

The Annba



Dedicated volunteers, collectors, and nonprofits keep an astoundingly rich variety of historic military aircraft flying.

ssadors

Photos by Jim Dunn

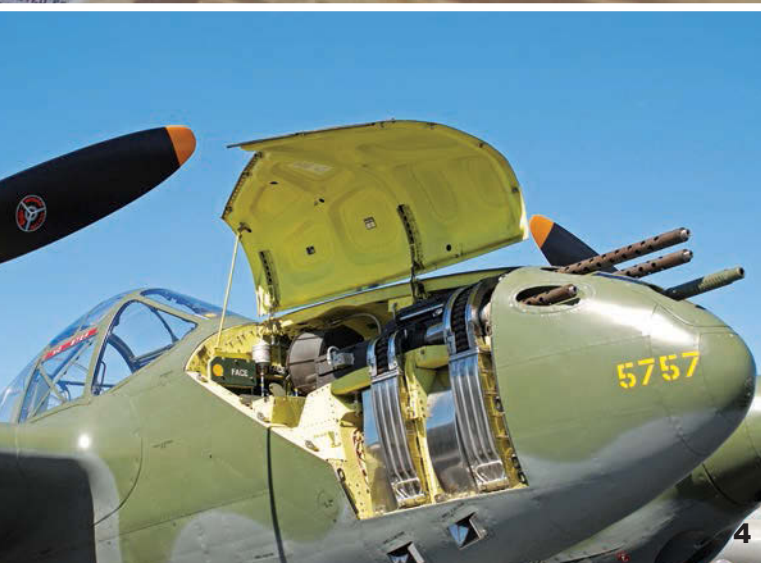


Many World War II and early Air Force aircraft soldiered on flying bush cargo, fighting wildfires, air racing, or serving foreign air arms after completing their USAF service. Decades later, a handful of representative examples have been recovered, reclaimed, or restored, and serve as inspirational flying ambassadors of airpower history.

In addition to their US service, both the Bell P-63 Kingcobra (foreground) and the North American T-28 Trojan went to war in the ground attack role in foreign service—the P-63 in Soviet hands against German forces in World War II, and the T-28 in Laotian and South Vietnamese air forces against communist insurgents in Southeast Asia. Pretty Polly was the fourth P-63 built and served out its operational service as a test aircraft with the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics.

[1] In Nampa, Idaho, the Warhawk Air Museum's Curtiss P-40N is painted with parrot's head nose art in the colors of an AAF training unit at Napier Field, Ala. It was used in the 2001 film "Pearl Harbor" and is seen here flying near Reno, Nev. [2] The Marine Corps' Grumman F7F Tigercat entered service too late for World War II, but saw use over Korea. Here Kitty, Kitty! practices for the National Championship Air Races near Reno in 2011. [3] The T-28A replaced the Air Force's T-6 trainers in 1948, but was quickly deemed underpowered and replaced. The Navy flew the improved T-28B/C for many years. [4] Retired Air Force crew chief Jerry Anderson flew the photo ship for many of these shots and has worked on Beechcraft Model 18s—designated C-45s in USAF service—such as this one at Oshkosh, Wis., in 2009.





[1] Retired Brig. Gen. Regis Urschler taxis P-51D Gunfighter at the annual Oshkosh air show in 2005. Urschler logged some 12,700 hours as a Cold War Strategic Air Command RC-135 pilot. Gunfighter served in the AAF's Eighth Air Force.

[2] Pacific Theater markings are rare on restored P-51Ds, and #44-73751's representation of the Iwo Jima-based 47th Fighter Squadron's World War II markings won it top honors at Oshkosh in 2010.

[3] Douglas C-47s still haul cargo, and as turboprop-converted gunships, serve in several air arms worldwide. This "Gooney Bird" wears D-Day markings. [4] Lockheed P-38F Glacier Girl was rescued from 260 feet below the Greenland ice cap 50 years after a forced landing in 1942. Volunteers spent the better part of a decade restoring it to flight status.



1



2



4



3

[1] P-51D Quick Silver mixes World War II invasion stripes with symbolic markings honoring military veterans. **[2]** The German Messerschmitt Me-262 was the first operational jet fighter. This two-seat example seen over Napa, Calif., is one of several new-build full-scale flying replicas.

[3] The Boeing P-26 (foreground) and Seversky AT-12 were both revolutionary US designs in their time, as the first all-metal monoplane fighter and—as the P-35—the first enclosed-cockpit, retractable landing gear pursuit aircraft, respectively. Both quickly became obsolete. These

restored aircraft belong to the Planes of Fame museum in Chino, Calif. **[4]** This “Japanese Nakajima B5N Kate torpedo bomber” is actually an amalgam of a North American T-6 front end and a Vultee BT-13 tail section grafted together to be used in the 1970 movie “Tora! Tora! Tora!”



[1] A B-17G in the markings of Nine-O-Nine drops an inert bomb over California's San Joaquin Valley during Bomber Camp, where attendees experience World War II bomber crew training. [2] The Douglas A-26 is the only armed aircraft to see substantial AAF and USAF service in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Seen here in Korean War-era markings, #44-34538 went into combat with the French air

force in Southeast Asia. [3] Tiagh Ramey from the Stockton Field Aviation Museum in California adds a few modern instruments to a Lockheed PV-2D Harpoon to enable its recovery from a ranch in Northern California. Ramey flew the derelict airframe to the museum in 2010. [4] Steve Clough (l) and Cade Guthrie help Ramey prepare the Harpoon for that flight. This aircraft

was delivered too late in 1945 to see extensive military service and spent a long civilian career—until 1994—as a fire-fighting tanker. [5] This British De Havilland Dominie MK.1, flying over Northern California, was built for the Royal Air Force in 1944. It saw postwar service with British European Airways and as a survey aircraft, mapping motorways in the UK.

[1] P-51D Daddy's Girl takes off in California. It sports the colors of Capt. Ray Wetmore, an AAF ace with 21.25 kills in the European Theater. [2] A Lightning leads a pair of Tigercats during a photo shoot over Nevada's Pyramid Lake. [3] This North American OV-10B Bronco, retrofitted and painted as a Marine Corps OV-10A, actually served the West German Luftwaffe as a target-tug in the 1970s. It was photographed over Lake Berryessa in California. [4] This North American F-86F, at Oshkosh in 2009, spent some five years at Nellis AFB, Nev., and Williams AFB, Ariz., before being sent to the Argentine air force. It eventually ended up in the US in private hands.





[1] North American F-6D 'Lil' Margaret was converted from a stock P-51D to represent the reconnaissance version flown by World War II ace Capt. Clyde East, who scored 12 kills. [2] B-29 Superfortress 'Fifi' has long been the only airworthy example of the World War II bomber. A second restored B-29, named Doc, should take to the skies this year after nearly a decade of restoration by volunteers in Kansas. [3] The C-40 is a military variant of Lockheed's Model 12 Electra Junior. Only 130 were built. Yanks Air Museum in Chino owns this example. [4] In 1954, Canadair license-built this T-33, resplendent in SAC markings, as a CT-33 Silver Star. Canada retired the last of them in 2005. ☼

Photographer Jim Dunn thanks Jerry Anderson, Mike and Michele DeCastro, Taigh Ramey, and all the warbird pilots, operators, and owners who supported these photo missions.