

The original Avenger was developed for the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine corp. as a torpedo bomber, and entered service in 1942. Over time the aircraft was further developed to carry airporne radar in anti-shipping and anti-submarine roles. The TBM-3S was an anti-submarine version produced post WWII at the onset of the Cold War. The Thin-35 usually flew with a TBM-3W as a 'Hunter / Killer' team. The 35 was a converted 3E, with the turret removed, and had a larger rear compartment housing a radar operator / navigator. The radio compartment was retained with its operator, but two sonobuoy launch tubes were installed at the rear. A search light was mounted under the port wing and an AN/APS-4 radar pod anaer the starboard wing. The Royal Navy / Fleet Air Arm aircraft were designated AS-4 and their air-to-surface radar was mounted in a 'dustbin' type radome under the fuselage. The TBM-3S and similar TBM-3S2 could carry rockers with zero-length launch mounts under each wing. A single acoustic topedo or 4 boinbs / depth-charges could be carried in the bomb-bay. The aircraft had un catenna / receiver for the radar data-link from a TBM-3W. The TBM-3S was used by several countries including Canada, France, Japan, and the Dutch. Details sych as conopies and other components varied between countries.

The TBM-R was a converted TBM-3W or TBM-3S. Combat gear was removed and the rear canopy either glazed or covered over. It was developed during the Korean War as a COD (carrier onboard delivery) and had seating for 7 passengers in the rear compartment. It could also carry stretchers in the bomb-bay, or a cargo basket which could quickly be exchanged on the ground or on deck.

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