VP ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

AN ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS WHO SERVED WITH THE NAVAL AIR RESERVE PATROL SQUADRONS BASED AT NAS SQUANTUM MA, NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH MA, AND NAS BRUNSWICK ME.

NOTE, CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF ANY U.S. NAVY PATROL SQUADRON ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US!

ISSUE 50 HTTP://WWW.VPASSOCIATION.ORG DECEMBER 2012

Welcome to another edition of the VP Association newsletter. As always, please direct all general VP Association-related inquiries or correspondence to William Hanigan, 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02332, 781-585-4950, vp92association@gmail.com. Please send all newsletter-related correspondence to Marc J. Frattasio, P.O. Box 30, Pembroke MA 02359, marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

RECCO:

ABOVE: *This SP-2E Neptune from NAS South Weymouth was photographed at the T.F. Green airport in Warwick, RI on a drill weekend Sunday in 1967. The jets are Rhode Island Air National Guard F-84s. John Yaney Photo. Got something similar to share? If so, contact Marc J. Frattasio.*

FINAL FLIGHTS:

David O'Connor, who served in VP-ML-69 at NAS Squantum, passed away on November 21st.

ILL SHIPMATE IN NEED OF CHEERING UP:

Jack Leonard, a WW2 veteran who served in a number of VP units based at NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth, has been suffering through a number of illnesses recently including a bad fall. To inquire about Jack's present health or whereabouts (he's been in and out of hospitals and rehabs) contact his daughter Kathy Leavitt at kll153@myfairpoint.net.

THE 2012 ANNUAL REUNION:

The VP Association had another successful annual reunion on Saturday September 22, 2012. Approximately 90 members and their guests showed up at the Elks Hall in Weymouth, MA at 1200 that day for a terrific afternoon of good food and good company.

ABOVE: *VP Association members visiting the ANA Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation museum.* ***BELOW:*** *The reunion banquet hall at the Weymouth Elks facility. Marc Frattasio photos.*

ABOVE: *Guest speaker AWOC John Lovendale, Wayne Thomas, Marc Frattasio, Gerald Hayes, Richard Volk, Andy Massa, and Bill Hanigan attended the reunion in uniform. Marc Frattasio photo.*

Although attendance was slightly down from previous years, with some regulars (you know who you are) inexplicably AWOL, there were many new faces who we hope will become regulars in the years to come. Among the newcomers were Gerald "Doc" Hayes, Catherine Quin-Trexler, Susan Zimmerman, and Kasim Yarn. Doc Hayes, who is now a Captain with a USNR SeaBee unit and a decorated Afghan/Iraq war veteran, was the ever-popular flight surgeon assigned to VP-92 during most of the squadron's final two decades. Catherine Quin-Trexler came to the reunion from her home in Brunswick, ME where she is now employed as a special needs teacher. Back in the day, "Q-T" was an HM assigned to the VP-MAU. Susan Zimmerman was an AK with VP-92 during the 1980s. She's now retired, doing volunteer work with animals, and riding a motorcycle. Kasim Yarn was a big surprise, literally (he's a big guy). He and his wife drove all the way up from Norfolk, VA to attend the reunion. Many of you may remember that Kasim was an AZ in VP-92. Well, he's still in the Navy but is no longer an AZ. Believe it or not, Kasim is now a LCDR surface warfare officer!

The photos and memorabilia that attendees brought with them to put on display in the spaces set aside for this purpose were perhaps the best that we have seen at these events. Every table was completely filled. One of the things that you missed out on if you were not there was that Gene Forgit, who is downsizing his massive photo collection, had literally hundreds of photos from VP-92 cruises from the 1970s and 1980s that he was giving away to anybody who wanted them.

A number of participants showed up in uniforms or flight suits, a tradition that we started last year and will continue for as long as interest exists. Despite the passage of time it was encouraging to see that so many of us are still able to squeeze into our old uniforms and flight gear.

As reported in previous issues of the VP Association newsletter, every attendee was presented with an exact reproduction of the special commemorative “challenge coins” that were originally produced for the VP-92 decommissioning ceremony weekend in October 2007. Bill Hanigan also had P-2 Neptune ball caps and P-3 Orion polo shirts available for sale at the reunion. There are a few coins, caps, and shirts left over and while supplies last you can still get your hands on any of them if you missed the reunion. See the second to last page of this newsletter for details on how you can order these things.

The caterers that were engaged to provide food for the reunion did a terrific job. The sumptuous all-you-can-eat buffet included a salad, chicken, roast beef, assorted vegetables, potato, dinner rolls, and desserts. There was plenty of food. Your newsletter editor isn’t proud to admit it, but he had three helpings of roast beef and all the trimmings.

Our guest speaker this year was AWOC John Lovendale, a P-3 non-acoustic sensor operator who is presently the senior enlisted advisor at the Naval War College in Newport, RI. Chief Lovendale grew up in Weymouth and attended Weymouth High School during the mid-to-late 1990s while Bill Hanigan was teaching there. Despite Bill’s bad example, Lovendale joined the Navy and embarked upon what has been to date a fifteen year career. AWOC Lovendale gave a fascinating presentation on the Navy’s plans to transition from the P-3 to the P-8. Many of the P-3 guys in the audience, after viewing Chief Lovendale’s presentation, now know exactly how the P-2 guys felt back in the days when the Neptunes were in the process of being replaced by the Orions!

Through the cooperation of the ANA Patriot Squadron, the Shea Naval Aviation Museum on the SouthField development at old NAS South Weymouth was opened on the morning of the reunion. About thirty VP Association members went over to the museum before the reunion started. Several visitors including Bob Allen, Fran Creney, Jerry Eisenhauer, Bob Mandeville, and Bill Scaccia brought photos or other memorabilia to donate to the museum, which was much appreciated. Some VP Association visitors were so impressed with what the ANA Patriot Squadron is trying to do with respect to preserving the history and heritage of NAS South Weymouth and NAS Squantum that they ended up joining the ANA Patriot Squadron that morning.

In summation, everybody who attended the annual reunion at the new location in Weymouth appears to have had a good time. We intend to hold next year’s reunion on Saturday September 21, 2013 at the Weymouth Elks Hall. With luck, we will be able to convince the ANA Patriot Squadron to open the Shea Naval Aviation Museum for us again. Mark 09/21/13 down on your calendars and plan to attend next year’s VP Association reunion. Remember, there is no reserve or regular Navy maritime patrol aviation on the east coast north of Florida. It is up to all of us to try to keep the memory, history, and heritage of the reserve and regular Navy VP squadrons that operated in New England alive and the VP Association’s annual reunion is perhaps the best way of doing this.

ADMIN FUND DONATIONS:

The VP Association has no dues but voluntary contributions are always welcome to help defray the cost of printing and mailing newsletters to shipmates without e-mail. We’d like to thank Ray Beauchemin, Skip Burton, Tom Carroll, Marc Connolly, Gene Forgit, Allan Gilman, Paul Lapinski, Alderic LeBlanc, Joe McCann, Joe Mortland, David O'Donnell, Arthur Ricca, Ned Rogerson, Leo Salmeri, Bill Scaccia, Harvey Shore, Richard Smith, Fred Squires, Herb Tallent, Tom Tullie, and Alexander Zimba for their recent generous contributions to the VP Association’s administration fund.

SPEAKING OF THE COST OF PRINTING AND MAILING NEWSLETTERS…

If you have an e-mail address and are getting this newsletter through the U. S. Postal Service please contact Bill Hanigan as soon as possible so we can begin sending it to you via e-mail instead.

LOST CONTACT:
Please let Bill Hanigan know whenever your street or e-mail address changes.

VP ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER EDITOR FEATURED IN MPA PLANESIDE:
Your newsletter editor recently had a feature article published in the third issue of “Planeside”, the quarterly newsletter of the Maritime Patrol Association. The profusely illustrated eight-page article, “Naval Air Reserve Maritime Patrol Aviation in New England”, presents the history of the USNR VP and ZP squadrons that were based at NAS Squantum, South Weymouth, and Brunswick. Planeside is made available on-line to all members of the MPA. See http://www.maritimepatrolassociation.org for details.

EAA PANCAKE BREAKFAST AND FLY-IN AT CRANLAND AIRPORT:

Several former VP-92 personnel have been meeting for breakfast at the EAA pancake breakfast and fly-in held at Cranland Airport off Route 58 in Halifax, MA on the third Sunday of the month between April and October. Shown above are Faith and Marc Frattasio, Al Firnrohr, George Driscoll, Bill Hanigan, Bob Mandeville, Bob Obrien, and Joe Mortland at Cranland on the last such event for 2012 held on Sunday October 21st. If you live in the local area, plan on coming out to join us in April 2013.

A SHORT NOTE AND PHOTO FROM JERRY LACH (VP-93 AND VP-92):
While at this year's AirVenture at Oshkosh a P-3C Update III AIP showed up. The aircraft is assigned to VP-40 out of Whidbey Island, Washington. During their approach to land they had to wave off due to a small aircraft taking off. I met the crew one morning and after explaining to them not to call me 'a sir' they invited me on board. On board I talked to an IFT, SS1, SS3 and two FE's (all AW's now). It

was great swapping sea stories and sharing common issues. They really like what they are doing but obviously are most concerned with the Defense draw down. There also was one young (well they all looked young) officer aboard (LtJg Pilot). He was very enthusiastic about flying the mighty Orion as well. The rest of the officers must have been filing, checking weather or other important stuff (just kidding!). One final note, The interior of this P-3C smelled just like LH02's interior!!

ABOVE: *P-3 Orion and home-built light aircraft in the landing pattern at Oshkosh. Jerry Lach photo.*

A PHOTO FROM DICK SHAFNER (VP-92):

Dick Shafner is an active flying member of the Massachusetts Civil Air Patrol. He took the great aerial photo of the USS Massachusetts at Battleship Cove in Fall River, MA that is shown here while he was out on a recent CAP training flight.

THE 2013 MARITIME PATROL ASSOCIATION REUNION AND SYMPOSIUM:

The Maritime Patrol Association will be holding their next reunion and symposium at NAS Jacksonville, FL between Tuesday April 16th and Friday April 19th 2013. A number of VP Association members have attended this event in the past and have met up there. Work schedule permitting, your newsletter editor intends to attend at least the Tuesday and Wednesday events (the social,

briefing, and heritage dinner). If anybody else in the VP Association intends to go to the MPA reunion and symposium, please contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com and perhaps we can plan to meet up there and make arrangements to have our own table at the heritage dinner. For more information about the Maritime Patrol Association and/or the 2013 reunion and symposium see their web site at http://www.maritimepatrolassociation.org.

Note, the organizers of the MPA reunion and symposium have indicated that they want veterans to bring photos and other VP squadron-related memorabilia to this event for display during the heritage dinner. Your newsletter editor intends to set up a small display of VP-92 related squadron patches, command ball caps, and an electronic photo frame loaded with digital images of aircraft and squadron personnel. Anybody else who might be interested in doing something similar is encouraged to do so.

OBSOLETE BEFORE DEPLOYMENT: BOEING TO UPDATE P-8A ELECTRONIC WARFARE COMPONENTS TO STAVE-OFF OBSOLESCENCE (http://nosint.blogspot.com 10/21/12):
PATUXENT RIVER NAS, Md., 21 Oct. 2012. The U.S. Navy is asking the Boeing Co. in Seattle to upgrade electronic warfare (EW) subsystems in the P-8A Poseidon Multi-Mission Maritime aircraft to overcome obsolescence issues -- ever before the new maritime patrol jet is deployed to active-duty Navy flight squadrons. Officials of U.S. Naval Air Systems Command at Patuxent River Naval Air Station Md., awarded Boeing an $8.5 million contract Thursday to update the electronic support measures (ESM) sensor digital measurement unit of the P-8A to ensure the EW components are not obsolete by the time the aircraft is widely fielded. The P-8A, a military variant of the Boeing 737 jetliner, first flew in 2009, and was approved for low-rate production the following year. The first production version of the aircraft was handed over to the Navy last March. Initial operating capability of the P-8A is not expected until next year.

Obsolescence in new weapon systems is a common problem among U.S. Department of Defense major systems that can take years, if not decades, to design, manufacture, and deploy. ESM involves search, interception, identification, and location of enemy radar or radio communications. Other onboard EW systems then can jam or avoid the enemy radio signals. The Northrop Grumman Corp. Electronic Systems segment in Linthicum, Md., is in charge of the P-8 EW systems. Northrop Grumman is supplying the P-8's electronic warfare self-protection (EWSP) suite, which includes the Terma AN/ALQ-213(V) electronic warfare management system (EWMS), directional infrared countermeasures (DIRCM) set, radar warning system, and BAE Systems countermeasures dispenser. Just this month the Northrop Grumman ESM system for the P-8A was officially designated the AN/ALQ-240(V)1.

Ultimately, the Navy plans to buy 108 P-8A aircraft from Boeing to replace the service's fleet of 196 P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft, which are approaching the end of operational life. The P-3 is a version of the Lockheed Martin Electra four-engine turboprop aircraft. The P-8A is a specially hardened and reinforced version of the Boeing 737 passenger jet, and is designed to operate at extremely low altitudes over the ocean during close-in searches for potentially hostile submarines. The P-8A is designed to withstand the rigors of low-altitude turbulence and exposure to salt spray. The Boeing P-8A Poseidon, a Navy version of the 737 jetliner, will replace the P-3 Orion for long-range maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare. Navy officials plan to use the P-8A in tandem with the Northrop Grumman RQ-4N Broad Area Maritime Surveillance (BAMS) unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) -- a maritime-patrol version of the Global Hawk long-range surveillance UAV. Plans call for using BAMS to detect potentially hostile submarines and surface ships, and upon detection, to call in the P-8A to take a closer look or to attack hostile vessels with torpedoes and missiles.

Boeing will build the Poseidon aircraft at its factory in Renton, Wash. The 737 fuselage and tail sections will be built by Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita, Kan., then transferred to Renton where all

structural features will be incorporated in sequence during fabrication and assembly. The P-8A's flight management system and the stores management system have been developed by GE Aviation Systems in Grand Rapids, Mich. (formerly Smiths Aerospace). The cabin has as many as seven operator consoles. The Poseidon's MX-20HD digital electro-optical and infrared (EO/IR) multi-spectral sensor turrets come from L-3 Communications Wescam in Burlington, Ontario. The MX-20HD is gyro-stabilized and can have as many as seven sensors, including infrared, CCDTV, image intensifier, laser rangefinder, and laser illuminator. The aircraft has the upgraded APS-137D(V)5 maritime surveillance radar and signals intelligence (SIGINT) system from the Raytheon Co. Space and Airborne Systems (SAS) segment in McKinney, Texas. The APS-137D(V)5 radar, which is installed on the P-8's enlarged nose fairing, provides synthetic aperture radar (SAR) for imaging stationary ships and small vessels, coastal and overland surveillance, and high-resolution imaging synthetic aperture radar (ISAR) for imaging surfaced submarines and fast surface vessels operating in coastal waters. The P-8A will have the CAE Inc. advanced integrated magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) system. The Navy plans to arm the P-8A with the MK 54 torpedo.

Boeing will supervise most of the work under the current contract at Northrop Grumman in Linthicum, Md. Boeing will do other work on the contract in Seattle, and should be finished with the job in April 2015.

GOLDEN ORION (Lockheed-Martin Code One Magazine 8/22/12):

Exactly three months after delivery of the first P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft, US Navy aircrews from Patrol Squadron 8 found themselves deployed to Bermuda—and stepping into the brightest of world spotlights. On 23 October 1962, four aircrews from VP-8 and four aircrews from Patrol Squadron 44 (VP-44) began enforcing President John F. Kennedy's blockade of Cuba to prevent Soviet missiles from reaching Cuba. The P-3 crews patrolled the Atlantic sea lanes to locate and track Soviet cargo ships carrying intermediate range ballistic missiles or missile launch support equipment.

By the time the Cuban Missile Crisis ended a few days later, a VP-44 crew achieved international recognition of sorts when their aircraft was photographed flying close surveillance over the Russian freighter Anasov on its return to the Soviet Union. Anasov was the only Russian vessel that refused to uncover the large oblong objects lashed to its deck. The Orion crew was able to verify that the objects were indeed crated missiles, and the ship was allowed to proceed.

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

The competitors were Martin, Consolidated, and Lockheed, three companies that had been building patrol aircraft for the Navy for more than three decades at that point. The French Atlantique, developed with the help of US Navy funds, did not meet the stated range requirement and was eliminated from the competition.

The Lockheed proposal highlighted the Electra airliner's turboprop engines and its capability for high-speed transit at high altitudes, low speed, low-altitude handling qualities, and fuel economy. Because the Electra was designed to operate from commercial airports, the Navy did not have to alter any runways. The Lockheed Model 185 retained the wings, tail, and Allison T56-A-1 turboprop engines of the Electra. The new design called for the Electra's fuselage to be shortened by seven feet, and a weapon bay for mines, conventional or nuclear depth charges, or torpedoes was added.

Lockheed was named as the winner of the competition on 24 April 1958, and the contract was awarded that May. A design problem with the Electra's propeller and engine mount that resulted in several crashes—a phenomenon called whirl mode—had not surfaced at this point. Once the issue was identified, Lockheed briefed the Navy on proposed fixes, and the service was satisfied. Development continued.

The first aircraft was actually the third production Electra with a mockup of a magnetic anomaly detection, or MAD, boom installed at the rear of the aircraft. The MAD equipment, originally developed in World War II, gives aircraft crews the ability to detect large metal objects under water. The greatly improved MAD gear in the P-3 is a primary method the crew uses to locate submarines. The demonstrator was an aerodynamic prototype only and still had the airliner's passenger windows. It was first flown on 19 August 1958, and Lockheed crews made eight flights. This aircraft was again modified into a full-up prototype of what was then designated P3V-1.

The first flight of YP3V-1 prototype came on 25 November 1959 at the Lockheed plant in Burbank, California, where most of the aircraft would be built. The nickname Orion was officially adopted in late 1960, keeping with the Lockheed tradition of naming aircraft after mythological figures or celestial bodies. The first preproduction P3V-1 was flown on 15 April 1961 from the Lockheed plant in Burbank, California.

The Orion represented a new approach to the ASW mission. It was a more spacious aircraft than previous patrol aircraft, with room for a crew of up to a dozen, along with a galley and rest bunks. It was pressurized and air conditioned. The P-3 had enough electrical power to incorporate advanced sensors and avionics. It was the world's first dedicated maritime patrol aircraft to be powered by turboprop engines. The Orion also had a significantly better weapons system than its predecessors.

The Orion test fleet consisted of six aircraft. Navy Bureau of Inspection and Survey trials—what today is called operational test and evaluation—took place from April to June 1962 at what was then known as the Naval Air Test Center at NAS Patuxent River, Maryland, and the Naval Weapons Evaluation Facility in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The first P3V-1s were delivered to VP-8 on 23 July 1962 and to VP-44 on 13 August. Delivery consisted essentially of moving the aircraft on the Pax River ramp, as both squadrons were based there at the time. With the adoption of the new Department of Defense designation system on 18 September 1962, the P3V-1 was redesignated P-3A. The first Naval Reserve squadrons would receive P-3As in 1970.

A total of 158 P-3As were built for the US Navy. The Alphas, as they were called, were equipped with state-of-the-art analog avionic systems, including the first inertial navigation system in a Navy patrol aircraft. The aircraft featured fore and aft AN/APS-80 search radars, an AN/AQA-3 Jezebel passive acoustic signal processor, an AN/ASA-20 Julie echo location system, and the ASR-3, which was designed to sniff for diesel exhaust from snorkeling submarines.

The move-countermove strategy between the superpowers that defined the Cold War was particularly striking in ASW. The emergence of increasingly lethal and quiet Soviet submarines resulted in the need for increasingly more sophisticated navigation, detection, and tracking equipment on the P-3. Throughout its career, the most significant changes made to the Orion were in its sensors and avionics, not to its airframe.

The next major advance in the Orion was P-3B, or Bravo, introduced in 1966. This version featured a first-generation integrated ASW sensor suite and more powerful 4,500 shp T56-A-14 engines. The

Heavyweight modification that came at the end of the P-3B production run featured strengthened structural elements, mainly in the wings, to accommodate heavier sensors and weapons.

A total of 125 Bravos were built for the US Navy. Additional aircraft were delivered new to the first international P-3 operators, the air forces—not the navies—of New Zealand in 1966, to Australia in 1968, and to Norway in 1969.

Development of a fully integrated avionics for the P-3C, or Charlie, began in 1966. Dubbed A-NEW, the heart of this system was the Univac 1830A thirty-bit parallel binary airborne digital computer that combined all the collected sensor data in real time. Computerization improved the speed and accuracy of sensor data generation and freed the crew from routine recordkeeping tasks. Development of this system was accelerated, and VP-49 made the first deployment with the P-3C in July 1970.

Much like the Super Bowl, the avionics, navigation, and sensor suite updates to the P-3C variant over the next three decades were seen as being important enough to warrant Roman numerals to differentiate them—Update I, II, II.5, and III. These updates brought a variety of advanced equipment, capabilities, and weapons to the Orion, which kept it ahead of the threat and took advantage of the computer revolution.

As illustrative examples, the P-3C has a chin-mounted electro-optical infrared sensor allowing crews to see and target at night. By contrast, the P-3A had a seventy-million candlepower searchlight under its right wing to locate surface targets. In addition to the ability to fire short range AGM-65 Maverick air-to-surface missiles, the P-3C crew can now launch over-the-horizon AGM-84 Harpoon anti-ship and AGM-84E Standoff Land Attack Missiles. The P-3 Alphas could launch unguided rockets. The Bravos were the first to be modified to launch guided AGM-12 Bullpup missiles, which gave crews a significantly enhanced ability to attack surface targets.

A total of 266 P-3Cs were built for the US Navy, and 107 Charlies and special mission aircraft were built by Kawasaki Heavy Industries under license in Japan. US production of the P-3C shifted from Burbank to Palmdale, California, in the 1980s and then to Marietta, Georgia, in the early 1990s. The last US-built P-3Cs, eight aircraft for the Republic of Korea Navy, were delivered in 1995. The last Kawasaki-built aircraft was delivered in 2000, closing out thirty-nine years of Orion production.

Total P-3 production, including license-built aircraft, came to 757 aircraft. Today, the worldwide P-3 fleet numbers 435 aircraft flown by twenty-one operators in sixteen countries on five continents, with Taiwan scheduled to join the Orion community with refurbished and rewinged former US Navy aircraft in 2013.

At the height of the Cold War in the 1970s, twenty-four squadrons of US Navy P-3s blanketed the seven seas tracking submarines, primarily Soviet fast attack and ballistic missile boats. Literally millions of sonobuoys—active or passive sensors dropped by parachute into the water to extend the Orion crew's search area—were launched during the Cold War. An oft-repeated story is of a Soviet admiral who once lamented that if he wanted to know where his submarines were, all he had to do was look for the P-3s flying over them.

For most of its career, the primary mission for US Navy P-3 crews was hunting submarines on missions lasting more than twelve hours. But the Orion carried out other missions as well. Crews from VP-9 at NAS Moffett Field, California, deployed to Vietnam for Operation Market Time in February 1969 for the P-3's first Pacific deployment. Market Time was the Navy's coordinated

operation to stop the flow of weapons, ammunition, and supplies to Viet Cong forces infiltrating South Vietnam. The EP-3 signals intelligence variant also debuted during Vietnam.

The end of the Cold War brought a dramatic change in mission, as the P-3 was increasingly used in supporting overland missions in surveillance, targeting, and peacekeeping roles.

During Desert Storm, P-3 crews monitored shipping lanes while EP-3 crews monitored electrons. But by Operation Allied Force in Kosovo in 1999, Orion crews had further expanded their role to include targeting cruise missiles. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, P-3 crews using surveillance equipment and sensors could determine who or what was on the other side of a hill. Then a Marine riding on board would transmit that information directly to troops in contact on the ground.

But the versatility of the Orion has always been one of its strongest attributes. Today, Norwegian crews do much as they did during the Cold War, monitoring Russian ships and submarines coming out of the ice-free port of Murmansk and protecting Norwegian fishing grounds from poachers. Former Dutch P-3s now owned and operated by Germany are flown on antipiracy missions in Djibouti, while Australian P-3 crews have been conducting overland missions in Afghanistan since 2003.

In addition to military operators, two versions of the P-3 are flown by US Customs and Border Protection primarily for antidrug and homeland security missions. NASA acquired the YP3V prototype in 1966 and flew it until 1993. Today the agency has an NP-3B for scientific research missions. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, has two WP-3Ds, nicknamed Kermit and Miss Piggy, for weather research.

Although the P-8 is the US Navy's designated replacement for the P-3, Orion crews will still be on station for several years to come. Upgraded EP-3E ARIES II electronic reconnaissance aircraft will be flown well into the 2020s.

But other operators intend to continue flying their P-3s for many more years. To get the Orion through at least its sixth decade of service, the P-3 Mid-Life Upgrade, or MLU, is a life extension kit that replaces the aircraft's outer wings, center wing lower section, and horizontal stabilizer with new production components. The MLU removes all current P-3 airframe flight restrictions and provides 15,000 additional flight hours.

The US Navy has thirty-one MLU kits on order. Lockheed Martin builds the outer wings at its Marietta facility, and the kits are installed at the Fleet Readiness Center Southeast, the aviation depot at NAS Jacksonville, Florida. New wings are also being built for P-3s flown by Norway, Canada, Taiwan, and US Customs and Border Protection.

In one respect, the Orion has actually come full circle. The MLU replacement wings today are built on the exact same tooling that was used to build the wings for Bureau Number 148883, the first P3V-1 delivered to VP-8 fifty years ago.

Code One Magazine Article by Jeff Rhodes

THE VP-92 MINUTEMAN INSIGNIA:

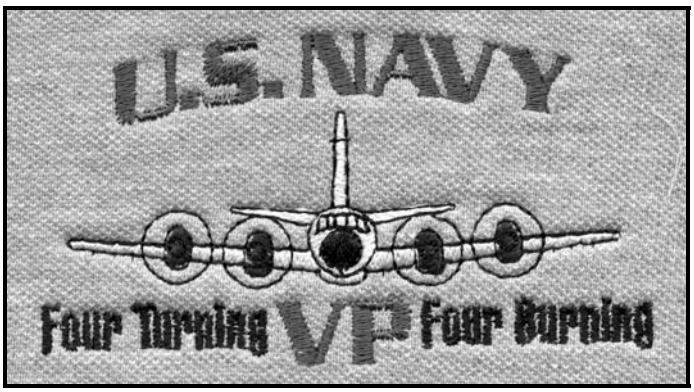
VP-92 had two different squadron insignia during the course of its four decades of existence. The first insignia featured a guillotine and was designed by AW2 Lee Bureau during early 1971, just a few months after the squadron was commissioned. In early 1979 YNSN Tammy Budlong designed a new insignia featuring the Concord Minuteman silhouette that had been decorating the tails of VP-92's P-3

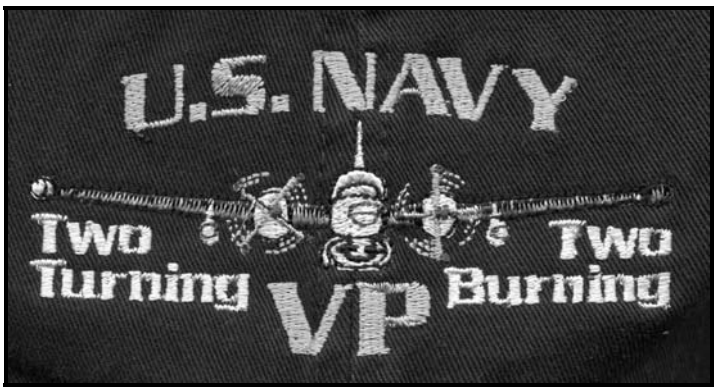
Orions since these aircraft replaced the P-2 Neptunes in 1975. According to Kevin Cahill, who was an AMCS in the squadron during its latter years, the original "Minuteman" insignia as it was designed had 14 stars. There were supposed to be only 13, one for each of the original American states. This mistake was eventually caught and corrected, but early "Minuteman" jacket patches and other things featuring this insignia have 14 stars.

At far left is shown an example of the original VP-92 Minuteman insignia with 14 stars. Note that there are two stars located between the Minuteman figure's legs. At near left is shown the later corrected version of the squadron's insignia, with 13 stars. Note that there is only one star between the Minuteman figure's legs.

LEFTOVER REUNION MERCHANDISE:

We still have some leftover merchandise from the 2012 annual reunion available for sale to those who either were unable to attend the reunion or missed out on them there for whatever reason. We have light gray VP Association P-3 Orion polo shirts in extra-large (XL) for $35, blue P-2 Neptune "Two Turning and Two Burning" ball caps for $20, and VP-92 challenge coins for $15. Prices include shipping to U.S. and FPO locations. To order, contact Bill Hanigan at vp92association@gmail.com.





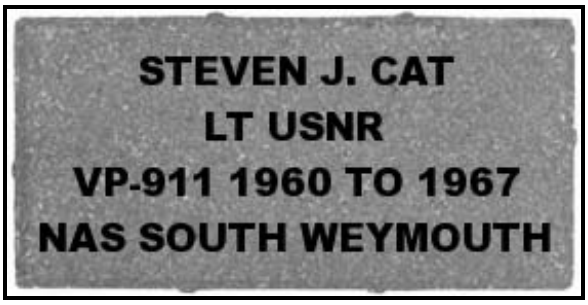
ABOVE LEFT: The embroidered P-3 Orion design that is on the polo shirts. ***ABOVE RIGHT:*** The embroidered P-2 Neptune design on ball caps. ***LEFT:*** both sides of the VP-92 challenge coin, which has a P-2 on one side and a P-3 on the other side.

MEMORIAL BRICKS:

The Association of Naval Aviation Patriot Squadron, the group that maintains and operates the Shea Naval Aviation Museum and the Shea Memorial Grove at the SouthField real estate development on

old NAS South Weymouth in Weymouth, MA, is selling custom-engraved memorial bricks as a fund-raiser. The group intends to place the bricks on public display at the Shea Memorial Grove in some manner with the final configuration (pathway, border, etc.) depending on the total number sold.

RIGHT: Representative sample memorial brick showing the kind of thing that you can have engraved on it to commemorate your military service at NAS Squantum, NAS South Weymouth, or anywhere else.

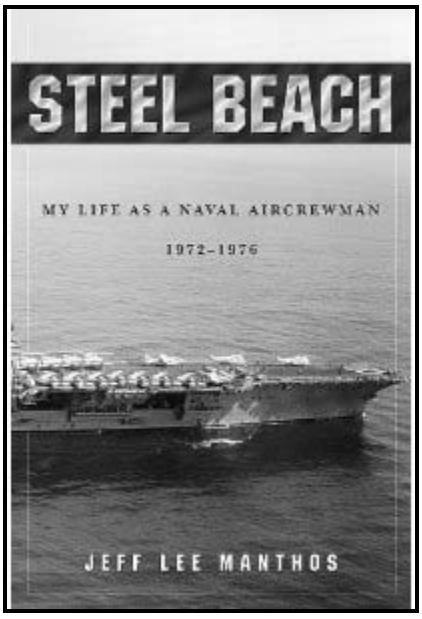


Each memorial brick costs $50. Up to four lines of text can be engraved on a brick, with each line of text having no more than 21 characters and with spaces counted as separate characters. A brick can serve to publicly commemorate an individual's military service, squadron, ship, etc., or basically almost anything within the limits of good taste. For more information, see the informational flyer and brick order form in PDF format posted on the ANA Patriot Squadron web site at http://www.anapatriotsquadron.org or send a standard sized self-addressed stamped envelope to ANA Patriot Squadron, Engraved Brick Offer, 495 Shea Memorial Drive, South Weymouth MA 02190.

The ANA Patriot Squadron is a group composed of veterans and civilians who are interested in preserving the history and heritage of NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth. The group tends the Shea Memorial Grove and operates the Shea Naval Aviation Museum. The museum, which serves as a repository of artifacts and photographs pertaining to the military history of both bases, is located in the former USN gymnasium (the Shea Fitness Center) on old NAS South Weymouth and is open to the public between 9 and 11 AM on the last Saturday of every month. Admission is free. Several VP Association members including Mark Connolly, Fran Creney, George Driscoll, Faith Frattasio, Marc Frattasio, Al Firnrohr, Alan Gilman, Bill Hanigan, Pat Kelly, Jack Leonard, and Susan Zimmerman, are active in the ANA Patriot Squadron and can often be found at the museum when it is open. Please note that the museum will host a speaker from the Naval War College on Saturday January 26, 2013. The presentation, which will be on the future of the aircraft carrier, starts at noon.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Navy veteran Jeff Lee Manthos recently wrote a book about his experiences as an enlisted aircrewman flying Sikorski SH-3 Sea King helicopters during the immediate post Vietnam War era. Manthos' book, "Steel Beach: My Life as a Naval Aircrewman" (ISBN 978-1592992614 by Inkwater Press), has 336 pages. You can obtain a copy on-line through Amazon.com or via special order from your local bookstore.



ON THE INTERNET:
Bob Wilson found an interesting web site at http://www.joebaugher.com that has some great information about naval aircraft bureau numbers. George Griffin suggests the National Association for Uniformed Services web site at http://www.naus.org for information of interest to military retirees.

MONTHLY MEETING:
Don't forget that we meet for lunch on the last Thursday of every month at the Officer's Club at Hanscom AFB in Bedford, MA from 11:30 to 13:30. Please join us if you can. If you don't have a military ID (base stickers are no longer required) contact Bill Hanigan at 781-585-4950 so your name can be added to the base's security access list. Note, all persons without a military ID are required to enter the base at the civilian gate, not the Hartwell gate.

PARTING SHOT:

ABOVE: Recognize anybody? VP-911 personnel on annual training at NAS Willow Grove, PA during the summer of 1968. This photo was passed along by member Bill Scaccia. Have something similar to share? If so, contact Marc J. Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

Until Next Time, Lose Not Thy Speed In Flight Lest The Earth Rise Up And Smite Thee – "Frat".