

Brewster Buffalo



First Brewster

The XSBA-1 was Brewster's first design. It was a light naval scout bomber. (NASA-Langley)

Introduction

The Brewster XF2A-1 naval fighter made its first flight in December 1937 because the U.S. Navy Bureau of Aeronautics had reconsidered the idea that monoplane aircraft were unsuitable for aircraft carriers because of their high landing speed. The Brewster F2A-1 was to become the very first U.S. monoplane fighter for use on aircraft carriers. Unfortunately it was already more or less obsolete and retired from first line duty at the U.S. Navy when the Pacific war broke out. It had a very unlucky career when it was used by the U.S. Marines in combat against the Japanese Mitsubishi A6M 'Zero' fighter. For this reason some aviation historians consider the Brewster fighter as a failure, but in fact this was undeserved. In the hands of well-trained Finnish air force pilots this stubby little fighter was a great success. Also in the war between the Netherlands East Indies with Japan, the B-339 as it was called by the Dutch was the best fighter they had. It definitely was inferior to the Japanese Zero fighter, but it could absorb a lot of enemy fire before it was downed!

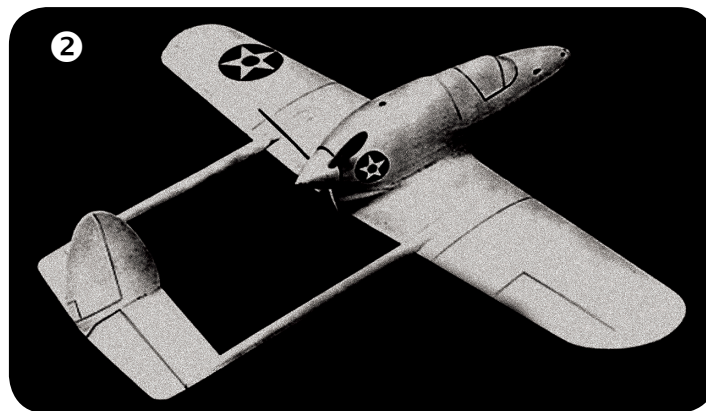
Brewster Aeronautical Corporation:

Brewster & Co was a U.S. based company manufacturing originally carriages. Later they changed their production to automobile bodies. In 1932 James Work purchased the aircraft division of Brewster & Co. He changed the name into Brewster Aeronautical Corporation. The company was based in multi-story urban factory buildings in Long Island City, New York, across the East River from Manhattan. Being an aeronautical engineer, Work started building business

Production

The XSBA-1 was produced in small numbers as the SBN-1 by the Naval Aircraft Factory. (U.S. Navy)





with contract work for other aircraft manufacturers such as making wing panels for the PBY Catalina, but already in 1934 Brewster's design team, headed by Dayton T. Brown, started with the design and construction of their first aircraft. It was a single engine two-seat scout bomber, that received the naval aircraft designation SBA-1. The prototype XSBA-1, Bureau Number 9726, made its first flight on 15 April 1936. Although a small order for 30 machines was placed, these were eventually built by the Naval Aircraft Factory as the SBN-1.

The next type Brown's team designed was a single seat monoplane fighter. It was clearly based on the SBA-1 having the same type of engine. It was built as an answer to a U.S. Navy requirement for a new shipboard fighter. First flight of the new fighter, designated as the XF2A-1, took place in December 1937. It was ordered by the U.S. Navy as the first monoplane type capable to operate from aircraft carriers and it is the subject of this book.

1-Buccaneer

The Brewster SB2A-2 Buccaneer was produced as a naval attack aircraft.

(Mark Nankivil collection)

3-Licence Corsair

Brewster licence manufactured the Vought F4U-1 Corsair early model with the 'bird-cage' canopy as the F3A-1.

(U.S. Navy)

2-400 mph fighter

Brewster's Model 33a was a project for a twin-boom shipboard fighter with a pusher propeller. It was never built.

4-Attack bomber

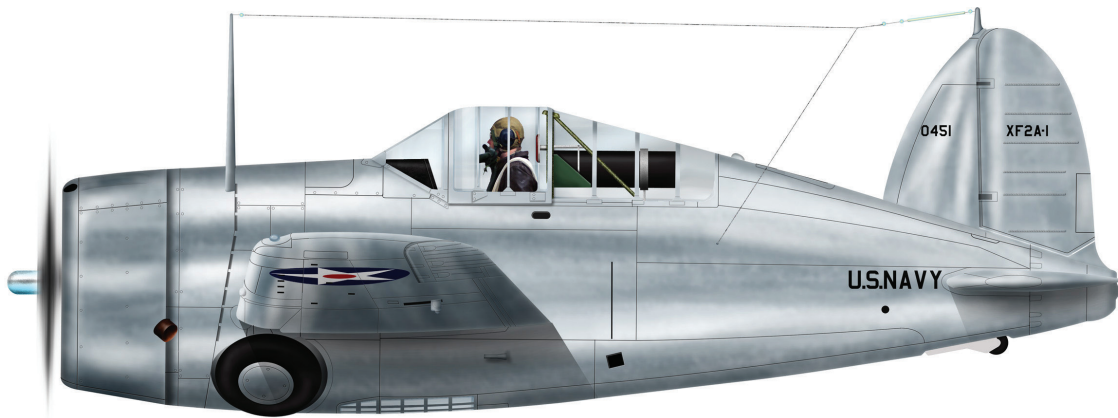
The last Brewster aircraft was the XA-32 attack bomber for the U.S.A.A.C. Only two prototypes were build. The photo shows no. 42-13569, the second machine. (U.S. Air Force)



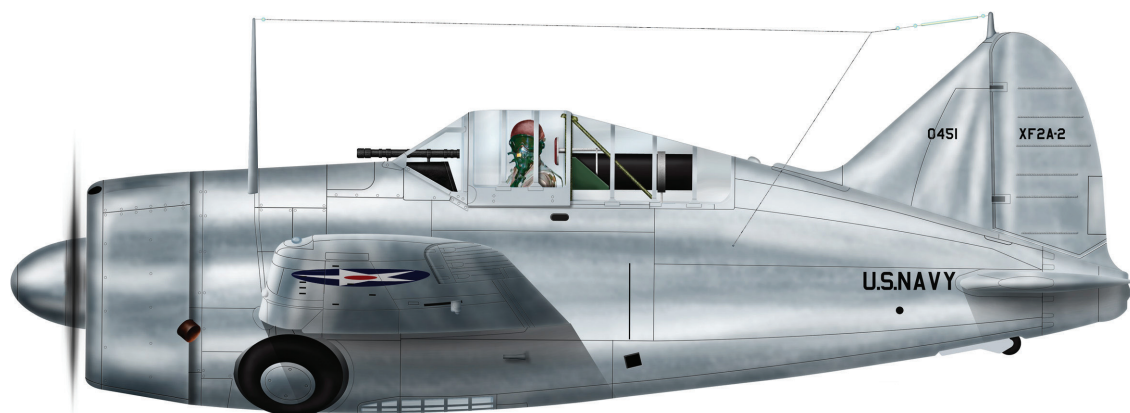
Almost Bermuda!

The SB2A-1 was exported to the United Kingdom as the Bermuda I. On this picture we see British export machines, both in U.S. and R.A.F. markings.

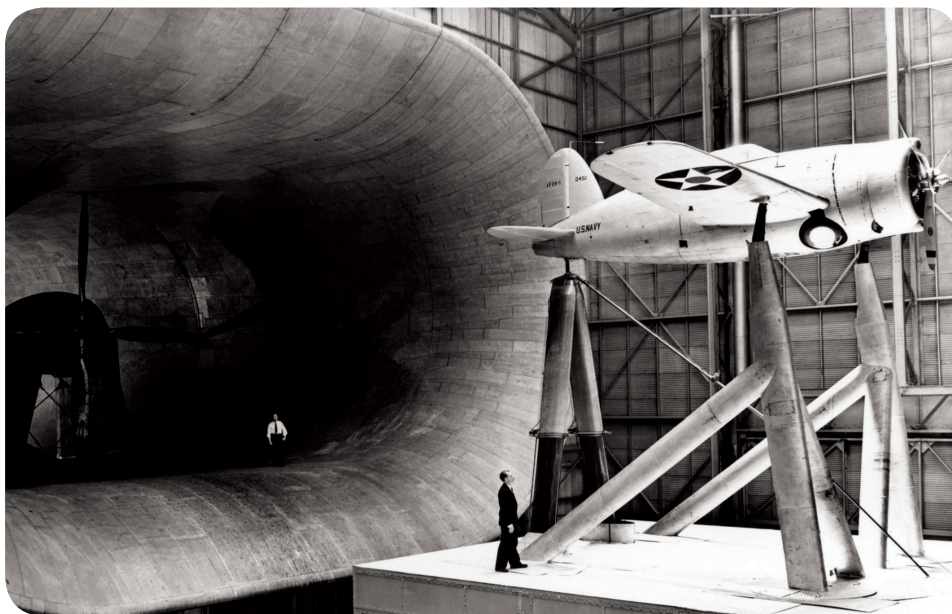
(Mark Nankivil collection)



*Left:
The XF2A-1 prototype in
its original form with small
vertical tail and a 1000 hp
engine
(©Srecko Bradic)*



*Right:
This is the original prototype
at a later stage with enlarged
vertical tail, changed cockpit
and a 1200 hp engine desig-
nated as XF2A-2.
(©Srecko Bradic)*



Wind tunnel

*The XF2A-1 being tested in the full-scale
NACA wind tunnel at Langley. This photo
was taken on 5 February 1938.
(NASA - Langley)*

The next Brewster design was a more powerful scout bomber with a Navy type designation of SB2A. The prototype made its first flight on 17 June 1941. It was built on a relatively small scale for the U.S. Navy, where it became known as the Buccaneer. A few hundred were ordered

for export to Great Britain as the Bermuda I and to the Netherlands East Indies (where they eventually never arrived). Brewster also designed in 1941 for the U.S. Navy a '400+ mph' single seat fighter as the Model 33A. It had a twin tail boom with a pusher propeller and with the cannon armament concentrated in the nose. It was never built!

Under a license contract the Brewster Aeronautical Corporation also built, during the war years, 735 Vought F4U Corsair fighters as the Brewster F3A-1. The last Brewster design was for a single seat attack bomber for the U.S.A.A.F. powered by a single Pratt & Whitney R-2800-37 Double Wasp of 2100 hp. It received the type designation A-32. Two XA-32 prototypes were built and flown in 1944 before it was cancelled. The XA-32 was the last type built by Brewster. After reporting a large loss, the management decided to shut down the company, and on 5 April 1946 the Brewster Aeronautical Corporation was dissolved by its shareholders.