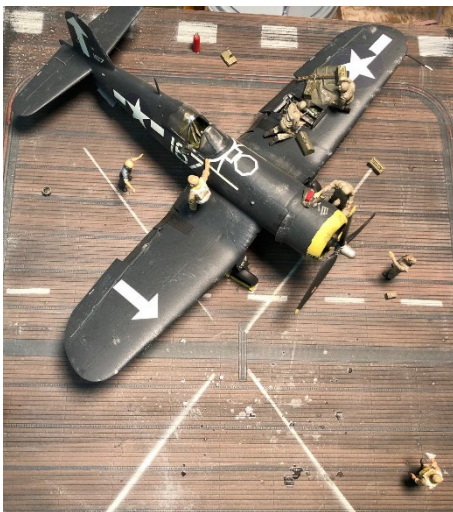


#23 The Whistling Death – Vought Corsair



Mechanics prep a Navy Corsair for takeoff from an aircraft carrier deck.



In 1940 Rex Beisel and his engineering staff designed a navy fighter aircraft around Pratt and Whitney's 2000 horsepower Double Wasp engine. That plane was the Vought Corsair, (XF4U-1) sometimes called "Whistling Death."

The gull wings allowed the XF4U-1 to swing a 13-foot, 4-inch propeller and have a short light landing gear and a low draft right angled wing-to-fuselage intersection. The first F4U-1 rolled off the line in June 1942. From the Pacific came good reports from both Navy and Marine pilots. In early 1943 the Corsairs proved themselves in battle in the Solomon Island. Admiral Chester Nimitz proclaimed these superior to all models of the Japanese Zero fighter.

The fighter would see use through the end of WWII and into the Korean Conflict.