

Heavy Attack Squadron Histories (VAH)

VAH-8 to VAH-123

VAH-8

Lineage

Established as Heavy Attack Squadron EIGHT (VAH-8) on 1 May 1957.

Disestablished on 17 January 1968. The first squadron to be assigned the VAH-8 designation.



The squadron's approved insignia.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's insignia was approved by CNO on 29 April 1958. Colors for the insignia were not available.

Nickname: Fireballers, 1959–1968.

Chronology of Significant Events

13 Mar 1960: All nine of the squadron's A3D-2 Skywarriors were launched from the deck of *Midway* (CVA 41), while deployed to WestPac, and flew a formation trans-Pacific flight of 4,800 miles to their home port of NAS Whidbey Island. Refueling stops were made at NAS Barbers Point and Alameda. The total flight time was 10.9 hours and the aircraft arrived at NAS Whidbey Island on 15 March.

Mar–Apr 1961: The squadron, while deployed aboard *Midway*, operated in the South China Sea due to the deteriorating position of Laotian government forces.

13 Mar 1962: During exercise Potshot, squadron A3Ds were launched from *Midway* carrying Marine paratroopers who were dropped on a target site at Camp Pendleton.

12 Dec 1963: The squadron's commanding officer, Commander C. E. Guthrie, was killed in an aircraft

accident. His aircraft, while returning to NAS Cubi Point from a training flight, crashed into Mount Silanguin. The crewmembers, Lieutenant Ray G. English and ATCS Russell J. Marshall were also killed in the accident.

Apr 1965: The squadron participated in its first combat operations. Bombing missions were performed against targets such as army camps and marshalling yards during the combat deployment. Air-to-air refueling sorties for attack and fighter aircraft were also flown.

May–Jun 1966: The squadron's A-3B aircraft left *Constellation* (CVA 64), in late May while in Hawaii, and flew to Cubi Point to await the arrival of *Constellation*. During the period prior to the carriers arrival in the Philippines, the squadron's aircraft flew operations in support of Yankee Team from *Ranger* (CVA 61) and *Enterprise* (CVAN 65). During the deployment, the squadron's primary mission was combat aerial refuelling in support of CVW-15 and other units flying missions in North Vietnam.

Home Port Assignments

Location	Assignment Date
NAS North Island	01 May 1957
NAS Whidbey Island	01 Jul 1957

Commanding Officers

	Date Assumed Command
CDR Halford Woodson (acting)	01 May 1957
CDR LeRoy B. Fraser	28 Jun 1957
CDR Halford Woodson	21 Jun 1958
CDR Frederick R. Fearnow	29 Jan 1959
CDR Cyrus F. Fitton	05 Feb 1960
CDR James T. Cockrill	1961
CDR Frank S. Haak	30 Mar 1962
CDR C. E. Guthrie	01 Mar 1963
CDR Archie B. Treadwell	12 Dec 1963
CDR Charles W. Cates	04 Dec 1964
CDR Ralph E. Neiger	03 Dec 1965
CDR Thomas P. Stewart	14 Dec 1966

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
A3D-2/A-3B†	12 Aug 1957
F9F-8B*	28 Aug 1957
F3D-2*	01 Sep 1957

Aircraft Assignment—Continued

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
KA-3B	May 1967

* These aircraft were used for training flights during the latter part of 1957.

† The A3D-2 designation was changed to A-3B in 1962.

Major Overseas Deployments

<i>Date of Departure</i>	<i>Date of Return</i>	<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Carrier</i>	<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Area of Operation</i>
14 Jul 1958	19 Dec 1958	CVG-21	CVA 16*	A3D-2	WestPac
16 Aug 1958	12 Mar 1959	CVG-2	CVA 41	A3D-2	WestPac
15 Aug 1959	25 Mar 1960	CVG-2	CVA 41	A3D-2	WestPac
16 Feb 1961	28 Sep 1961	CVG-2	CVA 41	A3D-2	WestPac
06 Apr 1962	20 Oct 1962	CVG-2	CVA 41	A3D-2	WestPac
08 Nov 1963	26 May 1964	CVW-2	CVA 41	A-3B	WestPac
06 Mar 1965	23 Nov 1965	CVW-2	CVA 41	A-3B	WestPac/Vietnam
12 May 1966	03 Dec 1966	CVW-15	CVA 64	A-3B	WestPac/Vietnam
29 Apr 1967	04 Dec 1967	CVW-14	CVA 64	KA-3B	WestPac/Vietnam

* VAH-8 Det L was embarked in *Lexington* (CVA 16) during its deployment to WestPac, operating with four squadron aircraft.



Two squadron A3D-2 Skywarriors fly over Midway (CVA 41) in 1959.

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
COMHATWING-2*	NL/ZD†	01 May 1957
COMFAIRWHIDBEY		01 Jul 1959
CVG-2‡/CVW-2§	NE	02 Jul 1959
CVW-15	NL	15 Jan 1966
CVW-14	NK	01 Jan 1967

* VAH-8 was assigned to Commander Heavy Attack Wing 2 and temporarily assigned to a Carrier Air Group during deployment.

† Each heavy attack squadron was assigned its own tail code. These tail codes were different from the ones assigned to the carrier air groups. VAH-8's tail code was changed from NL to ZD in 1957. The effective date for this change was most likely the beginning of FY 58 (1 July 1957).

‡ On 30 June 1959 COMHATWING-2 was disestablished and VAH-8 was administratively assigned to COMFAIRWHIDBEY. On 2 July 1959, CVG-2 was assigned as VAH-8's operational senior command. CVG-2 became VAH-8's administrative senior on 15 August 1959.

§ CVG-2 was redesignated CVW-2 when Carrier Air Groups (CVG) were redesignated Carrier Air Wings (CVW) on 20 December 1963.

Unit Awards Received

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Dates Covering Unit Award</i>	
NAVE	Mar 1964	30 Jun 1965
AFEM	06 Sep 1958	10 Sep 1958
	12 Sep 1958	29 Sep 1958
	12 Oct 1958	30 Oct 1958

Unit Awards Received—Continued

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Dates Covering Unit Award</i>	
NUC	11 Nov 1958	15 Nov 1958
	30 Nov 1958	12 Dec 1958
	24 Mar 1961	25 Mar 1961
	28 Mar 1961	07 Apr 1961
	08 Apr 1965	11 May 1965
	19 May 1965	28 Jun 1965
	16 Apr 1965	04 Nov 1965
	29 May 1966	24 Nov 1966
	18 May 1967	26 Nov 1967
	05 Oct 1965	
RVNGC	09 Oct 1965	
	21 Jun 1966	22 Jun 1966
VNSM	01 May 1967	01 Nov 1967
	22 Jul 1965	26 Aug 1965
	10 Sep 1965	09 Oct 1965
	18 Oct 1965	04 Nov 1965
	14 Jun 1966	13 Jul 1966
	27 Jul 1966	31 Aug 1966
	08 Sep 1966	01 Oct 1966
	08 Jun 1967	11 Jun 1967
	18 Jun 1967	25 Jul 1967
	01 Aug 1967	03 Sep 1967
25 Sep 1967	15 Oct 1967	
24 Oct 1967	12 Nov 1967	

VAH-15

Lineage

Established Heavy Attack Squadron FIFTEEN (VAH-15) on 15 January 1958.

Disestablished on 15 February 1959. The first squadron to be assigned the VAH-15 designation.

FILL IT UP!



The squadron's stylized aircraft insignia. Note the refueling line connecting the two aircraft.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

There is no record of the squadron receiving CNO approval for its insignia. Colors for the insignia are unknown.

Nickname: unknown.

Chronology of Significant Events

Jan 1958: VAH-15 was established with the designation heavy attack

but its primary mission was to provide aerial refueling to the Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet.

Home Port Assignments

Location	Assignment Date
NAS Norfolk	15 Jan 1958

Commanding Officers

	Date Assumed Command
LCDR Alfred G. Trube, Jr. (acting)	Jan 1958
CDR Trazewell T. Shepard, Jr.	13 Jun 1958

Aircraft Assignment

Type of Aircraft	Date Type First Received
AJ-2	Apr 1958
TV-2	Jul 1958

Air Wing Assignments

Air Wing	Tail Code	Assignment Date
NALCOLANTUNIT	GP	1958



A squadron AJ-2 Savage at NAS Glenview, Illinois, circa 1958.

VAH-16

Lineage

Established as Heavy Attack Squadron SIXTEEN (VAH-16) on 15 January 1958.

Disestablished on 30 January 1959. The first squadron to be assigned the VAH-16 designation.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's insignia was approved by CNO on 25 July 1958. Colors for the insignia were: a back-



The squadron's one and only insignia.

ground of alternating white and blue quadrants outlined in blue; light blue lightning bolt outlined in gold; white sword blade with a gold handle; and a blue scroll outlined in gold with red lettering.

Nickname: unknown.

Chronology of Significant Events

1 Jul 1958: The squadron's primary heavy attack high altitude bombing mission was changed to aerial refueling.

13 Jun 1958: The squadron established Detachment A in Hawaii and then relocated it to Agana, Guam, with four AJ-2 aircraft.

Home Port Assignments

<i>Location</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
NAS North Island	15 Jan 1958

Commanding Officers

<i>Officer</i>	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR R. L. Ashcraft	1958

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
AJ-2	15 Jan 1958

Major Overseas Deployments

<i>Date of Departure</i>	<i>Date of Return</i>	<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Carrier</i>	<i>Det*</i>	<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Area of Operation</i>
09 Aug 1957	02 Apr 1958	ATG-3	CVA 33	J*	AJ-2	WestPac
06 Jan 1958	30 Jun 1958	ATG-4	CVA 12	K*	AJ-2	WestPac

* The squadron only deployed detachments. The departure dates listed above are for the carrier and do not apply to VAH-16's detachments. VAH-16's detachments were not established until after 15 January 1958 and their departure dates are not known.

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
COMHATWING-2	ZH	15 Jan 1958



A squadron AJ-2 Savage refueling an F3H-2M Demon from VF-64, circa 1958.

VAH-21

Lineage

Established as Heavy Attack Squadron TWENTY ONE (VAH-21) on 1 September 1968.

Disestablished on 16 June 1969. The first squadron to be assigned the VAH-21 designation.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's insignia request was disapproved by CNO because the insignia instruction restricted the use of cartoon designs. A new insignia request was not submitted prior to the squadron's disestablishment.

Nickname: unknown.



Squadron personnel standing at attention during the establishment ceremony at NS Sangley Point, Philippines, in September 1968.

Chronology of Significant Events

1 Sep 1968: Heavy Attack Squadron 21 became the first squadron in the Navy with a night interdiction mission using new electronic surveillance equipment (multi-sensors). Its mission was to interdict logistics moving over land or sea.

1 Sep 1968: A detachment of VAH-21 was established at NAF Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam. The detachment at NAF Cam Ranh Bay had been a Naval Air Test Center Project TRIM Detachment (TRIM: Trails Roads Interdiction Multi-sensor) prior to becoming a VAH-21 detachment.

16 Jun 1969: With the disestablishment of VAH-21, its record included no loss of aircraft or any wounds suffered by its personnel during operations in Southeast Asia.

Home Port Assignments

<i>Location</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
NS Sangley Point, Philippines	01 Sep 1968

Commanding Officers

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR A. E. Forsman	01 Sep 1968
CDR N. D. Dunnan	1968

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
AP-2H	Sep 1968

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
COMFAIRWESTPAC	SL	01 Sep 1968

Unit Awards Received

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Dates Covering Unit Award</i>	
MUC	14 Jan 1968	01 Dec 1968



A squadron AP-2H Neptune at NAS Patuxent River, 1969 (Courtesy Robert Lawson Collection).

VAH-123

Lineage

Established as Heavy Attack Training Unit, Pacific (HATUPAC) on 15 June 1957.

Redesignated Heavy Attack Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE (VAH-123) on 29 June 1959.

Disestablished on 1 February 1971. The first squadron to be assigned the VAH-123 designation.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname



The squadron's insignia following its modification in 1961 which added the motto Professionalism is our Business.

The unit's insignia was approved by CNO on 12 August 1959. Colors for the insignia are unknown. Following the unit's redesignation to VAH-123 the HATUPAC designation was removed from the scroll and replaced with VAH-123. In 1961 the design was modified to include an upper scroll with the motto Professionalism is Our Business.

Nickname: Professionals, 1961–1971.

Chronology of Significant Events

Jun 1957: The unit was established to train personnel for the heavy attack mission, including the pilots, bombardier/navigation and aircrewmembers.

25 Nov 1958: Lieutenant Commander C. L. Chute became the first student to complete the unit's heavy attack training syllabus, through the solo stage, for the A3D-2 Skywarrior.

Jan–Mar 1959: The unit incorporated the maintenance training program into its syllabus, thereby providing a complete training program for all aspects of the heavy attack community's operational requirements.

Aug 1966: The squadron received its first A-6A Intruder in preparation for fleet replacement training in the new attack aircraft.

1 Sep 1967: VAH-123 was relieved of its mission of replacement training in the A-6 Intruder when VA-128 was established as a separate squadron from VAH-123 and assumed that mission.

1 Feb 1971: VAH-123 was disestablished and the mission of replacement training for the A-3/KA-3B was transferred to VAQ-130. Elements of VAH-123 were transferred to VAQ-130.



A squadron P2V-3B at NAF Litchfield following its retirement from service (Courtesy Robert Lawson Collection).

Home Port Assignments

Location	Assignment Date
NAS North Island	15 Jun 1957
NAS Whidbey Island	01 Jul 1957

Commanding Officers

	Date Assumed Command
LCDR R. H. Grant (acting)	15 Jun 1957
CDR Donald A. Miller	16 Jul 1957
CDR Frank J. Shaw	18 Jul 1958
CDR Norman K. McInnis	29 Dec 1959
CDR C. F. Fitton	20 Jun 1961
CDR R. E. Osterholm	15 Jan 1963
CDR L. E. Kirkemo	20 Feb 1964
CDR Edward C. Fritsch	05 Jan 1965
CDR John L. Underwood	14 Jan 1966
CDR John P. Sundberg	20 Jan 1967
CDR Horace B. Chambers	01 Dec 1967
CDR Donald K. Forbes	07 Jan 1969
CDR James E. Service	1970



A squadron A-3 Skywarrior preparing to launch from Constellation (CVA 64) in March 1968.

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
P2V-3B	Jul 1957
F3D-2	Jul 1957
F9F-8B	01 May 1958
A3D-2/A-3B*	01 Aug 1958
F9F-8T	11 Feb 1958
A3D-1/A-3A*	Jul 1959
A3D-2P	04 Dec 1959

Aircraft Assignment—Continued

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
A3D-2T/TA-3B*	21 Dec 1959
A3D-2Q	04 Aug 1960
A3D-1Q	12 Aug 1960
A-6A	17 Aug 1966
KA-3B	May 1967

* The A3D-2, A3D-1 and A3D-2T designations were changed to A-3B, A-3A and TA-3B in 1962.



A squadron A-6A Intruder, most likely at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington.

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
HATWING-2	ZG*	15 Jun 1957
RCVG-12/RCVW-12†	NJ‡	29 Jun 1958

* The tail code ZG was assigned to Heavy Attack Training Unit, Pacific.

† Replacement Carrier Air Group 12 (RCVG-12) was redesignated RCVW-12 when Carrier Air Groups (CVG) were redesignated Carrier Air Wings (CVW) on 20 December 1963.

‡ RCVW-12 was disestablished on 1 June 1970 but VAH-123 continued to use the NJ tail code that had been assigned to RCVW-12.



A squadron A-3 Skywarrior being placed on display for the squadron's disestablishment ceremony at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, 1971.