



P40 USAAF/RAAF Operations in Australia Supplementary #3_{vers6}

For a change, we will leap ahead by two years to inform you of a reverse lend-lease event whereby RAAF P-40Ns were handed back to the USAAF some nineteen P-40Ns.

The 49th Fighter Group, specifically the 7th and 8th Fighter Squadrons, were still flying P-40Ns in mid 1944 as they had yet transited to an all P-38 Group by this time. That would happen later in September 1944. Losses due to enemy action and through pilot error had by July 1944, reduced the available P-40Ns to these two units to an unacceptable level.

Further to this, additional Units had been allocated all of the current USAAF P-40N reserves held to replace existing types. Several Tactical Reconnaissance Groups and even the 3rd Bomb Group were given these pool aircraft.

With no further issues from the USA, a request was sent to the RAAF for a supply of what seems in number, a total of nineteen P-40N-20s in late July 1944 to replenish the now empty USAAF Pool.

The RAAF agreed and issued orders to 5AD at Wagga, New South Wales, to prepare from storage, these airframes for collection by the USAAF.

The nineteen airframes were selected by the 31st July 1944 and collected by the 4th August 1944. They were:

43-23218(A29-640, *originally NEI Contract*), **43-23222**(A29-643 *originally NEI Contract*),
43-23239 (A29-672), **43-23241**(A29-673), **43-23243**(A29-674), **43-23342**(A29-678),
43-23350(A29-682), **43-23352**(A29-685), **43-23354**(A29-686), **43-23181**(A29-687),
43-23187(A29-689), **43-23190**(A29-692), **43-23192**(A29-693), **43-23194**(A29-694),
43-23198(A29-695), **43-23204**(A29-696), **43-24221**(A29-697), **43-24229**(A29-699),
43-24245(A29-703)

*Nb: The first two aircraft were "payback" P-40Ns to replace several P-40Ns made available to 120Sqn NEI earlier in 1944. These aircraft were not ordered under Indent 2012A per other P-40N-20s and had no previous factory allocated A29-1*** Serials per RAAF Order as the others intended for USAAF and NEIAF Service.*

Example: A29-672 was originally marked as A29-1270. GRB/Buz

Following sea delivery to Brisbane, some were delivered by 13ARD to Amberley, then they were assembled and test flown by 3 Aircraft Depot at Amberley.

All of these airframes were in storage at 5 Aircraft Depot Wagga then since erection and acceptance. Therefore, they had not seen any service by the RAAF apart from being test flown and ferried to their place of storage.

A typical history would be **A29-703 (ex-43-24245)** which was one of five P-40N-20s (other's being **43-24241, 49, 53 and 57**) shipped from the United States per RAAF Air Indent 2012A on the 21st February 1944 after being crated and dispatched from Curtiss Wright on the 26th January 1944. Following its arrival by sea, it was delivered to 3AD directly for assembly on the 9th April 1944.

By the 15th May 1944, it had been assembled and test flown, and then, on the 21st May 1944, it was sent to 5AD for storage. There it stayed till selected for the USAAF on the 27th July 1944.

Following preparation, it was ready, along with the other eighteen P-40Ns, to be ferried up to the USAAF Pool at Garbutt at Townsville.

It would seem that all of them were finished in the then standard colour scheme of Olive Drab over Neutral Grey, with the application of the then Allied White identification marking on the rear tail appendage and on the leading edge, outward of the landing gear mounting.



43-24187 P-40N-20 (ex-A29-689) as how it looked at Townsville during August 1944 after it was placed in the USAAF Pool. The A29-Serial remnants are Grey, though the profile shows black for clarity.

It's FY designator in Yellow, with "Pool" under the serial. The white tail marking is extended up the fuselage to just before the Star and bar.

*The previous RAAF partial marking of 689 is just visible under the Bar of the star, as located in a standard application of A29-*** serials at that time.*

Under wing Star and bar left out intentionally. GRB



Previously, A29-689 P-40N-20 as delivered to 5AD May 1944. GRB

Whether they were marked in USAAF marking prior to their departure, one this is pretty sure is that some, if only a small number, some had their entire paint colours removed on before entering USAAF squadron service.

Perhaps an example of being delivered in natural metal colour rather than the depicted Olive Drab/Neutral Grey would be **A29-694**.

On reverting back to her USAAF Serial number, **43-23194**, it was issued to the 7th Fighter Squadron with a group number of **#34**. It has been stated in Protect and Avenge that the 8th Fighter Squadron also used it.

Often quoted as being a relocated FY Serial "94" remanets on the rear fuselage, it seems fairly certain that this is in fact, the remanets of the marking, **A29-694**, behind the star and bar.

If so, it means that the number was applied on a bare metal fuselage. Given the time between selection and dispatch, I don't subscribe that the aircraft were in fact paint striped after being in USAAF Service, but rather in some cases, such as **A29-694**, already in bare metal prior to being dispatched by 5AD.

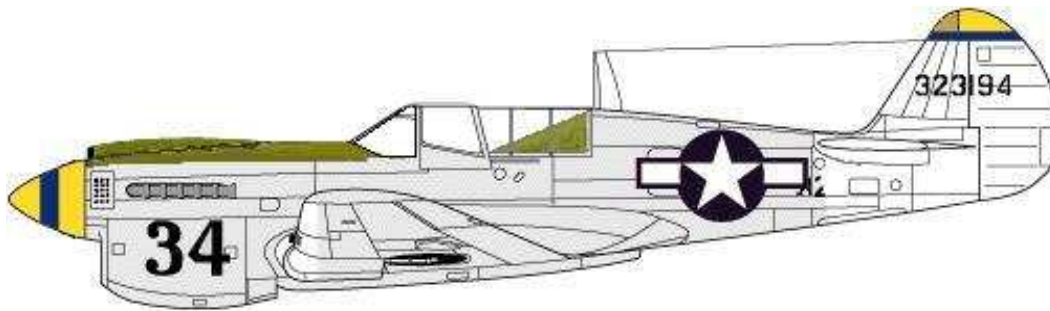


A starboard photo of 43-23194 as it was with the 7th Fighter Squadron during August 1944.

I hope a reader can either correct this comment or shed further light. I dare say there was a mix of painted and a limited number of bare metal P-40Ns. Non painting of Factory delivered P-40Ns only started with P-40N-40s to Australia.

The first actual “aluminium “ finished P40N for the RAAF was **A29-418** in early 1944. Paint was stripped off to see if the incoming USAAF practice of non-painted aircraft improved the performance.

Therefore we can assume that additional stripping of P-40Ns was done at Depot level.



The portside of 43-23194 (Ex-A29-694) as it would have been with the 7thFS at Biak PNG August 1944. There would have been the remaining “A2” of the A29-694 there on the Port side. GRB

So, as you have just read, the P-40N transfers were not just one way. We gave some back to the USAAF as well as forwarding some onto the Dutch under the C3-* series, but that will be covered in another Supplement.**

This research would not have been possible without the RAAF Museum E/E88 Cards, the National Archives of Australia records and to those people who added “important” bits, here and, to make this story possible. Special thanks to be given to Buz Busby for his usual helpful input and advice. Thanks Mate

Please note: My Aircraft Profiles that are depicted in any story are representations only, though every effort is made to be accurate given the information available.

Gordon R Birkett complied @2005