



United States Navy

Patrol Squadron 74

Military Corner

VP-74 was a Patrol Squadron of the U.S. Navy. The squadron was established as Patrol Squadron 55 (VP-55) on 1 August 1940, redesignated Patrol Squadron 74 (VP-74) on 1 July 1941, and redesignated Patrol Squadron 40 (VP-40) on 1 September 1948 and disestablished on 25 January 1950.

1 August 1940: VP-55 was established at NAS Norfolk, Virginia, under the administrative control of PatWing-5 as a seaplane patrol squadron destined for duty with the Neutrality Patrol. VP-55 and sister squadron VP-56 were ordered to provide aerial surveillance for the ships of the Support Force on the offshore patrol. The first aircraft flown by the squadron was an XPBM-1, the pre-production version of the Martin Mariner. Training on this aircraft was undertaken at the Glenn L. Martin plant in Baltimore, Maryland, from 1 September through early October 1940. Engineering personnel were sent to the Wright engine plant for instruction. By the end of January 1941 the squadron's full complement of 12 PBM-1 aircraft had been delivered.

A six-aircraft detachment was sent to NAS Jacksonville, Florida for training. The six remaining aircraft at NAS Norfolk continued training and participated in the Neutrality Patrol. The destroyer units and Patrol Wing of Support Force (Neutrality Patrol) were reorganized as elements of Support Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet under command of Rear Admiral Arthur L. Bristol, designated Task Force 4. The original offshore patrol was now extended to include a northern patrol to strategic islands in the north and east to help ensure the safe passage of war materials to Britain.



On 1 May 1941, VP-55 flew to Gardiners Bay, New York, for 10 days of exercises with USS *Albemarle*. On the conclusion of the exercises, *Albemarle* proceeded on to NAS Argentia, Newfoundland. The squadron returned to NAS Norfolk. In July, Patrol Wing, Support Force became Patrol Wing 7, remaining a patrol wing of Support Force. Patrol Squadrons 51, 52, 53 and 55 became Patrol Squadrons 71, 72, 73 and 74, respectively.

On 19 July 1941, Six aircraft were dispatched to Reykjavik, aboard USS *Goldsborough*. The VP-74 detachment operated from Skerja Fjord conducting convoy coverage patrols out 500 miles (800 km) from base and air patrols from the Denmark Strait to Greenland, and served on many other missions. On 9 January 1950, VP-40 was relieved for return to NAS Norfolk where it was formally disestablished on 25 January 1950.

