



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 76

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

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Welcome to another edition of the VP Association newsletter. Until further notice 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-92 P-3C LY-404 taking off from Andrews AFB on April 27, 1996. Stephen Miller photo. Got something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

FINAL FLIGHTS:

Members Robert Mercer, Clarence Schultz and Mike Smith passed away recently. All were in VP-92.

THE ADMIN FUND:

The VP Association has no dues but contributions are welcome to help defray the cost of web site hosting, postage, and other expenses. We'd like to thank Dexter Morrison for his recent generous donation to the admin fund.

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.

ANOTHER ADMIRAL IN THE FAMILY:

Former VP-92 OINC Scott Fuller has been selected for Rear Admiral. He joins squadron alumni Robert Clark and Tom Reck in having been so honored.

TEN SPEED

John Schwind, AKA "Ten Speed", wants everybody to know that he has finally retired from his civilian career as a realtor. He'd appreciate hearing from any of his old friends from VP-92. You can contact him via e-mail at nzw7z@comcast.net.

NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH PRESENTATION:

Your newsletter editor was recently asked to give a presentation on the history of NAS South Weymouth. You can watch it on-line at <https://weymouth.tv/>. Go to "WETC-8 Recently Added" and then click on "Weymouth Naval Air Station History".

2019 VP ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION:

We will have this year's annual reunion on Saturday September 21st at the Sons of Italy Hall in Weymouth, MA, which is the same place as last year. Everybody seemed to like this venue and the new caterer too, so we are going to use the same caterer and menu. We're going to try to get another guest speaker from the Naval War College to give a presentation on a subject that will be of interest to everybody. Reservations are required and a reservation form is included on the last page of this newsletter. Please note that if you intend to come to the reunion to get your reservations in sooner rather than later. Many people wait until the last few weeks and this creates a heavy workload for Barbara Hanigan, who handles the reservations.

US COULD LOSE A KEY WEAPON FOR TRACKING SUBS (Defense News 5/1):

A key tool in the U.S. Navy's fight against Russian and Chinese submarines weighs eight pounds, is three feet long and it doesn't even explode. The sonobuoy is an expendable, waterborne sensor that has been air-dropped by the hundreds to detect enemy subs, a go-to capability for America and its allies for decades. The Pentagon wants to buy 204,000 sonobuoys in its fiscal 2020 budget request, a 50 percent spending increase over 2018. But just as the U.S. military needs them most, this critical capability is under threat, and it's got nothing to do with an enemy nation. Without government investment in the market, the Pentagon says it may no longer have a reliable supplier, according to officials who spoke to Defense News.

Like so many systems in the Pentagon's arsenal, America has just one proven supplier. In this case, it is a joint venture between the United States and the UK called ERAPSCO. The Pentagon says ERAPSCO will dissolve by 2024 and that neither side of the partnership — Sparton Corp., of

Schaumburg, Illinois, and Ultra Electronics, of Middlesex in the U.K. — will be able to make the necessary investments to produce the capability independently. It's an "acknowledged weakness" in the industrial base that required the Pentagon find a solution, said Eric Chewning, a top Pentagon official who was until January the head of the Pentagon's industrial policy office. As a result, U.S. President Donald Trump in March signed a memo invoking the Defense Production Act to declare domestic production for the five types of AN/SSQ sonobuoys "essential to the national defense" and grant the Pentagon authorities to sustain and expand the capability. The Air Force, in anticipation, issued a market research solicitation to find suppliers beyond ERAPSO.

The Pentagon requires "comprehensive individual production lines ... for the five sonobuoy types, but the two companies would "require assistance to establish independent production lines," said DoD spokesman Lt. Col. Mike Andrews. "Due to the significant efforts and expenditures, it is unlikely that either the JV partners (or any other entity) will be independently able to make the necessary investments to develop and produce the required sonobuoy demands by 2024," Andrews said, adding that "DoD intervention into the market is necessary."

A staple of the sub-hunting P-8 maritime surveillance aircraft and the MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter, multi-static active coherent, or MAC, sonobuoys have a battery life of about eight hours. Because they're tracking submarines that are in constant motion, a sonobuoy dropped in one place may become useless soon after. If a P-8 is hunting blind, its full cache of 120 might get used up in a single mission and abandoned. "It depends on how much area the P-8 needs to search and how quickly the target submarine is moving," said naval analyst Bryan Clark, of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "The search area for the system depends on the detectability of the target submarine. If the P-8 is conducting a barrier search, it may not need to expend that many sonobuoys. If it is tracking a moving, quiet submarine, though, it could use up its entire sonobuoy load and need to come back for reloading."

With Russian and Chinese sub activity on the rise, anti-submarine forces have been unexpectedly busy in recent years, burning through supplies of all kinds of sonobuoys. The Navy's sonobuoy budget climbed from \$174 million in 2018 to \$216 million in 2019 to \$264 million in the 2020 budget request. In 2018, the Pentagon asked Congress for a \$20 million reprogramming for sonobuoys for 6th Fleet, after including \$38 million for sonobuoys on its unfunded priorities list. Analysts agree that sonobuoys will only become more important to the U.S. and its allies as Russia and China's sub technology advances. "With the new generation of quiet submarines being fielded by Russia and China, traditional approaches to [anti-submarine warfare] using our submarines or surface ships are becoming less successful," Clark said. "Our ships and submarines have to get too close to the Russian or Chinese submarine to hear them on passive sonar, and ship and submarine active sonars are relatively short range and expose the transmitting platform to detection."

Russia's subs are the most capable, and Moscow is devoting considerable resources to modernizing them, said Nick Childs, of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. China's subs are "technologically still behind the curve," but the country is investing heavily to become a competitor in underwater capabilities. "Russia's submarine force is likely to remain the most potent and challenging of its naval arms, with continued significant investment, and to the extent that its submarines activities continue, [the Navy will] be demanding such things as sonobuoys," Childs said.

ERAPSCO produces four of the five types of sonobuoys, which the Navy is in negotiates to buy on a four-year contract through 2023. Looking to boost competition, the service has been pushing Sparton and Ultra Electronics to dissolve the partnership and sell sonobuoys independently at the end of this contract. But Sparton disclosed in an annual report last year that "due to the significance of the effort and expenditures required, there can be no assurance that Sparton, or both of the ERAPSCO joint

venture partners,” would be able to meet the Navy’s requirement independent of one another. Facing financial troubles, Sparton agreed to be acquired by Ultra Electronics in July 2017, but the companies cancelled their \$234 million deal less than a year later, after the U.S. Department of Justice planned to block it over antitrust concerns. Sparton then sold itself to Cerberus Capital Management, a New York City-based private equity firm specializing in distressed assets, for \$183 million, roughly a year later. Cerberus owns major brands like office supply retailer Staples and grocery chain Safeway, but also defense contractors DynCorp, and as of December, Navistar Defense.

Andrews, the Pentagon spokesman, laid out the government’s concerns in a statement to Defense News. “The DoD/DoN anticipates purchasing over 204,000 sonobuoys per year across the five types. To meet this demand, the DoD/DoN requires secure and stable sonobuoy suppliers,” Andrews wrote. “Based on these requirements and need for a stable sonobuoy industrial base, comprehensive individual production lines are required for the five sonobuoy types. “This Defense Production Act Title III project is intended to sustain and reconstitute the industrial base for U.S. Navy sonobuoys and ensure at least two sources of sonobuoy manufacturing,” Andrews said, adding: “For these reasons, President Trump, DoD, and DoN found use of DPA funds, coupled with industry investment, to be the most cost-effective, expedient, and practical approach to meet critical AN/SSQ series sonobuoy capability requirements.”

The Defense Production Act, invoked in Trump’s memo, allows the department to give funding to producers of key industrial needs. It’s something the department is trying to use more in the wake of a major industrial base study, released last year. “Part of what we wanted to do was inject capital to make sure there was support to the industrial base so that you could have two or more viable suppliers,” Chewning, the former industrial policy head, told Defense News recently. “It just made sense given the existing shortfall, and what had been allowed to happen within the industrial base, that we used the DPA Title III authorities to create incentives to expand production and strengthen.” Chewning, who is now chief of staff to Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan, said that he was going off information gleaned from before he left the Industrial Policy job. He described the situation as being “active, not reactive.”

Ultra Electronics and Sparton declined to comment on the future of their joint venture. “Ultra Electronics remains committed to our US Navy partners to ensure the continued success of sonobuoy production and future development efforts. Our focus is, and will continue to be set on meeting the growing ASW requirements of the fleet,” the company said in a statement. If the United States was open to buying sonobuoys outside its borders, there are other Western producers of the technology, including close allies Britain and France. But those production lines are being tapped by others, and with the U.S. likely to be the biggest procurer of the systems going forward, losing a U.S. internal production capability could lead to shortages worldwide. And fundamentally, naval analysts Childs and Clark agree having a domestic supplier for the U.S. is vital, both for production needs and for, as Childs puts it, remaining “at the cutting edge of what is a critical technology area.”

Defense News article by Joe Gould and Aaron Mehta

THE NAVAL ACADEMY’S NEXT SUPERINTENDENT (Stars and Stripes 5/1):

Rear Adm. Sean S. Buck has been nominated to be the next superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. Navy Secretary Richard Spencer and Adm. John Richardson, the chief of naval operations and a 1982 graduate of the Naval Academy, nominated Buck on Tuesday, according to the academy. Buck would also be appointed to the rank of vice admiral if he is confirmed by the Senate. If confirmed, Buck, 58, would be the 63rd superintendent of the Naval Academy, replacing Vice Adm. Walter “Ted” Carter, who is retiring in the summer. The change of

command is planned for the summer, but the date has not been selected as they wait for the Senate confirmation, according to the academy.

Originally from Indianapolis, Ind., Buck is a 1983 graduate of the Naval Academy, which is the service's only undergraduate institution for Navy and Marine officers. In his career as a naval flight officer, Buck has flown the P-3C Orion, an anti-submarine warfare patrol aircraft, and served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, according to his Navy biography. He has also commanded the Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 11, located at Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida, and served as the chief of staff for the plans and policy director for the Joint Staff, according to the announcement. Buck now serves as the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and U.S. 4th Fleet at Naval Station Mayport near Jacksonville, Fla.

He has a master's degree in international security policy from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Buck's other education includes the College of Command and Staff at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, R.I., the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va., and the Seminar XXI program at a branch of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Washington, D.C. Buck's military awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

Stars and Stripes article by Caitlin Kenney

LAST P-3C SQUADRON LEAVES FOR FINAL DEPLOYMENT (Whidbey News-Times 4/9):

The last active duty P-3C Orion departed Naval Air Station Whidbey Island on March 29. Patrol Squadron 40 is the last active duty P-3C squadron. On March 25th, VP-40's first P-3C Orion aircraft departed NAS Whidbey to mark the beginning of the last P-3C squadron to deploy in support of US interests worldwide. After finishing a 12-month inter-deployment readiness cycle at NAS Whidbey, they departed across different continents within the US 5th and 7th Fleet Areas of Responsibility.

VP-40 has been flying the P-3C aircraft since 1975 and have taken the platform all over the world in support of multiple exercises and operations. While VP-40 is the last active duty squadron to fly P-3s, there will still be P-3s on Whidbey Island. Naval Reserve squadron, VP-69, is not scheduled to transition away from the P-3C during 2019, but VP-40 sun-downs the P-3C with this final deployment. VQ-1 will also continue to fly E-P3s for a few more years.

The P-3 platform was introduced by Lockheed Martin in 1962. It has been utilized for decades in ASW, search and rescue, drug interdiction and information, surveillance and reconnaissance operations. The P-3C has operated over all of the world's oceans and in many U.S conflicts.

"We could not be more proud of the effort given by the men and women of VP-40," said Cmdr. Patrick O'Reilly, VP-40's commanding officer. "It's had its challenges, but our sailors have succeeded in this fight with exceptional results. "VP-40 has had many successes this IDRC, to include nearly perfect scores in the Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection, the Chief of Naval Air Forces Aviation Maintenance Inspection and the Fleet NATOPS Evaluation.

They also dominated operationally by participating in exercises supporting the U.S.S. John C. Stennis COMPTUEX, U.S.S. Boxer ARG MEUEX, Air Wing Fallon, and manned the Homeland Defense detachment while simultaneously training and preparing for its upcoming deployment. "Even when the aircraft fought against us, even when the tempo was high and the days were long, we continued to fight," O'Reilly said. "We intend to honor the platform's final deployment by living the legacy of all those that have gone before us and continuing to fight to the finish."

Whidbey News-Times article by VP-40 Public Affairs

TRUMP PICKS NEXT CNO (Navy Times 4/11):

The man President Donald J. Trump has nominated to replace Adm. John Richardson as the Navy's 32nd chief of naval operations is a Cold War aviator who helped reinvent the sea service as its top personnel officer. If confirmed by the Senate, Adm. William Francis "Bill" Moran will fleet up from his position as the vice chief of naval operations to take the helm of a Navy in flux, pursuing a fleet of 355 warships during an era of increasing competition from Russia, China and other rising powers.

In a prepared statement emailed to Navy Times, Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer welcomed the White House on the nomination of Moran, calling him "a stalwart partner and adviser." Richardson told Navy Times he was "thrilled with this announcement" because Moran "is an amazing leader and good friend." "He has been central to the Navy adopting a fighting stance in this great power competition," Richardson said. "As I turn over and go ashore, I will rest easy knowing that, pending confirmation, Adm. Moran has the watch."

Moran released a terse message, saying only that he was "honored and deeply humbled by the nomination and look forward to working with Congress during the confirmation process." Past and present military leaders lauded the president's decision and urged lawmakers to confirm a four-star they believe is the perfect fit to lead the sea service. "When he shakes your hand and he says something to you, you look at him and immediately recognize that he's real and that he cares," said retired Command Master Chief Aaron Shipley Jr., who served as Moran's top enlisted adviser after he took command of the Norfolk-based Patrol and Reconnaissance Group in 2008.

Moran is slated to become only the fifth of 39 VCNOs to relieve the CNO as the Navy's top officer but supporters say he's uniquely qualified to do the job and they point to his role as chief of naval personnel before taking his current Pentagon post. As the Navy's top personnel officer between 2013 and 2016, Moran unleashed a stream of reforms designed to drag the Navy's human resources system into the 21st century. Moran's ambitious "Sailor 2025" program not only has sought to modernize the Navy's entire personnel system and training process but also change the culture of the sea service to embrace flexibility, reward merit and scrap broad purges of sailors like the despised Enlisted Retention Board.

But it didn't stop there. He fought to hike career sea pay and got it. He wanted to preserve military fitness standards but ditch outdated body composition assessments and won those fights, too. He tried to muscle the Navy bureaucracy to make it more welcoming to families, including growing the capacity of child development centers, lengthening the hours they're open, liberalizing paternity and adoption leave and making it easier for military spouses to work in the same community.

As VCNO, Moran also emerged as a candid but insistent voice on Capitol Hill for sustained funding to shore up years of readiness woes. It was Moran who delivered the stark warning to House Armed Services Committee members in early 2017 that a spending bill was soon to expire and the Navy would almost immediately run out of operations and maintenance funds. He predicted that without a supplemental infusion of cash the Navy would begin to shutter air wings and defer maintenance for surface ships and submarines. Lawmakers overwhelmingly passed hefty defense spending hikes, including increased aircraft and shipbuilding procurement and more funding for maintenance.

A native of the Hudson Valley hamlet of Walden, Moran wasn't drawn to nearby West Point. Instead, he graduated from the Naval Academy in 1981 and pinned on his golden wings as an aviator in 1982. A P-3 Orion pilot, his job was to hunt Soviet submarines. That crucial mission took him to Brunswick, Maine and then a long association with Florida — Jacksonville and nearby Naval Station Mayport, home to the famed flattop Forrestal. From mid-1989 to late 1990, he served on board it as a Carrier Strike Group Six staffer, rising from his role as the admiral's flag lieutenant to qualify as a Battle

Group Tactical Watch Officer. He got his initial immersion in personnel issues as a detailer at the Bureau of Naval Personnel between 1995 and 1998 but was chosen to command Patrol Squadron 46 and departed for Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. He went on to command Hawaii-based Patrol Reconnaissance Wing 2 and Patrol and Reconnaissance Group in Virginia before becoming a Beltway fixture in 2010 — first in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, then as Chief of Naval Personnel and VCNO. Once confirmed, Moran, 60, will be the first of the nine aviators who became CNO who never rose through the ranks of carrier-based commands.

Retired military leaders who served with Moran over the decades pointed Navy Times to a succession of posts where his competence and commitment telegraphed his ascension to higher rank and greater responsibilities. They included his stint as a junior captain serving as an executive assistant to Adm. Thomas Fargo at U.S. Pacific Command between from 2002-2003 and then a similar task as a senior captain to two chiefs of naval operations nearly a decade later, the position he's preparing to fill now. "Shortly after I took over in May of 2002, I had to pick a new executive assistant," Fargo told Navy Times. "I was so impressed with Bill that I moved him up into that slot."

To Fargo, it was an unusual move. Typically, those slots are reserved for senior captains soon to pin on their first stars, rarely do the go to "fresh-caught" captains who had yet to hold a major command, he said. "He was so impressive in terms of his ability to work with the senior officers on the staff as well as the action officers, folks external to the command, that I just made the decision to bring him into that job at an early point in his career," Fargo said.

Selected for flag rank a dozen years before he retired, Fargo recalled a number of good executive assistants but said the most junior of them, Moran, "was at the very top." That assessment was shared by retired Adm. William "Shortney" Gortney, who helmed both U.S. Fleet Forces Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command, U.S. Northern Command. A career aviator with 1,265 carrier-arrested landings, mostly in the A-7E Corsair II and the FA-18 Hornet attack jets, Gortney said he likes to chide Moran on his P-3 lineage, but he'll never disparage Moran's proven ability to tirelessly conquer any task. Gortney marked Moran as a rising star while watching him serve as the executive assistant to CNOs Mike Mullen and Gary Roughead. "We all saw his innate skills," Gortney said. "He has the ability to pick things up — fast — to listen and understand quicker than almost anyone and that's why he can be given any task and he'll proceed to knock it out of the park."

Fargo and Gortney said it was that drive and intelligence that made him a two-star and sent him to become the Director of Air Warfare on the CNO's staff. By their reckoning, he was one of the best to ever hold the post. "I believe he was the first and only P-3 guy to be given that job, and again, he was given that job at a more junior level than that job has normally seen in the past," Fargo said. "But he has such a command of not only the aviation community, but the Navy at large that he was more than up to the task and, in fact, excelled in the job." His secret, they said, was Moran's ability to study and solve problems, coupled with communication and listening skills that connect him up and down a chain of command, quickly developing strong ties, and trust. "He I think that's one of the reasons because he engages and listens really well," Fargo said. "He goes out and figures things out first-hand. His willingness to go forward and spend time with the operators and work to understand their problems is how he's done business his whole career."

Those bonds weren't merely forged with senior officers but also enlisted sailors. Retired Command Master Chief Shipley told Navy Times that Moran has a deep understanding of the role of the chiefs mess. As a commissioned leader, Moran would tap into the authority of the Goat Locker in a self-effacing and genuine way, the same way he interacts with everyone, Shipley remembered. "The first opportunity we had to really talk, once he took command I took him over to the chief's mess for

lunch," Shipley said. "We talked about everything, but at one point, he came out and told me that 'I'm going to need your help to learn how to be a flag officer.'" Shipley didn't think that Moran really needed his help to become a flag but he understood the sort of counsel he was seeking. To the command master chief, it was "my first of many aha moments with him," episodes when he saw Moran's sincerely "humble and modest kind of leadership style."

On all hands calls across the globe, Shipley watched Moran "listen more than he talked." When a sailor asked a question Moran couldn't immediately answer, he'd promise to find out "and would always follow through, even if it took weeks." He often made the phone call or wrote the email himself instead of delegating the duty, Shipley remembered. "That builds trust," he said. Shipley recalled Moran donning a flight suit and visiting squadrons at odd hours, simply to talk to sailors to canvass their views. That irked a few commanding officers, Shipley said, until they began to see Moran's true motives. "They learned that he wasn't coming to inspect them," Shipley said, only to hear their unvarnished thoughts. Moran also watched his senior enlisted adviser and noticed he was always hanging out at smoke pits. "Moran knew I wasn't a smoker, asked me why I was always out there," Shipley recalled. "I told him it's because you get a new crowd every 10 minutes." Like Moran, Shipley wanted to hear raw opinions and complaints. So Moran started accompanying him to the pits or making solo trips.

Over time, Moran's respect for the chiefs mess became mutual. While serving with him, Shipley decided to make a pitch to then-Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West to anoint his boss as an honorary master chief. But before he went to MCPON, he took a poll of the Group's subordinate command master chiefs and they voted unanimously to honor Moran. What was true for that Group was true for the Navy's collective chiefs mess, according to retired Fleet Master Chief April Beldo. She served as Moran's top enlisted adviser during his 13-month tour as the chief of naval personnel. "What you see is what you get with Adm. Moran," Beldo said, a quality he also expects from his staffers. She said that he respects "you for what you've accomplished" but at the same time he expects his officers and sailors to live up to them and if they didn't, "we were going to have a conversation about that." To Beldo, Moran commanded excellence from his subordinates because "no one wants to let him down."

All of the retired flags and senior enlisted contacted by Navy Times said Moran was the best choice to lead the sea service. "You can always come up with reasons why someone shouldn't be picked for the job and I'm sure that will happen," Gortney said. "But if you look at what he's done and what he's accomplished everywhere he's been, there's no reason to believe he won't do a phenomenal job as CNO, too." Beldo and Shipley said they weren't surprised when they heard Moran got the nod for CNO. Beldo chalked his rise up to being a "totally fair and honest leader who leads by his own example and brings the same out of others." Shipley suspects it's because Moran is the real deal and everyone in the Navy knows it. "Sailors can smell a fake from miles away," Shipley said. "Likewise, they know from the instant they either meet him or hear him speak that he's about as real and genuine as they come." He realizes it could sound like a cliché, but Fargo believes Moran is "the right leader at the right time" and comes armed with the "policy people and budget experience to lead the Navy very effectively." But most of all, Fargo said is the fact that Moran "is absolutely forthright and transparent with truth" and his inherent credibility resonates down the ranks. As an aviator, Gortney says he's happy to see another flyer in the Navy's top spot but insists Moran is really just the best candidate for the gig. "I don't want to spoil it, but I will predict he will be one of the great CNOs as well," Gortney said.

Navy Times article by Mark Faram

NAVY P-8A AND DESTROYER JOIN JSDF SEARCH FOR JAPANESE PILOT (US Navy 4/10):

U.S. Navy P-8A maritime patrol aircraft and a guided-missile destroyer are assisting Japanese-led search and rescue efforts for the pilot of a Japan Air Self Defense Force F-35A missing since Apr. 9. The F-35A lost radar contact approximately 85 miles east of Misawa Air Base. A P-8A joined JASDF aircraft and Japan Maritime Self Defense Force ships searching the area overnight. Additional flights are continuing today. Guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG 63) is sailing to the search area now.

The U.S. 7th Fleet provides security alongside allies and partners throughout a free and open Indo-Pacific. As the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet operates roughly 50-70 ships and submarines and 140 aircraft with approximately 20,000 Sailors. The P-8A aircraft are assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 8 and Patrol Squadron (VP) 5. Both squadrons are homeported in Jacksonville, Fla. and are on rotational deployments to 7th Fleet out of Misawa, Japan. Stethem is forward-deployed to Yokosuka, Japan.

NEARLY 3 TONS OF COCAINE SEIZED WITH HELP OF P-3 CREWS (KIITV 3/19):

U.S. Customs and Border Protection helped stop attempts to smuggle almost three tons of cocaine across open waters between Feb. 28-March 2. Their efforts resulted in the capture of three suspects and the interception of drugs valued at \$76,456,839, along with the seizure of two vessels.

On February 28, an Air and Marine Operations crew based at National Air Security Operations Center-Corpus Christi was patrolling in a P-3 aircraft and spotted and monitored two high-speed vessels in open water. The first vessel was spotted Feb. 28. The AMO crew alerted Costa Rican authorities who then pursued the vessel as its crew began dumping bales of cocaine overboard. The vessel was later found abandoned. Costa Rican authorities recovered the vessel and more than 2,600 pounds of cocaine, valued at \$34,474,930. The next vessel was spotted by the AMO crew on March 2. They again coordinated with Costa Rican authorities and intercepted the high-speed vessel, arresting three suspects and seizing more than 3,200 pounds of cocaine valued at nearly \$42,000,000.

The National Air Security Operations Center - Corpus Christi is a division of Air and Marine Operations that operates the Lockheed P-3 Orion conducting counter-drug patrol missions over the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Together with the National Air Security Operations Center in Jacksonville, Fla., Customs and Border Protection P-3 crews seized or disrupted 261,939 pounds of cocaine in various operations conducted in 2018.

KIITV article by Jonathan Munson

RUSSIA IS GETTING SOME SERIOUSLY DANGEROUS SUBS (The National Interest 3/17):

The Northern Fleet is now taking a major step to modernize its submarine force with a new hardware shipment slated for later this year. From the Petr Velikiy battlecruiser to the Admiral Gorshkov frigate, Russia's Northern Fleet is home to some of the newest, most advanced Russian surface ships. The same cannot be said of its aging submarine lineup, however. The Northern Fleet submarine force is largely comprised of 1980's Soviet Detla IV and Sierra models, which are becoming increasingly harder and more expensive to maintain with incremental updates.

The Northern Fleet is now taking a major step to modernize its submarine force with a new hardware shipment slated for later this year. Admiral and Fleet Commander Nikolai Yevmenov informed Russian state news that, "In 2019, we are expecting the arrival of new logistics vessels and submarines." Yevmenov added that the new submarines will be Knyaz Vladimir and Kazan, from the Borei and Yasen classes respectively. Laid down in 2012, Knyaz Vladimir is the first entry in a newer

line of 955A-- also known as Borei II-- submarines. The 955A generation brings several iterative improvements over its 955 predecessors: target acquisition upgrades, new onboard electronics, updated communication systems, and redesigned living quarters.

Knyaz Vladimir will join the very first Borei vessel, Yuri Dolgorukiy, in replacing the Delta IV line as the Northern Fleet's staple strategic nuclear submarine. Generic performance improvements notwithstanding, the Borei line introduces a critical, sorely-needed update to Russia's nuclear triad: the new Bulava missile system. Boasting a 550 kiloton warhead and an effective range of up to 10,000 kilometers, the Russian Navy seeks to make Bulava-equipped Borei vessels the cornerstone of their nuclear submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) deterrent for decades to come.

On the tactical front, the introduction of Kazan marks a serious first step in the revitalization of the Northern Fleet's decades-old attack submarine lineup. The second Yasen-class vessel, Kazan offers an expanded and markedly more deadly armament suite over its Akula and Oscar-class predecessors. Not only does the Yasen class support the standard submarine-launched variant of the Kalibr land attack cruise missile, but it apparently also accommodates the heavier, larger Kalibr-M missile with roughly double the range, at 4,500 versus 1,500 to 2,500 kilometers.

As the Arctic region becomes ever more militarized in the context of global Russia-NATO competition, it is hardly surprising that the Russian Navy is actively investing in the Northern Fleet. But submarine modernization comes neither cheap nor fast, and the Kremlin is unlikely to commit the massive resources required to replace every Soviet-era submarine in the Northern Fleet roster with a modernized equivalent. With two more Borei vessels commissioned over the next several years alone, the Delta IV line is on track to be completely phased out before 2040. But attack submarines pose a much more difficult value proposition, as a single Yasen vessel reportedly costs twice as much as its Borei counterpart.

So, where does the Northern Fleet go from here? One potential route is consolidation; that is, saturating the Northern Fleet with modernized submarines at the expense of shrinking its total submarine roster. The other is iteration in the form of deep refits of existing submarines, as the Pacific Fleet has recently done with a modernized batch of old Kilo models. Of course, the two are not mutually exclusive. It's perfectly possible that Russia will opt for any number of hybrid development approaches; for instance, mass-producing new nuclear strategic submarines while extending the lifespan of existing attack submarines for as long as technically possible.

The National Interest article by Mark Episkopos

RUSSIA TO ARM A SUBMARINE WITH "DOOMSDAY" DEVICES (Business Insider 3/13):

Russia will deploy what's been described as the deadliest nuclear weapon ever aboard mysterious submarines by 2020, state media has announced, citing a Russian defense-industry source. The Russian "Poseidon" nuclear-powered torpedo - reputed to carry a 100 megaton to 200 megaton nuclear warhead and meant to erupt underwater for maximum effect - will reportedly deploy aboard the Project 09852 sub Belgorod, which is a converted nuclear-powered cruise-missile sub expected to go on combat duty in 2020.

Russian state news agency TASS said the new Belgorod subs could carry six of the Poseidon nuclear torpedoes, sometimes described as drones. But Russia will reportedly not operate the mysterious submarine alongside its regular armed forces or other nuclear-powered subs. The Main Directorate of Deep Sea Research will run the ship, according to H.I. Sutton, who said the Belgorod would conduct covert missions with a smaller submarine in tow.

"Russia operates a small number of very small, nuclear-powered submarines that are capable of diving in excess of several thousand meters," Andrew Metrick, a research associate in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in 2016. "It's probably the most shadowy part of the Russian undersea apparatus," he added. The new Belgorod submarine is "not operated by their navy. It's operated by a separate branch of their ministry of defense," Metrick said.

In addition to six Poseidon torpedoes that experts say could wipe out almost all life on earth, Metrick and Sutton speculated the Belgorod could carry a smaller sub that could dive deeper to cut undersea cables and dramatically disrupt international communications and national economies. Russian President Vladimir Putin initially announced the Poseidon in a March 1, 2018 speech where he said US defenses could not stop it. Of course, the US has no defenses against any full-scale Russian nuclear attack, but in the case of undersea defenses, the US appears not to have even explored this avenue. In that speech, Putin confirmed the existence of the Poseidon, which has horrified experts since images of it first leaked in 2015.

The US and other countries field nuclear-powered submarines capable of firing nuclear missiles, but the Poseidon represents a unique danger to life on earth. Most nuclear weapons seek to minimize radioactive fallout and simply destroy military targets. Russia took the opposite approach with the Poseidon. The weapon is said to use a warhead, perhaps the strongest ever, designed to come into direct contact with water, marine animals, and the ocean floor, kicking up a radioactive tsunami that could spread deadly radiation over hundreds of thousands of miles of land and sea and render them uninhabitable for decades. In short, while most nuclear weapons can end a city, Russia's Poseidon could end a continent.

Russia has also repeatedly threatened the US and Europe with the weapon, which it said it could park off a coast and detonate at a time of its choosing. Malcolm Davis, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, previously told Business Insider that rather than a first- or second-strike weapon, he sees Russia's new torpedo as a "third-strike vengeance weapon" designed to shatter NATO.

While a nuclear exchange between the US and Russia would cause incredible death and destruction and plunge much of the world into the dark ages, a secretive, stealthy submarine designed to launch six "doomsday" devices would be the most deadly weapon in human history and pose a direct threat to life on earth. The inclusion of a mini-sub, which experts speculate could destroy vital undersea cables, operated by a shadowy branch of Russia's military suggests another purpose for this weapon.

Business Insider article by Alex Lockie

NAVY's POSEIDON SPY PLANES TRACK CHINA's NUCLEAR SUBMARINES (Fox News 3/6):

The increasing global reach of Chinese nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines, armed with JL-2 weapons reportedly able to hit parts of the US, continues to inspire an ongoing Navy effort to accelerate production of attack submarines, prepare long-dwell drones for deployment to the Pacific and continue acquisition of torpedo-armed sub-hunting planes such as the P-8/A Poseidon. Seeking to overcome the Pacific's "tyranny of distance" dispersed geography, and track China's expanding fleet of submarines, the Navy is working with Congress to produce as many as three Virginia-class submarines per year, moving beyond the current plan to build two.

In the air, the Navy has been moving to place its new Triton sea drones in Guam and has recently awarded Boeing a \$2.4 billion deal to produce 19 more P-8A Poseidon surveillance and attack planes. Given the Poseidon's role as a high-tech surveillance aircraft, known for capturing video of

Chinese phony island building in the South China Sea (land reclamation) several years ago, it takes little imagination to envision ways its advanced sensors, sonobuoys and weapons could function as part of a containment strategy against Chinese expansion -- and even operate as a deterrent against China's growing fleet of nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines (SSBN).

The PLA Navy has, in recent years, been expanding its reach beyond the Pacific as part of a visible effort to become a major-power international force. Chinese SSBNs have been sighted at great distances from Western Pacific shores, according to numerous news reports -- and the existence of both JL-2s and emerging JL-3s have increased pressure on the US. According to the National Air and Space Intelligence Center, the Chinese had deployed up to 48 JL-2 launchers on submarines as of 2017. With ranges greater than 4,500 miles, JL-2s traveling well beyond China's immediate vicinity can hold US areas at risk.

Just last year, Captain James Fanell, a former director of intelligence and information operations for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, warned Congress about the need to track and deter Chinese nuclear-armed submarines. "Every time a [PLA Navy] SSBN departs on a strategic nuclear patrol, the [U.S. Navy] must follow closely enough to be ready to sink them if they ever attempt to launch a nuclear-tipped ICBM towards our shores," he told Congress, according to an essay called "China's new undersea nuclear deterrent strategy doctrine and capabilities" from the National Defense University. (Dr. Toshi Yoshirara & Dr. James Holmes) The essay goes on to make the case that, given the difficulties associated with intercepting possible Chinese SLBMs (submarine-launched ballistic missiles), an intelligent way to address the threat might be to "hold Chinese SSBNs at risk so they can be destroyed preemptively before their SLBMs can be launched."

The Poseidon, alongside ISR-enabled SSN attack submarines, seems well positioned to help perform this SSBN sub-hunting mission for a number of reasons. Not only is the P-8's 564 mph speed considerably faster than the P-3 Orion it is replacing, but its six additional fuel tanks enable it to search wider swaths of ocean and spend more dwell-time patrolling high-threat areas. Navy developers explain the Poseidon can operate on 10-hour missions at ranges out to 1,200 nautical miles. More dwell time capacity, fortified by high-speeds, seems to position the Poseidon well for covering wide areas in search of "hidden" Chinese SSBNs.

The P-8A, a militarized variant of Boeing's 737-800, includes torpedo and Harpoon weapons stations, 129 sonobuoys and an in-flight refueling station, providing longer ranges, sub-hunting depth penetration and various attack options. Given that a P-8 can conduct sonobuoy sub-hunting missions from higher altitudes than surface ships, helicopters or other lower-flying aircraft, it can operate with decreased risk from enemy surface fire and swarming small boat attacks. Unlike many drones and other ISR assets, a Poseidon can not only find and track enemy submarines but attack and destroy them as well.

Alongside its AN/APY-10 surveillance radar and MX-series electro-optical/infrared cameras optimized to scan the ocean surface, the Poseidon's air-parachuted sonobuoys can find submarines at various depths beneath the surface. The surveillance aircraft can operate as a "node" within a broader sub-hunting network consisting of surface ships, unmanned surface vessels, aerial drone-mounted maritime sensors and submarines. As part of its contribution to interconnected sub-hunting missions, the Poseidon can draw upon an Active Electronically Scanned Array, Synthetic Aperture Radar and Ground Moving Target Indicator.

By lowering hydrophones and a magnetic compass to a pre-determined depth, connected by cable to a floating surface radio transmitter, Poseidon sonobuoys can convert acoustic energy from the water into a radio signal sent to aircraft computer processors, according to a June 2018 issue of "Physics

World.” Also, Poseidon-dispatched sonobuoys can contribute to the often discussed “US Navy Fish Hook Undersea Defense Line,” a seamless network of hydrophones, sensors and strategically positioned assets stretching from coastal areas off of Northern China down near the Philippines all the way to Indonesia, according to an essay from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, called “China’s Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarines and Strategic Stability.” An improved aerial sub-hunting presence offered by the Poseidon, it seems, could help reinforce this “Undersea Defense Line” effort to prevent Chinese SSBNs from leaving the region undetected.

Interestingly, Poseidon planes might offer a significant nuance to the Pentagon’s well-cultivated nuclear deterrence posture, by introducing a technically advanced method of finding and destroying enemy SSBNs from the air. It aligns with the current “offensive power can be the best defense” approach central to the Pentagon’s nuclear-triad strategic deterrence strategy. Holding Chinese SSBNs at risk, could at very least help further deter China from contemplating some kind of sub-launched nuclear strike. The Poseidon could almost function as a kind of connective tissue between the undersea and air portions of the nuclear triad. The current air leg of the triad, consisting of platforms such as the B-2 and B-52 bombers, is not able to track or destroy submarines. A Poseidon could further fortify the air leg of the triad while also providing crucial intelligence to surface ships and US undersea assets seeking to track Chinese SSBNs. Currently in service with UK, Norwegian and Australian militaries, among others, the Poseidon is increasingly in demand in international market.

Fox News article by Kris Osborn

AIRCREWS ASSIST IN SEIZURE OF 1600 POUNDS OF COCAINE (Breitbart 2/27):

Air and Marine Operations (AMO) aircrew members from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) assisted the U.S. Coast Guard in the seizure of nearly 1,600 pounds of cocaine being smuggled in small boats from Ecuador. The seizures are estimated to be valued in excess of \$20 million.

Operating P-3 Orion aircraft assigned to the National Air Security Operations Center (NASOC) in Jacksonville, Florida, AMO aircrew members began tracking a 35-foot panga boat in the Eastern Pacific ocean. The vessel appeared to be riding low in the water despite only three people being onboard, according to information obtained from CBP officials. The aircrew notified the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard about the suspected drug-smuggling boat.

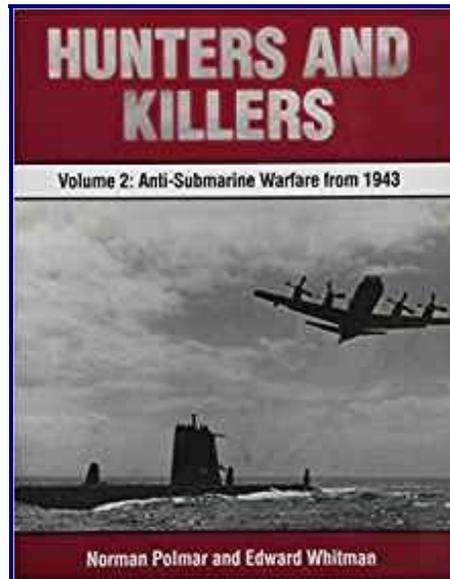
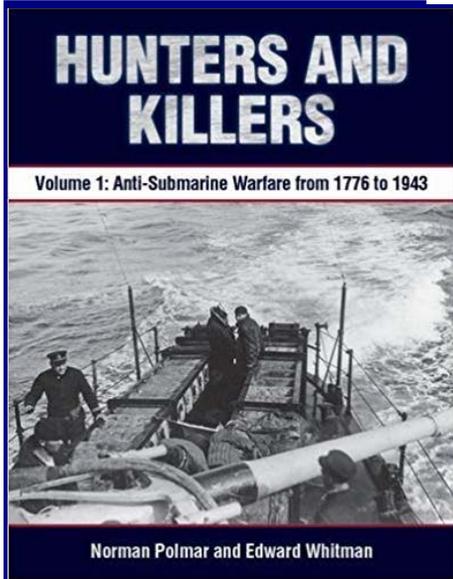
The following day, a Coast Guard vessel interdicted the boat and carried out a search. Onboard, were three Ecuadorian nationals, officials stated. The search resulted in the discovery of approximately 1,585 pounds of cocaine. Breitbart News reached out to CBP officials and learned that the estimated value of the seized cocaine is approximately \$20.7 million.

The National Air Security Operations unit in Jacksonville teams up with its partners located in Corpus Christi, Texas, to provide air interdiction flights to prevent seaborne drug-smuggling efforts in the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. The aircraft operate throughout North and South America, officials stated.

AMO utilizes 1,800 federal agents and mission support personnel, 240 aircraft, and 300 marine vessels operating throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands. During Fiscal Year 2017 their missions resulted in the seizure of approximately 269,790 pounds of cocaine, 384,230 pounds of marijuana, 5,721 pounds of methamphetamine, and nearly 1,100 weapons. They also made 2,573 arrests, seized \$26.1 million in cash, and apprehended 37,009 illegal aliens, CBP officials reported.

Breitbart News article by Bob Price

RECOMMENDED READING:



For some time I've assumed that I'd eventually have to write a comprehensive history of ASW myself, since the subject interests me and I'd never seen such a thing. I was recently relieved to discover that somebody has already done this, so now I don't have to. Check out this two-volume nearly six-hundred-page set by Norman Polmar (the Jane's naval books guy) and Edward Whitman. You can pick them both up at www.amazon.com or any bookstore. They are great.

GREAT POLO SHIRTS AND BALL CAPS:

A friendly reminder that if you want VP-92, P-3 Orion, and/or P-2 Neptune polo shirts and ball caps, and you can't wait for or attend the VP Association's annual reunion in Weymouth in September, you can always purchase these things directly from our own Larry Daly's Eastern Embroidery company. Larry, who was in VP-92 before he migrated out of New England in search of sunny weather and substantially lower taxes, can customize whatever you buy with your name, nickname, rank insignia, rate insignia, wings, etc., at a very reasonable price. You can contact Larry directly at easternemb@msn.com. Be sure to tell him that you are a member of the VP Association.

Although Larry Daly is our preferred supplier for embroidered items (please check with him first), there's another company out there called Military Best that provides polo shirts that are embroidered with wings or rate insignia and which you can customize with your name or pretty much anything else that you might want to put under the wings/insignia. When this was brought to my attention I had some polo shirts made up in a variety of colors with aircrew wings and my name underneath, similar to the way my old flight suit nametags were done up. I work with a lot of former Navy people and I've received a lot of complements about these shirts. Military Best has naval aviator wings and naval aircrew wings, but oddly no NFO wings. They seem to have most of the enlisted rating insignia. You can check them out at <https://militarybest.com>.

ON THE INTERNET:

There are fairly active groups on the popular social media web site Facebook for VP-92, NAS South Weymouth, and NAS Brunswick. You can check them out at www.facebook.com. You may also find Nevins Frankel's VP Navy web site at www.vpnavy.com very interesting too.

MONTHLY MEETING:

Members who can do so are welcome to join us for lunch on the second Thursday of every month at Warren's Place in South Weymouth, MA (in the Whole Foods Plaza off Route 18) from 11:30 to 13:30

PARTING SHOT:



ABOVE: VP-92 power plants shop at NAS Brunswick during the squadron's final months in 2007. Come to our next reunion in September and come reconnect with old friends like this. Got something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.



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



VP ASSOCIATION 2019 ANNUAL REUNION
WEYMOUTH SONS OF ITALY HALL, 54 WHITMAN ST., EAST WEYMOUTH, MA
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2019 FROM 1200 TO 1700

Appetizers and Cash Bar between 1200 and 1300, Meal at 1300, Guest Speaker following Meal

BANQUET RESERVATION ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Squadron Affiliation(s) and Years: _____

Number in Party: _____

Guest's Name(s): _____

Amount Enclosed (\$45 Per Person): \$ _____

Make Checks Payable to **"The VP Association"** and Mail to Barbara Hanigan, 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02332.

If you haven't been to a VP Association reunion before, how about joining us this year?

Don't assume that everybody you know from your Navy Reserve or regular Navy patrol squadron days is aware of the VP Association or the annual reunion banquet. Spread the word about us to your Navy friends and former shipmates.

Dress is CASUAL. However, if you would like to wear a uniform (any kind) or flight suit to the reunion that's fine.

Tables will be available for displays of any Navy memorabilia that you may wish to bring. If you have photos, cruise books, squadron or crew patches, squadron ballcaps, NATOPS manuals, or any other interesting memorabilia that you'd like to show off to your friends and former shipmates at the reunion banquet please bring it with you and we'll find a table for you.

Please help reduce Barbara Hanigan's workload by getting your banquet reservations in to her as soon as possible. Don't wait until the last minute. Thanks!