

Air traffic



The Helsinki-Stockholm air-liner arrives at the Helsinki aerodrome.

The Company Aero O/Y was founded in November 1923 by the late Consul *Bruno Lucander* and started air traffic on the line [Helsinki-Tallinn](#) in spring 1924 with a single engined Junkers F.13. In the same year the Company purchased a second F.13 and began to operate the line *Helsinki-Stockholm* during the summer months together with the newly founded Swedish company A.B. Aerotransport. From these modest beginnings Finnish air traffic has gradually taken its present shape, the principal weight being laid on the development of the "*Scandinavian Air Express*" whose northern section Aero O/Y is now operating together with the Swedish A. B. Aerotransport. This line now runs from Tallinn via Helsinki and Turku to Stockholm. The night express from Stockholm has immediate connection at Malmö with the western section of the "*Scandinavian Air Express*" to Amsterdam, London and Paris, as well as with the different lines to Germany, Belgium and Southern Europe. With the opening of the new landing field at Stockholm-Bromma in July 1936 the lines which before ended at Malmö could be extended to Stockholm and Aero O/Y runs yet another service between Finland and Sweden by which an excellent day connection was established with most capitals in Western and Central Europe. Apart from the main line of the "*Scandinavian Air Express*" Aero O/Y maintains a local traffic between Helsinki and Tallinn and the connections at Tallinn with the lines run by the German and Polish companies to Berlin and Warsaw are excellent. During the bathing season a special service is run between Stockholm and Mariehamn on the Åland Islands which has proved a great success.

The international traffic is now run with three-engined aeroplanes of the type Junkers Ju 52 with accommodations for at least 15 passengers, pilot, flight mechanic and wireless operator. Two internal air lines *Helsinki-Viipuri* and *Helsinki-Tampere* were opened 1/5 1937 and are run with English twin engined Dragon Rapide aircrafts with accommodation for 2 men's crew and 7 passengers. In the summer of 1938, however, an "*Arctic Air Express*" service is to be inaugurated on the route *Helsinki-Tampere-Vaasa-Oulu-Kemi-Petsamo*. This service will enable travellers to fly from Helsinki to the Arctic coast in one day.

Aero O/Y received the first subsidy from the Government in 1926 and has since then received a yearly sum which, however, due to the comparative poverty of the country is smaller than that given to any other air traffic company in Europe. In spite of small funds, however, the Company has succeeded in obtaining a remarkable high percentage of paying load and both passenger and mail traffic have steadily increased. Thus the Company's seaplanes during the first year (1924) carried 534 passengers in all, whilst in 1934 the corresponding number was 6,550 and in 1935 7,098 and in 1936 8,702 and there is good reason to expect that these numbers will double and redouble themselves in the years to come.

As to mail transport to which more and more attention is given in European air traffic the Company has been greatly aided by the modern point of view taken by the Finnish Postal Authorities from the

very beginning. From 1928 Aero O/Y has taken part in the night air mail service run by several air traffic companies during the summer months. During these night mail periods the whole of the Finnish post, that is letters, postcards and postal orders, are carried by aeroplane without special charge. These missives might be put into any letter box unto a certain hour when the bulk of the mail is collected. After this some special postage is demanded. The advantages of this to a country of Finland's geographical situation, especially from a business point of view, are obvious. The night air mail service is now kept going all the year round.

The principal obstacle to the development of Finnish civil air traffic has been the absence of land-aerodromes along the main lines. This meant an interruption of traffic in spring and autumn when ice drifts prevent the landing with seaplanes and when, on the other side, the ice is not thick enough to carry aeroplanes on skis, apart from the circumstance that the heavy undercarriage of the seaplanes limits the accessible margin for paying load in a traffic where demands for seats often cannot be met.

This, however, is completely changed the last year. The landing field at Turku has been inaugurated in September 1935 and the new land-aerodrome at Helsinki was ready for traffic in December 1936. With this it is possible to maintain an uninterrupted connection through international lines with the other European countries and Finnish air traffic has now reached a new stage from which to develop under more favourable auspices.

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Regular international flights from Finland in 1939:

- **Helsinki-Turku-Stockholm**, carriers mentioned in the timetable: Aero Oy (Finnish), Ab. Aerotransport (Swedish), Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij (Dutch).
- **Mariehamn-Stockholm**, carriers: Aero Oy (Finnish), Ab. Aerotransport (Swedish).
- **Helsinki-Tallinn**, carriers: Aero Oy (Finnish), Ab. Aerotransport (Swedish), Deutsche Lufthansa A.G. (German), Polskie Linje Lotnicze Lot (Polish).
- **Helsinki--Tallinna-Riga-Kaunas-Königsberg-Berlin**, carriers: Aero Oy (Finnish), Deutsche Lufthansa A.G. (German).
- **Helsinki-Tallinn-Riga-Kaunas-Wilno-Warzawa-Krakow-Budapest**, carriers: Aero Oy (Finnish), Polskie Linje Lotnicze Lot (Polish), Magyar Legiforgalmi R.T. "Malert" (Hungarian).

Source: Heikki Immeli & Kari Juntunen: "Piletti Pietariin" (*Ticket to St. Petersburg*). The centenary jubilee publication of the annually in multiple volumes published "*Public communications in Finland*". Finnish Tourist Association, 1991.

Aero O/Y (meaning Aero Ltd) changed its name to Finnair for marketing purposes already in 1953 and, finally, officially in 1968. The flight numbers, like AY543, still remind of the old company name. The Helsinki international airport (Helsinki-Vantaa) was moved to its present site in 1952. The previous Malmi airport (the new land-aerodrome in the article) serves now small aircraft traffic. However, the runway area of the historical airport is under threat of being converted to a residential area.
