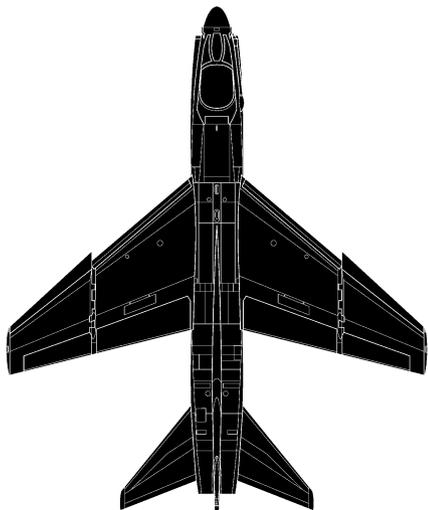


# Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

## A-7 Corsair II



The Air Force A-7 Corsair II was derived from the Corsair developed for the Navy in the early 1960s, and was more or less ordered off-the-shelf. The first USAF prototype flew on April 6, 1968. The only significant changes to the LTV-built Navy version were use of a different engine and addition of a 20 mm cannon (which the Navy later adopted). Somewhat less than beautiful, the A-7—in both the Air Force and Navy versions—proved to be both effective and highly adaptable.

The A-7 was intended to replace the A-4 Skyhawk, and it sprang from a requirement to be developed from an existing type. LTV won with a highly modified version of its F-8 Crusader, a fact which helped speed A-7 development. The Corsair II had a shorter fuselage and larger air intake, but its wings were roughly the same size, and it used both leading edge

and trailing edge flaps, as well as upper surface spoilers, as did the F-8. The A-7's main strength was payload; it could carry up to 15,000 pounds of ordnance. USAF expressed interest in 1966, ordering an A-7D with a more powerful engine.

The Navy A-7 entered combat in Vietnam in December 1967 and flew more than 90,000 combat missions there. The Air Force A-7s pulled heavy combat duty late in the war, flying close air support missions and serving with search and rescue operators. The type achieved high accuracy with bomb drops by the aid of an automatic electronic navigation and weapons delivery system. In 1973, the Air Force began assigning A-7Ds to Air National Guard units.

—Walter J. Boyne

**This aircraft:** USAF A-7D—#70-0970—as it looked in late 1972 when assigned to 354th TFW, Korat RTAB, Thailand. It is displayed at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.



A-7s left Vietnam for the Air Guard.

### In Brief

Designed, built by LTV Aerospace ★ first flight Sept. 27, 1965 ★ crew of one (two in trainer) ★ number built 1,545 (484 USAF) ★ one Rolls Royce/Allison TF41-A-1 turbofan engine ★ **Specific to A-7D:** armament one M-61A 20 mm Vulcan cannon ★ max load 15,000 lb of bombs, missiles, mines, rockets, gun pods ★ max speed 698 mph ★ cruise speed 545 mph ★ max range 1,780 mi ★ weight (loaded) 42,000 lb ★ span 38 ft 9 in ★ length 46 ft 2 in ★ height 16 ft.

### Famous Fliers

**Air Force Cross:** Colin Clarke. **Notables:** Jim Allen, Tom Crawford, Howell Estes III, Gregory Feest, Thomas Goselin, Craig Gourley, John Hoskins, William Lake, Dennis Larsen, Chuck McClaran, David McCloud, Thomas McKee, John Miller Jr., Wally Moorhead, Lonnie Ratley, Robin Scott, Sandy Sharpe, Michael Short, Leighton Smith Jr., Anthony Tolin, Robert Yates.

### Interesting Facts

Nicknamed "SLUF" (for Short Little Ugly Feller) ★ performed (on Aug. 15, 1973) last official bombing in SEA War ★ saw combat in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Cambodia, Lebanon, Libya, Grenada, Panama, Kuwait, and Iraq ★ used for close air support, search and rescue, reconnaissance, interdiction, surveillance ★ in Vietnam, suffered only six losses in 13,000 sorties—lowest ratio for any USAF type ★ provided air cover in battle for *Mayaguez* ★ used as surrogate to train F-117 stealth fighter pilots in 1980s.