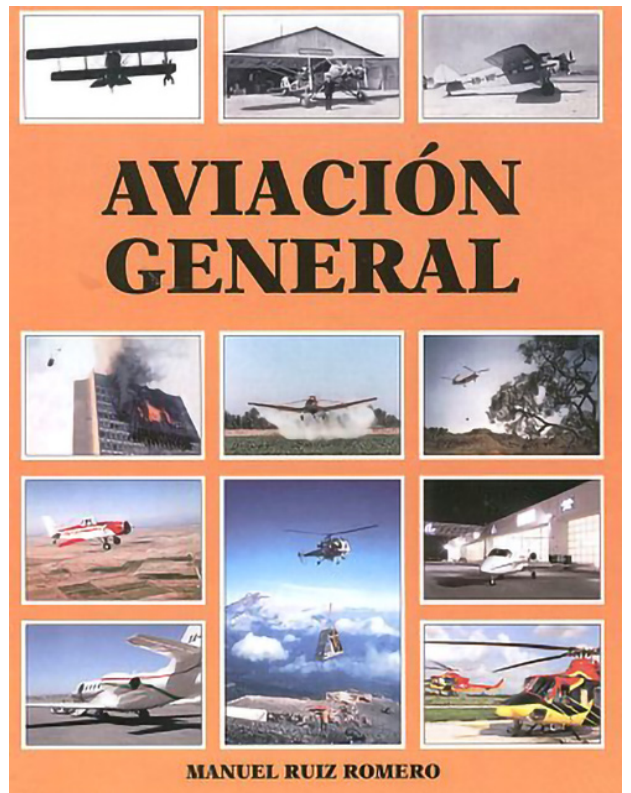


The XB of Mexican Aviation

written by Gary Kuhn | May 4, 2022



The prolific author and aero-historian Manuel Ruiz Romero, who passed away in January 2016, published several well illustrated photo essays on early flying, famous flights and military aviation in Mexico. His research also accumulated vast data relevant to civil aviation, so vital within a large and mountainous country. In 2002, he published a biographical dictionary providing details of Mexico's aviation people. However, it wasn't until 2007 that he managed to publish the book titled *Aviación General*, which focused entirely on the history of civilian use of airplanes in Mexico.



For the photo folks' delight, the book is packed full of images of "XB" privately-owned aircraft, with just a few "XA" (airline) and "XC" (government) airplanes included to complete the record. The illustrations have their context explained within the text, providing the best available overall view of the many roles that civil aircraft have performed in the development of the national welfare. For example, page 194 identifies the "P-61" XB-FUJ (really the Northrop F-15 photo recon version; there are only a couple other ID errors in the book) as utilized by the *Aerofoto* business of Capt. Miguel Maldonado. This is within two pages of text plus a dozen photos of various rare aircraft used by a number of identified aerial photo businesses. The following pages deal with: rain making, with such planes as the unique XB-KUU "Tlaloc"; then comes helicopters setting electrical towers in the mountains; and on and on, with interesting aircraft so variously applied.

Aviación General largely overcame the problem of too much centralization of Mexican aviation history within the region of the national capitol. This writer taught a semester at la UDEM in Monterrey, and was pleased by the coverage of aviation in the North. The iconic *Cerro de la Silla* appears in the background of a couple of photos!

For anyone interested in the diverse story of the utilization of an impressive variety of aircraft within Mexico's complex geographical boundaries, *Aviación General* will provide well posed photos with explanatory text, as well as a comprehensive bibliography that includes references to the many Mexican aviation magazines of past decades.



North American P-64 XB-KUU (C/N 68-3062, ex USAAF 41-19085), photographed at Mexico City sometime in the mid 50s. (Photo: The author.)

Unfortunately, the book has been out of print for several years and the few copies available are used ones that appear every once in a while at online auction websites like Mercado Libre or Ebay. So, if one of these days you spot one, don't hesitate and buy it right away!