



# 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 104**

**[HTTP://WWW.VPASSOCIATION.ORG](http://www.vpassociation.org)**

**JUN 2026**

Welcome to another edition of the VP Association newsletter. Please direct all VP Association-related inquiries or correspondence to Marc Frattasio, PO Box 30, Pembroke MA 02339, 781-294-4491, marc\_frattasio@yahoo.com.

## **RECCO:**



**ABOVE:** Unusual perspective of a VP-92 P-3C Orion approaching the runway threshold and about to land sometime during the 1990s. Photo provided by Jerry Lach. Got something similar to share? If so, contact Marc Frattasio at marc\_frattasio@yahoo.com.

## **REGARDING THE COST OF PRINTING AND MAILING NEWSLETTERS...**

If you have an e-mail address and get your newsletter in the mail please contact George Driscoll at gnddriscoll@gmail.com ASAP so we can send it to you via e-mail. Remember, we do not charge dues and operate on a shoestring thanks to volunteer labor, memorabilia sales, and donations. If you have an e-mail address and get a paper newsletter it would be better for us to send it via e-mail.

## **LOST CONTACT:**

Be sure to inform George Driscoll at [gnddriscoll@gmail.com](mailto:gnddriscoll@gmail.com) about home or e-mail address changes.

## **NAS BRUNSWICK BASE REUNION IN SEPTEMBER:**

The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum will host another base reunion at old NAS Brunswick, ME on Friday and Saturday September 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Save the date and please come! The reunion committee has asked the Navy to provide static display aircraft and will have several guest speakers at the event, as in previous years. Former VP-92 COs Sean Coffey (former USN Chief Counsel), Riley Joe Gladden, and (RADM) Tom Reck are supposed to come and there may be one or more other VP-92 VIPs coming too. More details will be provided as the date of the event approaches.

On-line registration is live at <https://bnamuseum.org>. Several local hotels are providing discounted rates and these are listed on the museum's web site. Please note that the on-line registration process is a little different this year. The most significant change is that every person has to register separately. Although inconvenient, this is not such a big deal and if you have trouble with the process the museum provides a contact on the on-line registration form that you can reach out to for assistance. Please note that for a small fee you can reserve an eight-person table at the banquet.

Your newsletter editor will sponsor a command mini-reunion between 1 and 2 PM on Saturday September 19<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the base reunion for former VP-MAU and VP-92 personnel. We will have some kind of free squadron-branded "geedunk" to hand out to shipmates who come to this event, on a first-come first-served basis and while the supply lasts of course.

In related news, the Navy's famous Blue Angels will be coming to old NAS Brunswick on the weekend of July 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. See <https://www.blueangels.navy.mil/show/#show> for details.

## **MARTY McCORMACK, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS FOR THE BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT:**



Marty McCormack, who was an AWCS in VP-92, was recently promoted to Chief of Operations for the Boston Fire Department. If you see him at the upcoming NASB reunion be sure to congratulate him. Note the VP-23 insignia on Marty's fire hat in the photo presented at left. Marty was in that squadron before he left active duty and affiliated with the Naval Air Reserve. You can't see it here, but there is a VP-92 insignia on the opposite side of the hat!

## **DARRELL DAVIS RETIRING FROM THE NATIONAL GUARD AT NAS BRUNSWICK REUNION:**

Anybody who was in VP-92 between the 1990s and the disestablishment of the squadron should remember Darrell Davis. He was a popular SELRES AO. After the squadron was disbanded he transferred to the Army National Guard, where he was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers. He'll be retiring from the Army National Guard as a lieutenant colonel at the upcoming NAS Brunswick base reunion. The retirement ceremony will be held on Saturday September 19<sup>th</sup> starting at 11 AM. If you are planning to go to the NAS Brunswick base reunion, be sure to look for Darrell and congratulate him on the conclusion of a long and successful military career.



## NAVY DECLARES IOC FOR MODIFIED P-8A POSEIDON (USNI News 4/30):



The U.S. Navy declared Initial Operational Capability (IOC) for the P-8A Poseidon Increment 3 Block 2 system, Naval Air Systems Command announced Friday. The Inc 3 Blk 2 achieved IOC after the Initial Operational Test performed by Air Test and Evaluation Squadron One (VX-1) with support from the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft Program Office (PMA-290), reads the NAVAIR news release.

“The P-8A Inc 3 Blk 2 modifications enhance Naval Aviation’s Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting (ISR&T) capabilities – the eyes of the fleet,” Rear Adm. Michael Wosje, director of Air Warfare (OPNAV N98), said in the release. “This capability enhancement is in line with the CNO Fighting Instructions and the Golden Fleet Initiative, which shifts the paradigm from platform-centric thinking to a warfighting system. We are delivering the P-8A Inc 3 Blk 2 as a high-end, networked, and rapidly adaptable platform.”

Inc 3 Blk 2 is an upgrade to the P-8A airframe and avionics systems and includes new airframe racks, radome, antennas, sensors and wiring. The upgraded airframe also includes modifications that incorporate a new combat systems suite with improved computer processing, higher security architecture, a wideband satellite communication system, an ASW signals intelligence capability, a track management system, and additional communications and acoustics systems to enhance search, detection and targeting capabilities, reads the release.

“The recent deployment of P-8A Increment 3 Block 2 marks the culmination of a spiral development strategy that delivers winning capability to the fleet and ensures that the P-8A will remain agile, relevant and lethal for decades to come,” Rear Adm. Craig Mattingly, Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Group (CPRG), said in the release. Under Mattingly’s leadership, CPRG is responsible for the manning, training and equipping of the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance fleet of aircraft for the U.S. Navy.

The Navy sent its first P-8A for Inc 3 Blk 2 modification in March 2024. The work was done at Boeing’s Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul hangar at Cecil Airport in Jacksonville, Fla. Modifications were completed in June of 2025. The Navy plans to eventually upgrade all its P-8As to Inc 3 Blk 2 standard and has requested funding for 12 P-8As under its Fiscal Year 2027 budget request.

Australia is currently the only international P-8A operator that has committed to Inc 3 Blk 2 modifications. Australia's first aircraft began modifications in October of 2025 in the U.S. A second aircraft will undergo work in the U.S. while the remaining 12 aircraft will be upgraded in Australia.

Meanwhile, the New Zealand Defence Force on Tuesday announced the conclusion and results of maritime patrols by a Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) P-8A Poseidon over international waters in the Yellow and East China seas. The Royal New Zealand Air Force monitored the North Korean evasion of United Nations Security Council sanctions, observed a possible ship-to-ship transfer of illicit goods, reported 35 vessels of interest and broadcast eight deterrence messages.

"The evidence captured of activities that were occurring in the East China and Yellow seas allows authorities to take action against ships that may still be operating in contravention of this resolution," Air Commodore Andy Scott, said in the release.

The NZDF has contributed to international efforts since 2018 to detect sanctions evasions by North Korea, which are aimed at curbing North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The RNZAF P-8A operated from late March to mid-April out of Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, according to a Japan Ministry of Defence news release. Since 2018 a number of countries have contributed warships and aircraft staging out of Japan to surveil North Korean sanctions evasion at sea. New Zealand is the only country involved which routinely discloses the results of its surveillance missions.

A spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of National Defense spoke out earlier this month against what the country considers to be "harassment operations" by New Zealand forces in the East China and Yellow seas. During a mid-April press conference, Snr. Col. Zhang Xiaogang said that a Royal New Zealand Air Force P-8A anti-submarine patrol aircraft disrupted operations around China's airspace, disregarded China's warnings and conducted close-in reconnaissance and harassment.

"New Zealand's actions endanger China's sovereignty and security, seriously disrupt flight order in the relevant airspace and are highly likely to trigger maritime and air incidents. We urge New Zealand to strictly restrain its frontline forces, immediately cease its irresponsible behavior of harassment and endangering civil aviation safety, and prevent the risk of misunderstanding and misjudgment," Zhang said during the April 17 conference.

In refuting the Chinese claims, New Zealand Defense Forces said the country was monitoring North Korea as part of a United Nations effort that has been in place since 2018. "These activities are not directed at China but rather aim to monitor evasions of United Nations sanctions on North Korea, which do occur in the Yellow Sea and East China Sea," reads the April 18 statement from the New Zealand Defense Forces.

According to the defense force, routes flown were reviewed and there is no indication the P-8A disrupted civil aviation. The statement said New Zealand takes an open and transparent approach to these operations and as part of this, there has been dialogue between New Zealand and Chinese officials. "We have made it clear that this is a longstanding deployment enforcing UN-mandated sanctions on North Korea," reads the statement.

The Royal New Zealand Air Force P-8 is currently operating out of Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, carrying out monitoring and surveillance activities on North Korea as part of the UN effort. North Korean ally China sees such missions as a cover for conducting surveillance and reconnaissance on China and routinely dispatches ships and aircraft to shadow foreign military missions, which has resulted in unsafe interactions. The most recent incident was in March when a

Royal Australian Navy MH-60R helicopter launched from frigate HMAS Toowoomba (FFH156) in the Yellow Sea and was forced to take evasive action against a Chinese helicopter.

*USNI News article by Dzirhan Mahadzir*

**RUSSIAN, CHINESE WARSHIPS SAIL TO EAST CHINA SEA (USNI News 4/28):**

Russian and People's Liberation Army naval groups made separate transits over the past week through Japan's southwest region to enter the East China Sea, according to officials from the island country. A Russian Navy task group consisting of submarine RFS Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky (B-274), corvette RFS Gromkiy (335) and tugboat Andrei Stepanov were spotted April 21 sailing northeast around 50 kilometers south of Yonaguni Island and onward between Yonaguni Island and Iriomote Island to enter the East China Sea, Japan's Joint Staff Office said. A Russian Navy surface action group, that included corvettes RFS Sovershenny (333) and RFS Rezkiiy (343) and fleet oiler Pechenga, were spotted around midnight local time April 22 sailing the same route to enter the East China Sea. Sovershenny, Rezkiiy and Pechenga were later sighted Thursday sailing northeast around 130 kilometers southwest of the Goto Islands and through the Tsushima Strait to enter the Sea of Japan. Japanese minesweeper JS Yakushima (MSC-602), a P-1 maritime patrol aircraft and a P-3C Orion MPA conducted surveillance on the Russian ships, according to the release.

As of publication, Japan has not released whether Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Gromkiy and Andrei Stepanov transited the Tsushima Strait. The task group departed in early March from Vladivostok, Russia, and have only made one port visit to Tanjung Priok port, North Jakarta, Indonesia, from March 29-April 2. In contrast, Sovershenny, Rezkiiy and Pechenga deployed the second week of February and made port calls to Penang, Malaysia; Thilawa, Myanmar; Visakhapatnam, India; Chittagong, Bangladesh; Sihanoukville, Cambodia; Zhanjiang, China. Russian state media Tass reported that the three ships returned Monday to their homeport of Vladivostok.

On Monday as well, Japan reported PLAN destroyer CNS Chengdu (120) and fleet oiler CNS Kekexilihu (903) were sighted sailing southwest around 80 kilometers northeast of Tsushima and subsequently sailed southwest through the Tsushima Strait into the East China Sea. Japanese fast attack craft JS Shirataka (PG-829) surveilled the Chinese ships. Chengdu and Kekexilihu were among four PLAN ships that transited northeast through the Tsushima Strait on March 30-31 to enter the Sea of Japan, according to the release. The other two PLAN ships – cruiser CNS Lhasa (102) and destroyer CNS Guiyang (119) – have yet to transit back southwest through the Tsushima Strait.

A PLAN surface action group that includes f destroyer CNS Baotou (133) and frigate CNS Huanggang (577) operated around Japan's southwest region from April 19-22. The PLAN surface group was sighted by Japanese frigate JS Yahagi (FFM-5) at 11 a.m., April 19, according to Japan's Joint Staff Office. The PLAN ships sailed east around 60 kilometers southwest of Yokate Island and through the waters between Amami Oshima and Yokate Island to enter the Pacific Ocean. The two PLAN ships were sighted again by Japanese forces around 3 a.m. local time April 22. Destroyer JS Akebono (DD-108) observed the two PLAN ships sailing northwest 80 kilometers south of Hateruma Island and through the waters between Yonaguni Island and Iriomote Island to enter the East China Sea.

China publicized the movements of its surface group in a rare announcement from the PLA's Eastern Theater Command. According to the April 19 news release, the vessel formation was tasked with transiting the Yokoate Waterway to conduct training in the Western Pacific. "This is a routine training organized in accordance with the annual plan. It complies with international law and practice and does not target any specific country or entity," command spokesperson Senior Col. Xu Chenghua said in the release. It is unclear whether the rare announcement was in response to Japan's

destroyer JS Ikazuchi (DD-107) transiting the Taiwan Strait on April 17 or if this is a new policy from China to publicize its naval operations.

The Southern Theater Command and China Military Bugle, the PLA's official social media channel, issued releases and videos Friday on the operations of PLAN Naval Task Group 107 in the South China Sea. According to the releases, PLA Southern Theater Command recently dispatched a naval task group headed by cruiser CNS Zunyi (107) to conduct training exercises east of Luzon, Philippines. The exercises will focus on live-fire drills, air-sea coordination, rapid maneuver and replenishments-at-sea. The exercises coincide with Balikatan 2026, a series of U.S.-Philippine led exercises in Luzon that focus on the defense of Manila's strategic islands amid tensions with China. "The training exercises are necessary operations carried out in response to the current regional situation and are fully in compliance with international law and practice. Troops of the Chinese PLA Southern Theater Command will regularly conduct corresponding military operations based on the need of the security situation to safeguard China's national sovereignty and security, as well as regional peace and stability," reads the releases.

JMSDF destroyer Ikazuchi transited the Taiwan Strait on April 17, drawing criticism from China. PLA Eastern Theater Command spokesperson Xu said in a separate statement that the transit was "sending the wrong signals to Taiwan independence separatist forces." According to Xu, the Eastern Theater Command deployed naval and air assets to track and monitor the Japanese ship. "Forces of the Eastern Theater Command will remain on high alert at all times, and resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty and security, as well as regional peace and stability," reads the statement. Ikazuchi's transit of the Taiwan Strait marks the first under the Takaichi administration and is the fourth known transit in recent years. Ikazuchi is part of Japan's Indo-Pacific 2026 deployment, an annual presence in the region. This year's deployment will span April 13-Sept. 16 and will include three surface units, a submarine unit, three air units, a Visit, Board, Search and Seizure unit and an engineer unit, according to a news release from Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force.

Ikazuchi is in the First Surface Unit, which consists of helicopter destroyer JS Ise (DDH-182), Ikazuchi and amphibious tank landing ship JS Shimokita (LST-4002). The group departed April 14 from Japan to head to the Philippines to participate in Balikatan 2026. Ikazuchi is slated to detach from the unit later to conduct independent taskings. The Second Surface Unit includes multi-role cruiser JS Kaga (CVM-184), destroyer JS Fuyuzuki (DD-118) and fleet oiler JS Mashu (AOE-425). Fuyuzuki is also slated to depart later to participate in the U.S. Navy's Rim of the Pacific 2026 exercise held in the Hawaiian Islands in the summer. The Third Surface Unit consists of only destroyer JS Kongo (DDG-173). The Submarine Unit is a single submarine while the three air units are a US-2 Search and Rescue seaplane, a P-1 MPA and a UP-3D Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) training aircraft. The US-2 is expected to participate in Balikatan with the First Surface Unit.

*USNI News article by Dzirhan Mahadzir*

### **IRANIAN SUB SUNK BY ATACMS SHORT RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE (TMZ Newsletter 3/13):**

A submarine is among the Iranian naval vessels that U.S. forces have struck with Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) short-range ballistic missiles. ATACMS cannot hit moving targets, so the submarine would have had to have been stationary in port when struck. TWZ was first to report earlier this week that M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers firing ATACMS, as well as Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) short-range ballistic missiles, had been aiding in the destruction of Iran's Navy as part of Operation Epic Fury. The conflict has also marked the first combat use of PrSM, which brings a major boost in range over ATACMS.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff U.S. Air Force Gen. Dan “Razin” Caine put a particular spotlight on the contributions of field artillery units in current operations against Iran at a press conference at the Pentagon this morning. “Today, I’m going to talk about our incredible artillery force, comprised of American soldiers and Marines who’ve been sinking ships, [and] destroying depots,” Caine said. “Our Army and Marine artillerymen are hitting sites that Iran relies on to project power beyond their borders and protect our deployed [forces].”

“In just the first 13 days of this operation, our artillery forces have made history. They fired the first Precision Strike Missiles ever used in combat, reaching deep into enemy territory,” the Chairman continued. He also said that soldiers from the Army’s 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery, part of the 18th Field Artillery Brigade based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, were the ones to fire the first PrSMs against targets in Iran.

“They used Army ATACMS to sink multiple ships, including a submarine,” Caine added. “And they’ve done all of this with the precision and determination that comes from relentless training and trust in each other and in their weapon systems.” “We’ve rendered the Iranian Navy combat ineffective,” but “continue to attack naval vessels,” Caine also said, speaking generally.

Caine did not name the Iranian submarine that was destroyed using ATACMS, nor did he say what class it was. TWZ has reached out for more information. There is no known operational version of ATACMS capable of hitting moving targets, so, as already noted, the missile would also have had to have been employed against a submarine in port or one that was otherwise stationary. A review of satellite imagery in Planet Labs’ archive does show one of Iran’s three Russian-made Kilo class diesel-electric submarines sunk at Bandar Abbas as of March 4. The submarine had looked to be untouched in an earlier Planet Labs image taken on March 2 in the aftermath of a wave of strikes, as TWZ previously reported. Bandar Abbas is the Iranian Navy’s main base and occupies a particularly strategic position along the Strait of Hormuz.

In a video address on March 5, U.S. Navy Adm. Brad Cooper, head of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), had also said that “the most operational Iranian submarine ... now has a hole in its side.” What submarine Cooper was referring to here remains unclear, but it may have been the Kilo class submarine struck at Bandar Abbas. At that time, his comments were also taken by many to be a reference to the IRIS Fateh, a domestically-produced diesel-electric coastal attack submarine that entered Iranian service in 2019. The fate of that boat remains unconfirmed.

On March 10, CENTCOM released the video seen below, showing strikes on various Iranian vessels at sea and in port, including what looks to be a Ghadir class diesel-electric midget submarine. That boat was struck by an AGM-114 Hellfire missile, a U.S. official told TWZ. How many Ghadir class submarines were in Iran’s inventory before the current conflict is not clear, but prior estimates had generally put the size of that fleet at between 16 and 20 hulls.

Regardless, it makes good sense that the U.S. military would focus on neutralizing Iran’s submarine force, and doing so in port if possible, as part of the larger objective of neutering the country’s naval capabilities. Finding, fixing, and engaging submerged submarines, even older and louder designs, can take significant time and effort, as you can read about in more detail in this past TWZ feature. Iranian submarines could have been used to discreetly lay mines, as well as to attempt attacks on friendly warships or commercial vessels. As it stands now, maritime traffic in and out of the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz has still ground to a virtual halt over concerns about mines and other remaining Iranian threats, which is already having global ramifications.

Chairman Caine’s comments today also reinforce the role that ATACMS and PrSM have been playing in the current conflict, in general. TWZ previously noted that this is a preview of what one would expect to see from U.S. forces in other future conflicts, especially when it comes to using ballistic missiles in the anti-ship role as part of a high-end fight with China in the Pacific. PrSM, which only began entering service in the past two years or so, offers significantly greater reach than ATACMS, allowing it to hold a much broader swath of territory at risk from any launch position.

Just yesterday, Lockheed Martin also announced the first test launch of a full-up Increment 2 PrSM, an anti-ship optimized version in development now. In that test, a HIMARS launcher fired the Increment 2 missile, which flew out to a range of around 217 and a half miles (350 kilometers), according to a company press release. The Increment 2 PrSM features an additional multi-mode seeker specifically designed to allow it to engage moving targets at sea. Lockheed Martin also released the rendering below as part of its announcement yesterday, which looks to show apertures for the seeker system around the nose.

Questions do remain about the anti-ship and/or moving target capabilities that might be found on baseline Increment 1 PrSMs. A pair of “early operational capability” PrSMs – a term generally understood to refer to Increment 1 missiles – were fired at what was described as a moving maritime target during a test in the Pacific back in 2024. In the meantime, the older ATACMS, which PrSM is set to eventually replace, has now scored a hit against an enemy submarine, albeit one not on the move.

*TMZ Newsletter article by John Trevithick and Howard Altman*

**SUB HUNTER OVER CA DAYS AFTER DOOMSDAY PLANE SPOTTED (New York Post 3/12):**



California residents spotted another ominous plane, the Navy’s “submarine hunter,” zooming over Fresno Tuesday night. The intelligence aircraft made its flight days after the “Doomsday” plane, the

Boeing E-6B Mercury, also flew over the city. It also came a day after a leaked FBI memo warned of an “unverified” report of a possible way Iranian drones could attack California from a ship. The White House and Bureau were quick to play it down.

The latest plane, a Boeing P-8 Poseidon, is used as a “multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft excelling at anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, maritime domain awareness and search and rescue,” according to Boeing. People around the Central Valley looked up Sunday, March 8, to see a large, unmarked airplane flying unusually low and repeatedly circling the area. The plane was identified as a Boeing E-6B Mercury, often referred to as a “Doomsday Plane.”

The Poseidon flew over the city for about 30 minutes before heading back north, KMPH reported. Residents told the outlet that they saw the plane before they heard it. In the video, a large plane is seen flying overhead, cutting through the blue sky before passing through the sun’s light. Witnesses told KMPH the plane is large, loud and flying unusually low. It was performing what appeared to be touch-and-go landings, the outlet reported, and had few visible markings. The plane took off from the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, flight data shows, and the plane regularly conducts training exercises along the West Coast, KMPH reported.

The “Doomsday” plane is a more worrisome sighting than the “submarine hunter.” The plane serves as a nuclear control platform and strategic command post. If the plane had to execute its mission, the US could be heading for a nuclear war. But the sub-hunting plane, Boeing P-8 Poseidon, could hunt any threat to the West Coast from foreign adversaries. It’s specialized in eliminating submarines and performing reconnaissance. It’s unclear why the sub-hunting plane was flying over Fresno.

*New York Post article by Ross O’Keefe*

### **VIDEO SHOWS US FORCES DESTROYING IRAN'S OLD WARPLANES (Business Insider 3/12):**

US Central Command released new footage on Wednesday of strikes against some of Iran's old American-made surveillance and transport military aircraft. The videos, posted on X, showed a Lockheed C-130 Hercules and a Lockheed P-3F Orion being set ablaze by air strikes as they were grounded on runways. It's unclear when or where the strikes occurred.



The C-130's frame appears to collapse upon the strike's impact, with the fuselage separating from its wings in a fireball. The clips also showed the apparent destruction of an Ilyushin Il-76, a Soviet-designed strategic airlift freighter. "The Iranian regime is losing air capability day by day," CENTCOM wrote in its post.

Iran has an aging fleet of C-130E and C-130H transport aircraft, which it acquired from the US before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Tehran was believed to field about 28 of these turboprop planes, but it's

unclear how many remain after recent strikes on its military assets. Iran also purchased six P-3F Orion maritime surveillance aircraft before the revolution and was, until recently, believed to still operate five of them. Its air force is also reported to have roughly five IL-76s. Separate satellite images from Monday obtained by Business Insider also show that several of Iran's American-made F-14 Tomcat fighter jets — made famous by the film "Top Gun" — were destroyed at an airbase in Isfahan.

The US and Israel have continued to launch strikes against Iran, saying they've attacked over 5,500 sites and military assets since February 28. Many of those strikes targeted Iranian naval vessels, which the US is concerned may threaten the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway that services about a fifth of the world's oil supply. Over a dozen reported attacks on the strait have reduced its traffic to a crawl, sending oil prices briefly spiking over \$100.

President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that the war with Iran may end soon and there was "practically nothing left to target" in the country. "Any time I want it to end, it will end," he told Axios in a phone call.

*Business Insider article by Matthew Loh*

### **CANADA TO MODERNIZE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE P-3C ORIONS (Zona Militar 3/11):**



The Portuguese Air Force recently agreed on the modernization of five of its P-3C Orion with the company General Dynamics Mission Systems-Canada. The objective of the government-to-government contract aims at updating the maritime surveillance aircraft that Portugal recently incorporated, based on the experience of a similar agreement signed in 2022.

According to what was reported by the Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC), the agreement for the modernization of the five P-3C Orion patrol aircraft amounts to 39 million dollars. "...Through this government-to-government contract, we combine Canada's proven contracting expertise with the advanced technological solutions of General Dynamics Mission Systems-Canada to deliver upgrades that improve NATO interoperability and strengthen Portugal's maritime patrol capability...," commented Bobby Kwon, President and Chief Executive Officer of the CCC.

It is worth recalling that the government of Portugal decided to move forward with the modernization of the P-3C Orion at the end of 2025. The project contemplates that the recently incorporated aircraft, coming from Germany, receive new Link 16 Cryptographic Modernization data link systems,

an AIS (Automatic Identification System), as well as an update of their acoustic systems used in anti-submarine warfare and maritime surveillance missions.

With this initiative, the Portuguese Air Force aims at the standardization of its Orion fleet, since it is composed of aircraft of the P-3C CUP (Capability Upkeep Program) II variant, acquired from Germany, and the P-3C CUP+, purchased from the Netherlands. Once the modernization and improvements are implemented, the Portuguese P-3s will have the same operational standard, having optimized their capabilities for reconnaissance operations, land and maritime patrol, as well as for long-range search and rescue operations.

As we reported previously, the Portuguese Ministry of Defense established a phased investment schedule for the modernization of the German P-3C Orion. The project, which will extend until 2028, contemplated payments with an initial allocation of 800 thousand euros in 2025, 4.2 million in 2026, and two allocations of 9.5 million for 2027 and 2028 respectively.

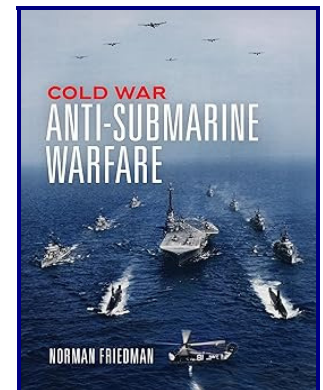
The Portuguese Air Force (FAP) P-3C CUP+ surveillance and patrol aircraft are the result of a modernization program of five P-3C acquired in 2005 from the Netherlands, with the first prototype delivered in September 2010. As detailed by the FAP, the P-3C CUP+ variant "...retains all the maritime patrol capabilities inherited from the P-3P, namely anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), and search and rescue (SAR). In addition, a set of modern sensors, together with a fully integrated tactical mission system, allows the P-3C CUP+ to also operate in various land missions. It is also equipped with a missile and laser warning self-protection system (MLWS), which allows the detection of threats and the firing of countermeasures...".

In 2023, Portugal moved forward with the acquisition of six P-3C Orion CUP II from the German Navy. The Portuguese purchase contemplates the entire inventory of Germany's P-3C Orion fleet, which included the aircraft, mid-life upgrade (MLU) kits, spare parts, support equipment and test benches, as well as flight and tactical procedure simulators. The first aircraft was received in February 2024.

The purchase of the German P-3C Orion was considered by Portuguese authorities as a great opportunity and a necessity, since their incorporation would guarantee the Portuguese Air Force "...the operation of the P-3C CUP+ weapon system in the coming years without significant restrictions, thus ensuring sustained high availability. Without these resources, the increase in the current availability of the aircraft will be compromised, which experience increasingly longer periods of unavailability due to the need to carry out maintenance tasks for which there is no material available on the market...". The P-3C Orion are equipment assigned to Squadron 601 "Lobos", a unit based at Beja Air Base.

### **RECOMMENDED READING:**

Here is a very good and relatively recent (August 2025) book about Cold War ASW operations. Written by defense analyst Norman Friedman and published by the Naval Institute Press (the Proceedings people), the book tells about how the US and NATO won the war against the Soviet submarine fleet between the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Cold War Anti-Submarine Warfare (ISBN 978-1682478578) can be purchased through Amazon or any other bookstore.



## **PARTING SHOTS:**



**ABOVE:** VP-63Z3 crew posed in front of an SP-2H Neptune at NAS South Weymouth during annual training in 1968. In the foreground crouching, from left to right are Bill Hanigan, Conamachi, Robert Belcher, Paul Lapinski, and Bayer. In the background standing, from left to right are, Lee Bureau, Kazmanian, Furgeson, Norman, and Jacobs. Reserve patrol squadron VP-913 was redesignated VP-63Z3 during the summer of 1968 as part of a reorganization of the Naval Air Reserve that was implemented in two distinct phases. The first phase, of which VP-63Z2 was a part, was called the "Force in Being". In November 1970, as part of the second phase of this reorganization, which was called the "Reserve Force Concept", VP-63Z3 was disestablished and all its members were transferred into a new Reserve Force Patrol Squadron (RESFORON) called VP-92. Photo provided by Barbara Hanigan.

**One Last thing.** Let's try to get a great turnout for the upcoming VP-92 and VP-MAU squadron mini-reunion at the NAS Brunswick reunion in September. If you can make it, please plan on coming!



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

