Vintage Wings of Canada

North American

P-51D Mark IV MUSTANG

Compiled by VWC Historian Don MacNeil

Photo: Eric Dumigan

Introduction

The P-51 Mustang is to some the most successful single engine fighter of all time. During the opening salvos of the Second World War, its predecessors the Hurricane and Spitfire, are known from the valiant and desperate struggle put up by British and Allied pilots against superior and overwhelming German forces. When introduced, the Mustang began its reputation by shifting European air superiority in favour of the Allied forces. When equipped with external long-range fuel tanks, the Mustang was capable of escorting Allied daylight bomber formations all the way from Britain to Berlin and back, thus providing Allied bomber formations with much needed protection against marauding enemy aircraft.

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The Vintage Wings of Canada Mustang is painted in the period markings of the Royal Canadian Air Force's 442 Squadron.

This squadron flew the last Allied forces fighter mission of the War in Europe. The day after VE (Victory in Europe) Day , fourteen Mustang Mk IV's left from RAF Station Hunsdon, Hertfordshire to fly fighter cover for naval operations near the German occupied Channel Islands. Led by Wing Commander J.A.S. Storar, the entire mission was a success although three aircraft returned early due to mechanical difficulties.

Mustang Origins

Designed by North American Aviation Inc. to British specifications, the prototype N.A. 73 Mustang flew within 100 days of its design and construction. Passing all flight tests, it was almost immediately put into production.

The first P-51s (Mustang 1) were delivered to the Royal Air Force in November 1941 under British contracts and later under the Lease-Lend arrangements with the U.S. Government. A portion of Mustang production was later diverted to the U.S. Army with the entry of America into the war effort.

Mustangs were originally conceived as long range bomber escorts. Due to the poor high altitude performance of their Allison V-1710-FR3 engines, the first Mustangs were re-mustered by the RAF as low-altitude reconnaissance fighters. It was not until the later P-51B and C models came into service with Rolls Royce Merlin engines, four blade propellers, two stage superchargers and re-designed airframes, that the P-51 emerged as a legendary high level, long range escort fighter.

Of the nearly 16,000 Mustangs produced, the P-51D (Mark IV) was the most common model.

Photo: DND

The Vintage Wings Mustang IV (P-51D-25) is a development of the B model with armament increased from four to six 50 cal. machine-guns. The Mustang IV also has the more familiar `blister` type sliding canopy and modified rear fuselage.

Dimensions:	**Imperial**	**Metric**
Wing Span:	37'	(11.3 m)
Fuselage Length:	32'	(9.8 m)
Height:	8` 8``	(2.6 m)

Weight:		
Empty:	7,635 lb	(3,465 kg)
Fully Loaded:	9,200 lb	(4,175 kg)

Performance:		
Maximum Speed:	440 mph	(712 kph)
Stalling Speed:	95 mph	(153 kph)
Range:	1000 miles	(1,609 km)
Max Climb:	3,077 feet/ minute (938 meters/ minute)	
Max Altitude:	40,000 feet (12,200 m)	

Armament:

6 – .50 Caliber Browning G53-2 Machine Guns Wing Mounted

Optional Armament:

2 hard points for up to 2,000 lb (907 kg) of bombs.
10 - 5" (127 mm) Rockets

Optional Equipment:

2 – 108 gallon, pressed paper drop tanks

Origins of Vintage Wings Mustang IV

Originally manufactured in 1944 at Inglewood, CA, this aircraft was assigned construction # 122-39922 by North American Aviation and taken on strength by the United States Army Air Force as service number 44-73463.

On 7 June 1947, 44-73463 was transfered to the RCAF and re-designated as a F-51D-NA. It was assigned RCAF service number 9575. In the mid 1950's it was struck from RCAF strength and on 27 February 1957 acquired by Mr. James H. Defuria & Fred J. Ritts of Intercontinental Airways at Canastota, NY.

From 1957 to 1961 9575 was stored uncovered at RCAF Station Carberry, Manitoba and in 1961 ownership passed to Aero Enterprises of Elkhart, IN. June 1962 saw the aircraft stripped and trucked from Carberry to Elkhart and later in the year sold as scrap to Leonard Tanner of North Cranby CT.

At some point between 1962 and 1977 it was reported to have been recovered from a scrapyard in Decatur, IL and ownership passed to Duan Egli of Fabens, TX .

In 1977 it was acquired by Richard Ransopher of Grapevine, TX. He moved the project from Texas to North Carolina in 1985 where restoration was started using the fuselage of RCAF s/n 9575 and parts from three other American aircraft: N1335, N6176C, 44-74574/ N5478V.

Robert S. Baker of Alva, OK purchased the project in 1998 and restoration work continued at Warbirds Inc. of Oklahoma City (fuselage and wing restoration). In 1999 the project moved to Alva, OK for detailing and completion work by Bob Baker. Finally registered as N351D and named "Oklahoma Miss", Skip Holm took the aircraft on its first post- restoration test flight on 17 June 2000. In the same year it was unveiled at the EAA convention at Oshkosh, WI and in 2001 it won the "Best P-51" award at Oshkosh.

MTW Aviation Inc., of Wilmington, Delaware acquired the aircraft 29 April, 2005. In the same year, Mr. Michael Potter of Ottawa, Ont., Canada became owner and the aircraft was registered as "CF-VPM". A new paint scheme was applied in 2006 to show the aircraft in period RCAF P-51D colours of 442 Squadron.

Mark IV Design and Specifications

Wings – Low-wing cantilever monoplane

Fuselage – All-metal with flush riveted "Alclad" skin and aluminium-alloy extrusions

Tail Unit – Cantilever monoplane type. All-metal tailplane with smooth skin covering. Elevators and rudder are dynamically balanced and have light alloy frames and fabric covering.

Landing Gear – Retractable main gear. Cantilever oleo-pneumatic air-oil shock-absorber legs with hydraulic retraction inwardly into the wings forward of the main wig spar. Fully-steerable and retractable tail wheel.

Power Plant – One Packard V-1650-7 (Rolls Royce Merlin 69), 1590 horsepower, V-12 liquid cooled engine with 2-stage supercharger.

Propeller – Four blade, Hamilton Standard, Hydromatic (24050) constant-speed. Diameter: 11' 2" (3.4 m).

Photo: Eric Dumigan