

Flying Fuel Tank



The crusade to win World War II produced many impressive advances and more than one unconventional idea. The Cornelius Aircraft Corp. of Dayton, Ohio, designed a novel way to extend the range of bombers and cargo aircraft—a piloted fuel glider, designated XFG-1. This extra, 764-gallon fuel “tank,” with a fifty-four-foot, forward-swept wingspan and no horizontal tail surface,

was designed to be towed behind a powered ship, feeding it fuel. When the glider was empty, it would detach and return to base. Only two XFG-1s were ever built. The first crashed in a spin-recovery test. The second proved that the aircraft would have needed a spin-recovery parachute, so it was never accepted into production.

Photo courtesy Jeffrey Ethell