



Swedish Mustangs

By JOHN C. TAYLOR

Late in World War II, Swedish air authorities saw the need for a new fighter. The Fiat and Reggiane fighters then used by some Swedish fighter wings had a very low in-commission rate. At this time, the fortunes of war placed in Swedish hands examples of one of the finest pursuit types of the war, the North American P-51 Mustang. This provided the Swedish Royal Air Force with several test machines, and had much influence upon the final selection of the P-51 as the new type. Had a log been kept of the development of the Mustang's association with Flygvapnet (FV) it might have been similar to what follows:

1943-44. Discussions were held in the Royal Swedish Air Staff (Flygstabens) and the R. S. Air Board, (Flygforvaltningen) with the air attache of the United States and other countries. These talks concerned the possibilities of obtaining pursuit aircraft and other aviation materials from abroad.(1) In this period the first ten P-51s arrived via the combat zones; nine were American and one was RAF.(2)

15 April 1944. The first P-51 crashed at Skumneslov from unknown causes. It was buried twenty feet underground and the pilot perished on impact.

13 May 1944. Next to arrive was P-51 B-5-NA, Z HUB, USAAF 43-6365. It landed out of fuel at Rinkaby, after combat over Stettin. It was flown unharmed to Bromma Flygplats (Stockholm) 14 May 1945 and turned over to the Air Force as number one in the new fighter series, J 26, Number 26001.

22 May 1944. On this date, three P-51s landed in Sweden. P-51B-5-NA 43-6461, HOT PANTS, was forced down at Ljungbyhed for lack of fuel. It became 26002 in April, 1945. P-51B-1 NA 43-12463 landed at Ljungbyhed for the same reason. It later crashed at



Bromma on 7 October 1944 and, after usable material was salvaged, the remainder was sold for scrap. The third Mustang of the day, P-51D-5-NA 44-13939, crashed at Kungstorp after motor failure and was salvaged.

6 August 1944. After combat over Gydnia, P-51D-5-NA 44-13917 landed out of oil at Bulltofta, with only light damage. It was from the 339th Ftr. Group at Fowlmere. FV purchased it October 5.

25 August 1944. The first of two to land at Lomma, P-51D 44-13345 of the 364th FS (357th FG), made a forced landing after a mission over Germany. It entered FV at 23 March 1945. 42-106854 was less fortunate, making a belly-landing with heavy damage. It was taken to Malmo 28 August 1944, and after salvage was sold as scrap.

25 August 1944. The last Mustang to find haven on a Swedish field was of the RAF. This was P-51K-1-NT 44-11391, coded YT-E, from 65 Squadron at Peterhead. It had been on escort duty over Skagerrak-Kattegat, and belly-landed at Getteron, apparently from motor trouble and bad navigation. The wreckage was sold for scrap.

The first three of the J 26 Series, 26001-03, were thus obtained at no cost to Flygvapnet. They provided a wealth of study material, all of which was carefully evaluated.(3)

2 October 1944. Sweden proposed to send two officers, Lt. Col. C.H.B. Nordenskiöld and Maj. Frank Cervell, to England for study of United States and other pursuits in War Surplus stocks.

31 October 1944. The Air Board proposed to the Government that requests be made via the Swedish Embassy in Washington, concerning possible purchase of 70 P-47s or P-51s from United States stocks.

16 November 1944. Discouraging service reports were received from F 10, at Malmo, about the Italian aircraft there. These were of the types J 11 (Fiat Cr 42) and J 20 (Reggiane Re 2000 Falco). They suffered from frequent defects, and were 75% grounded. The only Swedish aircraft to fall to German guns were of these types, all in the year 1944. One of the four casualties (one pursuit and three recce) fell in Western Swedish waters, and the rest had been shot down over the Baltic.

30 January 1945. The Air Board proposed to the Defense Minister that 50 pursuits, available in Great Britain, be purchased.

2 February 1945. The Defense Minister brought the proposal, with its cost of thirty-four million SKr, before the parliament. That same day, the Government authorized the Air Board to sign a preliminary contract for fifty airplanes. This was done by the special Air Board envoy to Great Britain, Col. (later General) Bengt M. Jacobsseon.

14 March 1945. Final approval for the purchase was given by parliament.

March - April, 1945. The first fifty Mustangs were flown to F 16, at Uppsala, by American pilots. These delivery flights were noted with deep concern, by German radar observers in Denmark, and the Luftwaffe considered sending night fighters against the "Swedish" aircraft.

Upon their arrival over Stockholm, some of the more expressive pilots flew under Vasterbron, the high bridge in the Western part of the city, attracting much attention to these early deliveries.

February-March, 1946. New negotiations about further Mustang purchases were begun with the United States. Ninety airplanes were offered for sale.

4 March 1946. The Air Board placed the proposal before the Government, citing its necessity while awaiting deliveries of the first indigenous

jet fighter, the SAAB J 21R.

15 March 1946. Government approval was given to the purchase, with contracts and deliveries to occur during 1946-47.

The new Mustangs were assigned to F-4, Osterlund upon their arrival over the period from March, 1946 to May, 1947.

23 November 1948. The last batch of P-51s procured, twenty-one in all, entered the Air Force at F 21, Lulea.

Besides those already mentioned, one other station had Mustangs for a short time. This was F 8 at Barkarby. The assignment of aircraft by stations is shown by this table.(4)

	1945	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
F 4	-	-	23	54	53	47	40	38	2	
F 8									10	10
F16	47	39	59	64	72	60	55	50	7	8
F12					3	12	11	12	9	9
	47	39	82	118	128	119	106	100	28	27

Eleven of the airplanes assigned to F-12 were converted to photo-recon S-26s. The modification was done by mounting a single Type SKa 10 camera in a shaft just forward of the tailwheel. On each side of the fuselage was an access panel for the film cassettes.

The camera was warmed by air from the oil/coolant radiator, which was passed through the camera opening. Since the shutter speed and aperture could not be controlled from the cockpit, they had to be set before takeoff. Operation was electrical, being coupled to the aircraft electrical system when the main-buss circuit breaker was closed. Both series and single photos could be taken, activated by camera controls on the right side of the instrument panel.

The camera location shifted the center of gravity to the rear. To compensate, a 20 kg. weight was placed in the nose. It was also necessary, however, to limit fuel-loading in the wing and fuselage tanks, so that the airplane would not become tail-heavy. Drop tanks could be used either full or empty without affecting the CG.

The log of the Swedish Mustangs was closed in 1954. Final accounting for J-26 operations showed: Sixty aircraft crashed over Swedish territory or territorial waters; five due to pilot error, five to technical faults, nineteen from midair collisions or with the ground during exercises, bad weather, etc. and the remaining thirty-one from now unknown causes. Thirty-two pilots were killed.

131 planes remained, of which eight were scrapped, and the rest were sold via the firm H. Wallenberg and Co., AB, Birgerjarlsgatan 4, Stockholm, as follows:

1952-53	42 to Fuerza Aerea Dominicana
1952	25 to the Israeli Air Force
1953	25 to the Nicaraguan Air Force

The Nicaraguan purchases were delivered, disassembled, to Corinto in January, 1955. The airplanes delivered to Dominica accompanied by a group of Swedish technicians, headed by Walter Ekberg, which has been active during the years since with FAD. In the period 1954-64 Ekberg served as technical chief and advisor to FAD, and had one written the FAD concerning the Mustang, the answer might

well have been in Swedish.

The Mustang continued its varied career with these smaller air forces, but in Sweden the reign of the reciprocating engine fighter was over. During its service the Mustang saw the DH Vampire, SAAB's interim J 21R, and the pudgy but agile J 29 enter service and begin the Swedish jet age.

REFERENCES.

- (1) Historical sketch of Mustangs delivered to Flygvapnet, supplied by Flygstabens.
- (2) Listing from R. Sw. Air Board of Mustang serials, approval, dates, units, and disposition.
- (3) "North American 'Mustang' i Sverige" by Bo Widfeldt, in Meddelandet från Svensk Flyghistorisk Forening (Proceedings of the Swedish Aviation Historical Society), No. 7, October, 1964, translated by J. C. Taylor.
- (4) Full names of J 26 Units are: F 4 Kungl Jamtlands Fflj, Östersund-Frosön, in north-central Sweden. F 16 Kungl Upplands Fflj, Uppsala-Arna,

about forty miles north of Stockholm. F 12 Kungl Norrbottens Fflj, Luleå-Kallaxheden, at the north end of the Gulf of Bothnia. F 8 Kungl Svea Fflj, Barkarby, some twelve miles NW of Stockholm. (The author was fortunate enough to visit F 4, F 12 and F 8, as part of a group, guests of the Flygvapnet in the summer of 1958.)

(5) Further Swedish terms not defined in the main text are: J (for Jaktplan) - pursuit type; Flygflottilj (F or Fflj) - equivalent to a USAF group; Kunglig (Kungl) - Royal.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to express my thanks to the Royal Swedish Air Staff, in the person of Lt. Col. N. Kindberg, who so kindly furnished material, including the article by Herr Widfeldt, and photos of Swedish P-51s. Capt. John C. Taylor Editor's note: Capt. John C. Taylor, USAF, has kindly consented to act as liaison officer between the A.A.H.S. and the Swedish Aviation Historical Society.

TABLE OF SERIALS, UNITS, AND DISPOSITIONS OF FV J26s

Legend: C=Crashed
P=Salvaged for Parts
D=Fuerza Aerea Dominicana
I=Israeli Air Force
N=Nicaraguan Air Force
S=Converted to S26 Standards

FV sn	Fflj	USAAF sn		FV sn	Fflj	USAAF sn		FV sn	Fflj	USAAF sn		FV sn	Fflj	USAAF sn	
26001	F 16	43-6365	P	26041	"	44-72198	I	26081	F 16	44-72390	D	26121	F 4	44-63634	NS
26002	"	43-6461	P	26042	"	44-63857	I	26082	F 4	44-64071	NS	26122	"	44-72232	C
26003	"	44-13345	C	26043	"	44-72105	NS	26083	F 16	44-72389	NS	26123	"	44-72269	C
26004	"	44-13917	D	26044	"	44-64132	C	26084	"	44-72112	C	26124	"	44-72449	D
26005	"	44-64157	C	26045	»'	44-72204	C	26085	"	44-72331	N	26125	"	44-63830	D
26006	"	44-72058	P	26046	"	44-64087	I	26086	"	44-63791	D	26126	"	44-72075	
26007	"	44-72066	NS	26047	"	44-63716	C	26087	"	44-72483	N	26127	"	44-63231	C
26008	"	44-72074	D	26048	"	44-72064	C	26088	"	44-72171	C	26128	»'	44-63879	C
26009	"	44-72086	D	26049	"	44-63552	N	26089	"	44-72113	C	26129	"	44-63762	D
26010	"	44-72093	N	26050	"	44-63892	C	26090	"	44-72395	D	26130	"	44-64122	NS
26011	"	44-72109	C	26051	"	44-72430	C	26091	"	44-72095	I	26131	"	44-72438	D
26012	"	44-72126	D	26052	"	44-72414	C	26092	F 4	44-72123	D	26132	"	44-72300	C
26013	"	44-72156	C	26053	F 4	44-72303	I	26093	F 16	44-72361	C	26133	"	44-72425	C
26014	"	44-72177	D	26054	"	44-72219	N	26094	"	44-72406	D	26134	"	44-72425	C
26015	"	44-63701	D	26055	"	44-72291	N	26095	"	44-72433	C	26135	"	44-64104	C
26016	"	44-63743	C	26056	"	44-72272	N	26096	F 4	44-64065	C	26136	"	44-72046	C
26017	"	44-63758	C	26057	"	44-72215	C	26097	"	44-72359	N	26137	"	44-63649	NS
26018	"	44-63865	N	26058	F 16	44-63263	C	26098	"	44-72356	D	26138	"	44-72431	I
26019	"	44-63974	C	26059	F 4	44-72372	D	26099	"	44-72033	D	26139	"	44-72446	N
26020	"	44-63992	I	26060	"	44-72276	P	26100	"	44-72299	D	26140	"	44-72353	D
26021	"	44-72031	NS	26061	"	44-72364	D	26101	F 4	44-72416	N	26141	F 16	44-72228	I
26022	"	44-7222	C	26062	"	44-72185	C	26102	"	44-72096	I	26142	"	44-72059	N
26023	"	44-64109	C	26063	"	44-63635	C	26103	"	44-72188	D	26143	"	44-72164	D
26024	"	44-64072	I	26064	"	44-72078	C	26104	"	44-72247	C	26144	"	44-63856	C
26025	"	44-72050	C	26065	F 16	44-72254	D	26105	"	44-72380	I	26145	"	44-63861	C
26026	"	44-72051	D	26066	F 4	44-72320	N	26106	"	44-72388	D	26146	"	44-63729	CS
26027	"	44-63888	C	26067	"	44-63759	D	26107	"	44-72366	CS	26147	"	44-63818	D
26028	"	44-72151	D	26068	F 16	44-63691	N]	26108	"	44-63833	I	26148	"	44-63705	N
26029	"	44-72184	C	26069	F 4	44-72273	C	26109	"	44-72030	C	26149	"	44-63511	D
26030	"	44-72206	C	26070	"	44-63739	D	26110	"	44-64152	D	26150	"	44-63819	D
26031	"	44-72220	P	26071	F 16	44-72107	D	26111	"	44-64091	D	26151	"	44-72970	I
26032	"	44-72223	C	26072	F 4	44-72136	C	26112	"	44-72202	D	26152	"	44-63675	N
26033	"	44-64062	C	26073	F 16	44-72229	I	26113	"	44-72423	I	26153	"	44-63817	I
26034	"	44-64059	I	26074	"	44-72290	D	26114	"	44-72208	I	26154	"	44-63637	C
26035	"	44-63860	C	26075	"	44-72288	I	26115	"	44-72339	D	26155	"	44-63840	C
26036	"	44-72183	P	26076	"	44-72399	I	26116	"	44-72216	I	26156	"	44-63880	N
26037	"	44-64034	C	26077	"	44-72479	C	26117	"	44-72305	D	26157	"	44-63815	I
26038	"	44-72090	N	26078	"	44-72321	D	26118	"	44-72239	C	26158	"	44-63864	I
26039	"	44-63871	I	26079	F 4	44-72419	I	26119	"	44-72330	C	26159	"	44-72378	C
26040	"	44-64100	I	26080	F 16	44-72452	C	26120	"	44-72221	CS	26160	"	44-72346	C
												26161	"	44-63688	D