

The following History of VC-9 is part of the original Natoma Bay Logbook Project created in the 1970s and 1980s by John J. Sassano, historian and Bob Wall, editor.

The current document attempts to recreate, in electronic form, that original LOGBOOK of the Natoma Bay Association. I have tried to retain the exact formatting of the original paper version. Minor modifications were made when the modern word processor refused to reproduce the original typewritten format.

The entire Natoma Bay Online Logbook Project can be found at: <http://natomabaycve62.org/logbook/LBindex.html>

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June 2009
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HISTORY OF VC 9

—CHRONOLOGY—

1. COMMISSIONED - 6 August 1942
2. COMMANDING OFFICERS:
Lieutenant Commander William McClure Drane, U.S. Navy
(63264)
Alexandria, Virginia
6 August 1942 to 27 August 1943

Lieutenant Commander Howard Malcolm Avery, U.S. Navy
(76159)
Rancho Santo Fe, California.
27 August 1943 to 24 September 1944.

Lieutenant Julian Oxford Kay, U.S. Naval Reserve (95794)
Richmond, Virginia
24 September 1944 to present date.

3. COMMANDS ATTACHED TO:
ComFairSeattle - 6 August 1942 to 16 November 1942.
ComFairWest Coast - 16 November 1942 to 11 December
1942.
U.S.S. Bogue - 11 December 1942 to 23 August 1943.
ComAirLant - 4 January 1943 to 18 November 1944.
U.S.S. Card - 23 September 1943 to 8 November 1944.
U.S.S. Mission Bay - 25 December 1943 to 7 February 1944.
U.S.S. Solomons - 21 March 1944 to 26 August 1944.
ComFourthFleet - 12 April 1944 to 15 August 1944.
U.S.S. Wake Island - 10 November 1944 to 5 December
1944.
ComAirPac - 5 December 1944 to present date.
U.S.S. Natoma Bay - 11 March 1945 to 5 July 1945.
ComEsCarForPac - 21 March 1945 to 21 June 1945.
Commander Fifth Fleet - 21 March 1945 to 28 May 1945.
Commander Third Fleet - 28 May 1945 to 21 June 1945.

4. CHANGES IN FUNCTION:
 1. Anti-Submarine Warfare and Escort of Convoys
(Atlantic) January 1943 to November 1944.
 2. Combat (Pacific) March 1945 to June 1945.

5. PHYSICAL MOVEMENT OF VC-9

N.A.S. Seattle - 2 July 1942 to 16 November 1942.
N.A.S. San Diego - 16 November 1942 to 11 December 1942.
U.S.S. Bogue - 11 December 1942 to 20 December 1942.
Panama Canal Zone - 20 December 1942 - 25 December 1942.
U.S.S. Bogue - 25 December 1942 to 4 January 1943.
N.A.S. Norfolk - 4 January 1943 to 20 February 1943.
U.S.S. Bogue - 20 February 1943 to 14 March 1943.
N.A.S. Argentia - 14 March 1943 to 16 March 1943.
U.S.S. Bogue - 16 March 1943 to 10 April 1943.
N.A.S. Quonset Pt. - 10 April 1943 to 16 April 1943.
U.S.S. Bogue - 16 April 1943 to 20 April 1943.
N.A.S. Argentia - 20 April 1943 to 22 April 1943.
U.S.S. Bogue - 22 April 1943 to 4 May 1943.
Belfast, Ireland - 4 May 1943 to 11 May 1943.
U.S.S. Bogue - 11 May 1943 to 27 May 1943.
N.A.S. Argentia - 27 May 1943 to 31 May 1943.
U.S.S. Bogue - 31 May 1943 to 20 June 1943.
N.A.S. Norfolk - 20 June 1943 to 13 July 1943.
U.S.S. Bogue - 13 July 1943 to 31 July 1943.
Casablanca - 31 July 1943 to 6 August 1943.
U.S.S. Bogue - 6 August 1943 to 23 August 1943.
N.A.S. Norfolk - 23 August 1943 to 1 September 1943.
N.A.A.S. Chincoteague - 1 September 1943 to 23 September 1943.
U.S.S. Card - 23 September 1943 to 27 September 1943.
Bermuda - 27 September 1943 to 28 September 1943.
U. S. S. Card - 28 September 1943 to 18 October 1943.
Casablanca - 18 October 1943 to 20 October 1943.
U.S.S. Card - 20 October 1943 to 9 November 1943.
N.A.S. Norfolk - 9 November 1943 to 25 December 1943.
U.S.S. Mission Bay - 25 December 1943 to 14 January 1944.
Casablanca - 14 January 1944 to 16 January 1944.
U.S.S. Mission Bay - 16 January 1944 to 7 February 1944.
N.A.S. Norfolk - 7 February 1944 to 16 February 1944.
N.A.A.S. Fentress - 16 February 1944 to 21 March 1944.

U.S.S. Solomons - 21 March 1944 to 12 April 1944.
N.A.A.F. Ibura (Recife, Brazil) - 12 April 1944 to 14 April 1944.
U.S.S. Solomons - 14 April 1944 to 2 May 1944.
N.A.A.F. Ibura - 2 May 1944 to 6 May 1944.
U.S.S. Solomons - 6 May 1944 to 20 May 1944.
N.A.A.F. Ibura - 20 May 1944 to 30 May 1944.
U.S.S. Solomons - 30 May 1944 to 23 June 1944.
N.A.A.F. Ibura - 23 June 1944 to 7 July 1944.
U.S.S. Solomons - 7 July 1944 to 24 July 1944.
N.A.A.F. Ibura - 24 July 1944 to 25 July 1944.
U.S.S. Solomons - 25 July 1944 to 6 August 1944.
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - 6 August 1944 to 9 August 1944.
U.S.S. Solomons - 9 August 1944 to 13 August 1944.
Recife, Brazil - 13 August 1944 to 15 August 1944.
U.S.S. Solomons - 15 August 1944 to 26 August 1944.
N.A.S. Norfolk - 26 August 1944 to 17 September 1944.
N.A.A.S. Creeds - 17 September 1944 to 12 October 1944.
N.A.A.S. Creeds - (VF) 12 October 1944 to 31 October 1944.
N.A.A.S. Boca Chico, Florida (VT) - 12 October 1944 to 31 October 1944.
N.A.S. Norfolk - 31 October 1944 to 10 November 1944.
U.S.S. Wake Island - 10 November 1944 to 18 November 1944.
Panama Canal Zone - 18 November 1944 to 20 November 1944.
U.S.S. Wake Island - 20 November 1944 to 29 November 1944.
N.A.S. Alameda - 29 November 1944 to 30 November 1944.
U.S.S. Wake Island - 30 November 1944 to 5 December 1944.
N.A.S. Kaneohe (T.H.) - 5 December 1944 to 31 January 1945.
U.S.S. Copahee - 31 January 1945 to 9 February 1945.
N.A.B. Agana (Guam) - 9 February 1945 to 4 March 1945.
U.S.S. Admiralty Islands - 4 March 1945 to 5 March 1945.
Ulithi - 5 March 1945 to 11 March 1945.

U.S.S. Natoma Bay - 11 March 1945 to 22 April 1945.
Guam - 22 April 1945 to 3 May 1945.
U.S.S. Natoma Bay - 3 May 1945 to 21 June 1945.
Guam - 21 June 1945 to 5 July 1945.
U.S.S. Shipley Bay - 5 July 1945 to 21 July 1945.

6. ACTION IN WHICH ENGAGED:

—ATLANTIC—

Task Group 21. 12 - 20 April 1943 to 20 June 1943
(European)
Task Group 21. 13 - 12 July 1943 to 23 August 1943
(American)
Task Group 21. 14 - 25 September 1943 to 9 November
1943 (European)

—PACIFIC—

Nansei Shoto Operation - 25 March 1945 to 21 June 1945.

7. LOSS OF PERSONNEL THROUGH ENEMY ACTION:

Ensign George Edwards, A-V(N), U.S. Naval Reserve
East St. Louis, Illinois

Albert Donald Pacyna, ARM2c(CA), U.S. Naval Reserve
Dolton, Pennsylvania

Frank (n) Kuczinski, AMM2c(CA), U.S. Navy
Trenton, New Jersey

Ensign Edwards and crew were lost in the South Atlantic on
15 June 1944. They were attacking a German U-boat in the
face of anti-aircraft fire when the plane (TBM) in which they
were flying was hit and crashed into the sea.

Lieutenant (jg) William F. Chamberlain, A-V(N), U.S. Naval
Reserve
Montasemo, Washington

James Hurston Finch, ARM 1 c(CA), U.S. Naval Reserve
Leesburg, Florida

Richard George Hennick, AMM2c(CA), U.S. Naval Reserve
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Lieutenant(jg) Chamberlain and crew were attacking a
German U-boat in the South Atlantic on 15 June 1944. Depth
charges were dropped and they exploded upon hitting the
deck of the submarine. The plane (TBM) was engulfed in
smoke and flames and crashed into the sea.

Lieutenant(jg) Peter Hamilton Hazard, U.S. Naval Reserve
Narragansett, Rhode Island

William Patrick Bird, ARM 1 c, U.S. Naval Reserve
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Clarence Edward Davis, AOM 1 c, U.S. Naval Reserve
Lima, Ohio

Lieutenant (jg) Hazard and crew in on attack on a Val in the
vicinity of Okinawa on 27 March, 1945. Aware of friendly anti-
aircraft fire an attempt was made to divert the course of the
"suicide" diving on one of our warships. His plane (TBM) was
not seen again after beginning the run.

8. TYPE AND NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT:

Atlantic Operating Complement	12 VT 9 VF
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Type - Fighter - F4F4's and FM-2's
Torpedo - TBF, TBF- 1 c and TBM.

Pacific Operating Complement	12 VT 18 VF
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Type - Fighter - FM-2
Torpedo - TBM-3

—NARRATIVE—

Composite Squadron Nine was commissioned to operate
from the escort type carrier protecting convoys and carrying
on anti-submarine warfare in the Atlantic. This function it
carried out until transferred to Commander Air Force, U.S.
Pacific Fleet in

November 1944.

After two (2) months of training on the West Coast VC-9 was embarked on the U.S.S. Bogue for the East Coast via the Panama Canal. On 4 January 1943 the squadron reported to Commander Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet for duty.

—ATLANTIC—

U.S.S. BOGUE

VC-9 began operations from the U.S.S. Bogue in the Atlantic on 20 February 1943 at a time when the submarine menace was at its peak. In the face of adverse weather conditions the squadron protected allied shipping as far North as 50 degrees. On 10 March 1943, Lieutenant(jg) McAuslan became the first member of the squadron to sight a U-boat and it was just two miles from the convoy being escorted. He forced the submarine to submerge but was unable to release his depth charges. No attack was made by the submarine on any of our ships. Search after search was made for the U-boat and the following day as Lieutenant Roberts was about to land aboard he observed a swirl 3,000 yards astern of the carrier. An attack was made but there was no evidence of damage. The first cruise ended by putting into Argentia on 14 March 1943. The next month was uneventful as far as submarines were concerned. Operations were carried on when weather permitted and refueling was done at Quonset Point and Argentia.

On 28 April 1943, Lieutenant Santee sighted a fully surfaced submarine and attacked immediately. His bombs exploded on the starboard side of the U-boat. There was no evidence of damage, but it is felt that the attack prevented the convoy from being sighted and subjected to a torpedo attack. A very pleasant interim followed this encounter when the U.S.S. Bogue put into Belfast, Ireland. However, a very busy return trip was in store for the squadron on the way back across the Atlantic. It began on 21 May 1943 when Lieutenant Commander Drone sighted the wake of a fully surfaced submarine. Bombs were released and the explosion enveloped the submarine obscuring it from view. Lack of evidence of damage made it impossible to make an assessment.

The following day Lieutenant(jg) Kuhn severely damaged a German U-boat in the face of anti-aircraft fire. This was the first submarine encountered by VC-9 that had elected to fight back. Attacks followed in rapid succession by Lieutenant(jg) Doty, Lieutenant (jg) Sterns and Lieutenant(jg) Rogers on three U-boats within 100 miles from each other. It was Lieutenant(jg) Chamberlain and Lieutenant(jg) Roberts who took honors for the day when they attacked and defensively sank a German submarine - the first definite kill for VC-9. Fifteen (15) survivors were picked up and returned to the United States for interrogation. The Bogue returned to Argentia to prepare for more action which would take place on 4 June 1943. Between this time and 12 June 1943 seven separate attacks were made resulting in one boat definitely sunk, one probably sunk and two damaged.

The squadron put into Norfolk preparatory to making its last cruise on the U.S.S. Bogue. On 13 July 1943, VC-9 and the U.S.S. Bogue left Norfolk and before reaching Casablanca another U-boat had been sunk and one damaged. The return trip was uneventful but the past few months were looked back upon with pride and the Task Unit's efforts of those months were to be the basis for the awarding of the Presidential Unit Citation.

U.S.S. CARD

VC-9 was not resting on its laurels, however, and on 23 September 1943 it was embarked on the U.S.S. Card to begin a cruise which is unequalled in antisubmarine warfare. Within four (4) weeks, ten (10) attacks had been made on U-boats resulting in four (4) probably sunk. Evidence was insufficient to assess the other six (6) attacks which is unfortunate because it is believed some damage was done. On one occasion, Lieutenant Sterns sighted five enemy submarines surfaced. He could only devote his attention to one and delivered a lethal attack. The other four submerged before assisting planes could get to the scene. It was also on this cruise that the U.S.S. Borie was engaged by a U-boat and took a torpedo. The U-boat was sunk. All hands were transferred from the Borie and it was sunk by our own fire. Lieutenant(jg) Connley flying a

VT scored direct hits and sent the fighting Borie to the bottom of the Atlantic to prevent its use by the enemy. Once again the squadron had participated in action against German U-boats and was a part of a Task Unit to receive the Presidential Unit Citation.

U.S.S. MISSION BAY

VC-9 returned to Norfolk and underwent further training in the use of new weapons to be used against the submarine. A cruise was made on the U.S.S. Mission Bay with negative results. No ships were lost in the convoys escorted, however.

U.S.S. SOLOMONS

In March 1944 orders were received to report to Commander Fourth Fleet at Recife, Brazil to carry on anti-submarine warfare in the South Atlantic. Operations were carried on for two (2) months without a contact and finally on 15 June 1944, VC-9 made what was to be its last attack on a submarine in the Atlantic. It was a 1200 tonner and twenty (20) survivors were picked up after the sinking.

During this operation the ship operated from Recife and the squadron was based at Ibura Field while in port. Just before being detached from the Fourth Fleet the ship received orders to put into Rio de Janeiro. It is believed that this is the only time a carrier has visited Rio during the present war and the populace seemed much impressed. Not any more impressed, however, than the ship and squadron personnel were with Rio de Janeiro.

On 15 August 1944 the USS Solomons and VC-9 were detached from the Fourth Fleet and ordered to return to Norfolk. Upon arrival there the VF underwent training at N.A.A.S. Creeds and the VT proceeded to N.A.S. Boca Chico Florida for searchlight training. In the midst of this training orders came to prepare for transfer to the Commander Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

U.S.S. WAKE ISLAND

11 November 1944 found VC-9 embarked on the U.S.S. Wake Island en route to the Panama Canal.

Operations were carried on en route and a simulated attack was made on the Canal. Liberty was granted in Colon and Panama City affording celebrations before setting sail in the Pacific.

—PACIFIC—

It was 20 November 1944 and the Wake Island was steaming in the Pacific on a course for San Francisco. Upon arrival there planes and passengers were embarked and within 23 hours and ship departed for and transferred to N.A.S. Kaneche to undergo training. Over 4,000 hours were flown while at Kaneche, devoting most of the time to training in gunnery, fighter director exercises, simulated pre-dawn attack on shipping and support exercises.

U.S.S. COPAHEE

On 31 January 1945, VC-9 was embarked aboard the U.S.S. Copahee for transportation to Guam. Upon arrival at Guam the squadron was based at N.A.B. Agana. Carrier refresher landings were arranged on the U.S.S. Thetis Bay and U.S.S. Sitkoh Bay. Finally on 4 March 1945 while at Agana orders were received to proceed to Ulithi to begin combat duty in the Pacific.

U.S.S. ADMIRALTY ISLANDS

VC-9 was embarked on 4 March 1945 and departed Guam for Ulithi arriving there on 5 March 1945. The squadron remained aboard the Admiralty Islands while at Ulithi awaiting the arrival of the U.S.S. Natoma Bay.