

## VPB-61

### Lineage

Established as Patrol Squadron SIXTY ONE (VP-61) on 1 May 1942.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron SIXTY ONE (VPB-61) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 15 September 1945.

### Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The only official insignia used by VPB-61 was submitted for approval on 28 June 1945, and was approved by CNO on 6 July 1945. The insignia was comprised of a cat, representing the PBV-5A Land Cats, rolling a lucky seven with a pair of dice. The cat was



*The squadron's cartoon cat insignia.*

standing on a bomb with a pair of binoculars around its neck, signifying the squadron's primary function as a patrol bombing squadron. There were two color themes for the cat. When northern based, the squadron painted the cat white on a black bomb; if southern based, it became black on a gray bomb. Colors: field, aquamarine; dice, white and gray with black dots; bomb, black (or gray) with yellow highlights; cat, white (or black); cat jowls, gray; eyes, white

with lime green pupil; tongue, dull red; mouth, black; binoculars, black with yellow highlights; cap on cat, bright blue and yellow striped.

Nickname: None on record.

### Chronology of Significant Events

**1 May 1942:** VP-61 was established at NAS Alameda, Calif., as a seaplane squadron flying both the PBV-5 Catalina and the amphibious PBV-5A version. During this period the squadron came under the operational control of PatWing-8. Training of squadron personnel continued through the end of July.

**10 Jun 1942:** Four of the squadron aircraft were ferried to Cold Bay, Alaska, for temporary duty.

**15 Aug 1942:** VP-61 departed NAS Alameda bound for Sitka, Alaska. Bad weather encountered en route kept the squadron grounded at NAS Seattle until 18 August. A break in the overcast allowed the squadron to make a quick dash to Sitka, then on the next day to NAS Kodiak, PatWing-4 headquarters where VP-61 reported for duty. The squadron was assigned duty at Section Base Sand Point, Popof Island. From this location three five-hour patrols were flown over search sectors each day.

**23 Aug 1942:** Four squadron aircraft were detached for duty at NAS Kodiak. All four returned to Sand Point, Popof Island, on 26 August 1942.

**27-29 Aug 1942:** Two aircraft were detached for operations from Nazan Bay, Atka Island, with tender support provided by *Casco* (AVP 12).

**30 Aug 1942:** Adak was occupied by Army forces and an advanced seaplane base was established there by the tender *Teal* (AVP 5), which put North Pacific forces within 250 miles of occupied Kiska and in a position to maintain a close watch over enemy shipping lanes to that island and to Attu. The tender *Casco* (AVP 12) was damaged by a torpedo from the Japanese submarine *RO-61*, Lieutenant Commander Toshisada Tokutomi commanding, and was beached while repairs were completed.

**2 Sep 1942:** The squadron headquarters was relocated to NAF Dutch Harbor. Two aircraft were sent to operate with tender *Casco* (AVP 12) at Nazan Bay, Atka Island; and three aircraft to operate with tender *Teal* (AVP 5) at Kuluk Bay, Adak Island. From these sites the squadron conducted routine sector patrols and attacks on Japanese shipping.

**30 Nov 1942:** In preparation for relief and return to the States, all of the squadron aircraft flew back to Dutch Harbor. Weather conditions were so bad at that base that none of the aircraft could be flown, even though they were kept on alert status through mid-December.

**12 Dec 1942:** A temporary break in the weather allowed the squadron to depart NAF Dutch Harbor, but it only got as far as Sitka, Alaska, when storms kept VP-61 grounded until 22 December 1942.

**22 Dec 1942:** VP-61 departed NAS Sitka for NAS Seattle, Wash. Upon arrival, crews were given home leave through 6 January 1943.

**15 Jan 1943:** After a week spent at NAS Seattle settling squadron affairs and administrative matters, the squadron again departed for the north, returning to NAS Sitka, Alaska, then on to Kodiak on 18 January 1943. After reporting to FAW-4 headquarters, the squadron was assigned to NAF Otter Point, Umnak Island.

**19 Jan 1943:** VP-61 relieved VP-42 at NAF Otter Point. After getting settled, detachments of aircraft were sent to NAF Dutch Harbor, Aleutians.

**4 May 1943:** Squadron headquarters were reestablished at NAF Adak, Alaska, with a detachment at Amchitka Island.

**10 May–7 Jun 1943:** Squadron headquarters were shifted to Amchitka Island in preparation for the invasion of Attu Island on 11 May. On 7 June 1943, the establishment of NAF Attu within one week of its cap-

ture from the Japanese brought FAW-4 bases to the tip of the Aleutian chain, nearly 1,000 miles from the Alaskan mainland and 750 miles from Japanese territory in the Kuriles.

**7–16 Oct 1943:** VP-61 was relieved by VB-61. Only half of the squadron was able to depart on the 8th when the weather shut down operations. The rest of the aircraft left the next day and rejoined the squadron at Kodiak. By 16 October 1943, all of the squadron aircraft arrived safely at NAS Seattle, completing the second tour of duty in the Aleutian Island chain. All hands were given 30 days home leave and told to report on expiration of leave to NAS Whidbey Island, Wash.

**5 Jan 1944:** VP-61 was reformed at NAS Whidbey Island under the operational control of FAW-6, spending the next three months training new crews and refurbishing equipment.

**8 Apr 1944:** The squadron departed NAS Whidbey Island for its third Aleutian tour, proceeding to

Yakutat, Alaska, then on to NAS Kodiak on 12 April. After reporting to FAW-4 headquarters, the squadron was given orders to report to Adak Island to attend the LORAN School and the Ordnance refresher course. LORAN, which stood for long-range aid to navigation, equipment had been tested for the first time at NAS Lakehurst, N.J., on 13 June 1942. Operators could home in on beacons during IFR flying conditions and find their home bases safely. In the inclement weather of the far northwest, this equipment proved to be a lifesaver.

**22 Apr 1944:** VP-61 departed Adak for NAS Attu, commencing daily patrols the next day. The patrol areas were divided into six pie-shaped segments extending 350 miles out to sea.

**15 Sep 1944:** VP-61 began flying inshore patrols along the shipping lanes, which extended the complete length of the Aleutian chain. To facilitate the coverage over these vast distances, the squadron was divided into detach-



*A PB4Y taxiing past two PT boats in the Aleutians, September 1943.*

ments: Headquarters moved to NS Adak, Detachment 1 went to NAF Amchitka, Detachment 2 to NAS Kodiak, and Detachment 3 went to NAF Dutch Harbor.

**10 Dec 1944:** VPB-61 was relieved from inshore patrols by VPB-43. The various detachments rejoined the headquarters staff at NAS Kodiak.

**11–28 Dec 1944:** VPB-61 departed Kodiak en route to NAS Seattle, Wash. The last aircraft arrived on 28 December 1944, and all hands were given home leave.

**1 Feb 1945:** VPB-61 began reforming at NAS Whidbey Island with new personnel and equipment. With the end of the war imminent, deployment plans were delayed until the end of August, when the decision was made to disestablish the squadron.

**15 Sep 1945:** VPB-61 was disestablished at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash.

### *Home Port Assignments*

| <i>Location</i>           | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Alameda, Calif.       | 1 May 1942                |
| NAS Seattle, Wash.        | 22 Dec 1942               |
| NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. | 5 Jan 1944                |

### *Commanding Officers*

|                         | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR Frank Bruner       | 1 May 1942                  |
| LCDR Charles J. Eastman | 5 Jan 1944                  |
| LCDR W. J. Camp, Jr.    | 18 Feb 1945                 |

### *Aircraft Assignment*

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBY-5/5A                | May 1942                        |



*A PBY on patrol in the Aleutians area, March 1943, 80-G-K-8145.*

**Major Overseas Deployments**

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 10 Jun 1942              | *                     | PatWing-4   | Cold Bay                  | PBY-5/5A                | NorPac                    |
| 15 Aug 1942              | *                     | PatWing-4   | Sitka                     | PBY-5/5A                | NorPac                    |
| 30 Aug 1942              | *                     | PatWing-4   | Adak                      | PBY-5/5A                | NorPac                    |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Teal</i> (AVP 5)       |                         |                           |
| 2 Sep 1942               | 22 Dec 1942           | PatWing-4   | Dutch Harbor              | PBY-5/5A                | NorPac                    |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Casco</i> (AVP 12)     |                         |                           |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Teal</i> (AVP 5)       |                         |                           |
| 15 Jan 1943              | *                     | FAW-4       | Umnak Is.                 | PBY-5A                  | NorPac                    |
| 4 May 1943               | *                     | FAW-4       | Adak                      | PBY-5A                  | NorPac                    |
| 11 May 1943              | 7 Oct 1943            | FAW-4       | Amchitka                  | PBY-5A                  | NorPac                    |
| 12 Apr 1944              | *                     | FAW-4       | Kodiak/Adak               | PBY-5A                  | NorPac                    |
| 22 Apr 1944              | 11 Dec 1944           | FAW-4       | Attu                      | PBY-5A                  | NorPac                    |

\* Continued combat deployment in the North Pacific, moving from base to base.

**Air Wing Assignments**

| <i>Air Wing</i>  | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| PatWing-8        |                  | 1 May 1942             |
| PatWing-4/FAW-4† |                  | 15 Aug 1942            |
| FAW-6            |                  | 22 Dec 1942            |
| FAW-4            |                  | 15 Jan 1943            |
| FAW-6            |                  | 16 Oct 1943            |
| FAW-4            |                  | 12 Apr 1944            |
| FAW-6            |                  | 28 Dec 1944            |

**Air Wing Assignments**

| <i>Air Wing</i>   | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|---|------------------|------------------------|
| † Patrol Wing 4 (PatWing-4) was redesignated Fleet Air Wing 4 (FAW-4) on 1 November 1942. |                  |                        |

**Unit Awards Received**

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| None on record.   |   |



*A PBY being serviced at an Aleutians airfield, July 1943, 80-G-K-8155.*

## VPB-63

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Squadron SIXTY THREE (VP-63) on 19 September 1942.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron SIXTY THREE (VPB-63) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 2 July 1945.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

The squadron's only known insignia was approved by CNO on 3 November 1944, after it had been redesignated VPB-63. The design was inspired by the squadron's MAD gear. It featured the face of a "mad" cat wearing a sailor hat, holding a broken submarine in its paws.



*The squadron's insignia.*

Colors: field, yellow; border, dark blue; paws, jowls and hat, white; cat face blue; eyeball, yellow and green; pupil, dark blue with white iris; submarine, black; lettering, green with dark blue shadows.

Nickname: The Mad Cats, 1943–1945.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**19 Sep 1942:** VP-63 was established at NAS Alameda, Calif., under the operational control of PatWing-8, as a seaplane squadron flying the PBY-5A

Catalina. The squadron was originally intended to be used in the South Pacific as a Black Cat squadron operating out of Guadalcanal, but shortly after its establishment a decision was made to use it as a test bed for two new technological innovations—Magnetic Anomaly Detection (MAD) equipment and retro-firing rockets. The MAD gear was designed to detect the presence of a submarine underwater, while the 12 (later 15) retro-firing rockets overcame the tendency of air-dropped depth charges to overshoot the target by canceling out the bomb's forward trajectory as soon as it was dropped. A third device was soon added to the squadron's arsenal, the passive-listening sonobuoy. This equipment was dropped over the suspected location of a submarine and allowed the aircraft PPC to determine with a high degree of accuracy the target's depth and position.

**2 Nov 1942:** VP-63 ferried nine PBY-5As to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii. The flight provided valuable experience for the squadron's upcoming transpac.

**5–7 Dec 1942:** A full squadron alert took all available aircraft into the Pacific on long-range search patrols for Japanese carriers believed to be coming in under cover a weather front to make a sneak raid on the California coast. No enemy vessels were sighted, but the patrols gave the squadron valuable experience in rough weather operations.

**31 Dec 1942:** A VP-63 Catalina piloted by Lieutenant James E. Breeding made a night crash landing at sea five miles off the coast of Oregon. Although all eight of the crew were able to board life rafts before the plane sank, all but one drowned in the surf while coming ashore.

**1 Jan 1943:** The squadron's success in tactical exercises resulted in an increase in the complement from 12 to 18 aircraft and crews.

**14 Feb 1944:** Lieutenant (jg) Henry Kovacs made a crash landing in San Francisco Bay. Three crewmen were killed, including Lieutenant (jg) Kovacs.



*A squadron PBY-5A, circa 1942.*

**15 Mar 1943:** VP-63 departed NAS Alameda for San Diego, Calif. On the 16th, the squadron was officially detached from FAW-8 and assigned to FAW-5. On the 17th the squadron departed San Diego for NAS Elizabeth City, N.C., via Salton Sea, Calif.; Corpus Christi, Tex.; and Pensacola and Jacksonville, Fla. Upon arrival, the aircrews were given a brief course on use of searchlights in ASW operations.

**30 Mar 1943:** Lieutenant Frederick A. Brown and his entire crew were lost in a crash off Albemarle Sound, N.C., while on a searchlight training flight.

**4–18 Apr 1943:** A six-aircraft detachment was sent to NAS Key West for duty under the operational control of FAW-12. Two days later the rest of the squadron was transferred to NAS Quonset Point, R.I., for operations under FAW-9. The detachment rejoined the squadron there on 18 April 1943.

**24 Apr 1943:** A four-aircraft detachment was sent to NAS Jacksonville, Fla., returning to NAS Quonset Point on 6 June 1943.

**2 May 1943:** A two-aircraft detachment was sent to Bermuda for ASW operations, returning to NAS Quonset Point on 24 May 1943.

**May 1943:** In two separate incidents, squadron aircraft made emergency landings at sea with only minor injuries to personnel.

**22–23 Jun 1943:** VP-63 departed NAS Quonset Point for RAFB Pembroke Dock, South Wales, for op-

erations with the RAF 19 Group Coastal Command and assignment to the operational control of FAW-7. On 23 July 1943, VP-63 became the first U.S. patrol squadron to operate from the United Kingdom in the campaign against U-boats.

**28 Jul 1943:** Lieutenant (jg) Samuel R. Parker caught two U-boats on the surface while on patrol. Both remained on the surface putting up a fierce concentration of AA fire that prevented Lieutenant (jg) Parker from attacking. Two RAF flying boats soon arrived on the scene, forcing the U-boats to dive. Subsequent attacks by the combined aircraft were unsuccessful.

**1 Aug 1943:** On one of the squadron's patrols in the Bay of Biscay, a VP-63 aircraft piloted by Lieutenant William P. Tanner, was attacked by eight enemy Ju-88 fighter-bombers. In the ensuing combat, two of the enemy aircraft were claimed shot down and a one damaged. Lieutenant Tanner was also shot down, but survived with two members of his crew. This encounter marked the first aerial combat between U.S. Naval Aviation and the Luftwaffe. The Ju-88 encounters were not accidental; the aircraft were a special squadron of attack interceptors tasked with finding and shooting down Allied ASW aircraft searching for German U-boats. Postwar examination of German records indicate that only one enemy fighter was actually shot down, a Ju-88C-6 Werk No. 360118



*A squadron PBY at Pembroke Dock, South Wales, England, with a British Sunderland in the foreground, 1943, 80-G-53246 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*

from 13/KG40. The German crew was rescued later by one of their seaplanes.

**16–26 Dec 1943:** U-boat hunting in the Bay of Biscay was no longer productive and was a waste of the squadron's MAD resources. VP-63 departed RAFB Pembroke Dock en route to NAF Port Lyautey, French Morocco, for better hunting grounds in the Mediterranean. Two aircraft remained at Pembroke Dock to continue operations with the RAF in experimental countermeasures being developed for use against the V-1 flying bomb. While en route to Port Lyautey on 25 December 1943, squadron commanding officer Lieutenant Commander Curtis Hutchings came under fire from a group of six enemy destroyers that had put to sea under cover of the bad weather. After Lieutenant Commander Hutchings relayed the position of the enemy vessels, the Royal Navy arrived and sank three of the destroyers. The remainder of the squadron arrived without incident at Port Lyautey on 26 December 1943, coming under the operational control of FAW-15. Squadron operations consisted almost solely of antisubmarine warfare patrols in the Straits of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean.

**9 Jan 1944:** Lieutenant Woodrow E. Sholes crashed during takeoff from the Oued Sebou River at Port Lyautey. Two crewmen survived the accident.

**20 Jan 1944:** The two aircraft remaining at RAFB Pembroke Dock rejoined the squadron at NAF Port Lyautey.

**8 Feb 1944:** A two-aircraft barrier patrol was established between the southern tip of Spain and the tip of Spanish Morocco. The aircraft flew at an altitude of only 55 feet from dawn to dusk, in all sorts of weather. Spanish anti-aircraft batteries in Spanish Morocco frequently shot at the patrolling aircraft whenever they flew close to the three-mile limit.

**24 Feb 1944:** *U-761* was detected by PBV-5 Catalinas of VP-63 during an attempt to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar. The two VP-63 PBVs, piloted by Lieutenants Howard Baker and T. R. Woolley, used their MAD gear to detect, track and assist in the sink-



On 24 February 1944 *U-761* was detected by squadron PBVs which tracked and assisted in the sinking of the submarine. This photo shows the crew of *U-761* abandoning the submarine.

ing of *U-761*, Oberleutnant Horst Geider commanding. The U-boat was attacked by a British Catalina of RAF Squadron 202 and a PV-1 Ventura of VB-127. Lieutenant P. L. Holmes, pilot of the VB-127 Ventura, assisted in the kill by dropping depth charges on *U-761* when it surfaced. It was the first sinking of a submarine aided by MAD equipment. Following the attack by VB-127, the U-boat was scuttled near Tangier, in view of approaching British destroyers. The crew of 51 was picked up by HMS *Anthony* and *Wishart*.

**16 Mar 1944:** Squadron aircraft piloted by Lieutenant (jg) M. J. Vopatek, Lieutenant R. C. Spears, and Lieutenant (jg) V. A. T. Lingle detected *U-392*, Oberstleutnant Henning Schumann commanding, during an attempted passage of the Straits of Gibraltar. Lieutenant (jg) Vopatek guided HMS *Affleck* into position with his MAD gear. *Affleck* fired a pattern of depth charges that sent the U-boat to the bottom.

**15 Apr 1944:** Lieutenant (jg) Vopatek and Lieutenant H. L. Worrell repeated the performance of 16 March, when they detected *U-731*, Oberstleutnant Alexander Graf von Keller commanding, attempting to cross the straits. Subsequent attacks by the aircraft did not sink the U-boat but both aircraft continued to track the submarine, guiding HMS *Kilmarnock* into position for a successful Hedgehog attack that sent the submarine to the bottom. This sinking was to be the last in the Mediterranean theater, as the squadron had, in the words of British Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham "... turned the Mediterranean into an Allied lake."

**6 Dec 1944:** The Mad Cats were reduced to 12 aircraft with three spares. The resulting surplus personnel were returned to the U.S. for reassignment to other patrol squadrons.

**10 Jan 1945:** A detachment of aircraft was sent to RNAS Dunkeswell, Devon, England, for operations with RAF Coastal Command, under the operational control of FAW-7.

**30 Apr 1945:** Lieutenant F. G. Lake, from the Dunkeswell Detachment, sighted *U-1107* while submerged with only its snorkle visible. The U-boat, commanded by Oberstleutnant Fritz Parduhn, was quickly sunk by a spread of 30 retro contact bombs fired by the MAD signature, rather than visual sighting.

**11 May 1945:** *U-541*, Kapitänleutnant Kurt Petersen commanding, surrendered to PPC Lieutenant W. D. Ray. The U-boat was fully surfaced and raised the black flag in accordance with surrender instructions. Lieutenant Ray circled the U-boat for two hours until surface units arrived on the scene. A guard crew was then put aboard and the submarine was escorted to Gibraltar.

**4 Jun 1945:** Orders were received to stand down for return to NAS Norfolk, Va., and disestablishment. The squadron departed Port Lyautey and Dunkeswell, with all personnel arriving at Norfolk by 21 June 1945.

**2 Jul 1945:** VPB-63 was disestablished at NAS Norfolk, Va..



*On 11 May 1945 U-541 surrendered to a squadron PBV. This photo shows the U-541 surfaced with a British destroyer on the far left, 80-G-319661 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*



*A close up of U-541 surrendering, 80-G-319659 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*



**Home Port Assignments**

| <i>Location</i>                             | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|---|---------------------------|
| NAS Alameda, Calif.                         | 19 Sep 1942               |
| NAS Elizabeth City, N. C.                   | 23 Mar 1943               |
| NAS Quonset Point, R. I.                    | 6 Apr 1943                |
| RAFB Pembroke Dock,<br>South Wales, England | 22 Jun 1943               |
| NAS Port Lyautey, F.M.                      | 16 Dec 1943               |
| NAS Norfolk, Va.                            | 21 Jun 1945               |

**Commanding Officers**

|                          | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR Edward O. Wagner    | 19 Sep 1942                 |
| LCDR Curtis H. Hutchings | 23 Sep 1943                 |
| LCDR Carl W. Brown       | 25 Jul 1944                 |

**Aircraft Assignment**

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBY-5A                  | Sep 1942                        |
| PBY-5A MAD              | Oct 1942                        |



*A close up showing the MAD gear on a squadron PBY.*

*A close up of a squadron PBY-5A showing the rails on the wing for retro-rockets, 80-G-53255 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*

### Major Overseas Deployments

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 22 Jun 1943              | 25 Dec 1943           | FAW-7       | Pembroke                  | PBY-5A                  | NorLant                   |
| 26 Dec 1943              | 9 Jan 1945            | FAW-15      | Port Lyautey              | PBY-5A                  | Med                       |
| 10 Jan 1945              | 21 Jun 1945           | FAW-7       | Dunkeswell                | PBY-5A                  | NorLant                   |

### Wing Assignments

| <i>Wing</i>      | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| PatWing-8/FAW-8* |                  | 19 Sep 1942            |
| FAW-5            |                  | 16 Mar 1943            |
| FAW-9            |                  | 6 Apr 1943             |
| FAW-7            |                  | 22 Jun 1943            |
| FAW-15           |                  | 26 Dec 1943            |
| FAW-5            |                  | 21 Jun 1945            |

\* Patrol Wing 8 (PatWing-8) was redesignated Fleet Air Wing (FAW-8) on 1 November 1942.

*A squadron PBY flies above a Navy blimp, 1945, 80-G-48763 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*



### Unit Awards Received

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| None on record.   |   |



*A squadron PBY-5A, 80-G-53247 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*

## VPB-84

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Squadron EIGHTY FOUR (VP-84) on 1 October 1941.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron EIGHTY FOUR (VPB-84) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 28 June 1945.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**1 Oct 1941–15 Apr 1942:** VP-84 was established at NAS Norfolk, Va., under the operational control of PatWing-8. The squadron remained without aircraft during training. In December the squadron was transferred to NAS San Diego, Calif., for a month of ground and flight training. On 1 February 1942, it was transferred to NAS Alameda, Calif., for advanced flight training in the PBY-5A Catalina. The squadron then returned to NAS Norfolk in two detachments, departing the West Coast on 12 and 15 April 1942. Two aircraft of the first section of aircraft, led by the squadron commanding officer, crashed into a mountain top while flying in heavy fog near Livermore, Calif. Only one enlisted crew member survived.

**1 Jun 1942:** Nine VP-84 aircraft departed NAS Norfolk, Va., for NAS Argentia, Newfoundland, with a three-aircraft detachment remaining at Charleston, S.C. The detachment rejoined the squadron at the end of June.

**25 Sep 1942:** VP-84 departed NAS Argentia for FAB Reykjavik, Iceland, relieving VP-73 of convoy coverage, ASW patrols and special patrols in cooperation with RAF Coastal Command. Flying was generally conducted under 600-foot ceilings, with two-mile visibility at a maximum. Days were short during the winter months with only four hours of dim daylight available.

**5 Nov 1942:** *U-408*, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Reinhard von Hymmen, was sunk by Lieutenant R. C. Millard and his crew. The submarine, caught on the surface, was struck by four depth bombs aft of the conning tower while submerging.

**27 Dec 1942:** Lieutenant H. H. Luce and his crew were killed during extreme turbulence in a squall, crashing on the Keflavik Peninsula.

**14 May 1943:** *U-640*, commanded by Oberleutenant Karl-Heinz Nagel, was sunk by Lieutenant P. A. Bodinet and crew off Iceland using a Fido homing torpedo.

**25 May 1943:** *U-467*, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Heinz Kummer, was sunk by



*A squadron depth bomb explodes to port as U-467 turns hard right. U-467 was sunk by a squadron aircraft on 25 May 1943 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*

Lieutenant R. C. Millard and crew off Iceland using bombs.

**11 Jun 1943:** Lieutenant Douglas S. Vieira and crew attempted a water landing to rescue the crew of a ditched RAF B-17 Flying Fortress. During the landing, the aircraft hit a large wave and sank, leaving the crew to join the RAF survivors floating in life rafts. Five days later one survivor was rescued; the others had died of exposure to the cold.

**20 Jun 1943:** *U-388*, commanded by Oberstleutenant Peter Sues, was sunk by Lieutenant E. W. Wood and crew.

**24 Jun 1943:** *U-194*, commanded by Kapitänleutenant Heerman Hesse, was sunk by Lieutenant J. W. Beach and crew.

**7 Sep 1943:** The squadron returned to the continental U.S., arriving at NAS Beaufort, S.C., on 25 September. During its one-year deployment, the squadron had experimented with several types of armament against the German U-boats. Twin fixed 50-caliber machine guns were found too difficult to operate. A fixed 20-mm cannon obtained from a P-38 squadron worked well, but the best results were obtained from a fixed 50-caliber gun with twin 30-caliber guns in the forward turret. These weapons were used with varying degrees of success in 31 attacks. The primitive ASV Mark II radar sets were less than useless on patrols, as German U-boats could detect the signals of the units and submerge before the aircraft could spot the targets. Upon return to NAS Beaufort, VP-84 came under the operational control of FAW-9.

**28 Nov 1943:** Lieutenant J. W. Beach and five members of his crew were killed in a crash two miles north

of NAS Beaufort. Four other members survived the crash. No cause for the accident was ever determined.

**18 Dec 1943:** The squadron proceeded on to NAS Quonset Point, R.I., where it commenced convoy patrols and coverage of sea lanes off the eastern seaboard out to the 500-mile mark. During this period new ASV Mark III radar and airborne LORAN gear were installed, greatly reducing the hazards of navigation in foul weather conditions.

**11 May 1944:** VP-84 was transferred to NAS Coco Solo, C.Z., under the operational control of FAW-3. A detachment was sent to Barranquilla, Colombia, to conduct ASW sweeps of the tanker lanes. The detachment rejoined the squadron at NAS Coco Solo on 4 November 1944. Since the Navy had no field for land-based aircraft, the squadron used the Army's New France Field next to the naval air station. A one-mile long taxi strip connected the two air bases.

**11 Nov 1944–12 Jan 1945:** VP-84 received orders to return to NAS Quonset Point, R.I. The squadron returned in two sections of three aircraft each, one arriving on 4 December 1944, the other arriving on 12 January 1945. A third four-aircraft detachment remained at NAS Coco Solo to continue convoy patrols. Five of the squadron aircraft of the NAS Quonset Point group received the L8C searchlight installation to assist in anti-

submarine sweeps along the Eastern Sea Frontier. At this time there was considerable concern over the ability of the Germans to launch submarine-borne V-1 buzz bombs in attacks on major coastal cities.

**7 Apr 1945:** VP-84 received orders to proceed to NAS Alameda, Calif. All aircraft and crews, including those of the Coco Solo detachment, arrived safely by 18 April 1945. The squadron came under the operational control of FAW-8 on 20 April, providing support for the United Nations Conference for International Organization being held in the San Francisco area. Patrols were conducted in cooperation with VPB-32. Each squadron flew four eight-hour ASW patrols in the Bay area each day.

**4 May 1945:** PPC Lieutenant (jg) Robert Moment, the squadron executive officer Lieutenant Commander Norman W. White and most of the crew of a squadron PBV-5A were killed in a crash shortly after takeoff. The aircraft encountered fog two miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge and crashed into a hilltop while attempting to get beneath the overcast. Two enlisted crewmen survived the crash.

**28 Jun 1945:** VPB-84 was disestablished at NAS Alameda, Calif. A large portion of the squadron pilots and crews were used for ferry duty on a temporary basis after disestablishment of the squadron.



*Squadron personnel with a squadron PBV-5A in the background, 7 November 1944.*

**Home Port Assignments**

| <i>Location</i>            | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Norfolk, Va.           | 1 Oct 1941                |
| NAS Argentia, Newfoundland | 1 Jun 1942                |
| FAB Reykjavik, Iceland     | 25 Sep 1942               |
| NAS Beauford, S.C.         | 7 Sep 1943                |
| NAS Quonset Point, R.I.    | 18 Dec 1943               |
| NAS Coco Solo, C.Z.        | 11 May 1944               |
| NAS Quonset Point, R.I.    | 11 Nov 1944               |
| NAS Alameda, Calif.        | 7 Apr 1945                |

**Commanding Officers**

|                              | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR Loren A. Morris         | 1 Oct 1941                  |
| LCDR Jesse J. Underhill      | 12 Apr 1942                 |
| LT Brendan J. Moynahan       | 26 Feb 1943                 |
| LCDR Poyntell C. Staley, Jr. | 18 Mar 1943                 |
| LCDR Douglas G. Parker       | 12 Dec 1943                 |

**Aircraft Assignment**

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBY-5A                  | Dec 1941                        |

**Major Overseas Deployments**

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Jun 1942               | 24 Sep 1942           | FAW-7       | Argentia                  | PBY-5A                  | NorLant                   |
| 25 Sep 1942              | 18 Dec 1943           | FAW-7       | Reykjavik                 | PBY-5A                  | NorLant                   |
| 11 May 1944              | 11 Nov 1944           | FAW-3       | Coco Solo                 | PBY-5A                  | Carib                     |

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i>                  | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| PatWing-8                    |                  | 1 Oct 1941             |
| PatWing-7/FAW-7 <sup>†</sup> |                  | 1 Jun 1942             |
| FAW-9                        |                  | 7 Sep 1943             |
| FAW-3                        |                  | 11 May 1944            |
| FAW-9                        |                  | 11 Nov 1944            |
| FAW-8                        |                  | 20 Apr 1945            |

**Wing Assignments—Continued**

| <i>Wing</i>   | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|---|------------------|------------------------|
| † Patrol Wing 7 (PatWing-7) was redesignated Fleet Air Wing (FAW-7) on 1 November 1942. |                  |                        |

**Unit Awards Received**

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| None on record.   |   |

## VPB-91

### Lineage

Established as Patrol Squadron NINETY ONE (VP-91) on 1 December 1941.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron NINETY ONE (VPB-91) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 2 April 1946.

### Squadron Insignia and Nickname

A photograph on file for VP-91 in the Aviation History Branch squadron insignia archives showed what appeared to be a Disney-like Dumbo elephant, with outstretched ears, astride two bombs. The figure



*The squadron's insignia.*

was in a circular patch with the squadron designation VP below the right ear, and 91 above it. Above and outside the design was the logo UP-FLOATS. Colors: background, dark blue; outlines and letters, gold. The reputed insignia tied in with one of the squadron's primary missions in WWII, that of Dumbo missions to retrieve downed airmen. The squadron achieved a record on this score, retrieving 80 airmen from the water during two tours in the South Pacific. Unfortunately, no documentation survives to verify the authenticity of the insignia or its approval by CNO.

Nickname: None on record.

### Chronology of Significant Events

**1 Dec 1941:** VP-91 was established at NAS Norfolk, Va., under the operational control of PatWing-8, as a seaplane squadron flying the PB-5 Catalina. On 15 December 1941, the squadron was relocated to Alameda, Calif. Upon arrival preparations were made for the transpac to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where VP-91 would be located to reinforce the patrol squadrons depleted by the Japanese attack.

**28 Feb 1942:** VP-91 departed San Francisco, Calif., for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, with the last aircraft arriving safely by 2 March 1942. Upon arrival the squadron came under the operational control of PatWing-1. VP-91 remained in the Hawaii area through early September flying local patrols under COMNAVAIR-BASEDEFENSE.

**4 Sep 1942:** VP-91 began relocating south into the active war zone, arriving at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides Islands, on 13 September 1942. Operations from this area were conducted while based aboard *Mackinac* (AVP 13) in the Segond Channel, under the operational control of FAW-1. On 2 November 1942, with the departure of *Mackinac*, the officers of the squadron were berthed aboard *Curtiss* (AV 4), while the enlisted personnel were berthed aboard *Tangier* (AV 8).

**27 Oct 1942:** Lieutenant Melvin K. Atwell and crew were flying a night reconnaissance mission in the vicinity of the Solomon Islands when they spotted a large vessel 30 miles away. They determined that the dark outline of a large ship was moving in an easterly direction at high speed. Flying closer to investigate, the ship was seen to enter a low overcast and stop. Two passes at low altitude failed to identify the ship. Atwell climbed back to 1,500 feet and when two miles from the ship was bracketed by two bursts of AA fire. He immediately put the aircraft into a dive, releasing his four 500-pound bombs over the ship at 650 to 600 feet. Two bombs were seen to explode aft of the forward smokestack of the ship, which appeared to be an Aoba class heavy cruiser. The concussion of the explosions damaged the aircraft, which barely pulled out of the dive at 20 feet above the surface of the sea. Atwell chose not to linger in the vicinity of the warship, as he had developed several fuel leaks. As they headed for home base a large orange flash was seen in the distance in the vicinity of the target, followed by a larger explosion 10 minutes later. For his courageous single-handed attack on the enemy warship Lieutenant Atwell was awarded the Navy Cross.

**13 Nov 1942:** Five of the squadron aircraft were flown to Vanikoro, supported by tender *Mackinac* (AVP 13) in Peon Bay. On 2 December 1942, *Mackinac* was relieved by *Ballard* (AVD 10), and returned to Espiritu Santo. The detachment of five aircraft and six crews remained with *Ballard*, flying sector searches from Vanikoro, while the seven aircraft

remaining at Espiritu Santo aboard *Mackinac* flew sectors from that location.

**Mar 1943:** VP-91 was relieved for return to the continental U.S. The squadron was reformed at NAS San Diego, Calif., under the operational control of FAW-14.

**9 Aug 1943:** VP-91 conducted its transpac to Hawaii, with the last aircraft arriving safely at NAS Kaneohe on 18 August 1943. Here the squadron remained until 1 October 1943, when a detachment of six aircraft was sent to Johnson Island for antishipping patrols in support of the Task Force 14 raid on Wake Island from 5 to 6 October.

**29 Oct 1943:** VP-91 began the deployment from NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, in three-aircraft elements to Espiritu Santo. Upon arrival on 10 November 1943, the squadron came under the operational control of FAW-1, supported by tenders *Wright* (AV 1) and *Chandeleur* (AV 10). Three days later, a detachment of six aircraft was sent to Suva, Fiji. A second detachment of three aircraft was sent to Halavo Bay, leaving three aircraft and six crews to conduct sector patrols from Espiritu Santo. Crews and aircraft were rotated frequently between all three sites.

**1 Jan 1944:** The Halavo Bay detachment was relieved, and the aircraft and crews redistributed with six PBYS at Suva, aboard *Mackinac* (AVP 13), and seven PBYS at Espiritu Santo, aboard *Chandeleur* (AV 10). Duties consisted primarily of convoy escort and aircraft maintenance.

**26 Mar 1944:** VP-91 was relieved by VP-54, and dispatched to Tulagi Island, Halavo Bay Seaplane Base. Shortly after arrival, five aircraft were detached to Treasury Island, three aircraft were sent to Green Island, and two were sent to Emirau Island. Duties of the squadron at this time consisted primarily of air-sea rescue missions and miscellaneous utility work for Commander Air Northern Solomons. On 27 May 1944, the Treasury Island detachment of five aircraft was sent to Green Island to augment the three aircraft present, reverting to search sector and antishipping patrols. The augmented detachment was supported by tenders *Coos Bay* (AVP 25) and *Chincoteague* (AVP 24).

**15 Jun 1944:** VP-91 was relieved at Green Island by VP-44. The eight aircraft of the detachment were flown to Halavo Bay Seaplane Base, where the squadron was reunited to prepare for transfer back to the continental U.S. VP-91 departed the combat zone on 21 July 1944 in elements of three aircraft, bound for NAS San Diego, Calif., via NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii.

**10 Sep 1944:** VP-91 was reformed at NAS San Diego, Calif., under the operational control of FAW-14. While training of new personnel was underway, the squadron was redesignated VPB-91.

**15 Oct 1944:** VPB-91 was relocated to NAS Corpus Christi, Tex., to learn how to process Naval Aviators and combat air crews through an advanced training course for combat replacement crews flying the PBM Mariner. On completion of the course on 13 December 1944, the squadron was transferred to NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., under the operational control of FAW-6. Here the squadron remained until the end of the war, training replacement crews.

**2 Apr 1946:** VP-91 was disestablished at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash.

### Home Port Assignments

| Location                  | Date of Assignment |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| NAS Norfolk, Va.          | 1 Dec 1941         |
| NAS Alameda               | 15 Dec 1941        |
| NAS Ford Island, Hawaii   | 2 Mar 1942         |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.     | Mar 1943           |
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii       | 18 Aug 1943        |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.     | Jul 1944           |
| NAS Corpus Christi, Tex.  | 15 Oct 1944        |
| NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. | 13 Dec 1944        |

### Commanding Officers

|                       | Date Assumed Command |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| LCDR T. U. Sisson     | 1 Dec 1941           |
| LCDR Joe B. Paschal   | Jan 1942             |
| LCDR James O. Cobb    | Nov 1942             |
| LCDR E. L. Farrington | 18 Apr 1943          |
| LT Edwin M. Grant     | 14 Sep 1944          |
| LT E. B. Thompson     | 13 Dec 1944          |
| LCDR V. V. Utgoff     | 21 Mar 1945          |
| LCDR Harold P. Gerdon | 28 Jun 1945          |

### Aircraft Assignment

| Type of Aircraft | Date Type First Received |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| PBY-5            | Dec 1942                 |
| PBY-5A           | Dec 1944                 |
| PBM-3S           | Oct 1944                 |

### Major Overseas Deployments

| Date of Departure | Date of Return | Wing  | Base of Operations                         | Type of Aircraft | Area of Operations |
|-------------------|----------------|-------|--|------------------|--------------------|
| 28 Feb 1942       | *              | FAW-2 | Ford Island                                | PBY-5            | EastPac            |
| 4 Sep 1942        | *              | FAW-1 | Espiritu Santo<br><i>Mackinac</i> (AVP 13) | PBY-5            | SoPac              |

**Major Overseas Deployments—Continued**

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i>  | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 Dec 1942               | Mar 1943              | FAW-1       | Curtiss (AV 4)<br>Tangier (AV 8)<br>Vanikoro<br>Mackinac (AVP 13)<br>Ballard (AVD 10)                                    | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 9 Aug 1943               | *                     | FAW-2       | Kaneohe  | PBY-5                   | EastPac                   |
| 1 Oct 1943               | *                     | FAW-2       | Johnson Isl.   | PBY-5                   | EastPac                   |
| 10 Nov 1943              | *                     | FAW-1       | Espiritu Santo<br>Wright (AV 1)<br>Chandeleur (AV 10)<br>Mackinac (AVP 13)<br>Coos Bay (AVP 25)<br>Chincoteague (AVP 24) | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 26 Mar 1944              | 21 Jul 1944           | FAW-1       | Tulagi   | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 27 Mar 1944†             | 27 May 1944           | FAW-1       | Treasury Isl.  | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 27 Mar 1944†             | 15 Jun 1944           | FAW-1       | Emirau   | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 27 Mar 1944†             | 15 Jun 1944           | FAW-1       | Green Island<br>Coos Bay (AVP 25)<br>Chincoteague (AVP 24)   | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 15 Jun 1944              | 21 Jul 1944           | FAW-1       | Halavo Bay   | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |

\* Continued combat deployment in the South Pacific, moving from base to base.

† The squadron conducted split deployments to two or more sites on the same dates.

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i>                | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| PatWing-8                  |                  | 1 Dec 1941             |
| PatWing-1/ FAW-1†          |                  | 2 Mar 1942             |
| FAW-14                     |                  | Mar 1943               |
| FAW-2                      |                  | 9 Aug 1943             |
| FAW-1                      |                  | 29 Oct 1943            |
| FAW-14                     |                  | 21 Jul 1944            |
| Naval Air Training Command |                  | 15 Oct 1944            |
| FAW-6                      |                  | 13 Dec 1944            |

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i>   |
|-------------|------------------|--|
|             |                  | † Patrol Wings (PatWings) were redesignated Fleet Air Wings (FAWs) on 1 November 1942. |

**Unit Awards Received**

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| NUC               | 15 Sep 1942 – 1 Mar 1943                  |



A squadron PBY-5 refueling from a tender, October 1942 (Courtesy Richard C. Knott Collection via Dave Walkinshaw).



## VPB-92

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Squadron NINETY TWO (VP-92) on 26 December 1941.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron NINETY TWO (VPB-92) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 28 May 1945.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**26 Dec 1941–15 Jan 1942:** VP-92 was established at NAS Alameda, Calif., as a seaplane squadron flying the PBY-5A Catalina under the operational control of PatWing-8. The squadron personnel began ground training at NAS Alameda, with flights commencing after the arrival of the first Catalinas from the factory on 15 January 1942.

**5–15 Mar 1942:** VP-92 began a transcontinental flight from NAS Alameda, Calif., to NS San Juan, P.R. The unassigned flight crews and ground support staff departed for Florida by train. On 15 March, these personnel boarded *Pastores* (AF 16) for transportation to San Juan. Upon arrival the squadron came under the operational control of PatWing-3. When the first aircraft of VP-92 landed at San Juan, the beaching party had never seen an amphibious Catalina. The aircraft landed in the bay and proceeded at taxi speed for the beaching apron while lowering their wheels into the water. The beaching crews panicked, thinking that the crews were going to run the aircraft into the concrete. They were amazed when the aircraft emerged from the water on dry land with wheels already attached.

**12 Mar–May 1942:** A detachment of five aircraft were assigned to NAS Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. On 13 March three of these aircraft were sent to Antigua. This detachment was increased to five aircraft on 25 March. The Guantanamo detachment mission was to protect convoy shipping throughout the Caribbean. The Antigua detachment was to prevent the Vichy French surface vessels from supplying German and French submarines operating in the Caribbean area. To further meet this goal, the Antigua detachment was moved on 5 May to St. Lucia, which put it closer to Martinique. Two attacks on U-boats were made during the month of May, but postwar examination of German records indicates no damage to any units during that time.

**19 Jun 1942:** The St. Lucia detachment was recalled to San Juan to rejoin the squadron. The Vichy French at Martinique capitulated on 14 May, releasing squadron assets previously engaged in monitoring that threat.

**24 Jun–5 Jul 1942:** A detachment of three aircraft was sent to Camaguay, Cuba. On 5 July, the entire squadron left San Juan for NAS Guantanamo Bay. Once arrived and operational, the primary mission assigned was air-sea rescue work and occasional ASW patrols.

**15–27 Aug 1942:** Operational control of the squadron was shifted from PatWing-3 to PatWing-11 on 15 August. On 27 August a squadron PBY-5A Catalina piloted by Lieutenant G. R. Fiss dropped depth charges on a U-boat. The Catalina's attack was followed-up by the Canadian corvette HMCS *Oakville* which rammed *U-94*. *U-94*, commanded by Oberstleutenant Otto Ites (Knights Cross), sank with a loss of 19 and 26 survivors.

**19 Sep 1942:** A two-aircraft detachment was sent to Great Exuma to patrol that area and the Bahamas. Two days later, another two-aircraft detachment was sent to Trinidad to conduct ASW and antishipping patrols. On 24 September one of the Exuma detachment aircraft crashed while attempting to land in the unlighted harbor at night. The aircraft was a total loss and several of the crew injured.

**7–10 Oct 1942:** All detachments rejoined the squadron at NAS Guantanamo, Cuba. VP-92 was then divided into two sections. The first division departed on 22 October for French Morocco under the operational control of FAW-15 (scheduled for establishment on 1 December 1942), followed by the second division on 25 October. Spare crews and ground support personnel departed Guantanamo aboard *Biscayne* (AVP 11) on 23 October.

**13 Nov 1942:** Two squadron aircraft caught a submarine on the surface 700 miles off Casablanca that refused to answer recognition signals. Lieutenant H. S. Blake made a run on the submarine and blew off the conning tower, sinking the sub immediately with no survivors sighted. Postwar records indicate that the submarine in question was the 1,570-ton Vichy French submarine *Le Conquerant*.

**14 Nov 1942:** VP-92 began operational flying from Cazes Field, Casablanca, F.M.

**31 Dec 1942:** The squadron received its first German bombing raid. No damage to aircraft or personnel resulted from the raid as there had been advance intelligence on the possibility of a raid. All aircraft had been dispersed to reduce damage. Patrols and convoy coverage flown from Cazes Field extended from the Mediterranean to the Azores and Canary Islands.

**6 Apr–23 Jun 1943:** VP-92 was relocated to Port Lyautey, F.M. Patrols of the Mediterranean, photographic missions and ferry trips to Gibraltar comprised most of the squadron's missions during this period. On 11 April, one aircraft crashed on takeoff, killing the pilot and three crew members. On 23 June, a four-aircraft detachment was sent to Agadir, F.M., to guard against German blockade-runners.

**6 Jul 1943:** Lieutenant (jg) G. R. Morris and crew attacked a surfaced U-boat five miles from a convoy they were covering. Accurate AA fire from the U-boat killed radioman ARM3c E. J. Gibson and wounded several others of the crew, including Morris himself. Depth charges and strafing from the Catalina apparently damaged the U-boat sufficiently to prevent its attacking the convoy. Despite their injuries, the aircrew remained on station for another two hours until relieved, protecting the convoy from further attack. For his valiant efforts in protecting the convoy Lieutenant (jg) Morris was awarded the Navy Cross.

**15 Jul 1943:** Lieutenant R. J. Finnie assisted in the sinking of *U-135*, Oberstleutenant Otto Luther commanding, off the coast of Morocco near the port of Agadir. Finnie's depth bombs damaged the submarine, allowing British destroyers HMS *Rochester*, *Mignonette* and *Balsam* to finish it off. Five of the crew perished; 41 survived and were picked up by the destroyers.

**23 Nov 1943:** A squadron aircraft crashed on the breakwater at Port Lyautey, F.M., during a practice depth charge run. The starboard wing tip touched the water in a steep turn, tearing off the wing. All hands were lost.

**5 Dec 1943:** The entire squadron was transferred to NAAF Agadir, F.M., to relieve VP-73. The base was still under construction and had few amenities.

**29 February 1944:** VPB-92 was transferred to the British West Indies under the control of FAW-11. One detachment of six aircraft was sent to Hato Field, Curacao, and another to Zandrey Field, Surinam. The detachments conducted daily sweeps and patrols of the convoy routes in the Caribbean. Heavy, torrential tropical rains frequently kept the detachment at Zandrey Field grounded for days at a time during this period, bringing criticism from FAW-11. The squadron had its revenge, however, when the commander of FAW-11 was grounded for two days due to weather during a visit to the squadron. The Curacao detachment had no problems with the weather and patrols were conducted on schedule.

**14 May–Jul 1944:** The squadron moved to NAS San Juan, P.R., for training, while one four-aircraft detachment remained at Curacao. On 9 July the squadron

had 12 aircraft at Curacao and three at San Juan for long-range patrol work and ASW standby.

**29 Nov 1944:** VPB-92 transferred to NAS Quonset Point, R.I., under FAW-9, with a detachment of two aircraft remaining at Curacao for long-range patrol work. The Quonset Point portion of the squadron was assigned convoy patrol coverage missions and ASW sweeps protecting the approaches to New York harbor. Weather was again a problem for operations, only this time it was snow and ice that held the squadron on the deck.

**18–28 May 1945:** VPB-92 received orders to disestablish. On 24 May all the squadron aircraft were flown to NAS Norfolk, Va., where the aircraft were turned over to HEDRON-5. The squadron was formally disestablished on 28 May 1945.

### Home Port Assignments

| <i>Location</i>                    | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Alameda, Calif.                | 26 Dec 1941               |
| NS San Juan, P.R.                  | 5 Mar 1942                |
| NAS Guantanamo Bay, Cuba           | 5 July 1942               |
| NAAF Cazes Field, Casablanca, F.M. | 14 Nov 1942               |
| Port Lyautey, F.M.                 | 6 Apr 1943                |
| NAAF Agadir, F.M.                  | 5 Dec 1943                |
| British West Indies                | 29 Feb 1944               |
| NAS Quonset Point, R.I.            | 29 Nov 1944               |

### Commanding Officers

|                       | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR Charles Heberton | 26 Dec 1941                 |
| LCDR J. A. Moreno     | 18 Aug 1942                 |
| LCDR J. F. Parker     | 13 Sep 1943                 |
| LCDR H. S. Blake      | 22 Feb 1944                 |
| LCDR R. A. Proctor    | 25 Sep 1944                 |

### Aircraft Assignment

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBY-5A                  | 26 Dec 1941                     |

### Major Overseas Deployments

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5 Mar 1942               | 4 Jul 1942            | PatWing-3   | San Juan                  | PBY-5A                  | Carib                     |
| 5 Jul 1942               | 21 Oct 1942           | PatWing-3   | Guantanamo                | PBY-5A                  | Carib                     |
| 22 Oct 1942              | 5 Apr 1943            | FAW-15      | Casablanca                | PBY-5A                  | Med                       |
| 6 Apr 1943               | 4 Dec 1943            | FAW-15      | Port Lyautey              | PBY-5A                  | Med                       |
| 5 Dec 1943               | 28 Feb 1944           | FAW-15      | Agadir                    | PBY-5A                  | Med                       |
| 29 Feb 1944              | 13 May 1944           | FAW-11      | Curacao                   | PBY-5A                  | SoLant                    |

**Major Overseas Deployments—Continued**

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 29 Feb 1944              | 13 May 1944           | FAW-11      | Surinam                   | PBY-5A                  | SoLant                    |
| 14 May 1944              | 8 Jul 1944            | FAW-11      | San Juan                  | PBY-5A                  | Carib                     |
| 9 Jul 1944               | 29 Nov 1944           | FAW-11      | Curacao                   | PBY-5A                  | SoLant                    |

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i>        | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| PatWing-8          |                  | 26 Dec 41              |
| PatWing-3          |                  | 15 Mar 42              |
| PatWing-11/FAW-11* |                  | 15 Aug 42              |
| FAW-15             |                  | 1 Dec 42               |
| FAW-11             |                  | 29 Feb 1944            |
| FAW-9              |                  | 29 Nov 1944            |
| FAW-5              |                  | 24 May 1945            |

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
|             |                  |                        |

\* PatWing-11 was redesignated FAW-11 on 1 November 1942.

**Unit Awards Received**

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| None on record.   |   |



*A squadron PBY-5A on patrol in the Caribbean, May 1942, 80-G-13377 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*

## VPB-94

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Squadron NINETY FOUR (VP-94) on 3 March 1942.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron NINETY FOUR (VPB-94) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 22 December 1944.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**3 Mar 1942:** VP-94 was established at NAS Norfolk, Va., as a seaplane squadron flying the PBY-5A Catalina under the operational control of Eastern Sea Frontier, PatWing-9. The squadron conducted routine training while stationed at Norfolk.

**18 May 1942–14 Jan 1943:** The squadron remained at NAS Norfolk under training until 18 May when orders were received to transfer to NAS Quonset Point, R.I., for patrol duties and coastal convoy protection. Within two weeks the operational demands of the Eastern Sea Frontier resulted in the formation of a six-aircraft detachment being deployed to NAS Jacksonville, Fla. This detachment was split into two

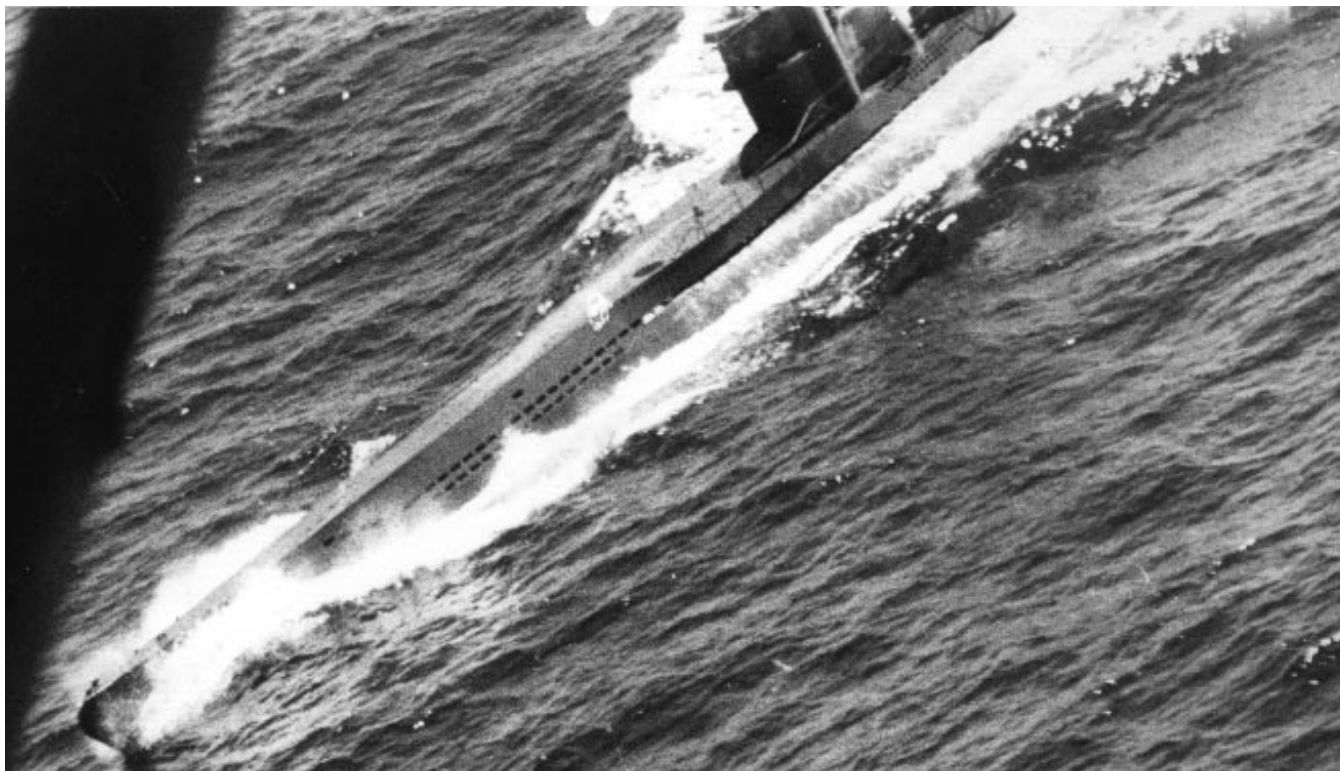
three-aircraft sections, one remaining at Jacksonville and the other deployed to Charleston, S.C. on 10 June 1942. A third detachment of two aircraft was formed and deployed to MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., on 1 September 1942. The squadron shifted aircraft and crews between the various detachment sites until 14 January 1943, when all of the personnel and aircraft were reunited at NAS Jacksonville in preparation for deployment to Brazil.

**16 Jan 1943:** VP-94 deployed to NAF Natal, Brazil. Administrative headquarters were established at that site on 20 January 1943, placing the squadron under the operational control of FAW-11. Convoy patrols and ASW searches were conducted along the coastal convoy routes.

**18–24 Jun 1943:** The squadron's reach was extended when a detachment of six aircraft was formed and deployed to NAF Belem, Brazil. A second detachment of three aircraft was sent to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 24 June.

**9 Jul 1943:** Lieutenant S. Auslander, from the Belem detachment, attacked and sank *U-590*, commanded by Oberstleutenant Werner Krüer, in the Atlantic off Trinidad. On the same day, Lieutenant Frank Hare made an attack on another submarine caught on the surface. The U-boat immediately opened fire with its quad-mount AA guns, killing Lieutenant Hare and forcing the aircraft to break off the attack.

**21 Jul 1943:** Lieutenant R. H. Rowland from the Belem detachment attacked and sank *U-662*, com-



*U-662 under attack by a squadron aircraft. The U-boat was sunk by the squadron on 21 July 1943, 80-G-85240 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*

manded by Oberstleutenant Heinz-Eberhard Müller, in the Atlantic off Dutch Guiana. Lieutenant Rowland's crew dropped life rafts for the survivors from the attack. The German submariners were later picked up by PC 494 from Task Force 2.

**Jul 1943:** The decision was made to relocate the headquarters of the squadron to Belem, where the majority of the squadron was now located. The move was made on 13 July 1943, leaving a five-aircraft detachment at NAF Natal and seven aircraft at NAF Belem. Over the next eight months, detachments were deployed at various times to Recife, Fernando de Noronha, Sao Luiz and Fortaleza, Brazil; Trinidad, B.W.I.; and Zandery Field, Dutch Guiana.

**19 Jul 1943:** A Brazilian PBV-5A Catalina flown by a trainee pilot, Cadet A. Torres, assigned to VP-94, sank *U-199* in the Atlantic off Cape Frio, Brazil. Out of the crew of 60 there were only 11 survivors. The survivors initially were under Brazilian captivity but were later transferred to the U.S.

**29 April 1944:** The headquarters for the squadron was moved for the third time to Maceio, Brazil, then on to Ipitanga, Brazil, on 15 May 1944, placing it under the operational control of FAW-16. Detachments operated from Maceio, Fernando de Noronha, Ipitanga, Caravellas and Santa Cruz until August 1944.

**10 Aug 1944:** A detachment of five aircraft was formed and transferred to Santa Cruz, Brazil, to initiate the US/Brazilian Aviation Training Unit. VP-94 had previously assisted in the training of Brazilian pilots while at Belem in April 1944. Part of a Brazilian squadron of PBV-5s was located at Belem at the time. VP-94 began a program of training, consisting of practical classes for radiomen and antisubmarine bombing practice for pilots. The training was apparently quite

effective. On 31 July 1943, one of the trainee pilots, Cadet A. Torres, sank *U-199*. The U-boat, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Hans-Werner Kraus (Knights Cross), went down in the Atlantic off Cape Frio, Brazil, with a loss of 49 crewmen and 11 survivors.

**12 Dec 1944:** The squadron's entire complement of aircraft and supplies was formally presented to the Forca Aerea Brasileira at Galeao, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Squadron personnel received orders for their return to NAS Norfolk on 15 December, and VPB-94 was officially disestablished on 22 December 1944.

### Home Port Assignments

| <i>Location</i>         | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Norfolk, Va.        | 3 Mar 1942                |
| NAS Quonset Point, R.I. | 18 May 1942               |
| NAF Natal, Brazil       | 20 Jan 1943               |
| NAF Belem, Brazil       | Jul 1943                  |
| NAF Maceio, Brazil      | 29 Apr 1944               |
| Ipitanga, Brazil        | 15 May 1944               |
| NAS Norfolk, Va.        | 15 Dec 1944               |

### Commanding Officers

|                        | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR David W. Shafer   | 3 Mar 1942                  |
| LCDR Joseph B. Tibbets | 26 Nov 1942                 |
| LCDR H. R. Swenson     | 12 Nov 1943                 |

### Aircraft Assignment

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBY-5A                  | Mar 1942                        |

### Major Overseas Deployments

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 16 Jan 1943              | 12 Jul 1943           | FAW-11      | Natal                     | PBY-5A                  | SoLant                    |
| 13 Jul 1943              | 14 May 1944           | FAW-11      | Belem                     | PBY-5A                  | SoLant                    |
| 15 May 1944              | 9 Aug 1944            | FAW-16      | Ipitanga                  | PBY-5A                  | SoLant                    |
| 10 Aug 1944              | 15 Dec 1944           | FAW-16      | Santa Cruz                | PBY-5A                  | SoLant                    |

### Wing Assignments

| <i>Wing</i>      | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| PatWing-9/FAW-9* |                  | 3 Mar 1942             |
| FAW-11           |                  | 20 Jan 1943            |
| FAW-16           |                  | 10 Apr 1944            |
| FAW-5            |                  | Dec 1944               |

### Unit Awards Received

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| None on record.   |   |

\* Patrol Wing 9 (PatWing-9) was redesignated Fleet Air Wing 9 (FAW-9) on 1 November 1942.



*A squadron PB4Y at Natal, Brazil, 1942, 80-G-10663 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*

## VPB-98

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Bombing Squadron NINETY EIGHT (VPB-98) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 1 April 1946.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**1 Oct 1944:** VPB-98 was established at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, as a medium seaplane squadron flying the PBM Mariner. During this period the squadron came under the operational control of Fleet Air Detachment, West Coast. The primary mission of the squadron was to serve as a training unit for PBM replacement crews.

**8 Nov 1944:** VPB-98 was transferred to NAS San Diego, Calif., coming under the operational control of FAW-14. The squadron was fully operational and began training the first replacement crews by 8 December 1944. During its brief existence the squadron averaged 400 flights per month, training an average of 35 crews per month.

**Sep 1945:** With the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific on 10 August the need for more replacement

crews was greatly diminished. Accordingly, personnel were rapidly demobilized from the squadron and operations significantly slowed down.

**1 Apr 1946:** VPB-98 was disestablished at NAS San Diego, Calif.

### *Home Port Assignments*

| <i>Location</i>           | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Corpus Christi, Texas | 1 Oct 1944                |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.     | 8 Nov 1944                |

### *Commanding Officers*

|                        | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR David J. Perry    | 1 Oct 1944                  |
| LCDR William O. Powell | 8 Nov 1944                  |
| LCDR Robert W. Leeman  | 24 Dec 1944                 |
| CDR E. F. Jacobs       | 11 Jul 1945                 |
| LCDR Robert M. Harper  | 14 Aug 1945                 |

### *Aircraft Assignment*

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBM-3D                  | Nov 1944                        |
| PBM-5 JATO              | Jan 1945                        |
| PBM-5D                  | May 1945                        |

### *Major Overseas Deployments*

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| No overseas deployments. |                       |             |                           |                         |                           |

### *Wing Assignments*

| <i>Wing</i>                      | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Fleet Air Detachment, West Coast |                  | 1 Oct 1944             |
| FAW-14                           |                  | 8 Nov 1944             |

### *Unit Awards Received*

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| None on record.   |   |

## VPB-99

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Bombing Squadron NINETY NINE (VPB-99) on 5 January 1945.

Disestablished on 15 January 1946.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**5 Jan 1945:** VPB-99 was established at NAS Alameda, Calif., as a PBM training squadron under the operational control of FAW-8. The mission of the squadron was to complete the training of PBM replacement crews that had finished the basic course at NAAS Banana River, Fla., or NAAS Corpus Christi, Tex. The sister squadron to this unit was VPB-98 at NAS San Diego, Calif.

**1 May–31 Jul 1945:** Between 19 and 30 crews per month were ferried to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, upon completion of the course syllabus. This ceased with

the end of combat patrols after 10 August and the Japanese surrender.

**Sep 1945:** Personnel were reorganized in the squadron to permit rapid demobilization of those who could be spared.

**15 Jan 1946:** VPB-99 was disestablished at NAS Alameda, Calif.

### *Home Port Assignments*

| <i>Location</i>     | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Alameda, Calif. | 5 Jan 1945                |

### *Commanding Officers*

|                          | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR James R. Jadrnicek  | 5 Jan 1945                  |
| LCDR William J. Scarpino | 30 Jan 1945                 |

### *Aircraft Assignment*

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBM-3D                  | Jan 1945                        |
| PBM-5                   | Jan 1945                        |

### *Major Overseas Deployments*

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|

No overseas deployments.

### *Wing Assignments*

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-8       |                  | 5 Jan 1945             |

### *Unit Awards Received*

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| None on record.   |   |



## VPB-100

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Squadron ONE HUNDRED (VP-100) on 1 April 1944.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED (VPB-100) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 15 December 1945.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**1 Apr 1944:** VP-100 was established at NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, as a seaplane squadron flying the PB4Y-1 and PB4Y-2 Catalina. Personnel (seven officers and 15 enlisted) and equipment were drawn from the HEDRON Replacement Unit, FAW-2. The mission of the squadron was to train replacement crews, ferry aircraft to advance bases, and maintain two aircraft and one crew for around-the-clock standby and rescue work at NAS Kaneohe. Detachments of two crews and two aircraft each were also maintained at Johnston Island and Canton for rescue and ASW patrol duties.

**15 Jul 1944:** Lieutenant Cecil A. Roark and his PB4Y-2 crew landed in heavy seas to rescue two survivors of an SB2C crash. The PB4Y-2 was damaged on landing and sank after six hours but the crew was able to rescue survivors of the SB2C with their life rafts. All awaited rescue by *Crouter* (DE 11), which arrived a short time later.

**Jul-Sep 1944:** Training and operational flights were conducted for 17 PB4Y-2 crews and four PBM-5 crews during this period. Personnel undergoing training were replacement and rotational crews fresh from the States going into the combat zone with squadrons in the middle of their tours. Through the end of the war, the squadron continued this training function, as well as transporting the crews to their new squadrons and ferrying aircraft to squadrons in need of replacements due to combat losses, accidents, or overdue for maintenance. PB4Y-2 Catalina, PBM-5 Mariner and PB2Y-3 Coronado seaplanes were assigned the squadron for training purposes. In August 1944, Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet advised that the rotation of squadrons in the forward area would be discontinued in the near future and that only the personnel in the squadrons would be rotated. Crews being trained at NAS Kaneohe would be sent to re-

placement pools in the forward areas for reassignment to squadrons as needed. As a result of these added responsibilities, the squadron's complement of personnel was doubled.

**1 Feb 1945:** Lieutenant Robert Erickson and his crew of 10 were killed in a crash at sea in a PB4Y-2 due to unknown causes during a night navigation training flight.

**22 Mar 1945:** Lieutenant Walter L. Hanson and his crew of 10 were killed in a crash at sea in a PBM-5. The aircraft was observed flying with one engine feathered immediately prior to the crash.

**10 May 1945:** Lieutenant (jg) Roland M. Cocker ditched at sea in a PBM-5 at night after a fire began inside the wing between the engine and fuselage. Nine crew members were killed in the crash. Three survivors were rescued the next day by the squadron commanding officer, Lieutenant Ewing E. Albertson.

**24 Oct 1945:** Personnel and assets of VPB-200 were consolidated with VPB-100. With this merger, the squadron was capable of training replacement crews in the PB4Y-1 Liberator, PB4Y-2 Privateer, PV-1 Ventura and PV-2 Harpoon. It also streamlined the rotation program and eliminated the personnel problem in the squadron created by demobilization.

**15 Dec 1945:** VPB-100 was disestablished at NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii.

### *Home Port Assignments*

| <i>Location</i>     | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii | 1 Apr 1944                |

### *Commanding Officers*

|                       | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| LT Ewing E. Albertson | 1 Apr 1944                  |
| CDR J. E. Dougherty   | 17 Jul 1945                 |
| LCDR Jack R. Egan     | 7 Nov 1945                  |
| CDR C. L. Tetley      | 21 Nov 1945                 |

### *Aircraft Assignment*

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PB4Y-2/3                | Apr 1944                        |
| PBM-5                   | Jul 1944                        |
| PB2Y-3                  | Jul 1944                        |
| PB2B-2                  | Jan 1945                        |
| PBM-5                   | Jan 1945                        |
| PB4Y-1                  | Oct 1945                        |
| PB4Y-2                  | Oct 1945                        |
| PV-1                    | Oct 1945                        |
| PV-2                    | Oct 1945                        |

**Major Overseas Deployments**

| <i>Date of<br/>Departure</i> | <i>Date of<br/>Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of<br/>Operations</i> | <i>Type of<br/>Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of<br/>Operations</i> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|

No overseas deployments.

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-2       |                  | 1 Apr 1944             |

**Unit Awards Received**

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |
|-------------------|---|
| None on record.   |   |

## VPB-103

### Lineage

Established as Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED THREE (VB-103) on 15 March 1943.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED THREE (VPB-103) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 31 August 1945.

### Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's only official insignia was produced by a commercial artist, Leon Schlessenger, who released the copyright to the Navy. The design was approved by CNO on 3 February 1945. It featured the well-known cartoon character Bugs Bunny, reclining



*The squadron's only insignia.*

on a large bomb while eating a carrot. The bomb symbolized the heavy bombardment designation of the squadron, and the rabbit the speed of the planes. The rabbit's large tummy represented the bomb load capacity and the open eyes and confident grin showed alertness and confidence of success. The carrot symbolized the sharp eyesight of the crews, especially under night conditions. While approving the design, CNO was unamused by the strained symbolism, and stated that "the lazy attitude of the rabbit in the in-

signia does not portray the mission of the squadron as effectively as possible." Colors: field, tan; circle, white; rabbit, gray; helmet, dark brown; eyes, white with black pupils; teeth, white; tongue and nose, pink; gloves, yellow; carrot, orange with green top; bomb, brown with black eyebrow, eye and nose; bomb's tongue, red; and bomb's teeth, orange and yellow.

Nicknames: None on record.

### Chronology of Significant Events

**15 Mar–24 Apr 1943:** VB-103 was established at NAAS Camp Kearney (later NAS Miramar), Calif., under the operational control of FAW-14. The squadron was designated as a heavy bombing squadron flying the PB4Y-1 Liberator. Most of the squadron's officers and enlisted personnel had been drawn from VP-23, a PB5Y-5 Catalina patrol squadron which had recently returned from the South Pacific. The squadron's ground school and basic flight training was conducted at NAAS Camp Kearney through the end of April and was rushed due to the critical nature of the submarine threat in the North Atlantic. On 24 April, three officers and 126 ground support personnel departed San Diego, Calif., by train for Norfolk, Va. The flight crews departed NAAS Camp Kearney on 29 April.

**29 Apr–14 May 1943:** Upon arrival at Norfolk, the squadron was told that a change had been made. The two weeks of ASW training planned there had been cancelled and VB-103 was to proceed to NAS Quonset Point, R.I. The ground staff boarded another train for New Jersey. Upon arrival of the first element on 30 April, the squadron was placed under the operational control of FAW-9. The last of the squadron's personnel did not arrive at NAS Quonset Point until 14 May 1943. Installation of secret new ASW gear began with the arrival of the first aircraft on 30 April. VB-103 was the first Navy patrol squadron to be equipped with APS-15 radar, LORAN, sonobuoys and provisions to carry the Mark 24 Homing Torpedo (nicknamed Fido and Zombie).

**15 May 1943:** When the last stragglers arrived at NAS Quonset Point, R.I., orders were received to proceed to NAF Argentia, Newfoundland. Ground staff boarded the tender *Barnegat* (AVP 10) and flight crews flew directly to Newfoundland. After only a day of orientation at NAF Argentia, flight crews were put on patrols over the North Atlantic convoy routes, under the operational control of FAW-7. By the time the squadron came into full operation, the U-boats had pulled out of the area.

**24 Jun 1943:** Lieutenant Reese and crew disappeared while on convoy patrol 700 miles northeast of Argentia. Reese had reported a radar blip and came through a very heavy overcast to investigate. No further messages were received. On the next day in clear

weather, three huge icebergs were seen in the area. The squadron learned from this incident that when investigating an isolated radar blip in bad weather, always allow a five-degree offset on the radar scope until a visual contact is obtained.

**7 Aug 1943:** Lieutenant (jg) Henry and crew crashed into the sea from unknown causes while on a training mission with a Canadian submarine in Placentia Bay. All hands perished.

**12–15 Aug 1943:** Squadron aircraft conducted an attack on a submarine on this date with negative results. This was the only attack on a submarine conducted by the squadron on the western periphery of the Atlantic. It was presumed the CVEs that were escorting convoys were having so much success against the U-boats that it may have caused them to change their hunting grounds. ASW searches and convoy patrols remained the primary missions until 15 August when the squadron received orders to proceed to St. Eval, England.

**17 Aug 1943:** VB-103 became operational at NAF St. Eval, England. Special training was given in ASW techniques for patrols over the Bay of Biscay. Upon completion of training at the end of the month the squadron was moved to RAFB Dunkeswell in Devonshire, England.

**2 Sep 1943:** Lieutenant Wickstrom and crew failed to return to base. It was believed the aircraft fell victim

to specially equipped Ju-88 aircraft. The German long-range fighter-bombers were assigned to a special German squadron looking for Allied patrol aircraft that had been hunting down the U-boats with such great success.

**4–18 Sep 1943:** Lieutenant (jg) Alexander and crew were conducting an antisubmarine patrol over the Bay of Biscay when they were forced to ditch their flaming PB4Y-1 after an attack by six Ju-88 interceptors. One enemy aircraft was shot down during the combat and another damaged. Alexander and his crew safely exited the sinking bomber and reached the English shore in a life raft 36 hours later. Lieutenant (jg) Alexander was later awarded the Navy Cross for his action. The enemy fighter shot down by Alexander's crew was a Ju-88C-6 Werk No. 360382 from 13/KG40 flown by Leutnant G. Blankenberg. Leutnant Blankenberg and his two crewmen were subsequently listed as missing by the Luftwaffe. Two other Allied aircraft, RAF bombers out of Dunkeswell, were also shot down that same day. Another VB-103 crew was attacked on 16 September without casualties, and a fourth on 18 September, also without any damage or loss of personnel.

**24 Sep–6 Nov 1943:** The 19<sup>th</sup> USAAF squadron departed Dunkeswell to join the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, followed by the 22<sup>nd</sup> USAAF on 28 September. Three Navy patrol squadrons (VBs 103, 110 and 105) took over the

*A PB4Y-1 flies over the English countryside en route to a patrol mission over the Bay of Biscay, circa summer 1943, 80-G-K-13688.*



ASW role previously assumed by the Army in England. The USAAF squadrons were phased out and their equipment, similar to that on the VB-103 aircraft, was turned over to the Navy. The USAAF flew its last ASW mission from Dunkeswell on 31 October 1943, and the 4<sup>th</sup> USAAF squadron departed on 6 November.

**10 Nov 1943:** VB-103 was a participant in one of the longest surface battles of aircraft against a U-boat in WWII. At 0800, a VB-105 aircraft piloted by Lieutenant L. E. Harmon, was alerted by an RAF aircraft of a radar contact near the coast of Spain. Harmon located the surfaced *U-966*, Oberstleutenant Eckehard Wolf commanding, and made two strafing attacks. Heavy AA fire damaged his aircraft and forced him to break off the attack. An RAF fighter then dove to attack the submarine. Harmon made a third strafing attack but had to break off afterwards due to a fuel shortage. Lieutenant K. L. Wright, of VB-103, located *U-966* near Ferrol at 1040, and delivered a strafing and depth charge attack. Intense AA fire drove him off and he too had to depart the target for lack of fuel. Lieutenant W. W. Parish and crew then arrived on the scene. A depth charge attack was conducted in cooperation with a rocket-firing RAF Liberator at 1230. The submarine was abandoned by its crew after running aground at Oritiguiera, Spain. The German crewmen were quickly picked up by nearby Spanish fishing vessels.

**12 Nov 1943:** Lieutenant (jg) Brownell made a night attack on a submarine. His aircraft was apparently heavily damaged by the U-boat's AA fire and crashed into the sea with the loss of all hands. The next day two oil slicks were spotted about five miles apart. Postwar examination of German records indicate that he sank *U-508*, Kapitänleutnant Georg Staats (Knights Cross) commanding.

**3 Dec 1943:** Worsening weather conditions made flying and patrol activities very dangerous. On this date, Lieutenant Lucas and his crew were killed when their aircraft crashed into a high ridge while flying on instruments on a training flight.

**24 Dec 1943:** A flotilla of German destroyers attempted to provide cover for a blockade runner, *Alstereufer*. Several missions were run against the enemy ships over a period of five days. The blockade runner was sunk on 27 December by a Czech squadron, leaving the destroyers fleeing for port. The enemy lost three destroyers to British surface units, but in the action shot up several squadron aircraft. Ensign Anderson and his crew were hit on a strafing run and had to bail out over Spain where they were interned for several months before returning to England.

**1 Jan 1944:** VB-103 came under the operational control of 19 Group Coastal Command of the RAF.

**28 Jan 1944:** Lieutenant Enloe and crew caught a U-boat on the surface, dropping six depth charges. The submarine quickly settled by the stern



*A squadron attack on U-271 resulted in its sinking on 28 January 1944, 80-G-222832A (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*

and slid beneath the surface. Postwar examination of records indicate that the submarine was *U-271*, Kapitänleutnant Curt Barleben commanding.

**14 Feb 1944:** Lieutenant (jg) Wright and crew were attacked while on patrol over the Bay of Biscay by two Ju-88 fighter-bombers. During the attack Wright's crew managed to shoot down one of their attackers, a Ju-88C-6 Werk No. 750967, flown by Oberleutnant K. Necesany of Stab 1/ZG1. Oberleutnant Necesany and his two crewmen were subsequently listed as missing by the Luftwaffe. Wright managed to escape into the cloud cover with one engine out. During the attempt to return to base another engine cut out and the crew was forced to ditch the aircraft. Only one crew member failed to exit the plane before it sank. One other crewman died in the life raft from internal injuries before the remaining eight crew members were picked up the next day.

**20 Mar 1944:** Lieutenant (jg) Kessel and crew crashed at sea from unknown causes while returning from an operational mission. All hands were lost.

**23 Mar 1944:** RAF Dunkeswell came under Navy control. The facilities under the RAF had been extremely spartan. With the change of Dunkeswell to a Naval Air Facility, conditions improved dramatically. A PATSU took over maintenance for the squadron.

**6 Jun 1944:** During the Normandy invasion the squadron provided patrols over the southern entrance to the English Channel to prevent U-boats from approaching the invasion fleet. Aircraft patrolled the area at 30-minute intervals. VB-103 conducted seven sorties a day during the operation. There were no encounters with enemy fighters but on 8 June Lieutenant Anderson exchanged gunfire with an FW-200 Condor.



*A PB4Y-1 en route to a mission over the Bay of Biscay, circa summer 1943, 80-G-K-14055.*

**Jul–Dec 1944:** The capture of French ports used for submarine bases greatly curtailed the activities of the German U-boat fleet. The use of the schnorkel by the German U-boats made intercepts more dependent on the use of radar. Although 16 sonobuoys were dropped on radar contacts in the months of October to December 1944, the results were negative.

**11 Mar 1945:** Lieutenant Field and his crew caught *U-681*, Oberstleutenant Werner Gebauer commanding, on the surface southwest of the Scilly Isles and straddled the vessel with a perfect salvo of depth charges. Forty survivors exited the U-boat before it sank. The survivors were picked up by British naval units.

**25 Apr 1945:** Lieutenant Nott and crew spotted a schnorkel on the surface southwest of the Brest peninsula and dropped a salvo of depth charges directly on top of the unsuspecting submarine. The schnorkel was blown into the air, a large oil slick appeared, and the body of one of the German submariners surfaced. Postwar examination of records indicate that the submarine was *U-326*, Kapitänleutnant Peter Matthes commanding.

**28 May 1945:** Operations were ceased on orders from 19 Group Coastal Command. A detachment of two aircraft was sent to the Azores for duty.

**4–14 Jun 1945:** VPB-103 departed England for Norfolk, Va. Ground staff proceeded by sea aboard the tender *Unimak* (AVP 31), arriving on 14 June 1944. All

hands were given rehabilitation leave upon arrival at Norfolk. Operational control over the squadron during this period was exercised by FAW-5.

**24 Jun 1945:** After return from leave the squadron was transferred to NAS Alameda, Calif. VPB-103 was operational at NAS Alameda by 30 September, coming under the operational control of FAW-8. Training was begun at both NAS Alameda and NAAS Crows Landing, Calif., but was discontinued with the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific on 10 August and the subsequent surrender of Japan.

**31 Aug 1945:** VPB-103 was disestablished at NAS Alameda, Calif.

### *Home Port Assignments*

| <i>Location</i>               | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAAS Camp Kearney, Calif.     | 15 Mar 1943               |
| NAS Norfolk, Va.              | 29 Apr 1943               |
| NAS Quonset Point, R.I.       | 30 Apr 1943               |
| NAF Argentia, Newfoundland    | May 1943                  |
| NAF St. Eval, England         | Aug 1943                  |
| RAFB/NAF Dunkeswell, England* | Sep 1943                  |
| NAS Norfolk, Va.              | 4 Jun 1945                |
| NAS Alameda, Calif.           | 24 Jun 1945               |

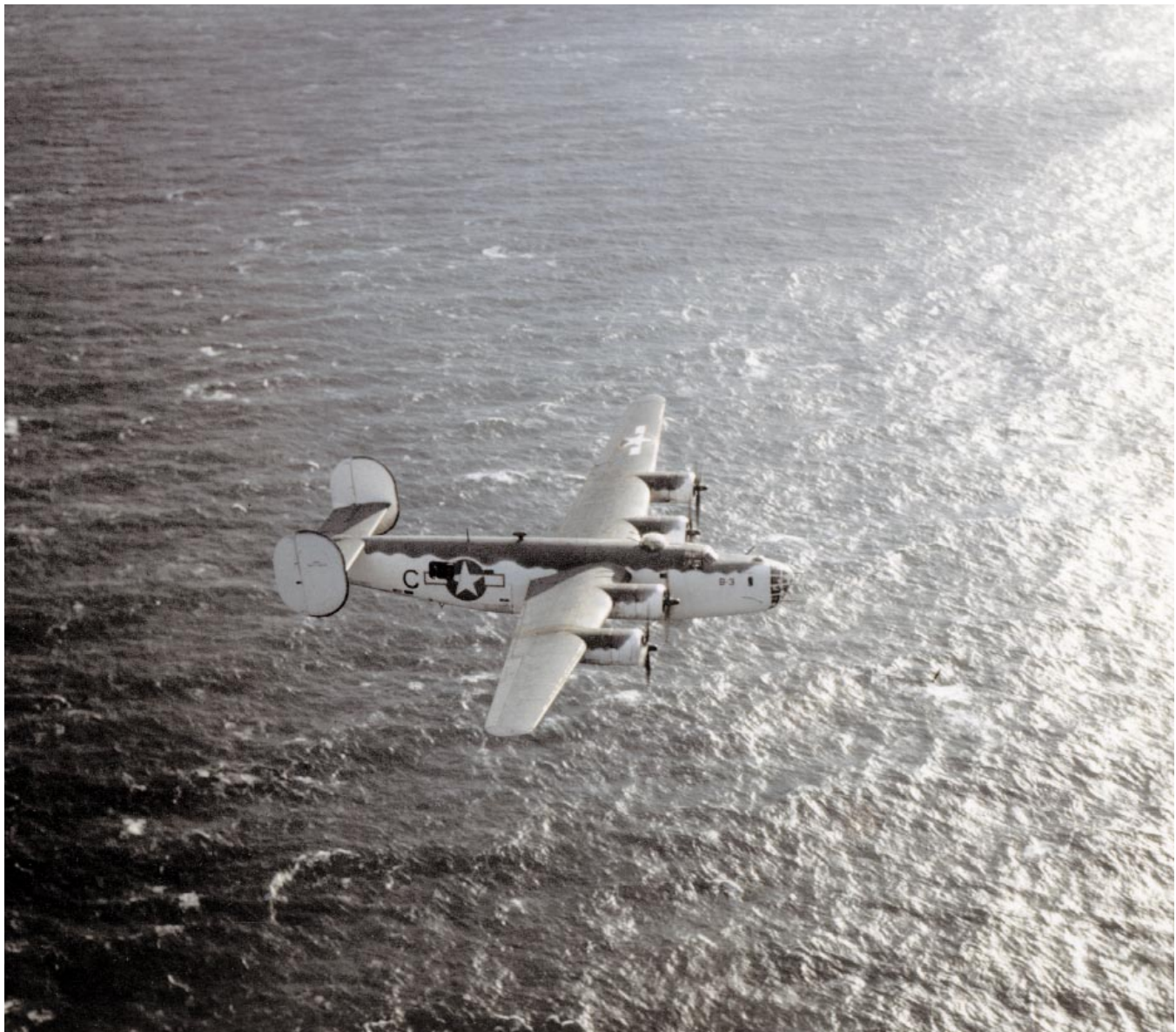
\* RAFB Dunkeswell came under U.S. Navy control and was redesignated NAF Dunkeswell on 23 March 1944.

**Commanding Officers**

|                            | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| LCDR William T. Easton     | 15 Mar 1943                 |                         |                                 |
| LCDR William G. von Bracht | 20 Aug 1943                 | PB4Y-1                  | Mar 1943                        |
| CDR Warren J. Bettens      | 8 Jul 1944                  |                         |                                 |
| LCDR Lucius L. Reid        | 4 Aug 1945                  | PB4Y-2                  | Jun 1945                        |

**Aircraft Assignment****Major Overseas Deployments**

| <i>Date of Departure</i> | <i>Date of Return</i> | <i>Wing</i> | <i>Base of Operations</i> | <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Area of Operations</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 15 May 1943              | 15 Aug 1943           | FAW-7       | Argentia                  | PB4Y-1                  | NorLant                   |
| 15 Aug 1943              | 28 May 1945           | FAW-7       | St. Eval                  | PB4Y-1                  | NorLant                   |
| 28 May 1945              | 4 Jun 1945            | FAW-7       | Azores                    | PB4Y-1                  | NorLant                   |



*A PB4Y-1 over water near the English coast, circa July-August 1943, 80-G-K-14059.*

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i>                      | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-14                           |                  | 15 Mar 1943            |
| FAW-5                            |                  | 29 Apr 1943            |
| FAW-9                            |                  | 30 Apr 1943            |
| FAW-7                            |                  | 15 May 1943            |
| 19 Group Coastal<br>Command, RAF |                  | 1 Jan 1944             |
| FAW-5                            |                  | 4 Jun 1945             |

**Wing Assignments—Continued**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-8       |                  | 24 Jun 1945            |

**Unit Awards Received**

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |          |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| NUC               | Nov 1943                                  | Jan 1944 |
|                   | Mar 1945                                  | Apr 1945 |



*A PB4Y refueling in England prior to a Bay of Biscay patrol, November 1943, 80-G-407690 (Courtesy Captain Jerry Mason, USN).*