

COLORS OF WAR

FURTHER SELECTION OF COLOR
MILITARY AIRCRAFT IMAGES FROM
THE CHALLENGE ARCHIVES
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In the last issue, we featured the Convair XFY-1 experimental VTOL aircraft that utilized captured German data to aid the design. In a similar manner, some German data on the use of the delta wing was incorporated into the unique XF-92A. After a series of gestations to create a point defense fighter, the XF-92A solidified Convair's thinking about a delta wing aircraft and in October 1947 engine runs with the Allison J33-A-21 turbojet of 4250-lbs thrust were begun at the company's facility at Lindbergh Field in San Diego, where this photo was taken. First flying on 18 September 1948, the XF-92A was less than a success — being universally disliked by the test pilots that took it aloft. Retired in 1953, it was then used as a recruiting tool and moved to various locations around the country. By the 1970s, the damaged hulk was with the USAF Museum where it was eventually restored. Today, the XF-92A is displayed as the stepping stone that led to the F-102, F-106, and B-58. This rather remarkable Kodachrome image displays XF-92A USAAF 46-682 with its tail pipe pointed out over San Diego Bay prior to running the J33 turbojet. As can be seen, the aircraft was in natural metal finish with an extremely large national insignia on the nose along with the inscription "XF-92A" painted in black. In the background is the imposing shape of B-36B-20-CF Peacemaker 44-92085 assigned to the 11th Bomb Group and carrying the proud wartime insignia of the 8th Air Force on the vertical tail. The six-engine bomber was accepted during October 1949 and was converted to a B-36D-30-CF at Lindbergh Field and then went to the 92nd Bomb Wing at Fairchild AFB. In order to survive increasingly effective Soviet air defenses, the bomber underwent Featherweight Configuration III modifications to reduce weight in order to attain higher altitudes. On 26 February 1957, the Peacemaker was flown to Davis-Monthan AFB for storage and scrapping.