

June 2023



Corey J Beitler's

"Distelfink Airlines"

An Online Aviation Newsletter

★ *Celebrating 10 Years Of Publication!* ★

The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow



Embraer ERJ-135LR

Gemini Jets General Aviation Series 1/72 Scale Cirrus SR22

Fokker D.VII

Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21F-13 Fishbed-C

Laird-Turner Meteor LTR-14

A Coloring Book For The Military Aircraft Enthusiast

U.S. Navy Blue Angels #6, Opposing Solo Pilot Lt. Cmdr. Griffin Stangel, banks his Boeing F/A-18E Super Hornet during a demonstration at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. The airshow, held on May 27-28 at the superspeedway, featured the U.S. Navy Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron as the headline performers.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Pocono Raceway Airshow, A Colorful Fokker D.VII, Military Aircraft Coloring Book

Greetings Everyone:

Summer is here, and so is the airshow season here in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States. "Distelfink Airlines" brings some airshow coverage to you for the June edition of the newsletter, and there will be more coverage to come from several airshows this summer in upcoming editions of the newsletter as well.

Featured in the June edition is a photo review of The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. This airshow was held over the Memorial Day weekend at the Pocono Raceway located in Long Pond, Pennsylvania. The airshow was small but featured an excellent performer lineup that included Jerry Conley with his de Havilland DH-115 Vampire, Rob Holland in his MXS-RH aerobatic aircraft, Rick Volker flying his Sukhoi Su-26M aerobatic aircraft, and a search and rescue demonstration by an MH-65D Dolphin from U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City. The headline performers for the airshow included the U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team and the U.S. Navy Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron, making their first appearance at an airshow in eastern Pennsylvania in several years. The F-22 Raptor was also flown in a presentation of the U.S. Air Force Heritage Flight, with Jim Beasley Jr. flying his restored P-51 Mustang with the F-22 for the flight. The airshow was well-attended by aviation enthusiasts and the local community, with Pocono's large grandstand being full each day of the event. The weather was also outstanding on both days, with clear skies and moderate early summer temperatures, comfortable for airshow attendees. Pocono Raceway did a great job managing this event overall, and I sincerely hope that Pocono Raceway continues to have this airshow in the future. I want to thank all the performers and the staff at Pocono Raceway for an enjoyable weekend at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow and David Schultz Airshows for their excellent work in coordinating and executing a safe and successful airshow.

Also featured in this edition of the newsletter is a very colorful Fokker D.VII from World War I with an interesting story behind its markings that were chosen by pilot Alfred Bader. This is one of the aircraft I wanted to feature in the "Flying Colors" section before that section of the newsletter is retired at the end of this year. I've always loved the unique markings on this Fokker D.VII, perhaps because the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome has a Fokker D.VII replica painted in these markings that they fly in their weekend airshows. I have fond memories of seeing this aircraft fly at Old Rhinebeck when I would take trips there with my grandfather as a child. The Fokker D.VII replica is still in the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome collection but is currently undergoing some restoration work to return it to regular flying status.

Finally, a recent trip to Barnes & Noble resulted in finding a unique aviation-themed item. Amber Books Ltd. has published a coloring book for adults featuring military aircraft. The illustrations are excellent, and the book includes a great selection of past and present military aircraft. The book is great coloring fun for all ages and a great history lesson about military aircraft at the same time. Most Barnes & Noble locations now have this coloring book in stock, the coloring book can be found in their "Book Annex" section and is priced at just \$10. It would make a great small gift for anyone interested in military aircraft.

There is also lots of other great stuff in this edition. Please check everything out, and as always, feel free to share the newsletter with whomever you wish. If you haven't already, please consider joining the newsletter's social media groups on Instagram and Facebook. The links are listed below. As always, thank you for reading and supporting my aviation photojournalism efforts.

Regards,
-Corey

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Embraer ERJ-135LR



An Embraer ERJ-135LR operated by Contour Airlines on approach to the Philadelphia International Airport after a flight from New York's Ogdensburg International Airport. The ERJ-135LR was a variant of the ERJ-135 that had upgraded engines and increased fuel capacity. The ERJ family of regional jets, which included the ERJ-135, and the stretched ERJ-140 and ERJ-145 variants, was a successful business venture for the Brazilian aerospace company Embraer. Over 1,200 aircraft were built during the type's production run, which ran from 1992 to 2020.

The Embraer ERJ family is a series of regional jets produced by Brazilian aerospace company Embraer. The family includes the ERJ 135, ERJ 140, and ERJ 145 (company model names EMB-135, EMB-140, and EMB-145). The ERJ family also includes the Legacy 600 business jet and the R-99/P-99 family of maritime patrol and airborne early warning and control military aircraft.

Embraer began the design and development of the EMB-145 in 1989, perceiving a new market for regional jet aircraft where passenger comfort and appeal, and increased speed, would be factors in airlines selecting aircraft for their fleets. The early design proposals for the EMB-145 took the form of a turboprop-powered stretch of the existing turboprop-powered EMB-120 Brasilia commuter airliner. Work was temporarily suspended on the EMB-145 in 1990 but restarted with a revised configuration of the aircraft in the early 1990s. The new design retained the three-abreast seating of the Brasilia but had a new swept-back wing and was powered by two rear-fuselage-mounted Rolls-Royce AE3007 turboprops. The new aircraft could carry 50 passengers up to 2,000 nmi. The ERJ-145 flew for the first time in 1995 and entered service in 1997 with the launch customer, ExpressJet Airlines. To meet passenger capacity clauses in pilot contracts with regional airlines, Embraer prioritized expansion of the ERJ family and offered two shortened versions, the ERJ-135, which could carry 37 passengers, and the ERJ-140, which could carry 44 passengers. The shortened versions of the ERJ family were launched in 1999. All models in the ERJ family use variants of the Rolls-Royce AE3007 turboprop, share many common parts, and have the same type rating, so pilots can fly any ERJ variant without needing additional training. As a result of this shared type rating, many airlines that operate ERJ regional jets have fleets with mixed variants. The ERJ family was a successful product for Embraer, over 1,200 were built during the type's production run, which ran from 1992 to 2020.

The Embraer ERJ-135LR pictured here is operated by American regional airline Contour Airlines and was photographed landing at the Philadelphia International Airport after a flight from Ogdensburg, New York. Headquartered in Smyrna, Tennessee, and owned by Contour Aviation, Contour Airlines operates a fleet of 13 Embraer ERJ-135/145 aircraft and flies to 17 destinations in the United States.





Gemini Jets General Aviation Series 1/72 Cirrus SR22



Gemini's recent release of its 1/72 scale Cirrus SR22 is the first time this aircraft, the world's best-selling general aviation airplane since 2003, has been available in this scale and in die-cast.

The Cirrus SR22 is a single-engine four or five-seat composite aircraft built by Cirrus Aircraft in Duluth, Minnesota. The SR22 is a development of the company's earlier SR20 and has increased fuel capacity, a larger wing, and a more powerful Continental IO-550-N piston engine that develops 310 horsepower.

The SR22 is a low-wing cantilever monoplane constructed of composite materials. The non-retractable tricycle landing gear has a castering nosewheel, with steering the aircraft on the ground accomplished through differential braking on the main wheels. The four or five-seat cabin is accessed through doors mounted on either side of the fuselage.

The SR-series of aircraft built by Cirrus are the only aircraft in their class to feature side-stick flight controls that combine aspects of a traditional yoke handle. Another interesting feature of the SR-series is that it is equipped with the Cirrus Aircraft Parachute System (CAPS). In an emergency, such as an engine failure, a parachute can be deployed that will lower the aircraft gently to the ground. This emergency parachute aircraft

recovery system has earned the SR-series of aircraft the nickname "the plane with a parachute".

The SR22 entered production in 2001. Since 2003, the SR22 has been the world's best-selling general aviation aircraft. With over 7,200 aircraft delivered, the SR22 is the most-produced general aviation aircraft of the 21st century and is the single-most produced general aviation aircraft made from composite metal.

Since its introduction in 2001, the SR22 has remained in production, with Cirrus Aircraft making only minor improvements to the aircraft's overall design and layout. Improvements made to the SR22 include a "glass cockpit", introduced in aircraft produced from 2003 and onward, upgraded avionics and navigation lighting, aerodynamic improvements to the airframe, Bluetooth wireless connectivity, and updated brakes. Cirrus Aircraft has also developed a specialized training variant of the SR22 for use by flight schools. The SR22 is used worldwide by civilian and military operators for flight training. Other popular uses of the SR22 include air charter and air taxi operations and as a general utility aircraft.



Gemini Jets latest release in its 1/72 scale General Aviation series of aircraft is a die-cast replica of the Cirrus SR22, the first time the type has been available in die-cast and in 1/72 scale. This model joins a previously released Cessna 172 Skyhawk and Piper J-3 Cub in Gemini's General Aviation series of aircraft. Similar to the previous two aircraft in the series, the Cirrus SR22 was released in partnership with Sporty's Pilot Shop and Academy. The SR22 replicated, N2525V, is based at Sporty's Flight School at the Clearmont County Airport in Urbana, Ohio.

Gemini's 1/72 scale Cirrus SR22 is an excellent model of the world's best-selling general aviation aircraft. The model is made of die-cast metal, with plastic used for smaller parts, such as the engine exhaust pipes and propeller. Similar to other Gemini releases, the model comes with a small display stand so that it can be displayed on a bookshelf or desk. The model can also be displayed on its landing gear if desired.

Gemini's model captures some of the distinctive features of the SR22 well, including the aerodynamic fuselage and fixed landing gear with the streamlined wheel pants. Gemini also did an outstanding job replicating the unique factory-applied colored trim striping that deco-

rates Cirrus SR-series aircraft. The model's colors and markings match the markings found on N2525V based on reference photos of the actual aircraft.

Unfortunately, the main disappointment with this model was some quality control issues. The first example of the model obtained for this review had two significant paint defects on the wing. The model was untouched in the packaging, meaning these quality control defects happened during production at the factory. Such issues are unusual for Gemini Jets, a manufacturer with a solid reputation for producing quality die-cast models. Thankfully, the dealer the model was purchased from accepted an exchange, and the replacement model was flawless, suggesting this was an isolated incident.

Gemini's 1/72 scale die-cast Cirrus SR22 is an excellent addition to their lineup of general aviation aircraft models. Given the SR22's popularity in the general aviation aircraft market, this model should sell well to die-cast aircraft collectors and pilots who may own a Cirrus SR22 or learned to fly on one. This model, along with the two previous releases in this series from Gemini Jets, offers die-cast aircraft collectors the rare opportunity to add another great general aviation aircraft model to their collections in 1/72 scale.



Gemini's 1/72 scale Cirrus SR-22 is an excellent model and has the correct shape of the actual aircraft and replicates the factory-applied trim striping found on all SR22 aircraft using pad-printed markings. The colors and markings are an exact match to the SR22 N2525V, operated as a training aircraft by Sporty's Flight School based at the Clearmont County Airport in Urbana, Ohio.



Fokker D.VII

(1918)



The Fokker D.VII was a German single-engine fighter aircraft designed by Reinhold Platz that entered service with the Luftstreitkräfte in May 1918 and is known as one of the best fighter aircraft of World War I. The D.VII quickly gained a positive reputation with German pilots for its maneuverability and high rate of climb. Despite its ungainly appearance, the D.VII was easy to fly, and the design was praised by famous German pilots such as Erich Löwenhardt, Ernst Udet, and Hermann Göring. Unfortunately, by the time the D.VII entered service, air superiority had already turned in favor of the Allies. By the time the war ended, more than 700 D.VIIs had been delivered to the Luftstreitkräfte. This Fokker D.VII is a reproduction aircraft and is part of the collection at the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in New York.

Fokker D.VII

Crew: 1

Length: 22 ft 10 in

Height: 9 ft

Wingspan: 29 ft 2 in

Wing Area: 221 sq ft

Powerplant: Mercedes D.IIIa 6-cylinder water-cooled in-line piston engine (165 hp) (x1)
 or Mercedes D.IIIaü 6-cylinder water-cooled in-line piston engine (175 hp) (x1)
 or BMW IIIa 6-cylinder water-cooled in-line piston engine (185 hp) (x1)

Range: 144 nmi

Maximum Top Speed: 117mph (Mercedes engine), 124 mph (BMW engine)

Cruise Speed: 95 mph

Empty/Loaded Weights: 1,477 lb/1,997 lb

Service Ceiling: 20,000 ft

Armament: 7.92 mm LMG 08/15 Spandau machine guns (x2)

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Fokker D.VII (OAW), 4649/18, Lt. Alfred Bader, Luftstreitkräfte, Jasta 56, Marville, France, September 1918

Alfred Bader joined Jasta 56 in August of 1918. Bader flew with this unit until November 31st of that year. Bader's combat career was insignificant compared to many other German pilots as Bader only obtained two confirmed kills during the war. Instead of his combat record, Bader is best remembered for the unique markings painted on the Fokker D.VII that he flew.

Bader's Fokker D.VII was painted with illustrations from the German fairy tale "The Seven Swabians". "The Seven Swabians" was a German fable brought back to popularity by the Brothers Grimm in 1857. In part of the fairy tale, the Seven Swabians are traveling through the world and come across a hare sleeping in the sun. The Seven Swabians mistake the hare for a dragon and attack it with their shared pear-shaped spear. When the Seven Swabians muster the courage to attack the hare, the hare runs away. Bader had his Fokker D.VII painted with two different illustrations from the Seven Swabians' encounter with the hare. On one side of the D.VII's fuselage, the illustration depicts the hare facing the Seven Swabians as they are about to attack it with the spear. On the other side of the fuselage, the illustration depicts the hare running away from the Seven Swabians. An existing period photograph showing Bader with his Fokker D.VII confirms the aircraft was painted this way, offering rare historical evidence to prove the scheme was authentic.

For many years, it was thought this Fokker D.VII was flown by a Cpl Wilhelm Scheutzel of Jasta 65. It is now known that this is incorrect, and the "Seven Swabians" Fokker D.VII was in fact flown by Lt. Bader. It is not clear why Bader had the "Seven Swabians" illustrations painted on his aircraft. One thought is that it was painted on the D.VII as an insult to Allied pilots, suggesting they would "flee like rabbits". Another theory is that he liked what the leader of the Seven Swabians said before attacking the hare "Then let us boldly advance to fight, and thus we shall show our valor and might". Bader's Fokker D.VII is the only known instance of a scene from a fairy tale being depicted on a German aircraft.



The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow



The superspeedway nicknamed “The Tricky Triangle” held an airshow over the Memorial Day weekend, with the event headlined with performances by the F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team and the U.S. Navy Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron.

Capt. Samuel “RaZZ” Larson, the demonstration pilot for the U.S. Air Force’s F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team, flies the F-22 Raptor during a demonstration at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow on Memorial Day Weekend. The F-22 Demonstration Team is based at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia.





One of the Federal Aviation Administration's regulations for airshows is that a medical helicopter is on standby for the duration of the event in case an emergency arises. This Eurocopter EC-135P2 (now Airbus Helicopters H135) arriving at the airshow is operated by healthcare provider Lehigh Valley Health Network. The EC-135 is widely used in Europe and North America by operators for emergency medical services and law enforcement use.

Located in the beautiful Pocono Mountains near Long Pond, Pennsylvania, Pocono Raceway is one of the world's most unique superspeedways because of its unique triangle configuration and its three turns, each with a different degree of banking, and modeled after turns at other racetracks. The three unique turns and the three straight stretches, each different lengths, make Pocono Raceway challenging for drivers and race teams setting up their cars. This unique layout has given Pocono Speedway the longstanding nickname "The Tricky Triangle". In addition to the superspeedway racing surface, Pocono's infield has a road course that can be set up in multiple configurations for sports car and motorcycle racing. Since its opening in 1971, Pocono Raceway has regularly hosted major racing events sanctioned by NASCAR, IndyCar, IMSA, AMA Superbike, and the Trans-Am Series.

In addition to its racing events, Pocono Raceway hosts club racing and driving schools on non-race weekends. Since 2019, Pocono Raceway has also hosted The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. The airshow

takes place over the infield and racing surface of the speedway, with the main grandstand being used for spectator seating. Aircraft performing in the airshow operate out of the nearby Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport.

The 2023 Great Pocono Raceway Airshow was held on May 27-28, 2023. This year's airshow was highlighted by performances from the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and the U.S. Air Force's F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team. Civilian performers included Rick Volker, Rob Holland, and Jerry Conley flying his rare de Havilland DH-115 Vampire vintage jet. Jim Beasley Jr. also made an appearance at the airshow with his restored World War II-era P-51 Mustang "Bald Eagle" to fly the U.S. Air Force Heritage Flight with the F-22 Raptor.

This photo feature includes highlights from the 2023 Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. Blessed by great weather, the airshow was well-attended on both days, with Pocono Raceway's main grandstand being full of families and aviation enthusiasts eager to enjoy the airshow.



The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow opened each day with the flying of the U.S. Air Force Heritage Flight. The U.S. Air Force Heritage Flight honors the history of the U.S. Air Force by putting formations of past and present U.S. Air Force aircraft together in formation. The Heritage Flight was originally supposed to be a one-time formation at an airshow in the late 1990s. Today, the U.S. Air Force Heritage Flight remains popular with airshow enthusiasts at airshows around the United States.



For The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow, the U.S. Air Force Heritage flight consisted of a World War II-era North American P-51D Mustang flying with a Lockheed Martin F-22A Raptor from the U.S. Air Force's F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team. The P-51 Mustang is one of the most iconic and famous American fighter aircraft from World War II. The F-22A Raptor is the most modern fighter aircraft in the U.S. Air Force's inventory and one of the most advanced fighter aircraft in the world.





Another view of the U.S. Air Force Heritage Flight from The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. From this angle, it is easy to see how large modern fighter aircraft are, as the F-22 Raptor dwarfs the World War II-era P-51 Mustang. The P-51 Mustang is owned and was being flown by Jim Beasley Jr. The F-22 Raptor was being flown by the F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team pilot, Capt. Samuel "RaZZ" Larson. This excellent showcase of past and present U.S. Air Force aircraft was a great start to the airshow.

After the U.S. Air Force Heritage Flight, it was time for a demonstration of the capabilities of the Lockheed Martin F-22A Raptor courtesy of the U.S. Air Force's F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team. The F-22 Raptor was piloted by the F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team's pilot and commander, Capt. Samuel "RaZZ" Larson. In this photo, Capt. Larson uses the F-22 Raptor's two powerful Pratt & Whitney F119 turbofan engines to climb vertically in front of the large crowd in attendance.



To preserve its stealth and aerodynamic properties, the F22 Raptor carries its armament in internal weapons bays. These internal weapons bays are located on the underside of the fuselage and the sides of the engine intakes. Carrying the weapons internally also hides the heat and radar signatures of the weapons themselves from enemy radar systems. The F-22 can carry a wide variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons. When the weapons are launched, the doors are opened for less than a second.



Capt. Samuel "RaZZ" Larson performs the dedication pass in the F-22 Raptor during the airshow. The dedication pass gives aviation enthusiasts a great opportunity for a photo of the fifth-generation stealth fighter. Lockheed Martin designed the F-22 to be difficult to detect and track by radar. As a result, the F-22 was built using radar-absorbent materials and features an active cooling system as well as a special surface coating designed to manage heat buildup over the surface of the airframe.





The F-22 Raptor's Pratt & Whitney FW119 engines combined allow the aircraft to "supercruise" at supersonic speed without the need to use afterburners. The engines feature flat, thrust-vectoring, exhaust nozzles that are designed to dissipate the heat of the exhaust and reduce the threat of infrared homing by heat-seeking air-to-air missiles. These exhaust nozzles are integrated into the F-22's flight management system, giving the Raptor impressive maneuverability across its flight envelope.

Rick Volker enters the aerobatic box at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow in his unusual pink Sukhoi Su-26M aerobatic aircraft that was built in the former Soviet Union. Volker is an experienced airshow and warbird pilot and has flown famous World War II fighter aircraft, such as the North American Harvard, Hawker Hurricane, and Supermarine Spitfire, as part of the exclusive Canadian Heritage Flight Team. In addition to being an airshow pilot, Volker is also a practicing general dentist.



Rick Volker performs in his Sukhoi Su-26M during The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. The Sukhoi Su-26 was introduced in 1984, with the improved Su-26M being a refined version with a German MTV-9 three-bladed composite propeller. The Su-26M quickly become one of the world's premier aerobatic aircraft. It won both the men's and women's 1986 World Aerobatic Championships. Unusual for an aerobatic aircraft, the Su-26M is powered by a nine-cylinder, air-cooled, radial engine.



Rick Volker climbs with the smoke on in his Sukhoi Su-26M at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. The Sukhoi Su-26M was designed to be a robust but light-weight aircraft and is constructed of composite materials to withstand the stress of aerobatic maneuvers. The aerodynamic symmetric-profile wing configuration allows for a high degree of controllability and maneuverability for aerobatic flight. The powerful nine-cylinder radial engine gives the Su-26M great power-to-weight ratio.





The Great Pocono Raceway also featured a search and rescue demonstration from the U.S. Coast Guard. Each day of the airshow, a U.S. Coast Guard MH-65D Dolphin helicopter and flight crew from U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City flew up to Pocono Raceway to perform the demonstration. The MH-65D Dolphin is a twin-engine, short-to-medium-range helicopter used by the U.S. Coast Guard for medevac-capable search and rescue missions and armed Airborne Use of Force missions.

The MH-65D Dolphin was introduced into service with the U.S. Coast Guard as the HH-65 in 1985. Initially powered by a pair of Lycoming LTS101 turboshaft engines, the HH-65 suffered several power loss events while powered by these engines. In 1994, the U.S. Coast Guard elected to switch to the Turbomeca Arriel 2c2-CG turboshaft engine. The engine upgrades began in 2004, and combined with other upgrades, have made the now-designated MH-65D a much more capable helicopter.



The MH-65D Dolphin is easy to identify thanks to its unique Fenestron enclosed tail rotor system, designed to protect the tail rotor from debris. The MH-65D is also easy to spot thanks to its bright orange color scheme, designed to be highly visible in all weather conditions. The MH-65D is used for many missions with the U.S. Coast Guard, including medevac-capable search and rescue, spotting for ice breakers, pollution control, drug interdiction, maritime law enforcement, and homeland security patrols.



The MH-65D carries a crew of four and has an advanced autopilot system that can automatically fly search patterns as well as bring the helicopter into a stable hover 50 ft. above the water's surface without any pilot input. The helicopter features a large sliding door seen open in this photograph to deploy rescue swimmers and facilitate easy loading of victims into the aircraft. Victims can be brought up via a rescue basket or by a rescue swimmer lowered by a winch and hoist system.





The flight crew of the MH-65D from U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City demonstrates the hoist and winch system used to lower a rescue swimmer to a victim at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City operates 11 MH-65Ds and is staffed by over 250 U.S. Coast Guard aviation personnel, reservists, and support staff. The air station is responsible for keeping two MH-65Ds on alert at all times with a 30-minute response time when dispatched.

Early military jet aircraft are a rare sight at airshows, but aviation enthusiasts at The Great Pocono Raceway had the unique opportunity thanks to airshow performer Jerry Conley. Conley performed an airshow demonstration with his restored de Havilland DH-115 Vampire. The Vampire was a British jet and was one of the first successful early jet fighters. More than 3,000 Vampires were built in several variants. The DH-115 flown by Conley, was used as a specialized two-seat training variant.



Jerry Conley flies his restored de Havilland DH-115 Vampire at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. The Vampire was powered by a single jet engine and was distinctive in its appearance with its twin tail booms. The Vampire was introduced into service with the Royal Air Force in 1946. The development of jet aircraft was so rapid that by 1953, the Vampire was already relegated to secondary roles. The Vampire was widely exported and used by the air arms of over 30 countries.



Jerry Conley performs a roll with his de Havilland DH-115 Vampire, showcasing the type's graceful maneuverability and aerobatic capability. As with most early military jet aircraft, the learning curve for pilots was steep, and the Vampire had a high accident rate, one of the reasons the two-seat DH-115 training variant was built. Also similar to other early jet aircraft, the Vampire exhausted its internal fuel quickly, and operational range was short. External fuel tanks mounted under the wings provided extra range.





Civilian aerobatic performer Rob Holland was also a scheduled performer at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. A native of New England, Rob Holland is his 18th year flying as an airshow pilot. Holland has also built time flying in many other roles, including as a banner towing pilot, ferry pilot, corporate pilot, flight instructor, and even operating his own aerobatic flight school. Holland has a reputation for professionalism and precision, and he and his MXS-RH aircraft are popular on the airshow circuit.

Rob Holland flies his MXS-RH aerobatic aircraft inverted during his performance at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. The MXS-RH is a one-of-a-kind aerobatic aircraft based on the popular MXS aerobatic aircraft manufactured by MX Aircraft in North Carolina. The MXS-RH is constructed of carbon-fiber, weighs in at just 1,200 pounds, and is powered by a 380-horsepower Lycoming engine. The MXS-RH is capable of rolling nearly 500 degrees per second and pulling up to 16 positive and negative Gs.



Rob Holland hard at work in his MXS-RH aerobatic aircraft during his performance at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. Rob Holland is one of the most accomplished and experienced aerobatic pilots flying airshows and aerobatic competitions today. Holland has won the U.S. National Aerobatic Championship 10 times consecutively. Holland has also been a member of the U.S. National Aerobatic Team eight times and won 28 medals in International Aerobatic Competition.



The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow concluded each day with a performance by the U.S. Navy Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron. The Blue Angels are the world's second-oldest formal aerobatic team, being formed by the U.S. Navy in 1946. The 2023 airshow season is the team's 77th season of flying aerial demonstrations. The 2023 season also marks the third season the team is using the twin-engine McDonnell Douglas/Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornet as their demonstration aircraft.





The U.S. Navy Blue Angels are also making history in 2023, as for the first time ever, the team selected a female to be one of the demonstration pilots. Lt. Amanda Lee is flying position #3, Left Wing, on the team for the 2023 season. Lt. Lee earned her U.S. Navy commission in 2013 and was designated a naval aviator in 2016. During her U.S. Navy career, Lt. Lee has accumulated more than 1,500 flight hours, over 225 carrier landings, and has earned four Navy Achievement medals.

U.S. Navy Blue Angels #5 and #6, Lead and Opposing Solo Pilots Lt. Cmdr. Julius Bratton and Lt. Cmdr Griffin Stangel perform the “Fortus” maneuver. This maneuver demonstrates the excellent low-speed handling characteristics of the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet as both pilots are flying with their landing gear extended, and Lt. Cmdr. Bratton has the added challenge of flying inverted. The F/A-18E/F Super Hornet entered service as a multirole fighter and attack aircraft with the U.S. Navy in 1999.



U.S. Navy Blue Angels Lead and Opposing Solo Pilots, #5 Lt. Cmdr. Julius Bratton and #6 Lt. Cmdr. Griffin Stangel perform the High Alpha Pass. This maneuver demonstrates the excellent slow-speed maneuverability of the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet. This slow-speed maneuverability is possible thanks to the Super Hornet's powerful General Electric F414 turbofan engines and enlarged leading edge extensions that provide improved vortex lifting characteristics in high angle of attack and pitching maneuvers.



The U.S. Navy Blue Angels perform the Echelon Pass In Review, one of the well-known and most popular maneuvers in the team's airshow demonstration routine. During these close formation maneuvers, the F/A-18E/Fs are flown as close as 18 inches apart. The F/A-18 Super Hornet is produced in two variants, the single-seat E and the two-seat F. In addition to the U.S. Navy, the F/A-18 Super Hornet is operated by the Royal Australian Air Force and has been ordered by the Kuwait Air Force.





The U.S. Navy Blue Angels complete the Diamond Burner 270 maneuver at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. During this tight turning maneuver, the Blue Angels pilots in the diamond formation pull up to 7.5Gs while using full afterburners on the F/A-18 Super Hornet F414 engines. The pilots flying in the diamond formation are #1 Flight Leader, Cmdr. Alexander Armatas, #2 Right Wing, Lt. Cmdr. Chris Kapuschansky, #3 Left Wing, Lt. Amanda Lee, and #4 Slot, Lt. Scott Goossens.

The U.S. Navy Blue Angels line up in the six-ship Delta formation for one final flyby of the airshow crowd after a successful demonstration at The Great Pocono Raceway Airshow. Achieving such precision flying each weekend at locations nationwide takes dedication and practice. The Blue Angels complete an extensive winter training season each year at NAF El Centro in California. The team also practices regularly between airshow visits at their home base of NAS Pensacola in Florida.



Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21F-13 Fishbed-C



A Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21F-13 Fishbed-C on display at the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia. The lightweight and simple MiG-21 is the most produced supersonic jet fighter in aviation history. Over 10,000 examples of the MiG-21 were built, and the aircraft has served in the air forces of more than 60 countries worldwide since its introduction in 1959.

The Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21 (NATO reporting name: Fishbed) is a supersonic jet fighter and interceptor aircraft designed by the Mikoyan-Gurevich Design Bureau in the Soviet Union. The MiG-21 was the Soviet Union's first second-generation jet fighter. Introduced into the Soviet Air Force in 1959, the MiG-21 would eventually serve in the air forces of more than 60 countries worldwide and is still in use as a frontline fighter in several nations today, nearly six decades after its introduction.

Design work on the MiG-21 began in the early 1950s. One of the problems facing the Mikoyan-Gurevich Design Bureau was that the afterburning-turbojet engine supplied by the S.K. Tumanskiy Design Bureau for use in the MiG-21 was underpowered. Therefore, the MiG-21 was designed to be lightweight and have a small profile. The MiG-21 also featured a thin delta wing and a unique "tailed delta" configuration. Flight testing began in 1956, and the first versions of the MiG-21 entered service with the Soviet Air Force in 1960.

The MiG-21 became the first Soviet aircraft to combine fighter and interceptor characteristics into one design.

Shortly after its introduction, the MiG-21 became the standard clear-air interceptor for the Soviet Air Force. The MiG-21 was praised for being simple to fly, cheap to maintain, having a top speed of Mach 2, and a fast climb rate. The aircraft's simple flight controls and technology were keys to its marketability in countries with limited training programs and pilot pools.

Although early MiG-21s had advantages in some flight characteristics, some flaws with the design were quickly apparent. The delta wing configuration of the aircraft meant that speed was quickly lost in any tight turning maneuvers, a disadvantage in a dogfight. The MiG-21's small size limited its fuel capacity. As a result, the MiG-21 suffered from short range. This required the MiG-21 to be based close to combat operations. The fuel tanks were also poorly placed in relation to the aircraft's center of gravity, causing dangerous handling characteristics as the MiG-21 exhausted its fuel load. Finally, the MiG-21's layout with the shock cone and engine intake in the nose limited the size of the radar that could be installed on the aircraft.



Later variants of the MiG-21 attempted to address some of the aircraft's shortcomings. These later variants of the MiG-21, such as the MiG-21PF and MiG-21S added more powerful engines, a strengthened structure, improved radar and weapons systems, improved avionics, increased fuel capacity by adding saddle-type auxiliary fuel tanks, and blow-up flaps for improved maneuverability. With these improvements, the MiG-21 became a multirole aircraft, able to operate in all weather conditions and in a ground-attack role. Specialized reconnaissance and two-seat trainer variants of the MiG-21 were built as well.


More than 6,000 MiG-21s were built in 12 variants for use by the Soviet Air Force, which used them as fighters and interceptors for over 30 years. The MiG-21 was used by the Soviet Union as an export tool to establish international relationships and the country exported hundreds of MiG-21s to Soviet-friendly nations. By the time MiG-21 production ended in the Soviet Union in 1985, over 10,600 aircraft had been built. With the success of international export sales, the MiG-21 became

the most-produced supersonic jet fighter in aviation history and the most-produced combat aircraft since the Korean War. In addition to aircraft produced in the Soviet Union being exported, the MiG-21 was license-built in India, Czechoslovakia, and China, where the aircraft is designated the J-7/F-7. As of 2022, more than a dozen countries still operate variants of the MiG-21 in their air forces, with the Indian and Croatian air forces being two of the largest operators. The Romanian Air Force recently retired their MiG-21 fleet, flying their last operational sorties with the aircraft in May of this year.

The National Air and Space Museum's MiG-21F-13 Fishbed-C has an unknown history. It carries the numbers "19 4 62", which may indicate the aircraft was constructed on April 19, 1962. It also carries the number "2106" and the acronym "GREG", the meaning of both is unknown. For many years, this captured MiG-21 was part of an exhibit of Soviet military hardware at Bolling Air Force Base in Maryland in the "Soviet awareness" training program. The U.S. Air Force donated the MiG-21F-13 to the National Air and Space Museum in 1990.



Laird-Turner Meteor LTR-14

(1936) 



The Laird-Turner Meteor LTR-14 was a purpose-built racing aircraft commissioned and designed by famous air racing pilot Roscoe Turner. The LTR-14 was designed by Turner and Professor Howard Barlow of the University of Minnesota. Turner contracted with the Lawrence Brown Aircraft Company in California to build the aircraft. Initially designed with a wing that spanned only 22 ft, Turner decided the LTR-14 was overweight and had too short of a wingspan. The LTR-14 was redesigned by Turner and famous racing aircraft designer Matty Laird, who rebuilt the racer in his factory. In its redesigned form, the LTR-14 won the 1938 and 1939 Thompson Trophy races. The LTR-14 is displayed in the National Air and Space Museum's new "Nation of Speed" exhibit in the museum's flagship building in Washington D.C.

Laird-Turner Meteor LTR-14

Crew: 1

Length: 23 ft 4 in

Height: 10 ft

Wingspan: 25 ft 3.5 in

Wing Area: 95 sq ft

Powerplant: Pratt & Whitney R-1830 Twin Wasp 14-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine (x1)

Propeller: 3-Bladed

Fuel Capacity: 50 gal

Oil Capacity: 15 gal

Cruise Speed: 275 mph

Maximum Speed: 350 mph

Empty/Loaded Weights: 3,000 lb/4,923 lb



Roscoe Turner's Last Racer

Name

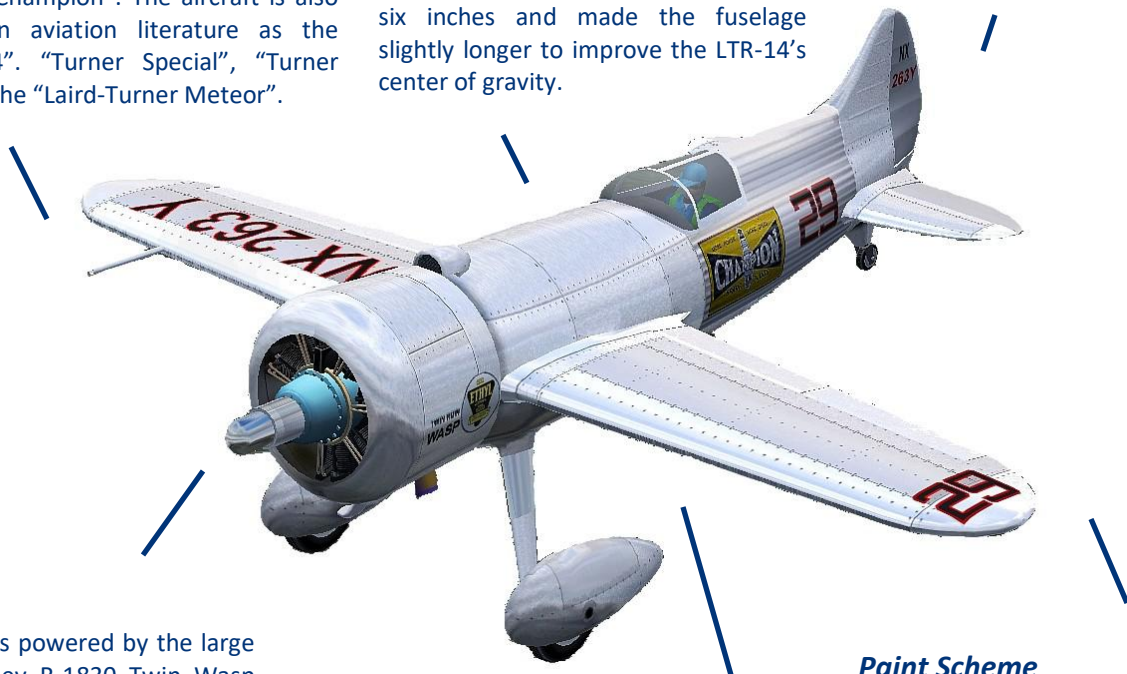
The LTR-14 was referred to by many names throughout its racing career. In 1937, it was named the "Ring Free Meteor" to reflect the sponsorship Turner had gotten from the Ring Free Oil Company. In 1938, reflecting sponsorship obtained from PESCO, the aircraft was named the "PESCO Special". For 1939, Turner obtained sponsorship to compete in the Thompson Trophy Race from the Champion Spark Plug Company, so the LTR-14 was named "Miss Champion". The aircraft is also referred to in aviation literature as the "Turner RT-14". "Turner Special", "Turner Meteor", and the "Laird-Turner Meteor".

Fuselage

The fuselage was constructed of chrome-moly tubing with spruce and fabric fairing. The fuselage was covered from the engine to the cockpit with metal, and Irish linen was used rearward of the cockpit. The fuselage had a metal strip along the bottom to protect the fabric portion from being damaged by any runway debris. When Matty Laird rebuilt the LTR-14 in his factory, he set the engine of the aircraft back six inches and made the fuselage slightly longer to improve the LTR-14's center of gravity.

Tail

The stabilizers were made of wood, and the tail, elevators, and rudder of steel tubing. All the surfaces of the LTR-14's tail section were fabric covered. The rudder was faired smoothly into the rear section of the fuselage to improve the airflow over the aircraft at high speeds.



Engine

The LTR-14 was powered by the large Pratt & Whitney R-1830 Twin Wasp radial engine. This 14-cylinder engine was rated at 1,000 horsepower at 2,600 rpm, and when run on full racing power, burned fuel at a rate of under two miles to a gallon. This large engine made the LTR-14 a heavier aircraft than most of the other racing aircraft it competed against. The advantage of this engine was that it could be pushed considerably harder and propelled the LTR-14 to much higher speeds than the rest of the competing aircraft. This reliable aero engine also powered many other famous American aircraft, including the Douglas DC-3 commercial airliner and C-47 military transport.

Wings & Landing Gear

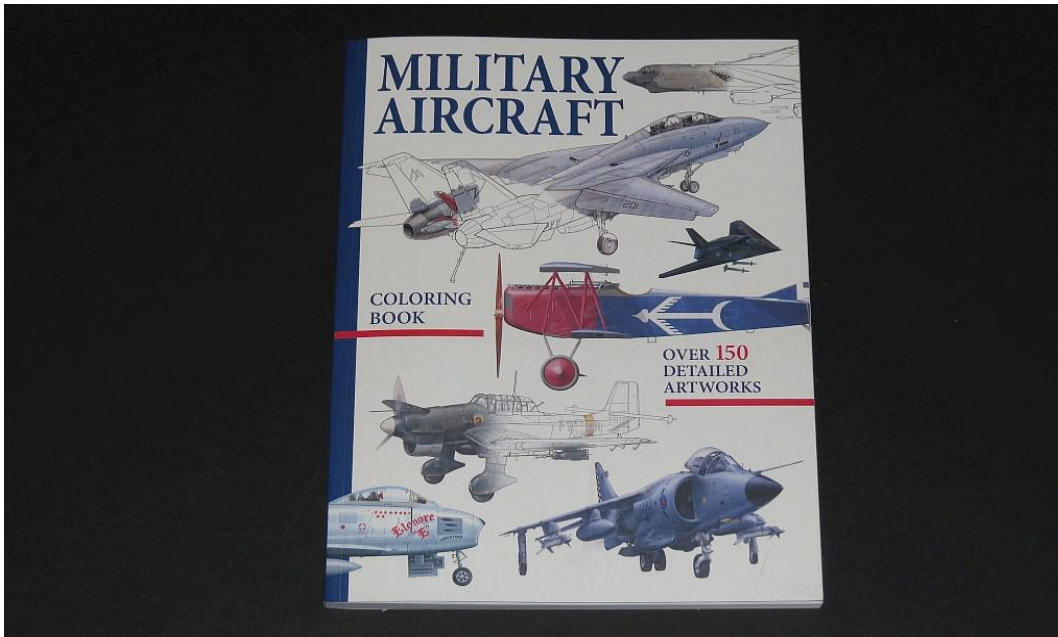
As initially designed, the LTR-14 had a wing that spanned only 22 ft. The wing also had a very narrow chord. When Roscoe Turner saw the LTR-14, he was nervous about flying it with a wing that had such a short wingspan. He redesigned the LTR-14's wings, adding a little over 2.5 feet to give the wing a span of just over 25 feet. The two solid wing spars were made of laminated spruce with reinforced plywood for the wing ribs and the leading edge constructed of metal. The wings also had manually controlled flaps to reduce the LTR-14's landing speed. Initially as designed, the landing gear did not have any spats on the wheels but had full caps. In 1938, wheel spats were added to the LTR-14's landing gear to further streamline the aircraft.

Paint Scheme

The LTR-14 wore a silver paint scheme with the race number #29 painted on the fuselage and wings in black with red trim. During its years of competition, the LTR-14 wore various company names and logos depending on the company that Turner chose for sponsorship at that year's races. The LTR-14 is shown here as it appeared at the 1939 Thompson Trophy Races when it was sponsored by Champion Spark Plug Co. and named "Miss Champion". 1939 was the final year Roscoe Turner and the LTR-14 would compete in the Thompson Trophy Race.



A Coloring Book For The Military Aircraft Enthusiast



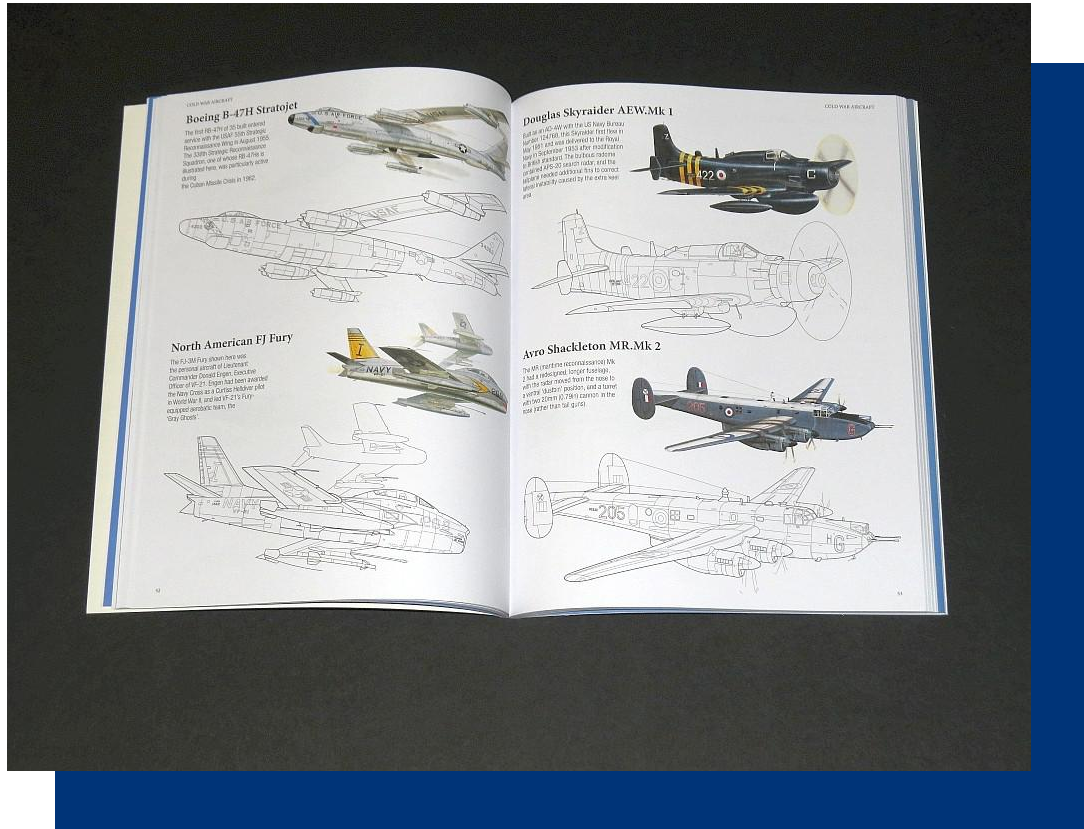
United Kingdom-based publisher Amber Books Ltd. recently released this adult coloring book with a military aircraft theme. The book contains over 150 illustrations of military aircraft from World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the Modern era that are ready to color. Amber's original color artwork is included with each aircraft illustration as a guide for coloring.

Adult coloring books became a huge hit in Great Britain a few years ago. The renewed interest in coloring books for adults quickly spread to other countries, including the United States. Although the initial surge of interest has leveled off, adult coloring books have remained popular and can be found on the store shelves of many retailers. Adult coloring books are published in a wide variety of themes such as television shows and movies, nature, animals, travel, landmarks, geometric designs and patterns, and famous people. A new coloring book from United Kingdom-based publisher Amber Books Ltd. will delight military aircraft and aviation enthusiasts of all ages.

Amber's new *Military Aircraft Coloring Book* features over 150 illustrations of classic and modern military aircraft. The coloring book includes four sections World War I Aircraft, World War II Aircraft, Cold War Aircraft, and Modern Aircraft. Types of military aircraft featured in the coloring book include fighters, bombers, multirole aircraft, transports, and helicopters. The *Military Aircraft Coloring Book* features iconic aircraft such as the Fokker Dr.I Triplane, Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, North American P-51D Mustang, and Lockheed Martin F-22A Raptor stealth fighter. The coloring book also features some unusual aircraft types, such as the Convair RB-36E Peacemaker, and aircraft types not well-known outside the United States, such as the Russian Tupolev Tu-22M Backfire strategic/strike bomber and the German/French Transall C-160 military transport aircraft. The aircraft illustrations for the coloring book were selected from Amber's extensive library of commissioned artwork that the publishing company uses in their aircraft reference books and magazines. The aircraft artwork was rendered in clear black lines for the coloring book, making the artwork easy to color. To aid in coloring each aircraft in the correct colors and markings, Amber included the original color artwork of each aircraft on its coloring page. Each illustration is also accompanied by a brief historical note about the aircraft featured.

The *Military Aircraft Coloring Book* is an excellent gift for an aviation or military aircraft enthusiast of any age. The coloring book is an excellent reference for military aircraft, and the aircraft selected for inclusion by the editors at Amber are a nice representation of the history of military aircraft from World War I to the present day. This unique coloring book is a great way for aviation enthusiasts of all ages to learn about military aircraft. The *Military Aircraft Coloring Book* is reasonably-priced for just \$10 at Barnes & Noble retail locations in the United States. The coloring book is also available online from the Barnes & Noble website.





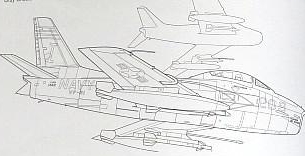
Boeing B-47H Stratojet

The first B-47H of its kind entered service with the USAF in 1956. It was the last of its kind to be built. The B-47H was the last of its kind to be built. The B-47H was the last of its kind to be built.



North American FJ Fury

The FJ Fury was the first of its kind. It was the first of its kind to be built. The FJ Fury was the first of its kind to be built.



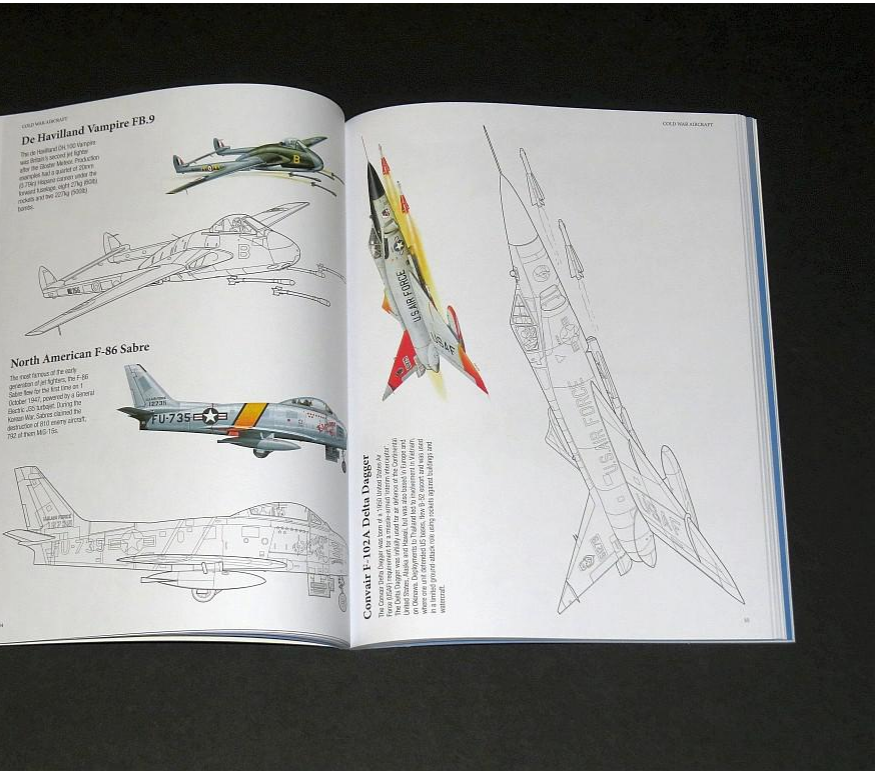
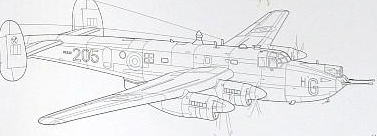
Douglas Skyraider AEW.Mk 1

The Douglas Skyraider was the last of its kind. It was the last of its kind to be built. The Douglas Skyraider was the last of its kind to be built.



Avro Shackleton MR.Mk 2

The Avro Shackleton was the last of its kind. It was the last of its kind to be built. The Avro Shackleton was the last of its kind to be built.



De Havilland Vampire FB.9

The De Havilland Vampire was the last of its kind. It was the last of its kind to be built. The De Havilland Vampire was the last of its kind to be built.



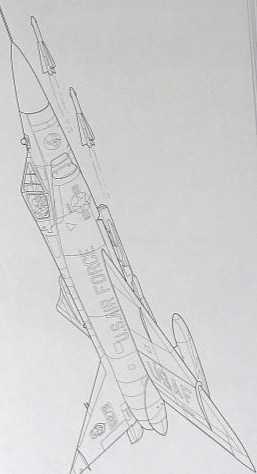
North American F-86 Sabre

The North American F-86 Sabre was the last of its kind. It was the last of its kind to be built. The North American F-86 Sabre was the last of its kind to be built.



Convair F-102A Delta Dagger

The Convair F-102A Delta Dagger was the last of its kind. It was the last of its kind to be built. The Convair F-102A Delta Dagger was the last of its kind to be built.





**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.