



antagonists, the St. Louis Cardinals would attempt

to repeat their resounding win over the New York Yankees. The 1942 Cardinals had not been given much of a chance against the New York powerhouse, but with the batting of rookie Stan Musial and the pitching of Johnny Beazley they defeated a team that had won six league championships in seven years.

But the nation's war effort was gobbling up manpower at a prodigious rate. No one knew who might be playing ball in 1944, or if there would even be a 1944 season. It looked as if this might be the last great series for the duration of the war, which is why the first game drew over 68,000 fans to Yankee Stadium.

As the teams took batting practice and the pitchers warmed up, four Army Air Forces B-17 bombers were droning toward New York City on their way to combat bases in England. At the navigator's station of *Thru Helen Highwater* [42-39785], sat my uncle, Second Lieutenant Harold Rocketto of Brooklyn. Second Lieutenant Jack Watson was the pilot; the other bombers were piloted by Second Lieutenants Robert Sheets, Elmer Young, and Joseph Wheeler.

As Rocketto, a Brooklyn Dodgers fan, scanned the landscape trying to pick out boyhood haunts in the Bensonhurst section, the idle chatter on the intercom turned to the World Series. No one is sure what sparked the next move. Perhaps it was Rocketto's desire to seek revenge against the Yankees for their 1941 victory over the Dodgers. Then again, perhaps it was just the high spirits of young men facing a dangerous future. Whatever the reason, the fans at Yankee Stadium were about to be treated to an impromptu demonstration of the nation's bomber force.

As the aircraft crossed the Hudson River, the pilots headed for the Bronx and put the formation into a shallow dive. Picking up speed, the bombers thundered over Yankee Stadium in a low pass from home plate to center field. After they climbed out the B-17s wheeled about and circled the field while Watson returned for an encore. He cleared the upper-deck flagpoles by a mere 25 feet,

prompting the Associated Press to later report that "an Army bomber roared over Yankee Stadium so

low that Slat's Marion could have fielded it." Watson then rejoined the formation and headed east.



*This is a frame from a movie taken of the buzzing. I saw it once cannot locate it. The B-17 is climbing over the left field tier.*

"We knew we were heading for a combat zone and dropping in on the World Series seemed like a good idea at the time," Wheeler told a reporter months later. "The announcers must have thought it was part of the show because after we went over the first time we could hear them on the plane radio talking about the big Air Force review. We figured they were enjoying it so we turned around and came over a second time. We thought nothing about it until later when we found we had caused a sensation."

New York mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, a World War I Army pilot, was watching as the bombers swooped overhead. La Guardia initially appreciated the panache of the young men, but admiration quickly gave way to his greater duty as mayor. Outraged, he burned up the phone lines to the Army Air Forces brass. "That pilot should be properly disciplined, endangering the lives of the citizenry of New York in that manner," he fumed.

When they landed at Presque Isle Airfield in Maine, Watson and the three other pilots were confined to quarters while court martial proceedings were undertaken. They were released a few days later when the Army realized it was

foolish to keep four badly needed aircraft and crews out of combat because of a youthful indiscretion. "Besides," a general told Watson, "you and your crew will probably be killed anyway."

Five days after the buzzing brouhaha the four aircraft continued their journey to England, each pilot's military record heavier by a letter of reprimand and his wallet lighter by a \$75 fine - no small sum to a second lieutenant back then.

Because of wartime news restrictions so tight that sports announcers were forbidden to comment on the weather lest the enemy pick up valuable intelligence, the buzzing incident went almost entirely unreported. The names of the crews were unknown to all but the authorities until three months later.

January 11, 1944, was one of the costliest days of air combat in history. Some 60 U.S. bombers were destroyed and more than 600 airmen were killed, wounded, or reported missing. On that terrible day, Watson, flying with the 303rd Bomb Group, single-handedly returned his badly shot-up and burning bomber to England. In a radio interview he brought up the stadium incident by voicing hope that the mayor of New York was not still sore at him. After hearing the interview, LaGuardia sent Watson a message: "All is forgiven. Congratulations. I hope you never run out of altitude. Happy landings. We'll be seeing you soon."

"Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and it can't be too soon for me." Watson replied, then added, "We'd sort of like to go back together some day and drop in on the Rose Bowl game."

### **The Crew of Hel'n HighWater**



(Back L-R) 2Lt Jack W. Watson (P), 2Lt John C. Doty, Jr. (CP)(EVD),  
**2Lt Harold Rocketto (N)(KIA)**, 2Lt Vance Colvin (B)(KIA)

(Front L-R) Sgt Roman Kosinski (TG)(POW), Sgt Fred H. Booth (BTG)(KIA),  
Sgt William H. Fussner (RWG)(KIA), Sgt Harry Romaniec (RO)(POW),  
Sgt Eugene R. Stewart (LWG)(POW), Sgt Samuel J. Rowland (E)(KIA)

Before the war ended, four had been killed in action, two were prisoners of war and one had been shot down and successfully evaded.

The fate of Rocketto was particularly poignant. Mission 84, target Dresden, his first mission, was on 29 November, 1943. He was assigned in the last minute as a substitute navigator aboard Stardust. He clambered aboard. No one knew his name.

As they approached Dresden and started on the bomb run, three German fighters made a frontal attack, blew out the plexiglass in the nose, killed my uncle and left a badly wounded bombardier.

My uncle left behind a pregnant wife and son whom would never know his father.

The bombardier, Charles Spencer crawled to the nose gun and fended off the fighters until he succumbed to his wounds and frostbite. He survived and lost one eye and fingers has to be amputated. He spent two years in hospital but returned, became a minister and led a fruitful life of service.

*A stanza from "All the Fine Young Men"*

*by*

*Thomas "Bill" Parrot, son of pilot John Parrott*

To all the fine young men who flew the skies

You will always be heroes in my eyes.

And I owe to you my life this very day

For you flew to meet the devil

And you met him face to face

And so today we still have freedom in this place.

## HALLOWEEN PHOTO-ESSAY

### AIRCRAFT FOR CELEBRATING HALLOWEEN

The celebration of Halloween has a mixed history and diverse traditions. Primarily a Christian holiday, it also has roots in other cultures: Celts and Romans for example. Halloween has both religious and secular elements and honors the dead and marks the end of harvest and the beginning of winter.

One of my favorite Gilbert and Sullivan operettas is *The Sorcerer* and my favorite patter song is John Wellington Welles' "advertisement of the products of his shop, *J. W. Wells & Co., Family Sorcerers*. a short piece which follows:

*Oh! my name is John Wellington Wells,  
i'm a dealer in magic and spells,  
in blessings and curses  
and ever-filled purses,  
in prophecies, witches, and knells.  
if you want a proud foe to "make tracks"--  
if you'd melt a rich uncle in wax--  
you've but to look in  
on the resident djinn,  
number seventy, simmery axe!*

...

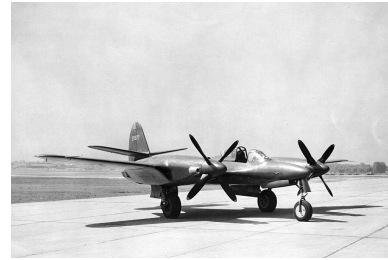
*He can raise you hosts  
of ghosts,  
and that without reflectors;  
and creepy things  
with wings,  
and gaunt and grisly spectres.  
he can fill you crowds  
of shrouds,  
and horrify you vastly;  
he can rack your brains  
with chains,  
and gibberings grim and ghastly!*

This brings to mind, a custom in aviation which

assigns eerie names to aircraft and engines. The leader in this tradition is the firm funded by James Smith "Mac" McDonnell Jr., McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, later McDonnell-Douglas and then merged with Boeing. Almost all of his early aircraft bore names apropos to Halloween. It started in 1944 and was carried on until 1958.

#### *McDonnell Aircraft*

##### *Moonbat*



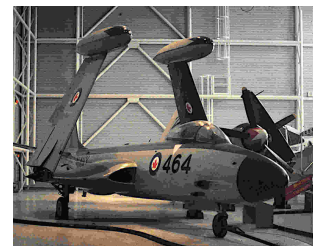
In 1944, McDonnell produced a one-off prototype, the XP-67 Moonbat, a piston powered twin engine interceptor. Its design exhibited near blended fuselage and laminar wings. Its negative qualities and an engine fire which led to its total loss ended the project

##### *FH Phantom*



A year later, McDonnell entered the jet age. The Phantom was a straight wing powered by twin Westinghouse J30 turbojets producing 1,560 lb of thrust. Limited in performance, on 62 were built and they ending up as trainers for the Naval Reserve until 1954.

##### *F2H-3 Banshee*



The 1947 Banshee was successful and 895 left McDonnell's St. Louis factory. Another straight wing twin engine jet, it was adopted by the Navy, Marines, and Royal Canadian Navy. It served during the Korean "Police Action" in close air support and interdiction mission



In 1951, the Demon made its first flight. It was McDonnell's first swept wing, single engine fighter and 519 were produced after the Navy issued a proposal for a swept wing. She was underpowered and required redesign with its attendant delays and costs. It has an unimpressive combat career in Korea and it several deployments to Lebanon and the Taiwan Straits.

*F-101-F/ RF-101C/CF-101 Voodoo*



*XF-85 Goblin*



The Goblin, first flown in 1948, was conceived for a unique mission, a parasite fighter carried by a B-36 bomber to provide air defense against enemy interceptor. Alas, it was difficult to dock and its single engine lackluster performance was inadequate to face enemy interceptors. Two prototypes were built before the project was cancelled.

*XF-88 Voodoo*

Another 948 product, the Voodoo was designed to meet a USAAF requirement for a long range escort fighter, a penetration fighter. Two prototypes were delivered but Air Force funding and the dropping of the mission requirement led to cancellation. One of the prototypes, designated XF-88B was modified as an engine testbed to take a nose mounted turbo-prop engine.

1954 led to the revival of the moniker Voodoo by McDonnell. The aircraft was a supersonic interceptor and excellent for reconnaissance and did yeoman service during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Navy US Air National Guard,, Republic of China and Royal Canadian Air Force all incorporated the 895 Voodoos produced into their inventories.

*F-4C/F-4S Phantom*



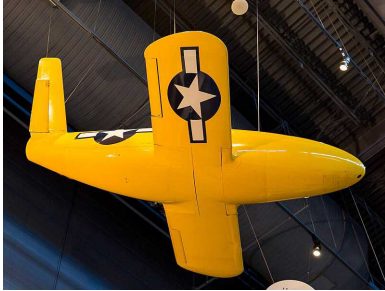
*F3H-2 Demon*



Mr. Mac hit the jackpot with the Phantom II. In a production run of 5,195 aircraft which ran from 1958 to 1981. Carrying a crew of two, it served as a fighter bomber in at least in eleven different air forces. The USAF originally designated the

Phantom II as the F-110 Spectre, a “century series” fighter but the DoD adopted the Tri-service Aircraft System still in use today.

*LBD Gargoyle*



McDonnell developed one missile for the Navy, the Gargoyle. It was an air-to-ship weapon guided by radio commands. Two hundred were produced between 1944 and 1947. Used in tests to support other Navy mission projects but never used in combat, the program was terminated in 1950.

**de Havilland Aircraft**

*Mr. Mac was hard pressed by Sir Geoffrey de Havilland whose de Havilland Aircraft Company and de Havilland Engine Company also favored spooky names.*

*DH.84 Dragon/Dragon Rapide*



First flown in 1932, 202 Dragons were built and found employment as commercial and military

transports. Amy Johnson and Jim Mollison made a 39 hour passage of the Atlantic from Wales intending to land at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn but a fuel shortage forced a landing in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

*DH.100 Vampire and Sea Vampire Swiss FB.6 Sea Vampire Mk.10*



*Lon Chaney, the Preeminent Count Dracula*

The Vampire was the second jet fighter adopted by the RAF. It made its first flight in 1943. It was the first jet to cross the Atlantic and the first jet to make a carrier landing and take-off with Winkle Brown at the controls. The Sea Vampire had the tail hook for arrested landings larger air brakes and flaps for slow-speed approaches and a beefed-up landing

*DH.112 Venom and Sea Venom*



*FAW21 Sea Venom*



The *Venom* was powered by the de Havilland Ghost 103, A navalized version was produced as the *Sea Venom* and 1,431 aircraft were manufactured. The DH.113 was a two seat night fighter developed for the export market. Only 78 or 93 were built, sources disagree. The two man crew sat side-by-side in the enlarged cockpit.



*BV 138  
Seedrache*

*DH.115 Vampire*



*T.11*

*Ki 49 Donryū  
Storm Dragon*



*Vampire Bat*



*U-28 Draco*



*U-2A Dragon Lad*



The DH.115 was a two seat trainer adopted by the RAF and Fleet Arm, Australia, Switzerland and India. All were powered by Goblin engines.

*de Havilland Power Plants*

The engine division produced the Ghost, Gnome and Goblin were turbines and the Sprite and Spectre rocket engines. The Sprite was a JATO rocket using hydrogen peroxide as a propellant and developed 5,000 pounds of thrust for 10 seconds. The Spectre was intended to be part of a mixed power plant for the Saunders-Roe research plane and used kerosene and hydrogen peroxide as fuel

*Owls*



*Heinkel 219 Uhu  
(Eagle Owl)*

*More Halloween Entities in Order Categorical*

*Dragons*

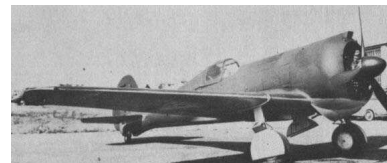


*Curtiss O-52 Owl*



*Demons*

*Curtiss CW-21 Demon*



*Belphegor, the Demon*



*F-16 "Viper" with Sidewinder mounted on wingtip*



*Nasty Critters*

*P-63C King Cobra*



*Ghosts, Spectres, Spirits, Sprites and Gremlins*



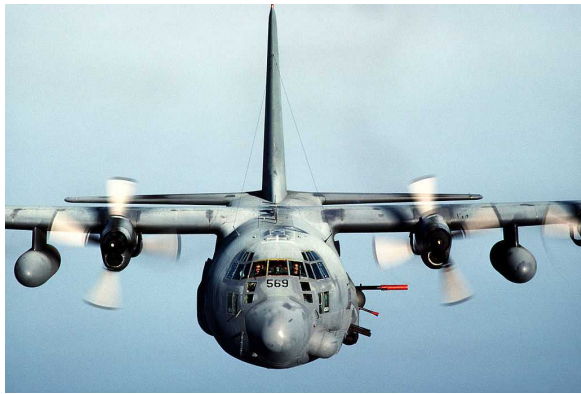
*YF-23 Black Widow II*



*AC-47 Spooky/Puff the Magic dragon*



*Lockheed AC-130H Spectre*



*AC-130J Ghost Rider*



*Twilight Zone-Nightmare at 20,000 feet*

*William Shatner and Nick Cravat*



*XB-70 Valkyrie*

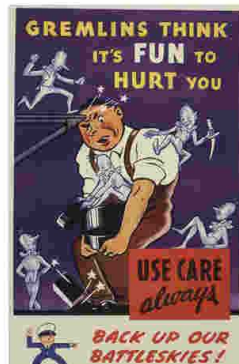


*SH2 Seasprite  
Wicked Gremlins*

*And to end on a cheerful note-goo natured  
Gremlins*



*Fifinella, guardian of the  
WASPs(Womens Service  
Army Pilots)*



*B-26 Marauder of the 573 Bomb Group*