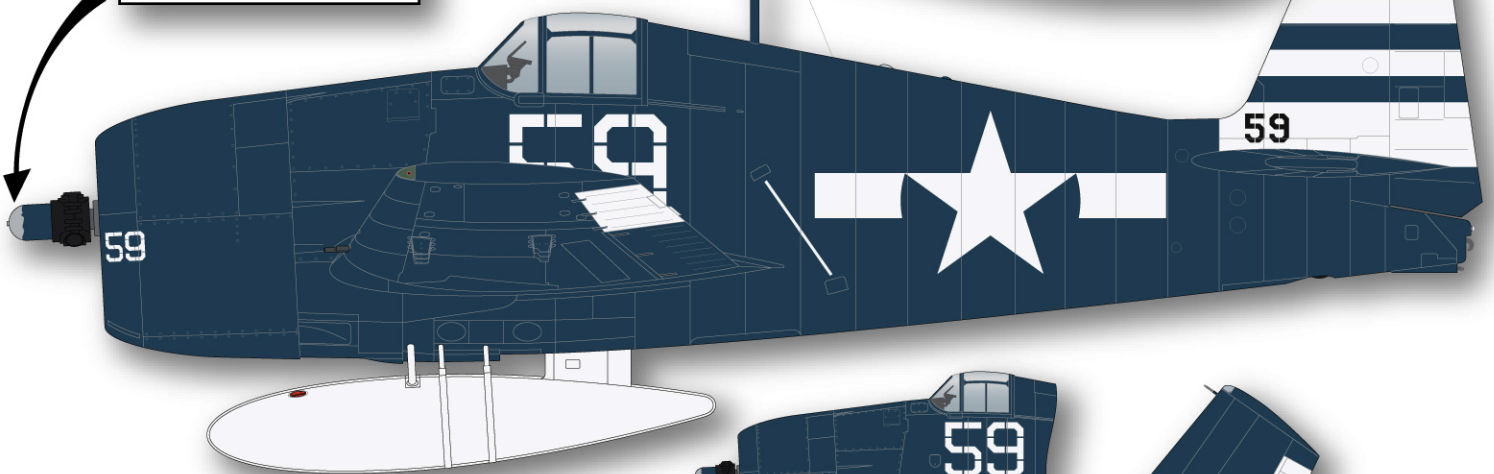


Detail Note

The Gloss Sea Blue paint on the front of the prop hub was mostly worn off. The aircraft otherwise appeared fairly unweathered.



Detail Note

ANA 623
Gloss Sea Blue

Many of the U.S. Navy carrier borne fighter-bomber squadrons of the period actually outscored their fighter squadron counterparts. The USS Randolph's two Hellcat squadrons followed this pattern, with VBF-12 claiming 74 kills to VF-12's 51. Lt. (jg) Daniel Carmichael joined VBF-12 in January 1945 having already scored 9 kills with VF-2 in 1944. By the end of May "Danny" Carmichael had earned a Silver Star and a DFC while flying air support for the two Jima and Okinawa landings as well as air strikes on Honshu and Tokyo. He also added 4 confirmed kills to bring his tally to 13, which are proudly displayed on the starboard side of #59, the Navy way.

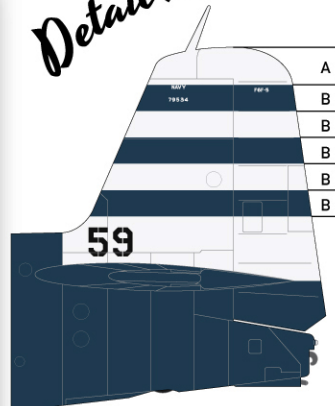
For an aircraft with a production run well over 12,000 machines, the various production variants of the Hellcat have remarkably few external differences. Carmichael's aircraft was in every way a bog standard F6F-5. It carried six lower wing 5" HVAR stub mounts, and as a mid-production machine, did not have the small windows aft of the canopy that were common to the F6F-3 and early -5s. On the day depicted here, Carmichael appears to have been carrying an older drop tank that was still painted white - a carryover from the tri-color camouflage scheme of the F6F-3.

Sometime in late April or early May of 1945, as Carmichael's aircraft recovered aboard the Randolph, the drop tank broke loose spilling avgas on the deck. The fuel ignited, engulfing the aircraft. The pilot, who may or may not have been Carmichael, escaped unharmed, but it is unlikely that #59 ever flew again.

The aircraft was overall ANA 623 Gloss Sea Blue. Air Group markings for the Randolph (known as G Symbols) were white ailerons top and bottom, and a series of white horizontal stripes on the vertical fin. Aside from the white drop tank, she carried no other exterior color save for possibly having black anti-skid paint on the wing roots (not shown here). Gear bays were Gloss Sea Blue, and the gear legs and main wheel hubs were painted aluminum. The forward third of the prop hub dome shows considerable paint wear, but the aircraft is otherwise well kept and quite glossy.



Detail Note

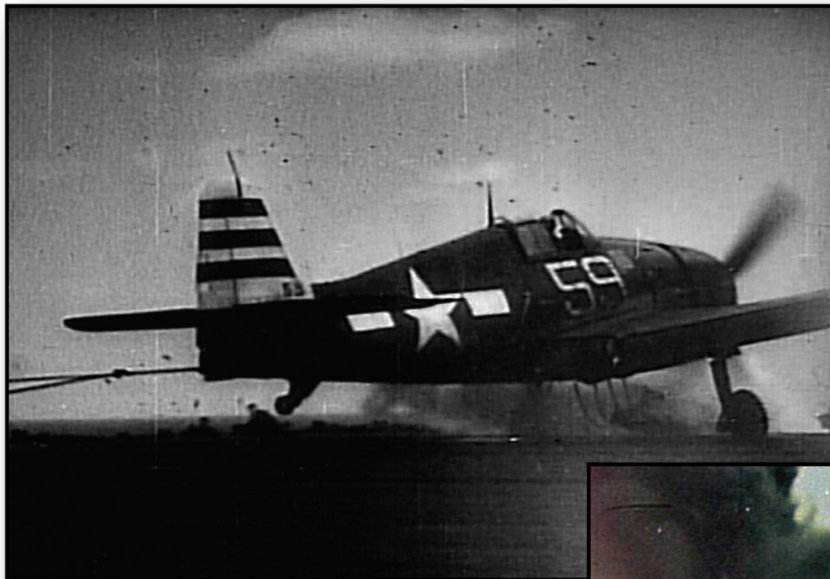


Stripe Widths

1/32 1/48 1/72

A = 8.3 mm 5.5 mm 3.7 mm

B = 5.9 mm 3.9 mm 2.6 mm



Above: Carmichael's aircraft traps aboard the Randolph carrying a white early style F6F belly tank. The tank ruptured on touchdown, spilling high octane avgas on the deck which immediately ignited.

Right: A fireman's mate pulls #59's pilot to safety as the aircraft burns. Note the prop still turning, although it's a safe bet the magneto switches were off by this point.



Above: View showing flight deck crew preparing to tow #59 off the deck. This view shows Carmichael's 13 kills and the location of the markings and the characteristic dusty grey Hellcat exhaust stain pattern. Note the tape over the gun barrels and the leading edge at the outer gun position as well as the overall well kept appearance of the airplane. The taped over guns and the fact she carried a drop tank back to the ship almost certainly means this was a mission where no Japanese aircraft were encountered. Virtually no paint chipping other than the prop hub dome is visible. Note the red wing fold locking pin indicator just outboard of the crewman's feet.

Right: The charred left wing of #59. Note the fabric burned away on the flaps (as it is on the elevator visible in other photos), and the aluminum skin burned completely away on the outer wing. It is doubtful that #59 ever flew again, and likely she was stripped and then dumped overboard.

