

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 29, 2005

Contact: Community Relations
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Stamp News Release No. 05-035
www.usps.com

**“American Advances in Aviation” Stamps Take Flight; to Steal the Show Last Bomber
downed in Germany featured on Stamp**

WASHINGTON – Ten classic American aircraft from the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s took center stage in the form of postage when the U.S. Postal Service conducted a First-Day-of-Issue ceremony for the American Advances in Aviation commemorative stamp pane at the AMERICOVER 2005 Stamp Show. The ceremony will take place at the Sheraton Premier at Vienna, 8661 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA today. One of the aircraft depicted on the pane was the last American bomber shot down over Germany in World War II. Solving the mystery behind the crew’s fate proved to be a testament to the art of letter writing.

The American Advances in Aviation stamp pane of 20 stamps (10 designs) will be available nationwide at Post Offices and Philatelic Centers Saturday, July 30.

U.S. Postal Service Vice President, Controller, Lynn Malcom dedicated the stamps.

“The historic aircraft chosen show the innovation and remarkable technological contributions of our nation’s aviation pioneers,” she said. They are a wonderful starting point for unique and beautiful first-day cachets and aviation stamp collections.”

Joining Malcolm in dedicating the stamps was Thomas Childers, the nephew of the radio operator of the specific B-24 Liberator known as the “Black Cat,” which is depicted on the stamp, and Tom Foust, President, American First Day Cover Society.

“The issuance of this stamp is a fitting memorial for all the brave young airmen who flew the B-24 in the Second World War, but especially for the men of the “Black Cat” who died on aboard sixty years ago,” stated Childers. “. I know I speak for the families of those men when I say that we are grateful—and humbled—to see their memory honored in this way.”

Said Tom Foust, "As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, the American First Day Cover Society (www.afdcs.org) is honored the Postal Service has chosen to issue the American Advances in Aviation commemorative sheet at our AMERICOVER 2005 show, the largest first-day cover show in the country. These covers highlight the history and beauty of the planes depicted on the stamps."



Childers is a professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania. His book, "Wings of Morning: the story of the last American Bomber shot down over Germany in World War II," is based on hundreds of wartime letters. Shortly after his grandmother died, Childers visited her Cleveland, TN, home to discover more than 200 of his uncle's letters among her possessions. Included were correspondence from crewmember relatives questioning the fate of their loved ones. B-24 eyewitness accounts reported parachutes opening as the Black Cat fell from the sky, yet the families received Killed in Action and Missing in Action telegrams in the midst of Victory over Europe Day celebrations.

Using the letters as a starting point, four years of research eventually led him to German villagers who, as eye-witnesses to the crash, took him to the site. The day-to-day training and combat experiences and quotes from the crew in his non-fiction writing are chronicled from nearly 600 pieces wartime correspondence.

Several family members of the Black Cat's crew, who contributed their loved one's letters to Childers work, were recognized in Oshkosh, WI, during First-Day-of-Issue ceremonies there. The event took place that day during the 2005 Experimental Aviation Association's AirVenture fly-in-convention (www.eaa.org).

A description of each aircraft is on the back of the stamp sheet (see below). The header illustration includes a Hughes H-1 racer and Boeing's YB-52 Stratofortress. The stamp images depict:

- Boeing's 247 and B-29 Superfortress;
- Consolidated's PBY Catalina and B-24 Liberator;
- Lockheed's P-80 Shooting Star;
- Grumman's F6F Hellcat;
- Republic's P-47 Thunderbolt;
- Northrop's YB-49 Flying Wing;
- Engineering and Research Corporation's Ercoupe 415; and
- Beechcraft's 35 Bonanza.
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The American Advances in Aviation stamp sheet was designed by Phil Jordan, an avid glider pilot and Falls Church, VA resident. The stamp illustrations and header design were painted by William S. Phillips of Ashland, OR, an award-winning historical aviation and landscape artist who also created the artwork for the 1997 Classic American Aircraft collection. **Aviation Enthusiast Collectables** A sampling of products available through The Postal Store at usps.com/shop or at 800-STAMP-24 include:

The actual B-24 Liberator depicted on a postage stamp, known as the "Black Cat," was the last American bomber shot down over Germany in World War II. Radio Operator Howard Goodner was the uncle of Thomas Childers, who spoke at the Vienna, VA dedication ceremony. Childers discovered hundreds of uncles wartime letter 50 years after his death. He used them to begin a four year quest to solve the mystery of their fate.



Kneeling, from left: Staff Sgt. Robert Peterson Sr. (asst. radio operator and waist gunner); Staff Sgt. John "Jack" Brennan (asst. engineer and waist gunner); Tech Sgt. Jerome Barrett (engineer), Tech Sgt. Howard Goodner (radio operator); and Staff Sgt. Al Seraydarian (tail gunner).

Standing from left: 1st Lt. John Murphy (radar operator); 2nd Lt. Jack Perella (1st navigator); 2nd Lt. John "Jack" Regan (co-pilot), 1st Lt. Richard Farrington (pilot), 1st Lt. George Noe (2nd navigator); and 2nd Lt. Christ Manners (bombardier).



Hal Shook (Carey, NC), who, as a P-47 squadron commander at 23, led a squadron of Thunderbolts over Normandy on D-Day. His plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire on his third mission that day. Shook's book, "Fighter Pilot Jazz," chronicles his WWII experiences. Shook also served in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. (Shook was the guest speaker at the Oshkosh event)

- First-Day-Cover set of ten with the July 29, 2005 First-Day-of-Issue postmark for \$7.50.
- A Digital Color Postmark designed by American Advances in Aviation stamps Art Director Phil Jordan. A single First-Day-of-Issue cover is \$1.50 or the entire set of ten with either an Oshkosh, WI or Vienna, VA postmark is available for \$15. Note: Digital color postmarks are not available on customer-submitted covers.
- An 8 x 10 inch Aviation Art Print featuring all 10 stamps for \$14.95.
- Framed Artwork of Grumman's F6F Hellcat (item 23133381); Republic's P47 Thunderbolt (item 23133385) and Engineering and Research Corporation's Ercoupe 415 (item 23133386) are available at select Post Offices for \$49.99 each.
- Baseball caps, t-shirts, key chains, lapel pins and numerous other American Advances in Aviation themed items are also available.

Of added interest to aviation enthusiasts are the world's rarest aviation stamps on display in Washington, DC. One-of-a-kind priceless "uncollectible collectible" envelopes and stamps—ranging from the first U.S. airmail delivery nearly 150 years ago to lunar postmarks—are showcased in the Postmaster General's Collection housed at the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum (www.postal.si.edu) in Washington, DC, through mid-March 2006. The collection is a major component of the Museum's "Stamps Take Flight" exhibit that highlights the history of U.S. stamp-making.

EAA, The Leader in Recreational Aviation, is an international association with 170,000 members and 1,000 local Chapters. EAA AirVenture Oshkosh is the world's greatest aviation celebration and EAA's yearly membership convention. For more information on EAA and its programs, call 1-800-JOIN-EAA (1-800-564-6322) or www.eaa.org. EAA's "Timeless Voices of Aviation" oral history program is preserving aviation history through firsthand accounts of those who have lived and made it (www.timelessvoices.org).

Since 1775, the Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 142 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume- some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year- and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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Information on the Back of the American Advances in Aviation Stamps

Building on the popular Classic American Aircraft collection issued in 1997, the planes chosen for this stamp pane illustrate American innovations and technological contributions to military, commercial, and general aviation during the 1930s, '40s, and '50s.

Stamp Header Illustrations

- Averaging 327.15 mph, the Hughes H-1 racer set a new transcontinental speed record on January 19, 1937.
- Boeing's YB-52 Stratofortress was a 1952 prototype for the still-operational B-52 bomber.

American Advances in Aviation Stamps



35 Bonanza

The Beechcraft Bonanza has been in continuous production since 1947, although the 35 model was discontinued in 1982. Its distinctive V tail was designed to reduce weight and drag, as well as buffeting from the wing and canopy wakes.



F6F Hellcat

A WWII "workhorse," the carrier-based Grumman F6F Hellcat met with perfection the requirements that had dictated its simple and straightforward design. The robust and maneuverable fighter was easy to mass produce and maintain.



B-29 Superfortress

The advanced armament, propulsion, and avionics systems in Boeing's B-29 Superfortress included remote-controlled gun turrets and pressurized crew compartments. The sophisticated long-range bomber served in both WWII and Korea.



B-24 Liberator

Designed as a heavy bomber, the Consolidated B-24 Liberator—with its great range and payload/cargo capacity—proved highly versatile during WWII. High-lift wing airfoils and retractable "roller-type" bomb bay doors were B-24 innovations.



YB-49 Flying Wing

Deemed futuristic in the late '40s, the all-wing configuration of Northrop's YB-49 Flying Wing jet-propelled bomber had great potential but stability problems shelved the project. Technology finally caught up with vision in the B-2 stealth bomber.



PBY Catalina

An internally braced cantilever wing and retractable wingtip floats were aerodynamic innovations of the reliable and versatile Consolidated PB Y Catalina flying boat. First acquired by the U.S. Navy in 1936, many still fly in nonmilitary roles.



Ercoupe 415

Designed in the mid-1930s, the Ercoupe 415 introduced safe, practical technologies for general aviation. The linked control system made it spin-proof; tricycle landing gear with a steerable nose wheel simplified landing and taxiing.



P-47 Thunderbolt

Originally planned as a lightweight interceptor, Republic's P-47 Thunderbolt turned out to be an immense multipurpose fighter. Fast and rugged, it earned a reputation as both a high-altitude escort fighter and a low-level fighter-bomber during WWII.



P-80 Shooting Star

The laminar-flow wing of the Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star streamlined airflow and contributed to the speed and overall performance of the first operational U.S. jet fighter. A P-80 made history in 1950 by winning the first all-jet aerial combat.



247

The first modern commercial airliner set new standards for speed, safety, and comfort in 1933. With twin engines, retractable landing gear, and an insulated ten-passenger cabin, Boeing's streamlined, all-metal Model 247 boasted state-of-the-art technology.

How to Order First Day of Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store on www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

AMERICAN ADVANCES IN AVIATION CANCELLATION
C/O POSTMASTER
1025 W 20TH AVE
OSHKOSH WI 54902-9998

AMERICAN ADVANCES IN AVIATION CANCELLATION
C/O POSTMASTER
VIENNA POST OFFICE
200 LAWYERS ROAD NW
VIENNA, VA 22180-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by August 28, 2005.

How to Order First Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
DEPT 6270
US POSTAL SERVICE

PO BOX 219014
Kansas City Mo 64121-9014

First-day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.