

28 March 1984

Commander T. E. Long
 Medical Department
 USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70)
 FPO San Francisco, CA 96629

Dear Cdr. Long:

In regard to your 19 March request for information on the use of "V" to signify fixed-wing, I hope you find the following of interest.

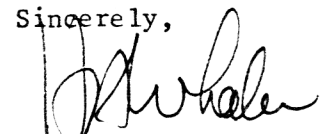
The Naval Aviation Historian, who collocates with our magazine, has never been able to track down the source of the V. I have enclosed a copy of his findings which appeared in a book on which he collaborated with the NavAirSysCom Historian, United States Naval Aviation 1910-1980.

However, a retired Navy captain and history buff who frequents the Naval Aviation History Office has searched for years for the conclusive evidence which would once and for all clear up this mystery. In his research, he has found many references to the French word volplane and he believes it to be the origin of the "V" in question. As a verb, the word means to glide or soar. As a noun, it describes an aeronautical device sustained in the air by lifting surfaces (wings), as opposed to the bag of air that the zeppelins (denoted by "Z") used.

This is by no means the official word but it is all that we presently know.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



Howard A. Wheeler
 Commander, U.S. Navy
 Editor

skn