

around the world in 26 days



November 8th - December 3rd, 1968

the dustin trans-polar flight

To honor the memory of Admiral Richard E. Byrd and raise funds for a Polar Center to bear his name Commander Frederick G. Dustin, a fuel engineer on the second Byrd Antarctic Expedition (1933-35), organized a transpolar flight. Touted as “the first commercial flight ever to cross both poles and touch down on all continents” it had originally been planned for 1959. Called Polar Byrd I it flew from November 8th to December 3rd, 1968. Subsequent attempts (Polar Byrd II) to repeat the feat in 2001, 2003, and 2004 were all indefinitely postponed. Firsts include; first to fly tourists to the South Pole, first to land a commercial jet in Antarctica, first aircraft to approach the American continent from the south, and the first to carry a woman over both poles.

Like BAE II, philatelic mail played an important role in the Dustin Around the World flight. Subscribers were offered an engraved envelope franked with the international airmail rate (25 cents). The plan was to have enroute markings at stations near the poles (Anchorage in the north and McMurdo in

the south). A final franking was planned at the return to Boston. Unlike the Rockwell Polar Flight (1965) the covers carried by Dustin were authorized by the Civil Aeronautics Board. Dustin would get into hot water with both collectors (who received covers months late and without enroute postmarks) and the Post Office Department (for carrying envelopes with the domestic 10 cent airmail rate).

This exhibit is unique philatelic documentation of that flight. It includes postcards and letters, many penned while in flight, from a participant to his wife. Of the twenty stops only Anchorage and McMurdo were not represented. An expedition envelope mailed by a fellow passenger postmarked at Scott has been substituted to represent Antarctica.

References

Vogel, H.
Antarctic: A News Bulletin
US Government

Ice Cap News Vol 29 No 167 pgs 206-7 Sept-Oct 1984
New Zealand Antarctic Society, Wellington NZ, 1956-
National Archives and Records Administration

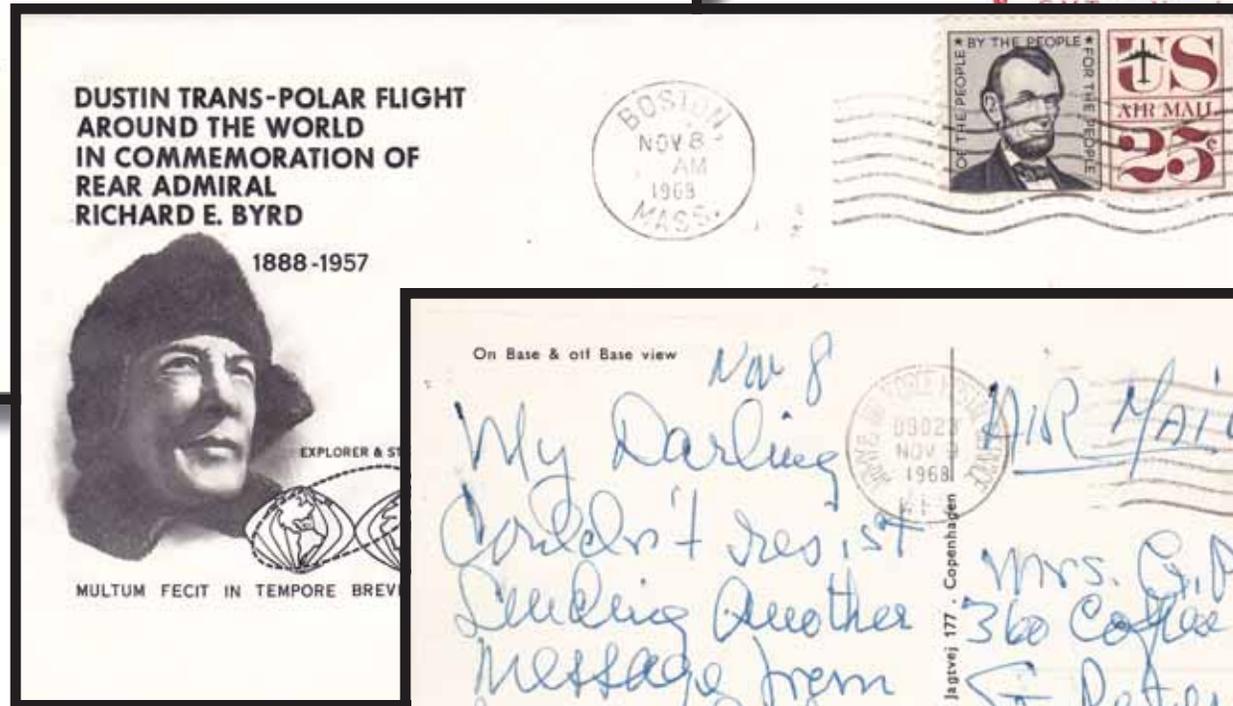
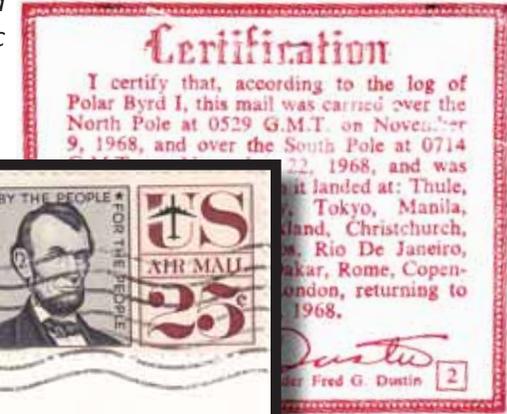
around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Boston, USA to Thule AB, Greenland

8 Nov 1968, Boston, USA



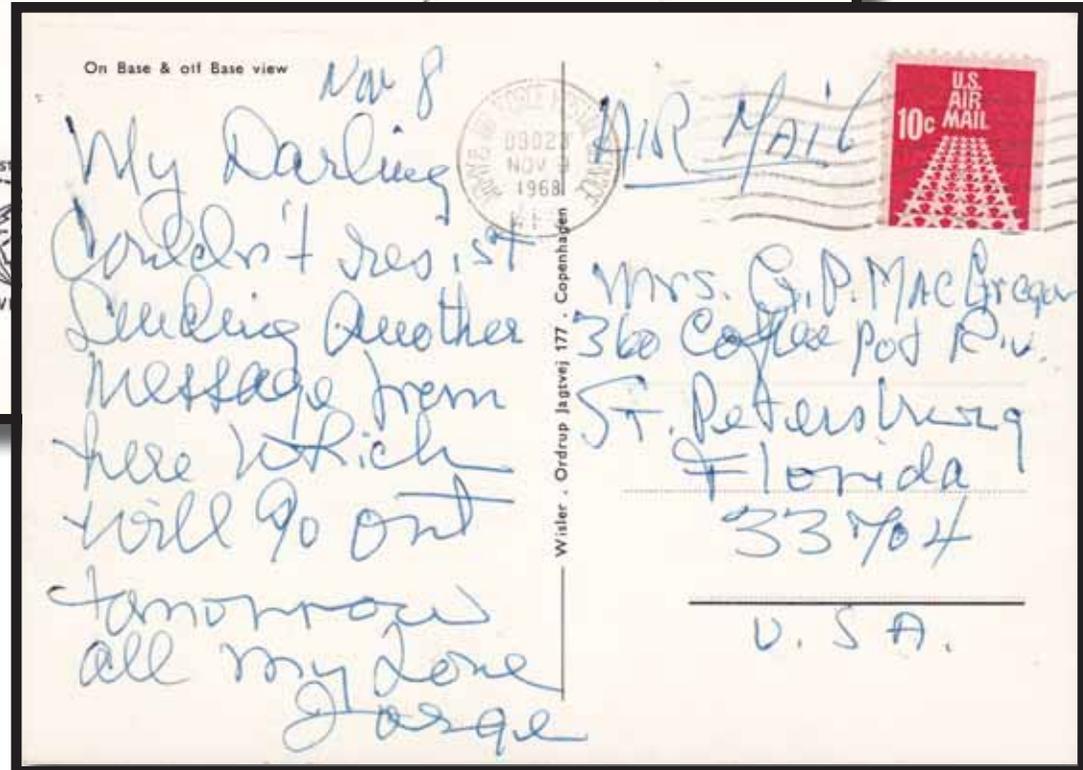
The red rubber stamp certified the mail made the entire trip. An enclosure was a reproduction of the McMurdo Commander stationery attesting that the brief stay precluded extensive philatelic activities.



After the Byrd Polar Center encountered financial difficulties, creditors cancelled upwards of 800,000 envelopes (most without cachet) with the domestic airmail rate of ten cents. The Boston Post Office impounded them for insufficient international airmail rate, and it is believed that only a few thousand were sold and the remainder destroyed.

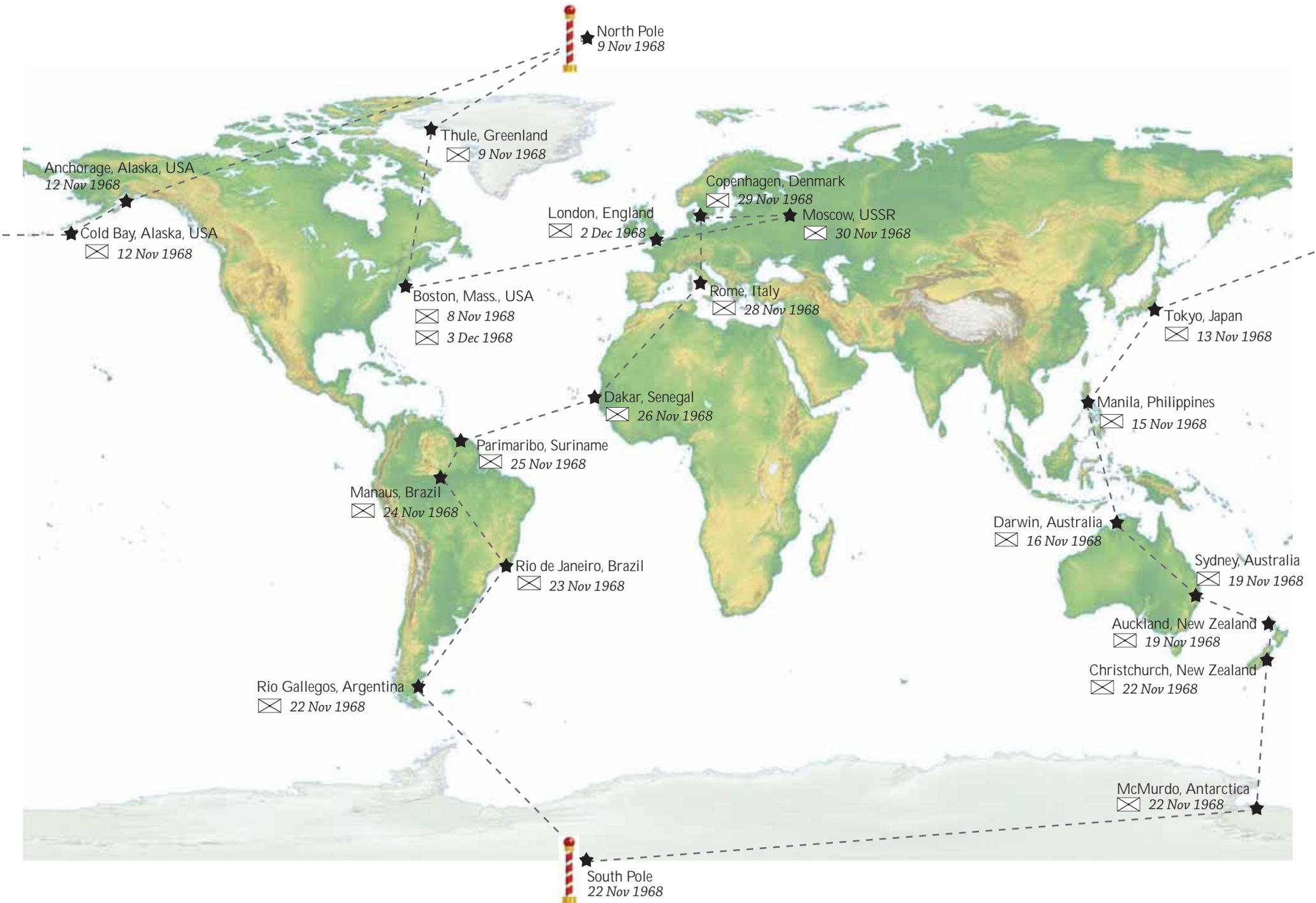
The first stop from Boston was Thule AB, Greenland. Here the Convair 990A took on fuel as the 60 business leaders who paid \$10,000 each for the 26-day trip received a tour of the northernmost US Air Base. Admiral Byrd's pilot, Bernt Balchen, and Commander Dustin had surveyed Thule as a possible military site. The postcard (right) is postmarked at Thule on November 9th, the day the group flew over the North Pole.

9 Nov 1968, Thule AB, Greenland



around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Unique Correspondence *Nov 8th - Dec 3rd, 1968*



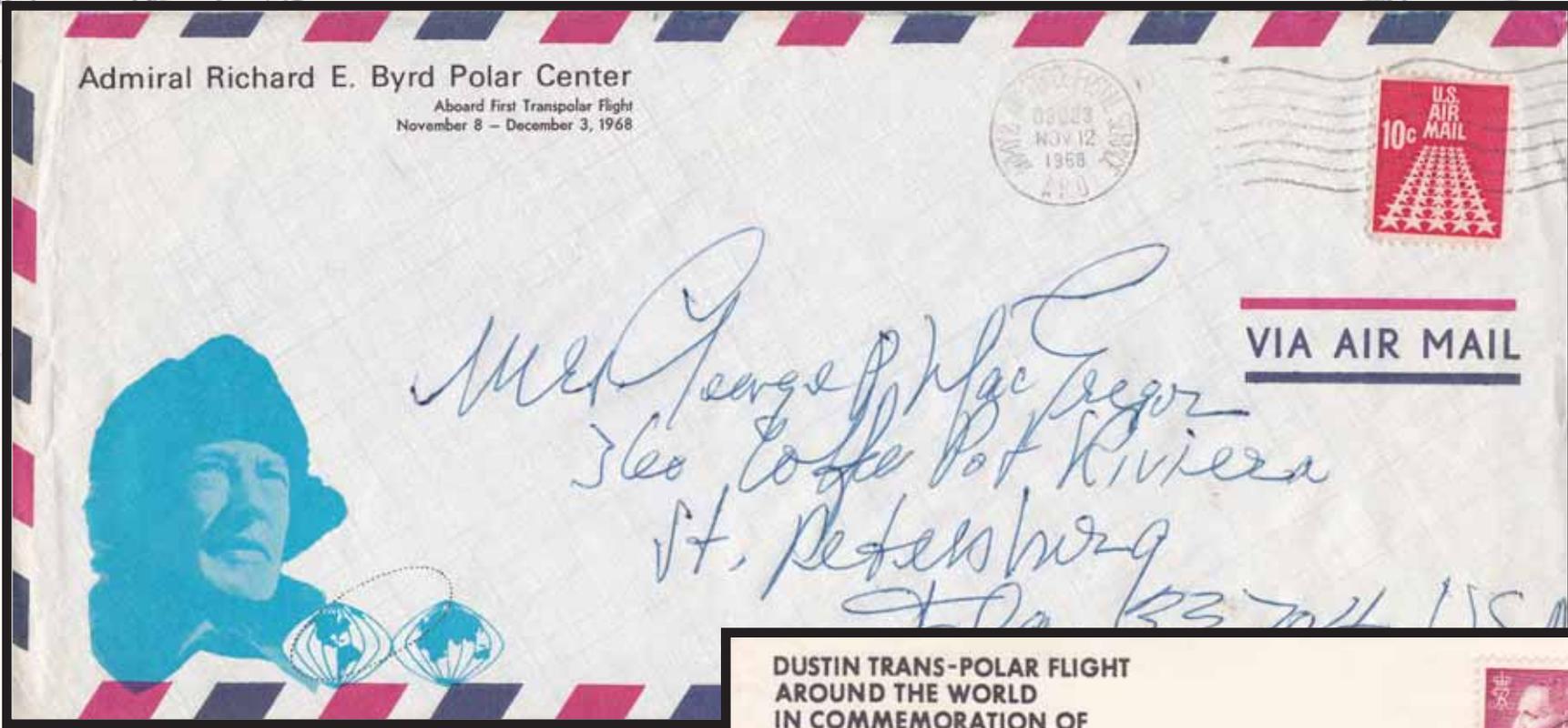
around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight
 Thule AB, Greenland to Anchorage, USA via the North Pole

12 Nov 1968, Thule AB, Greenland

*My Darling;
 to you
 are*

*Just about
 to land in*

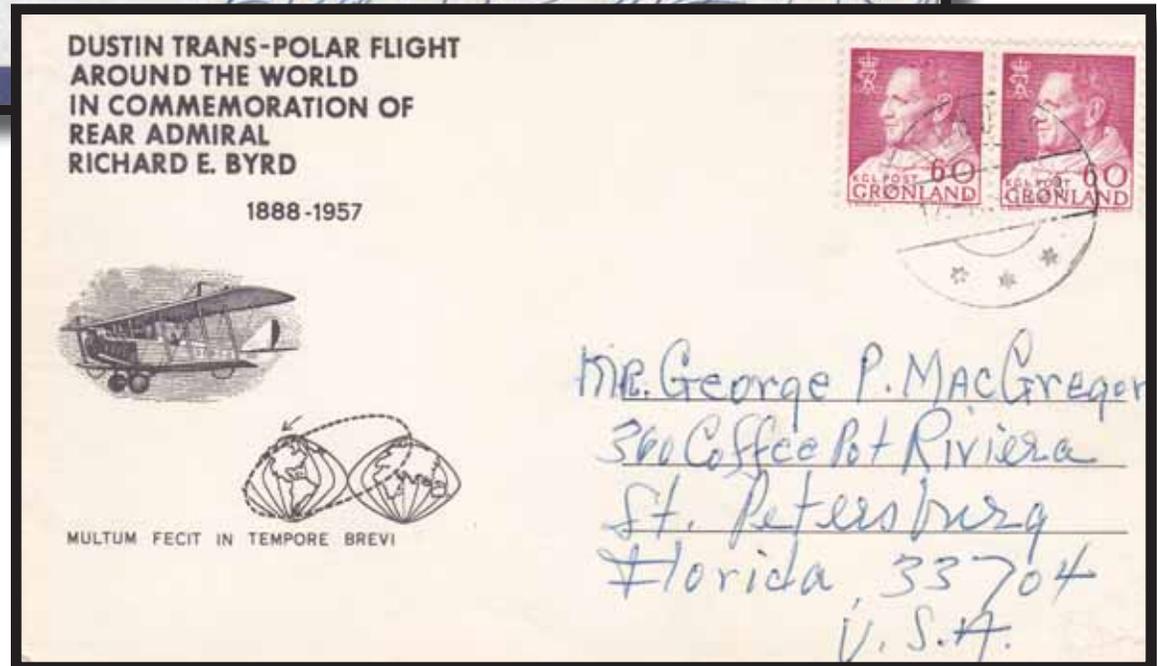
grade



George P. MacGregor, a 60-year-old executive with Florida Paper Converters, wrote a series of letters home. This letter (above) was written aboard Polar Byrd I, a Modern Air Transport specially outfitted four-engine jet with lounge-chair-and-table cabin configuration. He writes, "Just about to land at Thule, snowing and -45 degrees Centigrade."

Located about 2 miles from Thule AB is the community of Dundas (the original Thule), first settled 4,500 years ago by peoples migrating from the Canadian Arctic. Residents were relocated in 1953 when the United States was given permission to build Thule Air Base. A new town called Qaanaaq (New Thule) was build 81 miles to the north. The Latin expression about Adm. Byrd, "Multum fecit in tempore brevi," translates to "Much he did in a short time."

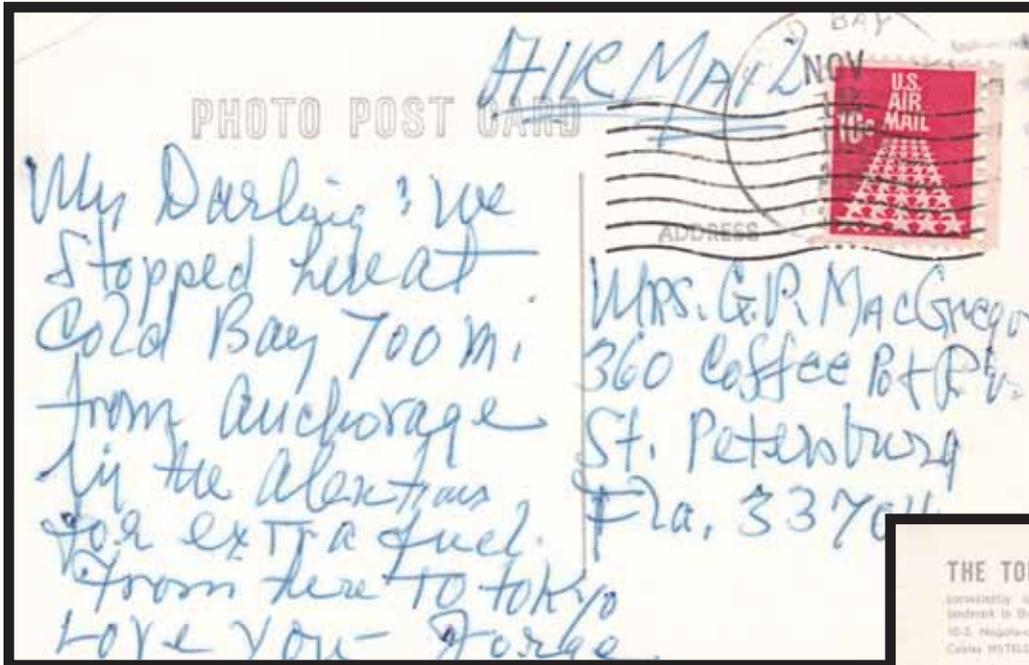
12 Nov 1968, Dundas, Greenland



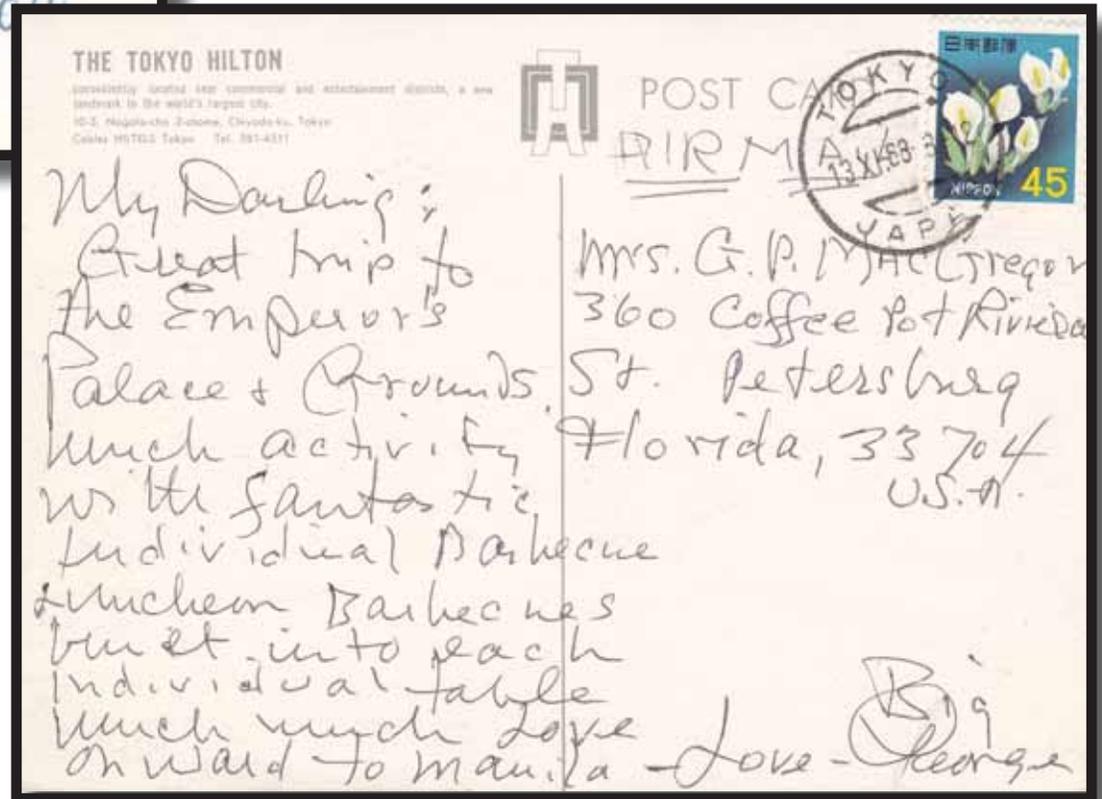
around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Cold Bay, USA to Tokyo, Japan

12 Nov 1968, Cold Bay, USA



13 Nov 1968, Tokyo, Japan

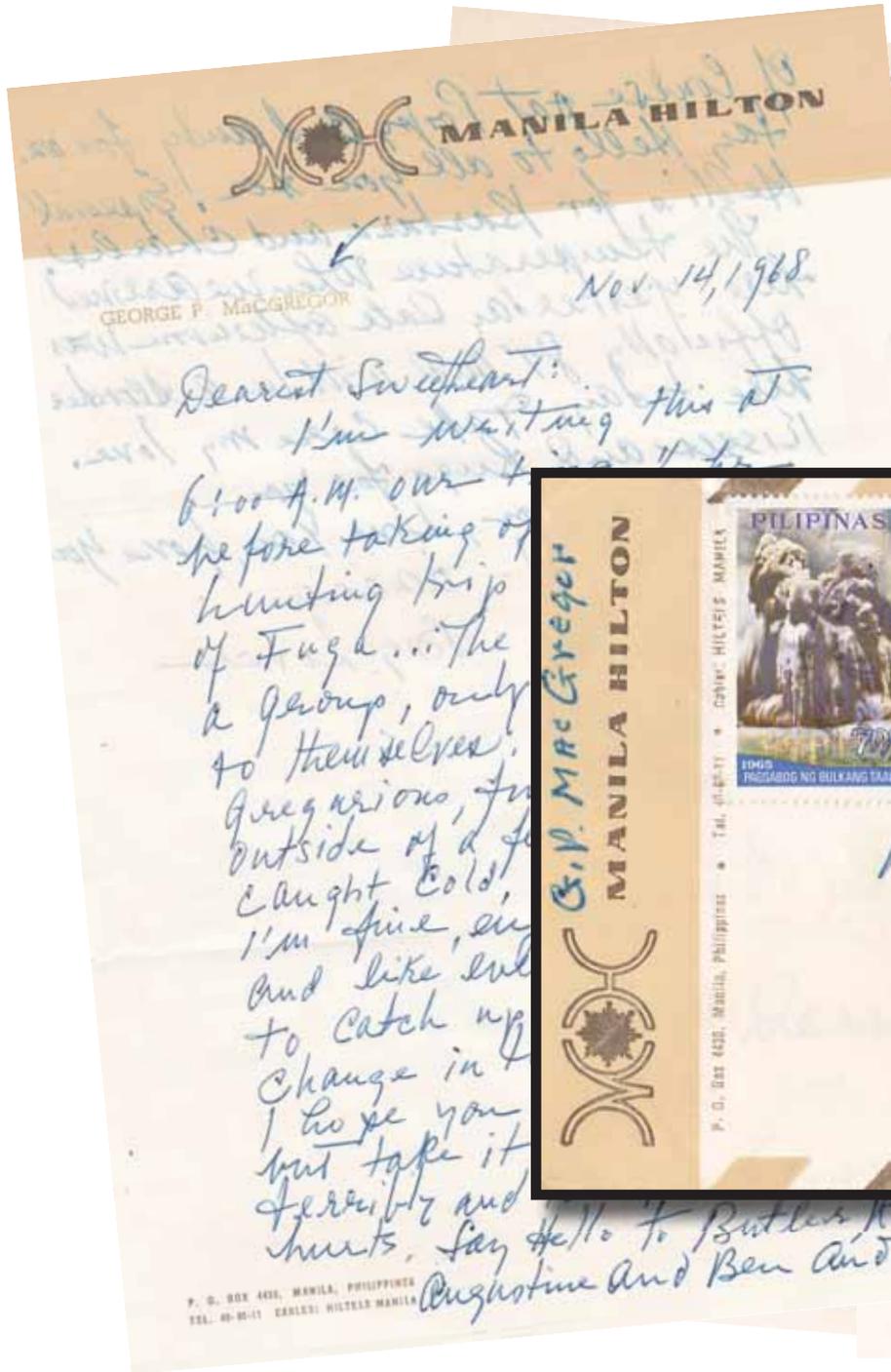


While crossing the geographic North Pole, Dustin dropped a memorial flag to honor the 1926 flight of Admiral Byrd and his pilot, Floyd Bennett. The plane then banked 90 degrees and headed south, over the Arctic Ocean and Beaufort Sea, and on to Anchorage before an unscheduled stop at the former Thornbrough AFB to refuel. The remote field at Cold Bay (above), had been used by weather versions of the B-29 before the Korean Conflict.

As advertised in the prospectus, participants were hosted by city, state, and national leaders and dignitaries around the globe. While in Japan (right) expedition members visited Hakone and Atami by bullet train, enjoyed a tea ceremony at private homes, and met both the Premier and Emperor of Japan.

around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

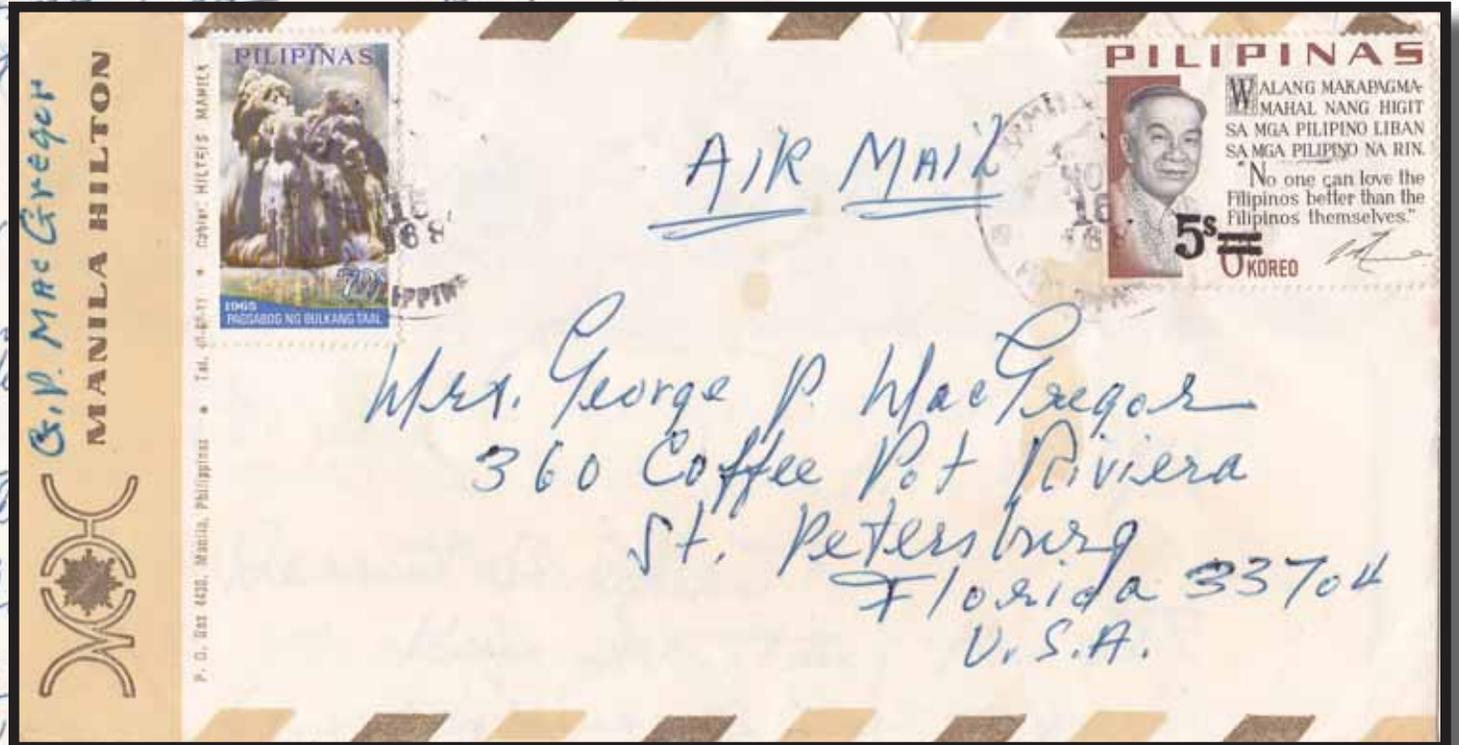
Tokyo, Japan to Manila, Philippines



Copy And Andy for me.
I hope you see! Special
bara and Charles.
re When we arrived
late afternoon was
? will be a storche
- care my love.

General Carlos Romulo, the legendary patriot, statesman, and an old friend of Admiral Byrd, prepared a warm welcome for the expedition for their arrival in Manila. While there participants enjoyed a folklore performance, duck hunting, fishing for tuna and marlin, and a trip hunting deer, wild boar and water buffalo. Personalized stationary (left) was available to guests at the luxurious Manila Hilton.

15 Nov 1968, Manila, Philippines



xxxxxx - 000000
Big Love

around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Manila, Philippines to Darwin and Sydney, Australia



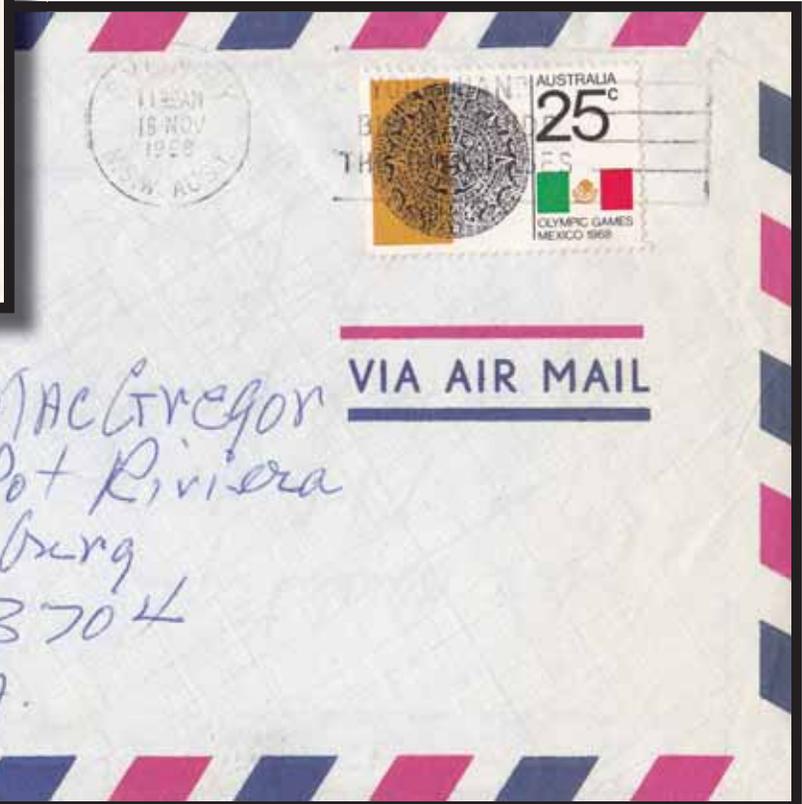
16 Nov 1968, Darwin, Australia

The international letter rate (left) pays this airmail note from Darwin. On arrival the captains of industry were taken to Darwin City Hall to meet the mayor. Dustin asked MacGregor to handle the local interviews, a task MacGregor took pleasure in. "Well we're off for the Outback Country for the day - Rugged Country they say."



McGregor writes of taking a DC-3 charter with 11 fellow travelers on a hunting trip. The landing strip was the middle of a wheat field followed by a 40-mile drive to Tambar Springs. "Pink and pearl grey parrots and red, yellow and black parakeets everywhere but no game to shoot today. Temperature of 102 degrees in the shade."

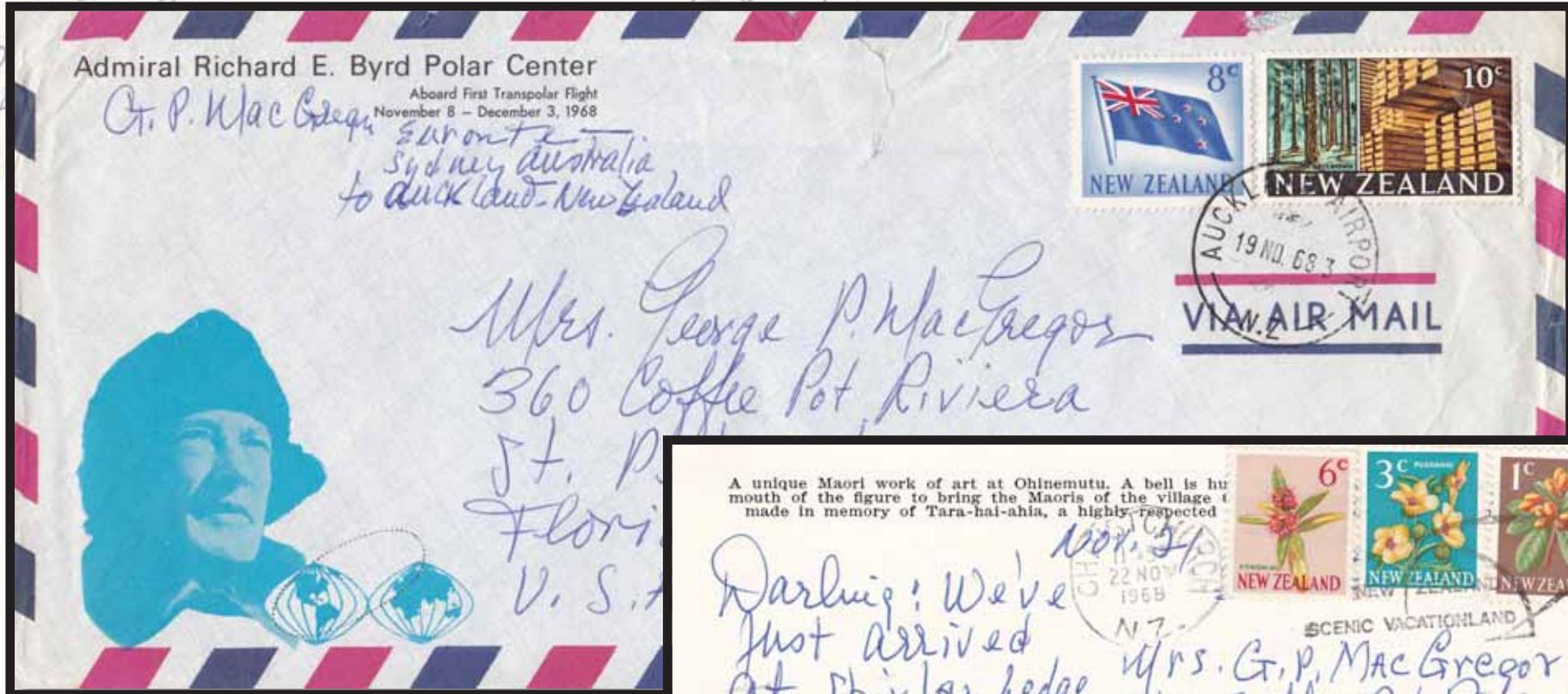
19 Nov 1968, Sydney, Australia



around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight
 Sydney, Australia to Auckland and Christchurch, New Zealand

*We are beginning our descent into Sydney
 we are 200 miles N.W. over flying time*

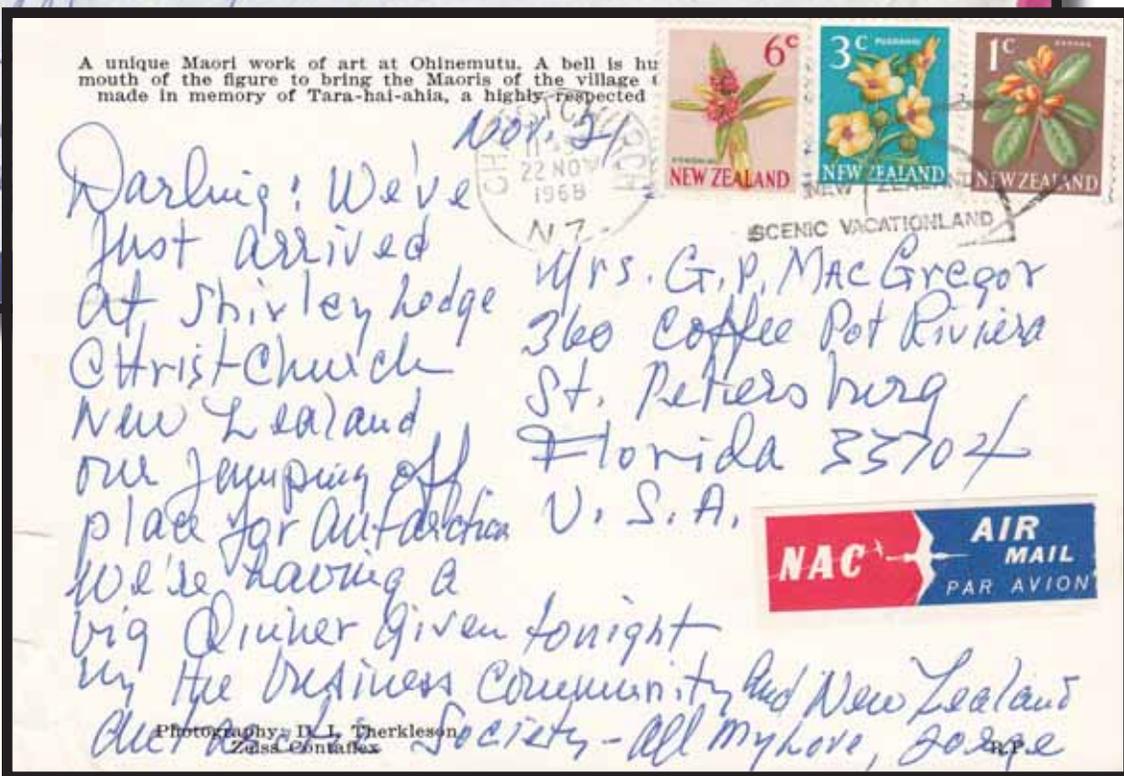
19 Nov 1968, Auckland, New Zealand



"I sure wish you were here with me, you would have seen some Aborigine dances, which were something to behold, part tableau part pantomime done to singing in their language to the music of a 6ft bamboo Horu with reeds in it - FABULOUS!"

Airmail postcard rate sent from Christchurch, NZ. Here the expedition met with the New Zealand Antarctic Society to pay homage at the Byrd Memorial on Mount Victoria. Here RADM JL Abbot, Jr., the Commander at McMurdo, joined as copilot for the first commercial landing at the South Pole.

22 Nov 1968, Christchurch, New Zealand

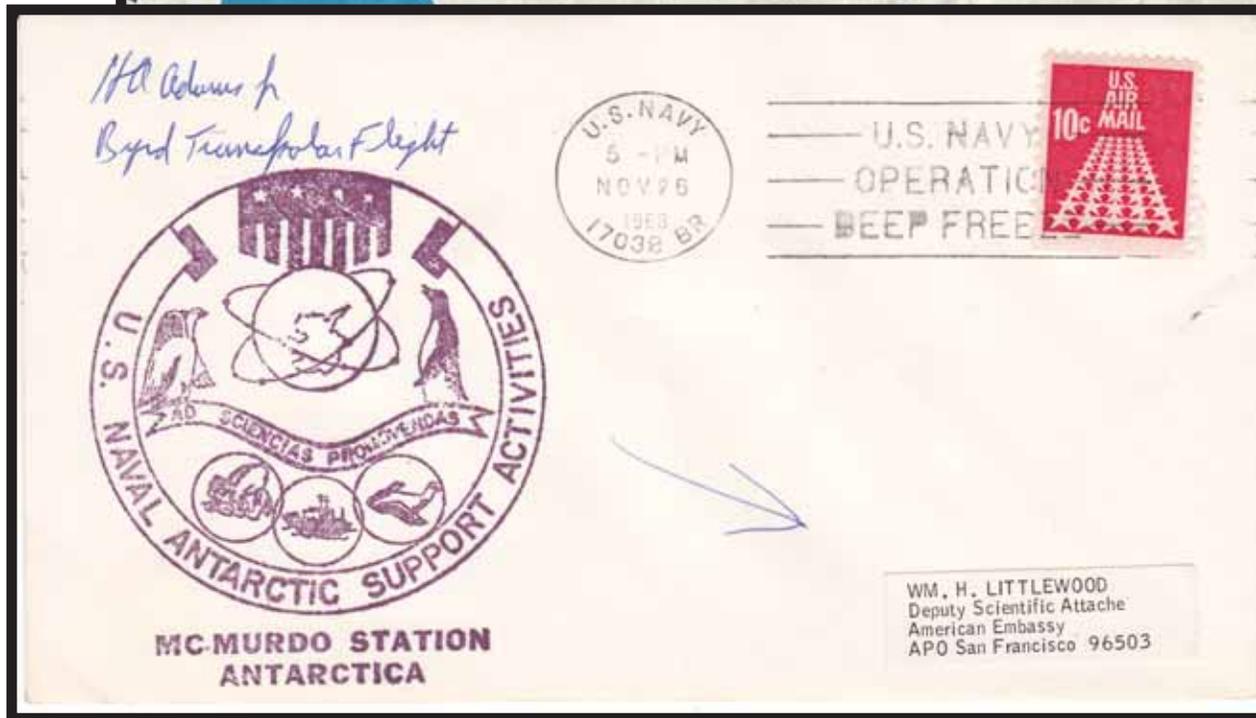


Photography: D. L. Therkleson
 Postcard: J. S. Conant

around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Christchurch, New Zealand to McMurdo, Antarctica then South Pole

28 Nov 1968, Scott Base, Antarctica



Edgar Bellefontaine was a Boston attorney who, along with Commander Dustin, Professor Bursk (Editor of the Harvard Business Review), RADM Richard Black (in charge of US Antarctic programs following Byrd's death in 1957) and others incorporated the Admiral Richard E. Byrd Polar Center in July 1968. RADM Abbot and the New Zealand Antarctic Division had serious misgivings about setting a precedent that would open McMurdo to commercial landings at the South Pole. Dustin, with the support of the Assistant Secretary of Defense and the Director of the National Science Foundation prevailed. Bellefontaine mailed this envelope from Antarctica to the Suffolk County Courthouse Social Law Library in Boston where he served as Chief Librarian from 1961 to 1988.

26 Nov 1968, McMurdo, Antarctica

Exceedingly rare envelope posted at McMurdo by participant. Interestingly, the cover is addressed to former Operation Deep Freeze oceanographer William Littlewood. While there was insufficient time to postmark 800,000 Dustin covers at McMurdo, the four-and-one-half hour visit did result in at least some philatelic documentation.

around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-pol ar flight

Rio Gallegos, Argentina to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

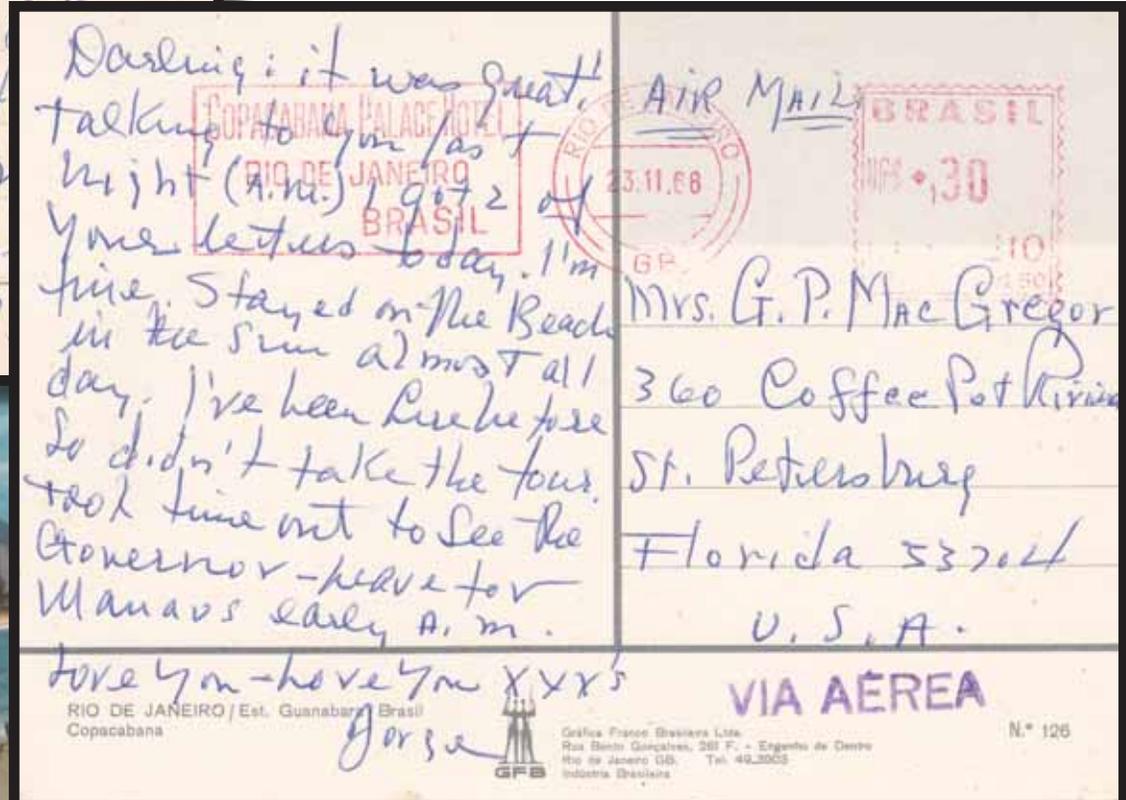
22 Nov 1968, Rio Gallegos, Argentina



"Sweetheart: We made it easily from McMurdo Antarctic to here Rio Gallegos down near the Horn. Success is sweet. The people here are wild with Joy."

The Convair 990A was the first plane to approach the continent from the south. Townspeople waited at the airfield in great numbers to give an excited welcome. Rio Gallegos is at the southern tip of South America.

23 Nov 1968, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Hotel meter to pay the International Airmail postcard rate. "Relaxing on the warm sunny beach at Rio de Janeiro and an opportunity to meet with the Governor. Next stop - Brazil's interior and the city of Manaus."

around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Rio de Janeiro to Manaus, Brazil

Manaus means "mother of the gods" in tribute to the indigenous nation of Manaós. Here half the population of the Amazon resides. By 2008 it had grown to be the eighth largest city in Brazil with 1.7 million inhabitants.

receptions, Cocktail parties Buffets -
 Dinners with and without shows
 up to me - cars, a bunch of
 the whole thing.

Dr. S. Modern Air is our charter Co. I don't think I used one of their envelopes except from W. K. M. de Souza - done. Geo. ...

Admiral Richard E. Byrd Polar Center
 Aboard First Transpolar Flight
 November 8 - December 3, 1968

Nov. 24, 1968
 Rio de Janeiro




Here stationery from the Miami-based Modern Air Transport airline modified for the trans-polar flight. Dustin had stationery made in 1959 during a previous attempt to put together the around the world tribute flight.

24 Nov 1968, Manaus, Brazil

Hello
 letter
 might
 you
 the
 sh
 for
 h
 e

En route - Rio to Manaus, Brazil

MODERN AIR TRANSPORT, INC.
 P.O. BOX 627 • MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BRANCH • MIAMI, FLORIDA 33148

AIR MAILS

TRANS-POLAR FLIGHT
 NOV. 8 - DEC. 3
 The First Commercial
 Passenger Flight to
 Circle the Globe
 From Pole to Pole

Mrs. George P. MacGregor
 360 Coffee Pot Riviera
 St. Petersburg
 Florida - 33704
 U.S.A.

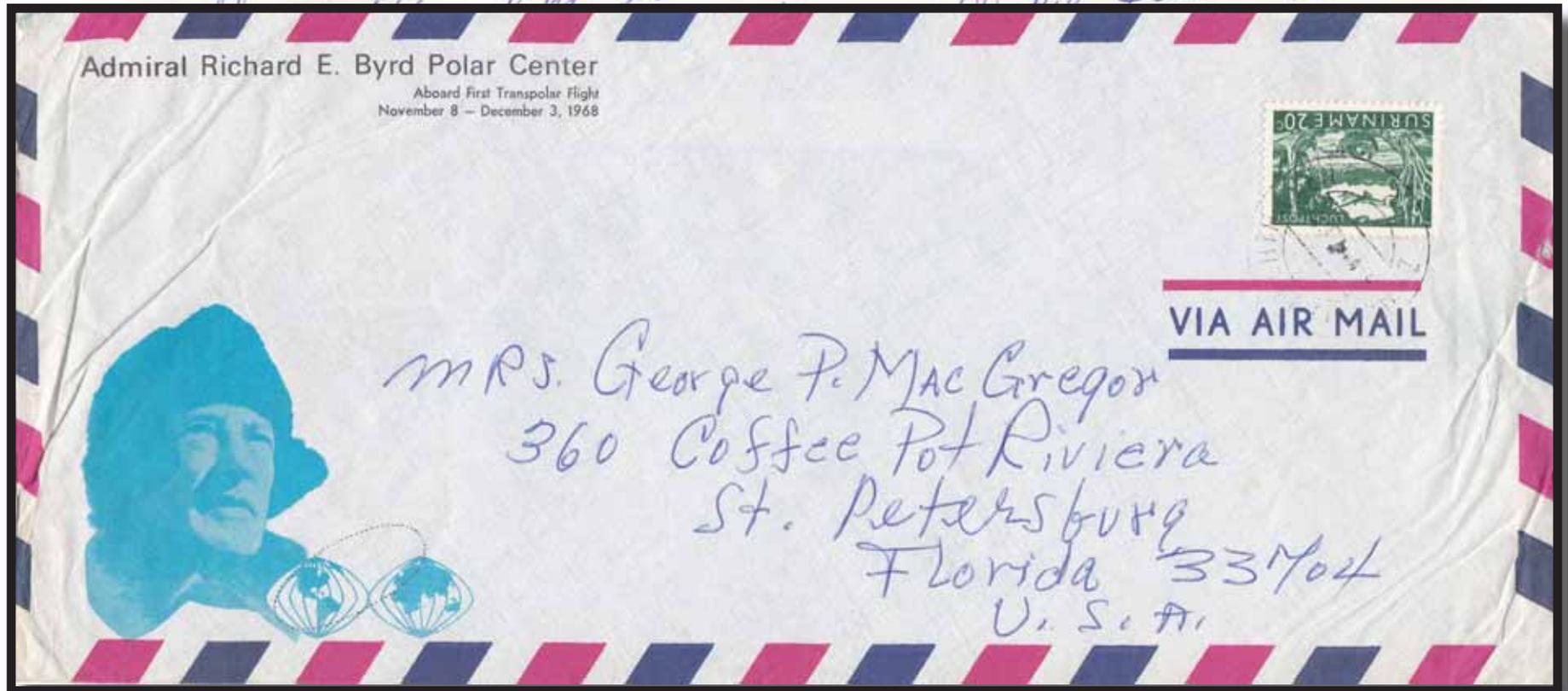




around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Manaus, Brazil to Parimaribo, Suriname

En route - Rodejaniere
to Manaus, Brazil
1:00 P.M. L.S.T.
11:00 A.M. E.S.T.
Received two of yours
put in the evening Saturday
on the line.



Admiral Richard E. Byrd Polar Center
Aboard First Transpolar Flight
November 8 - December 3, 1968



VIA AIR MAIL

MRS. George P. MacGregor
360 Coffee Pot Riviera
St. Petersburg
Florida 33704
U. S. A.

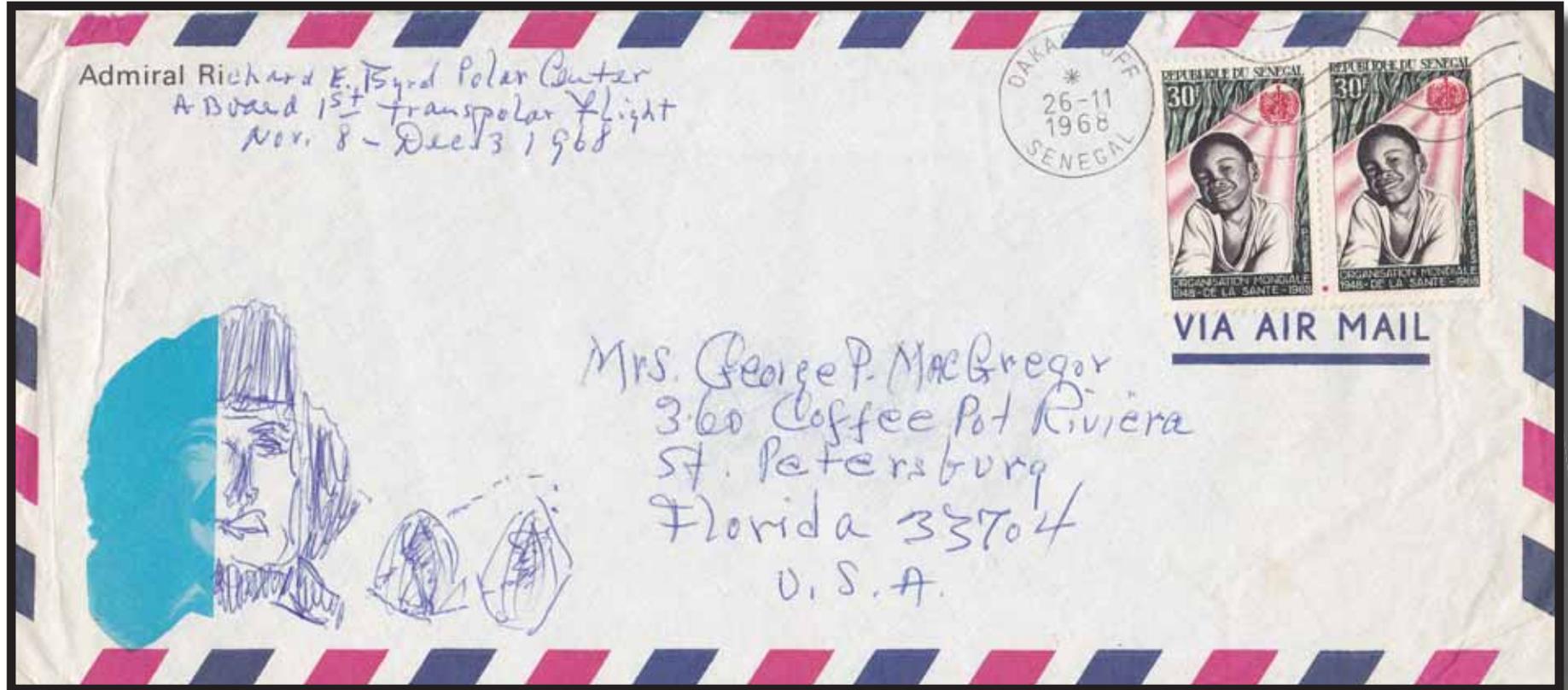
"I don't know whether you'll get my letter from Suriname or not because the post office was closed and I gave it to a KLM official to mail with stamp money because I obviously didn't have Suriname stamps. I haven't told you too much about the trip because I want to save it... it's so fantastic, you can't believe it - I don't believe it yet myself."

26 Nov 1968, Parimaribo, Suriname

around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Parimaribo, Suriname to Dakar, Senegal

26 Nov 1968, Dakar, Senegal



"Paramaribo is a quick fuel stop and then off to Dakar, Senegal. I want you to know that we suffered no danger from the Indians outside Manaus in case the paper or TV carried the news about the Indian massacre of 12 missionaries down the Amazon where we were going into the jungle but we stayed on the boats and returned to the hotel last night. It sure was dark on the river. The murders occurred in the small hours of the 24th - the day we arrived in Manaus. It's still very primitive even on the immediate outskirts of Manaus. Nothing but masses of jungle - Rio Negro and the massive Amazon. There's nothing but great silence and the ever present voices of the jungle life - sounds of cockatoos, parakeets, monkeys - weird whistles and shrills."

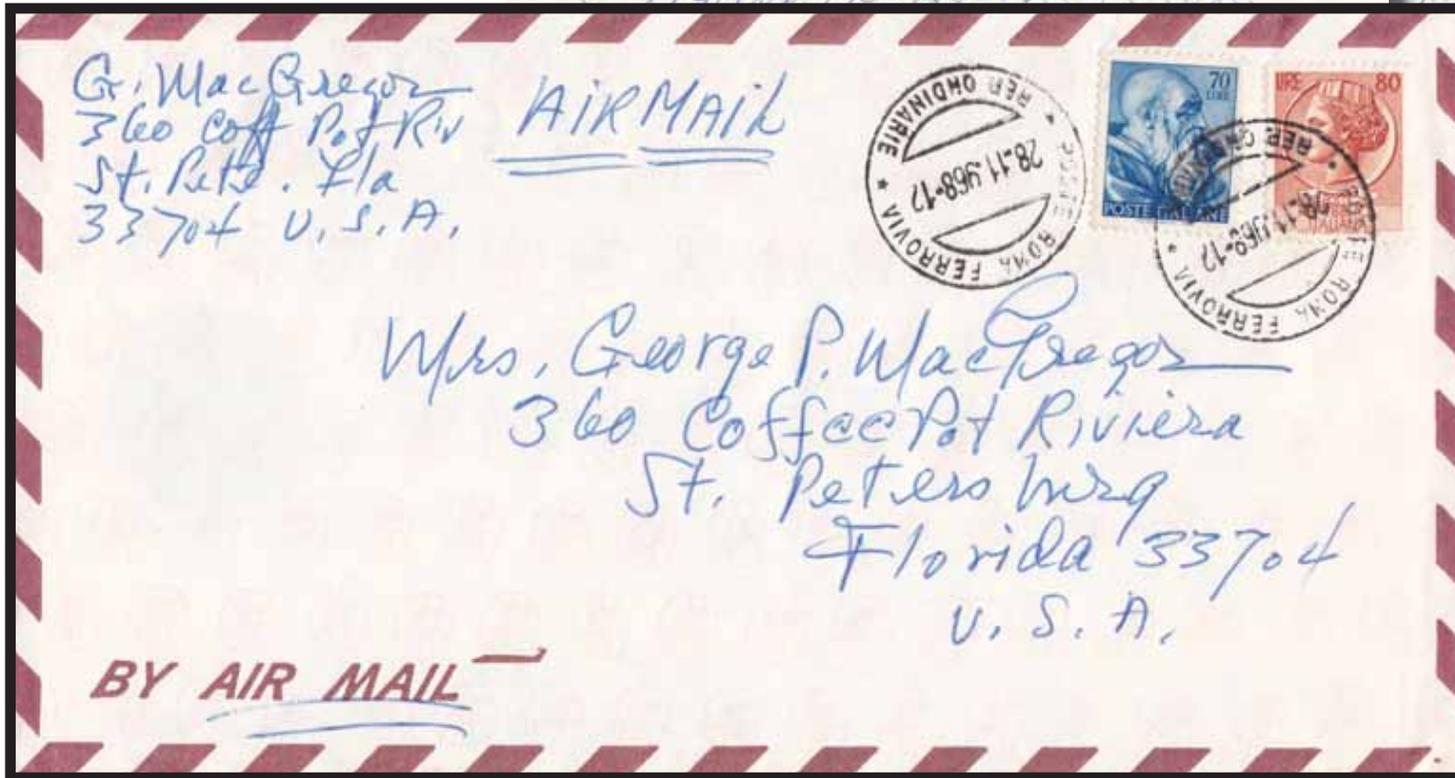
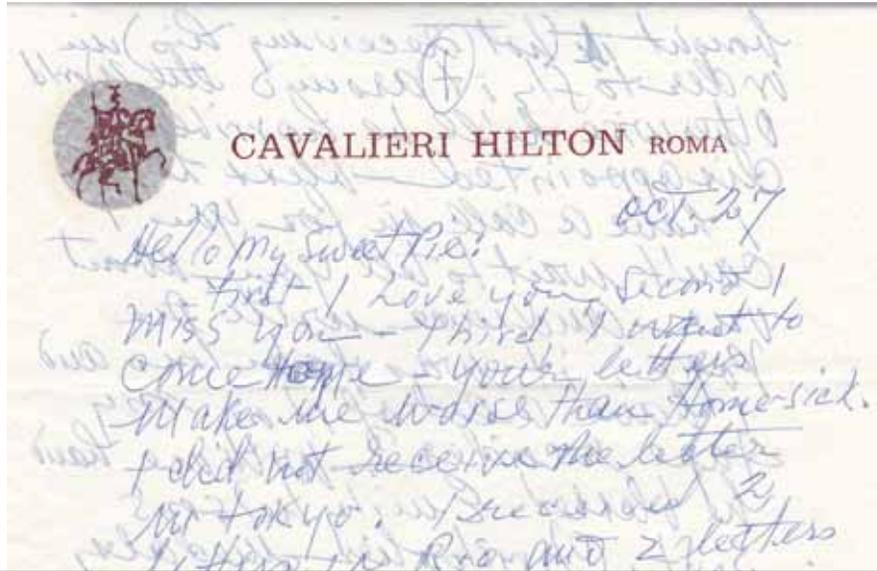
that we suffered
the Indians outside Manaus in
case the paper or TV carried
the news about the Indians
massacre of 12 missionaries
down the Amazon where
we were going into the jungle -
but we stayed on the boats
last night

around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Dakar, Senegal to Rome, Italy

"I can't wait to tell you about our audience with the Pope. It was fabulous and I have a lot of it on my tape recorder. With one hand he blessed Emily Nelson's three St. Christopher medals, Clementine's combination St. Anthony and St. Christopher medals and some extras I got here, with the other hand extended. I took it and kissed. He was not wearing a ring on either hand. He blessed the polar center, all of us, and our families. It was sensational."

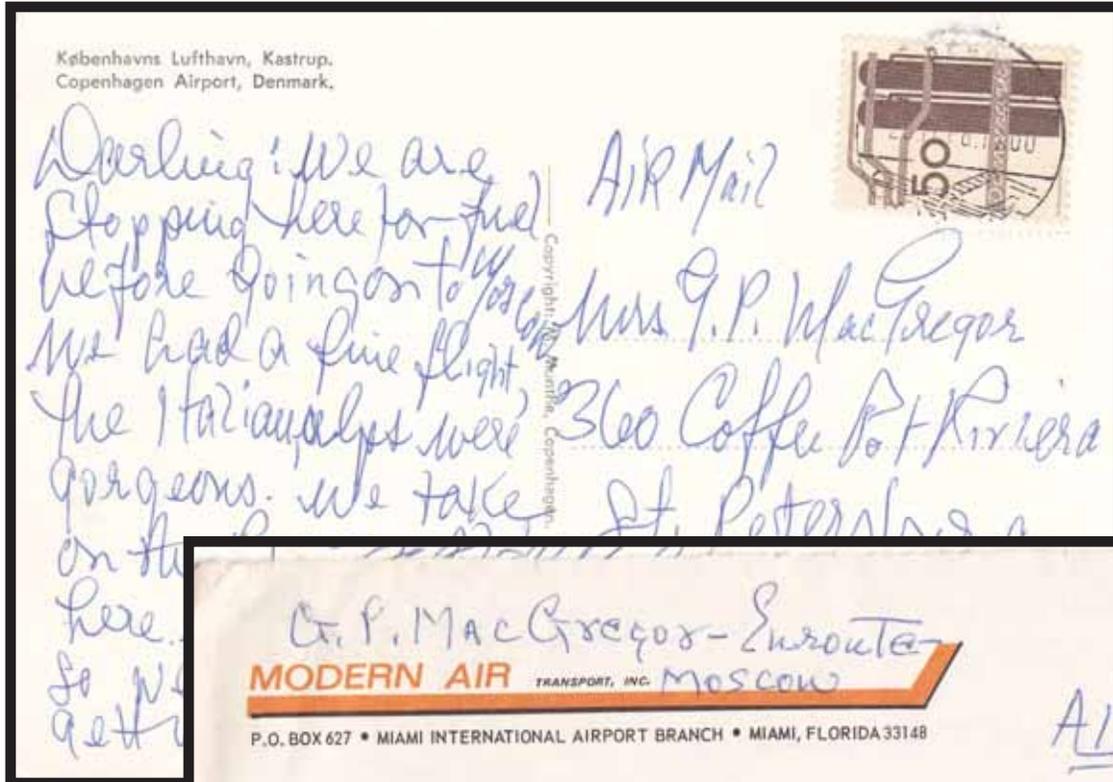
28 Nov 1968, Rome, Italy



around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

Copenhagen, Denmark to Moscow, USSR

29 Nov 1968, Copenhagen, Denmark

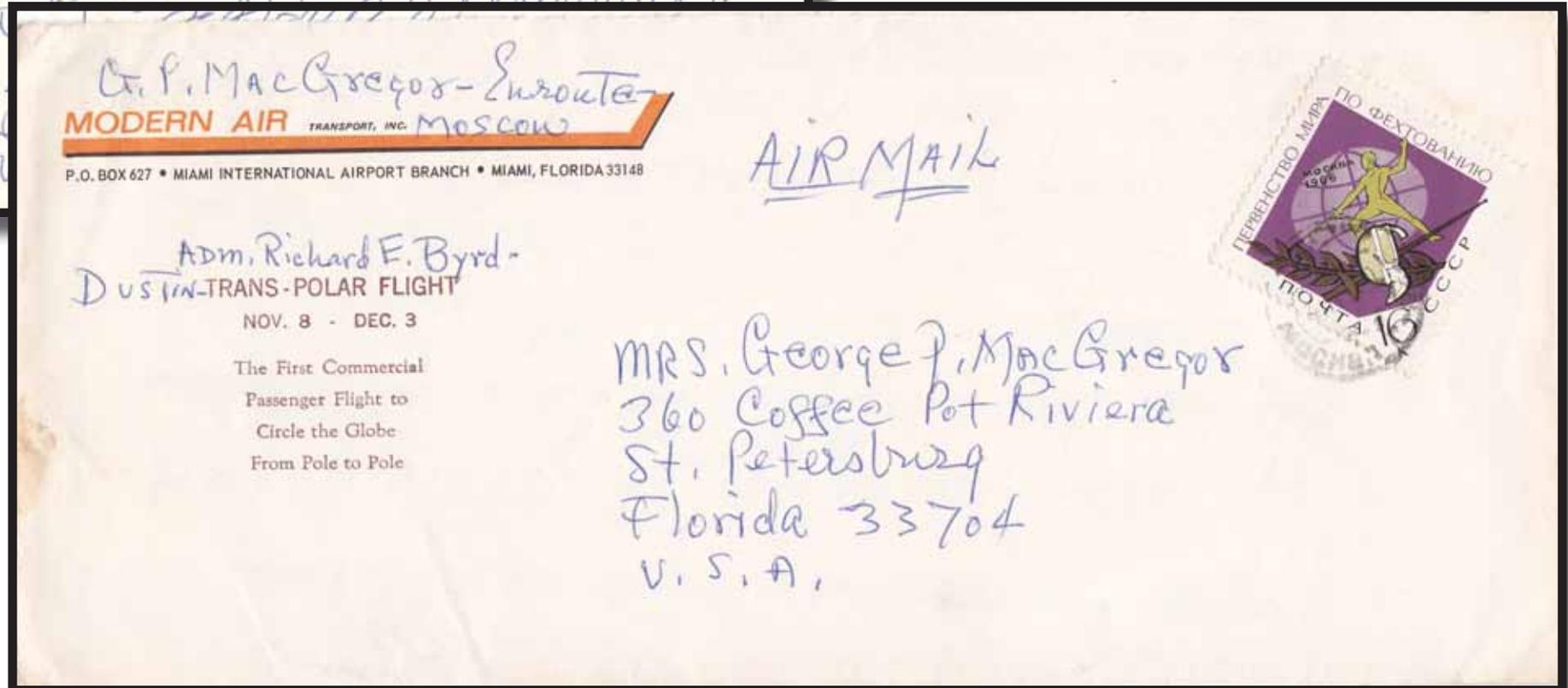


"We're stopping here for fuel before going to Moscow. We had a fine flight. The Himalayas were gorgeous. We take on a Russian pilot here. We're late getting started so we'll be late getting in. All my love, George."

"We had a magnificent flight from Rome to Copenhagen, flew over the Italian Alps in bright sunlight and arrived here comfortably. The Consul in the Russia-Rome Embassy was most gracious, very helpful and worked very hard to help us make this trip on such very short notice. They couldn't have been nicer.

The National Hotel is very old with filigree ceilings, paneling, marble floors, etc. It's snowing hard today, and quite dark. We visit the Kremlin and go to the ballet tonight."

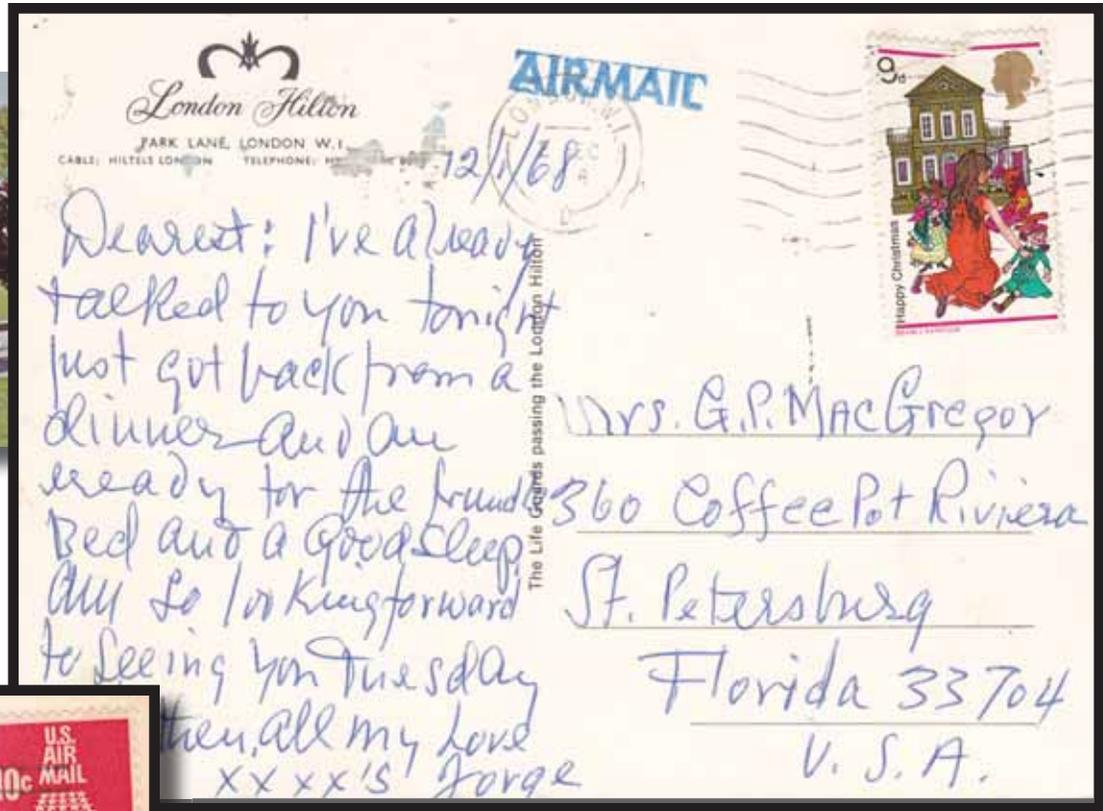
30 Nov 1968, Moscow, USSR



around the world in 26 days: the dustin trans-polar flight

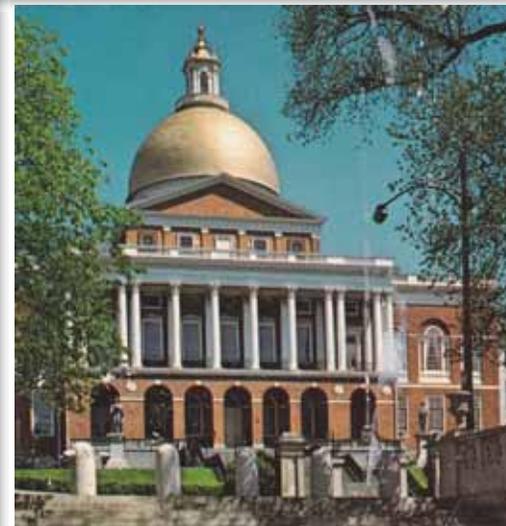
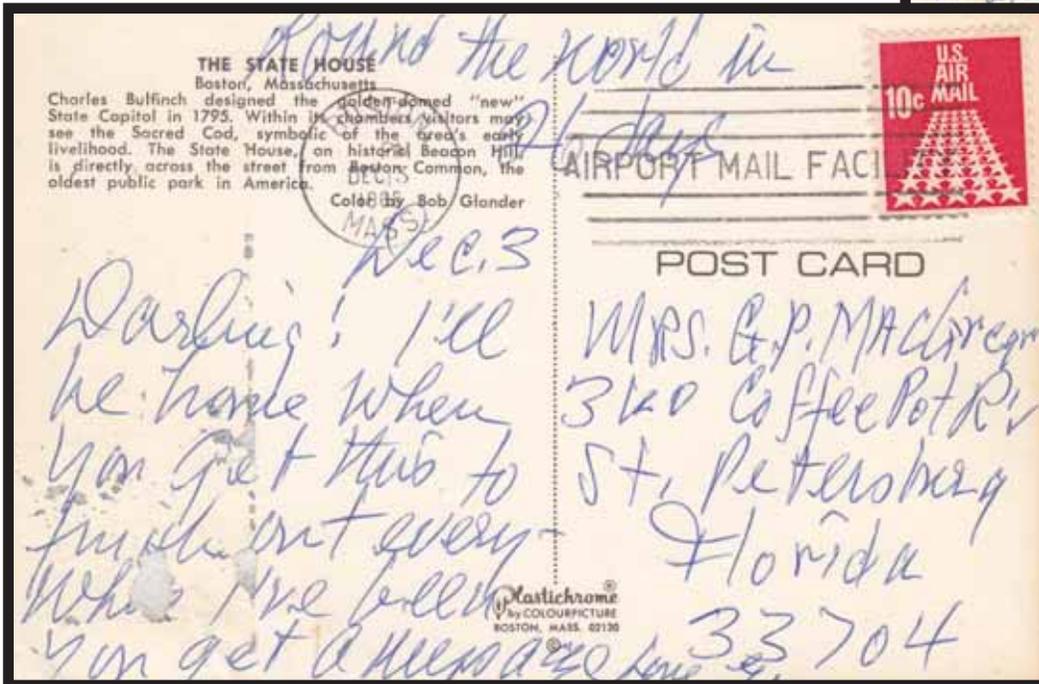
London, England to Boston, USA

2 Dec 1968, London, England



"Dearest: I've already talked to you tonight. Just got back from dinner and I'm ready for the trundle bed and a good sleep. Am so looking forward to seeing you Tuesday."

3 Dec 1968, Boston, USA



"I'll be home when you get this ... Hasn't this last leg from Boston been something? The worst delay of our round the world trip was three hours once. Round the world over both poles in 26 days, 36,000 miles, 84 hours flying time plus gate to gate. Boston to Tampa 24 hours and 15 minutes."