



The Famous Fliers' Wall of the Mission Inn

HISTORY

Creation of the Fliers' Wall

Most visitors of the Mission Inn hotel have heard of the famous St. Francis Chapel. However, did you know Frank Miller established the chapel as an International Shrine for Aviators? The shrine holds a total of 151 wings, “141 wings [are] autographed by famous aviators”¹. The shrine was dedicated on December 15, 1932.

Although Frank Miller dedicated the Chapel to aviators, his daughter and son-in-law, Allis and DeWitt Hutchings had a passion for aviation and made great efforts to seek out prominent aviators to place their wings on the wall.

Copper Wings

The wings attached to the wall are made of copper and are about 10 inches wide. On one wing is the name of the flier and on the other, the date the wings were dedicated. The wings contain a propeller in the center with space to add a crest or inscription. Fliers choose what would be placed in the center.

¹ Parks, Walter P. *The Famous Fliers' Wall of The Mission Inn*. California: Infinity Press, 1986, p.11.



Famous Aviators

There are numerous famous aviators with wings attached to the fliers' wall. To name a few:

- ***General Henry Harley “Hap” Arnold (2):*** General Hap Arnold was an “air strategist and commanding general of the U.S. Army Air Forces in World War II”². He was a 5-star general in both the Army and the Airforce. He is the only general to obtain 5-stars in the Airforce. At the time he placed his wings on the wall he was only a Lieutenant Colonel. The dedication date of his wings is December 15, 1932. His wings are number 2 of 151. **Fun Fact:** He was a pupil of Orville Wright.
- ***Amelia Earhart (27):*** Amelia Earhart was the first woman to make a solo flight across the Atlantic in 1932. Then in 1935, she flew solo from Hawaii to California.³ Her wings were dedicated on February 3, 1936, a year before she disappeared in July 1937. Her wings are number 27 of 151.
- ***Orville Wright (92):*** One of the two Wright brothers responsible for creating “the first powered, sustained and controlled airplane flight”⁴. Although he was unable to dedicate the wings himself, due to old age, he sent his signature to be engraved on the wings. The

² Encyclopedia Britannica. *Henry Harley Arnold*. Encyclopedia Britannica.

³ Parks. (1986), p. 62-63.

⁴ Crouch, Tom. *Wright Brothers*. Encyclopedia Britannica.



wings were dedicated on January 28, 1947, a year before he died. His wings are number 92 of 151. **Fun Fact:** Former pupil General Hap Arnold dedicated Orville Wright's wings at the Mission Inn in 1947.

- ***Charles A. Lindbergh (143):*** Charles Lindbergh was a famous American aviator. He is “remembered for the first non-stop solo flight across the Atlantic”⁵. The Hutchings had made several attempts to bring Charles Lindbergh to the Mission Inn to place his wings on the wall; unfortunately, they were unsuccessful. When Duane Roberts took over the Mission Inn 1992 he went to great lengths to add Charles Lindbergh's wings to the wall and on June 11, 1994, Eric Lindbergh dedicated his grandfather's wings to the famous fliers' wall. The wings are number 143 of 151.

⁵ Encyclopedia Britannica. *Charles Lindbergh*. Encyclopedia Britannica.



ACTIVITY

Today we are going to decorate our own Mission Inn Fliers' Wings to post on our wall at home!

Materials:

- 1 sheet of blank paper
- Crayons/markers
- Scissors

Directions:

1. Print template on paper.
2. Decorate flier.
3. Cut out wings (optional) and place it on the wall.
4. Share Flier with us!



Content Resources

If you are interested in learning more history about the Mission Inn Fliers' wall, check out the resources below.

Crouch, Tom. *Wright Brothers*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 17, 2020.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wright-brothers>

Encyclopedia Britannica. *Charles Lindbergh*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 17, 2020.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Lindbergh>

Encyclopedia Britannica. *Henry Harley Arnold*.

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<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Harley-Arnold>

Friends of the Mission Inn. *Historic: Mission Inn*.

California: Friends of the Mission Inn, 1998.

Parks, Walter P. *The Famous Fliers' Wall of The Mission Inn*. California: Infinity Press, 1986.