

Goblin



Photo via Robert F. Dor

Answering the need for a jet fighter with the range to escort heavy bombers, McDonnell Aircraft Corp. came up with the XF-85 Goblin. Plans called for the 14-foot-11-inch-long parasite airplane to be carried in the bomb bay of a B-36. The Goblin would be launched from a retractable trapeze beneath the bomber and—having successfully fought off enemy aircraft with its four machine guns—would use a retractable hook in its forward fuselage to snag the trapeze. The Goblin could then fold its wings and be tucked back into the B-36.

Free-flight tests began in August 1948, but it proved difficult to control the Goblin while engaging the hook. Also, development funds dried up, and mid-air refueling of fighter aircraft was beginning to show greater promise. USAF canceled the program in October 1949.

