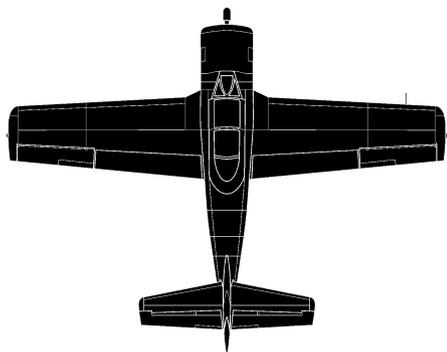


Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

T-28 Trojan



Many trainer aircraft have been turned into warplanes. Few if any, however, have performed as well in that role, and in so many places, as the Air Force's T-28 Trojan. Its combat career began in the early 1960s in Vietnam. The good performance of the T-28 intrigued foreign governments, which used it for training, close air support, reconnaissance, and airborne patrol. Versions of the T-28 served with more than 20 air forces. They eventually saw combat on four continents.

The T-28A was designed to replace the obsolete World War II-era T-6 Texan trainer. The early version was powered by a troublesome 800-horsepower Wright R-1300 engine. Nonetheless, the Trojan performed well enough to convince the Navy to buy the T-28B and T-28C with a larger Wright R-1820. USAF used the Trojan as a trainer through 1956, at which point it was replaced by the Beech T-34 and

Cessna T-37. The Air National Guard retained it for a few years. Then, in the early 1960s, the aircraft was revamped and given a completely new purpose.

The first T-28s to serve in Vietnam were part of Operation Farm Gate's 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron. Rugged and reliable, it was well-liked by its air and ground crews. The original mission to train South Vietnamese pilots soon grew to include combat strikes. Then, in 1962, USAF began to modify some 300 T-28s as fighter-bombers for counterinsurgency warfare in Vietnam. These aircraft, redesignated as T-28D Nomads, provided years of stellar service. The aircraft was withdrawn from combat in Vietnam in 1964, but it continued to operate with the 60th Special Operations Squadron on missions over Laos and Cambodia.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: USAF T-28C—#140579—as it looked in the early 1960s when assigned to the 4400th CCTS in South Vietnam. It wore South Vietnamese markings because it flew in secret US Farm Gate missions.



In Brief

Designed, built by North American ★ converted by Fairchild ★ first flight Sept. 24, 1949 ★ crew of two ★ number built (all services) 2,232 ★ single Wright R-1830 radial engine ★ **Specific to T-28D:** max speed 352 mph ★ cruise speed 230 mph ★ max range 1,335 miles (loaded) ★ armament two .50 cal machine guns, miniguns ★ bomb load up to 3,000 lbs of bombs, rockets ★ weight (max) 8,118 lb ★ span 40 ft 7 in ★ length 32 ft 10 in ★ height 12 ft 8 in.

Famous Fliers

Air Force Cross: Bernard Lukasik. **Notable:** Robert Simpson, died Aug. 28, 1962 in first shootdown of US attack aircraft in Vietnam War. **Others:** Harry Aderholt, Robert Gleason, James Harding, William Hobbins, Benjamin King, William Palank, John Piotrowski, Richard Secord, Brien Ward.

Interesting Facts

Saw combat in Asia, Africa, North America, South America ★ designed to transition pilots from prop to jet aircraft, the first to do so ★ given call sign Zorro by 606th ACS in Thailand ★ sold to French Air Force, which modified them and used them in Algerian War ★ used by 23 air forces ★ nicknamed Nomad, Fennec ("desert fox"), and Nomair ★ known as Tora-Toras in the Philippines ★ supplied by CIA in 1960s to Moïse Tshombe's regime in Congo.



T-28s armed with machine guns, bombs, and rocket launchers.