

NOTAM

NOTICE TO AIRMEN | FALL 2021 | ISSUE #45

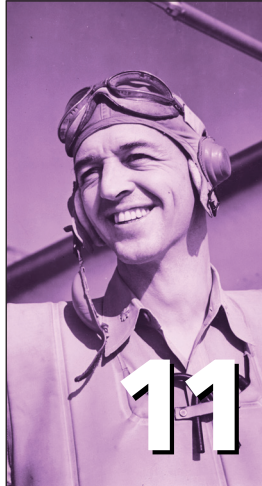
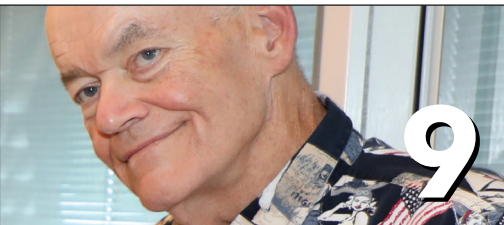
PEARL HARBOR AVIATION MUSEUM | FORD ISLAND, HAWAII

A LEGACY OF SERVICE

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same."

— President Ronald Reagan





NOTAM

CONTENTS - FALL 2021

- 2** Executive Director's Report
- 3** Our Douglas Dauntless SBD
- 5** 2021 STEM Summer Camps
- 7** My Hero, My Father...
- 9** Alexander "Sandy" Gaston
- 10** For Love of Country Gala
- 11** Maui's Role in WWII
- 12** The F-102 Delta Dagger
- 13** Flying the F-4 Phantom



PEARL HARBOR AVIATION MUSEUM

ON THE COVER:

CAPT Dominic "Dee" DiMatteo, USN (Ret.) with his son, CAPT Jim "Guido" DiMatteo, USN (Ret.). The elder DiMatteo, who is 100 years old, flew Hellcats and Bearcats out of Naval Air Stations Ford Island and Kahului, Maui in the 1940s.

CHALLENGING, YET EXCITING TIMES AT PEARL HARBOR

By Elissa Lines, Executive Director



We jumped into summer with tremendous hope, watching COVID infections around the country and the world decline. The readiness of vaccinations, available months earlier than previously expected, gave us hope and confidence that our lives, filled with togetherness, would return. We could travel,

embrace our loved ones, go to work, and replace Zoom with personal interaction. The last few weeks of soaring cases have given us pause. **Margaret Thatcher** said it best, “You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it.”

FOCUSED AND VIGILANT

Regardless of what tomorrow might bring, we remain focused and vigilant in our mission, approaching each day with renewed purpose. Our staff may remain small in number, enriched by the support of incredible volunteers, but our ability to get the job done has not diminished. When I look around and take stock of our achievements since the beginning of the year, I am energized, overwhelmed, and thankful.

“If you think you’re too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room.” — **Anita Roddick**. All I can say is that, with your help, we weathered a storm of major proportion.

WISDOM FROM ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

When we first closed our doors in March of 2020, I remember sharing a very special saying coined by **Eleanor Roosevelt**, “A woman is like a teabag; you can’t tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.” I’d say that together, our staff, our Board of Directors, volunteers and you, our Members and supporters, brewed a wonderful cup of tea.

As we look forward, the next few months will be both challenging and exciting. Visitation is returning but we are

seeing signs of change, a change that will force us to look creatively at our Museum experience, the scope and depth of our youth education programs, and our commitment to the stewardship of this historic battlefield.

INSPIRATION FROM ELLISON ONIZUKA

Ellison Onizuka, the Hawaii-born NASA astronaut tragically lost in the Challenger disaster in 1986 believed, “Your vision is not limited by what your eyes can see, but by what your mind can imagine. Many things that you take for granted were considered unrealistic dreams by previous generations.”

Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum is approaching a milestone, our 15th anniversary, an amazing story of success in its own right. We remain dedicated to our vision, to working together to ensure that the personal stories we share, the buildings, aircraft and artifacts we protect, and the programs we offer, document



the impact of the attack on Pearl Harbor, not only the loss of life, physical destruction, or crushing blow of such a defeat, but also the very same resilience that we call upon today – in an effort to inspire our next generation.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Elissa".

OUR DOUGLAS DAUNTLESS SBD-2P, BUREAU NUMBER 2173

By Rod Bengston, Director of Exhibits, Restoration & Curatorial Services



U.S. Navy Douglas Dauntless SBD-2 of Scouting Squadron 6 (VS-6) in flight with the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6) and destroyer below.



Flight deck crew of USS Yorktown secure SBD Dauntlesses that have just struck Japanese-held islands in 1943.

Did you know the Douglas Dauntless SBD-5 currently on display in Hangar 37 is on loan from the National Naval Aviation Museum (NNAM)? It was pulled from Lake Michigan on December 4, 1995, after decades of sitting in a cold, watery grave. Nearly 14 years later, on June 19, 2009, another very special Dauntless, an SBD-2P, was also recovered from Lake Michigan and later designated to Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum.

STANDING NOSE DOWN IN LAKE MICHIGAN

Of the 5,936 storied Scout/Dive Bombers built between 1940 and 1944, only a fraction survived the intervening 81 years. Even fewer were preserved in a “time machine-like” condition. The prized addition of a Douglas Dauntless SBD-2P to Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum’s collection would have been far less likely were it not for a carburetor icing incident over Southern Lake Michigan on February 18, 1944. Our SBD-2P stood nose-down for nearly 65 years in the cold depths of Lake Michigan.

The recovery effort at Lake Michigan was funded by former McDonald’s Chairman Fred Turner, as part of a tribute to his friend RADM James “Jig Dog” Ramage. Because it was going to take a fair bit of time to restore Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum’s SBD-2P Bureau Number 2173, NNAM loaned us its SBD-5 Bureau Number 36711, which is currently on display in our Battle of Midway exhibit. The Museum’s SBD-2P, a Pacific WWII veteran, was sent to our friends at the Air Zoo Aerospace

& Science Museum in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where they have been working to restore the aircraft to its former glory.

The design of the SBD evolved through six iterations during the war, adding self-sealing fuel tanks, armor, and increasing the number of machine guns. Along with the design changes, sub-categories designate the versatile aircraft’s warfare applications.

For instance, the P in our SBD-2P designation indicates the original configuration the Navy ordered from the Douglas Aircraft plant for this aircraft to support photo-reconnaissance. Of the 87 SBD-2s built, only 14 were configured for photo-reconnaissance.

The largest number of Dauntless dive bombers manufactured was the SBD-5. Numbering 2,965 units, the SBD-5 had a 1,200 hp engine and increased ammunition capacity.

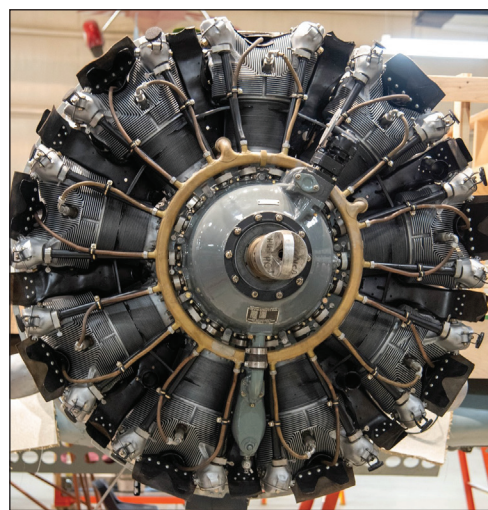
SERVING ABOARD THE USS ENTERPRISE

All records of Navy aircraft are ordered and individually identified by assigned Bureau Numbers. The records of our Douglas Dauntless SBD-2P, Bureau Number 2173, trace the aircraft from delivery to the Navy in early 1941 as a photo-reconnaissance aircraft, to its assignment to Scouting Squadron (VS)6 on the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise*.

PLUCKED FROM LAKE MICHIGAN, HEADED TO PEARL HARBOR



Our Douglas Dauntless was lifted from Lake Michigan, Chicago on June 19, 2009.



The Air Zoo Museum restoration team successfully reunited the engine and fuselage of our SBD-2P, a major step in the restoration of this historic aircraft. (Air Zoo Aerospace & Science Museum Photo)

The aircraft was subsequently assigned to a Battle Force pool at San Diego in August 1941. It was still in California on December 7, 1941, and assigned to a Battle Force pool at Pearl Harbor one month later. At this point, our SBD-2P Bureau Number 2173 (BN2173) appears to have been confused with the record-keeping for SBD-3 Bureau Number 2179 (BN2179).

CRASHING WHILE ASSIGNED TO THE USS HORNET

The SBD-3 crashed in an incident while assigned to the USS *Hornet*. Handwritten notations on the aircraft's history cards recorded 2173 instead of 2179. This created a conundrum for aviation historians.

Researching other official Navy records, historians and researchers identified the Bureau Number error and proceeded to unravel the fascinating history of our SBD-2P. The search for our SBD's history reads like any great detective investigation. Dates, momentous historical events, heroic exploits, and the stories of the brave crews of BN2173 emerge as an engaging narrative tracing the aircraft from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, to loading it as cargo on the USS *Yorktown*, to its front-line VS-5 squadron assignment during the Battle of the Coral Sea, to its training support at three mainland Naval Air Stations, to its service as part of the Lake Michigan Carrier

Qualification Training Unit, and finally its crash during training exercises for landing practice on carriers-underway.

The pilot, Lt. John Lendo, survived this final incident, and although it spent more than half a century under the cold waters of Lake Michigan, it was not to be the final resting place for BN2173.

As the team in Kalamazoo nears the final stages of restoration, we are preparing to welcome our SBD-2P home to Pearl Harbor. Thanks to donor support, funds were raised in 2020 to execute step one of the exchange – shipment of the SBD-2P from Kalamazoo to Hawaii.

With support from the Collings Foundation, our currently displayed SBD-5 will be shipped to Massachusetts, where it will be on display at the Collings Foundation Museum. Once our historic SBD-2P is on display in Hangar 37, it will provide authentic context to the

challenge faced by naval aviation during the aftermath of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

Join us as we look forward to the arrival of this stunning example of a legendary Dauntless dive bomber and the telling of BN2173's intriguing story.

"Our SBD will provide context to the challenge faced by Naval Aviation during the aftermath of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor."

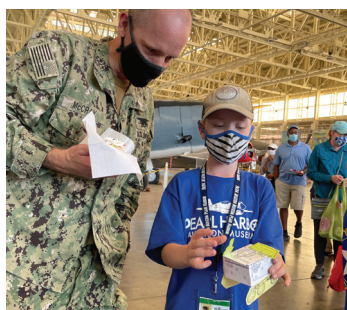
SUMMER STEM CAMPS AND AVIATION LEARNING CENTER

By Bill Miller, Senior Manager of Education & Visitor Experience



SUMMER STEM CAMPS - MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

Educational summer programs have been a tradition at Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum for nearly a decade. On the first day of Flight School for Girls in 2012, Jessica Manuel supported the camp as a high school volunteer. This year, as the Museum's Education Coordinator, Jessica, alongside the rest of the education department, executed three highly successful summer STEM camps. The sold-out camps were filled with students who were more than happy to leave their rooms and Zooms to participate in hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) activities. Students also had the unique opportunity to participate in round table discussions with aviation professionals who volunteered to serve as mentors.



Students in our summer camps came from all across Oahu to learn the rich history of aviation in the Pacific Theater, as well as basic aeronautical mechanics and theory. Thanks to the Col. Robert F. Szul Scholarship Fund, four students were awarded scholarships to attend our summer camps. The hard work and dedicated effort displayed by the education team made a lasting impact in the lives of these students. Mission success!

AVIATION LEARNING CENTER - A GAME CHANGER

With summer programs complete, the education team has turned its eyes to the next prize, the Aviation Learning Center (ALC). The ALC, which is based on the pioneering and highly successful aviation model developed by the Museum of Flight, is currently under construction and will be housed in Historic

Ford Island's Building 97. Building 97, which served as a Link Trainer facility during WWII to train Navy pilots, will return to its roots as a place where students can learn STEM and aviation concepts.

ALIGNED WITH STATE & NATIONAL STEM STANDARDS

Primarily geared for students in grades 4–12, this aviation instruction platform is an educational game changer for the Museum and the State of Hawaii. ALC students will engage in professionally developed curriculum based on concepts from general aviation delivered through computer technology and innovative hands-on devices. The ALC curriculum is fully aligned with state and national STEM standards, which will allow teachers to integrate pre-and-post visit materials seamlessly into their classrooms.

The center itself includes three distinct learning environments covering three educational modules: basic aviation concepts, flight planning/preflight operations, and a simulator. During the two-hour program, students will experience the working environment of an operations building and hangar, and learn about navigation, weather, instrument flight, and weight and balance through the use of wind tunnel aerodynamics.

ASPIRING AVIATORS WILL FLY THEIR ROUTES

Using the knowledge they gain, these aspiring aviators will then plan their flight and conduct a preflight check on a real Cessna 150 located in a "hangar" within the building. Of course, no flight training program would be complete without flying the route they created with their co-pilot in one of the ten on-site simulators!

Construction of the ALC is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021, and will welcome young aviators in 2022. Please stay tuned for more information on the dedication. The Museum sends its deepest thanks to the generous donors and contributors who helped make this a reality.



PHOTO GALLERY OF OUR SUMMER SUPER STEM STUDENTS



MY HERO, MY FATHER...A NAVAL AVIATOR AND PATRIOT!

By CAPT Jim "Guido" DiMatteo, USN (Ret.)



Ensign Dominic "Dee" DiMatteo, in a F-6F Hellcat in 1945 at Naval Air Station Kahului on Maui, Hawaii.



VF-11 Sun Downers' ready room with their dog mascot "Gunner."

VF-111 Sun Downers is a famous U.S. Navy Adversary squadron now stationed at Naval Air Station Key West on the southernmost tip of Florida, flying the F-5 Tiger II in the Adversary/Aggressor mission for the Navy. I was incredibly fortunate to be its first Commanding Officer and re-established the squadron in 2006. In creating the squadron, we were able to name it after the renowned VF-11/VF-111 Sun Downers, an elite Navy fighter squadron that existed from 1942 through 1995. My father, then Ensign Dominic "Dee" DiMatteo, flew Hellcats and Bearcats for the Sun Downers from 1945-1948 out of NAS Kahului, Maui, which is now Maui's Kahului Airport. Being able to resurrect the historic Sun Downer name was very important, but being able to bring back to life a squadron that meant so much to my father as a young 23-year-old fighter pilot in WWII still stands as one of the most important and emotional moments of my life.

SHARING THE SUN DOWNER LEGACY

My father is my hero and the man I admire most on this planet. In addition to our special father-son bond, I have the wonderful privilege of sharing the connection of both being Naval Aviators and fighter pilots. The cherry on top is that we also share the Sun Downer legacy, as I know it is a cherished memory of my father from an extraordinarily challenging and dangerous time in his life. We all worship our WWII warriors in naval aviation, especially the WWII naval aviators, as our freedoms today can surely be traced right back to their unselfish, patriotic, daily courageous actions and sacrifices. Naming them the Greatest Generation is the proper title, albeit none of them will accept any recognition or praise, a small example of their humility and a personal characteristic they all shared.

Last year, the Sun Downers asked me to give a presentation on the history of the squadron to talk about how and why we reestablished it. In preparing for the speech, my family



VF-11 Sun Downers Squadron photo.

dug through some of my father's old squadron paraphernalia. We struck gold and discovered a diary from 1940 to 1950 that none of us knew about, where my dad wrote a paragraph each night about the happenings and emotions of that day. The raw, unfiltered handwritten words from a young 23-year-old ensign flying Hellcats and Bearcats out of Naval Air Station Kahului, Maui, and Ford Island, Oahu, literally takes my breath away.

ADOPTING A MATTER OF FACT MINDSET

Not because it is my father, but rather because through his words and descriptions, one can feel the emotions, stress, dangers, sacrifices and challenges that these young men went through every day. Turn the page and they do the same thing the next day, over and over again. Amazingly, I cannot find one complaint in ten years of his daily diary. Rather, he had a matter of fact, "get up every day and do the best I can and pray that I stay alive" mindset.

We owe so much to ALL in that generation, both those in uniform and all those supporting them. I pray that our society never forgets this and am so thankful for organizations like Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, whose very charter is to honor the past and never forget our WWII heroes! My family feels so blessed that we discovered his diary, as this treasure was very close to never being discovered.

THE OLDEST LIVING SUN DOWNER TURNS 100

On September 2, 2021, we celebrated my dad's 100th birthday. He is the oldest living Sun Downer on the planet and although we continually try to celebrate his life and his accomplishments, he wants none of it. He only says, "I am so lucky to be here, don't make a fuss over me. Rather, don't you think we should celebrate all my wingmen that didn't make it home?" Even at 100 years old, his unselfish humility is profound. God bless all our veterans, but especially those of the Greatest Generation!



CAPT Jim DiMatteo at his Change of Command Ceremony with his father and fellow Sun Downer, CDR Dominic DiMatteo.

Actual Entries from the 1940's Diaries of Naval Aviator Dominic "Dee" DiMatteo

Japan attacks U.S. Pacific possessions and declares war on the U. S. and Great Britain
 DECEMBER 7
 1941 Sunday. Duty today. Had a 4-6 watch. Japan attack western possessions at 1:00 PM E.S.T. News kept coming over radio all night. Oklahoma sunk & Langley damaged. 350 soldiers killed during first attack on Hawaii.

Dominic "Dee" DiMatteo's diary entry from December 7, 1941: "Japan attacks U.S. Pacific possessions and declares war on the U. S. and Great Britain. 1941, Sunday. Duty today. Had a 4-6 watch. Japan attacked western possessions at 1:00 PM EST. News kept coming over radio all night. Oklahoma sunk & Langley damaged. 350 soldiers killed during first attack on Hawaii."

1942 Sunday Another working day. Have the Inshore Patrol again tonight. Not much doing again today. Wish I were in the South Pacific. I want to see some action. It is getting monotonous here.

A Sunday in 1942: "Another working day. Have the Inshore Patrol again tonight. Not much doing again today. Wish I were in the South Pacific. I want to see some action. It is getting monotonous here."

1945 No flying - swamps still on fire. Letters from Toni, Florence & Eno. Wrote Toni & Rose Di Palma & Linda. Went to S.S. as usual. Today is VE Day. Germany surrendered unconditionally. A lot of fellows should be going

VE Day Diary Entry: "No flying—swamps still on fire. Letters from Toni, Florence & Eno. Wrote Toni & Rose Di Palma & Linda. Went to SS as usual. Today is VE Day. Germany surrendered unconditionally. A lot of Fellows should be going home soon!"

1947 Tues. Worked on drivers licenses. Letter from Florence. Played horseshoes & a little football. Saw "It's A Wonderful Life" a very good movie. CRG-5 lost 4 planes 2 F8Fs

Jim DiMatteo explains the significance of this entry: "This is one of my favorites as it shows the notoriety and premier of the movie. Florence is my mom. And the brutal reality that four different planes crashed that day. If four different planes crashed in the entire military just today, that would be so rare and unacceptable that the military would stand down and stop flying until they discussed everything. Yet in WWII, they got up the next day, went to work, and carried on with what they needed to do. Truly amazing warriors."

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ALEXANDER “SANDY” GASTON

By LtCol. Gary Meyers, USMC (Ret.)



Photo by David Livingston



We salute our friend and benefactor Sandy Gaston, a great American who was a longtime Board Member and dedicated supporter of Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum and everything it stands for. He shall be missed.

We are saddened to report that a friend, Board Member, and benefactor has gone west. Alexander “Sandy” Gaston passed away on August 19, 2021, after a lengthy period of failing health.

The military ran deep in Sandy’s blood. His ancestor, Silas Talbot, was the captain of the USS *Constitution* from 1799 to 1801. His father was a Marine Corps officer during WWII. Sandy enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve four days after his 17th birthday. He later volunteered for active duty and served two combat tours off Vietnam, the first aboard the USS *Princeton* (LPH-5); the second aboard the USS *Wexford County* (LST 1168).

A JOURNEY TO AVIATION CHARTED BY ADM. RON HAYS

I once asked Sandy what drew him from the sea to aviation. Without hesitation, he said, “Admiral Ron Hays.” He had met our late chairman once at a military ceremony and they later became friends. Admiral Hays subsequently asked Sandy if he would be interested in joining the board of the small aerospace museum then located at the Honolulu International Airport. Sandy immediately agreed. He lived in Waikiki at the time, so Admiral Hays, coming from Hawaii Kai, offered to pick him up to attend the board meetings at the airport. That offer impressed Sandy greatly. “How often is a four-star admiral the duty driver for a former quartermaster third class? Only in America!” Sandy never forgot those small but significant acts of kindness. Later, when Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum (then Pacific Aviation Museum) was established, Admiral Hays once again invited Sandy to join its board of directors and Sandy eagerly accepted.

While Sandy’s going may have been relatively unnoticed, his having gone is immediately obvious to those of us who knew him as a loyal friend and who had enjoyed the pleasure of his company. Due to the current pandemic, arrangements for Sandy’s final journey are pending. In lieu of flowers or other such sentiments, however, Sandy’s hope was always that his legacy would inspire others to follow his precedent. We take great pride in offering a salute to Alexander “Sandy” Gaston, and send our warmest wishes for peace and comfort to his family.

REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR

CFC #33429

Your pledge through the Combined Federal Campaign will help carry the legacy of our Greatest Generation forward.

Visit GiveCFC.org to make a pledge

15TH ANNUAL FOR LOVE OF COUNTRY GALA GOES VIRTUAL

By Chuck and Shari Cotton, Gala Co-Chairs

Dear friends,

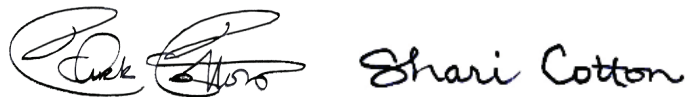
It is with great excitement that we invite you to join us virtually on Saturday, December 4, 2021, for Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum's 15th Annual For Love of Country Gala, presented by Price Enterprises, Inc. To be safe, stay healthy and to help our state and country fight the spread of COVID, this year's gala will be a spectacular **virtual affair**.

We invite you to join us as we honor our veterans, commemorate the 80th anniversary of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, and celebrate the 15th anniversary of Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum. Our evening includes a special tribute to our WWII veterans and all men and women who serve, entertainment, and an exciting silent and live auction that will get everyone engaged. We are excited to offer you several options to enjoy the evening at home and with friends – we will

deliver dinner, great wine and even a centerpiece if you choose, directly to your doorstep. It will be a night to remember.

Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum appreciates your support of our mission to educate visitors from all over the world about the tragedy of war and the bravery demonstrated by America's Greatest Generation. Because of you, we will continue to inspire future generations to embody their character.

Visit ForLoveOfCountryGala.org to learn more. We thank you in advance for demonstrating your Love of Country!



Chuck & Shari Cotton
For Love of Country Gala Co-Chairs



PEARL HARBOR AVIATION MUSEUM
together with
PRICE ENTERPRISES, INC.
is proud to present

FOR LOVE OF
COUNTRY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021

80
80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

MAUI'S ROLE IN HELPING WIN THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC

By Cory Graff, Curator, The National WWII Museum



The great John Thach taught many squadrons of young naval aviators clever flying tactics in the skies over Maui.



Two F4F Wildcats fly over the Pacific in early 1942. Squadron Commander John Thach pilots the Wildcat in the foreground.

The months after the Pearl Harbor attack were precarious for the Territory of Hawaii. Invasion seemed imminent.

Awaiting Japanese landing forces, U.S. military forces entangled beaches in barriers and barbed wire and ringed the islands with gun emplacements. Paper money appeared with the overprint "Hawaii," making it useless should it fall into enemy hands. Residents dug bomb shelters, hung blackout curtains, and kept gas masks within reach at all times. Citizens volunteered as watch wardens, donated their land and equipment to military construction projects, and awaited the inevitable.

FUNNELING THROUGH HAWAII DURING WWII

The invasion did come, but it came from the east. Almost the entirety of war in the Pacific funneled through Hawaii. Thousands of American military men, along with their vehicles, ships, and aircraft, moved through the islands before they moved west to clash with Japanese forces.

Oahu was the nexus of the Navy's Pacific Fleet and the jumping-off point for thousands of Air Forces bombers. Much of Kauai became a sprawling Army encampment. Further east, the lush landscapes of Maui and the Big Island were dominated by Marine units poised to wrestle back tropical outposts from Japan one by one.

The island of Maui also became the core of the U.S. Navy's aviation arm. At famed naval air stations like Kahului and Pu'unene, scores of newly-minted aviators learned improved strategies from the veteran flyers who had endured during early encounters at Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal. It was in the clear blue skies over Maui that brilliant airmen like John Thach and "Butch" O'Hare taught squadrons of young aviators how to defeat Japan's vaunted Mitsubishi Zero fighter with clever tactics and unwavering teamwork.

MAUI BEACHES WERE A PRACTICE BATTLEGROUND

Below, the men of the 4th Marine Division used their adopted home as a practice battleground day after day. The beautiful beaches of Maui became a proxy for the unfriendly shores of the Marshalls, then the Marianas, then the island of Iwo Jima, and later for the anticipated invasion of Japan itself.

All the while, Maui's civilian residents watched in wonder as their quiet home evolved into an extensive military base the likes of which no one had ever seen. We pay tribute to the thousands of aviators, Marines, and the residents of Maui who gave their land, their loyalty, and sometimes their lives to win the war in the Pacific.



The U.S. Navy's two most famous Wildcat pilots in early 1942. Leader of VF-2, Lt. Cmdr. John S. "Jimmy" Thach (creator of the Thach Weave) flies F4F-3 #F-1 alongside the Navy's first ace "Butch" O'Hare near NAS Kaneohe on 10 April 1942. Note the opened canopies (a typical action when not in combat).

THE F-102 DELTA DAGGER WAS A SUPERSONIC STUNNER

By Greg Waskul, National Development Director



The F-102, shown over Oahu, was a supersonic interceptor.

The Convair F-102 Delta Dagger was a stunningly beautiful, single seat, all weather supersonic fighter of the U.S. Air Force's legendary Century Series. Designed to intercept Soviet strategic bombers, it included a Hughes fire control computer, radar, and air-to-air guided missiles and unguided rockets. The F-102 carried no guns.

FIRST OPERATIONAL DELTA WINGED INTERCEPTOR

Convair began work on the Deuce in 1946. It made its first flight on October 24, 1953. After a number of significant design changes, the F-102 entered service with the U.S. Air Force's Air Defense Command with the 327th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at George AFB, California in August of 1956. It replaced the F-86 Sabre and was the first operational delta winged all-weather interceptor, capable of flying day or night at altitudes of up to 54,000 ft. A total of 1,000 F-102s were accepted by the USAF at a cost of \$1.5 million each. The Delta Dagger was deployed in the



Maj Gen "Rick" Richardson in the cockpit of his Convair F-102.



The Hawaii Air Guard flight line was once filled with F-102s.

U.S., Europe, the Pacific and Vietnam, where it performed air defense and also flew escort missions for B-52 bombers. Many USAF F-102s were transitioned to Air National Guard units.

The Delta Dagger had a wingspan of 38 feet, 1 inch, a length of 68 feet 5 inches and a height of 21 ft. 2 in. Powered by one Pratt & Whitney J-57-23 two-shaft, afterburning turbojet engine producing 17,200 lbs. of thrust, the Deuce had a maximum takeoff weight of 32,000 lbs. Its top speed was Mach 1.1.

"The F-102 was a good-looking, stable aircraft that was great to fly," said Maj Gen Edward "Rick" Richardson, USAF (Ret.), who piloted the F-102 during 40 combat missions in Vietnam for the 405th Tactical Fighter Wing out of Clark Air Base, the Philippines. His commander was Col. Chuck Yeager.

1,700 HOURS & HUNDREDS OF MISSIONS IN F-102

Maj Gen Richardson served for eight years as the Adjutant General of the state of Hawaii, Department of Defense. He was the military commander of the Hawaii Army and Air National Guard and director of State Civil Defense until he retired in 1999. Counting his hundreds of F-102 missions with the Hawaii Air Guard, Maj Gen Richardson flew more than 1,700 hours in the Delta Dagger. He accumulated a total of more than 3,660 flying hours in his career, which also included sorties in the F-86E, T-33, F-86L and F-4C.

"The F-102 could get airborne in less than three and a half minutes from the time the horn blew," Maj Gen. Richardson said. "It was a truly outstanding interceptor for the time when the main threat was Russian bombers."

Maj Gen Richardson joined the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum Board of Directors in 2001. He is the Board's driving force behind our Maui History Project exhibit, inspired by his childhood memories of watching WWII pilots train over Maui.

THE THRILL OF FLYING THE POWERFUL F-4 PHANTOM

By Richard M. May, Jr., Board of Directors

In recent issues of NOTAM, we featured exciting tales of flying the F-14, F-15, F-16 and F/A-18. I salute them, as they have been our mainstay in the recent fighter fleets of the USN, USAF and USMC. Now, let us take a moment to salute the F-4 Phantom, also a mainstay of those three fleets from the late 1960s until the late 1980s. The F-4 saw several early changes in the vision of what role it would fill, and as that occurred, the airframe changed as well. The Phantom was initially adopted by the Navy and then became the primary fighter in the USAF and USMC, as well as in many allied forces.

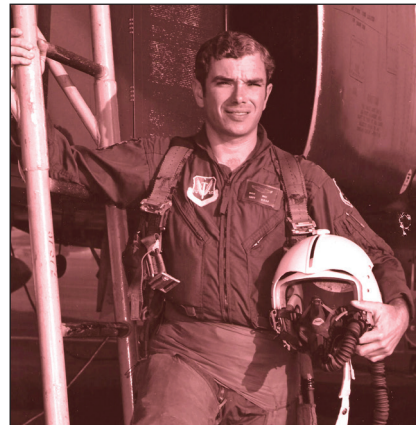
THE F-4 WAS A FORMIDABLE MACHINE

How should one describe the F-4 Phantom? It is big, at a maximum gross takeoff weight of over 60,000 pounds, and it is fast, at a top speed of over Mach 2.2 for a clean aircraft at 40,000 feet. I have seen that speed on several functional check flights. Impressively, this workhorse can carry up to 18,000 pounds of bombs and missiles. Although it does not have the agility of the newer fighters, a well-trained pilot and back-seater can employ the aircraft very effectively. The Phantom is not as precise a bombing platform as aircraft designed for the attack role, but with experience comes proficiency. The PAVE series of avionics pods added capability to identify and designate targets for the laser guided bombs. Having once put a 2000-pound GBU-10 bomb directly on the turret of a moving enemy tank, I can assure you the result is dramatic. The aircraft was not designed from the ground up as an air superiority fighter but did well in the role before the newer aircraft came along. Equipped with a good radar, with a mix of AIM-7 and AIM-9 missiles, and an internal gun on the F-4E, it was a formidable machine.

FLOWN BY THE THUNDERBIRDS AND BLUE ANGELS

The Phantom is also impressively loud and easy to see in an airshow, so it was the one fighter flown by both the Thunderbirds and the Blue Angels. Of course, feeding those twin J-79s in afterburner made the Phantom thirsty, so we got plenty of air refueling practice. In my view, it was an easy aircraft to fly, but as with any fighter, developing skill in the many roles required practice. With lessons learned from aerial combat in Vietnam, the USAF got serious about dissimilar air combat tactics. Another pilot and I were designated to teach the other instructors at my base, after we had gone through a training regimen taught by the Fighter Weapons Instructor Course staff. It was good fun!

Compared to newer aircraft, and the F-16 in particular, the F-4 was a high maintenance aircraft, but her maintainers were proud



Col. Richard M. May, Jr. poses in front of his F-4 Phantom II fighter aircraft at Clark AFB in the Philippines during the Vietnam War. Col. May flew hundreds of combat sorties during his career.

of her. She sits low enough that haste is not advised, lest you run into a sharp surface and suffer the proverbial "Phantom Bite."

ONE ENGINE FAILURE IN THOUSANDS OF HOURS

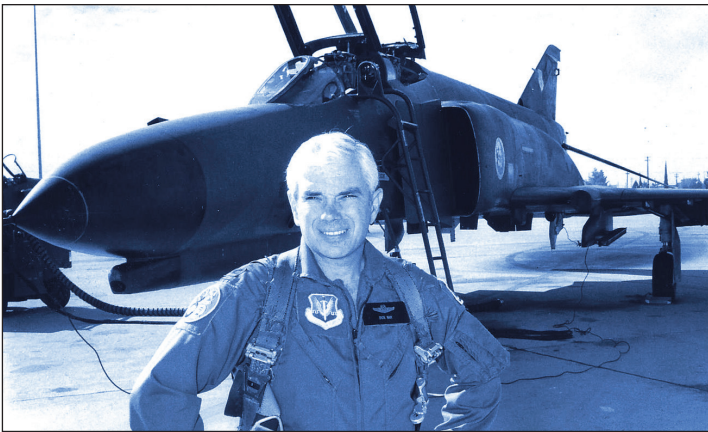
Durability was a real plus. I flew several hundred combat missions and thousands of hours and had only one engine failure. Hydraulic system failures were slightly more frequent, but the Phantom has a robust tail hook, and a cable engagement solved the landing directional risk. I once was on ingress to Crow Valley Range and noticed a strange sight – a towering tree in the jungle canopy with the top pruned off in the exact shape of an F-4. A moment later, I heard a call on guard channel for an F-4 doing a straight-in approach, as the canopy was smeared with sap and the pilot had restricted forward visibility. After he landed, among other issues, maintenance commented on a length of tree branch, almost two inches in diameter, lodged in the leading-edge slat. Centered a tree at 500 knots and flew home...yep, durable!

Once, on a low-level bombing run, I saw what looked like a grain of salt, growing rapidly larger in my windscreen. I yawed the aircraft and pulled the nose up and felt and heard a large impact on the left side of the aircraft. A heron, a Great Egret specifically, had hit the left vari-ramp and then dead-centered the left engine. The generator failed on that engine, but the engine ran fine, and no further damage was found. Again, durability that brought us home in one piece!

VISIT THE MUSEUM TO HEAR SOME GOOD STORIES

I am fond of this aircraft, which I first flew as a brand-new captain and last flew as a colonel. We have grown older together, but the Phantom has perhaps aged more gracefully than myself. I am happy for the friendship and the many memories. Visit us at the Museum and let the aircraft, and those of us who flew it, tell you some more good stories!

THE McDONNELL DOUGLAS F-4 PHANTOM IN ACTION





Historic Ford Island | 319 Lexington Blvd. | Honolulu, HI 96818

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Honolulu, HI
Permit No. 1633



For more information, please visit our website
www.PearlHarborAviationMuseum.org

JOIN THE 1941 CLUB

Become a part of a network of dedicated supporters who are committed to sustaining our history at Pearl Harbor.

Sign up to be a 1941 Club recurring donor to preserve and pass on the legacy of our WWII heroes.



LEARN MORE AT
PearlHarborAviationMuseum.org