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HELLCATS

&

CORSAIRS

OF THE

NAVAL

RESERVE

With heartfelt thanks to our good friend and research guru extraordinaire Dana Bell, we are proud to bring you this sheet of markings for U.S. Naval Reserve F4U-1D/FG-1Ds and F6F-5s in the virtually unknown and short-lived colors they wore during 1946.

On 8 May 1946, the Naval Air Reserve Training Command (NAResTraCom) proposed a new aircraft markings system - SR-2e. With many newly returned WWII fleet pilots anxious to "display their combat proficiency at low altitudes over their home towns and individual residences," commanders wanted a ready means for civilians to identify any offenders, reducing "the present tendency to "flat-hat."" While the paper trail is incomplete, it appears the new markings were passed to all Air Reserve facilities three days later on 11 May - prior to approval by higher command.

The specification divided aircraft into two classes based on the size of the lettering they could accommodate. The F4U/FG-1 and F6F were classified as Type II aircraft, with 30" fuselage numbers and 40" wing numbers. Interestingly, when we scaled the lower wing numbers on all of the photos Dana kindly provided us, every one of them scaled out to exactly 36" rather than the prescribed 40". So much for conformity. The specification deleted all national insignia from the fuselage.

Corsair and Hellcat camouflage was still the WWII ANA 623 Glossy Sea Blue, with NS Sea Blue antiglare panels on the Corsairs, and all markings in Orange Yellow. Each air station was to number its aircraft sequentially in blocks, with the

lowest numbers assigned to fighters, the middle range to trainers, and the highest range to utility aircraft. To allow for growth, each number block was to be at least 20% larger than the number of assigned aircraft. The station name was to appear below the cockpit, and special assignments (instrument, staff, navigation, radio, or administration) were to be painted below the station name - something that we found no photographic evidence of.

On 21 May NAResTraCom notified all of its station commanders the combat aircraft designations were to be applied with an "N-dash" prefix, denoting the fact that the aircraft had a reduced combat capacity.

In mid-June BuAer and the Chief of Naval Operations objected to the new Reserve marking scheme. A new Navy-wide marking specification was in preparation, with plans to distinguish Reserve aircraft with an International Orange fuselage band. On 5 July, the Reserves responded that their scheme was more effective and asking to continue its use. On 6 August BuAer repeated that a new scheme was under review and advising that Reserve aircraft should conform to the new scheme. However, all this was put on hold as the Navy considered a renumbering of all aircraft squadrons. By 16 December 1946 BuAer was ready to implement its new markings, which finally appeared in specification SR-2f on 2 January 1947. The 1946 Reserve scheme remained in use for several months more, eventually being replaced by the Navy's revised orders and now-familiar International Orange fuselage band.

The 8 May 1946 Naval Air Reserve Training Command (NAResTraCom) SR-2e diagram for the Yellow Orange markings to be applied to Type II aircraft, including the F4U/FG-1 and F6F. Each air station tended to apply the markings in a slightly different style, especially the smaller lettering for "U.S. NAVY", the aircraft type and BuNo, and the station name. While most markings followed the diagram pretty closely, all of the lower wing markings we were able to scale out came out to 36" rather than 40" as prescribed in this diagram. No explanation for the "V" prefix on some Bureau Numbers has been found to date.

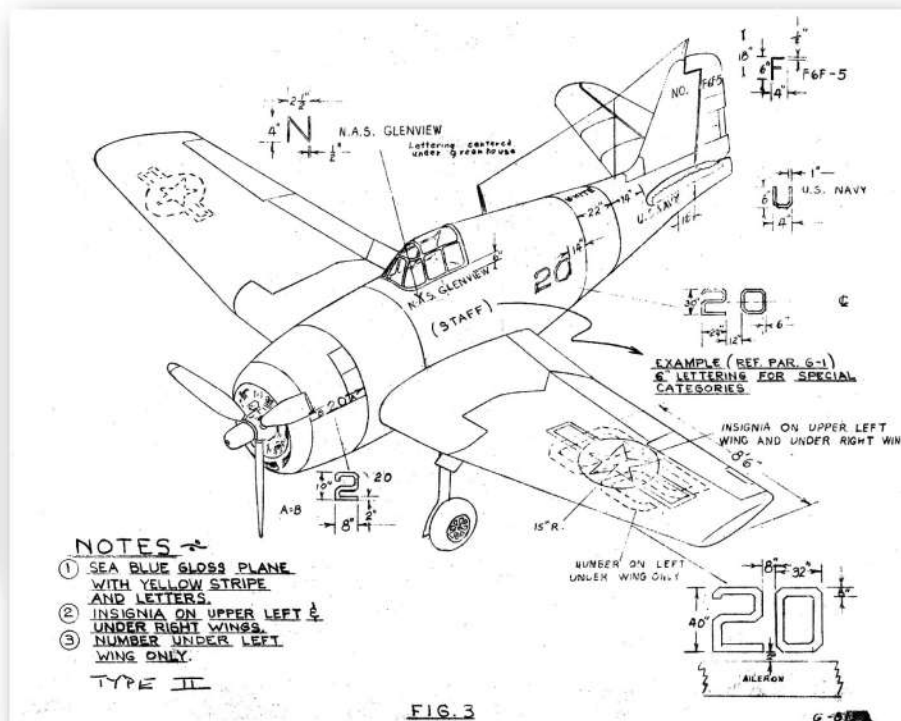


Photo: USN via Bell

Special Thanks... to Dana Bell & Rick Shanner for their kind assistance!



Detail Note

This aircraft is unique among those on this sheet in having the antenna wire lead-in insulator in the factory standard position high up on the right side aft of the canopy.



ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue

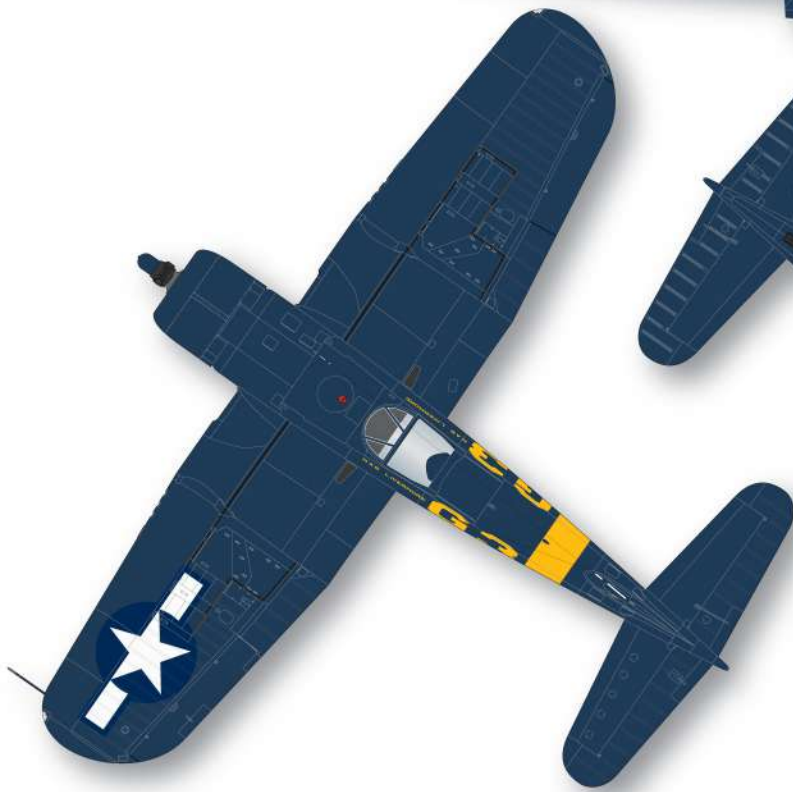


NAS Seattle History...

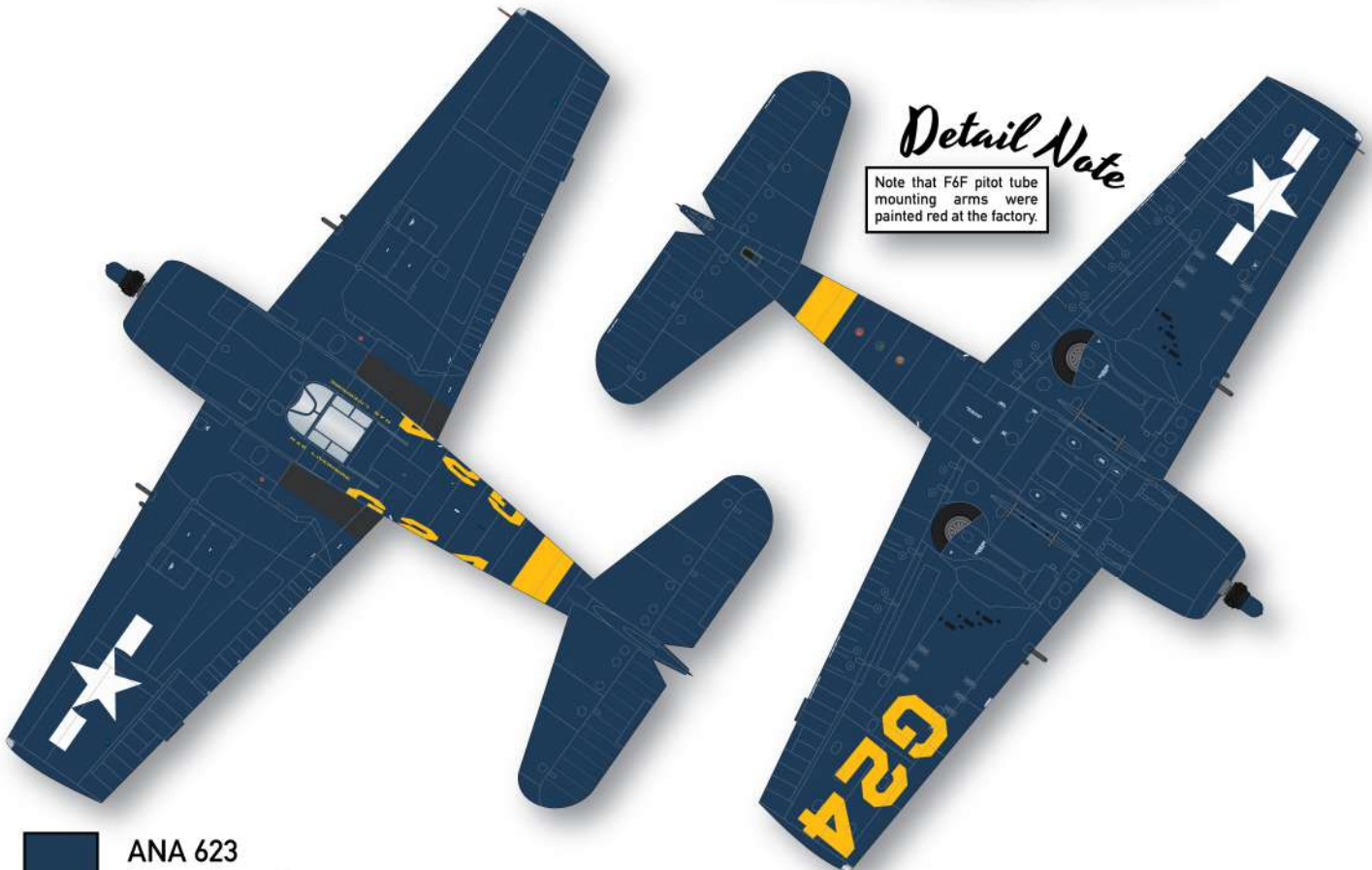
Construction on what was to become NAS Seattle began in 1922 at Sand Point in King County. The field gained notoriety in 1924 when the first round-the-world flight in history ended there. The grass runways were paved in 1940, and the field served as a training site throughout WWII. It was deactivated in 1970, and the property turned over to the local government, which developed it into a park.



NF4U-1D 57194 leads an echelon of other Corsairs over Whidbey Island during 1946. Among the USNR aircraft featured here, she is unique in having her antenna wire lead-in insulator in the original factory location on the right side high on the spine. She appears a bit more beaten up than some of her sisters, with fairly significant paint chipping on the prop dome and the usual location on the wing root area.



ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



Detail Note

Note that F6F pitot tube mounting arms were painted red at the factory.

ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



NAS Livermore History...

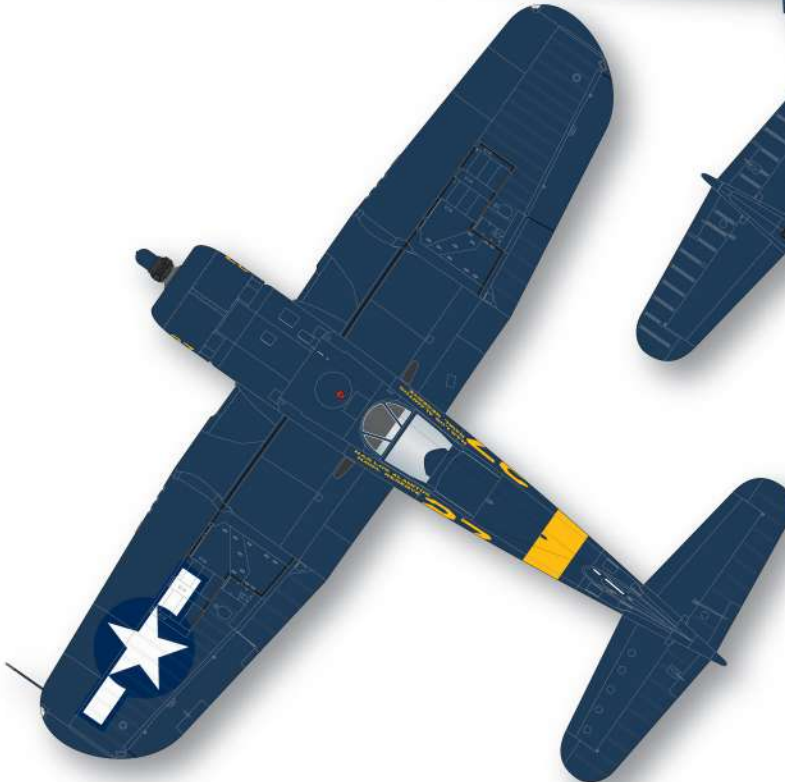
NAS Livermore was built in 1942 four miles east of Livermore, California to relieve overcrowding of the naval air facilities at NAS Oakland. The base trained Navy and Marine pilots throughout the remainder of WWII. In January of 1951, the station was transferred to the Atomic Energy Commission for use by the University of California's Radiation Laboratory.




NFG-1D 92041 in all her glory, basking in the warm California sun sometime in 1946. Note her entirely Gloss Sea Blue landing gear and tail hook, and her generally clean appearance. She is not carrying 5" HVAR stub launchers. Also note the orientation of the "G3" code on the lower wing, aligned with the leading edge skin joint.

Another "oops", this time NF6F-5 77847 on 3 November 1946. Note that she is relatively heavily weathered, with typical Hellcat exhaust staining, and some unusual chipping on the upper center cowling that we haven't seen elsewhere. Also note the lighter color at the top of the vertical fin, and the white tip on the tail antenna post.





 ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



NAS Los Alamitos History...

Naval Air Station Los Alamitos was commissioned in May 1942. It was used for aviation training by the Navy during WWII. It became one of the key naval stations of the US Navy following the expansion in 1945.

Los Alamitos supported the Naval Reserve Aviation activities after the war. It received the first jet FJ-1 Fury in November 1949 and the first helicopter unit in January 1952. It was the largest Naval Air Reserve installation on the West Coast during the 1950s and 1960s. The base was transferred to the Army in 1973.



NFG-1D 92094 came to grief at "Los Al" in March of 1947, some time after this markings scheme had been discontinued. She is unique in carrying the extra "NAVAL RESERVE" lettering below the station name on the fuselage.



ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



NAS Minneapolis History...

NAS Minneapolis was one of eight Naval facilities begun in the 1930s to house and maintain primary training aircraft. These were to be the barest of facilities, in most cases not even housing personnel. In January 1942 the base began expansion to hold 300 students, 600 enlisted men, and 50,000 gallons of fuel. By 1945 the base had a temporary capacity of 5,200 people.



NFG-1D 88395 under cloudy skies. In Minneapolis? We're not sure there's a hill that big anywhere near the Twin Cities! Looks cold though.



ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue

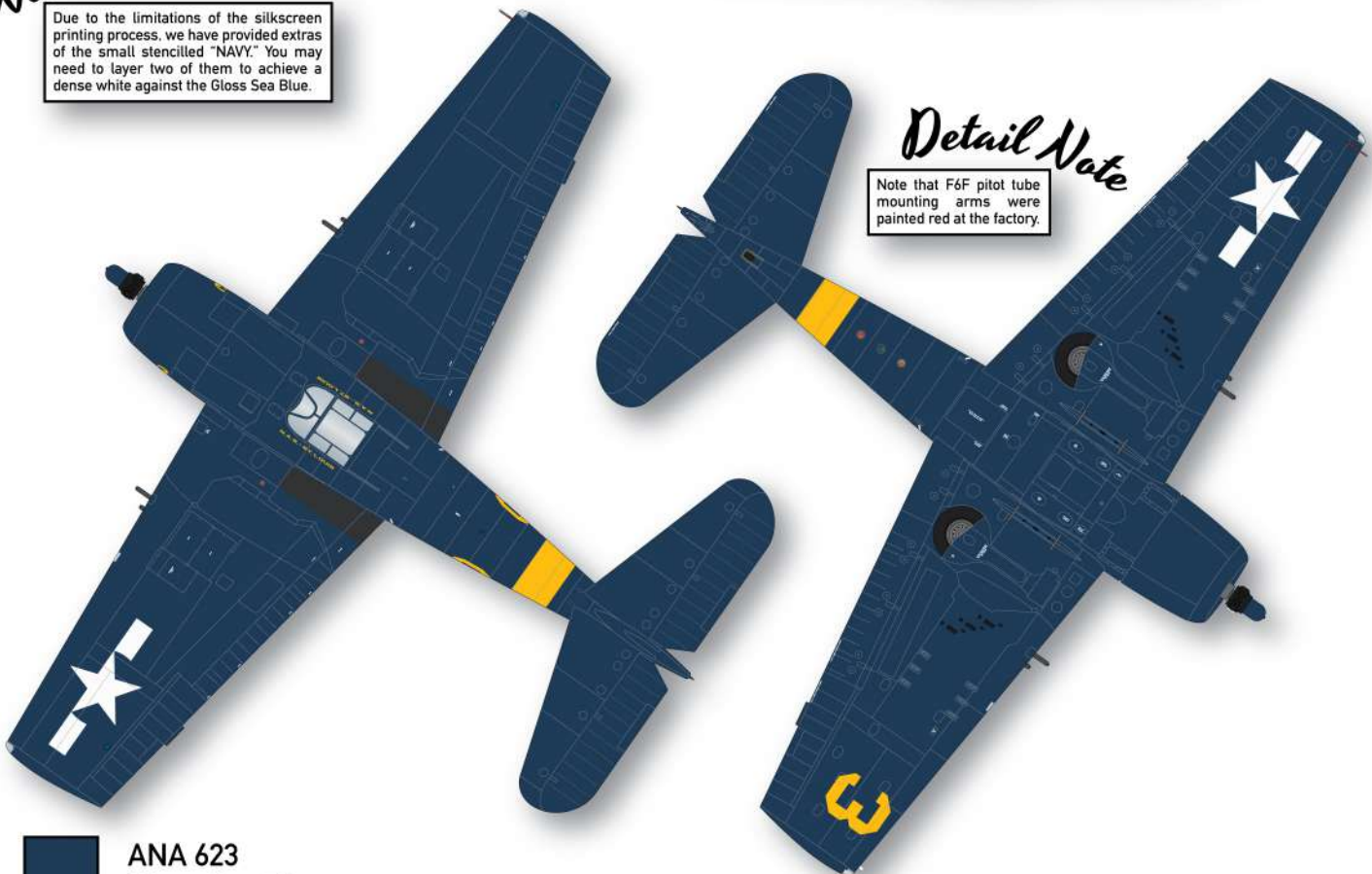


Note

Due to the limitations of the silkscreen printing process, we have provided extras of the small stenciled "NAVY." You may need to layer two of them to achieve a dense white against the Gloss Sea Blue.

Detail Note

Note that F6F pitot tube mounting arms were painted red at the factory.



ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



NAS St. Louis History...

Flying activities by U.S. Navy personnel began in St. Louis, Missouri as early as 1925 with the formation of an aviation unit by a group of Naval Reserve officers. In 1930, the U.S. Navy established a Naval Reserve Air Base at St. Louis, and following the passage of the Naval Aviation Cadet Act in 1935, the base expanded dramatically in order to handle elimination base training. Redesignated a naval air station on 1 January 1943, NAS St. Louis served as a primary training base during the war years, and also hosted ferry and transport command activities. Sharing facilities with civil aviation, NAS St. Louis served as a reserve base until deactivated in 1958.

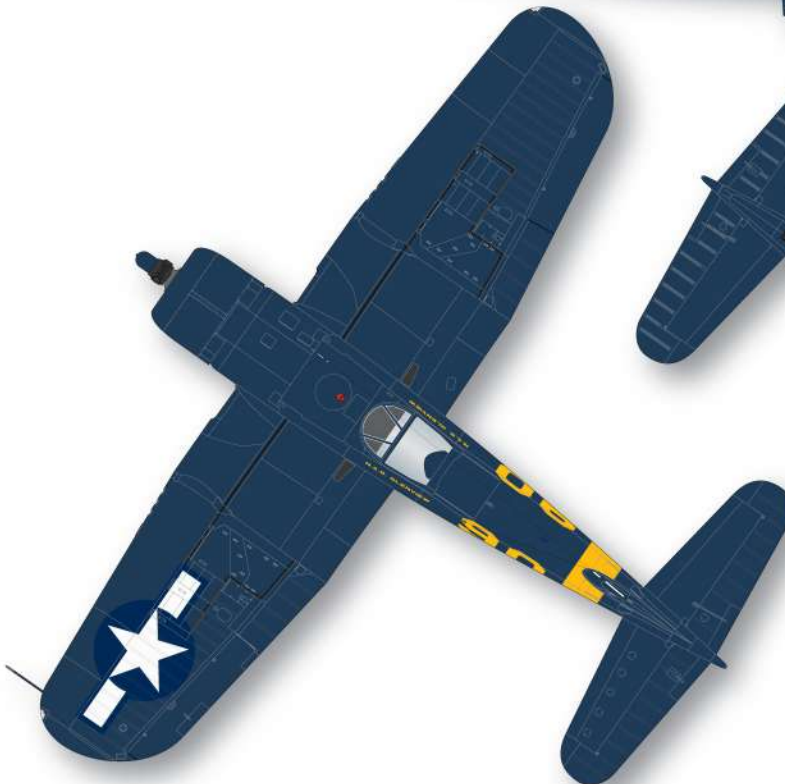


NFG-1D 92188 in the wrong kind of three point landing. Note the rather haphazard application of sealing tape over her gun ports.

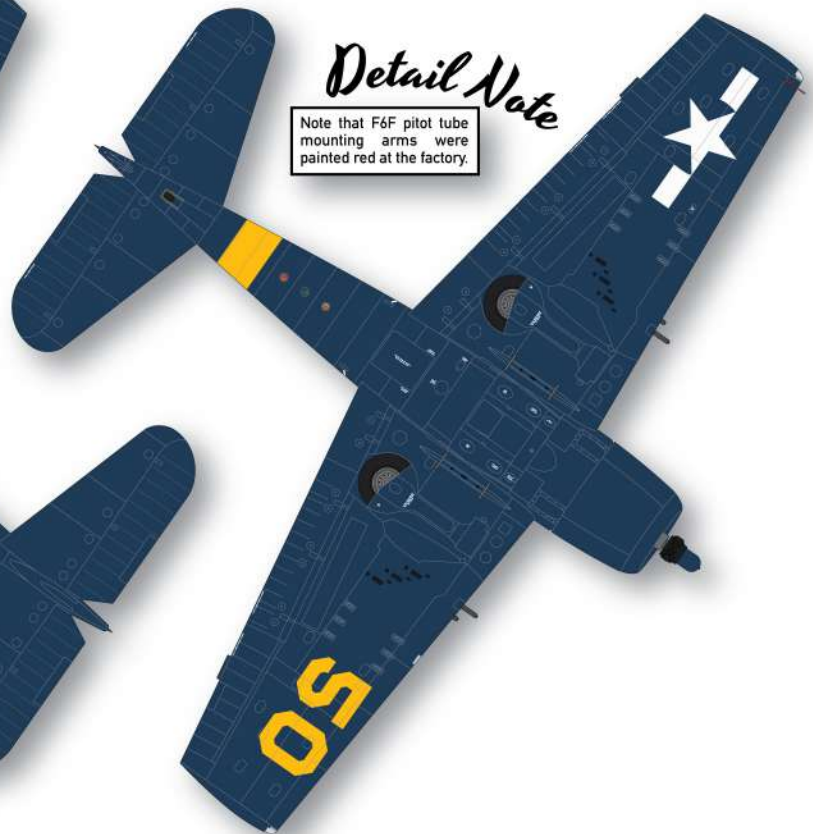


NAS St. Louis based NF6F-5 94286 in her element, probably in the summer of 1946.





ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



Detail Note

Note that F6F pitot tube mounting arms were painted red at the factory.

ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



NAS Glenview History...

Naval Reserve Air Base Chicago was dedicated on 28 August 1937. In 1941 the base began conducting primary flight training before sending students on to NAS Pensacola for advanced training. By 1944, "Chicago" was deleted from the air station's title and the installation renamed NAS Glenview. Later in the war, NAS Glenview also hosted advanced training in fleet combat aircraft, primarily for carrier qualification in Lake Michigan aboard the Chicago-homeported training aircraft carriers USS Sable (IX-81) and USS Wolverine (IX-64).

Following the end of World War II, NAS Glenview became headquarters for the newly formed Naval Air Reserve Training Command in 1946. NAVAIRESTRACOM's primary responsibility was the oversight of numerous reserve naval air stations throughout the US where experienced Naval Aviators, enlisted Naval Airmen, and maintenance personnel from World War II could affiliate as Naval Reservists and maintain their aviation proficiency should their skills be needed for future conflicts.

NAS Glenview survived into the post-Cold War era, finally closing in 1996.



FG-1D 92246 on a dreary ramp sometime during 1946.

Photo: via Shanner



F6F-5 V78944 basks in the warm sunshine during May of 1946. Note the white tip on the antenna post on the vertical fin.

Photo: via USN via Bell



Note

Due to the limitations of the silkscreen printing process, we have provided extras of the small stencilled "NAVY" and the Bureau Number. You may need to layer two of them to achieve a dense white against the Gloss Sea Blue.



ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



NAS Atlanta History...

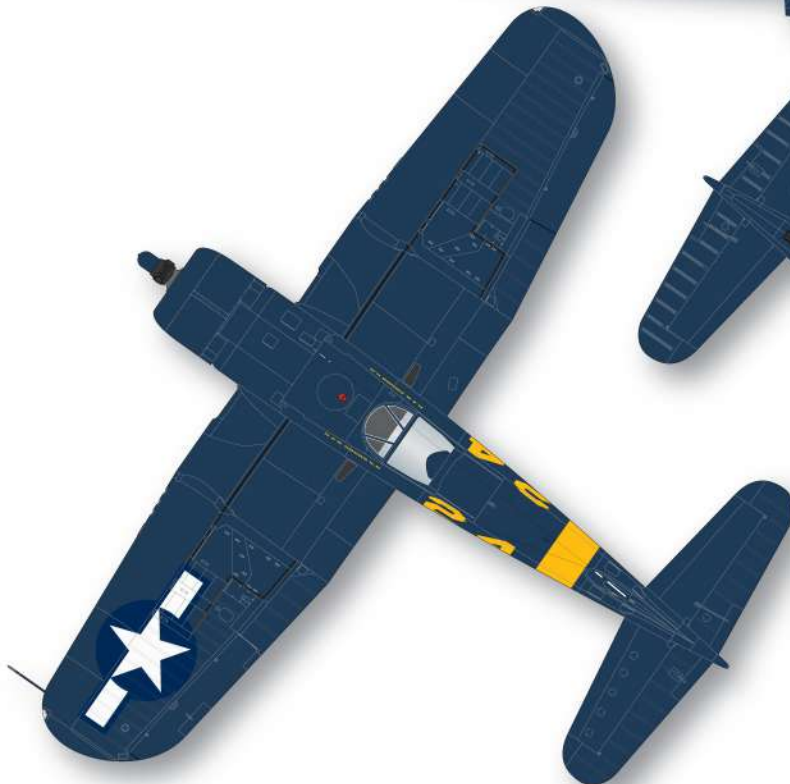
Naval Air Station Atlanta, Georgia was originally located on a portion of a former WWI training camp called Camp Gordon (not to be confused with the present day Ft. Gordon Army post located elsewhere in Georgia). The airfield was authorized in 1940, and began operations in March of 1941.

After WWII, NAS Atlanta was home to several reserve units, and operated until 1959, when military operations were moved to the current site in Marietta. The original NAS Atlanta airfield was converted to civilian use, and remains in use today as Peachtree Dekalb Airport, the main general and corporate aviation hub of the greater Atlanta area.



Two photos of NFG-1D 92319 looking rather forlorn after a belly landing in a Georgia field on 1 February 1947. Damage appears minimal however, and it's likely she was returned to service. Her vertical fin and rudder markings are a bit of a mystery. We're pretty sure we can see "N-FG-1D" on the rudder in the prescribed 4" yellow lettering, but her factory BuNo and "NAVY" appear to be intact on the vertical fin fixed section. This should have been replaced with just her BuNo in the same 4" yellow numbers. Otherwise she appears, outside of being rather muddy after her mishap, to be very clean and well kept. We can't tell if she has her HVAR stub launchers or not, but many USNR aircraft of this period did.





ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue

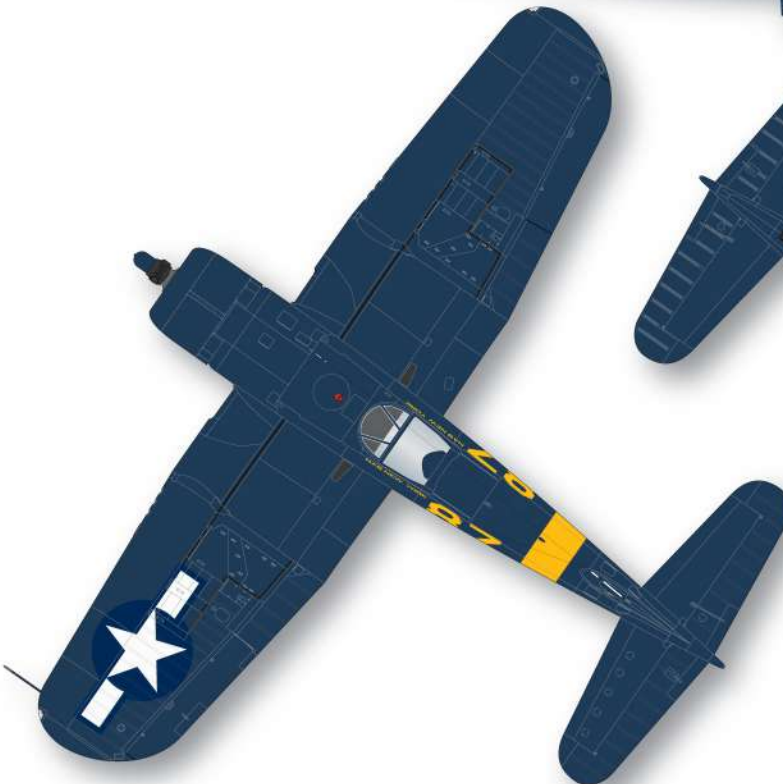


NAS Grosse Ile History...

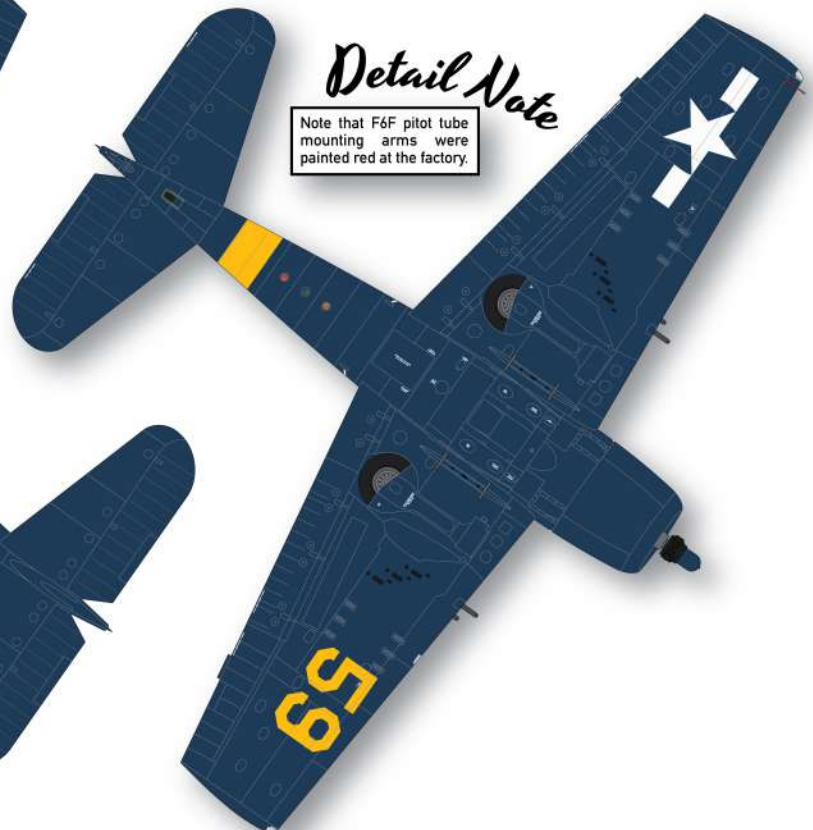
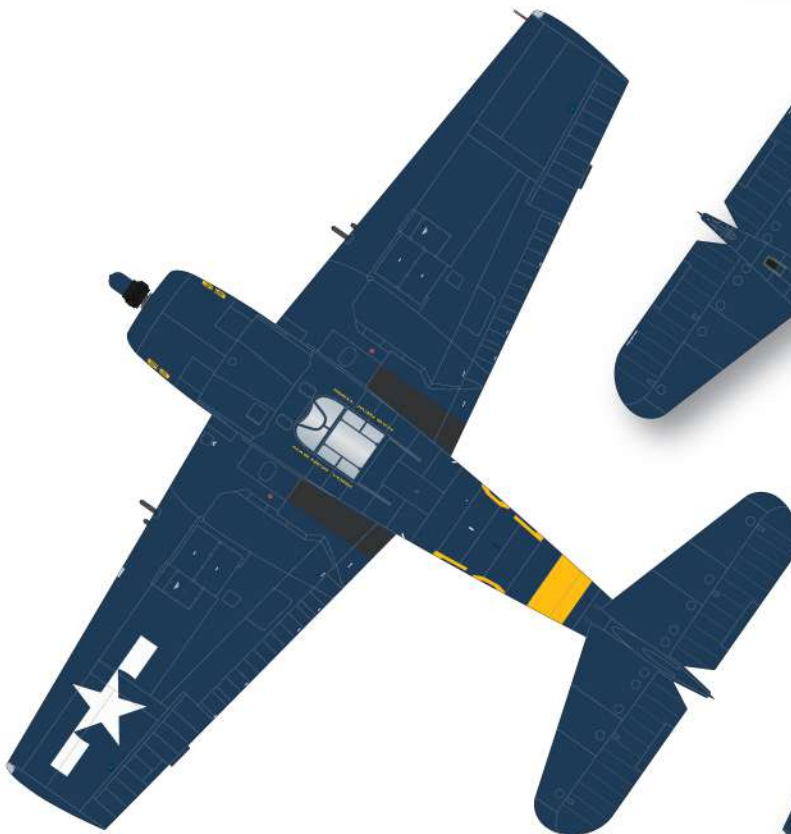
Naval Air Station Grosse Ile traces its roots as far back as 1925, when four U.S. Naval Reservists started an aviation unit near Detroit. In 1927 a large seaplane hangar had been built on the site (an island in the Detroit River). During WWII, Grosse Ile was a major training base, with over 5,000 Navy, Marine, and British cadets receiving training there. After the war, Grosse Ile's runways proved too short for the new generation of jet fighters and attack aircraft, and the base became an ASW training base during the 1950s. It was closed in 1969, with its Naval Reserve activities moving to Selfridge AFB in Mt. Clemens north of Detroit.



NFG-1D 88369 is seen following a right main gear failure, most likely at NAS Grosse Ile, given the river in the background. Her finish appears somewhat matte, with very little gloss left in her Gloss Sea Blue finish. Markings are absolutely standard per the 1946 USN specifications.



ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



Detail Note

Note that F6F pitot tube mounting arms were painted red at the factory.

ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



NAS New York History...

NAS New York was originally built as Floyd Bennett Field in the Marine Park neighborhood of southeast Brooklyn. The airport originally hosted commercial and general aviation traffic before being used as a Naval Air Station.

Floyd Bennett Field was created by connecting Barren Island and several smaller islands to the rest of Brooklyn by filling the channels between them with sand pumped from the bottom of Jamaica Bay. The airport was named after Floyd Bennett, a noted early aviator who had visualized an airport at Barren Island before dying in 1928; construction on Bennett Field started the same year. The airport was dedicated on June 26, 1930, and officially opened to commercial flights on May 23, 1931.

With the outbreak of World War II, Bennett Field became part of Naval Air Station New York on June 2, 1941, and after the war became a Naval Reserve base, remaining in active use until 1983.

NFG-1D 92215 on the brick ramp at Floyd Bennett Field/NAS New York. Difficult to see in this rather dark shot, she does carry 5" HVAR stub launchers.



NAS New York's NF6F-5 BuNo 72199 pranged on 13 October 1946. She looks repairable though... A few weeks in the hangar and she'll be good as new.



ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue



NAS Squantum History...

Naval Reserve aviation activities at what eventually became NAS Squantum started during WWI. In October 1929 a small grass airfield was opened at NRAS Squantum, it previously having been a seaplane base only. In early 1930 Squantum was redesignated a Naval Reserve Air Base or NRAB.

During the WWII NAS Squantum served as a maritime patrol and training base for American and British naval aviators. Regular Navy squadrons VJ-4 and VS-1D1/VS-31 flew anti-submarine patrols over Massachusetts Bay and the Gulf of Maine using Grumman J2F Ducks, Consolidated PBV Catalinas, Vought OS2U Kingfishers, Douglas SBD Dauntlesses, and Curtiss SB2C Helldivers. In addition, the base provided elimination and primary flight instruction for Naval Aviation Cadets as well as advanced training to Fleet Air Arm (Royal Navy) torpedo and dive-bomber squadrons, and U.S. Navy fighter, torpedo, and dive-bomber squadrons.

After the war, NAS Squantum became an important component of the new Naval Air Reserve Training Command. The base served as the focus of Navy and Marine Corps reserve aviation training activity in New England until December 1953 when the reserve program was moved to nearby NAS South Weymouth where longer runways would be available and Squantum was closed.



NFG-1D 88296 having a bad day on 17 August 1946 at NAS Squantum. Note the rather odd treatment of the tape below the gun ports. It appears to be yellow, but that's only our guess.



