

THE FLIGHT

DAN
HAMPTON

READ BY JOHN PRUDEN

ON THE RAINY MORNING OF MAY 20, 1927, A LITTLE-KNOWN American pilot named Charles A. Lindbergh climbed into his single-engine monoplane, *The Spirit of St. Louis*, and prepared to take off from a small airfield on Long Island, New York. Despite his inexperience—the twenty-five-year-old Lindbergh had never before flown over open water—he was determined to win the \$25,000 Orteig Prize promised since 1919 to the first pilot to fly nonstop between New York and Paris, a terrifying adventure that had already claimed six men's lives. Ahead of him lay a 3,600-mile solo journey across the vast north Atlantic and into the unknown; his survival rested on his skill, courage, and an unassuming little aircraft with no front window.

Only 500 people showed up to see him off. Thirty-three and a half hours later, a crowd of more than 100,000 mobbed the *Spirit* as the audacious young American touched down in Paris, having achieved the seemingly impossible. Overnight, as he navigated by the stars through storms across the featureless ocean, news of his attempt had circled the globe, making him an international celebrity by the time he reached Europe. He returned to the United States a national hero, feted with ticker-tape parades that drew millions, bestowed every possible award from the Medal of Honor to *Time's* "Man of the Year" (the first to be so named), commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp within months, and celebrated as the embodiment of the twentieth century and America's place in it.

Acclaimed aviation historian Dan Hampton's *The Flight* is a long-overdue, flyer's-eye narrative of Lindbergh's legendary journey. A decorated fighter pilot who flew more than 150 combat missions in an F-16 and made numerous transatlantic crossings, Hampton draws on his unique perspective to bring alive the danger, uncertainty, and heroic accomplishment of Lindbergh's crossing. Hampton's deeply researched telling also incorporates a trove of primary sources, including Lindbergh's own personal diary and writings, as well as family letters and untapped aviation archives that fill out this legendary story as never before.

DAN HAMPTON is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Viper Pilot*, *Lords of the Sky*, and *The Hunter Killers*, as well as a novel, *The Mercenary*. During his twenty years (1986–2006) of service in the United States Air Force, Colonel Hampton received four Distinguished Flying Crosses with Valor, a Purple Heart, eight Air Medals with Valor, five Meritorious Service medals, and numerous other citations. He is a graduate of the USAF Fighter Weapons School, USN Top Gun School (TOGS), and USAF Special Operations School. A frequent guest analyst on CNN, Fox News Channel, and MSNBC discussing foreign affairs, military, aviation, and intelligence issues, he has published in *Aviation History*, *Airpower*, the *Journal of Electronic Defense*, *Air Force Magazine*, *Vietnam* magazine, and Dartmouth College's *Clamantis* literary journal, and written several classified tactical works for the *USAF Weapons Review*.

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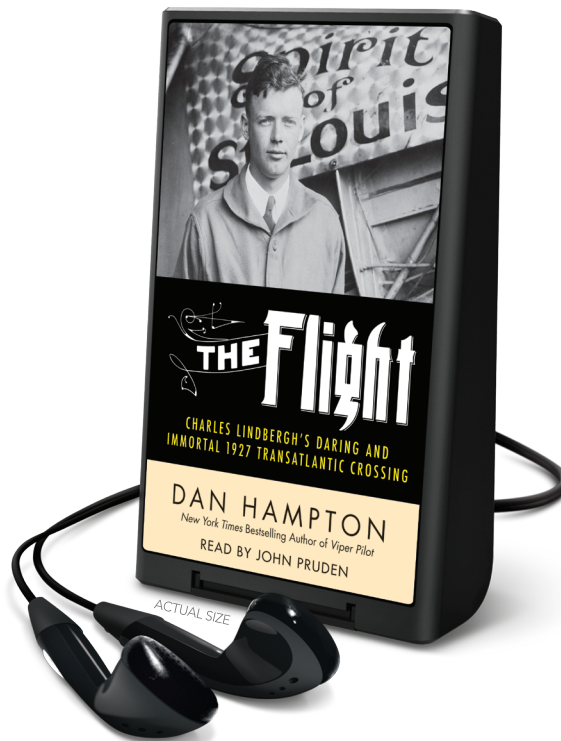


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