

Lockheed EP-3E ARIES II

(designed for 1/72)

US NAVY VQ-2 "Batmen" and VQ-1 "World Watchers"**INTRODUCTION**

The Lockheed P-3 Orion was designed as a long range anti-submarine- and patrol aircraft for the US NAVY. It was a design with four Allison T56 turboprop engines. The prototype flew November 1959. Several versions were developed in the next decennia and the P-3 was also exported.

One of the versions was the EP-3 ARIES for electronic warfare and reconnaissance. Some P-3C aircraft were converted to this version. The crew can comprise no less than 24 members with various tasks. The EP-3 ARIES I entered US Navy service with VQ-1 in 1969. The EP-3E ARIES II was a further developed version for a SIGINT role and some 12 were set in service in the early 2000s. Various large fairings and antennas are fitted on the EP-3E and may vary a bit in configuration.

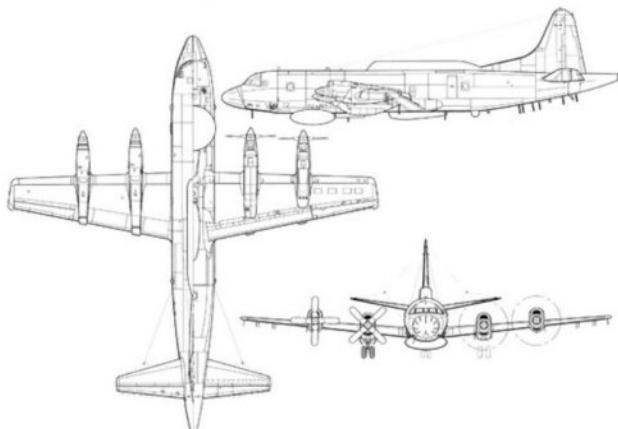
MODEL KITS

In 1/72 scale the only injection moulded P-3C kit is from Hasegawa that appeared in various kit releases.

Falcon released a vacuform conversion set #4598 that had vacuformed parts for an EP-3E (and F2H-3 and C-1A Tracer). The EP-3E conversion is to be used with the Hasegawa kit.

Hasegawa kit #00167 I itself later released a P-3C kit with EP-3E extra resin parts. The extra parts are for the various fairings and antennas. The different wing tips are also included. The kit decals are for a VQ-1 EP-3E.

Many smaller stencils and decals are to be used from the Hasegawa kit.



Please note that the EP-3E has no sonar buoys so fill the lower rear fuselage launch tubes.

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 double!

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.

DECALS AND DETAILS

[A-C] decals for EP-3E as flown by US NAVY VQ-2 "Batmen" (and in Spain also called Sandeman). VQ-2 started operations in the 1950s with the electronic reconnaissance role. End 1958 VQ-2 moved to Naval Air Station Rota in Spain. After the end of the Vietnam War, VQ-2 returned to NAS Rota in Spain operating also in various conflicts like the 1973 Yom Kippur and Gulf War 1990/1991. Various schemes were seen on VQ-2 EP-3E over the years with variations in sizes and shapes of codes and numbers.

[D] also one scheme is provided for EP-3E as flown by VQ-1. VQ-1 was established mid 1955 and are known as the "World Watchers". In 1960 VQ-2 flew a mixed fleet and was based at Atsugi in Japan and during the Vietnam War also flew missions from Da Nang and other bases. The first EP-3 joined in 1969. VQ-1 flew from various stations across the globe just like VQ-2.

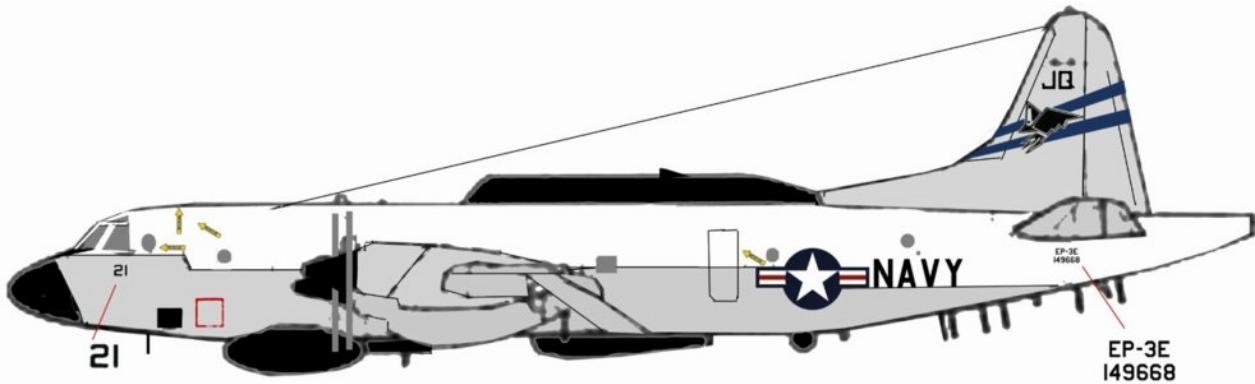
The US Navy operated EP-3E in small numbers until February 2025 when the last VQ-1 EP-3E was retired.

PAINT SCHEME

The US NAVY EP-3E paint scheme is basically gull grey FS16440 and gloss white FS17875 on upper surfaces and flying controls. Nose radome is usually black as are the engine nacelle intake' edges. The extra EP-3E fairings are not usually black (but not always such as scheme [D]). Overall, the paint scheme is symmetrical at port and starboard except for the cabin windows and entry door.

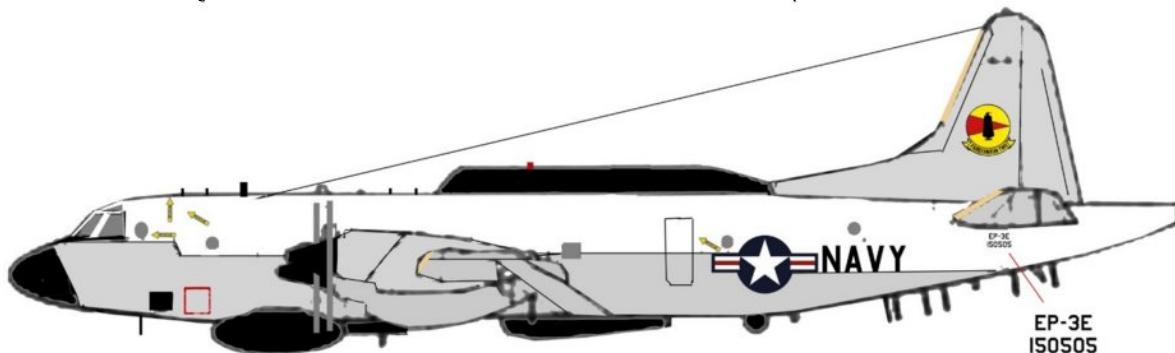
When flaps are deployed, red surfaces are visible. Gear bays and gears are white. Leading edge of tail is also often buff brown. Walkway areas on upper wing surfaces may vary in colour, mostly these are darker grey (see kit instructions).

It is recommended to study references and internet.



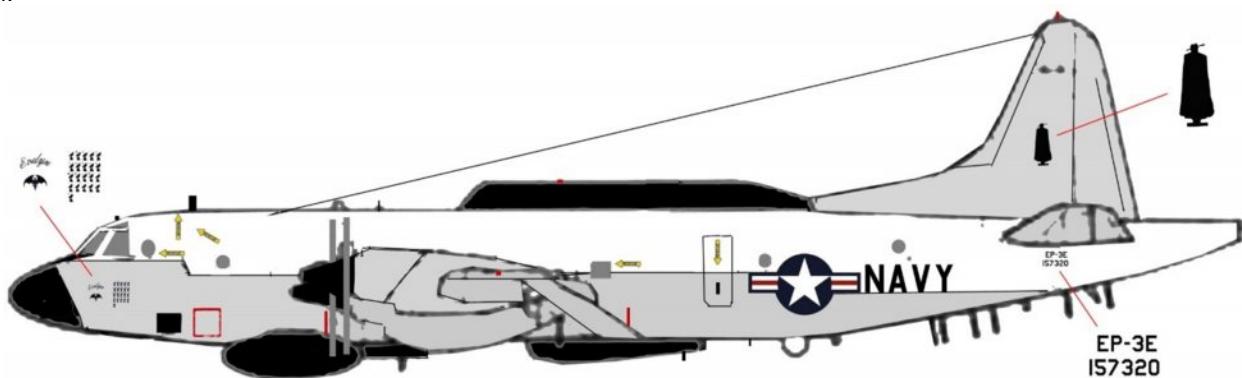
[A] EP-3E scheme has the VQ-2 Batmen badge with blue stripes on the tail and a JQ code. Bureau no 149668.

Nose number 21 has a tiny white edge.
Trim the blue stripes to fit.



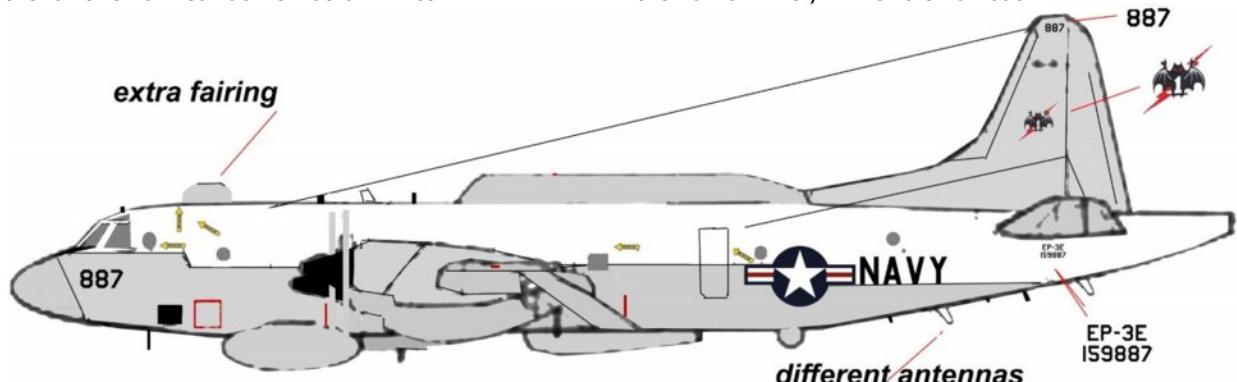
[B] EP-3E scheme has the VQ-2 Sandeman badge on the tail (no JQ code). Bureau no. 150505. Based at NAS Rota in Spain.

No nose codes were seen.



[C] EP-3E scheme has the VQ-2 Sandeman outline in black on the tail. Bureau no. 157320. (No nose codes were seen). Note the lower small rear dome was off white.

This aircraft was also deployed during the Gulf War 1990. It had a special nose marking to count ELINT missions and had the name "Evelyn" with a small bat.



[D] EP-3E scheme is for a VQ-1 "World Watchers" EP-3E. It has the unit badge with red flashes on the tail. Number 887, Bureau no. 159887. (symmetrical scheme).

There is an extra fairing on the spine aft of the cockpit. The various fairings and nose are gull grey. Different rear lower fuselage antenna configuration.