



## *U.S. Coast Guard Aviation History*

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# Vought OS2U-2 / 3 "Kingfisher"



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### **Historical Information:**

The Vought OS2U Kingfisher, a scout and observation floatplane, began service with the Navy beginning in August 1940. They were built using spot welding. The Coast Guard flew both the OS2U-2 and OS2U-3 models, the OS2U-3 being distinguished from the "2" model by having extra fuel tanks and better armor protection for the pilot and crew than the earlier production models. The Kingfisher could be fitted with a removable undercarriage and tail wheel for handling while on land.

Beginning in March, 1942, the Coast Guard eventually acquired 53 of the OS2U floatplanes. A number of these aircraft were Naval Aircraft Factory built OS2N-1s (the Naval Air Factory's version of Vought's OS2U-3). Their primary purpose was to carry the burden of the Coast Guard's early anti-submarine efforts along the nation's coastlines and in the coastal waters. They also scouted for and protected coastal merchant convoys. They were capable of carrying a depth charge and could fly patrols of up to six hours. None of the Coast Guard operated floatplanes was credited with sinking an enemy submarine but many made rescues of survivors from torpedoed merchant ships and also Coast Guard

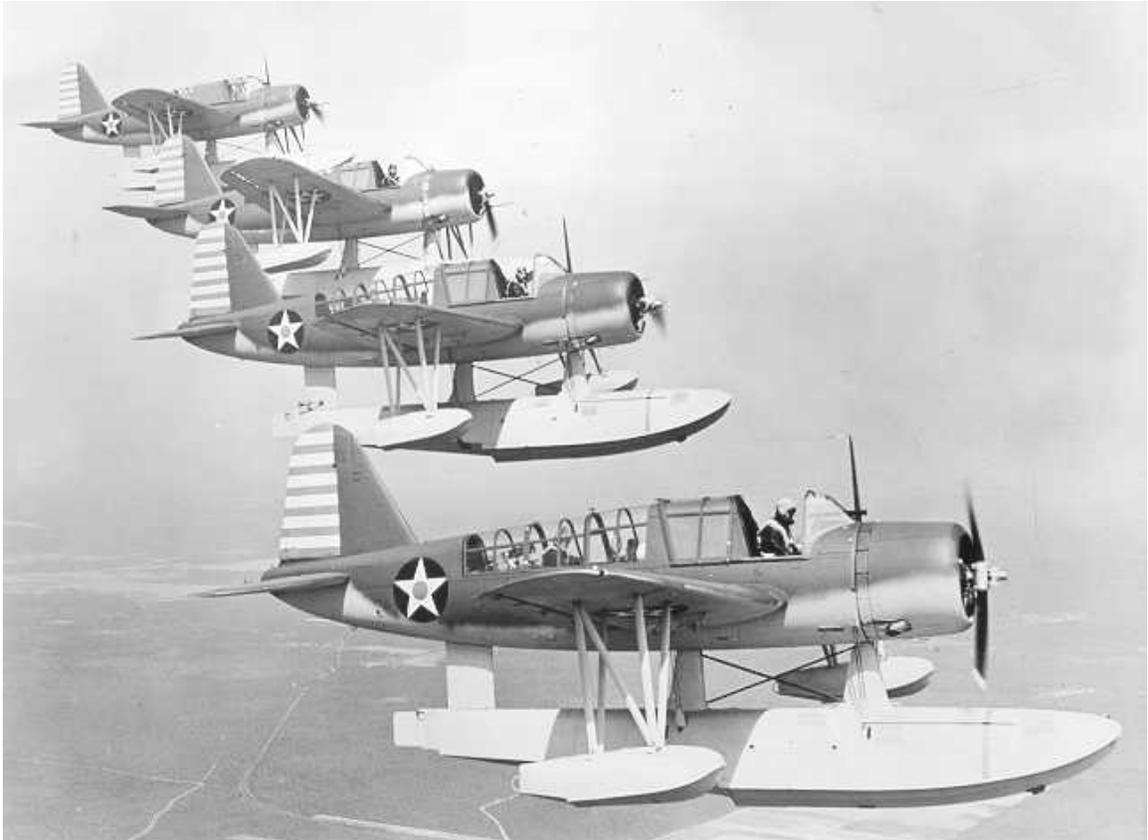
survivors of the cutters *Bedloe* and *Jackson* that were lost during the hurricane off the east coast of the U.S. in 1944.

Three OS2U-3 floatplanes (BuNo 5369, 5375, 5584) were allocated to the Coast Guard in exchange for three J2F-5 aircraft (BuNo 00735, 00736, 00739). BuNo 09401 was delivered to the US Navy on 5 May 1942 and was based with the Coast Guard at Air Station Biloxi.

All Kingfishers were discontinued from Coast Guard service by October, 1944



OS2U-3; "Sea Birds' With a Sting: Wings of the fighting U.S. Coast Guard, these 'Sea Birds' pack a sting--powerful depth charges--for enemy submarines molesting United Nations' convoys. Photographed at an East Coast air base [Air Station Salem], the Coast Guard planes are about to take off on convoy patrol." No date; Photo No. 224; photographer unknown; four OS2U's in line, on tarmac in front of hangar at Coast Guard Air Station Salem; from ground level.



OS2U-3; No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown; Four OS2U's, in flight, flying stacked formation, view from starboard.



OS2U-3; No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown; four OS2U's in line, on tarmac in front of hangar at Coast Guard Air Station Salem; from ground level (Note the JRF Goose at the end of the flight line).

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**Sources:**

Arthur Percy, *U.S. Coast Guard Aircraft Since 1916* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), pp. 232-233.

