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## *Aviation Novelty Slide Rules*

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**FIGURE 1.**  
**Aviation Novelty Slide Rules**

This article is about a small group of specialty rules, which were mildly popular with collectors with an interest in aviation, probably during the 1950's and 1960's. This is not an article about the "Small", cylinder slide rule featured in the *Journal of the Oughtred Society*, volumes 1:1 and 1:2.

Figure 1 illustrates the variety of rules available in this group. The top row shows three different money clips. The middle money clip rule also incorporates a combination knife blade and fingernail file. In the middle row on the left, are a key chain, a tie tack in the middle, and a cigarette lighter on the right. The reverse side of the lighter features a perpetual calendar, with dates from 1950 to 1977, indicating circa 1950 initial production. In the bottom row of Figure 1 are the cuff

links that go with the tie tack. All have black faces.

The fixed outer and rotatable inner scales are adaptations of the standard linear C & D slide rule scales to solve the basic time-distance-speed problems of aviation. They are based on the computer originally designed by Lt. Philip Dalton in 1931. Dalton's original design evolved into the famous E-6B flight computer of World War 2. Of course, the scales can be used for non-aviation applications as well. The outer scale of one of the money clips and the keychain also include gauge marks for the location of pi. Two of these were made in the U.S., the others were made in Japan. The scale diameters range from 0.75 to 1.0 inch, giving a longest scale length of 3.14 inches, indicating a low degree of accuracy.

One would be led to believe that these were given as favors, rather than for the more serious use of flight related calculations. They were probably not big sellers as none have a maker's name except for the lighter signed "Chadwick". They soon disappeared from the slide rule scene. No doubt there are other examples to be found of these small circular slide rules. One, recently brought to my attention, is a tape measure with aviation scales similar to those in my collection

with the tape scaled in statute miles.

Figure 2, shows the money clip with the combination knife blade and fingernail file. The owner may well have been a private pilot, who today certainly would not be carrying one on a commercial flight. While these rules are not special, they do make an interesting display by themselves, albeit a small one.



**FIGURE 2.**  
Money Clip with Knife & Fingernail File