

French Donald Duck Curtiss insignia



This post explores the history of an unauthorized French emblem featuring Donald Duck and comes to us via my friend and fellow researcher, Many Souffan.

The Donald Duck Curtiss insignia in this post was introduced in France between 1937 and 1938, when the French Government bought some three hundred P-36 fighters from Curtiss, an American aircraft manufacturer. The pin was worn by pilots who ferried the fighters to the French airbase located at Chartres, south of Paris.

A Frenchman named Cuffaut was one of the pilots who flew fighters to Chartres. In 1939 Cuffaut became an instructor on the Bloch-152 fighter. All the pilots Cuffaut trained were from Czechoslovakia and all four of Cuffaut's Bloch-152 training planes were painted with the Donald insignia.

As a side note, Cuffaut volunteered to serve in the Free French Air Group Normandie-Niemen, which saw action fighting alongside the Russians on the Eastern Front between March 1943 and May 1945. The Group finished the war with a record of 273 German aircraft destroyed.

The first image features a war-era cloisonné pin of the Curtiss design worn by some of the pilots who ferried the P-36. The second photo pictures a Czech pilot standing in front of a Bloch-152.