

# PLANESIDE

The Quarterly Magazine of the Maritime Patrol Association

2021: Issue 2





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### Cover Photo

NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Italy (Feb. 16, 2021) Mt. Etna lets off some steam in the background of P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft , assigned to the "Grey Knights" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, Feb. 16, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth 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. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts a full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national security interests and stability in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)



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## Info & Benefits

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# Checking On Station



Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Warriors Past and Present,

Last month, I had the privilege of hosting our community's annual Commander's Action Group and Naval Aviation Requirements Group virtually from Norfolk. Although conducted remotely via Secure Video Teleconference, it was inspiring to gather our community's leadership, including our Australian and UK partners, examine progress on our current "flight plan," and collaborate on priorities going forward. Despite our conference attendees being separated by thousands of miles, it was abundantly clear to me that the global Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force (MPRF) is thriving due to the incredible teamwork occurring across the enterprise.

You have heard it before but it bears repeating, "The U.S. Navy's fixed wing Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force represents the nation's only long-range, broad area search to engage airborne Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capability." In order to meet the very real 21st Century challenges presented by a renewed era of Great Power Competition, we rely heavily on our close relationship with Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) program managers and OPNAV resource sponsors to rapidly field

advanced capabilities that enable us to fight tonight and win, as well as maintain our edge into the future.

As P-8A Poseidons continue to roll off the Boeing production line each month, the global presence and reach of Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft grows. But make no mistake, the widespread support and interest in our community is the direct result of outstanding teamwork and the on-station performance of our active and reserve component aircrews. Employing an effective Family of Systems (FoS) approach, comprised of the P-8A Poseidon, EP-3E Aries, MQ-4C Triton, and TacMobile ground support, our US and Allied squadrons and aircrews stand the watch each and every day responding to myriad threats while providing Combatant Commanders and Fleet decision makers the common operational picture they require, and the rapid response capability to find, fix, and finish when necessary.

Our continued successes at home and abroad have led to tremendous congressional support, evidenced in lawmakers adding 11 P-8As to the Navy's 2021 and 2022 budget. This increase brings the U.S. total funded fleet of P-8As to 128, and gives us the inventory to recapitalize our reserve squadrons, VP-62 and VP-6g, to the Poseidon. CPRG/P is working closely with Commander, Naval Air Forces Reserve and the Maritime Support Wing to transition the Broadarrows and Totems to P-8A beginning in late 2022. These final two VP squadron transitions not only emphasize the importance of our reserve community as a force multiplier, but also solidifies the incredible active-reserve relationship that we in the MPRF have enjoyed for decades.

Working and flying together across the Family of Systems, active and reserve personnel continue operating from strategically located bases around the world, monitoring sea lines of communications to ensure freedom of navigation and the free-flow of commerce under international law, all while keeping watch for adversarial surface and subsurface activity. Synchronized with U.S. and coalition forces, we meet great power competition head-on to provide deterrence and cultivate peaceful resolution of disputes wherever possible. Distributed Maritime Operations

accurately describes the environment in which the P-8/EP-3/MQ-4/TacMobile teams thrive. While ASW is our primary mission area, new capabilities being fielded increase lethality and naval integration across the force. These tools allow MPRF aircrews to outpace the threat and excel on station no matter the mission or phase of conflict. Operating forward every day, in every major or minor contingency, they underpin our Navy's core missions of sea control and power projection.

To that end, I want to thank you for your continued support of Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aviation during these unprecedented times. COVID-19 has challenged humanity in unimaginable ways over this past year, but there are many reasons for optimism as we head into the summer months. As case counts decrease and widespread vaccination progresses, I remain confident we will finally be able to gather in person this fall in Whidbey Island. I look forward to connecting with many of you there. Until then, we will continue to Fly, Fight, Lead and Win!

With Great Respect,  
Lance Scott  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy  
Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Group/Patrol  
and Reconnaissance Group Pacific



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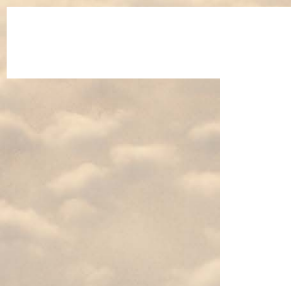
For more details, eligibility requirements, and to apply, visit:

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

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 2021 award year will open in October 2020.







**It's impossible to tell  
a wake from a wave.**

**Until it's not.**



**Maritime Patrol Association Awards \$15,000 in Scholarships**

Congratulations to the 2021 Maritime Patrol Association Scholarship Award Recipients! Each student was awarded \$1,000 towards their education costs for the 2021-2022 school year.

- Eilana Durkee**
- Breana Fay**
- Olivia O'Donoghue**
- Jacob Newlund**
- Cassandra Hansen**
- Sydney Long**
- Jessie Hearther**
- Tyler Pottenburgh**
- Andrew Albus**
- Bailey Kramarik**
- Brendan Kenny**
- Arianna Serow**
- Sarah McCarthy**
- Anna Gardella**
- Nathaniel Newlund**

To facilitate the MPA Scholarship Fund, MPA has partnered with the Wings Over America Scholarship Foundation, which offers college scholarships to dependents of military members from the US Navy's aviation community. The Foundation is funded solely through private and corporate contributions and has increased its support of Navy families every year since its inception in 1987, \$635,000 to date. We are proud to partner with Wings Over America.

MPA is dedicated to providing its members significant and tangible benefits, and as such the Association has quadrupled its scholarship awards in just two years. As membership continues to grow, so will scholarship opportunities. Only MPA members and their immediate dependents are eligible to receive MPA Scholarships.

**SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS AWARDED**

- 2020: \$15,000
- 2019: \$15,000
- 2018: \$14,000
- 2017: \$12,000
- 2016: \$10,000
- 2015: \$8,000
- 2014: \$5,000
- 2013: \$2,000

For more information and to apply, please visit: [www.wingsoveramerica.us](http://www.wingsoveramerica.us)





## Rear Admiral Butch Dollaga Visits NAFM

MISAWA, Japan (May 4, 2021) – Rear Adm. Butch Dollaga, Commander, Task Force (CTF) 74, left, speaks with Capt. Matthew Rutherford, Commander, CTF-72, middle, and Capt. Derrick Eastman, Deputy Commander CTF-72, during a visit to Naval Air Facility (NAF) Misawa. Dollaga visited Misawa as a part of a cross-CTF warrior talk initiative to improve multi-domain warfighting readiness. NAF Misawa provides aviation and ground logistic support and services to all permanent and transient U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps forces in Northern Japan. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jan David De Luna Mercado)



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# In the News



## VP-9 Search and Rescue Kit Loading Training

ROYAL AIR FORCE BASE LOSSIEMOUTH, Scotland , – Patrol Squadron (VP) 9 “Golden Eagles” held a search and rescue (SAR) UNI-PAC II Air-Drop Survival Kit loading demonstration for the Royal Air Force (RAF) CXX Squadron, April 15, 2020. The VP-9 Aviation Ordnance team went through all the steps teaching the RAF team how to properly load and install the SAR kit on the P-8A Poseidon maritime aircraft.

“We use the same exact equipment so if we were ever in a situation and we had to make a joint load team, it would go exceptionally smooth,” said Lt. j.g. Wesley Blyleven, VP-9 Aviation Ordnance division officer. “Our checklist, which gives us step-by-step instructions on how to load ordnance/stores, are remarkably similar,” added Blyleven.

The Lossiemouth RAF maritime squadron is still building their fleet of P-8A Poseidon aircrafts. CXX Squadron is the first to operate the Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft in the RAF. The squadron will receive their first SAR kit in June 2022.

This is the first time the CXX Squadron ordnance team has received this training.

“It is still a new aircraft to them and they’re a long way behind us in terms of practices that are used and are still working out a lot of kinks that the U.S. has already worked through,” said Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Gregory Turman.

The SAR kit, has an 8-man life raft with survival items. It weighs 107 pounds, and it’s used is for over water and over land mishaps.

The function of the SAR kit: A static line is connected from the kit to the aircraft. Upon kit release and activation of the static line, parachutes deploy which decelerate the kit, extract 450 feet of floating retrieval line with water activated lights, extract the life raft, activate the raft inflator, and bring all the survival items safely to the surface.

“There are many similarities and differences between the U.S. and UK maritime squadrons. The biggest difference between the U.S. and the RAF P-8 Aviation Ordnancemen is they do everything when it comes to the MK-54 Torpedo,” said Blyleven. “They were extremely welcoming and I think both of our teams learned a lot and I wanted to give a huge thank you to Chief Technician Owen McAlister and his team for coming out to join VP-9 during our pro-load.”

VP-9 is currently forward deployed to the U.S. Sixth 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. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts a full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national security interests and stability in Europe and Africa.

U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

★  
**By VP-9 Public Affairs, Published on US Naval Forces/6th Fleet, April 21, 2021**



**ROYAL AIR FORCE BASE LOSSIEMOUTH, Scotland - Lt j.g. Wesley Blyleven, assigned to the “Golden Eagles” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 9, explains how to mount the UNI-PAC II Air Drop Survival Kit to Chief Technician Owen McAlister and Sergeant Nicholas Elliot, assigned to RAF CXX Squadron, at RAF Lossiemouth, Apr. 15, 2021. VP-9 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. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts a full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national security interests and stability in Europe and Africa.**



# In the News



## Software-Defined Tactics and Great Power Competition

There are two components to military competency: understanding and proficiency. To execute a task, like driving a ship, one must first understand the fundamentals and theory—the rules of navigation, how the weather impacts performance, how a ship’s various controls impact its movement. Understanding is stable and military personnel forget the fundamentals slowly. Learning those fundamentals, though, does not eliminate the need to practice. Failing to practice tasks like maneuvering the ship in congested waters or evaluating potential contacts of interest will quickly degrade operational proficiency.

In the coming decades, human understanding of warfighting concepts will still be paramount to battlefield success. Realistic initial training and high-end force-on-force exercises will be critical to building that understanding. However, warfighters cross-trained as software developers will make it far easier to retain proficiency without as much rote, expensive practice. Their parent units will train them to make basic applications, and they will use these skills to translate their hard-won combat understanding into a permanent proficiency available to anyone with the most recent software update.

These applications, called software-defined tactics, will alert tacticians to risk and opportunity on the battlefield, ensuring they can consistently hit the enemy’s weak points while minimizing their own vulnerabilities. They will speed force-wide learning by orders of magnitude, create uniformly high-performing units, and increase scalability of conventional forces.

### Vignette

Imagine an F-35 section leader commanding two F-35 fighters tasked to patrol near enemy airspace and kill any enemy aircraft who approach. As the F-35s establish a combat air patrol in the assigned area, the jet’s sensors indicate there are two flights of adversary aircraft approaching the formation, one from off the nose to the north and the other off the right wing, from the east. Each of these flights consists of four bandits that are individually overmatched by the advanced F-35s. Safety is to the south.

These F-35s have enough missiles within the section to reliably kill four enemies, but are facing eight. Since the northern group of bandits are a bit closer, the section leader decides to move north and kill them. The section’s volley of missiles all achieve solid hits, and there are now four fewer enemy aircraft to threaten the larger campaign.

Now out of missiles, the section turns south to head back home. That’s when the section leader realizes the mistake. As the F-35s flowed northward, they traveled farther away from safety while the eastern group of bandits continued to close on the F-35s, cutting off their path home.

The only options at this point are to try to travel around the bandits or go through them. A path around them would run the fighters out of fuel, so the flight leader goes straight for the four enemy aircraft, hoping that the bandits will have seen their friends shot down and run away in fear.

The gambit fails, however, and the remaining enemy aircraft close with the F-35s and shoot them down. What should have been an easy victory ended in a tactical stalemate, and in a war where the enemy can build their simple aircraft faster than America can build complex F-35s, the 2:1 exchange ratio is in their favor strategically.

This could have gone differently.

### Persistent and Available Tactical Lessons

Somebody in the F-35 fleet had likely made a mistake similar to this example during a training evolution long before the fateful dogfight. They might have even taken a few days out of their schedule to write a thoughtful lessons-learned paper about it. This writing is critically important. It communicates to other pilots the fundamental knowledge



**A P-8A Poseidon conducts flyovers above the Enterprise Carrier Strike Group during exercise Bold Alligator 2012. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Daniel J. Meshel/Released)**

required to succeed in combat. However, success in combat demands not just understanding, but proficiency as well. An infantryman who has not fired a rifle in a few years likely still understands how to shoot, but their lack of practice means they will struggle at first.

Under a software-defined tactics regime, in addition to writing a paper, the pilot could have written software that would have alerted future pilots about the impending danger. While those pilots would still need to understand the risk, ever-watching software would alert them to risks in real-time so that a lack of recent practice would not be fatal. A quick software update to the F-35 fleet would have dramatically and permanently reduced the odds of anyone ever making that mistake again.

The program would not have had to be complex. It could have run securely, receiving data from the underlying mission system without transmitting data back to the aircraft’s mission computers. This one-way data pipe would have eliminated the potential for ad-hoc software to accidentally hamper the safety of the aircraft.

The F-35’s mission computer in our example already had

eight hostile tracks displayed. The F-35’s computer also knew how many missiles it had loaded in its weapons bay. If that data were pushed to a software-defined tactics application, the coder-pilot could have written a program that executed the following steps:

Determine how many targets can be attacked, given the missiles onboard. If there are enough missiles to attack them all, recommend attacking them all. If there are more hostile tracks than missiles (or a predefined missile-to-target ratio), run the following logic to determine which targets to prioritize.

Determine all the possible ordered combinations of targets. There are 1,680 combinations in the original example—a small number for a computer. For each combination, simulate the engagement and determine if an untargeted aircraft could cut off the escape towards home. Store the margin of safety distance.

If a cutoff is effective in a given iteration, reject that combination of targets and test the next one.



Recommend the combination of targets to the flight commander with the widest clear path home. Alert the flight commander if there is no course of action with a clear path home.

This small program would have instantly told the pilot to engage the eastern targets, and that engaging the targets to the north would have allowed the eastern targets to cut off the F-35s' route to safety. Following this recommendation would have allowed the F-35s to maintain a 4:0 kill ratio and live to fight another day.

A simple version of this program could have been written by two people in a single day—16 man-hours—if they had the right tools. Completing tactical testing in a simulator and ensuring the software's reliability would take another 40-80 man-hours.

Alternatively, writing a compelling paper about the situation would take a bit less time: around 20-40 hours. However, a force of 1,000 pilots spending 30 minutes each to read the paper would require 500 man-hours. Totaling these numbers, results in 96 man-hours on the high-end for software-defined tactics versus 520 man-hours on the low-end for writing and reading. While both are necessary, writing software is much more efficient than writing papers.

To truly train the force not to make this mistake without software-defined tactics, every pilot would need to spend around five hours—a typical brief, simulator, and debrief length—in training events that stressed the scenario. That yields an additional 10,000 man-hours, given one student and one instructor for each training event. At that point, all of the training effort might reduce instances of the mistake by about 75%.

To maintain that level of performance, aircrew would need to practice this scenario once every six months in simulators. That is 10,000 hours every six months. Over five years, you'd need to spend more than 100,000 man-hours to maintain proficiency in this skill across the force.

Software-defined tactics applications do not need ongoing practice to maintain currency. They do need to be updated periodically to account for tactical changes and to improve them, though. Budgeting 100 man-hours per year is reasonable for an application of this size. That is 500 man-hours over five years.

Pen-and paper updates require 100,000 man-hours for a 75% reduction in a mistake. Software-driven updates require 596 man-hours for a nearly 100% reduction. It is not close.

When a software developer accidentally creates a bug, they code a test that will alert them if anyone else ever makes that same mistake in the future. In this way, a whole development team learns and gets more reliable with every mistake they make. Software-defined tactics

offer that same power to military units.

## Software Defined Tactics in Action

While the F-35 example is hypothetical, software-defined tactics are not. The Navy's P-8 community has been leveraging a software-defined tactics platform for the last four years to great effect. The P-8 is a naval aircraft primarily designed to hunt enemy submarines. Localization—the process by which a submarine-hunting asset goes from initial detection to accurate estimate of the target's position, course, and speed—is among the most challenging parts of prosecuting adversary submarines.

On the P-8, the tactical coordinator decides on and implements the tactics the P-8 will use to localize a submarine. It takes about 18 months of time in their first squadron to qualify as a tactical coordinator and demonstrate reliable proficiency in this task. These months include thousands of hours of study, hundreds of hours in the aircraft and simulator, and dozens of hours defending their knowledge in front of more experienced tacticians.

When examining the data the P-8 community collects, there is a clear and massive disparity in performance between inexperienced and experienced personnel. There is another massive disparity between those experienced tacticians who have been selected to be instructors because of demonstrated talent and those who have not. In other words, there are both experience and innate talent factors with large impacts on performance in submarine localization.

The community's software-defined tactics platform has made it so that a junior tactician (inexperienced and possibly untalented) with 6-months of time in platform performs exactly as well as an instructor (experienced and talented) with 18-months in platform. It does this largely by reducing tactician mistakes—alerting them to the opportunities the tactical situation presents and dissuading them from enacting poor tactical responses.

This makes the P-8 force extremely scalable in wartime. In World War II, America beat Japan because it was able to quickly and continually train high-quality personnel. It took nine months to train a basic fighter pilot in 1942. It takes two or three years to go from initial flight training until arriving at a fleet squadron in 2021. Reducing time to train with software-defined tactics will restore that rapid scalability to America's modern forces.

The P-8 community has had similar results for many tactical scenarios. It does this, today, with very little integration into the P-8s mission system. Soon, its user-built applications will be integrated with a one-way data pipe from the aircraft's mission system that will enable the full software-defined tactics paradigm. A team called the Software Support Activity at the Naval

Air Systems Command will manage the security of this system and provide infrastructure support. Another team consisting of P-8 operators at the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Weapons School will develop applications based on warfighter needs.

## Technical Implementation

Implementing this paradigm across the US military will yield a highly capable force that can learn at speeds orders of magnitude faster than its adversaries. Making the required technical changes will be inexpensive.

On the P-8, implementing a secure computing environment with one-way data flow was always part of the acquisition plan. That should be the case for all future platform acquisitions. All it requires is an open operating system and a small amount of computing resources reserved for software-defined tactics applications.

Converting legacy platforms will be slightly more difficult. If a platform has no containerized computing environment, it is possible to add one, though. The Air Force recently deployed Kubernetes—a framework that allows for securely containerized applications to be inserted in computing environments—on a U-2. Feeding mission-system data to this environment and allowing operators to build applications with it will enable software-defined tactics.

If it is possible to securely implement this on the U-2, which was built in 1955, any platform in the U.S. arsenal can be modified to accept software-defined tactics applications.

## Human Implementation

From a technical standpoint, implementing this paradigm is trivial. From the human perspective, it is a bit harder. However, investing in operational forces' technical capabilities without the corresponding human capabilities will result in a force that operates in the way industry believes it should, rather than the way warfighters know it should. A tight feedback loop between the battlefield reality and the algorithms that help dominate that battlefield is essential. Multi-year development cycles will not keep up.

As a first step, communities should work to identify the personnel they already have in their ranks with some ability to develop software. About a quarter of Naval Academy graduates enter the service each year with majors that require programming competency. These officers are a largely untapped resource.

The next step is to provide these individuals with training and tools to make software. An 80-hour, two-week course customized to the individual's talent level is generally enough to get a new contributor to a productive level on the P-8's team. A single application

pays for this investment many times over. Tools available on the military's unclassified and secret networks like DI2E and the Navy's Black Pearl enable good practices for small-scale software development.

Finally, this cadre of tactician-programmers should be detailed to warfare development centers and weapons schools during their non-operational tours. Writing code and staying current with bleeding-edge tactical issues should be their primary job once there. Given the significant contribution this group will make to readiness, this duty should be rewarded at promotion boards to maintain technical competence in senior ranks.

A shortcut to doing this could be to rely on contractors to develop software-defined tactics. To maximize the odds of success, organizations should ensure that these contractors 1) are co-located with experienced operators, 2) are led by a tactician with software-development experience, 3) can deploy software quickly, 4) have at least a few tactically-current, uniformed team members, and 5) are funded operationally vice project-based so they can switch projects quickly as warfighters identify new problems.

## The Stakes

Great power competition is here. China's economy is now larger than America's on a purchasing parity basis. America no longer has the manufacturing capacity advantage that led to victory in World War II, nor the ability to train highly-specialized warfighters rapidly. To maintain America's military dominance in the 21st century, it must leverage the incredible talent already resident in its armed forces.

When somebody in an autocratic society makes a mistake, they hide that mistake since punishment can be severe. The natural openness that comes from living in a democratic society means that American military personnel are able to talk about mistakes they have made, reason about how to stop them from happening again, and then implement solutions. The U.S. military must give its people the tools required to implement better, faster, and more permanent solutions.

Software-defined tactics will yield a lasting advantage for American military forces by leveraging the comparative advantages of western societies: openness and a focus on investing in human capital. There is no time to waste.



**By LT Sean Lavelle, USN, Published on [www.cimsec.org](http://www.cimsec.org), May 19, 2021**

*LT Sean Lavelle is an active-duty naval flight officer who instructs tactics in the MQ-4C and P-8A. He leads the iLoc Software Development Team at the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Weapons School and holds degrees from the U.S. Naval Academy and Johns Hopkins University. The views stated here are his own and are not reflective of the official position of the U.S. Navy or Department of Defense.*



# In the News



## VP-46 Coordinated Operations in the Black Sea

BLACK SEA - Operating alongside the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Donald Cook (DDG-75) and USS Porter (DDG-78), two Turkish frigates, the TCG Orucreis (F-245) and TCG Turgutreis (F-241), and two Turkish F-16 fighters, the Patrol Squadron (VP) 46 "Grey Knights," participated in their first joint air and maritime training mission in the Black Sea. These operations with Turkish naval forces serve to fortify the importance and unique benefit of the maritime alliance with our NATO partners.

"Opportunities to operate with U.S. and NATO forces in the Black Sea not only supports the monitoring of the international maritime domain, but also improve integrations across multiple Navies," said Cmdr. James Imlah, deputy commander, Task Force 67, "This makes us a more prepared and effective combined fighting force."

Since January 2021, when the USS Donald Cook entered the Black Sea along with the USS Porter, VP-46 provided direct support to their operations.

"We assisted in the exercise of freedom of navigation of both international airspace and water, and provided extended range surveillance of surface and sub-surface ships in the operational area," stated Lt. Cmdr. Stokes, CTG-67.1 Tactical Operations Officer and Patrol Plane Commander.

VP-46, along with the DDGs, joined Turkish NATO allies for an integrated surface, air, and subsurface warfare exercise, thus strengthening U.S. security collaboration with Turkey in the Black Sea and the surrounding maritime environment.

Combat Aircrew Six simultaneously coordinated with U.S. and Turkish assets by providing an overall Common Operational Picture of the air and waterspace. In addition, they completed a photo exercise to showcase the coordinated efforts of the warships.

Lt.j.g. Max Vaughn, VP-46 CAC-6 Tactical Coordinator, sums it up as "a smooth and coordinated effort from all players involved that produced valuable training and further strengthening NATO relations."

VP-46 is currently forward deployed to the U.S. Sixth 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.

Task Force 67 is composed of helicopters and land-based maritime patrol aircraft that operate throughout European and African waters in anti-submarine, search-and-rescue, reconnaissance, surveillance, and mining roles. Task Force 67's official mission is to provide responsive, interoperable, and expeditionary combat ready maritime patrol aircraft and supporting forces to U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa and U.S. Sixth Fleet.

U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied, and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

★  
**By VP-46 Public Affairs, Published on Navy.mil, March 9, 2021**



Photos courtesy of VP-46.







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# Community

## VP-5 Mad Foxes Participate in Bilateral Exercise

Kadena AB, Japan –Several Combat Aircrews (CACs) from Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 took part in a multi-day exercise Bilateral Advanced Warfare Training Exercise (BAWT) conducted off the Southern coast of Tokyo, Japan, on March 1. BAWT is a bilateral training designed to improve proficiency and interoperability between U.S. air and surface assets and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF).

The main goals of the exercise were to increase the combat readiness and proficiency of friendly forces through execution of Anti-Surface Warfare (ASUW) procedures and simulation of coordinated attacks against notional threats. Participants in BAWT included the U.S. Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers USS John S McCain (DDG 56) and USS Benfold (DDG 65) and the "Mad Foxes" of VP-5. JMSDF participants included JS Ise (DDH 182), JS Shiranui (DDG 120), JS Harusame (DD 102), and SH-60 helicopters.

BAWT advances U.S. Navy and JMSDF maritime capabilities and initiatives between allied nations. The exercise allowed both nations to work together, integrate their ca-

pabilities, and demonstrate their wide range of maritime security and ASUW capabilities within the region.

Lt. Charles Sprague, a P-8A pilot assigned to VP-5, said the exercise was a rewarding experience for him.

"Working in such a complex on station environment provided a lot of great training for us. We had to be in constant communication with all of the assets out there. I had a lot of fun working with the [JMSDF] and seeing how they operate," said Sprague, who flew with CAC-2 on the first flight of the exercise.

The Mad Foxes are stationed in Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently deployed to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan. Throughout the deployment, they are scheduled to conduct maritime patrol and reconnaissance and theater outreach operations within the 7th Fleet area of operations.



**By Ltjg. Matthew Skowronski, VP-5 Public Affairs**



Photo courtesy of VP-5.



# In the News



## VP-46 Welcomes US AFRICOM Leadership to NAS Sigonella

Naval Air Station Sigonella (NASSIG), home to 37 tenant and deployed commands, serves as the premier operational installation supporting joint service, NATO, and interagency partners. Currently among one of these 37 commands are the VP-46 Grey Knights with the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance community.

VP-46 had the distinct pleasure to greet and present the P-8A Poseidon to a number of distinguished leaders from the United States Africa Command (US AFRICOM). Some of these guest included:

- General Stephen Townsend – Commander, US AFRICOM
- Rear Admiral Heidi Berg – Director, J2, US AFRICOM
- Mr. Russ Schiebel – Foreign Policy Advisor
- Colonel Jason Slider – Executive Officer
- Colonel Jacqueline Breeden – Commander's Action Group

As the commander of US AFRICOM, General Townsend and his staff oversee all military operations and activity to protect and advance national interests in Africa. As a forward deployed squadron with a detachment in Djibouti, Africa, VP-46 currently conducts operations in the African maritime theater. For this reason, the Georgia native was particularly interested in the efforts of our personnel and the P-8A's capabilities.

Guiding him through the tour of the Poseidon, Combat Air Crew Five, and the VP-46 leadership showed just how distinct the P-8A is as a Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance aircraft. "General Townsend showed a keen interest in the Poseidon, and how the aircraft stacked up as a formidable force against our enemy submarines," stated AWO2 MarcAngelo Lizza, CAC-5 Acoustic Sensor Operator.

Once the tour started, General Townsend was eager to hear about the capabilities and the range of operations of the P-8A.

With over 1,000 hours as a communications intercept evaluator onboard the EP-3E Aries II, RADM Berg understood the importance of the role P-8A plays in obtaining Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) from not only subsurface contacts, but from land based and surface contacts as well.

"General Townsend's visit afforded VP-46 Aircrew an invaluable opportunity to share P-8A Poseidon's vital intra-theater role and to demonstrate how our multi-mission capabilities dramatically enhance the operational advantage of a Combatant Commander," said Commander Clay Waddill, VP-46 (CTG 67.1 & CTG 57.18) Commanding Officer.

VP-46 is currently forward deployed to the US Sixth 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.



**By VP-46 Public Affairs**



**Photos courtesy of VP-46.**







## VP-46 Aircraft Tour for the Chargé d'Affaires of Iceland, Harry Kamian

Currently on detachment in Keflavik, Iceland, the "Grey Knights" of VP-46 hosted the Chargé d'Affaires of Iceland, Harry Kamian, and local Icelandic Coast Guard leadership for a tour of the P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol aircraft.

Mr. Kamian, the former Deputy Chief of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative to the US Mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, was able to see firsthand the versatile capability of the P-8A and the substantial technological and operational impact the platform makes for US and NATO decision makers.

"Hosting Ambassador Kamian and local Icelandic Coast Guard leadership was a great opportunity to showcase the P-8A's capability and a chance to highlight the hard work of the Sailors that make our success in theater possible," said LCDR Nick O'Neill, VP-46 Combat Aircrew Mission Commander and Tactical Coordinator.

VP-46 crew members AWO1 Brandon White, AWO2 David Wells, AWO2 Andrew Peterson, and AWO3 Alejandra Naranjo had the pleasure of providing Mr. Kamian a description of their duties as Air Warfare sensor operators.

"Mr. Kamian was enthralled at the amount of training we received to arrive at the level of competency that is required for our duties," stated AWO2 Wells.

Following the Q&A session, the crew provided Mr. Kamian a tour of the Mission Crew Workstations, and demonstrated how aircrew effectively executes tactical operations while on station.

"It was a pleasure to have Mr. Kamian and the Icelandic Coast Guard take a tour of our jet and to answer any questions they had. It's a privilege to represent VP-46 in furthering our goal to broaden the close political, economic, and cultural ties between our two nations," said AWO1 Brandon White, VP-46 Combat Aircrew Electronic Warfare Operator.

At the end of the tour, Mr. Kamian was thoroughly impressed with the aircraft, the maintainers, and the aircrew representing VP-46 in Iceland.

As his final departing words, Mr. Kamian excitedly asked "how long do I get to fly for?"

VP-46 is currently forward deployed to the US Sixth 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.

★  
By VP-46 Public Affairs



Photo courtesy of VP-46.







## Patrol Squadron 40 Begins Inaugural P-8A Poseidon Deployment

SIGONELLA, Sicily – “Laging Handa”- the squadron motto that is Tagalog for “Always Ready” – is alive and at the core of every service member assigned to the “Fighting Marlins” of Patrol Squadron Forty (VP-40). The Fighting Marlins began a landmark deployment in April 2021, tactically operating the P-8A Poseidon for the first time in squadron history, and also supporting U.S. Sixth Fleet for the first time in decades. Additionally, it is a landmark deployment for the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Community, as it marks the culmination of the active duty transition of all 12 squadrons from the P-3C Orion to the P-8A Poseidon.

The Fighting Marlins were the last active duty Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force squadron to undergo aircraft transition, a process that started in Jacksonville, Florida with VP-16 in 2012 and concluded in Whidbey Island, Washington with VP-40. VP-40’s transformation to P-8A began in November 2019 under the instruction of VP-30 in Jacksonville, Florida and consisted of extensive ground and flight instruction, testing, and evaluation for combat air crews and maintenance personnel.

In May 2020, the Fighting Marlins completed a uniquely challenging transition, one that saw normal travel and operations halted by the COVID-19 global pandemic, then began the task of building and training 12 combat-ready aircrew, ready to surge worldwide at a moment’s notice.

This display of turning adversity into opportunity set the tone for VP-40’s preparation for deployment to the 6th Fleet AOR the following year. Within a month of completing transition, United States Pacific Command called for P-8A operations in Alaska and the Fighting Marlins answered the call, sending all of their formed and qualified P-8A crews while still building additional crews in Whidbey. Along with VP-4 and VP-9, VP-40 crews completed multiple detachments to the North Pacific, executing operational tasking and holding the Pacific Northwest Homeland Defense ready for nearly two months.

Upon the conclusion of those operations, VP-40 again detached crews, aircraft and maintainers to Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii to stand the watch for the Pacific Homeland Defense ready. While there, crews conducted multiple training and operational Anti-Submarine Warfare and Anti-Surface Warfare missions in support of Commander Third Fleet, and Search and Rescue missions in support of United States Coast Guard District 14. These detachments, along with coordinated and individual training exercises at home in Whidbey Island, continued to hone the Fighting Marlins’ agility and tactical acumen as the squadron geared up for deployment.

Since arriving in theater in April of 2021, VP-40 conducted exercise detachments out of Keflavik, Iceland and Rota, Spain in addition to supporting operational missions out of Sigonella, Sicily under Commander Sixth Fleet and Task Force 67. Much more lies ahead, and the Marlins are excited to take on the challenges of operating in a dynamic environment. “Laging Handa,” as stated boldly at the top of the squadron logo, signifies the resilient, agile, and lethal mindset that enables VP-40 sailors to be “Always Ready” and prepared to support combat missions worldwide.



By LTJG Patrick Kaczka, VP-40 Public Affairs Officer



Photo courtesy of VP-40, by AME2 Carter Burlison; Keflavik, Iceland.







## VP-9 Conducts Change of Command

LOSSIEMOUTH- Patrol Squadron 9 (VP-9), On 9 April 2021 the "World Famous Golden Eagles", conducted an in-flight change of command ceremony, during which CDR Michael A. Bender was relieved by CDR Branden Woods while deployed to Royal Air Force Base Lossiemouth, United Kingdom executing missions in support of C6F operations. This concluded the 71st transition of command since the squadrons' establishment in 1951.

CDR Bender joined the "Golden Eagles" in June 2019 as the Executive Officer and assumed command on the 24 of April 2020 becoming the squadron's 71st Skipper.

In His farewell remarks, CDR Bender stated, "While I won't be able to stand in front of the entire Command during a traditional ceremony, I want you to know that serving alongside each and every one of you over these past two years has been the opportunity of a lifetime".

"I could not be prouder of your accomplishments and for the privilege of being your Commanding Officer. I will never forget this time with such an incredibly talented group of individuals".

CDR Bender will be transitioning to the PAX River area, accompanied by his wife Shanna and daughter, where he will become a pivotal member of the acquisition team.

After assuming command CDR Woods addressed the squadron saying, "I want to thank Skipper Bender for his leadership and dedication to ensuring we were set up for success. He showed true leadership during the last year and adapted to the continuous change around us and we have succeeded through significant adversity because of his guidance. I also want to thank my wife Natalie and our children Naomi, Elijah, Malakai, and Acacia for the sacrifices they have made during our service in the Navy".

CDR Woods is a native of Lexington, KY. He graduated from Centre College in Danville, KY in 2001. He attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned in July 2003 and designated a Naval Flight Officer in January 2005 at Randolph Air Force Base, TX. He served with distinction in VP-46 and VP-30 before conducting his Department Head (DH) tour with VP-26 and a post DH tour with the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley Virginia. CDR Woods joined VP-9 in April 2020 as the Executive Officer.

Patrol Squadron 9 welcomes onboard CDR James J. Donchez as the new Executive Officer. The Squadron is currently transitioning off of a very successful deployment covering two separate theaters of operation and consisting of over 4,500 flight hours.



By VP-9 Public Affairs



Photos courtesy of VP-9.



# Community



## Grey Knights Develop Sicilian Tutor and Mentorship Programs

SIGONELLA, Italy – The Patrol Squadron (VP) 46 “Grey Knights” demonstrated their selfless nature by volunteering to tutor students in the English language at two local schools: Istituto Comprensivo Gaetano Ponte (Palagonia Middle School), and Istituto Alberghiero G. Falcone Succursale (Riposto Hotel Management High School).

These schools are part of a comprehensive institute called G. Pointe, consisting of 12 preliminary schools, 19 primary schools and 13 lower secondary schools collectively encompassing approximately 900 students.

At Palagonia Middle School, the children were delighted the Grey Knights were available to assist them in their English education. Sailors taught students different phrases pertaining to Sicilian and American food, lifestyle, travel, and tourism. Essential for the students to learn as they grow from being adolescents in Sicily and embark on their journey across the globe. This was accomplished with the use of interactive marionette puppets!

“It was awesome to see how excited the kids were,” stated Naval Air Crewman 1st Class FIRST Maringo, VP-46 acoustic sensor operator. “They were very well prepared and absorbed the English lessons well. We learned just as much, if not more, about Italian and Sicilian culture and language.”

“Today we are living an important moment because we are starting a collaboration with the US Navy at the base in Sigonella,” stated Grazia Poma, Palagonia, middle school headmaster. “A strong bond of friendship. We give them a warm welcome in our school.”

A week thereafter, the Grey Knight family assisted in the education of the students at Riposto Hotel Management High School on the topic of cyberbullying, a rising issue with modern media, especially in this ongoing COVID environment. The students were pleased to have the opportunity to learn English on this topic to help spread awareness on a growing issue.

After classes, the students in the culinary department of the school prepared a meal for the volunteers, thus integrating Sicilian and American hospitality and developing a strong sense of comradery with the host nation and MPRA squadrons.

“It was a great privilege to help the students,” Lt. j.g. Kevin Gable, VP-46 co-tactical coordinator. “They taught us just as much by sharing their culture and experiences. Community outreach is a great opportunity we as Grey Knights can use to assist the local community while being deployed here.”

VP-46 is currently forward deployed to the U.S. Sixth 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.

Task Force 67 is composed of helicopters and land-based maritime patrol aircraft that operate throughout European and African waters in anti-submarine, search-and-rescue, reconnaissance, surveillance, and mining roles. Task Force 67s official mission is to provide responsive, interoperable, and expeditionary combat ready maritime patrol aircraft and supporting forces to U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa and U.S. Sixth Fleet.

U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied, and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.



By Lt. Andrew Staley, VP-46 Public Affairs



**SIGONELLA, Italy - 210304-N-VH871-1536 SIGONELLA, Italy (March 4, 2021) Sailors assigned to the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, assist Italian middle schoolers with their English proficiency as part of a community relations project, March 4, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth 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. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts a full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national security interests and stability in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)**





## VP-5 Mad Foxes Participate in OP RAI BALANG

Kadena AB, Japan – Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 participated in an operation that provided Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and information sharing, on March 8. Exercise OP RAI BALANG 21 took place in a multinational setting and was the first Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) event of the year led by the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA).

The purpose of this operation was to build an understanding of activity within the operating area by improving joint/combined interoperability, information sharing, and processing for the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Center (RFSC).

The “Mad Foxes” of VP-5 worked with the FFA and a U.S. Coast Guard asset to coordinate surface surveillance and law enforcement in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and surrounding high seas of the participating Pacific Island Country (PIC).

To facilitate the success of OP RAI BALANG 21, the “Mad Foxes” surveyed the operating area and provided imagery to the RFSC. In addition, they ensured vessels that were operating within the area were authorized to do so. VP-5 also received support from the U.S. Air Force for an aerial refueling evolution, which demonstrated the capability within FFA operations.

After his experience in the exercise “Mad Fox” Naval Flight Officer Ltjg. Ben Fields stated, “The operation was very interesting because MDA is a mission set that we do not conduct regularly. The crew had to work together to accomplish the mission.” OP RAI BALANG 21 was a large success and allowed the “Mad Foxes” to support the RFSC and combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Pacific.

The Mad Foxes are stationed in Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently deployed to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan. Throughout the deployment, they are scheduled to conduct maritime patrol and reconnaissance and theater outreach operations within the 7th Fleet area of operations.



By Ltjg. Matthew Skowronski, VP-5 Public Affairs



Photo courtesy of VP-5.



# Community



## Grey Knights Participate in Sicilian Environmental Initiatives

SIGONELLA, Italy (April 7, 2021) "Grey Knights" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46 supported an environmental initiative held at Three Rock Beach, near the town center of the coastal village of Riposto, April 7, 2021.

The volunteers assisted in the initial phase of the project by gathering and consolidating garbage that had been littered and blown onto the beach near the marina.

"It was an awesome opportunity to get out in Sicily and strengthen relationships between U.S. Sailors and Sicilians," said Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 1st Class Zania Saunders, aviation maintenance administration leading petty officer. "And what better way than to clean up a beach."

Some of the locals in the area like Carmelo D'Urso, who serves as the Environmental Chairman in Riposto, said that the relationship between the squadron and the community serves an important purpose in bridging the gap between cultures as well as preserving the area's historical significance.

"The initiative was part of an ongoing environmental program, supported by volunteer organizations such as VP-46 that is aimed at promoting the natural beauty of this historic beach used by fishermen and beachgoers," said D'Urso.

Present at the clean-up to express the village's gratitude was the Enzo Caragliano Sindaco di Riposto, Mayor of Riposto. Ecstatic to see the beach refurbished and that the Grey Knights were at the frontlines of the initiative commencement, the Riposto locals expressed their gratitude to the volunteers with local Sicilian enthusiasm.

"Today's project was conducted by a group of volunteers from the Aviation Squadron VP-46 to give back as part of a community relations program which has started full speed ahead and will continue in the weeks to come," said Dr. Alberto Lunetta, Naval Air Station Sigonella Community Relations (COMREL) director.

COMREL projects such as this beach and marina clean up gives Sailors a unique opportunity to make a difference for the locals in Sicily.

As the Sicilians prepare for another Mediterranean summer after two years of a nationwide lockdown, Sailors like Lt. Andrew Staley, VP-46 public affairs officer and patrol plane pilot, said that it's essential that local attractions such as Three Rock Beach return to their natural state of beauty.

"To actively see the transformation of this beach as the Grey Knights reconditioned it truly developed an internal sense of accomplishment and satisfaction," said Staley. "The smiles and gratitude of the local citizens are what these programs are all about, and we are honored to be a part of such a unique opportunity for culture immersion and selfless service with our host nation." With five previous COMREL events, the Grey Knights have amounted 560 hours of community service during their Sixth Fleet deployment.

"Nothing ever becomes real until it is experienced, and cleaning Three Rock Beach was an experience I will never forget," said Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Lonnell Taylor, maintenance control chief. VP-46 is currently forward deployed to the US Sixth 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.



By Lt. Andrew Staley, VP-46 Public Affairs Office



**SIGONELLA, Italy (April 7, 2021) "Grey Knights" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46 support an environmental initiative held at Three Rock Beach, near the town center of the coastal village of Riposto, April 7, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward deployed to the US Sixth 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 courtesy photos)**





## Events»Community

### 2021 MPA Symposium : Pending New Date

Watch for more information at: [www.maritimepatrolassociation.org](http://www.maritimepatrolassociation.org)

## Events»Reunion Groups

### VP-1 POPS (P-3 Orion Pioneers)

**Join/Renew your VP-1 POPS Membership:**

Check out membership information at: [www.vp1pops.com](http://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](http://www.anapatriotsquadron.org)



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# Events»Chapter Events

## Brunswick Chapter

**VP of Region:**  
Sean Liedman

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



## Jacksonville Chapter

**VP of Region:**  
Jim Burt

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



## Norfolk Chapter

**VP of Region:**  
Jordan Brye

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



## Pax River Chapter

**VP of Region:**  
Dan Papp

Stay tuned for upcoming events!



# Events»Chapter Events



## Washington DC Chapter

**VP of Region:**  
Scott Miller

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!



# VP Images Around the Globe



**RAF LOSSIEMOUTH, Scotland (Mar. 23, 2021) Air Force Staff Sgt. Anna Murray, a 48th Medical Group immunizations technician, gives the COVID-19 vaccine to Lt. Daniel Harbaugh, assigned to the “Golden Eagles” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 9, at RAF Lossiemouth, Mar. 23, 2021. VP-9 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. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts a full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national security interests and stability in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Rashaan Jeffery/ Released)**



**NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Italy (April. 2, 2021) Cmdr. Joseph Snyder, executive officer of the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, right, and Aviation Structural Mechanic (Safety Equipment) 3rd Class Melanie Whelan pull safety pins before flight on a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, April 2, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)**



**VP-5 : April 16, 2021 @ Facebook. Photo of the Day! AT1 Stokes hard at work on the hangar mural, looks great!**





**SIGONELLA, Italy (April. 2, 2021) Lt. Josh Schuh, assigned to the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, pilots a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, April 2, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)**

**CPRW -10 :March 19 , 2021 @ Facebook.**In a time honored tradition, CPRW-10 celebrated the accomplishments and bid farewell to Commodore Osborne. Capt. Erin Osborne was relieved by Capt. Jonathan Voorheis to become the 43rd Commanding Officer of Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing (CPRW) 10 on Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, March 15th, 2021. Rear Adm. Lance Scott, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group, was the presiding officer over the ceremony. Photos credit: MC2 Brandon J. Vinson



**RAF LOSSIEMOUTH, Scotland (Mar. 15, 2021) Naval Aircrewman (Operator) 3rd Class Kiel Spurlock, assigned to the “Golden Eagles” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 9, does a maintenance inspection on a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft. VP-9 is currently forward deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Rashaan Jeffery/ Unreleased)**

**CPRW 11: April 16 , 2021 @ Facebook.** On April 8th, Fleet Support Unit FIVE held a change of command ceremony where CDR John Cocca turned over to CDR Mike Cassidy. Congratulations to CDR Cassidy and fair winds and following seas to CDR Cocca... thank you for your leadership!







**NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Italy (April 7, 2021)** Lt. Michael Kropp, right, assigned to the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, assists in the tire change on a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, Apr. 7, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)

**NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Italy (March 26, 2021)** Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class Christian Schlangen, right, assigned to the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, conducts routine maintenance on the auxiliary power unit of a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, Mar. 26, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)



**Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing Ten: April 24, 2021 @ Facebook.** This week Commodore Voorheis, Deputy Commodore Martinez, and CMC Nuanez toured the Boeing factory where the P-8A Poseidon is manufactured and assembled.



**RAF LOSSIEMOUTH, Scotland (Mar. 15, 2021)** Naval Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd class JacQue Saulsberry, assigned to the “Golden Eagles” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 9, leads a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft to the parking apron. VP-9 is currently forward deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Rashaan Jeffery/ Released)



**SIGONELLA, Italy (March 12, 2021) Naval Aircrewmn (Operator) 2nd Class Rose Madden, assigned to the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, assists Italian high schoolers virtually with their English proficiency as part of a community relations project, March 12, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Zach Dalton/ Released)**



**SIGONELLA, Italy (April 2, 2021) Lt. j.g. Kevin Gable, assigned to the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, conducts his duties as Tactical Coordinator aboard a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, April 2, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)**



**Commander, Electronic Attack Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet: March 31, 2021 @ CPRW-10 Facebook Electronic Attack Squadron 136 conducts intercept training along with Patrol Squadron FOUR (VP-4).**



**CPRW-11 : April 21, 2021 @ Facebook. Rear Admiral John Meier, Commander Navsl Air Forces Atlantic visited NAS Jacksonville this week. Today, he spent time with VP-26.**





**VP-1 Screaming Eagles: April 15, 2021 @ Facebook**  
**Shout out to our Hawaii detachment! Their hard work and dedication are vital to making us the Fleet's Finest!**



**AVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Italy (March 15, 2021) Lt. Michael Kropp, left, and Lt. Tony Garcia, assigned to the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, pilot a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft during takeoff, Mar. 15, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)**

**RAF LOSSIEMOUTH, Scotland (Mar. 13, 2021) Naval Aircrew Survival Equipmentman Airman Cheyanne Mejia, assigned to the “Golden Eagles” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 9, sews nametags. VP-9 is currently forward deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Rashaan Jeffery/ Released)**



**SIGONELLA, Italy (April 2, 2021) Naval Aircrewman (Operator) 2nd Class Anthony Verrecchio, assigned to the “Grey Knights” of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, tracks radar contacts aboard a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, April 2, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin Ingram/ Released)**





**NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Italy (March 10, 2021) Aviation Structural Mechanic Airman Apprentice Tyler Joppa (let), and Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class Wesley Gonzalez, assigned to the Grey Knights of Patrol Squadron (VP) 46, review a manual during a tire change on a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, March 10, 2021. VP-46 is currently forward-deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations and is assigned to Commander, Task Force 67. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Zach Dalton/Released)**



**VP-1 : April 20, 2021 @ Facebook**  
**VP-1 held a Change of Command ceremony on April 16th. We would like to thank Skipper Woodards for everything he did as our Commanding officer. We would also like to congratulate and officially welcome Skipper Jones and XO Donnelly as our new command leadership! We have confidence that under your guidance we will remain the Fleet's Finest!**



**NAS Jacksonville : April 6, 2021 @ Facebook**  
**Patrol Squadron 26 Sailor of the Year AWO1 Jonathan Castano gets some last minute instructions from Blue Angels Pilot Lt. Julius Bratton before his flight in the F/A-18 Super Hornet, April 6. The Blue Angels are conducting a practice session Apr. 7-9 at NAS Jacksonville to maintain their flight proficiency since the air show was cancelled this weekend. (U.S. Navy photo by Kaylee LaRocque/Released)**



**VP-9 Golden Eagles : March 29, 2021 @ Facebook**

**VP-9 Golden Eagles getting the job done in EL Salvador.**





**Patrol Squadron FOUR SEVEN (VP-47): April 13, 2021 @ Facebook**  
**Training for the real deal. Our Swordsmen are always staying ready through real-life training scenarios. Maintaining mission readiness is a pivotal standard for our team.**



**VP-16 War Eagles : March 9, 2021 @ Facebook**  
**LT Yamin's last flight in VP-16 ended with a splash! Congratulations on your end-of-tour NAM! Fair winds and following seas at your next command.**



**Patrol Squadron Thirty (VP-30) :May 4, 2021 @ Facebook.**  
**Back to where it all started. Today Skipper Grady had his last P-3 Orion flight. The mighty P-3 sure will miss you and so will we.**



**Patrol Squadron EIGHT (VP-8) : April 9, 2021 @ Facebook**



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**VP-10 : March 5, 2021 @ Facebook : Red Lancer Photo of the Week**  
**LT Pache leads an aircraft towing and push back refresher training for pilots and maintainers.**  
**The evolution requires a minimum of 7 personnel to ensure the safety of the aircraft!**



**Patrol Squadron 45 Pelicans : February 4 , 2021 @ Facebook**  
**Petey Pelican made a surprise visit to the Ready Barrel Turn-over yesterday!!**

**2020 E 2020**  
**CNAP (VP)**  
**BATTLE "E" WINNERS**



**VP-47**

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**VP-47 : April 20, 2021 @ Facebook**  
**It gives me Golden goosebumps to inform you that the rumors you may have heard are now officially true....VP-47 won the CNAP Battle Effectiveness Award for Calendar Year 2020!!**  
**This award is a true testament to the hard work and dedication to the mission of ALL Golden Swordsmen amidst unique circumstances in an unforgettable year. So congratulations on a job extremely well done!**



## Engine Fire Over the North Atlantic

It was at the height of the Cold War back in the late 1970s. We were a VP-16 P-3C detachment aircrew flying out of Bermuda. LCDR Mark Baldy was the PPC, and I was the TACCO/MC. Our mission that night was to regain contact on a Soviet Yankee class ballistic missile submarine as it transited South through the North Atlantic Ocean to the Southeast of Greenland. We had just dropped the final sonobuoy of our acoustic barrier when we got a fire warning indication on our number 1 engine. We E-handled the engine, discharging the HRD fire suppressant into the engine thereby shutting it down. Immediately we headed to the Southwest for the 650 nautical miles and 2 to 3 hour transit back to NAS Bermuda.

En route an hour later, we had a fire warning indication on our number 2 engine. Following a shutdown of that engine we no longer had lift on the port side of the aircraft. Remaining engines numbers 3 and 4 on the starboard side of the aircraft produced barely sufficient power to keep our aircraft airborne, but it required dumping fuel and lightening our sonobuoy load in order to arrest our slow descent at an altitude of 1,500 feet. Because of the unlikely circumstance of two adjacent engines catching fire within an hour's time, there was discussion of a common cause factor such as a fuel leak or small fire contained within the airframe. No fire indications were visible externally.

We prepared the crew for a possible nighttime ditching at sea. Unfortunately, our best altitude of 1,500 feet put us in a scud cloud layer for most of the transit back which precluded a visual of the sea conditions below. We had everyone don the bulky anti-exposure suits, unzipped but ready in preparation for what might be an immediate ditching in the cold waters of the North Atlantic. I reviewed each aircrew member's ditching responsibilities with them individually during our slow transit and did my best to reassure everyone (myself included) of our positive chances for survival. Once that was done, there was plenty of time remaining for deep thoughts while gazing out my TACCO's observation window. It was eerily quiet on my side of the aircraft, quite conducive for thoughtful reflection.

Utilizing maximum right rudder input, the flight station set up for a landing on Bermuda's longest runway, knowing that it would be a challenging one shot overspeed landing attempt with no go-around capability given the limited power and asymmetric flight dynamics from our lopsided power configuration. As we descended slightly, I recall seeing the twinkling lights from Bermuda on the horizon as we made a very shallow (perhaps 10 degrees)

angle of bank and lengthy left turn toward the runway. As we flew quickly over the approach end threshold, the runway length remaining numbers quickly passed by as we floated at around 160 knots and 30 feet above the asphalt. The obvious aerodynamic tension was between aircraft lateral controllability and lift. With around 4000 feet remaining we chopped power to the remaining engines and the aircraft settled softly on the runway. With maximum reverse thrust now on the number 3 and 4 engines, the aircraft slid to the runway's end. We stopped with aircraft brakes on fire as the runway over-run lights glared in the port side windows, with a close-up view of the waves of the Atlantic Ocean splashing on the rocks a few feet from our wing tip.

After a moment's pause, relief and a prayerful thank you, we quickly lowered the ladder and even more quickly departed the aircraft while the air station fire department extinguished the small fire beneath the main mounts. I briefly recalled something in NATOPs about the possibility of exploding brakes or tires, but that seemed a very minor consideration at that point. Being an hour before dawn on Sunday morning, I suggested our attendance at the early church service and was pleased to share a pew with many of the crew.

After action note: This is the only asymmetric two engine emergency landing of a P-3 aircraft that we are aware of. Our experience was apparently later written up in a Naval Aviation Approach magazine issue, but I was never able to obtain a copy. I do recall some "Monday morning quarterback" discussion of the possibility of our restarting an engine somewhere on final. That possible action would have had its own unknowable controllability, etc. consequences. But you can't argue with success. I personally thought the flight station did a superb job of professional pilotage. And by the way, while I don't necessarily recommend it, wearing those bulky anti exposure suits is a remarkably effective way to quickly shed 5-10 pounds of water weight. One final note of interest... Post flight inspection by squadron maintenance discovered evidence of a hot air leak on one engine, but no readily discernible cause for the second engine's fire warning indication. "Bermuda Triangle"? It was also discovered that the explosive squibs for the HRD fire extinguishing agents had not discharged. The squibs had been incorrectly installed.

On the rare occasions when, as an instructor, I recounted this story to students at VP-30, I was usually met by kind of a stunned but attentive silence. Fortunately (or unfortunately), I had more than one personal tale of



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nearly meeting my Maker on a flight. I had determined that sharing those "I've been there" sea stories was far more instructive and memorable than simply going over the often dry, academic procedures. Students would recall the "sea stories" long after forgetting the procedures or my name. Near the end of training one flight officer class, after my retelling of this incident, one student raised his hand and said, "Mr. Currie, I'm not sure I'd want to go flying with you." A bit taken back, I asked him why he thought that. He replied that after hearing all of my near miss sea stories, he felt I was unlucky. I pondered that a few moments and replied that "Quite the opposite, I had always felt very fortunate and blessed, and that you'd probably be safer flying with me than 'most anyone else!' Everyone laughed, but I did see his point. There is hopefully also value in living to tell the tale and paying it forward.



By George Currie, Cmdr., USN (Ret.)

**George Currie, Cmdr., USN (Ret.) is a former active duty and contract P-3C NFO instructor at Patrol Squadron Thirty in Jacksonville, Florida. He was the lead instructor for the Undergraduate Maritime Flight Officer (UMFO) program from 2007-2015. He currently is a leadership and life coach, college instructor and private pilot in Fleming Island, Florida.**



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PLANESIDE is a quarterly online magazine published for the Maritime Patrol Association, Inc. by septemberblue CREATIVE.



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