

MCDONNELL-DOUGLAS F-4B PHANTOM II



After losing out to the F-8U Crusader in a competition bid for a new Navy air-superiority fighter, McDonnell-Douglas began a company funded project in 1952 to produce a carrier borne fighter-bomber as a replacement for its F3H "Demon." The outcome was the single seat, multi-role (fighter, attack, photo reconnaissance, ECM) AH-1 aircraft with a top speed of Mach 1.5.

After the purchase of two AH-1 prototypes in 1954, Navy specifications were revised to provide

for a crew of two – pilot and Radar Intercept Officer. “Sparrow” and “Sidewinder” guided missile weapons systems and two General Electric J-79 engine with 17, 000 lbs. thrust each for a Mach 2+ speed. The aircraft designation was then changed from AH-1 to F4H-1 and named “Phantom”, one of the most famous aircraft in the history of military aviation. Its maiden flight occurred in 1958 with deliveries to Navy and Marine Corps squadrons beginning in 1960.

Within the space of about 28 months after its introduction, the F-4 had established 15 world aviation records including altitude (98,500 Ft) time to climb and speed, Mach 2.59. These factors, coupled with a demonstrated capability to lift a load of up to 22,000 lbs, convinced the Air Force to procure the aircraft whose performance qualities were as good as, or better than their best fighters.

Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force F-4's were used extensively during the Vietnam Conflict as high and low level bombers delivering a wide variety of ordinance, and as a fighter downing 107 enemy aircraft in aerial combat.

Over 5,000 F-4's were produced and it has served the air forces of twelve foreign countries. It was the only aircraft flown concurrently by the Navy and Air Force flight demonstration teams. While Navy F-4's were replaced by the Grumman F-14

"Tomcat", the Air Force still retains some for special mission roles. The last F-4's were converted to QF-4 remote controlled aircraft as target drones for air to air combat practice.

TYPE: Fleet Defense, Fighter

CREW: Two

ENGINE: 2-General Electric J-79-GE-15

THRUST/AFTERBURNER: 17,000 LB

RANGE: 422 MI

SPEED: 1,472 MPH MACH 2.23

CEILING: 60,000 FT

RATE OF CLIMB: 41,300 FT/MIN

LENGTH: 63 FT 6 IN

HEIGHT: 16 FT 6 IN

WINGSPAN: 38 FT 5 IN

EMPTY WEIGHT: 28,276 LB

MAX WEIGHT: 61,795 LB

This aircraft is on loan from the National Naval Aviation Museum, Pensacola, FL.