

## **Curtiss SOC-4 "Seagull"**



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### **Additional Information:**

The SOC was the last of the "Curtiss biplanes in operational service" with the U.S. Navy and was designed for use as a scout aircraft for battleships and cruisers--capable of catapult operation and landing at sea. The Coast Guard acquired the final three produced by Curtiss in 1938 and these were designated as SOC-4s. They were assigned the Coast Guard call numbers V171, V172, and V173 (BuNo 48243, 48244, 48245, respectively).

V171 served with the cutter *Bibb* in an experimental use of aircraft on board large cutters. The *Taney* and *Spencer* were also involved in the experiment although they each carried a Grumman JF-2. These cutters did not have catapults and simply hoisted each amphibian overboard during flight operations. Apparently, however, the experiment was not overly successful although the Coast Guard continued to assign some amphibians to various cutters, particularly those operating in arctic waters, during the war (although not the SOC-4s). The V171 was then fitted with fixed conventional landing gear at some point and operated from an as-yet undetermined air station. V173 was assigned to Air Station Port Angeles.

All three were transferred to the Navy in 1942.

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**Photographs:**



No date/caption; photographer unknown.



No date/caption; photographer unknown.



Curtiss SOC-4, V171, on ramp, unidentified airstation.  
No date/caption; photographer unknown. Note the wheeled trolley.

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**Sources:**

Arthur Percy, *U.S. Coast Guard Aircraft Since 1916* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), pp. 155-157.

Swanborough, Gordon & Peter M. Bowers. *United States Navy Aircraft Since 1911*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990), pp.159-161.

