

SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA



THE RYAN B.1 BROUGHAM DOWN UNDER

Following Charles Lindbergh's historic solo flight across the Atlantic in a Ryan monoplane in May 1927, the American company's B.1 Brougham became the "must-have" flying machine for prospective air pioneers. **NEIL FOLLETT** details the (mainly short) careers of the four examples imported into Australia during 1927–28

CLAUDE RYAN FORMED the Ryan Flying Company in San Diego, California, in 1922, conducting flying training and pleasure flights and converting surplus First World War aircraft for civil use. In the mid-1920s Ryan and his business partner, Benjamin Franklin "Frank" Mahoney, branched into aircraft design and manufacture, their first ventures being the Ryan M-1 and M-2 high-wing monoplane mailplanes, the prototype M-1 making its maiden flight in February 1926.

In 1927 their next design, the B.1 Brougham, a refinement of the M-2, was about to enter production when a disagreement between the partners saw Ryan leave the company. At this stage the company operated as Ryan Airlines Inc. On February 3, 1927, Frank Mahoney received a now-famous cable from one Charles Lindbergh asking if he could build an aeroplane to fly from New York to Paris. The B.1 design was accordingly modified and built as the NYP (New York—Paris) for Lindbergh's successful

transatlantic flight that May, the first to be completed solo. Unsurprisingly, this historic flight attracted an immediate interest in the B.1, and some 150 examples were ultimately built.

In the Antipodes, many aviators had made plans since the early 1920s to be the first to fly the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand. Most of these plans were impractical with the types of aircraft proposed, but because of Lindbergh's remarkable achievement, the B.1 was deemed suitable and two were imported into Australia specifically for that purpose. Ultimately, a total of four examples of the Ryan B.1 Brougham appeared on the Australian civil register, the fates of which we detail here.

CROSSING THE TASMAN: 1

G-AUNZ, c/n 47 In 1925 New Zealander John Moncrieff announced his plan to fly across the Tasman Sea, but the Beardmore-Rohrbach Inverness flying-boat he originally intended to use was unsuitable and unavailable in any

Although the B.1 Brougham bore a recognisable family resemblance to Lindbergh's famous Spirit of St Louis, early production examples shared surprisingly few common parts with their illustrious forebear — essentially the tail surfaces and some wing fittings; while later Broughams shared no commonality at all. Here B.1 G-AUGR awaits its next flight beside a state-of-the-art terminal in Papua New Guinea in the spring of 1928.

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