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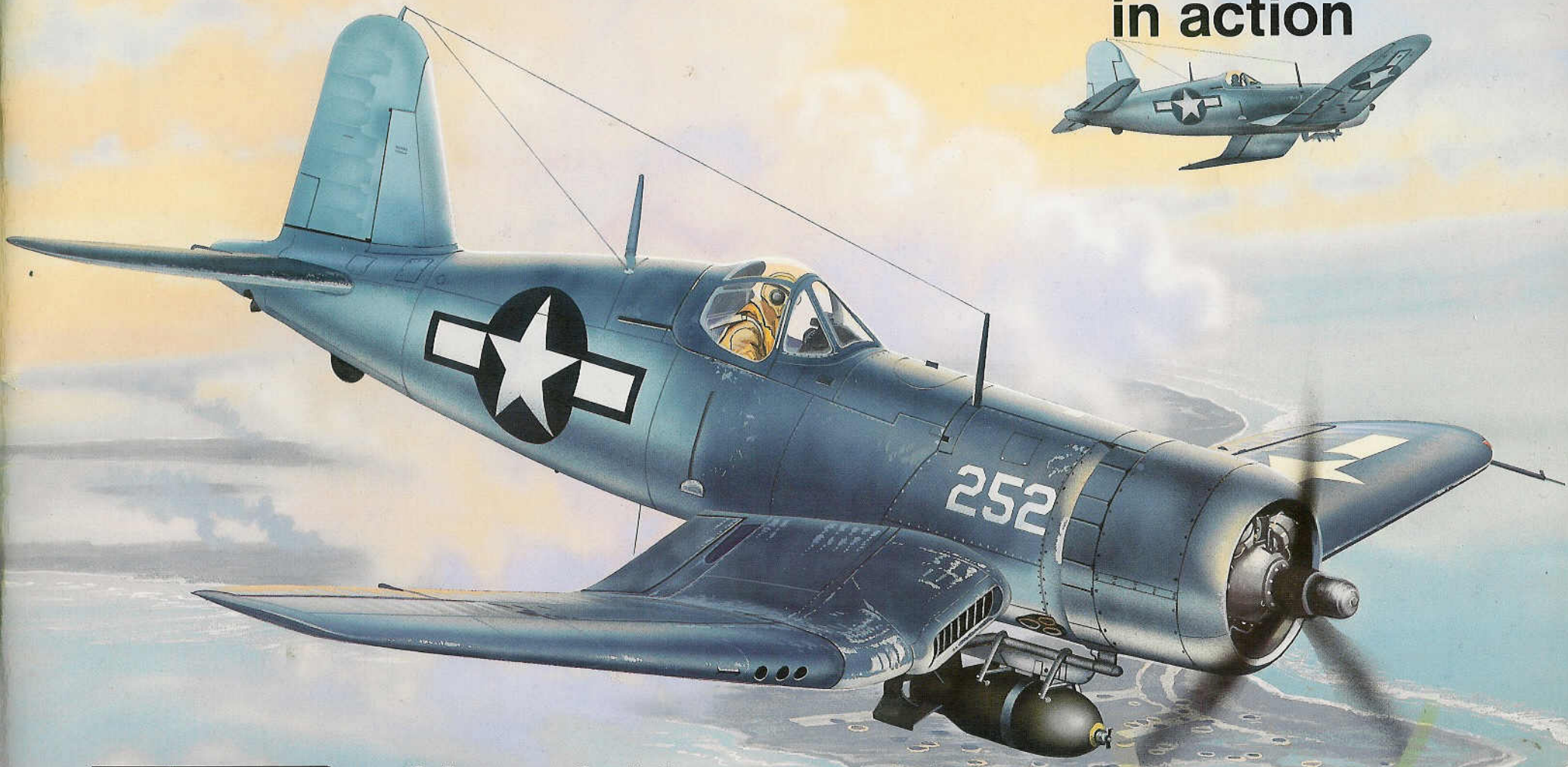
F4U CORSAIR

in action



Aircraft Number 145

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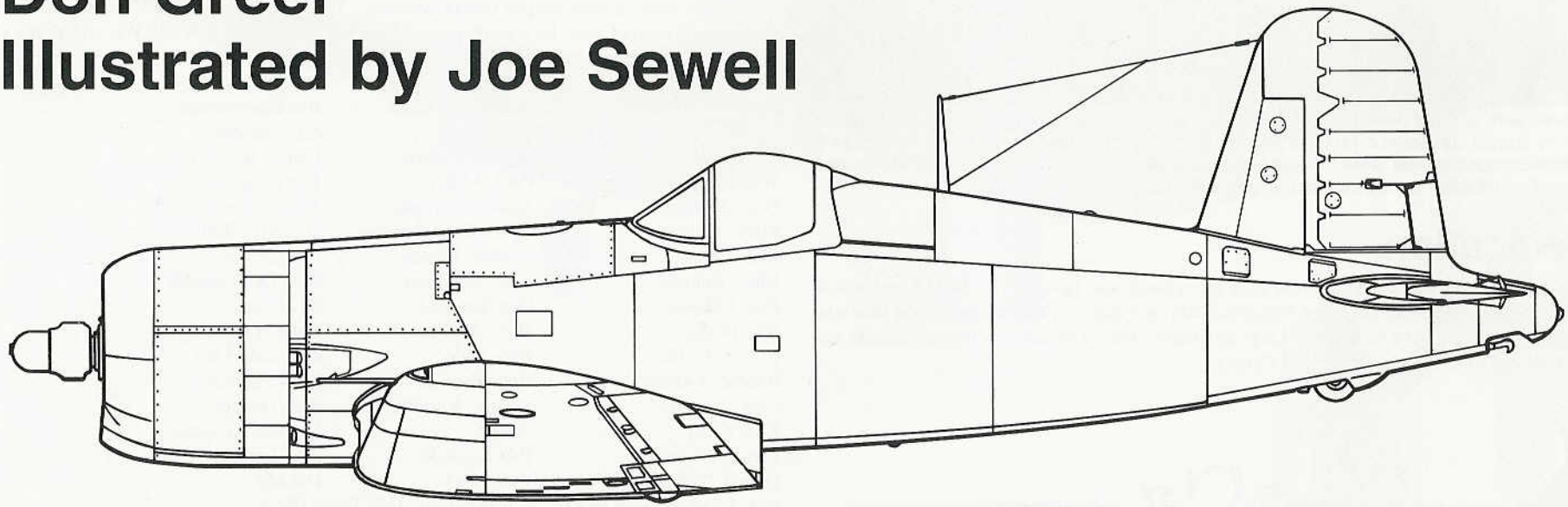
F4U CORSAIR

in action

By Jim Sullivan
Color By Tom Tullis &
Don Greer
Illustrated by Joe Sewell



Aircraft Number 145
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Loaded with a 1,000 pound bomb on its centerline bomb rack, a F4U-1A Corsair heads out to bomb Japanese targets in the Marshall Islands during March of 1944. Fighter/bomber strikes were carried out by Corsairs throughout the South Pacific and caused substantial damage to enemy installations.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the brave men and women who have served the U.S. military in troubled times. In particular, to the Naval and Marine aviators of the Second World War who fought so hard and gave so much to keep our country free. I would also like to dedicate this work to my family, Linda, Jim Jr. and Christy.

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Acknowledgements

This author would like to express appreciation to all the folks who have contributed to this book in the form of photographs and information. I share my admiration of the superb F4U Corsair with each of you. Its contribution to the effort in the Second World War and Korea is a matter of record and some of that proud history is presented in the following pages.

Richard Abrams	Hal Andrews	Art Scarborough
Robert E. Bennett	Paul J. McDaniel	Bill Scarborough
Lou Markey	Vought	Art Schoeni
Roger Besecker	Robert Mathers	Larry Webster
Warren Bodie	Paul Miller	Larry Smalley
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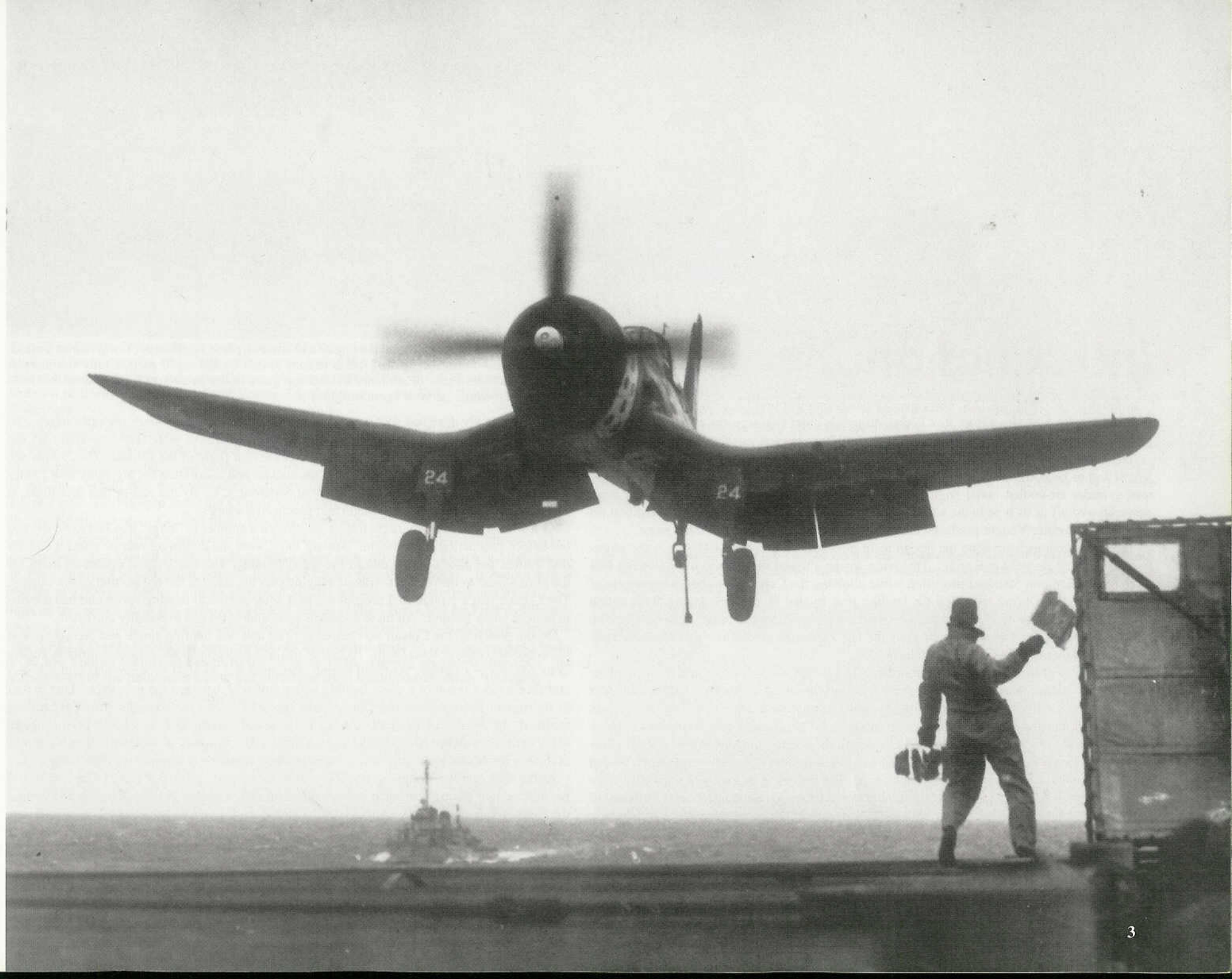
United Technologies	U.S. Navy	U.S.M.C.
Bob Lawson / The HOOK	Paul Madden / USS Essex CV-9	

An F4U-4B of VMA-332 settles to the deck of USS POINT CRUZ as the Landing Signal Officer (LSO) gives it the cut signal on 14 November 1953. The nose markings consisted of Red polkadots on a White band running around the engine cowling. (National Archives)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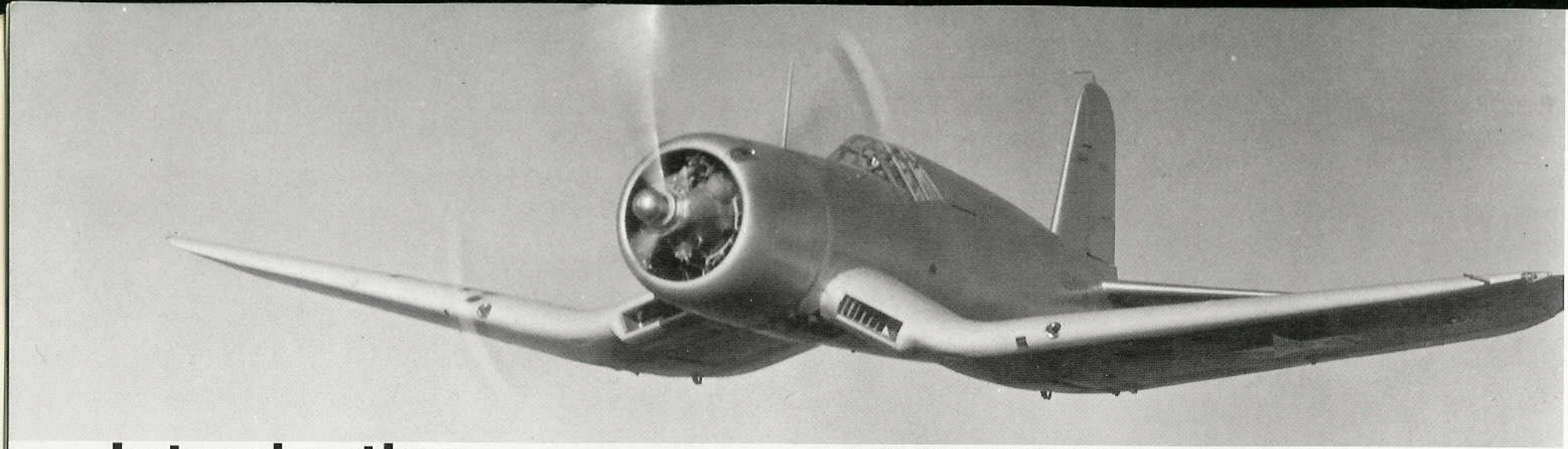


Introduction

The XF4U-1 Corsair prototype during one of the early test flights over Long Island Sound. In October of 1940, the XF4U-1 set a record speed of 405 mph. At this time the aircraft was armed with a pair of .30 caliber machine guns in the nose and a .50 caliber machine gun in each wing. (United Technologies)

In February of 1938, the U.S. Navy opened design competition for a high speed, high altitude fighter aircraft. Headed by Rex Biesel, Vought's chief engineer, the company set out to produce the finest Naval fighter aircraft of its day. What emerged was the XF4U-1.

The Chance Vought XF4U-1 was a single-seat, single-engine monoplane fighter aircraft which was to be powered by a 1,800 hp Pratt & Whitney XR-2800-2 Wasp double row eighteen cylinder air-cooled radial engine. With this power plant it would be the fastest, most powerful aircraft of its type in the world. It was named the Corsair, carrying on a tradition set by at least two other Vought-produced aircraft, which had previously carried the name.

The most obvious innovation the design team incorporated into the XF4U-1 was the graceful and efficient inverted gull wing. This wing design allowed the team to use a thirteen foot three blade Hamilton Standard propeller, while allowing the Corsair to utilize landing gear of "normal" length. During retraction the landing gear rotated 90 degrees, laying flush within the wing. In February of 1939 Vought presented the Navy with a full scale plywood mock-up of the Corsair design. Favorably impressed, the Navy gave the go-ahead to construct the actual prototype aircraft and assigned it BuNo 1443.

Construction of the XF4U-1 began immediately. Rex Biesel's team armed the new plane with two .30 caliber nose mounted machine guns synchronized to fire through the propeller arc and two .50 caliber, machine guns one mounted in each outer wing panel. Some thought was given to installing heavier firepower in the nose in the form of two 50 caliber machine guns or even a 23MM cannon but the limited space in the engine compartment would not allow it. As the Corsair was conceived to be a carrier-based fighter, the outer wing panels folded upward to minimize space for below deck storage. The underside of each wing had provisions for twenty small 5.2 pound anti-aircraft bombs, stored in sectioned compartments outboard of the wing fold line. In conjunction with the underwing bomb installation, a clear bombing window was installed in the underside of the fuselage directly beneath the cockpit. It was envisioned that the high flying Corsair would have the capability to hit an enemy bomber formation by flying over them and raining these small bombs down on them.

To keep the Corsair aerodynamically as clean as possible, the all-aluminum fuselage incorporated the newly designed spot welding process that yielded a low-drag smooth surface. To conserve weight, the outer wing section and all control surfaces were fabric covered. By the end of May 1940, Vought was ready to conduct the first flight of the Corsair. On 29 May 40, Lyman Bullard, Chief of flight test, sat in the cockpit and committed the big shiny new fighter to its first flight from the company facility at Stratford, CT. By the end of that first flight, it was obvious to all present that Vought had produced a winner.

As it was supposed to do, flight testing uncovered a number of "bugs" that had to be worked out before production could begin. Among those were the confining narrow cockpit canopy that limited the pilot's vision due to the metal framing. The canopy had minimum room for the pilot's head to move about without banging into the sides of the top portion of the canopy. The Corsair had a pronounced drop of the port wing at critical landing speed and had a built-in bounce when landing. All these problems were addressed and eventually corrected.

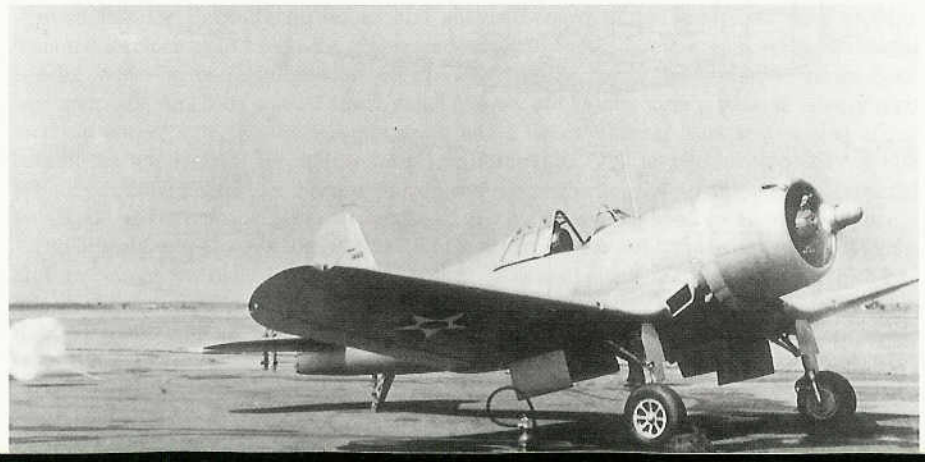
On the plus side, the Corsair was extremely fast and was the first single seat fighter aircraft to exceed 400 mph in level flight. Its rate of roll was exceptional and would contribute greatly to its success as a fighter. As flight testing continued, the XF4U-1 program was set back several months as a result of a crash landing which severely damaged the prototype. Due in part to its rugged construction, the Corsair was repaired within two months and flight testing resumed. In October of 1940, the Corsair ran a speed course and, as Vought personnel and Navy officials watched, the XF4U-1 roared by at a record speed of 405 mph. The Navy was favorably impressed and a proposal for a production version was requested by the Navy.

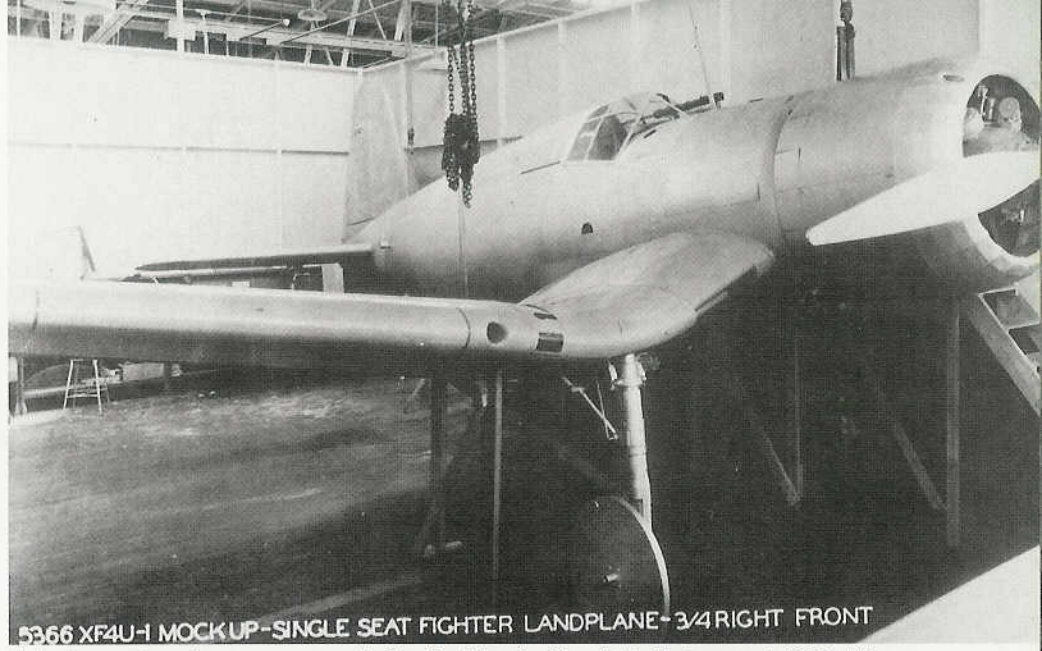
At the time, neither Vought or the Navy were aware that eventually 12,571 Corsairs would be built. Flight testing continued at NAS Anacostia and Langley Field in Virginia and around the Connecticut countryside. At NAF Philadelphia the Corsair was tested on a simulated carrier deck which was painted on the runway. These tests pointed out again the aggravating and dangerous port wing drop at low landing speed. This tendency was eventually remedied by the installation of a small triangular wedge on the leading edge of the starboard wing just outboard of the wing guns.

The XF4U (BuNo 1443) arrived at Langley Field, Virginia for drag reduction tests in the full scale thirty foot by sixty foot wind tunnel during the Fall of 1941. Testing was carried out by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) the forerunner of today's National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). (NASA via Mark Chambers)

The Corsair's performance was so outstanding that even the Army Air Corps took note of it, as interest was expressed by General Hap Arnold. The XF4U-1 possessed a 500 feet per minute rate of climb and in one of the dive tests it reached a speed of 550 mph with an eight G pullout. While this exceeded the design requirement, it demonstrated how sturdy the Corsair was. During spin tests, the Corsair was equipped with a small parachute mounted in the modified tailcone. On one flight test this spin chute was utilized by test pilot Boone Guyton to recover from a particularly nasty spin, saving the XF4U-1 from almost certain destruction. The Vought XF4U-1 Corsair had a wing span of forty-one feet, a fuselage length of thirty feet and at its highest point, a height of fifteen feet seven inches. It had an empty weight of 7,505 pounds and a gross weight of 10,500 pounds. The prototype carried 273 gallons of fuel which gave it a range of over 850 statute miles. The 1,850 hp Pratt & Whitney engine combined with the large thirteen foot Hamilton Standard three-bladed propeller provided a cruise speed of 180 mph and a service ceiling of 31,000 feet. Vought had just reason to be proud of its Corsair and their contribution to the war effort with the finest Naval fighter aircraft of the Second World War.

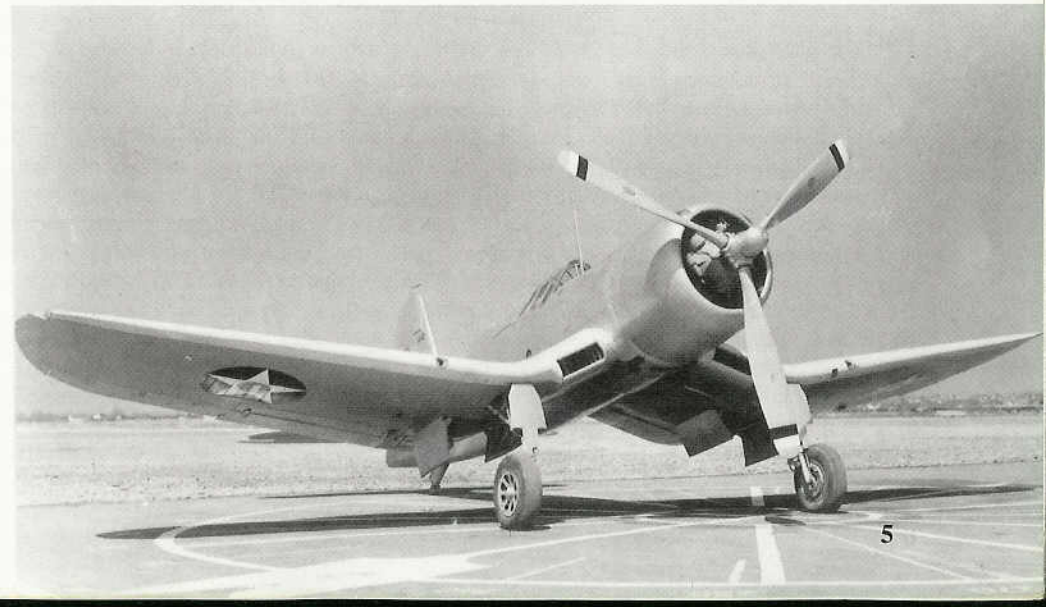
The XF4U-1 (1443) tested the spin parachute installation prior to conducting spin tests from the Vought facility at Stratford on 19 June 1940. During one particular spin, the deployment of the parachute saved the prototype from certain destruction. (Vought)





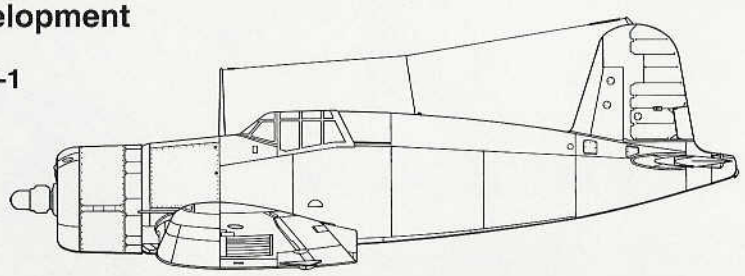
This plywood mock-up was presented to the Navy by Vought in February of 1939. After a complete inspection the Navy gave the go-ahead for construction of the XF4U-1 prototype. The gun sight on the mock-up was obsolete and not used on the prototype.

The prototype XF4U-1 Corsair parked on the compass rose at Vought's plant at Stratford, CT on 15 April 1941. The aircraft was overall Natural Metal with Chrome Yellow wings and Black lettering. (Vought)

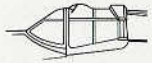


Development

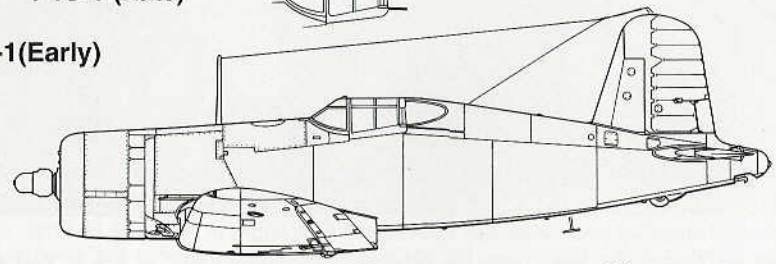
XF4U-1



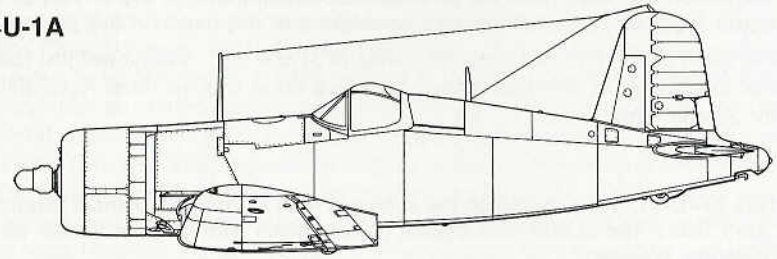
F4U-1 (Late)



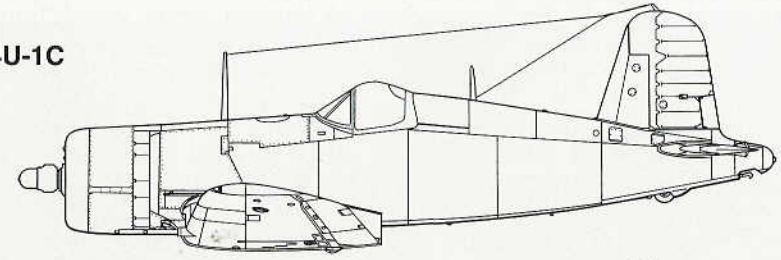
F4U-1(Early)



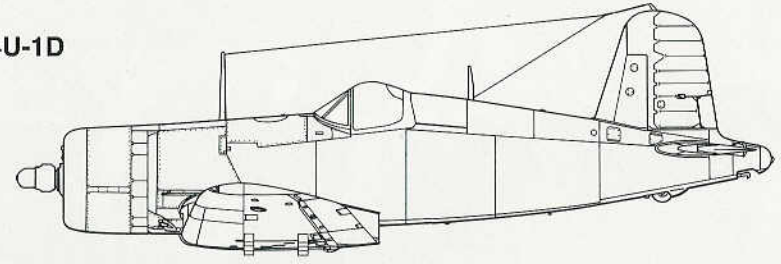
F4U-1A



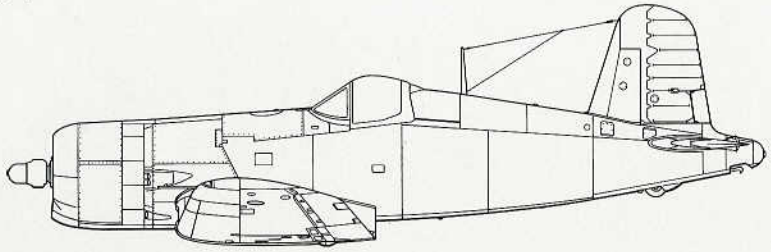
F4U-1C



F4U-1D



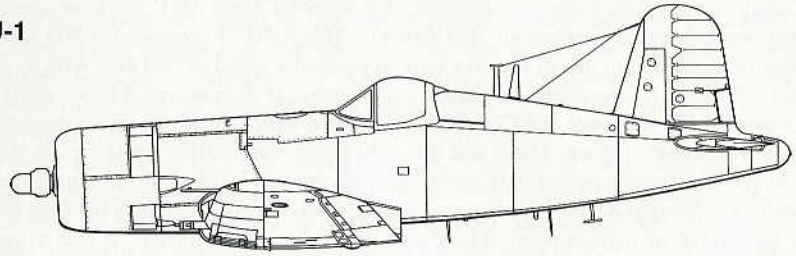
F4U-4



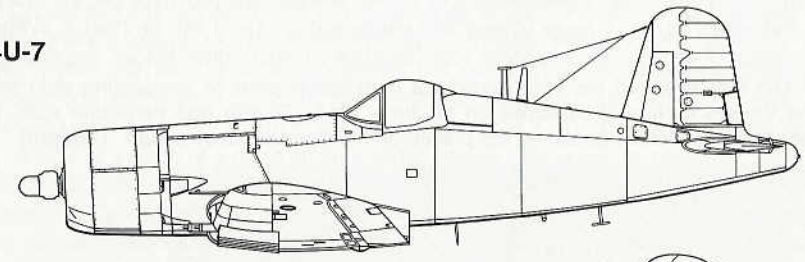
F4U-5N

Starboard Radar Pod

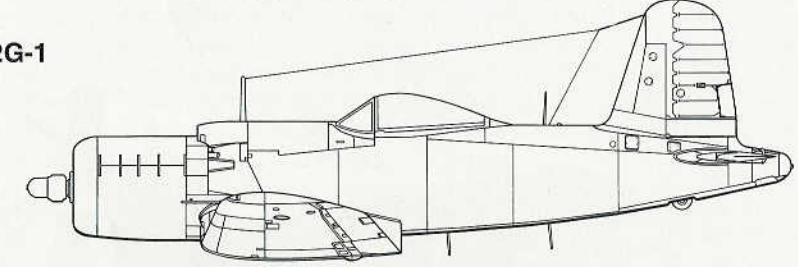
AU-1

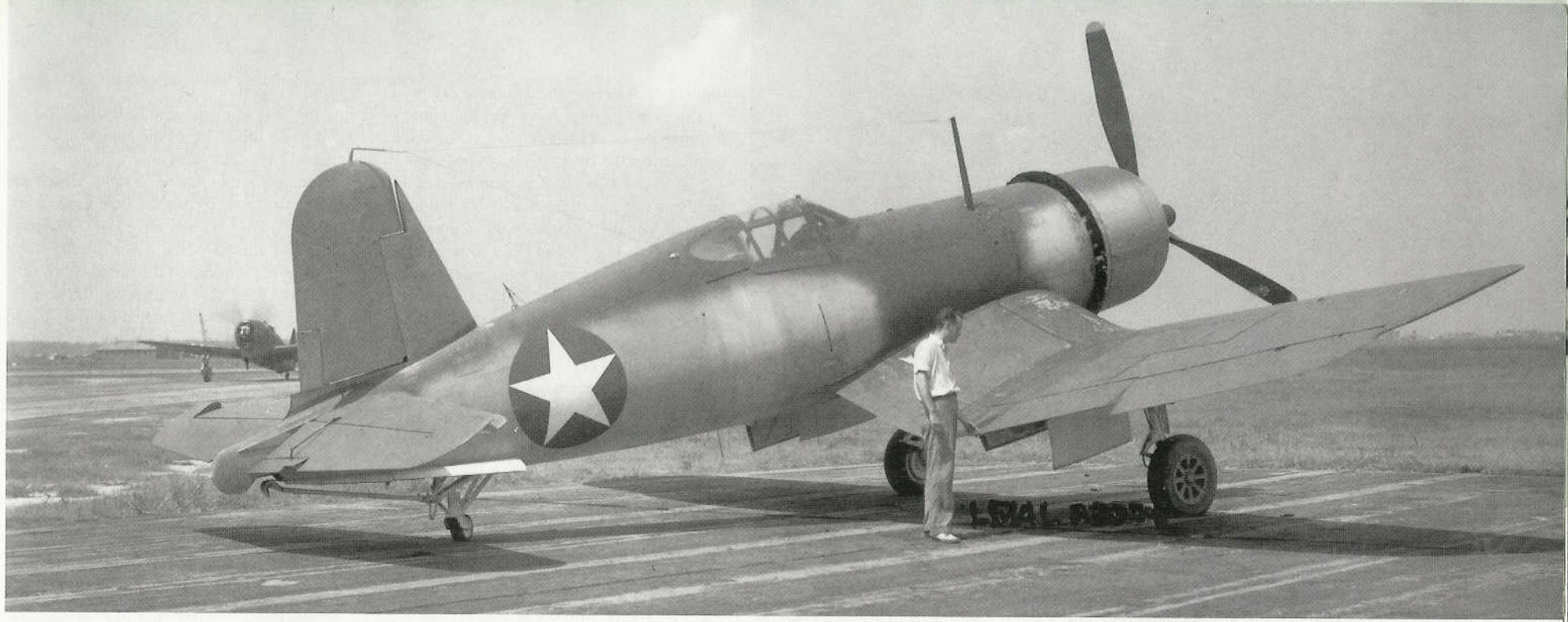


F4U-7



F2G-1





F4U-1

This F4U-1 Corsair (BuNo 02183) was the thirty-first Corsair off the Vought production line and participated in tests by NACA during July of 1943. It was stationed at Langley Field for two months before being assigned to the Navy at NAS Floyd Bennett Field, New York. (NASA via Mark Chambers)

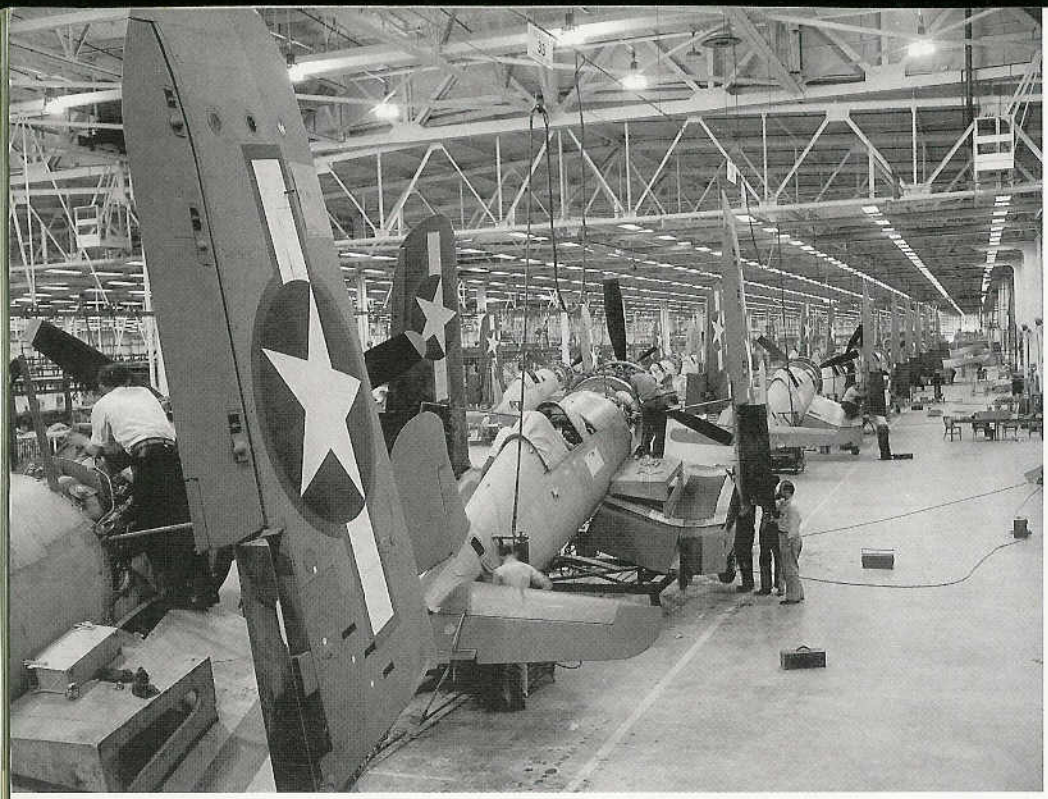
The great enthusiasm produced by the performance of the XF4U-1 prompted an initial order for 584 Corsairs. After extensive testing of the prototype, Vought incorporated a number of design changes for the production aircraft. The most obvious of these was the relocation of the cockpit almost three feet rearward from its original location. This was done to allow the installation of a 237 gallon self-sealing fuel cell just in front of the cockpit. The internal wing mounted fuel tanks were removed and the space was used for the installation of six .50 caliber machine guns, which were mounted three in each wing close to the fold line in the outer wing panels.

In combat, the Corsair achieved an 11:1 kill ratio thanks to this impressive array of wing mounted machine guns. With the change in wing armament, the nose guns were eliminated and the underwing bomb installation was also deleted. The bomb-aiming window on the fuselage underside was soon deleted after a small number of Corsairs were produced. The cockpit received armor protection for the pilots seat and a bullet resistant glass section was added behind the windscreen for additional pilot protection. The newly developed Pratt and Whitney R-2800 engine had been improved and the production F4U-1 Corsair was powered by a 2,000 hp P&W R-2800-8 power plant which gave the aircraft a top speed of 425 mph.

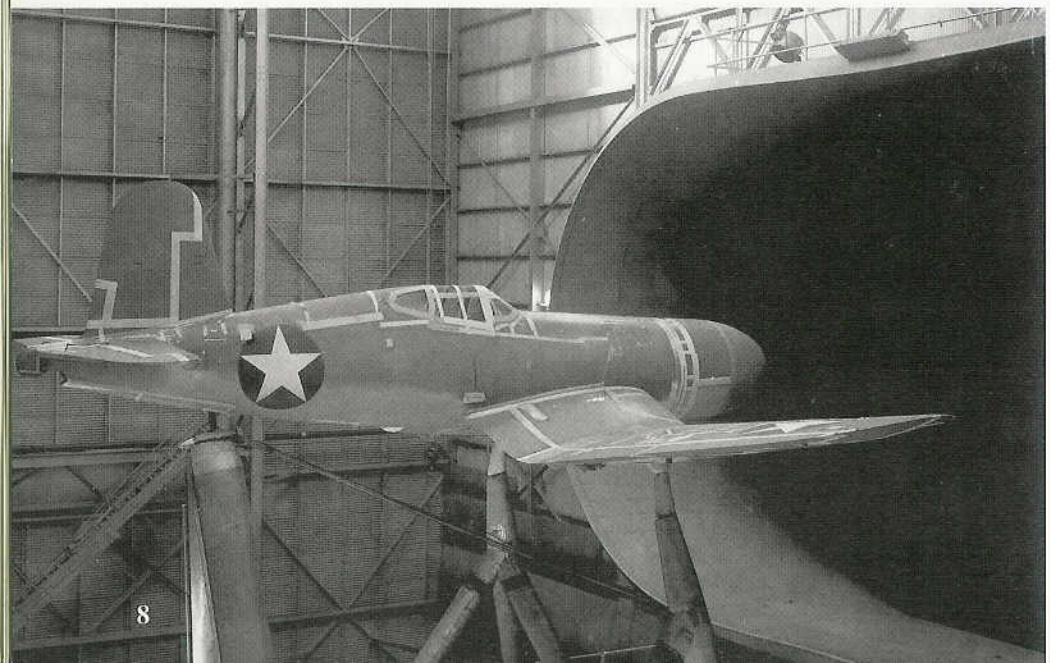
The original canopy was deleted in favor of a slightly larger jettisonable one that provided a bit more room for the pilot to move around. The cockpit of the production F4U-1 had improved instrumentation and additional attention was given to improvements in the wing flaps, ailerons, tailhook and arresting gear. Additionally, two small underwing bomb racks were added. Early production Corsairs had cowl flaps that completely encircled the fuselage aft of the engine. Due to consistent problems with leaking hydraulic oil, the center portion of the engine cowl flaps across the top of the fuselage were permanently sealed to correct the problem.

The first Navy squadron to receive the F4U-1 was VF-12 at North Island, California, followed shortly by VF-17 at NAS Norfolk, Virginia. The first Marine Corps squadron to receive the Corsair was VMF-124. Despite the F4U-1s high speed and maneuverability, the Navy was disappointed with the Corsair after carrier trials pointed out some undesirable landing characteristics. The port wing drop at landing speed was dangerous enough on land bases, but it was unforgivable for carrier operations. This problem, coupled with the tendency to bounce during arrested landing and the obstruction of visibility in a three-point attitude, caused by the long nose of the Corsair, led the Navy to declare the big fighter unsuitable for carrier operations. Vought set out to remedy these problems and did so eventually, but in the meantime, the F4U-1 was relegated to operations from land bases. As it turned out the Navy's loss was the Marine Corps' gain, since most of the early Corsairs were assigned to the Corps.

Trading in their rugged Grumman F4F Wildcats, the Marines enthusiastically embraced the Corsair. The Navy was still very interested and impressed with the high performance of the F4U-1 and equipped VF-17 (Jolly Rogers) with the fighter. Under the command of Tom Blackburn, the land based Fighting Seventeen roared throughout the South Pacific creating



FG-1s roll down the Goodyear assembly line at Akron, Ohio on 9 October 1943. At this point of the war, the large national insignia carried a Red surround. These birdcage Corsairs were all armed with six .50 caliber wing mounted machine guns and many went directly into combat in the South Pacific with the U. S. Marine Corps. (Goodyear)



(Left) This F4U-1 (02161) was tested in Langley's full size wind tunnel on 19 October 1942, to determine how to reduce the effects of drag on the aircraft. Every "break" in the Aluminum skin was taped over and an engine nose cap installed to clean up the aerodynamics of the Corsair. (NASA via Mark Chambers)

havoc with the renowned Japanese Zero and other types it encountered.

The British Royal Navy had the honor of being the first to operationally fly the Corsair from the decks of their carriers. Due to the overhead space limitation of the hangar decks on their carriers the British Corsairs had eight inches clipped from their wingtips.

The F4U-1 was much in demand and under an agreement with Chance Vought, Goodyear and Brewster joined the war effort and began producing Corsairs. When the final totals were counted Vought produced 4,699 Corsairs (F4U-1, F4U-lA, F4U-1C and F4U-1D), Goodyear 4,006 (FG-1, FG-1A and FG-1D) and Brewster 735 (F3A-1 and F3A-lA). The visibility from the cockpit of the Corsair was greatly improved when Vought introduced the raised cabin version of the F4U-1. That modification is often referred to as the F4U-lA; however, the stenciling on Corsair tails did not add the 1A into its designation. All Corsairs carried the F4U-l/FG-l/F3A-1 designation regardless of whether it carried the older birdcage canopy or the new improved raised cabin installation (this author has opted to include the use of the F4U-lA designation to distinguish between the two different canopy types). While Vought and Goodyear Corsairs shared the burden of battle, the Brewster Corsairs were largely relegated to stateside training duties. The first production F4U-1 (BuNo 02153) took to the air on 25 June 1942. Vought test pilot Boone Guyton was at the controls for this initial flight.

The F4U-lA was well received by pilots who greatly appreciated the improved visibility. While the "birdcage" canopy had many metal frames restricting pilot vision, the improved raised cabin version had only two. The windscreen of the F4U-lA also offered improved forward visibility as a result of its reduced metal framing. To increase the ability to deliver bombs, several squadrons field rigged bomb racks to carry 500 and 1,000 pound bombs. At least three squadrons share the credit for developing this capability, VMF-111, VMF-224 and VF-17. Other squadrons quickly adopted the bomb rack installation and assumed the fighter/bomber role. With the introduction of the water injected P&W R-2800 engine, the F4U-lA benefited from an additional 300 hp producing a burst of twenty more knots of speed for approximately five minutes. That additional edge made the difference of life or death for more than one pilot.

The F4U-1C differed little from the F4U-lA. Vought changed the armament arrangement from six wing-mounted 50 caliber machine guns to four wing-mounted 20MM cannon. Pilots liked the firepower of the cannon armed Corsair but, given a choice ,often preferred the six gun arrangement due to the higher number of rounds that could be carried. The F4U-1C also differed from the earlier Corsairs in that the canopy was a one-piece unit without the braces of the F4U-lA type. Vought produced 200 of the cannon armed version, the first of which got into combat in the early Spring of 1945.

The final Vought production version of the F4U-1 series was the F4U-1D. Goodyear produced the same aircraft as the FG-1D. Production records show 1,685 F4U-1Ds and 1,997 FG-1Ds came down the assembly lines. These advanced Corsairs were the ultimate F4U-1 wartime version and were powered by the 2,250 hp P&W R-2800-8W water injection engine. The F4U-1D/FG-1D was accepted by the Navy in April of 1944 and immediately went into combat. Improvements on this version were the addition of four rocket launch stubs under each wing which allowed the Corsair to carry eight five inch HVAR rockets. Two wing root pylons were added to allow the addition of two 500 or 1,000-pound bombs or two 154 gallon

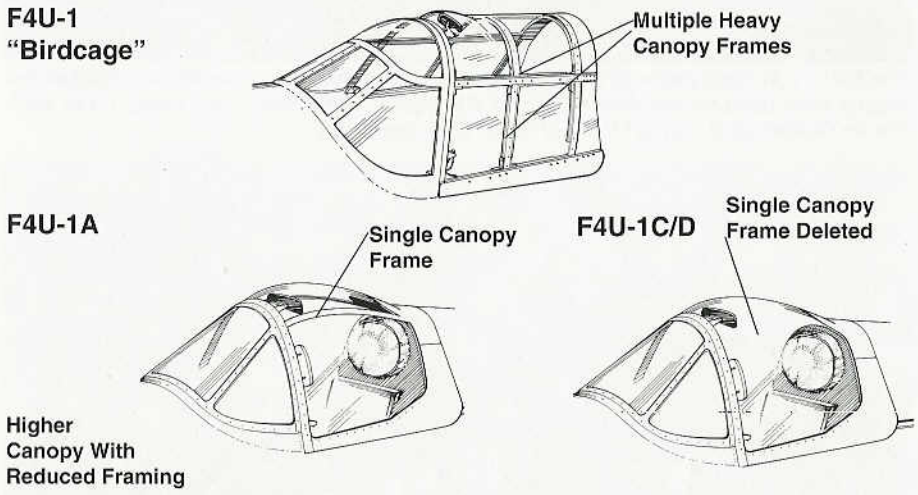
drop tanks; or napalm. The remaining external identification feature was the deletion of the upper braces from the sliding canopy for better visibility. In some cases, early production F4U-1D/FG-1D Corsairs came from the factory with the earlier braced-style canopy, but those were soon replaced as the clear style became available.

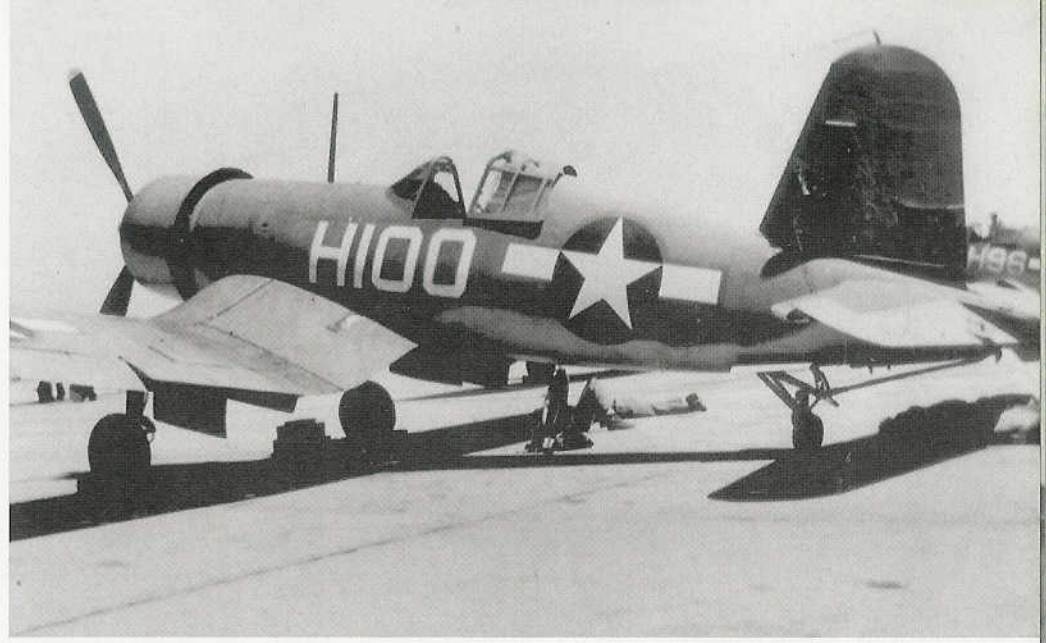
The F4U-1D Corsair exclusively used the Glossy Sea Blue paint scheme applied at the factory. The national insignia was originally applied with the Blue surround and later was replaced by the borderless White star and bar insignia. In January of 1947 Red stripes were added to the White bars on the wings and fuselage. That insignia was retained for the remainder of all U.S. Corsair production. The F4U-1D/FG-1D models were the first Corsairs to be operationally assigned to U.S. carriers. With the bad bounce and port wing drop tendency overcome, the U.S. Navy began equipping fast carriers with Corsairs. In December of 1944, the Marines were the first to go aboard, sending VMF-124 and VMF-213 aboard USS ESSEX. These two squadrons were soon joined by other USMC squadrons aboard other carriers. The F4U-1D/FG-ID quickly replaced the superb Grumman F6F Hellcat as the standard carrier-based fighter equipping both Navy and Marine squadrons.

The remaining F4U-1 version of the Corsair was the F4U-lP which was a field modification that added a K-21 aerial camera mounted in the lower rear section of the fuselage midway between the wing trailing edge and the forward part of the tail wheel installation. This camera was controlled from the cockpit and provided both pre-strike and post-strike photographic intelligence. This modified F4U-1P version was used by both the Navy and Marines.

The F4U-1D and FG-1D Corsair was used by the USN, USMC, Royal Navy and Royal New Zealand Air Force during the Second World War. Later years saw the FG-ID exported for service with El Salvador and Honduras. During the war between these two South American countries in the early 1960s, both opposing sides used Corsairs to fight against Corsairs and Mustangs. The U.S. F4U-1D/FG-1D Corsairs finished their careers with the Reserves across the nation and eventually were phased out during the early 1950s by the more advanced and improved F4U-4. The F4U-1 series of Corsairs were the largest number produced of any Corsair variant.

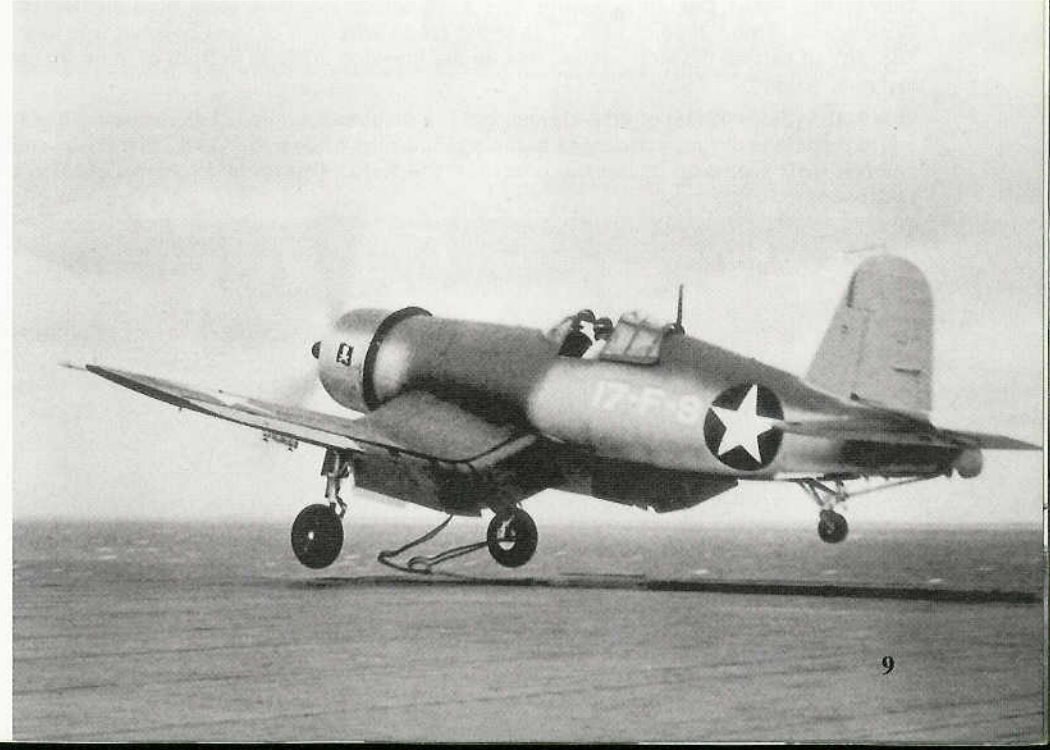
Canopy Development





A F4U-1, side number H-100, of VMF-422 parked on the flight line at Santa Barbara, California during September of 1943. A large number of F4U-1s were used in the training role to prepare Marine aviators to take the Corsair into combat. (Mark Syrkin)

A F4U-1, side number 9, of Tommy Blackburn's VF-17 launches from USS BUNKER HILL on 30 June 1943, during the carrier's shakedown cruise. The wire object under the aircraft was the catapult bridle. (National Archives)



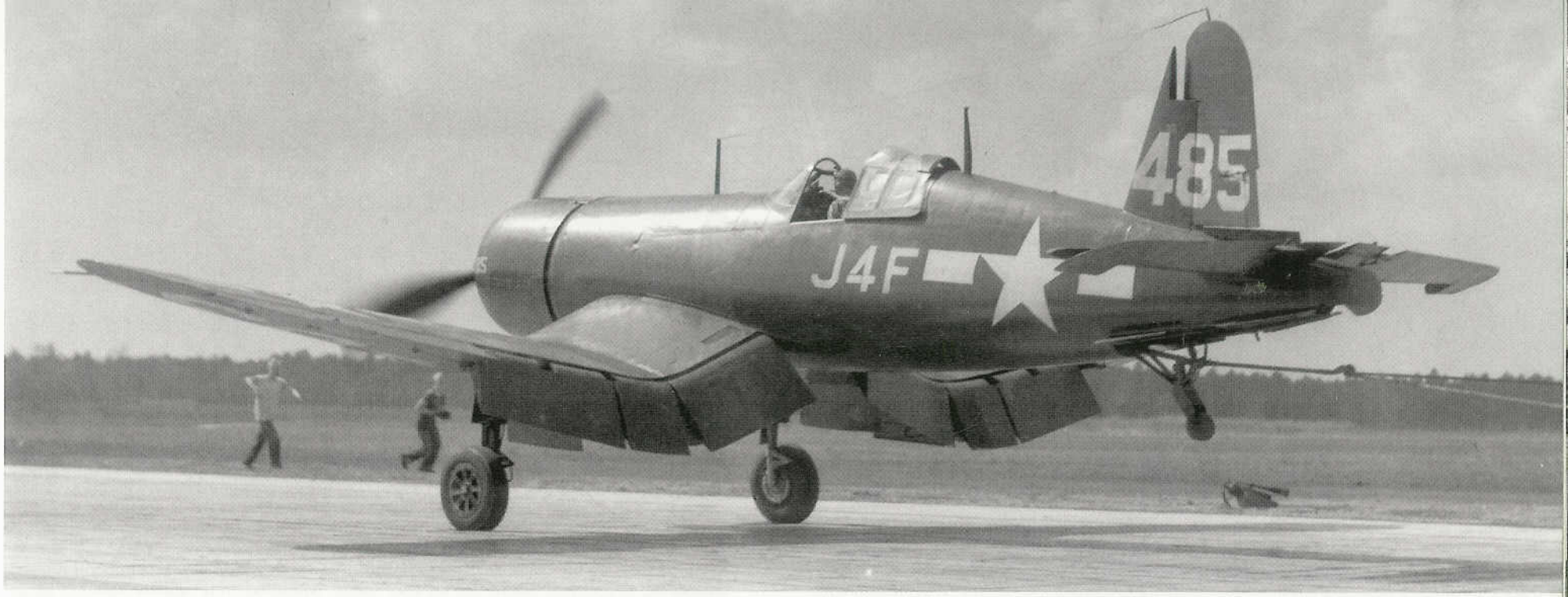
This Marine F4U-1 Corsair is having its six .50 caliber machine guns bore sighted on Guadalcanal during June of 1943. The lifting cradle was built of local coconut tree logs. The aircraft carried the side number five on the fuselage in White in front of the national insignia. (USMC)

This F4U-1 (BuNo 02435) of VMF-225, parked in a revetment on Vella LaVella was protected from damage during a Japanese bombing attack on 4 November 1943, that destroyed several SBD's parked in the open across the field. (National Archives via Dave Lucabaugh)

A Corsair of VMF-214 flares out for landing on the coral strip at Espirtu Santo on 11 September 1943. The squadron commander, "Pappy" Boington, flew this aircraft on several missions. (National Archives)

This F4U-1 (BuNo 02576) of VMF-222 was named Marine Dream. She ran off the runway on Bougainville on 13 December 1943, and ended up inverted in a drainage ditch. Thanks to quick action from fellow marines, the pilot escaped the crash unhurt. (USMC)

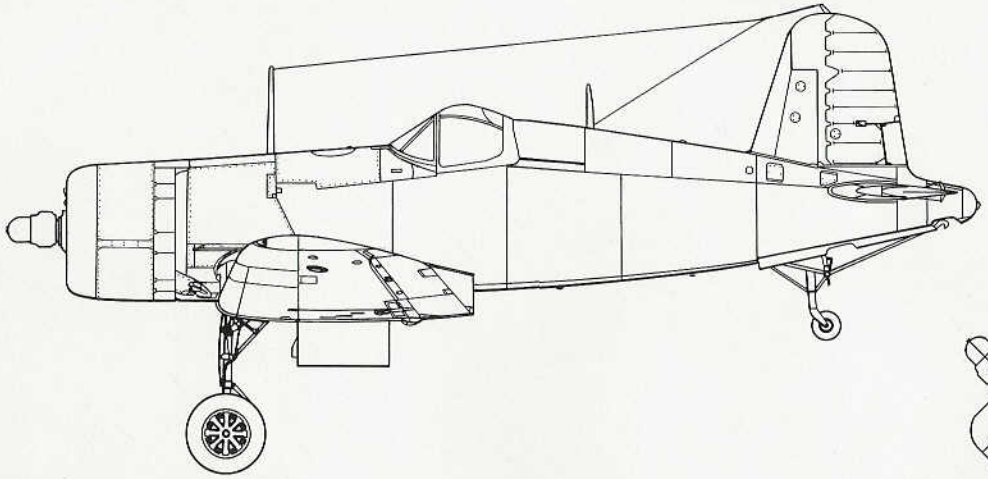
The F4U-1 was equipped with a thirteen foot Hamilton Standard three-blade propeller, the largest prop used on any Second World War fighter. This F4U-1 was assigned to VMF-124 on Guadalcanal during March of 1943. (Bob Esposito)

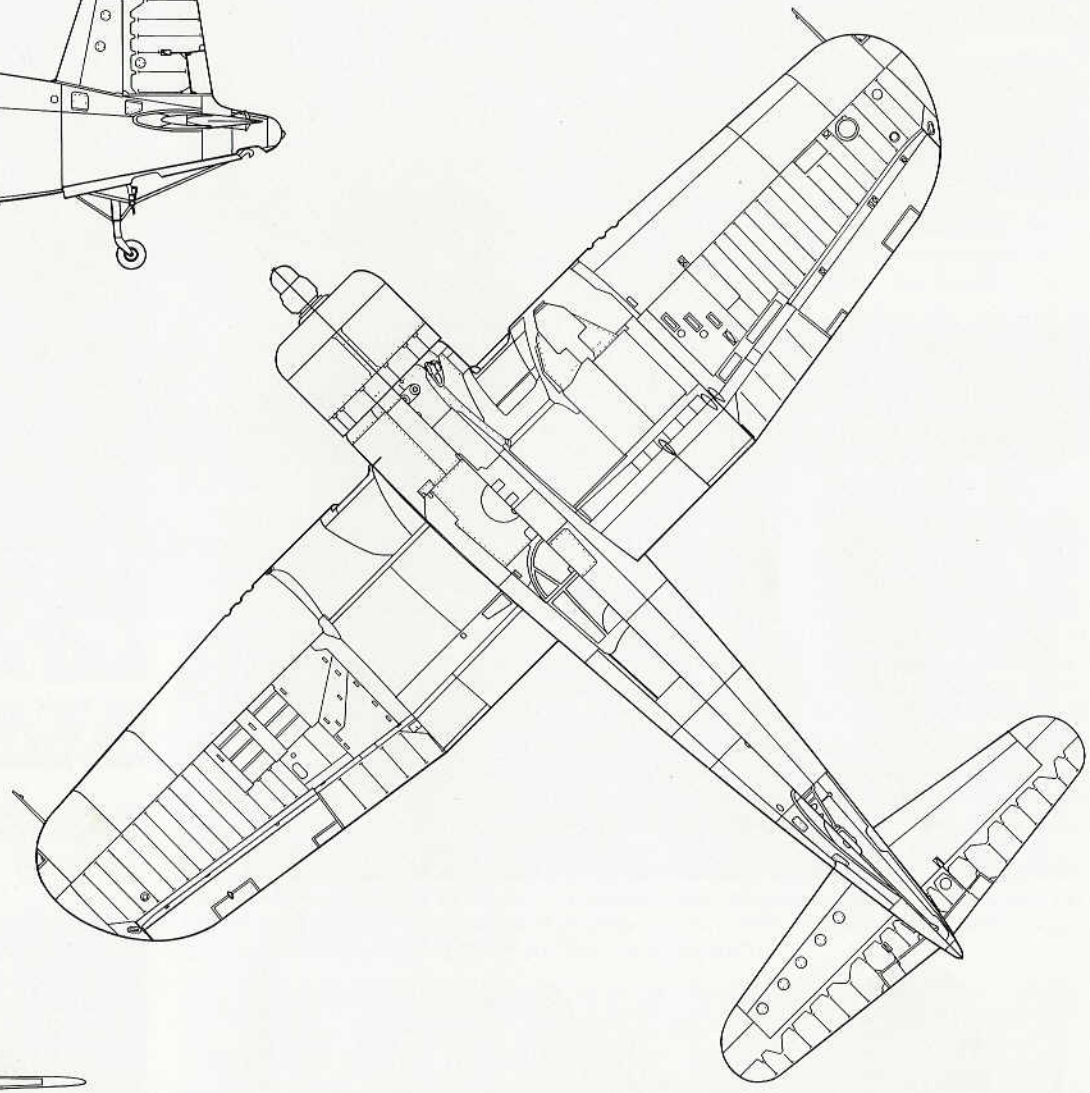


Some early production F4U-1s were returned from the South Pacific, refurbished and assigned to training units in the states. This F4U-1, tail number 485, was assigned to VF-OTU-4 (Operational Training Unit Four) and was engaged in practice carrier landings on the field at NAS Jacksonville, Florida on 17 February 1945. (National Archives)

F4U-1 (03804) of VOF-1 suffered an engine failure shortly after takeoff from NAS Atlantic City, New Jersey and crash landed at Brigantine Beach on 14 January 1944. The pilot made a gear down landing near the surf line and the Corsair suffered strike category damage and never flew again. (USN via Dave Lucabaugh)

This F4U-1 (02460) was modified by Vought to flight test the Pratt & Whitney R-4360 Wasp Major engine during 1944. This one-of-a-kind Corsair was equipped with a four bladed propeller and was the "grand-daddy" of the F2G series. (United Technologies)

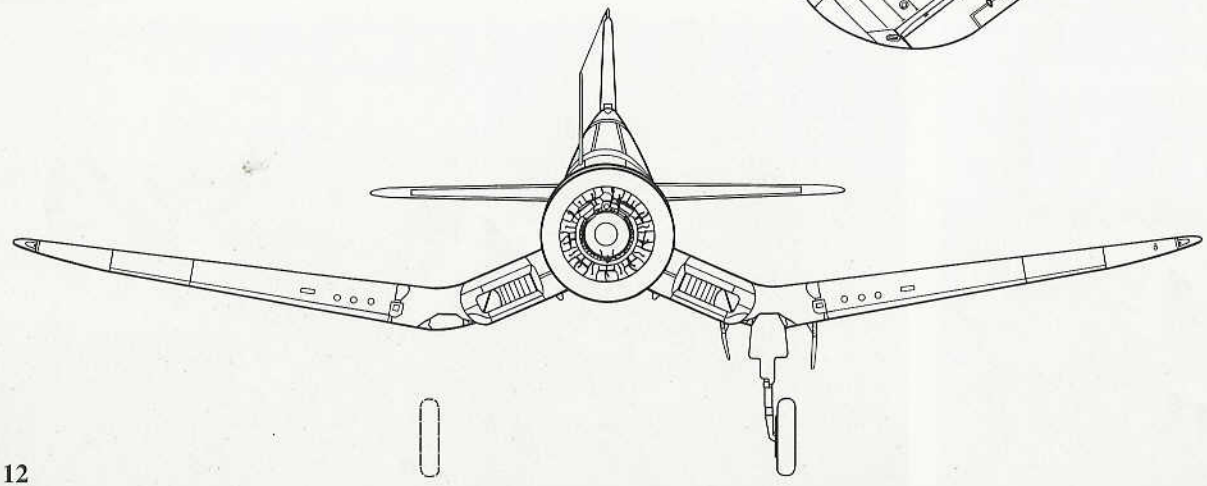


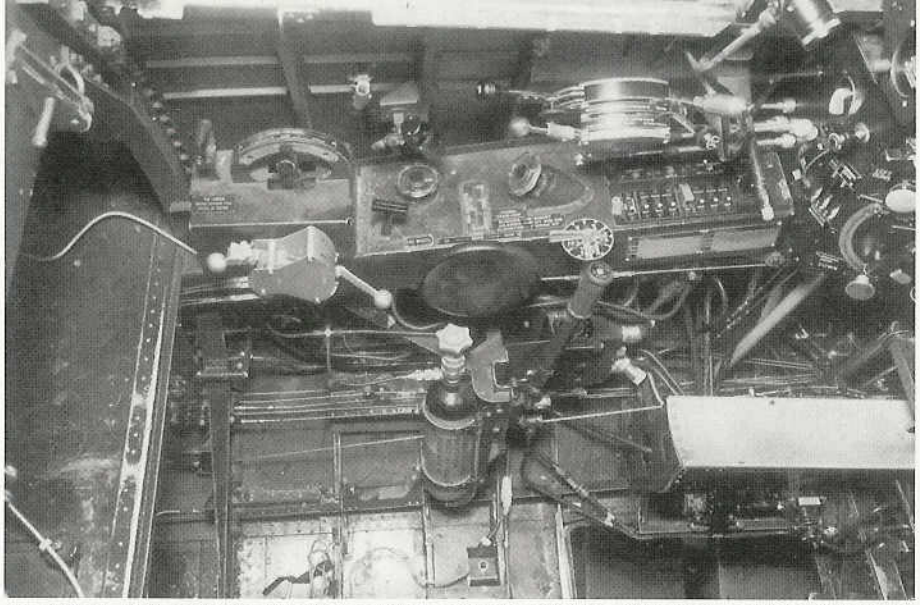


Specification
F4U-1 Corsair

Wingspan.....41 feet (12.49 m)
Length.....33 feet 4 inches (10.21 m)
Height.....15 feet 7 inches (4.72 m)
Empty Weight.....8,982 pounds (4,074 kg)
Maximum Weight.....10,500 pounds (4,762 kg)

Powerplant.....One 2,000 hp Pratt & Whitney R-2800-8W air-cooled engine
Armament.....Six .50 caliber machine guns.
Speed.....417 mph (181.8 kph)
Service Ceiling.....20,000 feet (6,096 m)
Range.....1,015 miles (1,633 km)
Crew.....One

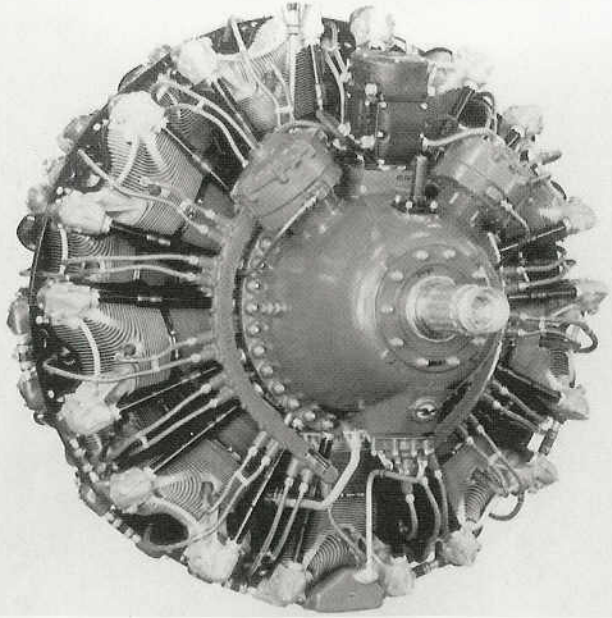


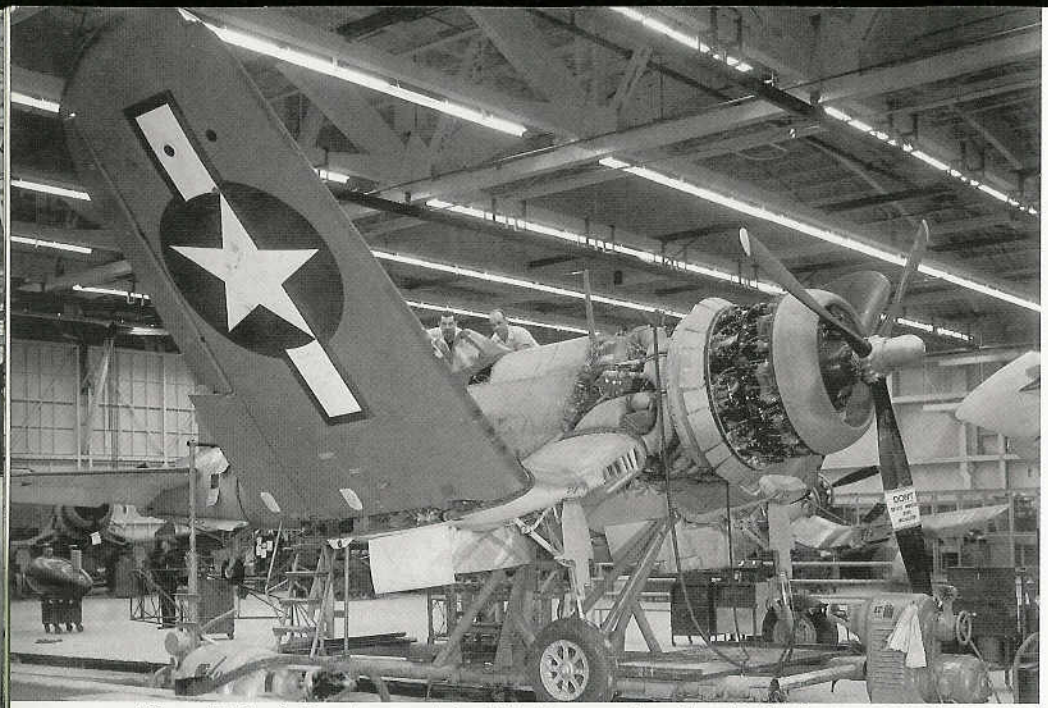


The F4U-1 port console showing cockpit controls, throttle, propeller controls, fuel mixture. The open area at left is the radio compartment. (Vought)

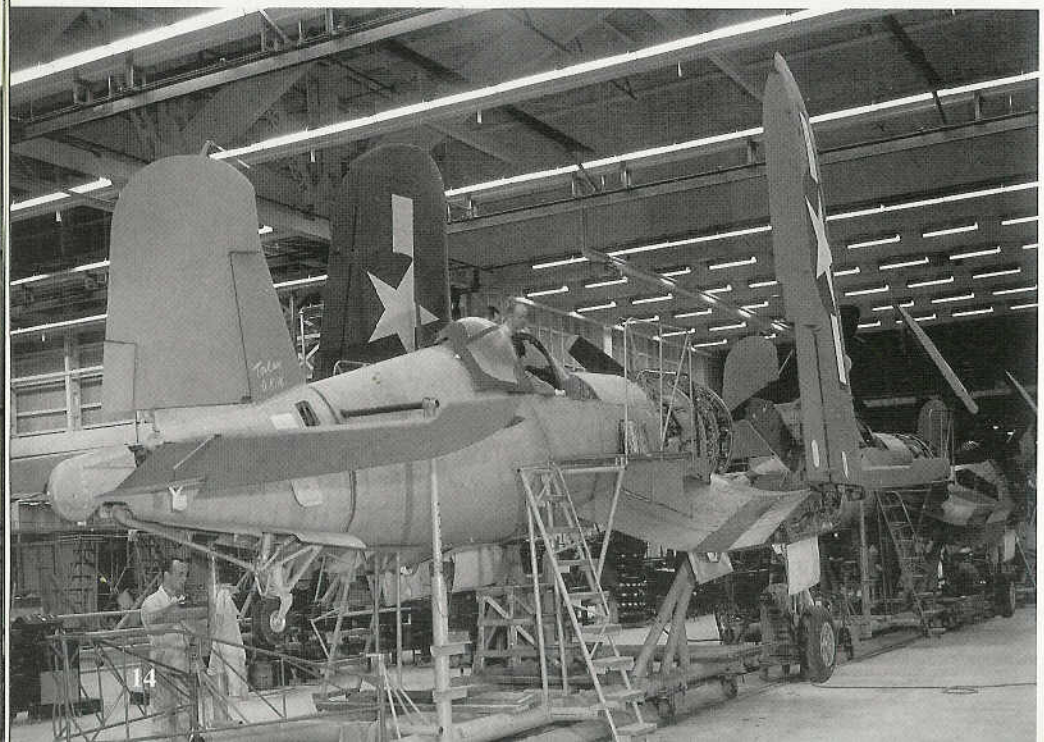
(Right) The F4U-1 main instrument panel, gun sight and side console. The F4U had no cockpit flooring and was open beneath the foot troughs. The stick and starboard rudder pedal are also visible. The cushioned rubber pad on top of the instrument panel was installed to minimize injury in the event of a crash. (Vought)

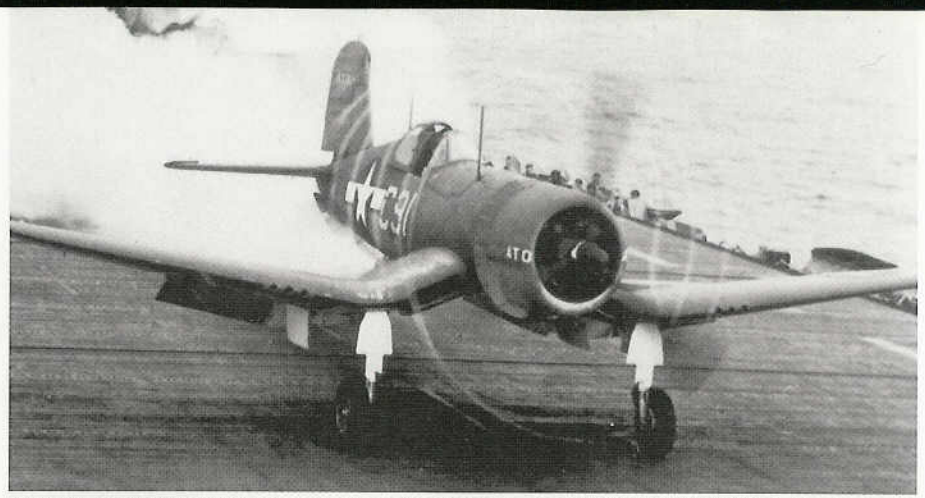
The Pratt & Whitney R-2800-8W engine was capable of producing over 2,000 hp giving the F4U-1 a top speed in excess of 415 mph. This powerful 18-cylinder, two row Wasp engine was "state-of-the-art" for the Second World War. (United Technologies)





(Above/Below) Nearly complete F4U-1A. s on the Vought final assembly line on 25 January 1944. While on the line the hydraulic wing fold was tested. The large Blue surround national insignia occupied most of the fabric covered outer wing panel. The arresting hook was installed at the factory although many individual squadrons removed them in the field to save weight. The fuselage was the last section to be painted. (Vought)

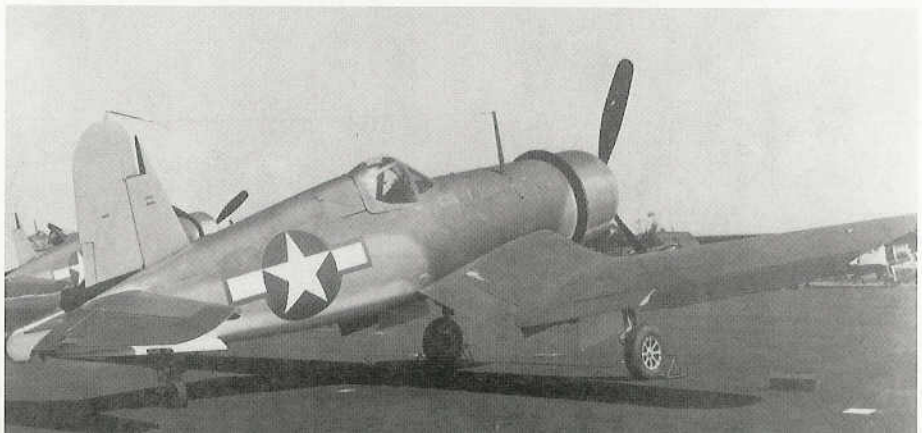




An F4U-1A (BuNo 56045) heads down the flight deck of USS ALTAHAMA during tests of the JATO installation carried out by CASU-14 during March of 1944. The fuselage side number, C91, was in Yellow. (National Archives)

A number of JATO tests were also conducted at NAS Anacostia, Virginia including this take off test on 7 September 1944. The bottles were fitted, one to each side of the fuselage, just behind the wing. Each JATO bottle provided thrust equal to 230 hp. (National Archives)

This F4U-1A was the sixth production Corsair. It was modified by Vought to be the first F4U fitted with the enlarged canopy. It greatly increased pilot visibility and soon replaced the birdcage canopy on the production line. (National Archives)

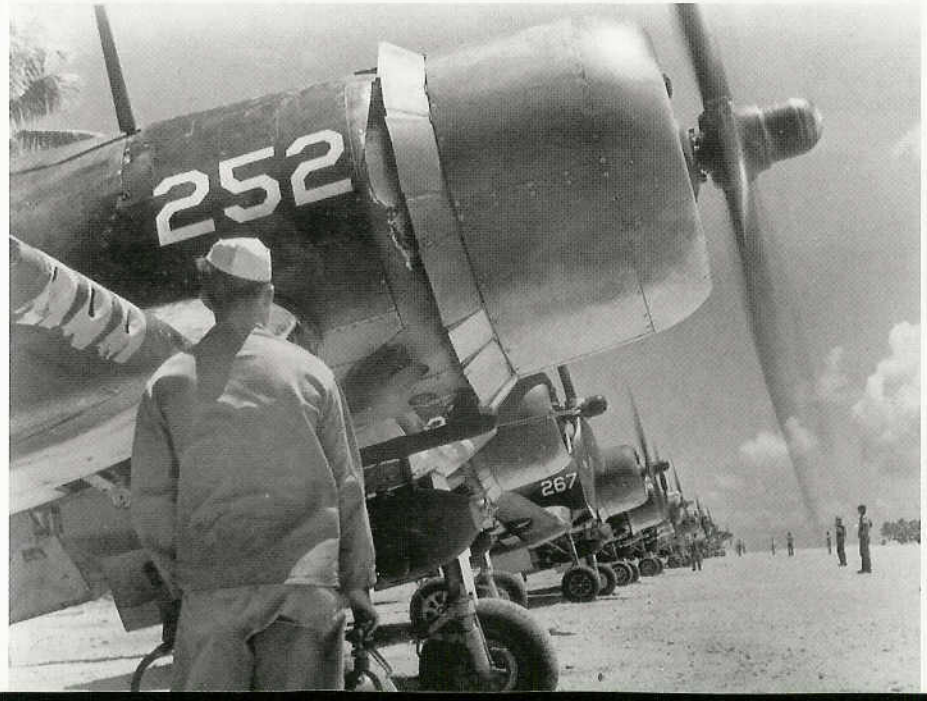


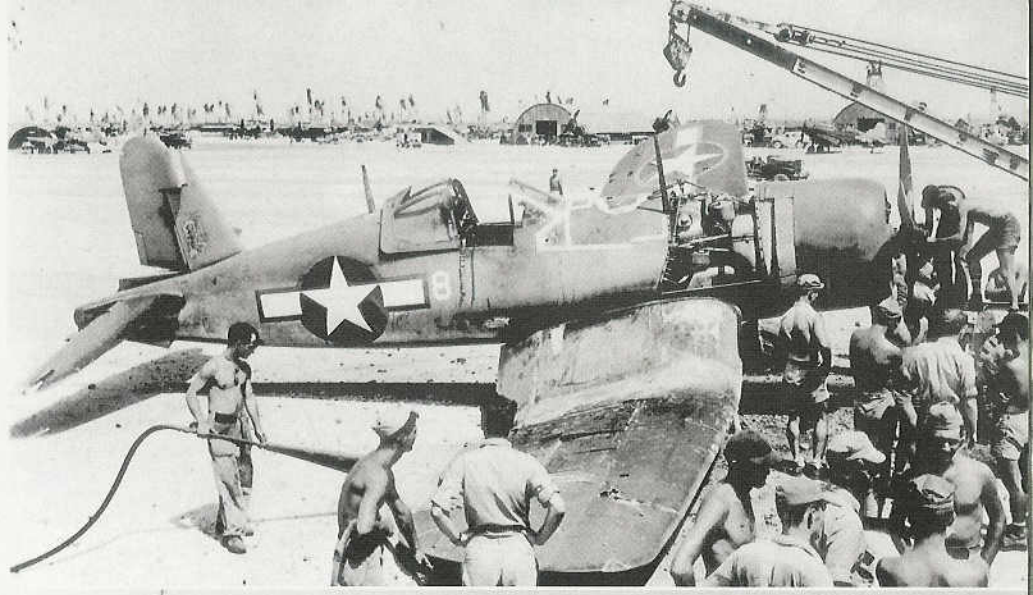
This F4U-1A carried the name *Grim Reaper* on the cowling in White. BuNo 49897 was assigned to VMF-217 at West Field on the island of Guam in September of 1944. The tip of the vertical stabilizer and horizontal stabilizers were trimmed in White. (B. B. Turnage)

(Above/Right) This Corsair, flown by Lieutenant Stout of VMF-422, made a crash landing after receiving battle damage on 18 May 1944. The aircraft had Red surround national insignia and had the aircraft number 8 on the fuselage in White. The aircraft carried a Vargas girl on the vertical fin. (Mark Syrkin)

(Right) A FG-1A (13993) of VMF-222 Flying Dueces was the background for this group pose with songwriter Irving Berlin (standing almost directly in front of the center of the star). This Corsair carried the name *MARGIE JACKIE on* the nose. (USMC)

F4U-1A and FG-1A Corsairs of VMF-224 on Majuro turn up prior to takeoff on a fighter-bomber mission on 19 September 1944. Each is loaded with a 500 pound bomb on a centerline Brewster bomb rack. The Corsair was the first fighter aircraft to be used in the fighter-bomber role during the Second World War. (National Archives)

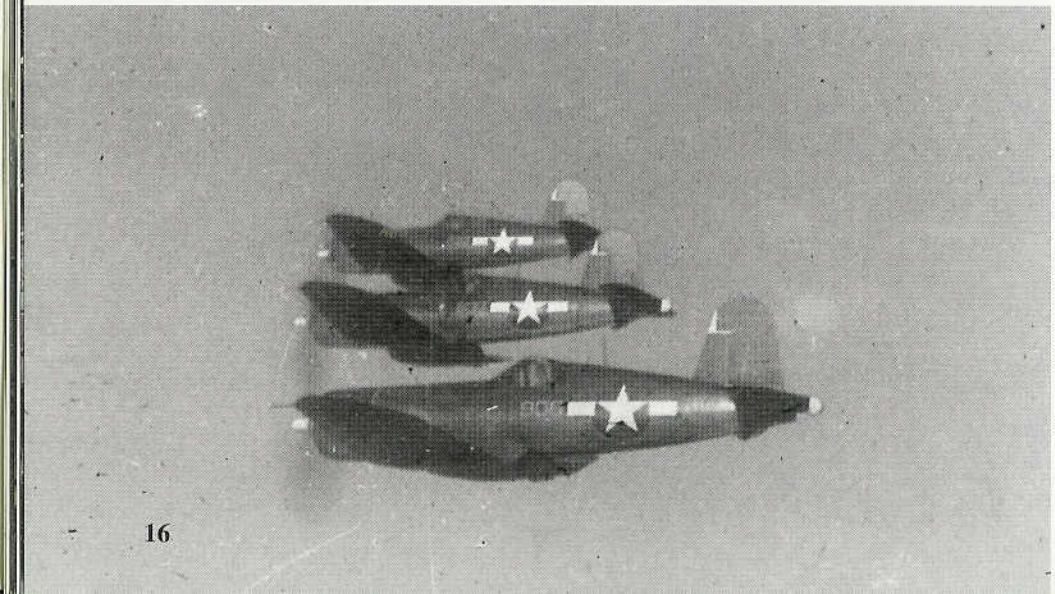


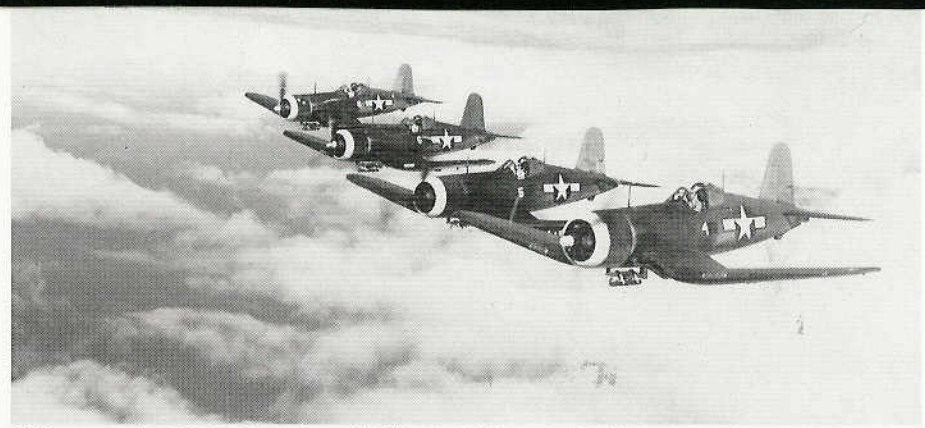


This Marine F4U-1A carried the number 302 on the fuselage in Black just forward of the national insignia. Fuselage numbers were usually in White or Yellow. The aircraft was on an escort mission for B-24s near Eniwetok during 1944. (Bill Isenberg via Wayne Smith)

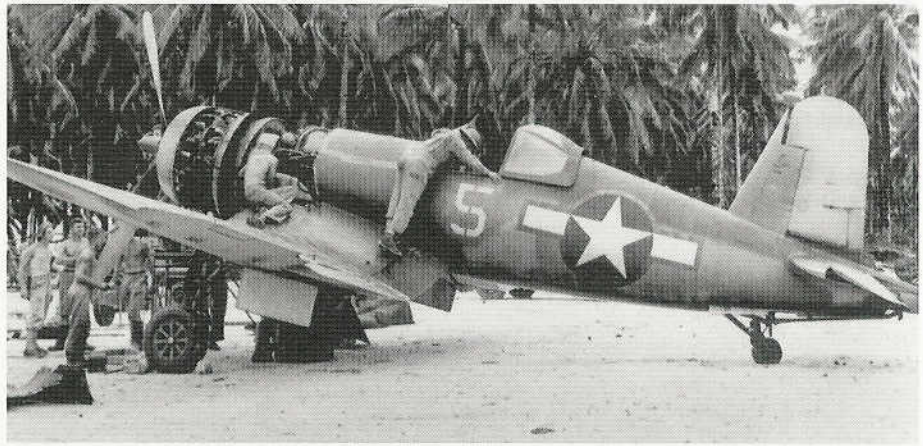
Bayou Baby was an F4U-1A (49850) of VMF-217 on Guam during September of 1944 named and flown by a pilot from Louisiana. The squadron insignia was carried on each side of the engine cowling. During the Second World War the Wild Hare squadron was credited with nineteen kills. This Corsair survived the war and was stricken from inventory on 21 January 1946. (B. B. Turnage)

A flight of three F4U-1A Corsairs of VMF-217 Wild Hares on a combat mission out of West Field on Guam during September of 1944. The F4U-1A at the bottom was BuNo 49906 which carried the fuselage numbers in Yellow. White trim was applied to the propeller boss, tail cone and tips of the vertical and horizontal stabilizer. (B.B. Turnage)





White nosed F4U-1A Corsairs of VMF-213 Hellhawks fly in echelon formation as they return from a fighter-bomber strike on 11 November 1944. Each Corsair is fitted with a Brewster bomb rack installed on the forward section of the fuselage. (USMC via Duane Kasulka)



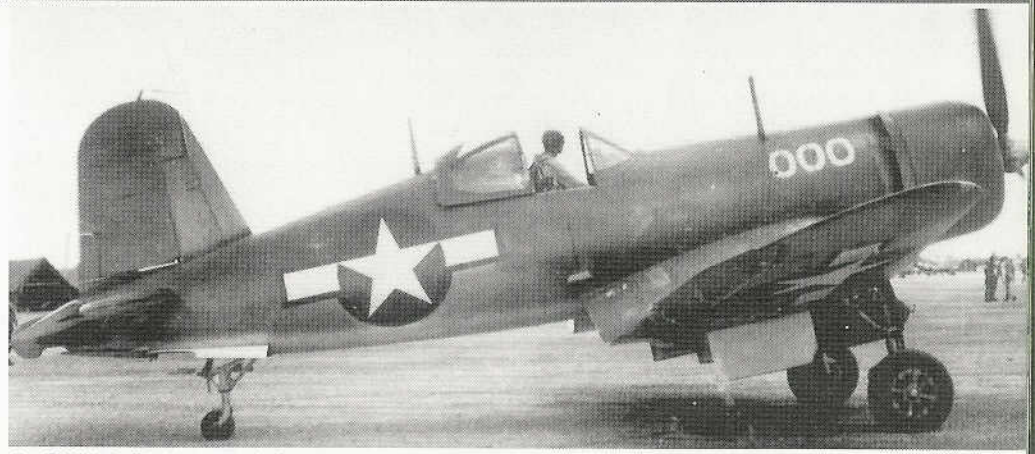
This F4U-1A (BuNo 17656) of VF-17 was flown by Lieutenant Junior Grade Tom Killifer who made a dead stick landing on Nissan Island after suffering engine failure during March of 1944. Killifer was credited with a total of four and a half kills during his wartime service. (National Archives)

This FG-1A was assigned to ABG-2 (Air Base Group Two) at NAS San Diego, California and participated in Project JOE, an attempt to set a transcontinental speed record on 22 May 1945. Bad weather toward the end of the flight prevented a successful record flight. The fin and rudder carried Blue and White checks. (Goodyear)

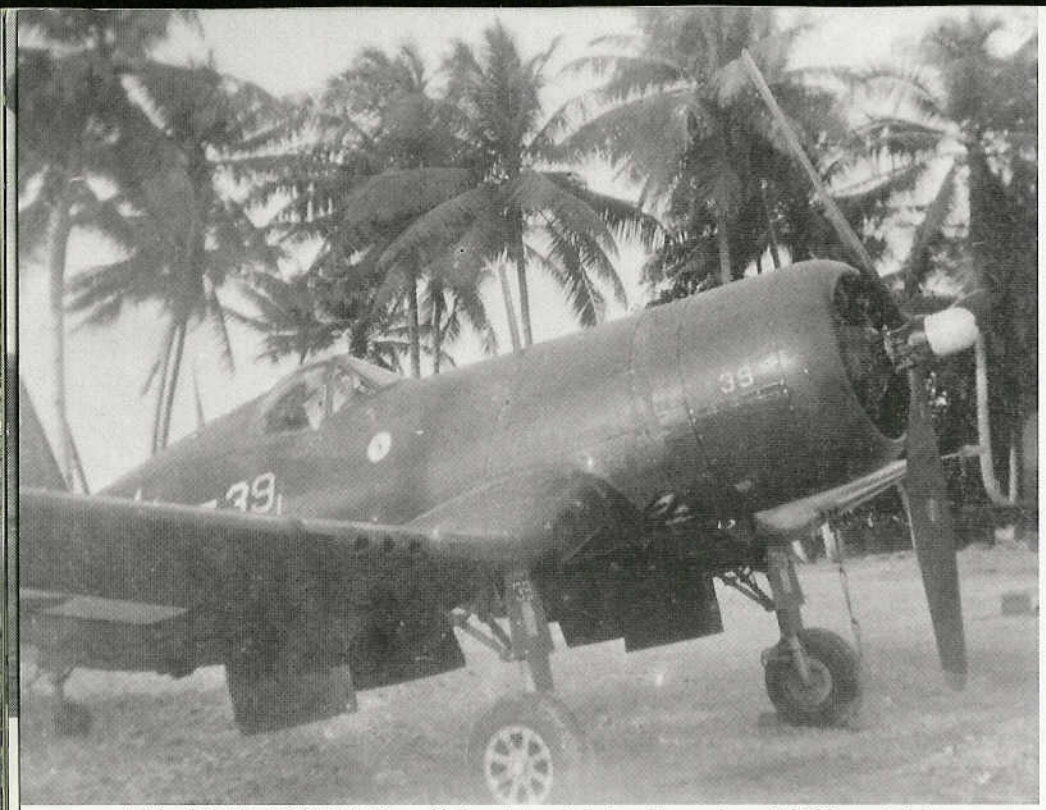
F4U-1As of VMF-115 carried colorful Blue and White checkerboard markings on the nose, tail and tail cone and the insignia of "Joe's Jokers" on the engine cowling. These Corsairs participated in operations covering the invasion of the Philippine Islands during December of 1944. The aircraft in the foreground is BuNo 50007. (USMC via Bob Lawson/The Hook)

(Right) Operating from Roi/Namur, this F4U-1A Corsair (BuNo 49845) side number "000" of VMF-224 prepares to head out on a fighter bomber mission armed with a 1,000 pound bomb under the fuselage on 2 September 1944. The target for this Marine Corsair was a Japanese installation on Taroa Island, Maloelap. (W.E. Scarborough)

As the ground crew pulls the wheel chocks, FG-1A (BuNo 14254) unfolded its wings prior to an acceptance flight from the Goodyear factory at Akron, Ohio on 16 May 1944. This Corsair saw combat with VMF-212 and also served with SEVRON-14. It survived the war and was finally retired on 31 December 1945. (Goodyear via Nick Hauprich)



An F4U-1A (BuNo 17891) Corsair of VMF-214 Blacksheep lands on the crushed coral runway of Barakoma Field on Vella LaVella, just off Empress Agusta Bay on 20 January 1944. (National Archives)



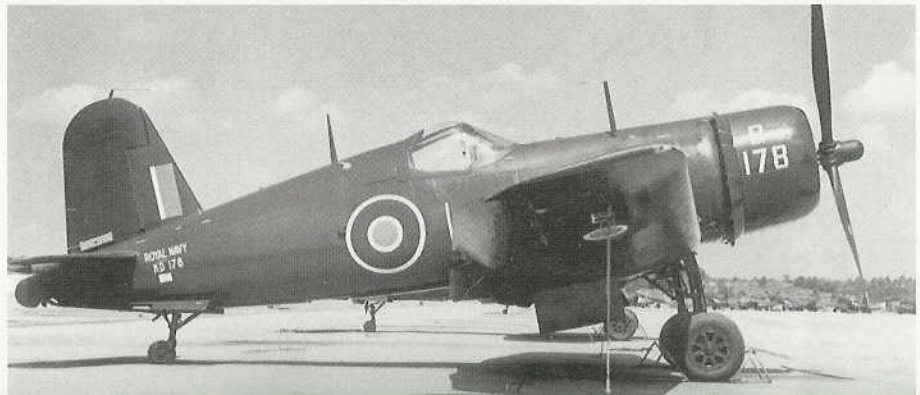
This FG-1A of VMBF-331 on Majuro Island during November of 1944 carried the number 39 on the fuselage and landing gear/dive brake doors. The squadron insignia was carried beneath the cockpit on both sides of the fuselage. (Bob Stuckey)

(Right) This F4U-1A (BuNo 50283) of VF-85 was salvaged by a crane after making a water landing near NAS Atlantic City, New Jersey on 28 May 1944 . The pilot escaped serious injury but the Corsair suffered strike damage and never flew again. (USN via Larry Webster)

Piloted by Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, a heavily loaded F4U-1A of VMF-224 takes off with three belly fuel tanks from Roi/Namur, Kwajelein Atoll during September of 1944. The centerline tank carried aviation fuel while the remaining two drop tanks were loaded with napalm. (W. E. Scarborough)

This Brewster-built F3A-1 (BuNo 11289) was assigned to the Headquarters Squadron of MAG-91 at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina during May of 1945. The Corsair carried the code H-75 with GROUP COMMANDER stenciled in White on the fuselage. Brewster-built Corsairs served primarily as training aircraft and few, if any, were used in combat. ((USMC via Bob Lawson/The Hook)

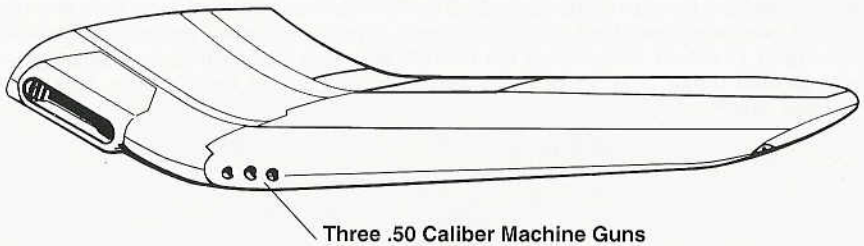
This Goodyear FG-1A (BuNo 14609/KD-178), parked on the Goodyear factory ramp at Akron, Ohio on 8 July 1944, was painted overall Gloss Sea Blue and carried the markings of the British Royal Navy. Royal Navy Corsairs had eight inches clipped off the wingtips to allow the aircraft to fit in the hangar decks of British carriers. (Goodyear via Nick Hauprich)



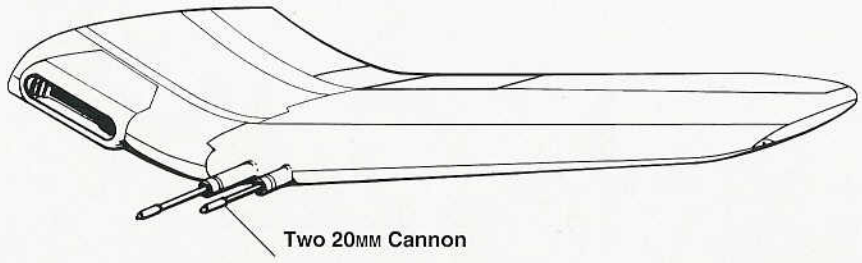
This Red nosed Corsair was on the ramp at Yokosuka, Japan in September of 1945, was one of 200 F4U-1C cannon armed Corsairs manufactured by Vought. BuNo 82450 carried the fuselage code N-11 and was assigned to VMF-311. (Clay Jansson)

Internal Armament

F4U-1A

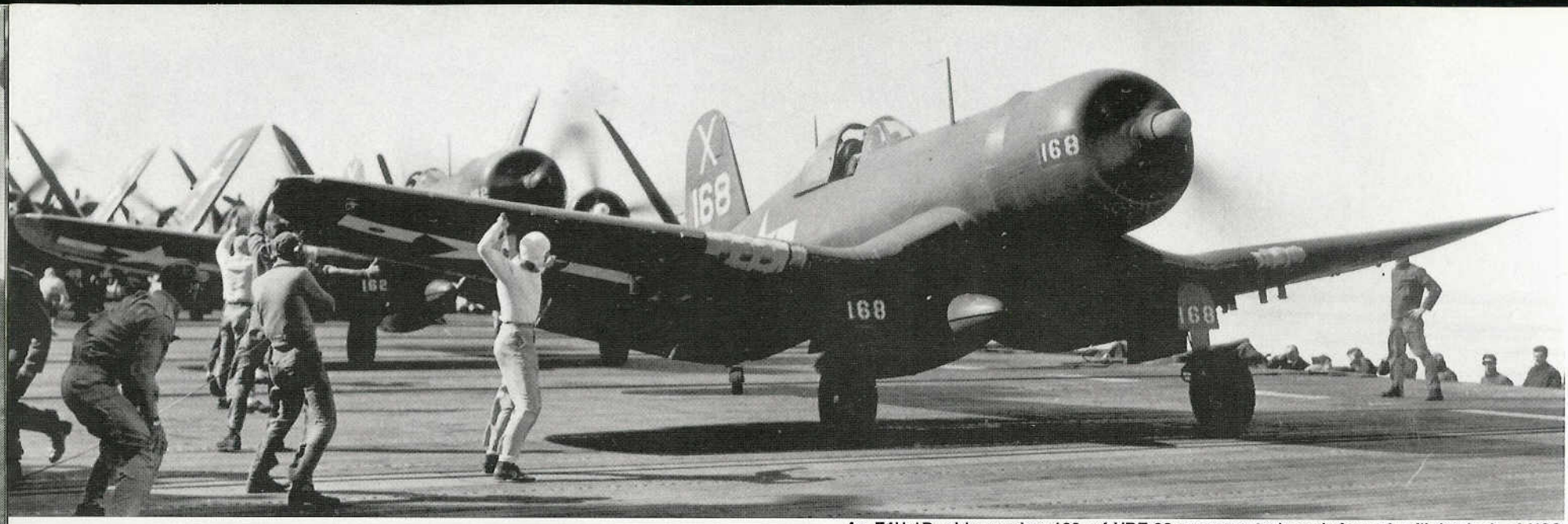


F4U-1C



A F4U-1C (BuNo 80452) of VMF-311 was being refueled on Iwo Jima on 18 April 1945 during its long flight to Okinawa and the beginning of its combat tour. Both F4U-1Cs still carried the large White ferry numbers on the engine cowling. (Clay Jansson)

A pair of cannon armed F4U-1Cs, along with other Corsairs of VMF-311 Hells Bell's, prepare to take off from Yontan Airfield on the Island of Okinawa to strike Japanese targets during May of 1945. (USMC)

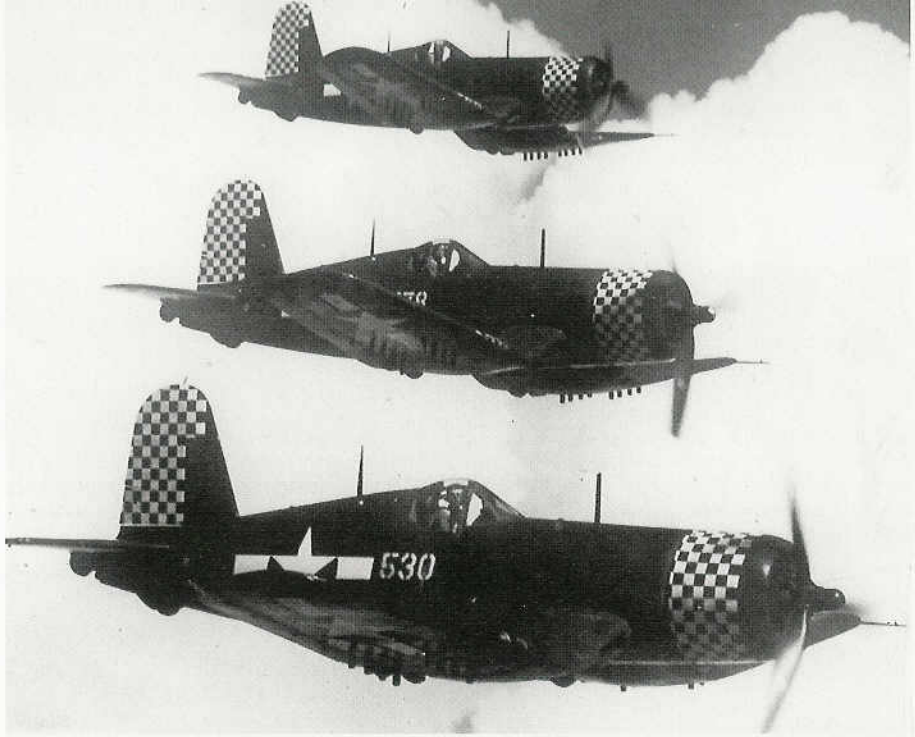


An F4U-1D, side number 168, of VBF-86 prepares to launch from the flight deck of USS WASP during October of 1945. This Corsair carried the Glossy Sea Blue paint scheme with White lettering. The small White number 168 on the nose was stenciled on a Black rectangle. (National Archives)

Fully loaded with napalm tanks and eight five inch HVAR rockets, an F4U-1D, side number 31, of VMF-323 lines up for an attack on Japanese forces on the mountain peak of Kushi Take, in Central Okinawa on 15 June 1945. (USMC)

(Left) Flying over Iwo Jima, this FG-1D (BuNo 88231) of the 2nd MAW prepares to land during July of 1945. The Goodyear-built Corsair suffered from a chronic serious oil leak and was never flown in combat. It sat out the war isolated at the end of the field. (Bill Derby)

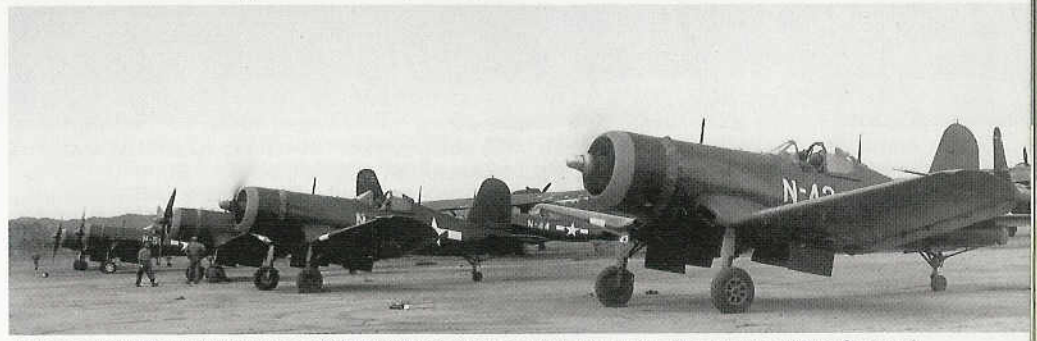
F4U-1Ds of VF-5 line the flight deck of USS FRANKLIN prior to a strike. This was one of the last missions flown from "Big Ben" since Japanese bombs dropped on her on the morning of 19 March 1945 turned the FRANKLIN into a blazing inferno. Although damaged beyond repair, she did not sink and eventually sailed back to New York Harbor. (National Archives)



Trimmed with Blue and White checkerboards on the nose and rudder, F4U-1Ds of VMF-312 fly in tight formation back to Okinawa during June 1945. During service in the Second World War, VMF-312 was credited with fifty-nine and a half kills. Two of these three Corsairs were fitted with the older style braced canopies. (USMC)

F4U-1D and FG-1D Corsairs of VBF-6 line the forward flight deck of USS HANCOCK. These Corsairs took part in raids against the Japanese home islands during March of 1945. In addition to eight five inch rockets, the Corsair could carry up to three drop tanks for long range strikes. (National Archives)

Loaded with two 500 pound bombs and eight five inch HVAR rockets, F4U-1D Corsairs of VMF-441 taxi for takeoff from their Yontan base on Okinawa on 15 April 1945. The Black Jack squadron was credited with forty-nine kills and was involved extensively in ground attack and close air support missions. (USMC)

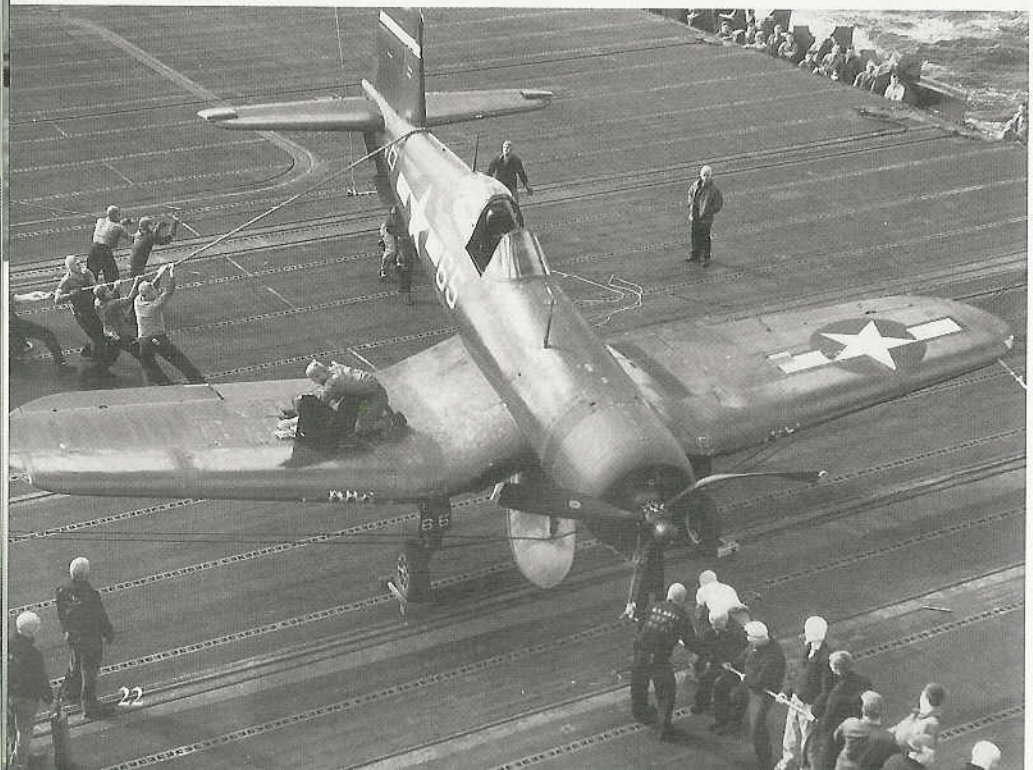


Blue-nosed F4U-1D Corsairs of VMF-441 continued to serve after the close of the Second World War. Based in Japan at Marine Air Base Yokosuka, these Corsairs are warmed up before departing on a surveillance hop over the island during September of 1945. (USMC)

This F4U-1D (BuNo 57574) of VMF-211 had its eight underwing rocket launch stubs removed. Under the primitive field conditions at Zamboanga, Mindanao in the Philippines during July of 1945, stones were used for wheel chocks. (Gene Sommerich)

After landing, a F4U-1D of VBF-83 folds its wings and taxies forward to join other AG-83 Corsairs and Hellcats aboard USS ESSEX during the Spring of 1945. CV-9 was the first fast carrier to deploy the Corsair with three squadrons of F4U-1D/FG-1D aircraft assigned to VBF-83, VMF-124 and VMF-213. (Paul Madden/USS ESSEX CV-9)

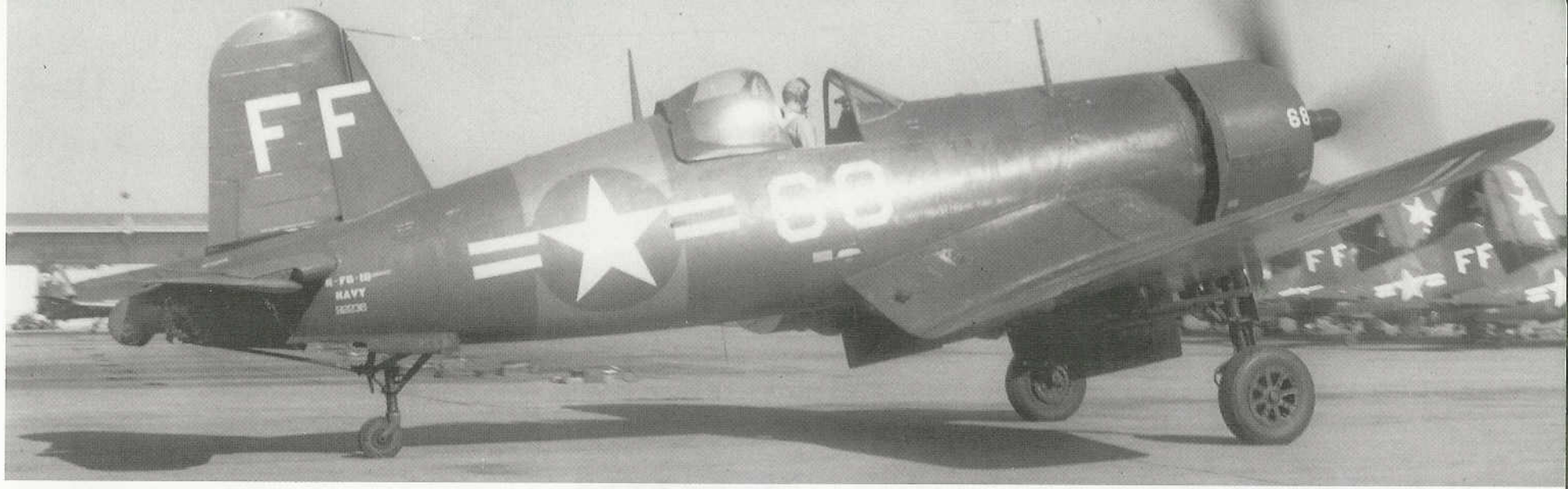
A Marine F4U-1D of VMF-124/213 tangled with the flight deck wires while coming aboard USS ESSEX during the Spring of 1945. Damage was limited to a bent propeller and a torn drop tank mount. This Corsair was a part of Air Group Eighty Three. (Paul Madden/USS ESSEX CV-9)



A F4U-1D , side number 182, of VBF-83 plows through heavy ocean spray while taking off from USS ESSEX during rough weather. The pilot was holding right rudder to counteract the torque of the 2,000 hp P&W R-2800-18W engine and successfully flew off the deck. (Paul Madden/USS ESSEX CV-9)

This F4U-1D, side number 228, took a wave-off while attempting to come aboard USS ESSEX during August of 1945. Late in the war, geometric markings gave way to letter codes to identify Air Groups and "F" was assigned to CV-9. This Corsair carried the name ALTHEA on the nose in Yellow as was the aircraft side number. (Paul Madden/USS ESSEX CV-9)

This VBF-94 F4U-1D (BuNo 57093) hit five parked aircraft while landing aboard USS PRINCE WILLIAM and careened off them leaving the port side of the flight deck on 25 February 1945. The Corsair ended up inverted in the sea and quickly sank. (National Archives)



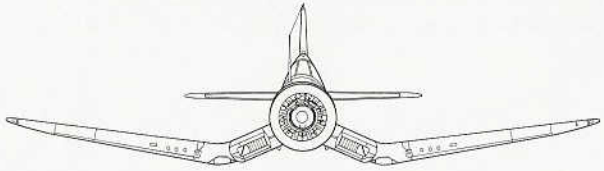
This FG-1D (BuNo 92236) was assigned to the Naval Air Reserves at NAS Oakland, California during October of 1948. The Corsair carried a wide International Orange band around the rear portion of the fuselage, denoting it as a Reserve aircraft. Goodyear produced a total of 1,997 FG-1D Corsairs. (Larry Smalley)

(Left) Ed Baur of VMF-232 was at the controls of FG-1D, side number 55, as it flew over the southern shore of Long Island. This Corsair was assigned to the Naval Air Reserve Unit stationed at NAS New York during 1949.

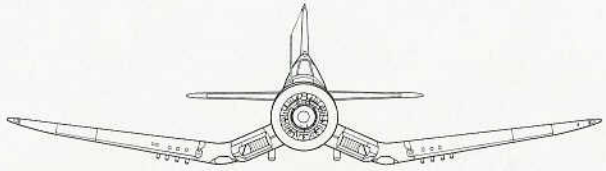
A Goodyear-built FG-1D (BuNo 92457) assigned to the Naval Air Reserve training unit at NAS New Orleans during 1948. The White X on the fin was the station code for NAS New Orleans and the air station emblem was located on the fuselage just forward of the cockpit. (Bill Crimmins)

Underwing Armament

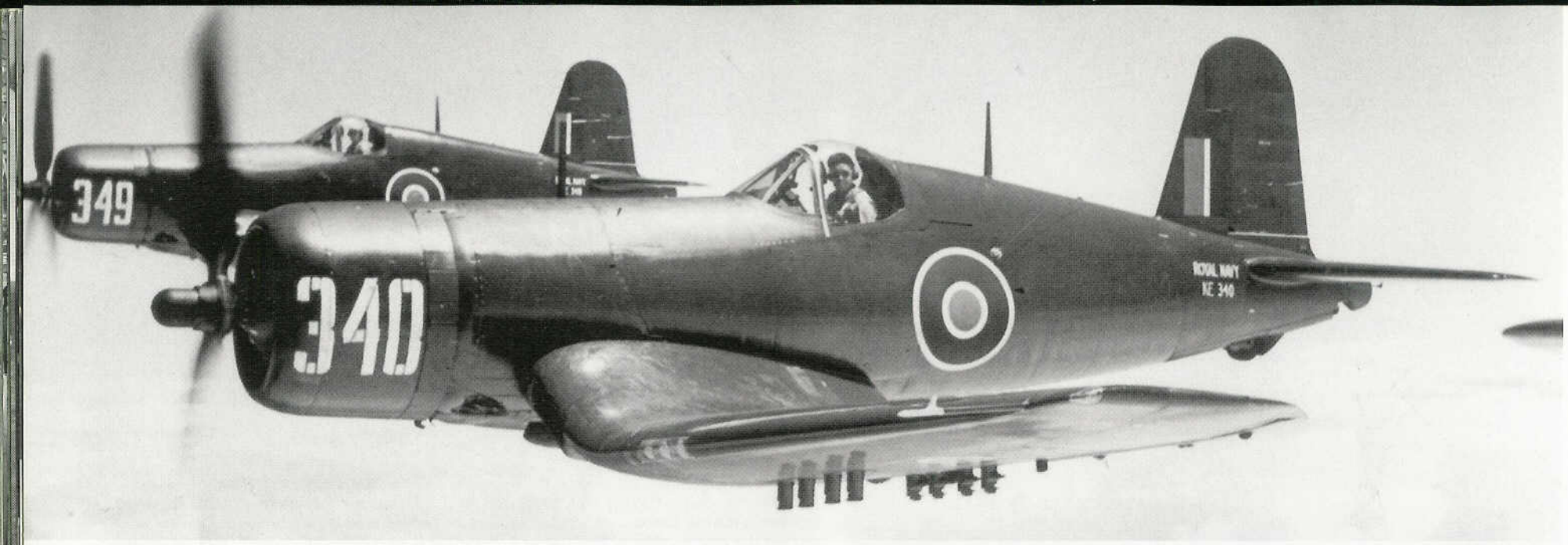
F4U-1A



F4U-1D



Four, Five Inch Rocket Launcher Stubs And One Plyon, Each Wing



A pair of British FG-1Ds KE-340 (BuNo 92146) and KE-349 (BuNo 92425) fly over the Ohio countryside during flight testing on 3 July 1945. These factory fresh Corsairs did not see combat due to their late arrival at the close of the war. A flat overspray was applied to the top of the Gloss Sea Blue fuselage to act as an anti-glare panel. (Goodyear via Nick Hauprich)

(Right) This FG-1D (BuNo 92629) was one of a small number of Corsairs that were made available to El Salvador. Late in their service lives the aircraft were given a camouflage paint scheme, although the Yellow band around the fuselage compromised the camouflage. The FG-1D made its way back to the U.S. during September of 1975 and was registered as N62290. Refurbished and repainted, the Corsair now appears on the warbird airshow circuit. (Bob Stuckey)

This F4U-1D Corsair airframe was modified by Vought to a two seat configuration during 1945. Arriving too late to be of any practical value to the war effort, the modification never went into production or service use. (Vought via Art Schoeni)

This FG-1D (BuNo 88357/NZ5649) carried the aircraft side number 49 and belonged to No 14 Squadron Royal New Zealand Air Force. The unit was based at Honeda Airport, Tokyo, Japan on 6 December 1946 as part of the occupation forces. (Dave Lucabaugh)

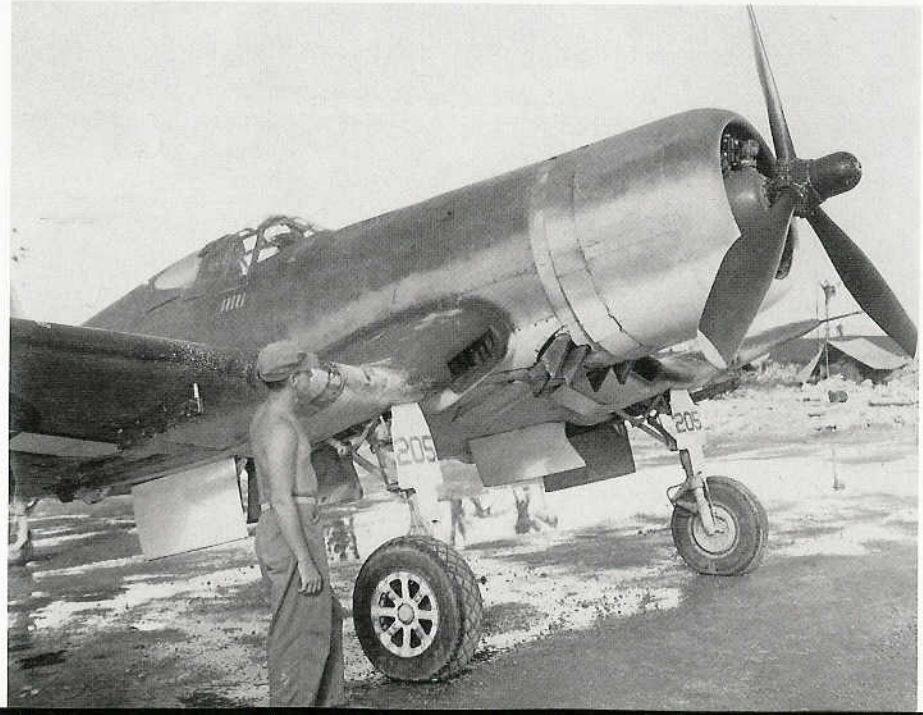
F4U-2

In November of 1941 the U.S. Navy expressed an interest in a night interceptor variant of the Corsair. Originally, the Bureau of Aeronautics (BuAer) suggested that fifty Corsairs be pulled from the Vought production line and sent to the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia for modification to the night fighter configuration. Thirty-two Corsairs were actually sent to NAF for conversion, all of which were Vought-produced Birdcage F4U-1s. The NAF fitted an air intercept radar radome on the starboard wing and deleted the outboard .50 caliber gun installation to help balance the weight of the radome and its contents.

NAS Quonset Point made the final adjustments to the radar and associated equipment. Cockpit changes included the addition of the radar transmitter and receiver in the radio compartment and the installation of a radio altimeter system. Externally, some minor changes were made in the antenna arrangement. Armor plating was added for the radio compartment and a small generator airscoop was installed on the starboard side of the fuselage forward of the cockpit. An additional two F4U-1As were modified in the field by VMF(N)-532 to bring the total number of F4U-2s to thirty-four. All of the night fighter Corsairs had their exhaust stubs modified by elongating them to minimize the exhaust flame in order to help preserve the pilot's night vision.

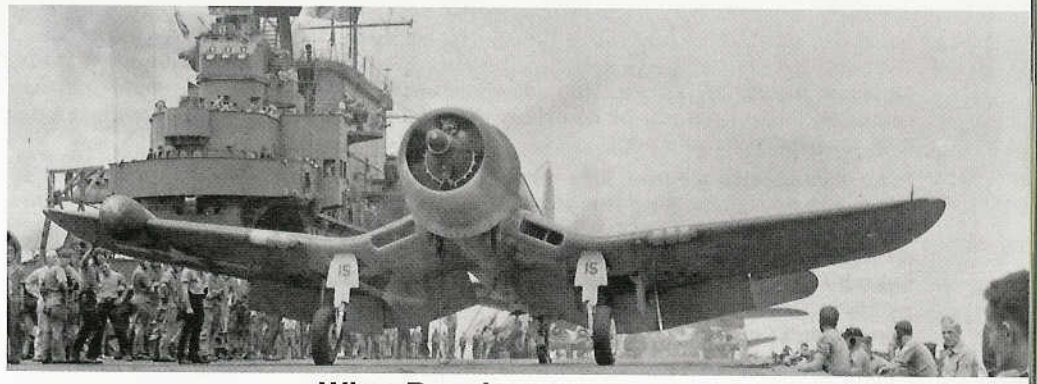
Only three squadrons flew the F4U-2 Corsair night fighter. VMF(N)-532, VF(N)-75 and VF(N)-101. These aircraft were used from carriers as well as land bases and pioneered night fighter tactics in the Second World War.

This F4U-2, side number 205, of VMF(N)-532 was parked on a muddy ramp at Orote Field, Guam. The F4U-2 featured exhaust flame dampners which were installed to minimize glare and protect the pilot's night vision. This Corsair was used for night combat air patrol during September of 1944. (USMC)



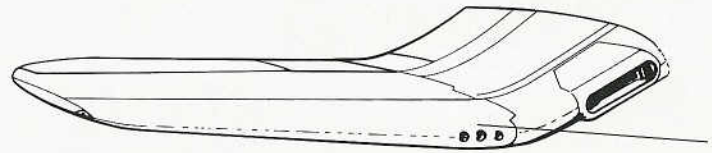
Held in a flight attitude position, this F4U-2 (BuNo 3201) was having its guns boresighted. The Corsair was assigned to VMF(N)-532 at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina during late 1943 and was flown by Major Everett Vaughan, commander of the squadron. (W. F. Gemeinhardt Collection)

This F4U-2, side number 15, of VF(N)-101 was ready for launch from the port catapult of USS ENTERPRISE during late January of 1944 . This squadron had the distinction of being the first Navy night fighter squadron to be assigned to a carrier. During its six month tour of combat duty; VF(N)-101 was credited with five kills. (National Archives)



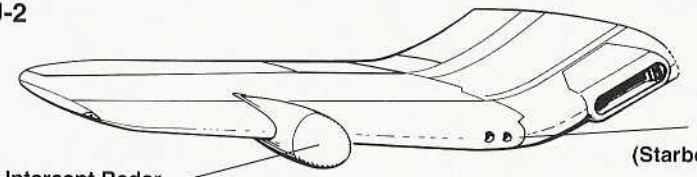
Wing Development

F4U-1/1A/1D



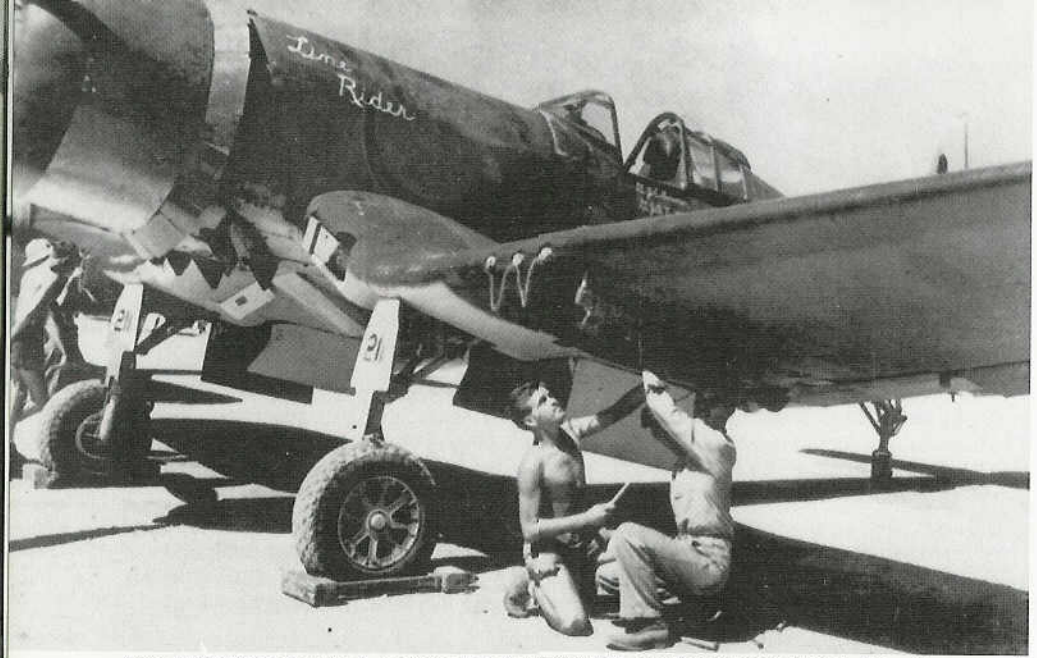
Three .50 Caliber Machine Guns

F4U-2



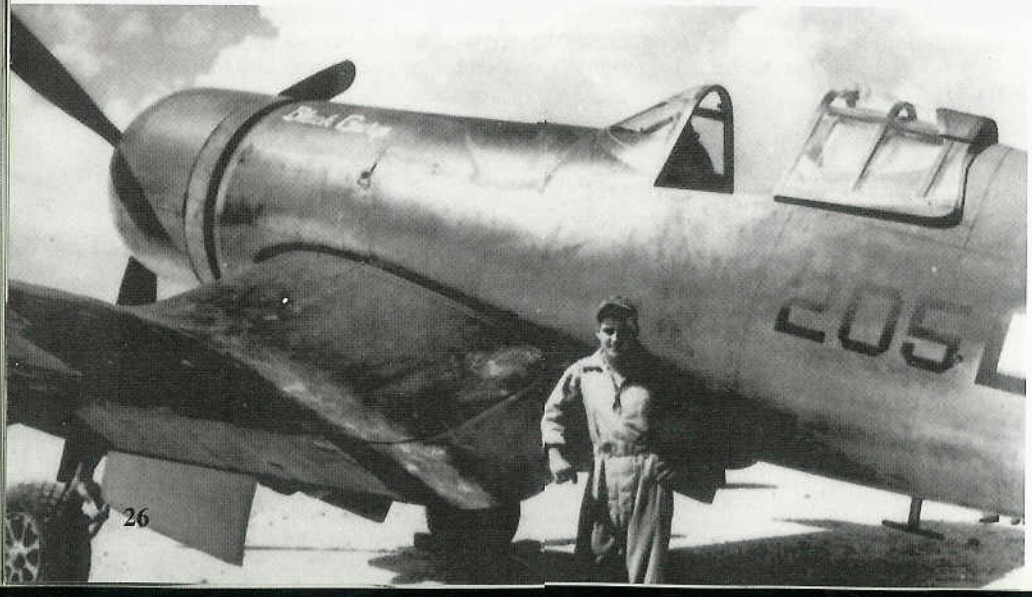
Two .50 Caliber Machine Guns (Starboard Wing Only)

Air Intercept Radar Radome



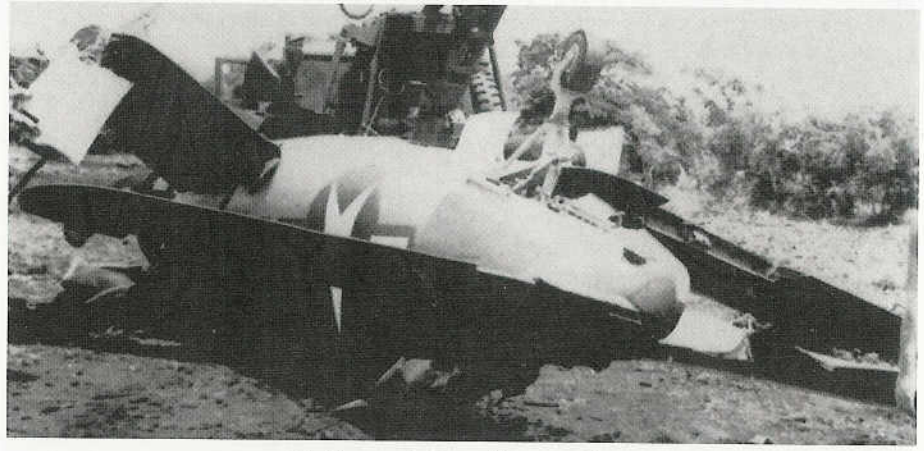
Line Rider was a F4U-2 assigned to VMF(N)-532 on Roi Island during the Summer of 1944 and flown alternately by Lieutenant Joel Bonner and Lieutenant John Tuttle. Squadron mechanics were making adjustments on the port bomb rack while ordnance personnel inspect the pair of .50 caliber machine guns installed in the starboard wing. (W.F. Gemeinhardt Collection)

Black George was a F4U-2, side number 205, assigned to VMF(N)-532 and flown by Lieutenant Paul Dolhoude. This night fighter squadron had recently arrived on Tarawa and was used for night combat air patrol over the island during February of 1944 to ward off Japanese night attacks. Lone enemy aircraft would often fly over the island at night to keep U.S. troops from sleeping. These intruders were often referred to as "washing machine Charlies" because of the monotonous sound of their engines. (W.F. Gemeinhardt Collection)



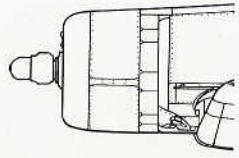
A F4U-2, side number 4, of VF (N)-75, the Navy's first night fighter squadron, parked on Torokina Field on Bougainville on 10 January 1944. The wide White tape on the fuselage forward of the windscreen was used to seal small leaks coming from the fuel cell. The early roundel style national insignia had been updated by the addition of two White bars. (USMC)

Returning from a night bombing raid on Japanese installations during August of 1944, Lieutenant Ed Sovik's F4U-2, side number 204, was hit by anti-aircraft fire and suffered hydraulic line damage. As Sovik attempted to land on Saipan only one main landing gear came down and, in the resulting crash landing, the Corsair came to rest on its back. The F4U-2 was destroyed but Sovik suffered only minor injuries. (W.F. Gemeinhardt Collection)

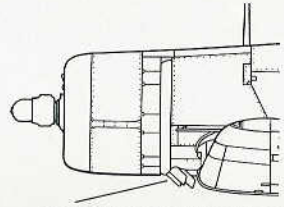


Exhaust Configuration

F4U-1

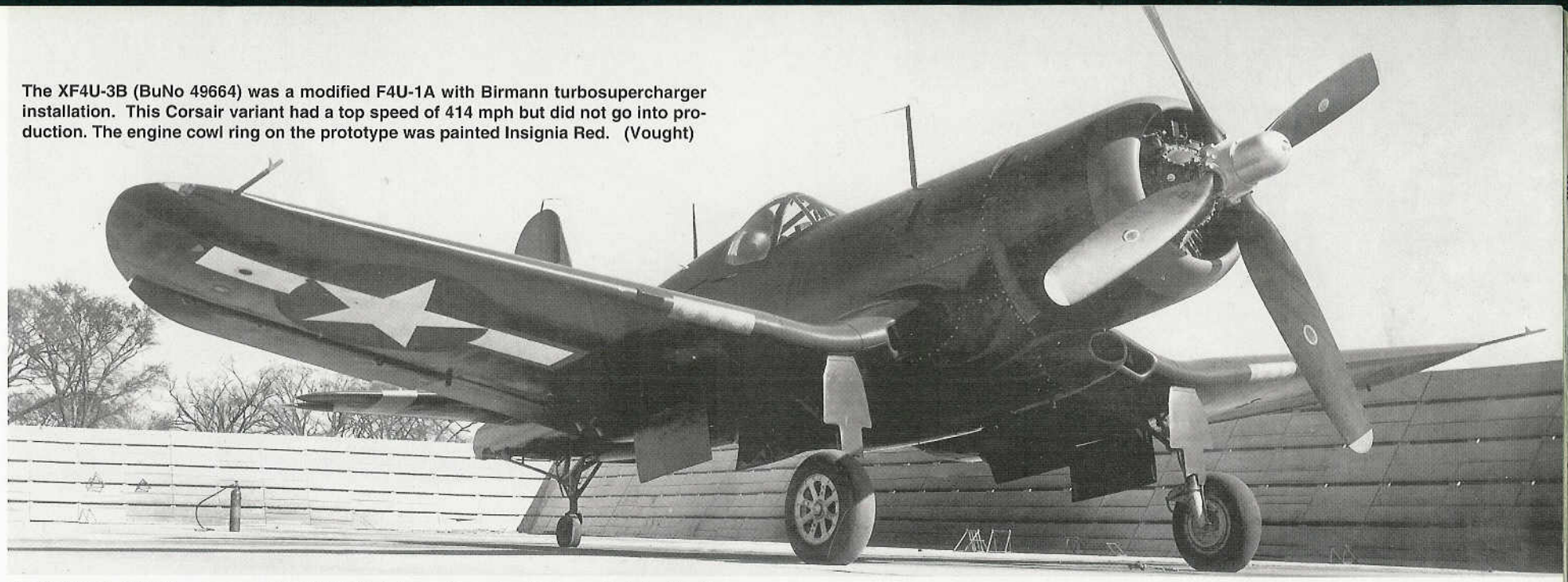


F4U-2

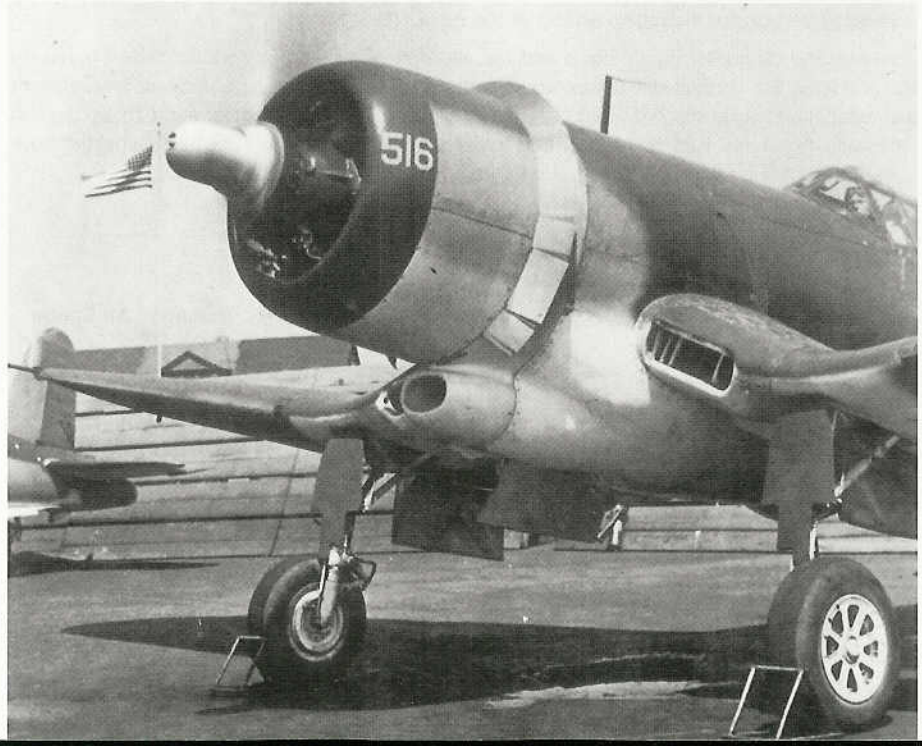


Extended Exhaust Stacks

The XF4U-3B (BuNo 49664) was a modified F4U-1A with Birmann turbosupercharger installation. This Corsair variant had a top speed of 414 mph but did not go into production. The engine cowl ring on the prototype was painted Insignia Red. (Vought)



The XF4U-3A (17516) was a modified F4U-1 birdcage Corsair which was finished in the standard Navy tricolor scheme with a Red engine cowling ring. Had the modification met expectations, plans called for 100 F4U-3s to go to the USMC. This aircraft was stricken from the inventory on 30 June 1946, (Vought)



XF4U-3

The quest for additional speed from the P&W R-2800 engine resulted in the design of the XF4U-3. The Navy planned to modify 100 F4U-1As by installing the R-2800-14 single stage "C" engine and Birmann turbosupercharger. These modifications were to be handled by the Naval Air Maintenance Unit in Johnsville, Pennsylvania. The first XF4U-3 modification was a F4U-1 airframe (BuNo 02157) which incorporated the supercharger under the fuselage in a large blister housed under the wing center section. The additional power gained necessitated the use of a four bladed Hamilton Standard propeller. The second airframe modified was an F4U-1 (BuNo 17516) which was redesignated the XF4U-3A. The third and final airframe to be modified was an F4U-lA (BuNo 49664), which was equipped with the P&W R-2800-14C engine and designated XF4U-3B.

Modifications to the F4U-1 and F4U-lA airframes included a redesign of the lower portion of the engine cowl flaps, redesign of the engine exhaust system and the removal of catapult hooks to accommodate the turbosupercharger blister on the bottom of the fuselage directly beneath the wing. The Birmann turbosupercharger added over 300 pounds to the weight of the Corsair and at 25,000 feet gave the aircraft a top speed of 414 mph. The proposed F4U-3 variant was intended for the exclusive use of the U. S. Marine Corps. After a comparative study; however, it was determined that the turbosupercharged variant of the Corsair would not show any appreciable improvement over the F4U-4 at altitudes below 23,000 feet and the project was cancelled.

The last of five F2G-1 production variants of the "Super" Corsairs (BuNo 88458) was tested extensively by the Navy at NATC Patuxent River, Maryland during 1947. It was powered by the 3,000 hp P&W R-4360 Wasp Major engine. This Corsair was fitted with an extended carburator air scoop on top of the nose. (U.S. Navy)

F2G

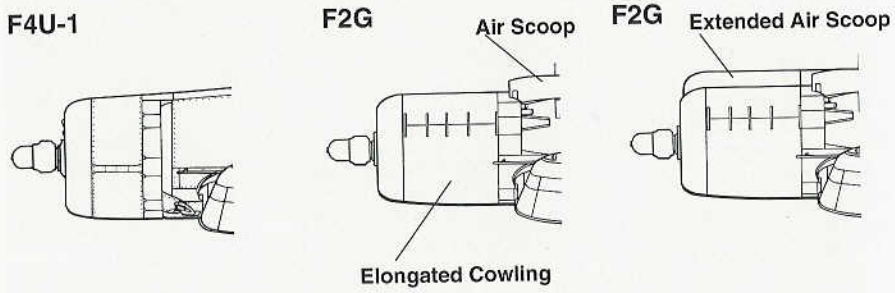
Unlike the F4U-3, the F2G concept to achieve a higher performance Corsair was successful. Late in the Second World War, the Navy approached Goodyear for the production of a "super" Corsair. This variant was to be equipped with the 3,000 hp Pratt & Whitney R-4360 four row Wasp Major engine. Goodyear modified a number of FG-1A Corsairs from their assembly line to flight test the modifications which included a new bubble canopy, reduced rear deck area of the fuselage, engine installation and air scoop modification. Two variants of the F2G would be produced, the F2G-1 which was the land based variant with manually folding wings and the F2G-2 with hydraulically folding wings and arresting hook installation for carrier use. It was planned to use the F2G as a high speed interceptor to neutralize the Kamikaze threat.

Goodyear's F2G was capable of speeds in excess of 450 mph and had a rate of climb that allowed it to reach 30,000 feet in only four minutes. Including the experimental prototypes, eighteen F2Gs were completed but saw no military service since the war concluded before they could be mass produced.

F2G production aircraft were assigned BuNos 88454 through 88458 for the F2G-1s and BuNos 88459 through 88463 for the F2G-2s. The high performance of the F2G was utilized after the war in the National Air Races where it was unbeatable from 1946 to 1949.

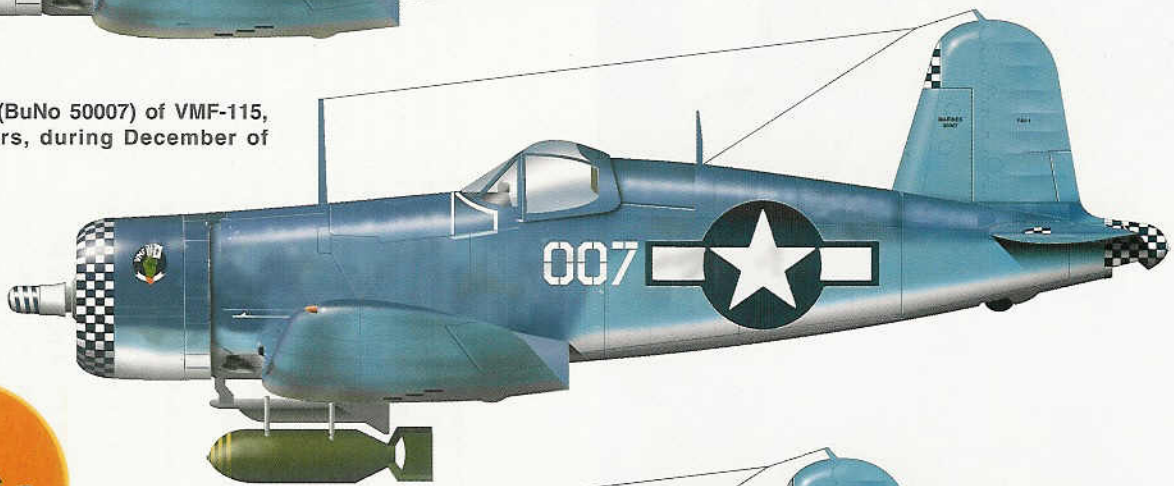
The F2G differed from the standard F4U in a number of ways, the F2G had an elongated nose, four blade propeller, revised exhaust arrangement, the high visibility bubble canopy, the revised wing oil cooler intake ducts and the addition of an auxillary rudder which extended the height of the vertical tail for improved stability and control. The armament arrangement was unchanged from the F4U-lD/FG-lD; six .50 caliber machine guns, eight rocket launch stubs and two wing root bomb/fuel tank pylons. The production F2G had a cockpit floor installation with instrumentation similar to the F4U-4.

Cowling Development



This F4U-1 (BuNo 02435) was assigned to VMF-225 on Vella LaVella on 4 November 1943.

An F4U-1A (BuNo 50007) of VMF-115, Joe's Jokers, during December of 1944.

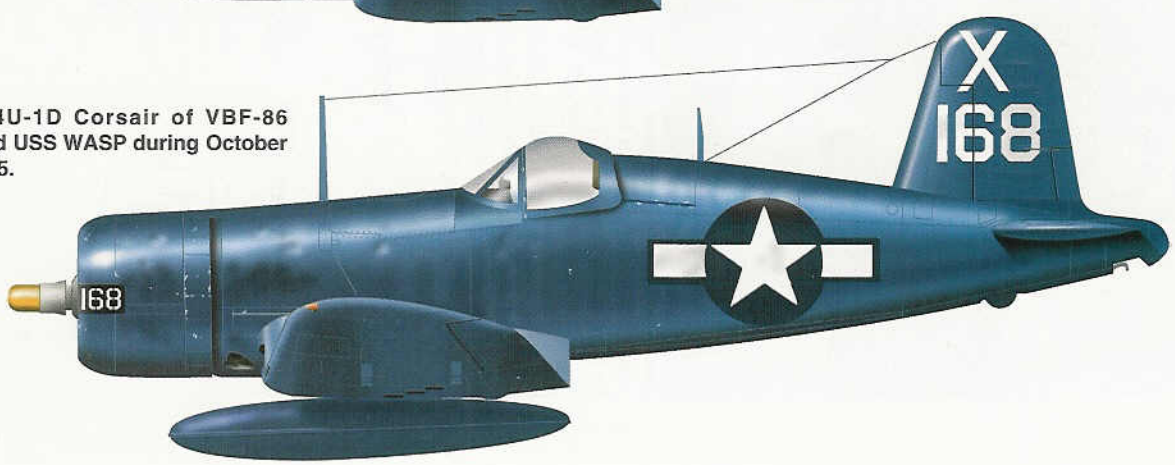


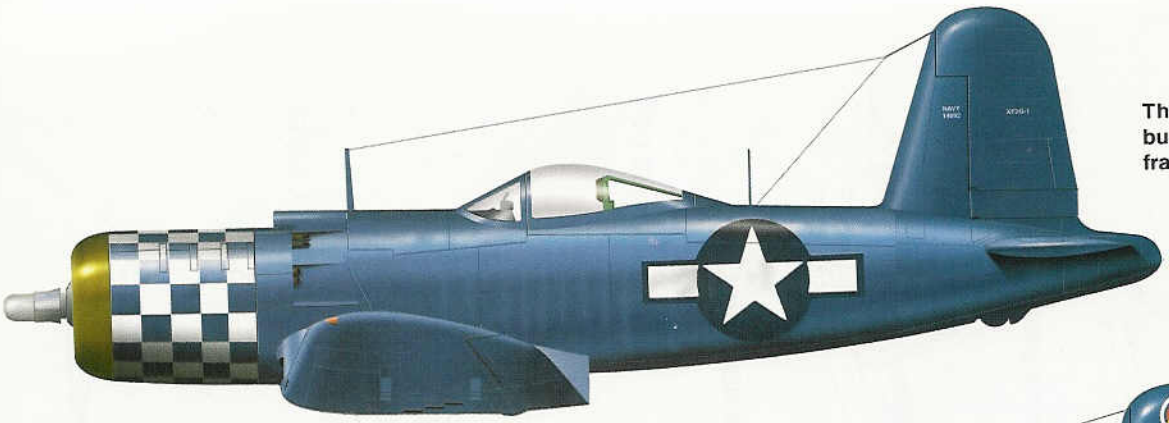
VMF-217 Patch

This F4U-1A (BuNo 49850) of Marine Fighter Squadron 217 (VMF-217), Wild Hares, was stationed on Guam during September of 1944.

This FG-1A took part in Project JOE, a transcontinental speed record attempt on 22 May 1945.

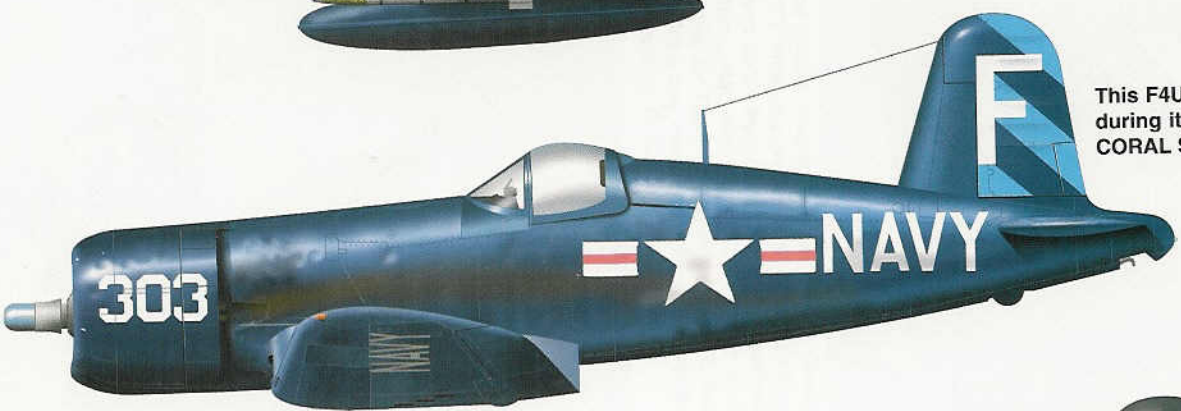
An F4U-1D Corsair of VBF-86 aboard USS WASP during October of 1945.





The XF2G-1 (BuNo14692) was built from a modified FG-1A airframe during September of 1945.

An F4U-5 of VF-23 during unit carrier qualifications aboard USS WRIGHT on 3 November 1948.



This F4U-4 was assigned to VF-43 during its Med cruise aboard USS CORAL SEA in 1952.

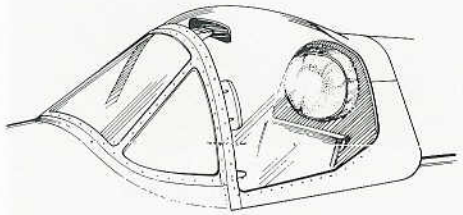
This overall Black F4U-5N night fighter was assigned to VMF(N)-513 at K-8 (Kunson) Korea during 1952.

VMF-312 (Back Cover)

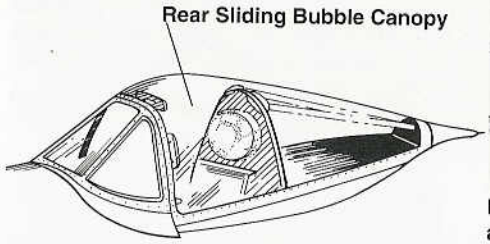
This F4U-5 Corsair was flown by MAJ Fernando Soto Henriquez of the Honduran Air Force during the "Football War" of 1969. He shot down two Salvadorean FG-1 Corsairs and a n F-51D Mustang.

Canopy Development

F4U-1D/FG-1D

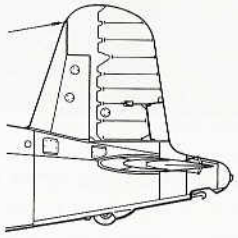


F2G-1 And F2G-2

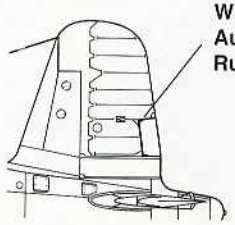


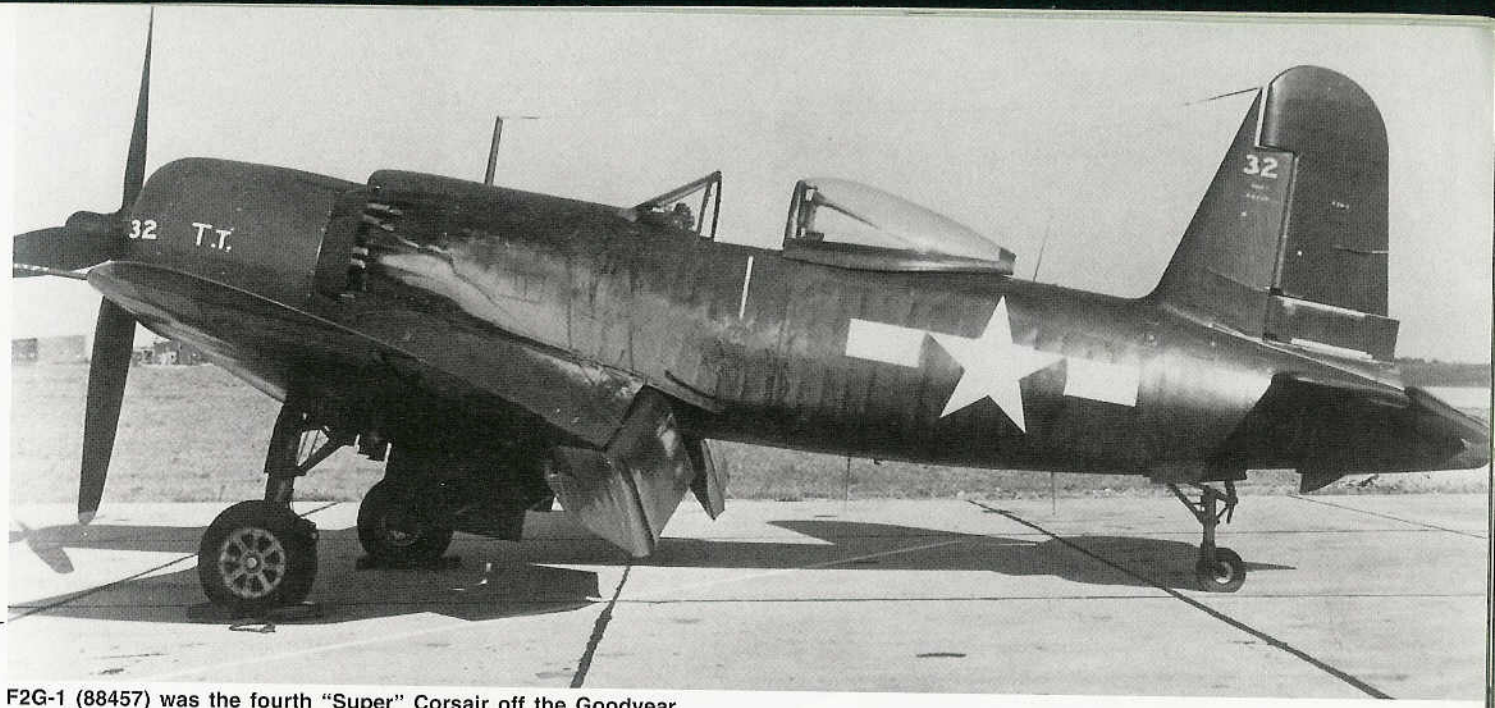
Fin Development

F4U Series



F2G-1 And F2G-2



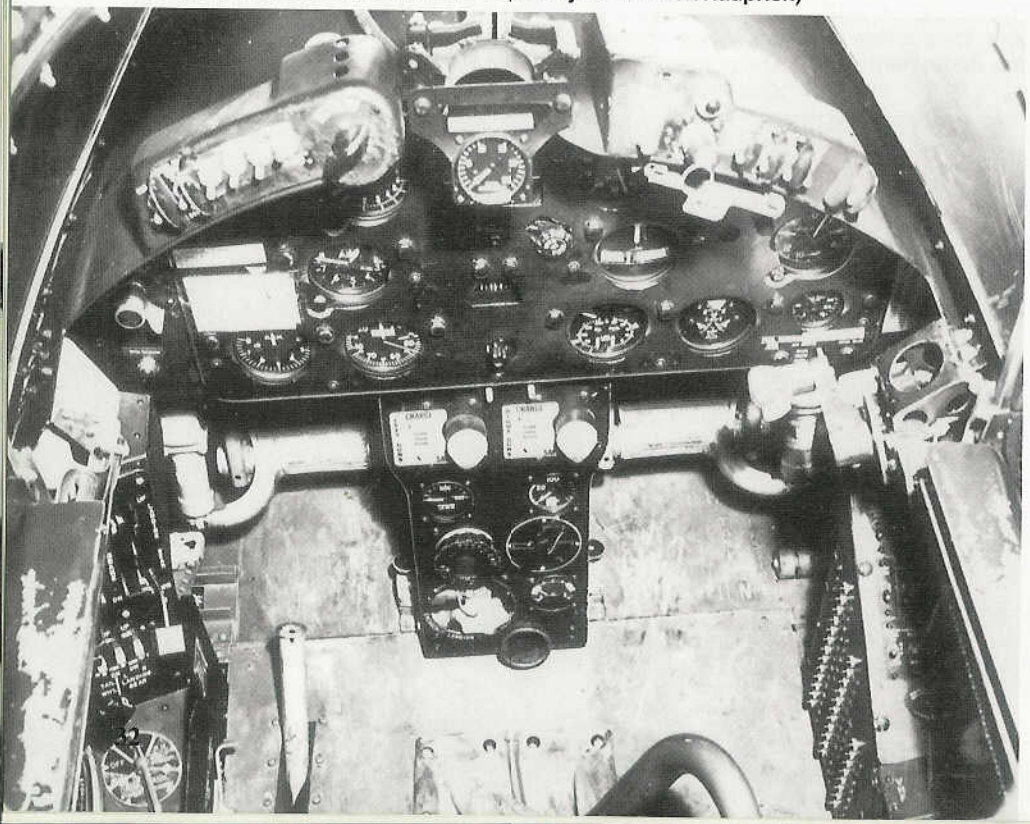


F2G-1 (88457) was the fourth "Super" Corsair off the Goodyear assembly line. The "TT" marking on the nose cowling stood for Tactical Test and during its military career was flown exclusively by NATC Patuxent River, Maryland during November of 1946. During the 1947 National Air Race at Cleveland, Ohio it flew as race number 84 (NX5588N) and crashed during the seventh lap, killing the pilot, Tony Jannazo. (U.S. Navy)

XF2G-1 (14692) was modified from a FG-1A airframe. This Goodyear Corsair was the first to be equipped with the twelve inch extension to the rudder that served as an auxillary rudder for improved control. The pilot was Goodyear test pilot Don Armstrong. The cowling trim was Blue and White checkerboard. (Goodyear via Nick Hauprich)

XF2G-1 (BuNo 14692) on the ramp at NATC Patuxent River, Maryland during flight testing. This Corsair variant had a top speed of 450 mph and was armed with six .50 caliber machine guns. The bubble style canopy on the XF2G-1 gave the best pilot visibility of all the variants. (National Archives via Hal Andrews)

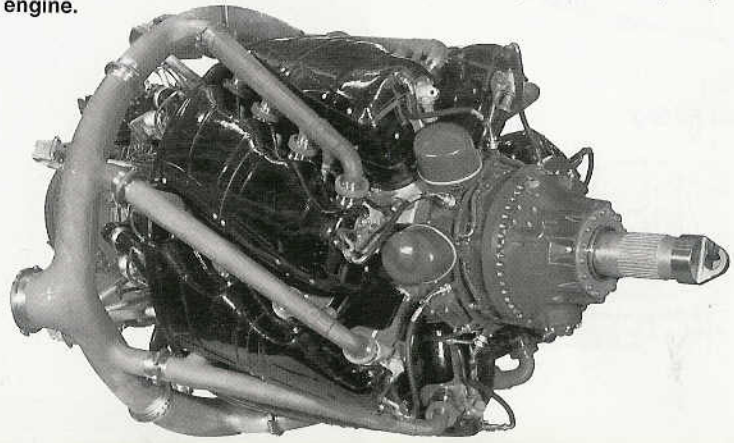
Cockpit view of XF2G-1 showed redesigned instrument panel and side consoles. The cockpit floor was introduced on the F2Gs and was incorporated in all subsequent Corsairs from the F4U-4 to the F4U-7. (Goodyear via Nick Hauprich)

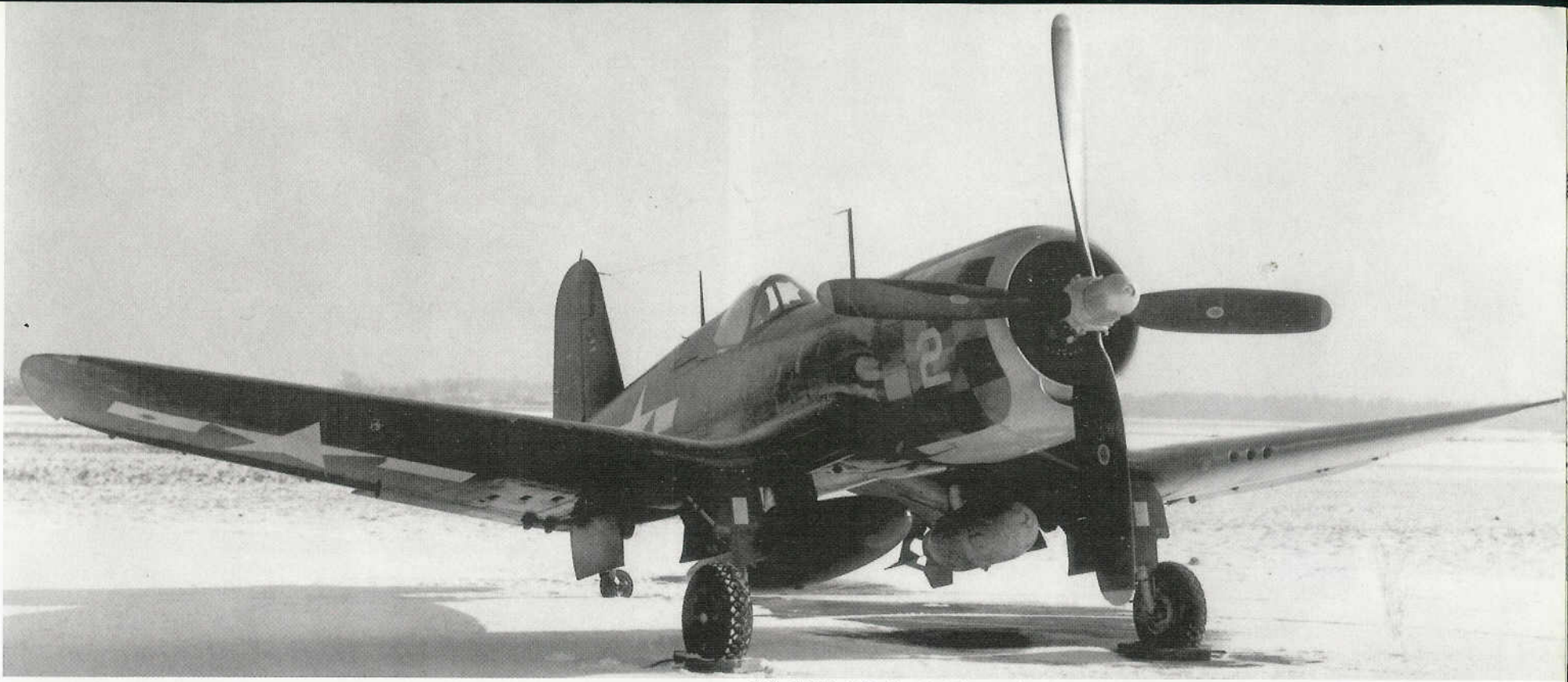


The first production F2G-1 (BuNo 88454) completed its military career in storage at NAS Norfolk, Virginia. Obtained by a former Navy pilot, it was flown for a brief time during the early 1970s from Patrick Henry Airport in Hampton, Virginia with the civil registration N4324. (Jim Sullivan)

This F2G-2 (88459) parked on the ramp at Annapolis, Marlyand during 1946, was the first production model of a series of five produced by Goodyear. This version was equipped with hydraulically folding wings and arresting gear for carrier operations. The cowling was a Yellow and Blue checkerboard. (Bern Eader)

The power plant of the F2G series, the Pratt & Whitney R-4360 Wasp Major air-cooled radial engine.





F4U-4

This XF4U-4 (BuNo 80760) was the second test aircraft for the improved variant of the Corsair and was flown extensively at NATC Patuxent River, Maryland during January of 1945 . The twin wing root pylons could carry a 1,000 pound bomb each or a 154 gallon drop tank. The engine cowling was trimmed in Red, Black and Yellow. (National Archives)

Vought produced a total of 2,357 aircraft of the F4U-4 series including the F4U-4B, F4U-4N and F4U-4P variants. Goodyear was slated to produce a comparable FG-4 variant and did in fact complete two of them; however, the end of the war led to cancellation of that contract and the pair of FG-4s were destroyed.

The F4U-4 was first flown on 20 September 1944 and was accepted by the Navy during October of 1944. First used by the Marines, the F4U-4 entered combat in April 1945. It was initially powered by the P&W R-2800-18W engine but later in the production run Vought began installing the more powerful R-2800-42W. The F4U-4 Corsair was capable of a top speed of 450 mph, a cruising speed of 215 mph, had a rate of climb of 4,000 feet per minute and the service ceiling was increased to 41,500 feet. With two drop tanks the F4U-4 could carry 584 gallons of fuel which gave it a combat range of over 1,000 statute miles.

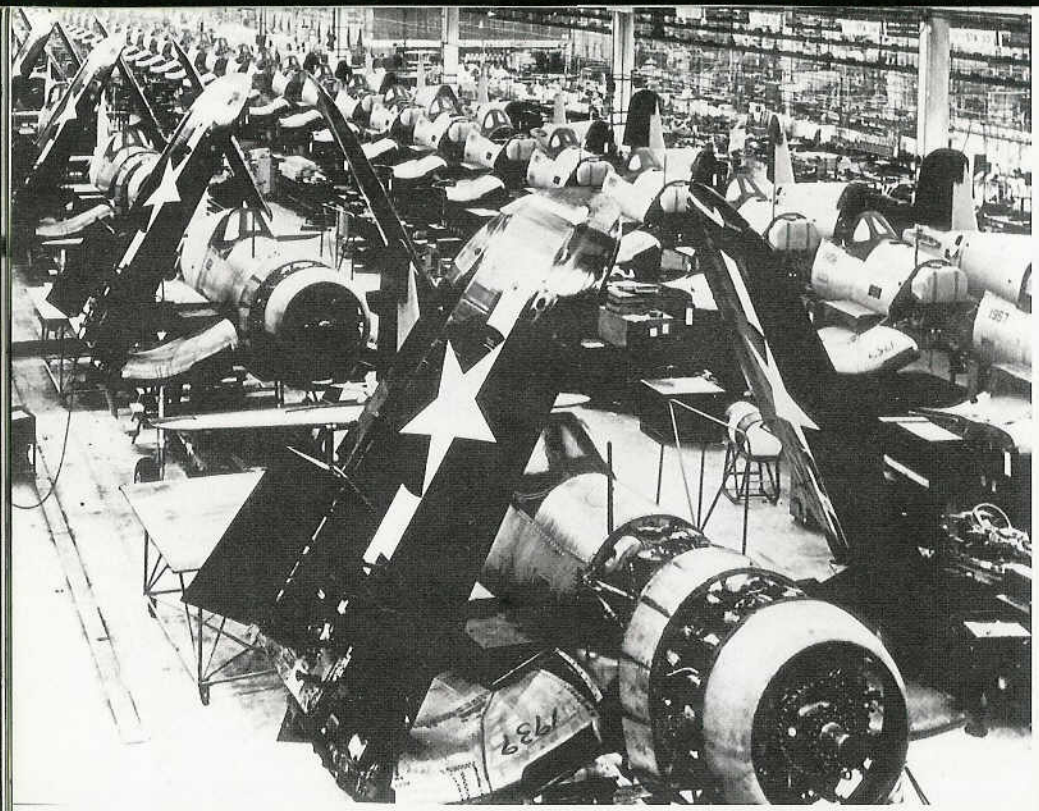
Vought produced a total of 2,050 F4U-4s. Externally, the major change was the installation of a thirteen foot Hamilton Standard four blade propeller and the addition of a chin air scoop at the bottom of the engine cowling. The straight F4U-4 retained the same six .50 caliber machine gun and rocket armament arrangement. Additionally, the the wing root pylons could carry bombs, fuel tanks, napalm tanks or the 11.75 inch Tiny Tim rockets.

The F4U-4B cannon armed variant was similar to the earlier F4U-1C and was armed with two 20MM cannon in each wing. The F4U-4Bs arrived too late to see combat in Second World War but they were used extensively in Korea for the ground attack role and a total of 297 F4U-4Bs were produced. One F4U-4B flown by Captain Jesse Folmar of VMF-312 shot down a Russian built, Russian piloted MiG-15 jet fighter during the Korean War.

The F4U-4N variant was a night fighter of which only one was built. This aircraft (BuNo 97361) was equipped with AN/APS-6 radar and a starboard wing mounted radome similar to that used on the F4U-2. Its purpose was to be used on night fighter missions against aerial targets.

The final variant of the F4U-4 series was the F4U-4P photo-reconnaissance Corsair equipped with a rear fuselage mounted camera. The distinguishing external feature of the F4U-4P was the small fuselage blister and sliding "window" installation located toward the rear of the fuselage on the port side. A total of nine F4U-4P photo-fighters were produced.

F4U-4 Corsairs saw service with the Navy, Marines and the air forces of Honduras and El Salvador. Many of the remaining F4U-4s finished their military career with U. S. Navy and Marine Reserve units and were phased out of service during late 1956 and early 1957. A small number of F4U-4s still fly today as warbirds on the airshow circuit.



The production line at Vought's factory at Startford, CT was packed with Corsairs during August 1945. Production was at peak output providing F4U-4s for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. This variant of the Corsair entered service in April of 1945 with greatly improved performance over earlier variants. (Vought)

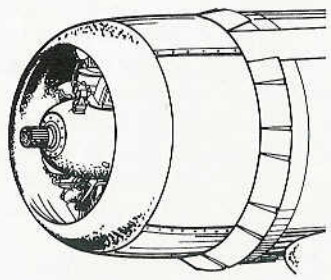
The F4U-4XA (BuNo 49763) was one of the F4U-4 prototypes modified from a F4U-IA airframe. This Corsair was equipped with a propeller spinner, although this made no appreciable gain in performance and was not incorporated into production variants. (Vought)

This F4U-4 (BuNo 80779) was equipped with a BAT missile on an underfuselage launch rail during October of 1946. The missile launch tests were successful; however, the missile never became operational with F4U squadrons. (U.S. Navy via Hal Andrews)

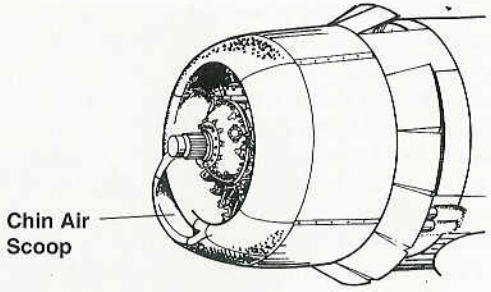
Parked on display at Philadelphia during 1945, this F4U-4 (BuNo 81701) was assigned to VMF-122 and carried the name *GRAVEL GERTIE* on the starboard side of the engine cowling, along with the squadron insignia. (Leo J. Kohn)

Cowling Development

F4U-1/FG-1/F3A



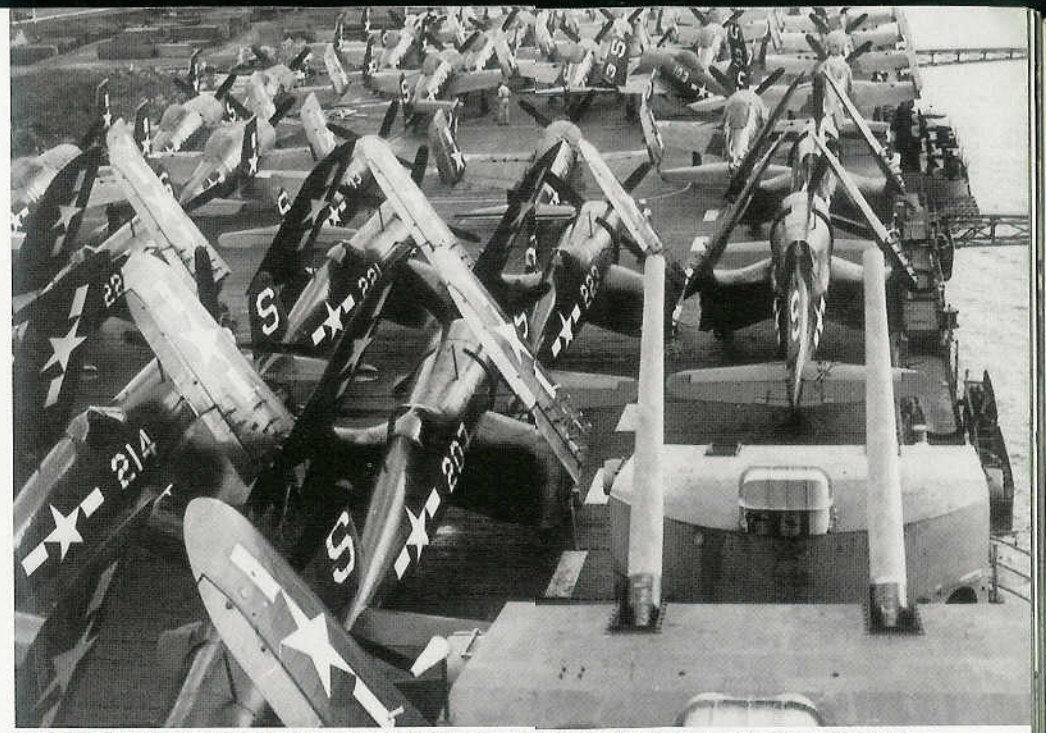
F4U-4



A pair of F4U-4s from VMF-211 fly in tight formation over Northern China at wars end. The Corsair in the foreground was BuNo 81924. Both aircraft had Yellow trim applied to the propeller hub and tail fin. (A.C. Allen, Jr.)

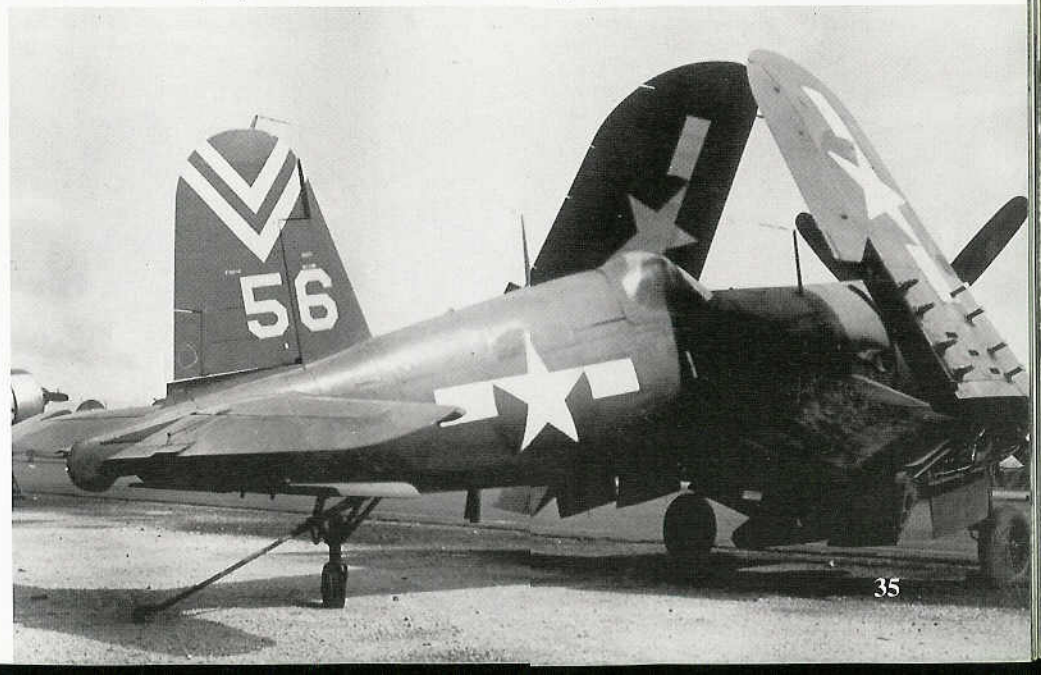
This Marine F4U-4 (BuNo 82023) was assigned to VMF-323 Death Rattlers at MCAS El Toro, California during 1946 and was painted in overall Glossy Sea Blue with the aircraft code in Yellow on the fuselage. (Lee Enich via Bill Larkins)

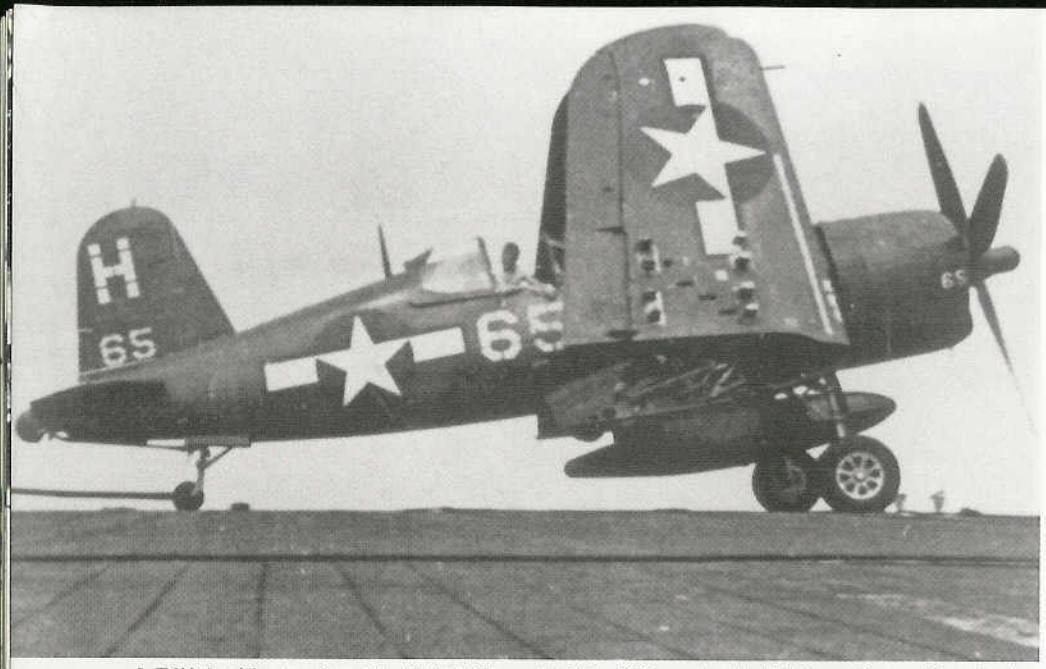
An F4U-4 (BuNo 80989) of AES-12 high over the Virginia countryside near Marine Corps Air Station Quantico, Virginia. The F4U-4 was powered by the Pratt & Whitney R-2800-18W engine and had a top speed of 414 mph. (Colonel Rhinehardt Lieu)



F4U-4s of VF-52 share the flight deck of USS HORNET with F8F-1 Bearcats of VF-51 on 24 October 1945. The modex 'S' was assigned to CV-12 during the final months of the Second World War. Both the Corsairs and Bearcats were Glossy Sea Blue with White markings. (National Archives)

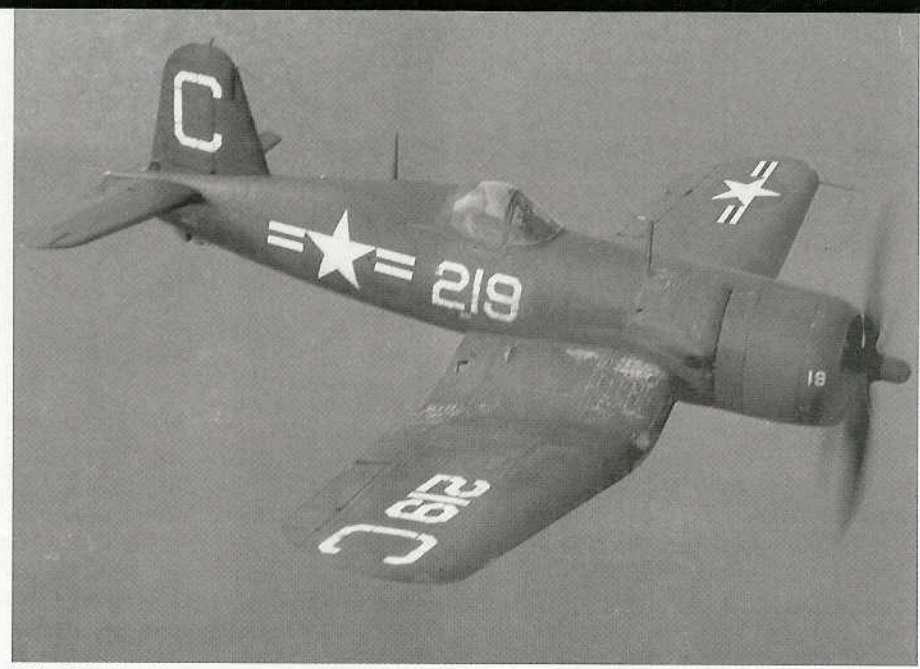
This F4U-4 Corsair, side number 56, had two inverted White chevrons on the fin and rudder. It belonged to AIRPAC Pool and was parked on the ramp at Naval Air Station Orote Point, Guam during September of 1945. (J.R. Pritchard, Jr.)





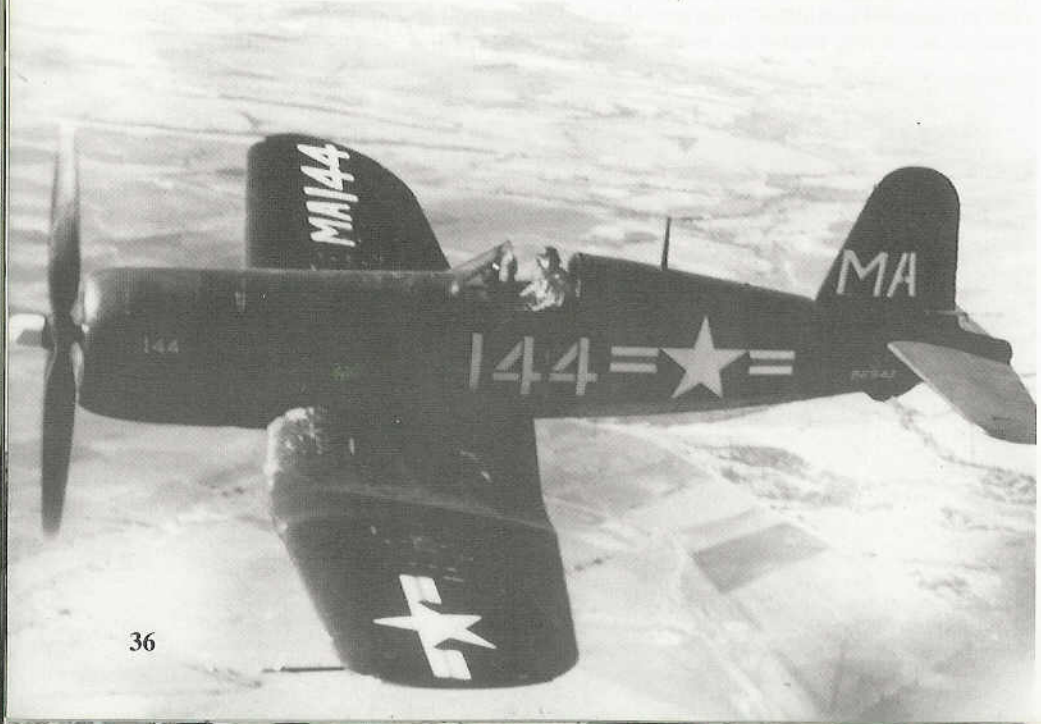
A F4U-4, side number 65, of VBF-94 carried the "H" modex in White on the rudder during August of 1945. This letter indicated that the Corsair was assigned to USS LEXINGTON. A tow bar was attached to the tailwheel since the aircraft was being spotted on the flight deck. (Earl Neff Collection)

Flying over the Texas countryside, this F4U-4 (BuNo 96942) of VF-ATU-1 (Fighter - Advanced Training Unit - One) was based at NAAS Cabaniss Field at Corpus Christi, Texas during 1949. (Ron Gerdes)



This F4U-4, side number 219, of VF-6B carried White markings on its weathered Glossy Sea Blue finish. This Corsair flew from the USS CORAL SEA (CVB-43) during March of 1948. F4U-4s flew with the Navy and Marines during the Second World War and into the Korean War. (Bill Crimmins Collection)

This F4U-4 of AES-12 carried an unusual style of markings during early 1947. The side number 39 and nose marking "EA" were in White and were unusual in the positioning on the cowling. This style of markings was unique to MCAS Quantico, Virginia based aircraft. (R.W.(Pete) Peterson)

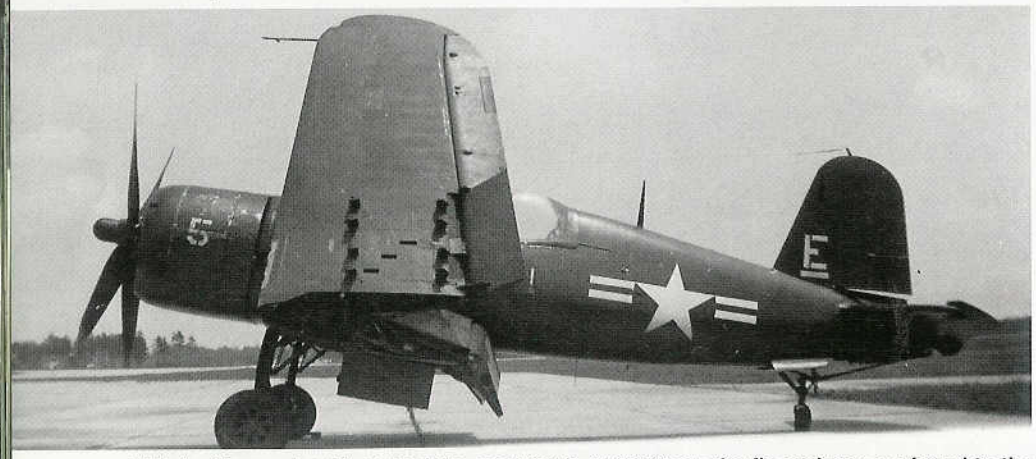


This F4U-4 of Headquarters Squadron (HEDRON) -11 carried the modex "LM". This Corsair was waiting its turn to be loaded aboard a carrier at the Norfolk Naval Operating Base during the Spring of 1949. (Robert Mathers)

A F4U-4 of VF-ATU-4 on the ramp at NAS Jacksonville, Flordia during the Spring of 1949. Its flaps were fully extended at 50 degrees and the tailhook had been removed. The aircraft in the background are Blue Angels F8F-1 Bearcats. (Dave Lucabaugh Collection)

A F4U-4 (BuNo 96812) of VF-42 just after touch down at NAS Oceana, Virginia on 18 May 1953. The tip of the tail and propeller hub were trimmed in Yellow. The stenciling on the port side of the fuselage beneath the cockpit carried the name, Lieutenant Jay Duncan. (National Archives)

As a result of a wing change this F4U-4, side number 301 of VF-33, carried mixed markings with 301 on the nose and 305 on the top of the starboard wing. This Corsair was preparing to launch from USS LEYTE during a Med Cruise in the Fall of 1951 (Robert Mathers)



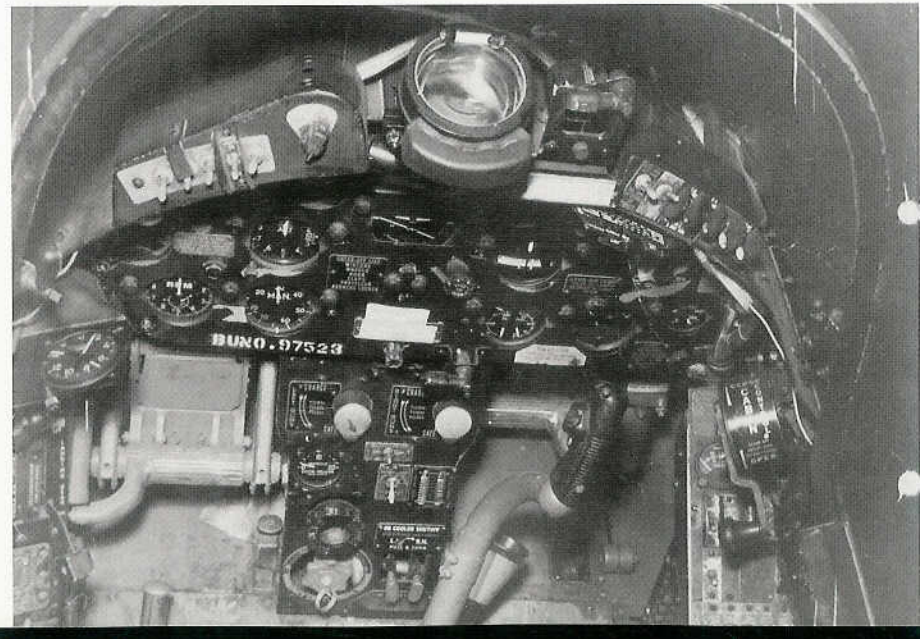
F4U-4, side number 5, carried the marking E in White on the fin and was assigned to the Headquarters Squadron at MCAS Cherry Point, NC and was visiting Wilmington, NC during 1948. The 5 was stenciled in White on both sides of the engine cowling. (Paul J. McDaniel)

A F4U-4 (BuNo 81619) of VF-41 Black Aces catches a wire aboard USS MIDWAY during August of 1952 and comes to a sudden halt. This Corsair carried the battle efficiency "E" marking low on the fuselage beneath the cockpit. (Bob Esposito Collection)

Parked on a section of marston mat, this F4U-4 (BuNo 96801) of VF-821 was being loaded with practice rockets for a mission over the gunnery range at NAS El Centro, California during 1951. This Reserve Corsair was from NAS New Orleans and saw combat in Korea. (Art Scarborough via Bill Scarborough)

A F4U-4 (BuNo 96802) of VMF-225 on final approach for landing at Philadelphia, PA on 31 May 1947. The unusual placement of the markings "U.S. Marines" and "VMF-225 were unique to that squadron. The propeller hub was White with a Red "barber pole" spiral. (Dave Lucabaugh)

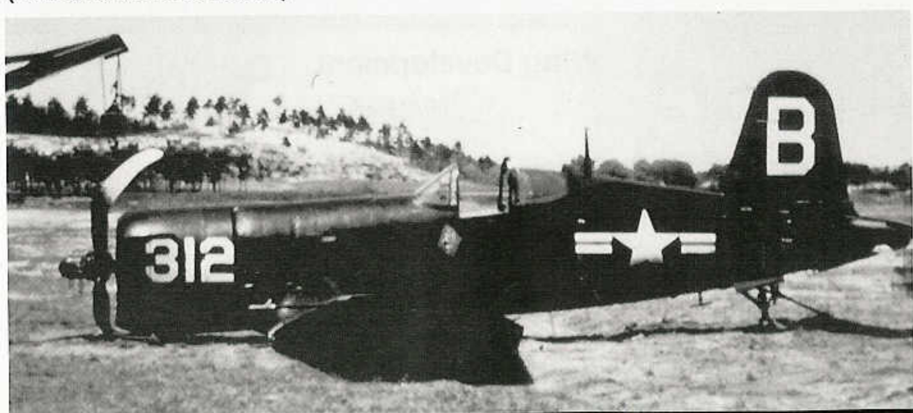
Cockpit of a F4U-4B (BuNo 97523) Corsair that crash landed at NAS South Weymouth, MA on 22 July 1954. (Conrad Larson via Larry Webster)

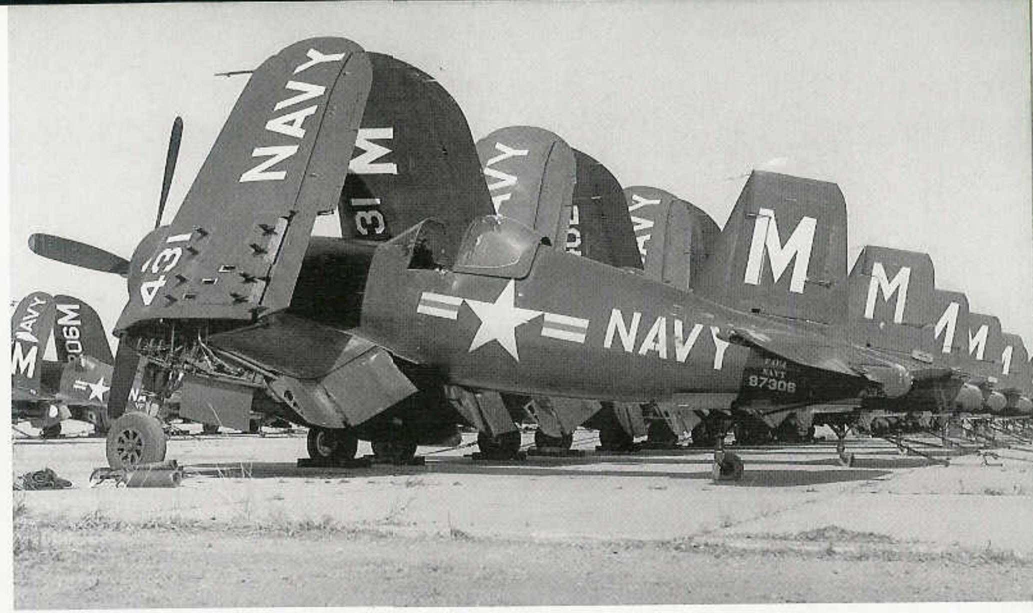


This F4U-4, side number 5, of VMF-312 was flown by Second World War Ace Captain Phil DeLong. He made the 22,000th arrested landing on the deck of USS BATAAN (CVL-29) on 25 April 1951 while returning from a mission over Korea. (USMC via Phil DeLong)

THE FIGHTING KILROY was a F4U-4 (BuNo 81865) of H&MS-33 which carried the modex "WM"on the tail and the top of starboard wing. This Corsair participated in numerous air strikes over Korea and was stationed for a time at K-8 Kunson during 1952. (Don Severson)

After a wheels up crash landing at a divert field in Korea during the Summer of 1952, this F4U-4, side number 312, of VF-193 came to rest off the runway. Pilot was uninjured and after repairs, the sturdy Corsair was flown back to the USS PRINCETON to fight again. (B.L. Reed via Pete Bowers)





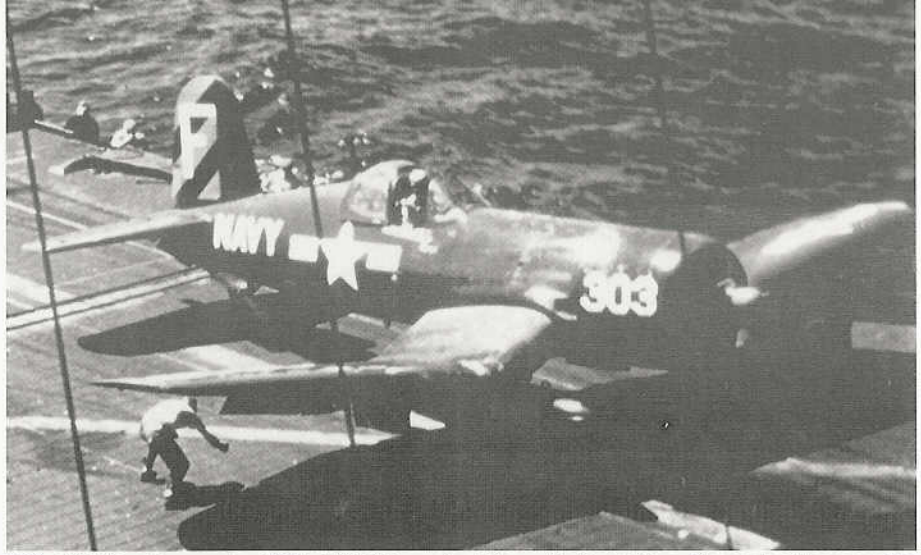
F4U-4s of VF-64 parked in with other Corsairs from VF-63 at NAAS Santa Rosa, California during August of 1951. These two squadrons had seen combat in Korea and would return to the war to fight again from the deck of USS BOXER. (Bill Larkins)

This F4U-4 (BuNo 81712) of VMA-332 suffered moderate damage after a barrier crash aboard USS SALERNO BAY on 17 April 1953. Modex "MR" was carried on the tail but the squadron's Red and White polkadot cowl trim had not yet been applied. (USMC via Dave Ostrowski)

This F4U-4B (BuNo 97392) was assigned to Flight Test at NATC Patuxent River, Maryland during March of 1950. It was detached to Langley Field, Virginia where it took part in control rate tests. This Corsair carried a Yellow tail band with NACA markings. (NASA via Mark Chambers)

Shedding parts of Corsair and chewing up the flight deck with its thirteen foot propeller, this F4U-4B (BuNo 62952) of VF-53 Blue Knights came to a grinding stop beside the island of USS ESSEX ON 23 JULY 1951. The pilot was uninjured and the Corsair was later repaired and continued in the Korean air war. (U.S. Navy via Art Schoeni)

Loaded with rockets and napalm, an F4U-4B, side number 410, of VF-54 launches from USS VALLEY FORGE for a strike over Korea during the Fall of 1950. The rudder tip and propeller hub were trimmed in Yellow. (U.S. Navy)

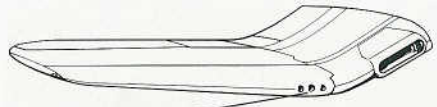


This F4U-4, side number 303 of VF-43, carried three Medium Blue diagonal stripes on its Glossy Sea Blue rudder. These unusual markings were carried briefly during a Med cruise aboard USS CORAL SEA in 1952. (Mark Syrkin)

A F4U-4B (BuNo 97498) of VF-653, a Reserve squadron from NAS Akron, Ohio, launches from USS VALLEY FORGE for a strike over Korea during the Spring of 1952. The squadron commander was Commander Cook Cleland, a well known air racer. (Ron Gerdes)

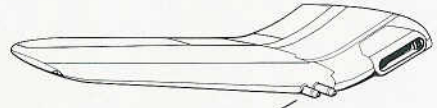
Wing Development

F4U-4



Three .50 Caliber Machine Guns

F4U-4B



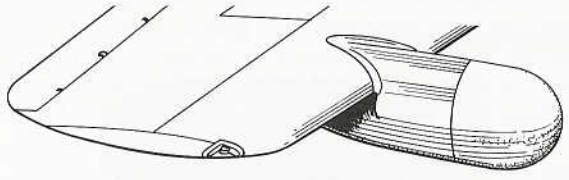
Two 20MM Cannon

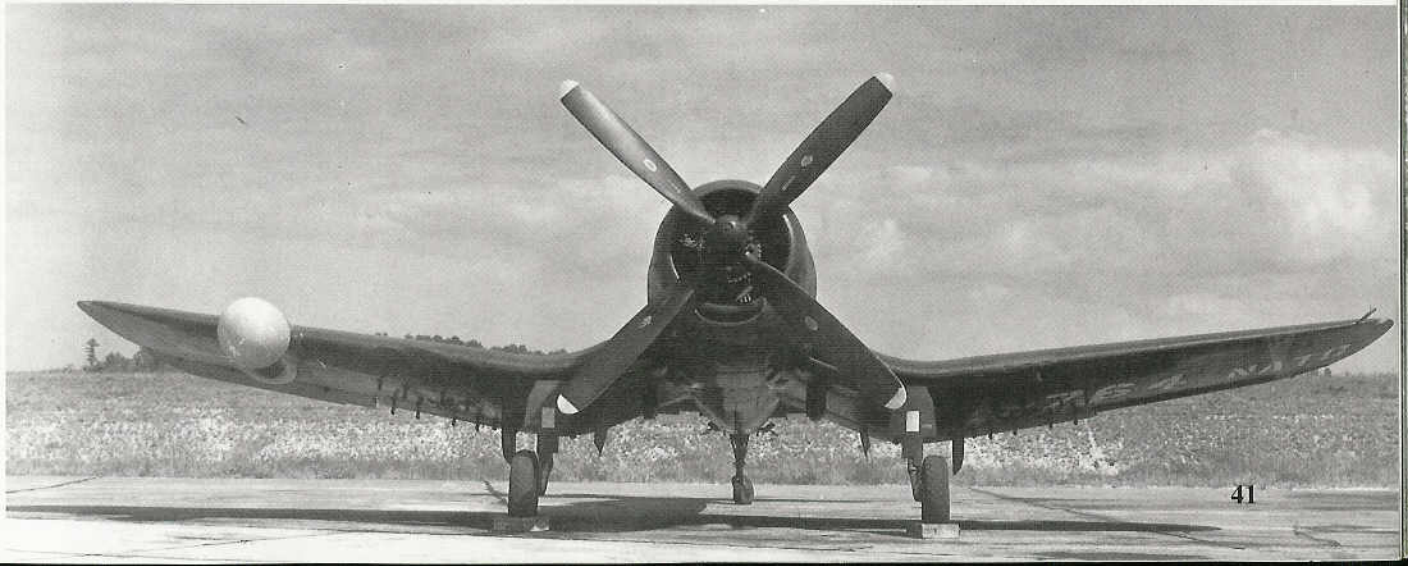
The one-of-a-kind F4U-4N (BuNo 97361) parked on the ramp at the Vought facility on 29 August 1946, was equipped with AN/APS-6 radar in a large radome mounted on the starboard wing. This night fighter was to be used for air-to-air night intercept missions. (Vought)

This F4U-4 (BuNo 80764) was the first production Corsair of the F4U-4 series. It was modified with a wing-mounted radome and flown at NATC Patuxent River, Maryland during September of 1947, to determine carrier landing and takeoff characteristics for the upcoming F4U-5N series. (National Archives)

Radome Installation

Radome Similar On All Corsair Night Fighter Variants
F4U-4N, F4U-5N, F4U-5NL



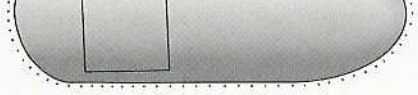


After completing service with VMP-254 at MCAS El Toro, California during 1949, this F4U-4P (BuNo 97507) had the squadron markings painted out in preparation to join another squadron. Vought produced only nine of the camera-equipped photo reconnaissance Corsairs. (Clay Jansson)

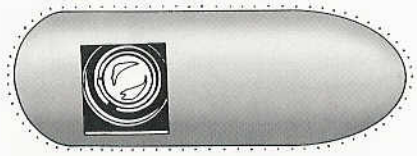
A F4U-4P (BuNo 97527), side number 7, of HEDRON-2 (Headquarters Squadron Two) in flight over the North Carolina countryside. The F4U-4P retained the cannon armament of the F4U-4B version. This camera equipped Corsair was completely functional as both a reconnaissance platform and as a fighter and retained its full strike capability. (USMC)

Camera Installation

Camera Port Closed



Camera Port Open



This F4U-5, side number 100, was assigned to the Sqaudron Commander of VF-21. The Corsair had just trapped (engaged an arresting wire) aboard USS WRIGHT during carrier qualifications off the coast of Florida on 3 November 1948. (CDR Robert E. Bennett)

F4U-5

Vought first flew their F4U-5 Corsair on 4 April 1946. It was powered by a 2,459 hp P&W R-2800-32W engine and had a top speed of 470 mph. The cruising speed of the F4U-5 was 227 mph with a range of over 1,100 statute miles. With two drop tanks it could carry a total of 534 gallons of fuel. Armament for the F4U-5 was a pair of 20MM M-3 cannon located in each wing, additionally, it was capable of carrying eight 5 inch HVAR rockets. The wing root pylons could carry drop tanks, napalm tanks or bombs. A total of 223 F4U-5s were produced by Vought along with 214 F4U-5Ns, 101 F4U-5NLs and 30 F4U-5Ps. The total production of the F4U-5 series came to 568 aircraft.

Improvements to the F4U-5 series included automatic cowl flaps, intercooler flaps and oil cooler doors, a modernized comfortable cockpit, higher canopy and a redesigned engine cowling that featured twin air scoops on the lower portion of the cowling. The F4U-5 was the first Corsair to utilize metal covered outer wing panels and control surfaces.

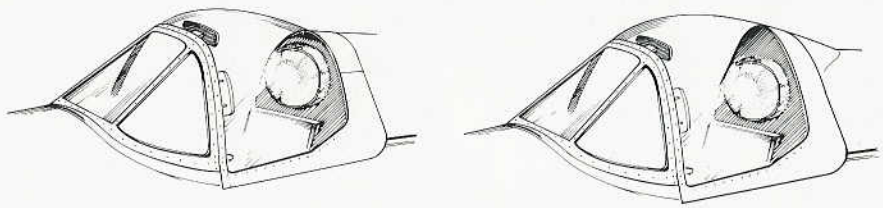
The F4U-5N was the night fighter variant with a starboard wing mounted radome similar to that used on the earlier F4U-2 and F4U-4N. The F4U-5NL was the "winterized" variant of the F4U-5N and featured deicer boots on the wing leading edges and the vertical and horizontal tail.

The F4U-5P was the photo reconnaissance variant which was distinguishable by the side fuselage sliding door blister and the and the tear-shaped blister located midway on the vertical tail fin. Various variants of the F4U-5 were operated by the Navy, Marines, Argentine Navy and the Honduran Air Force. The U.S. Navy retired the F4U-5 Corsair from the Reserves during 1956.

Canopy Development

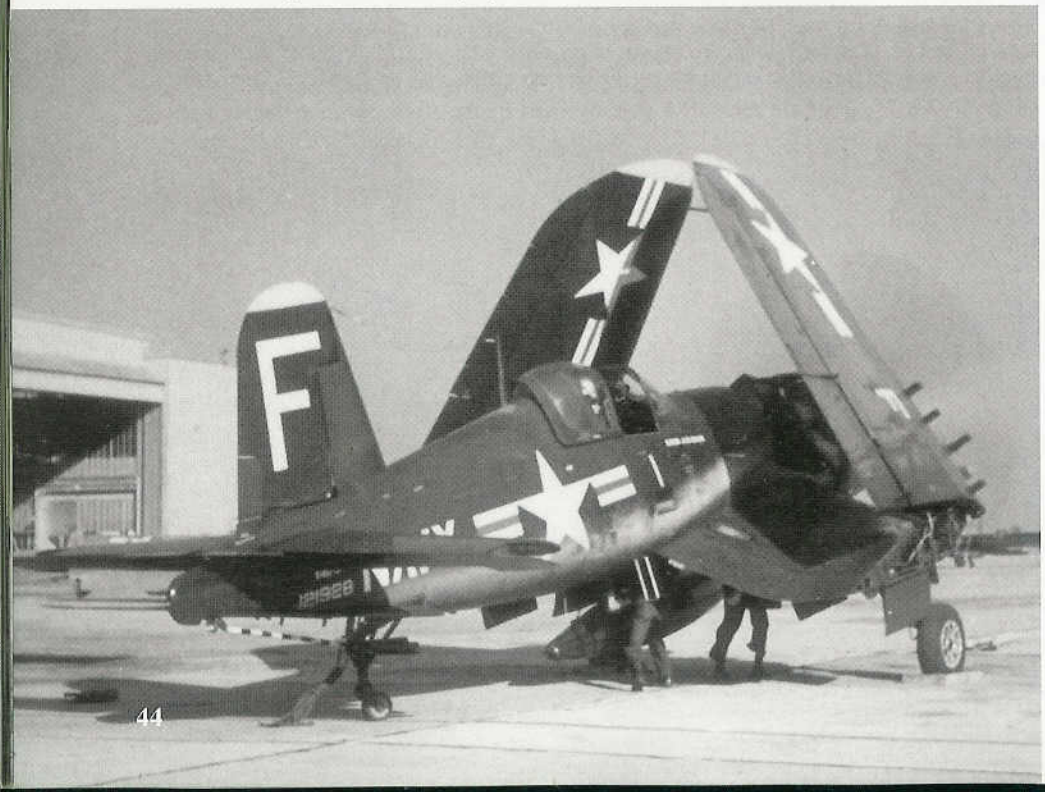
F4U-4 **F4U-5**

Higher Canopy



This F4U-4 (BuNo 121800) of VF-23 carried the squadron insignia high on the fin. The Corsair, side number 301, had just recovered aboard USS WRIGHT during carrier qualifications on 3 November 1948. The F4U-5 was the first variant of the Corsair to have metal covered outer wing panels and control surfaces. (CDR R. E. Bennett)

This F4U-5 (BuNo 121928) was undergoing engine maintenance on the ramp at NAS Norfolk, Virginia during the Spring of 1950. The F5U-5 was powered by a Pratt & Whitney R-2800-32W engine and had a top speed of 470 mph. (Robert Mathers)

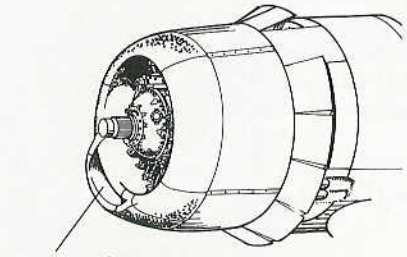


An F4U-5 of VF-14 Tophatters catches a wire aboard USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT during a cruise with the 6th Fleet in the Med. The propeller hub and fin tip were painted Yellow and the aircraft carried a White E on the fuselage below the cockpit. (Rich Corbat)

Holding full right rudder, this F4U-5 (BuNo 122050) of VF-14 Tophatters, launches from USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT during August of 1953. The aircraft is carrying two underwing drop tanks, a common load for the F4U-5. (Rich Corbat)

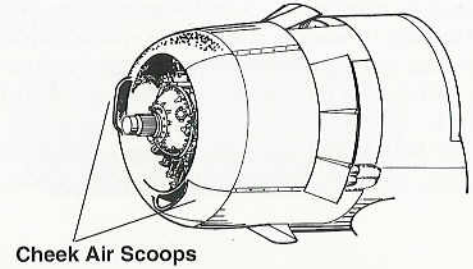
Cowling Development

F4U-4



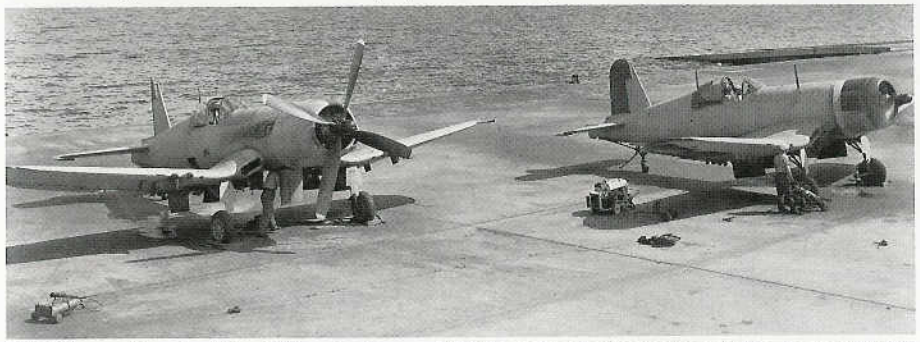
Chin Air Scoop

F4U-5



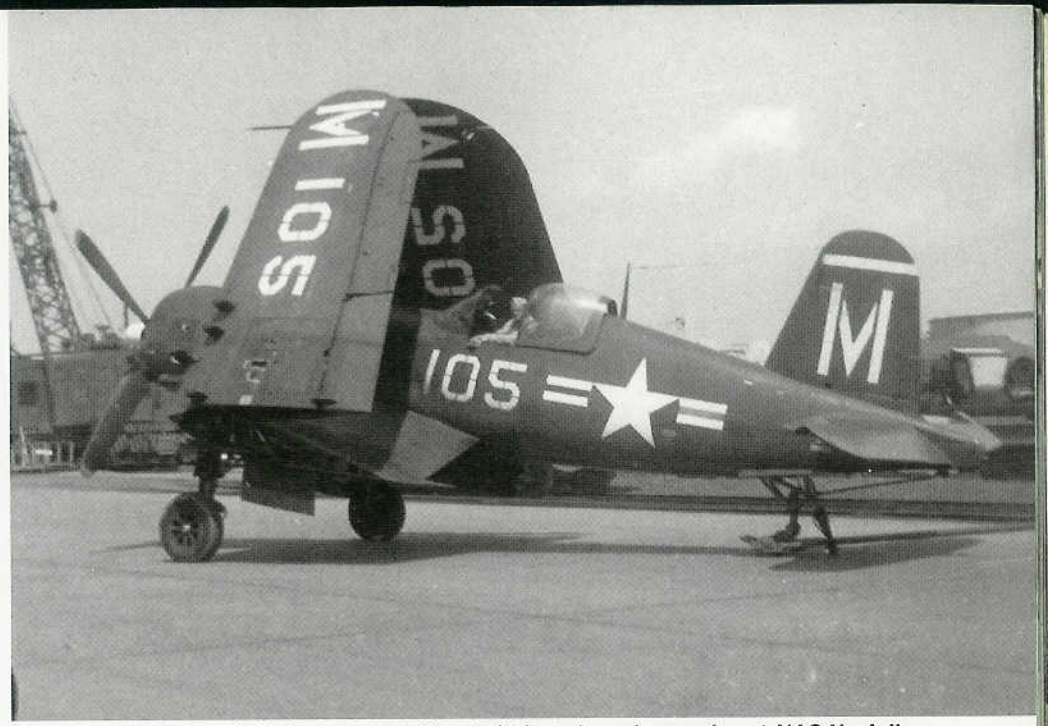
Cheek Air Scoops

Fully loaded, a F4U-5 (BuNo 122196) of VMF-212 flown by Major H.E. Smith heads for a target in North Korea during 1952. Flying out of K-3, the Marines used the rugged Corsair for ground attack missions. (Major H.E. Smith)



With the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, F4U-5s and other versions of the Corsair were pulled from storage and put in fighting shape for combat use. These Corsairs were refurbished at NAS Jacksonville, Flordia during 1950. (National Archives)

This F4U-5 (BuNo 121986) was modified with an auxillary rudder installation similar to the one used on the F2G-1 and a test probe installation was mounted,beneath the starboard wing. This Corsair was a one-of-a-kind modification used for stability tests at Dallas, Texas during 1949. (Vought via Hal Andrews)



This F4U-5 of VF-21 is being prepared for hoisting aboard a carrier at NAS Norfolk, Virginia during April of 1949. At Norfolk, the Naval Air Station and Naval Base are connected and aircraft could be easily moved from the air station to the carrier piers. (Robert Mathers)

Major Harold E. Smith of VMF-212 Lancers poses by his F4U-5 aircraft number 15 at K-3 (Pohang) Korea during 1952. The Corsair was fully loaded with five inch rockets, two 500 pound bombs and a 154 gallon drop tank. (MAJ H. E. Smith)

A F4U-5, side number 113, of VF-41 rolls down the flight deck of USS MIDWAY for a deck run takeoff. The propeller hub and tip of the fin was trimmed in White. The Pratt & Whitney R-2800-32W engine produced 2,300 hp and the F4U-5 could reach a top speed of 470 mph. (U.S. Navy)

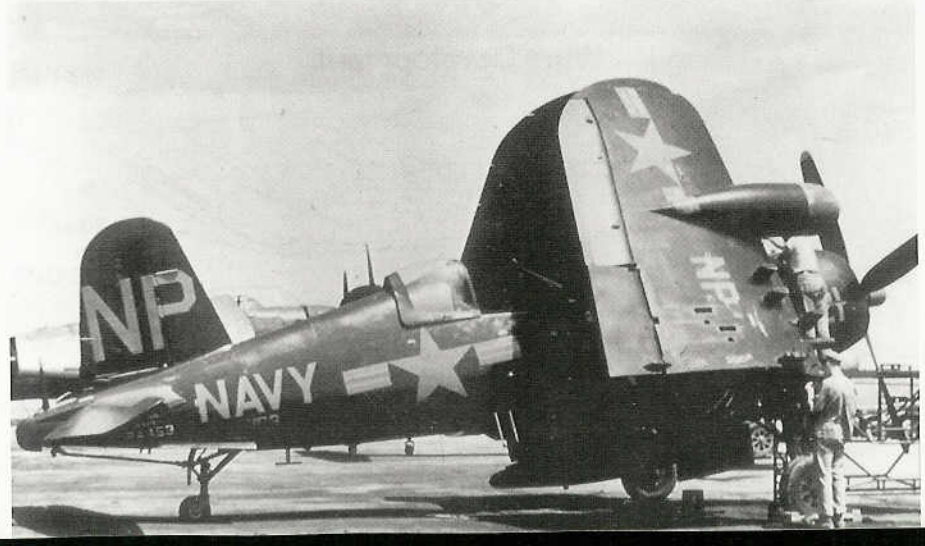
(Right) Taking a wave-off from the LSO aboard USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, this F4U-5 (BuNo 121879) side numbr 401, of VF-14 heads around for another approach during October of 1953. To counteract the torque of the big P&W engine, the pilot has kicked in full right rudder to avoid a potentially fatal torque roll. (Rich Corbat)

F4U-5, side number 13, of VMF-224 based at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina, was hoisted aboard a carrier at the Norfolk Naval Base on 23 April 1949. This Corsair was Glossy Sea Blue with White markings. (Robert Mathers)

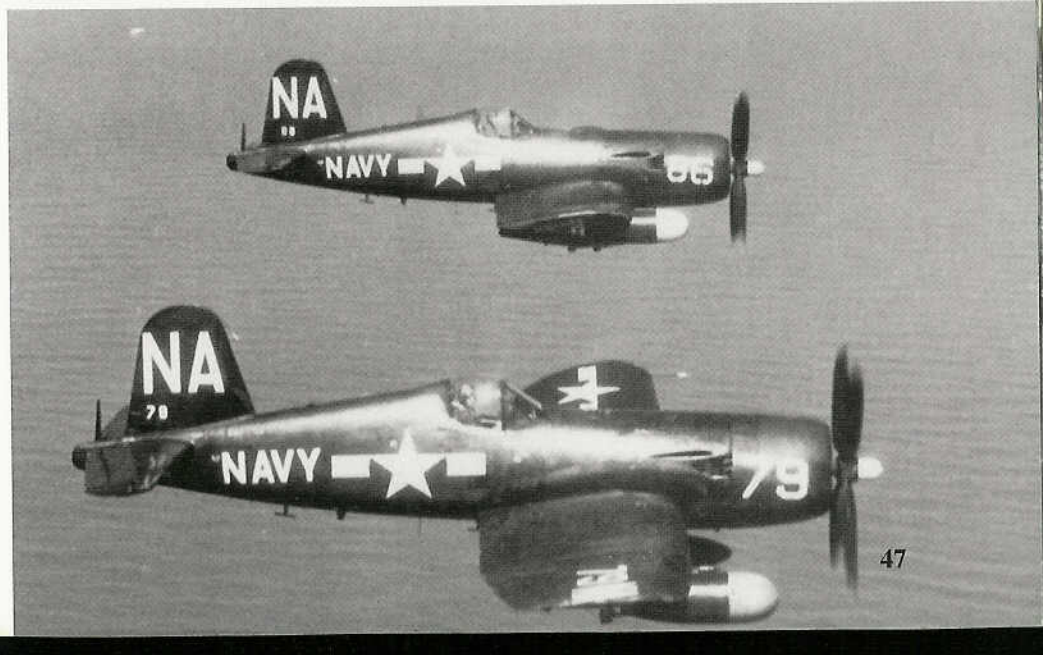
A F4U-5N, serial 601, of the Honduran Air Force on final approach for landing at Toncontin Airport, on 21 March 1976. The Corsair carried Medium Blue and White national markings on the tail with Blue/White stripes on the wingtips. The original starboard wing mounted radome and related night fighter equipment had been deleted. (F. Ariza via Carlos Planas)

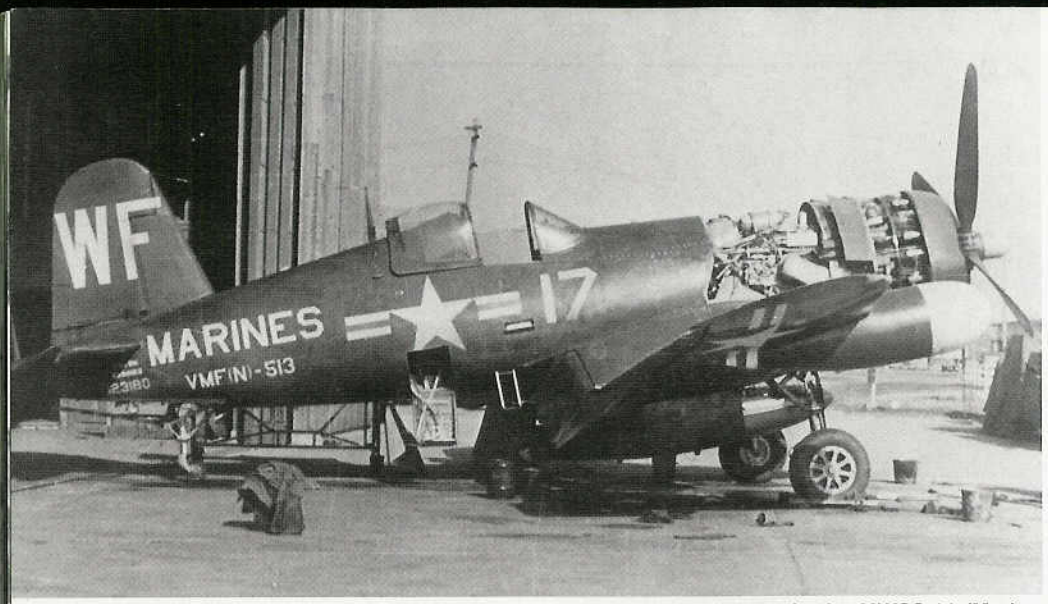
An overall Matte Black finish with Red markings and small national insignia were used on this F4U-5N (BuNo 124449). Flying from K-8, Kunson, Korea, VMF(N)-513 Flying Nightmares night fighters participated in strikes on enemy convoys and troops that attempted to move under the cover of darkness during 1952. (Don Severson)

This F4U-5N (BuNo 124453) of VC-3, undergoing engine maintenance on a South Korean airstrip, was flown by the Navy's first Korean War Ace, Commander Guy Bordelon during 1953. NP-21 usually flew from the deck of USS PRINCETON. The Corsair was later destroyed in a takeoff crash in the hands of another pilot. (Jeff Ethell Collection)



A pair of F4U-5Ns of VC-4 fly off the New Jersey coast during a routine training mission on 25 September 1953. Detachments of Composite Squadron Four flew combat missions from various carriers during the Korean War. Vought produced a total of 214 F4U-5N night fighters for use by the both the Navy and Marines. (National Archives)





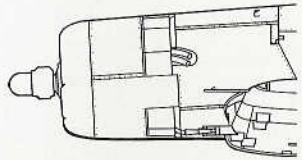
A F4U-5N (BuNo 123180) of VMF(N)-513 undergoes engine repairs by MWSS-11 (Marine Wing Service Squadron Eleven) at Itami Airbase, Japan during 1950. Borderless national insignia was applied and all markings were in White. (USMC)

This F4U-5N (BuNo 124443) rested upside down at Kimpo Airfield (K-16), Korea after suffering strike damage when it nosed over on landing on 3 December 1950. The white markings on this Corsair have been muted by overspraying with Blue to lower its visibility. (LT J.A. Buebe via Robert F. Dorr)

A F4U-5N, side number 14, of VC-3 recovers aboard USS ESSEX off Korea during 1952. This Corsair carried the NP modex on the tail. Armed with four 20MM cannon and capable of carrying a variety of underwing ordnance, the F4U-5N was an awesome adversary during night or day operations. (U.S. Navy via Paul Stevens)

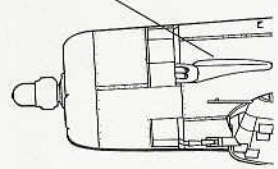
Cowling Development

F4U-5



F4U-5N

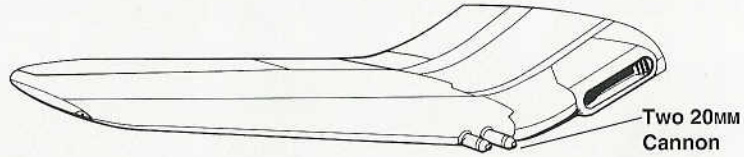
Exhaust Shield



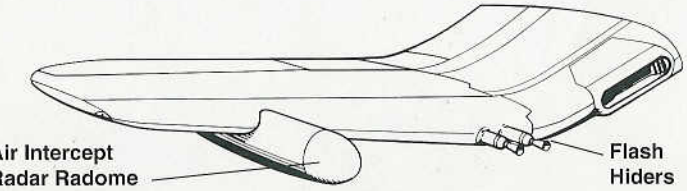
This F4U-5N (BuNo 124691) of VC-4 suffered extensive damage after engaging the barrier while coming aboard USS LEYTE off Korea on 3 November 1951. The Corsair had flipped over on its back, destroying the vertical fin. Deck crews are in the process of hoisting the aircraft back on its landing gear. (Robert Mathers)

Wing Development

F4U-5



F4U-5N

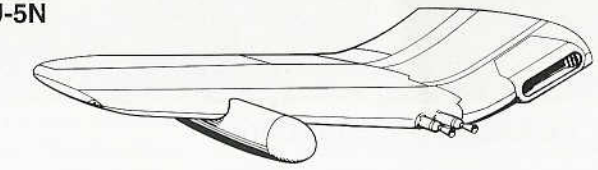


A F4U-5NL, with the serial 3-A-205, makes a deck run takeoff from the Argentine Navy carrier INDEPENDENCIA during 1958. Argentina acquired a number of F4U-5N/-5NL Corsairs from the U.S under the Mutual Defense Assistance Plan. (via Hal Andrews)

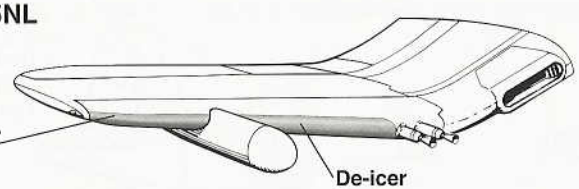
Fully loaded with rockets and bombs, a F4U-5NL Corsair of the Argentine Navy, serial 3-A-204, prepared to take off from an Argentine naval air base during 1960. (Carlos Planas Collection via J. Nuez)

Wing Development

F4U-5N

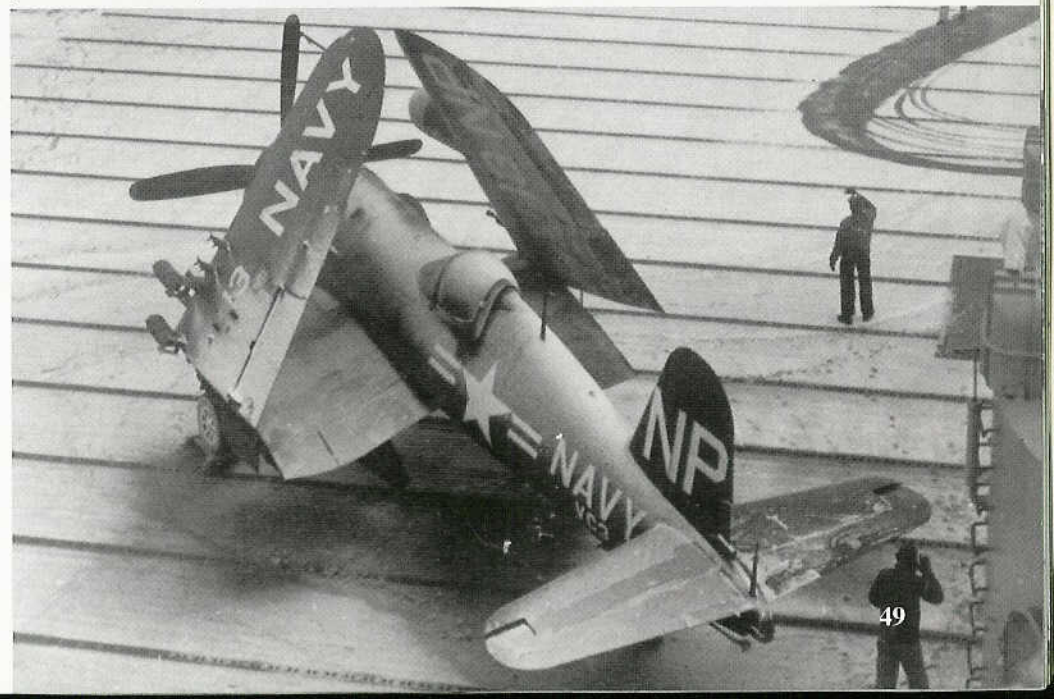


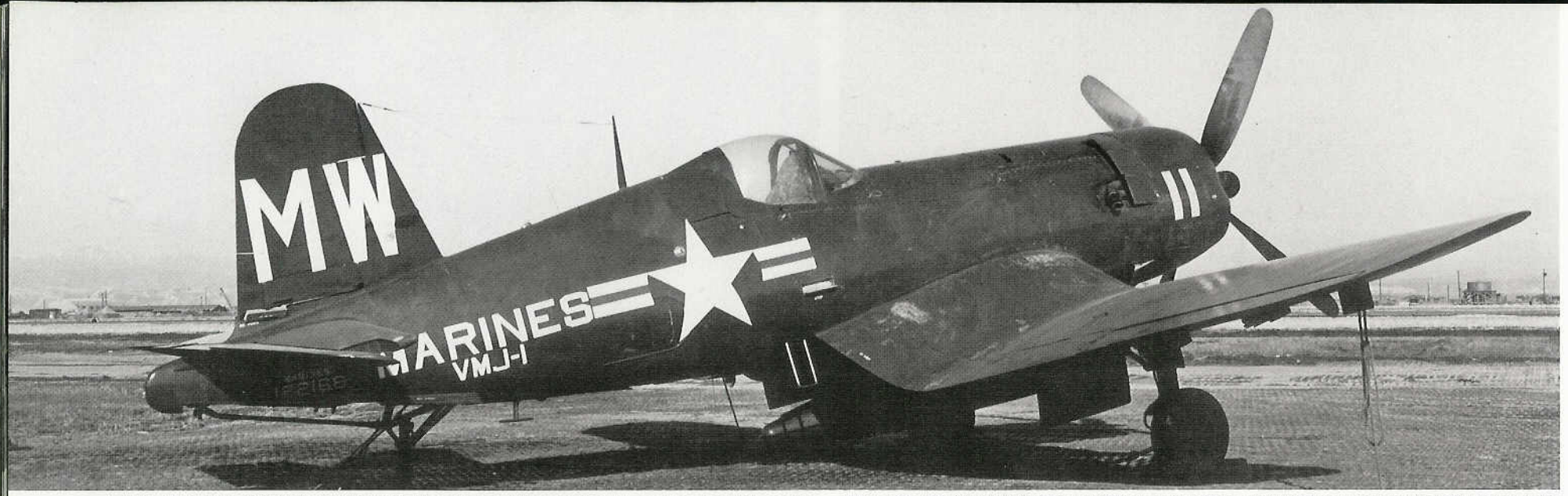
F4U-5NL



A pair of Corsairs of VC-4 fly over the New Jersey countryside near NAS Atlantic City during 1953. The Corsair in the foreground is a F4U-5NL (BuNo 124681) which shows the deicer boot installation on wings and tail. Vought produced 101 F4U-5NLs. (Bob Esposito Collection)

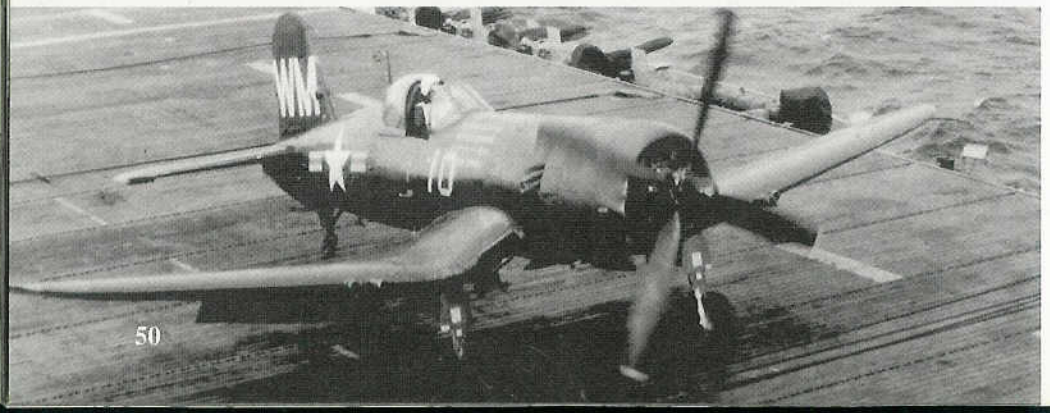
Navy and Marine pilots experienced severe Winter weather during their operations in the Korean War. This F4U-5N, side number 13, of VC-3 was coated with snow and ice aboard USS VALLEY FORGE while operating in the frigid waters in the Sea of Japan during 1951. (National Archives)





A F4U-5P (BuNo 121977) of HEDRON-12 with the side number 11 and modex WA on the tail. The aircraft was normally based at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, California during 1949. (Clay Jansson)

During combat operations off Korea, this F4U-5P, side number 10 of H&MS-33 carried thirty-nine mission markers on its fuselage just forward of the cockpit. This Corsair had just recovered aboard USS BAIROKO on 5 May 1951 (U. S. Navy via Hal Andrews)

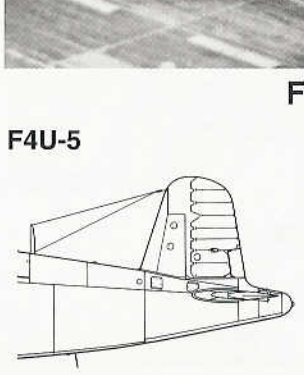


This F4U-5P (BuNo 122168) of VMJ-1 carried the unit's MW modex on its tail. This photo fighter participated in missions over Korea both as a fighter and a photographic reconnaissance aircraft during February of 1953. The sliding fuselage camera port window and the small blister on the tail fin were the external identifying features of the F4U-5P. (Clay Jansson)

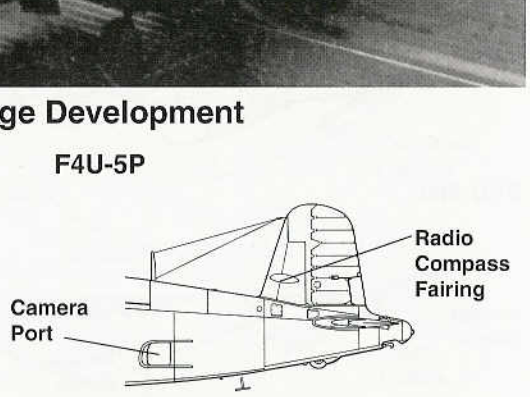
Piloted by Colonel Mobley, this F4U-5P (BuNo 122020) of HEDRON-2 launches from USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT on 20 July 1957. The photo Corsair was at sea for carrier qualifications and was stationed at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina. (SGT Paul Miller)

Fuselage Development

F4U-5



F4U-5P



(Above & Below) These AU-1 Corsairs, coming down the Vought final assembly line during 1952, would soon see combat with Marine Corps units as ground attack aircraft in Korea. This variant of the Corsair had ten underwing stores stations for bombs or rockets. (Vought)

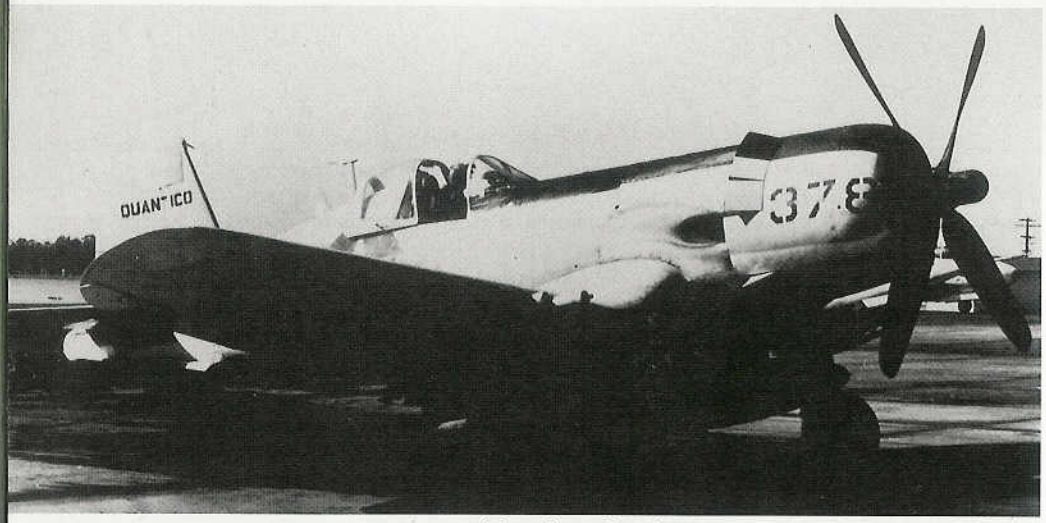
AU-1 (F4U-6)

The AU-1 [F4U-6] was the final variant of the Corsair to be produced for use by the U.S. military. It was flown primarily by the Marine Corps and was used extensively in Korea. The Naval Reserve also utilized them for a period of time after 1954 and retired their last one during early 1956.

The AU-1 first flew on 31 January 1952 and was equipped with a 2, 300 hp P&W R-2800-83W single-speed supercharged engine. This Corsair was a dedicated ground attack aircraft and carried ten underwing pylons for rockets or bombs and two wing root pylons for additional fuel tanks, bombs or napalm. The AU-1 was externally similar to the F4U-5 but did not have the twin air scoops on the engine cowl ring. Internal armament was identical to the F4U-5 (four 20MM cannon). Vought produced a total of 111 of these superb ground attack Corsairs. After service with the U.S. military, a number of them were made available to the French Navy. In French service they participated in three conflicts and served faithfully until retired in 1964.

This AU-I (BuNo 129368) sat with folded wings on the snowy ramp at NRAB Minneapolis, Minnesota during January of 1965. A short time later, Corsair side number 153 took its final flight to the Navy boneyard at Litchfield Park, AZ. (Bob Stuckey)

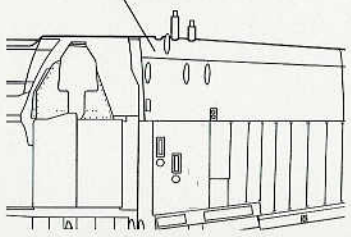
Piloted by Marine Corps Ace Captain John F. Bolt, this AU-1 (BuNo 129378) of AES-12 was one of the last three Corsairs in the Corps. Bolt was preparing to depart MCAS El Toro, California for a return flight to his home station at MCAS Quantico, Virginia during 1957. (W.F. Gemeinhardt)



Rocket Stubs

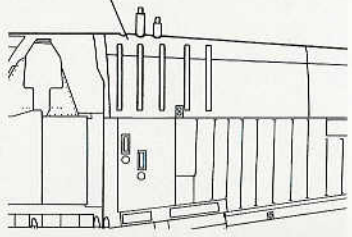
F4U-5

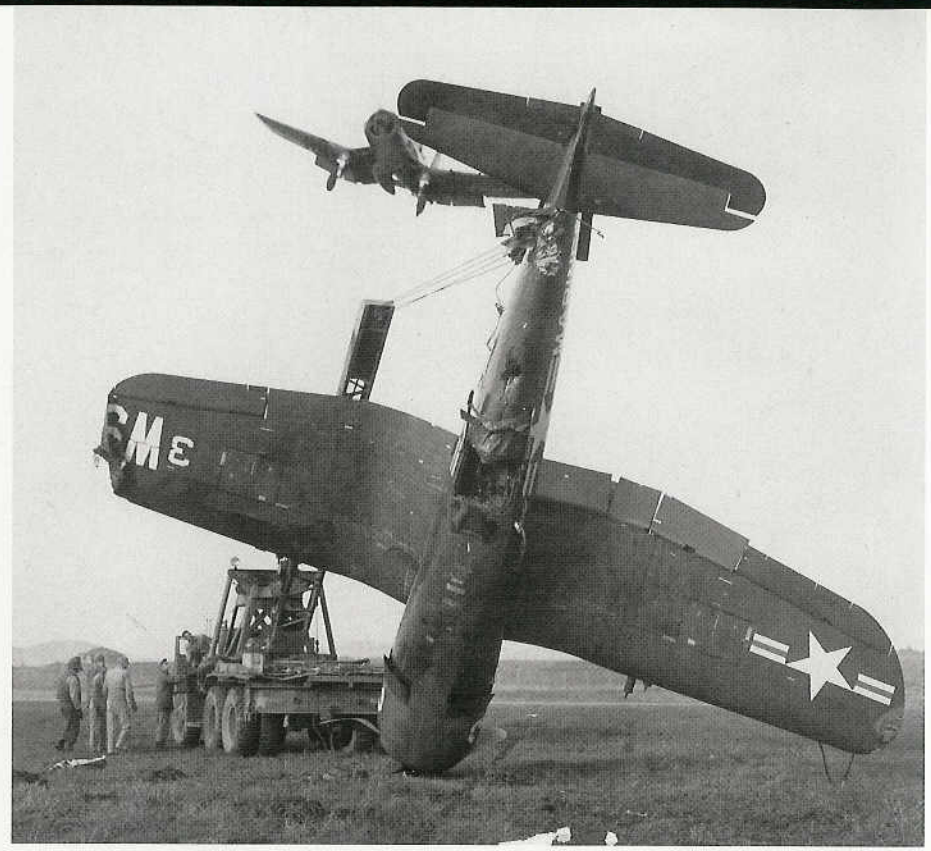
Four Staggered Rocket Stubs



AU-1

Five Ordnance Pylons

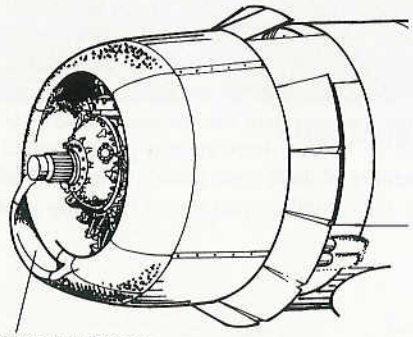




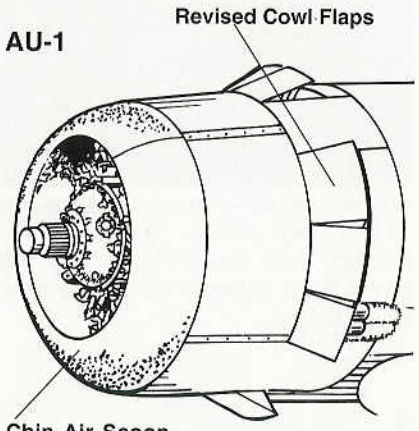
Operating out of primative Korean airfields, crashes were inevitable, as Corsairs and other aircraft were pushed to their limits to meet operational requirements. This AU-1 Corsair, side number 3 of VMA-323 nosed over in the mud after running off the runway at K-6 airfield in Korea, during December of 1952. (USMC via Art Schoeni)

Cowling Development

F4U-4



AU-1

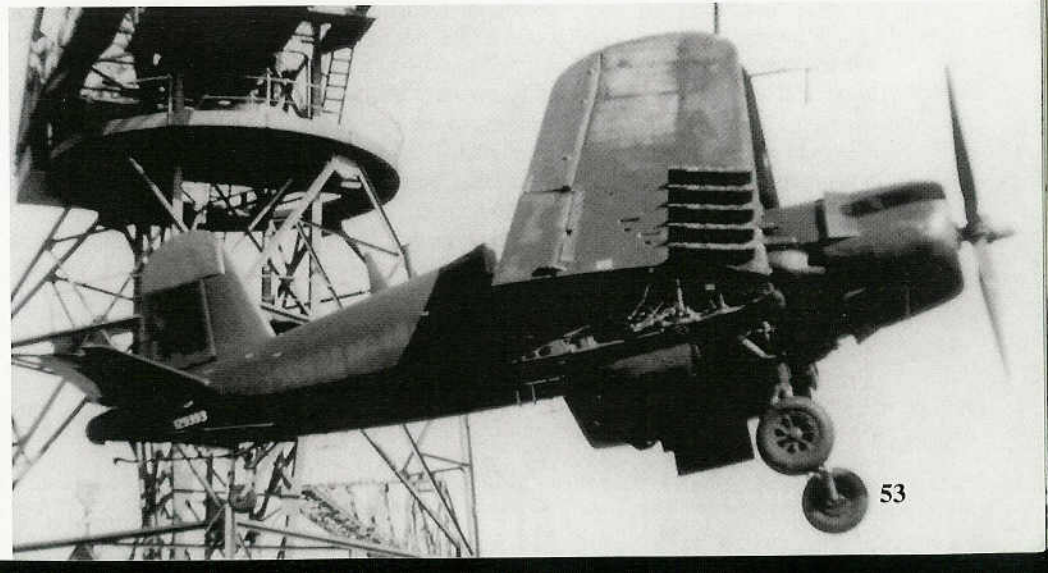


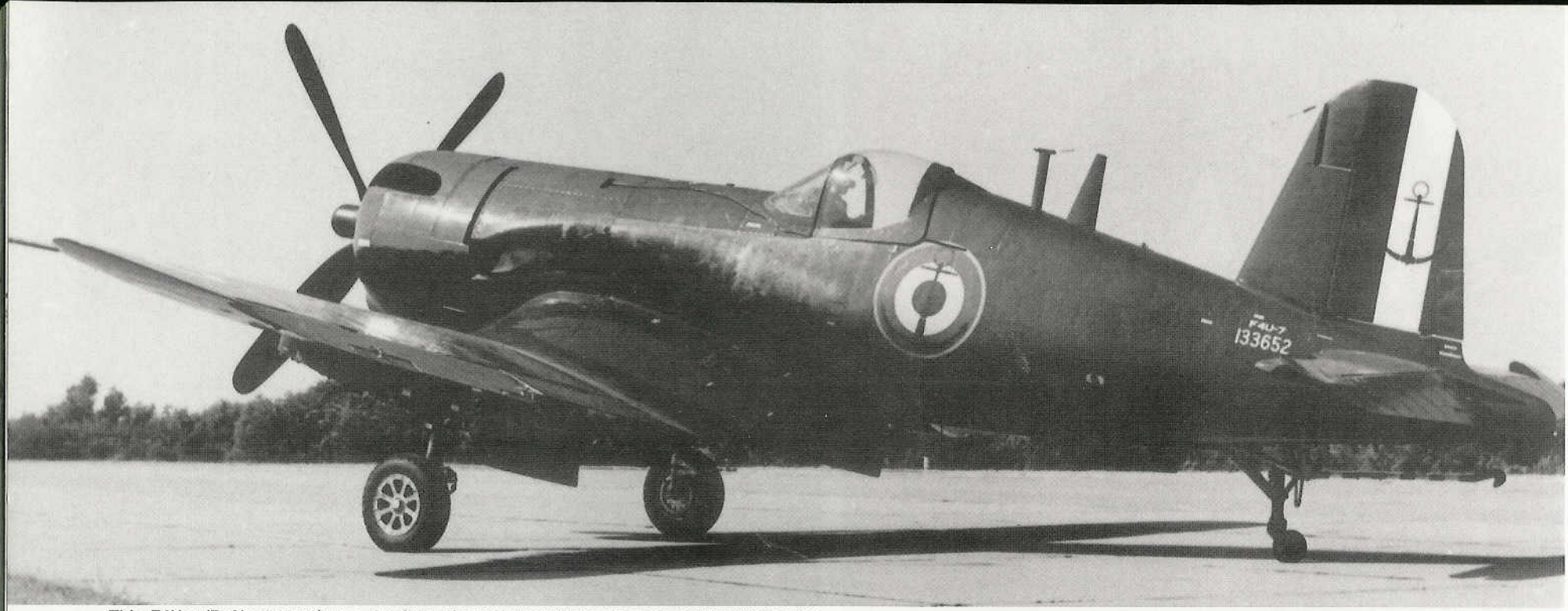
This very weathered AU-1 (BuNo 129391) of 14 Flotille was one of the last Corsairs retired from service by the French Navy. The war-weary AU-1 had made its final flight and was stored at NAB Cuers, France, on 17 March 1964.

VMA-323 pilots celebrate the conclusion of 100 combat missions. The 100th mission was flown by Captain Ray Pineo on 24 May 1953. Hoisted on their shoulders, he was saluted by his fellow pilots on the flight line in front of his AU-1 Corsair. (Henry Covington)

An AU-1 Corsair of VMF-212 side number 20, on the ramp at K-3 (Pohang) Korea, during September of 1953, awaiting its next mission. The AU-1 carried four 20mm cannon and was used exclusively by the Marine Corps as a dedicated ground attack aircraft. (Clay Jansson)

An unmarked Marine AU-1(BuNo 129393) was hoisted aboard ship at Yokosuka, Japan on 11 April 1954. Marines were sent to reclaim a small batch of Corsairs from storage so that they could be refurbished for use by the French Navy. After serving the Marines in Korea, the AU-1s were destined to see combat again in French colors. (R.W. "Pete" Peterson)





This F4U-7 (BuNo 133652) was the first of ninety-four Corsairs built by Vought for the exclusive use of the French Navy. First flown on 2 July 1952, the F4U-7 was basically an updated F4U-4B in an AU-1 airframe. (Vought via Hal Andrews)

F4U-7

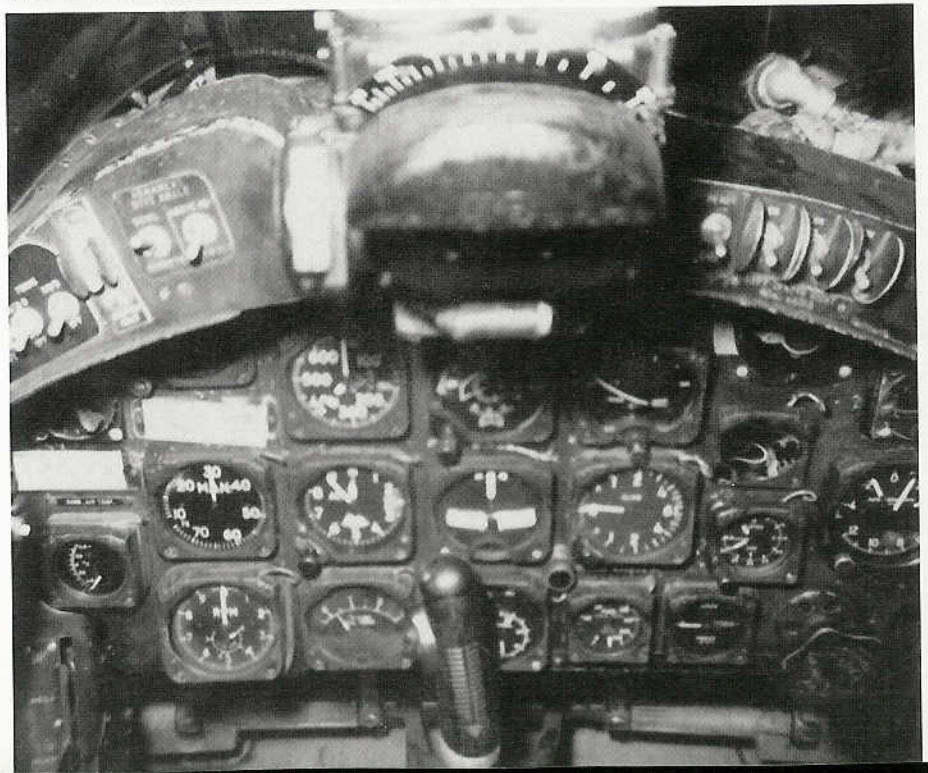
The F4U-7 was an updated variant of the F4U-4B which used an AU-1 airframe and was produced by Vought exclusively for use by the French Navy. It first flew on 2 July 1952 and was manufactured in Vought's Dallas (Grand Prairie) factory and a total of 94 F4U-7 Corsairs were delivered.

These French variants were powered by the P&W R-2800-43W engine and had a top speed of 440 mph. Their armament was identical to the F4U-5 and AU-1. A few of the French F4U-7s were configured to carry the wire-guided SS-11 air-to-ground missiles and participated in conflicts in Indochina, Suez and Algeria. The final French F4U-7 Corsairs served with Flotille 14F and were phased out in late 1964.

A small number of F4U-7s were returned to the U.S. and today a few of them still fly on the airshow circuit. F4U-7 (BuNo 133704) is on permanent display at the USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial in Mobile Bay, although its present paint scheme depicts it as a U.S. marked AU-1 of VMA-212.

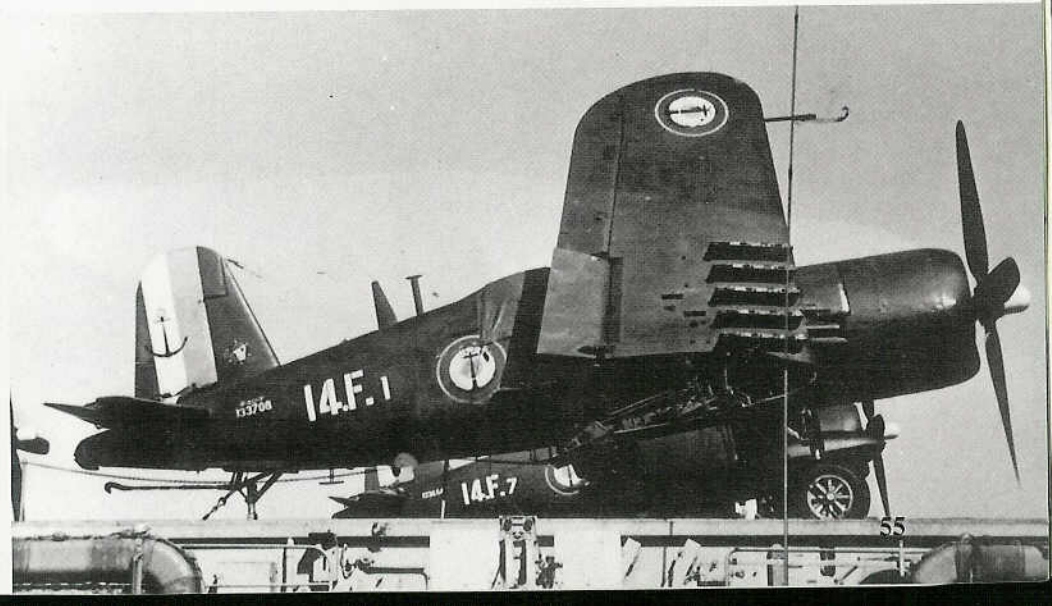
This F4U-7 (BuNo 133710), after completing its service with the French Navy was retired and returned to the U.S. It was delivered by the Navy, via barge, to MCAS Quantico, Virginia on 21 August 1964. (USMC via W. F. Gemeinhardt)

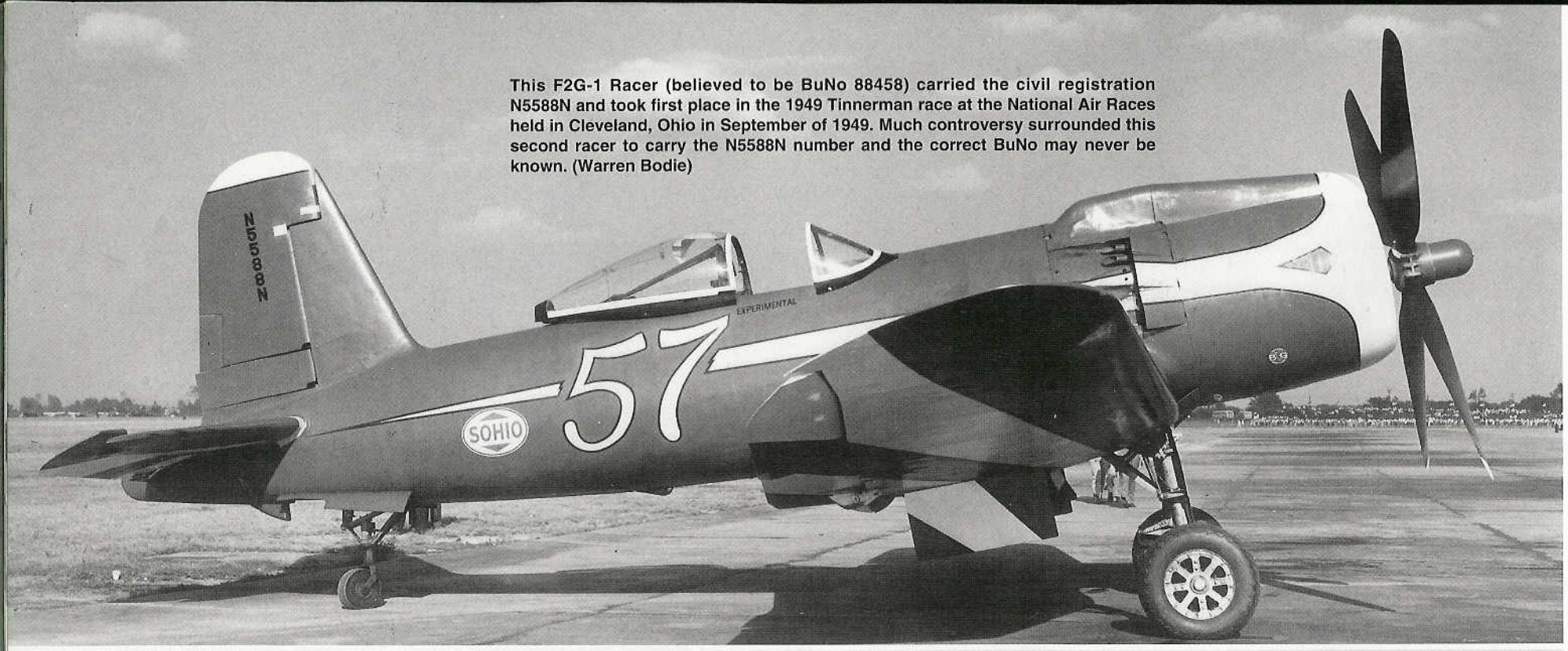
The instrument panel of the Vought F4U-7 (BuNo 133710) was very similar to a standard F4U-4 cockpit layout with all dials and guages in English. (Jim Sullivan)



This F4U-7, side number 11, was modified to carry the French SS-11 wire guided anti-tank missile during 1960. Special launch racks were installed to accomodate four missiles, using the standard underwing rocket stations. This was an experimental installation and did not see widespread operational use. (via Dave Ostrowski)

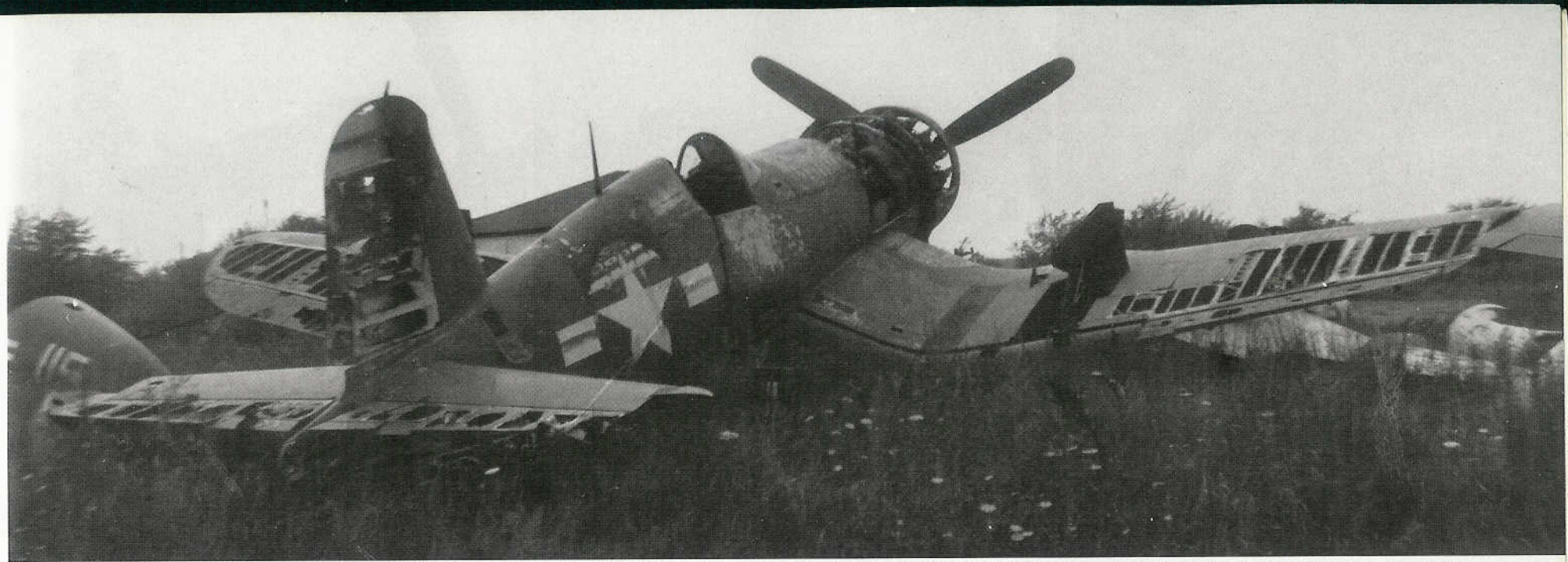
A French Navy F4U-7 (BuNo 133708) in factory-new condition having just joined 14 Flotille aboard the French carrier ARROMANCHES during 1954. The Corsair was Glossy Sea Blue with White markings and propeller hub. (via Hal Andrews)





This F2G-1 Racer (believed to be BuNo 88458) carried the civil registration N5588N and took first place in the 1949 Tinnerman race at the National Air Races held in Cleveland, Ohio in September of 1949. Much controversy surrounded this second racer to carry the N5588N number and the correct BuNo may never be known. (Warren Bodie)

This XF2G-1 (BuNo 14694) carried the civil registration NX91092 and raced as number 18. This Corsair participated in the Cleveland National Air Race in 1947 where it dropped out on the nineteenth lap due to engine failure. In 1949 it raced again and took second place in the Thompson Trophy Race and second place in the SOHIO Race. (Marty via Bill Larkins)



This FG-1D last served with the Reserve Unit at NAS Willow Grove, PA. Along with several other aircraft it was parked in a field at the Air Station and allowed to rot. After several years it was reduced to a hulk and was eventually burned for fire fighting training during October of 1958. (Roger Besecker)

This F4U-4 (BuNo 97264) was retired from service in 1957 at NAS Olathe, Kansas. After being declared surplus, it was purchased by Bob Bean and ferried to Arizona along with several other Corsairs, where it sat in a field for several years. It was eventually purchased, restored and returned to flying condition. Today it flies on the warbird airshow circuit. (Bob Kopitzke)

"High Pockets" was a F4U-1A (BuNo 50022) of VMF-217 on Guam during September of 1944. In the cockpit were the pilot Herb Pennfield (front) with Ed Stivers, the sqauadron engineering officer behind him. (Ed Stivers)

Shirley June, was a F4U-2, side number 201 of VMF(N)-532 on Tarawa, during January of 1944. She was flown by Major Everett Vaughan. (W.F. Gemeinhardt Collection)

THUNDERING HOG II was a F4U-1A, side number 20 flown by Lieutenant Jesse Folmar of VMF-422 on Engebi Island during 1944. (Jesse Folmar)

"KILLER'S HASH WAGON", was attached to VBF-83 aboard USS ESSEX during January of 1945 (Paul Madden/USS ESSEX CV-9)

(Left) KATY DID was flown by Lieutenant Royce Watson of VMF-422 while on Engebi Island during 1944. The ground officer next to him is Lieutenant Hiddreth Moody. (Mark Syrkin)

CORSAIRS WITH NAMES

(Right) The Corsair in the foreground was named RAMBLING WRECK. She was a F4U-1 (BuNo 02386) VMF-121 on Espiritu Santo during March of 1944. (USMC)

"GET EM BLUE DOG", side number 51, was attached to VMF-113 while the unit was in the Marshall Islands near Eniwetok in July of 1944. (Paul Madden/USS ESSEX CV-9)

CHOW HOUND of VBF-83 aboard USS ESSEX during January of 1945 carried an impressive menu of side orders. (Paul Madden/USS ESSEX CV-9)

My Bonnie, an F4U-1 of VMF-124 takes off from Munda Island during August of 1943. The extra gun port on the wing was a dummy painted on by the ground crew.

TOM TULLIS

Marine Ace, Major Phil DeLong, lands his F4U-4 of VMF-312 aboard USS BATAAN off Korea during April of 1951. He shot down two Yak fighters in Korea to add to his Second World War total of 13.

TOM TULLIS

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