

Fifth VP-21

Lineage

Established as Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN (VB-111) on 30 July 1943.

Redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN (VPB-111) on 1 October 1944.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN (VP-111) on 15 May 1946.

Redesignated Heavy Patrol Squadron (Landplane) ELEVEN (VP-HL-11) on 15 November 1946.

Redesignated Patrol Squadron TWENTY ONE (VP-21) on 1 September 1948, the fifth squadron to be assigned the VP-21 designation.

Disestablished on 21 November 1969.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's first insignia on record was not submitted to CNO for approval until after WWII, when it was designated VP-HL-11. The design approved by CNO on 19 February 1948, was that of an elephant centered in a circular design overlaid on an anchor. The elephant held a depth bomb in its trunk, a searchlight around its neck, wings on its back and a gun turret on top of its back. The elephant was apparently a



The squadron's first insignia was the flying elephant. Unfortunately the color design submitted for approval was cut to fit in a file folder.



This photo shows the entire design of the flying elephant insignia.

turret, black; clouds, white; sky, blue; searchlight, yellow; anchor, blue and white. VP-HL-11 and VP-21 used the insignia through 1954.

The squadron's second insignia was submitted in 1954 and approved by CNO on 10 March 1954. The motif of the design was the "Truculent Turtle," named after the P2V-1 flown by Commander Thomas D. Davies on a record-breaking flight on 29 September 1946, from Perth, Australia, to Columbus, Ohio. The turtle was rampant in a cloud-filled night sky, searching out the adversary with a lantern in his right hand (corresponding to the searchlight on the starboard wing tip of



The squadron's second insignia was a cartoon design turtle.

the P2V-6), and ready to attack with a rocket carried in his left hand. In the background was a parachute mine, symbolic of the squadron's primary mission in sea and air warfare. Colors: turtle, light green body, yellow eyes, dark green shell; lamp, black frame; lantern light, yellow; missile, red; cloud, gray; sky, blue; mine, black with white parachute; insignia border, black.



The squadron's last insignia was the jack and ace of spades, reflecting the squadron's designation of 21.

common theme of the period, featured in insignia used earlier by both VPs 52 and 101. The "elephant" of VP-HL-11 was the Navy's largest land-based bomber, the PB4Y-2 Privateer. It was utilized in an ASW role and equipped with searchlights for night attacks against surfaced submarines.

The squadron's third insignia was approved by CNO on 17 August 1959. It was a circular patch with VP-21 at the bottom. In the patch were two playing cards, an ace of spades and a jack of spades. The squadron derived its nickname from the latter card, the "Black Jacks." The squadron in-

signia was changed when its primary mission was changed from aerial mine warfare to antisubmarine warfare. Colors: playing cards, black and white; background, blue; squadron logo, black with white letters; border, black.

Nickname: Black Jacks, 1959–1969.

Chronology of Significant Events

30 Jul 1943: VB-111 was established at NAS Norfolk, Va. Half of the personnel from VP-201 formed the cadre of the new squadron. The next day a new commanding officer was designated and all personnel began relocating to NAAS Oceana, Va., for training in the Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberator patrol bomber. Operational control of the squadron came under FAW-5.

15 Aug 1943: Six crews were sent to San Diego, Calif., to pick up half of the squadron's allotment of aircraft. After their arrival the crews completed their familiarization training using auxiliary fields at Chincoteague, Va., and Cherry Point, N.C.

1 Oct 1943: The squadron received its orders to deploy to St. Eval, England, under the operational control of FAW-7.

4 Nov 1943: VB-111 transferred to Port Lyautey, French Morocco, under the operational control of FAW-15, to guard the western approaches to Gibraltar.

8 Feb 1944: The squadron had its first contact with the enemy on this date, carrying out one attack on a German U-boat. Postwar records indicate no enemy losses on that date.

2 Mar 1944: Over a period of four months, sections of three aircraft at a time were transferred back to St. Eval, England, under the operational control of FAW-7. By 13 July 1944, the entire squadron was gathered at St. Eval in preparation for its return to NAS Quonset Point, R.I.

14 Jul 1944: The first section of three aircraft departed England for the U.S., arriving on the 19th. The last section arrived at NAS Quonset Point on 23 July 1944. The squadron began a training program that was conducted through 19 August 1944.

20 Aug 1944: The first section of VB-111 aircraft began the transit across the U.S. to the West Coast, with the last section arriving at NAAS Camp Kearney, Calif., on the 22d. The squadron came under the operational control of FAW-14. A brief period of training for South Pacific operations was undertaken through the end of September.

24 Sep 1944: VB-111 personnel (13 officers and 102 enlisted) boarded *Makassar Strait* (CVE 91) for transportation to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii. Aircrews began the transpac on 1 October 1944, with the last section arriving on 5 October 1944.

29 Nov 1944: VPB-111 was given combat indoctrination training under operational control of FAW-2

through the end of November. On the 29th, the squadron received orders to transfer to the combat zone at NAB West Field, Tinian. The last section of aircraft arrived on 1 December 1944, and the squadron came under the operational control of FAW-1. Strategic long-range searches were conducted from that location through the middle of January 1945.

5 Jan 1945: Two squadron PB4Y-1s, flown by Lieutenant Howard E. Sires and Franklin B. Emerson, spotted and attacked a midget submarine two miles southwest of Chichi Jima. The submarine was sunk using 250-pound G.P. bombs and strafing with 50-caliber guns.

15 Jan 1945: The squadron and its headquarters were relocated to NAB Morotai under the operational control of FAW-17, with a detachment of four aircraft at Tacloban Air Base, Leyte, Philippines, under FAW-10. Long-range reconnaissance missions and antishipping patrols were carried out from both locations.

1 Feb 1945: VPB-111 began transferring personnel and assets to the Tacloban Air Base from Morotai. By 6 February 1945, the entire squadron had been relocated, with a detachment of four crews at McGuire Field, Mindoro. Long-range reconnaissance missions and antishipping patrols were carried out from both locations.

17 Mar 1945: The Mindoro detachment rejoined the squadron at Tacloban to prepare for the upcoming invasion of Okinawa. Interdiction cover patrols for TF 58 en route to Okinawa began on 21 March 1945.

11 Apr 1945: VPB-111 relocated to Palawan Army Air Field. On 1 May 1945, the squadron received several new PB4Y-2 Privateers as replacements for its worn-out PB4Y-1s. With its new and refurbished complement of aircraft, the squadron commenced a series of daytime strikes on targets along the Borneo and Malaya coasts. On one such mission against the enemy installations at Singapore, two squadron Privateers were teamed up for an attack. One of the aircraft was badly damaged during its bombing run, and the second, flown by Lieutenant (jg) Romayn F. Heyler, flew through heavy enemy fire to protect its withdrawal from the area. During the escape from the target area a squadron of enemy fighters attacked the Privateers. Lieutenant (jg) Heyler's crew managed to shoot down one fighter and damage several others while escorting their squadron mates safely back to base. For his heroic actions while protecting his comrades Lieutenant (jg) Heyler was later awarded the Navy Cross.

7 Jul 1945: A detachment of five aircraft was sent to Mindoro, Philippines, for a two-week tour of duty, returning to Palawan on 20 July.

27 Oct 1945: After a brief period of standdown for maintenance, the squadron began the transit back to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, and from there to the U.S.

24 Nov 1945: VPB-111 concluded its transit from

the South Pacific to NAS New York, where crews were given leave. Over the next three months many of the wartime personnel were discharged from military service to civilian status.

1 Mar 1946: VPB-111 began a period of postwar re-forming and retraining of new crews at NAS New York.

Jun 1946: The squadron was designated an Atlantic Fleet Antisubmarine Warfare Squadron.

3 Jan 1949: VP-21 deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for training. One squadron aircraft crashed at Patuxent River, Md., killing two crewmen.

28 Jun 1950: The squadron received its first P4M-1. VP-21 was selected to be one of the few Navy patrol squadrons to fly the new Mercator. On 1 July 1951, the untested aircraft were flown on a 6,500-mile circuit from Pensacola, Fla., to San Diego and Alameda, Calif., and Seattle, Wash. During the test flights all of the aircraft were operational, with no down time for repair.

21 Oct 1952: The squadron gave a demonstration of the P4M-1's capabilities to CNO and BuAer officials,

which included minelaying to show the bomber's ability to carry 13,000 pounds of mines in an internal bomb bay.

Feb 1953: VP-21 replaced its P4M-1 Mercators with P2V-6 Neptunes, carrying the latest equipment for minelaying and ASW, a steerable nose wheel and reversible pitch propellers.

1 Aug 1958: The squadron's primary mission was changed from aerial minelaying to antisubmarine warfare.

8 Jul 1958: VP-21 deployed to RNAS Halfar, Malta. During the deployment, the squadron participated in the Lebanon Incident from 15 July to 1 October 1958. VPs 21 and 10 provided ASW coverage to the Sixth Fleet during the crisis.

1 Jan 1967: Six VP-21 aircraft deployed to Rota, Spain, relieving VP-24. On 6 June to 23 June 1967, the Rota detachment deployed four aircraft to Souda Bay, Crete, for advanced base operations during the Arab-Israeli conflict.

21 Nov 1969: VP-21 was disestablished at NAS Brunswick, Maine.



A squadron P4M-1 in flight, 1950.



A squadron P2V, circa mid-1950s.



A squadron P2V-7 (SP-2H) in flight.

Base Assignments

<i>Location</i>	<i>Date of Assignment</i>
NAS Norfolk, Va.	30 Jul 1943
NAAS Oceana, Va.	1 Aug 1943
NAF Port Lyautey, F.M.	4 Nov 1943
NAS Quonset Point, R.I.	23 Jul 1944
NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii	5 Oct 1944
NAB Tinian	1 Dec 1944
NAB Morotai	15 Jan 1945
NAB Tacloban, Philippines	1 Feb 1945
AAF Palawan	11 Apr 1945
NAS New York, N.Y.	24 Nov 1945
NAS Atlantic City, N.J.	23 May 1946
NAS Patuxent River, Md.	11 May 1948
NAS Brunswick, Maine	26 May 1954

Commanding Officers

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
LCDR M. H. Tuttle	1 Aug 1943
LCDR J. V. Barry	20 Jan 1944
LCDR Gordon R. Egbert	19 Apr 1945
LCDR J. L. Hall	10 Oct 1945
LCDR B. C. Wheatley	31 May 1946
CDR R. H. Rice	20 Jun 1947
CDR C. D. Mott	25 Jun 1948
CDR R. Semmes	21 Oct 1949
CDR R. G. Albright	10 May 1951
CDR A. A. Barthes	25 Jun 1952

Commanding Officers—Continued

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR Ralph D. Ettinger	31 Dec 1953
CDR James D. Ifft	Jun 1954
CDR Gerald E. Minor	Mar 1956
CDR John T. Griffith	25 May 1957
CDR W. H. Patterson	26 Sep 1958
CDR H. S. Ainsworth	2 Nov 1959
CDR J. J. Cryan	10 Nov 1960
CDR C. E. Mackey	7 Nov 1961
CDR C. R. Robertson	2 Nov 1962
CDR John G. Boniface	16 Oct 1963
CDR W. W. McCue	15 Oct 1964
CDR John W. Orrill	25 Sep 1965
CDR Ian J. Johnson	1 Aug 1966
CDR Edward L. Wilkinson	4 Aug 1967
CDR John Goodfellow	9 Jul 1968
CDR R. L. Latta	8 Jul 1969

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
PB4Y-1	Aug 1943
PB4Y-2	May 1945
P4M-1	Jun 1950
P2V-6	Feb 1953
P2V-5F	Aug 1953
P2V-7S/SP-2H*	Dec 1957

* The P2V-7S was redesignated SP-2H in 1962.



A squadron P4M-1 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>
1 Oct 1943	3 Nov 1943	FAW-7	St. Eval	PB4Y-1	NorLant
4 Nov 1943	1 Mar 1944	FAW-15	Port Lyautey	PB4Y-1	Med
2 Mar 1944	13 Jul 1944	FAW-7	St. Eval	PB4Y-1	NorLant
24 Sep 1944	27 Oct 1945	FAW-2	Kaneohe	PB4Y-1	WestPac
1 Dec 1944	14 Jan 1945	FAW-1	Tinian	PB4Y-1	SoPac
15 Jan 1945*	5 Feb 1945	FAW-17	Morotai	PB4Y-1	SoPac
15 Jan 1945*	5 Feb 1945	FAW-10	Tacloban	PB4Y-1	SoPac
6 Feb 1945	10 Apr 1945	FAW-10	Mindoro	PB4Y-1	SoPac
11 Apr 1945	27 Oct 1945	FAW-10	Palawan	PB4Y-2	SoPac
28 Apr 1947	14 May 1947	FAW-5	Argentia	PB4Y-2	NorLant
3 Jan 1949	26 Feb 1949	FAW-5	Guantanamo	PB4Y-2	Carib
21 Apr 1949	2 Aug 1949	FAW-5	Argentia	PB4Y-2	NorLant
1953	1953	FAW-5	Malta	P4M-1	Med
1954	1954	FAW-3	Malta	P4M-1	Med
Aug 1955	Dec 1955	FAW-3	Malta	P2V-5F	Med
8 Jul 1958	7 Dec 1958	FAW-3	Malta	P2V-7S	Med
2 Mar 1959*	10 Aug 1959	FAW-3	Sigonella	P2V-7S	Med
2 Mar 1959*	10 Aug 1959	FAW-3	Keflavik	P2V-7S	NorLant
2 Mar 1960*	Aug 1960	FAW-3	Sigonella	P2V-7S	Med
2 Mar 1960*	Aug 1960	FAW-3	Keflavik	P2V-7S	NorLant
4 Jun 1961	6 Nov 1961	FAW-3	Argentia	P2V-7S	NorLant
27 Oct 1962*	26 Nov 1962	FAW-3	Lajes	SP-2H	NorLant
27 Oct 1962*	3 Dec 1962	FAW-3	Argentia	SP-2H	NorLant
5 Jan 1963	1 Jun 1963	FAW-3	Sigonella	SP-2H	Med
29 Apr 1963	1 Jun 1963	FAW-3	Souda Bay	SP-2H	Med
Apr 1964	Jun 1964	FAW-3	Argentia	SP-2H	NorLant

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>
May 1964	Jun 1964	FAW-3	Guantanamo	SP-2H	Carib
20 Aug 1965*	1 Feb 1966	FAW-3	Rota	SP-2H	Med
20 Aug 1965*	1 Feb 1966	FAW-3	Keflavik	SP-2H	NorLant
1 Apr 1966	18 Apr 1966	FAW-3	Bermuda	SP-2H	Lant
1 Jan 1967*	29 Jun 1967	FAW-3	Rota	SP-2H	Med
6 Jun 1967*	29 Jun 1967	FAW-3	Souda Bay	SP-2H	Med
15 Oct 1967	15 Apr 1968	FAW-3	Signonella	SP-2H	Med
20 Feb 1969	26 Jun 1969	FAW-3	Signonella	SP-2H	Med

* The squadron conducted split deployment to two sites during the same dates.

Wing Assignments

<i>Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
FAW-5		1 Aug 1943
FAW-7		1 Oct 1943
FAW-15		4 Nov 1943
FAW-7		2 Mar 1944
FAW-5		23 Jul 1944
FAW-14		22 Aug 1944
FAW-2		5 Oct 1944
FAW-1		1 Dec 1944
FAW-17/10		15 Jan 1945
FAW-2	HC*	28 Oct 1945
FAW-5	HC	24 Nov 1945
FAW-3	HC/LH†	26 May 1954

* The squadron was assigned the tail code HC on 7 November 1946.

† The squadron's tail code was changed from HC to LH in 1957. The effective date for this change was most likely the beginning of FY 1958 (1 July 1957).

Unit Awards Received

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Date Covering Unit Award</i>	
NUC	2 Dec 1944	31 Jul 1945
AFEM	24 Oct 1962	31 Dec 1962



A squadron P4M-1 in flight.



A close up of the tail of a squadron P2V showing the tail code LH and a spade at the top of the tail.