

THE LONG SKYROAD WEST

HOW A RARE BUCKER JUNGSMANN FINALLY FOUND ITS WAY TO CALIFORNIA

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Eric Presten and *Miss Stradivarius* wearing the finished updates. The *Jungsmann* now has the correct serial number on the tail. The biplane has had the landing gear realigned and is seen with the front seat cover in place.

The prototype Bucker Bu 131 *Jungsmann* was test flown in Germany on 27 April 1934. However, the Bucker name entered aviation history in March 1915 when Carl Clemens Bucker transferred from the German Imperial Navy to the Naval Air Service. In less than two months from his transfer, he passed his flying examinations and was promoted to lieutenant. He spent the remainder of the Great War flying seaplanes for the Imperial Navy on the North Sea coast.

When the war concluded and the Treaty of Versailles put a close to Bucker's flying career for the German military, he moved to Sweden where he could continue flying. He acted as a test pilot and technical advisor for the Swedish Navy until he formed his own company in 1921. Bucker's new company, *Svenska Aero AB*, employed the help of a young designer by the name of Ernst Heinkel and was quickly tasked with building and improving Caspar and Hansa-Brandenburg floatplane designs leftover from the war.

Heinkel eventually formed his own company, however Bucker's *Svenska Aero* continued to work closely with Heinkel as both companies began building aircraft of their own designs. As Germany was still banned from most flying activities by the Treaty of Versailles, they were secretly ordering aircraft through both companies. This tactic didn't take long to be noticed and eventually Germany became much less subtle about their activities, allowing Bucker to work directly for his home country.

In 1933, Bucker moved back to Germany with young Swedish designer Anders J Andersson at his side. Bucker wasted no time forming *Bucker Flugzeugbau GmbH* in October 1933. The need for a light training aircraft in Germany was apparent and the new company took only six months to produce and test fly their first airplane to fill this role. The prototype Bu 131 *Jungsmann* was test flown in April 1934 powered with a Hirth HM60R of just 80-hp. The first production variant, the Bu 131A, kept the 80-hp Hirth but the design was quickly updated to the Bu 131B with a 105-hp Hirth HM504A-2. Shortly after this change, the Bu 131B