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[About Us](#)
[Calendar](#)
[Past Events](#)
[Gallery](#)
[Hangar Aircraft](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Radio Controlled Warbird Aircraft within Australia

2014 - The Year of the BIG BUILD



Southern Cross - Lionel Weeks - Dec 2013

This magnificent aircraft owned by Lionel Weeks of Wishart, Queensland has a 100" wingspan and is powered by one OS 95 4/s engine with two 32 size electric motors. The IC engine has an extended crankshaft to conceal it as well as a ducted fan engine cooling system.

The entire aircraft (including the drawing of the plans) was built by Lionel.

This is perfection at its best.



Southern Cross is the name of the Fokker F.VIIb/3m trimotor monoplane which in 1928 was flown by Australian aviator Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and his crew in the first ever trans-Pacific flight to Australia from the mainland United States, about 7,250 miles (11,670 km).

The *Southern Cross* began life as the *Detroit*, a polar exploration aircraft of the *Detroit News*-Wilkins Arctic expedition. The aircraft had crashed in Alaska in 1926, and was recovered and repaired by the Australian expedition leader, Hubert Wilkins. Wilkins, who had decided the Fokker was too large for his Arctic explorations, met with Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm in San Francisco and arranged to sell them the aircraft, without engines or instruments.

The **Southern Cross** is inside the Kingsford Smith Memorial at the Brisbane Airport.

Having fitted the aircraft out with engines and the other required parts, Kingsford Smith made two attempts at the world endurance record, in an attempt to raise funds and interest for his trans-Pacific flight. However, after the New South Wales government withdrew its sponsorship of the flight, it looked as if the money would run out and Kingsford Smith would have to sell the *Southern Cross*. The aircraft was bought by American aviator and philanthropist Allan Hancock, who then loaned it back to Kingsford Smith and Ulm.

Kingsford Smith and Ulm also made the first nonstop Trans-Tasman flight in the *Southern Cross* – over the Tasman Sea from Australia to New Zealand and back (c. 2,500 miles (4,000 km)) – beginning with the first crossing on 10/11 September 1928. Guy Menzies completed the first solo trans-Tasman flight in the *Southern Cross Junior* in 1931.

Shortly before Kingsford Smith's death in 1935, he donated the *Southern Cross* to the Commonwealth of Australia, for display in a museum. The aircraft was brought out of retirement briefly in 1945 for the filming of the movie *Smithy*. The machine was refurbished in 1985 under the supervision of Jim Schofield, a senior aviation civil servant and air crash investigator. The *Southern Cross* is now preserved in a special glass hangar memorial on Airport Drive, near the International Terminal at Brisbane Airport in Queensland, Australia. There is also a full-sized flying reproduction of the *Southern Cross* in South Australia. This aircraft was built in the 1980s and is the largest known reproduction aircraft in the world.

The **Southern Cross** can be viewed inside the Kingsford Smith Memorial which is at the Brisbane Airport.

