

COLORS OF WAR

A FURTHER SELECTION OF INTERESTING IMAGES FROM THE CHALLENGE ARCHIVES BY MICHAEL O'LEARY

Completely forgotten today is the fact the South African Air Force contributed No. 2 Squadron to the United Nations war effort in Korea. Using P-51D Mustangs (designated Mustang Mk. IV) initially, the South Africans went into combat in the very hazardous ground attack mission. Attached to the USAF's 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing for the duration of the war, No. 2 flew Mustangs from November 1950 to February 1953, at which time they re-equipped with F-86 Sabres. This Mustang Mk. IVA was originally given the serial KM361 but this was shortened to just 361 and painted on the rear fuselage near the horizontal tail. The aircraft, named *Miss Marunouchi*, is loaded with two 1000-pound bombs and four 5-inch rockets with two other similarly equipped Mustangs in the background. The national insignia was similar to that of the RAF but the red was replaced with orange, South Africa's national color (note that the spinner and carburetor intake lip are also painted orange). Also, an orange springbok was added to the center of the roundel. The entire airframe has been sprayed aluminum with the No. 2 insignia under the windscreen. The squadron flew 12,067 missions with Mustangs and Sabres and to give an idea of the losses, 74 of the 94 Mustangs assigned to the unit and four out of 22 Sabres were lost. Fourteen pilots were killed in action, eleven missing in action, and eight killed in accidents. The photo was taken at Chinhae (K-10 airfield) in Korea and the Mustang was being flown by Lt. J.G. Jimmy Newton.



Operations in the Western Desert were harsh on men and machine alike. Engine lives were drastically reduced due to the sand, even though tropical filters were added, which can be seen on the bottom of this Hurricane's cowl. Hurricane Mk. IID HV663 was operating with No. 6 Squadron, when photographed at Gabes, Tunisia, on 6 April 1943. The Mk. IID was a dedicated anti-tank aircraft and was fitted with two underwing Vickers 40mm S guns with 15 rounds of ammunition per gun. Each wing panel also had a single .303-caliber machine gun.



As noted, the attrition of South African Air Force Mustangs was huge. This view shows SAAF 326, 3780, and 373 plus an unidentified example