

## The Evolution of the VQ-1 Logo

In October of 1951, the forerunner of VQ-1, Special Projects Division became operational at Naval Station, Sangley Point, Republic of the Philippines, as a division under the Naval Station.

Photo contributed by Mel Davidow

Bob Bublitz, a pilot in the early days writes, "We were, I can say with some modesty, quite an event for the little Navy backwater that Sangley Point had been. We had what some have described as an aura. Our planes were painted Navy blue and bore no markings except for four standard- a white star on a red and white bar - national markings, one on either side of the fuselage aft and one each on the upper left and lower right wing. Persons not attached to the Special Projects Division were prohibited from approaching the aircraft any closer than 50'.



- 50 Footer's Belt Buckle. Special Projects would not let unauthorized personnel within 50 feet of unit facilities at Sangley Point in early 50s.

Armed sentries, with live ammunition, who were instructed to call out, "Halt...Halt...Halt..." and then shoot, patrolled the perimeter of the parking area.

We were quickly designated the "50-footers" by Sangley's personnel. Our quickly adopted informal insignia, sported on locally made belt buckles, was the outline of a P4M with the midships section obscured by a cloud and bearing the legend, "50-Footers".

Other bits of the aura came from the fact that we were the only division (with a small "d") in the Navy to be transferred intact from one station to another. Nobody outside of the unit was cleared for our operations although the Captain of the Station and the Admiral (Commander Naval Forces, Philippines) were briefed in general about our work. For that matter, the aircrews, excepting the SigInt folk, did not know what went on in the back of the plane. I once said to an old Air Force friend that it seemed strange to have flown for two years without knowing what I was doing. To which he responded, "I thought that was about average for a Navy Pilot."

Sometime later Special Projects was designated VW-1 Det Able and then in 1954 they became VW-3 Det Able when VW-1 returned to Hawaii. It is not know if there was any formalized logo during the VW times however, former members recall specific logos for the different detachments.



Original VW-1 Det A patch. This was a prototype made in Okinawa circa 1952. Courtesy of Ron Paul

The patch on the left was used in VW-1 Detachment Able at Naval Station, Sangley Point, Republic of the Philippines in the early 1950s.



The patch on the left was for VW-3 Detachment Alpha at Sangley Point. VW-3 became the parent squadron when VW-1 rotated back to Hawaii. The unit remained VW-3 Det Able until they became ECMRON ONE (VQ-) on 1 June 1955.

On June 1, 1955 the unit, VW-3 Detachment Able at that time, was commissioned Electronic Counter Measures Squadron One (ECMRON ONE). The new commanding officer was LCDR E. R. Hall.

Recollection of squadron and family members who were in the squadron in 1955 remember that a contest was held in the early summer to come up with a design for a squadron logo. The wife of a squadron pilot, Virginia "Jinny" Martin, remembers her participation vividly. Her design consisted of three monkeys (hear, see and speak no evil) with a world globe in the background. A P4M pilot named Francis "Frank" Flood came up with a bat design, with a lightning bolt and electron. Evidently, the selection committee saw merit in both designs. The three monkeys were dropped and the bat was added to the world globe. The bat signified the nighttime missions preferred at the time. The lightning bolt and clouds depicted the inclement weather they often used to mask their operations. According to Norman S. Bull, another P4M pilot in the unit, the land mass depicted on the globe was no specific area and the ship was a representation of station ship "November."

Ms. Martin recalls that she and Frank Flood were given a pen and pencil set for their design. Jinny also graciously acknowledges that Frank Flood was the main architect of the design that was adopted. Tragically, a year later, Frank Flood and 15 others were lost when Chinese Communist aircraft shot down their P4M off Shanghai.



The logo on the left is the one that was designed by "Jinny" Martin and Frank Flood in the summer of 1955

In the fall of 1955 the new squadron was relocated to Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni in Japan. Less than five years later, the unit moved to the last permanent location they would be at in Japan, Naval Air Station, Atsugi. In addition to the move in 1960, the squadron was



re-designated Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One (VQ-1).

During the Atsugi era minor changes were made to the logo. The landmass in the logo came to look more like the Japanese area of operations and the ship was a depiction of the Seventh Fleet, which was the squadron's operational commander for many years. The logo remained basically the same even after the squadron moved to Guam in 1971. Then, in 1992, a new logo was submitted through the chain of command and approved. This writer cannot speculate as to the reason for the change. One thing I did hear was the updated logo was meant to reflect the worldwide nature of VQ operations. While I'm quite certain changing a squadron logo is not without precedent, units usually take great pride in the longevity of their logo. It is the humble opinion of this writer that traditions are a hallmark of the Navy and one thing that transcends the passage of time is the logo that ties the past and the present. My regret is that the early history, chronicling the events leading to the creation of the logo, was not compiled. Had the information been known that the main architect of the logo was among the first Cold War casualties of the new squadron, perhaps there may have been a different decision concerning the logo?

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The following provided information that made writing this history possible.

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Kenneth "Ken" Tidwell, AD1, USN (Ret), VW-1A, VW-3A, VQ-1, 53-56

Norman S. Bull, Capt., USN (Ret), VQ-1 55-57,63-65

Mrs. Jinny Martin, wife of Barney (deceased), Capt. USN (Ret) VW-3A, VQ-1 54-55

Robert "Bob" Galloway, VW-3A, VQ-1 54-55.

Melvin "Mel" Davidow, (deceased) Special Projects, VW-1A 51-53.

Stuart Scheffel (deceased), VW-1A, VW-3A 52-54

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## VQ-1 Bat Logo Displays a Long History

By Ltj.g. Karie Johnson  
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Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One (VQ-1) carries on a long tradition of electronic warfare squadrons using a bat in their insignia.

The U.S. Navy first used a bat on its official squadron insignia in the 1920s. The Observation Squadron, VOS-3S, flew the Vought O2U-1 Corsair, which was poorly suited for the mission and caused the crew to complain that they were “blind as bats”. The bat insignia caught on and was used by the squadron as it changed designation until it was disestablished in 1937. During World War II various patrol and reconnaissance squadrons, including the predecessors to VQ-1, used bats on their insignia to symbolize the type of flying they did.

These flights were flown when the moon was not full and often in stormy weather to provide cover. This was back when most countries did not have radar and aircraft intercepts were done visually.

Coincidentally the navigation equipment used at the time used aural tones to provide direction, similar to the way a bat finds food. As you flew towards a navigation station the tone would get stronger and as you flew away the tone would get weaker, with a cone of silence directly over the station. This allowed crews to locate foreign stations and it worked as well at night as it did during the day.

All of this added to the use of a bat as official squadron insignia. As the squadron was redesignated and new platforms were introduced the use of the bat was continued. The bat represented the electronic countermeasures origin without depicting what the aircrews did.

VQ-1 adopted the bat as their insignia after being established as Electronic Countermeasures Squadron One in 1955. A stencil of a bat was often taken on deployment and little bats would spring up wherever they landed.

After VQ-1 moved to NAS Agana, Guam in 1971, they kept a live fruit bat in the hangar as a mascot. His name was Barney and he was the responsibility of the squadron duty officer. He was kept in a cage located near the squadron’s snack bar, so everyone passing by kept him very well fed. Unfortunately after he passed away the squadron was unable to replace him, however the legacy of the bat lives on.

