North American T-2 “Buckeye”

The Hickory Aviation Museum’s T-2C Bureau Number 158327 is on loan from the National Museum of Naval Aviation. Numerous local and state aviators began there jet training in the Buckeye. Coordinated by Kyle & Kregg Kirby.

Role	Trainer Aircraft
National origin	United States of America
Manufacturer	North American Aviation
First flight	31 January 1958
Introduction	November 1959
Retired	Semi-Retired
Status	Retired, USN 2008; still in service w/Hellenic Air Force
Primary users	United States Air Navy Hellenic (Greece) Air Force Venezuelan Air Force
Produced	1958–1970
Number built	529
Propulsion	2 × General Electric J85-GE-4 turbojet
Unit cost	Less than US$2 million (in 1958 dollars)

First flown in 1958, T-2 Buckeye (its original designation was T2J-1) jet trainer aircraft were produced for the U.S. Navy by North American Aviation at Columbus, Ohio. T-2 trainers were used by the Naval Air Training Command to conduct basic jet flight training for future Navy and Marine Corps aviators. The trainer established an outstanding record of safety and reliability while providing training for more than 11,000 students to pilot 18 different models of Navy jet aircraft. Buckeyes also were purchased by Venezuela (T-2D) and Greece (T-2E).

The two-place, high-performance T-2 Buckeye was used for a wide variety of pilot training, from the student’s first jet flight to fully qualified flight. The aircraft was used for teaching a wide range of skills, including high-altitude, high-speed formation and aerobatic flights; basic and radio instruments; night and day navigation; and gunnery, bombing and carrier operations.

General characteristics	**Performance**
Crew: two **Length:** 38 ft 3½ in (11.67 m) **Wingspan:** 38 ft 1½ in[7] (11.62 m) **Height:** 14 ft 9½ in (4.51 m) **Wing area:** 255 ft² (23.69 m²) **Empty weight:** 8,115 lb (3,680 kg) **Max. takeoff weight:** 13,179 lb (5,977 kg)	**Maximum speed:** 453 knots (522 mph, 840 km/h) at 25,000 feet (7,600 m) **Range:** 909 nmi (1,047 mi, 1,685 km) **Service ceiling:** 40,400 ft (12,315 m) **Rate of climb:** 6,200 ft/min (31.5 m/s)

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Operational history

U.S. Navy

The first version of the aircraft entered service in 1959 as the T2J-1. It was redesignated the T-2A in 1962 under the joint aircraft designation system. The two-seat trainer was powered by one Westinghouse J34-WE-46/48 turbojet. The aircraft was subsequently redesigned, and the single engine was replaced with two Pratt & Whitney J60-P-6 turbojets in the T-2B. The T-2C was fitted with two much more powerful 2,950 lbf (13,100 N) thrust General Electric J85-GE-4 turbojets. The T-2D was an export version which was sold to the Venezuelan Air Force, while the T-2E was sold to the Hellenic Air Force. The T-2 Buckeye (along with the TF-9J) replaced the T2V-1/T-1A SeaStar, though the T-1 would continue in some uses into the 1970s.

T-2C being parked at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, on August 30, 2005.

The Buckeye was designed as a low-cost multi-stage trainer. Its straight wing was similar to that used in the original North American North American FJ-1 Fury and its cockpit controls were similar to the T-28C Trojan trainer. The T-2's performance was between that of the U.S. Air Force's Cessna T-37 Tweet, and the U.S. Navy's TA-4J Skyhawk. While it had no built-in armament, the T-2 had two underwing hardpoints for .50-inch gun pods, 100 lb (45 kg) practice bombs or 2.75-inch rockets.

All T-2 Buckeyes were manufactured by North American at Air Force Plant 85, located just south of Port Columbus Airport in Columbus, Ohio. 273 aircraft were built during its production run. The name Buckeye refers to the state tree of Ohio, as well as the mascot of the Ohio State University.

Every jet-qualified Naval Aviator and virtually every Naval Flight Officer from the late 1950s until 2004 received training in the T-2 Buckeye, a length of service spanning four decades. The aircraft first exited the Naval Aviator strike pipeline (where it saw its final carrier landings) in 2004,[3] and the Naval Flight Officer tactical jet pipeline in 2008. In the Naval Aviator strike pipeline syllabus and the Naval Flight Officer strike and strike fighter pipeline syllabi, the T-2 has been replaced by the near-sonic McDonnell Douglas T-45 Goshawk (the U.S. Navy version of the BAE Systems Hawk), which is more comparable to other high performance subsonic trainers, or the supersonic U.S. Air Force Northrop T-38 Talon.[4] More recently, the T-2 has been used as a director aircraft for aerial drones. Several T-2 Buckeyes are now registered in civilian markings and regularly appear at airshows.

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