

Curtiss JN-4A Jenny (Canuck) Replica

2001



General History

Roots of American Aviation

Even with her cantankerous ways, the Curtiss *Jenny* (*Canuck*) holds a special place in the hearts of American flyers. Built as a trainer for World War I pilots, the letter and number designation “JN-4” looked enough like “*Jenny*” to earn it the nickname almost immediately. Roughly 95 percent of World War I U.S. and Canadian pilots flew a JN-4 during their training. After the Armistice, there was a surplus of planes and young men who knew how to fly. Thus, barnstorming was born.

At about \$500 each, surplus *Jennys* cost only a fraction of the original war production price of \$4,250. Barnstormers traveled America showing off, selling rides and performing crazy, dangerous stunts. For many spectators, it was the first time they had seen a “flying machine” up close. The machine, more often than not, was a *Jenny* painted with screaming banner headlines like “The Great Diavalo” or “Flying Aces Air Circus.”

Eventually, the planes wore down through constant use. One pilot complained that his *Jenny* was less an airplane and more a bunch of parts flying in formation! Now, only a handful of these flying machines, so plentiful in their day, remain.

Flying—1920s Style

It’s a wonder that those who did pilot the *Jenny* were not frightened at the sheer mention of its name! The Curtiss OX-5 engine in most early *Jennys* weighed 390 pounds and produced a scant 90 horsepower. Notoriously unreliable, the engine kept a *Jenny* flyer always looking for open meadows and farmer’s fields in case he needed to make an unscheduled stop. On landing, the plane had no brakes and no steerable tailskid. A wrong move could teach a *Jenny* pilot even more about how his aircraft was put together. One sizable jolt and the pilot, gas tank and hot engine smashed together with predictable results!

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About This Aircraft

This replica aircraft was built from 1999 to 2001, by Century Aviation in Wenatchee, Washington, with many original *Jenny* (*Canuck*) pieces, including an original Curtiss OX-5 engine and many vintage metal parts. This aircraft represents a *Canuck*, a Canadian version of the Curtiss *Jenny* used to train both Canadian and American pilots.

Though essentially the same as American JN-4s, the *Canuck* has a few different physical features, such as gracefully rounded vertical and horizontal stabilizers, strut-connected ailerons on both wings and the absence of “notches” in the wings that aided pilot visibility.

The *Canuck* aircraft set many Canadian first records. It was the first mass-produced plane in Canada, the first to be used for military flying and the first to be exported in large numbers. The *Canuck* was the first aircraft to fly equipped with skis, the first to be used for airmail and aerial surveys, and the first to fly over the Canadian Rockies.



Specifications

Type:	Military Trainer Aircraft
First Flight:	JN-4 in July of 1916
Wingspan:	43 feet 7 inches
Length:	27 feet 2 inches
Height:	9 feet 11 inches
Wing Area:	352 square feet
Weight, Empty:	1,390 pounds
Weight, Loaded:	1,930 pounds
Power:	One Curtiss OX-5 90 horsepower engine
Normal Crew:	One or two
Typical Armament:	None

Performance

Cruise Speed:	60 miles per hour
Top Speed:	74 miles per hour
Range:	155 miles
Service Ceiling:	11,000 feet