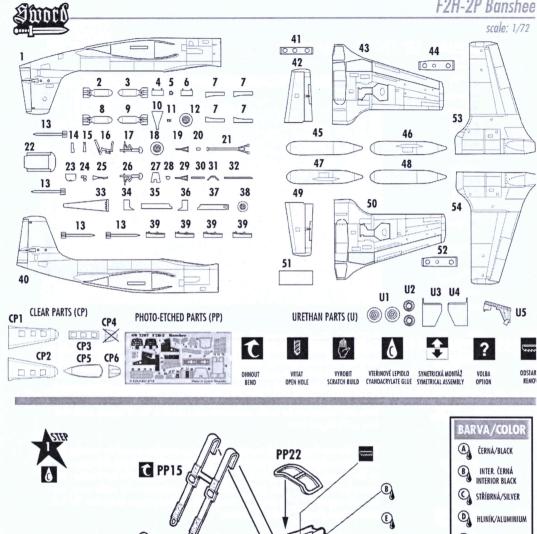


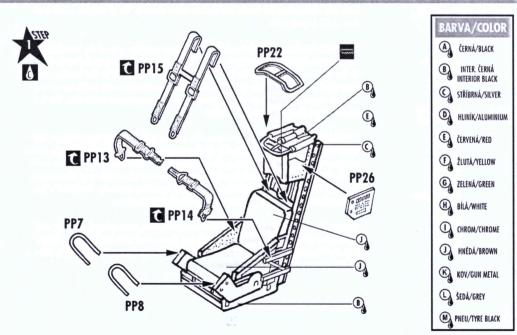
In 1943, the U.S. Navy contracted with McDonnell Aircraft for a single-seat, twin-engine, carrier-based jet fighter that was to become the FH-1 Phantom. It was a first for both the Navy and McDonnell. Although successful, the Phantom was somewhat underpowered. It was soon followed on the production line by the F2H-1 Banshee, which incorporated an ejection seat, additional fuel, more powerful engines, and four 20 mm cannon instead of machine guns. First flight was accomplished on 11 January 1947. Wing-tip-mounted fuel tanks and eight pylons for bombs and rockets were added to the -2 variant, which first flew on 18 August 1949.

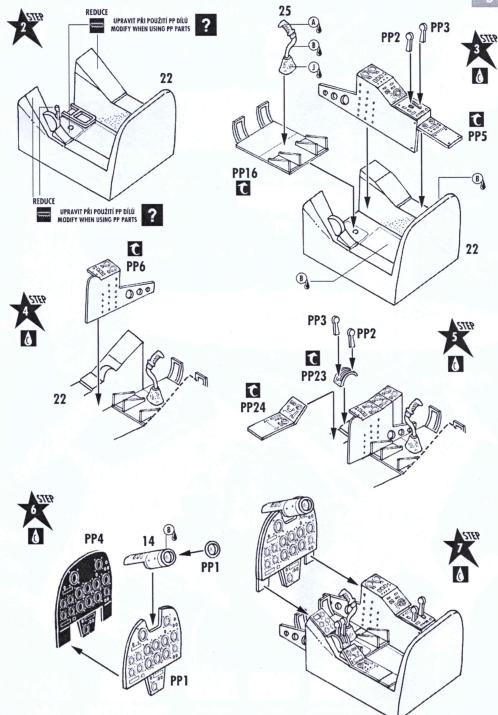
Along with the Grumman F9F Panther, the Banshee quickly replaced the existing propeller-driven fighters aboard the U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and was therefore available for combat operations in the Korean War in 1951. Compared to the Panther, it had somewhat better endurance, payload, and altitude performance for strike escort and close air support missions as well as interdiction of enemy trucks and trains. The U.S. Marine Corps also operated the Banshee.

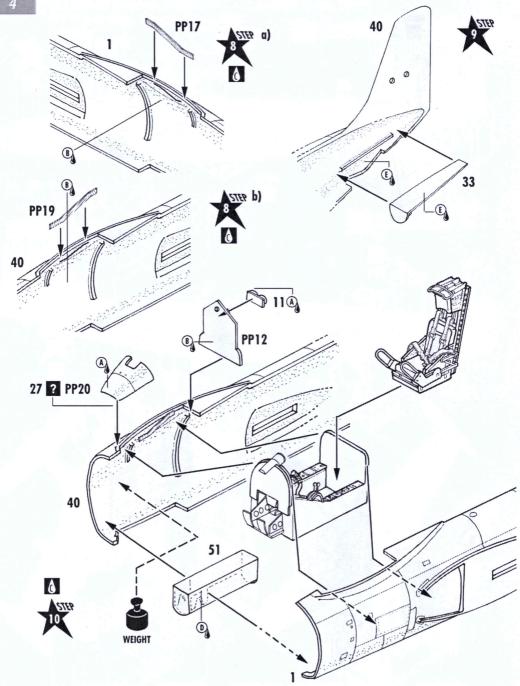
Before combat in Korea, an F2H-1 was used to counter U.S. Air Force claims that its high-flying B-36 could not be intercepted by jet fighters. When the Secretary of Defense denied the Navy's request for trials pitting the Banshee against the Peacemaker, one was modified to carry a camera in the aft fuselage that was used to take a picture of Washington, D.C. from 49,000 feet, demonstrating its altitude capability. Ironically, the F2H-2's first mission during the Korean War was to escort USAF B-29 bombers.

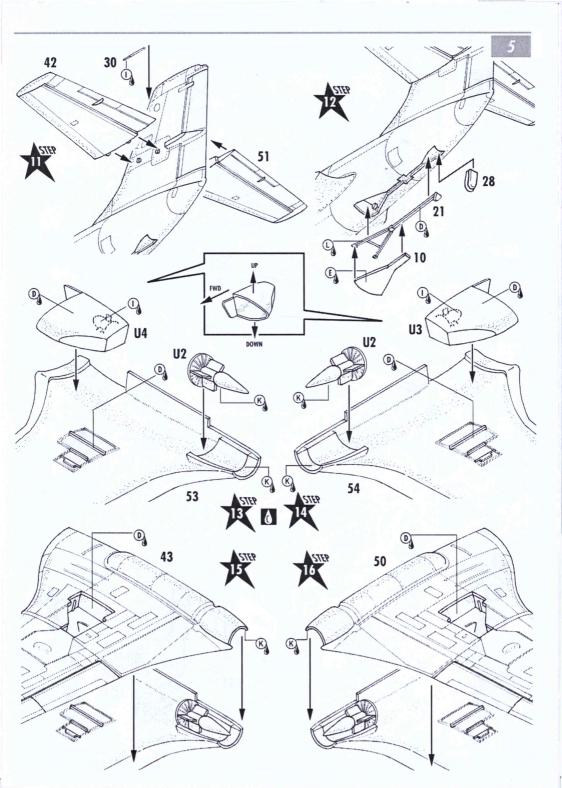
Variants of the F2H-2 were used for photoreconnaissance, nuclear-bomb delivery, and all-weather air defense. It was replaced aboard the carriers with the somewhat larger F2H-3/4 Banshee beginning in 1952, having played a significant role in the U.S. Navy's transition from propeller-driven fighters to jets.

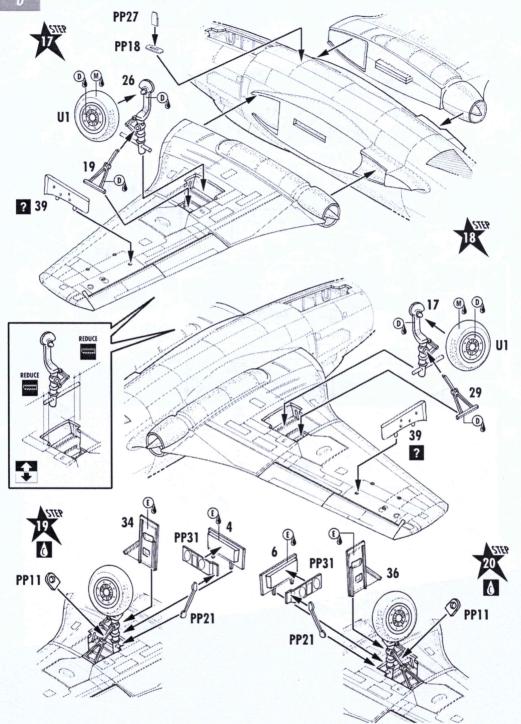


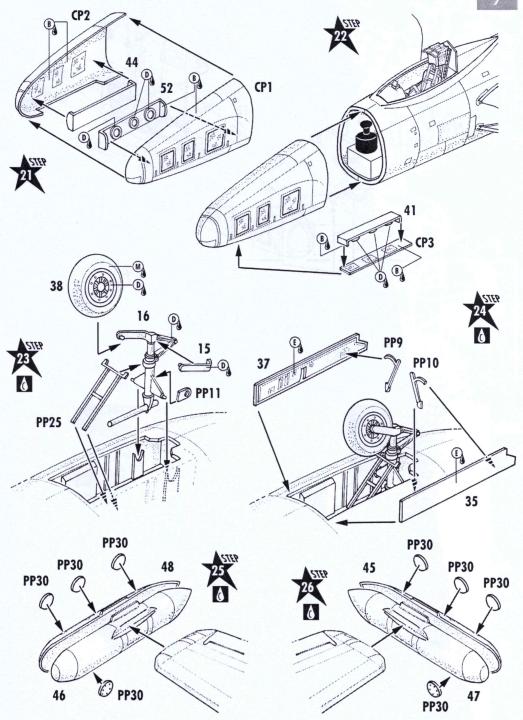


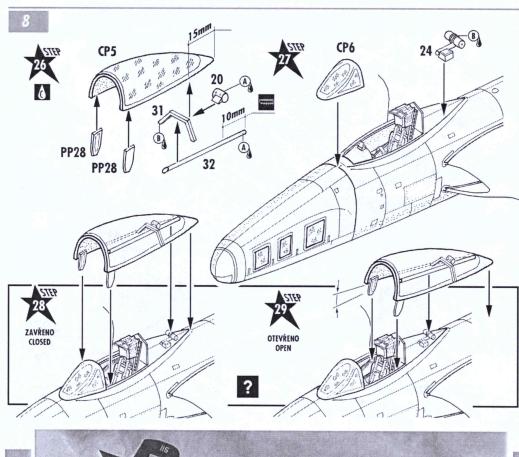




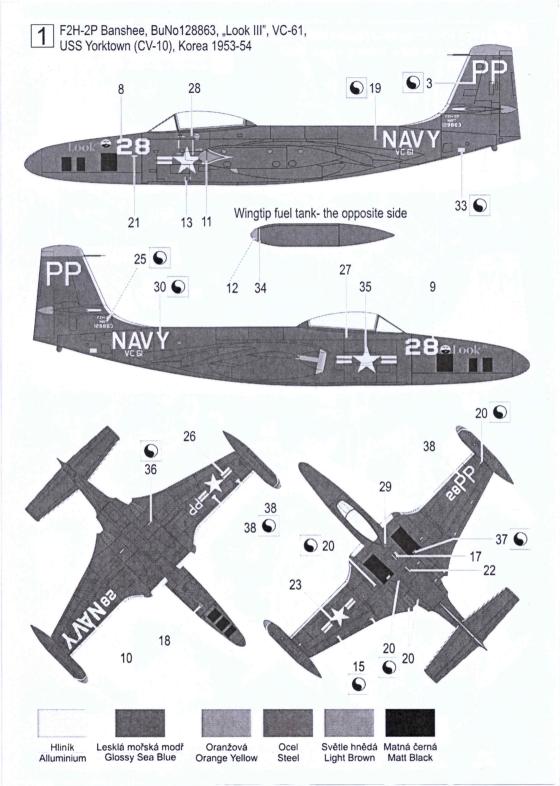


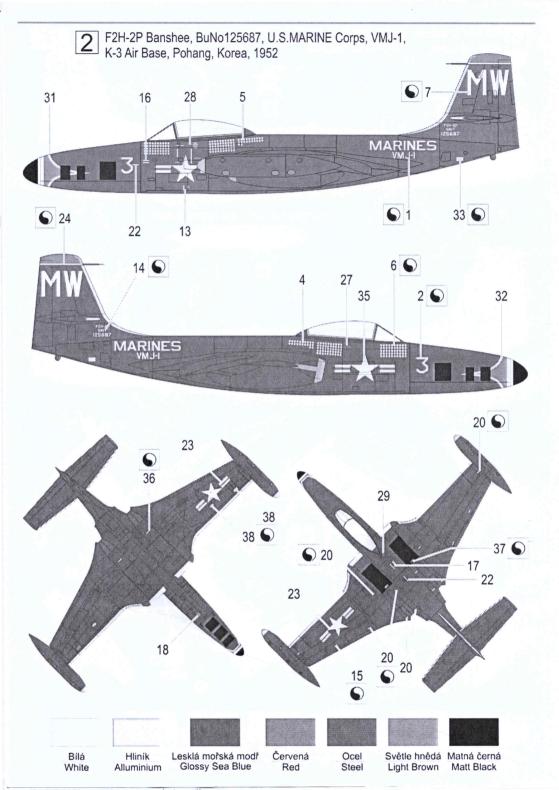


















1872





F2H-2P Photo Banshee

