

Submerged Cultural Resources Exploration Team

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Exploration Updates

Spring 2003

Issue 2

Welcome to the second issue of *SCRET's* newsletter. Our goal is to publish the newsletter twice each year, in the fall and spring. Each issue will focus on *SCRET's* efforts to explore and document significant submerged cultural resources in the Pacific Northwest.

Sand Point Naval Air Station (1920-1970)

Sand Point, a peninsula in north Seattle that juts into Lake Washington, served for almost 50 years as an air base, aviation training center, and aircraft repair depot for the U.S. Navy. Growing eventually to more than 400 acres, the Sand Point Naval Air Station hosted at its peak during World War II more than 5,600 Naval personnel, more than 2,400 civilian workers, and hundreds of aircraft. Units trained at Sand Point participated in some of the critical battles in the Pacific war.

The area is now known to most people as Warren G. Magnuson Park and the Western Headquarters of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

During its operational years, one of the primary missions of NAS Seattle was training new pilots. World War II aviators started in a small single engine trainer known as the BT-13 Vultee Valiant. The Navy acquired 1,350 of the BT-13s and gave them the designation SNV-1. The Navy later acquired 650 SNV-2s, which differed from the SNV-1 only in the addition of a 24 volt electrical system.



Valiant (SNV-2)

Manufacturer: Vultee Aircraft, Incorporated

Type: Trainer

Accommodation: student pilot and instructor

Power plant: one 450 hp Pratt & Whitney R-985 Junior Wasp radial engine

Dimensions: span, 42 feet, 2 inches length 28 feet, 9 inches, height 12 feet, 5 inches

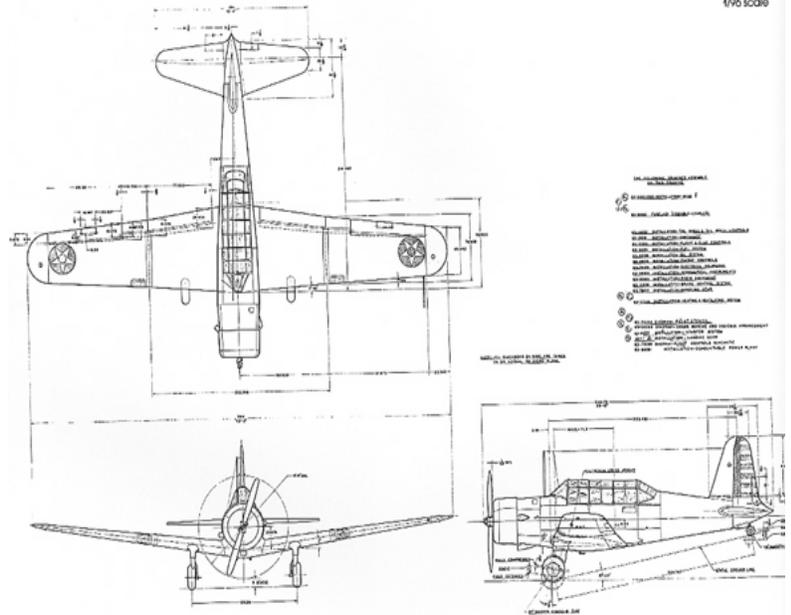
Weight: empty, 4,360 pounds

Performance: max. speed, 166 mph; service ceiling, 16,500 ft. range, 516 miles



NAS Seattle—1955

February 29, 1944. Lieutenant (jg) Carter Perry did not impress his instructor, L. S. Nitka, when he put them into Lake Washington one mile north of Sand Point on February 29, 1944. He was flying Vultee SNV-2 Valiant Bureau Number 52067. Reports indicate that the pilot came in high on an emergency landing due to incipient engine failure and overshot the runway. The pilot attempted to go around again and the engine cut out entirely, resulting in a forced water landing. The pilot and his instructor escaped from the plane unharmed. The airplane and engine were not recovered.



Sidescan image of SNV-2 Valiant
(courtesy Innerspace Exploration Team)

The aircraft lies upside down on the bottom of Lake Washington due north of Sand Point on the eastern side of the lake. The SNV lies on a clay shelf in water 125-130 feet deep. The engine, wings and fixed landing gear are intact. The propeller is intact, but badly bent, indicating that it was probably spinning as the plane hit the water. The section of the fuselage containing the cockpit is badly damaged. The fuselage aft of the cockpit is intact. The tail section is intact, although twisted at an angle. The skin covering the fuselage and wings is generally extremely fragile. Some of the control surfaces appear to have had a fabric covering, which is gone.

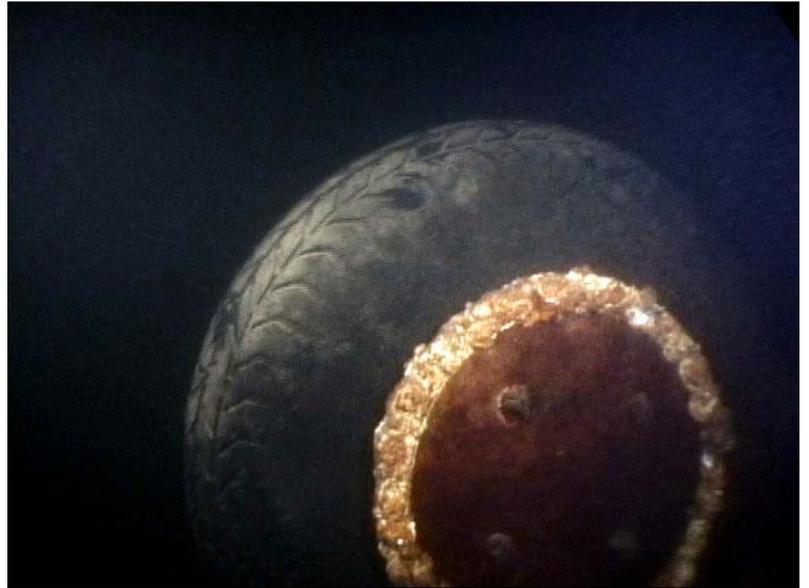


The markings on the skin of the aircraft are still visible, including stars on the wings and "US Navy" along the fuselage. There is a small wooden "data box" below what used to be the cockpit of the airplane.

The Valiant in Lake Washington was discovered by Historic Aircraft Preservation, Inc. (Robert Mester) and reported to the Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation in 1990 as a submerged cultural resource. This office determined that, because this type of aircraft was well represented in existing collections and not associated with specific historic events, it was not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The aircraft remains the property of the United States Navy.



Radial engine and propeller



Main landing gear



Bent propeller blade



US Navy insignia on fuselage near tail



Tail section showing missing control surfaces



Tail landing gear



Datacase beneath cockpit area

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I would like to contact *SCRET* for information on a wreck – write to info@scret.org

I would like to become a member of *SCRET* – join on-line at www.scret.org

I would like to make a financial contribution to *SCRET* – mail to *SCRET*'s address shown below.

I would like to contribute an article to *SCRET*'s next newsletter – e-mail to wjaccard@mindspring.com or mail to *SCRET*'s address shown below.

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