



PHOTO CONFIGURED PB-2P'S SERVED VC-62 IN EARLY YEARS F2H-2P BANSHEES WERE WELL SUITED FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK

'YOU NAME IT; WE SHOOT IT!'

A SHORT history, long in achievement, is the record of Light Photographic Squadron 62, formerly Composite Squadron 62. Their slogan might well be, "You name it; we shoot it!"

In the years following WW II, the Navy had a small number of combat-experienced photo reconnaissance pilots, attached to regular fighter squadrons, or to Air Groups. No standard training syllabus or specialized training existed, and the quality of photographs depended to a large degree upon the pilot's interest in his work.

Late in 1948 two fighter photo-



VFP-62'S JETS PHOTO MUCH OF THE WORLD

graphic reconnaissance squadrons were formed, VC-61 on the West Coast, and VC-62 on the East. Their mission was "to train and maintain the readiness of units for carrier-based photographic reconnaissance of designated targets in areas of naval operations." These squadrons would furnish detachments of photo-configured fighter aircraft and specially trained photo pilots to each deploying Air Group.

Nucleus of VC-62 was the FASRON Three Photo Unit at NAS NORFOLK. Numbering 15 officers and 88 men, VC-62 was commissioned in January 1949 with Cdr. W. O. Moore as first



FIRST JET FLIGHT INTO HURRICANE. VC-62 PHOTO PLANE HEADS INTO CONNIE'S EYE



BANSHEE CAMERAS GET 'INSIDE EYE' VIEW

commanding officer, and with a complement of 16 planes—10 F8F-2P's, two F4U-4P's and four F4U-5P's.

Getting off to a rapid pace that has not slowed in its eight-year history, VC-62's first detachment, Able-49, departed in the USS *Midway* the same day the squadron was commissioned.

That year, VC-62 detachments flew from six carriers, totalling 5100 flight hours, and 297 carrier sorties.

The squadron, now the size of an Air Group, of about 90 officers and 500 men, totalled, during 1956, 12,598 flight hours and 1383 photo missions.

an aerial map make instrument training essential. A 200-picture map can be ruined by a 100-foot difference in altitude or three degrees in bank.

At the start of the Korean War, a detachment from VC-62 was sent with the USS *Leyte* to the Korean Area. Flying F4U-5P's, the group made photos of strategic targets in Korea. They followed up attacks on these targets with damage assessment photographs. One pilot, Ens. William Wagner, and two planes were lost in action.

In mid-1951 the first photo-jets, F2H-2P's, arrived in the Atlantic Fleet.

With the jets came a new concept of flying in combat areas. While the *Corsairs* and *Bearcats* had carried a normal load of guns, *Banshees* were unarmed. The pilot's defense in combat areas were speed and maneuverability and superior headwork. Defensive tactics become increasingly important.

VC-62's first detachment to taste combat in jets was led by Lt. E. D. Kimble. Flying from the *Lake Champlain* in 1953, they racked up 67 combat missions over Korea without loss.

That same year the first swept-wing photo-jets, F9F-6P *Cougars* saw service



LUBE AND ELBOW GREASE FOR THE BANSHEES



CHECK-OUT ON CAMERA CONTROLS SYSTEM



F2H-2P PHOTO NOSE READIED FOR CAMERAS



PHOTO INTERPRETERS BUSS & BABB AT WORK



PHOTOGRS FINISH MULTI-STRIP MOSIAC MAP



PHOTO INTERPRETERS STUDY COMPLETED MAP

From the very beginning, VC-62 has placed great emphasis on training. The ground and flight training syllabus devoted to aerial photography includes lectures, check-outs and demonstrations on the characteristics of films and lenses, on operation of aerial cameras, and on mapping mathematics.

Of equal importance is navigation and instrument training. Flying alone or with one escort, the photo pilot must be able to navigate to the maximum of his plane's radius of action. He must find a small target such as a bridge or railroad intersection, and then get home. Tolerances in flying

Though the advent of jets called for an entirely new syllabus, for jet familiarization, and jet photo training, with all hands going through it, the new *Banshees* were welcomed with enthusiasm. While the prop photo planes carried only one camera, usually fixed in the oblique or vertical position, the *Banshees* carried three cameras, all of which the pilot could rotate from the cockpit. The *Banshee's* viewfinder, with which the pilot could see under his plane and center his pictures exactly, was a great improvement after the 'seaman's eye' centering pictures as it was done in the *Bearcats* and *Corsairs*.

in the squadron. The *Cougars* augmented the *Banshees*, rather than replacing them. The F9F-6P's have since been replaced by F9F-8P's.

In August 1955 the squadron attained an important first when two VC-62 pilots, Lts. Peter Mongilardi and George D. Hudson made the first jet flights into a hurricane, taking aerial photographs of "Connie" as they flew over the top, and then into the eye of the storm.

Led by such skippers as Cdr. L. W. Keith, Cdr. N. R. Bacon, Cdr. W. D. Dietz and Cdr. M. P. McNair, VC-62, or VFP-62, as it is now designated, has



IN THESE SWEEP-WING COUGARS, VC-62 PILOTS HAVE RANGED OVER LARGE AREAS OF THE WORLD, SHOOTING PICTURES AS THEY GO

ranged over much of the world. Since her commissioning over 80 detachments have been supplied to 18 different carriers.

Photographic targets that the squadron has covered have been as varied as

the surface of the earth. For a picture of a single installation or a map covering 400 square miles, from altitudes of 200 feet to 50,000 feet, the planes of VC-62 have made their photo runs. In peace and in war, they

have discharged their mission of conducting aerial photographic reconnaissance in support of fleet operations, of providing first phase photographic interpretation reports, and second phase damage assessment information.



INSTALLED IN THE PHOTO-SANSHEE'S NOSE, THESE AERIAL CAMERAS CAN MAKE DAY OR NIGHT, OBLIQUE OR VERTICAL PHOTOS