

Contents

NOVEMBER 2017
VOLUME 53 / NUMBER 11

Features

18 MISSION: BURN JAPAN!

Part Two of our history looks at how the combat role of the B-29 was drastically modified for a new mission — low-level fire-bombing / by **James Thompson**

30 SKYSHARK

The XA2D was created as a replacement for the Skyraider, yet the design fell far short of its promises / by **Marshall Wainwright**

34 OPERATION BERLIN EXPRESS

We interview Lee Lauderback to find out what it was like to fly the P-51B Berlin Express from the USA to Britain / by **Michael O'Leary**

Departments

6 WARBIRD AND CLASSIC REPORT

Latest vintage aircraft news along with updates on the restoration of the MAPS Martin Marauder

46 DOWN MEMORY'S RUNWAY

USAF aircraft in tactical camouflage / by **Norm Taylor**

70 AIRLINES

News and views from the readers of Air Classics

72 CHECKLIST

Latest in aviation literature / by **George Hulett**

COVER: A Superfort is loaded for a mission to Japan. As can be seen, it is being loaded with high explosives and is fully armed with a set of turrets. However, the B-29's mission would change to where the turrets were stripped out and the bombers sent in with loads of incendiaries to burn Japan to the ground as part of Curtis LeMay's plan to destroy Japan by bombing alone. (National Archives)

THE PAGE: Night Witches. During WWII, Soviet female pilots flew a variety of combat missions against the Germans. These two pilots had been decorated as Heroes of the Soviet Union and are (left to right) Rufina Fasheva (848 night combat missions) and Nataly Meklin (980 night combat missions). Night Witches was the German nickname for the pilots. (National Archive)



Editorial & Production Staff

Michael O'Leary • Publisher-Editor • moleary@challengeweb.com
Mike Machat • Associate Editor • mikemachat@gmail.com
Michael Garcia • Art Director-Typographer-Digital Prep
Jose Martinez • Assistant Art Director
Susan Duprey • Production Manager
Roger Cain • Antique Aircraft Editor • jollyrogercain@comcast.net
James Farmer • Aviation Film Editor • jfarmer2244@hotmail.com
Doug Fisher • Great White North Editor • dougfisher@cogeco.ca
Jim Larsen • Air Racing Editor • jim@aeroacoustics.com
Bruce Lockwood • Technical Editor • lockwoodaviation@yahoo.com
Philip Makanna • WWI Aviation Editor • phil@ghosts.com
Richard Paver • European Editor • rhpaver@ntlworld.com
Ralph M. Pattersen • Propliner Editor • mpattersen@gmail.com
Joe Scheil • Jet Warbirds Editor • phydreams@aol.com
Nick Stroud • UK Editor • nickstroud@gmail.com
Rick Turner • Northern California Editor • rt21231@sbcglobal.net
Nicholas A. Veronico • Surplus/Wreckchasing Editor • nickver@sbcglobal.net
Tim Weinschenker • Golden Pylons Editor • pylonguy2003@yahoo.com
Steve Whitby • Air Tanker Editor • swhitby@verizon.net
Howard Carter, Keith Charlot, Jim Dunn, William T. Larkins, Gerald Liang, Norm Taylor, James Thompson, Marshall Wainwright, Mark Watt • Contributors

Advertising Staff

George Hulett • Advertising Sales Manager •
ghulett@challengeweb.com
Tel: 818.225.7799, 818.700.6868 x18

Editorial & Advertising Offices

AIR CLASSICS, 21835 Nordhoff St., Chatsworth, CA 91311-5712
Tel: 818.700.6868 (8:00-4:00 PST Mon.-Thurs.); FAX: 818.700.6282
E-mail: mail@challengeweb.com
Web: www.challengeweb.com

Subscription Offices

AIR CLASSICS, PO Box 16149, North Hollywood, CA 91615
Tel: 818.286.3124
Toll-Free: 800.562.9182 (Continental US Only) (9-5 PST Mon.- Fri.)

AIR CLASSICS (ISSN 0002-2241) is published monthly by Challenge Publications, Inc., 21835 Nordhoff Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311-5712. Copyright ©2017 by Challenge Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing in whole or in part may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. Send editorial and advertising material to 21835 Nordhoff Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311-5712. Publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material. All photos, artwork, and manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed return envelope. **POSTMASTER — Send address changes to AIR CLASSICS, PO Box 16149, North Hollywood, CA 91615.** Please give six to eight weeks advance notice of address change. Send old and new address plus recent mailing label, if available. Subscription rate: US and possessions, one year — \$69.95; Canada, Mexico, and other foreign countries — \$93.95 (US funds). Periodicals postage paid at Chatsworth, CA, and additional mailing offices. **PRINTED IN USA**



Challenge Magazines are proudly distributed by
CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY
730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646
Tel. 201.634.7400; FAX 201.634.7499