

JUNKERS IN THE SKY

NEW EXAMPLES OF THE WORLD'S FIRST ALL-METAL AIRLINER ARE BEING BUILT
AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR HISTORIC FLIGHTS

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The F-13 replica displays the lines of the world's first production all-metal airliner.



Professor Hugo Junkers was a pioneering creator of advanced airframes. As the Nazis grew in power, Junkers did not care for their policies and in 1933 Hitler requested Junkers aid in Nazi rearmament. He declined and they took over ownership of all his patents and market shares. He was placed under the threat of high treason and in 1934 went into house arrest where he died under mysterious circumstances the next year. The company bearing his name would go on to build some of the Luftwaffe's most famous warplanes.

The Junkers Ju 52 tri-motors operated by the Swiss company Ju Air were a long-established classic aircraft tradition. Created in 1984, Ju Air flew thousands of enthusiasts on sightseeing flights and took part in aviation events, even far away as Oshkosh 2012 where Ju 52 HB-HOT was put on display and sponsored by Rimowa.

Sadly, everything changed with the tragic crash of HB-HOT on 4 August 2018 in the Swiss Alps, where it impacted nose-down with the crew of two and 18 passengers, all being killed. The investigation into the disaster noted "the plane fell to the ground like a stone." Numerous areas of cracks and corrosion were discovered when examining the wreckage but these, according to the investigation, did not lead to the crash. However, the two surviving tri-motors, HB-HOP and

HB-HOS, were grounded. New rules for historic airplanes transporting passengers were issued by the Swiss Federal Council in 2022 and these rules limit the number of passengers in historic aircraft to six with two pilots and a flight attendant, while commercial vintage flights were also banned.

For Ju Air, the change in regulations meant only members of the Association of Friends of the Air Force (VFL), to which Ju Air belonged, could be transported. This practice had been in place since 2018 and more than 90% of the passengers were club members, but the new capacity limitation was now an axe to the operations of the much loved *Tante-Ju* since the new regulations caused an impossible rise in flight costs for prospective passengers. The two surviving Ju 52s seem fated to become static museum exhibits.

It's quite sad to observe this long-



Junkers had a unique policy in trading aircraft for interest in early airlines. Such as example was this F-13 that went to the Polish airline LOT in exchange for partial ownership. As can be seen, the plane is being used for a medical evacuation flight. Note the little dolly under the tail skid for maneuvering the plane on hard surfaces.