



Artwork & Stories

Inspiration From Humor and Drama



"Spreading the Word"

In the early twenties technologies as we know them and take for granted today were still in their infancy. The powered airplane was barely twenty years old. Trains were the main mode of overland transportation and the telephone still had humans as operators. A sign painter and his apprentice are seen painting one of the hundreds of Mail Pouch barns that started showing up all over at that time.



"Misty Morning Mail Run"

The air mail pilots were, in the beginning at least, under a "fly or be fired" order from the postmaster Otto Preager. The deskbound official, never having flown, had no idea or obvious concern about what the pilots had to endure. "If I can see the building across the street, it's ok to fly." The aviators went on strike and one pilot took a Post Office official on a mail run that scared the fellow so bad, the rule was changed to give the pilots the right to decide if conditions were good enough to fly.



"Max Miller's Last Flight"

Early on the morning of September 1, 1920. Max Miller and his mechanic Gustav Reiersen were flying their Junkers JL-6 mail plane enroute to Cleveland when the engine caught fire. The crash occurred near a farm in Morristown, NJ. The New York Times headline read: "Premier Mail Pilot Dies in Flaming Fall. Duty Their Final Thought. Aviators Dropped Letter Bags to Safety as Plane Became a Blazing Meteor"



"Back in Bellefonte"

The people of Bellefonte loved the air mail pilots. Everyone wanted them as house guests, gave them dinners and treated them like rock stars are treated today. In return the pilots would give impromptu airshows and simply show off for their friends. This painting is from a story of pilot Slim Lewis. It is said that Slim once buzzed by the courthouse so close that the weathervane spun around!

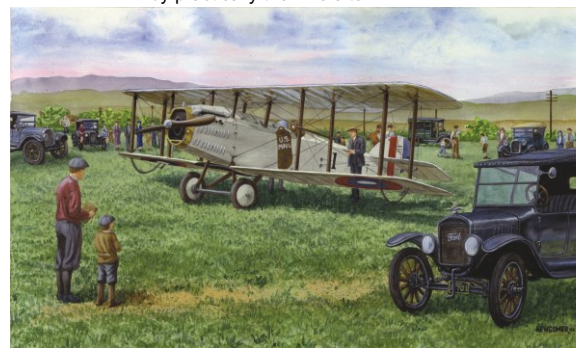
"Max Picks Bellefonte"

On September 20, 1918, Max Miller, flying a white Standard JR-1B mail plane with a mailbag painted on the side landed at Bellefonte and declared it to be the best choice for an airmail field. He was greeted by practically the whole town.



"Frost Class Delivery"

The pilots flew in all weather conditions. Winter gear included fur lined suits, standard leather helmet and a brown leather face mask to avoid frostbite. Ernie Allison had to make an emergency landing near DuBois, PA and after he made it down, started to walk toward a farm house for help. Little did he know, the daily paper reported that an ape had escaped from the circus in Altoona. When he knocked on the door an old lady opened it, screamed bloody murder and ran like an athlete.



The Art of Flight



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