

1925, the US Congress passes the new *Air Mail Act* also known as the *Kelly Act*. The Postmaster General will now contract commercial airline companies to carry mail.

Step into the shoes of an aviation tycoon and manage one of these companies competing for the contracts to establish and operate the first air mail service. Grab the incentives offered by the government by plotting the most efficient routes and developing the technology that will allow you to build the most autonomous and reliable models. Whoever can make the most profit for their company will win. Get ready for *Air Mail* to take off !

COMPONENTS



1 Double-sided Board: Map of the United States, 2 to 5 players, and Map of Canada, 2 to 3 players



5 Income Counters

5 Technology Counters



115 Planes (23 of each colour)



90 Packages (18 of each colour)



60 Permit Cards



12 Special Permit Cards



12 Postal Service Decree Cards



64 Express Delivery Cards for the United States Map



52 Express Delivery Cards for the Canada Map



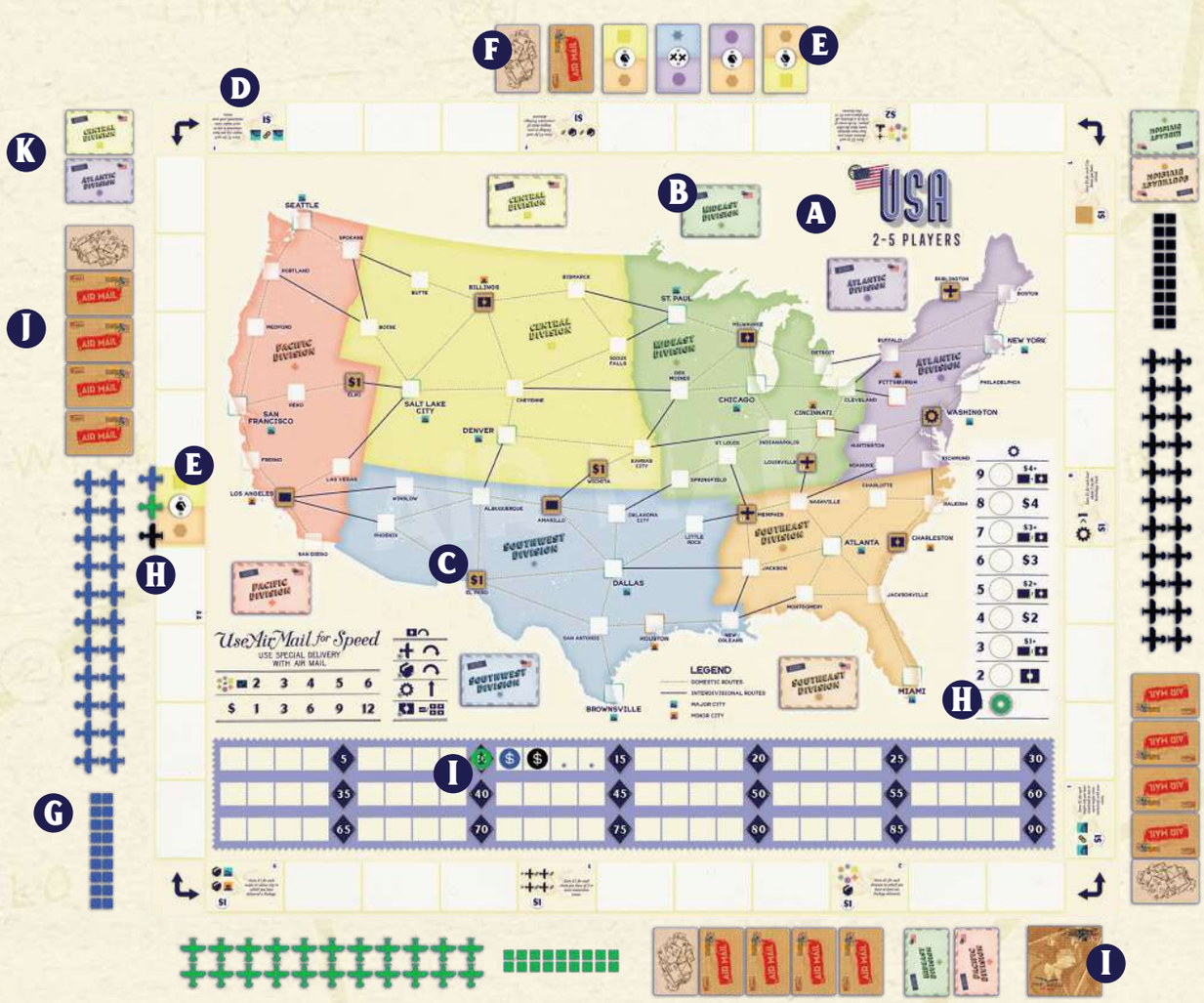
18 City Bonuses



1 Starting Player Token

1 Rulebook

SETUP



A. Place the Board in the centre of the table on the side of your choice, depending on the number of players. For 4- or 5-player games you should play on the United States Map. For 2- or 3-player games you can choose either Map, although we recommend Canada if you want more interaction between players.

B. Take the Express Delivery Cards that correspond to the Map you will be playing on, separate them by colour into decks, shuffle each deck, and place each deck face down on its corresponding space on the Map.

C. Next, reveal the first 2 Express Delivery Cards of each division and place 1 face-up City Bonus randomly on each of the cities indicated by those cards. Once this is done, place the used cards on the bottom of their respective decks and return the remaining City Bonuses to the box.

D. Shuffle the Postal Service Decree Cards, draw 9 and distribute them face up randomly in the 9 squares marked for Decrees on the Permit Track surrounding the Map. Return the remaining Decree Cards to the box.

E. Shuffle the Permit Cards, form a face-down deck next to the Board and reveal the first 4 cards. **Both the face-up cards and the deck itself represent the Public Permits Offer.** Draw a card from the deck and place it face up on the starting square of the Permit Track (/ depending on the map). **In 2-player games, instead of placing a Permit Card on the starting square, draw 2 cards from the deck and place them face up on the 2 squares marked with the icon .**

F. Shuffle the Special Permit Cards into a face-down deck near the Permit Deck.

G. Take the Planes, Packages and Counters of the colour of your choice, and place them in your play area.

H. Next, place your Technology Counter on square 1 of the Technology Track and one of your Planes, which we'll call **the Executive Plane**, next to the starting square of the Permit Track.

I. Randomly decide who the starting player will be and give them the Starting Player Token. They set their Income Counter to $10, the second player, continuing clockwise, sets it to $11, the third to $12, and so on.

J. Draw 5 cards: 4 from the Permit Deck and 1 from the Special Permits Deck. Your hand of cards is always concealed.

K. Finally, starting with the last player and proceeding anticlockwise, e**ach player draws an Express Delivery Card from two different divisions, without repeating the same colour combination chosen by another player.** These cards are kept secret and are not revealed until the end of the game.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVE

The aim at *Air Mail* is to achieve the highest income for your company. There are three main ways to achieve income:

- **Transporting Packages between the different divisions of the country.** The maximum distance you can send a delivery depends on your level of technology, which you can improve during the game. The greater the distance between the origin and destination of a delivery, the more income you will earn.

- **Comply with the Postal Service Decrees.** During the game, they will be activated in the form of common objectives that will be scored by all players.

- **Make Express Deliveries.** At the end of the game, you will get the income indicated in the Express Deliveries that you possess and have fulfilled.

To achieve all of the above, you will have to plot and extend air routes connecting the different divisions, playing Permit Cards and asking for grants from the administration.

PLAYING

A game of *Air Mail* consists of an indeterminate series of rounds in which, starting with the starting player and proceeding clockwise, each player in turn must choose between these 2 options:

Play a Permit Card from their hand
OR
Ask for a grant

PLAY A PERMIT CARD

The Permit Card Deck includes 4 times each combination of the 6 colours on the Map. Each colour corresponds to one of the 6 Postal divisions into which the Map is divided.

Note: On the Map of Canada, Juneau belongs to the USA division (green).

Permit Cards are placed on the Permit Track squares around the board, connecting the ends by colour in a similar way to dominoes. **Thus, in order to play a Permit Card, one of the colours of the card has to match the colour of one of the 2 ends of the row of cards being created on the Permit Track. The colour you use to connect your card will in turn determine the active division.**

Note: Special Permit Cards are always playable because one end of the card is multi-coloured (joker) and can therefore be connected to any colour.



Active Division: Central



Active Division: Mideast



Playing a Permit Card in this way gives you 3 Operations Points (OPs) which you can spend on 4 available actions, **bearing in mind that each of them costs 1 OP and that you cannot repeat actions, except for the *Expand your Postal Network action*.**

If you play a Permit Card in a square occupied by a Postal Service Decree Card, set the Decree Card aside, place your Permit Card and spend your 3 OPs as normal.

The Decree Card will be scored at the end of your turn (see POSTAL SERVICE DECREES, p. 9).



The 4 actions you can spend your OPs on are:

EXPAND YOUR POSTAL NETWORK

Place a Plane from your reserve on **a free route in the active division: a free route is a route where there is no Plane and each route admits only one Plane. From that moment on, that route will be yours.** This is the only action you can repeat on your turn (you can spend your 3 OPs to place 3 Planes).

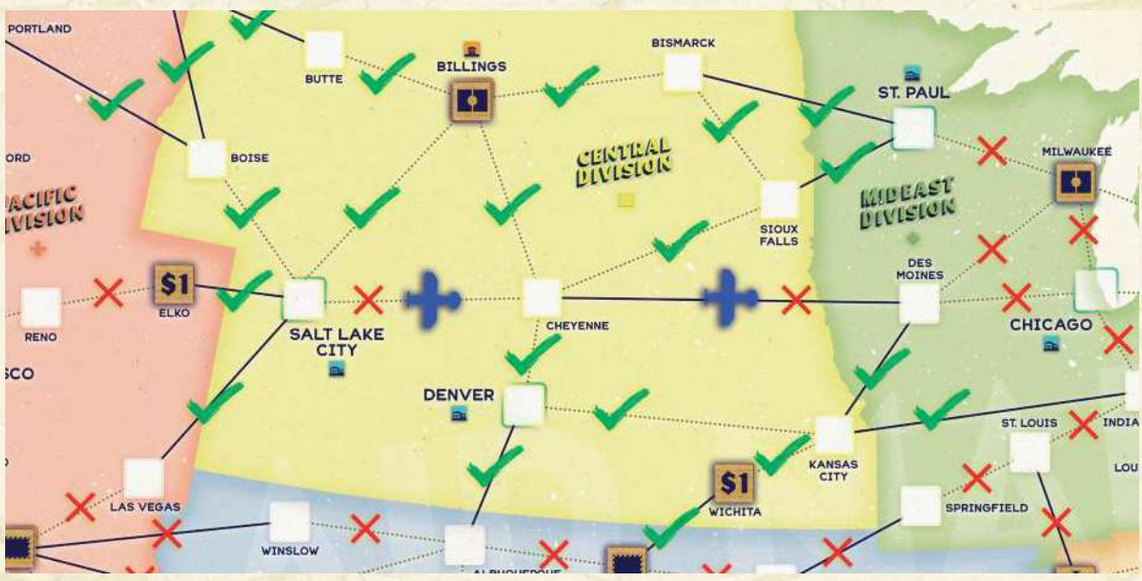
There are 2 types of routes:

Domestic Route (dotted line): links 2 cities of the same division.

Interdivisional Route (solid line): links 2 cities of different divisions. **These routes belong to the 2 divisions (colours) they connect.**



Active Division: Central



Example of the routes in the active division where you can place your Planes

In the rare case that you have placed all your Planes, this action allows you to move one of your already placed Planes to a free route of the active division.

Obtain a New Permit

Draw 1 card from the Public Permits Offer: you can either draw one of the face-up cards or draw one from the Permit Deck. If you draw one of the cards face up, immediately replace the card with another card from the deck.

Improve your Technology Level

Move your Counter 1 step forward on the Technology Track. You start the game at level 1 and can go up to level 9. If you reach the last square on the Track, you can no longer perform this action.

Each level indicates the number of routes you can use for a delivery and the reward you get for it. The higher you raise your Technology Level, the higher your chances of making deliveries and gaining the benefits, as **the number of routes you can travel to make a delivery must always be equal to or less than the level of your Counter on the Track.**

Make a Delivery

Send a Package from your reserve via plane routes from a city in the active division to a city in another division, or the other way around. When making the Delivery you must bear in mind that:

- There must be a Plane, your own or someone else's, on each of the routes linking the city of origin to the destination city, and you can only use each route once during a single Delivery.
- You may never use more routes than your Technology Level allows.
- The route out of the city of origin should be your own. From this first route, if you use other players' routes, **each of those players earns $1 for each of their routes you use.**

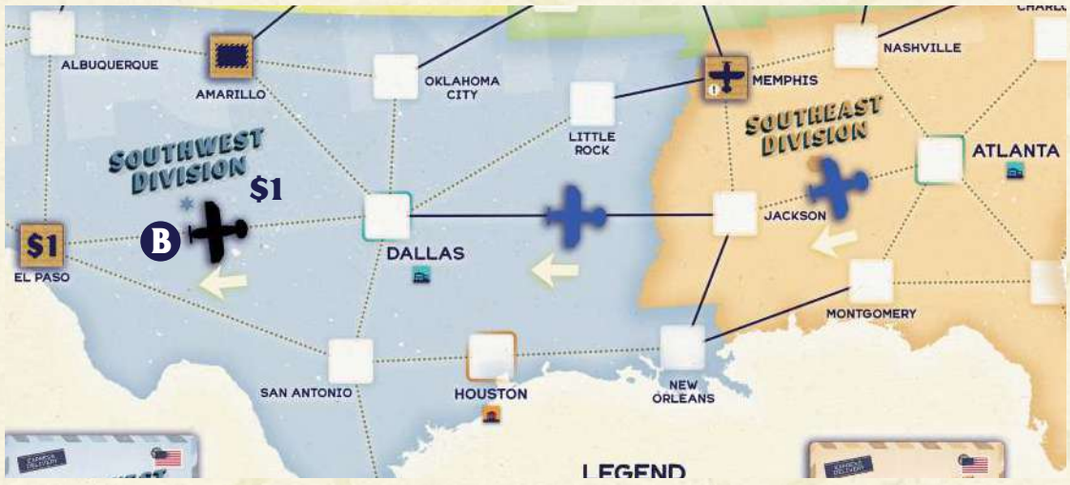
- One of the cities, origin or destination, **must belong to the active division.**
- The city of origin can never be in the same division as the destination city.

Drop the Package of your colour in the destination city and receive the reward corresponding to the number of routes you have travelled (see Technology Track):

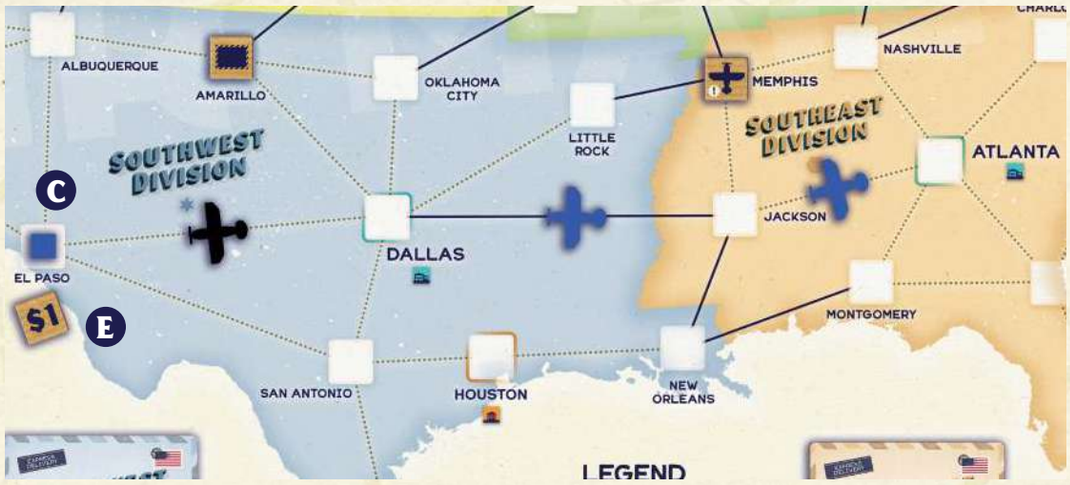
	Draw 1 card from the Public Permits Offer.
$X	Earn the indicated income.
$X+ 	Earn the indicated income and choose between drawing 1 Express Delivery Card from the active division or drawing 1 card from the Public Permits Offer.
$X+ 	Earn the indicated income and draw 1 Express Delivery Card from the active division and also draw 1 card from the Public Permits Offer.

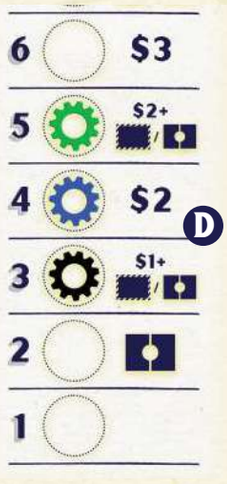
Each city can only take 1 Package from each player, so you can't send more Packages to a city that already has a Package of your colour.

If the city also contains a City Bonus, take it, place it in your play area and apply its benefit (see CITY BONUS, p. 9). **This step is always done after you have completed the delivery action.**









Laia plays a Permit Card and activates the Southeast division (A). She spends 1 OP to make a delivery from Atlanta, her city of origin (and of the active division), to El Paso, her destination city, via Jackson and Dallas. All routes along the way are hers, except the last one, so ***Miquel*** *earns $1 (B). Laia takes the City Bonus in El Paso, leaves a package from her Reserve there (C) and gets the corresponding reward for having used 3 routes (even though her Technology Level is 4): $1 and decides to draw 1 Express Delivery Card from the Southeast division (active division) (D). Finally, she gets the benefit of the City Bonus (in this case $1), keeping the Token in her play area (E). If Laia had wanted to make the same delivery in the other direction, i.e. from El Paso, the city of origin, to Atlanta, the destination city (and of the active division), she would not have been able to do so, as the route from El Paso belongs to* ***Miquel.***

There is a small chance that you will place all of your Packages on the Map. If you place your last Package on the map, you will not be able to continue this action and will cause the end of the game (see END OF GAME).

ASK FOR A GRANT

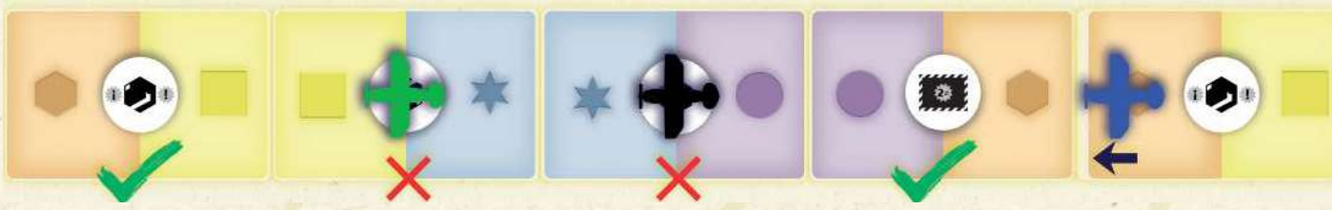
If you cannot or do not want to play a Permit Card, you can request a grant from the government instead. In game terms, asking for a grant allows you to perform, in the order listed, the following 2 actions:

1. Either draw 1 card from the Public Permits Offer **OR** draw 1 card from the Special Permits Deck (this is the only way to get Special Permits).

2. Move your Executive Plane forward by the cards placed on the Permit Track and take the action indicated by the Permit Card you stop on, **which must always be free (i.e. there is no other Executive Plane on top of it).**

The first time you move your Executive Plane, you must enter via the starting square and choose one of the two paths, to the left or right of it, formed by the Permit Cards played on the Track around the Map. Point your Executive Plane in the direction of the path you have chosen and move it to one of the free cards on that path in order to carry out the action indicated by the icon in the centre of the card. You may fly over any number of cards on your path, whether or not they are occupied by other Executive Planes, **but never through empty squares**. The next time you perform this action, you can only move your Executive Plane **forward** along the path you have chosen.

Note: In games with 3 to 5 players, you may decide to stay on the card in the starting square (if it is free); in this case, choose the path (orient your plane) when you make your second move.



The actions displayed by the Permit and Special Permit Cards are as follows:

	Make a delivery. **All divisions are considered active** !, so you may deliver from one division to any other division of your choice. If you are rewarded with an Express Delivery Card, you may draw it from the origin or destination division corresponding to the delivery made.
	Move your Counter 2 steps forward on the Technology Track.
	Expand your Postal Network by placing 2 Planes from your reserve onto 2 free routes. **All divisions are considered active** !, so you can place the Planes on any free route on the Map.
	Draw 2 Express Delivery Cards, each from 1 different division of your choice.
	Choose one of the 4 actions above.

Note: If you cannot move your Executive Plane because it is on the last Permit Card on your path, you simply do not perform this second part of the Ask for a Grant action.

END OF GAME AND FINAL SCORING

After scoring the 5th Decree (2 or 3 players) or the 6th Decree (4 or 5 players), the remaining Decree Cards on the Permit Track are removed from the game, the current round is completed and a final round is played. Once this last round is completed, the game is over.

Note: Exceptionally, the end game of the game is also triggered if the Permit Deck runs out or if a player places his last Package on the Map. If this happens, proceed in the same manner as if the 5th or 6th decree had been scored.

After the end of the game, you must add to the income earned during the game:

A. The income from each Express Delivery Card in your hand that you have fulfilled, i.e. you have managed to send a Package to the indicated city.



B. The income from the Express Delivery Cards of a different colour in your hand that you have fulfilled, according to the following table:

Number of different colours	2	3	4	5	6
Income	**$1**	**$3**	**$6**	**$9**	**$12**

At most you will win $12 as you can only score once per colour.



C. $1 for every 2 Permit Cards left in your hand. Special Permit Cards are not counted.



The player with the most income is the winner of the game. In the event of a tie, the winner is the player with the fewest routes covered on the Map (i.e. the most planes left over). If a tie persists, the tied players share the victory.

CITY BONUS

The first player to make a delivery to a city with a Bonus will be the one who gets the Bonus Token and its benefit. Remember that you only get the Bonus benefit after you complete the delivery action. Keep the Bonus Token in your play area.

	Place a Plane on any free route on the Map, **all divisions are considered active** !.
	Make a delivery. **All divisions are considered active** !, so you may deliver from one division to any other division of your choice. If you are rewarded with an Express Delivery Card, you may draw it from the origin or destination division corresponding to the delivery made.
	Move your Counter 1 step forward on the Technology Track.
	Draw 1 Permit Card from the Public Permits Offer.
	Draw 1 Express Delivery Card from any division.
	Earn $1.

POSTAL SERVICE DECREES

Postal Service Decrees are common objectives for all players. When, on your turn, you play a Permit Card in a square occupied by a Decree Card, you put it aside momentarily to place your Permit Card and play your turn as usual (spend 3 OPs). Only when your turn is over, and before the next player's turn, will the activated Decree Card be scored. **All players score the Decree** according to the requirements set by the card.

Once scored, the Decrees are discarded to a side of the table where they can be easily counted, because after scoring the 5th or 6th Decree, depending on the number of players, the end of the game begins.

Note: The cities marked on the board as major  *and minor*  *are those that at the time played the role of major logistical nodes because of their location or because they had better infrastructure and airports.*

The following is a description of the various Decrees and their scoring requirements:

A. Earn $2 for each division in which you have at least one domestic route (dotted line).

B. Earn $1 for each level above 1 on the Technology Track.

C. Earn $1 for each division in which you have at least one Package delivered.

D. Earn $1 for each route in your longest chain of consecutive routes.

E. Earn $1 for each chain you have of 2 or more consecutive routes.

F. Earn $1 for each Package in your longest chain of consecutive Packages delivered.

G. Earn $1 for each major or minor city in which you have delivered a Package.

H. Earn $1 for each minor city that you have connected to one or more divisions exclusively with your routes.

I. Earn $1 for each major city you have connected to one or more major cities exclusively with your routes.

J. Earn $1 for each different division colour you discard from your hand of Permit and Special Permit Cards (this will be a maximum of 6 colours). Special Permit only count on the one-colour side, not the multi-colour side.

K. Earn $2 in each division where you have more domestic routes than the other players. In the event of a tie in a division, all tied players earn $1 in that division.

L. Earn $1 for each City Bonus you have earned.

Promotional Decree Cards

The following 5 Decree Cards, which do not appear on the component list, would be added to the Postal Service Decree Deck prior to preparation. The game is perfectly playable using some, none, or all of them.

M. Earn $1 for each Express Delivery Card you have fulfilled (you must show them).

N. Lose $1 for each route you have not connected to a major city. Other players' routes do not serve to establish that connection.

O. Lose $2 for each division you have not connected to another division exclusively with your routes.

P. Earn $1 for each different coloured Express Delivery Card you have in your hand, regardless of whether you have fulfilled them or not (maximum of 6 colours).

Q. Earn $2 in each division where you have more Packages delivered than the other players. In the event of a tie in a division, all tied players win $1 in that division.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The maps in the game represent, in the most authentic way possible, the main routes, cities and nodes that formed the incipient postal air transport structure in the United States and Canada in the late 1920's. The inaccurate details that you may notice in both maps, which we apologise for, are due to small displacements of some cities and nodes that we have been forced to make in order to favour gameplay.

CREDITS

Author: Toni López
Illustrations, graphic design and layout: David Prieto
Development and rules: Juan Luque and Rafael Sáiz
Translation: Jayne Broomhead
Proofreading: Susan Broomhead

The author would like to thank all those who tested the game for their valuable contributions, especially Paulo and Kiru; and would like to dedicate *Air Mail* to the person who contributed so much to make our imaginations fly: thank you Miquel Barceló.

Ludonova would like to thank Antonio Varela, Alberto Martínez, David Ferrero, Paco Cantarero and, especially, the author himself for their collaboration in play testing.

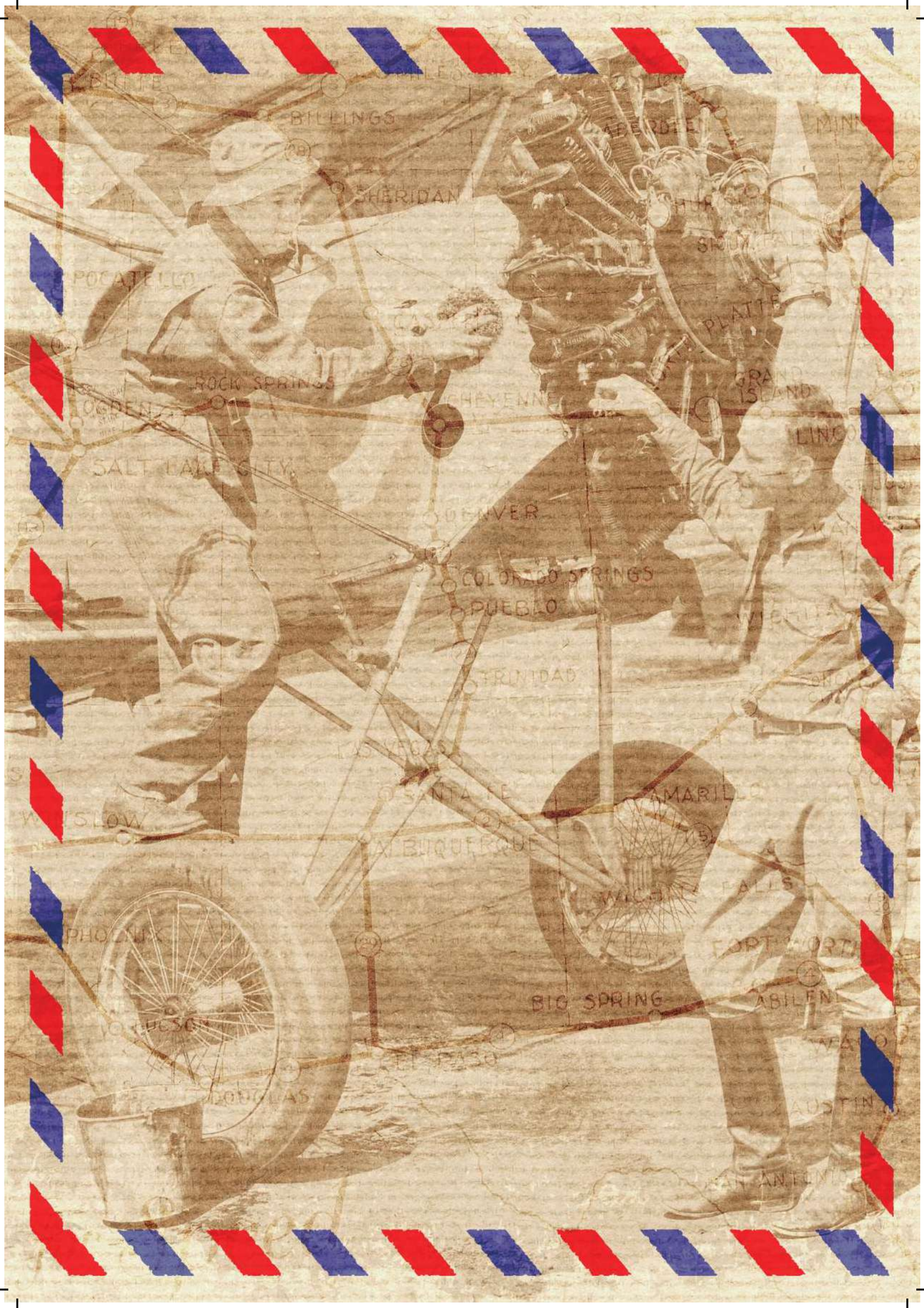
@ Ludonova S.L., 2022. All rights reserved.
San Pablo 22 – Córdoba – Spain

VIDEOTUTORIAL

Scan this code if you would prefer to learn how to play by watching our videotutorial.

SUPPORT

If, despite of all the care taken in the manufacture of this game, a component is missing or is damaged, please ask your retailer to contact our distributor in your country.


BILLINGS
SHERIDAN
POCATELLO
ROCK SPRINGS
SALT LAKE CITY
DENVER
COLORADO SPRINGS
PUEBLO
TRINIDAD
SANTA FE
ALBUQUERQUE
PHOENIX
BIG SPRING
DOUGLAS
PLATTE
GRAND ISLAND
AMARILLO
ABILENE
AUSTIN