

## The Flying Doctors of Australia

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Australia is a big place. Many years ago travel was more difficult than it is today, and people who lived in the vast region known as the Outback had little contact with others.

During the early years of the 20th century, residents and travelers in the huge region had almost no access to medical care. A pastor, John Flynn, sought ways to help. Flynn was a native Australian with an interest in reaching people in the remote region.

During World War I, aviation had rapidly developed. Flynn saw the airplane as the ideal way to get medical care to those needing help in the Outback.

Although it took Flynn about 10 years of work, he was able to get the government to approve the new plan. He finally gained support for a flying doctors service.

The service was first used on May 17, 1928. On that day, Dr. K. St. Vincent traveled to a place known as Julia Creek to help with a medical situation. During the first year, the doctor saw 256 patients. The work expanded to more planes and several doctors. The medical men often had to land on poor airstrips, but brought help and hope to those in lonely places. The name, Flying Doctor Service, described the work.

Flynn had several other ideas about helping the isolated bush people. He wanted to educate children through correspondence courses. He used a pedal-operated radio to help with communication. The pedal powered the radio receiver and gave people in the remote areas contact with the outside world.

Flynn also founded the Australian Inland Mission as well as the *Inlander* magazine. He reported on conditions in the Outback and offered help in many ways. He visited many of the locations and assisted in practical things-such as repairing clocks.

Flynn was one of God's pioneers.

Sources: This Day in History

Royal Flying Doctor Service