

THE MASTHEAD PLANE

The Bell XFM-1 Airacuda was one of those ideas that sounded great on paper, but just didn't work out. Robert Woods, chief engineer for Bell, thought the Army Air Corps needed a super heavy fighter designed from the outset to tear gaping holes in enemy bomber formations. It would have to be fast, reliable, and heavily armed. He only got one out of three with the Airacuda.

The 1937 design was radical. It called for two Allison engines driving pusher props, and a gun crew of four or five, not counting the pilot. It had a 37 mm cannon in each engine nacelle, twin 30 caliber machine guns in each of the fuselage side blisters, and a gunnery position in the belly just aft of the wing.

This was a big plane. The wingspan was over 60 feet. Unfortunately, the pusher installation of the Allison engines meant that they were prone to overheating, and required considerably more maintenance than the military was willing to give. The max speed was also disappointing, though not so slow as to preclude bomber attack. Designed for 300 mph, it could hit, at best, only 275.

The Army accepted less than a dozen of the prototypes, which at various times were fitted with either conventional or tricycle landing gear.

For the scale modeler, there is a wealth of detail just begging to be worked into the plane. Three separate cockpits and two large side blisters mean you can't just throw together any old frame. The addition of two pusher engines and retracting landing gear make this one a challenge!



PROPWASH

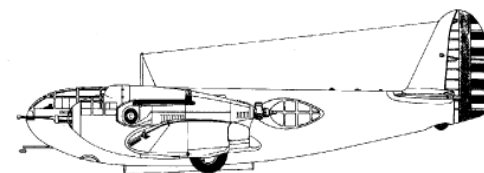
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DOOR PRIZE AND RAFFLE

Andy Pesonen won the raffle and **Mike Cuba** won the door prize at the August meeting, both prizes being gift cards from **Nankin Hardware & Hobby**. Congratulations, gentlemen, and thank you, Nankin!



PROPWASH PUBLISHING

The PropWash newsletter has been a part of the DAM ever since its inception in the mid-70's. One of the questions the AMA asks when chartering a club is whether they have a newsletter, and if not, why not. However, just as newspapers all over the US have discovered, the cost of putting out a print edition just keeps going up. At present, the costs associated with the PropWash are second only to those of field maintenance in the DAM annual budget.

It was suggested at the August meeting that the PropWash be published exclusively on-line. It would be posted on the DAM website, and sent by email to members who supply the editor with their address. This would be in the form of a PDF document, which could be viewed at whatever level of magnification made it easy for the member to read.

Since this would be a major change in DAM policy, the motion was tabled until the September meeting, at which time it will be voted on.

FIELD NEWS

Field Marshall **Bobby Harmon** resigned his post at the August meeting, citing personal reasons. There will be an election at the September meeting to fill the position. In the meantime, **Bill Gillespie** was appointed interim Field Marshall. We owe a big vote of thanks to Bobby for all his work the past few years. Thank you, Bobby!

INTRODUCTORY PILOTS

DAM member **Bob Mayhew** asked the club about the mechanism for bringing a non-AMA potential pilot out to the field for an introductory lesson, using Bob's equipment. We found that there are two ways to go about this, both AMA programs. For \$5, an AMA member can register as a trainer to teach potential members how to fly. Alternatively, the new flyer can get a temporary AMA 90 day membership for \$20.

GIANT AIR SHOW IN AUGUST

The committee for the August Air Show has met twice now, and is firming up plans for the event. There will be a \$10 landing fee for the pilots, to help cover the costs of food and porta-potties. Food will be provided for the pilots, their families and workers only. There will be a raffle and a 50/50. We will have a radio impound, and a nationally known pilot will give us a demo. The committee projects a budget of \$750 to \$900, and thinks we should break even on the event.

We discussed the possibility of letting the pilots park their cars on the field for the duration of the air show. **Stan Spiewak** will be talking to the appropriate authorities about that. In the event that there are fees involved for this permission, the club voted to fund up to \$300 in potential fees.

KROGER REWARDS PACKAGE

DAM member **Stan Spiewak** is looking into a program at Kroger stores. If a member signs up at Kroger (free) and uses their customer ID card, Kroger donates a portion of their profits to the club. What we don't know is how much money, and how complex the signup process is.

SAFETY

We had a spirited discussion at the August meeting about test flying a new airplane. Traditionally, club members have been asked to have a TPI (test pilot instructor) rated member give the plane its final checkout and first flight. This is a tradition, not written into the rules. Some pilots expressed the view that they would rather crash their own planes, thank you very much. Others suggested that if the plane was so far out of trim that even a TPI crashed it, they certainly would have had no better luck saving it themselves, and that a marginal plane would be more likely brought back safely by a TPI than the plane owner.

No resolution to the problem was arrived at. Safety chairman **Dennis Gazdecki** is investigating the problem, and invites your comments before he reports to the membership.

**Novice training every Wednesday, 10-12 and 6-8
at the field, beginning in May**

DAM Air Show	8/29-30	all day
Business meeting	9/8	7 p.m.

PROPWASH

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