

F9F-2 Panthers

Recommended Kit: Trumpeter F9F-2

VPD48008
1:48 Scale Decal



VF-51 USS Valley Forge 1950



VF-112 USS Philippine Sea 1950



VF-191 USS Princeton 1951



VF-21 USS Midway 1951



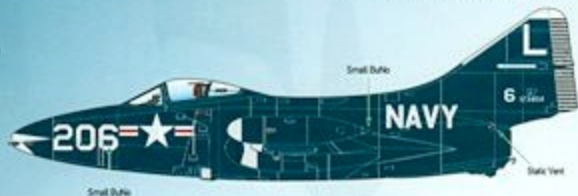
VF-837 USS Antietam 1952



VF-111 USS Valley Forge 1952



VF-71 USS Bon Homme Richard 1952



VF-72 USS Bon Homme Richard 1952



VMF-232 MCAS Kaneohe Bay 1953



VMF-451 MCAS El Toro 1953

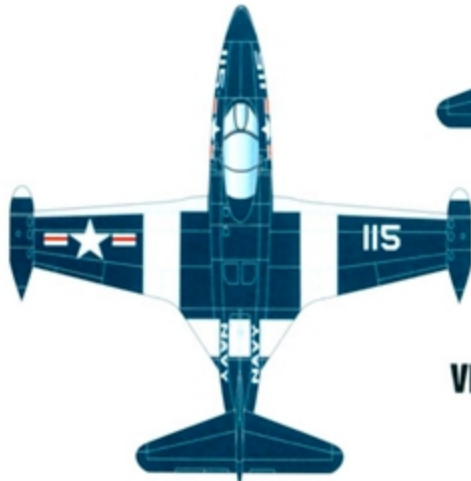
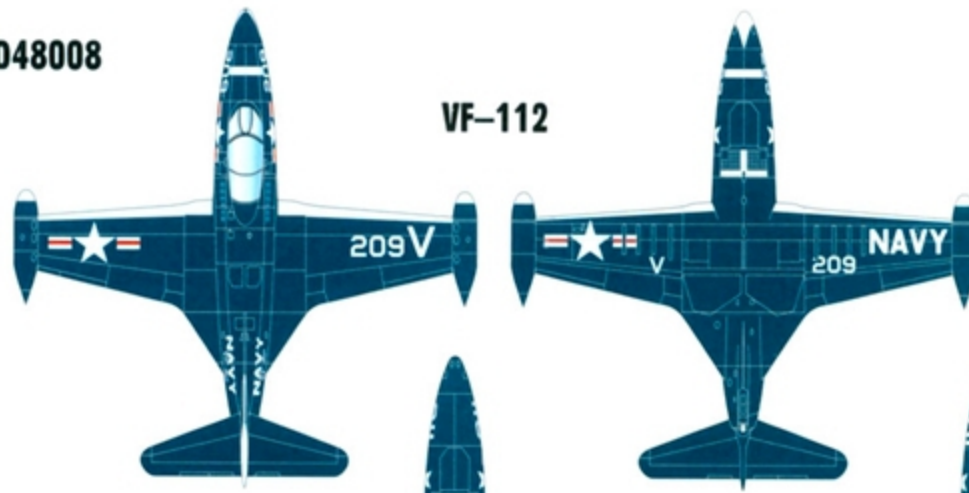


GMGRU-1 NAS Barbers Point 1957

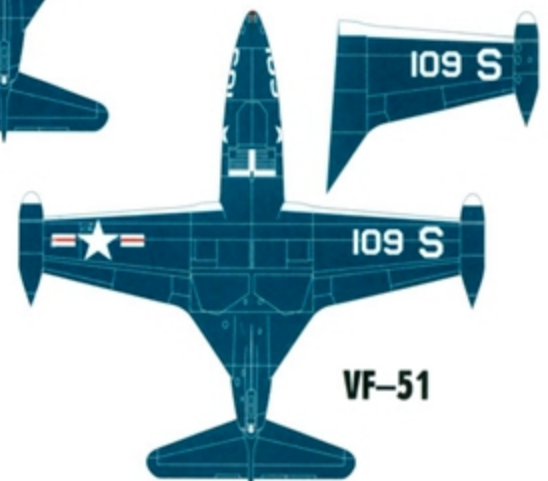
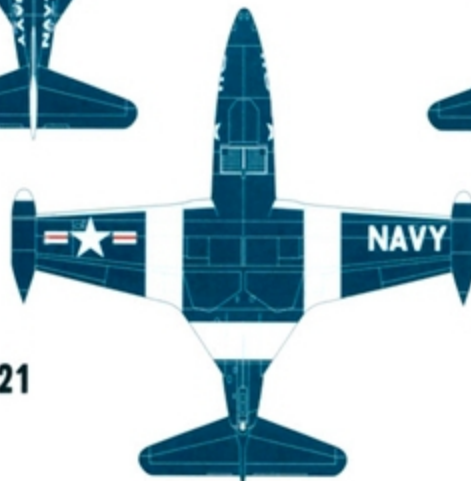
Color Key

Sea Blue FS 13453	Indigo White FS 17070
Orange Yellow FS 13330	Indigo Red FS 17038
Explosive Gray FS 14801	White FS 15085
Radome Tan	Flat Black FS 17050
Conquest (Aluminum)	Bare Metal

VF-112



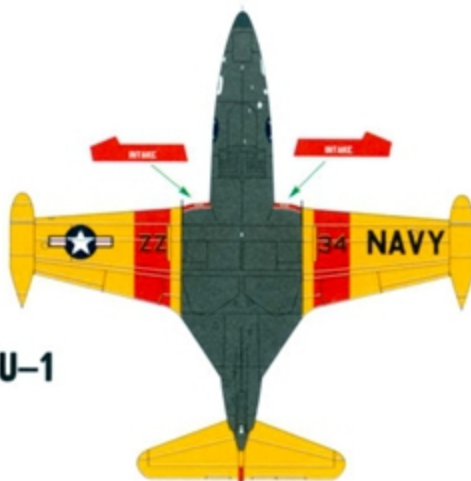
VF-21



VF-51



GMGRU-1



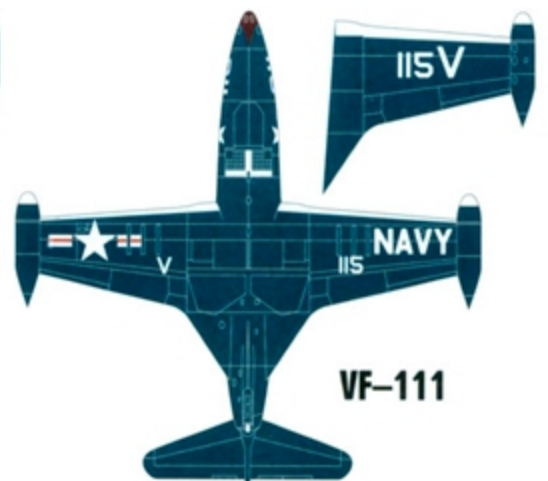
VF-191



VF-837



VF-71



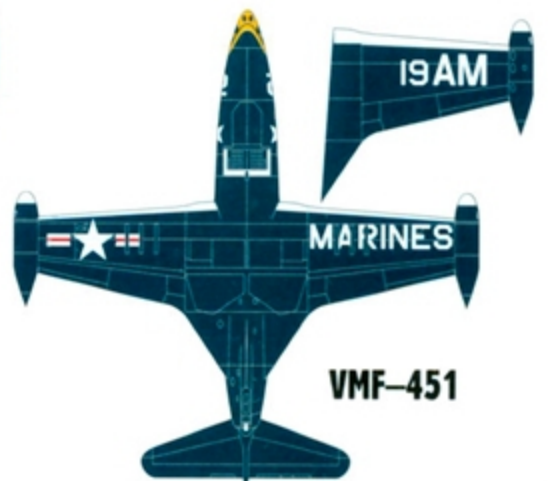
VF-111



VF-72



VMF-232



VMF-451

Victory Productions VPD48008

General Notes:

The Panther was the first large-scale production fighter jet intended for carrier operations and the first to see combat. The F9F-2 and F9F-3 Panthers were the identical airframes with different powerplants—the -2 was powered by the Pratt & Whitney J42, a license-built Rolls Royce Nene (the same engine used in the MiG-15), while the -3 had the available Allison J33 engine installed as a backup in the event of problems with the J42. As a result, the F9F-3 was the first Panther type introduced into the fleet in 1949. When the forces of North Korea crossed the 38th Parallel on 25 June 1950, the F9F-3 Panthers of VF-51 and VF-52 aboard USS VALLEY FORGE (CV 45) flew the Navy's first mission of the Korean War on 3 July 1950, downing a pair of North Korean piston engine Yak-9 fighters.

After a short time, the F9F-3s were re-engined with the higher performance J42, now available in quantity, and redesignated F9F-2. Panthers equipped with wing pylons for carrying ordnance were designated F9F-2B. However, strike missions became the norm in Korea and soon all Navy and Marine Panthers were equipped to carry bombs or rockets and the -2B designation was dropped. The F9F-2P was a photo-reconnaissance version. Both new production examples and some standard fighters were modified with cameras and used for this mission.

The F9F-2 served in front line Navy and Marine Corps fighter units until the mid-1950s when it was replaced by more advanced members of Grumman's family of F9F Cats or by other types. Many were flown by reserve squadrons while others served as trainers. Still others became drone controllers under the designation F9F-2KD. Twenty-four F9F-2 Panthers were modernized with gun-laying radar for the Argentine Navy and served there until 1969.

Kit Notes:

In 2007, Trumpeter released the first new 1/48 scale injection molded kits of the F9F-2 Panther since the Hawk and Aurora kits of the early 1950s. Two versions of the kit were issued—the F9F-2 and F9F-2P—differing only in the instructions and decal sets provided. The kits feature recessed panel lines, a photoetched sheet, detailed cockpit and landing gear bays, gun, bomb, and rocket armament, and wing folding options. The instructions suggest fitting the retractable pilot's ladder and (oversized) tip tank ground plugs even when the gear is retracted—something that would never be seen in actual practice.

Camouflage & Markings Notes:

When introduced, the F9F Panther was finished in the standard US Navy scheme of overall Glossy Sea Blue (FS15042) with leading edges of all flying surfaces and tip tank fronts painted Corroguard, a corrosion-resistant aluminum finish. Wheel well interiors and landing gear generally matched the camouflage color but were sometimes painted with aluminum or zinc chromate. Wing tip tanks were usually matched to the adjacent wing colors. Late in the Korean War, some Panthers flew combat missions in full or partial natural metal finish. Those Panthers still in service after February of 1956 had the two-tone scheme of Non-Specular Light Gull Gray (FS36440) uppers and Glossy Insignia White (FS17875) undersurfaces applied. The full transition to this scheme did not occur overnight and the Sea Blue finish was seen into 1957.

Panthers carried the national insignia in four positions — the fuselage just forward of the canopy, above the left wing and below the right wing. When finished in the overall Sea Blue scheme, only the white and red portions of the star and bars were applied. The full color insignia was used on natural metal and Gray and White aircraft. Red intake warnings became standard with the introduction of the Gray and White scheme. Trainer aircraft were finished in the current standard scheme with the addition of International Orange (FS12197) and Insignia White stripes on wings and fuselages. Drone controller aircraft were painted Engine Gray (FS16081) with Orange Yellow (FS13538) wings and tail surfaces and Insignia Red (FS11136) rudders and 36" wing bands. As always, check your reference photos carefully as there were always exceptions to these general rules.

Decal Notes:

The Panthers depicted on this decal sheet date include Navy and Marine Corps subjects from the 1950s. In addition to individual markings for eleven aircraft, the bottom of the second full sheet contains standard national insignias and stencils sufficient to complete three aircraft, including one post-1956 Panther. Most, but not all Panthers carried the small circular red static vent warning on the aft fuselage near the branch of service. Note that Panthers carried four very small (1" high) BuNo. sets which were applied on major removable fuselage parts for identification and replacement. These were on the nose shell below the forward bar of the national insignia and at the midpoint of the main fuselage forward of the break for engine removal. A set of four has been supplied for each subject.

The markings provided are as complete as possible, however, due to space limitations, we left it to the modeler to paint some of the markings which would be easy to mask and which would consume much needed space. In other cases, specifically on the various nose blazes, the decals may need to be slit for better fit. Some decals have been made slightly oversized to fit over surface edges and may need trimming after application.

Notes on Subject Aircraft:

F9F-3 BuNo. 123071, VF-51, USS Valley Forge, Sea of Japan, 1950

This aircraft scored the US Navy's first ever jet victory when LT Leonard Plog of VF-51 (the Screaming Eagles) downed a Yak-9 near Pyongyang, North Korea, on 3 July 1950. The small star marking on the nose is the Eagles' squadron badge and not a victory marking. The Screaming Eagles were one of the Navy's oldest squadrons and its Phantoms achieved several MiG kills in Viet Nam. The squadron was disestablished in 1995, flying Grumman's final cat, the F-14 Tomcat. To model this aircraft, the gun gas vents on both sides of the nose need to be removed and omit the weapons pylons, bombs, and rockets. The top 6" (0.125"/3.2mm in 1/48 scale) of the fin cap and the area between the rudder segments need to be painted Insignia Red by the modeler. Note the small area of Corroguard paint on the noses of the wing tip tanks. Use a sharp hobby knife if needed to make some slits in the Red nose flash decal for proper fit over the compound curves of the Panther's nose. Note the non-standard speed brake warning stripes.

F9F-2B BuNo. Unknown, VF-112, USS Philippine Sea, Sea of Japan, 1950

This aircraft has been attributed to be the one flown by LCDR William T. (Tom) Amen, Commander of VF-111 aboard USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CV 47), when he achieved the Navy's first jet-vs-jet kill on 9 November 1950. A painting of this event is featured on the front cover of Reference 1. The BuNo shown in the painting is spurious but the digits have been reordered to those of an actual F9F-2. We are not sure the BuNo given on the decal sheet is the correct one, but it is the only possible combination using the numbers in the painting. The gun gas vents on both sides of the nose need to be removed. Paint the top 6" (0.125"/3.2mm in 1/48 scale) of the fin cap White. The White nose flash may need to be slit for easier fit over the compound curves under the Panther's nose. The standard speed brake markings are found with the national insignia on the second decal sheet.

F9F-2B BuNo. 123633, VF-191, USS Princeton, Sea of Japan, 1951

"OCTANE SNIFFER" was assigned to VF-191 (Satan's Kittens) aboard USS PRINCETON (CV 37) during its first Korean War cruise. The Kittens were augmented by the addition of the six pilots of the US Navy's Blue Angels in August of 1950, and the Blues' skipper, LCDR Johnny Magda assumed command of the squadron. Remove the gun gas vents on both sides of OCTANE SNIFFER's nose and paint the top 6" (0.125"/3.2mm in 1/48 scale) of the fin cap Insignia Red. The Red nose flash may need to be slit for easier fit over the compound curves under the Panther's nose. Non-standard speed brake warning stripe markings.

F9F-2 BuNo. 123494, VF-21, USS Midway, Mediterranean, 1951

This aircraft was assigned to VF-21 (Mach Busters) aboard the large carrier USS MIDWAY (CVB 41) in late 1951. On 11 November 1951, during a fleet exercise, C115 missed the arresting wires, plowed through the barrier, and ran into several parked squadron aircraft. After the fires were extinguished, three Panthers, including C115, were pushed overboard. The gun gas vents on both sides of the nose need to be removed and omit all weapons and pylons. The White exercise bands applied to the wings and fuselage were 36" wide (0.75"/1.9cm in 1/48 scale). These need to be painted on by the modeler before applying the decals. Note the non-standard outline markings for the speed brakes.

F9F-2 BuNo. 127147, VF-837, USS Antietam, Sea of Japan, 1952

VF-837 (Grand Slammers) was a Naval Reserve fighter squadron flying FH-1 Phantoms and F4U-4 Corsairs when it was called to active duty on 1 February 1951. The squadron converted to the F9F-2 Panther and shipped out aboard USS ANTIETAM (CV 36) for Korean waters on 8 September 1951. The Grand Slammers returned home on 2 May 1952, and all personnel were returned to inactive duty. The squadron, however, remained a Reserve unit and returned with new personnel to Korea in January 1953 after converting to the F9F-5 Panther. A month later, VF-837 was redesignated VF-154 (the Black Knights). The squadron is still serving today as VFA-154 flying the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet with Carrier Air Wing Nine. Remove the gun gas vents on both sides of the nose. Paint the top 6" (0.125"/3.2mm in 1/48 scale) of the fin cap Orange Yellow. Use a sharp hobby knife to make some fine slits in the Yellow nose flash decal if needed for proper fit over the compound curves of the Panther's nose. Standard speed brake stripe markings.

F9F-2 BuNo. 127173, VF-111, USS Valley Forge, Sea of Japan, 1952

This aircraft was with VF-111 on the second of the Sundowners' three Korean War cruises. Due to training and equipment requirements, the Navy found it not always possible to deploy full carrier air groups with all their traditional component squadrons and created the Air Task Group concept. These groups were ad hoc units made up of squadrons from different air groups put together for a limited mission or period of time. The Sundowners were the number one squadron in the first such unit, Air Task Group One, which deployed aboard USS VALLEY FORGE (CV 45) on 15 October 1951 for Korea. The top 6" (0.125"/3.2mm in 1/48 scale) of the fin cap and the area between the rudder segments need to be painted Insignia Red by the modeler. The Red nose flash may need to be slit for easier fit over the compound curves under the Panther's nose. Standard speed brake stripes.

F9F-2 BuNo. 127116, VF-71, USS Bon Homme Richard, Sea of Japan, 1952

"WONSAN WANDA" was flown by LTJG John R. Leser during VF-71's Korean War combat tour which lasted from June through December of 1952 aboard the USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CV 31). The "Fickle Finger" Squadron placed its squadron badge inside a leaping red panther on the sides of its F9F-2 Panther jets. Many of the squadron's missions were flown against enemy targets in or near Wonsan Harbor on North Korea's east coast. VF-72 transitioned into the F9F-6 Cougar in 1954. The Red nose flash may need to be slit for easier fit over the compound curves under the Panther's nose. Note WANDA's non-standard speed brake markings.



F9F-2 BuNo. 123484, VF-72, USS Bon Homme Richard, Sea of Japan, 1952

L206 was an F9F-2 assigned to Carrier Air Group Seven's second Panther squadron during the 1952 Korean War cruise aboard "Bonnie Dick." In 1956, the Hawks turned in their Panthers for the new A4D-1 Skyhawk and were redesignated VA-72. Cut some slits in the white nose flash to aid in placing the decal. The white rudder stripes were designed to fit against the rudder post with enough left over to trim to fit the trailing edge. The White nose flash may need to be slit for easier fit over the compound curves under the Panther's nose. Standard speed brake stripes.



F9F-2 BuNo. 125160, VMF-451, MCAS El Toro, CA, 1953

Marine Fighter Squadron 451 was a Reserve squadron from NAS Willow Grove, PA, which was activated for the Korean War in March of 1951. After receiving F9F-2 Panthers, the squadron relocated to MCAS El Toro near Anaheim, CA. They kept their Panthers a relatively short time and transitioned into FJ-2 Furies in the fall of 1954. The squadron was deactivated in 1997, flying F/A-18s as VMFA-451. Use a sharp hobby knife to make some fine slits in the yellow nose blaze decal for proper fit over the compound curves of the Panther's nose. Note the non-standard speed brake warning stripes.



F9F-2 BuNo. 123507, VMF-232, MCAS Kaneohe Bay, TH, 1953

The Red Devils of VMF-232 are the oldest active fighter squadron in the Corps. After World War II, however, they became a Reserve outfit. Recalled to active duty in September of 1950, the Devils transitioned into the F9F-2 while on temporary duty at MCAS Kaneohe Bay, TH, in 1953. BuNo. 123507 was damaged after departing the runway while the squadron was converting from Corsairs to Panthers. Today, the VMFA-232 Red Devils fly the F/A-18. The Red nose flash will need to be slit for easier fit over the compound curves under the Panther's nose. Standard speed brake markings.



F9F-2KD BuNo. 123071, GMGRU-1, NAS Barbers Point, TH, 1957

A Panther assigned to Guided Missile Group One based at NAS Barbers Point in the Territory of Hawaii. ZZ34 was used to train drone control pilots. To model this aircraft, use the F9F-2P photo nose provided in the Trumpeter kit and fill in the photo windows. The single large national insignia decal is for the upper left wing. Extra rescue arrows are provided in case you wish to open the canopy. Note the extensive airframe modifications: the IFR stub on the nose, the small radar bulge under the nose, five UHF antennas aft of the nose bulge and on the left main gear door, and the small wing fences. There was also one weapons pylon under each wing just outboard of the wing fold line. Details of these modifications can be seen in photographs appearing in References 1 and 6 in the reference list. Note also the absence of warning stripe markings on the speed brakes.



References

1. "F9F Panther/Cougar in Action #51," by Jim Sullivan, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1982
2. "F9F Panther in Detail & Scale," D&S Vol.15, by Bert Kinzey, Aero Publishers, 1983
3. "USN/USMC Over Korea," by Thomas E. Doll, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1988
4. "The Official Monogram US Navy & Marine Corps Color Guide Vol. 3 1950-1959," by John M. Elliott, Monogram Aviation Publications, 1991
5. "Grumman F9F Part 2: USMC Panthers," Naval Fighters #60, by Steve Ginter, Ginter Books, 2003
6. "Grumman F9F Part 3: Navy Panthers, Korea and Beyond," Naval Fighters #61, by Steve Ginter, Ginter Books, 2003

Special thanks to Weldon Dunlap for the photos of Wonsan Wanda.
Research and original artwork by Jack Morris.

