



# TIME FLIES

Decals for the 1937 and 1938 Cleveland National Air Races.



SOME HAVE CALLED THIS AIRCRAFT THE "LAST GEE BEE" BUT THE HM-1/MAC-1 HAD A SHORT BUT INTERESTING CAREER AS A HIGH-PERFORMANCE RACER THAT ATTEMPTED TO BECOME A MILITARY FIGHTER

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In the spring of 1936, former Gee Bee designer Howell "Pete" Miller most likely figured his days as a creator of high-performance race planes had come to an end. During his time with the Granville Brothers and working on the "R" series of Gee Bee racers, he had experienced the high of Jimmy Doolittle winning the 1932

Thompson Trophy in the R-1 and the low of Russ Boardman losing his life in the crash of the same airplane during a takeoff in the 1933 Bendix. He saw the promise of the R-6 not realized and, even worse, the senseless death of Cecil Allen in the R-1/R-2 hybrid *The Spirit of Right* in another takeoff crash at the start of the 1935

Bendix. That Allen had added an additional fuel tank in a location that compromised the center of gravity, leading to the crash, was not known by the general public. They only knew that another one of those "death trap" Gee Bee racers had crashed, adding to the list of pilots who had lost their lives attempting to tame the racer.

## ENTER FRANK HAWKS

Imagine Miller's surprise that in the late spring someone would come calling to retain his services regarding the design of a new racing aircraft. That person was record-setting aviator Frank Hawks. In 1927, Hawks was hired by Texaco to establish their Aviation Division in order

to market Texaco Aviation Products. *Texaco One* was a custom-built Ford Tri-Motor that was received in January 1928. Hawks and *Texaco One* would undertake a good will tour of the United States during 1928 that would see them visit more than 150 cities and give 7200 people a ride in the Tri-Motor. Unfortunately for Hawks

and Texaco, *Texaco One* was destroyed during late 1928 in a crash at Floresville, Florida, but with no loss of life.

Hawks was able to convince Texaco management to replace the Tri-Motor with *Texaco Five*, a Lockheed Air Express. Hawks and *Texaco Five* would set numerous records until it was destroyed

The sleekness of the HM-1 was amplified when the windscreen was in the retracted position. Note the original single visibility port on the right along with the entrance door, which has "Frank Hawks, Hawks Nest, Redding, Conn." stenciled on the door. Also note the access panel, behind which was the Westinghouse radio gear. Logo for Gruen is centered on the fuselage. The logo on the vertical fin has an illustration of a hawk and the wording "Hawks Aircraft" but little in the literature of the time refers to the aircraft as anything but HM-1.