

PLANESIDE

The Quarterly Magazine of the Maritime Patrol Association

2020: Issue 2



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Cover Photo

ATLANTIC OCEAN (March 29, 2020) - A P-8A Poseidon multi-mission aircraft assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 4, flies alongside the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) during a photo exercise, March 29, 2020. VP-4 is currently forward deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67, responsible for tactical control of deployed maritime patrol and reconnaissance squadrons throughout Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan Sua/Released)



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P-8
PROVEN
OVER LAND
OVER SEA
OVERALL



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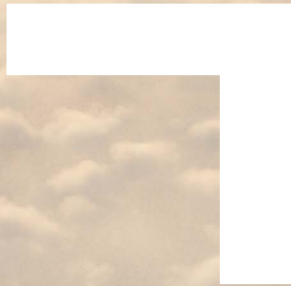
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Info & Benefits

What's in Your Wallet?

Renew your annual membership today and enjoy the benefits of free monthly member happy hours, a quarterly magazine, discounted event tickets and participation in an organization that was established to preserve the history and legacy of the Maritime Patrol & Reconnaissance community.

With more than 1,000 members across the country that represent the spectrum of pay grades, active and retired, uniformed and civilian, the member networking opportunities are invaluable. And the association also supports dependents of current and former community members through a partnership with the Wings Over America Scholarship Foundation. Since 2012, MPA has awarded more than \$51,000 in scholarships.

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Checking On Station



Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Warriors Past and Present,

Under normal circumstances, I would begin my spring submission to "Planeside" by regaling you with stories – most of them true – of yet another successful MPA Symposium in Jacksonville. Unfortunately, as you know all too well, these are not normal times. We made the difficult decision to cancel our annual gathering in Jacksonville due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have all had to make adjustments in our professional and personal lives, and Cheryl and I can only hope and pray that all of you remain safe and healthy as we navigate these difficult shoal waters together. We remain hopeful the community will be able to come together again in Whidbey Island this fall.

As testament to the community's resiliency, I can report that we have continued to make headway even in light of our shared challenges. While the Navy at large may have been restricted in movement, your Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force (MPRF) continued to operate unabated around the world. While others sheltered in place, your VP, VQ, and VUP squadrons overcame logistical challenges and delays to execute complex and highly dynamic deployment turnovers all while adhering to DoD

COVID guidelines to keep our Sailors and their families safe. Moreover, I cannot adequately express my appreciation for their understanding support, and flexibility and that of their families and loved ones during these unprecedented times. Most importantly, throughout it all we have maintained combat readiness.

We recently achieved a number of noteworthy milestones for Naval Aviation and the MPRF. First, VP-40 completed their P-8A Safe-For-Flight certification on 14 May and accepted their first Poseidon, the culminating event of a six-month transition from the P-3C Orion. VP-40 represents the 12th and final active component VP squadron to transition from the venerable P-3C Orion to the state-of-the-art P-8A Poseidon, a process that began eight years ago with VP-16 aboard NAS Jacksonville.

The P-3C to P-8A transition has been on glideslope, on course, maintaining the original schedule, all while continuing to meet VP Global Force Management and deployment obligations. The completion of all twelve active VP squadron transitions represents a landmark occasion in our storied branch of Naval Aviation, and I am very proud of the VP-40 Fighting Marlins' efforts to 'fight to the finish' during the final active duty P-3C deployment last fall. The last P-3C to return from that deployment, bureau number 162776, now resides at the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola. Secondly, and on the same day, Boeing delivered the 100th United States Navy P-8A aircraft to VP-30 in Jacksonville. "Triple Nickel" – Side number 555 – is the 94th addition to the Fleet's inventory of mission-capable aircraft, with six additional jets serving in developmental, operational test and evaluation roles. The P-8A has proven itself a long-range multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and coastal operations. A military derivative of the Boeing 737 Next-Generation, the P-8A combines superior performance and reliability with an advanced mission system that ensures maximum interoperability in the battlespace. With an impeccable service and safety record, the U.S. Navy recently surpassed 297,500 flight hours across the worldwide Fleet.

The recent success of the MPRF does not end there. Thirdly, two MQ-4C Tritons deployed to Guam earlier this year bringing a long anticipated early operational capability to the Fleet. The newest addition to the community's family of

systems, Triton entered its operational phase last month and rapidly proved itself a valuable asset across the Indo-Pacific Theater of operations. Providing persistent Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) to fleet and combatant commanders, the appearance of the MQ-4C has the potential to be a game changer in maritime operations.

The Triton is operated and maintained by VUP-19, the Navy's first dedicated Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) squadron. The men and women of "Big Red" are integrating Triton into a series of missions in support of multiple task forces across the Indo-Pacific theater that showcase its unprecedented endurance. Operating at high-altitude for nearly 24 hours at a time, the MQ-4C is proving the perfect complement to the P-8A Poseidon. The pairing of a high-altitude persistent spotter with multi-mission shooter is the epitome of long-range maritime lethality.

As I reflect on the MPRF's hard work over the last several years, I am extremely proud of how far our community has come, and more importantly, where we are headed. It is important that we acknowledge the incredible diligence and tremendous dedication of so many that have made these programs a success. The Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force is not just completing a transition from one platform to another, but also a fundamental transformation in the way we operate. What an honor and inspira-

tion it is to see the completion of these three momentous achievements in the span of a few weeks, and to acknowledge that it would not have been possible without the vision and dedication of all those that have gone before. Those of us still in uniform truly do stand on the shoulders of giants.

With the end of my tour as Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Group in sight, I want to thank each of you who have been involved in architecting and supporting our Family of Systems transformation. It has been a distinct honor and great privilege to serve the men and women of the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force (MPRF). I will turn over the reins to RDML Lance Scott in a small ceremony in Norfolk on 18 June 2020. The community remains in very capable hands as Lance, and his bride Elizabeth take the conn. For now, and into the future, your MPRA community will continue to fly, fight, lead, and win!

With great respect,

Pete Garvin
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Group/
Patrol and Reconnaissance Group Pacific



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Wings Over America (WOA) administers the Maritime Patrol Association (MPA) scholarship. Applicants who are eligible for the MPA scholarship will also be considered for available WOA scholarships. Application for the 2019 award year will open in October 2019.



In the News



Boeing Delivers 100th P-8A Poseidon Built for the U.S. Navy



SEATTLE — The U.S. Navy received its 100th P-8A aircraft from Boeing on May 14 as the global fleet, which also includes the Indian navy and the Australian and U.K. air forces, approaches 300,000 flight hours of hunting submarines and providing aerial reconnaissance capabilities around the world, the company said in a release.

"We're honored by the Navy's faith and confidence in our employees and the P-8 system," said Stu Voboril, vice president and program manager. "Our focus has been, and will be, on delivering the world's best maritime patrol aircraft, bar none."

The P-8 is a long-range multimission maritime patrol aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and coastal operations. A military derivative of the Boeing 737 next-generation airplane, the P-8 combines performance and reliability with an advanced mission system that ensures maximum interoperability in the battle space.

This is the 94th mission-capable airplane to enter the Navy fleet, with six additional jets used as engineering manufacturing development test aircraft. The 100th fully operational delivery is scheduled for later this year. Boeing has also delivered 12 jets to the Royal Australian Air

Force, two to the U.K.'s Royal Air Force and eight P-8Is to the Indian navy. Multiple U.S. Navy squadrons have deployed with the P-8A Poseidon, and the Indian navy and Royal Australian Air Force are conducting missions with the P-8 as well. .

★
By Seapower Magazine Staff, May 14, 2020

The 100th P-8A Poseidon built for the U.S. Navy departs. Boeing Co. Photo courtesy of Seapower Magazine.



VP-40 Completes Fleet’s Final Active Duty P-8A Transition

The Patrol Squadron (VP) 40 Fighting Marlins successfully completed transition from the P-3C Orion to the P-8A Poseidon, the Navy’s newest maritime patrol aircraft, on May 14, 2020.

VP-40 began the P-8A platform transition in November 2019 following its return to Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island after completing the Navy’s final active duty P-3C deployment. On this land-mark deployment, the Fighting Marlins made significant contributions to international maritime security while conducting sustained operations from three continents, marking the conclusion of VP-40’s forward-deployed P-3C operations that began in 1968.

The squadron completed the last of its nine P-3C aircraft transfers with the delivery of aircraft 162776 to the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Fla., and then commenced P-8A transition training under the instruction of VP-30, the Navy’s Patrol and Reconnaissance Fleet Replacement Squadron based out of NAS Jacksonville. VP-30 has been conducting squadron transitions to the P-8A since 2012 utilizing a team of military and civilian maintenance and aircrew professionals.

The first phase of the transition consisted of classroom, simulator, and aircraft ground training over the course of two months, and took place at NAS Whidbey Island.

“Though our aircraft has changed, our vision has stayed the same,” said Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 2nd Class Sarah Moore. “As every sailor learns different aspects of the job, and they support our Marlin family. Achieving our shared goals through teamwork has directly resulted in a successful transition from P-3C to P-8A.”

The second phase of the transition introduced in-flight training in addition to continued simulator, classroom, and ground training, and was executed as a three-month detachment to NAS Jacksonville that concluded with a fleet-model performance in the Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection. During this phase, the Fighting Marlins also received tactical instruction and training support from other Jacksonville-based commands, including the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Weapons School and the VP-26 Tridents.

“The P-8 operates very differently from the P-3, but the fundamentals of being a pilot remain the same,” said Lt. Alan Thornhill, a pilot with VP-40. “The aircraft has a lot more technology [than the P-3C] and can provide its pilots an immense amount of information. Knowing what information is important and relevant at any given moment still takes practice and training. Automation makes the plane fly more safely but is limited by the understanding and ability of the person managing the automation to make safe and timely decisions. We still focus heavily on the mantra of “aviate, navigate, communicate” to keep ourselves caged on the important details of whatever phase of flight we are in.”

The third and final phase consisted of advanced training, evaluation, and inspections led by the VP-30.1 transition team in Whidbey Island. Support was also provided by other Whidbey Island-based commands, including Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 10 and the VP-46 Grey Knights. For the aircrew, this final phase culminated in nine aircrews successfully conducting exercise torpedo attacks on a subsurface training target and in all aircrew achieving positional qualifications in the aircraft. For the maintenance professionals of VP-40, this culminated in the successful completion of the Maintenance Program Assist inspection and subsequent Safe for Flight certification, signifying the completion of the transition and VP-40’s ability to independently operate as a P-8A squadron.

“The VP-40 Fighting Marlins sustained their energy, motivation, and focus through seven months of rigorous training,” said Cmdr. Joseph Parsons, VP-40’s Executive Officer. “Our Sailors were consistently recognized by the VP-30 team for their positive attitude, extensive preparation, and exceptional performance.”



OAK HARBOR Wash. (15 May 2020) VP-40 Sailors pose for a photograph in front of a P-8A Poseidon aircraft. VP-40 is the final active duty Squadron to transition from the P-3C Orion aircraft to the P-8A Poseidon. VP-40 completed its transition 14 May 2020 on Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.(U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communicaton Specialist 2nd Class Jakoeb VanDahlen/Released)

The squadron qualified 56 Collateral Duty Inspectors, more than twice the minimum amount of this advanced maintenance qualification required for squadron certification. 8 Sailors received designations as Safe for Flight aircraft certifiers, 9 as Quality Assurance Representatives, 12 as Patrol Plane Commanders, and 9 as Tactical Coordinators.

“These advanced qualifications typically require 12-18 months to achieve in a normal training environment, but were completed in only seven months thanks to the dedication and hard work of each VP-40 Sailor,” said Parsons.

With transition complete, VP-40 is now preparing to execute forward-deployed operations across the globe

and across all Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance mission areas, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and search and rescue.

“The hard work of our Sailors and the Sailors of VP-30 allowed us to complete this transition process so seamlessly,” said Cmdr. Matt McKerring, VP-40’s Commanding Officer. “Once again, VP-40 has accomplished our mission successfully and on schedule regardless of any obstacles or challenges. After more than 50 years with the P-3C Orion, the Fighting Marlins are ready to tackle another 50 years with the P-8A Poseidon.”

★
By VP-40 Public Affairs

In the News



OUSDI Director for ISR visits Patrol Squadron NINE

KANEOHE BAY, HI., Feb. 2020 - On February 9th, Brigadier General Leslie A. Beavers, USAF, visited members of Patrol Squadron NINE (VP-9) Golden Eagles at Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay Hawaii (MCBH) in support of a Homeland Defense Detachment. During her visit, VP-9 aircrew showcased the capabilities the P-8A Poseidon provides to the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) mission.

Brig. Gen. Beavers currently serves as the Deputy Director for ISR Enterprise Capabilities within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Intelligence & Security), Director for Defense Intelligence, (Strategy, Programs & Resources). Her office oversees the development, resourcing, requirements, and acquisition of Military Intelligence Program funds necessary to support DoD and national intelligence related capabilities.

LCDR Lex Smith, the Officer in Charge of VP-9's Homeland Defense Detachment, described the importance of this visit as an invaluable opportunity for the Maritime community.

"This occasion gave us the chance to express to our senior leadership the capabilities that drive our mission effectiveness, but also increases our lethality as a force. As a vital Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance asset, it's important that our leaders understand what the P-8A is capable of accomplishing."

VP-9 operates the P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft responsible for conducting Anti-Submarine Warfare, Maritime Domain Awareness, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, Anti-Surface Warfare, and Search-and-Rescue missions.

VP-9 is currently responsible for maintaining the Homeland Defense Detachment in MCBH Kaneohe Bay Hawaii for the U.S. THIRD Fleet area of responsibility in the Pacific.



By **LTJG Forrest Cooke, VP-9 Public Affairs**



Above: MCBH KANEOHE, Hawaii (Feb. 2020) LCDR Lex Smith, the Officer in Charge of VP-9's Homeland Defense Detachment, escorts Brig. Gen. Leslie A. Beavers during a tour of the P-8A Poseidon. (U.S. Navy photo by LTJG Leland Hertig)



Left: MCBH KANEOHE, Hawaii (Feb. 2020) P-8A Poseidon aircraft assigned to VP-9 Golden Eagles on the flight line in Hawaii. (U.S. Navy photo by LTJG Leland Hertig)



VP-4 Participates in Tunisia’s IADE

DJERBA, Tunisia – The “Skinny Dragons” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 4, currently assigned to Commander Task force 67, participated in the International Aerospace & Defense Exhibition (IADE) 2020 March 4-8.

The Tunisia IADE 2020 provides a forum for international leaders in aerospace and defense to develop partnerships.

One VP-4 P-8A Poseidon multi-mission aircraft and its crew made the journey from Naval Air Station Sigonella to represent U.S. naval aviation at the inaugural event.

“The Exhibition allowed our aircrew and maintenance to interact with their counterparts from the armed services of regional allies and partner nations,” said Lt. j.g Thomas Chretien, a pilot assigned to VP-4.

“Fostering these sort of relationships with partner nations helps promote stability and international cooperation in the region.”

The Skinny Dragons showcased the advanced capabilities of the U.S. Navy’s premiere maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft to a number of civilian visitors and regional military officials attending the event.

“The opportunity to meet with international visitors along with civilian and military leaders was a true honor,” said Lt. Andrew Kriley, VP-4’s detachment officer in charge.

“The people of Tunisia we met were very enthusiastic

and our aircrew and maintainers were happy to represent naval aviation at the IADE.”

Among the distinguished guests present at the event, VP-4 Sailors had the opportunity to meet Donald Blome, United States ambassador to Tunisia as he made his way around the exhibition.

The IADE was just one of the many activities the Skinny Dragons conduct to support the collective security interests and interoperability of U.S. allies and partners in the region.

Task Force 67s official mission is to provide responsive, interoperable, and expeditionary combat ready maritime patrol aircraft and supporting forces to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet (CNE-CNA-C6F), NATO and Unified Commanders to conduct effective Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), maintain Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), enhance regional stability, promote cooperative maritime safety and security, and be decisive while conducting overseas contingency operations.

★
By Patrol Squadron (VP) FOUR Public Affairs

Photo courtesy of VP-4.



CTF-72 Concludes Royal Australian Navy FCP 2020

AUSTRALIAN COAST – Commander Task Force (CTF) 72 wrapped up its participation in the Australian navy’s Fleet Certification Period 2020 (FCP20), March 7.

CTF-72 dispatched a P8-A Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft (MPRA) from Patrol Squadron (VP) 45 to assist with the Royal Australian Navy’s (RAN) first major exercise of the year.

Similar to the U.S. Navy’s FCP, the exercise focuses on warfighting at a high level and ensures operational fleet readiness.

The P8-A Poseidon aircraft, as well as a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) P-8A aircraft, and a Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) P-3 aircraft were tasked with testing the Task Group’s readiness against airborne combatants.

“Taking part in the Royal Australian Navy’s Fleet Certification Period has been an excellent opportunity to exercise interoperability with our Royal Australian Air

Force and Royal New Zealand Air Force maritime patrol counterparts,” said Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Chesney, officer in charge of VP-45’s Poseidon crew. “Over the course of the detachment we conducted multiple scenarios of anti-submarine warfare, allowing for adequate mid-intensity warfare techniques.”

Patrol Squadron 45, based in Jacksonville, Florida, is deployed to Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, Japan. The squadron is conducting maritime patrol and reconnaissance as well as theatre outreach operations within U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

As the U.S. Navy’s largest numbered fleet, 7th Fleet interacts with 35 other maritime nations to build maritime partnerships that foster maritime security, promote stability and prevent conflict.

★
by Seaman Thomas Higgins, VP-45 Public Affairs



AUSTRALIA (Mar. 07, 2020)
Patrol Squadron (VP) 45 sailors pose for a photo with members of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAFF) During the Australian navy’s Fleet Certification Period (FCP) 2020. (US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Thomas A. Higgins)

Community

Commodore Celebrates Final Flight with VP-5

Jacksonville, Fla.— Captain Craig Mattingly, Commodore of Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing (CPRW) 11, flew his last flight as a Tactical Coordinator (TACCO) on the P-8A with a crew from the "Mad Foxes" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 5, Mar. 5.

Capt. Mattingly assumed command of CPRW-11 June 2018 as 57th Commodore of the Wing. For the last 21 months, Capt. Mattingly has commanded six P-8A Poseidon squadrons and their associated Mobile Tactical Operations Centers (MTOC) based out of Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. He will be ceremoniously relieved by Capt. Matthew Pottenburgh, Mar. 12.

The "Mad Foxes" helped celebrate Capt. Mattingly's final flight with him sitting as the crew's TACCO for a training flight based out of NAS Jacksonville. Upon their return, the Commodore had a traditional Naval Aviation send off with a healthy dousing of water and handshakes from many of Sailors and Officers that served under him.

"It's always great fun to congratulate someone on their success in our community, and I'm glad the Commodore's final flight was with us," said Lt. Sam Reber, one of the "Mad Fox" pilots who dumped water on the Commodore following the flight. "It's a great tradition that reminds me a lot of why we take such pride in what we do."

Capt. Mattingly enlisted in the U.S. Navy as an aviation anti-submarine warfare operator in 1987 before earning his commission upon graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1995. Capt. Mattingly earned his "Wings of Gold" and was designated a Naval Flight Officer in 1997 before his initial operational tour with Patrol Squadron (VP) 8, out of Brunswick, Maine. Following that, he served as a Flag Aide to Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet and various other commands before taking command of Patrol Squadron (VP) 9, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Capt. Mattingly's shore tours include Naval Flight Officer Instructor and Fleet Naval Aviation Training and Operating Procedures Standardization (NA-TOPS) Evaluator with VP-30, Fleet Replacement Squadron, as well as Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Training Systems integrated product team lead for P-8A, P-3C, and EP-3 platforms in Patuxent River, Maryland. Capt. Mattingly has accumulated more than 3,800 hours aboard Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA).

The "Mad Foxes" are based out of Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently taking part in the year-long Fleet Readiness Training Program (FRTF) in preparation for their next operational deployment. ★

By Lt. Reed Arce, VP-5 Public Affairs



Above: JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Mar. 5, 2020) Commanding Officer of Patrol Squadron (VP) 5, Cmdr. Carl E. White III, congratulates Capt. Craig Mattingly, Commodore of Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing (CPRW) 11, after his last flight at Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. For the last 21 months, Capt. Mattingly commanded six P-8A Poseidon squadrons and their associated Mobile Tactical Operations Centers (MTOC) based out of Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. He will be ceremoniously relieved by Capt. Matthew Pottenburgh, Mar. 12.

Left: JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Mar. 5, 2020) Sailors assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 pose in front of a P-8A Poseidon with Capt. Craig Mattingly, Commodore of Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing (CPRW) 11 at Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. For the last 21 months, Capt. Mattingly commanded six P-8A Poseidon squadrons and their associated Mobile Tactical Operations Centers (MTOC) based out of Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. He will be ceremoniously relieved by Capt. Matthew Pottenburgh, Mar. 12.



VP-4 Honors Women’s Heritage

SIGONELLA, Sicily —
An all-female crew from Patrol Squadron (VP) 4 paid homage to women's heritage by conducting an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) mission in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, March 20, 2020.

VP-4 continues to fly regular missions throughout 6th Fleet in support of maritime security.

“Today's flight crew represents the many contributions women have made in the Navy,” said Naval Aircrewman (Operator) 2nd Class Meghan Cooke. “My grandmother was in the Navy WAVES program during World War II, and I am proud to represent modern women in the military.”

In 1942 Congress enacted the Women's Reserve, better known as WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), to expedite the war effort by replacing men serving on shore duty, releasing them for duty at sea. Upwards of 30 percent of the WAVES worked in naval aviation as parachute testers, air traffic controllers, and training pilots.

Over the past, 78 years the Navy has significantly changed its policy toward women in aviation. In 1973, the Navy ended the restriction that prevented women from serving in training and non-combat related aviation. In 1994, the barrier preventing women from serving aboard warships and flying combat missions was lifted.

“I am thankful to have been raised in a country where I don't notice if I am the only female in the room or on a flight,” said Lt. Jennifer Hogan, a naval flight officer and the operation mission commander. “It's amazing to lead a female crew knowing, as a country, how far we have come.”

The ISR mission took the crew over the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. The operation allowed the crew to increase situational awareness of the maritime domain and put their training in the P-8A ISR mission set to use in real time.

“It is an honor to fly among these remarkable, capable women who challenge, support, and train each other to achieve new heights,” said Lt. Jillian Lewis, a pilot assigned to VP-4.

VP-4 is forward deployed to Signonella, Italy to support regional security and demonstrate commitment to allies and partners throughout Europe and Africa.

“Planning out such a flight might have been more challenging in the past, but VP-4 has various, fully qualified women to fill each one of the nine crew positions,” said Cmdr. Wayne Lewis, commanding officer of VP-4. “This flight was planned to honor the past and inspire the future.”

In Dec. 2015, all combat roles in the military were opened to women, ensuring that the military is able to recruit, train, and retain the nation's most capable talent.

“We carry the torch for the women who came before us,” said Naval Aircrewman (Operator) 3rd Class Micha Deason. “Women today continue to push boundaries and achieve greatness. I am honored to take part in the new generation of women in the military.”

These women are able to inspire people in their lives, even influencing their decisions to serve.

“As the youngest of five girls, I watched each of my sisters choose military service,” said Lt.j.g. Taryn Puro. “It was always inspiring to me how they optimized the opportunities the military has to offer. In the future, I hope to be able to inspire others as my sisters have inspired me.”



Story by Petty Officer 2nd Class Juan Sua, VP-4 Public Affairs



SIGONELLA, Sicily (March 20, 2020) Sailors assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 4, pose for a photo prior to an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance mission over the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. All crew positions on the aircraft were occupied by female aviators in homage to women’s history month. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan S. Sua/Released)



Community

NJROTC Cadets Tour Naval Aviation Careers with VP-5

Jacksonville, Fla. — Twenty-seven cadets that are enrolled in the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) at Robert E. Lee high school were welcomed aboard Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville by the “Mad Foxes” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 5, to tour the P-8A Poseidon and training facilities used by the squadron, Mar. 6.

While visiting, the cadets had the opportunity to speak with Sailors and meet with the combat aircrew in this deployable squadron. NJROTC visits are an excellent opportunity for the cadets interested in the aviation community to get face-time with those who have real-world experience operating worldwide. While touring the hangar, a few of the “Mad Foxes” were able to pose for photos with the cadets, and answer questions about their daily life within the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance (MPRA) community.

“Speaking with young cadets is always a great opportunity for not only the future of Naval Aviation, but the Navy as a whole,” said Lt. Thomas Logan, a “Mad Fox” pilot. “To introduce the importance of what we do to eager young students that show an interest in an admirable career gives me high hopes for the future.”

Lt. Logan spoke with the cadets while giving them a tour of where the aircrew pre-flight and inspect their flight gear before each flight. The students enjoyed getting a look into the window of Naval Aviation and showed excitement while trying on helmets and being briefed on various survival equipment each crewmember is trained to operate.

The “Mad Foxes” are based out of Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently taking part in the year-long Fleet Readiness Training Program (FRTF) in preparation for their next operational deployment. ★

By Lt. Reed Arce, VP-5 Public Affairs



Above: 200306-N-SU685-0107 JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Mar. 6, 2020) Cadets enrolled in the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) at Robert E. Lee high school posed with members of Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 for a photo after touring a P-8A Poseidon and the VP-5 spaces. The “Mad Foxes” are based out of Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently taking part in the year-long Fleet Readiness Training Program (FRTF) in preparation for their next operational deployment.

Left: JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Mar. 6, 2020) U.S. Navy Aircrew Survival Equipmentman 3rd Class, Luis Reyes, speaks to cadets enrolled in the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) at Robert E. Lee high school about the survival gear used by pilots, flight officers, and aircrewmen at Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. The “Mad Foxes” are based out of Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently taking part in the year-long Fleet Readiness Training Program (FRTF) in preparation for their next operational deployment.



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VP-4 Participates in Dynamic Manta 2020

SIGONELLA, Sicily — Crews operating Patrol Squadron (VP) 4's P-8A Poseidon aircraft participated in Exercise Dynamic Manta 2020 (DYMA20), a NATO led maritime exercise Feb. 24 – March 6, 2020.

Dynamic Manta, an annual exercise hosted by NATO's Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM) took place in the Mediterranean Sea off the southern coast of Italy. The overarching purpose of the exercise was to provide operational training in anti-submarine warfare and anti-surface warfare in order to enhance overall multi-lateral operations among NATO allies.

"Dynamic Manta has been a fast-paced and challenging exercise that has given us the opportunity to fine tune our skills," said Lt. Tessa Hann, a naval flight officer assigned to VP-4. "It has presented scenarios that allow us to grow as individual operators and as a crew. It is always both a pleasure to work with our NATO counterparts, and it provides valuable training that ensures we will have mission success if we are called upon in real world scenarios."

Participating nations included Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. VP-4's two P-8A Poseidon aircraft, currently forward deployed out of Naval Air Station Sigonella, and assigned to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 67, were the only U.S. assets to participate in the exercise.

"Dynamic Manta was a great opportunity to further our interoperability with partner nations," said Caitlyn Jensen, a pilot assigned to VP-4. "The real world scenarios resulted in challenging coordinated operations flights which allowed us to put our training to the test."

To support the simulated multi-threat environment, maritime patrol aircraft worked with surface vessels to locate the simulated adversarial submarines. A total of five maritime patrol aircraft and eight helicopters from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States operated with surface ships from Canada, Spain, Italy, Turkey, France, and Greece to locate, track, and conduct simulated attacks on submarines from Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, under the control of NATO Submarine command.

"Dynamic Manta provided an excellent opportunity to improve both our P-8 aircrew's, but also the collective NATO teams anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities by flexing NATO tactical ASW doctrine against some very challenging targets," said Capt. William Pennington, commander, CTF 67. "The exercise showcased the collaborative approach required for effective ASW operations, plus the strategic nature of NAS Sigonella, as maritime patrol aircraft from the US, France, Germany, Turkey, and Canada executed missions from here."

Task Force 67's official mission is to provide responsive, interoperable, and expeditionary combat ready maritime patrol aircraft and supporting forces to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet (CNE-CNA-C6F), NATO and Unified Commanders to conduct effective Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), maintain Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), enhance regional stability, promote cooperative maritime safety and security, and be decisive while conducting overseas contingency operations.

★
By Petty Officer 2nd Class Juan Sua, VP-4 Public Affairs



SIGONELLA, Italy (Feb 27, 2020) A P-8A Poseidon Aircraft assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 4 comes in for a landing at Naval Air Station Sigonella following a flight in support of Dynamic Manta 2020. Dynamic Manta is an annual exercise hosted by NATO's Allied Maritime Command to provide training in anti-submarine warfare and anti-surface warfare in order to enhance overall multi-lateral operations among NATO allies.(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan Sua)

SIGONELLA, Italy (Feb 25, 2020) Lt. Stefan Knight, a naval flight officer assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 4, speaks to the press about VP-4's involvement in Dynamic Manta 2020, Feb. 25, 2020. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan Sua)





VP-5 Mad Foxes Conduct Torpedo Training Flight

Jacksonville, Fla.— Combat aircrew from Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 completed a training flight with a practice torpedo loaded aboard their Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft, the P-8A Poseidon, Feb. 28. As part of proficiency and training for both aircrew, and aviation ordnancemen, the squadron occasionally conducts readiness training flights employing these exercise-only weapons at designated ranges at sea.

Combat Air Crew (CAC) 8 departed Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville with a Recoverable Exercise Torpedo (REXTORP) inside the aircraft's weapons bay in route to the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluations Center (AUTEC) Weapons Range. These types of flights provide crucial training, and practice, for the "Mad Fox" ordnance team on the ground as they stay current on proper weapon pre-flight and post-flight procedures. Additionally, the aircrew can run simulated attack scenarios in flight for real-life proficiency, as compared to a conducting the training synthetically, in a simulator.

"Flying with practice weapons aboard is an excellent training tool for our crews, and it involves a lot of responsibility, as well as careful planning, to execute correctly

and safely", said Lt. Ridgely Riggs, the Aircraft Commander for CAC-8.

The MK-54 REXTORP is a lightweight practice torpedo which is buoyant by design, allowing it to be recovered through coordination with surface ships following employment. This anti-submarine training capability is one method that allows Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft to remain fully trained, and worldwide deployable.

The "Mad Foxes" are based out of Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently taking part in the year-long Fleet Readiness Training Program (FRTTP) in preparation for their next operational deployment.

★
By Lt. Reed Arce, VP-5 Public Affairs

(Right) U.S. Navy Sailors assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 conduct loading operations of a Recoverable Exercise Torpedo (REXTORP) before a training flight at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. The "Mad Foxes" of VP-5 are currently taking part in the year-long Fleet Readiness Training Program (FRTTP) in preparation for their next operational deployment.

(Left) U.S. Navy Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Marcus Walton, assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 5, conducts loading operations of a Recoverable Exercise Torpedo (REXTORP) before a training flight. The "Mad Foxes" of VP-5 are currently taking part in the year-long Fleet Readiness Training Program (FRTTP) in preparation for their next operational deployment.



Mad Foxes Continue to Excel at CWTP

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Despite the ongoing Corona Virus and Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 continues to operate on all levels while maintaining force health protection as their top priority. The "Mad Foxes" of VP-5 have taken prudent measures to limit COVID-19's spread, while also ensuring squadron members are trained and ready to defend the nation.

These efforts proved fruitful when the Mad Foxes received top marks with the completion of VP-5's Conventional Weapons Technological Proficiency Inspection (CWTP) that took place throughout March and April. CWTP is a required multi-day inspection, used to evaluate a squadron's maintenance department and the overall proficiency of the squadron to handle, inspect, load, and employ ordnance.

The Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Weapons School (MPRWS) typically administers the inspection in three phases. Phase One is an administrative review of all required programs. Phase Two includes a series of aircraft preflights and release and control checks, where the weapons and flares are inspected, checked for any

discrepancies, and loaded onto the aircraft. Phase Three includes a torpedo exercise training flight to review the aircrews' procedures for employment of both the countermeasures and torpedoes in-flight. Although the third phase was heavily delayed due to COVID-19 concerns, the squadron returned in the second week of April to complete their torpedo exercise flight and complete the inspection.

The Mad Fox team passed the inspection quickly and efficiently. "The ordnance shop did an outstanding job of working together and getting the job done", stated VP-5's Ordnance Officer or "Gunner", Chief Warrant Officer 3 Luis Aponteramos. "Bravo Zulu to AO2 Snyder, AO3 Washington, and AO3 Nichols for their hard work during this inspection."

The Mad Foxes are based out of Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently taking part in the year-long Fleet Readiness Training Program (FRTTP) in preparation for their next operational deployment.

★
By LT Reed Arce, VP-5 Public Affairs

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VP-16 Holds Aerial Change of Command

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (NNS) -- The "War Eagles" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 16 held an aerial change of command ceremony on May 1 in Jacksonville.

Cmdr. Michael P. Bukolt Jr., from Syracuse, N.Y., was relieved by Cmdr. Kevin Kraemer, from Coral Springs, Fla., as commanding officer of VP-16. Kraemer will become the 66th commanding officer of VP-16.

Bukolt has inspired the squadron to excel since he assumed command in June 2019. Under his leadership, the War Eagles, during their most recent home cycle, flew nearly 3,000 hours in support of strategic U.S. interests and combatant commander priorities. In addition, VP-16 earned the prestigious Battle E and Arleigh-Burke awards.

It has been the highlight of my career to lead these hyper-successful warriors over the past year," said Bukolt, who will depart VP-16 and will be joining Commander, Task Force 69. "At no time did leadership ask the War Eagles to answer the call, and the result end up as anything other than absolute success. I am thrilled that they were recognized in so many ways, as the Sailors really deserve it. I cannot wait to see all the great things to come from VP-16 in the future."

Kraemer previously served as an instructor pilot in VP-40,

fleet replacement squadron instructor pilot for VP-30, assistant navigator onboard the USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70) and operations officer for VP-26 and acquisition placement officer at Navy Personnel Command, before taking over as executive officer of VP-16.

"I am absolutely humbled, honored, and grateful for the opportunity to serve as the commanding officer of VP-16," said Kraemer. "I look forward to continuing the success of Skipper Bukolt and leading the War Eagles over the horizon."

The squadron reports to Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing, which serves as the Navy's premier provider for airborne Anti-Submarine Warfare, Anti-Surface Warfare, and Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance operations.

★
By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Mathew C. Lombardo, VP-16 Public Affairs

Below: CDR Kevin Kraemer (left) relieved CDR Mike Bukolt (right) in an aerial change of command ceremony. Pictured with CAPT Matt Pottenburgh, Commander, Patrol & Reconnaissance Wing ELEVEN (center).



Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) NINETEEN Changes Commanders

Jacksonville, Florida (NNS) -- The commanding officer of the Navy's Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19, transferred leadership during the time-honored change of command ceremony, April 30 aboard Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville.

The time-honored tradition of the change of command traces its origins back to long before the United States became a nation. It serves as an in-person handoff from one commander to another in a show of unity, good order and coordination in front of those under the command.

Cmdr. Kim DaCosta-Azar, a native of Tarrytown, New York, turned over responsibility to Cmdr. Michael Minervini, a native of Chicago, after two years of leading the command of more than 500 Sailors.

DaCosta-Azar served a unique role by leading a geographically dispersed command in NAS Jacksonville and detachment sites in Andersen Air Base, Guam and Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu, California. Her leadership contributed to the squadron's first certification for deployment. Additionally, she is responsible for the operations of the Broad Area Maritime Surveillance Demonstrator (BAMS-D), the predecessor to the MQ-4C Triton Unmanned Air System (UAS).

According to DaCosta-Azar, the past two years has been about building a foundation for the Navy's very first MQ-4C squadron. During this time VUP-19 accomplished many milestones to include the establishment of the following positions: Air Vehicle Operators (AVO), Tactical Coordinators (TACCO), Mission Payload Operators (MPO), and Triton maintainers in support of fleet operations. DaCosta-Azar added that flying Triton is very different, "while the basics of the piloting are the same, there is a complexity that comes with fly unmanned aircraft." Nearly 100 AVOs and MPOs have qualified under her command.

"The people are what make Triton successful, my personnel do extraordinary things with challenging resources, because this is not your typical aerial platform," said DaCosta-Azar. "I cannot express in words how proud I am of the Big Red Team. We are charting a new course in Naval Aviation. There has been a lot of discovery learning, but all of the Sailors of VUP-19 have answered the call at every turn to show up on station. We have arrived and I look forward to seeing what they will accomplish in the future under Commander Minervini's leadership." DaCosta-Azar led her team Sailors through the first-ever operational readiness evaluation for Triton, executing

over 300 flight hours of two MQ-4C aircraft, and established permanent presence for the unmanned system in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

Following her assignment at VUP-19, DaCosta-Azar will report to the U.S. State Department to work for the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation in the Office of Counter Proliferation Initiatives.

Minervini praised his predecessor for her sound leadership and impact she had on the community.

"Skipper DaCosta-Azar transformed both VUP-19 and the future of the MQ-4C Triton," said Minervini. "Doubtlessly, her leadership proved critical in laying the foundation for Unmanned Aerial Systems as a new problem-set for America's enemies and a boon to Naval Aviation."

VUP-19 was established on Oct. 1, 2013 and commissioned three years later as the U.S. Navy's first unmanned maritime patrol squadron, VUP-19 draws its lineage from and honors the rich history of Patrol Squadron (VP-19) "Big Red" legacy. The squadron reports to Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing (CPRW) 11, which is also based aboard NAS Jacksonville. The mission of VUP-19 is the sustained deployment of the MQ-4C Triton in support of Combatant Commanders around the globe.

★
From Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic Public Affairs



Events»Chapter Events

Jacksonville Chapter

VP of Region:
Jim Burt

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



Memphis Chapter

VP of Region:
Dan Starsinic

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



Norfolk Chapter

VP of Region:
Brian Solano

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



Pax River Chapter

VP of Region:
Dan Papp

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



Events»Chapter Events

San Diego Chapter

VP of Region:
Teddy Kribbs

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



Washington DC Chapter

VP of Region:
Luke Reid

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



Whidbey Chapter

VP of Region:
Bobby Mills

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



Moffett Chapter

VP of Region:
CAPT Tom Spink, USN (Ret.)

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



Events»Community

Due to COVID-19 limitations, the MPA Symposium in Jacksonville, Florida scheduled for May 13-15 was canceled.

Watch for more information at: www.maritimepatrolassociation.org

Events»Reunion Groups

Patron Four Five Association (VP-45)

Reunion Oct 7-11, 2020, Jacksonville, FL:

POC: Doug Mitchell

Email: poohbearmit@aol.com

Phone: (678)650-7500

Web: www.vp45association.org

VP-1 POPS (P-3 Orion Pioneers)

Join/Renew your VP-1 POPS Membership:

Check out membership information at: www.vp1pops.com

ANA Patriot Squadron, Boston, MA

Monthly Meeting & Lunch @ 11 am, last Saturday of the month at the museum: This

group operates a small naval aviation museum on the site of former NAS South Weymouth called the Shea Naval Aviation Museum. A number of members were formerly VP-92 and predecessor reserve patrol squadrons that were based at NAS South Weymouth.

For details see: www.anapatriotsquadron.org



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2020 NAS Brunswick Reunion Schedule

We are pleased to announce the schedule of events and pricing information for the 2020 NAS Brunswick Reunion, which will be held on 14-16 August, 2020. Highlights of this year's reunion include:

- Held concurrently with the Great State of Maine Airshow, including performances each day by the Blue Angels! Friday is an air show practice day, and there is no charge for admission. Saturday and Sunday requires paid admission to the airshow between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- A dedication ceremony of our newly refurbished P-3 static display on Friday at 4:00 p.m. VP-8 will lead the dedication ceremony as they contributed the majority share of the fundraising for the refurbishment. The P-3 static display will be painted in the livery of LC-85 in honor of the eight VP-8 aircrewman that were lost when their P-3B suffered a catastrophic mishap over Poland Spring, Maine on September 22nd, 1978.
- Food catering by Cook's Lobster and Ale House and a cash bar featuring sodas, cocktails, wine, and beer from the Flight Deck Brewing Company. Cook's Lobster and Ale House and Flight Deck Brewing Company are strong supporters of BNAM and Cook's is generously donating 10% of all food sales back to BNAM and Flight Deck Brewing Company is donating \$1 to BNAM for every beer sold during the Reunion. The Welcoming Reception on Friday night and the Airshow Parking Lot Party on Saturday afternoon will feature an ala carte, pay as you go menu and cash bar. The Reunion Banquet on Saturday night features fixed menu options and a cash bar and requires pre-paid food reservations in advance. Further details are contained below.
- VP-23 is hosting a squadron reunion on the sidelines of the NAS Brunswick reunion, and other squadrons are encouraged to do the same. Please send an e-mail to president@bnamuseum.org if you are interested in making arrangements for a squadron reunion.
- We expect to go-live with on-line reunion registration and Banquet meal reservations shortly after the New Year on our website at <https://bnamuseum.org>.
- We will host a four-ball scramble golf tournament on Sunday morning at an 18-hole course in the Mid-Coast Region if there is sufficient interest; please indicate on your Reunion registration if you are interested in playing.
- We recommend that you make lodging reservations early as the Great State of Maine Airshow will add demand to the normal tourist demand for lodging in the beauty of August in Maine. A list of Mid-Coast region lodging options is posted on pages xx-xx.



VP Images Around the Globe



WHIDBEY ISLAND, WA (Mar. 4, 2020) Prior to social distancing requirements, Cub Scout pack 4084 took a tour of one of VP-46's newest P-8A Poseidon aircraft.(Photo courtesy of VP-46.)



JACKSONVILLE, FL (April 13, 2020) - Our amazing Fighting Tigers PR Shop is working tirelessly creating masks for the Squadron to help protect our Sailors!Photo courtesy of VP-8.



SIGONELLA, Italy (April 07, 2020) An AGM-84D Harpoon missile as seen on a P-8A Poseidon aircraft following its installation during a proficiency exercise on Naval Air Station Sigonella. VP-4 is forward deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67, responsible for tactical control of deployed maritime patrol and reconnaissance squadrons throughout Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan S. Sua/Released)



KADENA AIR FORCE BASE, Guam (May 05, 2020) - AWO3 Kolten Wiechman from Patrol Squadron FOUR FIVE performs pre-flight procedures on a P-8A Poseidon aircraft. VP-45 is participating in 7th fleet integrated operations designed to coordinate and synchronize maritime operations in the Indo-Pacific. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Thomas A. Higgins/released)

SIGONELLA, Italy (April 04, 2020) Sailors assigned to VP-4 execute a plane wash evolution on a P-8A aircraft in preparation for a maintenance inspection onboard NAS Sigonella. VP-4 is currently forward deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet AOR and is assigned to CFT-67, responsible for tactical control of deployed maritime patrol and reconnaissance squadrons throughout Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by



Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan Sua)



WHIDBEY ISLAND, WA (April 29, 2020) - Commander Robert Woodards (left) relieved Commander Trumbull in VP-1's 76th 'Screaming Eagles' change of command ceremony.



JACKSONVILLE, FL (April 29, 2020) - It takes great pleasure to announce that LTJG Shaun P. Lillard of VP-26 was the winner of Chief of Naval Aviation Forces first-ever Aviation Intelligence and Cryptology Officer of the Year Award! The Aviation Intelligence and Cryptology Officer of the Year Award recognizes one officer who has made the most significant contributions to Naval Intelligence and Cryptologic Warfare support to Naval Aviation during the past year. The epitome of servant leadership, he wanted his entire Intel team to be recognized. Congratulations Shaun and Team Trident Intel! (Courtesy CPRW-11)



WHIDBEY ISLAND, WA (April 24, 2020) - CAPT Erin Osbourne, Commander, Patrol & Reconnaissance Wing TEN, awards CDR Brian Schneider in his outgoing change of command ceremony from VP-9. (Photo courtesy of VP-9)

KADENA AIR FORCE BASE, Guam (May 05, 2020) - AWO1 Chad Hanson from Patrol Squadron FOUR FIVE performs pre-flight procedures on a P-8A Poseidon aircraft. VP-45 is participating in 7th fleet integrated operations designed to coordinate and synchronize maritime operations in the Indo-Pacific. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Thomas A. Higgins/released)



WHIDBEY ISLAND, WA (April 24, 2020) - Members of VP-9's 'Golden Eagles' await the start of an unconventional change of command ceremony amid the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo courtesy of VP-9)



Capt. Matthew T. Pottenburgh, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing (CPRW) 11, observes as Cmdr. Ronald H. Rumfelt Jr., left, relieves Cmdr. Carl E. White III, right, as commanding officer during the change of command ceremony for Patrol Squadron VP-5 aerially above Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville in a P-8A Poseidon. VP-5 is part of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force, one of the oldest and most storied branches of Naval Aviation. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Sergio Montanez)



WHIDBEY ISLAND, WA (April 24, 2020) - Skinny Dragons being recognized at quarters to receive Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, Navy And Marine Corps Achievement Medals and Command Letters of Commendation. (Photo courtesy of VP-4)

On This Day in History: May 5, 1961

On May 5, 1961, the 'Mad Foxes' of Patrol Squadron (VP) FIVE assisted in the location and post-mission seaborne recovery of Commander Alan Shepard, the first American to fly in space aboard the Freedom 7 spacecraft of NASA's Project Mercury. #nflamf

---The Follow article re-published from smithsonianmag.com, May 5, 2011----

At 9:37 AM on May 5, 1961, the Freedom 7 spacecraft, now a Smithsonian artifact, was launched from Cape Canaveral, lobbing Mercury astronaut Alan Shepard Jr. (1923-1998) to an altitude of 116.5 miles. Shepard tested out the spacecraft's attitude control systems during the five minutes of weightlessness he had at the top of the trajectory, then he parachuted safely into the Atlantic Ocean, 303 miles downrange.

"The whole thing lasted 15 minutes and 28 seconds," says Michael Neufeld, curator in the Space History Division of the Air and Space Museum. "It was a short trip, but it gave a lot of confidence that the Mercury spacecraft was becoming ready to carry out the orbital mission."

The primary purpose of this mission was to put an American in space, but the Mercury Redstone sub-orbital flights, of which Freedom was one, were also intended to test the spacecraft's Mercury capsule and booster to make sure that the capsule would be ready for orbital flight. Another objective was to prove that astronauts were ready to fly in space, allaying concerns about their medical well-being. With the success of Shepard's flight, he became the second man in space, after the Soviet astronaut Yuri Gagarin, who completed an orbit of the Earth less than a month earlier on April 12, 1961. Shepard, by comparison, was launched on suborbital hop. "It wasn't as impressive as the Soviet accomplishment, clearly," says Neufeld, "on the other hand, the fact that the U.S. did the whole thing in full view of the press and the world—as opposed to Soviet secrecy—made a positive impression on a lot of people domestically and internationally." Especially since the success of the mission was not guaranteed at that point.

Alan Shepard was born in East Derry, New Hampshire on November 18, 1923. After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1944, Shepard served on a destroyer in WWII. After the war, Shepard went to flight school and received his wings in 1947. Afterwards, Shepard trained as a Navy test pilot and would work in that capacity throughout the 1950s until his selection as a Mercury astronaut in 1959. Project Mercury was the first human spaceflight program in the U.S. Out of the seven astronauts chosen for the program, Alan Shepard, Jr., John Glenn, Jr., and Virgil Ivan "Gus" Grissom, were selected as the first three to fly and concentrate on the Mercury Redstone mission. Of those three, Shepard was chosen to launch the Freedom 7.

"Shepard, I think was fundamentally chosen because he just came out as the best of the seven, as far as leadership of the program was concerned, the sharpest, the best trained of them," says Neufeld.

Mercury had two boosters (used to lift the spacecraft) and two mission profiles, one of which was to conduct these early flights. The Freedom 7 was launched in a smaller Redstone rocket and could be classified as just a suborbital hop, in preparation for the Mercury mission to put a man in orbit, which Glenn would do in February of 1962. But with its success, Shepard became the first American in space.



Astronaut Alan Shepard is lifted to safety with the assistance of US Marines after being spotted by a recovery crew aboard a VP-5 P-3 Orion in 1961.

Photos courtesy of VP-5 Public Affairs Office.



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