

## *NAME THAT PLANE*

### **Brewster F2A-3 Buffalo**

The wreckage of a Brewster F2A-3 Buffalo was recently found submerged beneath a mere 10 feet of water off the island of Midway Atoll, bringing attention to the stubby-looking airplane known as a “flying coffin” during World War II due to its notoriously poor combat record. Federal divers stumbled upon the find in the summer of 2012 while cleaning up trash in the area. Based on evidence from February 1942 Marine records, officials believe the Buffalo was flown by Lt. Charles W. Somers Jr., who escaped unharmed after landing short of the runway.

The Brewster F2A Buffalo was an American fighter aircraft which saw limited service early in World War II. It was one of the first U.S. World War II monoplanes with an arrestor hook and other modifications for aircraft carriers. The Buffalo won a competition against the Grumman F4F Wildcat in 1939 to become the U.S. Navy's first monoplane fighter aircraft. Although superior to the Grumman F3F biplane it replaced, the Buffalo turned out to be a disappointment.

The US Navy called this obsolescent fighter a "Buffalo". The US Marines called it a "Brewster". Unofficially, pilots of both services dubbed them "Flying Coffins". They were no match for the deadly Japanese Zero fighter which was much faster and more agile in combat. The main strength of this stubby fighter was its ruggedness. On the morning of June 4, 1942, these elderly fighters fought a gallant but hopeless battle against the Zeros escorting Vice Admiral Nagumo's carrier-launched air strike against Midway Atoll. The Marines shot down and damaged several Japanese bombers before the escorting Zero fighters struck viciously. The Marine fighters were not only heavily outnumbered, but completely outclassed by the faster and more agile Zeros. In quick succession, sixteen Buffalos and Wildcats were sent plummeting into the sea.

When World War II began in the Pacific in December, 1941, Buffalos operated by both British Commonwealth (B-339E) and Dutch (B-339D) air forces in South East Asia suffered severe losses in combat against the Japanese Navy's Mitsubishi A6M Zero and the Japanese Army's Nakajima Ki-43 "Oscar". The British attempted to lighten their Buffalos by removing ammunition and fuel and installing lighter guns to increase performance, but it made little difference.

(Data and information from FLYING eNews 01/10/13, the [New York Times](#) 01/02/13, [www.Pacific.war](#), [United States Navy Aircraft since 1911](#).)

### **Brewster F2A-3 Buffalo Specifications**

#### *General characteristics*

Crew: One, pilot  
Length: 26 ft 4 in  
Wingspan: 35 ft 0 in  
Height: 12 ft 0 in  
Wing area: 209 ft<sup>2</sup>  
Empty weight: 4,732 lb  
Max. takeoff weight: 7,159 lb  
Powerplant: Wright R-1820-40 Cyclone 9 nine-cylinder  
single-row air-cooled radial engine, 1,200 hp

#### *Performance*

Maximum speed: 321 mph (279 knots) at 16,500 ft  
Cruise speed: 161 mph (140 knots)  
Range: 965 mi (839 nmi)  
Service ceiling: 33,200 ft  
Rate of climb: 2,440 ft/min

#### *Armaments – Guns:*

2 × 0.50 in nose-mounted M2 machine guns  
2 × 0.50 in wing-mounted machine guns



This image by artist John Greaves captures the moment when Marine pilot 2nd Lieutenant William V. Brooks, flying an obsolescent Brewster Buffalo F2A-3 hampered by defective landing gear, has engaged two agile Japanese Zeros and damaged one of them with his fire.

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**If you did not receive a mailed newsletter but only the e-mailed *Pea Patch Post* and you also wanted the mailed version you need to contact the club Secretary at [EAA172@jemservices.net](mailto:EAA172@jemservices.net) and indicate that you want the newsletter mailed to you. This should be done by deadline date, which for March is February 25, which is also the deadline for any articles for the March issue. Mailing the *Pea Patch Post* costs EAA 172 \$18 annually per recipient. Note that if you have the newsletter mailed, and do not inform the EAA 172 Secretary about an address change, the Postal Service will charge you a 50 cent fee for mail forwarding.**

*tentative* **EAA 172 CALENDAR for 2013** (01/12/13)

**January 12 – Saturday: Chili Cook-off at 12:30 PM at the Pea Patch Aerodrome.**

**February 9 – Saturday: Winter Soup Party at 12:30 PM at the Pea Patch Aerodrome.**

**March 9 - Saturday: EAA 172 Fish Fry Fly-in. Food at 12:30 PM at the Pea Patch Aerodrome.**

NOTE: March 31: Easter.

NOTE: April 3 - 6: Bensen Days Rotorcraft Fly-in 2013 - Wauchula, FL.

NOTE: April 9 - 14: Sun 'n Fun® 2013 Fly-In - Lakeland, FL.

**April 13 - Saturday: EAA 172 Breakfast Fly-in 9:00-10:00 AM at the Pea Patch.**

**May 11 – Saturday: Club Meeting. Food at 12:30 PM at the Pea Patch Aerodrome.**

NOTE: May 12: Mother's Day.

**June 7 - Friday: 6:00 PM EAA 172 “Bring your own meat to grill meal” Wrens airport.**

**June 8 - Saturday: EAA 172 O.B. Brown Memorial Fly-in, Wrens airport.**

NOTE: June 16: Father's Day.

**July 13 - Saturday: EAA 172 Barbecue Fly-In. Food at 12:30 PM. at the Pea Patch Aerodrome.**

NOTE: July 29 – August 4: Monday-Sunday: EAA Oshkosh Airventure® 2013. Oshkosh, WI.

NOTE: August 6 -August 10: PRA Rotorcraft International Convention. Mentone, IN.

**August 10 – EAA 172 Breakfast Fly-in 9:00-10:00 AM at the Pea Patch Aerodrome.**

NOTE: September 4 - 8: Wednesday-Sunday: Triple Tree Fly-in. Woodruff, SC.

**September 14 – Saturday: Club Meeting. Food at 12:30 PM at the Pea Patch Aerodrome.**

NOTE: September 15: Sunday: Bob Rhodes Barbecue Fly-in.

**September 27-28 : Friday, Saturday: Wrens Fall Fly-In at the Wrens airport.**

**September 28: Saturday: EAA 172 Fall Breakfast Fly-in 9:00-10:00 AM at the Wrens airport.**

NOTE: October 3-6 (*tentative*) -- VAA 3 Fall Vintage Fly-In Woodward Field, Camden, SC

NOTE: October 11 – 13: Great Georgia Airshow, Peachtree City, Georgia

NOTE: October 12 – 13: Wings Over North Georgia Air Show, Rome, GA.

NOTE: October 19 – 20: (*tentative*) Saturday-Sunday: Boshears Skyfest 2013. Daniel Field, Augusta, GA.

**November 9: Saturday: Keith Brock Memorial Fly-in. Jenkins County Airport, Millen, GA.**

**December 14: Saturday: EAA 172 Christmas Party 12:30 PM. Pea Patch Aerodrome.**

