

## VPB-17

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Squadron SEVENTEEN (VP-17) on 3 January 1944.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron SEVENTEEN (VPB-17) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 30 January 1946.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**3 Jan 1944:** VP-17 was established at NAS Norfolk, Va., as a large seaplane squadron flying 12 PBM-3D Mariners under the operational control of FAW-5. The squadron was relocated on 11 January 1944 to Harvey Point, N.C., for flight training. Fitting out and shakedown of squadron personnel and equipment continued through 31 March 1944.

**31 Mar 1944:** VP-17 was temporarily relocated to NAS Key West, Fla., for continuation of flight training with emphasis on ASW. The squadron returned to NAS Harvey Point on 7 April 1944.

**12 Apr 1944:** An advance party of 2 officers and 45 enlisted personnel proceeded to NAS Alameda, Calif., by train to prepare for the scheduled arrival of the remainder of the squadron. The remainder of the squadron personnel and equipment arrived with the squadron aircraft on 15 May 1944. Preparations for the transpac to Hawaii were commenced.

**18 May 1944:** VP-17 began departing NAS Alameda for NAS Kaneohe on schedule with all aircraft arriving by 31 May. No problems were encountered enroute. While at Kaneohe the squadron operated under the operational control of FAW-2.

**1 Jun 1944:** After the squadron had settled into its new temporary quarters, it was quickly brought up to operational status and patrols in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands were commenced. Additional ASW training was begun on 1 July 1944, continuing until the squadron was deployed to the South Pacific.

**3 Sep 1944:** VP-17 deployed a detachment of five aircraft to NAB Ebye, Eniwetok, Marshall Islands, joining VP-21 and sharing quarters aboard the tender *Casco* (AVP 12). The detachment came under the operational control of FAW-1.

**11 Sep 1944:** A detachment of three aircraft was deployed to Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, with tender support provided by *Hamlin* (AV 15). The remainder of the squadron from NAS Kaneohe joined this detachment on 17 September 1944, bringing the detachment total to seven aircraft. Sector searches, Dumbo

missions, mail delivery and air cargo missions to Palau were assigned by Commander, Patrol Squadrons, FAW-1.

**5 Oct 1944:** VPB-17 was reassigned temporarily to the tender *Curtiss* (AV 4) in preparation for relocation to Ulithi. Six squadron aircraft departed for Ulithi on 9 October 1944, operating temporarily from the small seaplane tender *Onslow* (AVP 48) until *Hamlin* arrived on 13 October 1944. The remaining six aircraft of the squadron arrived on the same date. Antishipping patrols in the vicinity of Ulithi were commenced immediately.

**24 Dec 1944:** VPB-17 was relocated from Ulithi back to Tanapag Harbor, Saipan. Essential maintenance and crew rest was provided in preparation for further deployment.

**21 Jan 1945:** VPB-17 was enroute to Kossol Passage, Palau Islands. On arrival, the squadron was provided support by seaplane tender *Kenneth Whiting* (AV 14). Sector searches and antishipping patrols were commenced upon arrival.

**5 Feb 1945:** VPB-17 was again relocated to Ulithi, and based temporarily aboard the tender *Chandeleur* (AV 10).

**12 Feb 1945:** A detachment of VPB-17 was deployed further south aboard the tender *Orca* (AVP 49), operating out of San Pedro Bay, Philippines, under the operational control of FAW-17. A second detachment was deployed to Lingayen Gulf, berthed temporarily aboard the tender *Currituck* (AV 7). The remainder of the squadron arrived at San Pedro Bay on 20 February and the crews were relocated to *San Pablo* (AVP 30).

**9 Mar 1945:** VPB-17 was relocated to Jinamoc Island, Philippines, and rejoined by the detachment previously operating from Lingayen Gulf. The seaplane base at Jinamoc Island was completed on 31 March 1945, providing berthing and repair facilities ashore for the squadron.

**11 Mar 1945:** A detachment of eight aircraft was deployed to Puerto Princessa, Palawan Islands. Tender support upon arrival was provided by *Pocomoke* (AV 9). The detachment remained until 22 April 1945, when it was deployed again to Lingayen Gulf, with tender support provided by *Tangier* (AV 8). The detachment of four aircraft remaining at Jinamoc rejoined the squadron at Lingayen Gulf on 27 April 1945.

**7 Jun 1945:** VPB-17 deployed a detachment to Tawi Tawi, Sulu, Philippines. This group was joined by three additional aircraft on 14 June.

**15 Jun 1945:** The rest of VPB-17 remained in Lingayen Gulf at Port Sual, Philippines, still aboard *Tangier* (AV 8). Night searches and attack patrols were conducted from this location against enemy positions and ships until 30 June, when the remainder of the squadron rejoined the detachment at Lingayen. The reunited squadron was relocated aboard *Currituck* (AV 7).

**2 Jul 1945:** Eleven squadron aircraft were deployed back to Tawi Tawi, aboard *Pocomoke* (AV 9). Patrols were conducted over Balikpapan, Borneo, and Morotai.

**14 Sep 1945:** VPB-17 was relocated to Jinsen, Korea, operating from the tender *Currituck* (AV 7). While at this location the squadron operated with the 7th Fleet for duty with the Allied occupation of Korea and the China coast. On the 19th, part of the squadron was ordered to move to Lungwha Airdrome on the Whangpo River, where it was joined by the remainder of the squadron after *Currituck* arrived on 24 September 1945.

**29 Sep 1945:** VPB-17 was deployed to Taku. *Currituck* (AV 7) and the squadron staff departed, leaving half the squadron at Shanghai and the other half based temporarily aboard *Barataria* (AVP 33). The squadron was reunited at the end of the month at Taku.

**30 Jan 1946:** VPB-17 was disestablished at NAS San Diego, Calif.

### Home Port Assignments

| <i>Location</i>        | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Norfolk, Va.       | 3 Jun 1944                |
| NAS Harvey Point, N.C. | 11 Jan 1944               |
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii    | 18 May 1944               |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.  | Jan 1946                  |

### Commanding Officers

|                         | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR Kenneth A. Kuehner | 3 Jan 1944                  |
| LCDR Leeds D. Cutter    | 21 Jun 1945                 |

### Aircraft Assignment

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBM-3D                  | Jan 1944                        |

### 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> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 18 May 1944              | *                     | FAW-2        | Kaneohe  | PBM-3D                  | WestPac                   |
| 3 Sep 1944               | *                     | FAW-1        | Eniwetok<br><i>Casco</i> (AVP 12)                              | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 11 Sep 1944              | *                     | FAW-1        | Saipan<br><i>Hamlin</i> (AV 15)                                | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 9 Oct 1944               | *                     | FAW-1        | Ulithi<br><i>Onslow</i> (AVP 48)<br><i>Hamlin</i> (AV 15)      | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 24 Dec 1944              | *                     | FAW-1        | Saipan   | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 21 Jan 1945              | *                     | FAW-1        | Palau<br><i>Kenneth Whiting</i> (AV 14)                        | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 5 Feb 1945               | *                     | FAW-1        | Ulithi<br><i>Chandeleur</i> (AV 10)                            | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 12 Feb 1945              | *                     | ComAir7thFlt | San Pedro<br><i>Orca</i> (AVP 49)<br><i>San Pablo</i> (AVP 30) | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 12 Feb 1945              | *                     | ComAir7thFlt | Lingayen<br><i>Currituck</i> (AV 7)                            | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 11 Mar 1945              | *                     | ComAir7thFlt | Puerto Prin.<br><i>Pocomoke</i> (AV 9)                         | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 22 Apr 1945              | *                     | ComAir7thFlt | Lingayen<br><i>Tangier</i> (AV 8)                              | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 7 Jun 1945               | *                     | ComAir7thFlt | Tawi Tawi  | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 30 Jun 1945              | *                     | ComAir7thFlt | Lingayen<br><i>Currituck</i> (AV 7)                            | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 2 Jul 1945               | 14 Sep 1945           | ComAir7thFlt | Tawi Tawi<br><i>Pocomoke</i> (AV 9)                            | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 14 Sep 1945              | 29 Sep 1945           | ComAir7thFlt | Jinsen<br><i>Currituck</i> (AV 7)                              | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 29 Sep 1945              | Jan 1946              | ComAir7thFlt | Taku<br><i>Currituck</i> (AV 7)                                | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |

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

***Wing Assignments***

| <i>Wing</i>  | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|--------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-5        |                  | 3 Jan 1944             |
| FAW-2        |                  | 18 May 1944            |
| FAW-1        |                  | 11 Sep 1944            |
| ComAir7thFlt |                  | 12 Feb 1945            |
| FAW-14       |                  | 30 Jan 1946            |

***Unit Awards Received***

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

## VPB-18

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Squadron EIGHTEEN (VP-18) on 15 January 1944.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron EIGHTEEN (VPB-18) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 23 November 1945.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

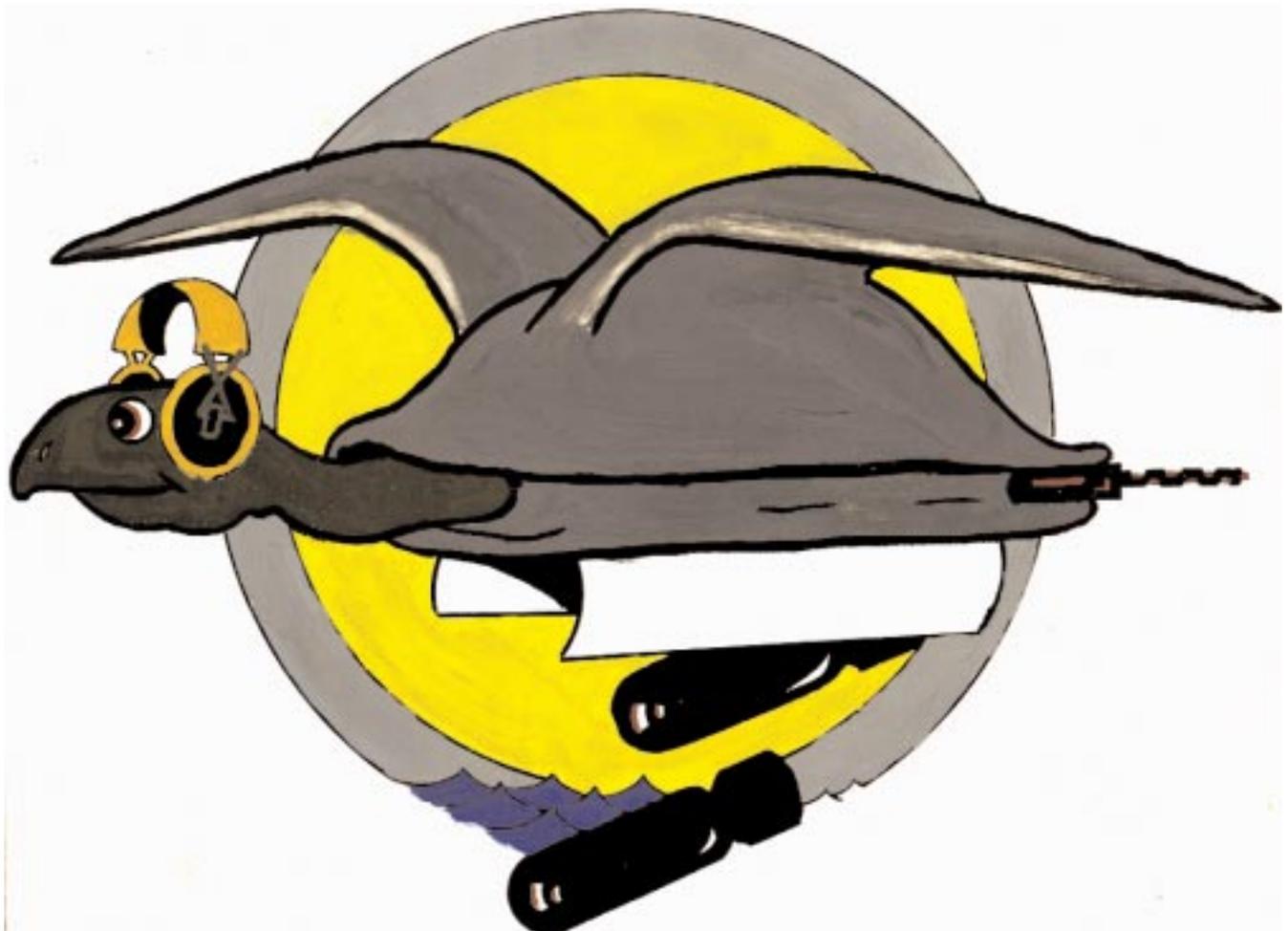
The insignia for VPB-18 was approved by CNO on 10 September 1945, only six weeks before the squadron was disestablished. The central figure of the design was a flying turtle with open bomb doors in the belly, with two bombs emerging. In the tail was a 50-caliber machine gun, and on the turtle's head there was a headphone set. The symbolism of the design was not explained in the request for approval, but it can be surmised that the shape of the turtle was analogous to the boxy shape of the PBM Mariner flown by

the squadron during its brief existence. Colors: field, drab yellow, pearl gray outline; waves, dark blue; turtle shell, gray; wings, gray; turtle head, olive green; eyes, white; bomb-bay doors, white; machine gun, black; bombs, black.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**15 Jan–Apr 1944:** VP-18 was established at NAS Norfolk, Va., as a medium (twin engine) seaplane squadron flying the PBM-3D Mariner. The squadron came under the operational control of FAW-5. The squadron was originally scheduled to go to NAAB Harvey Point, N.C., for training, but those facilities were overcrowded. On 1 February, VP-18 was relocated to NAS Charleston, S.C., for shakedown flight training in the Mariner. On 9 April, the squadron was relocated once again, this time to NAS Key West, Fla., for training in ASW techniques.

**12 May 1944:** With the completion of the syllabus at NAS Key West, the squadron received orders to proceed to NAS Alameda, Calif., under FAW-8, to prepare for the transpac to Hawaii. To prepare for the cross-



*The squadron's cartoon insignia.*

country flight, the aircraft were stripped of all armament, armor plate and other unnecessary gear. These items were packed for transshipment to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii. The squadron aircraft flew in groups of three to Eagle Lake, near Fort Worth, Texas, then on to Alameda. VP-18 was ready to begin the long trans-Pacific flight on 30 May 1944, with the last aircraft arriving safely at NAS Kaneohe by 6 June 1944.

**7 Jun 1944:** VP-18 came under the operational control of FAW-2 while at NAS Kaneohe. Training for combat patrols continued through 13 July 1944, when preparations were made to begin island hopping to the South Pacific. The armor plate, machine guns and other gear needed for operations in the combat zone that had been removed at Charleston were reinstalled.

**15 Jul–Sep 1944:** VP-18 departed Kaneohe for Ebeye, Kwajalein Atoll, arriving on 17 July. Several high-altitude-bombing missions were run against Wotje, and the remainder of the time was spent on mail runs and Dumbo missions. On 1 August orders were received to proceed to Saipan. The squadron was based afloat in Tanapag Harbor, with two detachments aboard *Yakutat* (AVP 32) and *Shelikof* (AVP 52) under the operational control of FAW-18. On 9 September 1944, the detachment aboard *Yakutat* relocated to *Coos Bay* (AVP 25). The squadron's experience indicated that these *Humboldt*-class tenders were too small to support modern seaplane squadron operations, with inadequate berthing, lack of spare parts and poor maintenance facilities. Both day and night patrols were conducted in the vicinity of Saipan to provide antisubmarine screening in addition to mail hops between Saipan and Ulithi, hunter-killer standby and Dumbo standby.

**23 Sep 1944:** VP-18 flew all of its aircraft back to Ebeye for engine changes that the small PATSU unit at Saipan was unable to handle. The squadron returned to Saipan in October, and assumed the duties of transferring mail and passengers between Saipan, Ulithi and Kossol Passage. Maintenance during this period proved troublesome. There were continual problems with the Wright Cyclone R-2600-22 engines due to limited maintenance facilities. When aircraft were damaged on reefs, salvage resources were inadequate in recovering aircraft, resulting in unnecessary losses. The situation improved when CASU-48 became the squadron's maintenance organization in mid-October.

**1 Nov 1944:** The patrol emphasis was shifted to daytime, with three 600-mile sectors, and one night antishipping patrol. On 9 November 1944, the squadron moved aboard the newly completed NAB Tanapag, Saipan.

**20 Nov 1944:** Two aircraft and two aircrews departed for NAS Kaneohe as part of the new crew rotation plan. The squadron had originally been scheduled for relief in January 1945, but the war in Europe had forced the Navy to reconsider its squadron allocations.

Two crews would be relieved each month by new crews from the States. Ground crews were not included in the rotations, and most wound up serving through the end of the war without being relieved.

**30 Nov 1944:** Following the arrival of the tender *St. George* (AV 16), VPB-18 moved aboard and experienced a distinct improvement in living quality for all hands. Maintenance was taken over by the PATSU unit aboard.

**13 Dec 1944–4 Feb 1945:** VPB-18 was relieved of duty at Saipan by VPB-13. On 19 December 1944, the squadron relocated to Kossol Passage to relieve VPB-21 in the conducting of searches and antishipping patrols under the operational control of FAW-1. The squadron was provided tender support by *Chandeleur* (AV 10) and *Casco* (AVP 12) and on 24 December the squadron moved back aboard *St. George* (AV 16). VPB-18 continued routine 600-mile searches northwest of Kossol Passage through 4 February 1945, when orders were received to relocate once again.

**5 Feb 1945:** VPB-18 relocated to Ulithi, with *St. George* (AV 16) following. Routine patrols and searches were conducted at this location until the end of February, when orders were again received to relocate the squadron.

**1 Mar 1945:** VPB-18 relocated back to Saipan, with *St. George* following. Routine patrols and training flights were conducted through the end of March under the operational control of FAW-18.

**28 Mar 1945:** VPB-18 and the faithful *St. George* (AV 16) were relocated to the island of Kerama Retto, southeast of Naha, Okinawa. From this location, day and night antishipping search patrols were conducted north along Nansei Shoto to Kyushu under the operational control of FAW-1. On 1 April 1945, a detachment of two aircraft was sent to NAB Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, returning on the 30th.

**6 Apr 1945:** Two VPB-18 crews downed enemy fighters during the same patrol. Lieutenant Jorden B. Collins claimed a Nakajima B5N, Navy Type 97 Carrier Attack Bomber (Kate) over the East China Sea south of Kyushu. One hour later, Lieutenant Gerald Hooker and his crew spotted an Aichi D3A, Navy Type 99 Carrier Bomber (Val) over the East China Sea northeast of the Ryukyu Islands and shot it down.

**16 Apr 1945:** Two more VPB-18 crews scored on the same day, with Lieutenant Jorden B. Collins and Lieutenant Paul D. Fitzgerald sharing credit for a Aichi E13A, Navy Type O Reconnaissance Seaplane (Jake) shot down over the Korean Strait.

**4 May 1945:** Lieutenant Paul D. Fitzgerald and his crew claimed a Nakajima Ki-27, Army Type 97 Fighter (Nate) while on patrol over the East China Sea east of Naha, Okinawa. Lieutenant (jg) John D. Martin and his crew shot down a Kate in the same general area just eight minutes later.

**6 May 1945:** A kamikaze struck the crane on the seaplane deck of *St. George* while at anchor in Kerama Retto. The engine of the aircraft penetrated below decks into the VPB-18 area stateroom of Lieutenant Jorden Collins, killing him instantly and injuring his roommate, Lieutenant Peter Prudden.

**15 May 1945:** Three squadron aircraft, piloted by Lieutenant Marvin E. Hart, Lieutenant (jg) Irving E. Marr and Lieutenant Dixon, were attacked by several Japanese N1K Georges from the 343<sup>rd</sup> Ku over the Tsushima Straits at 1145 hours (local time). In the ensuing combat Hart's crew accounted for three N1K Georges. Marr's crew also claimed one N1K George. Having lost an engine during one of the attacks, Marr headed back toward base. The remaining enemy fighters concentrated their fire on Lieutenant Marr's crippled aircraft. In the crash that followed all of the crew were killed. Hart was forced to ditch later on, but all except three of the crew were subsequently rescued.

**28 May 1945:** Lieutenant John T. Moore and his crew claimed a Nate fighter when attacked by enemy fighters while on patrol over the East China Sea north of the Ryukus.

**28 Jun 1945:** Lieutenant (jg) Podlogar and four of his crew were killed when their aircraft lost an engine during a night patrol. The aircraft impacted the water before single engine procedures could be put into effect.

**12 Jul 1945:** VPB-18 was withdrawn to NAB Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, for ten days of crew rest and aircraft maintenance. During its operational tour at Kerama Retto, the squadron had shot down 10 enemy aircraft (confirmed by postwar examination of enemy records), and had sunk 44 ships during 422 combat missions. Six aircraft had been lost during this period, three from combat and three from accidents. Daily surveillance patrols were conducted on reduced tempo under operational control of FAW-18. On 17–19 August 1945, training was conducted on use of the sonobuoy with *Gar* (SS 206). Equipment that had been

installed the week before was removed a few weeks later when it became apparent that it would no longer be needed with the hostilities unexpectedly coming to an end.

**24 Aug 1945:** VPB-18 was relieved of patrol responsibilities to commence shuttle service for mail, passengers and supplies to Tokyo. The aircraft were stripped of armor, guns and bomb racks in preparation for the first of 51 roundtrip flights to Japan that began on 1 September 1945 and continued through 3 October 1945.

**24 Oct 1945:** The squadron was transferred to Tinian for one week of crew rest.

**3 Nov 1945:** VPB-18 flew to Okinawa to begin weather flight service until orders were received to stand down for return to the States. Detachment orders were received on 14 November 1945, for return to NAS San Diego, Calif., via Kaneohe.

**11 Dec 1945:** VPB-18 was disestablished at Coronado Heights, NAS San Diego, Calif.

### Home Port Assignments

| <i>Location</i>       | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Norfolk Va..      | 15 Jan 1944               |
| NAS Charleston, S.C.  | 1 Feb 1944                |
| NAS Key West, Fla.    | 9 Apr 1944                |
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii   | 7 Jun 1944                |
| NAS San Diego, Calif. | Nov 1945                  |

### Commanding Officers

|                        | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR Charles M. Brower | 15 Jan 1944                 |
| LCDR R. R. Boetcher    | 9 Apr 1945                  |

### Aircraft Assignment

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PBM-3D                  | 1 Feb 1944                      |

### 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> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 6 Jun 1944               | Nov 1945              | FAW-2       | Kaneohe                   | PBM-3D                  | WestPac                   |
| 17 Jul 1944              | *                     | FAW-2       | Kwajalein                 | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 2 Aug 1944               | *                     | FAW-18      | Saipan                    | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Yakutat</i> (AVP 32)   |                         |                           |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Shelikof</i> (AVP 52)  |                         |                           |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Coos Bay</i> (AVP 25)  |                         |                           |
| 23 Sep 1944              | *                     | FAW-2       | Kwajalein                 | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| Oct 1944                 | *                     | FAW-18      | Saipan                    | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Yakutat</i> (AVP 32)   |                         |                           |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Coos Bay</i> (AVP 25)  |                         |                           |

**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> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 30 Nov 1944              | *                     | FAW-18      | Saipan   | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 19 Dec 1944              | *                     | FAW-1       | <i>St. George</i> (AV 16)<br>Kossol Pass.<br><i>Chandeleur</i> (AV 10)<br><i>Casco</i> (AVP 12)<br><i>St. George</i> (AV 16) | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 5 Feb 1945               | *                     | FAW-1       | Ulithi<br><i>St. George</i> (AV 16)  | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 1 Mar 1945               | *                     | FAW-18      | Saipan<br><i>St. George</i> (AV 16)  | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 28 Mar 1945              | *                     | FAW-1       | Kerama Rhetto<br><i>St. George</i> (AV 16)   | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 12 Jul 1945              | *                     | FAW-18      | Saipan   | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |
| 3 Nov 1945               | 14 Nov 1945           | FAW-1       | Okinawa  | PBM-3D                  | SoPac                     |

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

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-5       |                  | 15 Jan 1944            |
| FAW-8       |                  | 12 May 1944            |
| FAW-2       |                  | 7 Jun 1944             |
| FAW-18      |                  | 2 Aug 1944             |
| FAW-1       |                  | 13 Dec 1944            |
| FAW-18      |                  | 1 Mar 1945             |
| FAW-1       |                  | 28 Mar 1945            |

**Wing Assignments—Continued**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-18      |                  | 12 Jul 1945            |
| FAW-14      |                  | 14 Nov 1945            |

**Unit Awards Received**

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |             |
|-------------------|---|-------------|
| NUC               | 1 Apr 1945                                | 31 Jul 1945 |

*A PBM-5 refuels in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, May 1945, 80-G-K-15890.*



## VPB-20

### Lineage

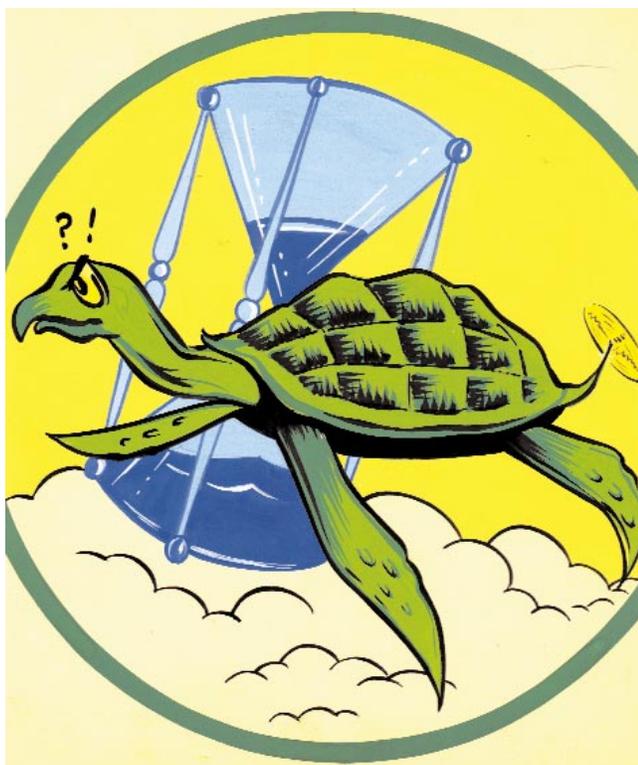
Established as Patrol Squadron TWENTY (VP-20) on 15 February 1944.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron TWENTY (VPB-20) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 4 February 1946.

### Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The only insignia for the squadron was first submitted by VP-20 in July of 1944. By the time CNO approved the design the squadron had been redesign-



*The squadron's cartoon insignia.*

nated VPB-20. The insignia portrays a flying turtle with spinner and hourglass in a circular design. The turtle represented the large, slow and ungainly patrol plane of the period; the hourglass, the passing of long, tediously alert patrol hours; and the insignificant spinner, the lack of power for such a large airframe. Colors: border of insignia, leaf green; background, light yellow; clouds, white with blue outline; hour glass, blue sand with white glass; turtle head, grass green with darker beak; eyeball, yellow; turtle shell, grass green; legs, grass green; whorl of tail, yellow.

Nickname: none on record.

### Chronology of Significant Events

**15 Feb–Jul 1944:** VP-20 was established at NAS Alameda, Calif. The aircrews began ground and flight training on the PBM-3D Mariner seaplane. While at Alameda, the squadron came under the operational control of FAW-8. Training continued through 19 July 1944.

**19 Jul 1944:** The squadron concluded operations at NAS Alameda in preparations for its transpac to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii. On the 26th, 10 officers and 96 enlisted personnel departed San Diego for Kaneohe as part of the advance party. The aircrews began flying the transpac on 10 August, with the last aircraft arriving on 29 August 1944.

**31 Aug 1944:** The majority of the squadron began advanced training in preparation for combat at Kaneohe under the operational control of FAW-2. Three crews had been unable to complete the transpac and remained at Alameda. They did not rejoin the squadron until mid-September.

**15–28 Oct 1944:** VPB-20 was ordered to proceed to the seaplane base at Los Negros, Manus, Admiralty Islands, in groups of three aircraft. The first group arrived at Manus on 24 October 1944, coming under the operational control of FAW-10. As each group of aircraft arrived, they were painted flat black in preparation for night operations. A detachment of two aircraft was sent on the 28th to Mios Woendi Island, followed on the 29th by a detachment of two aircraft to Morotai. The latter group of aircraft was provided tender support by *Tangier* (AV 8). Nine aircraft remained at Manus, relieving VPB-29. Operations during this period were carried out in the vicinity of the Mindanao Sea, Celebes Sea, Sulu Sea, Makassar Straits, and along the borders of islands in those waters.

**14 Nov 1944:** During night operations, squadron aircraft attacked and claimed damage to a *Shokaku*-class carrier in Philippine waters. Unfortunately, by this date both *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, the only members of that carrier class, had already been sunk in the Battle of the Philippine Sea (19 June 1944) and Battle of Leyte Gulf (25 October 1944), respectively. The only carrier surviving of a class similar to *Shokaku* was *Junyo*, of the *Hiyo* class. It was in the vicinity at that time of the action and at the close of the war it was located in the yards at Sasebo with aircraft bomb damage. She was scrapped after the war.

**21–26 Nov 1944:** The squadron, except for the Morotai detachment, was ordered to report to Leyte for further assignment. The first three crews to arrive were assigned night search missions out of Leyte. While in this area, the squadron was berthed aboard *Currituck* (AV 7). On the 25th, the Morotai detachment was relieved by VPB-71 and rejoined the squadron at Leyte. A routine of three daily daytime searches was begun on the 26th.

**27 Nov 1944:** A submarine was spotted on radar by Lieutenant (jg) John B. Muoio and his crew in Ormoc Bay. Lieutenant (jg) Muoio had been providing air coverage for DESDIV 43 engaged in bombardment of enemy positions at Ormoc Bay. The sighting was reported to the destroyer flotilla commander and they quickly located it and sank it with gunfire. Postwar examination of records indicate only one submarine sunk in that vicinity on that date, *Yu-2*, a Japanese Army submarine. The sinking of the submarine was accomplished by *Waller* (DD 446), *Pringle* (DD 477), *Saufley* (DD 465) and *Renshaw* (DD 499). The commanding officer of *Yu-2* was First Lieutenant Seikichi Ueki. Besides the crew of the submarine there was an Army detachment of 15 men aboard when she was sunk. Only 15 men from the crew and detachment survived the sinking.

**1–27 Dec 1944:** During the Mindoro Invasion landings, the squadron provided coverage for convoys and night combat patrols in the face of intense opposition. On 26–27 December a five-plane attack was made on a Japanese task force that was bombarding the beach head in Mangarin Bay, Mindoro. Two aircraft were shot down, but both crews were rescued. Lieutenant Warren M. Cox was hit by intense AA fire and ditched in the bay. Lieutenant James V. Fallon's *Mariner* was riddled by fire from a Japanese destroyer and ditched a half mile away from the scene of the battle. Fallon and his crew reached Canipo Island two days later where they were aided by guerrillas and returned to the squadron three weeks later.

**4–31 Jan 1945:** VPB-20 departed Leyte Gulf for Lingayen Gulf in company with TG 73.1. Through the end of the month the squadron provided support for convoys and invasion groups Marinduque, Lingayen, San Antonio and Nausbu with night patrols and search and attack missions.

**19 Jan 1945:** Lieutenant (jg) Wesley O. Glaze attacked a 24-ship Japanese task force, damaging a *Hayataka* (alternative classification *Hiyo*) class carrier, most likely the much-abused *Junyo* that was damaged by VPB-20 on 14 November 1944. Glaze approached the carrier at an altitude of 50-feet, barely clearing the flight deck, and dropped his three bombs in train (two 250 and one 500-pound GP), scoring two direct hits.

**21 Jan 1945:** A squadron PBM *Mariner* flown by Lieutenant Frank A. Yourek and crew sighted a submarine west of Ulithi and attacked it with 2 depth charges and a Mark 24 mine. The submarine escaped but was apparently damaged by the attack. Three destroyers, *Conklin* (DE 439), *Corbesier* (DE 438) and *Raby* (DE 698), observed the aircraft attack and the next day they resumed the attack which resulted in the sinking of the submarine. Postwar records indicate the Japanese submarine lost was *I-48* with a crew of 122. Commander Toyama and his crew had been on a Kaiten mission against shipping in Ulithi lagoon, but

apparently none of the Kaiten midget submarines were launched before VPB-20's attack.

**2 Feb 1945:** At Leyte, six crews were berthed aboard *San Carlos* (AVP 51). The remaining 12 crews flew to NAB Woendi for an aircraft exchange for the new PBM-5 seaplane.

**8 Feb 1945:** The six crews at Leyte were relocated to the captured Japanese seaplane base at Jinamoc, where they conducted antishipping patrols in the South China Sea and off the Indochina coastline.

**26 Feb 1945:** VPB-20 was relieved at Jinamoc by VPB-25. VPB-20 flew to Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, to relieve VPB-28. Tender support was provided by *Tangier* (AV 8). The squadron conducted daytime searches over the South China Sea.

**7 Mar 1945:** VPB-20 relocated to Sangley Point, Manila Bay, with tender support provided by *Currituck* (AV 7). Daytime antishipping searches were conducted over the South China Sea.

**11–29 Mar 1945:** Four squadron aircraft were sent to join VPB-17 at Puerta Princesa, Palawan Islands, aboard *Pocomoke* (AV 9). These crews participated in a formation attack on a Japanese convoy 60 miles south of Hainan Island on the 29th, in which one aircraft was shot down with the loss of all hands.

**1 May 1945:** The Sangley Point aircraft of VPB-20 joined the detachment on *Pocomoke* (AV 9) when it moved to Tawi Tawi, Sulu Archipelago. The squadron provided convoy coverage and reconnaissance flights in support of the invasion of Borneo. During the month numerous enemy small craft were sunk. During the month of June squadron activities were concentrated on mine spotting for convoys and task groups involved in operations around Borneo at Brunei Bay and Balikpapan.

**4 Jun 1945:** Lieutenant Deland J. Croze attacked two transports and an escort vessel in the Makassar Straits, sinking the two transports but receiving damage from the AA fire of the escort. Croze made a forced landing off the beach of Lingian Island near the northwestern tip of Celebes. One crewman died shortly after, six were captured by the Japanese, and three who avoided capture were later rescued. Fates of the captured crewmen, including Lieutenant Croze, are still unknown.

**3 Jul 1945:** A seven-aircraft detachment was sent to Lingayen Gulf, operating off *Barataria* (AVP 33). This group was primarily assigned to air-sea rescue operations. On the 9th, *San Pablo* (AVP 30) relieved *Barataria*.

**9–25 Jul 1945:** Four aircraft were detached from the squadron at Tawi Tawi and sent to Sangley Point, Philippines, for duty as transport and utility aircraft. On the 12th, the remainder of the Tawi Tawi detachment boarded *Half Moon* (AVP 26) for transportation to Sangley Point. After arrival on the 25th, they joined the Sangley detachment in conducting sector patrols in the western approaches to the Philippines.

**1 Aug 1945:** The Lingayen Gulf detachment of seven aircraft was assigned the role of air-sea rescue in support of the 15th and 13th Army Air Force missions.

**5 Aug 1945:** The Sangley detachment assigned five of its crews to ferrying aircraft from Sangley Point to the Los Negros repair facility for overhauls.

**29 Aug 1945:** A four crew detachment from Sangley Point boarded *Currituck* (AV 7) for transportation to Okinawa. Upon arrival, the detachment conducted mail and utility flights in support of Seventh Fleet operations.

**21 Sep 1945:** The *Currituck* detachment arrived at Shanghai. Primary duties consisted of mail flights between Okinawa; Jinsen, Korea; and Shanghai, China. On the 29th, the detachment moved to Taku, China, aboard *Barataria* (AVP 33), providing the same assistance in mail delivery and urgent delivery of parts.

**4 Feb 1946:** VPB-20 was disestablished at NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii.

### Home Port Assignments

| Location            | Date of Assignment |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| NAS Alameda, Calif. | 15 Feb 1944        |
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii | 31 Aug 1944        |

### Commanding Officers

|                       | Date Assumed Command |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| LCDR Robert M. Harper | 16 Feb 1944          |
| LCDR J. M. Brandt     | 25 Jun 1945          |

### Aircraft Assignment

| Type of Aircraft | Date Type First Received |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| PBM-3D           | Feb 1944                 |
| PBM-5            | Feb 1945                 |

### Major Overseas Deployments

| Date of Departure | Date of Return | Wing         | Base of Operations         | Type of Aircraft | Area of Operations |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 10 Aug 1944       | *              | FAW-2        | Kaneohe                    | PBM-3D           | WestPac            |
| 15 Oct 1944       | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Manus Island               | PBM-3D           | SoPac              |
| 21 Nov 1944       | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Leyte                      | PBM-3D/5         | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>San Carlos</i> (AVP 51) |                  |                    |
| 8 Feb 1945        | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Jinamoc                    | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
| 26 Feb 1945       | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Mindoro                    | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Tangier</i> (AV 8)      |                  |                    |
| 7 Mar 1945        | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Sangley Pt.                | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Currituck</i> (AV 7)    |                  |                    |
| 11 Mar 1945       | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Palawan                    | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Pocomoke</i> (AV 9)     |                  |                    |
| 1 May 1945        | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Tawi Tawi                  | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Pocomoke</i> (AV 9)     |                  |                    |
| 3 Jul 1945        | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Lingayen                   | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Barataria</i> (AVP 33)  |                  |                    |
|                   |                |              | <i>San Pablo</i> (AVP 30)  |                  |                    |
| 25 Jul 1945       | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Sangley Pt.                | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Half Moon</i> (AVP 26)  |                  |                    |
| 29 Aug 1945       | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Okinawa                    | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Currituck</i> (AV 7)    |                  |                    |
| 21 Sep 1945       | *              | ComAir7thFlt | Shanghai                   | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Currituck</i> (AV 7)    |                  |                    |
| 29 Sep 1945       | Jan 1946       | ComAir7thFlt | Taku                       | PBM-5            | SoPac              |
|                   |                |              | <i>Currituck</i> (AV 7)    |                  |                    |

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

### Wing Assignments

| Air Wing     | Tail Code | Assignment Date |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------|
| FAW-8        |           | 15 Feb 1944     |
| FAW-2        |           | 31 Aug 1944     |
| ComAir7thFlt |           | 15 Oct 1944     |

### Unit Awards Received

| Unit Award | Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| NUC        | 1 Nov 1944 - 1 Jun 1945            |

## VPB-23

### *Lineage*

Established Patrol Squadron TEN-S (VP-10S) on 1 July 1930.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron TEN-F (VP-10F) on 17 July 1933.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron TEN (VP-10) on 1 October 1937.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron TWENTY FIVE (VP-25) on 1 July 1939.

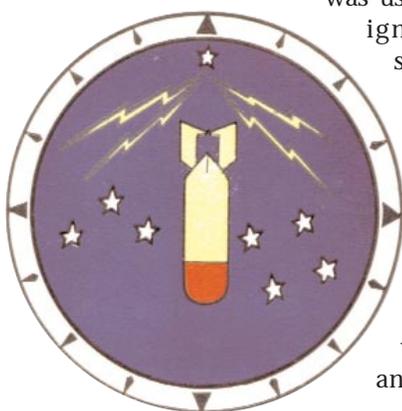
Redesignated Patrol Squadron TWENTY THREE (VP-23) on 1 August 1941.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron TWENTY THREE (VPB-23) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 25 January 1946.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

The date on which the official insignia of the squadron was accepted by BuAer is unknown. It would appear that the same design



*A squadron's insignia became a well-known design.*

was used after each redesignation of the squadron without alteration, from VP-10S to VP-23. There is no evidence that VPB-23 utilized this insignia. The circular design was a compass rose with the Big Dipper and Polaris Constellations imposed on it, with a bomb in the center of the design and two pairs of lightning-like radio waves on each side at the top. Radio waves were an essential element of long-range patrols, as were the navigational aids of star sightings. The bomb indicated the secondary role of the squadron in antishipping and ASW. Colors of the design: blue field with white stars and radio waves and bomb, yellow, with tip of bomb red.

Nickname: None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**1 Jul 1930:** Torpedo Squadron NINE-S (VT-9S) was redesignated at NAS Hampton Roads, Va., and the assets of the squadron were utilized to form Patrol Squadron 10S under the operational control of Scouting Fleet.



*A squadron T4M-1 with its wings folded.*



*A squadron PM-1, note the Battle E and insignia on the bow, circa 1931.*

**1 Sep 1930:** The squadron's twin-float Martin T4M torpedo bombers were turned in for Martin PM-1 flying boats. Tender support for the squadron's six PM-1 aircraft was provided by *Wright* (AV 1).

**8 Feb 1931:** VP-10S participated in Fleet Problem XXII with VP-8, VP-3 and VP-5 in the Caribbean. Squadrons were based ashore at Guantanamo, Cuba, and provided with tender support from *Wright* (AV 1), *Swan* (AM 34) and *Whitney* (AD 4) while at sea. The patrol squadrons were involved in exercises testing concepts of strategic scouting in both the attack on and protection of the Panama Canal. The greater range of the PM-1 led the planners to call for patrol sectors that were too ambitious, resulting in many units of the opposition forces passing unseen through the patrolled areas.

**1 Jan 1932:** VP-10S once again participated in fleet exercises in the Caribbean, but on a smaller scale. On



*Squadron P2Ys at FAB Pearl Harbor after their non-stop flight from San Francisco, January 1934.*

this occasion VP-8S was the only other squadron taking part in the training.

**1 Feb 1932:** VP-10S was reassigned a new permanent home base at FAB Coco Solo, C.Z. Tender support continued to be supplied by *Wright* (AV 1).

**1 Apr 1933:** VP-10S and the other squadrons at NAS Coco Solo (VP-2S, VP-3S and VP-5S) were reorganized from Scouting Fleet to Base Force. VP-10S was redesignated VP-10F with six P2Y-1 aircraft, supported by *Swan* (AM 34) and *Lapwing* (AM 1).

**10 Jan 1934:** Six P2Y-1 aircraft of VP-10F, Lieutenant Commander Knefler McGinnis commanding, made a historic nonstop formation flight from San Francisco, Calif., to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 24 hours 35 minutes. The flight bettered the best previous time for the crossing; exceeded the best distance of previous mass flights; and broke a nine-day-old world record for distance in a straight line for Class C seaplanes with a new mark of 2,399 miles.

**13 Jan 1934:** Effective this date, VP-10F was permanently reassigned to NAS Pearl Harbor, exchanging aircraft with VP-5F at San Diego before reporting there. VPs 10F and 8F from Coco Solo and VPs 1F, 4F and 6F

from Pearl Harbor participated in the Hawaiian Exercises, supported by tender *Wright* (AV 1).

**22 Apr 1935:** VPs 7F, 9F, 1F, 4F, 6F, 8F and 10F participated in Fleet Exercise XVI near Midway Island.

**1 Oct 1937:** VP-10F was redesignated VP-10 when the patrol squadrons came under the operational control of PatWing 2.

**18 Jan 1938:** VPs 10 and 9 conducted a historic ferry flight with 18 PBV-2 aircraft from NAS San Diego to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, without mishap. The crews of VP-9 returned to San Diego aboard *SS Matsonia*. The flight and the route later became the standard for the transpac made by all squadrons enroute to the South Pacific from the United States.

**25 Mar 1938:** Aircraft of VPs 1, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 18 participated in Fleet Exercise XIX (Phase V) as part of Red Force operating against Blue Force. The exercises demonstrated that slow patrol aircraft were extremely vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire from ships being attacked. During the exercise, the majority of aircraft participating were judged to have been shot down by the AA screen before reaching their intended targets.

**1 Jul 1939:** VP-10, flying 12 PBY-2s, was redesignated VP-25, still home based at Pearl Harbor under PatWing 2.

**9 Apr 1940:** Aircraft of VPs 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 participated in Fleet Exercise XXI with the Army 72nd Bombardment Squadron and the 4th Reconnaissance Squadron. The purpose of the exercise was to test the ability of aircraft to defend the Hawaiian Islands against an enemy carrier attack. The results of the fleet problem indicated that there were significant deficiencies in the coordination between the air arms of the two services in defense of the islands. Unfortunately, these deficiencies were not corrected in time to either prevent the coming attack on Pearl Harbor, or organize any defense during the attack.

**8 Nov 1941:** VP-23 flew its older model PBY-2 aircraft to San Diego, Calif., where new PBY-5 aircraft were picked up at the factory. Two weeks of familiarization training was given to the aircrews before returning to Hawaii.

**23 Nov 1941:** Upon return to Ford Island, Oahu, the crews of VP-23 began two weeks of intensive battle maneuvers to thoroughly familiarize them with the capabilities of the new PBY-5 aircraft.

**7 Dec 1941:** Two detachments of aircraft had been sent to Johnston Island and Palmyra Island the day before, and on the 7th began to practice circular patrol pattern searches. On that same morning, Japanese carrier forces attacked Pearl Harbor, destroying eight of the squadron's aircraft in their hangars on Ford Island.

**25 Dec 1941:** The two detachments of squadron aircraft remained at Johnston Island conducting search sweeps in the event of the return of the Japanese fleet. Back at Oahu, Ensign Brady and his crew claimed one Japanese submarine. Postwar records, however, do not indicate any enemy submarine losses on that date.

**16 Jan 1942:** Six aircraft of VP-23 temporarily based at Canton Island began daily searches of the waters between Canton Island and the Fijis to protect the advance of Task Force 8 as it prepared for its strike against the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. These were the first combat patrols by U.S. aircraft in the South Pacific.

**26 May 1942:** A detachment of squadron aircraft at Midway participated in the patrols searching for the Japanese invasion force expected from intercepted radio traffic. The first sightings occurred on 6 June 1942 and led to the famous carrier battles at Midway. All of the squadron aircraft returned safely to Ford Island, Oahu, on 30 June 1942.

**8 Jul 1942:** VP-23 was deployed to Noumea, New Caledonia, to support the invasion of Guadalcanal, relieving VP-71. Tender support was provided by *Curtiss* (AV 4). On 15 July 1942, the squadron was moved forward to the island of Espiritu Santo.

**25 Jul 1942:** VP-23 combed Tulagi Island, the first target in the bombing campaign conducted by the squadron against Japanese-held positions.

**6 Aug 1942:** Lieutenant Maurice "Snuffy" Smith and his crew of seven were reported missing after a patrol flown out of Espiritu Santo. On 14 January 1994, a team of loggers discovered the remains of the aircraft, BuNo. 2389, and its crew where they had crashed on a ridge of a hill on the island of Espiritu Santo.

**7 Aug 1942:** A nine-plane detachment of VP-23 was deployed to Malaita Island to support operations at Guadalcanal, with tender support provided by *Mackinac* (AVP 13). Severe losses by the Allies at the Battle of Savo Straits forced the return of the detachment to Espiritu Santo on 9 August 1942.

**10 Aug 1942:** A six-plane detachment was sent to Ndeni, Santa Cruz Islands.

**1 Oct 1942:** VP-23 and its detachments were recalled to Espiritu Santo for return to Kaneohe for rest and refit.

**1 Nov 1942:** Two detachments of squadron aircraft were sent to Canton and Midway islands for search patrol rotations.

**30 May 1943:** Twelve new PBY aircraft arrived from San Diego as replacements, and six of the aircrews ferrying the aircraft remained with the squadron as replacements. Training of the new crews was begun in conjunction with operational patrols in Hawaiian waters.

**24 Jun 1943:** VP-23 again deployed to the South Pacific, returning to its former base of operations at Espiritu Santo. A detachment was deployed to the island of Funafuti.

**20 Aug 1943:** The squadron base of operations was relocated to NAB Halavo Island, Florida Islands. From this location the squadron conducted special searches, convoy coverage, antishipping patrols, Dumbo missions and aerial resupply missions.

**15 Sep 1943:** A squadron PBY-5 Catalina piloted by Lieutenant W. J. Geritz spotted a submarine southeast of San Cristobal. The destroyer *Saufley* (DD 465) assisted in the sinking of the submarine. Postwar records indicate the submarine sunk was *RO-101* and the entire crew of 50 was lost.

**18 Sep 1943:** VP-23 conducted a bombing attack on Japanese positions at Nauru Island.

**10 Dec 1943:** VP-23 was relieved at NAB Halavo by VP-14. The squadron transferred to Espiritu Santo Island on 13 December 1943, in preparation for the return flight to Kaneohe.

**15 Feb 1944:** The squadron personnel of VP-23 boarded *Kasaan Bay* (CVE 69) for return to the continental United States. The squadron arrived at NAS San Diego, Calif., on 23 February 1943. Reassignments of personnel, home leaves, and other administrative details were taken care of upon arrival.

**1 Mar 1944:** VP-23 was reformed with new personnel and new equipment at NAS San Diego, Calif. Training commenced immediately and continued through mid-June 1944.

**20 Jun 1944:** The squadron flew the transpac from San Diego to Kaneohe, Hawaii, in the new amphibious version of the Catalina, the PBV-5A. All aircraft arrived safely and the squadron began operations on 30 June, sending a six-aircraft detachment to Midway for training in ASW.

**29 Jul 1944:** The Kaneohe detachment of six aircraft relieved the Midway detachment. This group returned to Kaneohe on 16 August 1944.

**20 Aug 1944:** VP-23 was deployed to the island of Eniwetok. From this naval air base searches were conducted to the northern and western approaches of the island. Periodic reconnaissance flights were conducted to Ponape and Wake islands.

**10 Sep 1944:** Group 1, FAW-2 was relieved by FAW-1 while VP-23 was based on NAB Eniwetok. Operational control of the squadron was undertaken by TU 96.1.7.

**30 Nov 1944:** VPB-23 conducted a bombing attack on Japanese positions on Wake Island.

**4 Dec 1944:** Twelve squadron aircraft were transferred to the island of Saipan; three aircraft remained at Eniwetok to provide search patrol support to FAW-1. Upon arrival at Saipan on 5 December, a detachment of three aircraft was sent to Orote Field, Guam, for air-sea rescue work, and another detachment of two aircraft was assigned to the Army Air Corps for air-sea rescue work. The remaining squadron aircraft conducted flight operations from Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, with headquarters ashore under the operational command of TU 94.4.2.

**7 Dec 1944:** A third detachment of two aircraft was sent to Falalop Island, Ulithi, for air-sea rescue missions.

**27 Dec 1944:** A fourth detachment of two aircraft relieved the VPB-54 detachment at Peleliu. The primary mission was provision of air-sea rescue support for elements of TU 94.4.2.

**1 Feb 1945:** On this date, detachments of VPB-23 were maintained at Agana, Guam; Isley Field #2, Saipan; Falalop Island, Ulithi; and Peleliu Island, Palau Islands. Operational control was under TU 94.4.2 with a primary mission of air-sea rescue, Dumbo and ferry flights.

**14 Feb 1945:** On this date, detachments of VPB-23 were maintained at Agana, Guam; Kobler Field, Saipan; Falalop Island, Ulithi; Peleliu Island, Palau Islands; Iwo Jima, Nanpo Shoto. Operational control was under TU 94.11.2, with the primary missions being Dumbo flights, press flights and antishipping patrols.

**1 Mar 1945:** Three crews of VPB-23 were detached from the Saipan detachment for return to the continental U.S. via Kaneohe, Hawaii.

**21 Mar 1945:** The VPB-23 detachment at Peleliu was relieved by a detachment from VPB-108.

**30 Mar 1945:** Daily ferry and resupply flights between Guam and Kerama Rhetto were begun by the Guam detachment.

**9 Apr 1945:** The Eniwetok detachment of three aircraft returned to VPB-23 at Saipan.

**20 Jun 1945:** The detachment at Falalop Island, Ulithi, was augmented by three more aircraft. Nightly antishipping patrols and Dumbo missions were conducted in support of TU 94.11.2 operations.

**9 Jul 1945:** The base of operations for VPB-23 on Saipan was transferred to the USMC air base on Peleliu Island, Palau, to provide air-sea rescue in support of Army Air Corps B-29 strikes on the Japanese home is-

*A squadron PBV-5A.*



lands. Air-sea rescue missions were also provided in support of USMC air strikes on Japanese positions of bypassed islands.

**1 Sep 1945:** On this date detachments were maintained at Peleliu Island, Palau; Falalop Island, Ulithi; and Agana Field, Guam. Primary missions conducted consisted of air-sea rescue work, antitime sweeps and leaflet drops on bypassed Japanese held islands.

**11 Dec 1945:** The detachment at Orote was transferred to Agana Field, Guam.

**13 Dec 1945:** Squadron operations were ended and all detachments were returned to Tanapag Harbor, Saipan. Shortly thereafter, the squadron departed

Saipan to return to San Diego, Calif., via Kaneohe, Hawaii.

**25 Jan 1946:** VPB-23 was disestablished at NAS San Diego, Calif.

### *Home Port Assignments*

| <i>Location</i>          | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Hampton Roads, Va.   | 1 Jul 1930                |
| FAB Coco Solo, C.Z.      | 1 Feb 1932                |
| NAS Pearl Harbor, Hawaii | 13 Jan 1934               |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.    | 23 Feb 1944               |
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii      | 20 Jun 1944               |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.    | Dec 1945                  |



*A squadron P2Y with a two star admiral's flag on the bow.*

**Commanding Officers**

|                    | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR Elmer W. Tod  | 1 Jul 1930                  |
| LCDR J. F. Maloney | 30 Dec 1930                 |
| LCDR K. McGinnis   | 3 Apr 1931                  |
| LCDR H. M. Martin  | Apr 1934                    |
| LCDR H. T. Stanley | 1936                        |
| LCDR S. H. Warner  | 1938                        |
| LCDR A. R. Brady   | 1940                        |
| LCDR F. M. Hughes  | Sep 1941                    |
| LCDR J. R. Ogden   | Jan 1942                    |
| LCDR F. A. Bradley | 11 Dec 1942                 |
| LCDR G. E. Garcia  | 25 Aug 1943                 |
| LCDR W. M. Stevens | 1 Mar 1944                  |

**Commanding Officers—Continued**

|                     | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR M. V. Ricketts | 6 Jul 1945                  |

**Aircraft Assignment**

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| T4M                     | Jul 1930                        |
| PM-1                    | Sep 1930                        |
| P2Y-1                   | Apr 1933                        |
| P2Y-2                   | 1936                            |
| P2Y-3                   | 1937                            |
| PBY-2                   | Jan 1938                        |
| PBY-5                   | Nov 1941                        |
| PBY-5A                  | Jun 1944                        |

*A squadron P2Y in flight.***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> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 8 Feb 31                 | 25 Mar 31             | ScoFlt      | Guantanamo<br><i>Wright</i> (AV 1)<br><i>Swan</i> (AM 34)<br><i>Whitney</i> (AD 4) | PM-1                    | Carib                     |
| 1 Jan 1932               | Feb 1932              | ScoFlt      | Guantanamo   | PM-1                    | Carib                     |
| 22 Apr 1935              | Mar 1935              | BasFor      | Midway   | P2Y-1                   | WestPac                   |
| 1 Feb 1942               | 1 Oct 1942            | FAW-2       | Marshalls  | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 26 May 1942              | 30 Jun 1942           | FAW-2       | Midway   | PBY-5                   | WestPac                   |
| 8 Jul 1942               | *                     | FAW-2       | Noumea<br><i>Curtis</i> (AV 4)   | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 15 Jul 1942              | *                     | FAW-2       | Espiritu Santo   | 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> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 7 Aug 1942               | *                     | FAW-2       | Malaita Island<br><i>Mackinac</i> (AVP 13) | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 9 Aug 1942               | 1 Oct 1942            | FAW-2       | Espiritu Santo                             | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 1 Nov 1942               | *                     | FAW-2       | Canton                                     | PBY-5                   | WestPac                   |
| 1 Nov 1942               | *                     | FAW-2       | Midway                                     | PBY-5                   | WestPac                   |
| 24 Jun 1943              | *                     | FAW-1       | Espiritu Santo                             | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 20 Aug 1943              | 10 Dec 1943           | FAW-1       | Halavo Island                              | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 20 Aug 1944              | *                     | FAW-2/1     | Eniwetok                                   | PBY-5A                  | SoPac                     |
| 4 Dec 1944               | *                     | FAW-1       | Saipan                                     | PBY-5A                  | SoPac                     |
| 9 Jul 1945               | 13 Dec 1945           | FAW-18      | Peleliu                                    | PBY-5A                  | SoPac                     |

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

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i>                  | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Scouting Fleet               |                  | 27 Aug 1927            |
| Base Force                   |                  | 1 Apr 1933             |
| PatWing-2/FAW-2 <sup>†</sup> |                  | 1 Oct 1937             |
| FAW-1                        |                  | 24 Jun 1943            |
| FAW-2                        |                  | Jan 1944               |
| FAW-14                       |                  | 23 Feb 1944            |
| FAW-2                        |                  | 20 Jun 1944            |
| FAW-1                        |                  | 10 Sep 1944            |
| FAW-18                       |                  | May 1945               |

**Wing Assignments—Continued**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-14      |                  | 13 Dec 1945            |

<sup>†</sup> Patrol Wing 2 was redesignated Fleet Air Wing 2 (FAW-2) on 1 November 1942.

**Unit Awards Received**

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



*A formation of squadron P2Ys.*

## VPB-24

### *Lineage*

Established as Patrol Squadron NINE-S (VP-9S) on 7 January 1930.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron NINE-B (VP-9B) on 1 October 1930.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron NINE-F (VP-9F) on 26 October 1931.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron NINE (VP-9) on 1 October 1937.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron TWELVE (VP-12) on 1 July 1939.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron TWENTY FOUR (VP-24) on 1 August 1941.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron TWENTY FOUR (VPB-24) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished at NAS San Diego on 20 June 1945.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

Patrol Squadron 9 adopted an insignia in keeping with the nature of its work, a wild goose flying in a sunlit sky. The goose was symbolic of the migratory nature of the species, flying from the arctic reaches to the temperate zones each year. It travels with unerring judgement to its destination, displaying great endurance and speed. It typifies the navigation necessary in patrol duties and is noted for flying in "V" formations like those flown by squadrons of patrol planes. Colors: light blue sky; goose, black and white; squadron letters superimposed on a yellow sun.



*The squadron's well known insignia.*

Letters and numbers identifying the squadron changed each time the squadron designation changed, from VP-9F through VPB-24. Although no official letter of approval by CNO exists in the records, BuAer had sent the insignia to National Geographic to be included in the *Insignia and Decorations of the U.S. Armed Forces*, Revised Edition, December 1, 1944.

Nickname: none on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**7 Jan 1930:** VP-9S was established at NAS Hampton Roads, Va., as a command under Scouting Fleet.

**1 Oct 1930:** VP-9S was redesignated VP-9B during the reorganization from Scouting Fleet to Battle Force.

**26 Oct 1931:** VP-9B was redesignated VP-9F during another reorganization, this time as an element under Base Force.

**22 Apr 1935:** The squadron participated in exercises in Alaska flying from Humboldt Bay and Sitka. *Gannet* (AM 41) and *Wright* (AV 1) provided tender



*A formation of squadron PMs flying over a glacier in Alaska, 1935.*

support during the cold weather operations. The crews found it extremely difficult to start engines and moor aircraft in the cold, rough seas.

**1 Oct 1937:** VP-9F was redesignated VP-9 as a result of the reorganization of patrol squadrons under Patrol Wings. VP-9 came under the operational control of PatWing-1, based at San Diego, Calif.

**18 Jan 1938:** VPs 9 and 10 conducted a record-breaking flight with 18 PBY-1 aircraft, flying from San Diego, Calif., to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Upon delivery of the aircraft, the crews returned to San Diego aboard SS *Matsonia*.

**17 Mar 1938:** The combined squadrons of PatWing-1 (VPs 7, 9, 11 and 12) and PatWing-4 (VPs 16, 17, 19) participated in Fleet Exercise XIX (Phase II), as a part of White Force. The squadrons conducted patrol sweeps at distances of 600 miles from Black Force, successfully attacking and damaging major elements of the enemy forces. The exercises marked the Navy's first use of long-distance radio bearings as an aid to aerial navigation.

**25 Jun 1938:** VP-9 and the other squadrons of PatWing-1 departed San Diego for Kodiak, Alaska, on a three-month deployment.

**13 Aug 1938:** VP-9 hosted Hollywood photographers during the filming of a movie about the Navy. Part of the action being filmed was the squadron's participation in Fleet Exercise XIX.

**11 Jan 1939:** The squadron flew with the rest of PatWing-1 to NAS Coco Solo, C.Z., for training exercises in the Caribbean area. PatWing-1 returned to San Diego from the deployment on 10 May 1939.

**1 Aug 1941:** VP-12 was redesignated VP-24 and relocated to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, under PatWing-2.

**1 Oct 1941:** VP-24 transferred from NAS Kaneohe to NAS Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

**7 Dec 1941:** The squadron's six aircraft were among the few spared during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Its planes were conducting joint submarine exercises off the coast of Hawaii when the attack came; the crews were subsequently given sectors by radio to conduct searches for the attacking Japanese forces. Having made no enemy contact, the squadron returned to NAS Ford Island to begin the cleanup and restoration of its devastated facilities.

**31 May 1942:** VP-24 was directed to send one PBY-5A and three crews in a detachment to Midway Island. The detachment was involved in the Battle of Midway, the next day. The group remained on Midway until 17 July 1942, when it returned to NAS Pearl Harbor.

**21 Sep 1942:** A three-plane detachment was sent to Espiritu Santo, with tender support by *Curtiss* (AV 4).

**1 Oct 1942:** VP-24 transferred its assets and personnel back to NAS Kaneohe. Five PBY-5A aircraft were traded to VP-23 for nonamphibian PBY-5s before the move, since the amphibian version would not be needed in the South Pacific, where VP-24 was soon to be sent. Most of the squadron's coming operations would be based afloat, serviced by seaplane tenders. Many of the flight crews actually preferred the older PBY-5, as they felt that the retractable gear of the newer PBY-5A added to the weight of the aircraft, reducing power and range.

**1 Nov 1942:** Two additional aircraft were sent to Espiritu Santo to supplement the original detachment, bringing it up to six operational planes.

**1 Feb 1943:** The remainder of VP-24 began to transfer by detachments to Espiritu Santo. The transfers were completed by April.

**30 Mar 1943:** VP-24 conducted Dumbo missions for the forces taking part in the New Georgia campaign, concluding on 29 September 1943. This was the first time that an entire squadron had assumed Dumbo work as its primary duty. The squadron rescued or evacuated 466 men during the campaign.

**29 Sep 1943:** Preparations were made to depart the island of Espiritu Santo for return to NAS Kaneohe and eventual return to the United States.

**7 Dec 1943:** VP-24 was given home leave while administrative details covering reforming of the squadron and reassignment of personnel were undertaken. Training of new personnel and reforming of the squadron began at NAS San Diego, Calif., on 1 January 1944. In mid-March all of the squadron aircraft were given coats of flat black paint, droppable wing tanks were attached, and improvements in radar and flight instruments were made.

**27 Mar 1944:** VP-24 made its second transpac to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii. Upon arrival combat patrols and training missions were conducted concurrently.

**9 May 1944:** Lieutenant (jg) Wade Hampton was lost with his entire crew while on patrol. His last reported message gave a position 150 miles from Midway.

**11 Jun 1944:** The squadron arrived at the island of Majuro in the Marshalls chain. Typical Black Cat night bombing missions were conducted, along with more mundane Dumbo and patrol missions.

**27 Jun 1944:** Lieutenant (jg) Mancini attempted to land in rough seas to rescue a downed fighter pilot one mile from a Japanese-held island. Both engines broke off on impact and the hull of the aircraft split in two. The entire crew managed to get into life rafts, and joined the fighter pilot in awaiting rescue. Fortunately, a destroyer had overheard the message from the aircraft and rushed to the scene in time to rescue the aircrews before they washed ashore on the island.

**1 Oct 1944:** VP-24 was redesignated VPB-24 while based at Majuro. Duties remained essentially the same during this period.

**10 Oct 1944:** A detachment of three aircraft and crews was formed and sent to Eniwetok to provide Dumbo coverage for air operations in the area. On 19 October the squadron was broken down into smaller one- and two-aircraft detachments that were sent to Apamama, Makin, Tarawa, Roi, Saipan and Guam. Through 1 December 1944, the squadron rescued 25 aircrew without surface assistance.

**28 Oct 1944:** Ensign Troy C. Beavers received a call to medevac a crew member of a ship (an LCI) who had a suspected case of acute appendicitis. Beavers landed near the ship and loaded the patient aboard. During the liftoff a rogue wave struck the starboard float, ripping off the wing. The crew and patient exited the aircraft before it sank and were picked up by the LCI. The patient turned out to only have constipation and it is believed that the crash cured him!

**23 Jan 1945:** The VPB-24 detachments were reformed with two aircraft at Eniwetok, four at Kwajalein, one at Tarawa and one at Roi.

**1 Feb 1945:** The various detachments of the squadron reformed on Majuro to conduct missions in support of the psychological warfare campaign against defending Japanese forces on the island of Wotje.

Additional duties included continuing Dumbo and air-sea rescue missions.

**25 Apr 1945:** VPB-24 was relieved at Majuro Atoll by VH-5. Elements of the squadron proceeded to Kaneohe, Hawaii, for transport back to the United States.

**1 May 1945:** The personnel of the squadron loaded aboard *Hollandia* (CVE 97) for transport to NAS North Island, San Diego, Calif.

**20 Jun 1945:** VPB-24 was disestablished at NAS North Island, San Diego, Calif.

### Home Port Assignments

| <i>Location</i>                       | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| NAS Hampton Roads, Va.                | 7 Jan 1930                |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.                 | 1930                      |
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii                   | 1 Aug 1941                |
| NAS Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii | 1 Oct 1941                |
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii                   | 1 Oct 1942                |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.                 | Dec 1943                  |
| NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii                   | Mar 1944                  |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.                 | 1 May 1945                |

*A formation of squadron PBV-1s flying over the Golden Gate Bridge, May 1937, 80-G-418203.*



### Commanding Officers

|                        | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR V. H. Ragsdale    | 1930                        |
| LCDR H. C. Frazer      | 1932                        |
| LCDR A. D. Bernhard    | 1932                        |
| LCDR B. J. Connell     | 1933                        |
| CDR H. R. Bogusch      | 1933                        |
| LCDR B. J. Connell     | 1934                        |
| LCDR H. T. Standley    | 1935                        |
| LCDR J. B. Sykes       | 1936                        |
| LCDR W. G. Tomlinson   | 1937                        |
| LCDR B. L. Braun       | 1938                        |
| LCDR A. C. Olney, Jr.  | 1939                        |
| LCDR C. W. Oexle       | 1940                        |
| LCDR A. E. Buckley     | 1941                        |
| LCDR J. P. Fitzsimmons | 1942                        |
| LCDR E. Tatam          | Aug 1942                    |

### Commanding Officers—Continued

|                      | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR W. L. Richards  | Sep 1942                    |
| LCDR R. F. Wadsworth | 7 Dec 1943                  |
| LCDR J. E. Tebbetts  | Mar 1945                    |

### Aircraft Assignment

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PD-1                    | 1931                            |
| PM-1                    | 1931                            |
| PBY-1                   | Aug 1937                        |
| PBY-2                   | Jan 1938                        |
| PBY-3                   | Jun 1938                        |
| PBY-4                   | Oct 1939                        |
| PBY-5                   | 1940                            |
| PBY-5A                  | Apr 1942                        |



*A squadron PM-1 in flight. (Courtesy John M. Elliott Collection).*

### **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> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 22 Apr 1935                  | Jul 1935                  | PatWing-1   | Sitka                         | PD-1                        | NorPac                        |
| 18 Jan 1938                  | Mar 1938                  | PatWing-1   | Pearl Harbor                  | PBY-1                       | WestPac                       |
| 25 Jun 1938                  | Aug 1938                  | PatWing-1   | Kodiak                        | PBY-2                       | NorPac                        |



*A squadron PM in flight over Resurrection Bay, Alaska, May 1935.*

**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> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 11 Jan 1939              | 10 May 1939           | PatWing-1   | Panama                    | PBY-3                   | Carib                     |
| 31 May 1942              | 17 Jul 1942           | FAW-2       | Midway                    | PBY-5A                  | WestPac                   |
| 1 Feb 1943               | 29 Sep 1943           | FAW-1       | Espiritu Santo            | PBY-5A                  | SoPac                     |
| 11 Jun 1944              | *                     | FAW-1       | Majuro                    | PBY-5A                  | SoPac                     |
| 10 Oct 1944              | *                     | FAW-2       | Marshalls                 | PBY-5A                  | SoPac                     |
| 1 Feb 1945               | 25 Apr 1945           | FAW-1       | Majuro                    | PBY-5A                  | SoPac                     |

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



*A squadron PM in flight over Resurrection Bay, Alaska, May 1935, note the squadron insignia on the fuselage.*

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i>                  | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Scouting Fleet               |                  | 7 Jan 1930             |
| Battle Force                 |                  | 1 Oct 1930             |
| Base Force                   |                  | 26 Oct 1931            |
| PatWing-1                    |                  | 1 Oct 1937             |
| PatWing-2/FAW-2 <sup>†</sup> |                  | 1 Aug 1941             |
| FAW-1                        |                  | Mar 1943               |
| FAW-14                       |                  | 7 Dec 1943             |
| FAW-2                        |                  | 27 Mar 1944            |
| FAW-1                        |                  | Sep 1944               |
| FAW-2                        |                  | 10 Oct 1944            |

**Wing Assignments—Continued**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-14      |                  | 1 May 1945             |

<sup>†</sup> Patrol Wing 2 was redesignated Fleet Air Wing 2 (FAW-2) on 1 November 1942.

**Unit Awards Received**

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



*A squadron PBY-1 in flight, circa 1937 (Courtesy John M. Elliott Collection).*

## VPB-29

### *Lineage*

Established as Pacific Air Detachment on 17 January 1923.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron FOURTEEN (VP-14) on 29 May 1924.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron ONE-Naval District 14 (VP-1D14) on 21 September 1927.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron ONE-B (VP-1B) on 1 July 1931.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron ONE-F (VP-1F) on 15 April 1933.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron ONE (VP-1) on 1 October 1937.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron TWENTY-ONE (VP-21) on 1 July 1939.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron ONE (VP-1) on 30 July 1940.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron ONE HUNDRED ONE (VP-101) on 3 December 1940.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron TWENTY-NINE (VPB-29) on 1 October 1944.

Disestablished on 20 June 1945.

### *Squadron Insignia and Nickname*

The squadron insignia was officially approved by CNO on 18 September 1934. Patrol Squadron One adopted the elephant for its representative since that animal had always been noted for its endurance and patience. The elephant of VP-1 stood on a cloud with one eye cocked downward at a target, a bomb securely held by his trunk, waiting for the proper time to make an unerring drop. The elephant was used because it occupies the same relative position in the animal kingdom as the patrol seaplane did in regard to other naval aircraft, e.g., heavy duty. The bomb was the primary armament of seaplanes of that period. The cloud denoted high altitude. Colors: elephant, gray with black outline and markings; eye and tusks, white; bomb, black with white markings; cloud, white outlined in black; background, royal blue; and circle, red. The same insignia was used throughout successive changes in squadron designation until the disestablishment of VPB-29 in 1945.

Nickname: None on record.

### *Chronology of Significant Events*

**17 Jan 1923:** Pacific Air Detachment, Navy Yard Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was formed with a hodgepodge of aircraft types. Aircraft assigned to the new unit consisted of F-5L, H-16 and DT models. The unit came under the operational control of Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, based on the reorganization of the fleet on 17 June 1922. By the end of 1923 the detachment was flying six F-5Ls.

**29 May 1924:** Pacific Air Detachment was assigned the Patrol Squadron 14 (VP-14) designation by Chief of Naval Operations. The new designation placed it under the Naval Coast Defense Forces, Hawaii Region

**1 May 1925:** VP-14 participated in exercises against the fleet at Oahu.

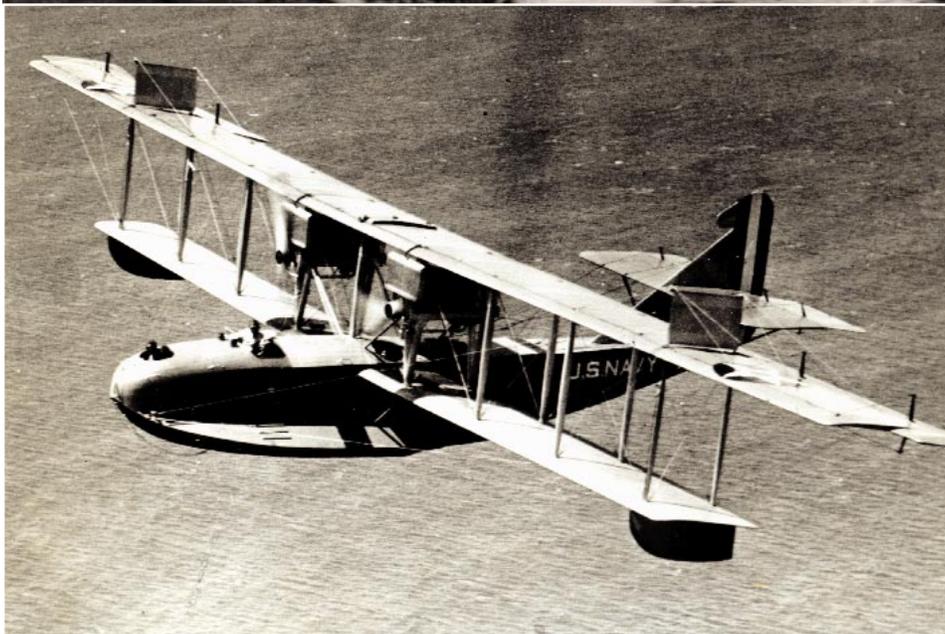
**15 Jul 1927:** The squadron flew two F-5Ls to Molokai to assist in the salvage of the airplane *City of Oakland*. Two civilian pilots, Smith and Bronte,



*The squadron's elephant on a cloud insignia became a well-known design.*



*DT-2s moored, NH-90103.*



*An H-16 in flight, circa 1924.*

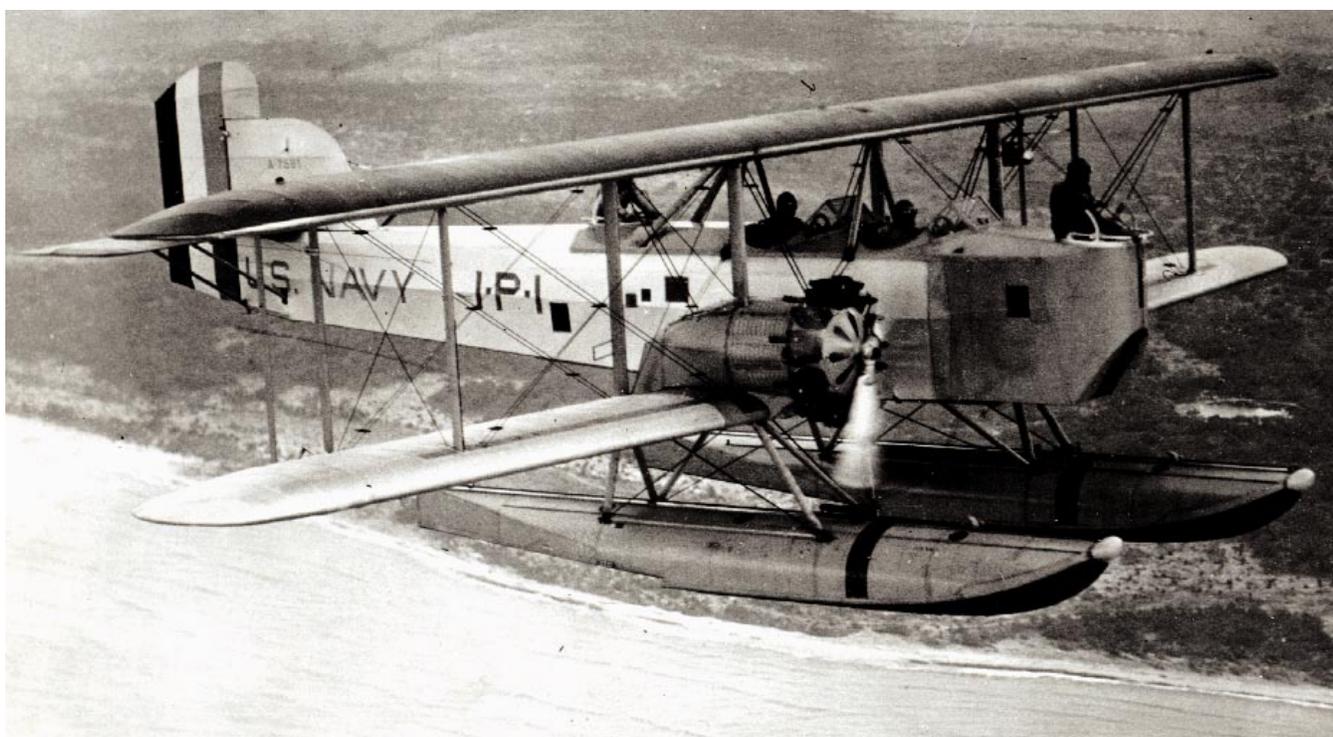
flew this aircraft from the West Coast depending on radio direction bearings for locating Hawaii. Their receiver broke down forcing them to use dead reckoning. The pair flew on, eventually locating Molokai Island where they made a forced landing in the tree-tops. Both Smith and Emory were unhurt. Their successful attempt at crossing the Pacific had already been beaten on 28–29 June 1927 by two Army aviators, Lester Maitland and Albert Heggenberger, who flew from Oakland, Calif., to Hawaii in an Army Fokker C-2 monoplane named *Bird of Paradise*.

**17 Aug 1927:** VP-14 provided three F-5Ls for seven-to-eight hour patrols over the Pineapple Derby flight route which also had destroyers located along the route at 15-minute intervals. The early pioneer successes of the teams Maitland and Heggenberger and Smith and Bronte in crossing the Pacific inspired

James D. Dole to sponsor his Pineapple Derby race in August of 1927. Dole, Boston-born head of the Hawaiian Pineapple Company, had offered a prize of \$25,000 to the first flyer in the race to cross the Pacific and reach Honolulu, Hawaii, from the continental U.S. The prize for second place in the race was \$10,000. The Pineapple Derby attracted eight entries, but only four aircraft actually left for Hawaii. A Lockheed Vega named *Golden Eagle*, sponsored by John Randolph Hearst, Jr., and a Buhl biplane named *Miss Doran* never arrived and were presumed lost at sea. Art Goebel's *Woolaroc* Travel Air monoplane was the winner of the race. Goebel arrived overdue at Wheeler Field on the 17th, followed a few hours later by the only other plane to complete the race, *Aloha*, a Breese monoplane piloted by Martin Jensen and Paul Schluter. The state of technology at that time proved unequal to the challenge. The total number killed in pre-race crashes, losses en route to Hawaii and deaths in the fruitless search for missing planes amounted to nine men and one woman.

**21 Sep 1927:** VP-14 was redesignated VP-1D14, the D14 representing the 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor. The squadron was stationed at NAS Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, supported by the tender *Pelican* (AM 27).

*A squadron F-5L in flight, circa 1924.*



*A squadron T2D-1 in flight.*

**7 Mar 1928:** VP-1D14 participated in Fleet Problem VIII with Submarine Division Nine in preparation for battle practice. Flights included radio compass calibration hops and flights in cooperation with Army aircraft.

**31 May 1928:** Two Australians, Flight Lieutenant Charles T. P. Ulm and Squadron Leader Charles

Kingsford-Smith, departed Oakland, California, in a Fokker trimotor attempting to fly from California to Australia. VP-1D14 provided air patrols in the event that *Southern Cross* went down at sea. The aircraft, however, made a successful crossing and landed safely on 9 June at Brisbane after a flight of 83 hours and 15 minutes.

**15 Aug 1928:** VP-1D14 participated in the Captain Cook sesquicentennial celebration exercises with the Army, in honor of Cook's discovery of the Hawaiian Islands. Squadron aircraft operated for the first time from advanced bases at Nawiliwili, Kauai and Waimea, Kauai. Operations were successful, but many problems occurred with the Liberty engines in the H-16s. These aircraft were scheduled for replacement by the new T2D.

**15 Nov 1928:** VP-1D14 tested the first T2D aircraft, a replacement for the Navy's aging H-16s. Trials were conducted on air maneuverability, speed, and quick takeoff, rough water and high-altitude capabilities.

**20 Feb 1929:** VP-1D14 conducted the first aerial surveys for charts of the Hawaiian islands, basing detachments at outlying islands to secure the necessary photographs. The survey was completed a month later.

**14 Sep 1930:** VP-1D14, VP-4D14, and VJ-6D14 departed Pearl Harbor for Hilo in company with *Pelican* (AM 27) for tests of advanced base operations and extended operations from a patrol airplane tender, including servicing of the new T2D and PD-1 aircraft while afloat.

**1 Jul 1931:** Under a reorganization of the fleet, VP-1D14 was transferred from a Naval Air Station squadron to assignment under Commander Minecraft, Battle Force, Fleet Air Base Pearl Harbor.

**15 Apr 1933:** FAB Pearl Harbor was reorganized from Minecraft, Battle Force and placed under Base Force, along with the associated squadrons assigned to the base, including VP-1.

**22 Apr 1933:** VP-1F departed Pearl Harbor with VPs 4F and 6F for an extended training flight to French Frigate Shoals. This flight with a group of patrol squadrons was one of the longest conducted to date.

**13 Jan 1934:** The year 1934 marked the beginning of the annual patrol squadron exercises in the Hawaiian and Midway Island sectors. Approximately half of the ten patrol squadrons participated each year with their full complement of aircraft and support vessels.

**22 Apr 1935:** VP-1F participated in Fleet Problem XVI at Midway Island, with VPs 4F, 6F, 7F, 8F, 9F, 10F and several support vessels.

**28 May 1935:** CNO established administrative organizations designated Patrol Wings (PatWing) to each of the three Base Force Fleet Air Bases. FAB San Diego, Calif., supported PatWing-1; FAB Coco Solo, C.Z., supported PatWing-3; and FAB Pearl Harbor supported PatWing-2, the home base of VP-1F. Patrol squadrons at this time were frequently referred to as Patrons, an abbreviation that is still in used today.

**25 Mar 1938:** Aircraft of VPs 1F, 4F, 6F, 8F, 10F and 18F participated in Fleet Exercise XIX (Phase V) as part of Red Force. This exercise demonstrated the ex-

treme vulnerability of slow flying patrol bombers mounting attacks in the face of strong anti-aircraft fire. The majority of aircraft making runs were judged shot down.

**17 Oct 1938:** VP-1 pilots took delivery of PBV-4s at NAS San Diego, Calif., with additional aircraft being through 18 January 1939.



*A squadron PBV-4 in flight, circa 1939 (Courtesy John M. Elliott Collection).*

**1 Jul 1939:** VP-1 was redesignated Patrol Squadron 21 and assigned to the Asiatic Fleet, becoming the nucleus for the newly formed Patrol Wing 10 at Cavite Naval Base, Luzon, Philippines.

**7 Dec 1941:** VP-101 was placed on war alert upon receiving news of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and war patrols commenced.

**14 Dec 1941:** PatWing-10 was relocated from the devastated Cavite Naval Base at Luzon, to Balikpapan in an attempt to keep ahead of the advancing Japanese forces.

**23 Dec 1941:** VP-102 was merged with VP-101 to combine the squadrons' dwindling assets in aircraft, crews and material. On the 25th VP-101 was relocated to Ambon, N.E.I.

**27 Dec 1941:** Six of the squadron's PBV-4 Catalinas, led by Lieutenant Burden R. Hastings, conducted an early morning attack against Jolo, in the central Philippines. Enemy aircraft and AA fire broke up the formation before a bombing run could be made. Ensign Elwin L. Christman and his crew followed through alone and made a drop on an enemy vessel at 1,000 feet. The Catalina, heavily damaged by AA fire, caught fire. Three crewmen bailed out, but the others remained with the aircraft until Christman made a controlled water landing near shore. Three crewmen died; the others were eventually rescued. Aviation Machinist Mate's First Class Andrew K. Waterman was the plane captain and waist gunner on the aircraft. He shot down one enemy aircraft while defending the Catalina during the attack on shipping in the harbor, but in doing so received mortal wounds. For his courageous actions under fire Waterman was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. Radioman First Class Robert

L. Pettit also stuck by his post even after the aircraft, flooded with aviation gas from perforated tanks, caught fire. For his devotion to duty Pettit was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. Ensign Christman led the surviving members of his crew to safety on the shore of Jolo Island. Lieutenant Jack B. Dawley and the surviving members of his crew, who had also been shot down immediately after dropping their bombs, joined Christman's group on Jolo Island. The two officers led their crews inland away from the Japanese, eventually reaching U.S. Naval Headquarters at Surabaya, Java, N.E.I. Aircraft Chief Machinist's Mate Donald D. Lurvey was awarded the Navy Cross for assisting Ensign Cough, the second pilot of Dawley's aircraft, into a life vest and guiding him to shore. Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class Joseph Bangust received the Navy Cross posthumously for his action as waist gunner in Dawley's aircraft, shooting down one enemy aircraft before being mortally wounded by incoming fire. Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class Evren C. McLawhorn, the plane captain, took over the waist gun position after Bangust was mortally wounded. He received seven wounds during the fight, but survived and received the Navy Cross for his heroism. For their courage under fire and leadership in guiding their crews through enemy-occupied territory to safety, Ensign Christman and Lieutenant Dawley were awarded the Navy Cross. Lieutenant Hastings, as leader of the gallant but unsuccessful strike, was later awarded the Navy Cross for guiding the force into the target area in the face of overwhelming odds. Lieutenant Hastings' award was made posthumously, as he and his men were the only aircrew captured by the Japanese. They were interrogated by their captors and beheaded on the parade ground of the Jolo garrison. The fourth Catalina shot down during the strike was manned by Lieutenant Hazelton and his crew. Hazelton made a sea landing and the entire crew safely escaped the sinking aircraft into life rafts and were picked up two days later by a squadron aircraft.

**16 Jan 1942:** VP-101 was ordered to evacuate Ambon due to the presence of an approaching Japanese naval task force. Assets and personnel were moved to Surabaya.

**1 Mar 1942:** VP-22's assets were merged with VP-101, which was then ordered to evacuate Surabaya and withdraw to Perth, Australia, to reform and refit the devastated squadron.

**7 Mar 1942:** VPs 102, 21 and 22 were officially disestablished, with the remaining personnel and aircraft assets being combined to bring up to full strength the remaining squadron, VP-101.

**26 Apr 1942:** A desperate attempt was made to rescue personnel otherwise doomed to capture on the besieged island of Corregidor. Two Catalinas, formerly assigned to VP-102, flew a circuitous route back to the Philippines, arriving around midnight of the 29<sup>th</sup>. Over

30 nurses were flown out that night under cover of darkness.

**1 May 1942:** The reformed VP-101 recommenced combat patrols off the coast of Australia, operating from bases at Exmouth Gulf, Pelican Point, Geraldton and Albany. Tender support was provided by *Childs* (AVD 15), *Heron* (AVP 2) and *Preston* (DD 379).

**9 Nov 1942–29 Jun 1943:** Upon return to Perth, Australia, VP-101 was split into three units—HEDRON, SCORON and VP-101. Combat patrols were continued from Perth until VP-101 was relocated to Brisbane, Australia, on 29 June 1943, under operational control of FAW-17.

**1 July 1943:** The first element of VP-101 flew into Port Moresby, Papua, New Guinea. Its aircraft were in poor mechanical shape and the decision was made to use them to supply guerrilla fighters in the vicinity of Wewak. Landings were made on the Sepik River leading into Lake Yibiri. The flights continued through October 1943, but were discontinued due to increased Japanese opposition. The guerrilla fighters were rescued in December 1945 by aircraft from VP-11. The second element of VP-101 was moved to the eastern end of New Guinea to begin Black Cat operations from the seaplane tender *San Pablo* (AVP 30), anchored in Namoa Bay. The squadron's Catalinas were fitted with ASV radar sets that allowed them to find targets on the darkest of nights. The highly touted Norden bombsights proved worthless, being unable to hit fast moving, dodging Japanese ships from any height. Instead, a low-level bombing tactic was worked out using one foot of altitude for each pound of bomb weight. Thus, a 500-pound bomb was released from a 500-foot altitude leading into a target, resulting in only a gentle updraft from the bomb blast. This technique was necessary due to the lack of a four-to-five second delay on the bomb fuses.

**1–28 Dec 1943:** VP-101 squadron headquarters were established at Palm Island, Australia, with advance bases at Samarai and Port Moresby, New Guinea. Combat patrols and crew training were conducted concurrently through the 28th, when the squadron returned to Perth, Australia. Upon return, the squadron again came under the operational control of FAW-10.

**1 May 1944:** VP-101 was relocated to Samarai, New Guinea. Dumbo missions were conducted in the area of the Green, Treasury and Manus islands, and Emirau, coming under the operational control of FAW-17.

**1–16 Jul 1944:** Five squadron aircraft were based at Manus, five at Green Island, two at Emirau, and one at Treasury Island. On the 16th, the detachments were relocated to the Admiralty Islands and later the Solomon Islands chain. Operations consisted primarily of Dumbo rescue missions to recover downed Army and Navy airmen.

**19 Sep 1944:** VP-101 was relieved by VP-52 in the Solomons and relocated to Morotai, north of New Guinea, aboard *Half Moon* (AVP 26). After settling in at Morotai, the squadron commenced combat operations as a Black Cat squadron on 21 September.

**1 Oct 1944:** VP-101 was redesignated VPB-29. The squadron continued to conduct Black Cat missions, antisubmarine patrols and night patrols around the area of Mindanao and Tawi Tawi.

**10 Nov 1944:** The squadron was relieved by VPB-20 for return to the continental U.S., arriving at NAS Alameda, Calif., on 30 November. The squadron commenced reforming and training following the return of personnel from leave and the arrival of new assignments.

**20 Jun 1945:** VP-101 was disestablished at NAS San Diego, Calif.

### Home Port Assignments

| <i>Location</i>                        | <i>Date of Assignment</i> |
|--|---------------------------|
| NAS Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii* | 17 Jan 1923               |
| NB Cavite, Luzon, Philippines          | 1 Jul 1939                |
| Perth, Australia                       | 1 Mar 1942                |
| Brisbane, Australia                    | 29 Jun 1943               |
| Palm Island, Australia                 | 1 Dec 1943                |
| Perth, Australia                       | 28 Dec 1943               |
| Samarai, New Guinea                    | 1 May 1944                |
| Morotai                                | 19 Sep 1944               |
| NAS Alameda, Calif.                    | 30 Nov 1944               |
| NAS San Diego, Calif.                  | 12 Dec 1944               |

\* NAS Ford Island, Pearl Harbor was later redesignated Fleet Air Base Pearl Harbor.

### Commanding Officers

|                        | <i>Date Assumed Command</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Unknown                | 1923–1927                   |
| LT A. R. Buehler       | Jul 1927                    |
| LT W. S. Cunningham    | 2 Jul 1928                  |
| LT G. H. Hasselman     | Jul 1929                    |
| LT Earl R. DeLong      | 1931                        |
| LT George A. Ott       | 1933                        |
| LCDR F. L. Baker       | 1935                        |
| LCDR S. L. LaHache     | 1937                        |
| LCDR J. E. Dyer        | Late 1939                   |
| LCDR J. V. Peterson    | 1941                        |
| Unknown                | 1942–1943                   |
| LCDR Lauren E. Johnson | Nov 1943                    |
| Unknown                | Dec 1944–Jan 1945           |

### Aircraft Assignment

| <i>Type of Aircraft</i> | <i>Date Type First Received</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| F-5L                    | Jan 1923                        |
| DT                      | Jan 1923                        |
| H-16                    | Jan 1923                        |
| T2D-1                   | Oct 1928                        |
| PK-1                    | Nov 1931                        |
| P2Y-3                   | Sep 1938                        |
| PBY-4                   | Oct 1938                        |
| PBY-5                   | May 1942                        |



*A squadron T2D-1 at Pearl Harbor, circa 1927.*

*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 May 1925               | Jun 1925              | BatFlt      | Oahu                      | H-16                    | WestPac                   |
| 13 Jan 1934              | Feb 1934              | BasFor      | Midway                    | PK-1                    | WestPac                   |
| 22 Apr 1935              | May 1935              | BasFor      | Midway                    | PK-1                    | WestPac                   |

*Squadron PK-1s lined up at Pearl Harbor, 1932.**A squadron PK-1 at Pearl Harbor, 1932.**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> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 14 Dec 1941              | *                     | PatWing-10  | Balikpapan                | PBY-4                   | SoPac                     |
| 25 Dec 1941              | *                     | PatWing-10  | Ambon                     | PBY-4                   | SoPac                     |



*A squadron PK-1 in the water at Pearl Harbor, 1932.*

### **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> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 16 Jan 1942              | *                     | PatWing-10  | Surabaya                  | PBY-4                   | SoPac                     |
| 1 Mar 1942               | *                     | PatWing-10  | Perth                     | PBY-4                   | SoPac                     |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Childs</i> (AVD 15)    |                         |                           |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Heron</i> (AVP 2)      |                         |                           |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Preston</i> (DD 379)   |                         |                           |
| 29 Jun 1943              | *                     | FAW-17      | Brisbane                  | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| Jul 1943                 | *                     | FAW-17      | New Guinea                | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
|                          |                       |             | <i>San Pablo</i> (AVP 30) |                         |                           |
| 1 Dec 1943               | *                     | FAW-17      | Palm Island               | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 28 Dec 1943              | *                     | FAW-10      | Perth                     | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 1 May 1944               | *                     | FAW-17      | Samarai                   | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 1 Jul 1944               | *                     | FAW-17      | Manus                     | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
| 19 Sep 1944              | 10 Nov 44             | FAW-17      | Morotai                   | PBY-5                   | SoPac                     |
|                          |                       |             | <i>Half Moon</i> (AVP 26) |                         |                           |

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

**Wing Assignments**

| <i>Wing</i>                                  | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|--|------------------|------------------------|
| Aircraft Squadrons,<br>Battle Fleet          |                  | 17 Jan 1923            |
| Naval Coast Defense<br>Forces, Hawaii Region |                  | 29 May 1924            |
| Aircraft Squadrons,<br>Convoy & Patrol       |                  | 29 May 1925            |
| 14th Naval District                          |                  | 21 Sep 1927            |
| Minecraft, Battle Force,<br>FAB Pearl Harbor |                  | 1 Jul 1931             |
| Base Force, Fleet Air<br>Base Pearl Harbor   |                  | 15 Apr 1933            |
| Base Force, PatWing-2                        |                  | 28 May 1935            |
| Base Force,<br>PatWing-10/FAW-10*            |                  | 1 Jul 1939             |

**Wing Assignments—Continued**

| <i>Wing</i> | <i>Tail Code</i> | <i>Assignment Date</i> |
|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| FAW-17      |                  | 29 Jun 1943            |
| FAW-10      |                  | 28 Dec 1943            |
| FAW-17      |                  | 1 May 1944             |
| FAW-8       |                  | 30 Nov 1944            |
| FAW-14      |                  | 12 Dec 1944            |

\* PatWing-10 was redesignated Fleet Air Wing-10 (FAW-10) on 1 November 1942.

**Unit Awards Received**

| <i>Unit Award</i> | <i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i> |             |
|-------------------|---|-------------|
| PUC               | 8 Dec 1941                                | 3 Mar 1942  |
| NUC               | 2 Jun 1944                                | 31 Dec 1944 |



*Squadron PBY-4s, circa 1940.*