

AERO: A 73-Year Journey

AERO magazine has always been forward-looking. For this issue, our last in print before *AERO* goes digital, we're looking back in time to our roots and reason for being. This takes us back 73 years and to World War II when the United States needed warplanes — fast. Boeing had ceased commercial production to focus on the B-17. In South Seattle, the sound of rivet guns filled the air; this was the time of Rosie the Riveter.

By **Diana Rhodes**, staff writer

On March 1, 1943, Boeing launched *Field Service News* to support B-17 operators and maintainers in the field. Its name captured its purpose: delivering information on airplane modifications and design changes, service bulletins, operating procedures, and maintenance notes. To page through those first issues of *Field Service News* is to view war through a unique lens. Boeing was engaged in an all-out push to produce airplanes and their accompanying documentation. The U.S. Army Air Corps and Britain's Royal Air Force had flown thousands of B-17s on missions in Europe, where it earned a reputation for surviving heavy damage from enemy fighter pilots and anti-aircraft fire. For that reason, the "Flying Fortress" earned the lasting affection of her crews.

SERVING WWII PERSONNEL

Field Service News' debut issue, more pamphlet than magazine in style, featured an article under the heading "Operating Information" with a section called "Resetting the Emergency Bomb Release Mechanism." It contained detailed mechanical drawings and instructions for the opening and closing of the bomb bay doors. The issue's simple cover carried a letter from Boeing's chief engineer at the time, Wellwood Beall, that closed with this: "It is a pleasure for me to be able to greet both the military personnel of our armed forces and our Boeing Field Service Representatives through the medium of these pages." Inside that cover, a list of Boeing field

representatives appeared with the assigned air force base for each.

It's easy to imagine the field service reps and the staff of *Field Service News* frantically working to track war developments so they could deliver much-needed maintenance and operating information to the field. Coverage would soon expand to support the next bomber, the B-29.

THE COLD WAR YEARS

Field Service News was the first in a series of such field publications, each dedicated to a different Boeing aircraft. Another, *Bomarc Service News*, launched in 1959 in Cold War times to support the Bomarc



"Rosie the Riveters" stand before a B-17.

This one is number 5,000 off the production line since the United States' entry into World War II.

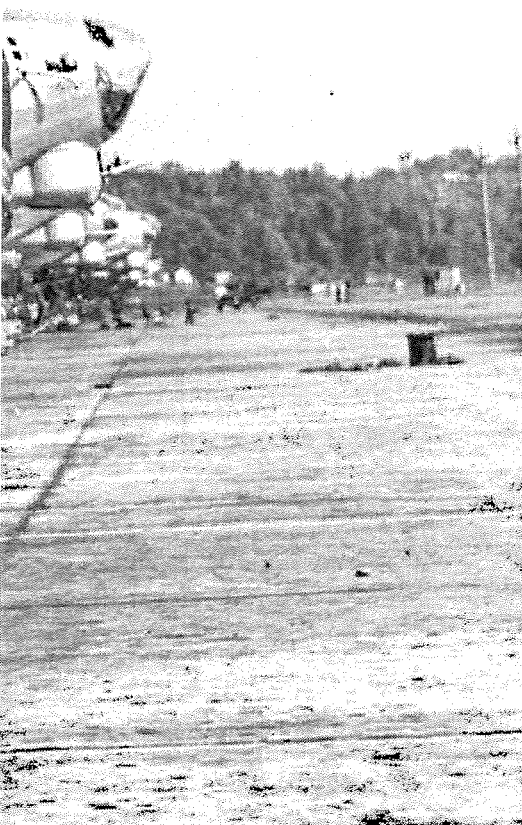


missile. Between 1957 and 1964, Boeing built 700 of these long-range anti-aircraft missiles for the U.S. Air Force. Each article concluded with a simple black image of the Bomarc missile.

In a literary twist, one of the writers of *Bomarc Service News* was the award-winning Thomas Pynchon, who, scholars believe, used knowledge gained in his two-year stint at Boeing to write *Gravity's Rainbow*, which went on to win the 1974 National Book Award. This is speculation because the famously reclusive Pynchon did not talk publicly about his work at Boeing and because *Bomarc Service News* articles did not carry bylines. (None of this has stopped literary scholars from visiting Boeing's archives to comb through issues of the magazine searching for clues to Pynchon's authorship.)

RETURN TO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

After *Field Service News* ceased printing and Boeing returned to commercial production, it launched *Boeing Airliner* in 1958 to support the 707. *Airliner's* premiere cover photo was of Boeing's first production 707 taking off from the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. It was titled "Takeoff into the Jet Age." A letter from Boeing's then service manager, Richard M. Morgan, reads, "The change from reciprocating engine to jet-powered airliners will have its effect on air transport operations." The magazine's goal, as he stated it, was to help make that transition "as simple as possible." Over the magazine's 39-year lifespan, *Airliner* supported Boeing's expanding product line, from the 707 to the introduction of the 777. *AERO* is a direct descendent of *Boeing Airliner*.



An innovative method of aviation instruction in 1943, "Bessie," a portable flying school, traveled to B-17 air bases.

The aircraft was modified to offer a classroom in the pilot's compartment. Books, charts, and other instructional aids filled the bomb bay. Called "one of the gaudiest, proudest airplanes," it was striped in bright yellow to make it easily distinguishable.

Airliner's subject matter would be easily recognizable to today's *AERO* readers: fuel conservation, corrosion prevention, and flight data. As time went on, *Airliner* went from a two-color monthly publication to a full-color quarterly glossy publication with photos, one easily identifiable as *AERO's* parent.

TWO GIANTS MERGE

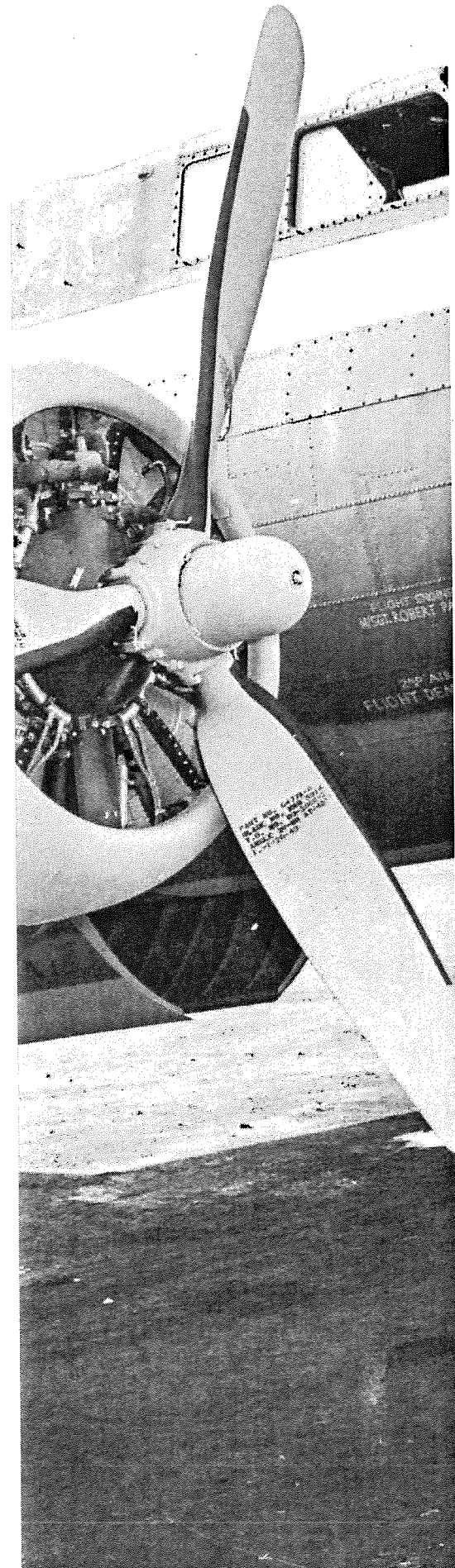
In January 1998, six months after Boeing and McDonnell Douglas merged, *AERO* was born. It replaced *Boeing Airliner* and *Douglas Service* magazines, blending the best of the two publications with the goal of supporting safe and efficient commercial fleet maintenance and operations. *AERO* debuted on the Web at the same time.

"We set out on a journey that took the better part of a year to build a world-class supplemental technical publication that represented the newly merged

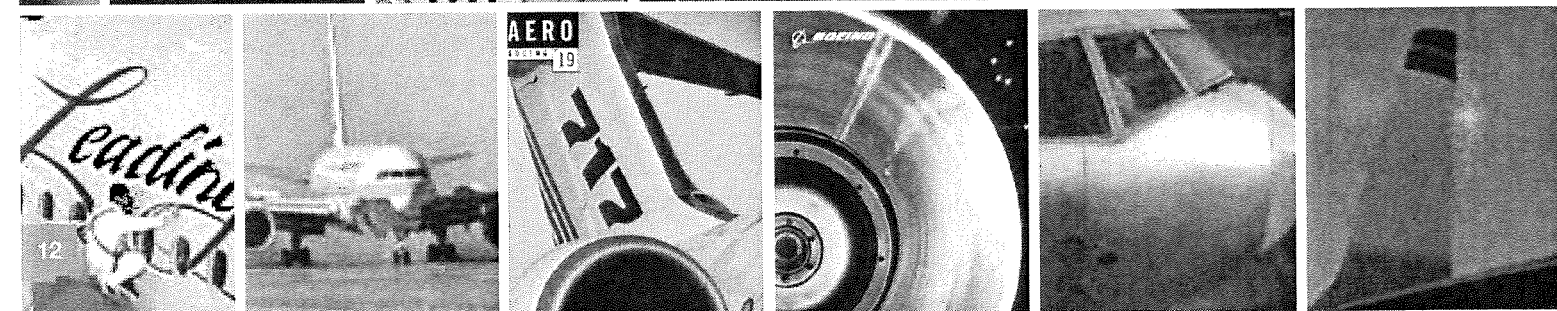
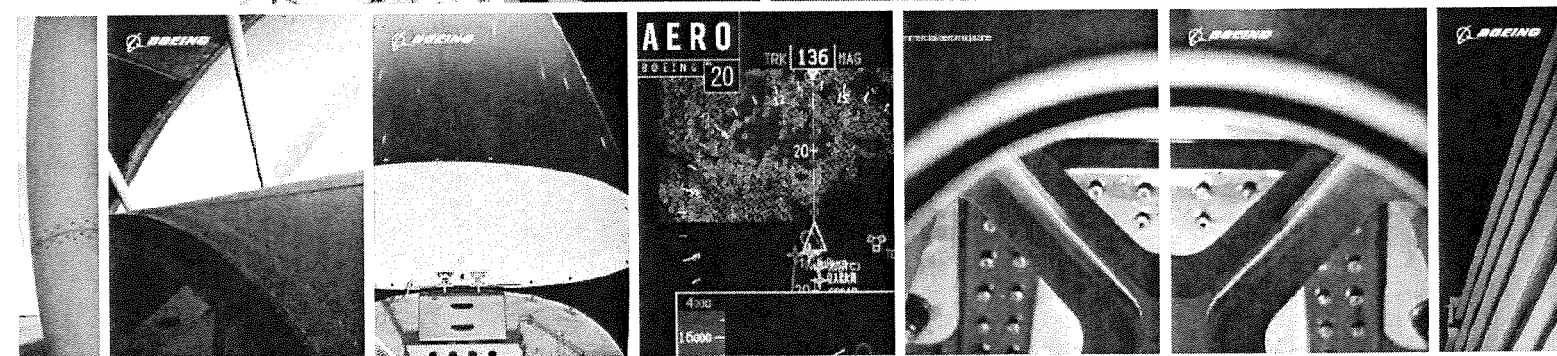
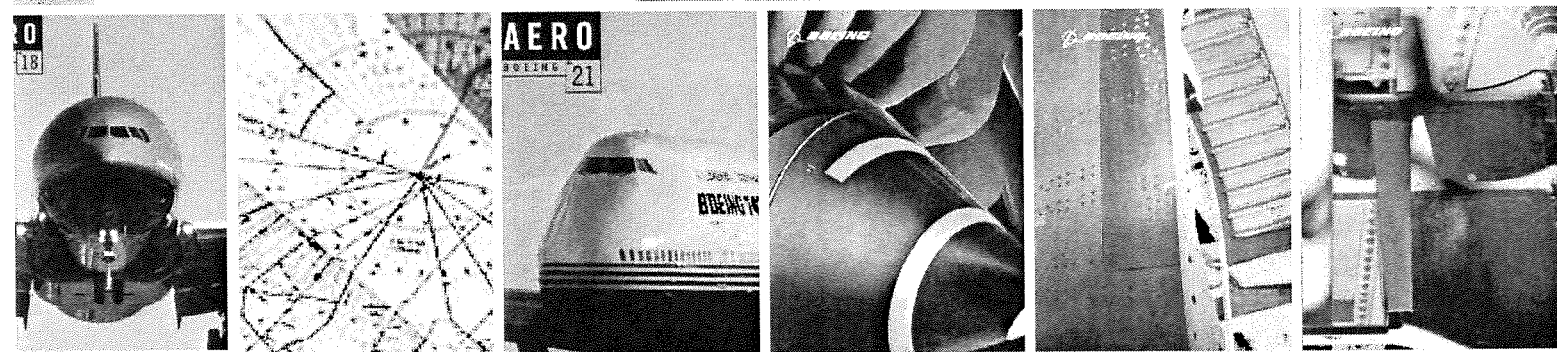
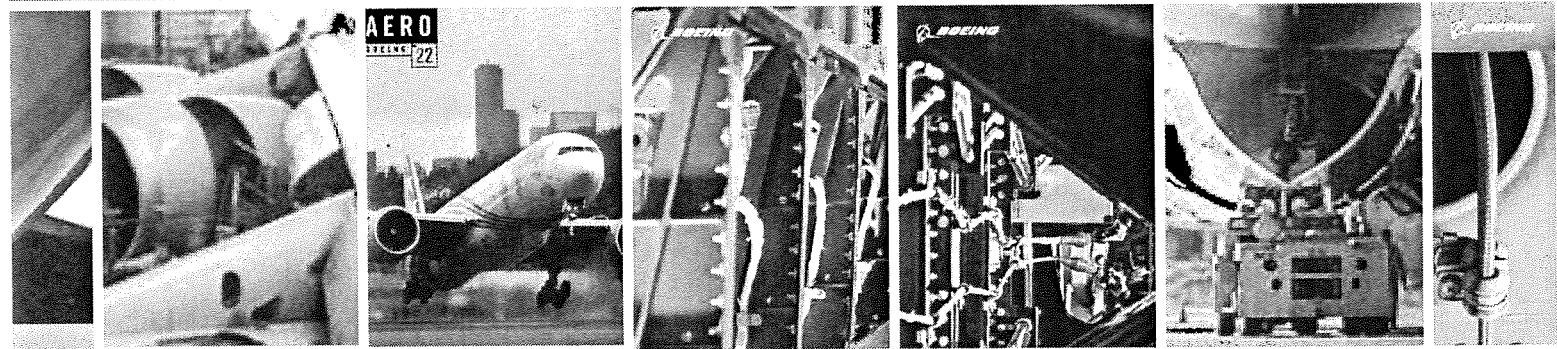
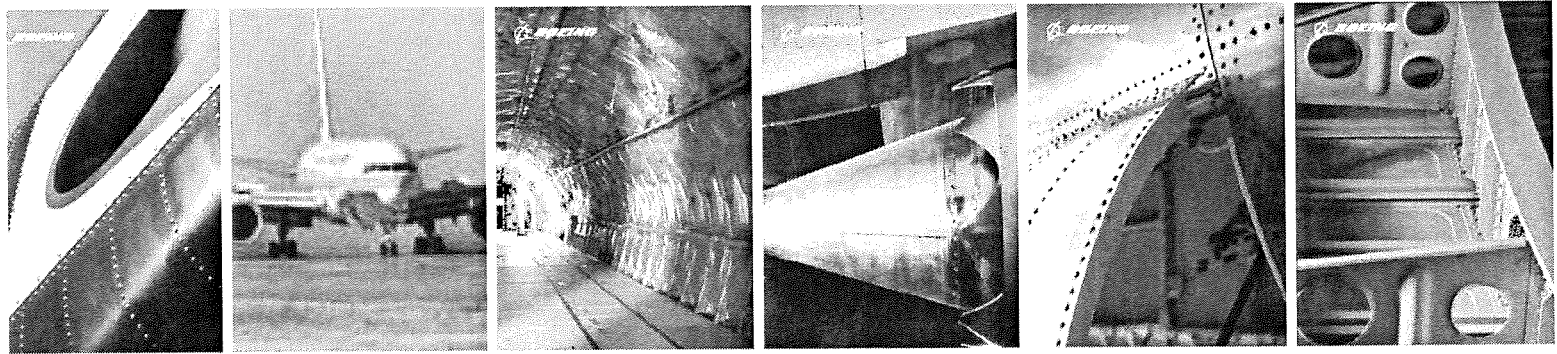
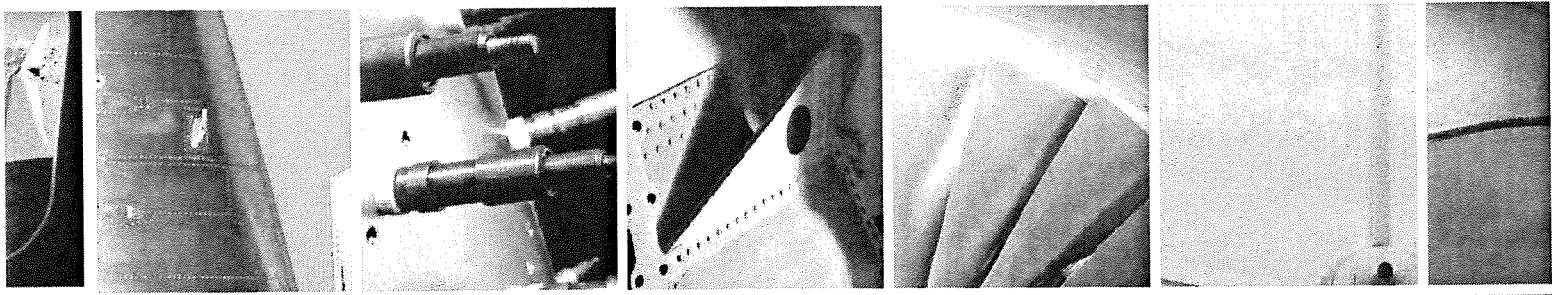
company," said John Kvasnosky, former *AERO* publisher. *AERO*, then as now, presented solid technical stories written by experts. "Our job was to polish them," Kvasnosky added.

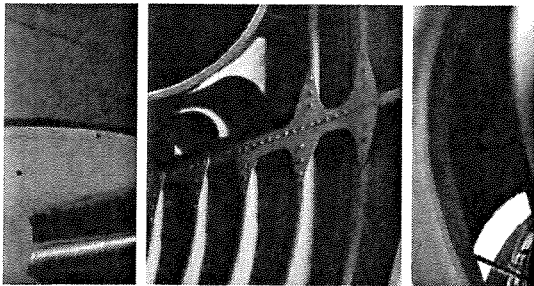
Former *AERO* editor Leslie Hazzard said, "I used to say that I had the best job in The Boeing Company because I got to learn so much technical information from our engineers." She recalled that the first issue was edited and ready to go when they got a stop-the-presses call informing them that the MD-95 airplane was going to be rechristened the 717. "We had to change all the references to it."

AERO magazine continues to be a well-read and respected publication that has won an armload of awards. One kudo came early on and from an unexpected source: "I remember the day Leslie got an email from her counterpart at Airbus who congratulated us on the new *AERO*," Kvasnosky recalled. "We were pleased with the industry response to the magazine."

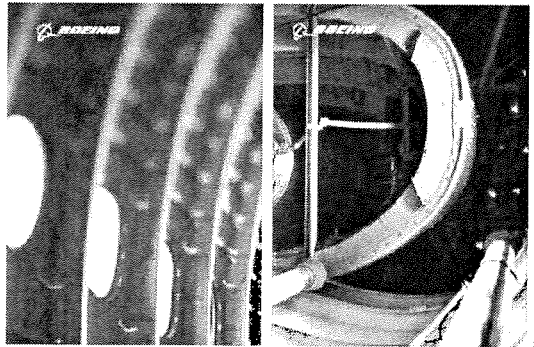
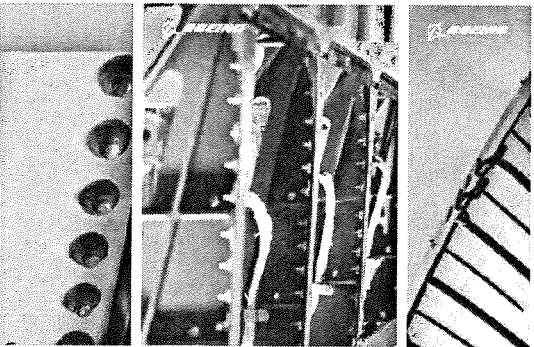
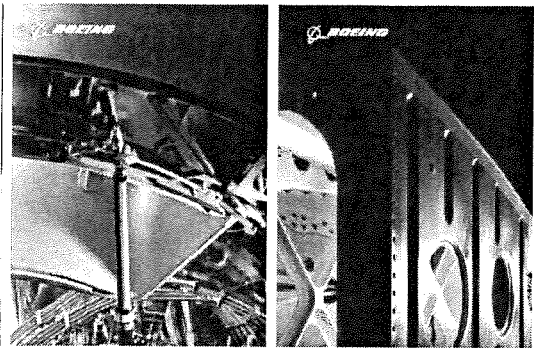








AERO covers over its 18 years have always featured crisp, bold imagery.



A recent survey revealed that *AERO* readers still want stories covering safety, flight, and engineering issues — stories that have long been the mainstay of both *Boeing Airliner* and *AERO*. Boeing's historian, Michael Lombardi, echoed that, saying the most popular stories over the years have been on wind shear and volcanic ash.

loyal readers have asked for, and now it will become a multimedia production, packed with videos, slideshows, and interactive elements. You will be able to enjoy it on your platform of choice — mobile phone, tablet, computer, or even a smartwatch. Of course, you can print your own copy if you like.

That's a lot of change. But much has remained the same: the magazine's goal now as it was in those early years is to provide Boeing customers with timely technical information that supports safe and efficient fleet maintenance and operations. We invite you to view the new *AERO* at www.boeing.com/aeromagazine next month. **A**

AERO'S NEW LOOK

As *AERO* moves forward, it's time to evolve again. We'll move from a quarterly print publication to a monthly digital magazine. The new *AERO* will still deliver the kind of well-reported, highly technical content that

