

Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons

Volume 2

The History of VP, VPB, VP(HL) and VP(AM) Squadrons

Michael D. Roberts



Naval Historical Center
Department of the Navy
Washington, D.C., 2000

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number
94-35647

Roberts, Michael D.

Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons Volume 2 / by Michael D. Roberts.

CD-ROM

Contents: v. 2. The history of VP, VPB, VP(HL) and VP(AM) squadrons

1. United States. Navy—Aviation—History. 2. Patrol Squadrons and Airplanes, Military—United States—History. I. Naval Historical Center (U.S.) II. Title: American naval aviation squadrons.

Secretary of the Navy's Advisory Committee on Naval History

Dr. David A. Rosenberg, Chairman
CDR Wesley A. Brown, CEC, USN (Ret.)
Dr. Frank G. Burke
J. Revell Carr
VADM Robert F. Dunn, USN (Ret.)
VADM George W. Emery, USN (Ret.)
Dr. Jose-Marie Griffiths
Dr. Beverly Schreiber Jacoby
David E. Kendall
Honorable G. V. Montgomery
Dr. James R. Reckner
Dr. William N. Still, Jr.
ADM William O. Studeman, USN (Ret.)
Virginia S. Wood

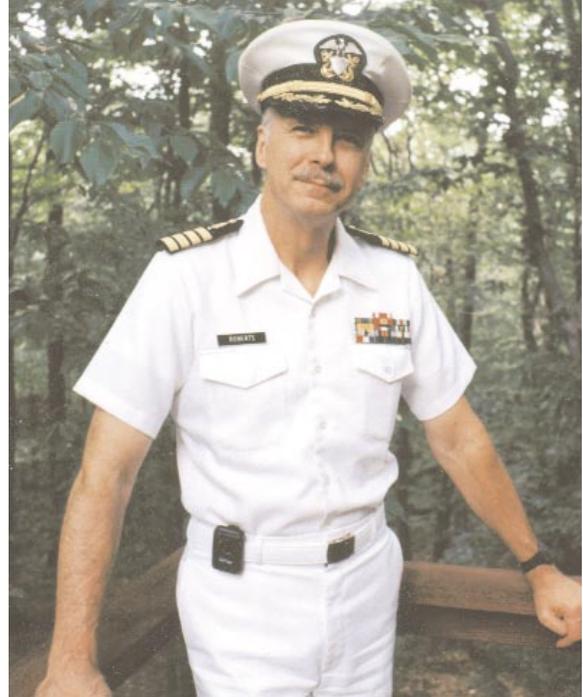
About the Author

CAPTAIN MICHAEL D. ROBERTS, MSC, USNR, is a computer systems specialist with the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, D.C. He was a drilling reservist with Naval Historical Center Volunteer Training Unit 0613 from 1988 to 1998. Captain Roberts graduated from Drury College, Springfield, Missouri, in 1966 with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and minor in History. He graduated from the Medical College of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, in 1968 with a Masters in Hospital Administration.

Following graduation Captain Roberts served four years on active duty in the Navy with assignments in San Diego, California, and Cubi Point, Philippines. Upon separation from active duty, he remained in the Navy Reserves and his assignments involved providing medical support to Marine Corps Reserve units. In 1990 he volunteered to cover the historical aspects of Navy medical units attached to the 1st and 2nd FSSG, U.S. Marine Corps during the Gulf War. During his six months on active duty he covered over 3,000 miles on the ground in the combat zone. He was later awarded two Navy Commendations and one Meritorius Service Medal for his contributions.

Captain Roberts has written several articles for the magazine *Navy Medicine*, numerous articles on the ironclad navies of the American Civil War, and a “History of the U.S. Navy Department” for the Oxford Press publication *A Historical Guide to the U.S. Government*. The research and writing of this reference book not only appealed to Captain Roberts as a professional historian but he also had a special interest in the subject matter because his father was a Naval Aviator in the patrol community during World War II.

On 1 November 1998 Captain Roberts retired from the Navy Reserves after 30 years of service. He currently resides in Springfield, Virginia, with his wife Carol and son, David.



Roberts, USNR, prior to his retirement from the Reserves in 1998.

Contents

Foreword / ix

Preface / xi

Acknowledgments / xiii

Chapter 1

Origins of Navy Patrol Aviation, 1911 to 1920s / 1

Chapter 2

Guidelines for Navy Aviation Squadron Lineage and Insignia / 13

Chapter 3

Patrol Squadron (VP) Histories / 15

Chapter 4

Patrol Bombing Squadron (VPB) Histories / 389

Chapter 5

Heavy Patrol Squadrons (Landplane) (VP-HL) Histories / 623

Chapter 6

Amphibian Patrol Squadrons (VP-AM) Histories / 631

	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
Appendix 1	Aircraft Data—Technical Information and Drawings	635
Appendix 2	A Summary of Patrol Aircraft Ordnance Equipment	687
Appendix 3	Submarines Sunk by Patrol Aircraft During World War II	697
Appendix 4	Air to Air Claims and Credits for Navy and Marine Corps Patrol Type Aircraft During World War II	713
Appendix 5	Seaplane Tender Listings	731
Appendix 6	Patrol Squadron Shore Establishments	737
Appendix 7	Lineage Listings for VP, VB, VPB, VP(HL), VP(ML), VP(MS) and VP(AM) Squadrons	769
Appendix 8	Listing of Reserve VP Squadrons, February 1946 to January 1968	781
Appendix 9	Medal of Honor Recipients for Patrol Aviation	785
Appendix 10	Patrol Squadron Korean War Deployments	789
Appendix 11	Patrol Squadron Vietnam Deployments (1964–1972)	795
Appendix 12	Patrol Squadron Persian Gulf Deployments (1990–1991)	805
Appendix 13	Organization and Development of Patrol Wings (Fleet Air Wings) 1918–Present	807
Appendix 14	Reserve Patrol Squadron Call-Ups in the Post-WWII Period	815
	Glossary	819
	Bibliography	829
	Index of Patrol Squadron Histories and Aircraft Data	831

Foreword

THIS EAGERLY ANTICIPATED SECOND VOLUME of the *Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons: The History of VP, VPB, VP(HL) and VP(AM) Squadrons* continues the excellent historical coverage seen in the first volume of this series. The author, Captain Michael D. Roberts, MSC, USNR (Ret.) and the staff of the Naval Aviation History Office of the Naval Historical Center have produced yet another quintessential reference work on U.S. Naval Aviation.

This work is designed to provide naval personnel, historians and aviation enthusiasts with a chronicle of the significant events and developments of maritime patrol aviation. The volume contains 154 histories covering every patrol squadron in existence between 1922 and the present. Also included are insightful appendices of technical information on patrol aircraft, submarines sunk by patrol squadrons, air-to-air claims for Navy and Marine Corps patrol aircraft during the Second World War, and a listing of patrol squadron shore bases. Volume 2 provides an opportunity to learn about the origins, achievements and traditions of patrol aviation as it relates to the rich naval heritage of

the United States. History is a useful subject for the Navy for several reasons. Insofar as it represents the sum total of the Navy's experience, it is an essential subject for study by naval professionals. History also is a means of giving an account to the American people of the activities of their Navy. Finally, since history allows naval personnel to learn about the origins, achievements, and traditions of their commands and of the Navy as a whole, it is a powerful means to promote naval morale. I hope this volume will be of interest and use to the active-duty Navy and to many other individuals interested in this nation's rich naval heritage.

Subsequent volumes in this series will cover other components of Naval Aviation. Currently, the Aviation History Branch staff is in the early stages of work on Volume 3 containing the histories and lineage of all U.S. Navy fighter squadrons.

William S. Dudley
Director of Naval History

Preface

The *Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons, Vol. 2*, is the second in the series of a multivolume set. It provides a brief history of every U.S. Navy fixed-wing patrol squadron and their precursors back to the year 1922. The format of this text follows that of the first volume, with special topics and appendices pertaining to maritime patrol aviation. As was the case with the earlier volume, the dictionary is written primarily for use as a reference work, stating concise facts about each squadron. It is regrettable that the story of patrol aviation could not be told in its entirety, but the details of achievements of individual squadrons would require a separate volume for each unit. There were over 154 separate patrol squadrons in existence between 1922 and the present. Their combined years of existence as operational units total over 1,300 years of naval aviation history.

Patrol squadrons have never received the publicity of the more glamorous carrier aviation community, for their jobs usually entail the endless tedium of antisubmarine searches and long-range patrols, serving as the “eyes of the fleet.” It is a historical fact, however, that the Curtiss A-1 seaplane was the first type of aircraft ordered by the Navy in May 1911. Carrier aviation did not come into its own until the first takeoff from the deck of an aircraft carrier on 17 October 1922. Patrol aviation technology progressed on a separate track from carrier-based aviation. Instead of speed and striking power, patrol aircraft were epitomized by endurance, long-range and reliability. It was not until the global nature of the conflict in WWII that patrol aviation transformed its mounts from slow seaplanes to fast, heavily armored and armed, long-range, multi-engine strike aircraft. The proven effectiveness of that transition is embodied in the present day series of multi-role P-3 Orion patrol aircraft.

As in the previous volume, each squadron history begins with a lineage section that starts with the date of establishment. It also includes any redesignations and disestablishment date if applicable. The squad-

ron’s establishment date may be equated to a ship’s commissioning and the history for a squadron or ship begins on that date. When a squadron is redesignated, there is no break in the history of that squadron. The history of a squadron covers the period from its establishment to its disestablishment, regardless of how many redesignations it undergoes. Redesignations can cause confusion when tracing the lineage of a squadron. For more information on how to trace squadron lineage, please refer to Appendix 5 of the *Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons Volume 1 The History of VA, VAH, VAK, VAL, VAP and VFA Squadrons* and Chapter 2 of this volume.

A short description and photograph for all officially approved insignia used by a squadron follows the lineage section. The chronology narrates the squadron’s important operational events and developments. The remaining sections pertain to the evolutionary history of the squadron and include listings of home port assignments, commanding officers, aircraft assignments, overseas deployments, wing assignments and major unit awards.

This second volume covers the patrol community and includes the history for VP (patrol squadron), VB (bombing squadron, non-carrier based), VPB (patrol bombing squadron), VP-HL (patrol, heavy landplane squadron), VP-ML (patrol, medium landplane squadron), VP-MS (patrol, medium seaplane squadron) and VP-AM (patrol, amphibian squadron). The squadron histories in this volume cover only those squadrons that are currently designated VP or those that had the VP, VPB, VP-HL or VP-AM designations when they were disestablished. Any patrol squadron redesignated VX or VAH and did not revert back to a VP designation prior to its disestablishment is not included in this volume. The lineage listing in appendix 7 provides a cross reference list for all squadrons that may have had the VP designation. Although most patrol squadrons also performed a variety of photographic and reconnaissance missions, squadrons with designa-

tions such as VD (photographic squadron), VW (airborne early warning squadron) and VQ (fleet air reconnaissance squadrons) will be described in future volumes. The histories of the active patrol squadrons, including the reserves, cover the period from establishment up through 1996, an arbitrary cutoff date. If a squadron was disestablished after 1996 its history was updated to its disestablishment or deactivation date, if that date was prior to the manuscript being forwarded for typesetting. All active duty patrol squadron histories will be updated at a later date and published in a separate book.

An attempt has been made to trace the development of the many Naval Air Reserve patrol squadrons that came into existence after 1946. The paucity of records on these squadrons makes the task of tracing lineage difficult at best, complicated by the fact that none of the early squadrons had permanently assigned aircraft or submitted history reports. During weekend drills they used aircraft from their local naval air station. A listing of all known reserve squadrons in existence from 1946 to 1968 is found in Appendix 8. More detail is available for those squadrons called up during the Korean War, the Berlin Crisis and Vietnam War, and is presented in Appendix 14. Reserve squadron histories included in this volume begin in 1970 when the Naval Air Reserves were reorganized into the same structure used by the active duty Navy squadrons.

Photographs used in the book are official U.S. Navy photographs unless otherwise indicated. If available, a photograph of at least one squadron aircraft is included for each squadron listed. Throughout the book one or more photographs are included for each known type of aircraft flown by all of the squadrons. Photographs of squadron insignia include only officially approved insignia. Insignia for squadron detachments and "other insignia" used by the squadrons are not included in this book.

As in the previous volume, every attempt has been made to exclude errors through exhaustive research and careful editing. The vast amount of the material presented increases the likelihood of mistakes. Hopefully, these are few and minor in nature. In a work of this scope, conflicts in dates or representations of events are an inevitable consequence of multiple sources. In such cases, the professional opinions of the Aviation Branch staff were solicited to assist in determining the most accurate representation. As the writer and major compiler of the data for this volume, I accept full responsibility for any mistakes or errors of fact or misinterpretations that may have occurred in the book, and I welcome any corrections.

Michael D. Roberts
Captain, MSC, USNR (Ret.)

Acknowledgments

WORK ON THIS BOOK BEGAN SHORTLY after my release from active duty following the Gulf War of 1990–1991. I had originally intended writing a much shorter version covering only the patrol squadrons of WWII as a tribute to my father and his squadron mates of VPB-102. With the encouragement of Mr. Roy A. Grossnick, Head Historian of the Naval Aviation History Office, the work was expanded to become Volume 2 of the *Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons*. As time progressed, I was almost overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task for which I had so blithely volunteered. The seven years of effort required could never have been completed without the professional guidance of Roy Grossnick and the encouragement and support of my wife, Carol, and father, Lieutenant Commander Marlin D. Roberts, USN (ret).

A reference text of this complexity is actually the culmination of efforts of many different people. First and foremost of the contributors were the staff of the Naval Aviation History Office. Their guidance and suggestions saved me much time and effort in research and location of source documents. My sincere thanks are extended to Naval Aviation History Office staffers Mr. John M. Elliott, historian, retired; Mr. W. Todd Baker, historian; and Ms. Gwendolyn J. Rich, archivist.

The *Naval Aviation News* magazine staff was also of great assistance in editing the manuscript. No other group could have been more ideally suited to the task, with their in-depth knowledge of naval aviation history and terminology. Their exceptional mastery of the intricacies of the English language helped steer this work clear of many grammatical reefs encountered. Commander James Carlton's staff includes: Ms. Sandra K. Russell, Ms. Wendy E. Karppi, Journalist Second Class Blake Towler and Mr. Morgan I. Wilbur, Art Director.

A special acknowledgement is extended to my fellow members of Naval Historical Center Unit 0615 for their encouragement in pursuit of this task. I am especially grateful to previous unit commanding officers, Captain Harold S. Tiernan and Captain Thomas G. Hilt for their generous assistance in keeping me free of the entanglements of Navy paperwork so that all of my time could be spent in research and writing.

The professional staff of the Naval Historical Center was collectively of great assistance in locating research materials for this work. Mr. Bernard Cavalcante's Operational Archives Branch assisted in finding many records, and Mrs. Jean L. Hort and her staff in the Navy Department Library were instrumental in locating many out-of-print volumes.

Many people outside the Naval Historical Center made significant contributions to this work in reviewing sections as they were completed and providing data for special topics and the appendices. Mr. Gudmundur Helgason, webmaster of U-boat Net, Mr. John M. Elliott and Mr. James C. Sawruk contributed to the appendices. Special thanks are also due to five reviewers of considerable experience who spent a significant amount of time reviewing the manuscript in its entirety: Vice Admiral Robert F. Dunn, USN (Ret.), Captain Richard C. Knott, USN (Ret.); Captain Albert L. Raithel, Jr., USN (Ret.); Dr. Jeffery G. Barlow; and Lieutenant Commander Richard R. Burgess, USN (Ret.).

The photographs in this book play an important part in telling the history of the patrol community. Many of the photographs in the book are from the collections held in the Naval Historical Center. I would like to extend my thanks to Mr. Edwin Finney and Mr. Jack Green in the Photo Section of the Center's Curator Branch for assisting with the research to locate photographs for the book. Other people who contributed photos from their collections for use in the book include Captain Jerry Mason, USN, John M. Elliott, William L. Swisher, Captain Richard C. Knott, USN (Ret.), and Fred C. Dickey, Jr.

I am most grateful to my wife, Carol, and our children, David and Meredith, for their forbearance over the many weekends and evenings spent apart from family activities while working on this book. A special debt of gratitude is extended to Mr. John Grier, the design and typesetting specialist who had produced the layout for Volume 1 of this series, and now in retirement graciously accepted the request to produce the layout for Volume 2.

Captain Michael D. Roberts,
MSC, USNR (Ret.)

