

Great Britain: First Flight from Great Britain to South Africa

Great Britain: First Flight from Great Britain to South Africa



Form: Circular

By: John Pinches, London

Date: 1975

Ref: Laidlaw: 0349a;

Variations:

Size	Metal Mass	Value
44.7 mm	Silver 39.8 gm	\$35

Edge: Plain. Stamped: "JP" in an oval and the London sterling silver hallmark for 1975 (A). Also stamped with a sequence number. This medal: "UK 1154".

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: "OFFICIAL ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM MEDAL" at the bottom, the emblem of the Royal Air Force and below that across: "Lt. Col. Pierre / van Ryneveld 1891-1972 / Captain Christopher / Quinton Brand 1893-1968 / First flight / Great Britain to / South Africa / 4 February- / 20 March 1920".

Notes: One of a set of fifty medals produced between 1973 and 1977, bound in two albums of leather and linen, entitled: "The Story of Man in Flight".

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 Quinton 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 offer 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 the record attempt.

The French version of this medal is Laidlaw 0349b.