

August 2005

It's All About Flight!

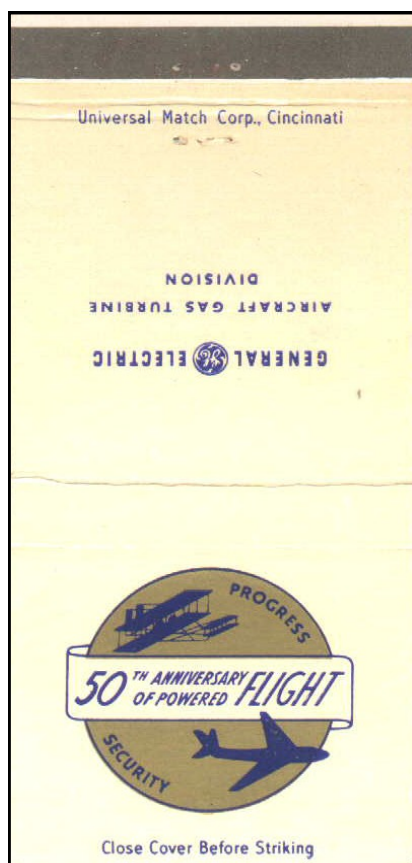
by
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Last August, we heralded National Aviation Day because the Wright brothers' flight, but if there is any month that should be held as 'Flight Month', it's got to be May! And, looking at these May milestones of aviation history, gets us onto the topic of "Flight" as a possible collecting category.

May 14, 1908: Charles W. Furnas became the first passenger to fly in an airplane. He flew with Wilbur Wright on a flight that lasted 28.6 seconds...but the really amazing thing is that he didn't have to worry

about parking, check his baggage, wait in endless airport lines, go through airport security, or sit behind the an endlessly crying baby. On the other hand, his flight had no air conditioning; he missed out on the in-flight movie; and there was no barf bag.

May 20-21, 1927: Charles Lindbergh made the first solo flight across the Atlantic in his plane, "The Spirit of Saint Louis". He flew from Long island, NY, to Le Bourget Field [near Paris], France. The historic flight covered some 3,610 miles and lasted 33.5 hours. Lindbergh came home to find himself the most celebrated hero of the time. And, that very same celebrity status was the reason for his being honored a few weeks later at one, or possibly even two, dinners in June, at the Hotel Astor in New York City. As a result of that tribute, we have today the most well-known and celebrated cover in the hobby—the Lindbergh cover!



May 15, 1930: Ellen Church, became the world's first stewardess [*this was back when stewardesses were stewardesses and not 'flight attendants'*]. She worked on a Boeing 80A Trimotor flying from San Francisco to Cheyenne, WY. She, and seven other women, hired by United Airlines, were all registered nurses. Hmmmmmm....I think I'd feel just a tad skittish about flying with an airline that was only hiring registered nurses as stewardesses. As I was boarding the plane, I'd be thinking, "Do these people know something I don't?!"

May 20, 1932: Amelia Earhart began the first solo flight ever by a woman.

So, May is synonymous with flight, and Flight" could be your next fascinating category. Over the years, I've had traders who collected pictures of airplanes, but I've never actually run across anyone who had "Flight" as a want area, although perhaps some call it "Aviation"...I think I remember one collector who listed that as a want. The advantage of having this as a category, rather than something more specific, such as pictures of airplanes, would be that there's so much that could be included in such a topic:

- **Air Force:** Covers here are almost always collected as part of the Military category, but if you're focusing in on Flight, there's no reason why you couldn't make a subsection in your Flight category for Air Force covers. [*I think you'd want to have a number of subsections here, because it would simply be easier to organize, and later find, everything once your collection becomes sizeable*] There are currently over 1,100 Air Force covers listed. It depends on your particular interests and perceptions, but you might want to collect only those Air Force covers that are more obviously tied into Flight—Air Force bases, for example, rather than NCO clubs; that would cut the number of covers here by some 50%.
- **Army Air Corps:** There are at least 865 listed covers in this possible subsection, a number with fantastic
airplane pictures.
- **Naval Aviation:** There are at least 442 listed Naval Air Station covers, plus a smaller assortment of Air Training Centers, Pre-Flight Schools, etc.
- **Marine Aviation:** The Marine Corps has (or had) Aviation Bases, Air Facilities, Air Stations, Air Depots,
etc. At least 67 of these are listed.
- **Coast Guard Aviation:** I haven't done the Coast Guard listing yet, but I know there are at least a few Flight covers in this subsection.
- **Pictures of Airplanes/Helicopters/Blimps:** (civilian) This could be 3 smaller divisions. Bill Furlong reported some times ago having 906 Airplane pics; no numbers on known Helicopters or Blimps, but I've seen them.
- **Airlines:** Yipes! Sid Barlow, ENG, had 4,354 of these a couple of years ago.
- **Airports:** (civilian) I've got over 500 of these.

That's a minimum of some 8,000 covers available here, and you can probably come up with some other