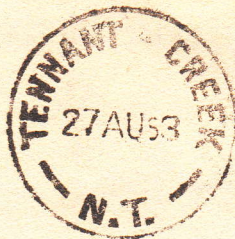


AIR MAIL

FLYING DOCTOR  
SERVICE OF AUSTRALIA



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VICTORIA.

SOUVENIR OF THE FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE



COMMEMORATING  
"FLYNN OF THE INLAND"  
THE VERY REV. **JOHN FLYNN** O.B.E. D.D.  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA  
1880 ~ 1951

HIS VISION ENCOMPASSED THE CONTINENT  
HE ESTABLISHED THE AUSTRALIAN INLAND MISSION  
AND FOUNDED THE FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE  
HE BROUGHT TO LONELY PLACES A SPIRITUAL MINISTRY  
AND SPREAD A MANTLE OF SAFETY OVER THEM  
BY MEDICINE, AVIATION AND RADIO.

*Hudson*



**WHY THE  
FLYING DOCTOR  
SERVICE ?**



**LACK OF COMMUNICATION**



## THE FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE IS BORN

Until 1926 Outback Australia had no easy means of communication. An aboriginal boy with a Yabba Stick,\* or a horseman riding to the point of exhaustion with a vital message, was commonplace. Telegraphy served the cities and main towns, but the Outback might not have existed. Camels took months to carry mails and the necessities of life over the endless miles, to small isolated families hundreds of miles from their nearest neighbour. The Rev. John Flynn, visionary and man of determination, saw all this as he travelled up and down the then “dead heart” of Australia, superintending the Australian Inland Mission. The isolation and loneliness set John Flynn thinking. How could the pioneers of the Inland share a portion at least of the amenities and privileges of City dwellers? How could women with their children share life with their men, secure in the knowledge that medical aid was “just around the corner”? How could neighbour keep in touch with neighbour? How? John Flynn decided that the Inland could not wait for civilisation to come to it. Characteristically he solved the problem after his own fashion. Medicine, Aviation, Wireless! Those were the three elements which Flynn was to weld into a National Service.

\* *Yabba Stick or Message Stick—cleft stick used by aborigines for carrying written messages.*



**DOCTORS *WERE* AVAILABLE**

Mute testimony to the isolation in which the early settlers spent their lives are the many lonely graves scattered throughout the Inland. Tragically—needlessly—women were widowed and children left fatherless because medical aid was not available quickly or easily. The development of 'planes helped John Flynn solve his problem. The Flying Doctor Service of Australia was born, bringing health and healing to the Inland. A message to the Flying Doctor Base, a brief description of illness or accident sends medical help "a-flying". In serious cases it is only a matter of minutes before the doctor is on his way. Relief and comfort for patient and family follows.

Here is the story of a young stockman thrown from his horse. Despite a broken leg causing untold agony, he managed to round up the animal, mount and return to the homestead. The Flying Doctor Base was called. Doctor gave instructions for the patient's care until his arrival in the Flying Doctor aircraft. Bringing the patient to the nearest hospital, setting the leg and caring for him until he is fit is merely routine—another errand of mercy, now so much a part of Inland life.

A young lubra attacked with waddies by her husband and relatives was struck across the stomach and head. With deep lacerations in her scalp and other injuries, she too was taken to hospital, given expert attention and nursed back to health.

Sir Willoughby Norrie, whilst Governor of South Australia, was knocked from a camel at Marree, S.A. His back was injured in the fall; the Flying Doctor attended him and later flew him to Adelaide.

This story illustrates how personal is the Service. It is not just a service for Inlanders, but for everyone in Australia. Australians, "new" or "old", it makes no difference to the Flying Doctor Service. This is YOUR Service always available with help, irrespective of colour, class or creed.



**THEN CAME AEROPLANES**



The third and very important arm of the service envisaged by John Flynn is that wonder of our age—Radio. Without it and the “pedal” for which we are indebted to Alfred Traeger, O.B.E., of Adelaide, the dumb Inland would still be without voice.

Mr. Traeger realised that any set he built must be simple and reliable, without need of instruction in wireless engineering and practice. Batteries were ruled out because of deterioration in transit, lack of storage and recharging facilities. The perfecting of the pedal generator, the tiny dynamo worked by a pair of bicycle pedals generating reasonably high voltage at low wattage, eventually solved the initial problem. And so the “pedal” was destined not only to crack the Great Australian Loneliness, but to enrich the Australian language. Absorbed unchangingly, regardless of improvements in the changing future.

Today the “pedal” is an integral part of the Outback. Each homestead is in touch with its mother station (the nearest F.D. Base). “Over the fence” conversations with neighbours anything up to 100 miles apart are commonplace. What does it matter if they rarely meet—or never? What does matter is that isolation has been shattered. Women, lonely during the weeks when their men are mustering, can now have their woman-to-woman gossip sessions. The “pedal” has transformed isolation into a community, a community of voices spread over hundreds of miles.

Children, too, are being absorbed into the radio life of the Outback. In the past they have been left to grow up knowing nothing of the world outside the immediate homestead surroundings. Today there is “School of the Air”! Under the guidance of teachers specially trained for this work children of all ages are losing their shyness, that shyness born of loneliness. Under the stimulus of new interests and widening horizons the children of the Outback can now take their place in the world that had forgotten them.



**BUT WHAT OF WIRELESS?**

## WHY THIS STORY CONCERNS YOU.

To Australia belongs the honour of a Service unique in the world. Nowhere else are the benefits of medicine, aeroplane, radio banded together for the benefit of mankind. This is YOUR Service—every man, woman and child in Australia may need the Flying Doctor at some time. What happens daily in the Outback could happen to you! The development of Australia depends as surely on the Flying Doctor Service as it does on railways, airways, the wheat harvest or the wool clip.

Today the Flying Doctor Service Radio Network covers more than half the continent of Australia, equivalent to an area of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million square miles, with Bases in W.A., S.A., Alice Springs, N.S.W., and Queensland. Victoria, having no need for such a service within the State, is responsible for the Kimberley area in the north-west of Western Australia.

To a large extent it is run by voluntary contributions. The personnel of the State Sections and the Federal Council are entirely voluntary. In recognition of the work it is doing, and because of the tremendously increased cost of operation, Federal and State Government aid is received today. The F.D.S. is always glad of an opportunity to express appreciation of the financial assistance received from these authorities, the co-operation of leading officials, particularly in the P.M.G.'s Department, and the various Departments of Health.

The Very Rev. John Flynn, O.B.E., D.D., died on the 5th May, 1951. His remains lie at the foot of Mt. Gillen, the site chosen by him. A memorial raised in his memory at the junction of the North-South and East-West Roads, near Tennant's Creek, symbolises the individualism and idealism of the man whose vision made possible the Flying Doctor Service of Australia. A rugged stone structure surmounted by a white cross on each face, bearing a brass plaque:

“His Vision encompassed the Continent,  
He established the Australian Inland Mission  
And founded the Flying Doctor Service,  
He brought to lonely places a spiritual Ministry  
And spread a Mantle of Safety over them  
by Medicine, Aviation and Radio.”

**FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE**  
**RADIO**  
**NETWORK**



**THIS STORY CONCERNS YOU!**