

# THE RED DEVILS, YOU SAY

**T**hirty-eight Marine pilots got the chance of a lifetime when they reunited with a former love—their fighter plane. A reunion on 12 May at the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, Fla., brought together former aviators from the VMFA-232 *Red Devils* for the unveiling of a restored FJ-4 *Fury*. Prior to restoration, the jet (BuNo 139486) had the historically inaccurate markings of a Navy squadron. Research proved the *Fury's* 1957–1959 active service life had been solely with the *Red Devils*. The 38 aviators raised more than \$6,000 to repaint the jet as a Marine fighter with appropriate markings.

Retired Brigadier General Jay W. Hubbard, former *Red Devils* skipper, led the group. A lieutenant colonel when he commanded the squadron, Hubbard rose from private to brigadier general in his career, which spanned combat tours in three wars. His name is stenciled under the canopy of the restored *Fury*.

The *Red Devils* have a long and celebrated history. On 1 September 1925 at NAS San Diego, Calif., 2d Lieutenant Clayton C. Jerome took to the skies in a VE-7 single-seat biplane with the Marine Fighting Plane Squadron 3 *Red Devil* insignia on the aft fuselage. As years passed, the squadron designation varied and aircraft became newer and more capable. In 1933, the unit was redesignated Bombing Plane Squadron 4M. In 1941, redesignated Marine Scouting Bombing Squadron 232, the *Red Devils* suffered loss or severe damage to 19 of 20 aircraft during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Redesignated Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron 232 in 1943, the squadron flew against enemy shipping, airfields and installations throughout the Pacific until August 1945. On 16 November of that year, the



**Above, the restored FJ-4 *Fury* is displayed at the National Museum of Naval Aviation. Left, former *Red Devils* skipper retired Brigadier General Jay W. Hubbard gives a thumbs-up from the cockpit.**

squadron arrived at San Diego and was deactivated.

On 3 June 1948 the *Red Devils* were reactivated as Marine Fighting Squadron 232. In 1953, the squadron entered the jet age with the F9F-2 *Panther*.

In 1965 the squadron became a Marine All-Weather Squadron. In 1966 VMF(AW) 232 was fully operational in DaNang, Vietnam. In 1967 the *Red Devils* left Vietnam and were redesignated Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232. It returned to southeast Asia in 1972 and played a key role in Operation Linebacker missions.

The *Red Devils* transitioned to the F/A-18 *Hornet* in 1989, and in 1991 participated in Operation Desert Storm. Various western Pacific deployments during the 1990s kept VMFA-232 at

the forefront of Marine aviation. In February 2001, the *Red Devils* had achieved more than 85,900 flight hours without a Class A mishap. Since January 1998, the Marine Corps oldest active fighter attack squadron has been home-ported at NAS Miramar, Calif. 



**The *Red Devil* insignia has flown on a wide variety of aircraft since its inception in 1925, including (from bottom to top) the BG-1, F4B-3s, the F-4 *Phantom II* and F/A-18 *Hornets*.**

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