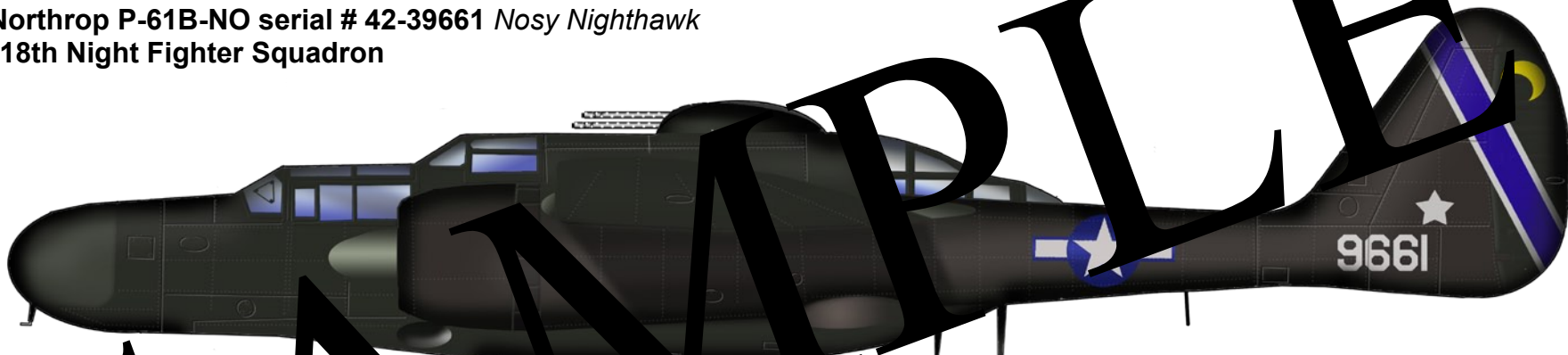


On 7 July 1944 *Dame de la Nuit* (French for ‘lady of the night’), assigned to 1/Lt Owen Wolf, scored the unit’s first P-61 victory, a Ki-46 Dinah reconnaissance aircraft. This night-fighter had simple, yet effective nose-art, and is profiled as it appeared in the Philippines after having scored four victories. The squadron used yellow as an identifying color, and *Dame de la Nuit*’s spinners were painted accordingly. The airplane is profiled with P-38 drop tanks, used effectively by P-61s throughout the war.

**190. Northrop P-61B-NO serial # 42-39661 *Nosy Nighthawk*  
418th Night Fighter Squadron**



The 418th Night Fighter Squadron was activated on 17 March 1943, and its first overseas detachment was assigned to the Fifth Air Force at Milne Bay, New Guinea, where it arrived on 2 November 1943. The Squadron’s pilots devised an optimistic and colorful emblem to be carried by their Douglas P-70 aircraft. Official records describe the insignia as: “Over an orange disc, a king bee black and golden orange, wearing a red crown, holding aloft a lighted lantern proper with the right foreleg and grasping a gray machine gun in the left foreleg, tip-toeing across a white cloud formation in base, and peering over the edge with a look of ferocity in his face, a crescent moon and two stars of yellow in the background.”

In operation, the P-70 gave mediocre performance, and Japanese night-time air raids quickly proved that the Mitsubishi G4M1 could outrun the modified Douglas light bomber. The 418th NFS was assigned a small number of P-38H Lightnings to supplement their P-70s. The Squadron’s pilots viewed these as a considerable improvement over their matt black P-70s, even though the P-38H was a stock fighter with no radar. With a mixed bag of night interceptors prowling the skies, pilots began working on new tactics to intercept enemy bombers. The Lightning pilots would wait until the enemy was over a target, which hopefully would become illuminated by friendly searchlights. They would then try to pick out the outline of the enemy, and intercept. Aside from the gunners aboard the Japanese bombers, this method had other dangers, since their P-38s were subjecting themselves to ‘friendly’ fire from Milne Bay’s formidable defences. Ground Control Intercept (GCI) radar was later installed to help vector the P-38H pilots, but this improved matters little.