

The Sea Kings of Project Apollo



Designed for Hasegawa and Revell-Germany SH-3 kits in 1:48 scale
and the 2016-tool Airfix Sea King in 1:72 scale

Contains enough markings to build two different aircraft!

A JOINT PROJECT OF OLD 66 DECALS AND STARFIGHTER DECALS

Thanks for purchasing this decal. It's the result of a lot of research, inquiry, investigation and discovery, and we've tried our best to make it as accurate as possible. We hope you'll enjoy it.

Note that this decal sheet is not all-inclusive -- while it contains the major markings for the helicopters in question, it doesn't include more typical stencils and other details, so grab those from other decal sheets if you want them.

(Note also that this collection doesn't include the famous "Old 66" - that's available on our previous sheets! We're paying tribute to the forgotten Sea Kings of Apollo here.)

The information here is from our research and investigation. We're also indebted to David Weeks, whose amazing diorama of the Apollo 9 recovery was a source of information and inspiration.

Kit and Conversion Notes

IN 1:48: Many Hasegawa kits (and the Revell-Germany rebox) represent a later SH-3H. For these, you must trim the horizontal stabilizer to SH-3D length (use the drawing below as a guide), omit the stabilizer brace and fill the holes, and replace the kit's sponsons with the earlier teardrop-shaped variety.

Some Hasegawa kits include the shorter stabilizer and early sponsons, and some aftermarket manufacturers (such as Belcher Bits) offer early sponsons. For an early Sea King, you must also fill the forward cabin window on the port side, and delete the FOD/ice guard over the cockpit if need be.

The otherwise beautiful Hasegawa kits feature no interior detail aft of the cockpit, and the main cabin door is molded shut. Opening the door and detailing the cabin will mean a *lot* of work. Regardless of the extent of your project, brass sets and detail parts are available from Eduard, Flightpath and other manufacturers.

IN 1:72: Although it will require mild conversion work, the best 1:72 kit is the new-tool Airfix HAR.3 released in 2016, which captures the shape of the Sea King in a way unlike any other kit to date. Posts on converting the Airfix kit to SH-3A/SH-3D standard may be found at Tommy Thomason's blog at tailspintopics.blogspot.com. The Cyber-Hobby SH-3 kits will also work, but require considerable correction to turn into an SH-3. Consult Tommy's blog for posts on the Cyber-Hobby kits.

FOR ALL KITS: The best possible printed reference is *Famous Aircraft Of the World No. 15: Sikorsky SH-3 Sea King*. The extensive detail photos and drawings in the book will more than justify the effort in hunting down a copy.

To more accurately depict an SH-3 as an Apollo recovery helicopter:

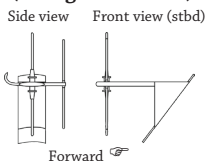
1. For SH-3A and SH-3D aircraft, do not install the AN/AQS-13 dipping sonar array. This was temporarily removed to provide additional room in the cabin during recovery. On all aircraft, install a cover over the hole in the cabin floor. The sonar well in the bottom of the hull remained, so do not seal it off, not even on the SH-3G aircraft.

2. Install a Yagi antenna on each sponson support strut (see drawings).

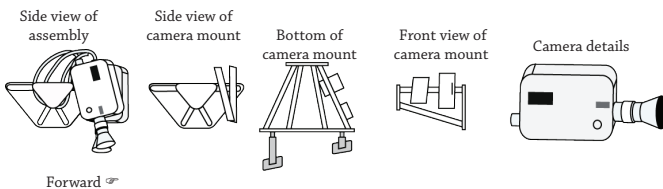
3. Install 70 mm cameras aft of and below the main cabin door (see drawings).

4. Apply yellow or gray tape along the route of the camera power cables, either with decal strip or thin strips of painted tape. (You may want to place a piece of small-diameter thread under the tape or decal for added effect.)

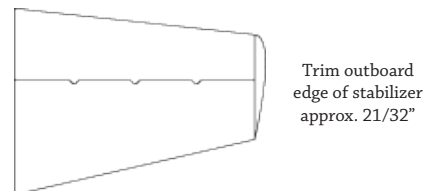
Yagi antenna (enlarged for detail)



70 mm cameras and mounts (enlarged for detail)



Stabilizer (1:48 scale)



For 1:48 scale, reduce the above drawings to 77%. For 1:72 scale, reduce the above drawings to 50%.

General notes on paint and markings

Paint: All aircraft wore the basic scheme of Insignia White (FS17875) and Light Gull Gray (FS36440). The demarcation line will vary from aircraft to aircraft, so check the profiles in this instruction sheet as well as photographs of the real aircraft.

Main rotor blades were FS36440 on top and flat black on the bottom, with yellow tips and two pairs of thin yellow stripes at intervals along the blade chord. Tail rotor blades are flat black. Decals are provided for the tail rotor blade tips.

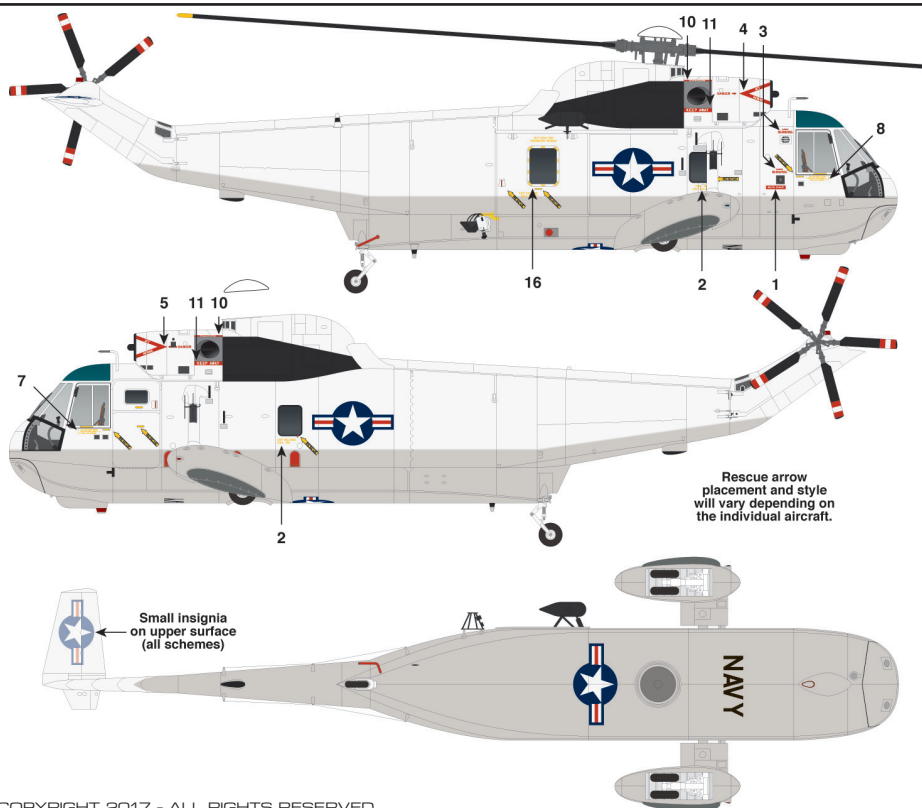
The large exhaust hide panel is shown at left, but some aircraft carried a smaller one. Profiles of individual aircraft will guide you.

Flotation bags were dark gray.

Airframe markings: The most common markings are shown in the diagram to the left. Note that there may be variations on certain aircraft; in such cases, the profile for that aircraft takes precedence.

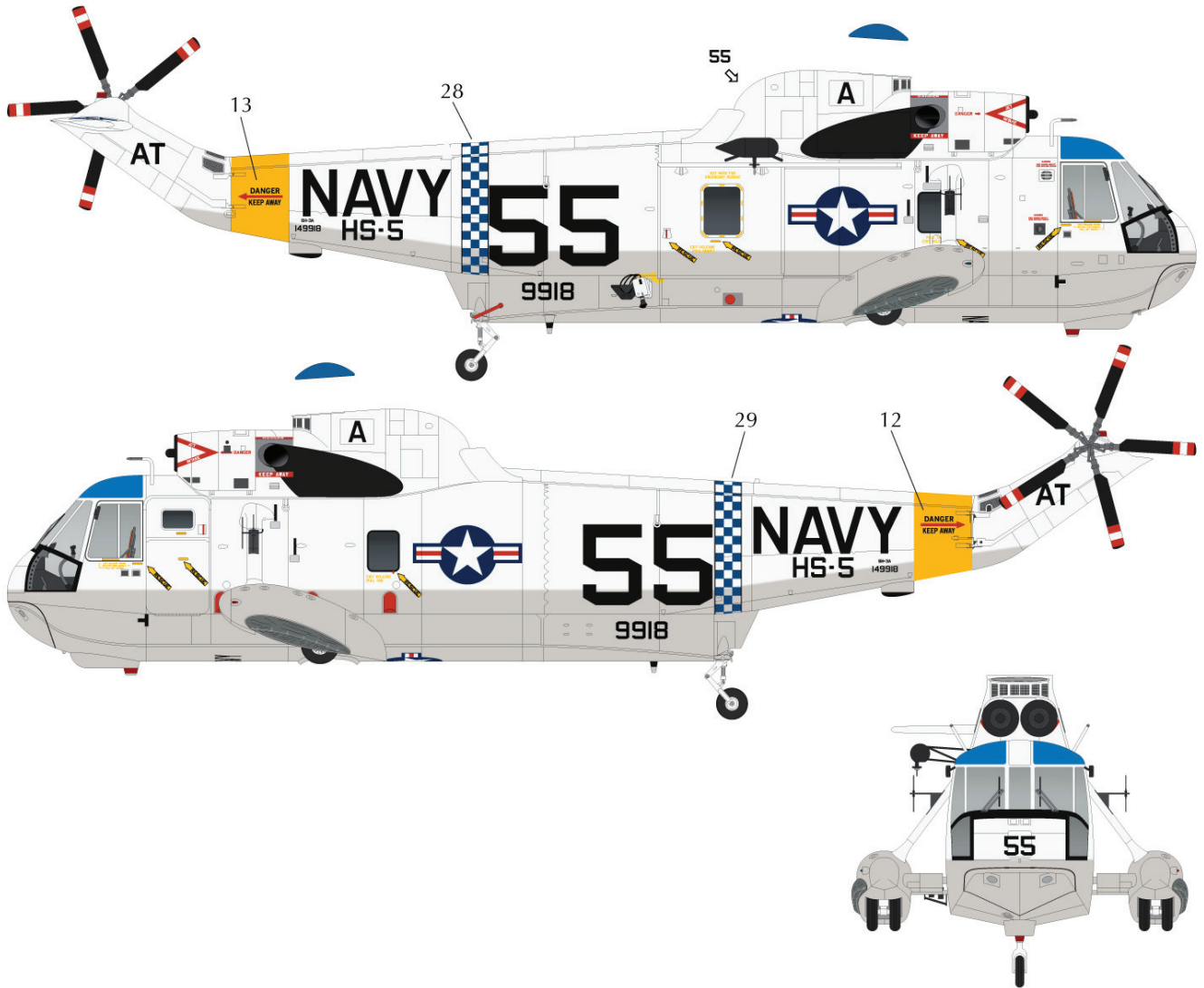
Cockpit: Almost all kits depict later "crashworthy" seats, but SH-3s of this era carried seats with lower backs. Seat cushions were typically orange.

Cabin greenhouse windows were tinted light blue.



Apollo 7 recovery - October 22, 1968

SH-3A BuNo 149918 of HS-5 "Nightdippers"



Apollo 7, a flight test of the Block II Command/Service Module, was the first Apollo mission to carry a crew into space. The 11-day mission to Earth orbit ended with astronauts Wally Schirra, Donn Eisele and Walt Cunningham recovered by this SH-3A flying from the carrier *Essex* (CVS-9).

149918 did not carry an ice shield in front of the intakes. Note the "A" on the access panel high on the fuselage, awarded to HS-5 for excellence in antisubmarine warfare. Also note the smaller, rounded shape of the black exhaust hide area.

The checkerboard strip on the aft fuselage may be tricky to apply. (It certainly was tricky to design for this decal.) How well it fits may also depend on your kit, too. Note that it is meant to closely align with a panel line just before the cabin/tail boom production break. The best advice is to work slowly and carefully, and make adjustment cuts in the decal if needed so everything stays in alignment. A small strip of additional checkerboard stripe is provided if you need to patch anything.

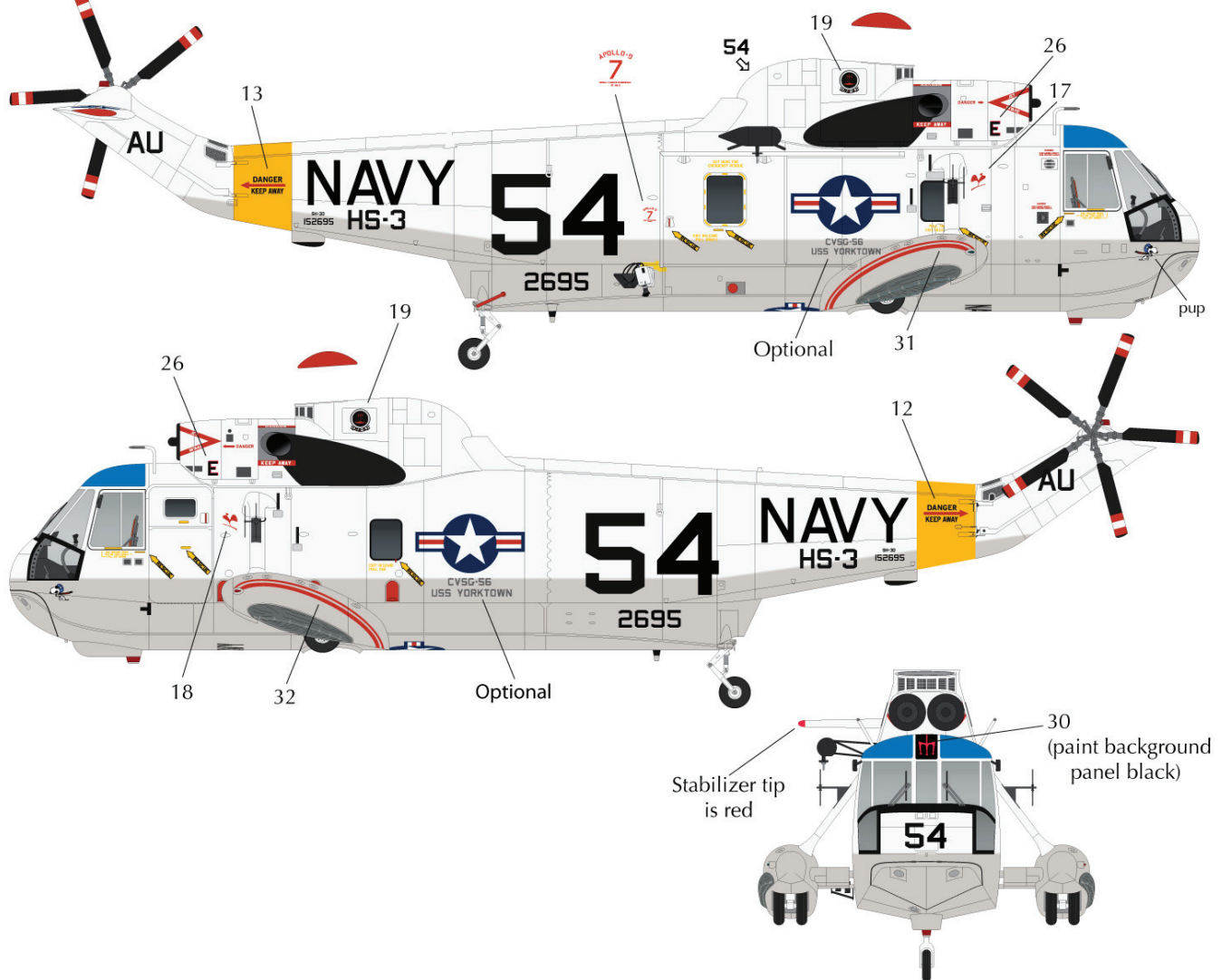
Note also that the large "55" side numbers are in close proximity to the checkerboard stripe - it doesn't touch up against it, but it comes very close, within a couple inches on the real aircraft.

Apply a small "55" to the rear of the transmission housing. This allowed the aircraft to be identified from above and aft.

For this aircraft, use the traditional "RESCUE" arrows with squared/angled lettering. Paint the tail warning stripe yellow and add the warning legends (decals 12 and 13).

Apollo 9 recovery - March 3, 1969

SH-3D BuNo 152695 of HS-3 "Tridents"



Apollo 9 (March 3-13, 1969) was the first test of the lunar module with a crew aboard, but in the relative safety of Earth orbit. This SH-3D, part of an HS-3 detachment aboard prime recovery ship USS *Guadalcanal* (LPH-7), recovered astronauts Jim McDivitt, Dave Scott and Rusty Schweickart after splashdown.

HS-3's bright and busy paint scheme includes efficiency "E" awards below the engine intakes on both sides, the HS-3 insignia on an access panel below the rotor head, and twin red stripes on the sponsons. Note that the stripes begin at the marker light housings and follow the curve of the sponson down and aft. Additional stripe is provided if you need to patch it to your particular kit.

Note too the smaller, rounded exhaust hide area on each side.

HS-3's aircraft also carried a "trident" logo on a black background between the greenhouse windows. Since SH-3 kits vary in the size and configuration of this part of the cockpit greenhouse, this sheet provides the trident and leaves it to you to paint the black background in the size appropriate for your kit. Leave a white frame between the black panel and the surrounding windows.

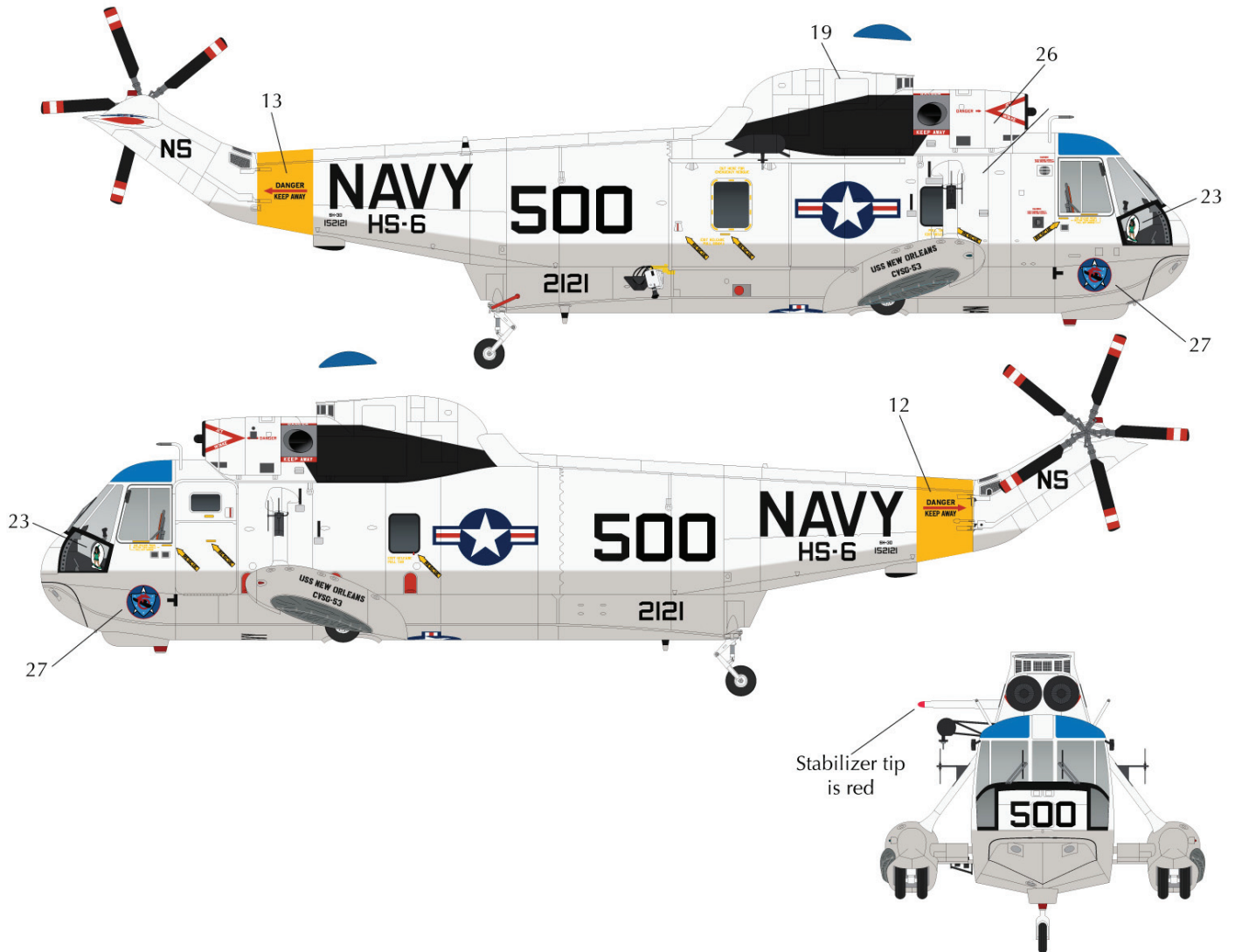
Just below the footwell windows, HS-3's Sea Kings carried a depiction of a certain World War I flying ace. 152695 also carried a small marking commemorating HS-3's seventh recovery of a space crew.

As a bonus, the sheet includes the markings 152695 wore while deployed with HS-3 aboard USS *Yorktown* (CVS-10) during the carrier's 1969 Atlantic deployment. Do not apply them for the Apollo 9 recovery, but if you'd like to build the aircraft in its "day job," apply them as indicated.

Although some HS-3 aircraft had a ice/spray shield, 152695 didn't wear one during the recovery.

Apollo 14 recovery - February 9, 1971

SH-3A BuNo 152121 of HS-6 "Indians"



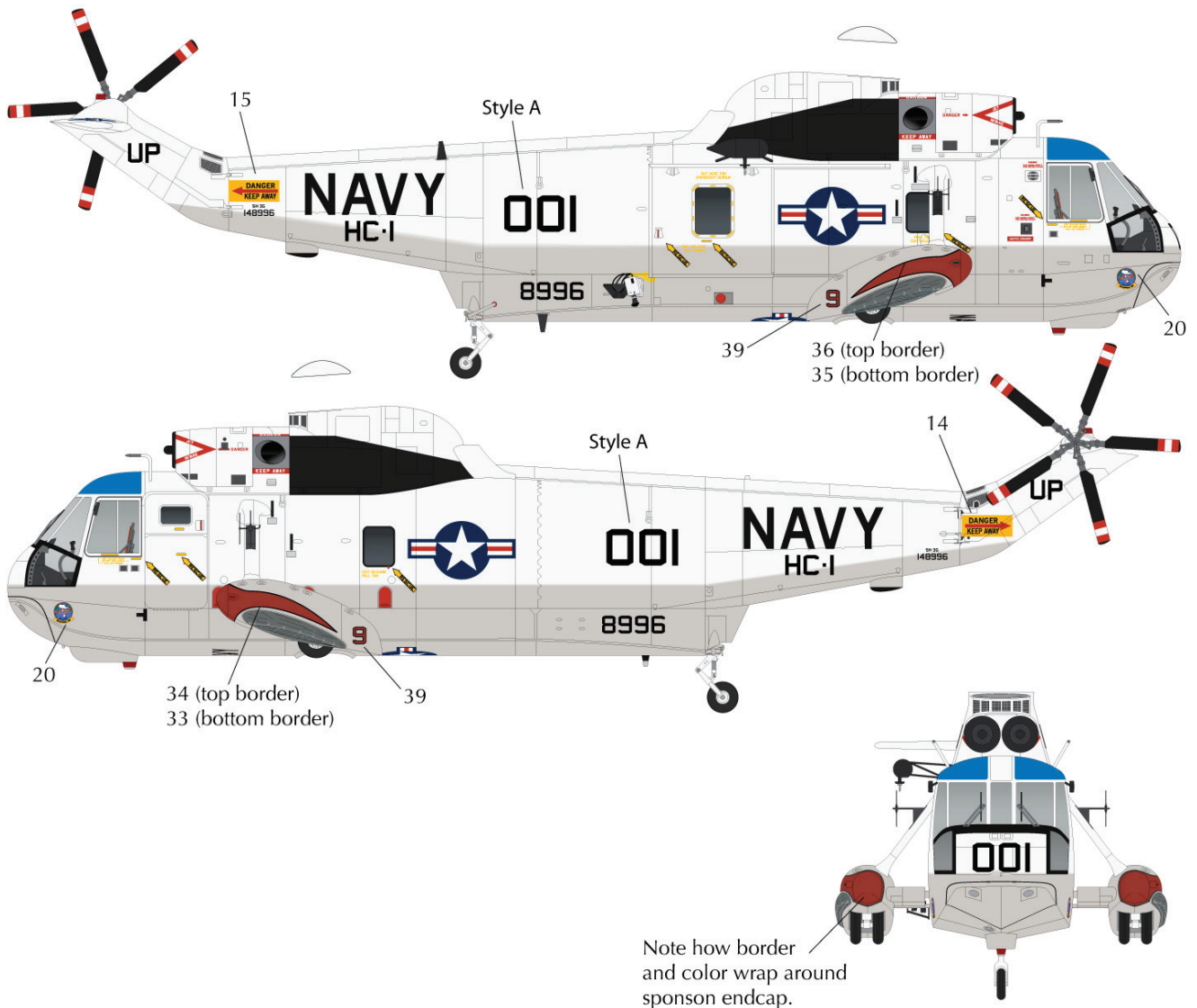
Apollo 14's mission to the Fra Mauro highlands, the quest Apollo 13 didn't get to fulfill, ended with splashdown in the Pacific on February 9, 1971. This SH-3A of HS-6 recovered astronauts Alan Shepard, Stuart Roosa and Edgar Mitchell and brought them back to prime recovery ship USS *New Orleans* (LPH-11). It was the last lunar landing mission with post-flight quarantine protocols, which by this point had been considerably relaxed; from Apollo 15 on, astronauts would enjoy a traditional "welcome home" ceremony on the flight deck.

152121 did not carry many colorful markings other than the large HS-6 insignia on the forward fuselage. The most distinctive marking, and the one most dear to the squadron's personnel, was the HS-6 "Indian Gal" logo (decal 23) carried on the inside of each footwell window. You can apply this to the inside of the window before gluing the window in place during assembly (flip the decal so the image faces outward, of course), or you may elect to apply it to the outside after painting. The choice is yours.

Although the BuNo decal for the tail boom designates 152121 as an SH-3D, the aircraft was an SH-3A, and our artist (who's acted for so long like some kind of big-time authority on recovery helicopters, like *that* will get you anywhere in life) didn't double-check that bit of information until after the decal was printed. Ha ha! It is all part of life's rich pageant. Anyway, feel free to cut the "SH-3D" lettering off and replace it with the "SH-3A" designation from the Apollo 7 helicopter markings - or if you're adept at making your own decals, you can create a corrected BuNo block by using the Long Beach USN font. (Wow, bet you never thought you'd see the word "adept" in a decal instruction sheet, did you?)

Apollo 15 recovery - August 7, 1971

SH-3G BuNo 148996 of HC-1 "Pacific Fleet Angels"



Note how border and color wrap around sponson endcap.

The Apollo 15 recovery was the first handled by HC-1; the squadron and its SH-3Gs would support the remaining Apollo lunar missions. An HC-1 detachment aboard USS *Okinawa* (LPH-3) recovered Apollo 15 astronauts Dave Scott, Al Worden and Jim Irwin at the end of their mission in August 1971.

148996 wore a very elementary scheme during the Apollo 15 recovery, with only the squadron insignia beneath the footwell worthy of note. The helicopter didn't carry a yellow stripe around the tail boom, but instead had the standard yellow "keep away" placards (14 and 15).

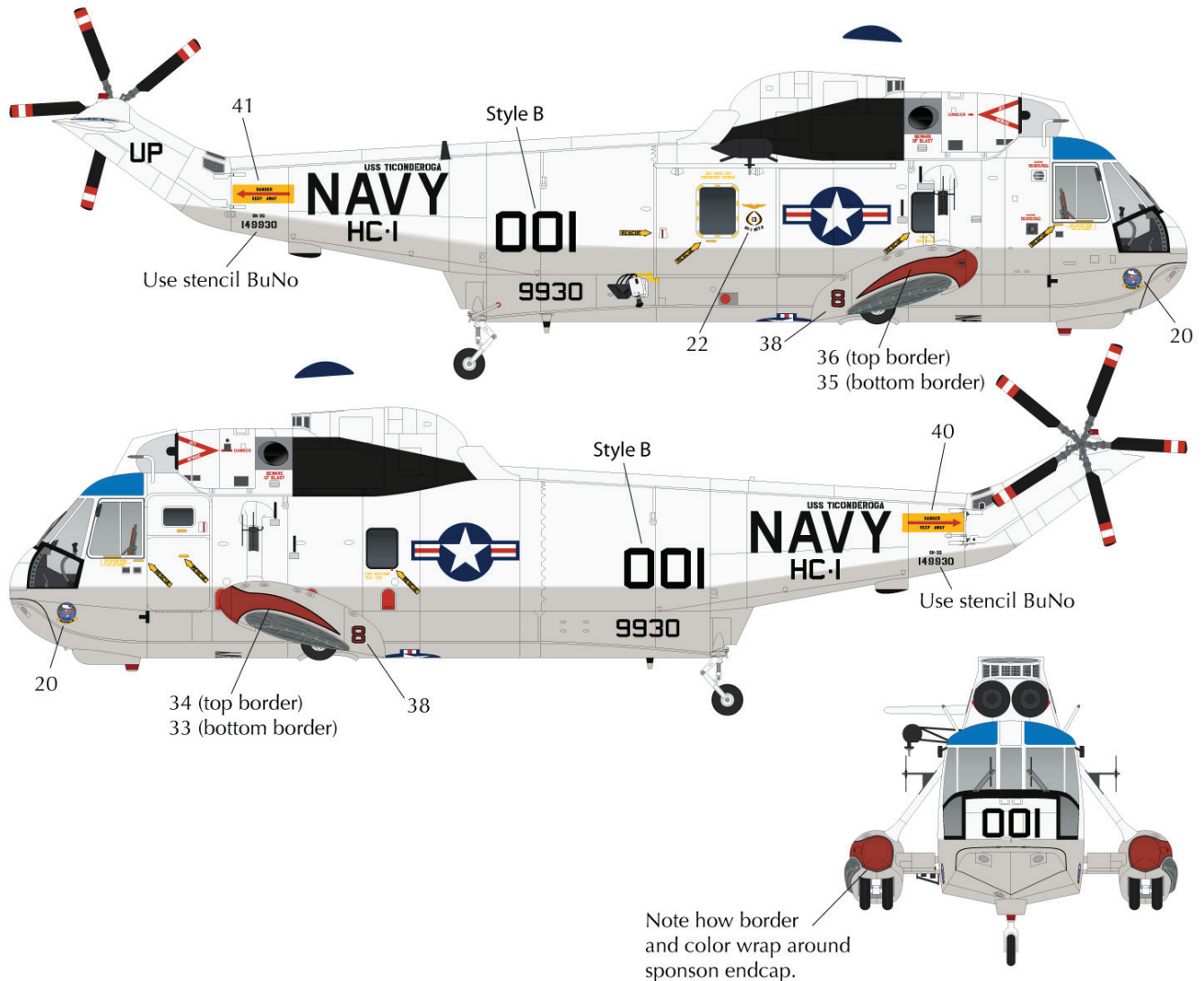
HC-1's Sea Kings carried distinctive markings on their sponsons. Given the variations in size and shape of the sponsons in Sea King kits, and given that making decals curve around sponson endcaps can be a nightmare, this sheet instead provides the border stripes for the HC-1 schemes. The modeler can then mask and paint the color to best fit the kit's sponsons, then apply the border outlines as appropriate.

Note that the painted trim on the sponson wraps around the forward endcap of the sponson, and then flows smoothly aft, paralleling the flotation bag outline on the lower edge. You may find it useful to make copies of the decal sheet, which will let you cut masks that will match the black border outlines. Mix your paint to match the "9" on the decal sheet. (Insignia Red - FS 11136 - perhaps lightened by about 5%, should work well.)

Note that 148996 did not carry an ice/spray shield in front of the intakes.

Apollo 16 recovery - April 27, 1972

SH-3G BuNo 149930 of HC-1 "Pacific Fleet Angels"



The April 1972 mission of Apollo 16 ended with astronauts John Young, TK Mattingly and Charlie Duke retrieved by this SH-3G of HC-1. In April 1972, BuNo 149930 carried some non-standard markings, including an unusual “keep away” placard (40 and 41), a large stenciled Bureau Number on the tail boom, and the name of recovery ship USS *Ticonderoga* (CVS-14) stenciled high on the tail boom. Note also that the side number is painted comparatively low on the aft cabin, touching the white/gray demarcation.

The starboard cabin door wore an insignia that tallied airmen rescued by this aircraft. It is provided here as decal 22.

Refer to the Apollo 15 notes for advice on handling the sponson markings. Use decal 38 for the Apollo 16 recovery.

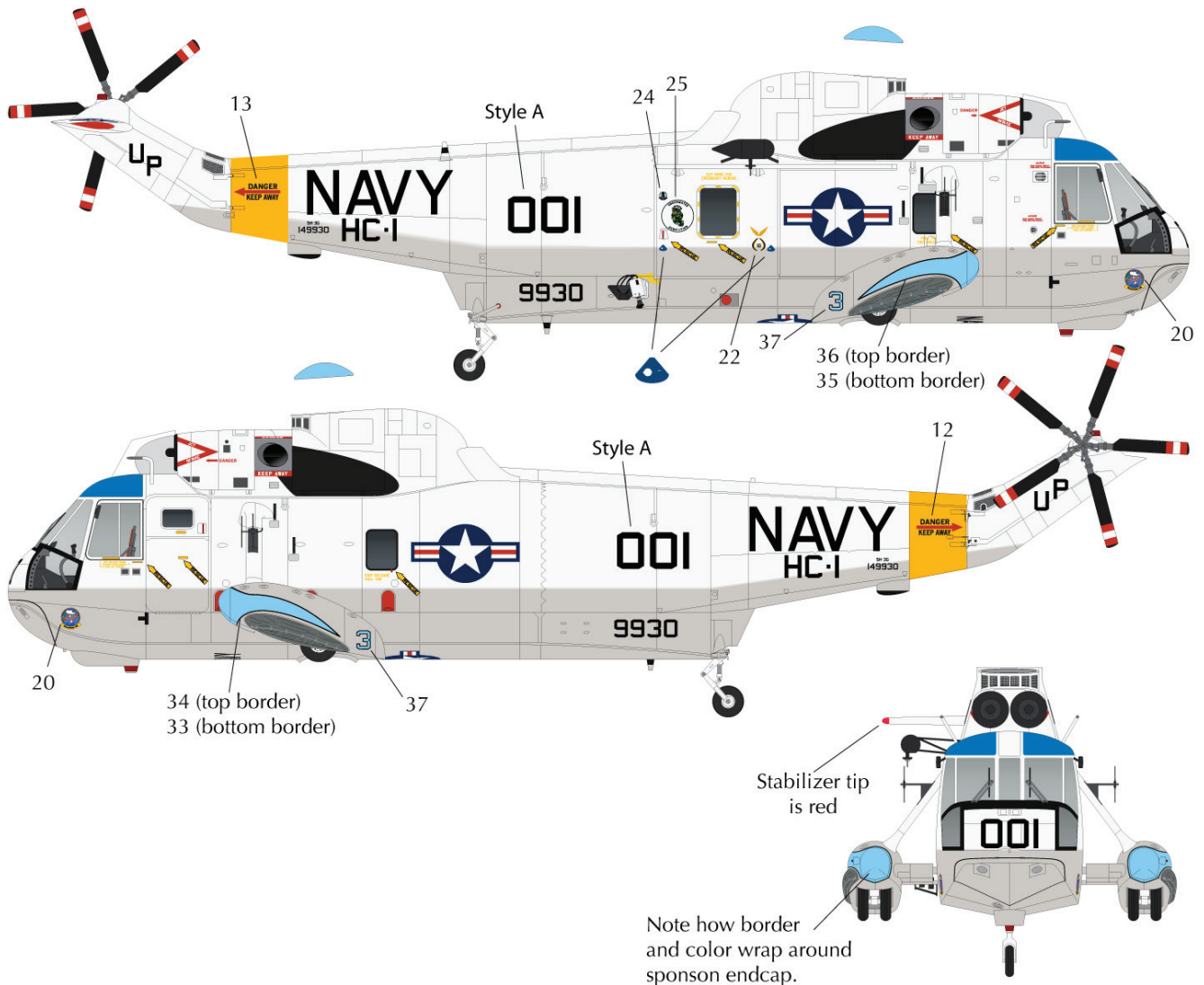
Instead of the rectangular DANGER/KEEP AWAY warnings by the exhausts, use the red BEWARE OF BLAST lettering below each exhaust.

The main rotor cap color looks different in various photos, and was either Engine Gray, Insignia Blue, or a similar color. Engine Gray may be the safest choice.

149930 was equipped with an ice/spray shield.

Apollo 17 recovery - December 19, 1972

SH-3G BuNo 149930 of HC-1 "Pacific Fleet Angels"



USS *Ticonderoga*, HC-1 and BuNo 149930 performed an encore at the end of the final lunar landing mission, retrieving astronauts Gene Cernan, Ron Evans and Harrison "Jack" Schmitt on December 19, 1972. This was the last helicopter to retrieve the crew of a spaceflight; during the Skylab and Apollo-Soyuz recoveries, the astronauts remained aboard the command module until it was brought aboard ship.

149930 wore a new and more typical set of markings in December 1972, and its sponson and rotor cap trim had become light blue. As before, refer to the notes on the Apollo 15 helicopter to guide you in marking the sponsons, and match the light blue to the "3" decal.

149930's repaint included the smaller, rounded exhaust hide area.

The starboard cabin door carried several special insignia for this last Apollo recovery, including a photo unit emblem (24), a large UDT emblem (25), an insignia commemorating airmen rescued (22), and two small Project Apollo emblems. Note the positioning of all these items on the door.

Use the "RESCUE" arrows with rounded lettering for this scheme.

149930 carried an ice/spray shield forward of the intakes during the recovery.

For further information, we recommend the following books:

Hornet Plus Three: The Story of the Apollo 11 Recovery by Bob Fish (Creative Minds Press, 2009)

Moon Men Return: USS Hornet and the Recovery of the Apollo 11 Astronauts by Scott Carmichael (Naval Institute Press, 2010)

Splashdown! NASA and the Navy by Don Blair (Turner Publications, 2004)

This decal project is the culmination of an awful lot of research and effort -- and we thank everyone who helped us bring this project to life!