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Corey J Beitler's

"Distelfink Airlines"

An Online Aviation Newsletter

Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend



Boeing/McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II Plus

Franklin Mint 1/48-Scale A-10C Thunderbolt II

Curtiss P-6E Hawk

Grumman F-14D(R) Tomcat

Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless

WWII Weekend Night Engine Run Photo Shoot

The Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's restored North American SNJ-4 advanced trainer takes to the sky during the 2022 Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend. The museum sells flight experiences in this aircraft, and the SNJ-4 was airborne throughout the weekend, giving people the thrill of flying in one of the most important advanced training aircraft ever built.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Greetings Everyone:

Welcome to the July edition of "Distelfink Airlines". Airshow season is in full swing with many great airshows taking place in the United States. It is great to see airshows return to their normal form, with lots of aircraft, aircraft demonstrations, and lots of spectators on the grounds of airports and air museums to experience the events.

This edition features photo highlights from the airshow portion of the 31st annual Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend. This annual event is an incredible tribute to the "Greatest Generation" that sacrificed so much both at home and overseas to achieve victory during World War II. The photographs feature many of the aircraft that flew in the event and also include some special photo shoots which incorporated some of the reenactors doing incredible living history portrayals at the event. I had the opportunity once again to cover this event as credentialed media and the event did not disappoint. I want to thank the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum and Dave and Christina Brown, the media coordinators for the event, for inviting me to cover World War II Weekend for my newsletter. I would also like to thank the America's Sweethearts girl group for being generous with their time and posing for some photographs for me next to some of the historic aircraft on the field. I would also like to thank Russ and Aldona Jones for posing for photographs for me with their 1942 Ford GPW and Pete Lerro from Lerro Photography for helping set up an excellent morning photo shoot with reenactors posing as bomber aircrew. Finally, special thanks to the Commemorative Air Force B-24/B-29 Squadron for allowing us to walk around and pose people and vehicles with their B-24 Liberator "Diamond Lil" during the bomber aircrew photo shoot.

More World War II Weekend coverage is also featured in "One Last Thing". For the second year in a row, the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum hosted a special night-engine-run photo shoot featuring some of the aircraft at the event. Check out this section for some photographs from that special photo shoot that took place on Saturday evening at the event.

The "Aviation Sightings" section features a Boeing/McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II Plus that performed a demonstration at the 2022 Thunder Over Dover Airshow held at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. The "Aircraft of Special Interest" section features the Commemorative Air Force Airbase Georgia's restored Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless, one of the few remaining airworthy SBDs in the world. This aircraft was at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum World War II Weekend and did a lot of flying, both in the airshow and for warbird experience flights. The "Aircraft of the National Air and Space Museum" section features a Grumman F-14D(R) Tomcat on display in the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center. The F-14 is once again a hot topic in aviation and popular culture with the recent release of the sequel to "Top Gun", "Top Gun: Maverick", hitting movie theaters. "Aircraft Models" takes a look at a classic Franklin Mint 1/48-scale A-10 Thunderbolt II model that will have a very special place in my model airplane collection.

Finally, a new section debuts in this edition I'm trying out. "Flying Colors" will feature an aircraft with a special or well-known paint scheme or livery, and discuss the history of that aircraft or the color scheme. I feel this section is a bit better of an idea than the "Aviation Graphic" section it replaces. The first aircraft to be featured is the Curtiss P-6E Hawk wearing the famous colors of the 17th Pursuit Squadron. Please let me know if you like this section or have any ideas for a future aircraft to include!

Thank you for reading "Distelfink Airlines" and supporting my aviation photojournalism efforts. I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter.

Regards,
-Corey

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Boeing/McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II Plus



A Boeing/McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II Plus operated by U.S. Marine Corps Attack Squadron VMA-231 performs a flight demonstration during the 2022 Thunder Over Dover Airshow held at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. With its thrust-vectoring exhaust nozzles, the AV-8B Harrier II Plus can takeoff and land vertically and also fly backward, sideways, and hover like a helicopter. Since its introduction in 1985, the AV-8B has been used successfully in multiple roles, including close support of ground troops and aerial reconnaissance.

The Boeing/McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II Plus is a single-engine ground-attack aircraft that represents the second generation of the Harrier Jump Jet Family. The aircraft is capable of vertical or short takeoff and landing operations (V/STOL) thanks to the thrust vectoring exhaust nozzles that are attached to the side of its Rolls-Royce Pegasus turbofan engine. The AV-8B can carry a variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons and is employed on light attack or multi-role combat missions, including close support of ground troops and aerial reconnaissance.

Design work on the AV-8B began in the early 1970s and was initially a cooperative effort between the United States and the United Kingdom, aimed at addressing weaknesses in the first generation Hawker Siddeley Harrier. One of the primary focuses of improvement for the new Harrier was improving the performance of the aircraft by installing a more powerful Rolls-Royce Pegasus engine. In 1975, the United Kingdom abandoned the project, leaving McDonnell Douglas to work on the improved Harrier alone. McDonnell Douglas (now Boeing) extensively redesigned the AV-8A to create the AV-8B. Changes included a more powerful engine, a larger composite wing with additional weapons hardpoints, an elevated cockpit for improved visibility, and a redesigned fuselage with structural and aerodynamic refinements. The new AV-8B Harrier II made its maiden flight in 1981 and entered service with the U.S. Marine Corps in 1985. In 1981, the United Kingdom returned to the project and ended up taking a large share of the workload of building the aircraft. The British Aerospace Harrier II was a variant of the AV-8B built for the Royal Air Force and later used by the Royal Navy from 2006 to 2010. Later upgrades to the Harrier II included a night-attack capability and radar, creating the AV-8B NA and AV-8B Plus variants of the aircraft. Variants of the AV-8B Harrier II are also operated by the Spanish Navy and the Italian Navy.

Often operated from small aircraft carriers, assault ships, or forward air bases, the AV-8B Harrier II has proven to be a vital asset in numerous combat and humanitarian operations. The AV-8B Harrier II was considered one of the most vital weapons of the 1991 Gulf War. The AV-8B Harrier IIs operated by the U.S. Marine Corps are expected to be replaced by the Lockheed Martin F-35B Lightning II by 2025. This AV-8B Harrier II Plus is operated by U.S. Marine Corps Attack Squadron VMA-231 “Aces of Spades” based at MCAS Cherry Point in North Carolina.



Franklin Mint 1/48-Scale A-10C Thunderbolt II



As part of their line of 1/48 scale die-cast model airplanes, the now defunct Franklin Mint made an excellent replica of the Fairchild Republic A-10C Thunderbolt II close support aircraft. Franklin Mint made this model in several different paint schemes, including this one. This A-10C was flown by the 103d Fighter Squadron of the 111th Fighter Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard from 1992 to 2010.

In service since 1976, the Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II is one of the most well-known attack aircraft in the world. Commonly known as the “Warthog” or “Hog” because of its unusual look, the A-10 is designed to provide close support to friendly ground forces by attacking enemy tanks, armored vehicles, and personnel. The A-10 can also use air-to-air weapons to shoot down enemy helicopters if necessary. The A-10 is the only purpose-built, close air support (CAS) aircraft built to serve with the U.S. Air Force.

The A-10 was designed around the 30 mm GAU-8/A Avenger rotary cannon, the shells from which can penetrate the armor of any tank in the world. The A-10 can carry a large amount and wide range of air-to-ground weapons including rockets, bombs, and missiles on its underwing pylons. For self-defense, the A-10 can be equipped with flare or chaff dispensers and air-to-air missiles. Survivability in a hostile environment was also built into the A-10s design. The cockpit and vital aircraft systems are protected by titanium armor and the pilot is protected by bulletproof cockpit glass. Redundant flight

control systems allow the A-10 to keep flying even if it is seriously damaged. To facilitate quick repairs in a forward operating area, many parts of the A-10 such as the tail surfaces, are interchangeable between each side of the aircraft. The ability of the A-10 to land and takeoff from short runways and its simple design allows it to operate and be serviced close to forward combat areas with minimal maintenance and support facilities.

Designed during the Cold War to take out Soviet tanks in a war in Europe that never happened, the A-10 has nevertheless proved itself in combat on numerous occasions. The A-10 played an important role in the First Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and in recent military action against the Islamic State. Despite of numerous attempts to retire or replace it, the A-10 remains in the U.S. Air Force inventory. Recent upgrades to its weapons systems, avionics, and the fact that the entire fleet of A-10 aircraft is scheduled to receive new sets of wings suggest the Warthog will be in the U.S. Air Force inventory for at least the foreseeable future.

During the early 2000s, the now-defunct Franklin Mint Company produced a line of 1/48-scale die-cast model airplanes. One of the models produced was an excellent replica of an A-10 Thunderbolt II in the colors of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 103d Fighter Squadron, part of the 111th Fighter Wing. The 103d Fighter Squadron flew A-10s from the now-closed Naval Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove in Horsham from 1988 to 2011. Long out of production, this model is hard to find on the secondary market. After years of searching, I recently came across this model, one I've wanted to acquire for years because of its connection to the 103d Fighter Squadron, which flew their A-10s almost daily over my house on their practice sorties.

Franklin Mint did a nice job replicating the A-10 Thunderbolt II. The shape of the aircraft is correct and captures many of the unique features of the A-10, such as the oversized engines and the low-visibility, two-tone gray color scheme used on most A-10 aircraft. The specific A-10 Franklin Mint replicated is serial number 81-0981. This aircraft was built in 1981 as an A-10A and served with the 103d Fighter Squadron from 1992 to 2010. In 2008, this particular aircraft, upgraded to the A-10C variant, deployed to Afghanistan for participation

in Operation Enduring Freedom. Reference photos of the actual aircraft show Franklin Mint matched all the emblems and markings of the 103d Fighter Squadron and 111th Fighter Wing on the model. Finally, Franklin Mint gave this aircraft a nice weapons load, including a pair of AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles that are carried by most A-10s as a measure of self-defense against enemy aircraft.

If there was any room for improvement on this model, it would be that the Franklin Mint produced the model with its landing gear fixed in the down position so the model must be displayed on its landing gear and there is no option to display the aircraft as if it were in flight. Franklin Mint also used decals to replicate some of the aircraft's markings, which could peel over time if the model is not carefully handled and displayed.

There are plenty of new models out there but sometimes it is a classic that adds to a collection even more. This model brings back many fond memories of seeing the 103d Fighter Squadron fly their A-10s in a ground attack demonstration at the annual Willow Grove Airshow and flying over my house on their practice missions a few days a week. This is a model I'm thrilled to have found and will cherish in my collection.



Franklin Mint's 1/48-scale Fairchild Republic A-10C Thunderbolt II die-cast model captures the unique look and features of the aircraft affectionately known as the "Warthog" well. The A-10s large General Electric TF-34-GE-100A turbofans are positioned above the fuselage to minimize the possibility of damage from debris when the aircraft is operating from unprepared runways. The twin tail configuration of the A-10 helps deflect the exhaust of the engines and reduce their heat signature

Curtiss P-6E Hawk

(1931)



The Curtiss P-6E Hawk was the last of a long line of biplane fighters developed by the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company beginning in 1925 to carry the name "Hawk. Introduced in 1931, the P-6E Hawk was the last biplane fighter aircraft produced in quantity for the U.S. Army Air Corps, which ordered 46 from Curtiss in 1931-1932. With a top speed of almost 200 miles per hour and a service ceiling of 23,900 ft, the P-6E had respectable performance for a fighter aircraft when it was introduced in the early 1930s. Rapidly advancing aviation technology would make the P-6E all but obsolete by the mid-1930s. The P-6E shown here is the only surviving example of the type. It is on display in the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio, being on indefinite loan from the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum.

Curtiss P-6E Hawk

Crew: 1

Length: 22 ft 7 in

Height: 8 ft 11 in

Wingspan: 31 ft 6 in

Wing Area: 252 sq ft

Powerplant: Curtiss V-1750C Conqueror V-12 liquid-cooled inline piston engine

Range: 212 nmi

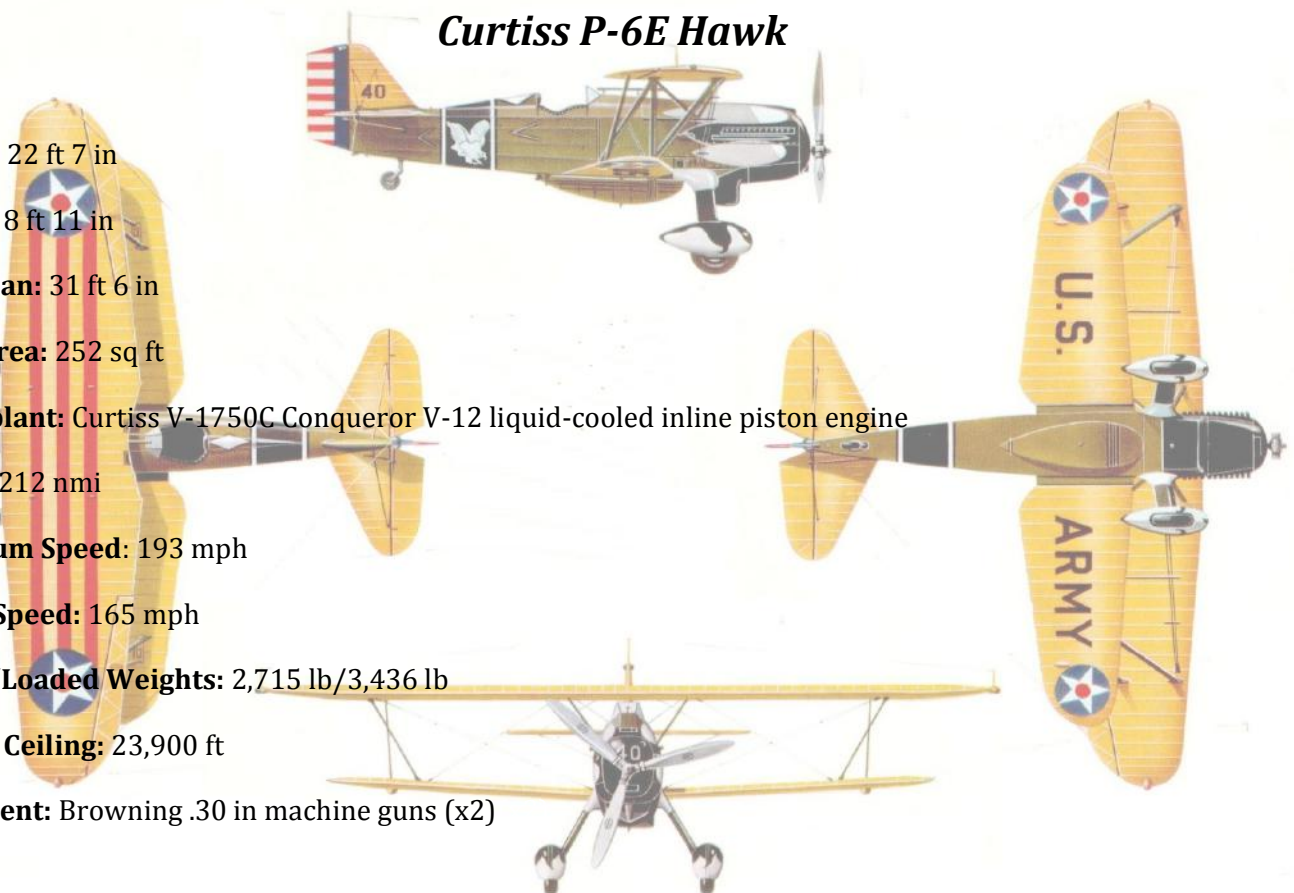
Maximum Speed: 193 mph

Cruise Speed: 165 mph

Empty/Loaded Weights: 2,715 lb/3,436 lb

Service Ceiling: 23,900 ft

Armament: Browning .30 in machine guns (x2)





Curtiss P-6E Hawk, 1st Pursuit Group, 17th Pursuit Squadron, Selfridge Field, Michigan 1933

Considered one of the most beautiful biplane fighter aircraft ever built, the Curtiss P-6E Hawk had a brief career with the U.S. Army Air Corps. Limited funding during the Great Depression meant Curtiss built only 46 P-6Es for the U.S. Army Air Corps and delivered them in 1931 and 1932. The P-6Es only served with three squadrons from 1931 to 1937, the 17th and 94th Pursuit Squadrons of the 1st Pursuit Group based at Selfridge Field, Michigan, and the 33rd Pursuit Squadron of the 8th Pursuit Group based at Langley Field, Virginia. During their brief career, over half of the P-6Es were lost in accidents. The others were allowed to wear out in service as they were already obsolete as fighter aircraft by the mid-1930s.

The 17th Pursuit Squadron's P-6E aircraft had very colorful and unique "Snow Owl" markings. These markings were chosen for the only surviving P-6E when it was restored by the Smithsonian Institution. The P-6E is on loan to and displayed at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. Today, these colorful markings are still a favorite of aviation enthusiasts building both plastic and radio-controlled models of the P-6E Hawk.

Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend



One of the nation's largest living history events and airshows dedicated to the World War II era once again thrilled thousands at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Always one of the stars of the airshow portion of World War II Weekend, the Commemorative Air Force's restored Boeing B-29 Superfortress, "Fifi", makes a banking turn during its Saturday airshow demonstration.



I take a break from my media duties covering the 31st annual Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend to have my portrait taken with the Military Aviation Museum's rare Bell P-39F Airacobra. The P-39 was a hit with event attendees in the air and on the ground at the event. Thanks to fellow photographer John Osciak for taking this photo for me.

For 31 years, the essence of the World War II years has come alive each year on the first weekend in June at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum, located at the Reading Airport in Reading, Pennsylvania. The event has grown into one of the most well-known airshows in the United States showcasing World War II aircraft and one of the largest living history reenactments in the nation. The event is an incredible tribute to the "Greatest Generation", the men and women who fought overseas and those who worked in the factories on the homefront to give the United States and its allies what was needed in both manpower and equipment to win World War II.

Held on June 3, 4 & 5, World War II Weekend featured over 30 restored World War II-era fighters, bombers, trainers, and transports, including a rare Bell P-39F Airacobra operated by the Military Aviation Museum, a Goodyear FG-1D Corsair that was recently acquired by warbird collector Tom Duffy, and the recently restored Douglas C-53 Skytrooper "Beach City Baby", visited the event as a static display aircraft. Unfortu-

nately, mechanical problems prevented some aircraft scheduled to attend from appearing at the event this year. Rides were available in several historic aircraft at the event. For the second consecutive year, World War II Weekend featured a special night-engine-run photo shoot for photographers featuring some of the aircraft that were part of the airshow roster.

In addition to the daily airshows, the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend featured multiple living history and informational exhibits that featured hundreds of military vehicles, over 1,700 reenactors portraying all aspects of World War II, live entertainment appropriate for the period, and World War II veterans as special honored guests.

Blessed by excellent weather and temperatures in the high 70s to low 80s all weekend, the event was attended by huge crowds of spectators from all over the nation, with Saturday's crowd setting an attendance record for the event. The following photographs showcase some of the airshow highlights of the 2022 Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend.

The Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend actually starts on Thursday as a number of the aircraft participating in the airshow arrive at Reading Regional Airport, and many reenactors begin setting up their living history encampments. One of the highlights of Thursday arrivals this year was the Commemorative Air Force's Consolidated B-24A Liberator "Diamond Lil" arriving at Reading. In this photo, the large bomber has just landed and is slowing on the runway.



In recent years, Thursday at World War II Weekend has also become a busy day for warbird experience flights. With some of the more popular experience flights selling out for the entire weekend, some aircraft operators try to arrive on Thursday to sell more flights and make more revenue. Here, an always popular aircraft at World War II Weekend, the Commemorative Air Force Airbase Georgia's P-51 Mustang "Red Nose" departs Reading Regional Airport on a warbird experience flight.



Although thunderstorms limited aircraft arrivals on Thursday this year at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend, some aircraft managed to make it to Reading before the weather moved in. Here, the Commemorative Air Force's Boeing B-29 Superfortress "Fifi" is parked on the ramp following her arrival at Reading Regional Airport. The B-29, primarily used in the Pacific theatre, was one of the most advanced bomber designs to see operational service in World War II.

Friday is a great day at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend to see many aircraft on the ground without a mass of people standing around them. One of the highlights of the static display aircraft at the 2022 event was Vintage Wings Inc.'s Douglas C-53 Skytrooper "Beach City Baby". The 2022 World War II Weekend was the first airshow appearance for "Beach City Baby" and its flight crew. With its stylish and colorful nose art, the aircraft was a crowd favorite the entire weekend.



Opening day at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend is best opportunity to get that special photograph as Friday typically draws a lighter crowd than the weekend. The Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's General Motors-built TBM Avenger did not fly in the airshow but was on static display for spectators to view up close. Here, the America's Sweethearts girl group members, Mollie Craven, Samantha Joy Pearlman, and Joyah Love, pose for a picture with the aircraft for me.



The Mid-Atlantic Air Museum has an extensive collection of aircraft, and a number of them are on display during World War II Weekend for the public to see. The Naval Aircraft Factory N3N was built as a training aircraft during the 1930s and early 1940s. The N3N could be fitted with conventional landing gear shown here or floats for use on water surfaces. Most N3Ns were painted in a high-visibility, bright yellow color scheme to make them easy to identify as training aircraft flown by student pilots.



Friday at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend is a busy day for warbird experience flights. With only a small practice airshow scheduled, the warbird experience flights can fly all day long with little interruption. When the flights return, the pilots often fly over the event grounds to give the passengers a bird's eye view of the event. Here, the CAF Airbase Georgia's Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless banks over the event as it returns from one of the warbird experience flights.

Over my years of attending the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend, I've had the opportunity to make personal connections with some of the entertainers that perform in the event. The fun ladies of the girl group, America's Sweethearts, are always willing to pose for pictures for me and share a few minutes of their time. In this photo, America's Sweethearts members Samantha, Mollie, and Joyah take a minute to pose for me next to the B-25 Mitchell "Briefing Time".



On Friday night at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend, a special sunset tour of the ramp is offered to select photographers and media members. Here, the Commemorative Air Force West Texas Wing's rare Curtiss SB2C-5 Helldiver sits on a quiet ramp during the last hour of daylight. This Helldiver is the only remaining airworthy example of the type. The dive bomber was plagued by technical and developmental delays and was a tricky aircraft to fly and maintain.

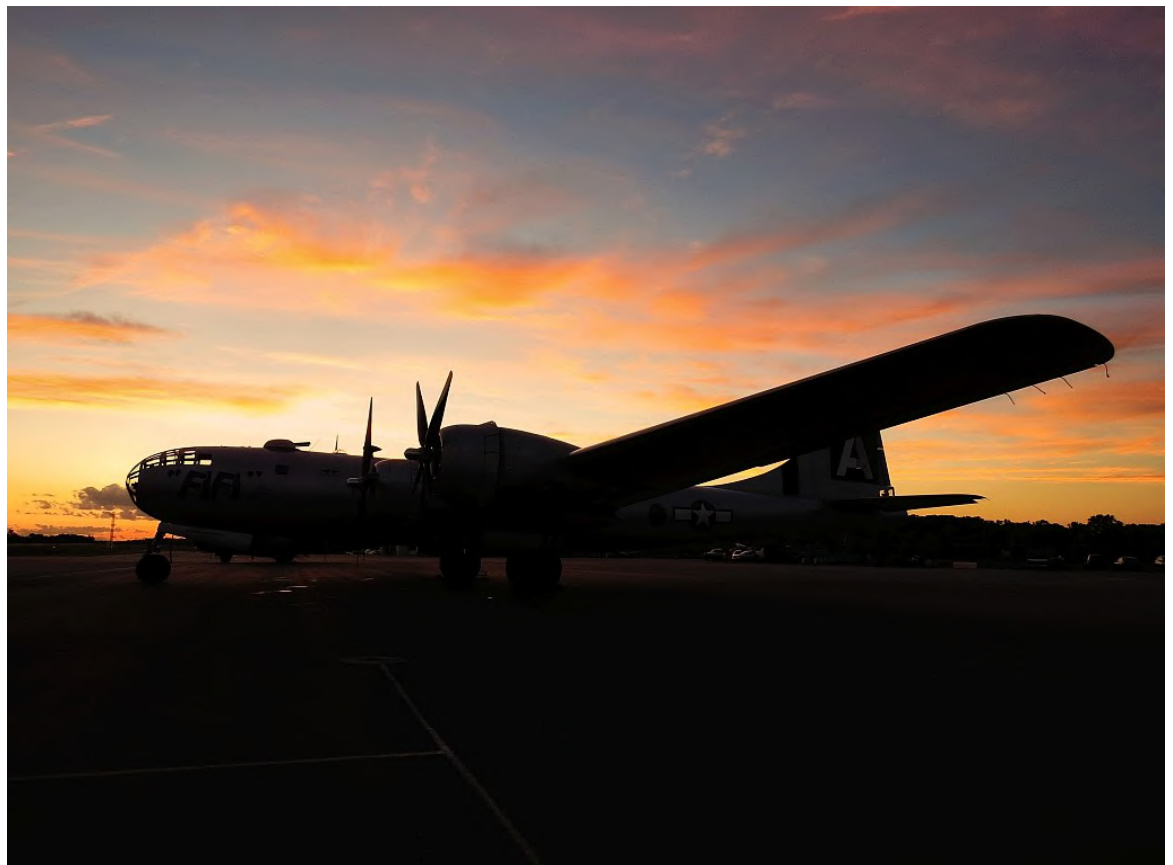


The sunset tour of the ramp is a unique opportunity to photograph some of the airshow aircraft at the Mid Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend without any people around. After a few years of not being part of the event, the Commemorative Air Force's B-24A Liberator "Diamond Lil" was back at the event to the delight of many aviation enthusiasts. This B-24 was the 25th Liberator built and is painted in the colors and markings of a B-24 used for transport duties by the U.S. Army Air Forces.



Alone on the ramp after a day of flying warbird experience flights, the Commemorative Air Force's Boeing B-29 Superfortress "Fifi" shines in the setting sun. The B-29 is best known for its role in dropping the two atomic bombs on Japan that brought World War II to a close. The B-29 would survive in service long enough to fly bombing missions during the Korean War. The B-29 had several technological advances in its design, such as a pressurized cabin and remote-controlled gun turrets.

As the sun goes down on Friday evening, the airfield gets quiet. Aircraft sit on the tarmac and wait for the next day, which will be a busy one and include both warbird experience flights and flying an airshow performance. It is very peaceful being on the tarmac during this hour photographing the aircraft. Here, the last minutes of daylight highlights the silhouette of the Commemorative Air Force's Boeing B-29 Superfortress, "Fifi" as the bomber sits parked on the ramp.



As the sun rises on Saturday morning at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend, the natural metal skin on the Yankee Air Museum's Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress "Yankee Lady" reflects the opening minutes of daylight. "Yankee Lady" has been visiting World War II Weekend for many years and is always a crowd favorite at the event. Unfortunately, the bomber was plagued with mechanical issues at this year's event, and flight performances were limited to Sunday afternoon only.



Saturday is the big day for public attendance at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend. For the credentialed photographers and media, it starts early with a sunrise photo shoot on the ramp. This year, Pete Lerro from Lerro Photography Productions arranged for a group of reenactors dressed as B-24 aircrew to be available for photographs with the Commemorative Air Force's B-24 Liberator "Diamond Lil". This unique living history representation was a highlight of the weekend.



The reenactors posing as the B-24 aircrew were very generous with their time and gave the photographers attending the photo shoot several unique opportunities for photographs. This photograph replicates many famous surviving images from the war, which show bomber crews walking from their aircraft after returning from a combat mission. "Diamond Lil" was a great backdrop for the photo shoot. The aircraft is one of only two B-24s bombers that survive today in air-worthy condition.

Another iconic photograph the reenactors recreated for the media group was that of a bomber crew posing next to the nose art they had chosen for their aircraft. Nose art on aircraft varied in subject matter and style. Pinup girls were a favorite subject matter for the young bomber crews and some of the nose art could be considered very risqué by today's standards. Sadly, some of these crew photographs were the last photo a relative would have of their loved one if they were killed on a combat mission.



One of the highlights at the 2022 Mid-Atlantic Air Museum World War II Weekend was the appearance of the Military Aviation Museum's Bell P-39F Airacobra at the event. The P-39 was an interesting design, with its engine in the middle of the fuselage and a cockpit that was entered through doors similar to a car. The mid-engine design allowed a cannon to be fitted to the aircraft to fire through the propeller hub. Unfortunately, poor high altitude performance limited the P-39s effectiveness as a fighter aircraft.



The Curtiss P-40 Warhawk was one of the most important fighter aircraft available to the Allied nations at the beginning of World War II. Although lacking in maneuverability and climb rate, the P-40 made up for those shortcomings by being fast, well-armed, and sturdily built. The P-40 served in every theatre of operations during World War II and remained in service throughout the war. This P-40M Warhawk is part of the American Airpower Museum based in Farmingdale, New York.



Saturday and Sunday afternoons at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend feature an airshow that includes most of the aircraft on display at the event. First up each day are the liaison aircraft or "I-birds". Liaison aircraft were used for a variety of roles, including VIP transport, air ambulance, and artillery spotting, and were built by several different manufacturers. This one is a Piper L-4 Grasshopper, the military variant of the famous Piper J-3 Cub civilian trainer/light aircraft.

Another popular aircraft used in the liaison role was the Taylorcraft L-2 Grasshopper. At the beginning of World War II, the L-2 was used in a similar manner as observation balloons were during World War I, for spotting enemy troop and supply concentrations and directing artillery fire on them. As the war progressed, the L-2s short takeoff and landing distance allowed the type to be used for other roles such as courier, light transport, short-range reconnaissance, and air ambulance duties.



A variety of primary training aircraft from World War II fly in the airshow portion of the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend. These aircraft were the ones that future pilots received their primary flight instruction in. The Boeing Stearman shown here is one of the most famous military trainers from World War II and was used in large numbers worldwide. After the war, many Steamans were bought as surplus for use as crop dusters. Today, many restored Stearmans remain airworthy.



With the need to train thousands of pilots during World War II, the United States and the Allies had to rely on many different types of aircraft for flight training. The Fairchild PT-26 Cornell was another excellent primary training aircraft. The PT-26 was essentially a PT-19 Cornell with an enclosed cockpit so it could be used in cold weather climates. A lot of PT-26s ended up going to the Royal Canadian Air Force, where their enclosed cockpits were appreciated in the colder Canadian weather.



The Civil Air Patrol played an important role at home during World War II. The organization used many different aircraft types for a variety of roles on the homefront, including acting as couriers between aircraft manufacturing facilities and flying coastal patrols. From March 1942 to August 1943, armed Civil Air Patrol aircraft flew coastal patrols out of 21 bases from Maine to Florida. This Stinson 105-10A Voyager flew anti-submarine patrols out of Lantana, Florida during World War II.

Advanced training aircraft were the last ones students would fly before graduating and moving into combat aircraft. The most famous advanced trainer of World War II was the North American SNJ/AT-6/Harvard. The SN/AT-6/Harvard had retractable landing gear, was fully aerobatic, and had the power and feel of a fighter aircraft. Today, this aircraft remains a popular aircraft for airshow performers because of its excellent aerobatic qualities. This is a flight of four SNJs, the naval variant of the aircraft.



One of the highlights at the 2022 Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend was the surprise appearance of this Goodyear FG-1D Corsair owned by warbird collector Tom Duffy. Duffy recently acquired this aircraft for his collection, and World War II Weekend marked the first appearance of the Corsair at an airshow under Duffy's ownership. This Corsair is a Goodyear-built FG-1D but is fitted with a canopy for a Vought-built F4U-1A, giving this particular Corsair a unique appearance.



During the production of the 1970 film "Tora! Tora! Tora!", the filmmakers needed to recreate the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor but had no authentic Japanese aircraft. Using old BT-13 Valiant and AT-6 Texan training aircraft, the production team built replicas of Japanese aircraft from World War II. Many of these replicas survive in the hands of museums and private owners. This replica of a Japanese Aichi D3A "Val" dive bomber was constructed from a BT-13 Valiant basic training aircraft.



This replica of a Japanese Nakajima B5N "Kate" torpedo bomber is another surviving aircraft that was built for the film "Tora, Tora, Tora". At the start of World War II, the B5N was the best torpedo bomber in the world. The aircraft could also be used for long-range scouting and conventional bombing. As the war progressed, the B5N was eventually outclassed by Allied fighters. This replica was built from a North American AT-6 trainer and is part of the CAF Airbase Georgia collection.

The highlight of the flying each day at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend is the fighter aircraft flybys and demonstrations. The CAF Airbase Georgia brought several fighter aircraft to the event in 2022, including the Bell P-63 Kingcobra "Miss Betty" and their North American P-51 Mustang "Red Nose". Here, the two aircraft take off together during the fighter demonstrations. Mark Todd is flying the P-63A Kingcobra and Craig Hutain is flying the P-51D Mustang.



Years after it served in combat, the North American P-51 Mustang remains one of the most famous fighter aircraft built. The P-51 had many fine qualities, it was fast, well-armed for the time, had good cockpit visibility, and excellent range. The CAF Airbase Georgia's P-51D Mustang "Red Nose" is always a favorite at World War II Weekend, and rides in the aircraft sell out quickly. In this photo, pilot Craig Hutain flies the Mustang in an aerobatic demonstration during the airshow portion of the event.



Many of the P-63 Kingcobras built went to the Soviet Union, which used them successfully as ground-attack aircraft. A few P-63s were kept in the United States for test and evaluation purposes. The CAF Airbase Georgia's P-63A "Miss Betty" was one of those aircraft. It was used as a test aircraft, first by Bell Aircraft and then by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) for research purposes. In this photo, pilot Mark Todd demonstrates the rare P-63A for the airshow crowd.



One of the highlights of the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend is the formations of the fighter aircraft flying together at the end of the airshow each day. This unique formation includes the CAF Airbase Georgia's P-51D Mustang "Red Nose" and the American Airpower Museum's Curtiss P-40M Warhawk "Jacky C". The P-51, designed just a few years after the P-40, was superior to the P-40 in every way and illustrates the rapidly changing technology in fighter aircraft design during the war.

Another great formation flown during the airshow portion of World War II Weekend was CAF Airbase Georgia's Bell P-63A Kingcobra "Miss Betty" flying in formation with the Military Aviation Museum's Bell P-39F Airacobra. It was the first time a P-39 Airacobra has ever appeared at World War II Weekend and seeing the aircraft flying was a real treat. Although the P-63 started out as an improved P-39, you can from this photograph how the P-63 ended up being an almost entirely new aircraft design.



The end of the Saturday airshow at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend featured this wonderful formation of the four fighter aircraft flying together. The pilots did a great job keeping these rare World War II aircraft in close formation. After the formation flyby, the four aircraft performed a missing man formation to honor all those lost during World War II. The missing man formation, along with the playing of "Taps", is an annual tradition to end the airshow at the event.



Immediately after the Saturday airshow, the warbird experience flights resume, and if the weather is favorable, the flights can go well into the evening on Saturday. In this photo, the CAF Air-base Georgia's Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless takes to the sky on another ride flight. The SBD was the primary dive bomber in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps arsenal early in World War II. The SBD is best remembered for its role in sinking four Japanese aircraft carriers during the Battle of Midway in June 1942.



For those looking for a less intense warbird flight experience, Bay Aviation's Fairchild PT-19 Cornell is a way to get into a warbird at a slower pace and at a more affordable price than some of the other aircraft. The PT-19 was a primary trainer during World War II and played an important role in helping thousands of pilots earn their wings during the war. The PT-19 has very gentle and forgiving flight characteristics, and the open cockpits offer a unique flight experience on a warm summer evening.

Saturday night a special night photo shoot is offered to photographers who make a donation to the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum. Select aircraft are positioned and their engines run for amazing photos with prop blur and engine exhaust flames. In this photo, the CAF Airbase Georgia's Goodyear FG-1D Corsair has been positioned on the ramp for the night photo shoot later in the evening. The Corsair was one of the finest naval fighter aircraft of World War II and also saw service during the Korean War.



The CAF Airbase Georgia's Bell P-63A Kingcobra "Miss Betty" on the ramp Sunday morning at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend. Unfortunately, not many P-63s survive today. Not accepted by the U.S. Army Air Force as a fighter, almost all production aircraft were sent to the Soviet Union. Only a few stayed in the U.S. as test aircraft. Some P-63s were modified for postwar air racing and lost in crashes. As a result, this P-63A is now a very rare aircraft in the warbird world.



Sunday morning presented a neat photography opportunity for myself and another photographer at World War II Weekend. Russ Jones in his 1942 Ford GPW poses with Jason Capra and the flight crew of Vintage Wings Inc.'s Douglas C-53 Skytrooper "Beach City Baby". The photo replicates a similar one Russ Jones had come across from World War II. Photography opportunities like these are what make World War II Weekend one of the most beloved living history events in the United States.



Another highlight of the airshow portion of the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend is the bomber parade. The Delaware Aviation Museum's North American B-25J Mitchell "Panchito" is a regular visitor to World War II Weekend. The B-25 is best known for its use during the Doolittle Raid in April 1942, when 16 of the aircraft took off from the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Hornet and bombed Japan. This raid did little damage but greatly boosted American morale after Pearl Harbor.

The twin-engine North American B-25 Mitchell was one of the most widely used medium bombers of World War II. Over 11,000 were built and saw service with air arms of several nations during the war. A versatile aircraft with excellent handling qualities, the B-25 was not only used as a medium bomber, but also as an anti-submarine patrol aircraft, anti-shipping aircraft, ground-attack aircraft, and VIP transport. "Takeoff Time" is a B-25J owned by warbird collector Tom Duffy.



After battling mechanical problems all weekend with one of the engines on "Yankee Lady", the Yankee Air Museum personnel managed to get the B-17G Flying Fortress fixed so it could be flown in the bomber parade on Sunday afternoon. The crowd at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend certainly appreciated their efforts. The B-17 is one of the most famous bombers of World War II and had a reputation for being able to withstand considerable battle damage and still return to base.



The B-17 was nicknamed the "Flying Fortress" by a news reporter when he saw the aircraft's multiple defensive machine gun positions. As the war progressed, machine gun positions were added to enhance the B-17's defensive armament. The B-17G, which "Yankee Lady" is an example, added the chin turret under the nose to help protect the B-17 against head-on attacks by enemy fighters. At the end of the war, most B-17s flew in a natural metal finish as seen on "Yankee Lady" to save weight.



The Commemorative Air Force's Consolidated B-24A Liberator "Diamond Lil" takes to the sky during the bomber parade at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend. Along with the B-17, the B-24 and its crews played an important role in the daylight bombing campaign over Europe during World War II. "Diamond Lil" is an early B-24, being the 25th of over 18,000 built during the war. The B-24 holds the distinction of being the most produced multi-engine bomber in American history.

Although often overshadowed by the B-17, the B-24 was a more modern design with a shoulder-mounted, high aspect ratio Davis wing and a tricycle landing gear layout. The wing gave the B-24 the ability to cruise at high speed and carry a large bomb load over a long distance. Crews preferred the B-17 because the B-24 was difficult to fly and had poor low-speed performance. The B-24 was used by every branch of the American armed forces during World War II and in every theatre of operations.



The highlight of the bomber flight at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend is without a doubt the Commemorative Air Force's Boeing B-29 Superfortress, "Fifi". "Fifi" is one of only two B-29s that remain in airworthy condition. By World War II standards, the B-29 Superfortress was a huge aircraft. The bomber has a length of just under 100 feet and a wingspan of over 140 feet. The B-29 had a top speed of over 350 miles per hour and carried a crew of 11 on a typical bombing mission.



The B-29 Superfortress, "Fifi", on a high-speed pass during the bomber flight at this year's World War II Weekend. The B-29 was used in the Pacific theatre where the type was used to conduct several large bombing raids against Japanese cities at the end of World War II, including the two raids which dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some B-29s were converted for use as high-speed cargo aircraft. The B-29 also saw action in the Korean War during the early 1950s.



Perhaps my most unique picture from the event is this one. On Friday, Russ and Aldona Jones, seen here, asked another photographer and me if we could take some photos of them and their 1942 Ford GPW. At our suggestion, the couple decided to pose with the Ford GPW next to Vintage Wing's Douglas C-53 Skytrooper, "Beach City Baby". With the wonderful nose art by artist Chad Hill on the nose of the aircraft as a backdrop, the reenacting couple posed for this picture with their vehicle. This great moment is what the Mid-Atlantic World War II Weekend is all about, restored aircraft, military vehicles, and amazing reenactors creating unique living history moments and honoring our "Greatest Generation".

Grumman F-14D(R) Tomcat



*The Smithsonian Institution's Grumman F-14D(R) Tomcat on display in the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center. The Grumman F-14 Tomcat might be one of the most well-known modern naval aircraft thanks to its on-screen appearance in the 1986 film *Top Gun* starring Tom Cruise. Armed with a powerful radar system and a variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons, the Tomcat was a formidable platform for fleet air defense, air superiority, aerial reconnaissance, and at the end of its career, a precision ground-attack aircraft.*

One of the most powerful naval fighter aircraft ever built, the Grumman F-14 Tomcat became forever a part of popular culture when it appeared on the big screen in the 1986 blockbuster film *Top Gun* starring Tom Cruise. During its service career, the F-14 served in a variety of roles including fleet air defense, aerial reconnaissance, air superiority, and as a precision ground-attack aircraft in the twilight of its career.

Designed by Grumman, the F-14 Tomcat was a carrier-capable, twin-engine, supersonic, twin-tail fighter aircraft capable of speeds up to two and a half times the speed of sound (Mach 2.5). One of the unique aspects of the Tomcat's design was its variable-sweep wings. The wings of the aircraft could change position during flight to optimize the performance of the F-14 for either high-speed or low-speed flight. These variable-sweep wings were controlled by the aircraft's computerized flight control system. The multiple tasks of navigation, target acquisition, electronic countermeasures (ECM), and weapons deployment were divided between the two-person crew consisting of a pilot and the radar intercept

officer seated in the rear cockpit. The F-14 first flew in 1970 and was introduced into operational service with the U.S. Navy in 1974.

The first production model of the F-14 was the A variant, which was designed as an all-weather interceptor. In addition to the U.S. Navy, the F-14 was ordered by the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force, which acquired 79 examples. The Iranian aircraft were heavily involved in the Iran-Iraq War, and some remain operational with the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force today.

In 1987, a new variant of the F-14, the B, was introduced. The major change for the F-14B was that the Pratt & Whitney TF30 turbofan engines, which had been problematic, were replaced by General Electric F110-400 turbofans. The new engines offered better thrust and improved safety, as launches from aircraft carrier decks could now be made without using afterburners. A total of 38 new F-14Bs were built with an additional 48 being remanufactured from F-14As. The F-14B arrived in operational service in time to participate in Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

The final variant of the F-14 was the D model. Called the Super Tomcat, the F-14D had the new General Electric engines, improved digital avionics, a glass cockpit, and a new radar system. The F-14D was equipped with the LANTRN targeting system that allowed the delivery of various laser-guided weapons for precision strikes in air-to-ground combat missions. The F-14D could transmit and receive targeting/reconnaissance imagery in-flight to provide time-sensitive strike capability with its Fast Tactical Imagery (FIT) system and provide in-theater tactical reconnaissance with the Tactical Air Reconnaissance Pod System (TARPS). Although the F-14D was the definitive variant of the Tomcat, only 37 new and 18 rebuilt F-14D aircraft were completed, as it was deemed the F-14 was old technology. The final F-14s in U.S. Navy service were retired in 2006.

The National Air and Space Museum's Grumman F-14D (R) Tomcat began life as an F-14A. It is one of only 18 F-14As that was upgraded to an F-14D in the early 1990s. Since the aircraft was rebuilt by Grumman from an A model, it is officially designated an F-14D(R). This F-

14D(R) is historically significant as it is credited with a MIG kill that was earned off the coast of Libya in 1989.

On January 4, 1989, a pair of F-14s from VF-32 on the U.S.S. *John F. Kennedy* were flying a combat air patrol (CAP) mission when they were alerted to a pair of Libyan MIG-23 Floggers approaching. The pair of F-14s locked their powerful radar on the MIG-23s in an attempt to scare off the Libyan fighters and force them to retreat to a safe distance. Unfortunately, the MIGs were not deterred and instead attempted to lock onto the F-14s with their own radar and missiles.

After making every attempt to evade the pair of MIG-23s, the Libyan aircraft were declared hostile and the F-14s were cleared to engage them. A lengthy air battle ensued between the two F-14s and the MIG-23s that lasted several minutes. During this battle, the crew of the F-14 pictured here fired an AIM-7 Sparrow missile at one of the MIG-23s, destroying the aircraft. The crew of the other F-14 shot down the second MIG-23 with an AIM-9 Sidewinder missile. Both Libyan MIG-23 pilots ejected from their aircraft and survived.



Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless

(1943)



The Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless was an improved variant of the Douglas SBD scout and dive bomber introduced in 1943. The SBD was the U.S. Navy's primary dive bomber and scout aircraft from mid-1940 through mid-1944. The SBD was also used in large numbers by the U.S. Marine Corps. The SBD is best remembered as the aircraft that sank four Japanese aircraft carriers at the Battle of Midway in June 1942. Although slow, the SBD was an excellent dive bomber and scout aircraft. It possessed good handling characteristics, maneuverability, ruggedness, long-range, and a formidable bombload. The restored SBD-5 shown here is one of the few airworthy SBDs in the world. Affectionately nicknamed "The Lady In Blue", it is operated by the Commemorative Air Force's Airbase Georgia and makes regular appearances at airshows throughout the United States.

Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless

Crew: 2 (pilot & rear gunner/radio operator)

Length: 33 ft 1.25 in

Height: 41 ft 6.375 in

Wingspan: 13 ft 7 in

Wing Area: 325 sq ft

Powerplant: Wright R-1820-60 Cyclone nine-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine (1,200 hp) (x1)

Range: 969 nmi

Maximum Speed: 255 mph

Cruise Speed: 185 mph

Empty/Loaded Weights: 6,404 lb/9,359 lb

Service Ceiling: 25,530 ft

Armament: Browning M2 0.50 in forward-firing synchronized machine guns in engine cowling (x2), 0.30 in flexible-mounted Browning M1919 machine guns in rear cockpit (x2), up to 2,250 lb of bombs

The Lady In Blue

Armament

The SBD was well-armed for a dive bomber of the World War II era. It could carry a considerable bombload and also had a pair of machine guns in the engine cowlings that could be used for strafing enemy targets. The rear cockpit also had a pair of machine guns for defense against attacking enemy fighter aircraft. Later variants of the SBD were equipped with an improved reflector gunsight, bombsight, and radar.

Flight Characteristics

The SBD was slow but highly maneuverable and aerobatic, allowing the type to be used for carrier air defense if there was a lack of fighter aircraft available. As a result of its excellent maneuverability and defensive armament, a well-flown SBD could often hold its own against enemy fighter aircraft. The SBD had excellent dive characteristics and was an extremely accurate dive bombing platform. These flight characteristics helped give the SBD the nickname "Slow But Deadly".

Operational History

The SBD was considered obsolete before World War II began but soldiered on in frontline service as its replacement, the Curtiss SB2C Helldiver, was delayed by several technical problems. The SBD played an important role in the early part of the Pacific campaign, including the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Guadalcanal. The SBD's most significant contribution to the Pacific campaign was at the Battle of Midway, where SBDs and their crews sank four Japanese aircraft carriers, turning the tide of the war against the Japanese. The SBD had lowest loss rate of any U.S. Navy carrier aircraft and sank more Japanese ships than any other Allied aircraft during the war. Besides the U.S. Navy, the SBD also saw service with the U.S. Marine Corps and in small numbers with the U.S. Army Air Corps, who designated the aircraft the A-24 Banshee. Foreign operators of the SBD included the Mexican and New Zealand air forces. Over 5,900 SBDs were built by the time production ended in 1944.



Construction

One of the unique aspects of the SBD's construction was its perforated dive flaps. The holes in these flaps helped prevent the aircraft from buffeting during dive-bombing attacks and made the SBD an accurate and potent dive bomber. Although designed as a naval aircraft, the SBD did not have folding wings for aircraft carrier storage. This presented some problems storing the SBD on cramped aircraft carrier hangar decks, with maintenance personnel sometimes resorting to removing the entire wing sections of SBDs and storing the aircraft in pieces, then putting them back together when needed.

CAF SBD-5 History & Markings

The Commemorative Air Force's SBD was delivered to the U.S. Navy in 1944. It was used as a personal transport aircraft stateside and never saw service on an aircraft carrier deck. Retired from U.S. Navy service in 1947, the SBD ended up in Mexico as an aerial photo aircraft with CIA Mexicana Aerophoto. It operated there from 1951 to 1966, flying hundreds of thousands of miles taking aerial photos. After being owned by Ed Maloney and displayed in his Planes of Fame Museum for a time, the aircraft was sold to Robert Griffin, one of the Commemorative Air Force's early donors in 1971. In 1991, the aircraft was assigned to the Commemorative Air Force's Dixie Wing in Georgia. The CAF unit then spent the next eight years restoring the SBD, with the aircraft returning to the skies in 1999. The SBD is painted in the color scheme used on SBD-5s during the Battle of the Marianas in 1943.

Engine

The reliable Wright R-1820 air-cooled radial piston engine driving a three-blade propeller powered the SBD Dauntless. This engine was used to power many American aircraft designs during World War II, including the famous Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bomber. Later variants of the SBD, such as the SBD-5, had an updated version of the engine that offered a slight increase in horsepower.

WWII Weekend Night Engine Run Photo Shoot



The Delaware Aviation Museum's B-25J Mitchell "Panchito", the Commemorative Air Force Airbase Georgia's Goodyear FG-1D Corsair "530", and the American Airpower Museum's Curtiss P-40M Warhawk "Jacky C" took part in the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend Second Annual Night Engine Run Photo Shoot. All three restored aircraft are iconic and famous American aircraft designs from World War II.

For the second year in a row, the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum hosted a special Night Engine Run Photo Shoot as part of the museum's World War II Weekend on Saturday evening. This special event for photographers was put together by the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum, Pete Lerro from Lerro Photography, and Dave & Christina Brown, the Media Coordinators for the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's World War II Weekend. A donation to the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum was required to take part in the event.

Once again, three aircraft from the airshow roster were invited to participate in the night engine run photo shoot. For this year's shoot, the three aircraft chosen were the Goodyear FG-1D Corsair "530" operated by the Commemorative Air Force Airbase Georgia, the Curtiss P-40M Warhawk "Jacky C" operated by the American Airpower Museum, and the North American B-25J Mitchell "Panchito" operated by the Delaware Aviation Museum. Although there was some concern that the Corsair might not be able to participate because of a mechanical problem earlier in the day, the night engine run photo shoot gave the Commemorative Air Force Airbase Georgia maintenance team an opportunity to test run the engine, so the Corsair was able to take part in the event. Shortly before sunset, the three aircraft were towed into position and the ramp soaked with water by the local fire department to provide light reflection for photography. Pete Lerro also provided lights to light up the aircraft on the ramp.

Each aircraft was started up and its engine run at multiple power settings for approximately 10 minutes, giving photographers ample opportunity to capture the aircraft running at night from several angles in both still images and video. During the engine run of the Corsair, the pilot demonstrated the folding and unfolding of the famous World War II fighter's gull-shaped wings several times. Photographers with long exposure times on their shutters could capture unique images of the wings moving in motion. Other photographers were able to capture a water tornado formed by the propeller of the P-40 *Jacky C* during its engine run and blue flames from the exhaust stacks on the engines of the B-25 *Panchito*. For the approximately 50 photographers in attendance, the event was a unique opportunity to capture some incredible images of restored examples of some of the most famous American aircraft designs of World War II illuminated while running at night.





**Distelfink
Airlines**

Est.
2013



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.

ABOUT

DISTELFINK AIRLINES

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.

"Distelfink Airlines" is an online newsletter featuring the aviation photography and writings of Corey J. Beitler. Contributions from guest photographers and writers are sometimes featured and are used only with prior permission. Public domain and/or copyright free images are utilized for some articles. All text and images are copyright to the original owners and may not be reproduced or reused without permission.