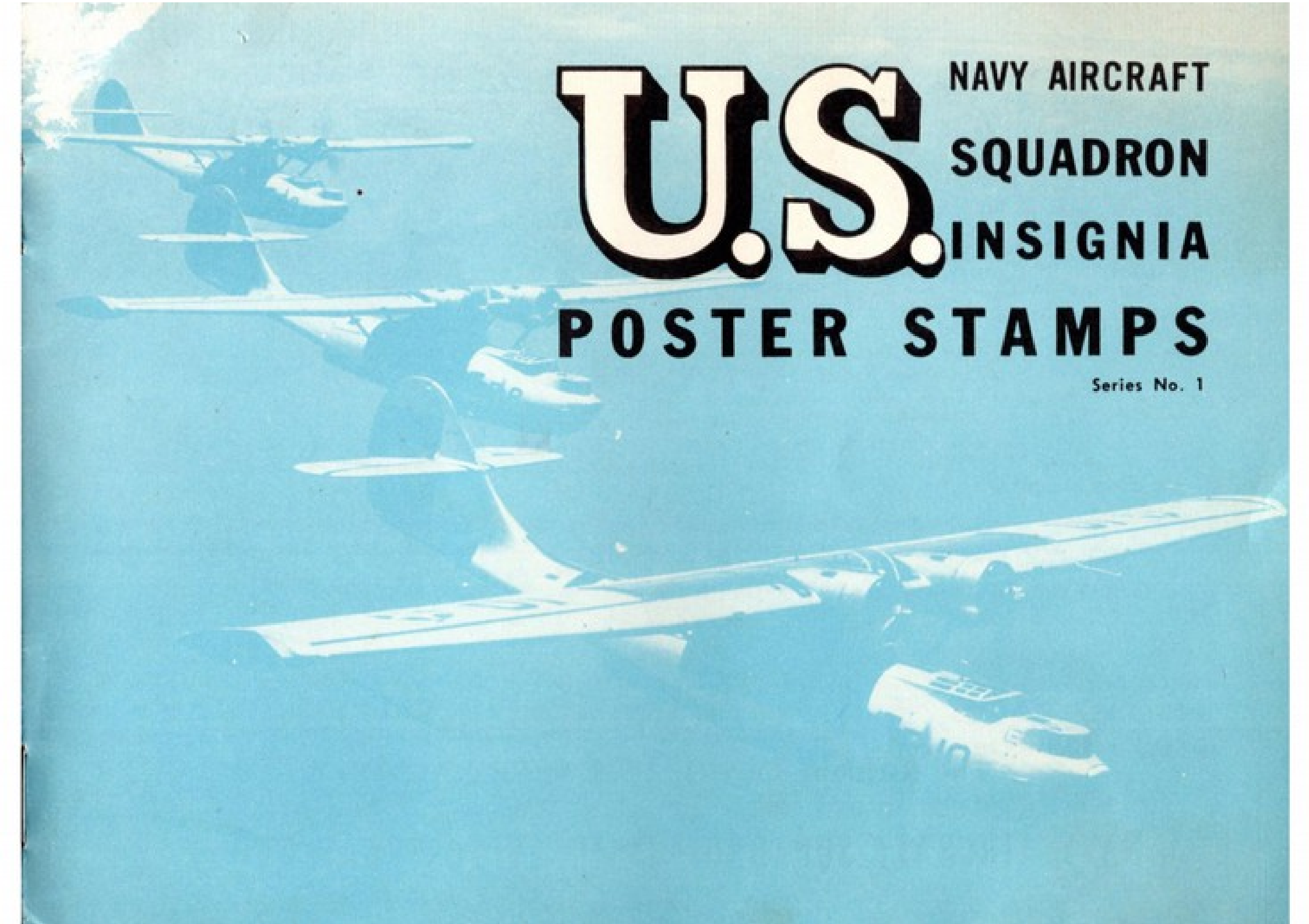




U.S.

NAVY AIRCRAFT

SQUADRON

INSIGNIA

POSTER STAMPS

Series No. 1

Basic story of naval aviation insignia

Naval aviation insignia may have a background of heraldry, although a knowledge of this subject certainly is not necessary in order to appreciate and understand the significance of the various symbols which have been adopted and reproduced on the fuselages of the planes of the various squadrons of the U. S. Navy.

During the World War, it became imperative that definite distinguishing marks be used on airplanes to prevent serious mistakes from being made during periods of low visibility. This need brought forth the use of the Iron Cross insignia on the German planes and the tricolored circle on the aircraft of the Allied forces. As the activities and strength in numbers of aircraft increased, the squadrons replaced the individual flyer. As pride in squadron organization grew and as victories were chalked up, the desire to be distinguished from other groups or squadrons asserted itself and the result was squadron insignia.

This custom was retained by the military aviation services in the United States after the World War, but it was not until aviation "went to sea with the Fleet" that squadron insignia was adopted almost universally in the U. S. Navy. In most cases, the squadrons have attempted to depict by their insignia the various functions or missions which they perform.



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Acknowledgement

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for information, illustrations and photographs is hereby made to the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

U.S. naval squadron insignia



No. 1

Bombing Squadron Two (VB-2). The insignia of Bombing Squadron Two is a graphic adaptation of the Greek myth of Bellerophon and Pegasus. According to this old story, Bellerophon captured the winged stallion, Pegasus, and set out to slay the three-headed Chimera. By diving three times over the monster, Bellerophon was able to strike off one of its heads on each attack. Since the primary mission of this squadron is dive-bombing, the insignia accurately symbolizes the method of attack.

The motto which appears over the figures is translated "first to attack." it is written in correct Greek of the period in which the story originated. *Aircraft carrier squadron.*

No. 2

Bombing Squadron Three (VB-3). The black panther was selected as the squadron insignia since it embodies the characteristics necessary for the bombing squadron—namely, stealth, diving tactics, speed, and decisiveness when stalking prey.

Aircraft carrier squadron.



U.S. naval squadron insignia

3.

M-J CO.



SCOUTING SQUADRON 41

No. 3

Scouting Squadron 41 (VS-41). The "High Hat" insignia was adopted in June 1927. Prior to that time, the insignia was a diving eagle, which lost favor because of its resemblance to a parrot used to advertise a well-known brand of chocolate. While casting about for an appropriate insignia, an idea was furnished when one of the pilots of the squadron appeared in a very battered top hat. The "High Hat" became forthwith the insignia of the squadron, at that time designated "Fighting One." As someone in the squadron at that time aptly remarked, "There was no special reason—it just seemed like a good idea at the time." So known to fame have the "High Hats" become that the

symbol has been retained when the squadron designations have been changed.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

No. 4

Bombing Squadron Five (VB-5). The winged mask of Satan, helmeted and goggled, superimposed on a ball of fire, represents the quick death and destruction which the planes (dive-bombing) of the squadron are capable of delivering.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

M-J CO.

4.



BOMBING SQUADRON 5

U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 5

Bombing Squadron Six (VB-6) adopted the wild goat as its insignia, because the characteristics of this animal closely parallel the characteristics of the squadron. "These animals inhabit the most precipitous and inaccessible heights of lofty mountains, where they assemble in flocks, sometimes consisting of 10 or 15 individuals. During the night they feed in the highest woods, but at sunrise they again ascend the mountains, till they have reached the most perilous heights. They are remarkably swift, and display amazing agility and dexterity in leaping."

Aircraft carrier squadron.

5.

M-J CO.



BOMBING SQUADRON 6

No. 6

Fighting Squadron Two (VF-2) is the only squadron in the U. S. Navy composed basically of enlisted pilots. To describe properly this organization, the insignia pictures the chevron of a chief petty officer, which also incorporates the American eagle. The chevron is mounted on a shield with the word "Adorimini" at the base. "Adorimini," which translated freely means "Up and at 'em," was used by Caesar's legions as a battle cry.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

6.

M-J CO.



FIGHTING SQUADRON 2

U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 7



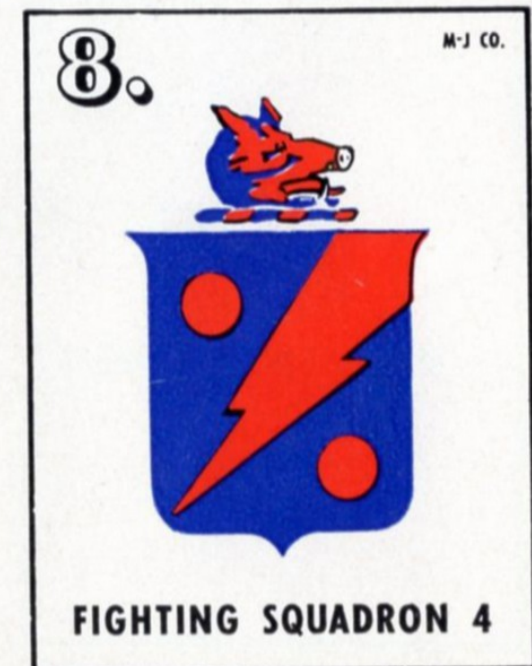
Fighting Squadron Three (VF-3) adopted its insignia when its primary mission was considered to be the dive bombing attack. This mission was clearly pictured by Pat Sullivan's "Felix" with a bomb in his hands. Although the mission of the squadron is now that of fighting, "Felix" with his bomb had so endeared himself to the personnel that he has been retained.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

No. 8

Fighting Squadron Forty-one (VF-41) is distinguished by a shield of royal blue crossed by a bolt of red lightning and with two red circular shapes in the quarterings. The crest is the head of a wild boar which depicts the characteristics of the pilots when operating against the enemy. The bolt of red lightning suggested the squadron's nickname of "Red Rippers," a sobriquet that has followed it since the adoption of the insignia.

Aircraft carrier squadron.



U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 9



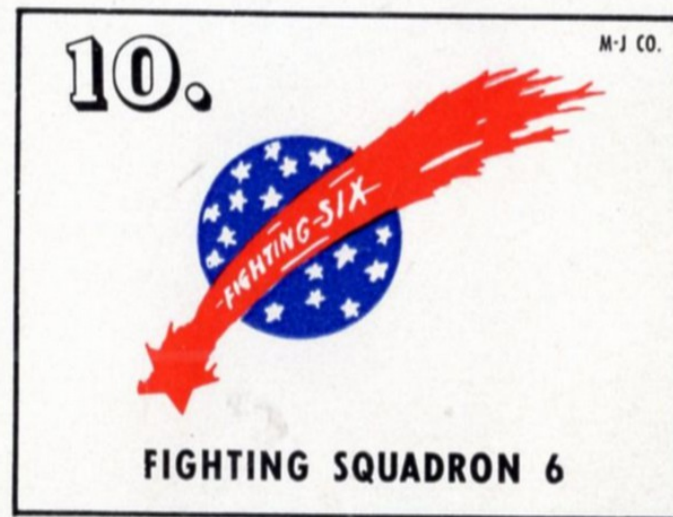
Fighting Squadron Five (VF-5) carries as its insignia a yellow five-pointed star across which an American eagle is descending. The outstretched wings and claws show the eagle ready to strike. The star on the field is an aircraft designation and the eagle represents a fighting plane ready to strike, with its machine guns or bombs. The squadron is generally referred to as "Fighting Five," or "The Striking Eagle."

Aircraft carrier squadron.

No. 10

Fighting Squadron Six (VF-6) is personified by a comet blazing a trail across the heavens. The comet or falling star is intended to symbolize speed through the heavens. The field of blue breaks through the tail of the comet to delineate FIGHTING SIX fleeing through the heavens.

Aircraft carrier squadron.



U.S. naval squadron insignia

11.

M-J CO.



Fighting Squadron VF-72

No. 11

Fighting Squadron VF-72 is symbolized by the "blue burglar" wasp. These steely-blue wasps are habitual house-breakers. After a yellow-legged mud-dauber has built a cell, stocked it with food, and sealed it, one of these burglars comes along, breaks open the cell, throws out the spiders, and proceeds to make itself at home. It cleans out the cell, then stocks it with a new supply of spiders, laying an egg on the last one. Then it seals up the cell in a clumsy and amateurish manner.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

(Excerpt from "Potent Personalities—Wasps and Hornets," by Austin H. Clark: *The National Geographic Magazine*, July 1937.)

No. 12

Fighting Squadron 71. The insignia represents the mythical figure of Thor, god of war, rising from a turbulent sea with a black, ominous thundercloud in the background, about to strike a lightning blow with his spike-studded mace. Upon Thor's head is the winged helmet, depicting speed of action, combined with flying goggles, representing modern aviation. Posed to strike irresistibly with his spiked mace, Thor's supple body appears to move rhythmically to the point of advantage, and the terrific blow is dealt with strong muscular arms. This is the theme of the insignia, synonymous to the principle of the powerful, devastating attack characteristic of the heavy dive-bombing squadron.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

12.

M-J CO.



FIGHTING SQUADRON 71

U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 13

The well-known excellent scouting proclivities of the Indian serve as the inspiration for the insignia of Scouting Squadron Two (VS-2).

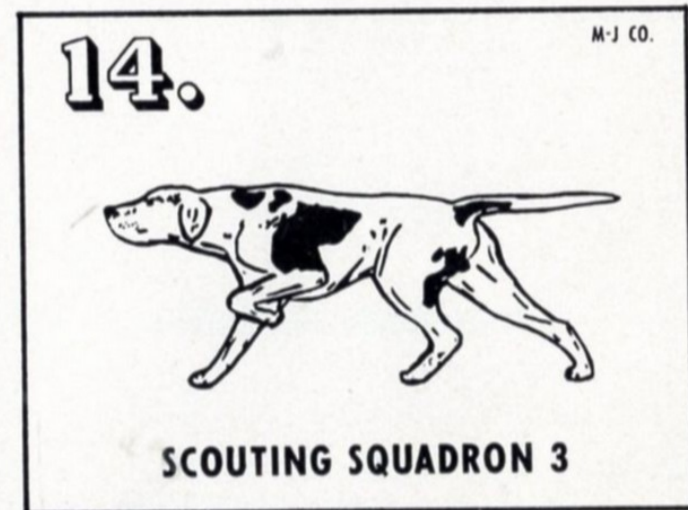
Aircraft carrier squadron.



No. 14

The insignia of Scouting Squadron Three (VS-3) was adopted in view of the fact that the duties of a scouting squadron operating with the Fleet require the characteristics natural to the pointer dog.

Aircraft carrier squadron.



U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 15



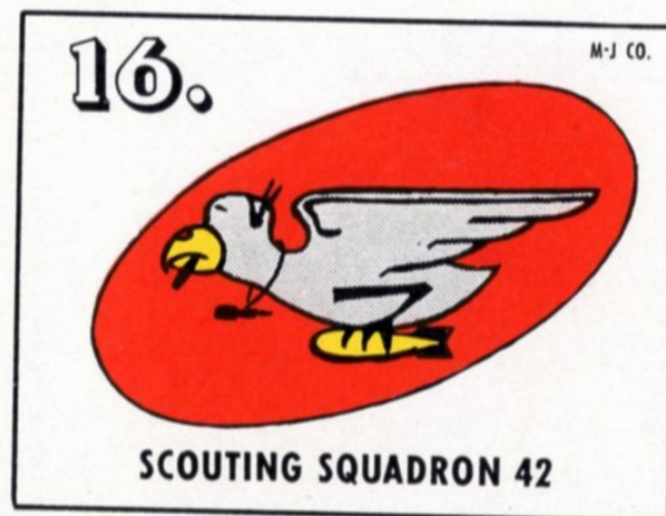
The insignia of Fighting Squadron Forty-Two (VF-42) dates back to the cruise to Honolulu in 1929, when information was received that the lanaplanes of the squadron would be changed to amphibians. This information was direct inspiration for the squadron's insignia: a very busy-looking duck equipped with pontoons and wheels, wearing helmet and goggles. The usual explanation for the duck's pontoons is that the squadron flies so far to sea that even a duck would hesitate to duplicate the trip without boats.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

No. 16

The insignia of Scouting Forty-Two (VS-42) depicts an entirely fabulous winged creature of remarkable attributes. The first mission of the squadron—scouting—is represented by the bird's grim, searching expression and the spyglass hung handily about its throat; the headphones are indicative of constant reporting of information by radio; the bomb clutched in the bird's ample claws demonstrates offensive readiness; the protective mission (smoke screening) is subtly shown by the cigar clamped in the capable beak. In every way the purposeful characteristics of this bird are all the more accentuated by being diametrically opposed to those of an ancient and extinct creature which he somewhat resembles—the dodo bird.

Aircraft carrier squadron.



U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 17



Scouting Squadron Five (VS-5) chose the man-o'-war bird for its several characteristics which are similar to those of aircraft carrier scouts. It is the most completely aerial of water birds. It never settles on the water. Throughout the hours of daylight it remains in the air, floating over the water or its island home, without the slightest effort, plunging down to the surface to pick up some floating object or to deliver a fierce peck with its long, hooked beak. Of the several existing species, the Christmas Island man-o'-war bird, with a wing span of seven feet, was selected as being the most distinctive in shape and color.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

No. 18

The insignia of Scouting Squadron Six (VS-6) was developed from a design of headdress worn by the high priests of the Aztec Indian race during the rite of human sacrifice. The basic design was changed somewhat in order to set forth the double purpose of the squadron—that is, the wide-open, alert eyes, significant of scouting, and the bomb in flight, indicative of bombing.

Aircraft carrier squadron.



U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 19



tudes, in conjunction with an early American weapon of attack, are considered apropos of the primary offensive mission of a scout-bomber squadron.

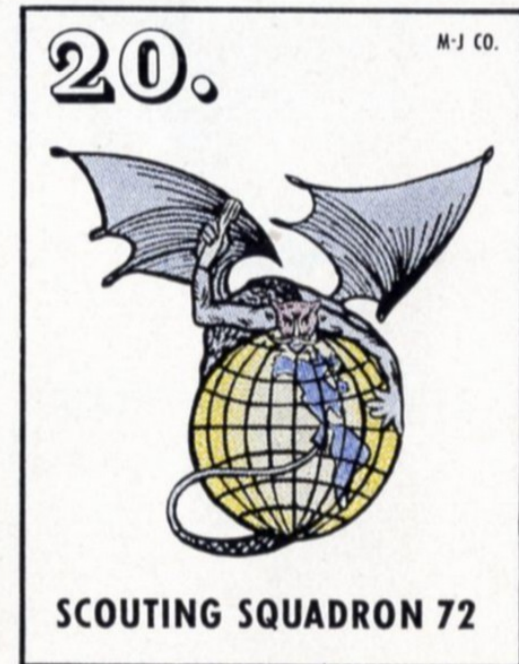
Aircraft carrier squadron.

No. 20

The insignia of Scouting Squadron Seventy-Two (VS-72) is the centaur vampire, a monster of war, hovering over the world. The centaur, a Greek mythological creature, was half man and half beast. The vampire is a bat, fabled demon, or ghost that sucks the lifeblood of unaware persons. The wings are those of a bat, chosen for the reason that a bat's wings enable him to fly in the darkest night, through the thickest forest, with bullet speed, pursuing his prey without striking a single obstruction. These wings, made up of a close network of fine nerves which seem able to detect the slightest vibration in the atmosphere caused by friction of air currents against solid objects, are symbolic of the squadron's mission. The head of the monster, combining features of man and tiger, denote the wile and cunning of the tiger and the intelligence and knowledge of man. Strength and power are depicted by the rippling muscles in the arms. His protection is assured the United States, to which he points with his tail, his upraised arm and bomb signifying destruction to all aggressors.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

The insignia of Scouting Squadron Seventy-One (VS-71) consists of a golden eagle head inset upon a black flint arrowhead. The eagle is noted for strength, size, keenness of vision, and power of flight. It has been known to launch its attack from extremely high altitudes, its tactics upon such occasions being akin to those employed by dive-bombing airplanes. The flint arrowhead is suggestive of swift offense involving darting flight and unerring trajectory. The flint is suggestive of an unyielding substance which strikes fire with steel. The combined figures, representing keen-sighted frequenters of high alti-



U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 21



Torpedo Squadron Two (VT-2) originally carried a squadron insignia which consisted of wings, each wing supporting a torpedo on its upper edge, with a pair of bombs attached to the bottom center. The development of new torpedo planes and the assignment of the squadron to an aircraft carrier brought about the adoption of a more modern insignia—a "bombman astride a torpedo." When the designation of the Squadron was changed, the beloved bombman was retained as the squadron's official representative.

Aircraft carrier squadron.

No. 22

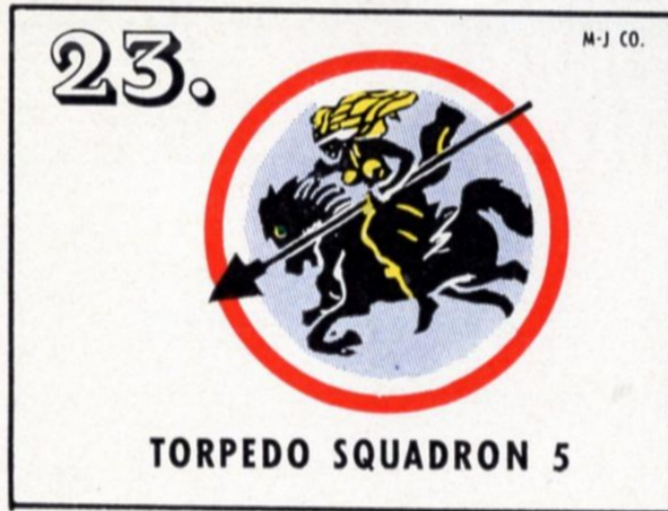
Torpedo Squadron Three (VT-3) designed its insignia at the time the squadron received its primary mission—bombing—which is represented by a fire-breathing flying dragon astride a bomb on its mission of destruction.

Aircraft carrier squadron.



U.S. naval squadron insignia

No. 23



The esoteric significance of the insignia of Torpedo Squadron Five (VT-5) is that the figure represents a Valkyrie silhouetted against the setting sun. A Valkyrie was "one of the maidens of Odin, awful and beautiful, who hovered over the field of battle and chose those to be slain. . . ." The analogy between the Valkyrie and the torpedo plane is that both are "choosers of the slain."

Aircraft carrier squadron.

No. 24

Torpedo Squadron Six (VT-6) is represented by the great white albatross, the largest seabird, capable of prolonged flight over open ocean, and often seen at a great distance from land. The wings of the albatross form a "V," the water spout forms a "T," and the fish in the beak of the albatross forms a "6."

Aircraft carrier squadron.



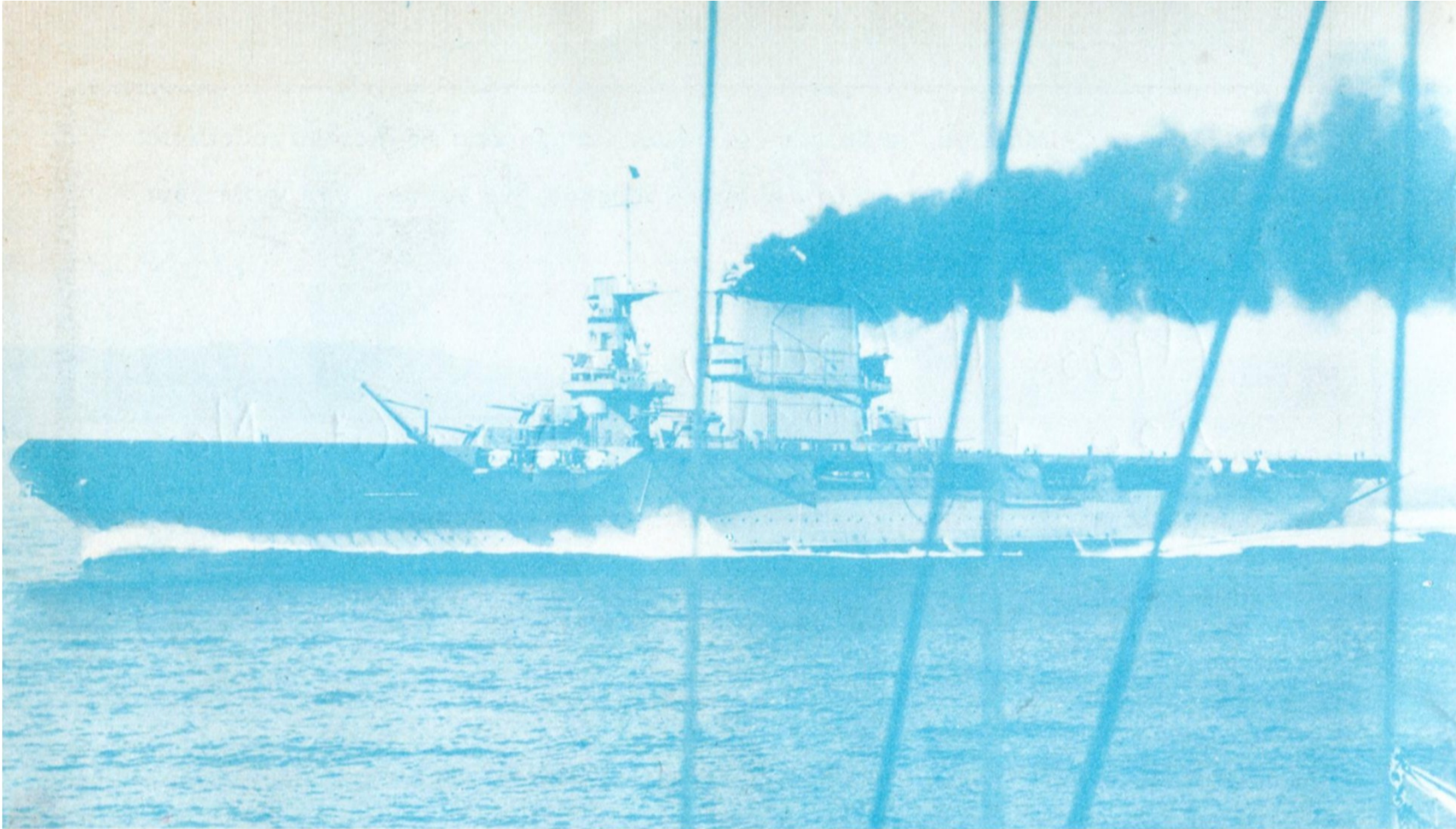
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U. S. Navy squadron insignia

Series No. 1

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