

# PLANESIDE

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Maritime Patrol Association

2012: Issue 2



## *In This Issue*

2013 Symposium Dates Announcement!

Northrop Grumman Unveils MQ-4C BAMS

VQ-2 and VPU-1 Disestablish





**THANKS TO ALL WHO DEFEND THE FLAG OF FREEDOM.**

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We salute the men and women in uniform and all who have  
so proudly served.





# PLANESIDE

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# BAMS

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## *Northrop Grumman Unveils MQ-4C Unmanned Aircraft*

On June 14, 2012, Northrop Grumman Corporation unveiled the first U.S. Navy MQ-4C Triton Broad Area Maritime Surveillance Unmanned Aircraft System (BAMS UAS) in a ceremony at Northrop Grumman's Palmdale, Calif., manufacturing facility.

"Northrop Grumman is proud to provide our U.S. Navy customer with the MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft, a key element of the BAMS UAS program, representing the future of naval aviation and a strategic element of the U.S. Navy," said Duke Dufresne, Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems sector vice president and general manager for unmanned systems. "The BAMS UAS program will revolutionize persistent maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. We are honored to serve the U.S. Navy and our nation's allies in the quest to build and maintain a strong and cooperative global maritime domain."

The Northrop Grumman BAMS UAS is a versatile maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance system to support a variety of missions while operating independently or in direct collaboration with fleet assets. When operational, BAMS will play a key role in providing commanders with a persistent, reliable picture of surface threats, covering vast areas of open ocean and littoral



regions as the unmanned segment of the Navy's Maritime Patrol Reconnaissance Force.

"Today is a significant day for the BAMS team," said Rear Adm. Bill Shannon, program executive officer, unmanned aviation and strike weapons. "The work they have done and will continue to do is critical to the future of naval aviation. Their efforts will enable the BAMS system to provide the fleet a game-changing persistent maritime and littoral intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability."



Designated the MQ-4C, the U.S. Navy released the aircraft name today as "Triton," keeping with the tradition of naming surveillance aircraft after Greek sea gods. Triton is the Greek messenger of the sea.

Currently, BAMS-D (demonstrator), a Block 10 RQ-4 equipped with maritime sensors, is being used by the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. BAMS-D provides a glimpse of the full persistent capabilities that the Triton's 360-degree Multi-Function Active Sensor (MFAS) radar will bring to the fleet. The MFAS radar is produced by Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems.

The BAMS UAS program is managed by the Navy's Program Executive Office (Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons), Persistent Maritime Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program Office (PMA-262), at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md.

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*The MQ-4C BAMS at the unveiling in June.*



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# Disestablishment

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## *VQ-2 Closes For Business After 57 Years*

**F**ederal budget belt-tightening has claimed its first victim at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station. In a ceremony in Hangar 6 on board NAS Whidbey Island on May 17, 2012, Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 2 was officially “disestablished.”

“Today we’re being asked to hang up our flight jackets and put away our tool boxes,” said VQ-2 Cmdr. Mark Stockfish.

The ceremony brings to an end 57 years of service for VQ-2, which was established on Sept. 1, 1955. The hangar was filled Thursday with personnel past and present, brought together to remember the squadron and its mission.

“We honor 57 years of a truly remarkable air reconnaissance mission,” acknowledged Air Wing 10 Commander, Capt. Peter Garvin. “VQ-2 has set a new standard. If you heard of a hot spot anywhere in the world, or those you didn’t hear of, VQ-2 was there. They met every challenge head on.”

Guestspeaker for the ceremony was retired Capt. Don East, who commanded the squadron from 1981 to 1982.

“This is a ceremony of mixed emotions,” East said. “Today we say farewell to an old friend.”

East spoke of writing the history of VQ-2, noting that the squadron seemed to be alive, becoming a part of everyone who ever served.



“When this ceremony is complete, it will be time to write the final chapter,” he said. “But its spirit can remain with us as long as the sun shines and the wind blows. VQ-2 will not be just history, but a legacy.”

And the former commander didn’t mince words regarding the Rangers’ disestablishment. “What we’re losing is our team in the sky,” he said. “This act will someday be seen as a mistake.”

Cmdr. Stockfish spoke jokingly about his efforts to try to prevent the day from arriving. “I started scheming to try to get the bullseye off our backs,” Stockfish said. “But it did us no good, as we’re standing on the dais today with the task at hand.”



*Current and former members of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 2 gather on the tarmac for a group photo following a disestablishment ceremony for the squadron. Aircraft at rear include the EP-3 Aries at left, the EA-3 Skywarrior and the P-3 Orion, painted as it appeared in 1969 for last year’s Centennial of Naval Aviation celebration. Photo courtesy of: KATHY REED/WHIDBEY NEWS-TIMES*

With words of thanks to Capt. Garvin, Capt. East and family and friends, Stockfish also had words of praise for the men and women of VQ-2.

"The improbable happens every day," he said. "Multi-tasking is not in your toolbox — it's what your toolbox is made of. You are the ones that have made this squadron a success over the last 57 years.

"Look at this as an opportunity," he continued. "In a few minutes, memories will be all we have of VQ-2. Remember the past, but do not live in it. The Ranger spirit will lead you to success."

After reading the orders, which stated VQ-2 will officially be terminated as of Aug. 31 and its personnel consolidated into VQ-1, tradition took over. The bell was struck eight times and the squadron's pennant was retired and presented to Cmdr. Stockfish.

"This is a sad day, but we will move forward," Stockfish said. "Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 2, dismissed."



By Kathy Reed, Whidbey News-Times, Published May 22, 2012

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# ORION: THE ULTIMATE STAR FOR 50 YEARS.



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## THIS IS HOW

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE AS WE CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE P-3 ORION

With 21 operators from 17 nations, the P-3 Orion patrols the oceans of the world and protects shorelines around the globe. Maritime patrol and reconnaissance have been priorities of this superior hunter for five decades. And the hunt has only begun, as the aircraft's Mid Life Upgrade program will keep the Orion on station for years to come. Guarding shores around the world is a question of how. And it is the how that Lockheed Martin delivers.

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# Disestablishment

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## *'Old Buzzards' of VPU-1 Farewell*

**S**pecial Projects Patrol Squadron (VPU) 1 held its disestablishment ceremony April 27 at NAS Jacksonville Hangar 117.

The "Old Buzzards" trace their lineage back 40 years when the Chief of Naval Operations requested the creation of a specially trained maritime patrol unit possessing the necessary expertise, flexibility and quick reaction capability to respond to immediate tasking from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As a result, a unique "special projects" detachment of P-3s was formed from operationally proven aircrew and maintenance professionals.

As the demand for P-3 Special Projects assets increased, the detachment became an independent unit under the command of its first officer-in-charge. During this period, the Sailors of VPU-1 continued their proud tradition of operational maritime patrol expertise, rapid response and professionalism.



*A specially equipped P-3 Orion assigned to the "Old Buzzards" of VPU-1 is ready to start its turboprop engines on the Hangar 511 flight line at NAS Jax. The squadron was disestablished April 27, 2012. Photo courtesy of VPU-1.*



The Old Buzzards served during the Cold War, in Operation Desert Shield/Storm, as well as numerous other military operations and crises. In March 1996, the unit was formally established as a patrol squadron under the command of Cmdr. Walter Kreitler. For more than 16 years the Old Buzzards upheld the highest standards of the U.S. Navy and the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force.

The squadron, flying at least two specially equipped Orions, has operated from NAS Jax since July 2009 when they relocated from NAS Brunswick, Maine.

Squadron personnel have earned seven Joint Meritorious Unit awards, six Navy Unit Commendations, seven Meritorious Unit Commendations, seven Navy Battle "E" awards and various other unit, service and campaign awards.

Several Old Buzzards alumni were in town for the disestablishment events that included the Buzzards Ball, a golf tournament and Buzzard Night at the Jacksonville Suns Ballpark.

As part of the Friday ceremony, Cmdr. Lee Boyer, the last

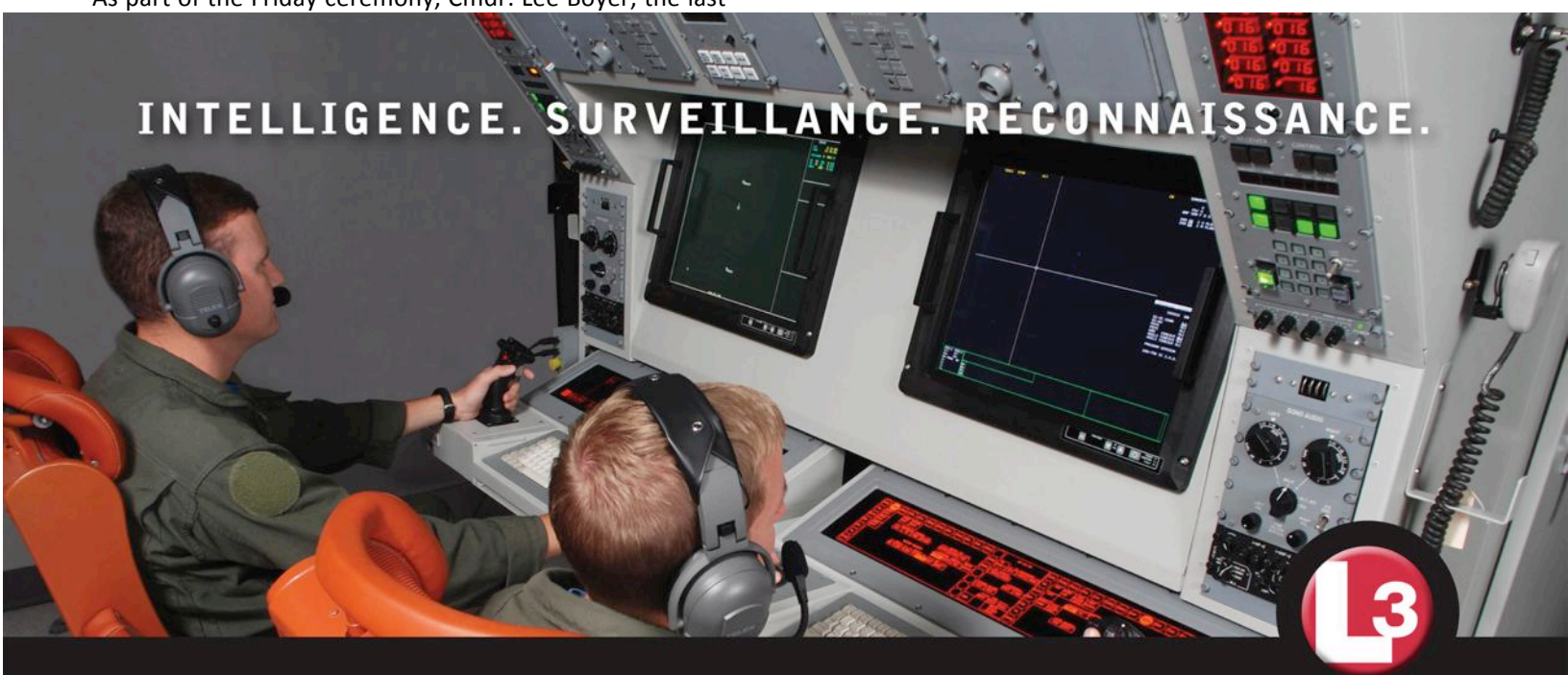
Old Buzzards commanding officer, lowered the command pennant and dismissed the squadron for the final time.

"It's definitely a bittersweet ceremony. On one hand, it is sad to see such a great squadron being retired – but on the other hand, disestablishment has renewed the bond between every generation of Old Buzzards. I have truly been humbled by the support and the obvious attachment that former and retired Old Buzzards have for this squadron," Boyer stated.

Cmdr. Chris McDowell, the former VPU-1 executive officer and now commanding officer of VPU-2 at MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii had these thoughts on the events.

"The Old Buzzards of VPU-1, and the dedicated professionals, families and friends who support us, repeatedly accomplished some amazing things over the past 40 years. With several current Old Buzzards destined to continue our fine tradition of mission accomplishment as members of our sister squadron, VPU-2, I look forward to carrying our unrivaled capabilities forward." ★

*Article Courtesy of Jax Air News, Published April 25, 2012*



## **Our Nation's Maritime Patrol Community Deserves the Best.**

For over 60 years, L-3 Link has partnered with the maritime patrol community to develop and deliver training systems that provide aircrews with a highly realistic in-theater experience. We salute the men and women of our nation's maritime patrol and invite you to visit [www.link.com](http://www.link.com) to see what we're doing today to support this critical mission.

# 2013 Symposium

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*Start Planning Now!*

## 2013 SYMPOSIUM

April 16-19, 2013

NAS Jacksonville

Join us in April for the *2013 MPA Symposium*, an amazing week of events which will highlight the international partnership of the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance community by bringing our foreign comrades to celebrate with us!

*The following events are tentatively scheduled for the week:\**

**Tuesday, April 16: MPA General Members Meeting & Social**

**Wednesday, April 17: Current Operations Brief for Retired & Civilian**

**Wednesday, April 17: Heritage Dinner in Historic Hangar 117**

**Thursday, April 18: MPA Golf Tournament**

**Friday, April 19: International Flight Suit Social**

*\* Schedule is subject to change. Members will receive communications regarding the finalized schedule later in the year.*

## Lodging

*Interested in getting a jumpstart on your travel arrangements for the 2013 Symposium?*  
MPA has blocked off rooms at the following local hotels within the date range of April 13-20, 2013:

**Navy Gateway Inns & Suites (BOQ/BEQ):** (877) 628-9233 (*Active Duty Only. Use Group Confirmation #31120804093.*)

**Navy Lodge:** (904) 772-6000 (*Use Group Code: "MPA Symposium." Military sponsor required for reservations.*)

**RV Park (on base):** (904) 542-3227

**Hilton Garden Inn:** (904) 458-1577 (*approx. \$80 per night*)

**Holiday Inn & Suites:** (904) 562-7400 (*approx. \$80 per night*) )

**Fairfield Inn by Marriott:** (904) 278-7442 (*approx. \$70 per night*)



# Community

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## *MPRA State of the Union*

*M*PRF Warriors Past and Present,

This will be the first in a series of MPRF community updates I will promulgate during my tour as Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Group (CPRG). I am approaching 100 days in command and have spent that time familiarizing myself with the day to day operations and pulse of our force. I have had the privilege of visiting and observing our Sailors working at home and deployed and am inspired by their professionalism and dedication, the same traits that are the hallmark of our Navy. Based on my observations, I am confident that we are focused on the right things to deliver a capability to our nation that is second to none. With four squadrons and 32 P-3C's continuously deployed around the world, we reaffirm every day that VP, VQ, VPU, and VUP warfighters operating together employing a unique Family of Systems are unequaled in providing relevant, timely, and game changing support to our Combatant Commanders. It is a testimony to our preparedness that Wing and squadron leadership, aircrews and support personnel succeed on-station every day despite the challenges of operating 40+ year old aircraft and simultaneously transitioning to new platforms. No one does it better. I thank you and your families for your continued sacrifice and service.

As your commander, I want to be clear that we will continue to successfully support our Navy's mission to deter aggression across the globe, and if deterrence fails, win our Nation's wars. It is my responsibility to ensure that the force is properly manned, trained and equipped to fulfill that overarching mission. The "buck" does indeed stop here. Every decision I make will be grounded in the CNO's tenets of warfighting first, operating forward, and to always be ready to answer all bells. To succeed, I understand that people are our biggest strength and providing the right tools to do the job is key. But in order to employ those tools, we need to be able to focus on the task at hand. Personal safety on and off duty is a priority and one area we can positively impact.



*Rear Admiral Sean S. Buck; Commander, Patrol & Reconnaissance Group*

We are naval aviation and understand and willingly accept that the business of flying aircraft is inherently dangerous. But to counter this fundamental truth, we are well trained and instinctively apply the tenets of risk management to everything we do. We have earned an excellent flight safety record despite operating some of the oldest aircraft in the Navy but it requires an all-hands effort and we must remain always vigilant these inherent risks. Learn from the mistakes of the past. Fly safe.

Less obvious are the risks we face once we leave the workplace. It is here that we have historically been most vulnerable. In the last three months the community has experienced a rash of off duty incidents that have tragically claimed the lives of fellow sailors and left an inconsolable void with family, friends, shipmates, and our Navy. The common thread in each of these incidents is that they were all preventable. I realize that this lesson is

not a revelation, but nevertheless I charge leadership and every member of this force to take care of our people and exercise good judgment both on and off the job. Make no mistake, you are your brothers' keeper and most accidents can be avoided if you simply watch each other's back. If you see someone standing into harm's way - act. Tell the chief, the Skipper, anyone, but don't be complacent. Complacency can kill you just as quickly on our city streets as in the air. We are deep into the 100 critical days of summer and my goal is to drive on and off duty injuries to as close to zero as humanly possible but I cannot do it alone. I need your personal engagement. Enough said.

These are exciting times in the MPRF. The community officially welcomed its first P-8A Poseidon to VP-30 in Jacksonville Florida on March 28th. In a ceremony befitting this momentous occasion, concurrent with marking 50 years flying the P-3 Orion, I was honored to experience the introduction of this amazing new weapons platform with the very youngest, and oldest, aviators in our community. Undersecretary of the Navy, the Honorable Robert Work, presided over the event and lauded the community's accomplishments and unprecedented partnership with industry, allies, and MPRF warriors past and present. He painted a picture of our future Navy where P-8 and Triton UAS will play prominently. A future where the on-station performance of our crews will remain as critical to our nation's defense as they were 50 years ago and continue to be today. The MPRA community has a proud legacy and it is clear that we will continue to be front and center serving our country's interests for decades to come.

Along with the rollout of P-8, we marked this year's MPRF Symposium with spirited ASW competition and another awesome Heritage dinner. Holding the annual Symposium in Jacksonville the last two years has been well received by Fleet and gray beards alike. I intend to continue this tradition with the spring 2013 Symposium centered on an international theme that will showcase U.S. and allied cooperation and combined ASW prowess. I encourage you to make your way to Jacksonville and participate in this annual event currently scheduled for 15-19 April, 2013. Additional details will be posted on the Maritime Patrol Association website as they become available:

[www.maritimepatrolassociation.org](http://www.maritimepatrolassociation.org)

As exciting as our transition from legacy P-3 aircraft may be, it is not without its challenges. To date, the Navy has taken possession of six P-8 test aircraft at PAX River and

one operational fleet aircraft in Jacksonville. The second Fleet P-8 will be delivered to VP-30 mid-July. Here is a brief summary of our progress to date:

**P-8 TEST** - VX-20 and VX-1 have had early success in developmental and operational testing of stage one (instrumented) and stage two (fleet representative) aircraft. To date VX-1 has flown P-8A in numerous Fleet and allied exercises from Europe to Australia to great effect. They will also be participating in exercises RIMPAC and Valiant Shield later this summer. While initial reports on flying characteristics and aircraft reliability are very positive, they are diligently identifying and correcting deficiencies to ensure the Fleet gets the most capable platform and mission systems as quickly as possible. I admit that it is not perfect, but it is byproduct of concurrent test and fleet introduction. NAVAIR still has much to do and will achieve a major program milestone when it enters formal Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) this September followed by a Full Rate Production decision. At the same time, VP-16 will be entering month three of its P-8 transition.

**P-8 TRANSITION** - Operating for the last three months with only one P-8 aircraft at VP-30 has been sporty to say the least. In order to begin the first P-3 squadron transition in July 2012 required intense instructor and maintenance training at the Pro's Nest. Employing new P-8 simulators at the NAS Jacksonville Integrated Training center (ITC), coupled with outstanding teamwork and occasional aircraft loans from VX-20 and VX-1, we have been able to effectively and safely qualify an expert instructor cadre - currently comprised of 42 individual aircrew and growing - to initially populate VP-30 and the Fleet Introduction Team (FIT). By flying the first Fleet P-8 (LL-428) over 150 hours a month, we are in a position to begin VP-16's transition as scheduled on 11 July. Furthermore, the planned on-time delivery of additional P-8's and trainers will allow VP-16 to successfully complete the advanced readiness program and achieve Initial Operational Capability (IOC) and first P-8 deployment in December 2013.

**Personnel** - Not surprisingly, manpower continues to be a challenge as we shape the future force. With P-8 as the community's ultimate fixed wing manned platform, we will eventually divest of flight engineers and IFT's, while growing an additional non-acoustic sensor operator and simultaneously standing up a new UAV community - VUP. Given the mandate to source from within, we have embarked on a complex and interdependent manpower plan that will see the consolidation and eventual merge



of VQ and VPU squadrons with their VP and VUP sister squadrons. These manpower shifts must occur while preserving required capabilities through reapportionment to new platforms inside and outside of the MPRF Family of Systems. Moreover, due to deltas in programmatic deliveries of these new platforms, the phasing of manpower requirements does not always align. It is my intention to preserve and reutilize MPRF end-strength by capitalizing on new opportunities for legacy platform officer and enlisted personnel. In addition to creating opportunities for sundowning platforms, we are reevaluating the planned divestiture of P-3 IFT's and exploring the possibility of retooling these desired skill sets into an AWV for P-8A.

Myth Busting - Another observation as I traveled around the Force and met with leadership in and outside the Pentagon is a fundamental misunderstanding of the capabilities of the P-8. There is a puzzling and incorrect opinion across many in the Navy that P-8 cannot operate effectively at low altitudes. This simply is not true. In fact, the aircraft was designed to fly safely in the same or expanded operational envelope as the P-3. Does a swept wing turbofan fly the same as the P-3? No. With proper training and adherence to NATOPS it flies better than the P-3 with more efficiency and safety features. The reason that we are researching and developing the capability to execute the entire ASW kill chain from altitude has nothing to do with the flying characteristics of the airframe and everything to do with optimization of sensors, weapons, and tactics. I charge you all with joining me in a "Myth Busting" campaign so that leaders and peers can become better educated in the business of MPRF make informed decisions effecting resourcing and employment of the platform. If you still have doubt, just ask the men and women flying Poseidon today.

MQ-4C - Triton has arrived. The first MQ-4C Triton, formally known as BAMS was rolled out at the Northrop Grumman Palmdale plant on 14 June. With Fleet representatives in attendance, the VCNO remarked "Last year, we proudly celebrated the centennial of naval aviation--this year we have seen the rollout of a new patrol aircraft (P-8A Poseidon) and now, the beginning of an unmanned tradition in our fleet with the rollout of Triton (BAMS)." He added, "Triton (BAMS) is uniquely suited to meet the demands of the maritime environment and give us the advantage we will need in the future--history will record this introduction as a milestone in the second hundred years of naval aviation."

First flight is expected by the end of this year, keeping us on track for IOC in December 2015. We are not without our challenges of adequate manpower, near-term training limitations and CONUS locations allowing unfettered access to airspace to fully support the Fleet and Cocom but I am confident that Triton will become that critical ISR adjunct to P-8A it is designed to be. Therefore, allowing us to fully recapitalize the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force by the end of this decade.

P-3/EP-3 - As we deliver new capability, we will be a blended force throughout the rest of the decade. We will employ legacy P-3's and EP-3's right alongside P-8 and Triton. But we will not have blended squadrons. For operational effectiveness and safety we will not have units employing different Type/Model/Series. This requires us to adequately sustain and even improve upon current combat capability of legacy aircraft for the foreseeable future. Due to the nature and relevancy of VP and VQ to our combatant commanders, we must stay ahead of the threat and are subsequently pursuing National Security and Safety of Flight related waivers to the mandated "5-year" no modifications rule. We have picked our 55 mission P-3's and 12 EP-3 best-of-breed airframes to see us safely and effectively to sundown. Required sustainment events are fully funded as are a number of soon to be delivered modernization efforts. Those of us flying workhorse Orion and Aries aircraft to retirement will continue to have the safest and most effective equipment available.

Regardless of platform, and even while in transition, the MPRF must maintain combat readiness. This has become more and more difficult given the demands and reality of world-wide operations where ISR often takes a priority over ASW. To this end, I have instructed my staff to solicit Wing and Task Force input to develop and publish a simpler and more realistic Training and Readiness Matrix (TRM). For too long we have attempted to fit our multi mission reality into a one-size-fits all TRM for naval aviation. The current method of reporting simply does not work and creates more questions and confusion with our Combatant Commanders. Given ever decreasing resources and pressure to become more efficient, we owe it to leadership and ourselves to find a better way of training for combat and reporting actual readiness. This will not happen overnight, but I am convinced there is a better way.

In summary, this is both an exciting and challenging time for our community. As we field new weapons systems,

while sustaining legacy platforms, and merge people, capabilities, facilities into a cohesive family of systems, you can count on me to keep you informed with the best and most accurate information available. In return I expect you to not only be deliberate and safety conscious in the execution of your responsibilities but provide frank and timely feedback on the issues that concern you and your families. I intend to come back to you with another update in October, but will engage as often as necessary to insure we all have the latest facts.

SS Buck



*Released via email on July 6, 2012*



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2013 MPRF Hall of Honor  
induction online today!**

[maritimepatrolassociation.org/hallofhonor](http://maritimepatrolassociation.org/hallofhonor)



ARABIAN SEA (April 22, 2012) Guided-missile destroyer USS Sterett (DDG 104) and attack submarine USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720) transit the Arabian Sea with ships and submarines from the Royal Navy, Pakistan Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces as a P-3C Orion assigned to the "Tridents" of Patrol Squadron 26 flies overhead. Sterett is deployed as part of the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility (AOR) conducting maritime security operations, theater security cooperation efforts and support missions as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Pittsburgh is assigned to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 54, which commands U.S. submarine forces and coordinates theater-wide anti-submarine warfare in the U.S. 5th Fleet AOR. *(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Tim D. Godbee/Released)*



# Community

## *Captain Wiese Relieves Captain Wheeler as CPRW-11*

**P**atrol and Reconnaissance Wing Eleven (CPRW-11) held its 52<sup>nd</sup> Change of Command June 29 as CAPT Eric Wiese relieved CAPT Trey Wheeler III as Commodore. RADM Brian Prindle, long time Maritime Patrol leader and Commander of the Naval Safety Center, presided as the keynote speaker.

CAPT Wiese is a 1990 graduate of the United States Naval Academy and also earned his Masters in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College, as well as a Masters in Business Administration from the Naval Postgraduate School.

CAPT Wiese's Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force tours include: Patrol Squadron TWENTY-SIX; an instructor at Patrol Squadron THIRTY; a department head with Patrol Squadron EIGHT; Operations Officer for CPRW-11 and Commanding Officer of Patrol Squadron EIGHT. He has also served as Deputy Commander, Task Force FIVE-SEVEN, home-ported in Manama, Bahrain; Flag Lieutenant to Commander, Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet in Yokosuka, Japan; and most recently as Branch Chief, Joint Staff, J-8 Forces Division.

Commodore Wiese will have the lead as the Patrol and Reconnaissance force actively begins transitioning to the P-8A Poseidon with Patrol Squadron SIXTEEN this spring.



By Lt. Darrien Thomas, CPRW-11 PAO



*RADM Brian Prindle, Capt Eric Wiese, RDML Sean Buck at the CPRW-11 Change of Command Ceremony. Photo courtesy of CPRW-11.*



*Capt Eric Wiese and Capt Trey Wheeler cutting the Change of Command cake. Photo courtesy of CPRW-11.*



*Capt Eric Wiese with wife, Kari. Photo courtesy of CPRW-11.*



# Community

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## *VP-16 Begins New Chapter*

When the VP-16 “War Eagles” recently returned home to NAS Jacksonville from their successful 7th Fleet deployment, they turned in their vintage P-3C Orion aircraft, as well as their tools, equipment and NATOPS manuals.

Then, on July 11, VP-16 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Molly Boron led her aircrews to the P-8A Integrated Training Center – where they are now studying to become the first operational squadron certified to fly the P-8A Poseidon. Boron, who took command of the squadron eight weeks ago at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, has served 11 years in the Navy’s Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force (MPRF) community.

“I completed my P-3 flight training at VP-30 back in 2001, and now I’m back with a truly talented squadron to transition to the P-8A platform. It’s quite an honor for our people.”

Boron noted that when she was a department head at VP-40 she served under Capt. Mark Stevens (who is now commanding officer of VP-30) and alongside Cmdr. Andy Miller (who is now OIC of the P-8A Fleet Integration Team). “Because we served together at VP-40, it’s reassuring to enter this historic transition having previously worked with the VP-30 leadership and understand their expectations.”

She explained that the previous eight months were a blur of activity for VP-16. “Our final deployment with the P-3C Orion at Kadena Air Base was filled with joint exercises and detachments to destinations that included Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, India, Guam and Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The War Eagles flew nearly 4,000 flight hours.”

“After our homecoming at NAS Jax in June, we bid farewell to our P-3 Orions and turned our attention to the P-8A transition. Since early 2011, we’ve been working on the P-8A manpower requirements. Unlike the P-3 aircrew, the P-8 does not require a flight engineer. And the P-8 maintenance department is much smaller – so

we’ve been working on transfers for those who will not be joining the transition,” said Boron.

“While on deployment, we sent some of our top maintenance professionals back to NAS Jax to observe the VP-30 safe-for-flight inspection of the P-8A – so we’d have a better picture of what to expect in the coming months.”

At the P-8A Integrated Training Center, VP-16 pilots, NFOs and warfare operators spend their first two weeks getting familiarized with the Poseidon through lectures and computer-based classroom training. Then the training migrates to the P-8A operational flight trainer (OFT), a full-motion reproduction of the aircraft cockpit that replicates the visual out-of-window display and cockpit noises. The OFT can be used as a stand-alone trainer or be connected with the weapons tactics trainer (WTT) in order to “fly” a P-8A complete with mission systems.

In the WTT stand-alone configuration, mission specialists receive realistic weapons and sensor employment training. The P-8A mission systems include dual display screens at five operator stations – two acoustic stations, one non-acoustic station, one tactical coordination and



*Like her fellow pilots, VP-16 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Molly Boron is eager for that segment of the training schedule when she takes the controls of a non-simulated P-8A Poseidon for the first time. Photo Courtesy of Clark Pierce, Jax Air News.*



one navigation and communications station. The P-8A stations are completely interchangeable with respect to data. Also, an operator can sit at any of the five stations and operate any system.

Boron added, "As our aircrew train at the P-8A ITC, our maintainers are attending classes at CNATTU-Jax, as well as getting hands-on instruction at the maintenance department of VP-30."

"We expect our pilots to begin logging actual flight hours at about our 55th training day. If everything goes according to plan, we should finish training in December and be ready for our safe-for-flight certification in January," said Boron.

"Our greatest challenge is that there is no blueprint for this transition in the MPRF community because it's been 50 years since Orion went operational. At the same time, it's very exciting to help shape the transition process and find solutions to any speed bumps we may encounter along the way. We will also pass along lessons learned to squadrons following in the footprints of VP-16."

In 2013, the War Eagles will enter their traditional Inter-Deployment Readiness Cycle (IDRC) with two P-8A Poseidons. They will certify 12 combat aircrews and be ready to deploy the first week of December, at which time they expect to be assigned six Poseidon aircraft.

The P-8A Poseidon is the latest Navy aircraft designed to execute long-range anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions. It will replace the P-3C Orion, which has been in operation for more than 50 years.



*By Clark Pierce, Editor, Jax Air News;*

*Published in Jax Air News July 18, 2012*

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*In one of the P-8A ITC computerized classrooms, instructors Lt. J.J. Donchez and Cmdr. Joe Testa review the July 16 lesson plan with VP-16 pilots undergoing CAT-3 training. Photo Courtesy of Clark Pierce, Jax Air News.*



*(Left) ITC instructors Lt. Kenny Prindle and Lt. James Anderson introduce naval flight officers from VP-16 to the warfare capabilities of the P-8A Poseidon. Photo Courtesy of Clark Pierce, Jax Air News.*



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# Community

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## *VP-5 Trains With Indonesian Navy*

A contingent of Mad Foxes from Patrol Squadron FIVE (VP-5) participated in the exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) at the Juanda Naval Air Base in Indonesia on May 30, 2012. Joined by squadrons 800, 600, 400 and 200 of the Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL), the Mad Foxes took part in "at sea" training exercises and joint professional discussions designed to help facilitate professional relationship building between the two countries.

Combat Aircrew Four (CAC-4) led by Mission Commander LCDR Douglas Steil and Plane Commander LT Trey Ross participated on behalf of Commander Task Group 72.2. Their support included a maintenance detachment led by Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate Keiya Crawford who ensured the aircraft was fully mission capable for daily flight operations.

The exercise began with an Aviation Symposium attended by representatives from both Navies covering a broad area of naval aviation topics. The Indonesian Navy introduced a variety of aircraft including the Casa C-212 Aviocar, GAF Nomad and the Belle 412 and explained the mission set of each. The Mad Foxes discussed topics including Crew Resource Management, aircraft mission equipment and coordinated operations.

At the end of each presentation, members from each country discussed how they could incorporate those new ideas into their respective communities. When asked about his favorite part of the exercise, LT Tim Clemens responded "It was really interesting discussing the similarities and differences between our military and theirs, especially from the operational and training perspectives."

Throughout the week, the Mad Foxes took members of the various Indonesian squadrons for familiarization flights including range clearing, coordinated operations, and a basic Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) profile. The Indonesian aircrews were able to develop a feeling of what life is like on a P-3C as they observed the crew perform their jobs at each crew station. For many

members of the detachment, it was their first exposure working closely with military members from a different country. "I really felt like I was a part of something big," explained Aviation Warfare Operator First Class Lemmons.

The relationship building didn't stop at the hangar. Shortly after their arrival, the Mad Foxes were treated to a coffee break and were able to experience local cuisine before departing for lodging. At the Aviation Symposium, the VP-5 crew was treated to traditional Indonesian food. Throughout the duration of the exercise, the Indonesian Officers continued to ensure they were exposed to the local culture.

The Mad Foxes from Task Group 72.2 were deeply grateful for the opportunity to participate in the CARAT exercise and for the chance to explore and foster new relationships with their Indonesian Navy counterparts. Whether through a symposium, training flights or sharing in the local culture, both the American and Indonesian aircrews came away with a better understanding and appreciation for each other and their own countries Navy. ★

*By LT David Childers, VP-5*



*LT Trey Ross of VP-5 demonstrates the roles of the Patrol Plane Commander to an Indonesian naval aviator during the basic anti-submarine warfare training flight as part of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Indonesia 2012. Photo Courtesy of LT David Childers.*



# Community

## VP-8 Hosts Japanese

**T**he “Fighting Tigers” of Patrol Squadron 8 took part in a bilateral exercise with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force here, June 14, 2012.

The “Fighting Tigers” hosted a visit from the JMSDF’s “Odin” Squadron, stationed out of Hachinohe Air Base in northern Japan.

Their bilateral exercise focused on tactical communication and coordination, and consisted of four short tactical flights – two flown by the “Tigers” and two flown by VP-2 – all of which had riders from each squadron aboard as observers.

“It was such a great opportunity to be able to work with such high quality forces,” said VP-8 Lt. Dan Kuriluk, a pilot who participated as an observer on one of the Japanese flights. “I was extremely impressed with the crew’s professionalism and skill. I highly encourage anyone who may have this opportunity in the future to participate.”

“Odin” crew members were very pleased with their experience expressing their desire to fly with American aircrews.

“It was a great event to participate in and a great learning experience for both crews,” said Lt. Omura, a veteran Japanese plane commander with more than 3,800 flight

hours.

After the exercise both squadrons were invited to a reception on board Misawa Air Base, hosted by Commander, Task Force 72.4. This provided another opportunity for VP-8 crew members to interact with their bilateral counterparts.

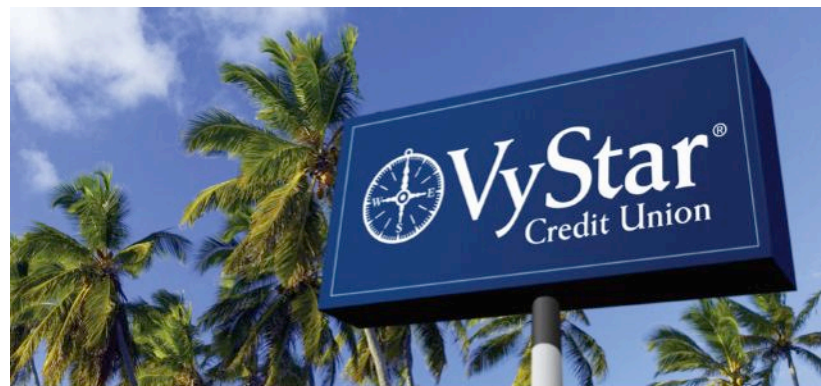
“On behalf of Patrol Squadron 2, I would like to show my deepest appreciation for today’s events,” said CAPT Seto of JMSDF VP-2. “I also worked with VP-8 in 2002 and it is an honor to work with them again. This is a great chance to promote our relationship and we look forward to more opportunities in the future.”

The “Fighting Tigers” of VP-8 are based out of Naval Air Station Jacksonville, FL, and are currently on a six-month deployment at Naval Air Facility Misawa. ★

*By Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Pedro Rodriguez Cladio, VP-8*



*Japanese and U.S. sailors pose for a group photo prior to take off as part of a joint ride-along exercise with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Forces (JMSDF) squadron, VP-2 “Odin” stationed at Hachinohe Air Base. The exercise focused on tactical communication and coordination and consisted of four short tactical flights, two flown by the “Tigers” and two flown by “Odin,” in which riders from the opposite command were welcomed aboard. Photo Courtesy of Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Pedro Rodriguez Cladio.*



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# Community

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## *VP-26 Welcomed Home*

**T**he “Tridents” of VP-26 recently completed a six-month deployment to the Middle East where they operated out of two detachment sites in the countries of Bahrain and Qatar. Upon their return to NAS Jacksonville, the Tridents were greeted with applause, smiles and tears as they reunited with family, friends and loved ones.

While in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility, VP-26 conducted missions with both U.S. and coalition forces in support of Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The squadron achieved an unprecedented 99.4 percent mission completion rate and flew more than 5,500 mishap-free flight hours.

These statistics are a true testament to the hard work and dedication put forth by the men and women of Team Trident.

The maintenance department worked countless hours, under difficult environmental conditions, to ensure the squadron always had fully mission capable aircraft.

The combat aircrews flew day in and day out, continually meeting mission objectives, in the most challenging operational environment in which the U.S. Navy currently deploys.

After all their hard work, the squadron was happy to



*VP-26 crew members arrive home to NAS Jacksonville aboard their P-3C Orion after a six-month deployment to Bahrain and Qatar. Photo Courtesy of VP-26.*

successfully turnover with the “Grey Knights” of VP-46.

VP-26 deployed with commanding officer Cmdr. Noel Dahlke, but returned with a new skipper, Cmdr. Erik Thors.

On May 19, the squadron held a change of command ceremony in Bahrain. Dahlke departed VP-26 for San Diego, where he will report to the Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Command.

The new executive officer is Cmdr. Mark Sohaney, who joins the Tridents from Strategic Pacific Command in Hawaii.

Thors and Sohaney will lead the Tridents through their inter-deployment readiness cycle as they prepare for their next deployment.

Team Trident will take a brief operational pause during their post-overseas movement leave period before starting the Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 11 advanced readiness program as they begin preparations for their next overseas deployment. ★

*From VP-26 Public Affairs*

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# Community

## Chapter News & Events

**O**n Saturday, 19 May in the VX-1 Hangar, the **Patuxent River, Maryland Chapter** gathered for a P-8A tour conducted by LCDR Chris Artis and then stayed for a BBQ that was put on by VP Community Junior Officers attached to VX-1 all of whom are part of the P-8A program.

Coupled with VX-1 Sailors that were on hand this day, the event created an atmosphere for the MPA members to mingle and share sea stories of old with today's current generation of VP community professionals.

The Commanding Officer of VX-1, CAPT Jeff Davila, was present to meet the MPA members. "The day was simply awesome," said Artis. "There was enough food on hand to feed an army and the occasion was exceptionally memorable!"



LCDR Chris Artis (pictured in flight suit above), LCDR Beau Massenburg and LCDR Rob Huntington with his son, Preston, joined other MPA members in Pax River to check out the P-8A. Photos Courtesy of LCDR Chris Artis.

**T**he **Whidbey Island Chapter** held a phenomenal event on Friday, July the 13<sup>th</sup> at the O'Club on base. About 50 folks showed ranging all the way from CDR(ret) Dave Weisbrod who raised his right hand in 1950 to two LTs who were commissioned in 2005. The crowd gathered for some informational briefs on MPA and the community given by Commodore Pete Garvin and then the floor was opened for questions and sea stories. The social continued with drinks and appetizers and fun was had by all!



Above: CDR Dave Weisbrod (Ret.), CAPT Tom Spink (Ret.), J.J. Boling, CAPT Dick Porter (Ret.). (Spink was a student in VP-31 in 1970 when Weisbrod, Boling, and Porter were instructors.) Photos Courtesy CAPT Tom Spink.

Left Photo: CDR Dave Weisbrod (Ret.), Commodore Peter Garvin (CPRW-10), CAPT Tom Spink (Ret.). Photos Courtesy of CAPT Tom Spink.

# Community

## Events Calendar

### *Upcoming Chapter Events*

**Washington DC Chapter: CDR Sean Liedman, VP of Region**

Join us for MPA Happy Hour on Friday, August 24 from 4:30-7:00 PM at Crystal City Brewing Company!  
sean.liedman@navy.mil

**Whidbey Island Chapter: CAPT Pete Garvin, VP of Region**

Stay tuned for coming events!  
peter.garvin@navy.mil

**Pax River Chapter: LCDR Chris Artis, VP of Region**

Stay tuned for coming events!  
christopher.artis@navy.mil

**Hawaii Chapter: CAPT Christopher Ramsden, VP of Region**

Stay tuned for coming events!  
christopher.ramsden@navy.mil

### *Reunion Events*

**VP-90 Reunion 2012: July 26-29, 2012 in Great Lakes, Illinois**

Contact: John Larson  
Phone: (702) 630-9812  
Email: [Johnlar1@cox.net](mailto:Johnlar1@cox.net)

**7th Bi-Annual VP-1 Reunion Circa 1965-1970: August 24-26, 2012**

Contact: AX2 J.B. "John" Merriott  
Email: [johnmerriott@gmail.com](mailto:johnmerriott@gmail.com)

**37th Mariners of VP/VPB-26 Reunion: September 16-19, 2012**

Contact: AE2 Gene Balog  
Email: [bilgepump@cfl.rr.com](mailto:bilgepump@cfl.rr.com)

**VP Association Annual Reunion and Banquet: September 22, 2012 in East Weymouth, MA**

Contact: Bill Hanigan  
Email: [vpassociation@aol.com](mailto:vpassociation@aol.com)  
Info/Register: [www.vpassociation.org](http://www.vpassociation.org)

**VP-40 Reunion: October 3-7, 2012 (for seaplane era of 1948-1968)**

Contact: Guy Fisk  
Email: [gfish@charter.net](mailto:gfish@charter.net)  
Info/Register: [www.vp40.com/](http://www.vp40.com/)

**VP-45 Reunion: October 18-21, 2012 in Mobile, Alabama**  
Info/Register: [www.vp45association.org/reunions.html](http://www.vp45association.org/reunions.html)

**VP-93 Alumni Association: 13th Annual Fall Muster: November 3, 2012 in Mount Clemens, MI**

Contact: Howard Rundell  
Phone: (734) 658-7701  
Email: [g5av8or@aol.com](mailto:g5av8or@aol.com)

**VP-44 Reunion: November 8-11, 2012 in Pensacola, FL**

Contact: Gene Toffolo  
Phone: (229) 559-7959  
Email: [genejanjay@aol.com](mailto:genejanjay@aol.com)  
Info/Register: [www.vp44goldenpelicans.com](http://www.vp44goldenpelicans.com)

**VP-24 Reunion: November 12-16, 2012, 4-night cruise from Port Canaveral, FL**

Contact: David Pierce  
Email: [david.pierce.fl@gmail.com](mailto:david.pierce.fl@gmail.com)



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# Community

## Events Calendar

*July*

**Wednesday, July 25**

Madison Navy League Flight Suit Reception:  
Charcoal Pit II Pub & Restaurant at 3pm

*August*

**Friday, August 24**

Washington DC Chapter MPA Happy Hour:  
Crystal City Brewing Company at 4:30-7pm

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

DENNY BEHR 608-669-3183	HERB THOMAS 608-604-7355	JOHN FISHER 608-798-4263
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**Get Your Event Listed Here:** Have a command ceremony or event or reunion event that you would like posted in *PlaneSide*? Email the details to us at: [info@maritimepatrolassociation.org](mailto:info@maritimepatrolassociation.org). After your event, be sure to send us a write up and some photos and we will publish those as well!

*Congrats!*

**Robert D. Fiacco receives the National Naval Aviation Museum Foundation's R.G. Smith Award for 2012**

In April 2012, Robert Fiacco, currently supporting PMA205, the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation presented the annual R.G. Smith Award to Robert D. Fiacco for Excellence in Naval Aviation Art.

For more than 50 years, aeronautical engineer and artist R.G. Smith, through his brilliant and unparalleled artistic genius, contributed immeasurably to the preservation of the proud heritage and rich history of Naval Aviation. Beginning in 1994, with the award first going to its namesake, Mr. R.G. Smith, it has since been presented in recognition of individuals who have followed Smith's vision, including such greats as Ted Wilbur, Robert Rasmussen, Stan Stokes, Keith Ferris, John Shaw, and many more.

The National Naval Aviation Museum also acquired a piece of the Fiacco's work to the National Naval Aviation Museum, for display in the Emil Buehler Naval Aviation Library.



Robert Fiacco displays one of his paintings, "Oriskany Rendezvous", which was recently displayed at the National Naval Aviation Museum. Fiacco is a MPA Plank Owner Member.

# Community

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## *Recent Event: VP-10 Holds 75<sup>th</sup> Change of Command Ceremony*

**T**he U.S. Navy's Patrol Squadron TEN held its 75th Change of Command on May 3, 2012 aboard NAS Jacksonville, FL. During the ceremony, Commander Timothy Parker, relieved Commander Andrew Miller, and became the Red Lancers' 76th Commanding Officer. Captain William W. Wheeler, III, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing ELEVEN oversaw the ceremony and offered remarks as the guest speaker.

Commander Miller is a native of Texas and graduated from Sherman High School in 1990. In 1994, he graduated from The University of Texas at Austin and received his commission through the Naval ROTC program. He received his Wings of Gold in October 1996.

Commander Parker was raised in Glencoe, Minnesota, graduated from Glencoe Senior High School, enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1985 and graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1994 and received his commission through the Naval ROTC program. He received his Naval Flight Officer Wings of Gold in 1996.

Commander Charles M. Stickney, a 1995 graduate of Auburn University, assumed duties as the Executive Officer.

The RED LANCERS, based aboard Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, are currently executing the Inter-deployment Readiness Cycle, which is a twelve month training and readiness period in preparation for deployment. Patrol Squadron TEN will deploy in support of South American and East Asian operations later this year. The squadron spent most of 2011 deployed to Southwest Asia and the Horn of Africa in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and NEW DAWN and other sites in support of ongoing military operations.

Patrol Squadron TEN flies the P-3C Orion, a military derivative of the Lockheed Electra and is designed for maritime patrol. The P-3C Orion is recognized throughout the world for its capabilities as a Maritime Patrol Under-Sea Warfare (USW), and Intelligence, Surveillance and

Reconnaissance (ISR) platform. Patrol Squadron TEN has been flying a version of the Orion since 1965.

Patrol Squadron TEN's primary mission is anti-submarine warfare. The squadron's crews are trained to search, localize, track, and ultimately attack hostile diesel or nuclear powered submarines. The numerous collateral missions of Patrol Squadron TEN include the following: anti-surface warfare (ASUW), precision strike targeting, surface search and interdiction, battle-group support, mine warfare, high resolution intelligence photography, search and rescue, counter-narcotics, and logistics support. ★

*By LTJG Brett Copare, VP-10*



*Above: CDR Parker relieving CDR Miller of command of VP-10.  
Below: CDR Miller and CDR Parker cutting the change of command cake. Photos Courtesy of VP-10.*





# History

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## *Sorry Charlie, The Story Behind the Art*

history of that flight. A different aircraft flew the actual flight. It was Buno 153438, LX-3

It was nearing the end of the Cold War era. The area of operations for the US Navy in the Western Pacific extended from the South China Sea off Vietnam. The crews covering this area flew out of Naval Air Station Cubi Point, Philippine Islands. This area extended up to the northeast of the island of Hokkaido, Japan. Crews covering that area flew out of the Naval Air Facilities Misawa, Japan.

The active duty squadron in Misawa was VP-19. They were on their 6-month deployment out of NAS Moffett Field, California. VP-90 out of NAS Glenview, Illinois was on its annual 17-day cruise and was augmenting VP-19. The Soviet Navy was conducting their big annual exercise during this time. During this Soviet exercise, the P-3's located over 10 different Soviet submarines.

VP-90 Crew 3 left Misawa on April 20<sup>th</sup> to relieve another P-3 on station. They were operating east of the Kuril Island chain in the North Pacific. Upon arriving on station,

they immediately had contact on a Soviet submarine. Within a short period of time the submarine surfaced, and was identified as a Charlie class Nuclear Soviet Submarine. It appeared that the sub might have a casualty. Whether the boat had a real problem or just wanted to surface and cause a diversion from the other submarines below him, we will never know.

With the sub was on the surface, the crew photographer took pictures and the rest of

This print, which can currently be seen hanging outside of the VP-30 Auditorium, is based on an actual flight of Patrol Squadron Ninety (VP-90). The original painting is hanging in the gallery at the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola.

The aircraft selected for this print was a P-3B, side number LX-00, and Buno 153458. In the Navy, the 00 side number is to signify the Commanding Officer's aircraft. So it was decided to use this plane to represent the whole squadron. The tail logo in this print was "Lambert the Lion". He was used as the squadron symbol in the 1980's. Also there is a rainbow on the nose of the aircraft. Patrol Squadron Ninety (VP-90) was assigned to the Reserve Pacific Wing. The Pacific Fleet was sometimes referred to as the "Rainbow Fleet".

The date of the flight was April 20, 1989. The crew involved was VP-90 Crew 3. The following is a brief



the crew continued to investigate the other multiple subsurface contacts below the Charlie Submarine. So it was a very successful flight.

One year later when the squadron was back in Kadena, Okinawa for its annual cruise; the squadron received a briefing on the intelligence gathered from this exercise. Four crews gathered exceptional data and VP-90 Crew 3 was the only reserve P-3 crew recognized.

VP-90 was decommissioned in September 1994 after 24 years of service to the United States Navy. ★

*Submitted By LCDR John Larson, USN (Ret.), MPA Plank Owner Member. Larson is the VP-4 Association's PAO.*

Notes: The crewmembers that were on this flight included, Patrol Plane Commander: Charlie Deveaux, Co-Pilot Commanding Officer: Lou Rabe, Co-Pilot: Bobby McPherson, Tactical Coordinator/Mission Commander: Ron Hilson, Navigator: Eugene Sullivan, Flight Engineer: Ron Leis, Flight Engineer: Guy Moekler, Acoustic Sensor Operator (SS1): David Johnson, Acoustic Sensor Operator (SS2): Mike Smith, Radar/Mad Operator (SS3): Keith Falvey, Radio Operator: Norm Larsen, Ordnanceman/Photographer: Bruce Rubenstein.

P-3B Buno 153438: This was the aircraft on the mission. It was first delivered to VP-26 on 8/16/67. It had side no. LK-31/LK-36. It was delivered to VP-11 on 3/21/72. It had side no LE-7/LE-8. It was delivered to VP-10 on 12/4/77. It was delivered to VP-11 on 12/27/77. It was delivered to VP-90 on 8/1/81. It had LX-3/LX-10. It was delivered to AMARC on 12/23/93. AMARC is the Aircraft Rejuvenation Center at Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson, AZ. It was delivered to RAAF in 1999. Side No A9-438. RAAF is the Royal Australian Air Force. This plane is used for logistic missions/pilot training.

P-3B buno 153458: This was the aircraft in the print. It was first delivered to VP-40 on 12/21/67. It had side no. QE-2. It was delivered to VP-19 on 9/25/68. It had side no. PE-1. It was delivered to VP-48 on 12/8/69. It had side no. SF-11. It was delivered to VP-31 on 2/9/72. It had side no. RP-14/RP-27. It was delivered to VP-4 on 4/2/79. It had side no. YD-1. It was delivered to VP-17 on 5/20/83. It had side no. ZE-8. It was delivered to VP-65 on 3/20/86. It had side no. PG-8. It was delivered to VP-90 on 7/1/92. It had side no. LX-00/LX-1. It was delivered to AMARC (storage) during the end of 1993/early 1994. It is still in the desert at Tucson, AZ.



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# History

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## *Project Muddy Hill*

I was a newly commissioned United States Navy Ensign

sporting the Golden wings of a Naval Aviation Observer (NAO), when I received orders to report to the Weapons Systems Test (WST) Division at the Naval Air Test Center (NATC), Patuxent River, MD in June 1966. Upon arrival at NATC, I met four Naval Officers and several enlisted personnel who were also assigned to a newly formed research and development project, Project Muddy Hill (Muddy Hill). The OPNAV Office of Reconnaissance, Electronic Warfare, Special Operations, Navy (REWSON) funded Muddy Hill. Prior to deployment to Southeast Asia, Muddy Hill was under the administrative command of the WST branch of NATC.

Muddy Hill's purpose was to equip a SP-2H Neptune (Buno 135582) anti-submarine (ASW) aircraft, later designated a NP-2H, with the newest state-of-the-art electro-optical (E-O) and special sensors and then test and evaluate these sensors in a nighttime developmental and operational scenario in Southeast Asia.

Along with several of the Muddy Hill officers and enlisted personnel, I was sent to factory and university classes to learn the fundamentals of infrared detection, low illumination television, starlight scope, terrain following radar, electronic counter measures, and active magnetic anomaly detection systems. In September, I joined the Muddy Hill contingent at the LTV Electro-Systems Inc. (E-Systems) plant, Greenville TX. E-Systems was a prime government contractor that modified government and military aircraft under special contract for such agencies as ARPA, CIA, USAF, etc. E-Systems had been working on the Muddy Hill aircraft (now painted with a high-gloss, 'Black Widow Black' paint) for some months installing and ground testing the newly incorporated electro-optical and radar/camera systems.

The Muddy Hill NP-2H retained its recognizable P2 Neptune configuration with the exception of two five foot long, 30 inch diameter pods mounted on either side of

the nose section, a six foot long, 30 inch wide fairing aft of the rear exit hatch, and a seven foot long probe extending forward from the top of the nose section which supported the angle of attack probe necessary for the Terrain Following Radar system. The existing APS-20 radar radome was modified to incorporate the Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) system that was capable of being scanned from the horizon to 20° aft of nadir. A small fairing just forward of the MAD boom housed a Fairchild Instruments, horizon-to-horizon, 70mm film format reconnaissance camera. The additional fairing just aft of the rear floor exit hatch now housed the Stereo, Downward Looking Infrared (DLIR) systems. The port circular nose fairing housed the Low Light Level Television (L<sup>3</sup>TV) system and the starboard circular nose fairing contained the APQ-115 Terrain Following Radar (TFR) system.



*Project Muddy Hill NP-2H Neptune enroute to South Vietnam. Photo courtesy of Robert Zafran.*



*Project Muddy Hill aircrew before central Laos armed reconnaissance mission. Photo courtesy of Robert Zafran.*

Controls and displays for the electro-optical systems were mounted on the flight deck in place of the previously existing ASW and navigation equipment. The E-O sensor station was the forward location on the flight deck, the navigation station was the center location, and the Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) station was at the aft location. The navigation station was composed of an integrated navigation suite consisting of a B-52 inertial guidance/navigation computer, Litton LN15 inertial system, APN-92 Ioran C, and an APN-122 Doppler groundspeed/drift navigation system. The transmitter for the Active Magnetic Anomaly Detection (AMAD) was a 36-inch coil of solid copper wire mounted directly behind the aft observer seats at 25° to the vertical. The wing fuel tanks were filled with orange-colored, polyurethane reticulated foam to minimize the possibility of wing fires initiated by small or medium caliber ground-fire.

Between August 1966 and June 1967, crewmember training and systems installation and flight testing was conducted. Flight operations utilized the E-Systems runways and ground facilities and the surrounding Greenville TX countryside. Additional operations were conducted at Fort Hunter Liggett Proving Grounds on the central coast of Northern California. In July 1967, the project relocated to WST, NATC Patuxent River MD, for pre-deployment preparations. The aircraft, with an aircrew of six departed NATC in late July 1967, followed by the remainder of the forty one project personnel (USN, USAF, USMC, Civilian Contractor, and US Civil Service) components and equipment via U.S. Air Force MAC transportation to Udorn Thani Royal Thai Air Force Base (Udorn RTAFB), located in the north-eastern sector of Thailand, just south of the Mekong River forming the Thailand-Laos border. Udorn RTAFB was to be the project's base of operations for the next four months.

As Pacific Fleet Task Group 50.8, Muddy Hill operated from the Air America compound at Udorn RTAFB. Avionics systems test, road reconnaissance crewmember training scenario, and low-level, aerial reconnaissance, 'Barrel Roll' and 'Tiger Hound' missions were conducted during both daytime and nighttime hours in Laos. Eight crewmember military operational missions were fully briefed with intelligence, threat scenario, and conjunctive military flight operations in the mission areas. Target areas consisted of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and its road segments as well as locations in the Plaine des Jarres in central Laos. Flight durations averaged 4-5 hours with takeoffs around 0500 and 1900 hours. While at Udorn

RTAFB, the pilot and co-pilot's seats were reinforced with seat armor salvaged from crashed helicopters. This seat armor was obtained from an Army base in Saigon RVN.

Mission flight parameters varied between 200 and 1500 feet absolute altitude on terrain following radar. Primary target area guidance was accomplished by my usage of a hand-held starlight (night vision) scope in the Plexiglas bow observer station to locate road segments and individual targets and direct the plane commander using voice commands via the aircraft's inter-communication system. Usage of the night vision scope also provided terrain avoidance to complement terrain following radar commands. Suspected targets of interest were marked with green, chemiluminescent dye impregnated airborne flare parachutes using the aircraft's sonobuoy dispensing chutes.

The Stereo DLIR system obtained IR images directly on two rolls of 70mm format film. After processing at the USAF photo laboratory, this film was analyzed by Muddy Hill personnel using a specially designed stereoscopic viewer during post-flight operations. Tactically significant target information was reported to the USAF intelligence center at Udorn RTAFB.

From August to December 1967, Project Muddy Hill (TG 50.8) completed a total 60 avionics systems test/road reconnaissance training flights. Also accomplished were 14 military operational, low-level reconnaissance missions while amassing 62 flight hours in a combat environment. The Muddy Hill aircraft and project personnel returned to NATC in December 1967. Project Muddy Hill successfully utilized some of the first airborne E-O systems to be operationally evaluated in a combat environment. These systems served as the predecessor of the later night-capable airborne sensors during the Vietnam conflict as well as the more modern E-O systems in common usage in today's civilian and military airborne platforms. ★

*Submitted By LCDR Robert Zafran, USN (Ret.). Retired from the US Navy in 1980, Zafran then taught high school science for twenty years followed by a stint as a research chemist for the IBM Research Center. In 2005, Zafran and his wife, Marian, retired to Salem, Oregon. This article was previously published in 'Wings of Gold' magazine.*

Notes: The author thanks his former Muddy Hill colleagues RADM Dale Hagen, USN (Ret) and CAPT Robert Porter, USN (Ret), for their comments and suggestions concerning the accuracy of details in this article.



# History

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## *VP-4 Crew Members Reunite with Vietnamese Refugees*

*Several months ago, John Larson, the VP-4 Association PAO, came across a notice in the VP web site posted by one survivor of a rescue at sea who was looking for the unknown U. S. Navy P-3 crew that found their group floating in the South China Sea around May 23, 1977. Fortunately, after several months of research, members of the association were able to determine the Vietnamese boat people were found by VP-4 Crew 2 on May 23, 1977. Validating evidence included a 1977 squadron deployment newsletter that contained an article about a rescue by Crew 2 and a merchant ship, the ALPS Maru, of a group of Vietnamese refugees. Plane Commander, Claude Timmerman had in his flight logbook that they flew on May 23, 1977, on a flight over the South China Sea. John Kennedy, the Tacco, had in his file a letter that was written by one of the survivors. In this letter he described in detail their rescue by a P-3 and then being picked up by the ALPS MARU. So we knew we had the survivors and that VP-4 Crew 2 had found them. The decision was made to try to link the survivors and Crew 2 at the upcoming VP-4 bi-annual reunion to be held in Portsmouth, VA just a few short weeks away. We were successful in locating a majority of them. The following describes the first meeting of the survivors and the crewmembers.*

On August 6, 2005 we have brought together the Survivors of that fateful day, May 23, 1977 and the VP-4 Crew 2 who found them in the South China Sea.

Of the 30 survivors, 11 were present for the reunion. Of the 12 crewmembers, 6 were present. Plane Commander Claude Timmerman, Co-pilot Ben Francisco, Tactical Coordinator John Kennedy, Navigator Carl Stocks, 2<sup>nd</sup> Flight Engineer Webster Hayden and In-flight Technician Dale Pocklington. Also in attendance, who were the Commanding Officer and Task Group Commander Bill Broadwell and Executive Officer Ted Rogers at the time of the rescue. The survivors talked of their escape and rescue. The following were the highlights.

Right after the fall of Saigon in April 1975, about 130,000 Vietnamese attempted to escape. Those who were associated with the government or the military who stayed were sent to “re-educations camps”. There were economic retributions, private property was confiscated and people were sent to re-settlement camps. The only religion allowed had to be approved by the government.

From 1975-1990, roughly 2 million exited the country and many of them didn’t make it to freedom. Three members of this group were imprisoned for being in the military and working for the former government. The communists didn’t care about a person’s rights- human, religious or political.

Several families got together and sold whatever valuables they had at the time and acquired an old 30 foot wooden river cargo boat. They had no plan except to reach international waters and the shipping channel. No one had any seamanship skills; only 1 person had any mechanical skills. To avoid being recognized by the authorities several families traveled by a family bus from Saigon to Go Cong a coastal town about 70 miles away. Along the way they picked up the rest of the people. There were 7 families and a total of 30 people on board. They could not take sufficient supplies because that might raise suspicions with the police and military. The cover story for the trip was they were going to a wedding



*Group photo of the crew members and refugee survivors taken at the VP-4 Reunion in Virginia in August 2005.*

event. To further avoid suspicion they took a Sampan (Typical to the Mekong Delta a small passenger boat resembling a very large kayak) to meet the escape boat anchored in the middle of the river few miles from the river mouth. There was no covering for the group on the little boat except for the top over the engine a mid ship.

On day 2 as they were leaving the country they were chased by the coast guard. The coast guard came within 200 meters of their boat. They chased them for 20 minutes before they gave up. Later that evening they encountered a severe tropical storm and the boat was taking on massive amounts of water. In order to save the boat from sinking they detached and pushed the only spare outboard motor overboard. Also the only navigation aid that was available to them was a Boy Scout type compass and a map from World Atlas, which were washed overboard that night.

The bad weather only got worse according to the refugees, large wave completely covered their boat a couple times. It was not the pilot skill but it was just sheer luck that the boat even stayed afloat because no one on this boat had any seamanship experience. Seaman ship skill was on the job training for one of them that piloted the boat in that stormy night. He was washed over board and managed to cling on the aft rail of the boat. He was able to climb back on board. He was the only one standing on stern of the boat. The children were inside the cabin that housed the engine and the adults were hunkering down in the cargo compartment of the boat.

Fortunately they survived that night and were badly beaten up by the storm. The bow had cracked and started taking on water. In the afternoon they spotted a fishing boat and steered toward it. It was a government owned fishing boat, but they were in a desperate situation. So they asked for help to save the children onboard. After intense negotiation they agreed to give up all of their valuables that they brought along such as jewelry, watches, etc.. They were transferred to this fishing boat and stayed there for 3 days. The leader of our escapees was told that he should return with the fishing boat to Vietnam. But it would certainly mean going to prison. So they had a choice to make, return or keep going. They continued their journey in their little river boat.

On day 8, they saw a big white ship that slowed down for them. Everybody was excited that they may at last be rescued. They pulled along side within 30-40 feet of the merchant's ship and one of them looked up on the smoke stag and realized it had a yellow hammer and sickle on the red background. They turned around and speed away as fast as they could in the opposite direction. This was the only time that any ship was willing to stop for them until the intervention of the P-3 from VP-4. They were now about 200 miles off the coast of Vietnam.

Day 9 came with little more than five gallon of diesel fuel and there was no food left after a couple of days. One of them found a small bag of rice submerged in the water inside the engine compartment and decided to use part of the boat for fuel, to cook the rice. After the rice was eaten, they saw off in the distance a small dot in the sky. They were all happy because they thought they saw a bird that meant they were close to land. As the dot grew larger and larger the shape of a plane started appearing. The plane flew just a couple of a hundred feet over the boat and slightly dip it wings on the first pass. Tired, sick, and desperate the survivors had a lot of joy when they realized that this aircraft was there to save them. On the second pass the P-3 dropped some smoke markers. They left and then about 1 hour later a Japanese merchant ship the "Alps Maru" arrived.

The refugees went with this ship to their home port in Kobe Japan. They stayed there in an old monastery church for 5 months. When they came to the United States they went to sponsors in Pennsylvania, Maryland, California, and Louisiana. They learned a new language, lived in rental apartments and found jobs. The children grew up and went to many well known colleges/universities. They became teachers, doctor, dentists, engineers, a Naval officer, computer scientists, and went into other professions. They worked for the Navy, Army, DOD, private industry and other government contract companies. They owned their own businesses. The kids who were from 3 to 14 years old at that time now have families of their own.

The following is a recap of the event by John Kennedy the TACCO on the flight:



We launched on a MAP 309 surface surveillance flight. As we were transitioning from one contact to the next, the 2nd Mech, sitting in the FE's seat, said he thought he had seen something in the water. He was unable to identify it so we decided to set up a datum and construct a search pattern around that point. The nav set everything up and we commenced an expanding square search around that point. Shortly, we found a small boat approximately 8 miles outside the shipping lanes. The people were waving frantically and indicating distress. We dropped a smoke to ensure that we did not lose them. Claude. The PPC got out of the seat and we held a conference on the best course of action. It was decided to mark their spot with another smoke and then climb to determine the closest ship.

As we were climbing, the SS3 called out a contact and we began attempts to raise the ship on the radio. The ship was the ALPS MARU and we were unable to raise them on any frequency. The attempt was a low altitude pass in the hope of getting their attention. This also failed to get them to turn on their radios.

Further discussion led to the plan to fly down their port side, cross their bow, drop a smoke, and then drop a series of smokes directing them to the refugees. This worked. We remained on station until the transfer of all refugees was completed. Their boat was cast adrift. At that time we climbed out, made contact with home base to report the incident, and then returned to base.

At the reunion, the survivors presented plaques to the CO, XO and the crew members for saving their lives. They also presented a plaque to the current Public Affairs Officers of VP-4, LTJG Ward, who was present for the reunion. This plaque will go back to the squadron to hang amongst the accomplishment that VP-4 has earned. The VP-4 Assn presented the survivors VP-4 coffee mugs, VP-4 baseball caps and made them honorary members of the VP-4 Assn.

It was a very moving event to have these survivors meet the crewmembers who found them. This is probably the only meeting of survivors and members of the U.S. Navy who were involved in the operation Frequent Wind during the late 70's. All the former members of VP-4 in attendance (1950-1980's) at the reunion were also moved by this special event. ★

Submitted By LCDR John Larson, USN (Ret.), MPA Plank Owner Member. Larson is the VP-4 Association's PAO.



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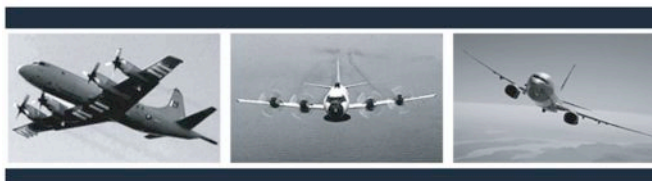
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# History

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## *Happy Birthday, Orion: Lockheed Martin Celebrates Milestone Birthday*

*T*ime for cake and a round of “Happy Birthday” as the Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion turns 50 years old this year.

A significant milestone, yes. But, for this iconic plane, it’s yet another historic benchmark to add to its growing list of achievements. Throughout its first half-century of service, the P-3 has played many roles for many countries. It was born of needs related to a Cold War environment and as needs shifted, the P-3 seamlessly transitioned into a multi-mission aircraft affording the P-3 and its operators several more decades of unparalleled service.

### **Orion’s early days**

The P-3 came about as a response to Navy Type Specification #146 issued in 1957 for a new land-based ASW aircraft to replace the Lockheed P2V Neptune land-based maritime patrol aircraft and the Martin P5M Marlin flying boat. A very specific requirement pertaining to delivery schedule and cost constraints dictated the need for modifying an off-the-shelf design for maritime patrol.

Competitors included Martin, Lockheed and Consolidated, three companies that had been building patrol aircraft for the Navy for more than three decades at that point. The French Dassault-Breguet Atlantic/Atlantique, which the U.S. Navy had helped fund, did not meet the Navy’s range requirement — and would not have worked in the Pacific — so it was eliminated.

Lockheed’s proposal highlighted the Electra airliner’s turboprop engines and its capability for high speed transit at high altitudes and low speed, low altitude handling qualities and fuel economy. The fact it was designed for commercial airports meant the Navy did not have to alter any runways. The Lockheed Model 185 retained the wings, tail and power plant of the Electra. The fuselage

was shortened by seven feet and a weapon bay was added.

Lockheed won the competition on April 24, 1958, with an Electra-based design. The contract was awarded in May 1958. The problems with the Electra (a phenomenon called “whirl mode”) had not surfaced at this point. Once those problems came to light, Lockheed briefed the Navy on the proposed fixes and the service was satisfied.

The first aircraft was actually the third production Electra with a mock-up of a MAD boom installed. It was an aerodynamic prototype only. It was first flown on Aug. 19, 1958, and made eight flights. It was then modified to a full prototype of the P-3.

The first flight of YP3V-1 prototype came on Nov. 25, 1959. The nickname “Orion” was officially adopted in late 1960, in keeping with Lockheed’s tradition of naming aircraft after mythological figures or celestial bodies. The first pre-production P3V-1 aircraft was flown on April 15, 1961, from the Lockheed plant in Burbank, California. The



*Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company - Palmdale, CA. P-3 Orion flying over submarine with P-2V Neptune in background 1964. Photo courtesy of the Lockheed Martin Corporation.*



test program consisted of six aircraft.

While the Electra and the P-3 were connected through a mostly common airframe, the differences between the two aircraft—and between the P-3 and the P-2 (as the Neptune fleet was redesignated) as well—were monumental.

The P-3 represented a new approach to the anti-submarine warfare mission. It was a more spacious aircraft with a significantly more superior weapons system than its predecessor.

While the airframe has basically stayed intact over its career, a variety of antennae and sensors have sprouted on the outside but the avionics and sensors have undergone dramatic changes. Much like the Super Bowl, the sensor suite updates to the definitive P-3C variant were seen as having been important enough to warrant Roman numerals (Update I, II, II.5 and III).

The Department of Defense designation system was changed in June 1962, and almost from the time the first P-3A was delivered to Patrol Squadron 8 (VP-8) in the summer of 1962, the Orion has been in action. In the years that followed, 158 P-3As, 125 P-3Bs and 266 P-3Cs were built for the U.S. Navy. Total production, including license-built aircraft, totaled 755.

Today, the worldwide P-3 fleet numbers 425 aircraft flown by 21 operators in 16 countries with Taiwan soon to come.

Both VP-8 and VP-44 saw action during the Cuban Missile Crisis enforcing the blockade of Cuba. At the height of the Cold War in the 1970s, 24 squadrons of U.S. Navy P-3s blanketed the seven seas tracking Soviet — and other countries'—submarines. It was reported that a Soviet admiral once lamented that if he wanted to know where his submarines were, all he had to do was look for the P-3s flying over them.



*P-3 Orion, US Navy 1962. Photo courtesy of the Lockheed Martin Corporation.*

### **New missions, new horizons**

As the Cold War melted, the P-3 found a new role supporting overland missions in peacekeeping, surveillance and targeting roles. Today's Navy P-3s equipped with the latest electronic surveillance suite have changed the way battlefield operations are conducted.

P-3s can be used to target strike points on the ground and relay real-time video surveillance to the battle group. The aircraft is also used to scout ahead of ground convoys and warn of potential dangers, protect shipping lanes and deter pirates, prevent illegal immigration, perform anti-terrorism missions and thwart drug smuggling attempts.



*Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company - Palmdale, CA. P-3 Orion Fuselage Final Assembly Burbank, CA Bldg. 306. Photo courtesy of the Lockheed Martin Corporation.*

Although the P-8 is the designated replacement for the P-3, Orion crews will be on station for several years to come. The specialized electronic reconnaissance versions of the Orion, the EP-3E ARIES II, will continue to fly into the 2020s.

To get the Orion into its sixth decade of service, the P-3 Mid-Life Upgrade (MLU) is a life extension kit replacing the aircraft outer wings, center wing lower section and horizontal stabilizer with new production components. The MLU removes all current P-3 airframe flight restrictions and provides 15,000 additional flight hours. The Navy has 31 MLU kits on order. Lockheed Martin builds the outer wings at its facility in Marietta, Ga., and the kits are installed at the Fleet Readiness Center Southeast, the aviation depot at NAS Jacksonville, Fla.

A majority of the P-3 Orions flown today were built in Burbank, Calif., with some built in Marietta and Japan. The current wing line in Marietta began work more than four years ago and has been busy ever since. While modern technology drives the P-3's current work, there is a major historic component to this line: the major tooling used today is the line's original tooling. It's the same tooling used on the original line in Burbank and has literally traveled around the world to support P-3 work. This tooling is a lot like the plane it has built – it just keeps on working.

Happy birthday, P-3 Orion. Here's to many more! . ★

*Submitted By Jeff Rhodes & Stephanie Stinn, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics (2012). Portions of this story originally appeared in the Association of the U.S. Navy's AUSN Magazine in April 2012 issue.*

Notes: P-3 Orion Specifications

Length . . . . . 116.8 ft / 35.6 m  
Height . . . . . 33.8 ft / 11.8 m  
Wingspan . . . . . 99.8 ft / 30.4 m  
Horizontal tail span . . . . . 42.8 ft / 13.05 m  
Power plant . . . . . 4 T56-A-14 Allison turboprops



Dear MPA Members,

*I am proud to announce that we have just uploaded the new P-3 Orion Research Group website!!*

*Besides a completely new layout we added an important new feature: our P-3 Aircraft Location History Report (ALHR) has now been published online! This report is giving the entire service life history for each individual P-3 Orion in the world. Our ALHR was last published eleven years ago in our "P-3 Orion Volume 2" booklet. Last year we decided that we will not publish a third booklet and instead we have now published the ALHR online. And there is more: it's our intention to publish an updated ALHR four times a year.*

*Another change to the website is the news section. In the past this wasn't refreshed as often as we wanted. It is our intention to publish new issues four times a year.*

*Please be advised that some sections of the new website are still under construction. And the text of other sections (like the history, variants and operators sections) still need to be updated. This will be done over the next few weeks. And of course we will be adding more photos to the existing pages over the next few weeks too.*

*We hope you will enjoy the new layout and especially the P-3 Aircraft Location History Report.*

Regards,  
Marco P.J. Borst and Jaap Dubbeldam  
P-3 Orion Research Group - The Netherlands

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# MPA

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**Check out the MPA website for up-to-date community news,  
member happenings and announcements!**

The 2013 Symposium website will be going live in the next few months,  
so keep an eye out for an email announcement with all the details!

### ***Haven't logged on in awhile?***

Log-in to our members only area on the Membership page of our website to access the secure member directory and online forums. Also, don't forget to update your contact information in your online profile each time you change locations or positions, or general contact info.

### **GOT GEAR?**

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*See you at the 2013 Symposium!*

### **Attention MPA Members, Command PAOs, and Corporate PAOs:**

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# MPA

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