

GRUMMAN F9F 'PANTHER'



The Grumman F9F Panther series saw extensive combat in the Korean War for the United States Navy, accounting for over 78,000 combat sorties. The Panthers were primarily utilized as a close-support strike aircraft but could hold their own against the Soviet-built MiG jet fighters fielded by North Korea and China.

In the end, the Panther would become the most widely used fighter for the Navy and be credited with achieving the first Navy combat kill for the branch at the outset of the war.

The F9F Panther was designed as early as the latter stages of World War II. The Panther was initially equipped with an array of four turbojet engines mounted in the straight-wing assemblies - a testament to how poorly the early turbojets performed in terms of output.

As engine designs caught up to available technologies, the Panther was redesigned to accept just two turbojet engines - complete with water-injection boosting capabilities - now mounted in the wing roots. The addition of wingtip fuel tanks was also tested to good effect and would go on to increase the range of the fighter.

The F9F Panther straight-wing design was later further developed in the F9F Cougar, a similarly-designed swept-wing version of this jet fighter that retained only the cockpit fuselage portion of the Panther. Later on, the Panther was successful in the Korean War against both land and air targets and staid in frontline service with the Navy a late as 1958.

The Panther was used as a training aircraft at NAAS Kingsville from Aug 1955 to Feb 1958, with ATU-212 (VT-2) and ATU-202 (VT-21).

General characteristics

Length: 42 ft 2 in Wingspan: 34 ft 6 in
Height: 12 ft 3 in Wing area: 337 ft²
Weight: Empty 11,866 lb; Loaded: 20,098 lb
Max takeoff weight: 24,763 lb
Powerplant: 1× Pratt & Whitney J48-P-8A turbojet, 8,500 lbf (38 kN) with water injection

Performance

Maximum speed: 647 mph (1,041 km/h)
Range: 1,312 mi (2,111 km)
Service ceiling: 42,000 ft (12,800 m)
Rate of climb: 5,750 ft/min (29.2 m/s)
Wing loading: 61 lb/ft² (298 kg/m²)

