



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 94

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

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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: VP-MAU P-3Cs LB 02 and LB 01 at NAS Brunswick in the summer of 1984. VP-MAU aircraft only wore squadron colors for a couple of years so photos like these are rare. Got something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

SPEAKING OF 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 about home or e-mail address changes.

NAS BRUNSWICK REUNION:

The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum had to cancel the NAS Brunswick reunion, scheduled for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday September 15-17, due to weather concerns regarding Hurricane Lee.

Although the hurricane was ultimately downgraded to a tropical storm, passed several hundred miles off shore, and the impact to New England was minimal, as Saturday approached wind gusts were being forecast of greater velocity than the large circus-like tent that the museum had rented for the event was rated to withstand. In addition, the VX-30 and German P-3C Orions cancelled, and it seemed likely going into the weekend that the Canadian CP-140 Aurora and VP-8 P-8A Poseidon would not be able to come too. So, there really was no other choice other than to cancel the event.

This was an enormous disappointment for the hundreds of people who had pre-registered. Many people who were coming from a distance had travel and lodging arrangements that had to be cancelled and some people had already driven or flown to Maine from locations across the country. The organizers, some of whom you served with in VP-92 and/or VP-MAU Brunswick, had put nearly a year's time into planning the event.

In an effort to do something so the weekend wouldn't be a total write-off, the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum continued with the events that had been planned for Friday afternoon and evening, including the dedication of the museum, a live concert, food trucks, and a cash bar.

The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum intends to try again in 2024, and is tentatively planning to have a base reunion over the weekend of September 13th through the 15th. Mark your calendars now if you think you might want to go. With another year ahead for planning, perhaps the event next September will end up being even bigger and better than the one that was supposed to happen this year. Stand by for more news as the planning process for this event kicks off in the months ahead.

NAVY P-8A POSEIDON OVERSHOOTS HAWAII RUNWAY (USNI News 11/20):



A Navy P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol airplane is in Hawaii's Kaneohe Bay after attempting to land on a Marine Corps runway Monday afternoon, according to Marine Corps officials. The P-8A reconnaissance and surveillance aircraft was on approach to land on the runway at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay on the island of Oahu. "The aircraft was landing and overshoot the runway", said 1st Lt. Hailey Harms, a Marine Corps Base Hawaii spokesperson, told USNI News.

The aircraft, assigned to the Whidbey Island, Wash.-based "Skinny Dragons" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 4th landed at 1:59 p.m. local Hawaii time and ended up in shallow water just off the coast. The air

station's main runway runs in a northeast-to-southwest direction. "At approximately 2 p.m. local (Hawaii), a U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon overshot the runway on landing at Marine Corps Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, and ended up in nearby water," reads a statement from U.S. 3rd Fleet. "All personnel safely evacuated the aircraft. The crew, assigned to Whidbey Island, Wash.-based squadron VP-4 'Skinny Dragons,' were on a detachment in support of maritime homeland defense." Nine people were aboard the aircraft at the time but no immediate injuries were reported. "They are still being medically assessed," Harms said.

Base emergency services quickly responded to the scene, including federal firefighters, military police, air traffic control, fire rescue and waterfront operations, she said. The Honolulu Fire Department sent out the initial alert just after 2 p.m. for a "probable aircraft fire incident," local KITV Channel 4 reported. It's unclear yet what the next step will be in recovering the aircraft and which agencies will be involved in investigating the incident. "That's still being assessed, as well," Harms said.

Images posted on Hawaii News Now show the white airplane surrounded by water some 50 yards offshore. The bay's depth in that area ranges from 5 to 25 feet, according to nautical charts. Sand, mud and coral cover much of the bottom of the picturesque bay. "An investigation will be initiated. More details will be released as they become available," reads the 3rd Fleet statement. Along with hunting submarines, the P-8A Poseidon – the aircraft is based on the Boeing 737 airplane – is used for anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and humanitarian response missions, according to the Navy.

USNI News article by Gidget Fuentes

NEW USS MASSACHUSETTS SUB TO BE COMMISSIONED IN BOSTON (Boston Herald 11/19): The Navy will commission its newest submarine, the USS Massachusetts, in Boston, a decision made earlier this month that "answers the call" from the state's federal delegation. Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro alerted the delegation on Nov. 2 that he's selected Boston as the site for the commissioning, according to a letter provided by Sen. Elizabeth Warren's office.

"Considering the namesake of the ship and the unique roles that Massachusetts has in naval history, with seven previous ships bearing the Massachusetts name, this request is especially fitting," Del Toro wrote. "I am pleased to announce that we will move forward with Boston as the commissioning site." "Despite the fact that I am a devoted NY Yankee fan," Del Toro quipped in a hand-written addendum to his letter.

The commissioning is slated to take place in spring 2025, but the site it will be held at still needs to be selected, according to the USS Massachusetts Commissioning Committee. Warren and the remainder of the delegation wrote a letter to Del Toro in June, urging him to select Boston for the commissioning, specifically at Flynn Cruiseport in Southie.

They expressed that the state legislature "seeks to help defray costs to the Sailors' immediate families for travel and lodging while in Boston for the commissioning and the Commissioning is fully supported by the city." "Our Commonwealth has the honor of being the namesake for a Virginia-class submarine, and now, we have the honor that the USS Massachusetts will be commissioned here in Boston," Warren said in a release announcing Del Toro's decision. "Massachusetts has a long history of service to the United States Navy, and Secretary Del Toro has answered the call for the USS Massachusetts to enter service in Boston, in recognition of these unique contributions."

Local and state officials also desired having the new Virginia-class nuclear attack submarine commissioned in Boston. The City Council and state Legislature each adopted resolutions last year signaling their support. City Council President Ed Flynn offered the resolution as a retired Navy veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom. “The City of Boston is honored to be selected as the commissioning site for the USS Massachusetts, a Virginia Class submarine purposefully built for the inclusion of women sailors and as a place to foster the leadership of its men and women service members,” Flynn said in a statement. “This continues Boston’s long history as the finest hosting site for the commissioning of Navy ships with our resources for support and security,”

USS Massachusetts will be the 22nd Virginia-class submarine to enter the Navy. Nearly 380 feet long, Virginia Class submarines carry crews of more than 130 and reach speeds of more than 25 knots. The last United States Ship to bear the name Massachusetts is the South Dakota-class battleship, BB-59, commissioned in May 1942, that saw action in World War II. It was decommissioned in 1947, stricken from reserve duty in 1967, and is now on permanent display as a memorial and museum in Fall River.

In 2018, Flynn Cruiseport hosted the commissioning of USS Thomas Hudner, a guided-missile destroyer. This past May, the Navy christened the USS Massachusetts in Newport News, Va.

The USS Massachusetts Commissioning Committee has led lobbying efforts to bring the event to Boston. The nonprofit public charity is collaborating with the Massachusetts Bay Council of the Navy League and the Battleship Cove Foundation in Fall River. Funding for the formal ceremony comes from the Navy, but the committee is responsible for planning other events funded through charitable donations.

“We collectively look forward to this fantastic opportunity to showcase the 200+ year tradition of support that the Commonwealth has for Sailors at sea,” the USS Massachusetts Commissioning Committee said in the release. “We all will be working hard with local, state, and federal stakeholders to plan and host the finest commissioning week events for the crew, people of the Commonwealth, and the Navy.”

Boston Herald article by Lance Reynolds

UK TO DEPLOY TASK GROUP TO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN (Financial Times 10/13):

Britain will deploy a Royal Navy task group to the eastern Mediterranean and from Friday will conduct military surveillance missions in the region in a show of support for Israel. The UK government announced on Thursday that the Royal Air Force will fly P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft to track the transfer of weapons to terrorists in the area.

From next week two Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels, RFA Argus and RFA Lyme Bay, plus three Merlin helicopters and a company of Royal Marines, will also be deployed. The government described the naval task force as a “contingency measure” to support humanitarian efforts and to provide “deterrence and assurance”. The RFA vessels will sail from Libya where they have been providing humanitarian support in the wake of catastrophic flooding, according to a UK government official.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Britain was acting in concert with allies, adding: “The deployment of our world class military will support efforts to ensure regional stability and prevent further escalation.” The UK is also bolstering other military teams in Israel and across the region. This includes deploying more personnel to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, a key UK strategic air base. The move comes after Washington announced it was deploying a carrier strike group, led by the USS Gerard R Ford aircraft carrier, to the region.

Britain's P-8 Poseidon spy planes are more commonly flown over water to hunt submarines, but they also boast an overland surveillance capability. Grant Shapps, the defence secretary, said the Royal Navy task group, RAF operations and Britain's "wider military support" was an "undeniable display of the UK's resolve to ensure Hamas's terrorist campaign fails, whilst reminding those who seek to inflame tensions that the forces of freedom stand with the Israeli people".

The UK has been steadfast in asserting Israel's right to self-defence and has stepped up its military support after Sunak spoke with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier this week and James Cleverly, the UK foreign secretary, visited the nation, where he met victims of Hamas's attack. Britain has also offered support to Egypt to keep its border with Gaza open as a humanitarian and consular route, according to Downing Street. Sunak spoke with Egyptian president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Thursday and noted "the importance of Egypt's historic role in the region, including in seeking de-escalation", Number 10 said.

Sunak acknowledged the "challenging security situation" at Egypt's Rafah border crossing with Gaza and "offered the UK's support to try to manage this situation and keep the route open for humanitarian and consular reasons, including for British nationals", his spokesperson added. The UK prime minister said terrorism was an evil that had to be confronted wherever it occurred. Sunak stressed it was "important that the conflict did not spread further", Downing Street said.

Britain has also organised commercial flights to evacuate UK citizens and their dependants wanting to leave Israel after several major airlines, including Ryanair, suspended flights to the country following the outbreak of conflict with Hamas. British Airways followed suit on Wednesday after one of its planes was forced to turn back to Heathrow shortly before reaching Tel Aviv owing to security concerns. The UK government has also sent a team to Israel to assist British citizens on the ground.

Financial Times article by Lucy Fisher

US POSEIDON AIRCRAFT TRANSITS TAIWAN STRAIT (Taipei Times 10/13):

The US Navy yesterday said that one of its P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft transited the Taiwan Strait, as the White House mulls linking aid to Taiwan with that for Israel and Ukraine. "By operating within the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law, the United States upholds the navigational rights and freedoms of all nations," the US Navy said in a statement. The transit demonstrates the US' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, it added.

The Ministry of National Defense said the US aircraft had flown north through the Taiwan Strait and stuck to the median line. Taiwan's forces kept watch and the situation was "as normal," it added. China's military described the flight as "public hype," adding that it had sent fighters to monitor and warn the US plane. In a statement, it said it "remains on high alert at all times to resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and regional peace and stability." The US last announced a Poseidon mission through the Strait in July.

Meanwhile, an unnamed US official said that the White House has been weighing whether to make a request to the US Congress that would lump funding for Israel with that of Taiwan and Ukraine to improve the chances of gaining passage of assistance for Ukraine's fight to repel Russian invaders. Some US Republican lawmakers on Wednesday said they would resist any funding request from US President Joe Biden that combined military aid for Israel and Ukraine, amid resistance from some Republicans to further assistance for Kyiv. White House national security spokesman John Kirby told reporters at a news briefing on Wednesday that parameters for the administration's additional funding request to Congress had not been finalized.

Separately, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Jedidiah Royal said he was “very confident” that the US could manage multiple contingencies, in response to concerns about thinning resources if a conflict were to also break out in the Taiwan Strait. The US would be able through its force posture and resource management to manage any number of possibilities, he told the Global Taiwan Institute’s annual symposium in Washington on Wednesday. “I would encourage you to fully take on board how much work and energy we’re putting into making sure we’re prepared for every situation,” Royal said. “If the United States does engage itself, I can assure you that we will be victorious in that regard,” he said. Conflict in the Taiwan Strait of any kind is “neither imminent nor inevitable,” but Washington wants to make sure it is taking the possibility seriously and preparing “across the board,” he added.

Taipei Times article by Kayleigh Madjar

RNZAF P-8As GET UP TO SPEED (Flight Global 10/13):

Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft of the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) are starting to have an impact regionally, including a long-range mission to locate a lost fishing boat. Three Fijian fishermen had been lost at sea for nine days when Suva requested Wellington’s help in locating them, according to the RNZAF. The last known contact with the fisherman had occurred on 2 October, when they reported having problems with their engine. They also lacked locator beacons and communications equipment.

Weather data and oceanic currents were assessed to determine the vessel’s likely direction of drift and identify a search area. On 11 October a 5 Squadron P-8A commenced a radar and visual search in the morning and found the fishing boat in the afternoon. It vectored nearby vessels to assist and loitered in the search area until another vessel was close enough to rescue the crew.

RNZAF Air Commodore Andy Scott says the search was extremely challenging given the vast search area and the extended time since contact was lost with the fishing vessel. “The P-8 is proving itself a highly effective and responsive asset to support the people of New Zealand and our Pacific neighbors and was no doubt an incredibly welcome sight for the people on board the fishing vessel,” says Scott.

An RNZAF P-8A was also involved in an August surveillance operation for the Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency. The work saw the aircraft flying for a total of 44h and covering 1.8 million square km of sea. The crew reported the activities and positions of 68 vessels.

Meanwhile, a former RNZAF P-3K2 is undergoing work in Christchurch prior to induction into the Air Force Museum of New Zealand. The RNZAF retired its last three P-3K2s in February, five months earlier than planned. This created a brief capability gap because the P-8A capability had yet to fully mature. The service helped fill the gap with other types, such as the Lockheed Martin C-130H.

Flight Global article by Greg Waldron

GENERAL DYNAMICS BEGINS PORTUGUESE P-3C MODERNIZATION (Shephard News 10/4):

General Dynamics (GD) Mission Systems – Canada has announced the induction of the first of five P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) from the Portuguese Air Force for an upgrade. The work is being carried out in partnership with the Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) at IMP Aerospace & Defense facilities in Halifax.

GD said it will use its Airborne Data Management System to modify the communications and mission electronics of the P-3C. The solution has been installed on more than 50 aircraft to date. The

modifications are said to be drawing from Canada's investment in the newly modernized CP-140 Block IV, which will allow Portugal to maintain the capabilities required to fulfill NATO missions.

IMP Aerospace will install the new systems and will work together with GD to test the upgrades in early 2024. 'This modification program is crucial for our P-3C fleet in order to ensure that the platform continues to respond adequately to the current and future operational scenarios,' said Brigadier General Nogueira, director of the engineering and programs directorate for Portuguese Air Force.

At the end of August 2023, the Portuguese Government authorized its air force to acquire six P-3C CUP Orion from Germany. The contract, worth €45 million (\$48 million), includes mid-life upgrade (MLU) sets, spares, support equipment, test benches and simulators. A contract is expected to be signed by early 2024.

Portugal initially procured six former Royal Australian Air Force P-3s, which were replaced by five ex-Royal Netherlands Navy aircraft. They are now being upgraded by GD and IMP Aerospace & Defense. The aircraft that are expected to be acquired from Germany will also be second-hand platforms purchased from the Netherlands.

The Lockheed Martin-built P-3 Orion MPA has been in service with 21 operators across 17 countries in a variety of standards, designations and configurations, many of which have undergone modernization or have recently been undergoing upgrades. Chile's two P-3As were also upgraded by Canada's IMP, starting in 2017. Germany, just like Greece, chose to contract Lockheed Martin directly for P-3 modernization in the same year.

Shephard News article by The Shephard News Team in London

NAVY ORDERS SIGNINT VERSIONS OF MQ-4C TRITON (Military+Aerospace Electronics 9/20): Signals intelligence (SIGINT) experts at Northrop Grumman Corp. will upgrade two U.S. Navy MQ-4C Triton long-range unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with SIGINT capability to match that of the Navy's EP-3 manned SIGINT aircraft under terms of a \$83.1 million order. Officials of the Naval Air Systems Command at Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Md., have asked the Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Systems segment in San Diego carry out the Triton integrated functional capability (IFC) 4.0 on two MQ-4C UAVs and one main operating base. These two long-range, high-altitude unmanned SIGINT aircraft are for the U.S. Navy and the Government of Australia.

The MQ-4C Triton, built by Northrop Grumman Aeronautics, is a maritime patrol version of the Northrop Grumman RQ-4 Global Hawk long-range reconnaissance UAV. The Triton provides real-time intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions (ISR) over vast ocean and coastal regions.

The Triton IFC 4.0 project seeks to upgrade the Triton UAV with multi-intelligence capabilities that include SIGINT, such that Triton IFC 4.0 UAVs could replace the Navy's fleet of EP-3 aircraft. The EP-3 aircraft are based on the Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion four-engine turboprop airframe. The Navy still operates only one EP-3 aircraft squadron, which is based at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, Wash. These aircraft are scheduled for replacement by the Triton IFC 4.0. Much of the EP-3's mission and electronic equipment is secret and is conducted in high-threat areas where long-range standoff is necessary.

The Triton IFC 4.0 unmanned SIGINT aircraft program is installing a SIGINT sensor payload with components from Boeing Argon ST in Fairfax, Va., and Sierra Nevada Corp. in Sparks, Nev. On this order Northrop Grumman will do the work in Palmdale and San Diego, Calif.; Chantilly, Va.;

Hauppauge, N.Y.; Waco, Texas; Linthicum, Md.; and at other U.S. locations, and should be finished by June 2026. For more information contact Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Systems online at www.northropgrumman.com/who-we-are/business-sectors/aeronautics-systems, or Naval Air Systems Command at www.navair.navy.mil.

Military+Aerospace Electronics article by John Keller

\$1.5 BILLION UPGRADE TO AUSTRALIA'S MARITIME SURVEILLANCE (ABC News 9/18):

Australia will purchase a fourth long-range Triton drone for maritime surveillance, despite the US Navy recently halting production of the expensive unmanned platform which critics warn is vulnerable to enemy attack. The contentious American acquisition is part of a \$1.5 billion boost to the RAAF being unveiled on Tuesday that includes upgrades to the existing P-8A Poseidon fleet, allowing the patrol aircraft to eventually fire anti-ship missiles up to 1,000km.

Under the Poseidon upgrade program, the Department of Defence expects the first of its 14 Boeing-made aircraft to receive enhancements to anti-submarine warfare, maritime strike and intelligence collection capabilities from 2026. The entire fleet is expected to be completed by 2030.

Defence Industry Minister Pat Conroy says the P-8A upgrades and purchase of an additional MQ-4C Triton Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) will be "critical to our defence and particularly surveilling the northern approaches to Australia". "The purchase of an additional Triton will enhance operations from Australia's northern bases, a priority under the Defence Strategic Review," Mr Conroy said. "The upgrades to the fleet of Poseidon aircraft strengthens our ability to secure and protect Australia's maritime interests."

Originating from the Global Hawk program, the MQ-4C Triton is manufactured by Northrop Grumman, boasting the ability to fly surveillance missions for more than 24 hours at altitudes exceeding 50,000 feet. Under the previous Coalition government, an initial order was made for three of the high altitude long endurance (HALE) aircraft with plans to eventually buy up to seven, but none have yet been delivered to Australia.

According to the Biden administration's latest Department of Defense budget, the Triton program will be terminated with production ceasing in 2024. The halted production will leave the US Navy with a total of 22 aircraft, well short of its earlier target of 70.

Former Australian defence official Marcus Hellyer has described Labor's decision to persevere with the Triton as "strange". He predicts the program will undoubtedly cost more in both acquisition and sustainment than originally forecast. "Rather than getting in deeper and throwing good money after bad do we actually reconsider the whole thing and get out while we still can?" says Dr Hellyer, now with Strategic Analysis Australia. "We've been pursuing this capability for well over 20 years, we've been involved with the US on this program in various ways and we've been contributing financially to this program for a very long time. "The question was always would we continue and get the full six or seven or would we get a smaller number but if we got a smaller number would it actually be a viable capability?"

However, the Triton acquisition is the right decision for Australia when combined with other steps being taken by the government, says Mr Conroy. "I think this is good technology that gives us that persistent longer-range presence, that complements the best maritime surveillance aircraft in the world in the P-8 Poseidon and investments we're making in space awareness," he said.

When Australia's Triton aircraft eventually arrive, they are expected to be housed at RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern Territory but operated remotely from RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia.

ABC News article by Andrew Greene

UKRAINIAN BOMBERS HAVE KNOCKED OUT A RUSSIAN SUBMARINE (Forbes 9/13):

Russian admirals knew they had a problem. This summer, the Ukrainian air force's sole bomber unit—the 7th Tactical Aviation Brigade—began arming its 1970s-vintage Sukhoi Su-24s with British-made Storm Shadows and ex-French SCALPs: stealthy, subsonic cruise missiles each with a nearly 200-mile range. Su-24s firing Storm Shadows and SCALPs began plucking at the Russian army's logistical system in occupied southern Ukraine, striking depots, repair yards and bridges.

The staff of Russia's Black Sea Fleet—30 large warships scattered across ports in southern Russia and occupied Crimea—sensed their vessels might be the next targets. They began painting elaborate camouflage on some ships, hoping the paint would confuse the cruise missiles' imaging-infrared sensors. The admirals were right to be worried. They were wrong to assume a little paint would protect their ships. On Wednesday morning, Ukrainian bomber crews fired a volley of Storm Shadow or SCALP cruise missiles at the Black Sea Fleet base in Sevastopol, in southern Crimea.

Ukrainian forces already had cleared a path for the missiles by blowing up, with a modified navy anti-ship missile, the Russian air force's long-range S-400 air-defense battery in western Crimea—and by sending commandos to dismantle Russian sensors on a pair of captured Ukrainian oil platforms in the waters west of Crimea. There was no stopping the 7th TAB's cruise missiles as they streaked right through the remains of Russia's Crimean air-defenses on Wednesday and struck a drydock belonging to the Black Sea Fleet's 13th Ship Repair Plant in Sevastopol. The two ships in the drydock—a Ropucha-class amphibious ship and a Kilo-class submarine—burned through the night. In the morning, imaging satellites spotted two roasted hulks: proof both vessels likely were beyond repair.

Ukrainian air force commander Lt. Gen. Mykola Oleschuk praised the bomber crews. "While the occupiers ... are still recovering from nighttime explosions in Sevastopol, I would like to thank the pilots of the air force of the armed forces of Ukraine for their excellent combat work," Oleschuk wrote on Telegram. The raid was the culmination of months of effort by Ukraine and its allies to arm the bomber regiment's Sukhois, reduce Russian defenses and then strike when two valuable ships were most vulnerable: when they were out of the water.

In 19 months of hard fighting with an enemy that has no major warships, the Black Sea Fleet has lost a cruiser, three amphibious ships, a submarine, a supply ship and several patrol boats and landing craft. It cannot make good these losses as long as the war continues and Turkey prohibits the passage of warships through the Bosphorous Strait into the Black Sea. And the losses almost certainly will continue. The Ukrainians have proved they can strike Russian warships in ports in both Crimea and Russia proper. No port is safe for what remains of the Black Sea Fleet.

Forbes article by David Axe

ARGENTINA BUYS P-3 ORIONS FROM NORWAY (DefenseNews 9/8):

The Argentine government has finalized negotiations to buy four surplus P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft from the Royal Norwegian Air Force, meeting a requirement set in 2015 by the South American country's Navy. The agreement was reached Aug. 31 in Buenos Aires during a meeting between Defense Minister Jorge Taiana and representatives of the Norwegian Defense Materiel Agency.

Three of the P-3C aircraft are fitted for maritime surveillance, anti-submarine and anti-surface missions, and one P-3N is designed for search and rescue operations, according to a news release from the Argentine Defense Ministry. The statement also noted the deal is worth \$67 million.

Argentina originally intended to acquire surplus P-3Cs from the U.S. Navy. However, the American aircraft would have required refurbishment that exceeded the Argentine government's funding, according to local military sources, who spoke to Defense News on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the topic.

Argentine and Norwegian officials began talks about purchasing the aircraft in late 2022. In February 2023, the head of the Argentine Navy, Adm. Julio Guardia, confirmed negotiations were underway with Norway to acquire three or four P-3s that the Nordic country would consider surplus after replacing them with P-8 Poseidon aircraft. Negotiations covered the financial conditions of the potential sale and included efforts to receive U.S. government permission for the transfer of the Lockheed Martin-made aircraft.

The first two planes are to arrive in Argentina by the beginning of October. The P-3s are expected to bolster the capabilities of the Argentine Navy's surveillance squadron based at the Almirante Zar Air Naval Base near Trelew along the Patagonian coast of southern Argentina. Since 1997, the unit has operated P-3Bs acquired from the U.S. Navy, but their need for servicing has limited their use.

Between 2009 and 2016, before Norway decided to replace its P-8s, all of the country's P-3s underwent life extension and upgrade work. That included Lockheed Martin replacing wings and parts of the horizontal stabilizers using components made of new alloys more resistant to fatigue and corrosion. The P-3C mission systems underwent an upgrade with the integration of AN/USQ-78B acoustic processor technology refresh, AN/ASQ-227 aircraft mission computers, and tactical mobile acoustic support systems.

"Even when the acquisition of a new, long-range maritime surveillance aircraft should have taken place several years ago, it is a very good and important step toward increasing surveillance, control and protection of Argentina's extended exclusive economic zone," Luis Piñeiro, an independent defense and security analyst based in Buenos Aires, told Defense News. "Illegal fishing, which is causing losses of \$2.6 billion each year to this country, will be from now prevented and fought more effectively with the support of newer and more capable [maritime patrol aircraft]."

DefenseNews article by Jose Higuera

CHINA "MIGHT" HAVE LOST A NUCLEAR SUBMARINE WITH "ALL HANDS LOST" (1945 8/24):

While now being denied by Taiwan and most outlets, rumors are still swirling that a Chinese Type 093 Shang-class nuclear submarine is rumored to have suffered a serious accident near the Yellow Sea off Lianyungang, according to a number of social media reports. Many of these reports claim the entire crew is dead. China's major state-controlled media outlets were silent about the rumor. Other reports suggest the incident took place closer to the Taiwan Strait, which would be a major combat flashpoint in the event of an invasion of Taiwan.

The Type 093 is the People's Liberation Army Navy's (PLAN) most modern attack submarine. The class represents an important element of China's modernization of its navy. The Type 93's mission is to defend the country's limited number of nuclear ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) from threats from hostile navies. The sub carries powerful YJ-18 anti-ship cruise missiles that can be launched from a buoyant launch canister. It can carry up to 22 torpedo-sized weapons, Naval News reports.

A Type 093 carries at least 100 crew, and there were six boats in the inventory before the rumored accident. “There are no further details at this stage. After all, more than 100 people have died, and more than 100 families. In all fairness, I also hope that this news is not correct,” a Chinese naval observer wrote on X.

The U.S. Navy lost the U.S.S. Thresher in 1962 with all hands and the U.S.S. Scorpion in 1968, likewise with all hands. The Russians lost the Kursk in 2000. The Soviet Navy lost a Golf-class diesel ballistic missile submarine K-129 that sank in 1968, and the CIA unsuccessfully attempted to recover it with Project Azorian in 1974. The area off the Chinese coast is not conducive to submarine warfare due to its shallowness. Submarines need access to deep waters such as the waters off Taiwan’s east coast, to be militarily effective.

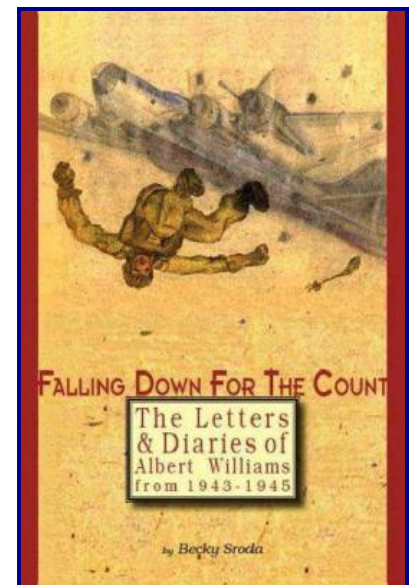
Hudson Institute Senior Fellow Bryan Clark, a veteran submariner, told 1945 that if the rumor is true despite the denials the likely cause of the boat’s sinking was human error. “It’s a very challenging operating environment for submarines. There are weird currents. It’s shallow. The depth varies. There’s a lot of rivers out there, so there’s silt. So sometimes the depth is not predictable,” Clark said. “You could see getting into trouble there if you are a submarine trying to remain submerged. China’s submarine force is getting better. It’s got some of the better people in it.

Clark continued, “If you read the report like that out of the Naval War College, it’s not like they get the cream of the crop. And the training they get is not necessarily the best training in the world ... That’s not their strength.” The recent grounding of the U.S. Navy’s Seawolf-class USS Connecticut on an uncharted seamount in the South China Sea shows that even the most highly trained crew can have navigational problems in the waters off the Chinese coast.

1945 article by John Rossomando

RECOMMENDED READING:

Some of you should remember Cindy MacKool. She was in VP-93 at NAF Detroit and later came to VP-92 at NAS South Weymouth after VP-93 was disbanded. Her late father, Albert Williams, was in the Army Air Forces during the Second World War. He was a B-17 Flying Fortress crewmember, flew bombing missions over Germany, was shot down, and spent time in a German POW camp. There was a book written about him called “Falling Down for the Count”. This book has been out of print for a while but you can still find used copies on the Internet and elsewhere. The book was put together by Albert Williams and Becky Sroda. It was published in 2006 by Trafford Publishing. It has 273 pages and the ISBN is 9781412012195. Check it out.



ON THE INTERNET:

A reminder that your newsletter editor took videos of the last VP-30 P-3 Orion’s engine starts, taxi to the runway, takeoff, and low pass at NAS Jacksonville, FL back in June. You can view these videos on the VP-92 and VP-MAU Facebook groups at www.facebook.com.

PARTING SHOT:



ABOVE: VP-92 personnel assembled on the tarmac at NAS Brunswick, ME for a group photo in front of a Lockheed P-3C Orion sometime in the late 1990s. Looks like Mike Christopher, Kevin Sinnett, and Doreen Wallace (Wheat?) standing in front of the formation.



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

