Flight Line

Southern California Wing
455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010
(805) 482-0064

COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

August, 2020
Vol. XXXIX No. 8

The only time both teams used the same aircraft - the McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II

Visit us online at www.cafsocal.com.

A Blue Angels McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Super Hornet and a Thunderbirds McDonell Douglas F-16 Fighting Falcon in tight formation during recent fly-bys.

To Educate, Inspire and Honor Through Flight and Living History Experiences

August 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Museum Open 10am to 4pm Tuesday - Saturday 12pm to 4pm Sundays Closed Monday and Major Holidays						1 Work Day
2	3 Museum Closed	4 Work Day	5	6 Work Day	7	8 Work Day
9	10 Museum Closed	MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE DUE TO COVID19 EPIDEMIC			14	15 Work Day
16	17 Museum Closed	18 Work Day	19	20 Work Day	21	22 Work Day
23	24 Museum Closed	25 Work Day	26	27 Work Day	28	29 Work Day
	Museum Closed	Museum Open 10am to 4pm Tuesday - Saturday 12pm to 4pm Sundays Closed Monday and Major Holidays				

STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS

Wing Leader	* Jason Somes	(818) 292-4646	wingleader@cafsocal.com
Executive Officer	* Chris Liguori	(310) 430-2779	exo@ cafsocal.com
Adjutant	* Roland Fogel	(805) 428-6806	adjutant@cafsocal.com
Finance Officer	* Paul Willett	(818) 469-8480	finance@cafsocal.com
Operations Officer	* Mike Hohls	(805) 410-2498	ops@cafsocal.com
Maintenance Officer	* Trace Eubanks	(805) 325-1513	maintenance@cafsocal.com
Safety Officer	* Al Kepler	(818) 399-2006	safety@cafsocal.com
Development Officer	* Kathy Newhard	(805) 857-2881	development@cafsocal.com
Education Officer	* Charlie Carr	(805) 200-7220	education@cafsocal.com
Gift Shop Manager	Berthany Smith	(805) 482 0064	museum@cafsocal.com
Friends Coordinator	Ceci Stratford	(805) 630-3696	cecipilot@sbcglobal.net
Air Show Officer	Jason Somes	(818) 292-4646	ops@cafsocal.com
Facility Officer			
Personnel Officer	Yvonne Anderson		membership@cafsocal.com
Film/Events Manager	LaTanya Barber	(805) 302-8136	barber.latanya@gmail.com
Public Info Officer	Pat Brown	(805) 479-2221	pio@cafsocal.com
Public Info Officer	Lucien Pillai	(805) 300-4580	col.luc.cafsocal@gmail.com
Historian	Ron Fleishman	(805) 586-4119	oldplanec46@aol.com
Training Officer			
Wing Photographer	Arash Afshari	(805) 279-1599	acafshari@gmail.com
Collections Manager			
Newsletter Editor	Dave Flood	(805) 402-8356	dmpflood31@gmail.com
Newsletter Production	Casey de Bree	(805) 205-0494	scdebree@aol.com
Webmaster	Will Cunningham	(805) 570-3515	col.will.cafsocal@gmail.com
Librarian			
Displays/Artifacts Mgr.	Charlie Carr	(805) 200-7220	education@cafsocal.com

HANGAR PHONE	(805) 482-0064
HANGAR FAX	(805) 482-0348
WEBSITE	www.cafsocal.com
E-MAIL	admin.cafsocal.com

IN THIS ISSUE

Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month

Southern California Wing
455 Aviation Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010-9501

U.S. Naval Air Centennial: 2011

Before The Blue Angels – There were *The Three Seahawks*

"In the fall of 1927, Lt. D. W. Tomlinson was authorized to proceed via Spokane, WA, on the return flight of an FB-5 from the Seattle Boeing factory to North Island, CA, so that he might observe the National Air Races. From North Island, three Naval aviators, each from a different squadron with different types of aircraft, were ordered to Spokane to represent Naval Aviation.

The Army Air Corps was represented by its aerobatic team, *The Three Musketeers*. The Marine Air Corps sent its aerobatic team of Rogers, Sanderson and Towers.

The *Musketeers*, superbly trained and led by Jim Doolittle, stole the show. Thanks to Jim's engineering background and ingenuity, the carburetors of the D-12 engines in their PW-8s had been fixed to run at full power, inverted. This was accomplished by the simple trick of plugging the fuel line to the carburetor with solder, then drilling the right-size hole through the plug to form a master jet which fed the correct amount of fuel for full power. Without the modification, the float mechanism normally failed and flooded the carburetor during inverted flight. This was a decisive advantage and safety factor when performing low-level aerobatics involving flight with negative G.

Thus, the AAC's *Musketeers* were able to perform smooth, perfectly executed loops, slow rolls and inverted flight. The airmanship of this team amazed and pleased everyone.

Though the Navy contingent, with its ill-assorted airplanes flew together, the result was less than impressive. Tomlinson was burned up at having to helplessly watch the *Musketeers* carry off the honors. He determined that before the next National Air Races, scheduled for September, 1928 at Mines Field, Los Angeles came around, Naval Aviation would have an aerobatic team. It happened that Tomlinson, in addition to being a Naval aviator, had for five years owned and flown JNs, utilizing his off time as a stunt pilot and barnstormer.

Navy's Boeing F2B-1 Fighter

Tomlinson was no sooner on the ground at North Island, where he was Exec Officer of VF-6, than he began to fix the carburetor in every plane in his squadron (on the QT). Navy regs required bureau approval, but competitive camera gun practice with VF-1 was on the schedule. What a surprise theVF-1 boys got when they tangled in mock combat with VF-6's F2Bs, which ran at full power inverted. There was never any kickback from the bureau.

Also, the Exec screened the younger gung-ho pilots fresh out of Pensacola for the two most promising aerobats to become his wingmen. Very soon, he, with Lt. Jg W. V. Davis, Jr, and A.P. "Putt" Storrs, used every opportunity to practice close-in 10-foot wing and tail formation flying. They progressed to aerobatics, loops, vertical turns, wing-overs and inverted flight – always above 1,500 feet when anywhere near North Island.

The Three Seahawks, (from left) Lt. William V. Davis, Jr, Lt. Daniel W. "Tommy" Tomlinson, and Lt. A.P. "Putt" Storrs.

Before the name "Three Seahawks" was adopted, they were sometimes referred to as "The Suicide Trio," due to their act of flying with their wings tied together.

Well before Squadron VB-2B (successor to VF-6) flew aboard the USS Langley for a fleet cruise to Hawaii in the spring of 1928, the stunt team was practicing at ground level. Inevitably, word of the team's activities worked up to Rear Admiral Reeves, Commander Aircraft Squadrons, Pacific Fleet. On arrival in San Francisco, Langley aircraft were to put on a show over the city. Word was passed down that VB-2B's exhibition team was to break off after the parade and do its act. No restrictions were given. San Franciscans along Market Street and in adjacent tall buildings were startled to see an F2B flying inverted down Market Street below the tops of the taller buildings. Other aerobatics were carried out a trifle more discreetly. The perpetrators held their breath, but there were no repercussions.

Upon return to North Island, the stunt team took advantage of every opportunity to polish its bag of tricks. Since the previous fall, the team had been referred to by several appellations which we did not consider suitable. Putt Storrs, in the course of a discussion of possible names, suggested *The Three Seahawks*, and that name stuck.

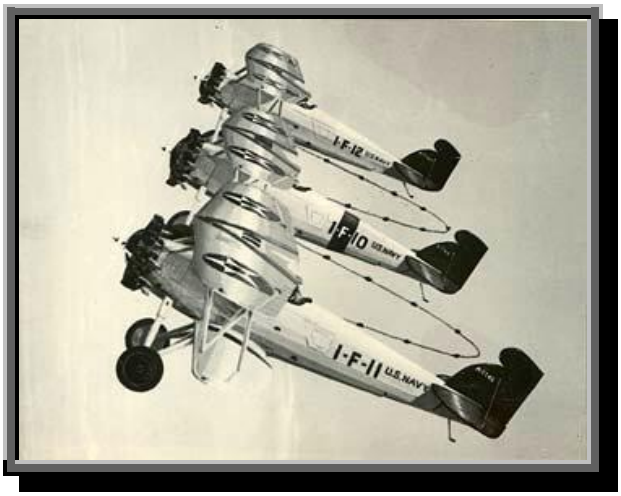
Tomlinson, the leader of *The Three Seahawks,* had succeeded to command of VB-2B. He had orders for *The Three Seahawks* to peel off from the squadron after the

mass flyby (in honor of the opening of Lindbergh Field, San Diego in the summer of 1928), and put on a demonstration in front of the reviewing stand. Again, there had been no mention of restrictions. This was a chance to break the ice. The team would either be selected to represent the Navy at the coming National Air Races, or they would be in deep trouble. As General of The Army MacArthur once said, "It is the order you disobey that makes you famous."

The Three Seahawks squared away to make a diving approach parallel to the stands, so that the tips of the inside wingman's plane would clear the outside of the stands by about 50 feet. Directly in front of the stands, when the leader's wheels were raising dust, the team pulled up for the first loop. We were almost close enough to count the whiskers in Rear Admiral Reeves's beard. People in the stands ducked as we came in. Two similar loops followed.

The team then approached again from the east, into the wind and away from the city, and passed close in front of the stands, with the leader inverted and the wingmen cocked up, flying on the side of the fuselage. Upon recovery, the team climbed several hundred feet and, in good view of the stands, performed formation slow rolls, wing-overs, vertical turns, et al., in close order. Nothing like that had ever been done before in public – especially under the nose of Navy brass.

Rear Admiral Reeves congratulated *The Three Seahawks*. (It was a foregone conclusion that VB-2B would fly for the Navy at the coming National Air Races.)



***The Three Seahawks* performing their aerobatics in front of Navy brass at San Diego.**

At the National Air Races at Mines Field, Los Angeles, in September, 1928, VB-2B took off each afternoon with 15 F2Bs in five three-plane sections, with *The Three Seahawks* in the lead. *The Three Seahawks* began their demonstration heading west into the wind, doing four consecutive wing-and-tail formation loops. The team then maneuvered to the west to come in downwind parallel to the stands, with the inside wingman just clearing the stands, about 50 feet up. At the edge of the field, the leader half-rolled to inverted and the wingmen cocked up, flying on the side of the fuselage. In this formation the team flew the length of the field in front of the stands. At the eastern edge of the field, the leader rolled upright and the team maneuvered to come back across the field (in front of the stands) at about 200 feet, doing formation slow rolls. The next act was the "squirrel cage loop," with the planes spaced 120 degrees apart, each making three loops. The team then climbed, separated, and took position for a three-way dive-bombing attack from 5,000 feet – on a target in front of the center stands. The attack and pullouts were closely timed so that it appeared as though the three planes passed over the target virtually at the same time. Actually, this was pretty hairy a couple of times. Collision seemed inevitable. The roar from the crowd was great! The act really shook the crowd.

The resulting nationwide favorable publicity was so great that, in the following years Naval Aviation was always represented at the National Air Races at Cleveland, Ohio. However, the name of the team, *The Three Seahawks* was never used again. But a tradition had been established, and, after WWII Naval Aviation commissioned the *Blue Angels* as a full-time unit and demonstration team."

At the end of 1929, the three pilots, Tomlinson, Davis and Storrs received new assignments and *The Three Seahawks* team was disbanded, never to fly together again. Now you know the "Rest of The Story."

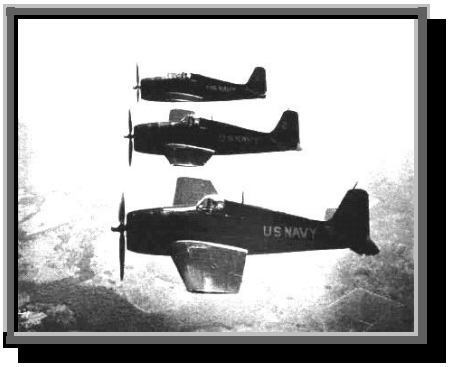
Editor's Note: In 1944, I was thirteen years old and living at Patuxent River Naval Air Test Center, MD. We had a Boy Scout Camp, and at one outing, the base commander, Capt. A.P. Storrs, attended. That's Capt. Storrs, the former *Three Seahawks* pilot, sitting at center left. My father, CPO Harold Flood is on the far left, and I am sitting on Capt. Storrs's left.

++

Thanks to D. W. Tomlinson and the *Naval Aviation News*, April, 1979 for excerpts of the article from this issue.

Reprinted from "Flight Line," Mardh, 2011.

U.S. Naval Aviation Centennial: 2011
Blue Angels' Planes: 1946 to Present



Grumman F6F Hellcat – June-Aug., 1946

Grumman F8F Bearcat - 1946-1949

Grumman F9F Panther – 1949 - 1954

Grumman F9F-8 Cougar – 1954 - 1957

Grumman F-11F-1 Tiger - 1957 – 1969

McDonnell Douglas F-4J Phantom II - 1969 – 1974

McDonnell-Douglas A-4F Skyhawk – 1974-1986

McDonnell Douglas F/A18 Hornet – 1986 –Present

Reprinted from "Flight Line," March, 2011.

USAF Aerial Demonstration Team
The Thunderbirds: Planes Since 1953

The Thunderbirds were commissioned on May25, 1953. Their first aircraft was the Republic F-84G Thunderjet.

In 1955, the Thunderbirds flew the Republic F-84F Thunderstreak.

The North American F-100 Super Sabre became the flying platform for the Thunderbirds in 1956.

The Republic F-105 Thunderchief became the plane of choice in 1984 – but after a structural failure in 1984, the Thunderbirds went back to the F-100.

From 1969 to 1973, the McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II was the plane of choice for the team.

Due to the oil shortage in the 70s, the Air Force decided to switch to the Northrop T-38 Talon for the team – five of which used as much fuel as one F-4 Phantom II.

In 1983, the Thunderbird team switched to the General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon, and have flown this versatile aircraft until the current time.

The Thunderbirds, in their red, white and blue F-16 Fighting Falcons, have recently joined the Blue Angels in fly-bys over major U.S. cities honoring all the public and private citizens helping fight the Covid-19 virus. Cities have included: New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Trenton and Atlanta. The Blue Angels continued alone over Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, New Orleans, Jacksonville, and Miami.

Canadian Snowbird Crash

Thanks to BBC online news and Time.Inc

At least one person has died after an aerobatic Canadian air force jet crashed into a residential neighbourhood.

Another crew member was injured when the plane hit a house in the city of Kamloops, British Columbia.

One pilot was able to eject before the crash on Sunday, video showed.

The Snowbirds jet had been on a tour "to salute Canadians doing their part to fight the spread of Covid-19", according to the team's **website**.

The Snowbirds perform aerobatic stunts for the public, similar to Red Arrows in the UK or the US Blue Angels.

The crash happened on Sunday morning, May 17, 2020, shortly after the jet took off.

"It is with heavy hearts that we announce that one member of the RCAF Snowbirds team has died and one has sustained serious injuries," the Royal Canadian Air Force said in a tweet.

The Canadian Armed Forces identified Capt. Jennifer Casey as the aircrew person killed**.**

She joined the armed forces in 2014 after a career in journalism, and served with the Snowbirds since 2018.

Capt. Richard MacDougall was injured but expected to recover.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he was "deeply saddened by the tragic loss".

"For the past two weeks, the Snowbirds have been flying across the country to lift up Canadians during these difficult times," he said.

"Their flyovers across the country put a smile on the faces of Canadians everywhere and make us proud. Sophie and I join all Canadians in offering our heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones of Captain Jennifer Casey."

Photos published in Canadian media appeared to show a parachute on the roof of a house.

The city of Kamloops is around 200 miles (320km) northeast of Vancouver in the West Coast Canadian province. It has a population of 90,00

The Snowbirds have performed at airshows across Canada and the U.S. for decades and are considered a key tool for raising awareness about — and recruiting for — the air force. Eleven aircraft are used during shows, with nine flying and two kept as spares.

The air force obtained its Tutor jets in 1963 and has used them in air demonstrations since 1971. Prior to Sunday's crash, seven pilots and one passenger had been killed and several aircraft had been lost over the course of the Snowbirds' history.

The RCAF 431 Air Demonstration Squadron – Snowbirds – based at 15 Wing, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada. They fly the Canadair CT-114 "Tutor," which was the RCAF's primary jet trainer from 1960-2000.

Sole Survivors: A Pilot and his Marine Corps "Mitchell"

Thanks to *Flight Journal* for sharing this story.

By Capt. John Morgan, U.S.M.C. (Ret.) – as told to Doug DeCaster.

Photos (except noted) by John Dibbs, *PlanePictures.com*

Jason Somes of the SoCal CAF Wing brings it in close for the camera in the Camarillo Museum's North American Aviation PBJ-1J – the sole surviving Marine Mitchell.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, I was home at the time. It was a Sunday, and we heard it on the radio like everybody else. I was living with my parents and working for American Airlines at LaGuardia Field. We were outfitting planes to go overseas, converting commercial airplanes for use by the military.
I had never been in an airplane except commercially, and I had never flown a light plane. I felt that an aerial line of duty was what I wanted, because I didn't want to end up in a trench somewhere. It turned out pretty good for me, but my brother Robert was not as fortunate. An Army Air Corps B-24 top turret gunner and engineer, he survived two crashes but was over the Adriatic when his bomber No Time for Love was attacked by enemy fighters on March 24, 1944. He never returned and was listed as MIA. My brother Al also enlisted in the Army Air Corps to fly. He served as a navigator in a B-29 Superfortress and saw heavy action over Japan.

On November 4, 1942, I enlisted to fly in the Navy because a good friend of mine was a Navy pilot, and he talked me into it. Patriotism was the driving force for my brothers and me to enlist.

Photo Courtesy of Capt. John Morgan
1st Lt. John Morgan, U.S.M.C., 1944

FLIGHT TRAINING

I started the Naval Aviation Cadet Selection Board in January, 1943. It took me a long time to get through the program as it was pretty backed up with military trainees, and they didn't have the capacity required to train so many people to fly. Some guys had to wait a year before being called to an active air station.

My training coursework began at Olean College in Olean, New York and Union College in Schenectady, New York. At Olean we flew Piper Cubs. It was so cold we had to drain the oil out of the crankcase, heat it, and put it back in! At Schenectady, I flew an open cockpit Howard DGA, a damned good airplane! The DGA was a two-seat trainer, where the student flew in the forward seat. I didn't have much time in those planes before we moved on to U.S. Navy Pre-Flight School in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. We never even flew at Chapel Hill; it was mostly ground school.

The next move was to the U.S. Naval Air Station in Bunker Hill, Indiana for flight training. There we were taught navigation, radio communication, engine care and repair, physical fitness, and hand to hand fighting.

Sole Survivors, cont'd…

Flight training was serious business. One time, a routine training flight ended in tragedy as two aviation cadets collided in mid-air in the cold night sky, spawning telegrams from the War Department to two separate families, each unbeknownst to the other, informing them of their loved ones' demise.

One day I was in an open-cockpit Stearman doing local flying and I got lost in the air. It was cold as hell. I landed on a farm, but I had to shoo the cows and horses away by flying over before I landed. I went up to the farmhouse, and a lady came to the door with a baby in her arms and said, "If you follow Route 31, it'll take you to Bunker Hill."

My logbook shows that I started flight training on October 9 and completed it December 3, 1943. I flew a total of 28 dual hours, 59.5 solo hours, and 6.5 check hours for a total of 94 hours in a Navy N2S Stearman, a two-seat biplane. It had the nickname of Yellow Peril due to its color and tricky ground handling characteristics.

After that, I moved on to the Naval Air Training Center in Pensacola, Florida. As we entered the Training Center on a bus, Cadets lined up on both sides of the street, chanting, "You'll be sorry!" It was pretty rigorous training.

I flew at an outlying airfield, Whiting Field, and began flight training in January, 1944 in a Vultee SNV Valiant, which due to its harmonics and rattling, was referred to as the "Vultee Vibrator."

In February I started flying the North American Aviation SNJ4, and on March I first flew in an SNB2 twin-engine. When I left Pensacola, I had logged 242.2 hours of flight time.

FLYING A PBJ

After I completed the program at Pensacola, I had to decide whether to become an Ensign in the Navy or a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. I chose the Marines as they had the planes I wanted to fly, and I wanted to fly the PBJ. I didn't want to be on a carrier. On May 25, 1944 I was honorably discharged from the Navy as an Aviation Cadet, V-5, USNR, and the next day I was transferred to the Marines and given my Naval Aviator certificate.

The Camarillo-based PBJ-1J is the world's only Flying example. Passenger flights are possible via www.cafsocal.com

My next flight training took place in Edenton, North Carolina at the Marine Corps Station Edenton, where the Marine Operational Training Group 81 trained pilots, aircrew, and ground crew on the North American PBJ-1 twin-engine medium bomber.

Before the PBJ, we flew in the SNB2 Beechcraft twin engine. We had quite a bit of time in those. I first flew a PBJ in October, 1944. The concept of a medium-weight bomber was relatively new to the Marines. The PBJ was a good airplane and easy to fly. It wasn't easy to get into; we had to go up and down a ladder. I liked the feel in the air and the looks on the ground. There wasn't anything I didn't like about that plane.

As we neared combat, we were bored for the most part and all young eager beavers, so we felt pretty good about it. When we heard about Victory Europe, VE Day on May 8, 1945, we were jubilant, and we all had an extra drink!

Before we shipped out to Long Beach, California, I had a total of 508.4 flight hours. There, we jumped onto a destroyer escort to Hawaii, where we were assigned to various locations. I drew Emirau Island and VMB 443 Squadron. We were a part of Marine Air Group (MAG) 61. Other squadrons were there as well.

PBJ MISSIONS

Emirau had been occupied by the Marines and became one of bases developed to surround and

Sole Survivors, cont'd…

isolate Rabaul, a major Japanese base to the south in the Bismark Archipelago. On June 12, 1945, I flew my first familiarization mission in a PBJ-1, and four days later I flew my first formation mission. My first medium-altitude bombing mission with three, 1,000-pound bombs was on June 17, on Tobera. By August 9, my crew and I had flown eight medium-altitude bombing missions on the following targets:

June 17: Tobera #31, 3 x 1,000-pound bombs
June 21: Rabaul #47, 12 x 100-pound bombs
June 30: Kavieng Town, 3 x 650-pound bombs
July 8: Kavieng, 12 x 260-pound bombs
July 12: Rabaul #4, 8 x 250-pound bombs
July 13: Rabaul #5, 12 x 260-pound bombs
July 15: Vunkanau #9, 3 x 1,000-pound bombs
August 9: Rabaul #30, 8 x 250-pound bombs

During this time we also flew two familiarization flights, one formation flight, seven rocket practices, one gunnery flight, one bombing practice, one 2-hour scar firing instruction, and two weather hops. In total, we flew 23 missions or flights.

Photo Courtesy of Capt. John Morgan
1st Lt. John Morgan and his PBJ crew – 1945

By the time I arrived at Emirau, PBJ tactics had changed from low-level bombing (which had resulted in heavy casualties) to medium-altitude bombing (maintaining 10,000-foot altitude). The casualties went down considerably, although there were still losses. We played poker in between missions. One fellow owed me $600 from poker, but he went missing, and when I was heading home through Hawaii I saw his name at the Wall of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery in Honolulu.

Our missions started with a briefing to point out the targets. Any mention of weather meant the targets were closed in. We had to fly around the storms, or occasionally we had to abort. We made weather hops to check weather conditions, which could be very rough.

We typically flew one mission on any given day, and generally each mission lasted about three hours. We normally flew with six or eight PBJs, and each crew included the pilot, copilot, tail gunner, two waist gunners, and navigator (who was also the bombardier and a gunner). The .50-caliber nose guns were controlled by the pilot. We didn't have a top turret in our PBJ-1J.

Our missions were often with eight, 250-pound bombs. We unloaded bombs day and night. We flew around the clock and neutralized the targets. We didn't do any strafing or skip bombing, which would have been done at low altitude. These were heckling missions to keep the pressure on the isolated enemy. We encountered very little opposition from enemy aircraft and at 10,000 feet, antiaircraft couldn't touch us. After the war, we heard that many Japanese had gone insane under the constant pressure of our bombing runs.

On Emirau, we came under attack from air raids a number of times, mostly strafing.

THE WAR'S END

Our confidence that we would win the war against Japan was never very high. They never told us too much; we just did what we were told to do. Our job was to bomb Rabaul and others nearby and that was it. I don't recall any discussions about the bigger picture.

We kept moving closer and closer to Japan. We were not privy as to why or when we were moving. We never heard about an atomic bomb until the day it was dropped.

When Japan's surrender was announced on August 15, 1945, I felt pretty good; it meant I was going home. I believe to this day that Harry Truman saved my life by dropping the atomic bombs.

My logbook shows that in August I flew from Emirau to Hollandia in New Guinea (now Jayapura), then to the Biak and Morotai islands in Indonesia,

Sole Survivors, contd…

and then on to Titcomb Field in Malabang, the Philippines. At that point, my logbook totaled 570.6 hours.

The landing at Biak Island was particularly memorable as the fog was dense and very low to the ground. The pilot elected to have me, the copilot, land as he couldn't. I really thought we were going to buy the farm, but we broke out of the fog at 100 feet and I made a perfect landing for a standing ovation from the eight-man crew. My training had paid off in spades, and I made Captain after that.

On Morotai, while I was sleeping, a native islander tried to sneak into my tent. A sergeant saw him and shot him in the leg. I came out and the sergeant had a gun to the islander's head. I said, "He's about 15; fix him up and turn him loose."
We departed for Hawaii in our PBJ on October 22, 1945. We were island-hopping, and I took photos as if I were a tourist. Midway had been used as an early air base, and we saw the Japanese Commissary and uniforms. At Peleliu Island, where the Battle of Bloody Nose Ridge had been fought, we saw dead Japanese everywhere.

At Ewa Marine Corps Air Station in Hawaii, we parked the PBJ and never saw it again. We took a destroyer escort to Long Beach. When we returned to the Long Beach Naval Air Station, I went out to the field and found a C-54 warming up. It happened to be a nonstop headed to Brooklyn Naval Air Station—just where I needed to go. When we arrived, I called my parents and said, "Pick me up!" It was the day before Thanksgiving in 1945. After that, I flew mostly with SNJs from the Brooklyn Naval Air Station to maintain my hours. At the end of May 1946, my logged hours totaled 633.8.

I was lucky.

AFTER THE WAR

After serving, I enrolled under the GI Bill at Fordham College, where I earned a bachelor's degree in 1949. I first worked at my father's Dodge Plymouth Agency in Manhasset, Long Island and then was a district sales manager in New England for Chrysler Corporation. I decided to go to graduate school and was admitted to the Columbia University Business School in 1950 and graduated with a master's in 1951.

Shortly after graduating from Columbia, I was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. I went through a flight refresher school, was assigned to an AD dive-bomber squadron, and drew orders for Korea. Fortunately, a Colonel friend who I had taught to fly light planes was so grateful that he had me reassigned to an Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company unit with the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean. He changed my life, and this turned out to be a wonderful experience. It wasn't until 1954 that I embarked on a career on Wall Street. I worked for several firms before settling with A.G. Edwards, where I stayed for 30 years and retired as a senior vice president and director of the firm.

Since retiring, I have lived at my home in Naples, Florida. Looking back, I understand that war was a personal thing viewed from each participant's own vantage point. It was a lark, an adventure, or sheer hell, or a combination of them all.

The authors would like to thank Steve Barber, Jason Somes and the whole team at CAF SoCal Wing for their assistance in producing this article.

Note from the author – Doug DeCaster
I feel particularly honored to have the opportunity to know John. I would like to thank him for giving me access to his personal papers and inviting me to his home to interview him, focusing on his time as a Naval cadet and Marine aviator. He was more than patient and generous with his time and that is much appreciated. We are so fortunate to have Americans like John who have sacrificed so much and put themselves in harm's way. John and I sat down on May 8, 2020, which happened to be the 75th Anniversary of VE Day and met several times through May 13, 2020. Semper Fi, John.

Visit To North Island NAS

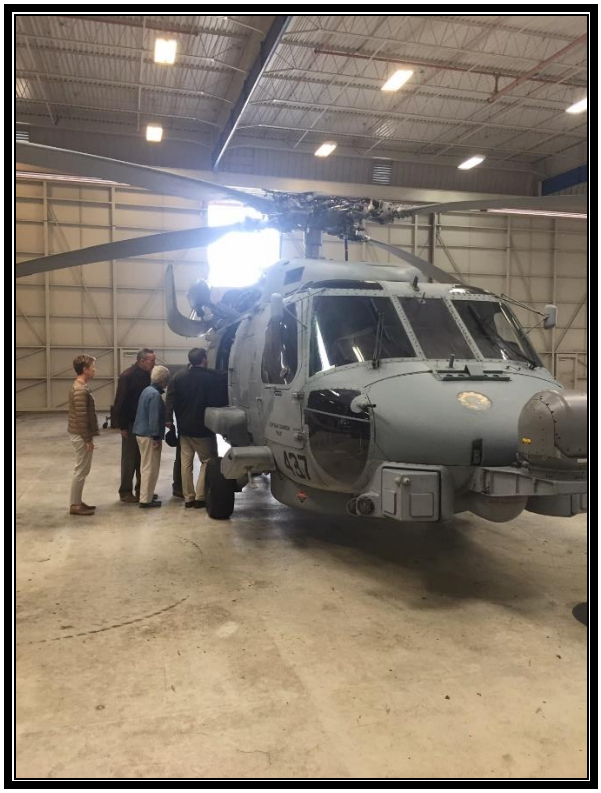
Text and photos by Dave Flood

Last fall, I was fortunate to be able to visit my grandson, Lt. Kevin Flood, USN at his base at Naval Air Station, North Island – in Coronado, CA. Kevin graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 2012, and has since been based on the nuclear-powered carrier USS Ronald Reagan, and the cruiser USS Chancellorsville. He is a helicopter pilot/instructor with the HSM-41 Squadron, flying the Sikorsky MH-60R and MH-60S Seahawk helicopter. The Seahawks are a U.S. Navy West Coast Fleet

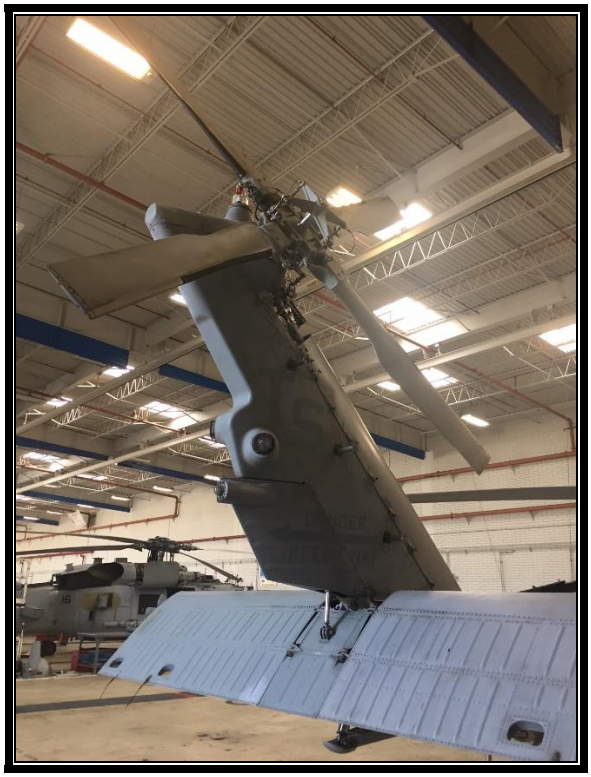
Lt. Kevin Flood, USN, with grandparents Col. George Robillard, USMC (Ret.) and wife Marianne (left) and Dave Flood (right) – outside HSM-41 Seahawks hangar.

Replacement Squadron training the Navy's newest Naval aviators and air-crewmen to fly and fight in the MH-60R and MH-60S helicopters, the world's most advanced rotary wing maritime strike platforms. Kevin is both a pilot and an instructor with HSM-41. The Seahawks have accumulated over 200,000 Class A mishap-free flight hours over their 33-year history, while training over 4,000 fleet replacement pilots and aircrew for service in MH-60R/MH-60S fleet squadrons.

Here are Dave and Kevin in front of one of HSM-41's 30-plus Sikorsky MH-60R/MH-60S helicopters.



Kevin (inside) showing MH-60R to his parents, Gina and Brian, and his grandparents, Marianne and George. Kevin is knowledgeable not only in all aspects of piloting the aircraft, but also in most aspects of maintenance.



A close-up of the MH-60R's rear rotor mechanism, which is cantilevered, and can be swung down to help fit the aircraft into the hangar space on an aircraft carrier. The main rotors also fold back over the fuselage for the same reason.

Sikorsky MH-60R Helicopter – "Romeo"

Thanks in part to Wikipedia and Lockheed Martin

An MH-60R Seahawk conducts sonar operations.

The MH-60R was originally known as "LAMPS Mark III Block II Upgrade" when development began in 1993 with Lockheed Martin (formerly IBM/Loral). Two SH-60Bs were converted by Sikorsky, the first of which made its maiden flight on 22 December 1999. Designated YSH-60R, they were delivered to NAS Patuxent River in 2001 for flight testing. The production variant was redesignated MH-60R to match its multi-mission capability. The MH-60R was formally deployed by the US Navy in 2006.

The MH-60R is designed to combine the features of the SH-60B and SH-60F. Its avionics includes dual controls and instead of the complex array of dials and gauges in Bravo and Foxtrot aircraft, 4 fully integrated 8" x 10" night vision goggle-compatible and sunlight-readable color multi-function displays, all part of glass cockpit produced by Owego Helo Systems division of Lockheed Martin.[1] Onboard sensors include: AN/AAR-47 Missile Approach Warning System by ATK, Raytheon AN/AAS-44 electro-optical system that integrates FLIR and laser rangefinder, AN/ALE-39 decoy dispenser and AN/ALQ-144 infrared jammer by BAe Systems, AN/ALQ-210 electronic support measures system by Lockheed Martin,[1] AN/APS-147 multi-mode radar/IFF interrogator, which during a mid-life technology insertion project is subsequently replaced by AN/APS-153 Multi-Mode Radar with Automatic Radar Periscope Detection and Discrimination (ARPDD) capability,[1] and both radars were developed by Telephonics, a more advanced AN/AQS-22 advanced airborne low-frequency sonar (ALFS) jointly developed by Raytheon & Thales, AN/ARC-210 voice radio by Rockwell Collins, an advanced airborne fleet data link AN/SRQ-4 Hawklink with radio terminal set AN/ARQ-59 radio terminal, both by L3Harris, and LN-100G dual-embedded global positioning system and inertial navigation system by Northrop Grumman Litton division. MH-60R does not carry the MAD suite.

Offensive capabilities are improved by the addition of new Mk-54 air-launched torpedoes and Hellfire missiles. All Helicopter Anti-Submarine Light (HSL) squadrons that receive the Romeo are redesignated Helicopter, Strike Maritime (HSM) squadrons.

The **Lockheed Martin Common Cockpit™** avionics suite is common to the U.S. Navy's **MH-60R** and MH-60S multi-mission SEAHAWK helicopters.

The cockpit enables the aircrew to perform diverse missions, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, Combat Search and Rescue, Vertical Replenishment, and Airborne Mine Countermeasures.

The Common Cockpit™ avionics suite is based on open architecture and commercial-off-the-shelf technology, including:

- Four 8"x10" full color, night vision device-capable, sunlight-readable displays
- Digital communications suite
- Common programmable keysets soon to be replaced with trackball
- Fully integrated Global Positioning System and Inertial Navigation System
- Mass memory data storage
- Rugged integrated mission computer

In addition, a new flight management computer and new operational software provide for greatly increased operational capability.

Sikorsky MH-60R helicopter, contd.

A west coast Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS), Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 41, received the MH-60R aircraft in December 2005 and began training the first set of pilots. In 2007, the R-model successfully underwent final testing for incorporation into the fleet. In August 2008, the first 11 combat-ready Romeos arrived at HSM-71, a squadron assigned to the carrier *John C. Stennis*.

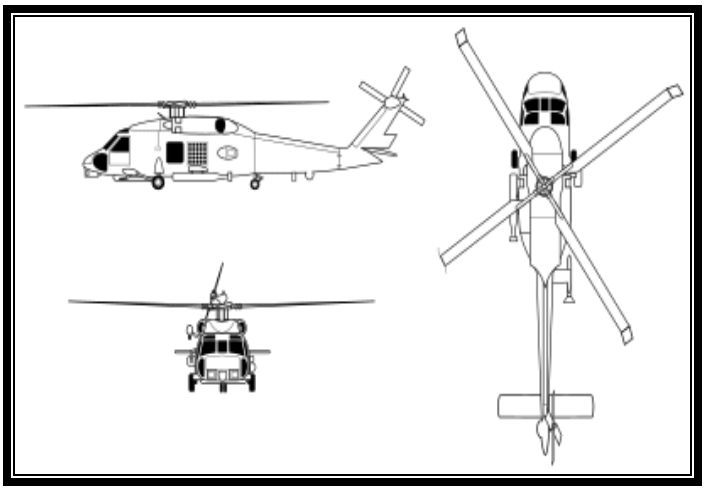
The primary missions of the MH-60R are anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare. According to Lockheed Martin, "secondary missions include search and rescue, vertical replenishment, naval surface fire support, logistics support, personnel transport, medical evacuation and communications and data relay."

HSL squadrons in the US have all transitioned to the MH-60R. The first MH-60Rs in Japan arrived in October 2012. The recipient was HSM-51, the Navy's forward–deployed LAMPS squadron, home based in Atsugi, Japan. The Warlords transitioned from the SH-60B throughout 2013, and shifted each detachment to the new aircraft as they returned from deployments. HSM-51 had all MH-60R aircraft at the end of 2013. The Warlords are joined by the Saberhawks of HSM-77.

On 23 July 2013, Sikorsky delivered the 400th MH-60, an MH-60R, to the U.S. Navy. This included 166 MH-60R versions and 234 MH-60S versions. The MH-60S was in production until 2015, totaling a fleet of 275 aircraft, and the MH-60R was in production until 2017 and totaled a fleet of 291 aircraft. The two models have flown over 660,000 flight hours. Seahawk helicopters are to remain in Navy service into the 2030s.

U.S. Navy Sikorsky MH-60 helicopter – note M60 machine gun showing out right side.

MH-60R General Characteristics



Crew: 3–4
Capacity: 5 passengers in cabin, slung load of 6,000 lb (2,700 kg) or internal load of 4,100 lb (1,900 kg) for B, F, and H models / 6,684 lb (3,032 kg) payload
Length: 64 ft 8 in (19.71 m)
Height: 17 ft 2 in (5.23 m)
Empty weight: 15,200 lb (6,895 kg)
Gross weight: 17,758 lb (8,055 kg) for ASW mission
Max takeoff weight: 23,000 lb (10,433 kg)
Powerplant: 2 × General Electric T700-GE-401C turboshaft engines, 1,890 shp (1,410 kW) each for take-off
Main rotor diameter: 53 ft 8 in (16.36 m)
Main rotor area: 2,262.3 sq ft (210.17 m^2)
Bladesection: root: SC1095/SC1095R8 ; **tip:** Sikorsky SC1095

Performance

Maximum speed: 146 kn (168 mph, 270 km/h)
Never exceed speed: 180 kn (210 mph, 330 km/h)
Range: 450 nmi (520 mi, 830 km)
Service ceiling: 12,000 ft (3,700 m)
Rate of climb: 1,650 ft/min (8.4 m/s)

Armament

Up to two Mark 46 torpedoes *or* Mk 50 *or* Mk-54s *or* two 120 U.S. gal (454 L) fuel tanks for HH-60R and MH-60R
AGM-114 Hellfire missile, 4 Hellfire missiles for HH-60H and MH-60R, 8 Hellfire missiles for MH-60S Block III.
AGM-119 Penguin missile (being phased out), APKWS Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System, M60 machine gun *or*, M240 machine gun *or* GAU-16/A machine gun *or* GAU-17/A Minigun
Rapid Airborne Mine Clearance System (RAMICS) using Mk 44 Mod 0 30 mm Cannon

Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-17

Thanks, in part, to Wikipedia

MiG-17

A restored MiG-17

Role	Fighter aircraft
National origin	Soviet Union
Manufacturer	Mikoyan-Gurevich
First flight	14 January 1950
Introduction	October 1952
Status	In limited service.
Primary users	Soviet Air Forces (historical) People's Liberation Army Air Force (historical) Polish Air Force (historical) Vietnam People's Air Force (historical)
Number built	10,649 including Polish, Czech and Chinese variants
Developed from	Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15
Variants	PZL-Mielec Lim-6 Shenyang J-5
Developed into	Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-19

Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG17 (Russian: Микоян и Гуревич МиГ-17; NATO reporting name: **Fresco**) is a high-subsonic fighter aircraft produced in the USSR from 1952 and operated by numerous air forces in many variants. It is an advanced development of the similar looking MiG-15 of the Korean War. The MiG-17 was license-built in China as the Shenyang J-5 and Poland as the PZL-Mielec Lim-6.

MiG-17s first saw combat in 1958 in the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis and later proved to be an effective threat against more modern supersonic fighters of the United States in the Vietnam War. It was also briefly known as the **Type 38** by U.S. Air Force designation prior to the development of NATO codes.

Development

While the MiG-15bis introduced swept wings to air combat over Korea, the Mikoyan-Gurevich design bureau had already begun work on its replacement in 1949 (originally the MiG-15bis45) in order to fix any problems found with the MiG-15 in combat. The result was one of the most successful transonic fighters introduced before the advent of true supersonic types such as the Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-19 and North American F-100 Super Sabre. The design would ultimately still prove effective into the 1960s when pressed into subsonic dogfights over Vietnam against much faster planes which were not optimized for maneuvering in such slower speed, short-range engagements.

While the MiG-15 used a Mach sensor to deploy airbrakes because it could not safely exceed Mach 0.92, the MiG-17 was designed to be controllable at higher Mach numbers. Early versions which retained the original Soviet copy of the Rolls-Royce Nene VK-1 engine were heavier with equal thrust. Later MiG-17s would be the first Soviet fighter application of an afterburner which offered increased thrust on demand by dumping fuel in the exhaust of the basic engine.

Though the MiG-17 still strongly resembles its forebear, it had an entirely new thinner and more highly swept wing and tailplane for speeds approaching Mach 1. While the F-86 introduced the "all-flying" tailplane which helped controllability near the speed of sound, this would not be adopted on MiGs until the fully supersonic MiG-19. The wing had a "sickle sweep" compound shape with a 45° angle like the U.S. F-100 Super Sabre near the fuselage (and tailplane), and a 42° angle

for the outboard part of the wings. The stiffer wing resisted the tendency to bend its wingtips and lose aerodynamic symmetry unexpectedly at high speeds and wing loads.

Other easily visible differences to its predecessor were the addition of a third wing fence on each wing, the addition of a ventral fin and a longer and less tapered rear fuselage that added about one meter in length. The MiG-17 shared the same Klimov VK-1 engine, and much of the rest of its construction such as the forward fuselage, landing gear and gun installation was carried over. The first prototype, designated I-330 "**SI**" by the construction bureau, was flown on the 14 January 1950, piloted by Ivan Ivashchenko.

MiG-17 at the Aviation Museum of Central Finland in Jyväskylä. The paintscheme is from 2006 and is based on the idea of Luonetjärvi primary school student Anni Lundahl.

A North Vietnamese MiG-17 on display at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

Tail section showing insignia, camouflaged MiG-17s were often referred to as "snakes" by NVAF pilots.

In the midst of testing, pilot Ivan Ivashchenko was killed when his aircraft developed flutter which tore off his horizontal tail, causing a spin and crash on 17 March 1950. Lack of wing stiffness also resulted in aileron reversal which was discovered and fixed. Construction and tests of additional prototypes "**SI-2**" and experimental series aircraft "**SI-02**" and "**SI-01**" in 1951, were generally successful. On 1 September 1951, the aircraft was accepted for production, and formally given its own MiG-17 designation after so many changes from the original MiG-15. It was estimated that with the same engine as the MiG-15's, the MiG-17's maximum speed is higher by 40–50 km/h, and the fighter has greater manoeuvrability at high altitude.

Serial production started in August 1951, but large quantity production was delayed in favor of producing more MiG-15s so it was never introduced in the Korean War. It did not enter service until October 1952, when the MiG-19 was almost ready to be flight tested. During production, the aircraft was improved and modified several times. The basic MiG-17 was a general-purpose day fighter, armed with three cannons, one Nudelman N-37 37mm cannon and two 23mm with 80 rounds per gun, 160 rounds total. It could also act as a fighter-bomber, but its bombload was considered light relative to other aircraft of the time, and it usually carried additional fuel tanks instead of bombs.

Although a canopy which provided clear vision to the rear necessary for dogfighting like the F-86 was designed, production MiG-17Fs got a cheaper rear-view periscope which would still appear on Soviet fighters as late as the MiG-23. By 1953, pilots got safer ejection seats with protective face curtain and leg restraints like the Martin-Baker seats in the west. The MiG-15 had suffered for its lack of a radar gunsight, but in 1951, Soviet engineers obtained a captured F-86 Sabre from Korea and they copied the optical gunsight and SRD-3 gun ranging radar to produce the ASP-4N gunsight and SRC-3 radar. The combination would prove deadly over the skies of Vietnam against aircraft such as the F-4 Phantom whose pilots lamented that guns and radar gunsights had been omitted as obsolescent.

The second prototype variant, "SP-2" (dubbed "Fresco A" by NATO), was an interceptor equipped with a radar. Soon a number of MiG-17P ("Fresco B") all-weather fighters were produced with the Izumrud radar and front air intake modifications.

In early 1953 the MiG-17F day fighter entered production. The "F" indicated it was fitted with the VK-1F engine with an afterburner by modifying the rear fuselage with a new convergent-divergent

nozzle and fuel system. The afterburner doubled the rate of climb and greatly improved vertical maneuvers. But while the plane was not designed to be supersonic, skilled pilots could just dash to supersonic speed in a shallow dive, although the aircraft would often pitch up just short of Mach 1. This became the most popular variant of the MiG-17. The next mass-produced variant, MiG-17PF ("Fresco D") incorporated a more powerful Izumrud RP-2 radar, though they were still dependent on Ground Control Interception to find and be directed to targets. In 1956 a small series (47 aircraft) was converted to the MiG-17PM standard (also known as **PFU**) with four first-generation Kaliningrad K-5 (NATO reporting name AA-1 'Alkali') air-to-air missiles. A small series of MiG-17R reconnaissance aircraft were built with VK-1F engine (after first being tested with the VK-5F engine).

5,467 MiG-17, 1,685 MiG-17F, 225 MiG-17P and 668 MiG-17PF were built in the USSR by 1958. Over 2,600 were built under licence in Poland and China.

Specifications (MiG-17F)

General characteristics

- **Crew:** 1
- **Length:** 11.264 m (36 ft 11 in)
- **Wingspan:** 9.628 m (31 ft 7 in)
- **Height:** 3.8 m (12 ft 6 in)
- **Wing area:** 22.6 m² (243 sq ft)
- **Airfoil: root:** TsAGI S-12 ; **tip:** TsAGI SR-11[52]
- **Empty weight:** 3,919 kg (8,640 lb) [53]
- **Gross weight:** 5,340 kg (11,773 lb)
- **Max takeoff weight:** 6,069 kg (13,380 lb)
- **Powerplant:** 1 × Klimov VK-1F afterburning centrifugal-flow turbojet engine, 26.5 kN (6,000 lbf) thrust dry, 33.8 kN (7,600 lbf) with afterburner

Performance

- **Maximum speed:** 1,100 km/h (680 mph, 590 kn) M0.89 at sea level
  1,145 km/h (711 mph; 618 kn) / M0.93 at 3,000 m (9,800 ft) with reheat
- **Range:** 2,020 km (1,260 mi, 1,090 nmi) at 12,000 m (39,000 ft) with 2 × 400 l (110 US gal; 88 imp gal) drop-tanks
- **Service ceiling:** 16,600 m (54,500 ft)
- **g limits:** +8
- **Rate of climb:** 65 m/s (12,800 ft/min)
- **Wing loading:** 268.5 kg/m² (55.0 lb/sq ft)
- **Thrust/weight:** 0.63

Armament

- **Guns:**
  - 2 × 23 mm (0.906 in) Nudelman-Rikhter NR-23 autocannon (80 rounds per gun, 160 rounds total)
  - 1 × 37 mm Nudelman N-37 autocannon (40 rounds total)
- **Hardpoints:** 2 pylons with a capacity of up to 500 kg (1,100 lb) of stores,with provisions to carry combinations of:
  - **Rockets:** 2 × UB-16-57 rocket pods for S-5 rockets
  - **Bombs:** 2 × 250 kg (550 lb) bombs
- (some versions equipped with 3 x NR-23 autocannons and 2 x K-5 air-to-air missiles).

Photo by Steve Lewis

Jason Somes's beautiful red MiG-17 "Fresco-C" captivating the crowd at the 2019 Wings Over Camarillo Air Show. This aircraft is technically designated as a PZL-Mielec LiM-5, since it was manufactured under license in Poland.

Photo by Arash Afshari

Jason wows the spectators with a low pass during the 2019 Wings Over Camarillo Air Show.

History of NH749. CAF Spitfire MkXIV

From "Spitfire Survivors – Then and Now" – by Gordon Riley, Peter Arnold and Graham Trant.

Thanks to Rob Moverly, a member of the Spitfire team, for finding this interesting article, and to Trace Eubanks for sending it to us.

NH749 is a low-back (Mod 963) Mk XIV which carries the cockpit c/n 6S-583887, firewall c/n 6S-661081 and was part of a mixed batch of 225 Mks VIII and XIV which were ordered on 1 December 1942. It left the Aldermaston works of Vickers-Armstrong in 1945, being delivered to No. 33 M.U. at nearby Lyneham on 23 February.

Following three months in store, the aircraft was sent to No. 215 M.U. at Dumfries on 30 May for packing, and on 4 June it was received at No. 3 Packed Aircraft Transit Pool. As with many other F.R.XIVs, NH749 was shipped to Karachi, India on board the Liberty Ship the SS Samsturdy, leaving on 2 July and arriving just 26 days later.

It was received by ACSEA on 9 August and noted as present in the ACSEA Census of 30 August 1945, and the India Census of May 1946. It is doubtful if this aircraft was ever issued for RAF use, but it may have seen service with an Advanced Flying School of the RIAF from May 1946 before being transferred to the Indian Air Force on 29/31 December 1947.

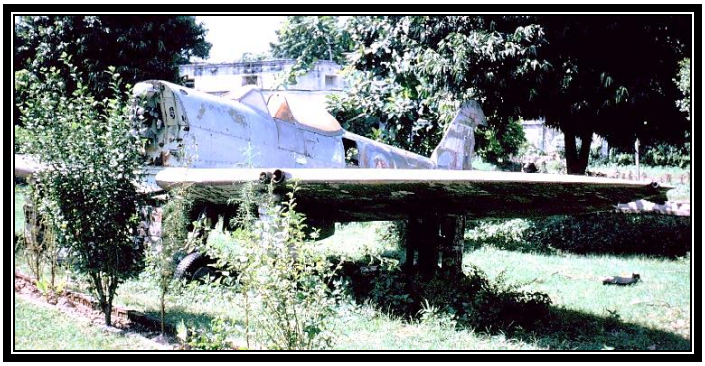


Photo Collection of Roger Sweet, Wensley Haydon Bailie & Peter Arnold

No details of its Indian service history are known, but it would have been given a new serial in the range HS351-370 (although the IAF Mk XIV's retained their RAF serials). It was one of eight offered for sale by the Indian government in 1977 and when examined by Ormond Haydon-Baillie in 1977 at Patna, the engineless hulk was propped on bricks next to the River Ganges and bore a maintenance serial starting with "T3" – evidence of its use by the IAF Technical College – together with codes "54" and "D". Photographs taken at the time clearly show the RAF roundel and serial NH749 still visible on the weathered fuselage.

Photo Collection of Roger Sweet, Wensley Haydon Bailie & Peter Arnold.

Acquired, along with seven other Spitfires, after Ormond's death - NH749 was shipped to the U.K. in early 1978. Following storage at Wroughton it was sold to Spencer Flack, shipped to Elstree, and immediately sold to A. and K. Wickenden, who registered it as G-MXIV on 11 April 1980. Following an extensive rebuild in the hands of Craig Charleston, the aircraft first flew at Cranfield on 9 April, 1983, and was offered for sale at Christies' Duxford auction the same month, but failed to reach its reserve with a maximum bid of £180,000. The aircraft returned to Cranfield and appeared at a small number of displays, but with the death of Keith Wickenden later that year its future became less settled and it was advertised for sale.

David Price, owner of P-51D N151DP, based at Clover Field, Santa Monica, travelled to Britain and test-flew NH749 before purchasing it in response to an advertisement in the US magazine Trade-A-Plane. Following a final display at Cranfield in April,.

1985, the aircraft was crated for shipping to California, breakdown and re-assembly being performed by Craig Charleston.

The aircraft arrived at Chino, CA on 2 July 1985, and it was re-assembled over the next few days, making its first flight from U.S. soil on 24 July, the registration NX749DP having been assigned by the F.A.A.

Price took the Spitfire to Oshkosh for the 1985 E.A.A. display, but the return trip was marred by a landing incident which resulted in propeller damage – this was temporarily solved by an exchange with the unit from TZ138 (q.v.). The RAF serial was amended to read "H749" to avoid possible confusion with an American civil registration.

NH749 continued to be based at Santa Monica – latterly on loan to the Museum of Flight – and even took part in the Phoenix Air Races in March 1995 as "Race 14" - but is now in the ownership of the Southern California Wing of the Commemorative Air Force, based at Camarillo Airport, where it is flying once again, following a renovation and restoration program which was completed in 2011.

Photo by Frank Mormillo
Our beautiful Spitfire MkXIV flying off the Californian coast.

Photo by Eric Van Gilder
The Spitfire flying with Bearcat, Hellcat and Zero

Photo by Jessica Bauman
"High Flight," indeed – over Malibu.

Photo by Sharon Dwyer
Our Spitfire crew in 2011, taken after a special event "Battle of Britain/ Spitfire Appreciation Day." From left: Jessica Bauman, Robert Seeger, Greg Bauman, Dave Spence, Les Bedding (Crew Chief), Jennifer Bauman, Colin Bedding. In front: Dan Eizak, Dick Roberts.

Photo by Dave Flood
Sitting inside our Spitfire after the "Battle of Britain/Spitfire Appreciation Day." A girl can dream, can't she?

Stars on the Silver Screen, (Well, Almost)

By Ron Fleishman, Wing Historian

With all or some of the new summer Hollywood blockbusters being held back due to closed theaters, it's time to search for some good oldies on television. If COVID-19 is good for anything, it's good for some research in digging out some aviation and history classics. To call them unique or interesting is to ask the question: "Why in the world did they ever film that???"

I like to try to find films that CAF airplanes are in or are used in the background. In a few, we have planes really up front and ready for our close-up.

Of course we (I always think of people and planes and CAF equipment as one) – "we" have seen *The History Channel* and *PBS* where they go into detail and talk about how we won the war, and how it was brave and daring, telling facts with the help of some stock airshow or cooperation by the museums. Airshow examples are shown to prove a point on "how it was won back in WWII."

Our sister CAF wings have had screen presences with the B-29 "FIFI," our B-17s, several fighter planes, and the So Cal Wing did fly our P-51 "Man 'O War" in a few color epics several years back. But what about our current birds, the planes we have on our ramp – they have "been there" too!"

There once was a rumor that a film crew came to Camarillo Airport and cleverly placed their cameras so our C-46 "China Doll" was seen in the background. I suppose we could call it an "uncredited part."

The next few times the filming at our Wing was commercials, doing heroic work selling cars, trucks, and a big production with cranes, green screen, special effects and costumes extras selling a multi-vitamin!

On special late hours when you can't get to sleep, you might catch these filmings on YouTube.

There are some films that you know were filmed at our Wing, but they never seem to surface on TV or the "Big Screen" or on the Internet. They just never seem to "pop up" like they were just waiting to be found again.

Truthfully, a lot of these titles are on the International Movie Data Base (IMDB), and can be bought or just viewed on Amazon Prime, Netflix or YouTube. However, you often have to "dig" a bit on these places just to find them.

How many of you movie fans have seen or heard of these titles, or may even own a copy: **"Doolittle Heroes,"** or **"Beautiful Dreamer,"** or even **"FDR:Americanbadass**?" (The latter is a real title, so I can publish it in our newsletter)!

The first one is an action war hero adventure; the second an independent film about love and being faithful returning from WWII; and the third a comedy farce dealing with historical facts about WWII which are severely "bent."

"Doolittle's Heroes" was filmed here at Camarillo and Oxnard in 2017. Other locations where it was "shot" included Chino and Agua Dulce. The company appeared to be a Chinese Film group, and seemed to be filming two productions at the same time. One was about the Doolittle Raiders and their bombing mission to Japan in April, 1942 – and the other story concerned a Chinese officer and his secret history with the C-46s flying "over the Hump" to China.

To say our hangar was busy would be an understatement. With the C-46 inside our Museum Hangar, jacked up to level position, the movie crew looking like they knew how to pull controls, and emergency bailing out from the open side doors of "China Doll" into airbags and boxes - it was like controlled chaos – while on the outside the blue PBJ (Navy B-25) was being painted an olive green,

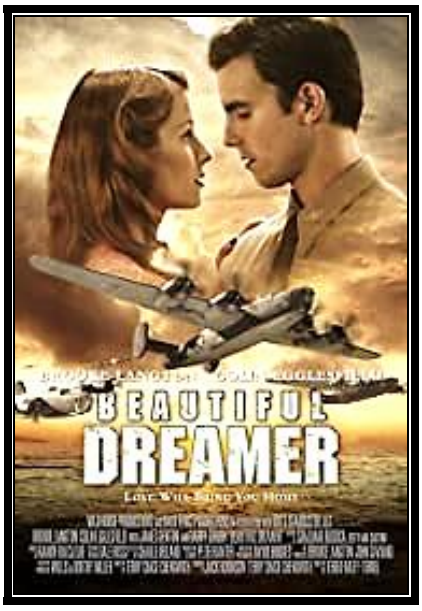
The "Doolittle Raiders" in front of our PBJ, with its new paint job to match the Raiders' B-25s

Stars on the Silver Screen, cont'd.

and a suited-up aircrew milling about looking like they were preparing for their Tokyo mission was getting ready to roll. As they say – "Busy, busy, busy!"

When is the premiere? Where was the blockbuster opening? We don't know, and we may never see it in the U.S. – maybe in China or on the Internet? You may look it up with the title, but not much is in evidence to tell us what has happened with it.

When I returned from my Kansas City job with TWA in 2006, I went to the Wing's hangar and a few of were "looking busy," and in the old front side shelf I discovered a DVD and a small note, saying something like "here it is and take a look at it." I watched it that evening. The title was **"Beautiful Dreamer."**



It proved to be not too bad a film for an independent. A little light on story, but good acting. I was surprised that the film starts out with an air crew in leather flying gear riding in our jeep out to an airplane. Then the action switches to the airplane, which turns out to be a B-24. The story has to do with a young B-24 pilot in WWII who suffers a serious injury to his head and develops amnesia. He settles in a place other than his home because he has no recollection of his name or his family background. By chance, the girl he was going to marry finds him and the story goes from there. It involves him working on a renovated B-24, through which experience he regains his memory.

The credits for "Beautiful Dreamer" at the end of the film include listing for The Commemorative Air Force, So Cal Wing and Camarillo.

For the next few weeks I asked about the film and no one knew about it – it seemed to be an aviation mystery. I returned it back to the front desk at the Wing. Others watched it and commented on it, some reviews good and some not so good. And then it disappeared.

About a year later, the movie came up in conversation and a long-term member remembered why they had filmed at our Wing. He said that a film crew needed a large silver plane with U.S. military markings and a jeep to film an aircrew driving up and getting into the large silver plane.
End of story!

While trapped in the current health house lock-down, I was web-surfing and the movie turned up. Digging a little deeper, I discovered it had won a few independent film awards. Most of the actors were young and had acted in some minor roles on television. The only "name" actor was Barry Corbin, who was well known from parts in films in the 1980s and 1990s. In "Beautiful Dreamer," he played the role of "Grandpa."

Barry Corbin

The financing for the film came from a car dealer who lived in Orange County. He had flown B-24 bombers in WWII, and he dedicated the film to his old bomber crew.

It's a movie that reminds you of one that was filmed in the l940s – it has that feeling. It can be found on most Internet sites and can be watched on YouTube.

Stars of the Silver Screen, cont'd.

"FDR:American Badass" – this infamous "epic" came out when all the crazier and/or raunchier stuff was in favor. As in other films, the C-46 "China Doll" appears in many scenes – with some special crazy effects as a result. There were extras in uniform and drunks climbing out of the tool crates at the rear inside of the plane. The film includes a flying wheelchair for FDR, with two golden-plated machine guns on the armrests. It also included Nazis, Japanese, and Italians as werewolves and much crude language. In short, it is BAD – and fun to watch.

After the filming at our hangar was completed, we looked for its release (or escape) but it never seemed to show up, and we all forgot about it.

Poster for "FDR:American Badass, showing the twin machine guns"

When the Blockbuster chain went out of business, the local store had a sale of its last remaining DVDs and VHSs. Brian and I wandered in to check it out, and yes, you guessed it, there was a copy of "FDR:American Badass."

That night I saw it for the first time. Since then we have dragged it over to our "after-the-airshow" barbecue at the hangars, and it really looks pretty good when you are tired out, or when you are slightly intoxicated. I still have the copy – everyone needs an "epic" like that to complete your film library. It also shows up on the Internet – but you have to look for it.

We have done some filming of our own, but as close as we are to Hollywood, we should do more. Who knows, maybe an HBO special with the C-46 "China Doll" and the PBJ "Semper Fi" will be a feature, with a supporting cast of CAF So Cal Wing's Hellcat, Bearcat, SNJ #290, SNJ Bluebird, Spitfire MkXIV, PT-19, F-24, Aircoupe, Navion and Yak-3. What a Blockbuster that would be!!!

I sure would buy it – wouldn't you?

The "Motley Crew" of "Doolittle's Heroes" in front of CAF – So Cal Wing's hangars

FDR: Badass played by Barry Bostwick, in his wheelchair named "Delano 2000," with its twin machine guns on the sides.