

Douglas EA-3B Skywarrior

(designed for 1/72)

US NAVY VQ-2 "Batman"

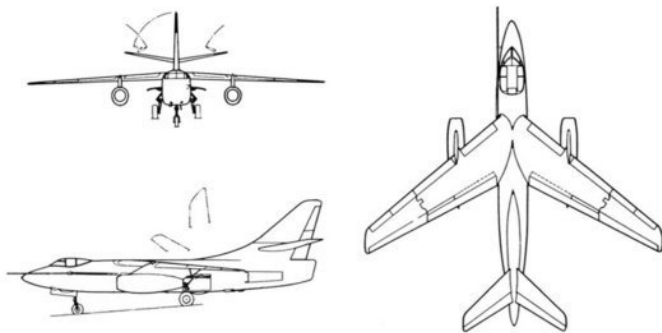
INTRODUCTION

The Douglas A-3 Skywarrior was designed as a carrier-capable strategic bomber for the US NAVY. The prototype flew October 1952.

It was a big two engine jet named the Skywarrior to be used from a carrier with a length of 23,27 m and a wing span of 22,1 m and the wing could be folded. The empty weight was about 18,000 kg and MTOW 37,000 kg. It was called the Whale due to its size and shape. Cruise speed was 950 km/hr. The flying crew was 3. Many variants were developed over the years. The A-3 was the US NAVY main carrier bomber and early variants even had tail guns. The ERA-3 was an electronic warfare aircraft. The KA-3 was used as refuelling tanker on behalf of carrier aircraft. The B-66 was a variant for the USAF called the Destroyer.

The US NAVY EA-3 fulfilled a reconnaissance role and ELINT role and had additional crew carried in the main fuselage. Quickly the EA-3B tail guns were removed and ECM fitted. US NAVY VQ units were deployed across the Globe operates mixed fleet of aircraft that flew secret missions.

In total nearly 300 A-3 were manufactured, all being used by the US NAVY, USAF and US ARMY detachments. No foreign exports.



MODEL KITS

In 1/72 scale the best injection moulded kit is from Hasegawa that appeared in various kit releases.

Hasegawa kit #02126 is for a EA-3B with markings for VQ-1.

For a VQ-2 EA-3B Skywarrior this kit can be made straight out of the box. It has the canoe on the fuselage belly and the smaller stencils and US NAVY markings to be used.

Please check out the setting of wing slats and flaps for your model as on many parked A-3 outboard wing slats and flaps were seen drooped.

DECAL SYSTEM and APPLICATION

The decal sheet has ONE continuous print film, so EACH decal needs to be cut out with fine scissors. No other prior laser printed decal preparation is needed. Each cut out decal can be applied as usual after soaking it a short while in water. Decals are EXTREMELY THIN, so slide off from the wet backing sheet on the model surface. Do not use tweezers! They will fold doubled!

After all decals have been applied, finish the model with your preferred final gloss or semi-matt varnish coats. This will also protect the decals.

PAINTING AND DETAILS

The decals are for EA-3B as flown by US NAVY VQ-2 "Batman". September 1956 the first few A3D-1Q arrived and flown from NAF Port Lyautey in Morocco for the electronic reconnaissance role. End 1958 VQ-2 moved to Naval Air Station Rota in Spain and 5 A3D-2Q arrived being one of the flown aircraft types. During the Cuba missile crisis, ops were done from Key West, Florida. Their first EA-3B was flown from USS Saratoga January 1965 in the Mediterranean. During the Vietnam War also operated from Da Nang. After the end of the Vietnam War, VQ-2 returned to NAS Rota in Spain operating EA-3B also in various conflicts like the 1973 Yom Kippur and Operation Desert Storm beginning 1991.

Various schemes were seen on VQ-2 EA-3B over the years with variations in sizes and shapes of codes and numbers. Sometimes even without any numbers or badges.

The US NAVY paint scheme is basically gull grey FS16440 and gloss white FS17875 lower surfaces and fuselage belly and rudder. Flaps and elevators also white. Rear engine nacelles portions burned metal and red intake lips and warning triangle. Overall, the paint scheme is symmetrical at port and starboard except for the EA-3B cabin windows and entry door at starboard.

Black anti-glare panel and the nose tip is often light "buff". When slats and air brakes are deployed, red surfaces are visible. Gear bays and gears are white. Leading edge of tail is also often white. Grey walkway areas on upper surfaces (see kit instructions).

It recommended to study references and photos.

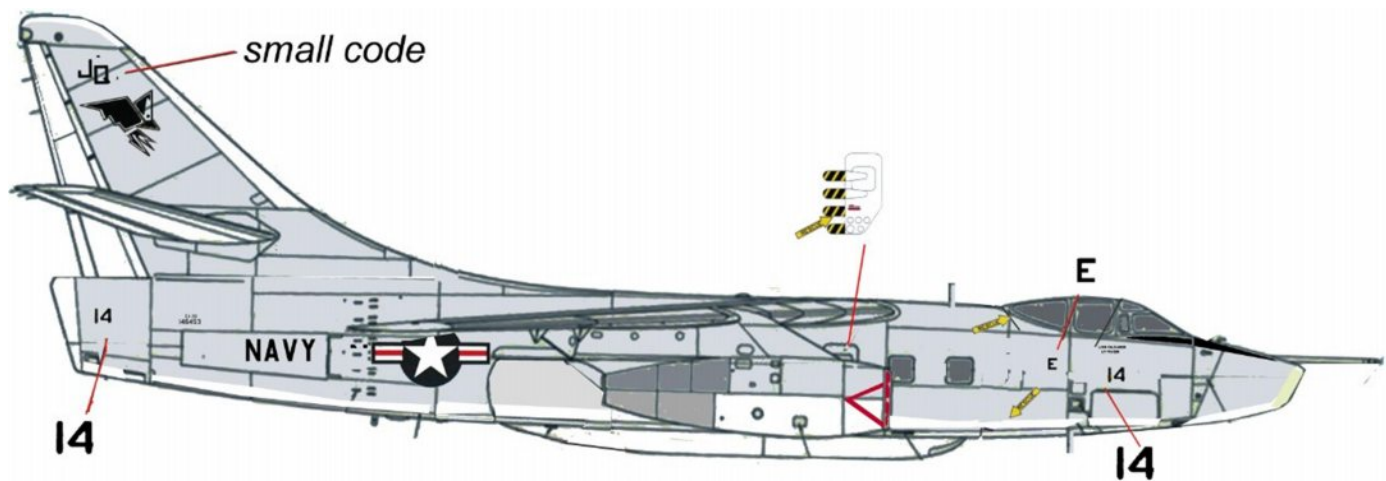
REFERENCES

Fleet Wales, Douglas A-3 Skywarrior, part 2, Cunningham, Naval Fighters , 2004

Aerograph 5, Douglas A-3 Skywarrior, Aerofax, 1987

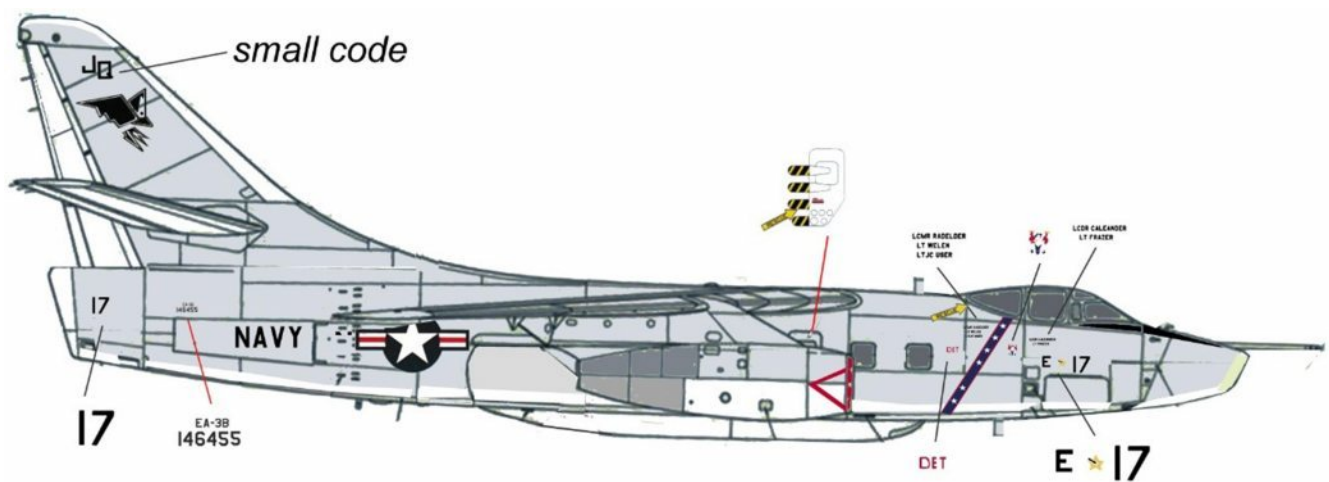
Famous Airplanes of the World, Douglas A-3, BUNRIN DO 87, July 1977

A-3 Skywarrior in Action no. 148, Squadron Signal publications, 1995



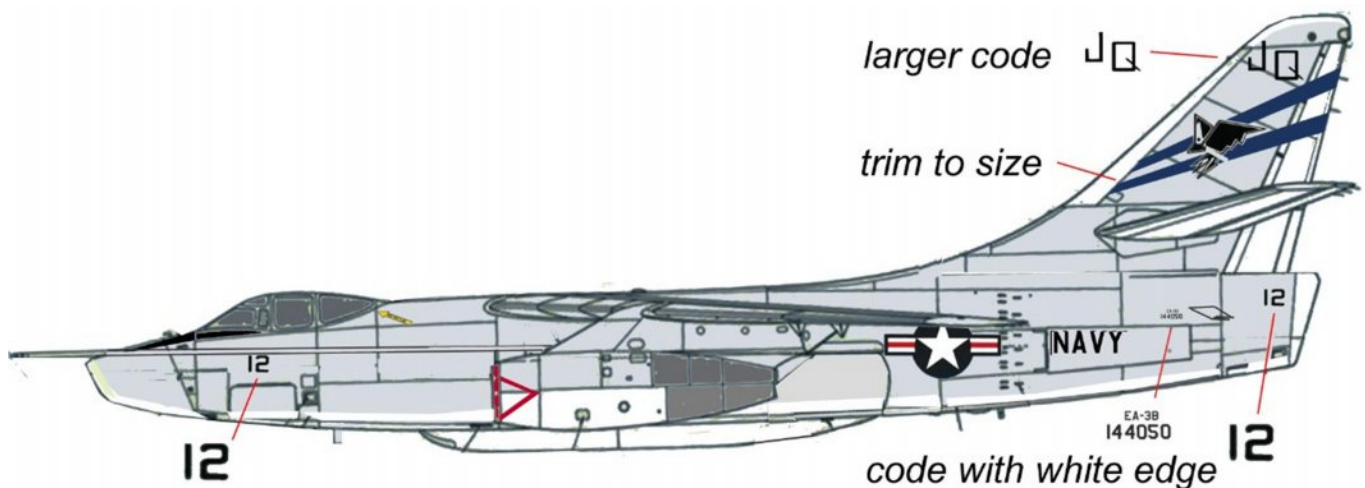
[A] scheme has the VQ-2 badge on the tail and the small JQ code. Number 14, unknown Bureau no but probably 144050.

Note: bureau numbers are often very tiny and unreadable. The 14 number has no white edge, plain black. Batmen logo. Early EA-3B coded "12" has a similar scheme and probably



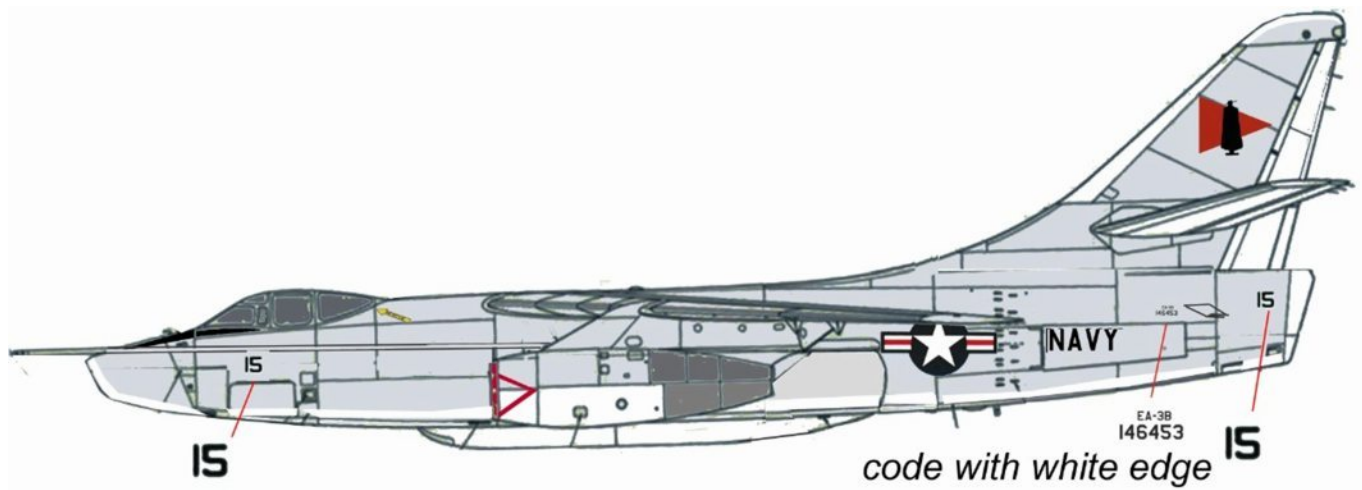
[B] scheme has the VQ-2 badge on the tail and the small JQ code at slightly different position as [A]. Number 17, probably Bureau no. 146455. Batmen logo.

It has colourful band at the forward fuselage. Detachment, crew names are unknown but suggested. NOTE tiny badge below cockpit.



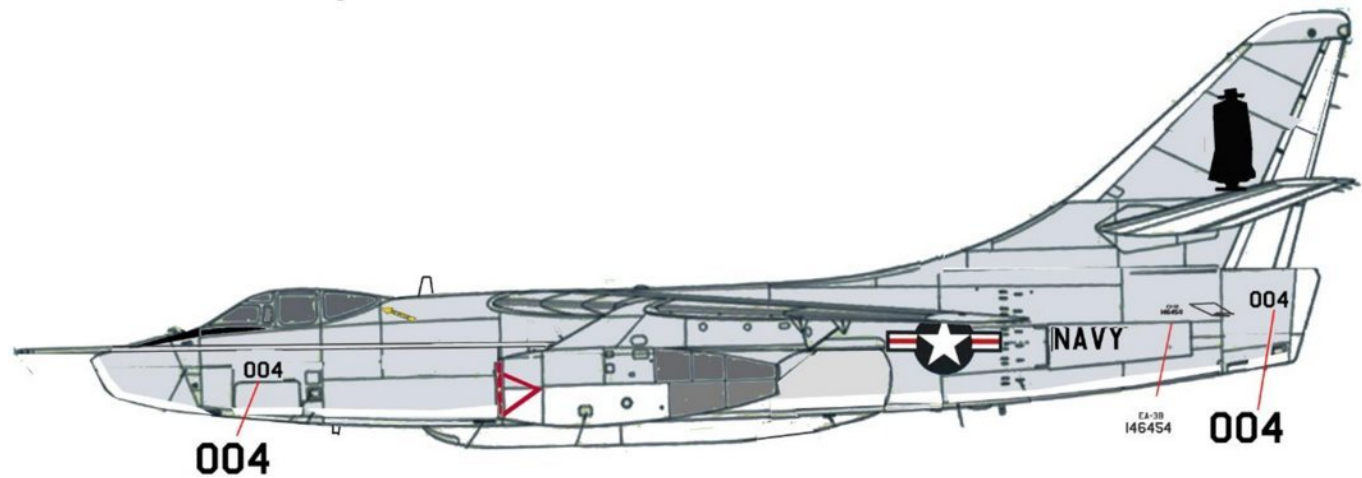
[C] later scheme has the VQ-2 badge with blue stripes and large JQ code. Number 12, Bureau no. probably 144050, see scheme [A]. Note: bureau numbers are often very tiny and unreadable.

Badmen logo with blue stripes; trim front of blue stripe decal to fit the model tail.



[D] scheme has the Sandeman VQ-2 badge on the tail when later based at NAS Rota in Spain. Number 15, Bureau no. 146453. Number has white edge.

Sandeman tail badge with tri-angle is mirrored on starboard.

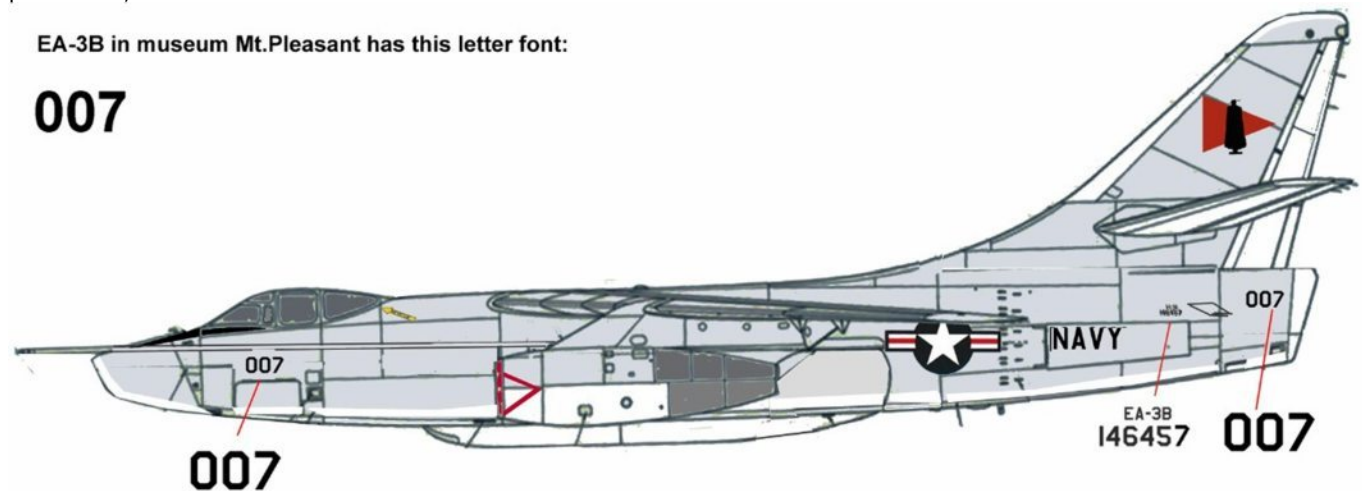


[E] scheme has the largere Sandeman VQ-2 badge on the tail when later based at NAS Rota in Spain. Number 004 in plain black, Bureau no. 146454.

Large Sandeman tail badge is mirrored on starboard.

EA-3B in museum Mt.Pleasant has this letter font:

007



[F] scheme has the Sandeman VQ-2 badge on the tail when later based at NAS Rota in Spain. Number 007 in plain black with standard letter font, Bureau no. 146457.

Sandeman tail badge is mirrored on starboard.

This aircraft was at the end of its career at NAS Rota a gate guard aircraft. It later went to the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum, Mt. Pleasant, SC, USA. It was repainted. As displayed at museum Mt. Pleasant it shows a different "rounded" letter font 007; this may be inaccurate but is also on the decals sheet.