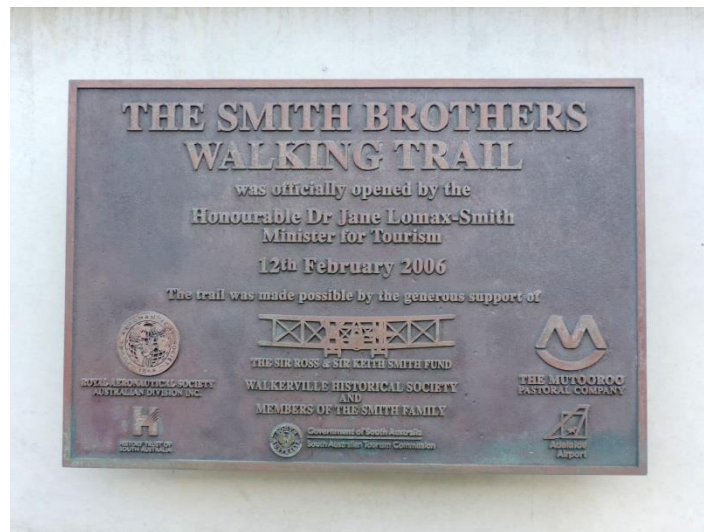


Smith Brothers Walking Trail, Adelaide Airport

Opened on 12 February 2006, the trail consists of 21 plaques that describe each stage of the 1919 epic flight. The trail begins at the new airport terminal and leads to the Vickers Vimy Enclosure.

Inscription:

THE SMITH BROTHERS
WALKING TRAIL
WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED BY THE
HONOURABLE DR JANE LOMAX-SMITH
MINISTER FOR TOURISM
12TH FEBRUARY 2006



2019 (H.Stein)



Opening, 12.2.2006. L-R: Pam Lloyd, Bardie Andrews, Jan Treloar, Judy Rischbieth, Jane Lomax-Smith, Ron Howard, Peter Morgan.

(Photo: ?Gary Lloyd)



HOUNSLOW

12 November 1919

Visibility was poor. Taking off, the crew felt a jolt.

A stubborn photographer on the runway had just lost his equipment.

LYONS

12 November 1919

Stiff with cold, they hobbled like robots from the Vimy

The French thought that they were mad to fly in such appalling weather.



PISA

15 November 1919

Tied to a rope, Jim Bennett crawled along the fuselage.

His weight held down the tail as the plane taxied off.

ROME

15 November 1919

The flight to Rome from Pisa was one long battle against heavy winds.

Dense clouds and rain forced them to fly perilously low.





CRETE

17 November 1919

They were flying blind when a rocky island loomed suddenly from the mist.

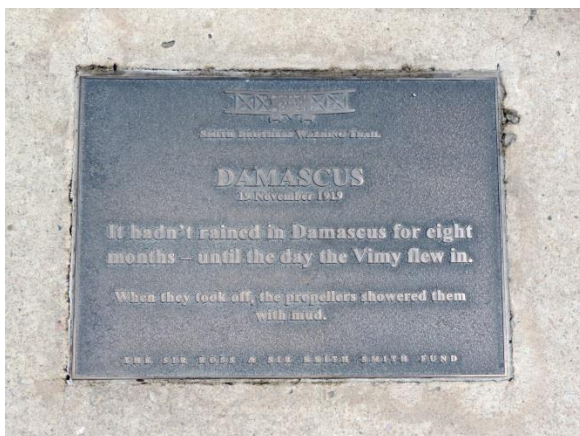
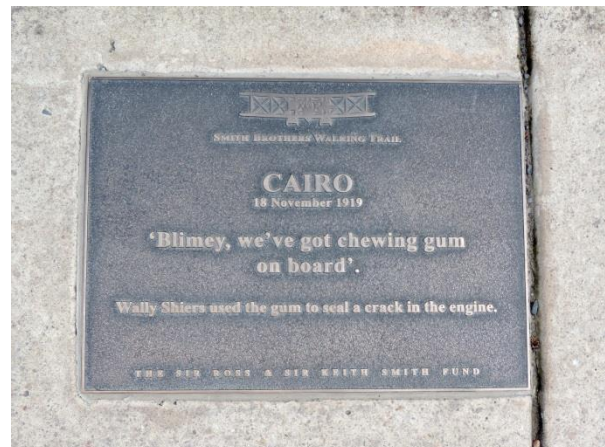
Swerving violently, they just missed it.

CAIRO

18 November 1919

'Blimey, we've got chewing gum on board'.

Wally Shiers used the gum to seal a crack in the engine.



DAMASCUS

19 November 1919

It hadn't rained in Damascus for eight months - until the day the Vimy flew in.

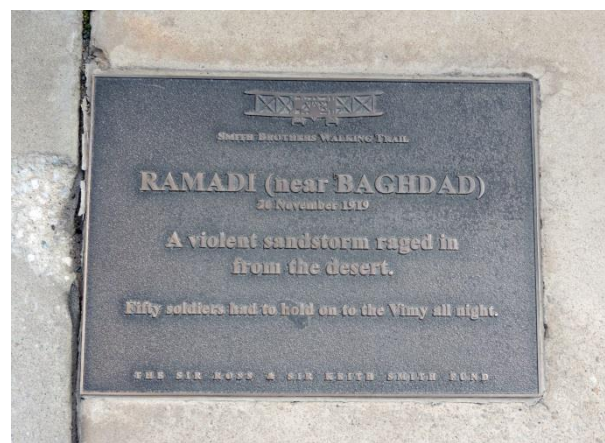
When they took off, the propellers showered them with mud.

RAMADI (near BAGHDAD)

20 November 1919

A violent sandstorm raged in from the desert.

Fifty soldiers had to hold on to the Vimy all night.





BASRA

22 November 1919

The Smiths took a well-earned day of rest at the Royal Air Force depot.

Bennett and Shiers serviced the Vimy.

KARACHI

24 November 1919

Bandar Abbas to Karachi was the longest stretch of the race.

The relentless flying was telling on them all.



DELHI

25 November 1919

The constant roar of the engines had deafened Ross Smith.

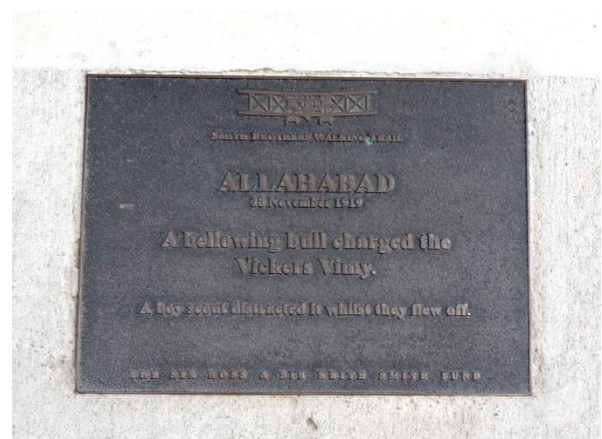
He heard not a word of the welcoming speeches.

ALLAHABAD

28 November 1919

A bellowing bull charged the Vickers Vimy.

A boy scout distracted it whilst they flew off.





CALCUTTA

29 November 1919

Hawks circled the aircraft after take-off. One hit the propeller.

But no damage was done and the Vimy climbed out of danger.

RANGOON

30 November 1919

G-EAOU was the first aeroplane to land in Rangoon – on the racecourse.

The Smiths had overtaken their French rival.



BANGKOK

1 December 1919

The flight in was terrifying.

The crew flew over wild, cloud-covered mountains with poor maps to guide them.

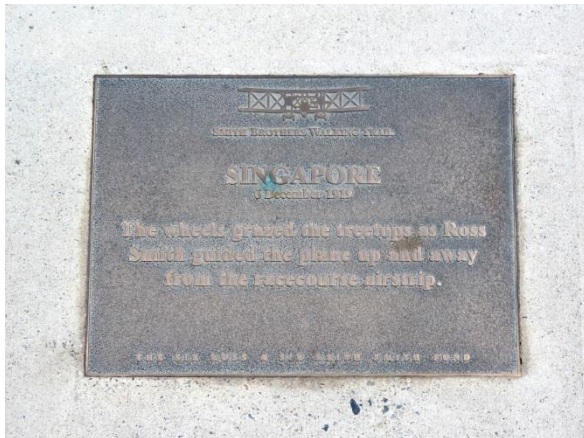
SINGORA

2 December 1919

The landing was a miracle.

The 'good airfield' was a patch of cleared jungle, half under water and bristling with tree stumps.





SINGAPORE

6 December 1919

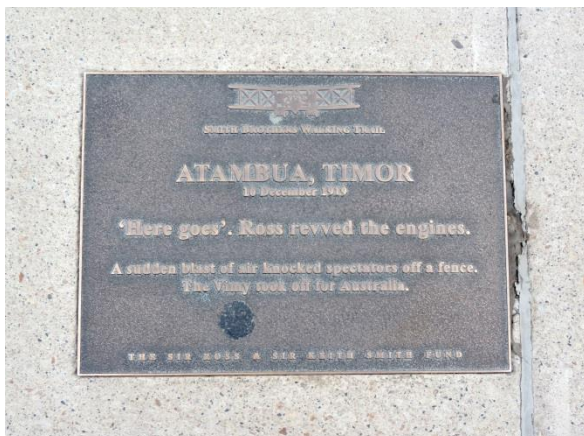
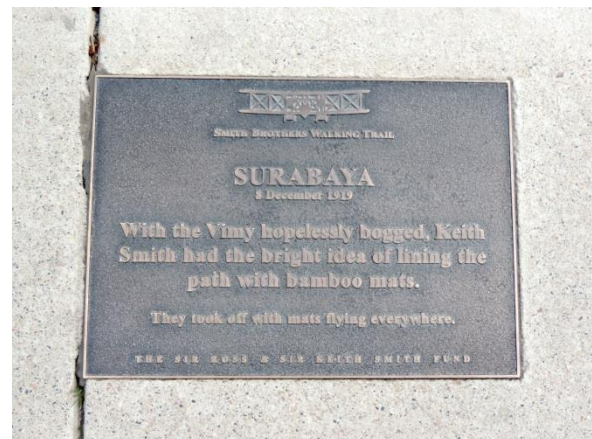
The wheels grazed the treetops as Ross Smith guided the plane up and away from the racecourse airstrip.

SURABAYA

8 December 1919

With the Vimy hopelessly bogged, Keith Smith had the bright idea of lining the path with bamboo mats.

They took off with mats flying everywhere.



ATAMBUA, TIMOR

10 December 1919

'Here goes.' Ross revved the engines.

A sudden blast of air knocked spectators off a fence. The Vimy took off for Australia.

DARWIN

10 December 1919

'We almost fell into Darwin'.
The fuel tanks were bone dry.

They had made it. But their home in Adelaide was still 50 days away.



(Photos: H.Stein 2019)