EARLY this year a plaque and beacon were unveiled on the island of Taveuni, in the Fiji Group. It marks the only significant land-mass in the Pacific through which the 180th meridian passes. The beacon is certain to attract thousands of tourists anxious to photograph their relatives and friends with one foot in “yesterday” and one in “today.” For Fijians, by the way, a proclamation has stated that the date to the west of the International Date Line is now to be adopted as standard throughout the Fiji Group.

Whether or not you will have sufficient time to leave your aircraft and take a snap of this unique beacon, there are still many out-of-the-ordinary signs to be found in different parts of the world. Several actually sited at airports are available to keen photographers during halts; others—in towns and cities—require at least an overnight stop if one is to add them to a collection.

Let us begin with Auckland—not that we are covering the world alphabetically, but because here a most informative signpost indicates (or did when I saw it last, in 1954) not only such points as London, Rome, Cairo, Sydney and Calcutta, but also the romantically sounding Apia, Papeete, Aitutaki, Tonga, and Suva on the “Coral route.” I hope the sign still remains; it stood beside four “grounded” flying-boats which (I later heard) were sold at an enormous loss when land planes took over the New Zealand - Australia services. However, outside Auckland is preserved an historic military milepost, so it is to be hoped that the authorities will also see to it that routes pioneered by Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and Capt Sir Gordon Taylor are perpetuated by making this sign a permanent part of New Zealand’s history.

Sir Gordon Taylor—who won the only George Cross (then the EGM) ever gained in a civil aircraft—initiated Pacific “cruises” in a Short Sandringham and now keeps a fleet of yachts and skiffs at his Pittwater home on Broken Bay, north of Sydney. Only a short distance away in Rose Bay, where I snapped an old Empire flying-boat sign and a more recent Qantas Empire Airways post. Yet, when I boarded a Hythe for a trip to Queensland, it was not one of the legendary firms which operated the flying-boats, but Ansett Airways. En route to Brisbane we touched down at Grafton, NSW, and Southport, Queensland, before finally landing at Redland Bay—thus proving that Australia certainly has the rivers and harbours for the “boats.” My day aboard the Tahiti Star was memorable, even though we did not visit the glamorous islands beyond Australia.

Australia—perhaps the world’s most air-minded country—can show a beautiful war memorial that is one of the all-too-few practical tributes to the dead. Those who recall the great England - Australia Air Race of 1934, won by the Comet Racer, will remember that the DC-2 entered by KLM and piloted by Parmentier and Moll, was in hot pursuit of Scott and Campbell-Black on the final leg, but in the darkness, failed to find Melbourne and circled the Victoria - NSW border until a band of motorists at Albury rushed to the aid of the distressed Dutchmen.