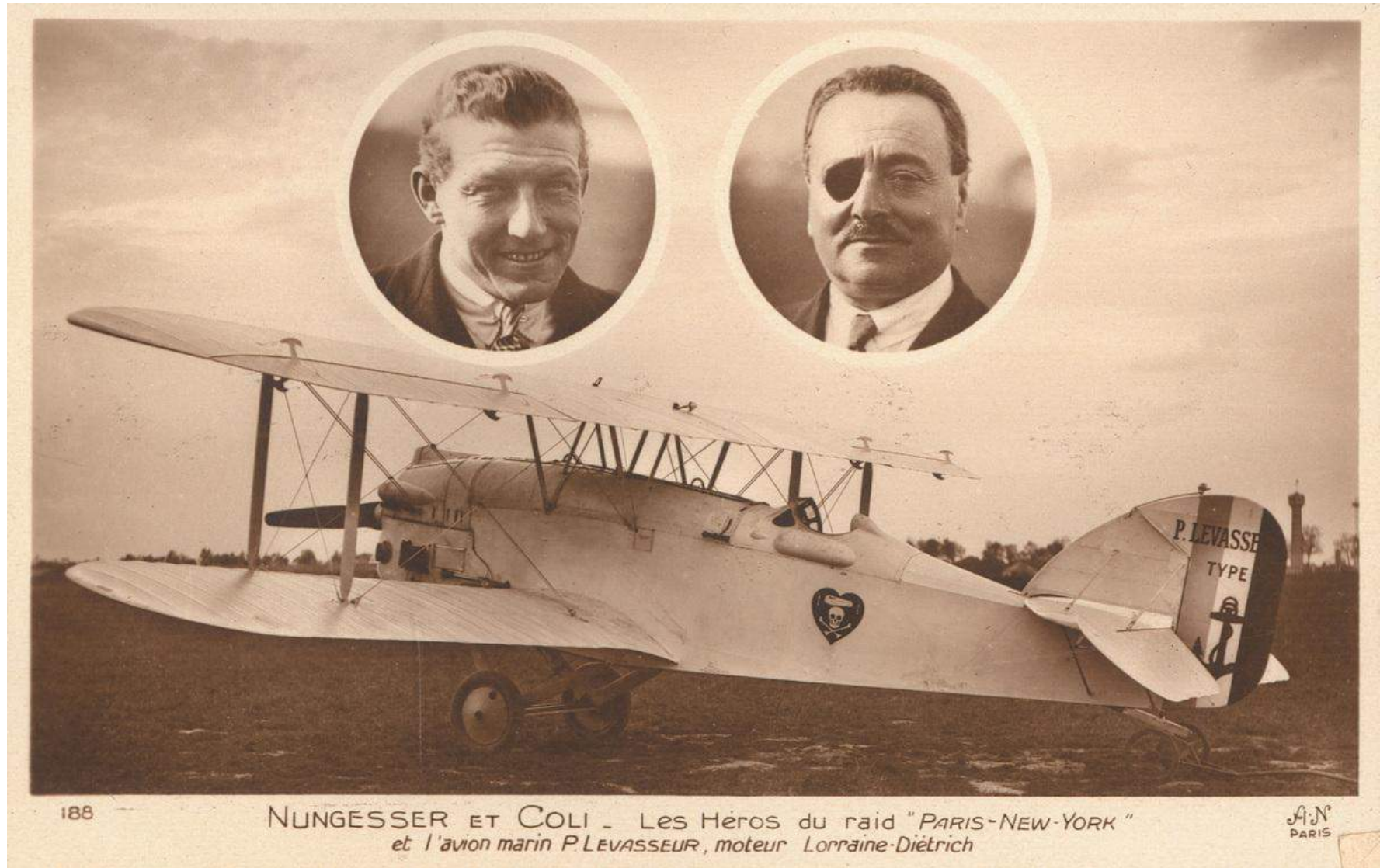
His navigator Lloyd Bertaud was for reasons not adequately explained, was forbidden by owner Charles Levine to make the transatlantic flight. Bertaud filed a court injunction for the plane not to leave the ground without him. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Lindbergh's French competitor was Charles Nungesser, an "Ace" in the French Air Force during World War I.



Nungesser had the third most "kills" of any French pilot during the war. Nungesser flew to America with his co-pilot Francois Coli. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Charles Nungesser, and his co-pilot Frances Coli left Paris for New York in their airplane, the "White Bird" before any of the Americans left New York.



Nungesser and Coli left France on May 7, 1927. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.