

Aviaology Venturas in Canada 1

OTU & USN Aircraft

Ventura B.II

AE929 OI / "Vivian"

34 OTU, Aug - Dec 1943

Ventura B.II

AE934 EX+Y

34 OTU, Aug - Nov 1942

Ventura B.IIA

FD640 B2

"The Blissville Jinx"

34 OTU, Jan 1944

Ventura B.IIA

FD675 S2

"Fancy Juggler"

34 OTU, 1943 - 1944

Ventura GR.Y

FN974 K2

"What did I do!"

34 OTU, 1943 - 1944

PV-3 Ventura

BII of USN VP-82

Argentina NAS, late 1943

PV-1 Ventura

B6 of USN VP-82 / VB-125

Argentina NAS, early 1943

Test & Development Aircraft

Ventura B.II

AE860 ski test a/c

TDE, Rockcliffe, early 1943

Ventura B.II

AJ164 ASW test a/c

early - mid 1943

Ventura B.II

AJ247 ASW test a/c

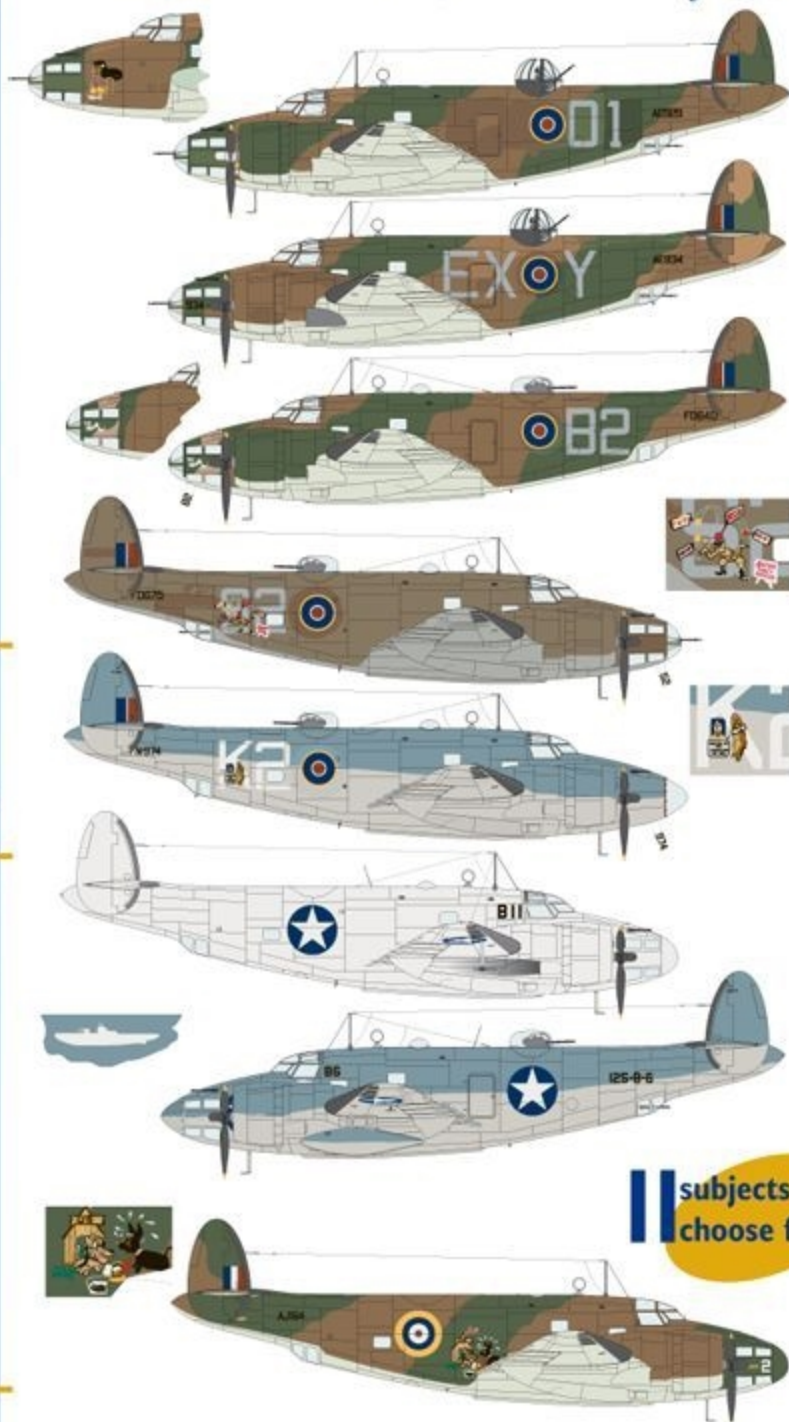
early - mid 1943

Ventura B.II

AJ430 ski test a/c

TDE, Rockcliffe, late 1943

34 OTU, test machines, and the early visitors



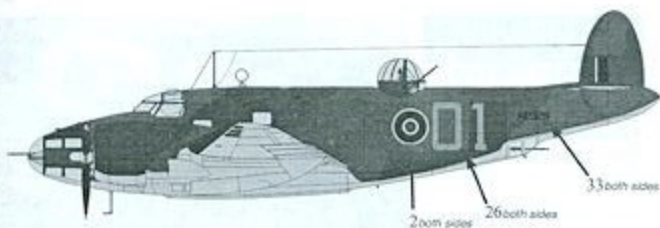
11 subjects to choose from

Ventura B.II AE929 / OI

Ventura B.II AE929 (m/sr type number 37-27-01/VII, c/n 4272)

In service with 34 OTU (Operational Training Unit) circa early 1944.

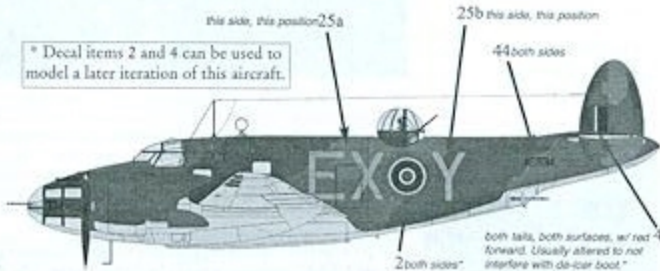
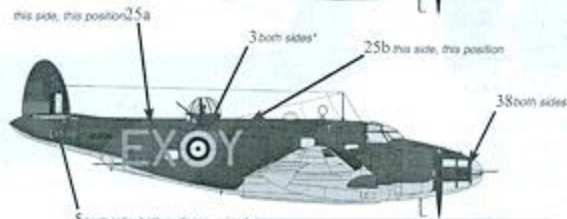
Our reference photo for this aircraft can be found on the Pennfield Parish Military Historical Society website. This particular photograph also illustrates the RAF-spec pilot's side window to good advantage.



Ventura B.II AE934 / EX-Y

Ventura B.II AE934 (m/sr 37-27-01/VII, c/n 4277)

In service with 34 OTU circa late 1942.



Ventura B.IIA FD640 / B2

Ventura B.IIA FD640 (m/sr 137-27-02/B-34, c/n 4748).

Became B-34 Lexington 41-38062 on entering USAAF Inventory

This aircraft was one of the first 100 Venturas built under the manufacturers new "Model 137" type numbers; a change which may indicate the installation of the Martin twin .50 turret on the assembly line and other detail refinements.

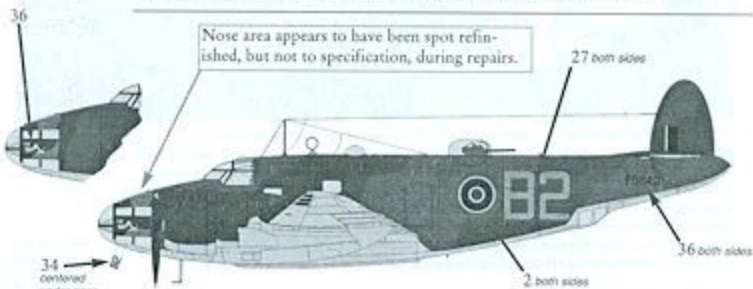
In service with 34 OTU circa late 1943 - early 1944.



Although not our subject aircraft this photo illustrates well the early style insignia carried by 34 OTU Venturas. The incidents illustrated occurred at Yarmouth, and are not related. AE929 (in the background) swung off the runway having suffered an engine failure during a night landing on 26 November 1942, while AJ211 swung on take-off three days later, ripping off the starboard main landing gear. Note that her guns have yet to be removed.



Our subject Ventura B.II suffered a typical OTU mishap at RCAF Station Yarmouth on 27 October 1942. Unlike AJ211 in the foreground of the photo at left, AE934 had the later style insignia (with reduced white and yellow areas) applied in October. A number of salient features, including the hodgepodge of spot refinished pairswork can be seen to good advantage in this photo. Note that the guns have been removed from the nose and turret, and an armed guard is in place; both were RCAF SolP for such incidents.



Ignition trouble forced FD640 down at Blissville, New Brunswick on 12 January 1944. It remained there while being repaired by a work party, until blown out on the 20th. Meanwhile, an unknown artist in attendance took the time to paint the nickname "THE Blissville Jinx" on the nose. Originally built for the RAF but not taken up, this aircraft became USAAF B-34 s/n 41-38062 where it probably served as a trainer, prior to coming to Canada.

Ventura B.IIA FD675 / 52

- Ventura B.IIA FD675 (mfr type 137-27-02/B-34, c/n 4783)
- Became B-34 Lexington 41-38262 on entering USAAF Inventory.
- Overall finish to USAAF specification – Olive Drab upper and side surfaces with Neutral Gray under surfaces.
- In service with 34 OTU circa late 1943 – early 1944.

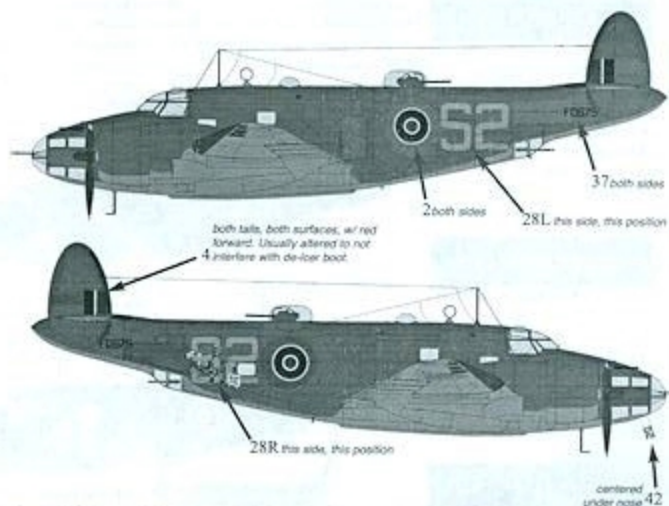


the Ventura Memorial Flight Association (VMFA) archives

This aircraft was at the other end (compared to FD640; see pg.3) of the first 100 B.IIAs produced. It would appear that, at some point along the way a decision was made to switch from the MAP Day Bomber scheme to the then-current USAAF scheme. It is notable that the refinishers took the time to preserve George McCraw's colorful "A. Hitler – Fancy Juggler" artwork when applying the 34 OTU code on the starboard side of the rear fuselage. Note the spot refinishing used elsewhere to cover the former USAAF markings prior to the new markings being applied. See note on pg.8 regarding the tight fit of markings around the starboard rear compartment window.

The photographic record suggests that the spot refinishing to obliterate former USAAF markings seem to be darker on the right than that on the left side of the fuselage and tail. One wonders if two individuals were employed for the task – one on the right and one on the left – using different cans of paint, or if the photos show the aircraft at different times in her 34 OTU career(?). Or, more simply, it may just be a trick of the light or some similar photographic phenomenon.

The illustrations suggest the possibilities of Dark Brown on the left and Dark Slate Grey (or some similar muted green) on the right.



Ventura GR.V FN974 / K2

- PV-1 Ventura BuNo 33330 (mfr 237-27-01, c/n 5282)
- Became RAF (Lend-Lease) Ventura GR.V FN974 which was diverted to the RCAF.
- In service with 34 OTU from August 1943 (Struck off RCAF Strength 7 December 1946).

Our reference photo for the port side of this aircraft can be found on the Pennfield Parish Military Historical Society website. The lack of any evidence of typical Day Bomber scheme demarcations (between upper surface colours) in both monochrome reference photos, as well as a colour photo of a Canada-destined Olive Drab over Neutral Gray B-34 (s/n 41-38206*) on pg. 86 of *USAAF Markings and Camouflage 1941-47* (Bob Archer, Shiffer), supports the contention that a number of the ex-USAAF Ventura B.IIAs rushed into service with 34 OTU were operated in this scheme.

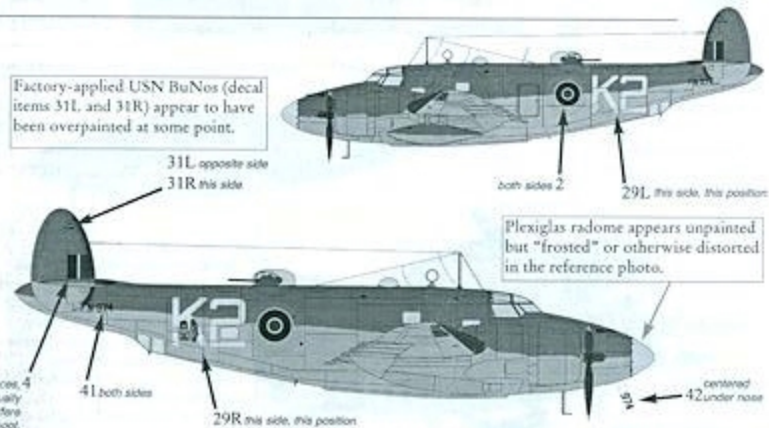
*In USAAF service as 41-38206, the referred to Ventura was built as RAF FD754. Although the assigned RAF serial is given by some sources as "not taken up", RAF serials were definitely present on these aircraft during their 34 OTU careers.



the Carl Vincent collection

Photographed Pennfield Ridge on 3 August 1943, FD675 was one of five (that were not immediately returned, but that were retained by the RCAF) of the 20 Lend-Lease examples initially transferred to Canada for use by 34 Operational Training Unit. A neat example of Vega factory worker George McCraw's artwork remains unobscured on the starboard rear fuselage. The fin flash and roundel national markings are very neatly applied, suggesting that they may have been rendered at the factory. However, a very slight change in tone below the roundel, generally consistent with the shape and size of the usual US cockade of the day, supports the notion that an ex-factory change in national markings may have occurred. Note the main-wheel hubs sans caps. See note on pg.8 regarding the tight fit of markings around the starboard rear compartment window.

Factory-applied USN BuNos (decal items 31L and 31R) appear to have been overpainted at some point.



PV-3 Ventura B-II / VP-82

• Ventura B.II AJ57? (m/t 37-27-01/VIL, c/n 4649 - 4675) - one of 27 aircraft which became USN PV-3 Venturas (BuNos. 33925-33951).

• VP-82 based at Argentina, Newfoundland in October-December 1943, operated these as the first ASW-dedicated Venturas north of the 49° parallel.

• B11 was reportedly flown by the Mason crew who, flying a VP-82 PBO-1 Hudson from this same base in 1942, claimed the first confirmed U-boat sinking by a US Service aircraft.

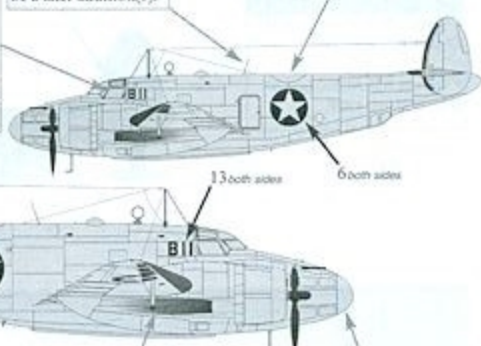


The twenty seven PV-3 Venturas, BuNos 33925 - 33951, started out as Ventura B.IIs AJ513 thru AJ539 and were most probably finished in the standard RAF scheme prior to being diverted. The overall white USN scheme applied to these conversions appears thinner in some areas, with the underlying darker colours bleeding through to some extent, while the de-icer boots appear to be toned down to a dark grey. VP-82's B11 was reportedly the aircraft of the Mason crew, which had sunk a sub while flying a Hudson, also out of Argentina Newfoundland. PV-3 features such as the ASB aerials, turret well fairing, and opaque nose cap are readily apparent in the photo.

While it is apparent that the interim PV-3 model did not use the blister-endowed cockpit glazings of the Ventura B.II, it probably retained original opening and panel shape for the pilot's side window (note "V" shaped rear edge). Common to all Venturas, that on the opposite side featured a more standard straight rear edge.

Short whip aerial may be a later addition(?).

Turret well faired over with sheet metal.



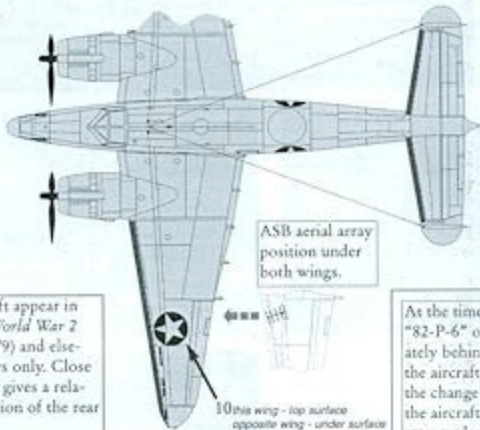
13 both sides

6 both sides

PV-1 Ventura B-6 / VB-125

• PV-1 Ventura BuNo 29722 (m/t 237-27-01, c/n 48??)

• The Argentina-based VP-82 crew of pilot Lt (JG) Thomas Kinaszchuk was responsible for the first confirmed Ventura U-boat victory, sinking U-174 while flying this aircraft out of Argentina, Newfoundland, on 27 April 1943.



ASB aerial array position under both wings.

10 this wing - top surface
opposite wing - under surface

Photos of both sides of this aircraft appear in *PV Ventura / Harpoon Units of World War 2* (by Alan Carey, Osprey - pp.78-79) and elsewhere. They are partial front views only. Close examination of the left-hand view gives a relatively good indication of the position of the rear fuselage ID markings.



ASB radar aerial array under the wing of a USN TBM. That for the PV-3 was identical with the exception of the mast, which appears shorter on the TBM. The arrays were independently rotatable through 90 degrees - from parallel to perpendicular to the line of flight.

ASB radar aerial array on vertical mast on both wings.

opaque nose cap is the same shape as the clear nose on Ventura B.IIs

Additional photos of the Argentina-based PV-3s appear in *Ventura in Action* (by Scrivner & Scarborough, Squadron and Signal - pg.7) and *Vega Ventura* (Stanaway, Shiffer - pg. 32 bottom of page, a second PV-3 photo is mistakenly captioned as being a PV-1). This latter image is also incorrectly captioned in *PV Ventura / Harpoon Units of World War 2* (by Alan Carey, Osprey - pg.79) where the ASB aerial masts can be clearly seen.

ASB aerial - 1/48 scale



The true BuNo identity of the historically significant 82-P-6 (later 125-B-6) remains to be discovered. The markings supplied here (decals 9L and 9R) are with in the earliest batch of four early production PV-1s delivered to VP-82 in December of 1942, and may therefore be considered as representative "enough", given the size of the marking in scale, for modelling purposes.

opposite side 9R
this side 9L

At the time of the sinking of U-174, this aircraft most probably carried the ID marking "82-P-6" on the rear fuselage, with a "6" character (without the "B" character) immediately behind the cockpit side windows. Shortly thereafter, the unit became VB-125 and the aircraft, retained by "crew 6", was then subjected to a change in markings to reflect the change in unit. It is while part of VPB-125 that the crew was photographed with the aircraft and its newly applied U-boat victory markings. The white U-boat silhouettes under each cockpit side window may have also had a swastika emblem applied centrally over top, in keeping with the squadron's earlier Hudson sub killer's mission markers (see *Aviaecology AODxx012*). These (decals 12b) are provided as options.

12R + 12b?

12L + 12b?



6 both sides

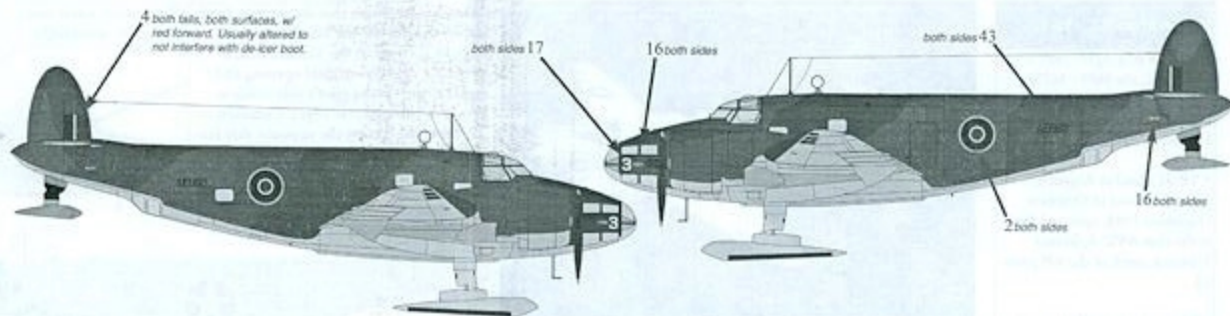
13 both sides

6 both sides of nose



6 both sides

- Ventura B.II AE860 (m/t 37-27-01/VII, c/p 4203).

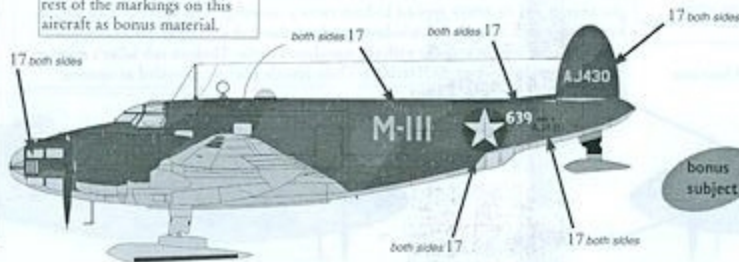


One of at least two Ventura used for RCAF ski alighting gear trials. Initially built for the RAF, and retaining its RAF serial number, it came to Canada 27 April 1943 and was involved in a Cat B incident on 26 July 1943. Not much else is known about its test-related activities. It would appear that factory-applied "type A1" roundels (or perhaps USAAF cockades?) have been overpainted and new CI roundels applied. The yellow "4203" on the front and rear fuselage are typical factory markings while the larger "3" on the nose was probably a radio call-sign for ferrying purposes. The Central Aircraft skin and strut fairings are bare metal with a black flexible boot over the tail strut and black rubber strips on the main ski sides.



- Tested in this configuration by the Test & Development Establishment, Rockcliffe through to at least March 1944.

An elaborate McCraw mid-fuselage artwork to starboard, but unfortunately the details could not be discerned. Hence, we are providing decals for the rest of the markings on this aircraft as bonus material.



the Terry Higgins collection



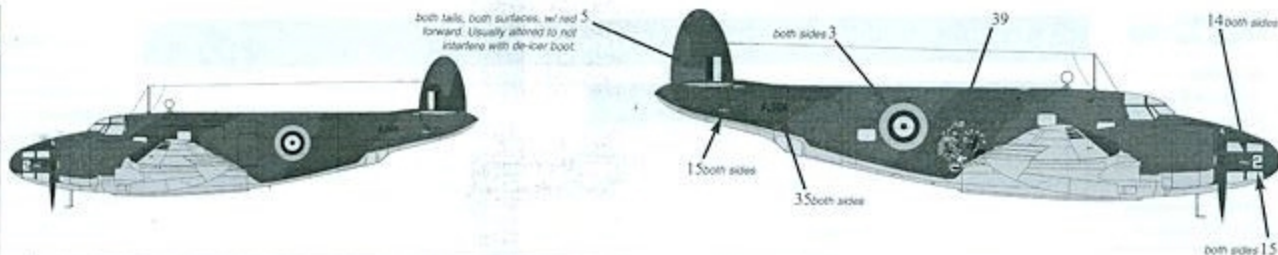
Originally built for the RAF, AJ43 had been transferred directly from the factory to the USAF on 12 August 1942. The original factory-applied serial and "model 37" inscription were retained, while the "639" (likely a ferrying radio call-sign) was brush-painted on the rear fuselage. The "M-111" base/aircraft code and repeat of the RAF serial were likely applied soon after she entered USAF service and the cockpit applied further aft on the fuselage at that time. The RCAF ski installation appears to be identical to that fitted to AE860. The lack of de-icer boots on the wings or vertical tails is in common with prototype AE658. Photo evidence of any RCAF markings applied either during or after the ski test period of this aircraft's career have yet to be found.

Ventura B.II AJ164 ASW test

• Ventura B.II AJ164 (m/t 37-27-01/VII, c/n 4302).

• Some sources put AJ164 variously in the hands of 45 Group, RAF (what was once Ferry Command) and later with 34 OTU, in whose hands she suffered a Cat B incident (wheels-up landing) on 23 October 1943.

• Carl's notes (see caption at right) suggest that this aircraft was most probably used in connection with the Test & Development Establishment ASW radar trials, which were ongoing during this period, in collaboration with the National Research Council.



From researcher / writer Carl Vincent's notes, "the photographs were discovered in the Archives long ago. The description is definitely that this was the first development aircraft for the antisubmarine Ventura, and the photographs are official US Navy ones, taken on 7 January 1942 and marked 'not for publication'. [This], the second [Ventura] of the second RAF order, is not one of those documented as being transferred to the US, but what its eventual fate was is unknown. What actual alterations were incorporated are also unknown....". Following what is known about AJ247 (see below), as well as similarly intriguing Digby and Hudson aircraft sent to Rockcliffe for radar work, it is possible that this aircraft was fitted with some manner of ASW equipment and test flown on Canada's east coast.



The three photos of this aircraft in the Carl Vincent collection were undoubtedly taken at Yarmouth in winter. The presence of the USAAF cockades in these photos suggest that this was not too long after the January delivery, so it would appear that the testing may have been underway prior to July 1943 (see title block at far left). The details of AJ247's subsequent RCAF markings have yet to be discovered. It is interesting to note that this ASW test machine as well as the ski test AJ247 both wear US national markings in these photos. Could this have been a positive statement of some level of international cooperation in these activities (it has been noted that the RAF and RCAF had undertaken joint "special duties" testing, but the author has learned that the US was also deeply involved in the radar work going on at that time in Canada) or was it due simply to a lack of time and other resources when more important work was at stake?

Ventura B.II AJ247 ASW test

• Ventura B.II AJ247 (m/t 37-27-01/VII, c/n 4385).

• TOS 18 January 1943 and reportedly at RCAF Station Rockcliffe for "joint RAF / RCAF special duty tests" from July.

• Sold for \$100 postwar, this aircraft was converted for civilian use in June 1952, and after various later modifications and numerous owners, ended her days in a fatal crash at Tenerife, Magdalena, Columbia 13 April 1977.



See pg.8 for scale drawings of the ASV.II radar aerials fitted to this aircraft.

