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Corey J Beitler's

"Distelfink Airlines"

An Online Aviation Newsletter

A Model Of Clive Caldwell's Spitfire

Airbus A330-200

Bond Bread "America's Finest Planes" Ink Blotter Set

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Amber Books Ltd. Aviation Reference Bookazines

John Jenkins Designs impressive model of a Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III British World War II fighter is part of a series of series of World War II aircraft, vehicles, figures, and diorama accessories in 1/30 scale manufactured by the toy soldier company. The model is a replica of the Spitfire flown by RAAF ace Clive Caldwell when he was stationed at Morotai Island in April 1945.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A RAAF Spitfire Model, Bond Bread Ink Blotters, A-10 Thunderbolt, Bookazines

Greetings Everyone:

Welcome to the April edition of "Distelfink Airlines". This edition of the newsletter comes after the month of March was a huge success for the newsletter. In March, the newsletter set a record for readers in a single day and readers for a month. I'm really happy with these numbers and how well the newsletter is picking up new readers. Airshow season is just around the corner as well and I will begin my airshow coverage for the 2024 season in May. I already have some arrangements to cover airshows lined up and am slowly working on more. It should be a great summer of airshows and aviation events!

In the last edition, the newsletter's featured content took a different path and presented one of my models as the featured content. This ended up being a huge success and brought a whole new group of people to the newsletter to read and enjoy it. So, the April edition of the newsletter features one of my models in my collection. The model featured is a John Jenkins Designs Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III in RAAF colors that was flown by Australian ace Clive Caldwell. Caldwell was the highest-scoring Australian ace during the war and served in both the Middle East and North Africa theatres of operation as well as the South Pacific-East Asia theatre of operations. The feature has a brief history of the Supermarine Spitfire, a brief discussion about Caldwell and his service, and, of course, a review of this excellent model of the Spitfire.

The "Aviation Memorabilia" section for this edition has some really neat ink blotters from the 1940s. These ink blotters featured illustrations of World War II aircraft and were a promotional item from Bond Bread. These blotters are representative of some of the many promotional items given out by American companies and businesses during World War II to promote their support of the war effort and keep public morale for the war high. If you are ever interested in starting a collection of World War II aviation memorabilia, smaller paper items like these are a great place to start. They are easy to store and usually affordable for entry-level collectors.

The "Aircraft of Special Interest" section has the legendary Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II featured. The only aircraft ever built for the U.S. Air Force designed exclusively for close air support of ground forces, the A-10 is entering the twilight of its life in the U.S. Air Force inventory. Currently, it is expected that the A-10 Thunderbolt II will be fully retired by 2029. The A-10s in this section are from the 104th Fighter Squadron of the Maryland Air National Guard. The 104th Fighter Squadron and their A-10s have deployed many times to support U.S. and Allied combat operations overseas and are frequent visitors to airshows and aviation events in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions of the United States. It was recently announced the 104th Fighter Squadron will begin retiring their A-10 Thunderbolt aircraft in late 2024, eventually transitioning to a cyber wing role and a non-flying mission.

Finally, "One Last Thing" features some great aviation reference bookazines currently on newsstands from Amber Books Ltd. What is a bookazine you may ask? It is a reference magazine, longer than a traditional magazine, and usually dedicated to a specific subject. Several of these bookazines have been published so far, each covering an aviation topic. They are a great affordable reference for any aviation enthusiast and worth checking out on your next visit to the local bookstore or newsstand.

Thank you again for supporting my aviation photojournalism efforts and "Distelfink Airlines" this year. Please feel free to share the newsletter with whoever you wish and invite them to join the newsletter's official social media pages listed below.

Regards,
-Corey

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What's Inside:

Airbus A330-200

An Airbus A330-200 operated by KLM Royal Dutch Airlines on approach to the Washington Dulles International Airport in Virginia after a flight from Amsterdam. In service since 1994, the Airbus A330 has been built in several variants, and more than 1,400 examples are in service worldwide with 148 operators. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines operates 11 Airbus A330s in its fleet of 110 aircraft. Six of these A330s are the A330-200 variant.

The Airbus A330 is a medium-sized, twin-engine, wide-body commercial airliner designed and manufactured by the multi-national aircraft manufacturer Airbus. The A330 has been built in several variants, including the passenger A330-330 and shorter A330-200, the A330-200F freighter, the A330 MMRT military transport and aerial tanker, and the ACJ330 corporate aircraft. With the introduction of the A330neo (new engine option) variant in 2014, the earlier variants of the A330 are now designated the A330ceo (current engine option). The A330 is the world's third most delivered wide-body commercial airliner behind the Boeing 777 and the Boeing 747.

Airbus began design studies for the Airbus A330 in the early 1980s. To accelerate its production and development, the twin-engine A330 was designed in parallel with the company's A340 quad-jet. As a result, the two aircraft share many common parts with the earlier A300-600, such as the tail, vertical stabilizers, and circular fuselage sections. The A330 and A340 also adopted the A320's flight deck, fly-by-wire flight control system, and sidestick control. The development of a common cockpit by Airbus helped facilitate faster flight crew transition from one type to another and simplified flight training. Three engine options were offered by Airbus for the A330, the Trent 600 from Rolls-Royce, the PW4000 from Pratt & Whitney, and the CF6 from General Electric. By 1987, Airbus had received commitments from several airlines to buy the A330. In November 1992, the prototype A330 flew for the first time. Air Inter became the first operator of the A330 in 1994. The A330-300 has a range of 6,350 nautical miles with 277 passengers, while the shorter A330-200 has a range of 7,250 nautical miles with 247 passengers. In 2014, Airbus announced the A330neo, comprising the 800/900 variants. These variants use the more fuel-efficient Rolls-Royce Trent 7000 turbofan exclusively and offer fuel economy improvements of up to 14% over earlier A330 variants. The first Airbus A330neo entered service with TAP Air Portugal in December 2018. As of February 2024, over 1,400 Airbus A330s are in service worldwide with 148 operators.

The Airbus A330-200 pictured here is operated by the Dutch flag-carrier airline KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. KLM has a fleet of 110 aircraft and operates passenger and cargo services to 145 destinations worldwide. This A330-200 is one of 11 A330s in the KLM fleet, which includes six A330-200s and five A330-300s.


KLM
PH-AOC


KLM
PH-AOC

Bond Bread "America's Finest Planes" Ink Blotter Set

Bond Bread offered this set of "America's Finest Planes" ink blotters to customers as a promotional advertising give-away during World War II. The blotters feature beautiful color illustrations of some of America's finest military aircraft from the war. One of the most unusual aircraft featured on a blotter is the Consolidated PB2Y Coronado. The Coronado was a large flying boat used by the U.S. Navy in the transport and maritime patrol roles during the war.

During World War II, many American companies supported the war effort by producing items for American and Allied military personnel. In an effort to promote themselves as supporting the war effort and boost the morale of the civilian population, many of these companies produced advertising items as giveaways. These giveaways were often everyday items used in a home or business, such as a pen or ruler, advertised the name of the company or business on the item and showed support for the war effort.

Bond Bread was a product of the General Baking Company. During its existence the company produced several advertising items to promote its bread. A promotional advertising item often given away by companies during the 1940s were ink blotters. Because fountain and quill pens were common writing instruments, ink blotters were found in almost every home and office. Ink blotters were made from absorbent paper and matted to heavy card-stock. The absorbent side of the blotter was used to wipe away excess ink from the tip of the fountain and quill pens. On the cardstock side of the blotter, a company often advertised its business with an illustration or with its name and contact information. Ink blotters were commonly offered as advertising items until the late 1940s and early 1950s, when ballpoint pens became common, and there was no need to wipe away excess ink from the tip of the pen. Today, ink blotters remain a popular item to collect for collectors of vintage advertising pieces.

During World War II, Bond Bread produced this series of ink blotters to commemorate "America's Finest Planes". The blotters were offered in two series of six and produced between 1942 and 1943. Each blotter featured an illustration of a famous American military aircraft, a brief description, and an advertisement for Bond Bread. One of the most unique aircraft featured on the blotters is the Consolidated PB2Y Coronado, a large U.S. Navy four-engine flying boat used for transport and maritime patrol. The blotters also feature some famous American World War II aircraft such as the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber, Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber, Chance Vought F4U Corsair fighter, and an early variant of the North American P-51 Mustang fighter.

Today, these ink blotters are hard to find in good condition. The colors have the tendency to fade over time and many have ink stains on the back from use. This complete set was acquired after many years of searching. These blotters are a great example of a World War II advertising piece featuring American military aircraft.

The first set of "America's Finest Planes" blotters was issued in 1942. This set differs from the second set of blotters as it does not have a white border on the edges. The two rarest blotters in the set are from the first series and are the ones featuring the B-17 Flying Fortress and P-38 Lightning illustrations.

Bond Bread printed a second set of blotters for the series in 1943. The clue that these blotters were issued in 1943 is the insignia on the aircraft in the illustrations. The red-bordered insignia was used for only a few months in the summer of 1943. This set of blotters also had a white border around the edges, unlike the first set.

SpecCast Tony LeVier Lockheed P-38L Lightning

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the collectible manufacturer SpecCast produced a line of World War II die-cast model airplanes. One of the models produced by the company was this 1/50 scale Lockheed P-38L Lightning in the color scheme of a postwar racing aircraft flown by famous Lockheed test pilot Tony LeVier. LeVier flew his bright red P-38L Lightning to a second-place finish in the 1946 National Air Races.

The Lockheed P-38 Lightning was an American single-seat, twin-engine fighter aircraft used during World War II. Developed by the Lockheed Corporation, the P-38 incorporated a distinctive twin-boom, twin-tail design with a central nacelle containing the cockpit and armament. Unlike most twin-engine fighter aircraft, the P-38 Lightning was both fast and maneuverable enough to match the performance of single-engine fighter aircraft on near-equal terms.

The P-38 Lightning saw use throughout World War II. In addition to its use as a heavy fighter, the P-38 was used in various other combat roles. One of the most significant uses of the P-38 was as a high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft. The P-38 also saw use as a fighter-bomber and long-range escort fighter.

The P-38 was used most successfully in the Pacific theatre of operations, where its long-range and twin engines were beneficial for extended missions over remote areas and large areas of water. Unusual for an early war fighter design, the P-38's engines were equipped with turbochargers, making the Lightning capable of excellent high-altitude performance. Although early variants of the P-38 were plagued by engine problems and a slow roll rate, improvements to later Lightning variants, such as hydraulically boosted ailerons and more powerful engines cured these problems.

The jet age rendered the P-38 Lightning obsolete immediately following World War II. Several P-38s were sold as surplus, with some used in postwar air races. Lockheed test pilot Tony LeVier bought a brand new P-38L Lightning as surplus for $1,250 and painted it bright red. For competition in air racing, LeVier made several minor modifications to the P-38, including removing the turbochargers and clipping the outer tips of the horizontal stabilizer. LeVier flew the modified P-38L in the 1946 National Air Races and finished 2nd, beating all the P-51D Mustangs in the field, an aircraft generally regarded as superior to the P-38. LeVier went on to have a long career as a test pilot with Lockheed, testing such aircraft as the P-80 Shooting Star fighter, the F-104 Startfighter, the U-2 spy plane, and even the L-1011 Tristar commercial airliner.

SpecCast Collectibles manufactures vehicle replicas of tractors, farm equipment, construction equipment, and cars. The company also creates special promotional replicas for businesses and events nationwide. In the late 1990s, SpecCast produced a series of World War II die-cast airplane replicas. These replicas were simple die-cast models of famous fighter aircraft of World War II, with limited detail and fixed landing gear, but they provided a starting point for many collectors to gain an interest in World War II die-cast aircraft models. Some of these models doubled as coin banks, and some were painted in the colors of companies, such as John Deere to be marketed as promotional items.

One of the interesting die-cast models produced by SpecCast in the series was this P-38 Lightning, painted in the colors of the machine Tony LeVier raced at the 1946 National Air Races. This model was released by SpecCast in 2000 and is 1/50 scale, smaller than the common 1/48 scale, so the model could fit in the box SpecCast used for all their World War II die-cast aircraft models. Unlike some of their other World War II die-cast aircraft models, the P-38 Lightning does not double as a coin bank. The model features a baked enamel paint finish, plastic detail parts, and rotating propellers.

As SpecCast model airplanes were designed to be affordable and simple, this model of Tony LeVier's P-38 depicts how the Lightning may have looked just after he purchased it. SpecCast did not change their P-38 mold to reflect the racing modifications that LeVier made to his Lightning, such as removing the turbochargers or clipping the outer portions of the horizontal stabilizer. SpecCast also did not change the nose of their P-38 model to accurately reflect that the guns were removed before LeVier purchased the Lightning as surplus. The strong point of the model is that SpecCast, for the most part, correctly replicated the paint scheme used by Tony LeVier on his P-38, including the race number #3 on the sides of the engines and Tony LeVier's name on the nose of the aircraft.

Over the years, many die-cast model aircraft collectors have moved away from the SpecCast models to other more detailed and expensive product lines. However, the Tony LeVier P-38 Lightning is one of the SpecCast models worth adding to a collection if you find it available. The model is one of the only die-cast replicas ever produced of a postwar air racing aircraft and also represents a machine flown by one of the most successful test pilots in aviation history.

SpecCast's die-cast Lockheed P-38L model is a simple representation of the famous American World War II fighter. Although it is a less detailed replica by current standards for die-cast model aircraft, the P-38 model has the distinctive shape of the fighter and some great details, such as rotating propellers and rolling wheels. SpecCast also did an excellent job on this model replicating the bright red color scheme and the "3" race number used by Tony LeVier when he raced his P-38L at the 1946 National Air Races.

A Model Of Clive Caldwell's Spitfire

The toy soldier manufacturer's excellent model of the iconic British World War II fighter aircraft is painted in the markings of the Royal Australian Air Force's highest-scoring ace of the war.

In 1/30 scale, John Jenkins Designs model of the Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III World War II fighter features excellent details. Highlights of the model include a detailed cockpit and opening cockpit canopy, optional position landing gear, a seated pilot figure for the cockpit, realistic weathering, and authentic colors and markings.

A Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III flown by RAAF ace Clive Caldwell on Morotai Island in 1945. Caldwell was the leading Australian ace from World War II, with 28.5 confirmed kills in 300 operational sorties. The Supermarine Spitfire was one of the most famous fighter aircraft of the Second World War. Built in many variants throughout World War II, the Spitfire was widely used by the Royal Air Force and British Commonwealth countries.

The Supermarine Spitfire is a British single-seat fighter aircraft used by the Royal Air Force (RAF), as well as many other Allied countries, before, during, and immediately following World War II. Several variants of the Spitfire were built using different engines, armament, and wing configurations. Introduced into service in 1938, the Spitfire has the distinction of being the only British fighter aircraft produced continuously through World War II. The Spitfire is one of the most famous fighter aircraft of World War II and one of the most revolutionary aircraft in British aviation history.

The Spitfire was developed in the mid-1930s as a short-range, high-performance interceptor by R.J. Mitchell, chief designer at the Supermarine Aviation Works. Mitchell developed the Spitfire's elliptical wing (designed by Beverley Shenstone) with evolutionary sunken rivets to have the thinnest possible cross-section but also have enough room to store the aircraft's armament and retractable landing gear. This elliptical wing, combined with the Spitfire's aerodynamic fuselage, allowed the Spitfire to achieve a top speed greater than most contemporary fighter aircraft of the time, including the Hawker Hurricane. Mitchell continued design work on the Spitfire until his death in 1937. After Mitchell's passing, his assistant, Joseph Smith, took over and oversaw the Spitfire's continuous development through many variants.

The Spitfire first saw widespread combat use during the Battle of Britain in 1940. Thanks to propaganda campaigns, the British public perceived the Spitfire as being the RAF's main fighter aircraft during the battle when, in reality, the Hawker Hurricane and its pilots shouldered more of the responsibility of defeating the German Luftwaffe. Despite the Hurricane being used in greater numbers, the Spitfire was generally regarded as the better airplane. Throughout the battle, the Spitfires had a lower attrition rate and a higher victory-to-loss ratio than the Hurricane. During the battle, RAF planners tried to match the Spitfires up against the Luftwaffe fighters, such as the Messerschmitt Bf 109E, whenever possible as the Spitfire had higher performance than the Hurricane.

After the Battle of Britain, the Spitfire became the principal fighter aircraft of the RAF. The Spitfire was widely used in the European, Mediterranean, Pacific, and South-East Asia theatres of operation. A powerful aircraft but also very easy to fly, the Spitfire was beloved by its pilots. The Spitfire had a high top speed and excellent maneuverability. One shortcoming of the Spitfire was its short range. Designed initially as an interceptor to engage enemy fighters near or over home territory, the Spitfire was never intended to fly long combat missions. This shortcoming was especially problematic for Spitfire pilots in the Pacific theatre, where missions were frequently flown at maximum range.

The Spitfire proved to be adaptable to several roles. In addition to its primary role as an interceptor, the Spitfire was used as a fighter-bomber and as a photo reconnaissance platform. To help pilots learn to fly the Spitfire, two-seat fighter-trainer variants of the Spitfire were developed. The Seafire, a naval version of the Spitfire with strengthened landing gear, a tailhook, and folding wings, was designed for use on aircraft carriers. The Spitfire served in several of these roles until its retirement in the mid-1950s.

Development of the Spitfire continued throughout the war. The original airframe was powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine that produced 1,030 horsepower. The Spitfire's airframe was strong enough and adaptable enough to use more powerful Merlin engines as they were developed. Later Spitfire variants switched to the Rolls-Royce Griffon engines, some versions of these engines producing over 2,000 horsepower. The Spitfire's armament was developed throughout the war as well. Initially armed with eight .303 in machine guns, armament was quickly upgraded to a pair of 20 mm cannon and four .303 in machine guns for more firepower. Other modifications made throughout the war included clipped wings, four and five-blade propellers for higher performance, additional compartments for reconnaissance cameras, and a cut down rear fuselage with a bubble canopy for improved cockpit visibility.

John Jenkins Designs model airplanes come in plain white boxes. The models are protected by foam inserts inside the box designed to fit the models and all the pieces they come with. The Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III comes with a half-bust pilot figure for the cockpit and optional position landing gear pieces. These pieces allow the model to be displayed with its gear retracted if using a John Jenkins Designs display stand.

The John Jenkins Designs RAAF-03 Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III model is essentially ready to display out of the box. The minor assembly required includes fitting the propeller into the nose, inserting the landing gear pieces into their positions, and placing the pilot figure in the cockpit. Working features on this model include a rotating propeller, opening cockpit canopy, and opening cockpit door.

The Spitfire was widely used by the Royal Air Force and British Commonwealth countries during World War II. Over 20,000 Spitfires of all variants were built during the type's production run, which lasted from 1938 to 1948. The last Spitfires in military service were retired in 1961 by the Irish Air Corps. Today, more than 70 Spitfires remain airworthy, with dozens more preserved in museum exhibits worldwide. The Spitfire is widely regarded today as one of the iconic symbols of British military aviation during World War II.

John Jenkins Designs is a toy solder and model manufacturer that produces 1/30 scale miniatures from periods of history ranging from the French and Indian War to World War II. John Jenkins Designs is known for its excellent recreation of a Viking Longship and its Viking crew, its World War I aircraft models, and its German tank models from World War II. The "World War II Aircraft" product range from John Jenkins Designs features aircraft, figures, and diorama accessories representing aviation from the Second World War. The aircraft models included in the "World War II" series are constructed of mixed media materials, including resin, metal, and plastic, and have features such as rotating propellers, opening hatches, moving control surfaces, detailed pilot figures, and realistic weathering.

This John Jenkins Designs Supermarine Spitfire model represents a Mk. V.III variant flown by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in April 1945. This model is product-coded RAAF-03 and retails for $278. The model is made of mixed media materials, including resin, plastic, and metal parts. The model is fully painted and ready for display. Features of the Spitfire include a detailed pilot figure for the cockpit, opening and closing cockpit door and canopy, rotating propeller, and landing gear parts to display the model with its gear extended or retracted. A hole in the bottom of the model allows the model to be displayed in flight using an optional display stand made by John Jenkins Designs. The only assembly required is to insert in the landing gear, propeller, and pilot into the proper positions.

This view of the John Jenkins Designs RAAF-03 Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III model highlights some design attributes of the iconic British World War II fighter that made it so successful. The large, elliptical wing and the slender fuselage paired with the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine gave the Spitfire excellent performance in combat.

RAAF-03 represents a Spitfire that was flown by Group Captain Clive Caldwell when he was flying with No. 457 Squadron, 80 Wing, based at Morotai Island in April 1945. From this position, No. 457 Squadron was engaged in attacking Japanese positions in the Netherlands East Indies and Borneo as part of Allied military offensives in the area. No. 457 Squadron also attacked Japanese shipping in the area using dive-bombing and strafing tactics and escorted other aircraft to attack Japanese targets. Between February and April 1945, No. 457 Squadron flew 293 operational sorties from Morotai Island. When the war ended, No. 457 Squadron was disbanded in November 1945.

Caldwell was the leading Australian ace of World War II. He is credited with shooting down 28.5 aircraft in 300 operational sorties. Before flying the Spitfire, Caldwell flew Curtiss P-40 Warhawks and Tomahawks in the North African campaign. Caldwell was the highest-scoring P-40 pilot from any air force during the war and the highest-scoring Allied pilot in North Africa. For his actions in combat, Caldwell was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) & Bar.

Unfortunately, Caldwell's military career ended in controversy. Upset with the use of the RAAF's fighter units on what Caldwell and others considered dangerous ground-attack missions against Japanese positions, Caldwell and several other senior RAAF pilots staged the "Morotai Mutiny". During the "Morotai Mutiny", these flyers resigned in protest for being relegated to flying strategically unimportant ground-attack missions. An investigation resulted in three senior pilots being relieved of their duties, but Caldwell and others were cleared of wrongdoing.

Before the "Morotai Mutiny", Caldwell was already under investigation for his involvement in an alcohol racket on Morotai. The alcohol was flown in by RAAF pilots and sold to the American military forces on the island. Court-martialed for his involvement and reduced to the rank of Flight Lieutenant, Caldwell left the RAAF in February 1946.

John Jenkins Designs did an incredible job replicating one of the Spitfires flown by Australian ace Clive Caldwell. The model is painted in the appropriate camouflage pattern and has an excellent application of weathering that makes it look like an aircraft that has seen some combat and been exposed to the elements of the South Pacific-East Asia theatre of combat operations. The model has all the correct stenciling, national markings, personal pilot markings, and other paint details. The model matches several reference profile illustrations and pictures of Spitfire Mk V.III A58-484 flown by Caldwell. There is a possibility that the color of the stripes on the propeller spinner is incorrect. Several sources state these stripes were black, and others state they were red. John Jenkins Designs has chosen the red stripes. Researching these models can be difficult using black and white grainy photos and not being able to rely on primary sources of information because the people who were involved are no longer living.

The design of the landing gear is another excellent aspect of this model. John Jenkins Designs uses concealed magnets to hold the landing gear parts in place on their models. This innovative idea eliminates plastic tabs that are commonly used to insert landing gear parts into die-cast models. These plastic tabs often have to be trimmed to fit correctly, do not fit securely, or break over time from removing and inserting them into the model. Using concealed magnets eliminates that possibility and provides a secure fit for all the landing gear parts. Another positive aspect of using concealed magnets to attach the landing gear to the model is it allows the landing gear pieces to be molded with more detail and accuracy, creating a more realistic model overall.

Finally, the Spitfire has excellent cockpit detail. The cockpit includes a separate seat, a detailed instrument panel, a control stick, and seat belts. The included pilot figure is a half-bust sculpt and fits into the cockpit with ease. Similar to the model, the pilot figure is painted with all the correct colors, and shadowing and highlighting creates realistic skin tones and clothing textures throughout the figure.

John Jenkins Designs did an excellent job replicating the paint scheme of the Spitfire flown by Clive Caldwell on their model. The model is painted in the correct camouflage pattern, and the weathered finish is incredibly realistic. To avoid identification confusion with Japanese aircraft, all RAF and British Commonwealth aircraft service in the Pacific theatre had the red color removed from the national insignias, which are correctly represented on this model.

As with any model airplane, there is always room for improvement. One aspect of this model that could have been improved was the addition of more opening panels and moving parts. On the Spitfire, only the propeller turns, and the cockpit door and canopy open and close. For some of John Jenkins Designs recent World War II aircraft models, movable control surfaces, and opening access panels are additional features. It would have been excellent if the Spitfire had opening gun access panels and possibly removable engine cowling panels.

Another area of improvement with the model could be offering a display stand with it. Unfortunately, John Jenkins Designs aircraft models can only be attached to one of the company's display stands, which have been discontinued and are very hard to find at John Jenkins Designs dealers. Without one of these display stands, there is no way to display the model in flight and use the retracted landing gear parts that come with the model. It would be excellent if in the future, John Jenkins Designs could produce another run of the aircraft display stands for collectors who are adding new John Jenkins Designs aircraft to their collections and want to display them as if they were flying.

The seated pilot is a great addition to this model and adds detail and realism to the Spitfire's cockpit. However, this pilot figure is only a half-bust sculpt and can only be used sitting in the cockpit. The other issue with this figure is that it is on the small side so it can fit into the cockpit. Unfortunately, the pilot figure just sits on the seat and doesn't secure in the seat. Turning the model to the side or upside down will cause the pilot to fall out of his seat in the cockpit. If the canopy is in the open position, the pilot could fall out and break if it falls a distance onto a hard surface. The canopy can also get scratched from the pilot figure moving in the cockpit when the model is handled. A solution is to take a small piece of double-sided tape and apply it to the bottom of the pilot figure. This solution will secure the pilot figure in the seat but not permanently, so it could be removed at a later time if desired.

One of the shortcomings of the John Jenkins Designs RAAF-03 Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III model is the seated pilot figure that is included with the model. The figure is on the small side to fit into the model's cockpit and can easily fall out of the seat if the model is turned or moved. This pilot figure is also sculpted looking up and to the right, limiting display possibilities with this model if you want the face of the pilot to be visible in a diorama.

The John Jenkins Designs RAAF-03 Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III is an excellent model for an RAAF diorama. In this diorama, the Spitfire is joined in the display by RAAF mechanic figures specifically made by John Jenkins Designs to display with the Spitfire. Also included in the display are figures of RAAF pilots Bobby Gibbes and Fred Inger, also manufactured by John Jenkins Designs.

The John Jenkins Designs Clive Caldwell Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III is such an excellent model that it makes a great centerpiece in a 1/30 scale World War II RAAF diorama. Fortunately, John Jenkins Designs has made several RAAF figures that are designed for display with the Spitfire. Some of these figure sets include a pair of RAAF mechanics, a sitting RAAF ground crewman, and figures of Fred J. Inger and Bobby Gibbes, both RAAF pilots who flew Spitfires with Caldwell during the war. All of these figures have detailed sculpts and excellent paint detail with shadowing and highlighting, making them great figures to display with the Spitfire.

Diorama accessories from other toy solider manufacturers also work well with the Spitfire model in a display. The manufacturer Thomas Gunn Miniatures makes several diorama accessory packs consisting of tarps, crates, ammunition boxes, covered fuel barrels, and other supply dump items. These diorama accessory sets can be placed anywhere in a display with the Spitfire and look the part. Adding a display base can also enhance this model. For the display base, a base printed to resemble a World War II Japanese Airfield in the Pacific manufactured by Coastal Kits is a great choice. The printed terrain of this base is very close to what Morotai Island looked like in World War II. This display base is also large, allowing plenty of room to display the Spitfire, corresponding figures, and other airfield equipment.

The John Jenkins Designs 1/30 scale Supermarine Spitfire Mk. V.III is an excellent model of the iconic British fighter aircraft from World War II. The model is an excellent tribute to Clive Caldwell and all the RAAF fighter pilots who flew combat missions in the South Pacific-East Asia theatre of operations during World War II. This model, with its impressive detail and quality paint finish, will be at home on any bookshelf containing a display of World War II aircraft models. For an even more impressive display of the Spitfire, pairing it with some of the John Jenkins Designs RAAF figures and other accessories in a diorama takes a collector back in time, to April 1945, and RAAF Spitfire operations from Morotai Island.

Grumman G-21A Goose

The Grumman G-21 Goose was the company's first monoplane to fly, its first twin-engine design, and its first aircraft to enter commercial airline service. After entering service in 1937, the amphibian quickly proved to be a durable and versatile aircraft, adaptable to a variety of roles. Today, some Grumman Goose aircraft are still in service with small airlines, carrying passengers and freight to remote locations worldwide.

Affectionately nicknamed the "Goose", the G-21 was Grumman's first monoplane to fly, its first twin-engine design, and its first aircraft to enter commercial airline service. This remarkable amphibian has served for over 80 years in a variety of roles that have confirmed the strength, versatility, and durability of its original design.

In the early 1930s, ten wealthy New York businessmen and aviators led by Wilton Lloyd-Smith were seeking a replacement for the Loening Air Yacht they used to commute from their Long Island homes to their offices in Manhattan. In 1936, they approached Grover Loening, who declined to work on the project but suggested that the group contact the Grumman Engineering Corporation. Loening had consulted for this company and helped finance it. The company's founder, Leroy Grumman, accepted the project and immediately went to work with designer William Schwendler and Ralston Stalb to build the new G-21 air yacht.

The new design was a stubby but elegant aircraft. The G-21 was an all-metal, high-winged monoplane powered by two 450-horsepower Pratt & Whitney Wasp Jr. nine-cylinder, air-cooled radial engines mounted on the high-set wings. The fuselage served as the aircraft's hull and was equipped with hand-cranked retractable landing gear so the G-21 could use conventional runways as well. The passenger cabin contained room for four to six passengers, and the aircraft could be fitted with a galley or lavatory if the operator requested it.

The G-21 completed its first test flight on May 29, 1937, from Grumman's Bethpage, New York factory. Flight trials went smoothly, and after lengthening the hull and adding outer wing floats to improve performance on the water, the G-21 was ready for production. The performance of the G-21 was notable for its time, having a cruise speed of 180 miles per hour and a range of 800 miles.

Just five weeks after its maiden flight, the first 12 G-21s were delivered to customers Wilton Lloyd-Smith and department store heir Marshall Field III. Soon, other wealthy owners were enjoying the excellent performance of the G-21 Goose. Some of these owners included Colonel McCormick of the Chicago Tribune, Britain's Lord Beaverbrook, and C.W. Deeds of United Aircraft.

The popularity of the G-21 spread as its reputation became well-known in the aviation community. Orders for the G-21 came to Grumman from airlines and foreign operators. The start of World War II prevented the G-21 from being adopted by airlines on a larger scale.

In 1938, the Royal Canadian Air Force became the first military operator of the Goose when it ordered nine examples. Orders soon followed from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army, Peruvian Air Force, and the Portuguese Navy. During World War II, the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard operated 169 "Gooses" designated JRFs in utility, transport, and anti-submarine roles. Eventually, the air forces and navies of 11 nations operated the Goose. Grumman ended production of the G-21 in October 1945 after 345 examples had been built.

After World War II, most G-21s were phased out of military service and many were sold as surplus. With its ability to fly from almost anywhere, the Goose saw widespread service with small airlines in the Caribbean, California, and Alaska. Antilles Air Boats was particularly noteworthy for flying the Goose throughout the Caribbean from their base in St. Croix in the Virgin Islands. The Goose still flies today, providing needed service carrying passengers and freight to remote locations worldwide not easily accessible by most aircraft. Some G-21s have had their original radial engines replaced by turboprops for improved performance.

The Grumman G-21A Goose in the National Air and Space Museum's collection was built in 1938 for the Asiatic Petroleum Company. It was equipped with cactus-proof tires for operation in remote locations. The Goose was later sold and flown in Ecuador until 1951 when it was returned to Grumman. After flying with Chalk's Flying Service for several years, and later, Catalina Airlines, the G-21A was transferred to Warbirds West in 1982 and acquired by the National Naval Aviation Museum. In 1983, the National Naval Aviation Museum transferred the G-21A to the National Air and Space Museum. The G-21A was then fully restored by Buehler Aviation Research in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The G-21A has been displayed in the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar Hazy Center since 2003.

Fairchild Republic A-10C Thunderbolt II (1977)

The Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II is a single-seat, twin-turbofan, straight-wing subsonic attack aircraft developed for the U.S. Air Force that entered service in 1977. Nicknamed the "Warthog" or "Hog", the A-10 was designed to provide close air support (CAS) to friendly ground forces by attacking enemy armored vehicles, tanks, and personnel. The A-10 is the only aircraft solely designed for CAS to have served with the U.S. Air Force. In addition to CAS, the A-10 can operate as an airborne forward air controller, directing other aircraft to attack ground targets. The A-10 served with distinction in the 1991 Gulf War and later in conflicts in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, and against the Islamic State in the Middle East. The A-10s pictured here belong to the 104th Fighter Squadron of the Maryland Air National Guard.

Fairchild Republic A-10C Thunderbolt II

Crew: 1 (Pilot)

Length: 53 ft 4 in

Height: 14 ft 8 in

Wingspan: 57 ft 6 in

Wing Area: 506 sq ft

Powerplant: General Electric TF-GE-100A turbofan (x2)

Range: 250 nmi

Cruise Speed: 340 mph

Maximum Speed: 439 mph

Empty/Maximum Takeoff Weights: 24,959 lb/46,000 lb

Service Ceiling: 45,000 ft

Armament: 30 mm GAU-8/A Avenger rotary cannon (x1), up to 16,000 lb of ordnance on 11 hardpoints. Ordinance can include Hydra rocket pods, AGM-65 Maverick air-to-surface missiles, laser-guided, unguided or cluster bombs, SUU-42A/A flare/chaff dispenser pod, ALQ-131 or ALQ-184 ECM pods, LITENING targeting pod, AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, external fuel tanks for increased range/loiter time over combat area

Curtain Call For The Warthog

Simplicity

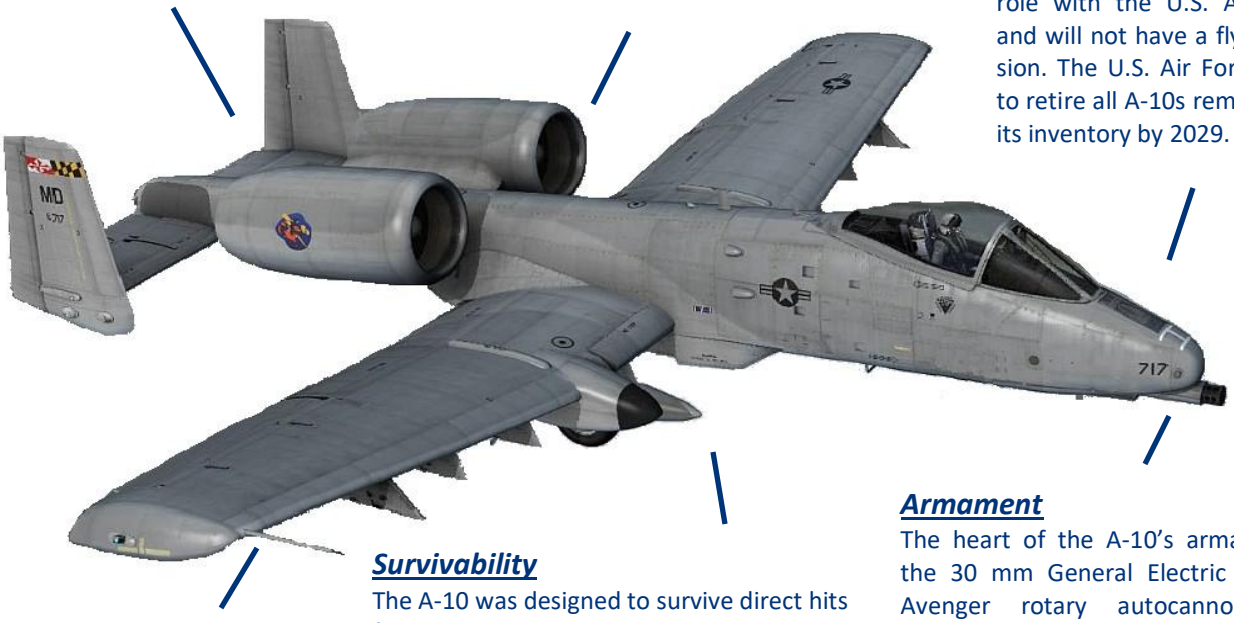
The A-10 was designed to be a simple aircraft to maintain and operate in forward combat areas and be able to be rearmed and refueled with minimal ground equipment. An unusual feature of the aircraft is that many of its parts, including the engines, main landing gear, and vertical stabilizers, are interchangeable between the left and right sides of the aircraft. The A-10 also has sturdy and simple landing gear, low-pressure tires, and a large, straight wing. These design features allow the A-10 to be operated from short, rough airstrips, taxiways, and even straight sections of roadways, with a heavy ordinance load.

Engines

The A-10 Thunderbolt II is powered by a pair of General Electric TF-34-GE-1000 turbofan engines. The engines have a high 6:1 bypass ratio. The high bypass ratio of these engines contributes to their distinctive sound and a low infrared signature. The unusual position of the engines decreases the risk of debris ingestion when the A-10 uses unprepared runways. The engines can also remain running while the aircraft is rearmed and serviced, reducing turn-around time on combat operations. The position of the engines also directs exhaust over the tailplanes, further shielding the A-10 from infrared surface-to-air missiles.

104th Fighter Squadron

The 104th Fighter Squadron of the 175th Wing of the Maryland Air National Guard has operated the A-10 Thunderbolt II since 1979. The 104th Fighter Squadron has deployed several times overseas to support U.S. combat operations. In March 2024, it was announced the 104th Fighter Squadron will begin retiring the A-10 in late 2024. The unit will take on a new cyber wing role with the U.S. Air Force and will not have a flying mission. The U.S. Air Force plans to retire all A-10s remaining in its inventory by 2029.



Modernization

Since its introduction in 1979, the A-10 has received numerous upgrades and updates to its avionics and weapons systems. From 2005 to 2011, A-10s were upgraded to the current A-10C standard as part of the Precision Engagement Program. Upgrades that were part of this program included all-weather combat capability, an improved fire-control system, integrated combat search and rescue systems, electronic countermeasures, smart bomb targeting, a modern communications suite, and cockpit upgrades.

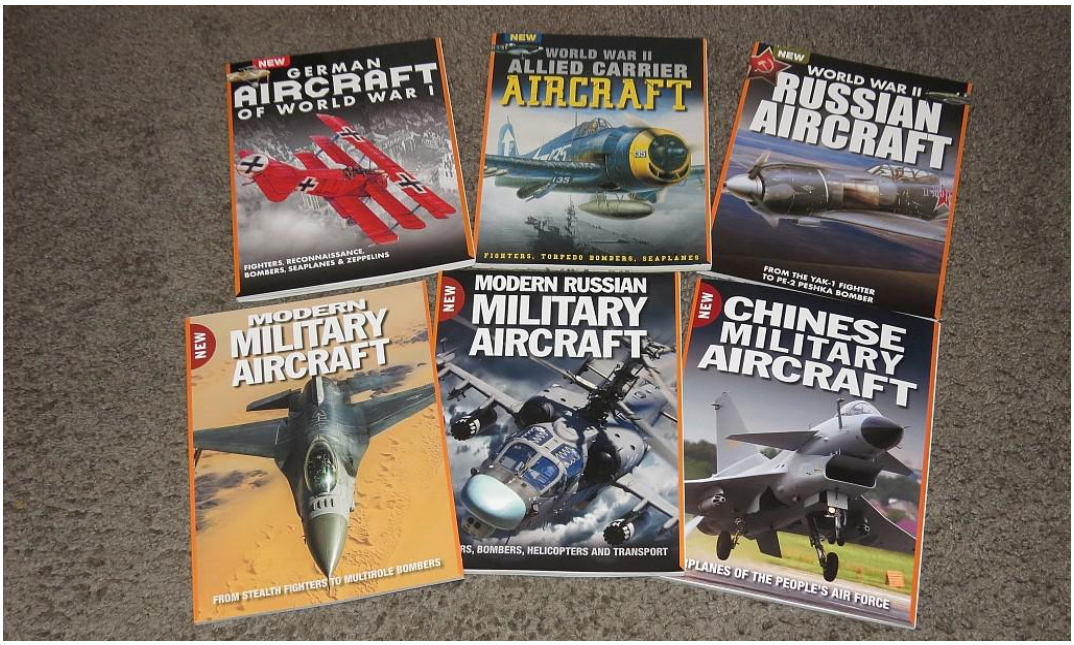
Survivability

The A-10 was designed to survive direct hits from armor-piercing rounds and high-explosive projectiles. The aircraft has a dual hydraulic flight control system with a mechanical backup if the hydraulics are lost. The cockpit and flight control systems are protected by titanium armor, with the cockpit windscreen and canopy being resistant to small arms fire. The A-10's fuel tanks are in the aircraft's center, and fuel system components are inside the tanks, so any component failure will not lead to fuel loss. The engines are also shielded from the rest of the airframe by firewalls and fire extinguishing equipment. The landing gear is also designed to lower and retract using drag and gravity if hydraulic power is lost.

Armament

The heart of the A-10's armament is the 30 mm General Electric GAU8/A Avenger rotary autocannon. This weapon is designed specifically for use against tanks and armored vehicles. The powerful cannon fires shells made from depleted uranium that can penetrate the armor of all existing tanks and armored vehicles. In addition to the cannon, the A-10 can carry various other weapons systems on 11 hardpoints. Common weapons carried include the AGM-65 Maverick air-to-surface missile, Hydra rocket pods, multiple types of bombs, the ALQ-131 or ALQ-184 ECM pod, flare and chaff dispenser pods, and AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles for self-defense.

Amber Books Ltd. Aviation Reference Bookazines

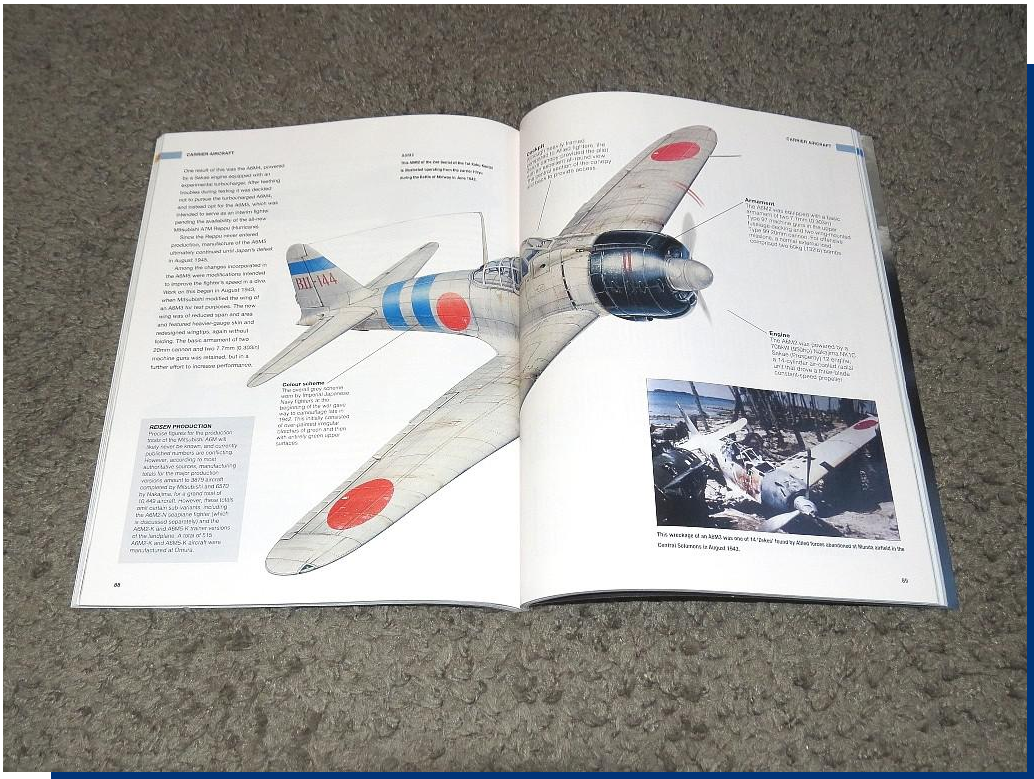


Amber Books Ltd. is currently publishing a series of reference bookazines focused on aviation topics that have shown up in the Newsstand section of Barnes & Noble bookstores in the United States. The bookazines are an excellent quick reference guide to the aviation topic they focus on and feature color illustrations, historical photographs, and aircraft design and specification information.

Amber Books Ltd. is a United Kingdom-based publisher of nonfiction illustrated reference books. The company publishes illustrated reference books for children and adults on topics related to military history, military technology, animals, pets, photography, travel, natural history, music, health, and transportation. The publishing company currently offers over 1,000 titles that are available in 40 different languages. In addition to publishing reference books under its own name, Amber Books Ltd. also offers book packaging services for clients, publishing materials for them with the clients paying royalty fees to use the material. Recently, Amber Books Ltd. began offering some of its military and aviation reference book titles in an affordable and concise reference bookazine format.

The aviation titles in this series of reference bookazines cover a wide variety of aircraft and periods in aviation history. Each title in the series is not a complete history but rather a quick reference guide of the aircraft presented. The bookazines are each over 130 pages in length and features multiple aircraft types, including fighters, bombers, trainers, transports, and reconnaissance platforms, a brief history of their use, specifications, color profile drawings, and photographs. Of interest is that the series of reference bookazines has covered some aircraft types not widely covered in other publications. For example, the bookazine titled *World War II Russian Aircraft* features many Russian aircraft from the Second World War that are virtually unknown to the general public. The bookazine titled *Modern Russian Military Aircraft* offers a look at many of the aircraft being used by the Russian Air Force in the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. A recent release in this bookazine series titled *Chinese Military Aircraft* is a rare glimpse at many of the aircraft types used or that are in development by the modern Chinese military. Other titles in this series of bookazines include *Japanese Aircraft of World War II*, *World War II German Bombers*, *World War II German Fighters*, *World War II Allied Carrier Aircraft*, *Modern Military Aircraft*, *Military Aircraft,* and *German Aircraft of World War I*.

The bookazines in this series are available in the newsstand section at Barnes & Noble bookstores across the United States and retail for $19.99. As these bookazines are special orders from the publisher and not part of the regular Barnes and Noble newsstand inventory, the selection of titles available in this series may vary at each store location. These bookazines make an excellent quick reference guide for anyone interested in aviation and aviation history and worthy of a spot on the bookshelf or desk of any military aviation enthusiast.


CARRIER AIRCRAFT
One result of this was the A6M5, powered by a Sakae engine equipped with an experimental turbocharger. After teething troubles during testing it was decided not to pursue the turbocharged A6M5, and instead opt for the A6M5, which was intended to serve as an interim fighter pending the availability of the all-new Mitsubishi A7M Reppu (Hurricane).
Since the Reppu never entered production, manufacture of the A6M5 ultimately continued until Japan's defeat in August 1945.
Among the changes incorporated in the A6M5 were modifications intended to improve the fighter's speed in a dive. Work on this began in August 1943, when Mitsubishi modified the wing of an A6M3 for test purposes. The new wing was of reduced span and area and featured heavier-gauge skin and redesigned ailerons, again without tabbing. The basic armament of two 20mm cannon and two 7.7mm (0.303in) machine guns was retained, but in a further effort to increase performance,
A6M5
Armament
Engine
Colour scheme
BUILT NUMBERS
Precise figures for the production totals of the Mitsubishi A6M will likely never be known, and currently published numbers are confusing. However, according to most authoritative sources, manufacturing totals for the major production versions amount to 3879 aircraft completed by Mitsubishi and 6310 by Nakajima, for a grand total of 10,449 aircraft. However, these totals are certain sub-variants, including the A6M2-N seaplane fighter (which is discussed separately) and the A6M2-K and A6M3-K 'Hamp' versions of the landplane. A total of 516 A6M2-K and A6M3-K aircraft were manufactured at Omura.
This wreckage of an A6M3 was one of 14 'Zeke' found by Allied forces abandoned at Munda airfield in the Central Solomons in August 1943.

Distelfink Airlines

Est. 2013

ABOUT DISTELFINK AIRLINES

My late grandfather, John Brey, and I at the 2007 Geneseo Airshow. This was one of the few times that we had our photo taken together at an airshow.

The story of "Distelfink Airlines" begins in the early 1990s when my late grandfather, John Brey, began building and flying remote control model aircraft in his retirement. He enjoyed the hobby and quickly amassed a large fleet of model airplanes, which filled his garage and woodworking shop. He gave a name to his fleet of aircraft, "Distelfink Airlines". For the symbol of his fleet, he chose the Pennsylvania Dutch/German hex sign featuring the "Distelfink", a colorful bird that is a symbol of good luck and happiness. This hex sign and symbol is very common on Pennsylvania Dutch/German barns in Eastern Pennsylvania and is an important part of our local culture. He had custom "Distelfink" decals made for all his airplanes and had T-shirts made with "Distelfink Airlines" printed on them. It wasn't long before curious people began asking about "Distelfink Airlines" and what it was. My grandfather told anyone who asked that "Distelfink Airlines" was a new startup airline that was going to be offering service between the Lehigh Valley International Airport and Philadelphia International Airport with more routes to come soon.

In addition to flying his model airplanes, my grandfather enjoyed attending airshows and we traveled to airshows together for almost 20 years. He also enjoyed local aviation history and was particularly fascinated by the history of the Consolidated TBY Sea Wolf, a torpedo bomber that was built locally in Allentown, Pennsylvania during World War II. He also remembered when famous aviator Amelia Earhart visited the Lehigh Valley in the early 1930s to raise funds for her failed attempt to become the first woman to fly around the world.

Established in 2013 in memory of my grandfather, "Distelfink Airlines" is an online aviation newsletter that carries on a tradition of sharing a love for aviation that my grandfather shared with me. This newsletter features photographs and writings on a variety of aviation topics. The logo that was chosen for "Distelfink Airlines" is the hex sign that my grandfather chose for his fleet of remote control model aircraft many years ago. This proud symbol of local Pennsylvania Dutch/German culture is joined by a pair of Consolidated TBY Sea Wolf torpedo bombers, the aircraft that was built locally in Allentown during World War II and is such an important part of our local aviation history. Thank you for reading "Distelfink Airlines" and sharing in the passion for aviation that my grandfather shared with me.