



**Pat Cherry** is the responsible artist for **Black Heart Art** creations. You can visit his web-site at <http://www.blackheartart.com>

. One of his latest work is one Hellenic Air Force A-7 Corsair of 335 Squadron Tiger. Pat spent a part of his precious time to tell us a few things about himself and also explain some of his basic artistic techniques that transform the shape of an aircraft into that beautiful caricatures.

**Pat Cherry:** *Okay let me start by saying that I am a long time aviation fan. Early on I would attend airshows and take pictures of all the different aircraft. I especially love World War II aircraft, the Corsair, Hellcat, Thunderbolt and of course the Mustang. I would go to all the local airshows shooting hundreds of pictures. I started back in 1979 at the Mojave Air Races and continue to this day going to airshows and taking pictures. It was back in 2001 one during the 9/11 cancelled Reno Air Races that I decided to try my hand at doing caricature aircraft art works. I had done a few fine art pencil drawings, complete with intricate shading, of some of my favorite aircraft using my pictures as a guide but I wanted to do something different. There was alot of aviation art coming out and it seemed to flood the market. I wanted something different and unique. After the air racers that year I decided to do all the Unlimited aircraft that were at that years races.*

*I sat down with some colored pencils and began creating these caricatures. They were fairly crude at first, but the more I did the better they got. My goal was to create caricatures that resemble the famous Squadron Prints... prints you see sold on-line and by squadrons. They seem to be the standard for color side profiles. I made it my goal to be as accurate as possible, and to be a little different. I chose to depict my side profiles from the right side instead of the standard left side which seems to be the accepted norm. I made every effort to be as accurate as possible and to create each caricature, including as many panel lines, and all the small details one associated with the detailed Squadron Prints. After several color pencil caricatures I*

decided they needed to be more clean and crisp. I moved on to using water colors. This greatly improved the look and feel of the art. Naturally I wanted to get an even cleaner look so I started using the air brush. This helped bring a greater control over the shadow and highlight in each art work.

After doing several airbrushed caricatures I started seeing the advantages to using the computer as a tool just like a paint brush or air brush. The ability to make changes quickly, to get even more detail and to make completely new art works from the same base drawing was too much to pass up. Currently the process by which I create a print is simple. I sit down with paper and pencil and start drawing. Each caricature is very unique. Some aircraft are very easy to characterize. While some are very difficult. Take an aircraft that is already short and fat (and all ready looks somewhat like a caricature) and it will be very challenging. Others like the F-5 are very easy. So I sit down and draw. I like to use pencil and paper because it still has a natural feel. My own hand is actually creating and sculpting and molding the art. I can erase a line and change curves quicker than in computer. Once I get the basic line drawing done I go back and refine all line work. This is where extensive research comes into play. Photos, books and drawings of the aircraft are used to gather as many details as possible. You would be surprised how many side profiles out there in books are wrong. It's all in the small details. I try but I am sure there are a few things I miss from time to time as well. Aircraft in front line units receive field modifications and not all aircraft have the same things in the same places. You can look at a book of the P-51B/C and see that the side line drawing had an antenna on the spine behind the cockpit.... but if you look at pictures, some aircraft did not have the antenna and some did. Some had rear view mirrors some did not. So it is very important to find as many pictures of the aircraft you choose. Once I refine the pencil drawing and include as many details as possible. (which is very hard sometimes as in altering the overall shape of the aircraft by characterization you lose surface area. So some panel lines are impossible to include.) I review the drawing. Once satisfied with the overall look, I ink the entire drawing. I use a fine tip ink pen to complete the art work.



After inking I clean up the drawing by erasing the pencil lines. Then it's scanned and stored in the computer. Using Paint Shop Pro (a basic photo editing software) I begin the process of painting the art work. I begin by refining any line work that needs cleaning up. Then it's just a matter of painting as I would with an air brush or paint brush. I try and use FS standard colors and their conversions as often as possible to be accurate. Sometimes they are slightly adjusted as they appear darker or lighter than what they should be. Again it's important to do research. With the computer I have the ability to use different layers and make changes that would be impossible with regular painting. The process I use is simple. I start with the line drawing and a basic color layer. This is where I do basic paint scheme colors. Then I add layers, details like exhaust nozzles, cockpit, pitot tubes, lights, etc. These will remain constant where as a paint

scheme will change. Then basic shadow and highlights are added. National markings and unit markings are next. The last step is weathering. This is where the aircraft comes to life. The true character comes out. It is amazing how different a clean version and a weathered version can look. Finally when I am satisfied with the over all look, and all the details possible are accounted for, I save the art work and add the squadron patch, the wing patch and the text that details the aircraft information. Then it's is printed to check the colors and overall appearance. Any changes that need to be made are made and the art work complete.

I started doing these caricatures for fun. A great little hobby. I shared them with anyone that I could and there was much feed back to the positive. This lead me to create Blackheart Art my web site. The web site was started years ago and I have been updating it with each new art work. Anyone that enjoys these unique art works can feel free to drop me a line suggest new caricatures and purchase prints.

Currently I do caricatures of just about any aircraft. Like I said earlier I started with the air racers and now I have branched out into currently military and warbird aircraft. I also have a few civilian aircraft completed. My goal is to be the official caricature artist for many of the worlds Air Force squadrons and units. I have customers that fly Medievac Helos in the US Army and ex fighter pilots. Besides the print art I have a on-line store (

[Zazzle.com/ blackheartart](https://www.zazzle.com/blackheartart)

) where I sell tee

**shirts**

,

**caps**

,

**mouse pads**

, etc featuring my caricatures. So hopefully the Blackheart Art brand grows bigger and bigger.

Click on the image above to visit Black Heart Art web-store.