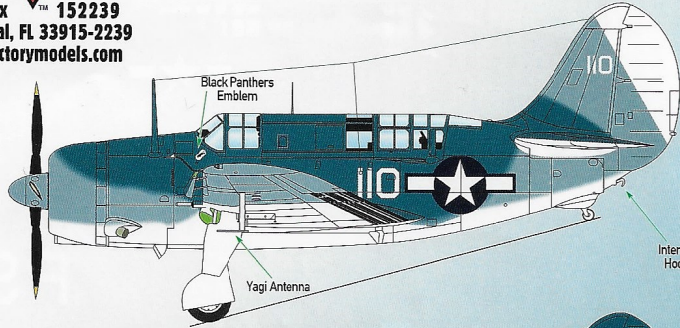


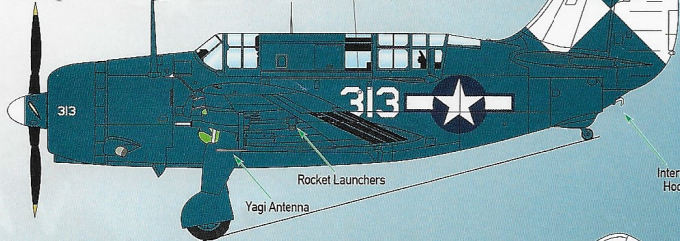
SB2C Helldivers

Recommended Kit: ACCURATE MINIATURES SB2C-4

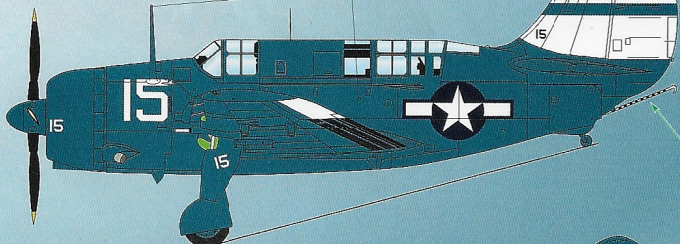
VPD48009
1:48 Scale Decal



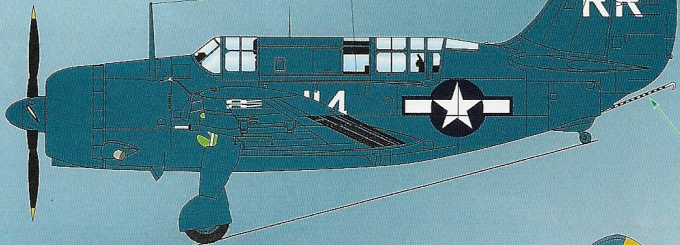
VB-3 USS YORKTOWN 1945



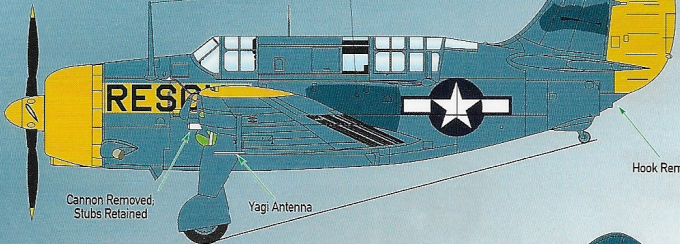
VB-83 USS ESSEX 1945



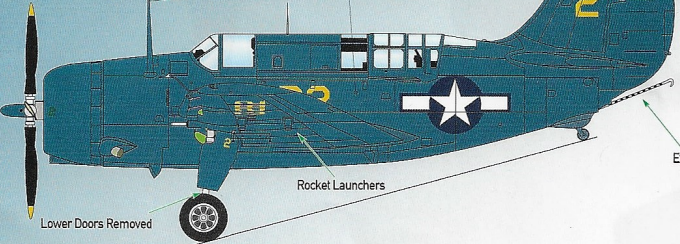
VB-16 USS RANDOLPH 1945



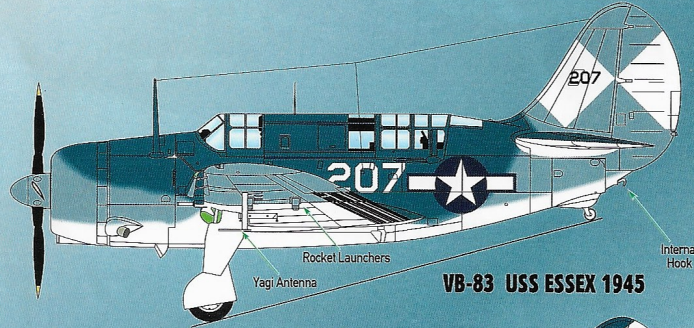
VB-88 USS YORKTOWN 1945



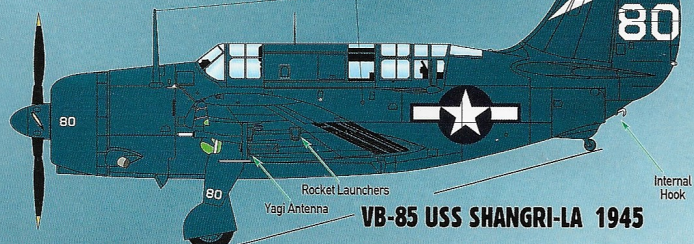
Air/Sea Rescue Unit, NAS Kaneohe Bay 1945



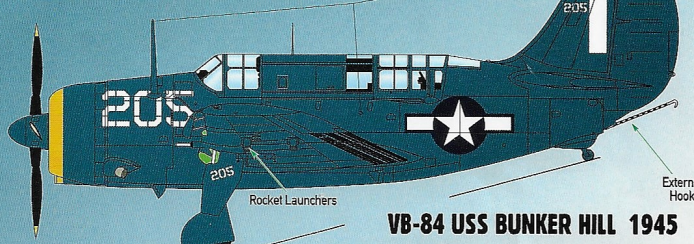
VB-82, NAS Alameda 1946



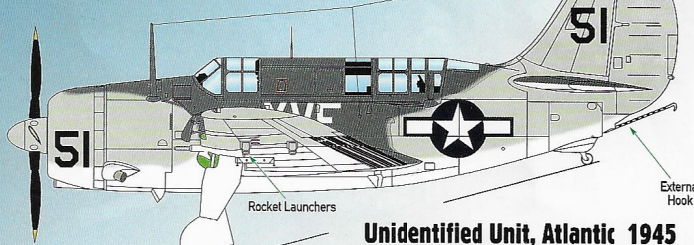
VB-83 USS ESSEX 1945



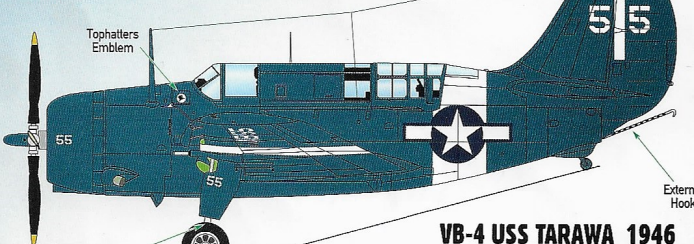
VB-85 USS SHANGRI-LA 1945



VB-84 USS BUNKER HILL 1945



Unidentified Unit, Atlantic 1945



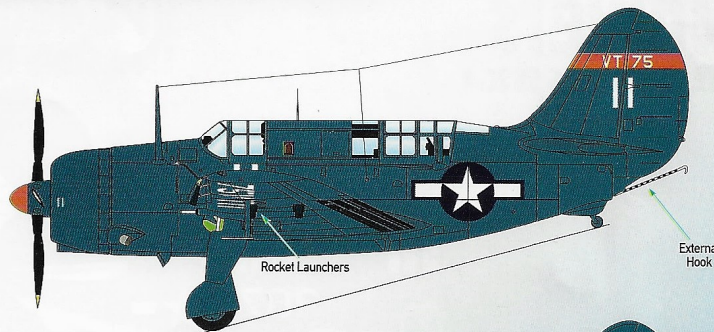
VB-4 USS TARAWA 1946

Color Key	

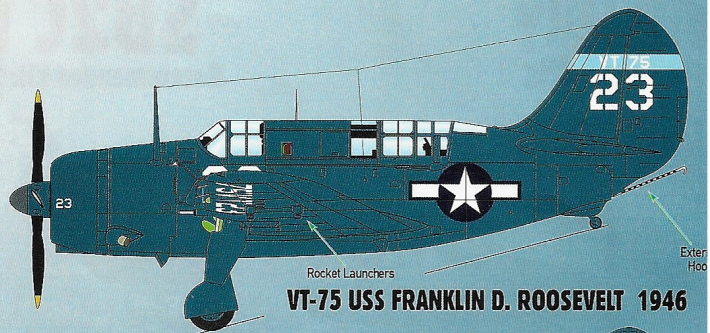
Custom Art By JDMC Graphics

Made with a Mac

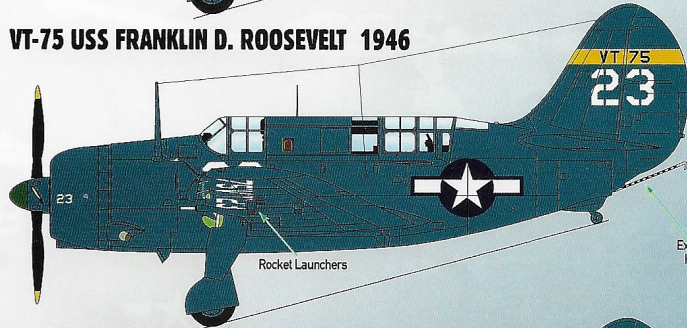
Victory Productions VPD48009



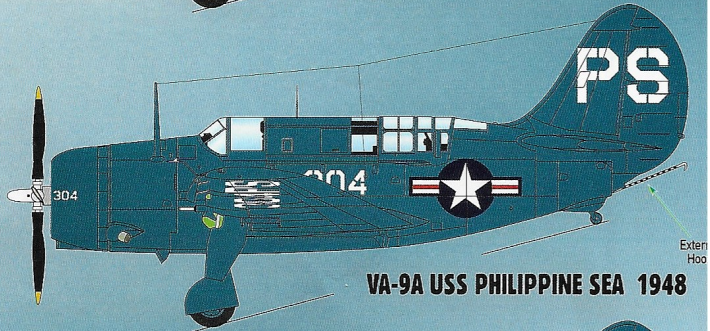
VT-75 USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT 1946



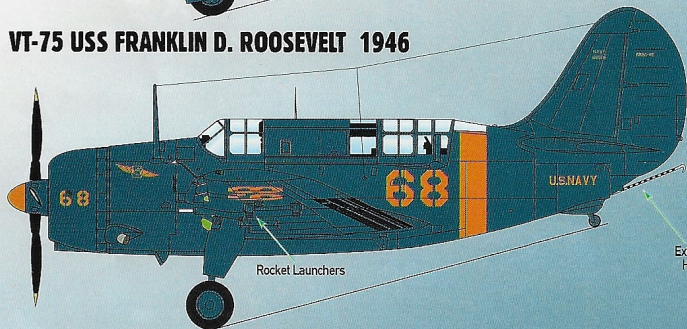
VT-75 USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT 1946



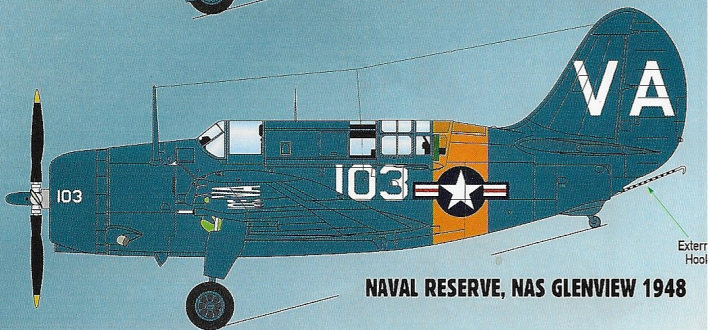
VT-75 USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT 1946



VA-9A USS PHILIPPINE SEA 1948

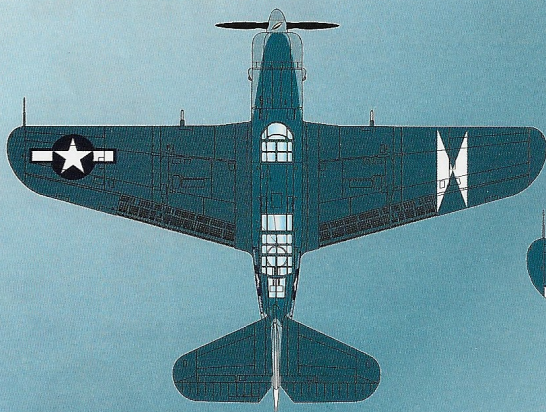


NAVAL RESERVE, NAS PHILADELPHIA 1947

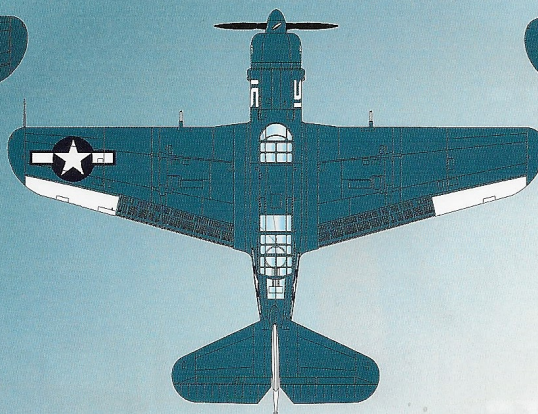


NAVAL RESERVE, NAS GLENVIEW 1948

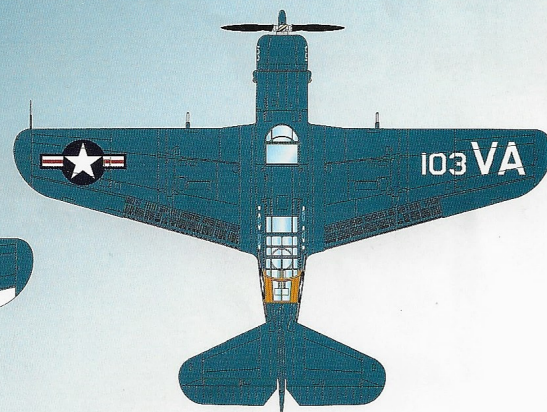
TYPICAL PLAN VIEWS



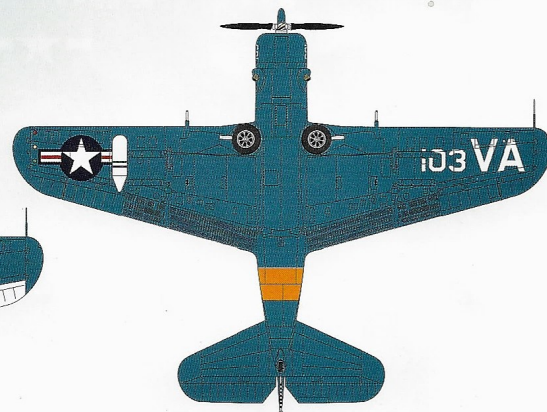
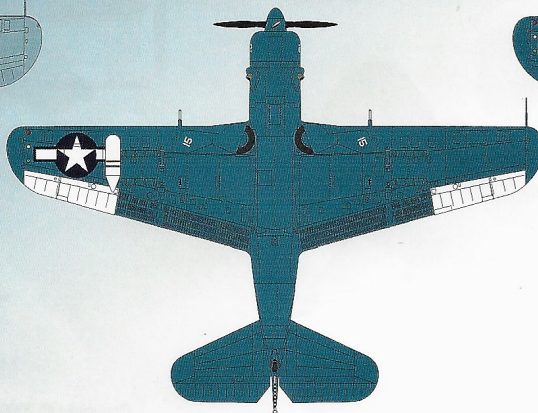
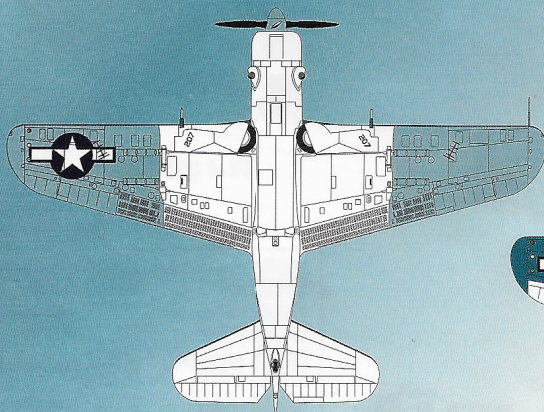
VB-83 USS ESSEX 1945



VB-16 USS RANDOLPH 1945



NAVAL RESERVE, NAS GLENVIEW 1948



Victory Productions VPD48009

General Notes:

In early 1938, the U.S. Navy sought a new and more powerful aircraft to replace the Curtiss SBC Helldiver, Vought SB2U Vindicator and Northrop BT dive bombers. Curtiss essentially proposed a monoplane derivative of its SBC powered by the R-2600 Wright Cyclone 14 driving a three-bladed Curtiss-Electric constant speed propeller and carrying a .50 caliber machine gun turret in the rear cockpit. A contract was awarded to Curtiss on 15 May 1939 but significant program delays and performance problems resulting from the concurrent development of airframe, engine, propeller, and armament delayed the SB2C's first flight until 18 December 1940.

In the meantime, the urgency for modernizing the Navy's dive bomber squadrons was heightened by the outbreak of war in Europe and Japan's continued aggression on the Asian mainland. A production contract for the yet-unproven Helldiver was awarded in November, 1940, before first flight and despite the problems encountered during development.

The first SB2C-1s were issued to Scouting Squadron VS-9 in late 1942, part of the Air Group formed for the first of the wartime carriers, USS ESSEX (CV 9). Qualification of the new bomber went so badly that the carrier's skipper stated he would never go to sea with the Helldiver again. The "Big Tailed Beast" finally entered combat in the fall of 1943 after extensive modifications. The SB2C-4 model entered service in 1944 and the -4E subtype served into the postwar period with both regular and reserve Navy units. The final production version, the SB2C-5, saw action in the closing months of WWII and continued in service until replaced by the AD Skyraider by the end of the decade of the 1940s.

Kit Notes:

The Accurate Miniatures SB2C-4 Helldiver kit is based on the 1/48 scale Pro Modeler kit released in 1997 with a photoetched sheet containing dive brakes, engine wiring harness, and small parts added. The kit features recessed panel lines, yagi antennas, 5-inch rocket launcher stubs, and a detailed cockpit and landing gear bays. The kit instructions show how to fit the arresting hook for internal or external stowage; the SB2C-4 stowed its hook internally while external stowage was used on the SB2C-4E and -5 models. The -4 carried the yagi antennas under its wings but these were replaced by an AN/APS-4 radar pod and rack on the -4E and -5 versions. These, however, do not come in the kit but can be found in the original 1960s Monogram Helldiver kit. To complete the SB2C-5, the modeler will also need the larger Curtiss-Electric paddle blade prop and hub dome, which can be obtained from a P-47M or N kit, and a frameless sliding canopy for the pilot, which can be modified from the Helldiver kit part.

Camouflage & Markings Notes:

The first SB2C-4s off the assembly line were finished in the US Navy's three-tone camouflage introduced in 1943. This consisted of Semi-Gloss Sea Blue (FS25042) wing and horizontal tail upper surfaces, Non-Specular Sea Blue (FS35042) fuselage upper surfaces and wing and horizontal tail leading edges, Intermediate Blue (FS35164) on the fuselage sides, vertical tail, and the under surfaces of the folding portion of the wings. Undersurfaces were painted Non-Specular White (FS37578). Late production SB2C-4s, and all SB2C-4Es and -5s were finished Glossy Sea Blue (FS15042) all over with the antiglare panel forward of the windscreen painted Non-Specular Sea Blue. Helldivers used in the Atlantic for antisubmarine operations were finished in the two-tone ASW II scheme of Dark Gull Gray (FS36231) and Light Gull Gray (FS36440) with Non-Specular White undersides. Interiors of wheel wells and landing gear components were generally painted to match the underside color although examples were seen with aluminum or natural metal finishes.

The national insignia was carried in four standard positions — fuselage (both sides), above the left wing and below the right wing. The national insignia included the full Insignia Blue background in all applications. Red stripes were added to the bars after January, 1947. Wartime codes and markings were generally in White. In the second half of 1944, geometric symbols were used to identify the different carrier air groups in the Pacific. These were carried on the tails and wings of all the aircraft in the Group. In the summer of 1945, the G-symbols gave way to one or two-letter combinations as the number of carriers grew. Postwar, the system of carrier identification letters was expanded although some units briefly reintroduced coding similar to prewar practice. Reserve units were identified by Orange fuselage bands.

Decal Notes:

The seventeen Helldivers on this decal sheet date include regular Navy and Naval Reserve SB2C-4s, -4Es, and -5s. Wartime Bureau (serial) Number presentation was very small and so identification of most of the subject aircraft is not available. Small numbers and the aircraft type and branch of service data is given in white and black, depending on the aircraft color scheme. Choose the appropriate decals for your model. Red rectangles applied over the port side refueling point are provided for each aircraft.

The markings provided here are as complete as possible, however, due to space limitations, we left it to the modeler to paint those markings which would be easy to mask and which would consume much needed space. These are identified under the individual aircraft descriptions. Some decals have been made slightly oversized to fit over surface edges and may need trimming after application.

Notes on Subject Aircraft:

SB2C-4, VB-3, USS Yorktown, 1944/5

VB-3 flew the Beast from USS YORKTOWN (CV 10) in support of the invasions of the Philippine Islands and Iwo Jima, and during the 1945 raids on Tokyo. The Black Panthers were one of the Navy's oldest squadrons, established on 1 July 1934 as VB-3B. On 31 January 1995, VA-35 was disestablished after over 60 years of continuous service, the last 30 of which were in the Grumman A-6 Intruder. To model this aircraft, use the kit's yagi antennas and fix the arresting hook in the internally carried position. This aircraft was finished in the three-tone mid-war scheme. Note the small White 110s carried on the wing leading edges just outboard of the cannon.

SB2C-4, VB-83, USS Essex, 1945

This SB2C-4 was assigned to VB-83 aboard USS ESSEX in early 1945 and supported the Okinawa invasions and participated in VB-83's air strikes on the Japanese home islands. It was finished in tri-color camouflage and carried CV 9's double diamond G-symbol. Note that the aircraft was equipped with yagi antennas under both wings and the internal arresting hook.

SB2C-4, VB-83, USS Essex, 1945

USS ESSEX came off the line after Okinawa was secured but returned to combat in July of 1945 with replacement crews and aircraft filling out the Air Group. VB-83's Helldivers were assigned the 3XX range and the aircraft were in the new overall Glossy Sea Blue scheme. The -4 Helldivers retained their yagi antennas under the wings and the internally carried tail hook.

SB2C-4, VB-85, USS Shangri-La, 1945

This aircraft was assigned to VB-5 aboard USS SHANGRI-LA (CV 38) in the spring of 1945 and carried her lightning bolt G-symbol on the tail and right wing tip. A late SB2C-4, White 80 was painted overall Glossy Sea Blue and carried yagi antennas. Note the internally carried tail hook.

SB2C-4E, VB-16, USS Randolph, 1945

Aircraft based aboard USS RANDOLPH (CV 15) in 1945 stood out with their White vertical tails with three blue stripes and White ailerons. White 15 was an SB2C-4E which carried the AN/APS-4 radar pod under the starboard wing instead of the pair of yagi antennas carried by the earlier dash-Four Helldivers. Paint the tops and bottoms of both ailerons and the vertical tail White before applying the blue stripe decals to the tail. Fix the arrestor hook in the external position.

SB2C-4E, VB-84, USS Bunker Hill, 1945

The first carrier to enter combat with the Beast was USS BUNKER HILL (CV 17). By 1945, Air Group 84, carrying the Arrow G-symbol on the tail and upper starboard wing, was aboard. Just prior to the landings on Iwo Jima, the Fifth Fleet executed a series of raids on Tokyo and other target areas on Japan's Home Islands. For these raids, the cowl fronts were painted Identification Yellow. Modify the model to the SB2C-4E configuration with APS-4 pod and external tail hook.

SB2C-4E, VB-88, USS Yorktown, 1945

USS YORKTOWN returned to action in July of 1945 with Air Group 88 embarked and carrying the CV 10 identification letters RR. The SB2C-4Es of VB-88 were overall Glossy Sea Blue and displayed the carrier ID letters on the vertical tail and upper starboard and lower port wings. Modify to the SB2C-4E configuration with APS-4 pod and external tail hook.

SB2C-4E, Unidentified Unit, Atlantic, 1945

Aircraft operating in the Atlantic on anti-submarine duty were painted in the ASW II scheme of Light and Dark Gull Grays over Insignia White undersides. This SB2C-4E was seen post-WWII at NAS Atlantic City, NJ, but its squadron and carrier assignments remain unidentified, as does the significance of the XVF coding. Standard SB2C-4E features including external hook and APS-4 radar.

SB2C-4, NAS Kaneohe Bay, 1945

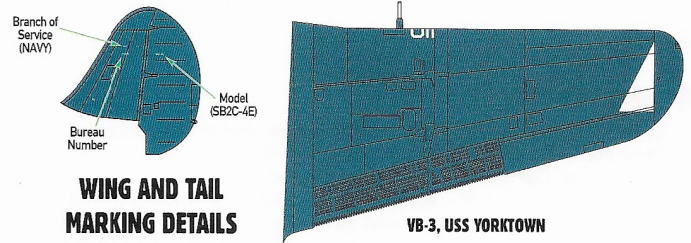
After the war, the Helldiver found service in new and different missions. One of these was air/sea rescue, and a small number of surplus SB2C-4s and -5s were found flying out of NAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, in this role. The overall Sea Blue paint on this -4 was badly faded and its earlier markings had been overpainted with fresh blue paint. The engine cowl, prop spinner, rudder, and wing tips were painted Identification Yellow (FS13538). Note the yagi antennas and absence of the cannon armament and tail hook.

SB2C-5, VB-4, USS Tarawa, 1946

The Tophatters of VB-4 flew the Beast off USS TARAWA (CV 40) after the war ended. Today's Tophatters of VFA-14 fly F/A-18 Super Hornets. In 1946, Air Group Four participated in a major fleet exercise and its aircraft carried 36-inch White bands on their wings and fuselages. These should be masked off 0.75-inch (1.9 cm) wide behind the gunner's canopy and on the outer wing panels. There was a thin dark Sea Blue stripe on each side of the bands which was the outline of the masking tape used when the bands were applied. Note the squadron codes were carried on the upper starboard and lower port wings and that the lower main landing gear covers had been removed.

SB2C-5, VB-82, NAS Alameda, 1946

When VB-82 returned from the war, it was home based at NAS Alameda, CA, and was one of the few Navy and Marine squadrons that applied its markings in Identification Yellow. The full codes were displayed on the fuselage and upper starboard and lower port wings. The aircraft were finished in the standard SB2C-5 scheme of overall Glossy Sea Blue. Note that the lower main landing gear covers were removed from 82B2.

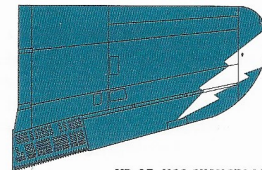


WING AND TAIL MARKING DETAILS

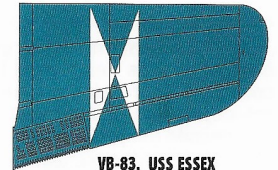
VB-3, USS YORKTOWN

SB2C-4E, VB-75, USS Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1946

The markings carried by the SB2C-4Es of VT-75 during the first cruise of the large carrier USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (CVB 42) are rather confusing. Color photographs taken at NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, in January of 1946 showed the squadron aircraft lined up with at least three different colors on their spinner tips and tail bands. Some of the aircraft even have duplicate numbers. The SB2C-4Es were all in the late war Glossy Sea Blue scheme. Note the solid Red outline to the fueling point behind the pilot's canopy and the under wing numbers which are read from the leading edge.



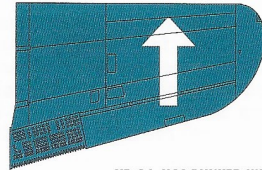
VB-85, USS SHANGRI-LA



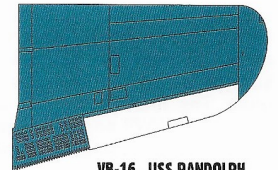
VB-83, USS ESSEX

SB2C-5, VA-9A, USS Philippine Sea, 1948

By 1948, the Navy standardized on the markings system that would remain essentially unchanged to this day, with each Air Group having its Modex code letters and each squadron being assigned three-digit numbers corresponding to their place in the Group. VA-9A flying SB2C-5s was assigned as the third squadron in Air Group Nine aboard USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CV 37). Modify to SB2C-5 configuration.



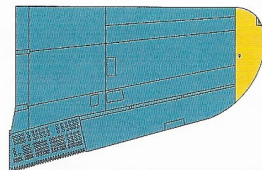
VB-84, USS BUNKER HILL



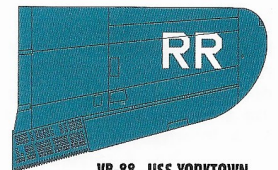
VB-16, USS RANDOLPH

SB2C-4E, Naval Reserve, NAS Philadelphia, 1947

Naval Reserve aircraft were readily identified by their International Orange (FS12197) markings. Orange 68 was from a Naval Reserve squadron based in Philadelphia, PA as reflected by its unit emblem. The 24-inch Orange band should be masked 0.5-inches (1.3 cm) wide on the aft fuselage. Wing codes were carried on the upper starboard and lower port wings. Note the placement of the Bureau Number on the Beast's tail and the removal of the main wheel door covers.



ASR, NAS KANEHOE BAY



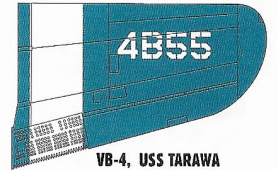
VB-88, USS YORKTOWN

SB2C-5, Naval Reserve, NAS Glenview, 1948

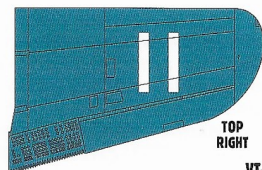
Another Naval Reserve Helldiver, this time an SB2C-5 from NAS Glenview IL, in a later markings style. The Orange fuselage band was now 36 inches wide and all other markings have been changed as well. Note the location when masking the 0.75-inch (1.9 cm) Orange stripe. Note also the absence of the main wheel door covers.



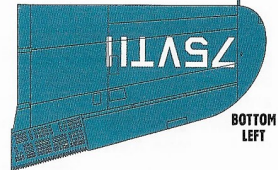
VB-82, NAS ALAMEDA



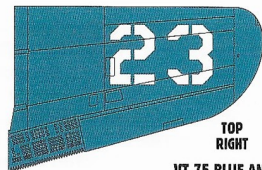
VB-4, USS TARAWA



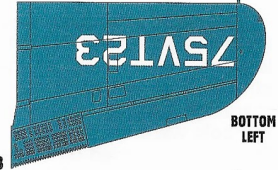
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VB-75 RED 11



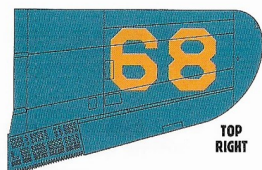
BOTTOM LEFT



TOP RIGHT
VB-75 BLUE AND YELLOW 23



BOTTOM LEFT



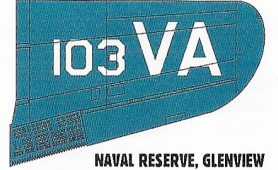
TOP RIGHT
NAVAL RESERVE, PHILADELPHIA



BOTTOM LEFT
NAVAL RESERVE, GLENVIEW



VA-9A, USS PHILIPPINE SEA



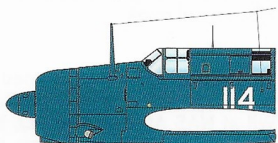
NAVAL RESERVE, GLENVIEW

References

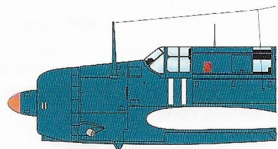
1. "Curtiss SB2C Helldiver," by Peter C. Smith, Crowood Aviation Series, 2004
2. "Helldiver Units of World War 2," by Barrett Tillman, Osprey Combat Aircraft #3, 1997
3. "SB2C Helldiver in detail & scale Vol. 52," by Bert Kinzey, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1997
4. "SB2C Helldiver in action," by Robert Stern, Squadron/Signal In Action #54, 1982
5. "Famous Airplanes of the World: SBD Dauntless, SB2C Helldiver," Koku-Fan FAOW #40, May 1993
6. "Aerodata International U.S. Navy Carrier Bombers of World War II," Squadron/Signal Publications, 1987

Research and original artwork by Jack Morris.

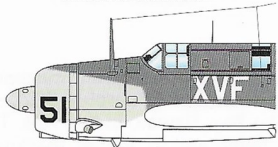
FUSELAGE MARKING DETAILS



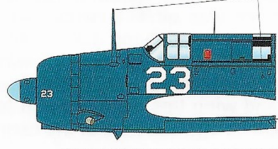
VB-88 USS YORKTOWN



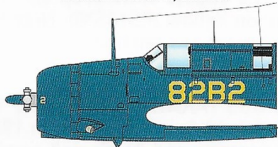
VB-75 USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



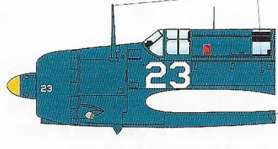
Unidentified Unit, Atlantic



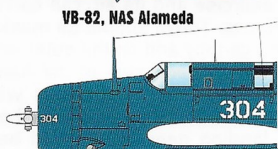
VB-75 USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



VB-82, NAS Alameda



VB-75 USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



VA-9A, USS PHILIPPINE SEA