



# 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 102**

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

**DEC 2025**

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](mailto:marc_frattasio@yahoo.com).

## **RECCO:**



**ABOVE:** VP-92 aircraft lineup at Roosevelt Roads Puerto Rico circa 1995. Photo courtesy of Jerry Lach. Got something similar to share? If so, contact Marc Frattasio at [marc\\_frattasio@yahoo.com](mailto:marc_frattasio@yahoo.com).

## **FINAL FLIGHTS:**

We lost Arthur Ricca and Frank Holland recently. Both were in VP-92. Arthur served as maintenance officer and Frank was an AOCS.

## **ILL SHIPMATE IN NEED OF CHEERING UP:**

Mike Ronsse, who was a TAR PN in VP-92 is recovering at home from recent open heart surgery. You can reach out to him at 1759 N Pearson Dr Springfield MO 65802 [michaelronsse@sbcglobal.net](mailto:michaelronsse@sbcglobal.net).

## **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](mailto: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.

**VP-92'S SUZANNE McDERMOTT KRAUSE IS NOW A REAR ADMIRAL:**



As mentioned in the previous issue of the newsletter, Suzanne McDermott Krause, who was a SELRES P-3 pilot in VP-92 during the squadron's final years, is still serving in the Navy Reserve and was recently promoted to Rear Admiral. At that time we did not have a picture of her in a Rear Admiral's uniform. Now we do, and here it is. At left is Suzanne's husband, Scott Bailey, who as most of you should know was the last commanding officer of VP-92 before the squadron was disestablished in 2007.

**VP-92 REPRESENTED AT ARTHUR RICCA'S FUNERAL:**



Several former VP-92 people met up on Friday September 26<sup>th</sup> to represent the old squadron at Arthur Ricca's funeral in Merrimack, NH. In the photo presented above are, from L-R, Joe McCann, Sara McCann, Rick Caesar, Marc Frattasio, Pete Gamble, and Richard Cahoon. To see more photos taken at this event, go to the VP-92 Alumni group on Facebook at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

### **NAS BRUNSWICK BASE REUNION COMING UP:**

The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum intends to host another NAS Brunswick base reunion at old NAS Brunswick, ME on Friday and Saturday September 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2026. Save the date! As has been the case in recent years, your newsletter editor intends to sponsor a command mini-reunion on Saturday in conjunction with the base reunion for all former VP-MAU and VP-92 personnel. We will most likely have some kind of free squadron-branded “geedunk” to hand out to everybody who comes to this event, on a first-come first-served basis and while the supply lasts of course. More details will be presented in the newsletter as the date approaches. A reminder that the Navy’s famous flight demonstration team, the Blue Angels, will be coming to old NAS Brunswick too over the weekend of July 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in 2026.

### **CHINESE JET RELEASES FLARES NEAR PATROL PLANE (Stars and Stripes 10/21):**



Australian officials lodged a complaint after a Chinese military aircraft released flares near an Australian surveillance plane over the South China Sea on Sunday. An Australian air force P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft had an “unsafe and unprofessional” interaction with a Chinese Su-35 fighter, Australia’s Defence Ministry said in a statement Monday. The Australian plane was undamaged and its crew members were uninjured, according to the statement. “This was an unsafe and unprofessional maneuver that posed a risk to the aircraft and its personnel,” the ministry said.

China’s state-run Global Times reported Monday that the country’s Southern Theater Command had warned the Australian aircraft for what is described as intruding into Chinese airspace. “We urge the Australian side to immediately stop such provocative moves,” Col. Li Jianjian, a spokesperson for the command, said in a statement, according to the newspaper. “The troops in the theater are on high alert at all times to resolutely defend national sovereignty and security and peace and stability in the region.”

Australia has carried out maritime surveillance in the region for decades, the Defence Ministry said, noting that patrols are carried out in accordance with international law and the right to freedom of navigation and overflight in international waters and airspace. Australia expects all countries, including China, to operate their militaries in a safe and professional manner, the statement said.

A similar incident occurred in February, when a Chinese military plane fired flares at an Australian P-8 over the South China Sea. The incident coincided with a White House meeting between President Donald Trump and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. During their talks, the two leaders reaffirmed their nations' growing defense cooperation and signed agreements on critical minerals, defense, technology and investment. The agreements follow moves by China to impose export controls on rare earth minerals used to manufacture electronics, weapons and electric vehicles.

*Stars and Stripes article by Seth Robson*

### **US AIRSTRIKE DESTROYED "DRUG-CARRYING SUBMARINE" (Sky News 10/19):**



Two survivors of a US airstrike, targeting what Donald Trump has described as a "drug-carrying submarine" in the Caribbean, have been repatriated to their home countries. The US president posted footage of Thursday's operation, part of a recent military campaign targeting boats transporting drugs to America. "It was my great honor to destroy a very large DRUG-CARRYING SUBMARINE that was navigating towards the United States on a well known narco-trafficking transit route," Mr Trump wrote on Truth Social. "US intelligence confirmed this vessel was loaded up with mostly Fentanyl, and other illegal narcotics," he added.

The US military staged a helicopter rescue for the survivors on Thursday after the strike on their semi-submersible vessel, suspected of trafficking illegal narcotics. They were then transported to a US Navy warship. Two other crew members on board were killed.

President Trump confirmed the survivors would be returned to their home countries of Colombia and Ecuador "for detention and prosecution". Both countries subsequently confirmed they had been handed over. "America will not tolerate narcoterrorists trafficking illegal drugs, by land or by sea," he added. On Saturday, Colombian President Gustavo Petro posted on X: "We have received the Colombian detained on the narco submarine, we are happy he is alive and he will be processed according to the law."

The Trump administration has said previous strikes in the Caribbean have killed 27 people, raising concerns among some about the legality of the military operations. The strikes also come against the backdrop of a US military buildup in the Caribbean that includes guided missile destroyers, F-35 fighter jets, a nuclear submarine and around 6,500 troops as the US president escalates a standoff with the Venezuelan government. On Wednesday, Mr Trump disclosed he had authorised the CIA to conduct covert operations inside Venezuela, adding to speculation in Caracas that the US is attempting to topple Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. Mr Maduro has denied any connection to drug smuggling and claimed the US boat strikes are a pretext for regime change, and violations of sovereignty and international law.

### **RUSSIA'S SUBMARINE PROBLEM IS WORSE THAN MANY IMAGINE (Naval News 10/15):**



The Russian submarine Novorossiysk, an Improved Kilo-class vessel, has been forced to limp home to the Baltic after a mechanical failure in the Mediterranean. While some reports exaggerated its plight, the incident exposes the Russian Navy's declining presence in the region. Since losing its Syrian base at Tartus in 2024 and facing restrictions on movement through the Bosphorus, Russia's Mediterranean task force has largely collapsed. The Novorossiysk's troubles highlight mounting maintenance issues and the broader erosion of Moscow's naval reach in the Mediterranean.

The saga of the Russian Navy submarine Novorossiysk has captured headlines, and even mocking remarks from officials. NATO chief Mark Rutte summed it up, commenting that the "broken Russian submarine" was "limping home from patrol". The submarine, a Pr.636.3 Improved Kilo class boat, has been transiting back from the Mediterranean to the Baltic since the start of the month. The submarine reportedly suffered a mechanical failure in the Western Mediterranean in late September and has since been returning home on the surface.

That it is surfaced is not in itself unusual however. Russian Kilos have been making this journey in this fashion for years. And it did not suddenly surface off France in any literal sense, despite clickable headlines. Nautical puns aside, much that has been written about its is exaggeration and

speculation. It's another case of 'wishful sinking'. Yet its woes do point to a much deeper submarine problem for the Russian Navy.

The Russian Navy established a 'permanent task force' in 2013. Submarines, together with frigates and larger warships were based at Tartus in Syria. The submarine component was often forward deployed from the nearby Black Sea Fleet. This was despite the Montreux convention which restricts submarines from deploying between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. In practice Russia was able to bend the interpretation of maintenance voyages to get around these restrictions.

The base at Tartus had enough facilities for submarines to rotate through there for up to a year at a time. An all-important repair ship, PM-82, was based there for extended periods to provide local maintenance support. By 2022 there were regularly two or more submarines at Tartus, with two there at the beginning of the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Things were not to go smoothly however. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine resulted in Turkey closing the Bosphorus to Russian Navy warships and submarines. Together with a ban on Russian warships visiting Cyprus, which had previously supplied refueling and maintenance services, this was a major blow to the Russian presence in the Mediterranean.

Then in March 2024 the Ukrainian uncrewed surface vessel (USV) threat in the Black Sea forced the rerouting of supply ships from the shorter Black Sea route to the much longer Baltic one. But the biggest blow came when in December 2024 with the sudden fall of the Assad regime in Syria. This led to the Russian Navy being evicted from Tartus. The submarine Novorossiysk was one of the first vessels to leave, passing through the Strait of Gibraltar on January 2nd 2025.

Since losing Syria Russia has found it increasingly difficult to maintain a submarine presence in the Mediterranean. Deployments now have to sail from the Baltic, a 4,000 km voyage at the beginning and end of each deployment. This has limited their time in the Mediterranean, and no doubt taxes crews and stretches maintenance schedules.

Novorossiysk returned to the Mediterranean, accompanied by a support tug, in late June 2025. Naval News has information that she called at ports in North Africa, and likely received specialist maintenance on at least one occasion. But the vital support network of local basing is lacking.

Meanwhile Russia's submarine fleet, particularly the diesel-electric Kilos, appear to be suffering from a maintenance backlog. This affects the remaining boats in the Black Sea (one, Rostov-on-Don, was written off by repeated missile strikes), as well as those in the Baltic. So despite having a fleet of over 10 boats, there is no immediate replacement for ill fated Novorossiysk.

Russia can still deploy nuclear powered submarines there, which can sail submerged the whole way and arrive unannounced. It is known that Yasen (aka Severodvinsk) class cruise missile boats have occasionally ventured into the Mediterranean since 2022. But these too are also stretched, and it almost certainly isn't a permanent presence.

The submarine deployments now appear more for show than a meaningful naval capability. But Russia is likely to be intending to reestablish a base in there to allow a more potent force to be based there, tying up resources on NATO's southern flank. The base may be in Libya, with Tobruk being the obvious candidate.

Any new base will take time to establish, with some degree of building work likely needed. Possibly the first sign will be Russian government cargo ships calling at the port, or repair ships sailing from

the Baltic. In the meantime it appears that Novorossiysk will take some time to replace on station in the Mediterranean, with no sign of another Kilo sailing south.

Russia's submarine forces should not be underestimated, especially the latest nuclear powered boats. But the Kilos are showing their limitations, and Russia has lost any sense of permanence in the Mediterranean. It's not just the tale of one unfortunate submarine, it's a growing hole in capacity and capability.

*Naval News article by H. I. Sutton*

### **ARGENTINE NAVY PREPARES TO RECEIVE ITS SECOND P-3C ORION (Zona Militar 10/2):**



After changes to the original schedule set by the Naval Aviation Command, the Argentine Navy is finalizing preparations for the incorporation of the second P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft, part of the batch of four acquired from Norway. According to information obtained by Zona Militar, the aircraft's crew will begin their trip in the coming days to the United States to receive the aircraft—presumably registered as 6-P-58—in order to carry out the ferry flight to Argentina.

Since the signing of the original agreements in October 2023, and following their reformulation under the current leadership of the Ministry of Defense, the incorporation of the P-3C/N Orions acquired from the Kingdom of Norway represents one of the most important programs for the recovery of capabilities for the Argentine Navy, which had effectively lost its long-range surveillance and reconnaissance capacity. With the incorporation of the first aircraft, registration 6-P-57, in September of last year, the delivery schedule officially began for these aircraft that previously served with the Royal Norwegian Air Force, which replaced them with the brand-new P-8 Poseidons.

As with the aircraft delivered last year, the second “Charlie” unit is also being prepared by MHD-ROCKLAND in the state of Florida. However, although its arrival in Argentina had been expected during the first half of the year, various delays prevented this from happening. In this regard, and in response to one of the questions raised during Report No. 144 to the National Congress, the Cabinet Chief of Ministers confirmed that the arrival of this aircraft will take place during the current month of October.

With this in mind, sources told Zona Militar that the crew bringing the aircraft to Argentina will depart for the United States in the coming days to complete its reception and the corresponding delivery flights, in order to obtain the necessary certification and begin the ferry flight to Argentina. Finally,

and according to Report No. 144, regarding the delivery of the remaining P-3C and the last P-3N, the third unit is expected to be delivered during the first half of 2026, while the fourth “November” “...is scheduled to begin major maintenance in November, with its arrival in Argentina and incorporation into the squadron expected during the second half of 2026.”

*Zona Militar article by Juan José Roldán*

### **UPGRADED HELLENIC NAVY P-3B ORION COMPLETES FIRST FLIGHT (Naval News 9/16):**



The Hellenic Navy’s first upgraded P-3B Orion aircraft successfully completed its maiden test flight, marking a major milestone in the Mid-Life-Upgrade (MLU) Program. The flight, which took place today, validated the aircraft’s onboard systems, including its state-of-the-art glass cockpit and mission data interfaces, which will enhance the Hellenic Navy’s maritime surveillance and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

Lockheed Martin, the program’s prime contractor, demonstrated its commitment to the Hellenic Navy P-3B modernization program by increasing its on-site team and investing significant resources to ensure the program’s success. The company worked closely with Hellenic Aerospace Industry (HAI) to resolve compatibility issues between the new digital cockpit and older systems, paving the way for the successful test flight.

“The successful test flight of the upgraded P-3B Orion aircraft is a key milestone,” said Rod McLean, vice president and general manager Air Mobility and Maritime Missions. “The upgraded P-3B Orion will play a vital role in enhancing Greece’s maritime patrol capability and ensuring the Hellenic Navy is mission ready for decades to come.” “The completion of the first upgraded P-3B Orion marks a milestone in the course of a structural and avionics modernization program characterized by a particularly high degree of difficulty and complexity,” said Alexandros Diakopoulos, executive chairman and CEO of HAI. “During its implementation, technical challenges arose, the resolution of which required significant investment of time and resources. Despite these difficulties, the commencement of flight tests of the prototype upgraded aircraft demonstrates our dedication to the mission.”

The Hellenic Navy P-3B maritime patrol aircraft MLU and modernization program launched in 2015 as a government-to-government agreement between the United States and Greece and is the only one

of its kind globally. It provides for phased depot maintenance, a Greece indigenous mission integration and management system, new avionics, and other ancillary hardware and services. The agreement includes the modernization of four Hellenic Navy P-3B aircraft through the MLU Program. MLU kits provide an extension of service life by 15,000 flight hours, greatly enhancing capability leveraged with cost-effectiveness.

The Hellenic Navy has operated the P-3 fleet for more than 20 years. The upgraded Greek versions of the P-3B Orion are uniquely equipped for anti-ship warfare, while the modern glass cockpit, featuring LCD displays and mission data interfaces, will provide pilots with improved situational awareness and threat identification capabilities. The P-3 Orion is the model in maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, and is used for homeland security, anti-piracy operations, humanitarian relief, search and rescue, intelligence gathering, antisubmarine warfare and, recently, to assist in air traffic control and natural disaster relief support. Find out more about the P-3 Orion here.

The P-3 Orion acquisition agreement was signed in February 1994 to replace the obsolete HU-16B Albatross. It was a \$69 million agreement with the aircraft to be given free of charge while the amount of money was for repair and rehabilitation works, spare parts, and training of the crews. Various accessories were also provided, such as air-dropped sea mines and sonobuoys. In total, four P-3As were allocated to Greece for ground training and spare parts, as well as six P-3Bs for operational use. All the aircraft of version "B" had gone through the Tactical Navigation Modification (TACNAVMOD) as they were manufactured during 1965-67.

The first operational P-3B was officially delivered in May 1996; the deliveries were completed in December 1997. The six P-3Bs joined the 353th Navy Cooperation Squadron (NCS), which was administratively subordinated to the 112 Air Force Combat Wing and operationally to the Navy Fleet Headquarters. The 353 NCS later on changed to Hellenic Navy Aircraft Squadron.

In the 2000s, Greece explored the acquisition of modernized P-3 aircraft from abroad, but these plans did not materialize as the focus shifted toward procuring new MPAs. As a result, all P-3Bs were gradually phased out by 2009. However, the procurement of a new platform never progressed, and the subsequent financial crisis ultimately brought the Orion replacement program to a definitive halt.

Finally, a decision was taken in 2014 for the re-activation of existing P-3Bs and their submission to a program of overhaul, upgrade and service life extension. The program for the modernization of the Greek P-3B, with a maximum potential cost of \$500 million, was finalized at the end of 2014 with the US Navy being the General Supervisor of the programme, Lockheed Martin the main contractor and HAI as a partner together with a number of other smaller companies. The modernization program consists of four parts:

- Phased Depot Maintenance (PDM) with complete repair and restoration of all structural and mechanical parts and, at the same time, structural MLU to provide 15,000 more flight hours and 25 years of use to the lifespan of each plane. The service life extension includes the replacement of main and tail wing sections by new ones.
- Installation of new navigation and communications equipment, with new flight avionics and a cockpit digital suite (glass cockpit).
- Installation and integration of new mission equipment (navigation, communications, sensors and tactical mission system).
- Follow-On Support (FOS) of the aircraft and their systems.

The contract includes the return of one aircraft to airworthy condition with the existing mission equipment as an “interim solution” (it was delivered in May 2019) and the complete modernization and upgrade of four other aircraft in HAI (with the option for the upgrade of the first “interim solution” aircraft). The sixth P-3B was permanently withdrawn and is used as a source of spare parts. The deal includes personnel training and training equipment, logistical support, the usual spare and repair parts, publications and technical documentation, US Government and contractor support and other related elements of logistics and program support. The Hellenic Navy, Lockheed Martin and HAI hosted a ceremony 24 July 2016 at HAI’s facilities in Tanagra to recognize the official launch of the Hellenic Navy P-3B maritime patrol aircraft modernization and upgrade program.

It should be noted that the original schedule, set when the contract was signed in 2015, foresaw the delivery of the first upgraded aircraft in 2019, with the remaining three to be handed over to the Hellenic Navy between 2020 and 2022. Under the leadership of Alexandros Diakopoulos, who was appointed CEO of HAI in January 2024, the P-3 MLU program, as well as other projects, has been accelerated, while the overall situation at HAI has improved significantly. It is now expected that all aircraft will be fully operational within the Navy by 2027 while the non-modernized P-3B will be used for training for its remaining lifetime.

The modernized aircraft is equipped with Collins Aerospace’ Flight-2 integrated avionics system, that converts the flight deck into a large, all-glass cockpit, making for easier viewing of critical information on the primary and multi-function flight displays (MFD), and the engine instrument display system. Additionally, integrated communications and identification friend or foe (IFF) Mode 5 capabilities ensure mission readiness.

The system includes the ASW-33 automatic pilot, the RINU-G EGI/INS system, the ELB-3000F emergency buoy detection system, six MFD-268 displays, three CDU-7000 display control units, panel display unit (PDU), digital engine instrument display system (EIDS), traffic collision avoidance system (TCAS), MLR-2020 VOR/ILS, and AN/ASH-37 structural data recording set (SDRS). The communications suite includes the installation of six new HF, UHF and VHF terminals, new navigation terminals, intercom communication system (ICS) and tactical data links.

The new mission equipment includes an IAI ELM-2022A 3D X-Band all-weather multimode airborne maritime surveillance radar incorporating synthetic aperture radar (SAR), inverse SAR (ISAR), ground moving target indication (GMTI) features and the IAI EL/L-8385 ESM/ELINT; both systems integrated with the automatic identification system (AIS) and the AN/ APX-123 IFF system. These will be complemented by a rotating and retractable L3 Wescam MX-15HD stabilized thermal imaging and tracking turret, the UYS-505 ASW suite and the self-protection suite that consists of AN/AAR-47 missile warning system (MWS) and AN/ALE-47 Airborne countermeasures dispenser systems (CMDS), and the maritime mission integration and management system (M2IMS) made by the Greek company SCYTALIS as the aircraft’s new tactical mission system with five workstations.

Despite strong criticism of the MLU program, largely due to its significant cost and the prolonged delays caused by its technical difficulty and complexity, the aircraft has undergone an extensive modernization. More than 85% of its systems were replaced or redesigned, significantly enhancing reliability, introducing state-of-the-art avionics, and improving overall mission effectiveness. Powered by turboprop engines, the upgraded P-3B combines long endurance with potent anti-submarine (ASW) and anti-surface warfare (ASuW) capabilities, while also excelling in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions. No equivalent platform with such advanced multi-role capabilities currently exists in the Greek aircraft inventory.

The P-3B HN Orion is expected to serve as a formidable force multiplier in modern naval operations for decades to come, offering unique features such as the ability to deploy and monitor sonobuoys and carry a broad array of guided and unguided weapons on its 18 hardpoints (two of the ten hardpoints on the wings are dedicated to ESM sensors, while the remaining eight are housed within the internal bomb bay) support a payload exceeding 9 tons, including MAVERICK and HARPOON missiles, as well as torpedoes, bombs, and naval mines.

*Naval News article by Dimitris Mitsopoulos*

### RECOMMENDED READING:

Here's a new book that should be of interest to all of you. "Sonar: Cold War ASW Adventures" (ISBN 979-8308452744) is about some of the anti-submarine warfare related research and development efforts undertaken during the Cold War by the U. S. Naval Underwater Sound Laboratory headquartered in Middletown, RI. The author, Michael Pastore, is a former submarine officer who worked at the USNUSL. You can purchase this book through Amazon or any other bookstore.



### PARTING SHOTS:



**ABOVE:** VP-92 AOs handling an exercise torpedo on a cart at NAS Roosevelt Roads Puerto Rico in preparation for loading it on to one of the squadron's P-3C aircraft during annual training sometime in the mid-1990s. Photo provided by Jerry Lach.



**ABOVE:** VP-92 AOs preparing to load an exercise torpedo on a P-3C at NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. **BELOW:** VP-92 AOs winching the exercise torpedo into the aircraft's bomb bay. These photos were provided by Jerry Lach. Have something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at [marc\\_frattasio@yahoo.com](mailto:marc_frattasio@yahoo.com).



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

