

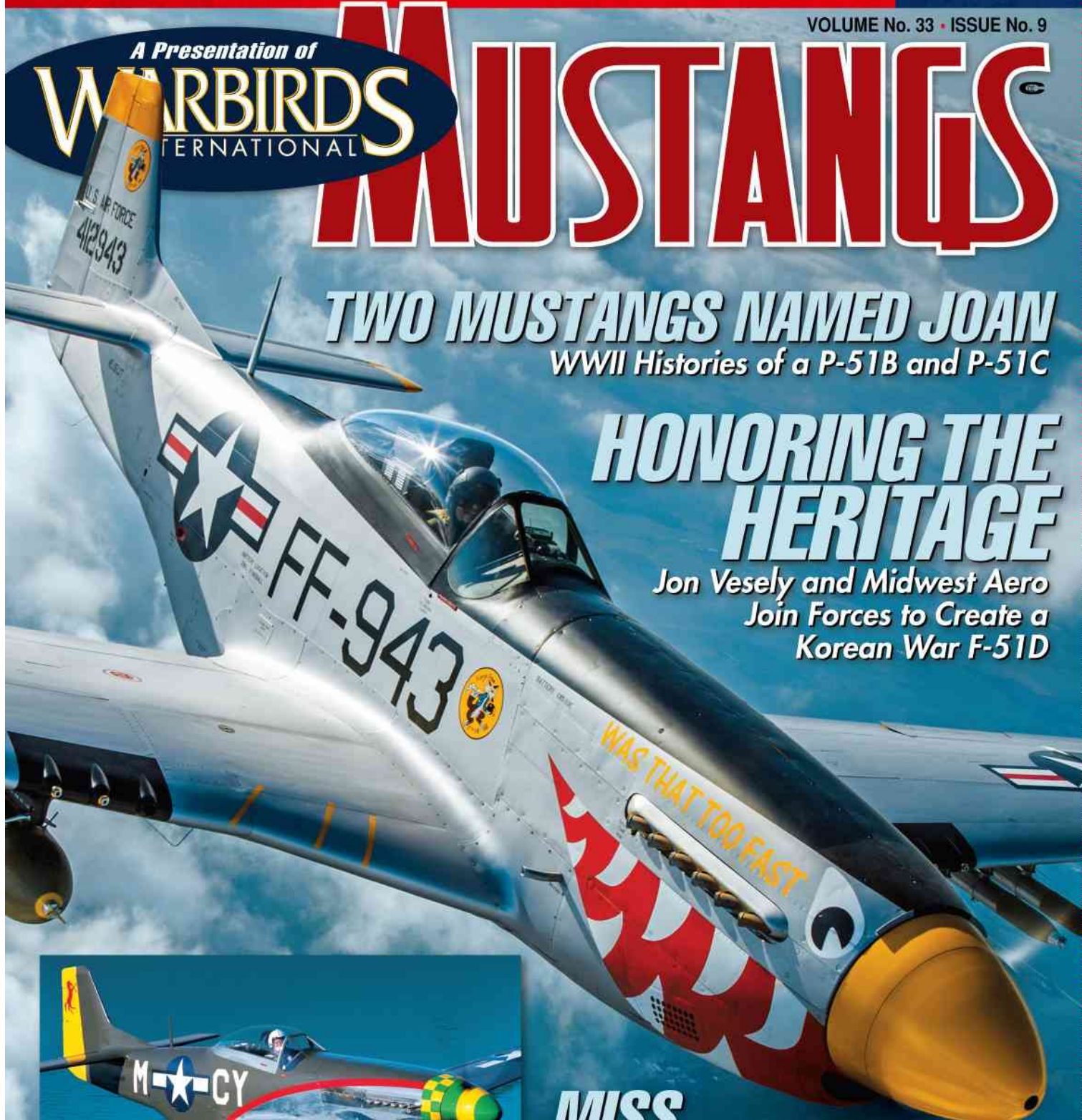
A Presentation of
WARBIRDS
INTERNATIONAL

MUSTANGS

TWO MUSTANGS NAMED JOAN
WWII Histories of a P-51B and P-51C

**HONORING THE
HERITAGE**

*Jon Vesely and Midwest Aero
Join Forces to Create a
Korean War F-51D*



**MISS
MARILYN II**
Building a 100-Point Mustang

DOVE OF PEACE
Ex-RAAF P-51D in the Markings of a Famous Ace

WHEN MUSTANGS GUARDED MISSISSIPPI

U.S./CANADA \$8.99

0 74470 02903 8 43

Honoring the **HERITAGE**

**JON VESELY AND MIDWEST AERO
COMBINE FORCES TO CREATE THE
FIRST TRULY ACCURATE KOREAN
WAR F-51D RESTORATION**

BY MICHAEL O'LEARY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BOWEN

So, how does one set about creating award-winning 100-point Mustang restorations? First, it is not easy and, secondly, it does not happen overnight. For Michael Vadeboncoeur his in-depth introduction to aviation began with visits to the annual Experimental Aircraft Association Convention at Oshkosh. He started his visits at age twelve – a formative time in

any adolescent's life – with the Young family and their five-year-old son David. This was back in 1976 and the kids had also become big fans of the television show *Baa Baa Blacksheep* and all those Corsairs roaring at them from the television screen. Both were particularly fascinated with the many Warbirds parked in the display area and they would spend hours and hours walking the Warbird line and examining each and every aircraft.

Now, while many young people become very interested in vintage and veteran aircraft this one fact does not mean it will lead to a life-long attachment to such flying machines.

Growing up in Danville, Illinois, Mike's father introduced him to another Danville resident by the name of Henry "Butch" Schroeder during the late 1970s. Butch was a fellow enthusiast when it came to WWII aircraft and he had purchased a Texan in 1976. At the time, the young Vadeboncoeur was in high school and Butch took him for a ride in the Texan and, thus, the future was set. Butch would go on to buy a Mustang that would become the basis for the restoration named *Lil' Margaret*, but more on that later.

After finishing high school, Vadeboncoeur attended Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and while there he worked on several Warbird aircraft that belonged to David Tallichet and were in the care of Ken Sternburg – thus getting his hands dirty on some interesting aircraft.

Returning to Danville from Spartan, he went to work for the airport's FBO while also helping Butch on his projects in his limited spare time. Then, a job opportunity arose at the aircraft maintenance facility of the University of Illinois. In that position, Mike did a lot of structural repair work and became a master sheet metal mechanic. On evenings and weekends, he would make the short drive to continue working for Butch.

While undertaking work on the Texan an engine problem was discovered that led to the engine being removed along with the decision to do a full firewall forward restoration. However, it did not stop there! The work kept progressing and turned into a full fuselage restoration and, as anyone involved with Warbirds knows, once this progression begins it is difficult to stop. While this was going on, Butch offered Vadeboncoeur a full-time job. Of course, this was a difficult decision since it would mean leaving a secure position but Mike decided to accept while also beginning to form a business plan for the future. That plan was to discover if a viable business could be created that would be able to undertake Warbird restorations for other owners.

When the Texan restoration was finished in

1990, it won the Reserve Grand Champion Award at Oshkosh. Returning to Danville, Vadeboncoeur and Schroeder got serious about restoring the F-6D Mustang project. At this point, David Young had completed high school and joined the team. David's father did the sheet metal work on the fuselage and the young man found that while he liked working on the planes, he was not consumed by the idea. However, the more he got into the project the more interested he became and this would lead to getting his A&P license.

When the F-6D *Lil' Margaret* showed up at Oshkosh, the judges were so impressed with the detail that had gone into the restoration that the photo recon bird became the Grand Champion Warbird. The Mustang caught the attention of other owners and the future just started to develop. Mike began doing work on a BT-13 for a local resident and then a Stewart 51 project for Ken Wagnon. This project led Ken to get a full-size P-51 and Mike was able to get into some larger hangars at the field and Midwest Aero Restorations was born. Work continued on some of Butch's other projects and Dave Young soon joined Mike in his enterprise.

Vlado Lenoch brings
Was That Too Fast in on the
EAA Cessna 210 camera plane
being flown by Bruce Moore.



The restoration of *Lil Margaret* set a new standard and Midwest was contacted by owners wanting an aircraft of similar caliber. This set Mike and Dave on an intensive research project to discover all the ins and outs of bringing a Mustang to 100-point configuration. We asked Mike about the difficult process of returning a Mustang to original condition. "Some pilots said that when we finished *Lil Margaret* that we set a new standard for the Warbird industry. However, restorations are nothing if not a learning process and we have gone from strength to strength with each Mustang we have done. We learn something from each aircraft.

"Actually, one standard that would be difficult to sell is to replicate a Mustang the way it came out of the factory. That would mean no polished metal. There would be lots of over-sprayed areas and not very nice wiring and plumbing. That is the way they really were when they left Inglewood or Dallas. It would not be an aircraft every customer would desire." WestPac



This is how the Mustang appeared in Uruguay when it operated as FAU 265. The aircraft was accepted by the FAU on 23 June 1950 and arrived in Uruguay on 4 December 1950, going into service with *Grupo de Aviacion No. 2 (Caza)*.

Restorations found that creating a "factory fresh" Mustang was an extremely challenging project when they took on Flying Heritage Collection's P-51D.

Mark Clark of Courtesy Aircraft commented on this trend. Courtesy has sold dozens upon dozens of Mustangs over the past few decades and Mark has watched as restorations have progressed from merely adding stars and bars to an airframe to create a "WWII P-51D" to

the restoration of aircraft such as the subject of this article. "At Courtesy, we have watched this progression with great interest," said Clark. "We are seeing a new generation of Mustang owners as well as restorations. The P-51s that are being brought back to 100-point configurations can be compared in many ways to the very rare collectible car market. A buyer of such a car advertised in the 100-point category will not accept anything except total accuracy. Shops like Midwest have pioneered that standard of P-51 restoration, but it comes at a price. In the past, so much of the original military equipment was sim-

Records indicate that the original *Was That Too Fast*/USAAF 44-12943A had recorded 1540-hrs of flight time by November 1953. On 19 November 1950, Edwin K. Jones of the 36th FBS, 8th FBG, was flying the plane when it was involved in a landing accident due to mechanical failure at K-14. At that time, the Mustang may have been named *Red Raider*. It was repaired and issued to the 12th FBS and was photographed at K-14 during 1951. The final fate of the aircraft is not known.



The Mustang was a nose to tail, wing tip to wing tip, restoration. Finding correct Korean War vintage equipment proved difficult.

ply stripped from the airframe as it was civilianized and then tossed. The available supplies of original military equipment have greatly declined so the last 20% of a 100-point restoration greatly adds to the overall cost."

Midwest has raised the bar on each of

its restorations — *Red Dog*, *Cripes A Mighty*, *Daddy's Girl*, *Live Bait*, *Happy Jack's Go Buggy*, and now an F-51D named *Was That Too Fast*. For the first time in Warbird history, a Mustang has been accurately restored in Korean War configuration and that is a very special story.

JON VESELY

"I started flying as a kid," recalled businessman/philanthropist Jon Vesely. "My dad was a private pilot and I went on many flights with him. I remember that if I washed the airplane, then I got a flight!"

As with Mike Vadeboncoeur, Jon

12TH FIGHTER-BOMBER SQUADRON — THE FOXY FEW

On 20 November 1940, the 12th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) was constituted at Selfridge Field, Michigan, and activated on 15 January 1941 (flying the Seversky P-35 and Curtiss P-36). The unit moved to Key Field, Mississippi, on 3 October 1941 and operated from that location until 19 January 1942 for further training (with Curtiss P-40s). On 15 May 1942, it was redesignated as the 12th Fighter Squadron and equipped with Bell P-39 Airacobras. In early February 1942, the squadron was assigned to Christmas Island and began patrols over the Pacific with its Airacobras until November 1942 when it moved to Efate and then to Guadalcanal on 7

February 1943. At this point the 12th was equipped with Lockheed P-38 Lightnings and flew from Treasury Island until August 1944.

It was then off to Sansapor, New Guinea, in late August 1944 and the squadron flew from Morotai starting 8 November 1944 until 10 January 1945. As the war moved closer to the Home Islands, so did the 12th. By 13 January 1945, the P-38s were flying from Lingayen, Luzon, before moving in late February to San Jose, Mindoro, where operations were carried out from Palawan from 26 April to 11 May 1945. It was then off to Zamboanga, Mindanao, in May 1945 where the 12th operated until

the unconditional surrender of Japan. Fighting in some of the most hostile areas of the world against a determined enemy, the 12th carved a record of honor and bravery in the skies over the Pacific.

Reequipping with P-51D Mustangs, the 12th flew from Palawan until moving to Floridablanca, Luzon, on 17 July 1946 where they operated until being transferred to Clark Field on 16 September 1947 (the squadron was unmanned from March to September 1947). At Clark, the 12th FBS (as part of the 18th FBG, which included the 44th and 67th FBS) converted to Lockheed F-80C



Shooting Stars — the latest and best the USAF had to offer.

Just five short years since the end of WWII, politicians had stripped the American military of its might. Also, intelligence was greatly lacking and when the North Koreans pushed into South Korea, it came pretty much as a surprise. Japan was

supposed to be a bastion of American military strength but with the invasion there was such a small number of troops stationed in Japan that they really would not have been able to do anything to blunt the North Korean advance.

The same problem applied to aircraft. The only active Mustangs operated by the Far East Air Force (FEAF) were a few F-51Ds utilized as target tugs. However, some aircraft were stored at various bases. The Fifth Air Force Headquarters issued a directive that every F-51D be made available for war in Korea — regardless of condition.

Project *Bout One* rounded up Mustangs as fast as possible under the command of the 8th Fighter-

Bomber Group that was based at Itazuki. This "round up" resulted in only ten fighters (mainly the target tugs) but on 30 June 1950, Maj. Dean Hess took these aircraft to Taegu to begin immediate attacks on the enemy. Originally, it was planned that these aircraft would be flown by South Korean pilots but it soon became obvious that these pilots did not have the training or experience to tackle difficult missions against a determined enemy so experienced USAF pilots took over.

Lieutenant General Earle Partridge, Commander of the 5th Air Force, knew it was imperative to put as many F-51Ds in South Korea as possible in an attempt to stem the communist advance. Orders went out

to send ANG and Reserve Mustangs to Korea aboard aircraft carriers.

Hundreds of Mustangs were moved out of storage at various bases across the USA and flown to numerous overhaul centers to be brought back to combat condition, but this would take time.

By mid-July 1950, some 145 F-51Ds had been flown to NAS Alameda in San Francisco Bay and packed into the USS *Boxer*, that immediately set sail at full speed to arrive in Tokyo Bay on 23 July — a most impressive feat.

As the Mustang force built, so did the losses. The aircraft was performing a mission for which it was not designed and the communists had lots of anti-aircraft weapons.

There was a finite supply of Mustangs from which to draw and in the early days of the war there were four wings flying the WWII "retread," as some pilots fondly called their Mustangs.

With increasing losses, the 35th Fighter-Bomber Group and the 8th FBG were ordered to turn over their surviving aircraft to the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group. At that point, those two units transitioned to the F-80C Shooting Star.

With the start of the war, experienced pilots from the 12th FBS were called to action to fly the F-51Ds with a provisional fighter squadron that was designated 51st FS(P) and began operations against the enemy from Taegu Air Base on 15 July.

started going to Oshkosh in the mid-1970s when he was twelve. "I really loved the whole Oshkosh experience and looking at those airplanes with my dad was something special. I guess you could say I really caught the bug.

"However, I also had to cope with reality. I went to college, got into business, and started a family but that aviation bug was really in the back of my mind. Initially there was not enough time or money to explore this interest. In the mid-1990s, I was at a local flight school and ran into an instructor who I had known in school. We talked about flying and I told him of my interest. He offered to take me for a flight and I told him I would think about it. As I walked out the door, I realized that if I did not turn around and start the process then I probably never would. I went back in and away we went. This would lead to my private then other ratings including instrument, instructor, multi, commercial, etc."

From attending Oshkosh and other fly-ins with his father, Jon was always aware of Warbirds and was interested in the aircraft and the stories told by veterans. "After getting my various licenses, I started thinking about flying Warbirds and I remember calling Mark Clark and asking how to proceed and Mark said to first get a tailwheel endorsement. This would lead me to Kenosha, Wisconsin, where I began flying with, and learning from, some of the Warbird pilots based at the field including Eddie Wachs and Don Kelner. Pretty soon, I was flying T-6s. This led me to buy a T-6 along with a T-6 project — I like projects."

Jon had become friends with Ed Stringfellow who owned a P-51D. One thing led to another and when Ed decided to sell the aircraft, he contacted Jon and a deal was quickly set. This particular machine was P-51D 44-63907/N20MS and had last operated with the Uruguayan and Bolivian air forces before going to Canada as CGXUD and then to the USA. "I knew Mike and Midwest and admired their work," recalled Jon "so the airplane was transferred to their facility in Danville."

"It was a pretty rough Mustang that had seen a lot of service," recalled Mike, "but the interior was surprisingly original." It was a complete restoration — new longerons, rebuilt Odegaard wings, etc. The Merlin went to Jack Roush while Midwest concentrated on the fuselage, tail cone, and systems.

"I wanted this aircraft to be relatively stock," said Jon. "I also wanted some changes for safety and practicality. The aircraft had a second set of controls installed for the rear seat passenger and Nelson Ezell had done this. The controls were removed, components detailed, and reinstalled. The panel received a Garmin 430 and GTX327 transponder while the large original gyros were replaced with a standard 3 1/8-in horizon, and DG and turn coordinator." Jon had chosen a paint scheme to represent at 359th Fighter Group Mustang flown by Ray Wetmore and named *Daddy's Girl*. "Nobody had done a Mustang in 359th colors and my goal was to create a Mustang that was different from the others out there," said Jon. Shortly



"With *Was That Too Fast*, we wanted to honor the importance of the Mustang and the people that flew and maintained the aircraft in other conflicts besides WWII," states owner Jon Vesely.

before completion, the aircraft was sold to Charles Somers.

However, Jon would not be without a Mustang. In 2008, a customer brought P-51D project 44-73343/N5482V to Midwest for complete restoration. The majority of work had been completed when

the customer decided to sell the plane. In April 2010, Jon purchased the aircraft, which was finished as *Live Bait*, and the aircraft made its first post-restoration flight during July 2010 with Vlado Lenoch at the controls. "I keep this aircraft in Scottsdale, Arizona, and fly it regularly," said Jon.

"When I decided to start flying Mustangs, I went to Stallion 51 and flew with Lee Lauderback. There is nobody better to show you the right way to safely operate a P-51."

KOREAN WAR HERO

"In 2012, I received a call from Mike

stating that the owner of a P-51D that he had in his shop undergoing restoration was going to have to sell the project and he wanted to know if I was interested. Of course, this was an intriguing call and I wanted to know more about the Mustang," said Jon.

Permission was granted to move the 67th FBS (of the 18th FBG) from Clark to Japan and they went into action on 4 August and around this time the 51st FSP (went back to the old designation of 12th FBS. The 18th FBG quickly picked up the nickname "Truckbusters," but 18th personnel referred to themselves as the "Dogpatch Gang." The 12th FBS picked up the nickname "The Foxy Few."

For the Americans and their Allies, the early days of the war were complete chaos. Invading communists grabbed thousands of fleeing civilians and used them as human shields. Air attacks made it almost impossible to distinguish the enemy from the refugees and thousands

died in rocket, bomb, machine gun, and napalm attacks.

As the enemy began to surround Pusan with vastly superior manpower and equipment, the only thing that kept the communists from taking complete control of the vital peninsula, was the constant action by the Mustangs as pilots flew multiple missions each day. Operating conditions at Pusan and Taegu were less than ideal and, because of the dire lack of aircraft and supplies, the best the 12th FBS could field was 20 Mustangs against a virtually overwhelming force of communists. Flying an average of 33 missions per day between 15 July and 31 August 1950, the pilots and Mustangs of the

12th took a terrific toll of the enemy. However, the communists seemed to take the heavy losses in stride as long as their forces kept moving south in the ultimate goal of completely capturing South Korea.

Because of the unstable condition at the front, the 12th FBS was rapidly moving bases — retreating and then moving forward again. There was never a problem finding targets since the constantly moving North Korean People's Army did not seem to worry overly much about attempting to camouflage its assets. However, the real worry was the accurate enemy ground fire that took a terrible toll of Mustangs — if the vital cooling system was hit then it was almost

certain that the F-51D would be lost.

Attrition was made up from overhauled Mustangs being sent from the States as soon as they were completed. The onslaught of the Korean winter provided a whole new set of problems for the Mustang pilots but American aggressiveness and ingenuity allowed attacks against the enemy to continue. As time went by, the beleaguered Mustangs were bolstered by hundreds of other American and Allied combat aircraft — both old and new, including more WWII "retreads" and the latest jet fighters.

As the North Koreans continued to take what would be unacceptable losses for the Allies, the Chinese

intervened and in November 1950 a new order of communists flooded into Korea. The Chinese brought with them the latest in aeronautical technology — the MiG 15 and the Mustang pilots suddenly had an entirely new worry. Also, the North Koreans were still able to put up enough Yak 9s to cause the Mustangs problems.

As American and Allied forces moved in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, they barely had time to unpack before they felt the full force of the enemy counterattack. The Mustangs of the 12th were basically in the air all day as they pounded the advancing enemy. The action was so intense that it was difficult to perform adequate

maintenance on the planes and often pilots waited in cockpits with engines running while the ground crews refueled and rearmed the Mustangs for the next mission.

The combined squadrons of the 18th FBW really started to take a heavy toll on the communists and the Chinese then began to move their convoys only at night. Newly arrived Sabres began to tackle the MiG 15s but the Mustang pilots had to keep performing their unglamorous low-level missions with the goal of stopping communist supplies heading south. The ground troops cheered as they saw flight after flight of bombed-up Mustangs roar overhead — flying directly to communist

targets. The pace of the action was so intense that there was not time to repair damaged Mustangs that had managed to make it back to home base and one mission began to blend into another. By early July 1952, the Mustangs of the 18th FBW had flown 45,000 combat sorties — a record that probably will never be equaled in military aviation history. Quite often, major missions would see the 18th launching 60 F-51Ds against the enemy. As time went on, Corsairs, Skyraiders, Fireflies, and Sea Furies supported the Mustangs in the ground-attack mission.

As mentioned earlier, there was only a finite supply of Mustangs to replace the heavy losses. By the fall

of 1951, NAA was sending a constant supply of new F-86F Sabres to the combat front. Once the requirements of the interceptor squadrons were satisfied, Sabres began replacing the Mustangs and Shooting Stars in the ground attack mission. The surviving Mustangs began to be retired and either handed over to the South Koreans or flown to Japan. The men of the 12th FBS and 18th FBW transitioned into the Sabre and continued to take the war to the enemy. In 30-months of intense combat, the Mustang pilots had set record after record and were directly responsible for the fact that the communists could not achieve complete victory over South Korea. •





Vintage V-12s built the Merlin installed in *Was That Too Fast*.



The Mustang's underwing armament was faithfully replicated.



Six replica Browning .50-cal machine guns were installed in *Was That Too Fast*.



The interior of the Mustang has been restored to its Korean War configuration.



Midwest has become known for its incredibly accurate detailing of Mustang airframes and this can be seen in gun bays.



The particular aircraft was P-51D USAAF 44-63577 that had last seen military service with the *Fuerza Aerea Uruguaya*. After WWII, Uruguay was seeking to modernize its air force but had a very limited budget. After trying, and failing, to obtain combat aircraft for several years, the Uruguayan government purchased 77 training and transport aircraft through the American Republics Project. At the time, the USA was providing F-47 Thunderbolts to many Latin American nations but Uruguay wanted Mustangs. The initial request was denied because the Mustang was still in active, ANG, and Reserve operation. However, the nation persisted and negotiated a 1948 agreement to procure 25 F-51Ds at \$8000 each, eleven B-25Js at \$13,000 each, and three C-47As at \$14,000 each.

On 29 October 1948, the Uruguayan government allocated \$825,000 to cover the purchase, overhaul, spare parts, crew training, and ferry flights of the aircraft. After further negotiating, the prices changed to where each F-51D would cost \$5290, B-25 \$8250, and C-47 a bit over \$20,000 each.

Proposals for overhaul were sent out to several American companies and the winner was Grand Central Aircraft Company based at Grand Central Air Terminal in Glendale, California, and a contract was signed on 19 October 1949. The Mustangs were part of a huge P-51 reserve held at Kelly AFB in Texas and Grand Central pilots and crews went to that location to prepare and fly the aircraft to Glendale. One of these Mustangs was 44-63577 and it landed at Grand Central on 6 January 1950. By the way, each ferry flight cost \$295!

Once at Grand Central, 44-63577 was closely examined and was found to have flown 1052-hrs. The overall time for the Merlin was not in the logs, but the engine had 28.45-hrs since major overhaul. Of course, the start of the Korean War suddenly made the F-51D a very valuable commodity to the USAF and the government began rapidly buying Mustang parts, propellers, and engines held by private companies.

Just previous to the invasion, Grand Central had been contacted by a company that had 75 V-1650-7 Merlins for sale. The engines had been overhauled for a sale to Nationalist China, but this sale was dragging so the engines were put on the

open market. The Uruguayan Air Mission showed interest in two of the Merlins with a possible purchase of seven or eight more with prices ranging from \$1700 to \$2000. They got permission to buy two but while waiting for an answer on the others, the USAF stepped in and immediately bought all 73 remaining Merlins.

Overhauls of the Mustangs went rapidly for Grand Central was receiving dozens of USAF Mustangs needing overhaul before being sent to Korea. The completed Mustangs (with purchase price, overhaul, and maintenance) had increased the unit price to \$14,211.73. The Mustangs were flown to Palmdale for some training prior to the ferry flight south. Operating as F-51 Fighter Group under the command of Lt. Col. Sencion, the aircraft were divided into Red Group (#1), White Group (#2), and Blue Group (#3) and Mustangs assigned to each group had their spinners painted in appropriate colors.

Our subject aircraft became FAU 265 and was assigned to White Group, which would be the third group to depart Palmdale. A C-47 support aircraft would accompany the flight. The flights went to Tucson, Arizona; El Paso, Texas; Kelly AFB, Texas (where minor problems could be rectified); Brookley AFB, Alabama; and MacDill AFB, Florida, where final inspections would be made before departing the USA. There were numerous problems and several minor incidents on the way.

In service, the F-51D proved fairly reliable but there were always parts shortages and maintenance problems resulting from minimal training. Also, flight hours were somewhat limited during the first couple years because only 28 pilots had been Mustang qualified.

By 1960, attrition had greatly reduced the F-51D force and it was decided not to keep the type in service. At the time, it appears that nine Mustangs were still flyable. On 17 May 1960, Uruguay agreed to sell six of its F-51Ds to Bolivia (in Bolivian service, the planes would fly for another 17-years and one of these would become Ed Stringfellow's N20MS) along with the complete stock of spare parts and armament. The USAF assisted in this sale and the spares were loaded in a C-124 Globemaster II and flown to Bolivia. The price, you ask? \$15,000 for everything!

FAU 265 (which was the highest time Mustang supplied by the USAF — the lowest was FAU 258/44-63530 with

15:35-hrs) had been struck off charge on 20 November 1957 because of corrosion and the airframe was sent to the Museo Aeronautica.

In 1984, Eugenio Heredia, an Argentinean living in the USA, contacted the FAU and Museo Aeronautica with a proposal to purchase FAU 265 for \$45,000. This caused a certain amount of consternation since many considered the plane to be a valued part of the nation's history. However, on 14 November 1984, a government resolution permitted sale of the Mustang and several other aircraft. The money would, theoretically, be used to purchase spare parts to keep active FAU aircraft flying. On 27 January 1985, the Mustang was loaded aboard *Neuquen II* and shipped to the USA.

The Mustang was sold to Tyrone Elias in Oklahoma and registered N51TE as some restoration work began. By 1994, it was N151JT with John Turgyan of New Jersey. The project was eventually transferred to Midwest Aero where Mr. Turgyan was hoping to have the aircraft completed as WWII P-51D *Passion Wagon*.

"I inspected Mr. Turgyan's aircraft at Midwest and I really admire all the time, effort, and money that he had put in the project," said Jon. "We concluded a deal. Now came the decision on how to complete the aircraft. We did not want to finish the aircraft as *Passion Wagon* since Mr. Turgyan had really put his heart into that goal. In case he gets another P-51D, then he will have the ability to complete it as *Passion Wagon*."

"Mike and I put our heads together. At many airshows we had met people whose fathers had served in Korea and Vietnam. In many ways, I had already made my WWII statement with *Daddy's Girl* and *Live Bait*. The Mustang has such an incredible history going over so many years that Mike and I thought it would be really neat to honor the veterans of the Korean War — the conflict that many people call the 'Forgotten War.'

"Mustangs used in Korea were configured differently from their WWII brethren. They had upgraded avionics and the airframes were equipped for the ground attack mission. We did not have a problem with the six .50-cal machine gun armament nor the bomb racks. However, we did have a problem with the rocket stubs. The Mustangs expended a huge number of 5-in HVARs in Korea but replicating that system would have been a real problem.



Finding a new old stock rocket stub field installation kit was essential to completing the aircraft's Korean War configuration.

"Mike remembered that he had received a call a few years back from a fellow that had a few sets of rocket installation kits, which were supplied by the factory to combat units for installation on their aircraft. At the time, Mike did not have use for such a kit. Well, he found the number and called the fellow and found he had one installation kit left! A deal was immediately concluded. When I saw the kit at Midwest, it was a time capsule — all factory-new with the instructions on how to install the kit and operate the system. We really needed this kit to complete the aircraft. For the radios behind the pilot's armored seat we decided to build all that from scratch."

When it came time to research a paint scheme, Jon and Mike picked 44-12943

Was That Too Fast from the 12th FBS. "There were so many colorful schemes worn by Mustangs during the Korean War that we had a hard time picking an example but we settled on *Was That Too Fast*. Taking the aircraft to Oshkosh 2013, the Mustang won the Grand Champion Post WWII Trophy while Midwest picked up yet another Golden Wrench Trophy. "It was really something to talk to the people that came to visit the aircraft," said Jon. "We met veterans, heard many interesting stories, and were thrilled to see all the hard work pay off — honoring our veterans and their families."

VLADO "FOXY FEW" LENOCH

Vlado Lench has done the majority of

first flights on Midwest Aero Mustangs and *Was That Too Fast* was no exception. "I became interested in Mustangs when I saw Bob Hoover fly *Old Yeller* at the West Chicago-DuPage Airshow. I was still in high school and had just gotten my pilot's license. I was absolutely awe-struck at the sound and power of the Merlin and delighted at the sheer abandon of the law of gravity with Bob's vertical maneuvers. At this same airshow, I met Steve Hinton who was the back-seater and crew chief for Bob. He introduced me to caring for a Mustang as we wiped down the oil from *Ole Yeller's* sides.

"Right from the start when I saw Bob Hoover fly, all I knew was that I had to have a Mustang. At the age of 16, I really never thought about getting a car first like

12TH FIGHTER-BOMBER SQUADRON ROLL OF VALOR

Capt. Chauncy A. Bennett	30 Apr. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. Allan S. Bettis	13 Apr. 1952, KIA
1st Lt. Willis R. Brown	15 Mar. 1951, KIA
2nd Lt. Mike S. David	3 Oct. 1950, KIA
Capt. Raymond R. Davis	5 Oct. 1951, still listed MIA
Capt. William Elsom	6 Jan. 1952, KIA
Lt. Robert S. Fluhr	6 May 1952, KIA
Harold S. Forster	17 Dec. 1951, KIA
Capt. George E. Gray	5 Apr. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. James D. Heath	8 Mar. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. Donald E. Hoffman	8 Dec. 1951, KIA
Capt. Fred G. Hudson	27 Nov. 1950, KIA
Capt. Frederick Irwin	21 Jan. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. Oliver E. Jones	22 Oct. 1951, still listed MIA
1st Lt. Robert J. Lucas	17 Nov. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. Clarence McGowan	23 Dec. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. Harry B. Middleton	30 Apr. 1951, KIA
Lt. Leonard S. Olson	14 May 1952, KIA
1st Lt. Alex B. Padilla	9 Oct. 1950, still listed MIA
Capt. Graham Smith	30 Apr. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. Raymond S. Stewart	25 Aug. 1951, POW
1st Lt. John A. Swanson	13 Dec. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. Claude R. Taylor	20 Oct. 1950, KIA
Harry M. Tyler	26 Dec. 1951, KIA
1st Lt. Lawrence E. Wolfe	26 Apr. 1952, KIA
Capt. John J. Woliung	5 Nov. 1952, KIA

*Information courtesy Mustangs Over Korea,
David R. McLaren*

The 12th FBS took a terrific toll of communist equipment and troops. On 7 November 1950, Kendall Carlson of the 12th FBS took on and destroyed a MIG 15 — and this was probably the first MIG 15 destroyed in aerial combat. However, for reasons unknown this most impressive victory was never officially credited.

my schoolmates — but rather a Mustang. Naturally, I didn't share that absolutely insane thought with anyone."

Of course, Vlado did go on to get a Mustang — *Moonbeam McSwine*, that he purchased in 1988 and flew regularly until 2013 when it was sold to a new owner in France.

Currently, Vlado has over 3100-hrs of Mustang time accrued in 37 different P-51s. When asked if he has a favorite he is quick to reply, "It's still *Moonbeam!*" Vlado took *Was That Too Fast* aloft from Danville on 11 July 2103 for its first post-restoration flight.

Since then, he has put about 20-hrs on the plane and is the only pilot to have flown the aircraft. We caught up with Vlado on 15 July after he had landed in *Was That Too Fast* and asked him a few questions. "Today's mission was a post-annual check flight. The mission board plan was to fly over to Rudy Frasca's factory during the noon lunch hour to show the factory staff a fully configured combat P-51. The flight to Urbana Airport in Ohio went smoothly. With the target in sight, a gentle roll-in set up the flyby pattern for good viewing for the 'troops' below. Though the bird is loaded up, it still handles very well

rolling in for the passes and climbing out for the turnarounds.

"The F-51D is loaded with four HVARs and two bombs. This makes the bird very draggy and not the spritely Mustang we all know. Yet with all that ordinance on the wings, I reflected on what it must have been like flying over the cold mountains north of Seoul as the F-51Ds passed over the hostile terrain of North Korea bringing in much needed air support for the fighting troops below. Though the Merlin pulls the bird along well enough, it still feels as if the racehorse has a Conestoga wagon hitched.

"This Mustang is a wonderful, authentic restoration of a Korean War veteran. The cockpit has a K-14 gunsight along with armament switches for the rockets. The airplane has a new car smell to it — new paint, hoses, rubber, and the strong odor of fresh canvas.

"The handling of this bird is wonderful. All the systems and switches and instruments work just as the Dash One manual describes. The Nixon Merlin performs smoothly at all power settings, burning the nominal 63-gal per hour of today's Merlin carburetor set up. Jon and Midwest have created an important aircraft that honors USAF service during the Korean War." MI



You Have Read About It...



Here's Your Opportunity to call it YOUR OWN.

N151JT *Was That Too Fast* has only 19 Hours since a Ground-up Restoration by Midwest Aero, a fresh June 2014 Annual Inspection and price has been reduced! Don't let this deal pass you buy to own the World's Finest and most recently Restored Mustang! Contact Mark Clark for more details at 1-800-4COURTESY/ IL 815-229-5112 or email sales@courtesyaircraft.com!

www.courtesyaircraft.com

