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DOCUMENTARY
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Magic Flight

When the early pioneers were scouting out the first airmail routes in their “flying machines”, the plane was still regarded as too dangerous for passenger flights. One of these foolhardy postal pilots was the author of the children’s novella, the “Little Prince”, the Frenchman Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. He flew mail deliveries over northwest Africa and South America, and was one of those men who sought out danger and adventure, but who were also driven by the vision of connecting continents and countries. A fascinating and romantic life that ended all too soon for Saint-Exupéry, who never returned from a military mission over the Mediterranean. In a number of exciting episodes, the series relates the great moments in aviation history, but also the numerous setbacks such as the Hindenburg accident at Lakehurst. Rare footage shows bizarre test models, impressive airships, powerful seaplanes. Man may have long claimed the skies, but the urge to travel further and faster away from the earth can know no bounds...

01 Touching the Sky – How the Pioneers Lived and Died for Mankind’s Dream

As the history books would have it, the Wright brothers made the first motorised flight on 17th December 1903. But in actual fact, they were not the first humans to take to the skies: four months previously, the German inventor Karl Jatho successfully flew a motored plane. But while the Wrights’ achievements were feted worldwide, Jatho was quickly forgotten.

02 Airmail – Messengers of the Sky

The history of the blue airmail postmark is as thrilling as an adventure novel. At the start of the 20th century, pilots risked life and limb to deliver the mail on time. Their flying machines had to battle with all manner of weather conditions, as well as technical shortcomings. The daredevil aviation pioneers lived every day as though it were their last.

03 Giants of the Sky – The Dramatic History of the Zeppelin

As early as 1874, Count Zeppelin made note of an idea for an airship. But it was 1901 before the first Zeppelin took to the skies. The LZ124 made the first Atlantic crossing in 1924. The Hindenburg, the largest aircraft in the world at 245 metres, was put into service in 1936. But after the Lakehurst accident of 1937, when the Hindenburg exploded in a fireball killing 36 people, passenger transport in airships ceased.

04 Seaplanes – The Dinosaurs of Aviation

At the beginning of the 20th century, flying was an adventure with incalculable risks. If an aircraft crashed into the sea, it was lost. This was the golden era of the seaplane. The floating aircraft could land on almost any body of water, making them deployable in the most isolated regions. But technical progress soon made the ponderous dinosaurs of aviation obsolete. They were too big, too unwieldy, and guzzled too much kerosene.

05 Skyriders – The History of the Helicopter

Using spectacular and exclusive footage, this documentary film highlights the capabilities of modern helicopters and the difficulties facing the pioneers, and shows this fascinating technical invention in a variety of situations from lifesaving to military missions. It illuminates the history of the “Skyriders”, from Leonardo da Vinci’s initial experimental design to the amazing landing of the first helicopter on Mount Everest in May 2005.