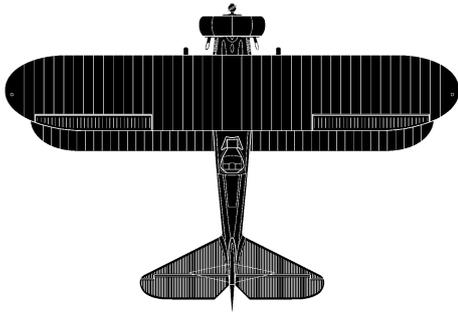


## P-12



The P-12 pursuit aircraft, though it had no official nickname, was one of the best known Army Air Corps fighters of the interwar era. The Boeing airplane was operated by the Army and Navy (the F4B-1) in slightly different forms. The first P-12, sans military markings, was delivered on Feb. 26, 1929, to AAC Capt. Ira C. Eaker, who immediately took it on a goodwill flight to Central America. The P-12 proved to be the Army's last biplane fighter.

In the late 1920s, Boeing was determined to hold its lead in fighter aircraft. It created the Model 83 and Model 89, based on all it had learned from earlier Boeing PW-9 and F3B fighters. The Navy tested both, and loaned the Model 89 to the AAC. Impressed, the Army ordered 10. The

P-12 featured all of the refinements Boeing had developed in the 1920s. It was smaller, lighter, and more agile than airplanes it replaced. Early models used a fuselage built of welded steel tubing in the center section and the engine mounts. The aft fuselage was formed of square Dural tubing bolted together. All P-12 production aircraft used Pratt & Whitney R-1340 engines, the first time the Army had used a radial power plant in a fighter.

By 1932, the Air Corps had acquired a total of 366 P-12s. They never saw combat, but they put in good service until they were replaced by the Boeing P-26 in 1934 and 1935. The P-12s later served as trainers until they were retired in 1941.

—Walter J. Boyne

**This aircraft:** United States Army Air Corps P-12C—#12—as it appeared in 1934 when assigned to the Army Command and Staff School.



**Capt. Ira Eaker beside his Boeing P-12.**

### In Brief

Designed, built by Boeing ★ first flight (AAC model) April 11, 1929 ★ crew of one ★ number built 586 ★ one Pratt & Whitney R-1340 engine ★ armament either two .30 cal machine guns or one .30 cal and one .50 cal machine guns ★ load up to 244 lb of bombs ★ **Specific to P-12E:** max speed 189 mph ★ cruise speed 160 mph ★ max range 570 mi ★ weight (loaded) 2,690 lb ★ span 30 ft ★ length 20 ft 4 in ★ height 9 ft.

### Famous Fliers

**Military:** H. H. Arnold, Ira Eaker, Robert Short, many other World War II air leaders. **Stunt pilots:** Jesse Bristow, Milo Burcham, Arthur Goebel. **Other notables:** Howard Hughes, Paul Mantz.

### Interesting Facts

Developed by Boeing as a private business venture ★ featured in National Museum of the US Air Force, Dayton, Ohio ★ flown by 17th Pursuit Group (March Field, Calif.) and 20th Pursuit Group (Barksdale Field, La.) ★ assigned to Hawaii, Panama, and Philippines ★ equipped to carry 55-gallon fuel tank under the belly ★ operated by air arms of US, Brazil, China (Nationalist Air Force), and Thailand.