

Arrival of F-4 enriches airpark

By **BOB WILSON**

Valley Press Staff Writer

PALMDALE — Using old stealth technology — the cover of darkness — Palmdale aerospace workers trucked a surplus McDonnell-Douglas F-4 Phantom fighter from the Mojave Airport to the Plant 42 Heritage Airpark early Thursday morning.

The plane was transported from the grounds of the AVTEL Services aircraft-repair company in Mojave to the airpark, 25th Street East and Rancho Vista Boulevard in Palmdale, between 1:30 a.m. and 5 a.m.

The Phantom's stealthy move wasn't for purposes of national security, but to avoid traffic snarls.

The historic craft is the fourth surplus warbird to be obtained by the city, which is working to acquire 40 aircraft representing 50 years of aerospace production and testing in Palmdale.

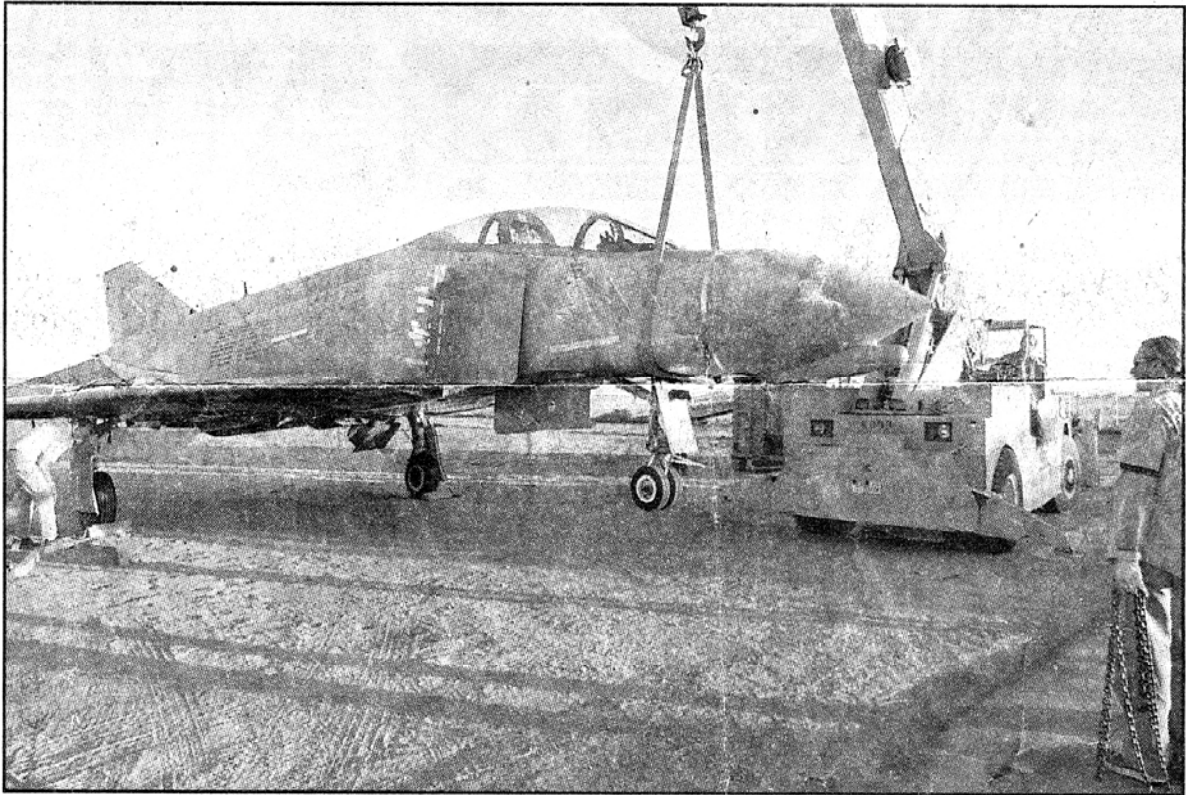
The F-4 will join a North American Aviation F-100 Super Sabre, a Lockheed F-104 Starfighter and a Republic Aviation F-105 Thunderchief already on display on the east end of the fledgling airpark, still under construction.

The display of the F-4 and the mounting of a one-twelfth scale model of a Northrop Grumman B-2 Stealth bomber, which has a 21-foot wingspan, should generate enough interest to spur the opening of the airpark to the public before the end of the year, said Carol Seidl, Palmdale's assistant city manager.

Workers will add landscaping to make visiting the planes more appealing while work on the six-block airpark continues, said Seidl, who is overseeing the project.

Airpark volunteers are still in

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PHANTOM MOVES

An F-4 Phantom fighter, above, is unloaded by volunteers at the Heritage Airpark in Palmdale early Thursday morning. The aircraft was donated by Avtel Services in Mojave and made the 37-mile trip to its new home in one hour and 40 minutes. Volunteer Ron Mosher, left, of Lockheed, unhooks the F-4 from a crane.

RICH L. SHVEDA
Valley Press photos

AIRPARK: City hopes to display all craft made locally

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the process of reassembling a Vought A-7 Corsair which also is slated for display, Seidl said.

Those volunteers are current and past employees of the companies that built and maintained the aircraft, she said. Those companies have donated the equipment and tools needed to refurbish the historic planes.

Lockheed Martin Corp. provided the truck needed for Thursday's relocation of the F-4, she said.

When complete, the city's airpark will have footpaths and a 400-foot-long visitors center that will be divided into sections — each devoted to the various companies that built the planes in the exhibit, Seidl said. "We hope to have a display for any company that did work at Plant 42."

Some of those firms have been absorbed by or joined with competitors over the years.

Today's Boeing Co. was created by the joining of the old Boeing, Rockwell (previously North American) and McDonnell-Douglas air-

craft companies after previous mergers between the McDonnell and Douglas companies.

Today's Lockheed Martin Corp. was formed by a merger between Lockheed and Martin Marietta after Lockheed purchased the fighter-production division of General Dynamics.

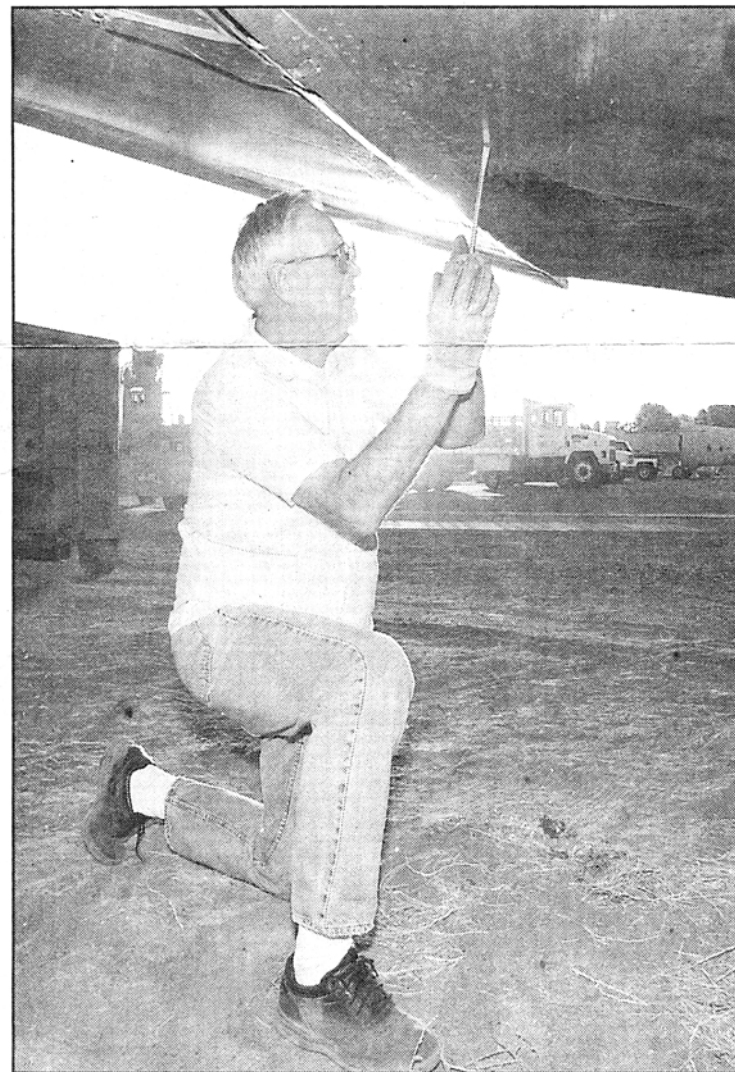
The existing Northrop Grumman is a combination of the old Northrop and Grumman companies.

Firms whose names disappeared along the way were Bell, Chance Vought, Convair, Curtiss, Fairchild, Hughes and Republic Aviation.

It is hoped the work of these and other companies can be memorialized in the airpark's visitors center, Seidl said.

Included on the city's list of planes to acquire are a Northrop B-1B Lancer, a Lockheed Martin F-117 Nighthawk and a Rockwell space shuttle.

None of the surplus planes at the airpark will belong to the city, she said. "We will have custody of them through the Air Force."



RICH L. SHVEDA/Valley Press

PHANTOM WINGS — Volunteer Dick Sinclair lowers the F-4's wings back into place after they were folded up during the move from the Mojave Airport to the Plant 42 Heritage Airpark early Thursday morning.