



The USPS Postal Service:

Early U.S. Air Mail Was Called the Pony Express of the Air

- ✓ Some people called the first coast-to-coast airmail service “the Pony Express of the air.”
- ✓ In 1921, mail spent five days on train on its way from New York to California. However, the Post Office believed it would be faster to use airplanes that could fly day and night.
- ✓ At the time, night long-distance flying was rare. There were few airports, no lights, no ground beacons to guide pilots and a very few good maps.
- ✓ But the Post Office persuaded some WWI pilots to give it a go and the first four planes took off on February 1921 with a load of mail. Two flew from San Francisco and two flew from New York. Only one plane completed the trip.
- ✓ Like the Pony Express, the planes worked in relays. It took five pilots 33 hours and 20 minutes to fly one plane from San Francisco to New York. Bad weather grounded two of the other planes, and the fourth plane crashed.
- ✓ Yet, the pilots proved air mail could succeed, and regular cross-country air mail service began in 1925.

Source: <http://superbeefy.com>

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