

# France: First Flight from Great Britain to South Africa

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**Form:** Circular

**By:** After John Pinches, London

**Date:** c 1975

**Ref:** Laidlaw: 0349b;

Variations:	Size	Metal	Mass	Value
	44.5 mm	Gilded Silver	38.0 gm	\$35

**Edge:** Plain. Stamped: "VERMEIL" and the French hallmark for sterling silver. Also stamped with the makers mark in a lozenge "P" and "76" in rectangles.

**Obverse:** A British Vickers Vimy bomber flying to the left, below busts of two Royal Air Force Officers in uniform with caps, side-by-side front.

**Reverse:** Within a laurel wreath entwined with a ribbon: "MUSEE DE L'AIR" at the bottom, the emblem of the French Air Force at the top, and that across: "Lt. Cl. Pierre van Ryneveld / et Major C.J.Q. Brand / Première liaison / Grande-Bretagne - Afrique du Sud / 4 Février - 20 Mars 1920".

**Notes:** The two pilots on this medal were born in South Africa. General Sir Hesperus Andrias van Ryneveld KBE CB DSO MC (1891-1972) was the founding commander of the South African Air Force (SAAF). Air Vice Marshal Sir Christopher Joseph Quintin Brand KBE, DSO, MC, DFC, (1893-1968) was a South African born officer of the Royal Air Force.

In the First World War both men served with distinction in The Royal Flying Corps and later in The Royal Air Force. In 1919 The Times newspaper offered a £10,000 prize for the first flight from London to Cape Town. General Jan Smuts authorized the purchase of a Vickers Vimy, G-UABA named 'Silver Queen' and van Ryneveld (commander) and Brand (co-pilot) formed the crew for the record-breaking flight.

They left Brooklands, England, on 4 February 1920 and, while they successfully reached Cape Town by air on 20 March 1920, they were disqualified as winners of the prize because their original aircraft had crashed. Both van Ryneveld and Brand were knighted for their record attempt.

The British version of this medal is Laidlaw 0349a.