



This is how Jim Larsen first spotted Bureau Number 92085 in Colorado during 1955. (J. Larsen)

Flight jacket insignia for VMF-241.



BACK TO FORMER GLORY

THE LONG ROAD UNDERTAKEN BY A GOODYEAR FG-1D BEFORE A DEDICATED BAND OF RESTORERS BROUGHT THE FAMED FIGHTER TO STATIC MUSEUM DISPLAY CONDITION

BY STEVE SIBAL AND ED KAMINSKI

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the February 2021 "Airlines," we ran a couple Corsair photographs taken by Jim Larsen. As a young aviation enthusiast, Jim was at Buckley AFB near Denver looking for interesting aircraft to photograph. He was surprised to come across a completely intact Goodyear FG-1D Corsair. At the time, Jim commented "I first saw this FG-1D during an airshow at Naval Air Station Denver [to become Buckley AFB] about 1955. The Corsair was parked on the side of the ramp where spectators entered on their way to the show. It wasn't part of the show — it was simply parked there. At the time, there were Bearcats, SNBs, and TBMs operating with the Naval Reserve at the field. When I returned to the field a couple years later, the Corsair had been moved to the infield where it was starting to look a bit bedraggled and the prop was missing. By this time, the NAR was flying Grumman Cougars." Well, *Air Classics* readers are nothing if not dedicated to finding answers to aviation mysteries and by the next issue we had an answer thanks to Jeff King and other readers. What follows is the story of a Corsair that, against all odds, survived to become a museum display.



The completed restoration will now be kept inside out of the harsh Michigan weather.



Naval Air Reserve Training Command Seattle flight jacket patch showing Corsairs against a traditional totem.

After a long and tortuous journey from near oblivion to resurrection, Chance Vought/Goodyear FG-1D Corsair BuNo 92085 has been restored and is now on display at the Selfridge Military Air Museum (SMAM), located on Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Michigan. The museum's FG-1D was built by Goodyear Aircraft in Akron, Ohio, and accepted by the Navy in May 1945. It served various Naval Air Stations stateside and in Hawaii until 1959 when it was declared surplus and placed in Antelope Park in Lincoln, Nebraska. Time, weather and vandals took their toll and 92085 eventually ended up as a gunnery target at Yuma, Arizona. In 1976, the aircraft was discovered by retired B/Gen. Robert Raisch, USMCR, who took the initiative to rescue and transport it to Selfridge with the intent of restoration.

The Corsair was accepted by the Navy on 22 May 1945 and was flown from Akron to NAS San Diego. At that location, the fighter went into one of the aircraft pools at the base while it awaited assignment to an active-duty squadron. Once again, we do not have



When Jim spotted the Corsair a couple years later, the downhill slide had started. Note the missing propeller. (J. Larsen)