

The Definitive Story on the Calibre 352/354 'No-Name' Globemaster/Constellation

History

There are two competing stories about the origins of the Omega Globemaster brand sold exclusively in the United States in the 1950s. One line has it that another corporation owned the Constellation name in the U.S. and Omega was prevented from using the trademark. The other story is that Globemaster was the original concept name for what eventually became the Constellation. It continues that the Globemaster name was owned by Douglas Aircraft and Omega Globemasters were re-named Constellations and the rest of the world followed suit. Only one story is true, but which one?

... and across the USA



-G CONSTELLATIONS

Quietest, most luxurious long-range airliners in the world

TWA now offers Super-G Constellation flights from Europe to New York—through to Los Angeles and San Francisco. This service starts November 1st, from London and Frankfurt and will soon be serving Paris, Rome, Athens and Cairo. These same great TWA airliners are already leading the way in non-stop service between major cities in the U.S.A.

When you fly in these magnificent aircraft you will benefit from such scientific advances as radar. Installed in the nose it plots the smoothest weather a hundred miles ahead. Special soundproofing quiets the four mighty Turbo-compound engines to a reassuring hum.

Wing-tip tanks mean greater range . . . less travel time. Take your choice of either luxurious Ambassador service including full-length berths or comfortable low-cost Sky Tourist service. And TWA's traditionally superb food and service match the smart, spacious setting every moment you're aboard.

You can enjoy all this—and save money! TWA's new DISCOUNT FARE PLAN operates throughout Thrift Season—you can fly Super-G Constellations at greatly reduced fares. Next trip take your wife—take the family. Also, see how little you'll spend with TWA's Time Pay Plan, in the tables opposite.

Fly the finest... **FLY TWA**
TRANS WORLD AIRLINES
U.S.A. • EUROPE • AFRICA • ASIA

First, let's get the origins of the name Constellation straightened out, as this will point us toward an accurate account of how the Omega Globemaster came to appear. The name Constellation was coined in 1951 by Bruno Passoni, a member of the sales team of Omega's Italian agent, Carlo Di Marchi. Di Marchi thought it had a ring to it and spoke with Omega Sales executive, Adolph Vallat. The rest is history and Omega's flagship brand, Constellation, was released in 1952 in the lead-up to the Helsinki Olympic Games, at which Omega was the official timekeeper.

The Howard Hughes Connection

In the late 1930s, TWA was building aggressively its passenger base with a fleet of Boeing Stratoliners. These aircraft could cross the continent

in 14 hours, an astounding feat in the opinion of most Americans but not so with Howard Hughes, TWA's controlling shareholder. Hughes had in the back of his mind an airliner that could not only wipe hours off the coast-to-coast time, but also have the range to fly from the West Coast to Europe non-stop.



Having established an earlier relationship with Lockheed, he approached the company with his ideas about an airliner that could deliver on his vision. The project, Hughes stipulated, must be kept top secret. When the aircraft was unveiled in 1944, the plane created a sensation both in terms of its technology and Hughes' record-breaking flight that took seven hours off the coast to coast flying time. The Constellation, as it was named, had a top speed of 340 miles an hour, bettering the speed of fighter planes of the period.

TWA launched the Constellation passenger service in 1945. Hughes, having struck a contract with Lockheed for the first 40 planes to roll off the assembly line, had an enormous commercial advantage over his main rivals. The Constellation name was bankable, and as we shall see both Lockheed and TWA went to considerable lengths to ensure that the joint branding of TWA and Constellation remained under their control.

In the early 1950s Lockheed began work on the successor to its first Constellation and, again, Hughes was the driving force behind its development. The Constellation name became synonymous with Hughes' rivalry with Juan Trippe's Pan American. Trippe sought to monopolise international air travel and had influenced powerful Maine Senator, Owen Brewster, to propose legislation securing Pan Am as the sole American airline allowed to fly overseas at a time when Hughes planned TWA service to Europe with the new, under construction Super Constellation.

Hughes' plans for TWA are believed to be the main reason for a Senate investigation, corruptly influenced by the infamous Senator Brewster. Hughes beat the Senate committee by turning the hearings into an attack on Brewster and successfully exposing Brewster's dealings with Pan Am. In 1955, the Constellation became the first plane to fly nonstop from California to Europe. Crossing over the North Pole, the Super Connie as it was known was the source of a major public relations coup for TWA.

Against the backdrop of the triumphs by Hughes and TWA in international travel and the importance of the name Constellation to TWA in terms of brand building and creating clear product differentiation between itself, Pan Am and other competitors, the Norman Morris Corporation (Omega's U.S. Distributor) was successfully blocked from using the name until 1956.

From Astronomical to Aeronautical

Omega, having created the Constellation brand for worldwide distribution as its flagship marque, was hardly motivated to change the name of its luxury line simply because of difficulties in the U.S. with trademarks. But, at the same time, it could not ignore the revenue potential offered by the expanding post-war U.S. 'luxury' market, nor underestimate the strategic marketing importance of the chronometer-grade, high value, high precision Constellation headlining its U.S. collection. After the kudos achieved through its status as the official timekeeper to the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games, Omega began a worldwide campaign to increase market share. The new Constellation line was one of its main weapons, and so there was never really any question of the Constellation in one form or another being promoted in the U.S.

Because of the trademark difficulties, a new name was needed to herald Omega's top of the line chronometer collection. Perhaps not so strangely given the circumstances, Morris chose to associate the new marque with an aeronautical rather than cosmological theme. It doesn't take a great leap of creative judgment to swing from one emerging aeronautical sensation, the Constellation, to another household name in aviation, the 'Globemaster'. While we can never know for sure, we can speculate about the underlying motives for this choice. Aviation was a growing and glamorous industry that was emblematic of a brighter and more prosperous post-war future. Never-the-less it contrasted markedly with the origins of the Constellation brand name, that of Omega's numerous successes at Observatory competitions in Geneva, Neuchatel and Kew-Teddington.

Omega was rightly proud of its reputation of having beaten the best that the Swiss Haute Horlogerie establishment could offer. In contrast to the special 'competition' watches many of the top names entered in the Observatory competitions, Omega submitted chronometers that were not dissimilar to the movements powering their retail collections. So, the association of its top marque with a 'futuristic' industry such as aviation as opposed to an industry steeped in tradition delivered a mixed message from the start, and it comes as no surprise that Omega, through Morris, persisted until an accommodation was struck with

Lockheed and TWA in 1956 that allowed fully imported Constellations to be branded as such.

Globemaster was the name of the predecessor of the massive transport planes we see today operated by the US military. The first Globemaster, the C-74, saw service in the Berlin Airlift during the chilliest days of the cold war, but it is the improved C-124 after which the Norman Morris Corporation named the early range of Constellations. The Douglas C-124 Globemaster was a two level giant powered by four propeller engines. The plane could hold 200 troops or 127 litter patients and could also hold vehicles as large as tanks. A total of 449 Globemasters were built between 1949 to



Douglas C-74 and C-124 Globemasters

1955. The aircraft served the USAF until 1970 and the reserves until 1974.

Initially the Globemaster name was used only for advertising and never appeared on the dial of any Omega Constellation from 1952 to 1956. Norman Morris imported fully encased 'No-Name' Constellations that featured the Constellation star without the brand name, as the advertisements opposite and overleaf show.

Later, Norman Morris used the Globemaster brand for other non-chronometer certified models, such as the sub-seconds calibre 491, calibre 501, the hand-wound calibre 520 and others. These exclusively American models were assembled in the US in American made cases *and are not to be confused with the 'No-Name' Constellations that were fully manufactured in Switzerland.*

The guilloche dialled model and the domed ivory dialled model, both with crosshairs, were the first ever two models to be imported by the Norman Morris Corp into the U.S. Morris followed the Omega marketing strategy of positioning the Connie as the ultimate luxury high-precision Omega global brand. He ran an extensive national 'Globemaster' ad campaign, reinforced by a sales push to his network of Omega jewellers. He promoted these 'no-name' Constellations as Globemasters for four years until trademark issues were resolved.

Early exports of 'No-Names' to the U.S. included case numbers 2648, 2652 and the very rare fancy lugged model produced in 1952 with the case number OT 14311. All were powered by either calibre 352 or 354 bumper movements and carried the Swiss 'Chronometre' spelling on the dial.

The Omega ads featured in this essay date from 1954 and 1955. As noted in the ad opposite, Omega produced 18,504 Chronometers in total in 1954, the majority of which were reserved for the Constellation marque. The initial 1952 run of Constellations was around 8000 for the world market, and so it is not hard to calculate that for the emerging U.S. market the numbers of imported 'no-name' Constellations in 1952 to late 1955 would have probably been in the hundreds rather than the thousands.

Therefore, 'no-name' Constellation/Globemasters were relatively uncommon in the U.S. when new. Because of the practice of dealers and sellers refinishing these early dials in the full Constellation livery in the belief that such modifications would enhance their value, it is reasonable to assert that 'no-name' calibre 352 and 354 examples, particularly with earlier case numbers such as 2648 and 2652 with 13 and 14 million serial numbers, fit the category of 'Rare'. As such, they should be treasured with the knowledge that their rarity will add an increasing premium to their value.

Certificate
OF HIGH
PRECISION

No. 187645
Having successfully passed rigorous scientific tests, has
obtained the exclusive right to be classed as a
Chronometer
Its high precision having surpassed the limits of the inter-
national ratings of the "Official Watch Rating Bureau" - this
chronometer has been awarded the rating certificate for
especially good results

Official Watch
of the Olympic Games

The watch that took
107 years to make

Back in 1848, a group of watchmakers
dedicated themselves to creating the
most accurate watch human skill could
devise. They named it Omega, which
means the "ultimate". Today, 107 years
later, Omega still reflects this highest
attainment. In 1954, every Omega
Chronometer sent to the official Swiss
Testing Bureau received a special cita-
tion for superior accuracy...18,506 in all!

Globemaster Chronometer

Self-winding, watertight, shock-protected.
18K gold case with 18K gold applied figure
dial. With registered rating certificate, \$500.
Other fine Omega watches for men and
women from \$71.50, Federal tax included.

Ω
OMEGA

The Watch The World Has Learned To Trust

46



Rare case OT 143.11 calibre 352 RG Globemaster produced in 1952. Picture courtesy Omega Museum



For Distinguished Service

Only one watch has ever received the prized Olympic Cross. It is Omega!

This is the greatest recognition ever accorded any timepiece by the nations of the entire world. The reason: Omega's unparalleled contribution to the Olympics...as official timer since 1932...and now, chosen once again for 1956.

Obviously, Omega has done an outstanding job. But then it always does. For instance, Omega chronometers have set highest records for accuracy in competition at the three leading international timing observatories. And over the course of a single year, these high-precision chronometers garnered more citations "for especially good results" from the Swiss Government Testing Bureau than all other makes of watches combined!

No wonder so many people aspire to an Omega. No wonder Omega always meets their highest expectations.

Globemaster Chronometer

Omega presents this superb self-winding, water-resistant chronometer with its own Registered Individual Rating Certificate, 18K gold case, 18K gold applied dial figures, sweep second hand. In a handsome presentation case...\$299, Fed. tax included. Other fine Omega Watches for men and women from \$27.50

Ω
OMEGA

THE WATCH THE WORLD HAS LEARNED TO TRUST



Original guilloche dial case 2652 Calibre 354 Chronometer. Courtesy Dean of Munhall Jewellers, Homestead, PA



Calibre 352 Case OT 2652 Solid Gold 1953 model, Case 2652 Calibre 352 Gold Top model : Courtesy Henzo Kitakata
<http://www.batei.com/omega.annex.htm>



From my collection: Calibre 354, case 2652. Guilloche dial, evenly patinated. Case in original condition, unpolished. Purchased from the estate of the original owner through Wayne Odle.



Calibre 354 Solid Gold Globemaster, Case 2648. Courtesy Old Watch Club <http://www.oldwatch.club.tw>

Non-Chronometer Globemasters Marketed by Norman Morris in the U.S.



Calibre 491 Globemaster: Courtesy Peter Wagenaar <http://www.omega-fanatic.com>



Calibre 520 hand wind Globemaster Courtesy: www.watchestobuy.com



Two Omega Calibre 501 Globemasters Circa 1958