

Proposed article for CSM monthly Newsletter

Visit to the National Museum of Naval Aviation, Pensacola, FL

I visited the National Museum of Naval Aviation on vacation this July. This was my first visit since they opened the new building and my first visit since they placed the PB2Y-5R Coronado flying boat on exhibition. My indoor shots were unfortunately rather dark but I got some decent pictures during the flightline tour, if the subject was on the right side of the bus!

### Building 1

This is the one I most wanted to see, the PB2Y-5R Coronado. There are only a few large 4-engine flying boats left. There is an H8K "Emily" in Japan; I believe one British Sunderland, a pair of JRM Mars still in use as forest fire water bombers and this Coronado. The Coronado owes its survival to having been loaned to Howard Hughes for use as a trainer for crews meant to fly his "Spruce Goose". After that use Hughes stored it for 20 plus years. It eventually made its way to the museum. I first saw it in the early stages of restoration in 2003. It is now completed, displayed in the markings it wore when used as a transport for Admiral Nimitz.



PB2Y-5R from mezzanine



PB2Y-5R from the floor (see the people!)

Flight line tour:



A4D-1 (A-4A) Skyhawk, note the smooth surface rudder



T-2C Buckeye



WV-2 (EC-121) Warning Star



TT-1 Pinto jet primary trainer



R5C (C-46) Commando, a very weathered example!



PV-2 Harpoon



PBY-5A Catalina



HU-16E Albatross



HH-3F Pelican, another well weathered airframe



Here is one I was really excited to see, the F6U-1 Pirate, Vought's first, and not very successful, attempt at a jet fighter. Only 30 were built and I believe this is the only one remaining. The airframe was restored by Vought retirees but surprisingly has some accuracy shortcomings.



Another view of the F6U-1 Pirate. Note the HR2S-1 (CH-37C) Mohave lurking in the left rear. I was on the wrong side of the trolley to get a better picture. Note the bug eyes painted on the engine nacelles. The tour guide told us the Marines nicknamed the chopper "Kermit" but I am more than a little sceptical. The HR2S-1, real nickname "Deuce", was long out of service before the famous frog debuted.

Just loitering in the parking lot:



F3D-2 Skyknight

Note the unusual aircraft number.

VMF(N)-513 numbered their aircraft in succession but just couldn't bring themselves to use number 13!



A3D Skywarrior electronic warfare version. Photo taken through a chain link fence. First time in four visits the plane was in a position to get a photo.

New Building 2 housing Viet Nam and modern aircraft plus USCG



Entrance to Building 2 with a Doolittle Raid B-25B in front



The only surviving P5M-2 Marlin, now restored and displayed indoors after years on the flight line. In front is the HH-52A Seaguard helicopter, a type completely ignored by model kit manufacturers.



P2V-1 Neptune "The Turtle", also rescued from years out on the flight line. In September 1946 this aircraft set a world distance record of 11,236.6 miles unrefueled from Perth, Australia to Columbus, OH. The plane was in the air for 55 hours and 18 minutes. The record was not surpassed until 1962 by a B-52. Among the crew was a gray kangaroo bound for the National Zoo in Washington.

And finally, the happy camper seated in the cockpit section of an F8U-1 (F-8A) Crusader. I managed to climb in and out all by myself, much to the amazement and amusement of the two pre-teen boys awaiting their turn behind me!

