

# North American T-2B/C Buckeye

NAAS Kingsville 1961-1963; 1972-1993

When the Navy requested competitive designs in 1956 for a new jet trainer capable of taking their student pilots through advanced combat flight categories such as gunnery, fighter tactics, bombing, and carrier qualification, North American Aviation emerged the winner with its design, which used proven features from operational North American aircraft like the FJ-1 Fury and T-28 Trojan.

Skipping the prototype phase, North American (purchased by Rockwell, which was later purchased by Boeing) went straight to the pre-production stage, building six YT2J-1 aircraft for evaluation. Of mid-wing configuration, the aircraft had tandem LS-1 ejection seats for pupil (front) and instructor (rear). The instructor's seat was raised to provide a good view, with full dual controls so the aircraft could be controlled from either seat. The first of the YT2J-1s flew on January 31, 1958.

Built with student pilots in mind, the Buckeye, as it was called, had a strong, wide-based tricycle landing gear, powered controls, large trailing-edge flaps, air brakes on both sides of the fuselage, and a retractable arrestor hook, all of which were hydraulically actuated. The YT2J-1 was powered by a single 3400-pound thrust Westinghouse J34-WE-48 fuselage-mounted turbojet, as were the initial T2J-1 production models (T2-A after 1962). 201 of this version were produced, the first entering service in July, 1959. NAAS Kingsville flew the T-2J at VT-23 for intermediate training.

In August, 1962, the first of two YT2J-2 test aircraft were converted from T2J-1 configuration by replacing the single turbojet with two 3,000-pound thrust Pratt and Whitney J60-P-6 turbojets. This conversion was chosen to replace the T-2A, and the first of 97 new T-2B aircraft flew on May 21, 1965 and entered service in December, 1965 with Training Squadron VT-4 at Pensacola Naval Air Station.

Next, the T-2B was converted to a YT-2C for evaluation of the aircraft with two General Electric J85-GE-4 engines. This led to the manufacture of 231 T-2Cs with the GE powerplants for the U.S. Navy Training Command, with the first production model being flown on December 10, 1968.



The Buckeye was well-designed for field maintenance conditions, with serviceable components installed at waist level or lower.

Thus, the need for stands and ladders for most routine maintenance, including fueling, was eliminated. At NAAS Kingsville, VT-23 switched to the T-2C version in 1972. The "Professionals" would fly the aircraft for another 19 years.

While training more than 11,000 student pilots to fly 18 different models of Navy jet aircraft, the Buckeye established an outstanding record of safety and reliability for many years. After 41 years of service, the North American T-2 Buckeye jet trainer was phased out in favor of the Boeing T-45 Goshawk.

## Specifications:

Engine: One 2,950-lb thrust GE J85-GE-4 turbojet  
Weight: Empty 8,115 lbs.,  
Max Takeoff 13,180 lbs.  
Wing Span: 38ft. 2in.  
Length: 38ft. 8in.  
Height: 14ft. 9.5in.

## Performance:

Max Speed: 521 mph  
Ceiling: 44,400 ft.  
Range: 910 miles  
Armament: None  
Number Built: 529

## Nicknames:

Attack Guppy; Trusty Tubbyjet