



ADF Serials Telegraph News

News for those interested in Australian Military Aircraft History and Serials

Volume 4: Issue 2: Winter 2014 Editor and contributing Author: Gordon R Birkett

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Message Board – Current hot topics:

These boards can be accessed at: www.adf-messageboard.com.au/invboard/

News Briefs

- **23rd April 14:** The Government has approved the acquisition of an additional 58 F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. The fifth generation F-35A is the most advanced fighter in production anywhere in the world and will make a vital contribution to our national security. Together with the Super Hornet and Growler electronic warfare aircraft, the F-35A aircraft will ensure Australia maintains a regional air combat edge. The F-35A will also provide a major boost to the ADF's intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. The first F-35A aircraft will arrive in Australia in 2018 and enter service with the Royal Australian Air Force with No 3 Sqn RAAF, in 2020. The F-35 will replace the F/A-18A+/B+ Classic Hornet aircraft. For over three decades, the Classic Hornet has been the backbone of Australia's air combat capability. These aircraft have delivered exceptional service to Australia's security but will be withdrawn from service by 2022. Hornet airframes will start being retired from 2019. The new 58 F-35A aircraft, in addition to the 14 already approved in 2009, will provide the RAAF with a total of 72 aircraft to form three operational squadrons and one training squadron.
- The Government will also consider the option of acquiring an additional squadron of F-35 aircraft to replace the Super Hornets in the future. Under the previous ALP Federal Government's Defence White Paper of 2013, the third tranche number was capped at 18 F-35A aircraft, down from the 28 F-35As (originally one for one to replace 21 F-IIIC/7 F-IIIGs

from 2020) to limit the total F-35 purchase to 90 F-35A airframes plus 12 E/A-18G Growlers, not the originally planned 100 F-35As only Fleet. In the forthcoming Current Government Defence White Paper of 2015, consideration will be made to consider the purchase of the STOVL F-35B within this third tranche or operation from the RAN's LPDs.

- **2nd May 14:** United Technologies Corp, Pratt & Whitney Military Engines, East Hartford, Connecticut, is being awarded a \$105,170,571 fixed-price-incentive-fee advance acquisition contract to procure long-lead components, parts and materials in support of 34 low rate initial production Lot 9 F-135 propulsions systems for the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft, including 26 F-135-PW-100 for the U.S. Air Force; six F-135-PW-600 for the U.S. Marine Corps; and two F-135-PW-100 for the U.S. Navy. In addition, this contract provides for the procurement of 13 F-135-PW-100 and 6 F135-PW-600 systems for international partners and foreign military sales customers. Work will be performed in East Hartford, Connecticut (67 percent); Indianapolis, Indiana (16.5 percent); and Bristol, United Kingdom (16.5 percent); and is expected to be completed in September 2017.
- **14th May 14:** The US Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) has notified Congress of a potential foreign military sale (FMS) of AIM 9X-2 Sidewinder missiles and associated equipment to Australia. Under the estimated \$534m sale, Australia has requested the supply of up to 350 AIM-9X-2 Sidewinder tactical missiles, along with 35 AIM-9X special air training missiles (NATMs), 95 AIM-9X-2 captive air training missiles (CATMs), 22 AIM-9X-2 tactical guidance units, 19 CATM-9X-2 guidance units, and DATM-9X dummy training missiles. Approved by the US State Department, the sale also covers containers, test sets and support equipment, spare and repair parts, personnel training and training equipment, and other related elements of logistics and programme support. Expected to be mounted on-board the Royal Australian Air Force's (RAAF) RAAF's F/A-18 aircraft and eventually F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter (JSF) aircraft, the missiles would enhance the air force's air-to-air capability to defend its extensive coastlines against future threats.
- **Defence Aviation Budget News:**
 - The Kiowa Planned Withdrawal Date (PWD) has been extended to December 2019 due to delays in the Helicopter Aircrew Training System (HATS) Project. 41 Kiowa airframes are still in service with two units, School of Aviation and 173 Sqn.
 - The planned S-70A9 Blackhawk withdrawal date is planned for June 2018, with 6th Aviation Regiment being the last operator. During 2014-15, the operational fleet will reduce to 18 S-70A9 aircraft(down from 34 available S-70A9 airframes) and sustainment will be optimised to ensure that the smaller fleet provides the required level of operational availability until Black Hawk is replaced by the MRH90 with 6th Aviation Regiment, based in Holsworthy, NSW.
 - Planned RAAF PC-9 withdrawal date has been extended to Dec 2019.
 - The VIP BBJ and Challenger contract has been extended to 2017.
 - The RAAF AP-3C fleet now consists of 16 Orion aircraft, meaning two AP-3Cs and one P-3C aircraft have been retired to date.



From the Malaya Jungle to the beaches of Normandy:

453 Sqn D-Day: 6th June 1944.

Background History

Originally approved to be established on the 16th December 1941, as a General Reconnaissance (GR) Squadron to be equipped with Hudsons, it was initially earmarked for service in the UK. It was then decided in early 1941 for this Hudson Bomber GR Squadron to be based in the Far East in Malaya from May 1941.

On the 30th May 1941, it was designated as a Fighter Squadron, along with 488 Sqn RNZAF to be equipped with 16 IE and 8 IR Brewster Buffaloes. *Due to training accidents within and outside this unit, seldom did its IE or IR total reached past 16 aircraft.* The assigned excess Sgt Pilots and WAGs were reassigned. The Squadron departed Sydney in two groups on the SS Katoomba and SS Marella on the 29th July 1941 for Malaya, arriving on the 15th August 1941.

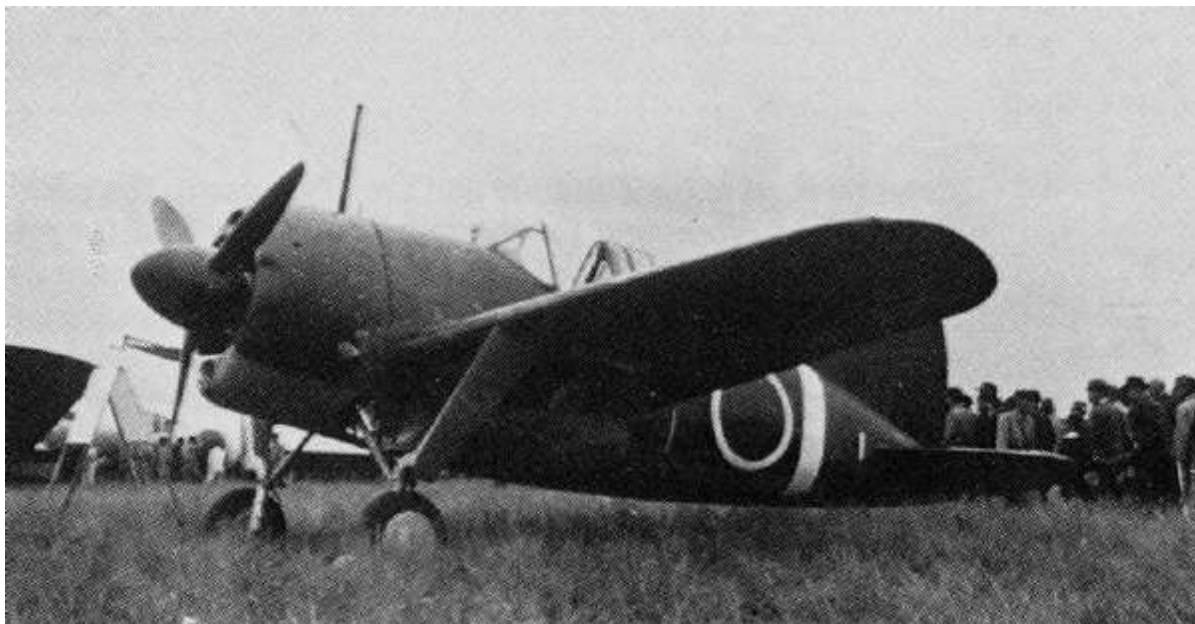
The first 9 Buffalo arrived on the 26th August 1941 and by the end of the following month, all pilots had completed their elementary training on the type.



453 Sqn RAAF Malaya based **Buffalo W8217 TD-B**. GRB Collection

War came on the 8th December 1941 when the Japanese entered into the war, with the ensuing Malaya, Sumatra and Java campaigns ending in disaster by the 9th March 1942. At the time the Sumatra campaign ended, 453 Squadron RAAF had been the sole operator of the remaining five RAF

Buffalo survivors of some four plus Sqns worth (96 Aircraft equipping 21 Sqn RAAF, 243 Sqn RAF, 151 MU, 4 PRU and 488Sqn RNZAF).



One of several captured ex RAF and NEI Buffaloes that were tested from mid-1942. GRB Collection

A fifth Buffalo Unit, 67 Sqn RAF (Coded RD-), which 453 Sqn RAAF replaced originally, had been transferred to Burma prior to the outbreak of war.*



Only some four RAF Buffaloes survived the Burma Campaign and were taken to India. Some of 453 Sqn RAAF's Buffaloes, along with Dutch survivors were also captured by the Japanese in Java. A fair portion of the surviving pilots later flew P-40E Kittyhawks with 75, 76 and 77 Sqns in 1942. One extra pilot, F/Lt Les Jackson, was attached to 453 Sqn RAAF from September 1941 for a few months prior to the outbreak of war to fly Buffaloes on his way back from the Middle East to Australia. This would come in handy when he flew and later commanded 75 Sqn in 1942.

Back in the UK

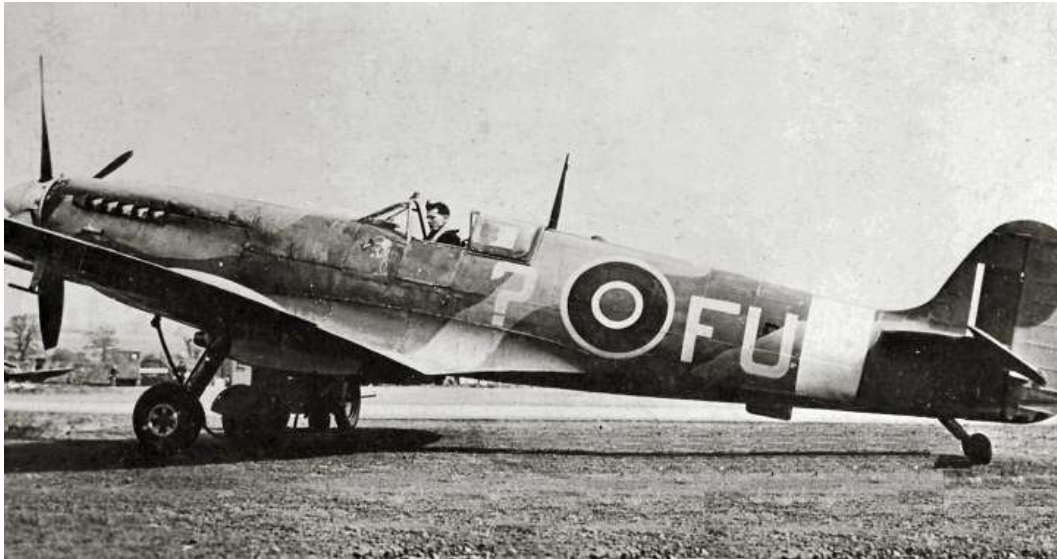
It was decided and agreed to, that the RAAF would not reform the Squadron in the Pacific, and that the RAF agreed to reserve that number plate for a later unit to be formed in the UK. Subsequently, 453 Squadron RAF (RAAF) reformed at RAF Drem, in the UK on the 9th June 1942. Now equipped with 16 IE and 2 IR Supermarine Spitfire Mk VB aircraft, along with a further aircraft, a Mile Magister, the Squadron was back in its second form.

The first all Squadron Flight formation, since Malaya was performed on the 15th July 1942.

On the first of August 1942, Pilot Officer Charles Guy Riley Serv#416285 became the first casualty of the Squadron since reforming when he crashed in Spitfire Mk VB EN774 (ex 124 Sqn RAF) when on a training flight, at 1100hrs, some two miles north of Crail, Scotland.

For the next two years it was assigned to the Air Defence of Great Britain, until it was transferred in early 1944 as part of 125 Wing; 83 Group, 2nd Tactical Air Force (2TAF), in preparation of offensive operations against the European enemy held continent. For a period in 1943, they were equipped with Spitfire MK IXs until again they were replaced with older reworked Spitfire MK VBs.

In early 1944, they again traded in their Spitfire MK VBs and received Spitfire MK LFIX's. The first Wing Strength assignment as part of the 2TAF, was escorting some 72 USAAF B-26 Marauders over Amiens/Longyeon on 11/02/44, under command of Sqn Ldr D C Andrews DFC, CO of 453 Sqn RAAF. All aircraft carried Slipper tanks.



Pictured here is Spitfire LF IX EN727 FU-? early in 1944. GRB Collection

Preparation for D-Day

On the 1/06/44, all activities and preparations were completed for the preparation of 453 Sqn RAAF's role in Operation Overlord, the invasion of Occupied Europe. The only the weather was the obstinate foe in preventing the execution of the invasion. It was a flight free day, and a dance was held by 456 Sqn RAAF at the base that night, with all invited.



Spitfire LFIX MH443 FU-A in early 1944. GRB Collection.



Spitfire LFIX MK421 FU-Z re-splendid in its new invasion stripe scheme 05/06/44.

The following day on the 02/06/44, one dive bombing mission was completed by 12 aircraft on a Wuorsburg at Cap Gris Ness in the afternoon which proved uneventful.

On the 03/06/44, the afternoon was spent ground strafing around the Flers, Domfront, and Caen areas of Normandy with 12 aircraft.

On the 04/06/44, it was a free flying day, whereupon, all aircraft were painted with three White and two black stripes around the wings and fuselage for easier IFF identification on D-Day. The following day, on the 05/06/44, ground crew completed the final touches to the aircraft schemes, as well as maintenance. Excitement was building, with also the squadron echelon reading itself for its future ground deployment to the European soil. Several patrols were completed, including escorting a convoy south of Catherine Point between 10.25 hrs (2 a/c) and 17.30hrs (12 a/c). The last flown was 21.15hrs to provide air cover to a convoy that was heading south. All aircraft (10 a/c) were down by 22.35hrs.

D-Day to D-Day plus 10

At 0400hrs all pilots were waken. Very little enemy aircraft were seen the week before, despite being enticed and baited during the pre-invasion operations strong Luftwaffe fighter and bomber opposition was expected on the invasion day.

The Normandy landings (codenamed Operation Neptune) were the landing operations on 6th June, 1944 (termed D-Day) of the Allied invasion of Normandy in Operation Overlord during World War II. The largest seaborne invasion in history, the operation began the invasion of German-occupied Western Europe, led to the restoration of the French Republic, and contributed to an Allied victory in the war.

On the day, the airfield was abuzz, with overflying formations of aircraft heading towards Normandy. With the airborne and landing invasion force already with its feet on the continent, they took off at 0800hrs to provide air cover over British and Canadian beach-heads at Normandy with an eventual 42 sorties flown on that day; 0800Hrs (11 a/c), 13.10Hrs (10 a/c), 17.15Hrs (11 a/c) and 21.30Hrs (11 a/c). Included in the sorties were ground attacks on target code, T5894 (Gun emplacement), near Varroville. One other act that day was to shoot down a runaway barrage balloon over the beach.

The following day, 07/06/44, another 47 sorties, in support of Operation Neptune, were flown without contact with the enemy; though an enemy formation of 12 Luftwaffe FW190s were sighted diving near Point De Le Raze. Sorties; 0810Hrs (10 a/c), 13.10Hrs (12 a/c), 17.20Hrs (12 a/c) and 21.30Hrs (12 a/c). Enemy flack was light between Carentan and Tsigny.

On the 08/07/44, still no enemy aircraft were engaged; patrols over the invasion beaches being were performed. The first flight had ringside seats to the bombing of the Utah beachhead by USAAF B-26 Marauders. Sorties flown on the day were; 0810Hrs (11 a/c), 13.10Hrs (12 a/c) and 17.20Hrs (12 a/c). The following day was quiet yet again, with a single weather recce flight performed by two aircraft, (**FU-?** flown by S/Ldr Smith and **FU-T** flown by W/O Cowpe) due to 10/10 cloud over the channel and Utah beach, between 14.10 hrs and 15.20 hrs.

The Luftwaffe activity on the 10/06/44 was still missing, even with visibility excellent over Utah Beach head in support of the Americans. Sorties flown that day were; 0810Hrs (11 a/c), 13.10Hrs (12

a/c), 17.20Hrs (12 a/c) and 21.30Hrs (12 a/c). The first RAAF Pilot to land at St Craix forward Invasion airstrip at Normandy was P/O Keith F Daff Serv#409090, on the 10/06/44, when his Spitfire LF-IX ML138 **FU-C**, experienced engine trouble when on patrol over the Normandy Beach Head. He landed on a under construction landing strip, and after a few adjustments to the engine, returned some hours later to the UK.



W/O Cowpe shown here in the cockpit of Spitfire MK285 **FU-T**, as photographed on 25/05/44. AWM

The first post invasion combat loss happened on the 11/06/44 when patrolling over Juno, Gold and Sword beaches on the second mission of the day. F/Lt H L Smith Serv#411539 was shot down by flak in Spitfire LF IX **MJ789 FU-B**, which was seen to hit a water canal near Ouistreham and overturned. He was killed in the crash. Sorties flown that day were; 10.40Hrs (8 a/c) and 19.00Hrs (14 a/c). Some 11 aircraft for the first time stayed on the continent at their designated St Craix forward Invasion airstrip.

On the 12/06/44, Luftwaffe activity was still missing, with an uneventful day over the beaches with no flak encountered. Sorties flown that day were; 05.30Hrs (9 a/c), 17.30Hrs (12 a/c) and 21.30Hrs (12 a/c). The following day, they performed a single seaward patrol (21.30 hrs with 11 a/c) off Omaha Beach Head, again without sighting any Luftwaffe aircraft. Some flak was experienced off the Cherbourg Peninsula. A non-operational flight to Redhill to exchange 4 tired aircraft ended in the sad

loss of F/Sgt Douglas Saunders Serv#417422 (Been promoted to W/O at time of death) aged 20 when he crashed Spitfire LF IX **MH487 FU-K**, on route at Coombe Hill near Wellington, Sussex.

The Luftwaffe activity on the 14/06/44 was still missing over the Beach Heads. Sorties flown that day were; 10.40Hrs (12 a/c), and 20.35 Hrs (12 a/c). The next day, the Squadron had another uneventful day over the Beach Heads, and 11 aircraft stayed at St Craix forward Invasion airstrip and a later patrolled off Needles and Portland. Sorties flown that day were; 10.40Hrs (11 a/c), 20.40 Hrs (12 a/c), 13.45 (2 a/c), 15.00hrs (2 a/c), 16.15 hrs (2 a/c) and 17.30 hrs (2 a/c).

The following day, on the 16/06/44, two earlier patrols over the Beach Heads proved uneventful, but the long absence of the Luftwaffe finally ended in the afternoon on their third patrol when 12 BF109s were sighted 6 miles south east of Caen at approximately 21.00hrs. One confirmed as destroyed by F/Lt Lancaster (**FU-H**) and W/O Rice (**FU-G**); one claimed by W/O Sweeny (**FU-B**) and F/O Lawrence (**FU-P**), one each probable by Sqn Ldr Smith (**FU-?**) and F/Lt Mc Dade (**FU-S**) with a further claimed as damaged by F/O Murray (**FU-J**).

Sorties flown that day were; 12.30Hrs (11 a/c), 15.10 hrs (12 a/c) and 20.05 Hrs (12 a/c).



453 Sqn RAAF Spitfire LF IXs pictured on French Soil at last. GRB Collection

More action would follow in the future days for the Australian piloted squadron in Normandy.

The Squadron would log some 720 sorties during the month of June 44 in support of the invasion, destroying in their final month's tally, some 3 enemy aircraft, claiming 3 probable enemy aircraft and damaging some 5 enemy aircraft. Before long, 453 Sqn RAAF as since operating on French Soil for the first time would be based later in Longues, Normandy, from July 1944.

The June 1944 record of 453 Sqn RAAF's 27 Spitfire LF IX aircraft and codes researched: Underline are the losses.

MH443 FU-A, MJ789 FU-B, NH462 FU-B, ML138 FU-C, MX575 FU-D, MK288 FU-E, MK288 FU-F, MK618 FU-F, MK299 FU-G, MK355 FU-H, MK418 FU-G, MK510 FU-J, MH487 FU-K, MK260 FU-K, NH244 FU-L, MJ333 FU-M, MH779 FU-N, NH462 FU-P, NH208 FU-R, ML146 FU-S, MK285 FU-T, MK284 FU-U, NH274 FU-V, MJ398 FU-W, MH423 FU-Y, MK421 FU-Z, and MK379 FU-?.

G R Birkett@2014

Long Range Lager Tanks; beer to the Front



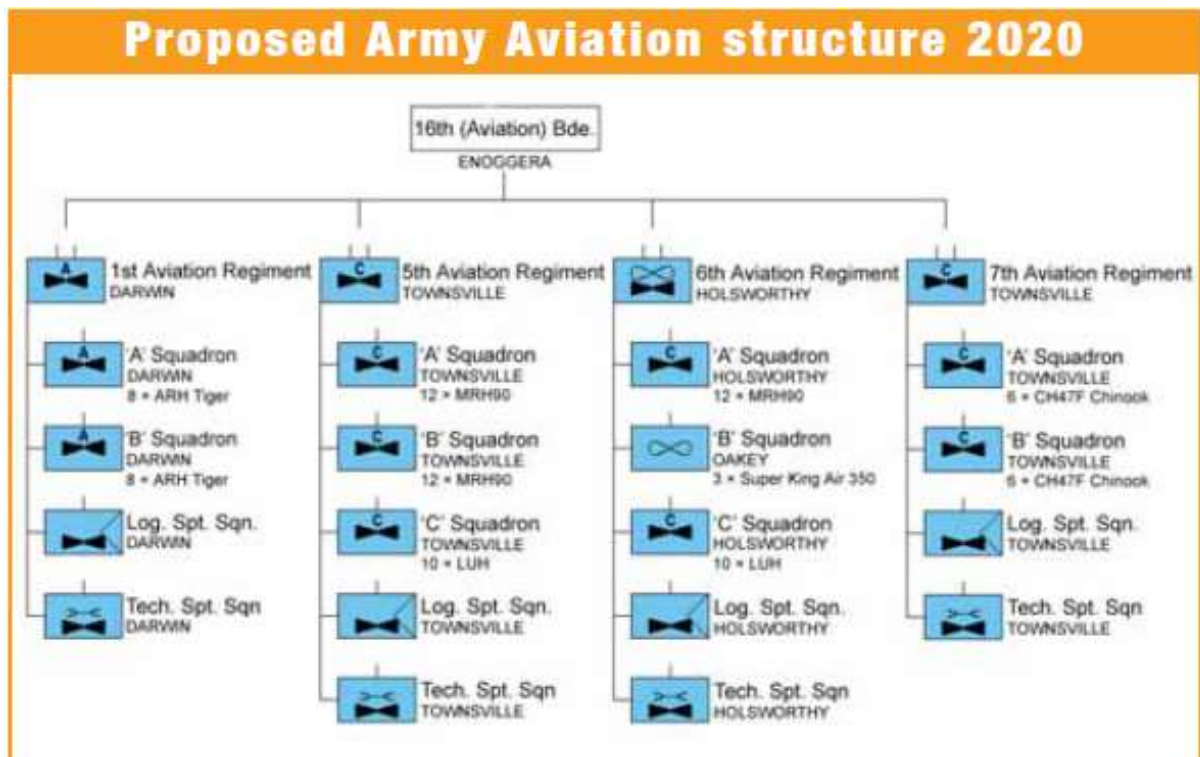
One of the most successful logistical innovations that had flown by D-Day; a Spitfire LF IX with Lager tanks. GRB Collection



Army Aviation 2020, a 2008 Snapshot Review

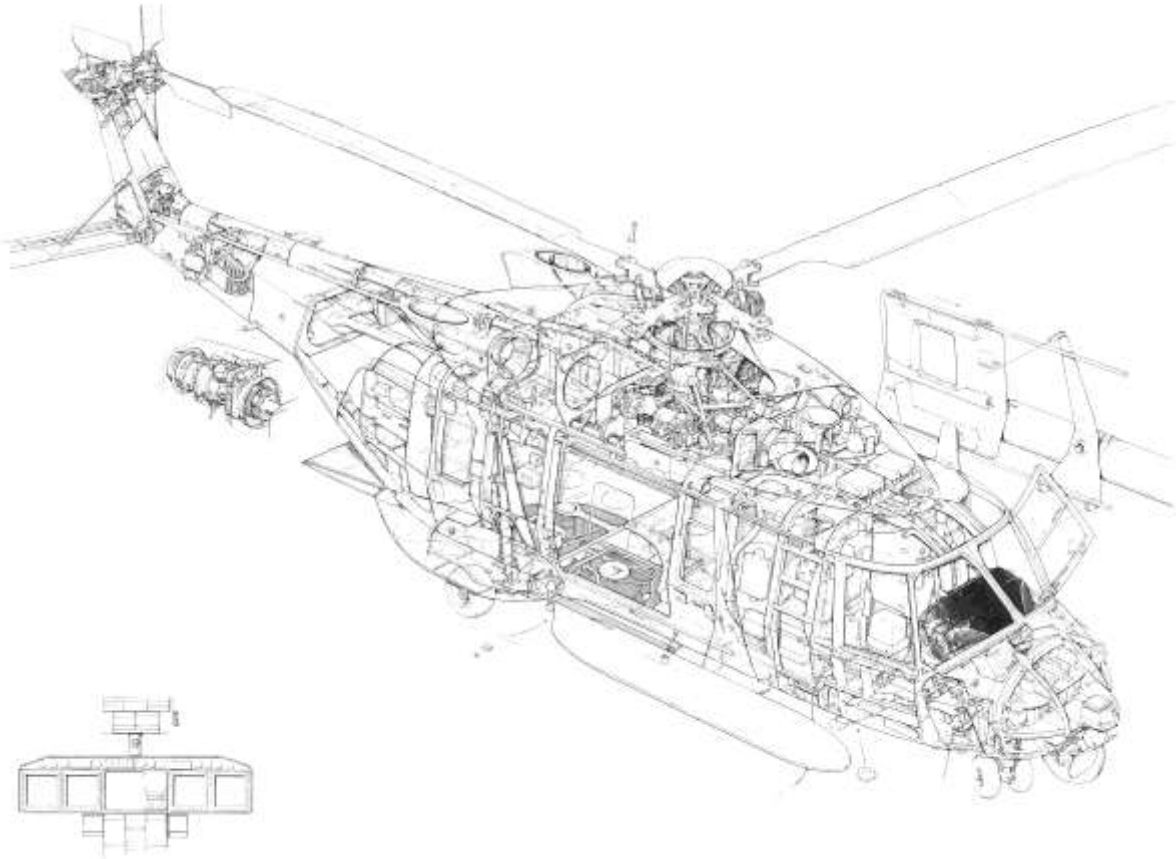


An interesting view of the Australian Army's proposed 2020 Unit Structure first mooted back in 2008.



It included the raising of an additional Aviation Regiment, the 7th, to be equipped solely with 2 Squadrons of 6 CH-47Fs each for a total of 12 both new and re-capitalised CH-47F.

The source of additional CH-47F airframes would have been re-capitalised existing Army CH-47D+s. The current inventory is 7 CH-47D plus, though one damaged in 2012 in Afghanistan may not have been repaired. *A thought bubble for at least two MH-47Gs, in addition to the 12 core fleet, was in consideration as well.*



MRH-90 Cutaway

Each of the other two regiments having a Light Utility Helicopter equipped C Sqn of 10 airframes within, under Air 9000 Phase 9, 20 LUH aircraft purchase. The sad fact is that this project has constantly been deferred to this date.

A total of 36 MRH-90s would equip both 5th and 6th Aviation Regiments, A/B and A Sqns equipped, respectively. Currently only 808 Sqn RANFAA has attained IOC with 6 PPB 3 Aircraft (Including PPB3 A40-26). The School of Aviation would have the balance, though it seems inadequate numbers; 5 MRH-90s, 6 ARHs, and undisclosed number of HATS Helios. 1 MRH-90s will be a rotated ground trainer, an addition aircraft provided (now 47 in total) as part of a restructured contract per 2013.

Actual Squadron numbers may be actually become 10 each with regimental reserves held (4), boosting the School of Aviation to 6 airframes plus ground trainer. Seems overall that an addition attrition/top up orders for CH-47F, MRH-90s and ARH types were being planned by 2020

Currently: *The forming of 7 Aviation Regiment is still born. With now 18 S70A-9 to remain in service with the 6th Aviation Regiment from the end of the year, training for that type will be within the unit.*

The type is more suitable for the SF role due to the layout of the S70A-9 cabin, flight and landing profiles and it may well serve on, perhaps with some recapitalisation from 2020 due to being well maintained and that they possess low airframe hours. The US Army has been doing this to their UH-60A's or UH-60L's since the 90's to MH/UH-60Ms in the 00's. Perhaps back trading to the US Army Program the remaining 14 S-70A-9s to help fund it.



North American Corner: CAC A68-42



RAAF Official via G.R.Birkett

A68-42	CA-17 Mk.20	1367	n/a	Delivered 1 AD ex CAC on 10/12/45. Issued 22 Sqn 18/10/49. Written off 29/03/52 at Green Hills NSW. Converted to Components 05/52.
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Squadron leader T. Henry Saunders A21899, the commanding Officer of 22 Squadron CAF, took off from Schofields in Mustang A68-42 at 1455 Hrs on the 15th March 1952 to carry out a gunnery detail at the Greenhills Gunnery Range.

Squadron Leader Saunders had served in the active Air force during WW2 with No 4 Squadron, initially as a Flying Officer, flying CAC Wirraways Nov 42 to April 43, and Boomerangs in 1945. He was the pilot flying A20-519, when at 1100 hrs on the 21/11/42, whilst on a survey landing a Wairopi Strip. The aircraft struck soft patch on strip and loss lift, causing it to stall and loose lift halfway along runway, affecting a fast involuntary

landing run past the end of strip and then striking trees at 80 miles per hour. Aircraft came to rest on nose and port wing. The Crew; F/O T H Saunders and F/Sgt D E W Bains Serv#21899 slightly injured. Despite this, both crew trekked back to Kokoda. They were collected individually by two 4 Sqn Wirraways on the 24/11/42 in A20-183 and A20-176 and ferried back to Berry Strip.

Back to A68-42: The flight duration was to be 35 minutes in company with A68-29. A68-42, the aircraft allotted to Squadron Leader Saunders , was fuelled up, but carried no fuselage tank, and carried 400 rounds 0.50 Cal ammunition.

When the aircraft arrived over Greenhills, Saunders was given permission to carry out his gunnery detail which proceeded normally until the last attack.

After the last dive, and when the noise of the guns had stopped, the Range Safety Officer heard the engine of A68-42 run roughly, and saw it spill white smoke. He saw deep red flames come from the port exhaust stack and watched the aircraft make a climbing turn through 180 degrees to approximately 1000 feet, where the canopy hood was jettison by the pilot in accordance in making a emergency forced landing. It flew for 800-1000 yards and started a medium gliding turn to port which seemed to increase in steepness. At 300-400 feet, the aircraft stalled and dived into the ground almost vertically.

The aircraft exploded 1507 hrs, on impact, killing the pilot instantly.

The primary finding was that there was a glycol leak between the cylinder head and cylinder block causing the engine to overheat, causing a subsequent fire. Evidence showed that the pilot had unlocked his harness in preparation of bailing out, but was incapacitated due to the canopy striking his helmet when jettisoning it, perhaps disorientating or causing incapacity to him.

A68-42 (with 216.40 TThrs on airframe) was fitted with Packard Merlin 1650-7 #335539 with 259.20 TThrs at the time of the accident.





Curtiss Corner: A29-162



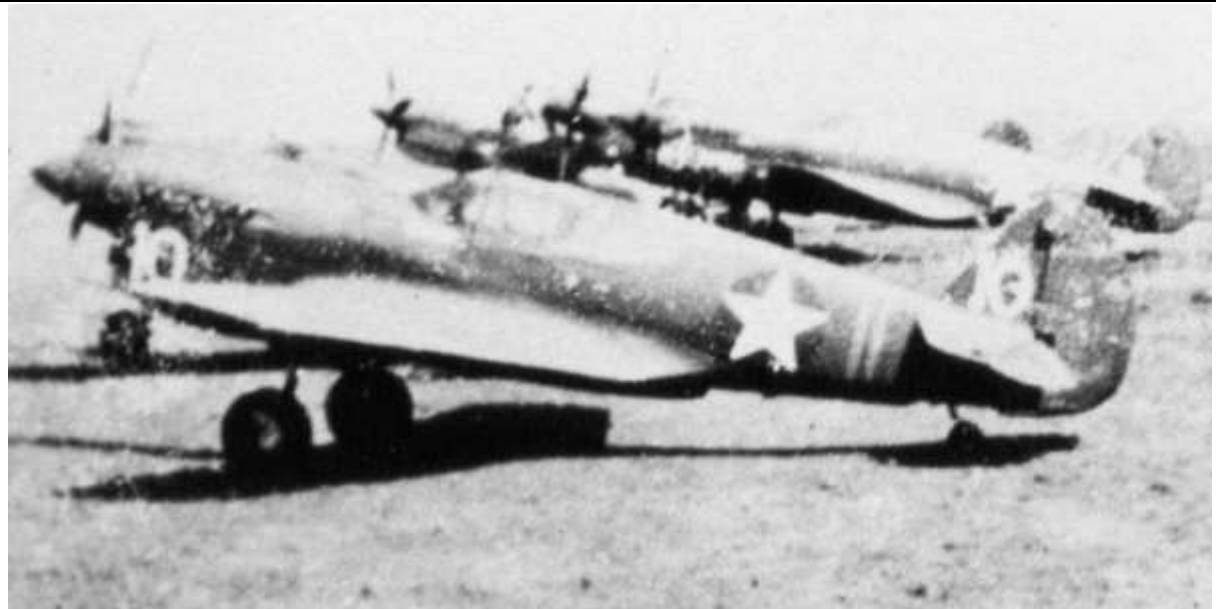
***P-40E-1 41-24818** DA3 USAAF Repo Project X 01/01/42 X 21/02/42 off Sumac 07/04/42. Damaged 04/05/42 at Batchelor Strip, flown by Capt. Robert Morrissey as #10. Repaired 20/8/42 Batchelor Strip NT from Taxying Accident 2nd Lt Ray Hillard. Became #37 Aug 1942. Condemned USAAF (LEFT) 7/9/42.*

Lt Ed Ball forced landed when ferrying aircraft to Charters Towers, after take-off 2/09/42, 5 miles north of Birdum NT. Picked up next day by 43rdSS and returned to Adelaide River for new Engine and prop. Repaired by US Pool Pell Strip NT (43rd S Sqn) 07/09/42.

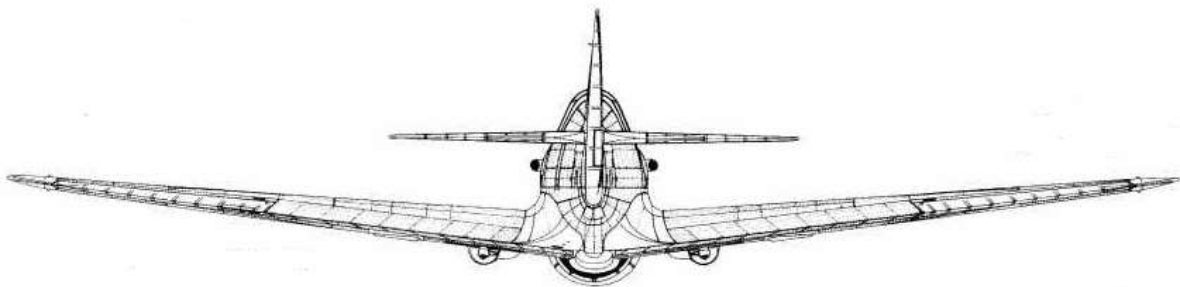
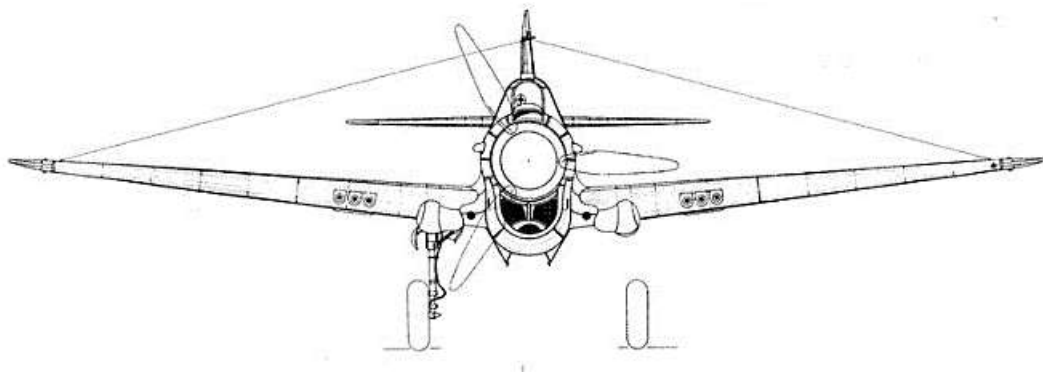
Became A29-162. Served from 28/9/42 with 75 Sqn; on 7/10/42 it was received by 3 AD from 75 Sqn and it appears it wasn't completely ready for operations; on 5/11/42 it was received by 77 Sqn from the reserve pool however within a few days it was u/s and was again allocated to 3 AD for an overhaul; on 21/2/43 it was received by 2 OTU from 3 AD.

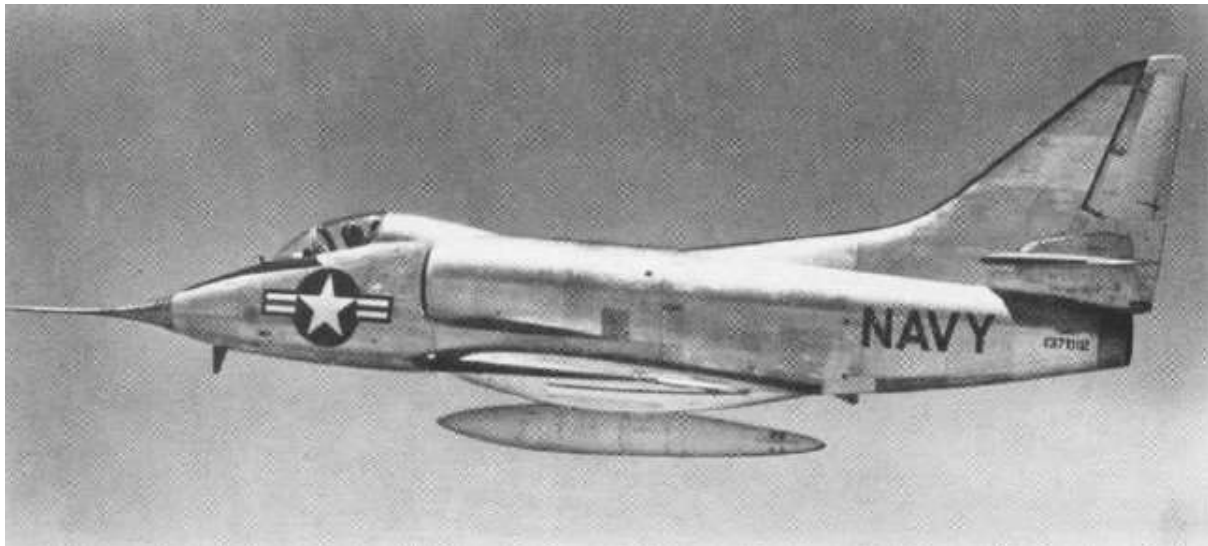
On 6/12/43 while on its landing run the undercarriage collapsed causing minor damage [pilot?] and it was stored; on 10/2/44 it was received by CGS from 2 OTU; on 9/11/44 it was received back at 2 OTU from CGS but within a month was selected to go to the T and F Sqn with 1 AD; on 29/12/44 it was received by T and F Sqn and remained with them until March 1945 when it was allocated to 10 RSU for some repairs but there is no info about an accident or maintenance problem; on 23/3/45 it was received by 10 RSU from 1 AD T and F Sqn; by 7/5/45 it was back with T and F Sqn before being sent to 1 CRD on 11/10/45 essentially for storage.

On 24/7/47 approval was given for it to be destroyed at Werribee bombing range.



Pictured here at Pell Strip in May 1942 as #10, with 7thFS CO, Captain Bob Morrissey. GRB Collection





A4D (A-4) Skyhawk *ala* Scooter

By the early 1950s, jet power had matured to the point where the Navy became interested in using it for an attack aircraft. At that time, the AD Skyraider was the Navy's premier VA plane. The A4D Skyhawk (Redesignated A-4) was the successor of the AD-1 Skyraider. Interdiction and close air support was what the aircraft was designed to do by the Douglas Company's aeronautical engineer, Mr. Ed Heinemann.

The Douglas A-4 Skyhawk is a carrier-capable attack aircraft developed for the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps. The delta winged single-engine Skyhawk was designed and produced by Douglas Aircraft Company, and later by McDonnell Douglas. It was originally designated A4D under the U.S. Navy's pre-1962 designation system.

The Skyhawk is a lightweight aircraft with a maximum take-off weight of 24,500 pounds (11,100 kg) and has a top speed of more than 600 miles per hour (970 km/h). The aircraft's five hard points support a variety of missiles, bombs and other munitions and were capable of delivering nuclear weapons using a low altitude bombing system and a "loft" delivery technique. The A-4 was originally powered by the Wright J65 turbojet engine; from the A-4E onwards, the Pratt & Whitney J52 was used.

Skyhawk's played key roles in the Vietnam War, the Yom Kippur War, and the Falklands War. Fifty years after the aircraft's first flight, some of the nearly 3,000 produced remain in service with several air arms around the world, including from the Brazilian Navy's aircraft carrier, São Paulo. Around 61 airframes are still in use by today's Air Forces and Navy

First contract 10 Sep 1952	Max Landing (Field) 11,556 lbs
First flight 22 Jun 1954	Max Landing (Arrest) 11,556 lbs
First reported in squadron 27 Sep 1956	Ordnance: Four 20 mm guns with 280 rounds on wing
Last delivery 27 Feb 1979	Fire control: six Aero 14B racks on wing
Number accepted 2,876	Max load capacity 3,000 pounds
Weight:	Electronics:
Empty 8,286 lbs	UHF Comm AN/ARC-27A
Basic 8,375 lbs	IFF AN/APX-6
Design 12,504 lbs	IFF Coder AN/APA-B9
Combat 11,702 lbs	UHF ADF AN/ARA-25
Max Take off (Field) 19,910 lbs	TACAN (Back fit) AN/ARN-21
Max Take off (Catapult) 19,910 lbs	Power Plant: One Wright J65-W-4 axial flow engine.
The following are the technical specifications for the A4D-1:	
Dimensions:	
Wing area 260 sq ft	Length 39 ft 5 in
Wing span 27 ft 6 in	Height 15 ft 7 in

A-4 Models that followed

A4D-2 (Redesignated A-4B): The A4D-2 differed from the A4D-1 primarily by the incorporation of a pressure fuelling-system, flight refuelling provisions and a powered elevator system.

A4D-2N (Redesignated A-4C): Improved A-4B with longer nose.

A4D-5 (Redesignated A-4E): The A4D-5 was an A4D-2N with the J-52-P6 engine and two additional wing weapon stations.

A-4F: Similar to A-4E but with J52-P-8A engine. Fitted with ESCAPAC IC-3 ejection seat.

A-4G: For Australian Navy.

A-4H: For FMS. (Israel)

A-4K: For New Zealand.

A-4KU: For FMS. (For Kuwait)

A-4M: Similar to A-4F but with enlarged canopy. (USMC)

A-4N: For FMS. (Israel)



Photograph by John Bartels.

RAN FAA TA-4G

Other Designations (Conversions & rebuilds)

TA-4B: Small, single-seat, delta wing, carrier-based, attack aircraft with tricycle landing gear and in-flight refuelling capability.

EA-4P: TA-4F modified for ECM missions.

A-4L: A-4C with new engine, winglift spoilers, Walleye and Shrike missile capability, and improved avionics.

OA-4M: A-4M modified for use by Marine Corps in high speed reconnaissance and tactical air control.

A-4S: A-4B aircraft for use by Singapore. Later re-engine with F404s as Super Skyhawk

TA-4S: Trainer version of the A-4S.

A-4AR: Ex USMC A-4M/OA-4Ms modified for use by Argentine Air Force



An XA4D-1 Skyhawk takes off on its maiden flight from Edwards AFB, California, in June 1954.

Model Designations Accepted from the Manufacturer (New Builds)

Only one model will list the technical specifications for the aircraft. All the other models will only identify the specific changes resulting in a new model designation.

A4D-1 (Redesignated A-4A): The A4D-1 was a single seat aircraft designed as a light weight, carrier-based, turbo-jet plane whose primary mission was the destruction of enemy ground and surface targets. The structure was a conventional all metal semi-monocoque type. Fitted with automatically operated wing slats and hydraulically operated split flaps. Folding wings were not provided.



Photo via Phil Thompson

Bureau Numbers: New Builds

XA4D-1 137812

A4D-1 137813-137831, 139919-139970, 142142 - 142235

142082-142141, 142116-142423, 142674- 142953, 144868-145061

A4D-2N 145062-145146, 146460-146692, 147669-147819, 148304-148317, 148465-148614, 149487-149646, 150581- 150600

A4D-3 145147-145156

A4D-5 149647-149666, 149959-150438, 151022-151261

A-4E 151984-152100

TA-4E 152102-152106

A-4F 152101, 154172-154286, 154970-155069

TA-4F 152846-152878, 153459-153531, 153660-153690, 154287-154343, 154614-151657

A-4G 154903-154910

TA-4G 154911-154912

A-4H 155242-155289, 157395-157428, 157918-157925

TA-4H 157429-157134, 157926-157929

TA-4J 155070-155119, 156891-156950, 158073-158147, 158453-158527, 158712-158723, 159099-159104, 159546-159556, 153795-159798

A-4K 157904-157913

TA-4K 157914-157917

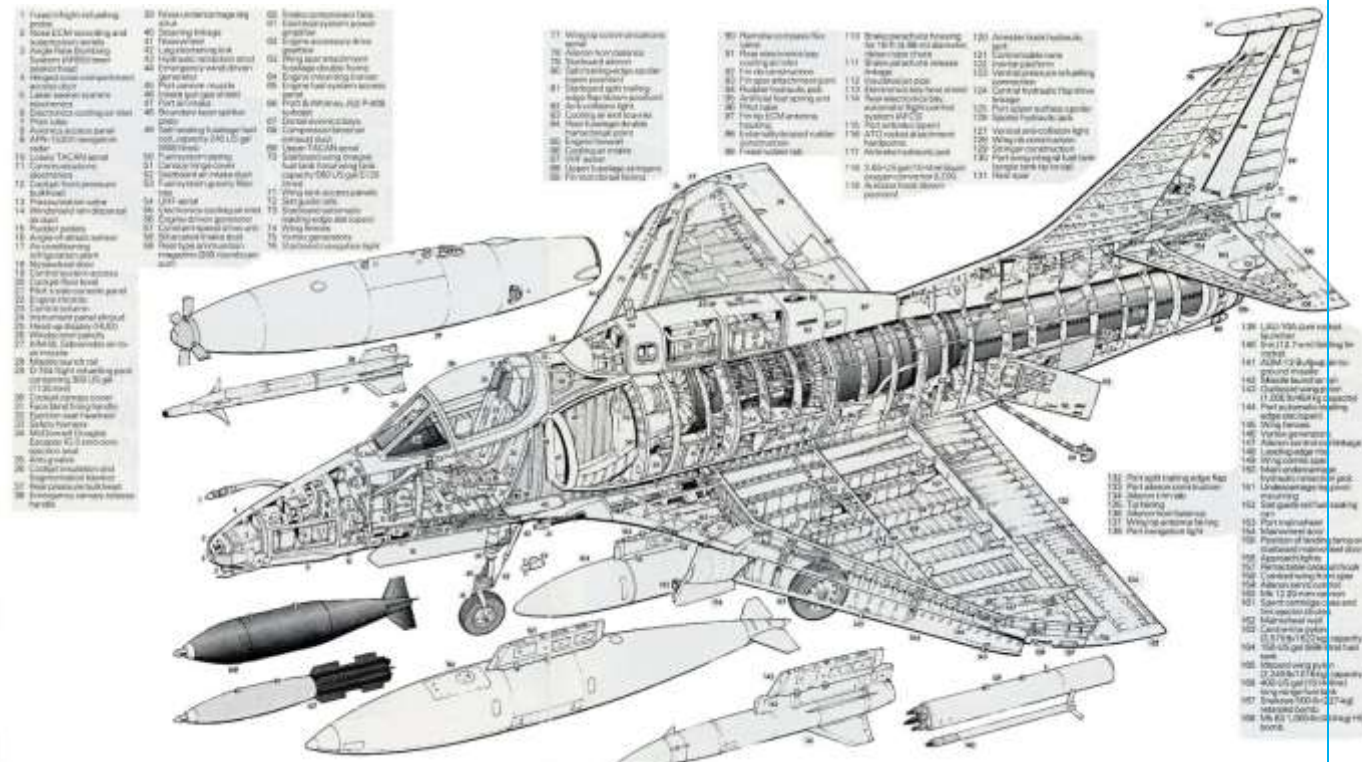
A-4KU 160180-160209

TA-4KU 160210-160215

A-4M 158148-158136, 158412-158435, 159470-159493, 159778-159794, 160022-160045, 160241-160264

A-4N 158726-158746, 159035-153052, 159075-159098, 159349-159350, 159515-159545, 159799-159824

The last model built new: A-4KU





A-4C refuelling a F-8 Crusader during the 60's



RAN FAA Skyhawk #882 in final colours



Retired from service, A-4Ns of the IASF in 2009



Photo by Rod Farquhar

A RNZAF A-4K in original form.



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ne of the original Argentine Naval Skyhawks in 2006



Republic of Singapore Air Force TA-4S pictured here with distinctive double bubble canopies. France 2006



End of an era, RAN FAA Skyhawk #876 with RNZAF Roundel, preparing to cross the Tasman.



The last Carrier based Skyhawk's are now with the Brazilian Navy, with some 12 operational (9 Single and 3 dual) of the 22 bought ex Kuwaiti Air Force A-4KU/TA-4KUs.

Odd Shots:



Pictured here is the First Helicopter landing on HMAS Sydney during 1951 in the China Sea. Can someone ID the BuNo?

From 1939 start to finals of A18-14 “Clifton”





Before and after: F-111C A8-137



On the strip lit up with water cascading from the undercarriage.



F-111C A8-137 following its demise in NZ



Next Issue, the Spring 2014 edition, will be out circa late September 2014.