

PHOTO FEATURE: McDONNELL F2H BANSHEE
notes by Dick Powers

These captions refer to the twenty five photographs on the next ten pages. All photos are from McDonnell unless otherwise noted. Fred Roos provided much information on unit identification.

- 1) The sire of the Banshee, the FD-1 Phantom (later FH-1). This aircraft, BuAer number 111749, was the first of sixty production aircraft. The FD-1 differed from the XFD-1 in several respects, the most noticable being the square vertical fin cap and an 18" increase in the length of the nose to provide room for more fuel. Note the early star and bar with no red bar. Photo dated 18 november 1946.
- 2) The second prototype Phantom, XFD-1 number 48236, with the second prototype Banshee, XF2D-1 (later XF2H-1) number 99859. In this photo the lineage of the Banshee is clearly evident. Note that the aircraft have no provision for armament. The gun ports in the nose are faired over. Photo dated 23 May 1947.
- 3) A production F2H-2, number 125033, in front of the MAC plant. This aircraft carries underwing and wing tip fuel tanks. A flight test pitot boom has been inserted into the gun port.
- 4) The first production Banshee, F2H-1 number 122530, at Lambert Field. Screens over the engine inlets provide protection against foreign object damage (FOD). Paul Stevens photo.
- 5) An F2H-2 (123318) on a test flight near the McDonnell plant shows off its sleek lines. Examination of the photos of the -1 and -2 versions of the Banshee seems to reveal two different types of windshield framing, with no definite pattern. Note the coroguard leading edges to the wings and tail.
- 6) The first prototype Banshee, 99858, on a flight over the Missouri River. The metal work around the junction of the vertical and horizontal tail may be a test installation to attempt a drag reduction. Comparing the vertical tail fillet on the prototypes with that of production aircraft shows that this was reduced in size.
- 7) The prototype photo reconnaissance Banshee F2H-2B. Number 123366 was originally a -2N. This in flight shot clearly shows the angular lines of the modified nose, required for the camera installation.
- 8) The first F2H-3, a much modified version, with four dummy Sparrow missiles under the wings. BuAer number 126291.
- 9) A comparative top view of a -2 and a -3 showing some of the differences. The -3 had a longer fuselage carrying much more fuel, a raised tailplane with dihedral (but the same shape) and differences in the fairing around the engine exhausts.

- 10) An early production -3 in natural metal finish banks away to reveal some of the undersurface detail. Of particular interest are the store stations and the bulges on either side of the lower forward fuselage for the new cannon installation. This photo was taken on 14 November 1952.
- 11) An F2H-1, 122537, in the markings of NAS Glenview, a reserve unit. The significance of the letters TGV on the tail are not known. The fin cap is colored. The white lines under the national insignia on the nose are for the benefit of the deck landing officer. Paul Stevens took this photo.
- 12) An F2H-2, 124982, of VF-172 in landing configuration. Although this photo is of poor quality, it does show the undersurface markings applied to Navy aircraft.
- 13) F2H-2, 124974, launches for operations against Korea in September 1951. This squadron, VF-172, is operating from the USS ESSEX, and was the first squadron to take the F2H into combat. The fin cap and lightning flash on the tip tanks are yellow.
- 14) An unusual photo for two reasons. The aircraft in the foreground, 125067, is an F2H-2B (note the underwing inboard pylon) which carries a sharkmouth marking. Look closely- the gun ports form the eyes and below is a small, toothy mouth. These aircraft belong to CVG-1, although no further unit identification is possible.
- 15) A Marine F2H-2, 123259, of VMF 224 at MCAS Cherry Point. Note C-46 in background. Marine Corps photo via Fred Roos.
- 16) More Marine Banshees. Four -2s of VMF-122 in echelon formation out of Cherry Point. Number 123228 in the lead. Photo dated 2 February 1951. Navy photo via Fred Roos.
- 17) An F2H-2N of VC-4 awaiting launch from a carrier in January 1951. Sikorsky HO4S plane guard helicopter in background.
- 18) A gray and white -2P, one of the last produced, BuAer number 128880, of VFP-61 at NAS Miramar in 1957. Reversed color scheme of tip tanks suggests that they may have been interchangeable. Warren Bodie photo via Fred Roos.
- 19) An F2H-2P, 128881, belonging to VMJ-1 in Korea, 15 May 1953. The -2Ps performed an invaluable service during the Korean conflict. Squadron markings include red fin cap and white bordered red flash on the wing tip tank. USMC photo via Fred Roos.

20) An F2H-3, 126477, of Naval Air Reserve (Oakland). at Lambert Field 3 July 1959. Orange band around rear of fuselage. Paul Stevens Photo.

21) An F2H-4, 127657, used jointly by USN and USMC Reserves at NAS Oakland in September 1959. Color scheme is standard gray and white with dayglo orange on wings, aft fuselage and vertical tail. Paul Stevens photo.

22) An interesting assortment of aircraft on board an unknown carrier in September 1955. This photo was taken at the same time as photo 14 from a different angle. The -4s are from VMF(N)-533. The wing tip tank coupling details are clearly shown, as is the fairing from the horizontal tail to the fuselage to prevent tail flutter. Aircraft in background include Grumman S2F-1 Trackers, North American AJ Savages and Sikorsky HO4Ss of HMX-1. Photo dated

23) An F2H-3, 127527, of VC-3 refuels from an AJ-2 of VC-6. The Banshee is carrying underwing fuel tanks. The bulge under the Banshee's fuselage is a fairing over the refueling lines, which are external to the fuselage.

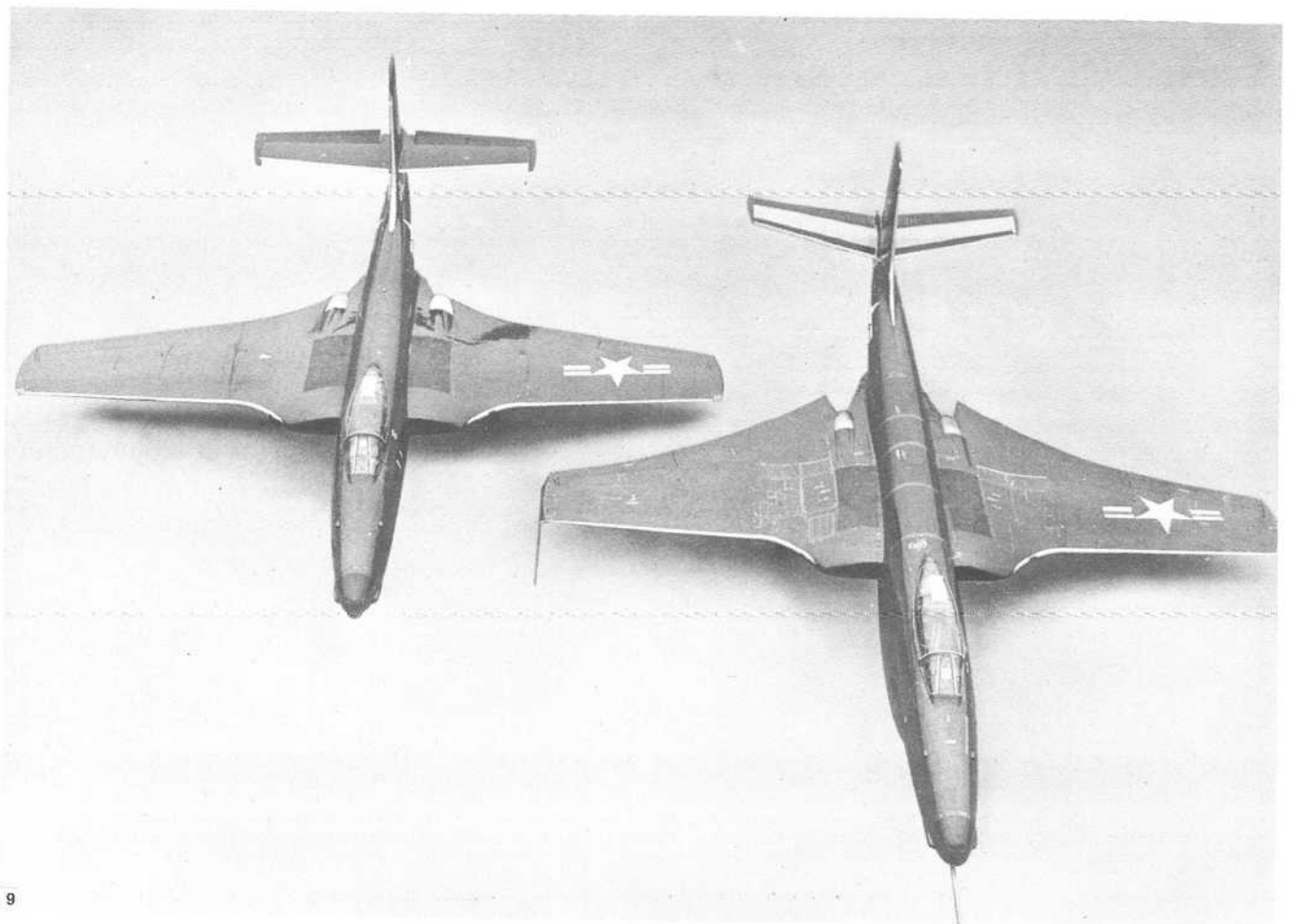
24) A weather beaten -4, 127647, of VMF-114 at MCAS Cherry Point on 24 March 1954. Marine Corps photo via Fred Roos.

25) A nice closing shot of a formation of -3s (?) flying past Mount Fuji. Aircraft of VC-4 while assigned to CVG-17.

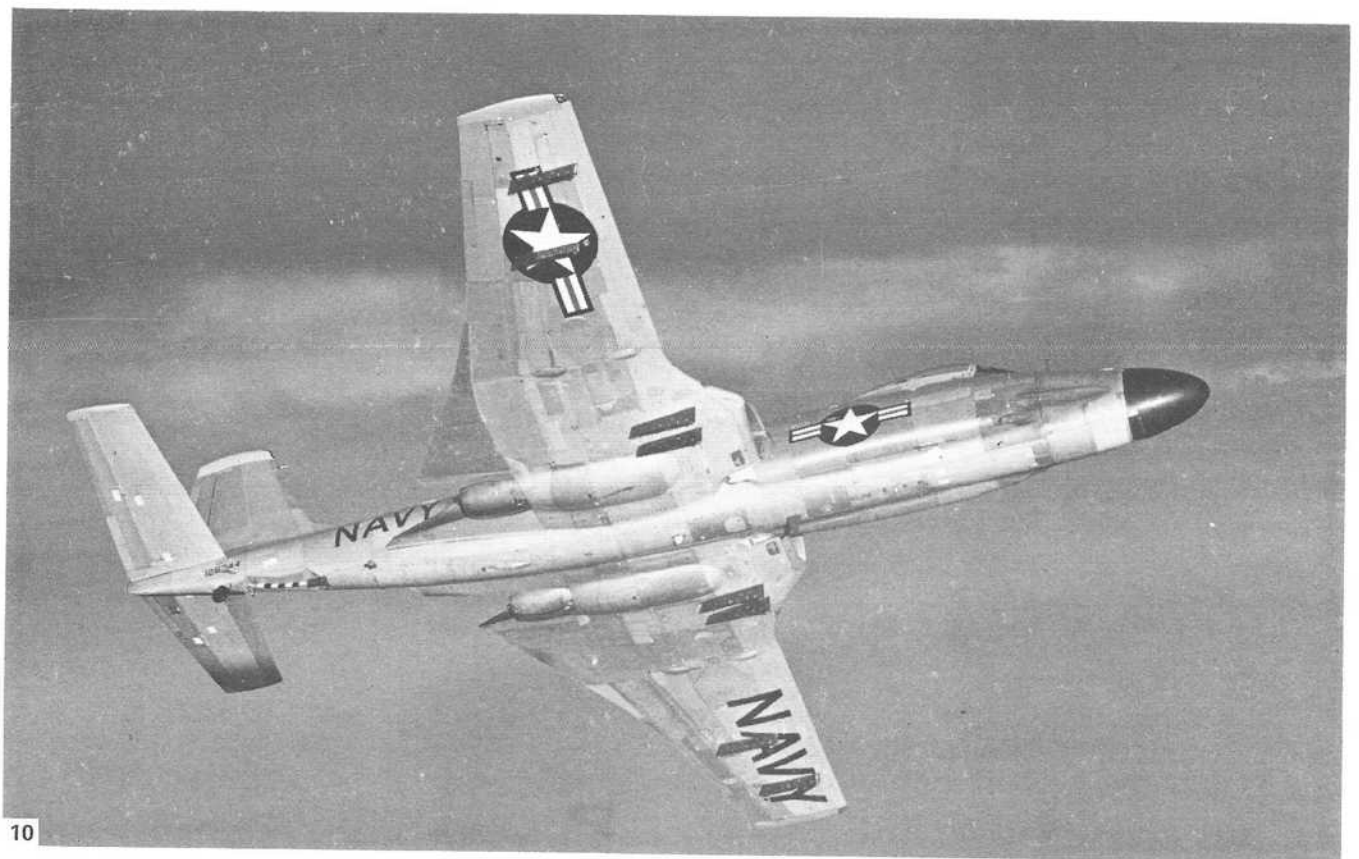








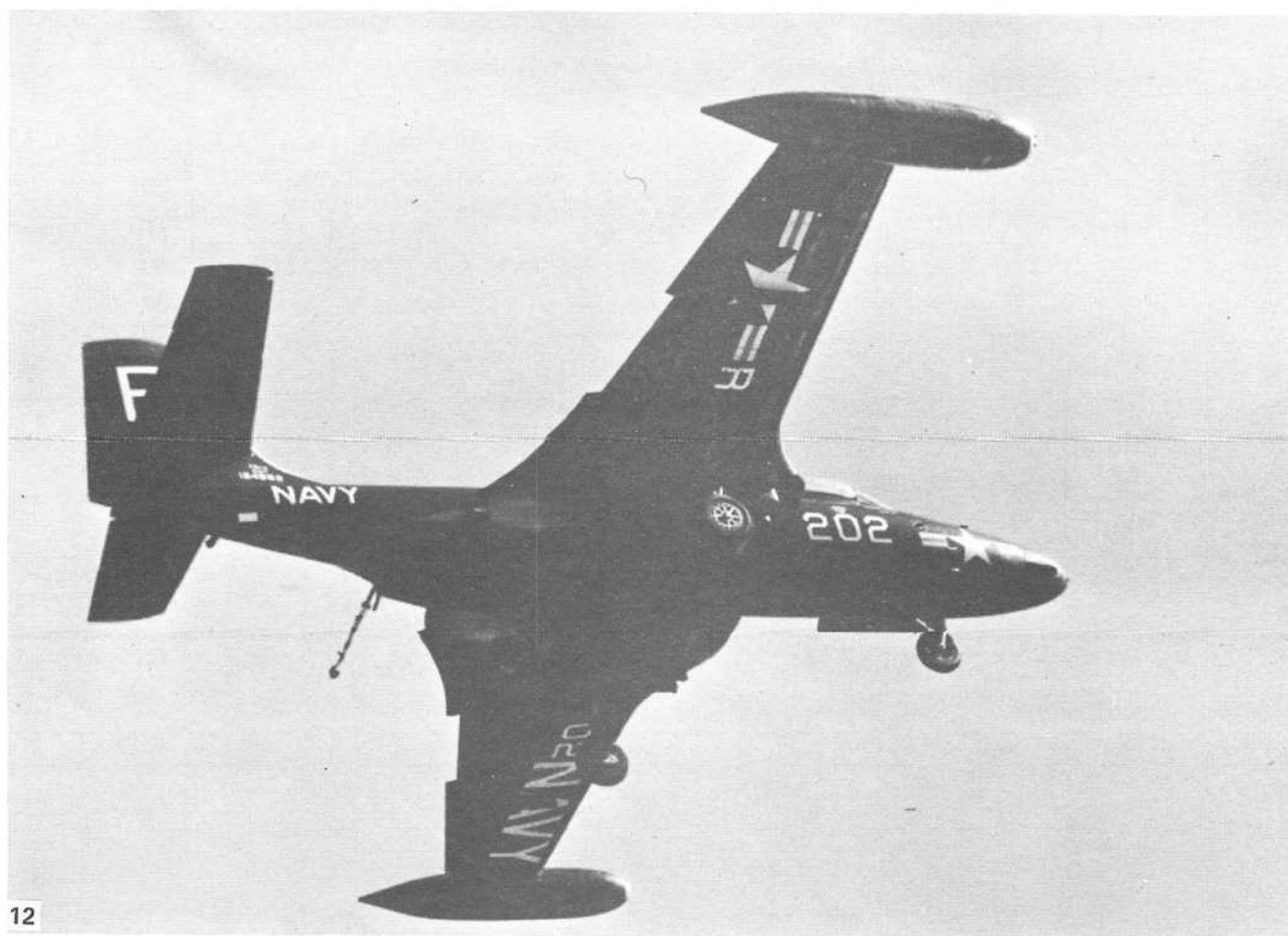
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