



Connections of WD-40

The development of the aircraft industry started in the United States after the Great War in 1919. During the war, the French were the leading players in the development of aircraft. That was soon to change when General Billy Mitchell came back from France and began to push for the development of an American Air Force. The nation was excited about flying, Barnstormers, air races and wing walkers were a rage. Many pilots found work delivering mail by air. Charles Lindbergh was one of those fliers. He started his historic flight to Paris, France, from San Diego, Calif.

Douglas Aircraft Company made the first commercially successful plane for passenger flights with the DC-2. The move from fabric and wood aircraft construction to metal started in the 1930s. Weather caused rust and corrosion on the metal. Then by the 1950s, the development of missiles with a thinner skin of metal created the need for a better rust-prevention solvent that also functioned as a degreaser. Research was being done in laboratories around the country. One small company in San Diego would develop a lightweight oil.

The Rocket Chemical Company, so the story goes, had tried 40 different formulas before they hit one that worked as required. They named the new product WD-40 (Water Displacement-40), which was first used by Convair Company in San Diego in 1953 for protection of the Atlas missile's outer skin. By 1958, WD-40 was being sold in stores. By 1961, WD-40 was being used in the major airlines. The product was internationally sold by 1969, and the company changed the company name from Rocket to WD-40 the same year.

The product has become so popular that four out of five homes have WD-40 in a cupboard or a garage. It was used by troops in Vietnam to clean and protect their weapons and is used in cleanup after natural disasters. Literature and images of the Blue and Yellow "can-do" product are a demonstration of the popularity of WD-40, which sells a million cans per week. Everything has a connection!

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