

# 000070: F8F\_Bearcat

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## Note

Read 000067, American Fighters, first.

## British

Have you ever noticed that the well-known British films are about surrendering, life as a P.O.W., and failure? Bridge over river Kwai, The great escape, A bridge too far, Rommel, the desert fox. They clearly have nothing to celebrate, as they were generally failures. Three things are seen as a result of this:

- 1) They have Nazi adoration. The British did so poorly against the Germans, that they subscribe to the Nazi Superman ideology. Anything German is Super Human.
- 2) Claiming they did better than they did. That they were more important than they were.
- 3) Denigrating anything non-German and British. Claims that they taught everyone else how to do everything.

The claim that they taught the U.S. Navy how to land Corsairs on carriers. Completely nonsense covered in another paper. They also claim that the F8F resulted from Grumman engineers flying a FW 190. When it's pointed out that the F8F was designed before that, it's on to "well, it did influence the F8F, especially the cowling." As always, they have nothing to base that on and it simply doesn't stand up to any scrutiny.

## Half Century

I remember sitting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, English, just trying to amuse myself. School was so boring. I was a reader; I read a lot, starting back in elementary school. The book I had at that time had outlines of WW2 fighters. When tracing them, for whatever reason, the F6F stuck out to me. I didn't care for the Corsair. I didn't care for the Mustang. I did kind of like the P-38, I had already reviewed the "Bong P-38," located, at that time, on a pylon in Poplar Wisconsin. The Hellcat stuck out to me. Why? I had no idea. It's taken half a century to really understand it. The F4F Wildcat and F8F Bearcat didn't catch my attention nearly as much. I was essentially right – I just didn't know why.

## Wrong Airplane

Two things put F4U Corsairs on the aircraft carriers:

- 1) Lack of airfields in the central Pacific
- 2) The desire to increase the number of fighter-type aircraft for the upcoming fighter sweeps.

Three things lead to the design of the F8F:

- 1) Interviews of the pilots, after Midway, which further distorted the abilities of the Japanese Zero
- 2) Kaiser's Vancouver shipyards
- 3) Bob Hall's past history.

The above three lead to the F8F. Not a bad airplane, not a good airplane, just the wrong airplane. The F8F owed nothing to the FW 190. It did owe much to the Zero, but, that influence wasn't good.

## The Zero

The start of the Pacific conquest, by the Japanese, gave the Zero a reputation it didn't deserve. See the 000067 paper. It was the perfect airplane for a modern day Red Baron, but it's not good to be a modern day Red Baron. The Red Baron is a blade of grass. Modern formation tactics make for the mower. Be the mower. In any event, the pilots facing the Zero, with bad tactics, wanted a very light and powerful fighter. A "Super Zero."

## Kaiser's Vancouver shipyards

The escort carriers. Flying F6F and F4U aircraft from them was a bad fit. Wildcats were used instead. With big carriers needing 36 months to build, all eyes were on those easy to make baby carriers. Something better was needed for those. Something better than the Wildcat. "How about the Super Zero!"

## Bob Hall's history

Bob Hall was chief engineer at Grumman. Very influential in the design of their aircraft.



In his past, Bob Hall had designed a pocket rocket. That one.

The F8F was in fact the "Super Zero." The Japanese would have loved it. The problem is that the U.S. Navy pilots had the right tactics. Read 000067 for the Hellcats getting jumped by the supposedly advanced KI 100. It's not good to be the Red Baron.

The F8F was inferior to the F6F and F4U. Lack of range was the biggest problem. Lack of load carrying ability was the second. F4Us, with range and load carrying ability, soldiered along into the Korean War. The F6F had given way to jets.

The F8F was the right plane for the Japanese. It was the wrong plane for America.



What is that? FM-2 Wildcat. Note the cowling.



F8F Bearcat. Note the cowling. The British like to claim the FW 190 influenced the F8F cowling design. The FM-2 begs to differ. Those two airplanes, given Kaiser's baby carriers, are far more related than most would understand.