



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 96

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

JUN 2024

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-3C Orion "Lima Bravo Zero One" flying over the Maine coast in the NAS Brunswick area sometime in early 1984. Got something similar to share? If so, contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

FINAL FLIGHTS:

Joe Minnix, who was previously reported to be in hospice care, passed away in January. We also recently lost Al Hansen, Mike Long, Steve McKinney, Kevin Pimm, and Jack Wills. All were in VP-92. Al Hansen and Jack Wills both served as the squadron's commanding officer.

REGARDING THE COST OF PRINTING AND MAILING NEWSLETTERS...

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

LOST CONTACT:

Be sure to inform George Driscoll at gnddriscoll@gmail.com about home or e-mail address changes. Wayne Thomas, who served with VP-912 at NAS South Weymouth during the 1960s, recently reported that he found John Donatello, who had apparently gone "dark" for a while. John was the radio operator on VP-912's CAC-1. His e-mail address is donatej@juno.com. Wayne, who was the ECM operator on that crew, reports that his e-mail address is stillhazegrayandunderway@gmail.com.

THE 2024 NAS BRUNSWICK REUNION:

As previously reported, the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum will hold a base reunion over the extended weekend of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday September 13th, 14th, and 15th on old NAS Brunswick, Maine. As you should know, a base reunion was planned for last year but it had to be cancelled at literally the last minute due to Hurricane Lee.

Go to <https://bnamuseum.org> to purchase tickets for the reunion and to make your banquet reservations. Please note that discounted "early bird" registration will only be available until June 30th. There are many events planned for the reunion weekend. See the schedule presented on the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum's web site for details.

The US Navy has pledged their support and they are expected to send a P-8A Poseidon and a P-3C Orion as well as some training aircraft for static display on Saturday. Please note that there are only about a half-dozen P-3s remaining in service with the US Navy. One operator (VQ-1) is expected to retire its P-3s, which are only used as "bounce birds", early next year. The other two operators (VXS-1 and VX-30) will not have P-3s for much longer. **At this point, you should consider any opportunity to see, let alone come aboard, an operational US Navy P-3 Orion as potentially THE LAST TIME you will be able to do so.** Please consider this if you are on the fence about coming! The organizers are also working on getting a Canadian CP-140 Aurora and a German P-3C to come too.

A joint VP-92 and VP-MAU "mini-reunion" will be organized in conjunction with the larger base reunion on Saturday September 14th. The command mini-reunion will be held from 11 AM to noon in the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum's main exhibition hall. All former VP-92 and VP-MAU personnel are welcome to come to the command mini-reunion. We will have some free "geedunk" to hand out to our old shipmates, on a first-come first-served basis, while the supply lasts. If you want to get your hands on this stuff, be sure to line up early, because what we bring with us is all there is and when its gone there will be no more!

Please note that although there is no charge to attend the command mini-reunion, you will have to purchase admission to the base reunion to get in. We hope to see many of you at the NAS Brunswick reunion in September. We know a lot of people pre-registered last year and were disappointed. Please give it another try this year. Come see your old friends and come see your old aircraft. They say lightning doesn't strike twice and we have to believe this goes for hurricanes too!

P-3 ORION AT OLD NAS KEFLAVIK IN MAY:



While on a brief stopover at Keflavik International Airport in Iceland during early May your newsletter editor was pleasantly surprised to see what appeared to be a German P-3C Orion along with two Canadian CP-140 Auroras and a US Navy P-8A Poseidon parked on the remnants of the old naval air station. The image presented above was shot from the window of an Icelandair Boeing 737.

SUZANNE KRAUSS COMPLETES COMMAND ASSIGNMENT IN AFRICA:

Captain Suzanne Krause, who was in VP-92 along with her husband Scott Bailey during the squadron's final years, is still serving in uniform. For the past year she was the commanding officer of Camp Lemonnier in the Republic of Djibouti in Africa. Suzanne and Scott are shown here at Camp Lemonnier. Note, Scott was VP-92's last commanding officer before the squadron was disestablished in 2007. Suzanne recently finished up her assignment. Presented below is the press release that the Navy issued on April 16th regarding the change of command at the African base:



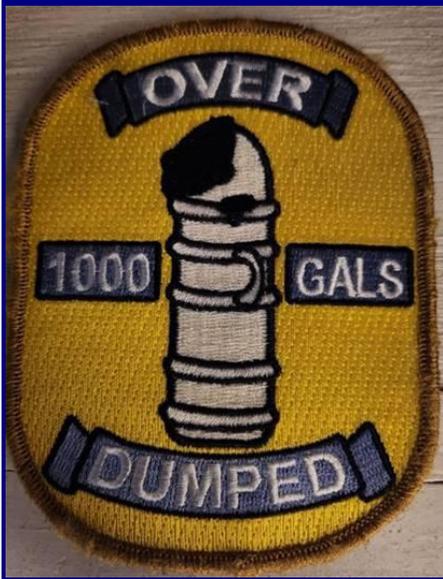
U.S. Navy Capt. Eilis Cancel assumed command of Camp Lemonnier at a change of command ceremony today. Cancel relieved U.S. Navy Capt. Suzanne Krauss, who began serving as Camp Lemonnier's commanding officer on April 16, 2023. Rear Adm. Brad Collins, Commander of Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central presided over the ceremony.

"Capt. Cancel, you have an incredible team of Sailors, Soldiers and partners in this room," Collins said. "I am excited to see you operate in such a dynamic environment. I know our relationship with Djibouti and all of our partners here will continue to thrive as you stand the watch."

Cancel previously commanded Naval Reserve Commander, Navy Europe and Africa's N-5 Africa North units. She directed the 2022 and 2023 Phoenix Express exercise, which encourages partnership with North African and Mediterranean nations. "I am honored to assume command of Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti," said Cancel. "I know how important this installation is to regional security and stability in the Horn of Africa. I look forward to continuing our long legacy of partnership with our Djiboutian hosts and our regional allies."

Camp Lemonnier is an operational installation that enables U.S., allied and partner nation forces to be where they are needed to ensure security and protect U.S. interests. The installation provides world-class support for service members, transient U.S. assets and 38 local tenant commands through 24/7 flight operations, force protection, port operations, lodging and facility management.

A NOTE FROM JOHN SCHWIND:



The image at left and the brief note presented below were sent by John Schwind, who many of you may have known better as "10 Speed". He was a member of VP-92's Work Center 210. I believe that he retired as an AVCM. He presently lives out on the west coast in Washington state.

I'll bet you haven't seen patch like this. Feel free to share, many will love it. All is well next door to Bangor sub base. A good friend of a friend of mine, a P-3 SS-3, got this patch for his services. Great!!!

JAPANESE P-3C ORION SKIDS OFF RUNWAY DURING LANDING (Aviation Safety 5/8):

A Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft skid off the runway during landing at an air base in the east of the country outside Tokyo, around 4:35 pm (local time) on May 8, 2024. The Asahi Shimbun reported that none of the 12 JMSDF personnel on board the aircraft were injured. The plane came to a grinding halt on the grass, finally coming to rest perpendicular to the Shimousa Air Base's runway, that straddles Kashiwa City and Kamagaya City.



The Asahi Shimbun said that civilian emergency services in Kashiwa city received a call from the JMSDF about the P-3C patrol aircraft that had “deviated from the runway.” The video carried by the report showed rescue personnel and fire trucks surrounding the aircraft, which was tilting forward with the nose scraping the ground. “According to the city’s Disaster Prevention and Safety Division, there was no fire or impact on the surrounding area.”

It quoted a statement from Japan’s Ministry of Defense that said the plane “veered eastward from the runway when it landed at around 4:10 pm.” “There were 12 Maritime Self-Defense Force personnel on board, but no one was injured. Shimousa Air Base has one runway that is 2,250 meters long and 45 meters wide. It has units that train pilots and aviators,” it added.

Aviation Safety Network claimed that the incident took place during a “training” sortie, observing that the “nose gear seemed to be retracted.” “The Orion first veered off the runway 01 to the left slightly, rotating 90 degrees to the right to cross over the runway and stuck on the grass. Four propellers shaved the surface of the grass and soil at the point of rest,” it added.

Presumably, the front landing gear must have experienced a malfunction and given away or pushed back in, causing the nose to drop and hit the ground, with the plane eventually steering off course. This is based on a video claimed to be of the accident as it was coming into land, shot from the ground from the runway and close to the chain-link fence guarding the base.

The video circulating online shows the plane landing off-axis, with first the rear and then the front landing gear touching down in sequential fashion. However, the video ends just as it appears that the nose too crashes on the ground and the plane is about to skid off the runway. It is not entirely clear if the clip is of the actual incident in question.

The four-engined turboprop Lockheed Martin P-3C Orion is the JMSDF’s leading anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and MPA. According to Sea Forces, there are 93 P-3Cs in service in the JMSDF where the Kawasaki Aerospace Corporation (KAC) assembled and produced more than a 100 P-3Cs, under license in Japan. Japan has several variants besides the baseline production P-3C variant.

This includes the EP-3, an electronic intelligence (ELINT) for the JMSDF; the OP-3, which is a P-3C converted for maritime reconnaissance for the JMSDF; the UP-3C that is used by the JMSDF for testing equipment; and the UP-3D, another JMSDF used for ELINT roles. The aircraft has participated in exercises with friendly countries like Malaysia and India over the years.

It has also been used to track and photograph Chinese and Russian warships sailing or exercising around Japan’s waters. A March 3 post on X by a handle that tracks Japanese navy developments, showed a photograph of the Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning, that was photographed “directly from above by the JMSDF’s P-3C.” The aircraft has an electro-optical turret under the chin for visual reconnaissance and surveillance.

Lockheed Martin describes the plane as a “peerless” long-range ASW and maritime patrol aircraft that set the global standard for “multi-mission long-endurance flights.” With a cruising range of 7,670-km, it also has advanced “information processing capabilities,” according to Kawasaki. This suggests the JMSDF Orions also are an important element in tactical coordination with other ground, surface, shore and air assets as an airborne data exchange platform.

Aviation Safety article by Parth Satam

US NAVY FLIES AIRCRAFT THROUGH THE TAIWAN STRAIT (AP 4/17):

The U.S. 7th Fleet said a Navy P-8A Poseidon flew through the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday, a day after U.S. and Chinese defense chiefs held their first talks since November 2022 in an effort to reduce regional tensions. The patrol and reconnaissance plane “transited the Taiwan Strait in international airspace,” the 7th Fleet said in a news release. “By operating within the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law, the United States upholds the navigational rights and freedoms of all nations,” the release said.

The critical strait is 160 kilometers (100 mile) wide and divides China from the self-governing island democracy. Although it's in international waters, China considers the passage of foreign military aircraft and ships through it a challenge to its sovereignty. China claims the island of Taiwan, threatening to defend it by force if necessary despite U.S. military support for the island.

China scrambled fighter jets to “monitor the U.S. plane's passage” and operated “in accordance of laws and regulations, naval Col. Li Xi, spokesperson for the Chinese People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater Command, said in a report on the command's official Weibo social media site. “Theater troops are on high alert at all times to resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and security as well as regional peace and stability,” Li said.

China routinely issues stern protests and activates defenses in response to the passage of ships and military planes through the straight, particularly those from the U.S. China also regularly sends navy ships and warplanes into the strait and other areas around the island to wear down Taiwan's defenses and seek to intimidate its 23 million people, who firmly back their de facto independence.

“By operating within the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law, the United States upholds the navigational rights and freedoms of all nations. The aircraft’s transit of the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States’ commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows,” the 7th Fleet statement said.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with his Chinese counterpart, Adm. Dong Jun, on Tuesday in the latest U.S. effort to improve communications with the Chinese military and reduce the chances of a clash in the region. It was the first time Austin has talked to Dong and the first time he has spoken at length with any Chinese counterpart since November 2022. The call, which lasted a bit more than an hour, came as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to travel to China this month for talks.

Military-to-military contact stalled in August 2022, when Beijing suspended all such communication after then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. China responded by firing missiles over Taiwan and staging a surge in military maneuvers, including what appeared to be a rehearsal of a naval and aerial blockade of the island.

AP article by Christopher Bodeen

“HELP” SIGN LEADS TO RESCUE OF STRANDED MARINERS (CBS News 4/11):

Three mariners who were stranded on a tiny island in the Pacific were rescued after they spelled out “HELP” with palm leaves on the beach, the Coast Guard said Tuesday, marking the second time in four years that castaways were found on the same island. The sailors were found on Pikelot Atoll after being stuck in the Micronesian archipelago for over a week.

The men — all experienced sailors in their 40s — had embarked on a voyage from Polowat Atoll on Easter Sunday in their 20-foot open skiff, which was equipped with an outboard motor, officials said.

But six days later on April 6, the Coast Guard in Guam received a distress call from a relative who reported her three uncles had not returned as expected to their home of Pikelot Atoll, which is about 100 nautical miles northwest of Polowat Atoll.

A joint search and rescue operation by the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy was immediately launched. Despite poor weather conditions and limited assets in the area, a U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon aircraft crew based in Japan was deployed and the USCGC Oliver Henry cutter was diverted to the search area, which spanned more than 78,000 square nautical miles.

"In a remarkable testament to their will to be found, the mariners spelled out 'HELP' on the beach using palm leaves, a crucial factor in their discovery," said Lt. Chelsea Garcia, the search and rescue mission coordinator on the day they were located. "This act of ingenuity was pivotal in guiding rescue efforts directly to their location."

The Poseidon aircraft located the message and the three mariners on the tiny island on Sunday, eight days after they went missing. The aircraft crew dropped survival packages to the men until further assistance could arrive, and the Coast Guard cutter was deployed to conduct the rescue operation. The next day, a Coast Guard aircraft based in Hawaii overflowed the area and dropped a radio to establish communication with the men, who confirmed they were in good health, and had access to food and water. They reported their boat had been damaged and its engine was broken. USCGC Oliver Henry finally reached the mariners on Pikelot Atoll on Tuesday morning and the ship successfully transported them home to Polowat Atoll.

"Every life saved, and every mariner returned home is a testament to the enduring partnership and mutual respect that characterizes our relationship, making a profound impact on the lives of individuals and the resilience of communities across the (Federated States of Micronesia)," said Lt. Cmdr. Christine Igisomar, the search and rescue mission coordinator on the day they were rescued.

This wasn't the first time stranded sailors were rescued from the island after spelling out a distress signal on the beach. In 2020, three men were rescued from Pikelot Atoll after writing a giant "SOS" sign in the sand. They were spotted by Australian and U.S. aircraft and safely returned home.

CBS News article by Stephen Smith

MQ-4C TRITON HAS ARRIVED IN EUROPE (The Warzone 4/1):

The global operational reach of the U.S. Navy's MQ-4C Triton fleet has expanded again with the arrival of one of the drones, which are optimized for long-duration overwater missions, at Naval Air Station Sigonella in Italy. From Sigonella, Tritons will be able to provide valuable additional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance coverage over and around parts of Europe, especially for keeping tabs on activity in the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, as well as North Africa and the Middle East. At the same time, this all follows the Navy's decision to significantly scale back its plans for the MQ-4C.

The first MQ-4C to be forward deployed at Naval Air Station (NAS) Sigonella arrived at the base on Italy's island of Sicily on March 30. The Triton is from Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19 (VUP-19), which has its main base of operations at Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida. VUP-19, which also has a detachment at Point Mugu in California, is currently the Navy's only operational MQ-4C squadron. The service does plan to establish a second such unit, VUP-11, in the 2026 Fiscal Year. Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 20 (VX-20) at NAS Patuxent River also has a Triton for test and evaluation use.

Plane spotters using online flight tracking software first noticed the MQ-4C heading from Jacksonville toward Europe on March 29. VUP-19 now has two forward-deployed detachments outside of the continental United States, the other being at Andersen Air Force Base on Guam. VUP-19 Tritons at Andersen have also conducted temporary deployments to Japan. The Navy plans to establish a third VUP-19 detachment, but where it might be based is unclear.

Earlier in March, the Navy held a ceremony to mark the opening of a new hangar at Sigonella specifically designed to house MQ-4Cs. The Triton is a derivative of the RQ-4 Global Hawk high-altitude long-endurance drone that has been optimized for persistent, over-water missions, which Australia is also in the process of acquiring. Other variants and derivatives of the Global Hawk are in service today with the U.S. Air Force, South Korea, and Japan, as well as with a unit operated collectively by multiple members of the NATO alliance.

Compared to the original RQ-4A, the MQ-4C notably has a strengthened fuselage and reinforced wings, as well as additional features to help prevent the build-up of ice on the leading edges and around the air intake and improve its ability to withstand lightning strikes. These changes give the Triton the ability to swoop down to lower altitudes to more closely investigate objects of interest on the surface.

As originally designed, the MQ-4C's sensor suite included an active electronically scanned radar with surface search and synthetic aperture modes, electro-optical and infrared video cameras in a turret under the nose, and electronic support measures systems for collecting electronic intelligence passively. In recent years, manufacturer Northrop Grumman has started delivering upgraded Tritons to the Navy in a so-called Multi-Intelligence (Multi-Int) configuration with additional electronic and signals intelligence (ELINT/SIGINT) capabilities. Tritons are also intended to work very closely together with Navy P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft and aircraft carrier strike groups.

"In the interest of operational security, we cannot comment on details of future operations and deployments, but can say that U.S. Sixth Fleet is committed to supporting U.S., Allied and partner interests in the region, and the deployment of the MQ-4C Triton gives us the opportunity to increase interoperability and enhance the combined capabilities amongst our NATO Allies and partners," a spokesperson for U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) told The War Zone. U.S. Sixth Fleet is the numbered U.S. Navy fleet associated with U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF), which oversees all of the service's operations in and around Europe and Africa, and commands are often referred to collectively.

"The addition of the MQ-4C Triton, right here in Sigonella, is another milestone in the successful development of the Triton program," Navy Capt. Aaron Shoemaker, NAS Sigonella's commanding officer also said in a statement. "We are proud to support VUP-19 as they integrate with the Fleet to expand the roles of unmanned aircraft systems operations in our region and beyond."

Sigonella has been a key strategic staging point for U.S. military crewed and uncrewed operations in this part of the world for decades. The Navy's MQ-4C joins Air Force RQ-4As and NATO RQ-4Ds already at the base on Sicily. Global Hawks have been particularly active in and around the Black Sea since the run-up to Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine in 2022. RQ-4s and other drones, as well as crewed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft have continued to fly over that body of water regularly since then, gathering intelligence that can be disseminated, and, in some cases, forwarded to Ukrainian authorities.

Outside of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the Black Sea, as well as the Mediterranean, have long been very strategic maritime regions where the U.S. military has high demands for routine ISR coverage. Air Force RQ-4s have used their very long endurance and other capabilities to help provide important ISR coverage elsewhere in Europe over the years, too. With their over-water and maritime surveillance capabilities, Navy MQ-4Cs could be particularly useful for flights over other strategic bodies of water around Europe further to the north, where Russian activity is also often a concern.

The RQ-4s in service with the Air Force today have much more limited sensor suites compared to those found on MQ-4Cs, in addition to their overall design not being optimized for maritime operations. Altogether, Navy Tritons will provide U.S. commanders in Europe significant additional capabilities over what is currently provided by Global Hawk.

In addition to supporting operations in Europe, Sigonella offers a prime location for launching ISR aircraft like Tritons on sorties around potential hotspots in Africa and the Middle East. Navy P-8As have been routinely flying in the Eastern Mediterranean off the coasts of Israel and the Gaza Strip since the conflict erupted there last October. Aerial overwatch is only set to become more important in that context as the U.S. military works to establish a temporary offshore pier to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza. There continue to be questions and concerns about risks to U.S. forces and how exactly security will be provided in the course of that operation, which you can read more about here.

From Sigonella, Navy MQ-4C could fly to the Red Sea and even further south, areas where Iranian-backed Houthi militants in Yemen have been launching regular attacks on U.S. and other foreign warships, as well as commercial vessels. Tritons could help provide additional situational awareness and support strikes on Houthi weapons and other assets ashore.

Navy Triton operations already benefit directly from experience gained over more than a decade of operating older Global Hawk variants over and around the Persian Gulf. Between 2009 and 2022, the Navy flew a small fleet of early-generation Block 10 RQ-4As in the maritime surveillance role from Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This was part of a program called the Broad Area Maritime Surveillance Demonstrator (BAMS-D), which lasted much longer than expected and fed directly into the development of the MQ-4C and of tactics, techniques, and procedures for operating those drones.

At the same time, BAMS-D also looks to have been a contributing factor in the Navy's decision to significantly truncate its plans for the MQ-4C, despite Triton's still-growing operational footprint outside of the continental United States. In 2019, Iranian forces shot down one of the BAMS-D drones while it was flying over the Strait of Hormuz, which links the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. This in turn immediately prompted a very public debate about the vulnerability of Global Hawks and their derivatives, especially in a potential future high-end conflict against a near-peer competitor like China.

In 2022, the Navy decided to dramatically truncate its total planned purchases of MQ-4Cs from 70 to 27. This figure includes an MQ-4C that was lost in a crash in 2018, as well as one drone retained for testing, according to a declassified Pentagon Selected Acquisition Report (SAR). This all comes as the Air Force is planning to divest the last of its Global Hawks in the 2027 Fiscal Year. The service is also working to retire its U-2 Dragon Lady spy plane fleet by 2026.

The War Zone has long highlighted how this adds to already significant evidence that the Air Force is planning to supplant both of those types with advanced, high-flying, classified drones, as well as new

space-based capabilities, if it hasn't already started doing so. What all of this might mean for the future service career of the Navy's MQ-4Cs remains to be seen. Whatever the case, Tritons based at NAS Sigonella will now be able to add additional ISR capacity over and around parts of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

The Warzone article by Joseph Trevithick

NAS SIGONELLA WELCOMES FIRST MQ-4C TRITON (US Navy 3/30):

The first MQ-4C Triton arrived to Naval Air Station (NAS) Sigonella, March 30, 2024. The MQ-4C's arrival to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations marks the second forward-deployed detachment for VUP-19. A total of three detachments are planned when the program is fully operational. Deployments like this enhance U.S. Navy interoperability with NATO Allies and partners.

"The addition of the MQ-4C Triton, right here in Sigonella, is another milestone in the successful development of the Triton program," said Capt. Aaron Shoemaker, Commanding Officer, NAS Sigonella. "We are proud to support VUP-19 [Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19] as they integrate with the Fleet to expand the roles of unmanned aircraft systems operations in our region and beyond."

The MQ-4C Triton is the Navy's newest Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Maritime Patrol asset and augments the capabilities of the P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft. To prepare for the arrival of the Triton in Italy, VUP-19 "Big Red" held a ceremony to celebrate the deployment and the opening of a new Triton hangar at NAS Sigonella, March 2.

VUP-19, homeported in Florida at Naval Air Station Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport, boasts more than 300 Sailors and officers from various aviation ratings and officer communities who maintain and operate the Triton around the world. Aircrew gather and process surveillance information utilizing data fusion tools that integrate sensor data from multiple aircraft into a comprehensive networked picture to further assist in building an accurate threat representation. VUP-19 achieved initial operation capability in September 2023 during its deployment to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

Naval Air Station Sigonella provides consolidated operational, command and control, administrative, logistical and advanced logistical support to U.S. and other NATO forces. The installation's strategic location enables U.S., allied, and partner nation forces to deploy and respond as required, ensuring security and stability in Europe, Africa and Central Command.

US Navy Press Release by LTJG Andrea Perez

FIRST P-8A POSEIDON UNDERGOES NEW UPGRADES (Military Embedded Systems 3/29):

The U.S. Navy began an enhancement of its P-8A Poseidon aircraft fleet with Increment 3 Block 2 modifications, delivering the first aircraft for this upgrade to Boeing on March 27, Naval Air Systems Command announced. The upgrades are designed to augment the aircraft's capabilities in anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), NAVAIR says.

"Increment 3 Block 2 provides a significant upgrade to the P-8A airframe and avionics systems, and includes new airframe racks, radomes, antennas, sensors, and wiring," the statement reads. "The modification incorporates a new combat systems suite with an improved computer processing and higher security architecture capability, a wide band satellite communication system, an ASW signals

intelligence capability, a track management system, and additional communications and acoustics systems to enhance search, detection and targeting capabilities."

Military Embedded Systems article by Dan Taylor

US ALLY SCRAMBLES FIGHTER JETS AGAINST CHINA'S SEA SPY PLANE (Newsweek 3/11):



Tokyo scrambled fighter planes over the weekend against a Chinese military aircraft that patrolled Western Pacific waters on consecutive days, according to Japan's Defense Ministry. Reports released on March 9 and 10 by the Joint Staff of Japan's Self-Defense Forces each carried an image of China's KQ-200 maritime patrol aircraft, which was photographed by Japanese pilots during its daytime sorties.

The turboprop support plane with anti-submarine and maritime surveillance capabilities transited the Miyako Strait—between the Japanese islands of Miyako and Okinawa—during its sorties, the Joint Staff reports said. The Chinese navy did not disclose the reasons behind the maneuvers, and China's Defense Ministry did not return emails seeking comment.

After loitering just south of Japan's southwest islands, the KQ-200 returned to the East China Sea via the same route. The Miyako Strait is a strategic outlet for the Chinese navy. It is one of the few international waterways—along with Luzon Strait between Taiwan and the Philippines—through which Beijing's forces can exit the first island chain and reach the expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

The two straits are similarly considered maritime choke points, access to which could be effectively controlled in wartime by U.S. treaty allies such as Tokyo and Manila or close security partners like Taipei. It means the waters of the Western Pacific are particularly important training grounds for American and allied forces, as well as their Chinese counterparts.

The KQ-200 was built by China's state-owned Shaanxi Aircraft Corporation and is flown by the People's Liberation Army's Naval Air Force. It was made for anti-submarine warfare and is distinguished from other similar Soviet-designed airframes by the radar dome under its nose and the magnetic anomaly detector protruding from its tail.

The same sea patrol plane is regularly spotted in the airspace around Taiwan, which classifies it as an anti-submarine variant of the China's Y-8 aircraft. Japan, on the other hand, calls it a Y-9, a reference to its upgraded airframe and hardware. The KQ-200—roughly equivalent in function to the U.S. Navy's P-8 Poseidon—is equipped with submarine-hunting weapons including torpedoes and

sonobuoys. It can stay in the air for up to 10 hours while scanning for underwater signals and frequencies.

Political ties between Beijing and Tokyo remain complex due to underlying historical and territorial tensions, as well as the broader rivalry between China and the United States. Japan hosts the largest number of forward-deployed American forces—roughly 50,000 military personnel—anywhere in the world outside of U.S. territory.

As in Washington, Tokyo's annual defense reports raise repeated concerns about China's military buildup, as well as its far-reaching territorial ambitions. The Communist Party's desire to one day control democratically governed Taiwan also has implications for Japan's economy and its strategic position in the region.

Last week, Japan said its Air Self-Defense Force was scrambled 21 times in February to intercept aircraft from China as well as Russia. The monthly total was down from 23 times in January. On March 2, its Joint Staff released images of two Chinese warships—the Type 051A frigates Zhoushan and Jingzhou—sailing into the Western Pacific via the Miyako Strait.

Newsweek article by John Feng

BOEING DELIVERS FIRST NEW P-8 TO US NAVY RESERVE IN SEATTLE (Komo News 3/9):

The US Navy Reserve in Seattle took possession of their first brand new Boeing P-8 Poseidon recently at Boeing Field. The plane is based on the 737-800 and it can do a lot. “So this is the nation’s only long-range multi-mission jet that can actually find, fix, and target and then ultimately engage adversaries around the world,” said Vice Admiral John Mustin.

The Navy Reserve is already flying P-8s, but the one just delivered is the first built new just for the Navy Reserve. “This is a significant capability increase for the Navy Reserve. We have historically flown the P3 Charlie,” said Vice Admiral Mustin. The Navy Reserve is being called to work more closely with other military services. We are told the brand-new aircraft is evidence of that synergy. The new plane is headed to a Squadron based out of Jacksonville, Florida.

“We also have a local squadron at Whidbey Island which is Maritime Patrol Squadron 69 and although this aircraft isn’t going there, they will also receive new aircraft shortly,” said Vice Admiral Mustin. “Ultimately, they’ll have five and they are also a globally deployable squadron.” It will be a quantum jump forward for all squadrons of this type who have been using the P-3 Orion which is based on a commercial airliner from the 1950s. Putting a familiar Boeing profile on the front lines of future conflicts.

Komo News article by Theron Zahn

BOEING TO BUILD 17 P-8A MARITIME PATROL PLANES WITH ADVANCED RADAR, PROCESSORS, AND ELECTRO-OPTICAL SENSORS (Military-Aerospace Electronics 3/6):

The U.S Navy is asking the Boeing Co. to build 17 P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft for key U.S. allies under terms of a \$3.4 billion order announced last week. Officials of the Naval Air Systems Command at Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Md., are asking the Boeing Defense, Space & Security segment in Seattle to build 14 aircraft for Canada and three for Germany.

The P-8 is a militarized version of the Boeing 737-800 single-aisle passenger jetliner hardened for long-range ocean missions like surveillance, maritime patrol, and anti-submarine warfare. The P-8A is replacing the Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion maritime patrol turboprop aircraft. The P-8A’s avionics

flight management system and the stores management system have been developed by GE Aviation Systems in Grand Rapids, Mich. The cabin has as many as seven operator consoles.

Ultimately, the Navy plans to buy 108 P-8A aircraft from Boeing, which is building the Poseidon at its factory in Renton, Wash. The 737 fuselage and tail sections are from by Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita, Kan., and move to Renton where technicians will assemble the finished aircraft.

The Poseidon's MX-20HD digital electro-optical and infrared (EO/IR) multi-spectral sensor turrets come from L3Harris Wescam in Burlington, Ontario. The MX-20HD is gyro-stabilized and can have as many as seven sensors, including infrared, CCDTV, image intensifier, laser rangefinder, and laser illuminator.

The Raytheon Technologies Corp. Intelligence & Space segment in McKinney, Texas, is providing the AN/APY-10 advanced airborne radar systems for the P-8A. The AN/APY-10 maritime, littoral, and overland surveillance radar is a relatively new design for the P-8A, which is replacing the previous-generation AN/APS-137 radar. The AN/APY-10 has reduced size, weight and power (SWaP); additional target track capability, a new color weather avoidance mode, and room for technology growth, compared to the Raytheon APS-137D(V)5 maritime surveillance radar and signals intelligence (SIGINT) system that the AN/APY-10 is replacing. The AN/APY-10 is integrated into the Boeing mission control and display system aboard the Poseidon for control, display and data distribution. The radar also will provide ultra-high-resolution imaging modes for maritime and overland operations. The radar fits in the nose of the Poseidon. The previous-generation APS-137D(V)5 radar provides synthetic aperture radar (SAR) for imaging stationary ships and small vessels, coastal and overland surveillance, and high-resolution imaging synthetic aperture radar (ISAR) for imaging surfaced submarines and fast surface vessels operating in coastal waters.

The P-8A will have the CAE Inc. advanced integrated magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) system, and eventually may use air-deployable unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to handle magnetic anomaly detection. Experts from the BAE Systems Electronic Systems segment in Nashua, N.H., are demonstrating a new radio frequency countermeasures (RFCM) electronic warfare (EW) system aboard the P-8A to enable the aircraft to protect itself from radar-guided missiles.

Boeing also is determining the feasibility of integrating the new Mobile User Objective System (MUOS) satellite communications (SATCOM) system aboard the P-8A. MUOS is a UHF communications system that operates at frequencies from 300 MHz to 3 GHz and will replace the legacy UHF Follow-On (UFO) system before that system reaches its end of life. MUOS is intended to provide mobile users with new capabilities and enhanced mobility, access, capacity, and quality of service. Boeing is conducting a technical study to determine if it makes sense to install MUOS capability on dual SATCOM channels on the P-8A, while maintaining legacy voice, Link-11, and DAMA/DAMA-IW SATCOM with the current UHF 5 and UHF 6 radio suite aboard the aircraft.

Boeing also is determining if the Multifunctional Information Distribution System (MIDS) Tactical Air Navigation System (TACAN) would be compatible with a MUOS installation aboard the P-8A.

Meggitt Defense Systems Inc. in Irvine, Calif., is providing large electronics-cooling system called the Liquid Air Palletized System (LAPS) for thermal management of electronic components and sensors aboard the P-8A. Meggitt's liquid palletized solution provides essential cooling to mission-critical equipment and sensors to ensure safe flight. The system can provide as much as 64 kilowatts of cooling for the aircraft when operating above 10,000 feet, and 20 kilowatts of ground cooling. LAPS cools the computer processors, electronic and electro-optical sensors, and other heat-generating avionics aboard the P-8A.

Telephonics Corp. in Farmingdale, N.Y., is providing the aircraft's AN/UPX-43(V)1 identification friend-or-foe (IFF) avionics systems. It is a Mark XIIA monopulse and AIMS-certified IFF interrogator for command and control. The avionics subsystem enables air traffic controllers and air defenders to identify military and civilian aircraft, verify forces as friendly, and determine their bearing and range.

The Navy also plans to arm the P-8A with the MK 54 torpedo, which will be fitted with kits to enable the aircraft to release them from altitudes as high as 30,000 feet. The modified torpedoes will glide through the air and enter the water safely to enable the Poseidon to attack enemy submarines from long ranges.

The Poseidon will have the Wideband Global satellite communications (SATCOM) system, otherwise known as WGS -- a high-capacity SATCOM link that will augment and eventually replace Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS) and Global Broadcast Service (GBS) satellites.

On this order Boeing will do the work in Seattle; Huntington Beach and El Segundo, Calif.; Mesa, Ariz.; St. Louis; and Huntsville, Ala., and should be finished by March 2028. For more information contact Boeing Defense, Space & Security online at www.boeing.com/defense/p-8-poseidon, or Naval Air Systems Command at www.navair.navy.mil.

Military-Aerospace Electronics article by John Keller

BOEING TO BEGIN MANUFACTURING CANADIAN AND GERMAN P-8s (Shephard News 3/4):

Boeing has received a US\$3.4 billion contract to begin manufacturing 14 P-8A Poseidon multi-mission MPA for the Royal Canadian Air Force and three additional aircraft for the German Navy.

Canada finalized the agreement for the 14 P-8As at the end of last year, with an option for a further two aircraft down the line. Once ready to enter service, the new MPAs will replace Canada's CP-140 Aurora fleet, an aircraft which has been in service for more than four decades. The CP-140 Aurora was deemed inadequate and difficult to maintain, and will be removed from service in 2030.

Germany, for its part, decided to purchase three more Boeing-made MPAs last November, bringing the total fleet to eight. The Poseidon will take over submarine hunting and maritime reconnaissance from the P-3C Orion from the end of 2024, but the purchase has still been considered an interim solution. The mission requirements and capabilities were officially set to be fulfilled by the Franco-German project Maritime Airborne Warfare System (MAWS) – an effort that has received little assurance recently.

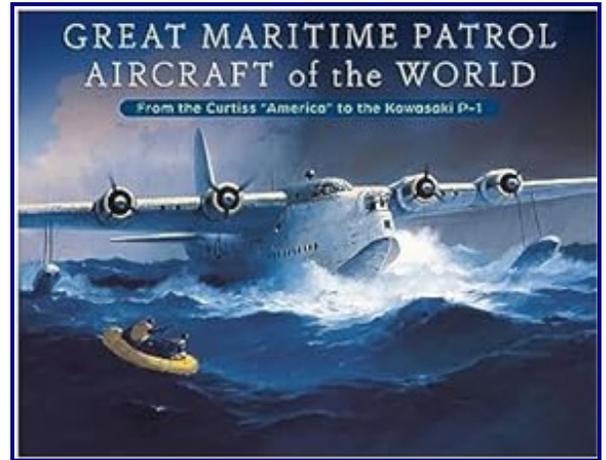
Last year, Boeing and CAE signed teaming agreements to expand multi-mission platform collaboration in Canada, Germany and Norway. These agreements will set to use the complementary capabilities of each company to provide management, technical and cost-effective training solutions for the P-8A Poseidon program, Boeing said.

There are 200 P-8s currently in service or on contract across nine countries including Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Norway, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the UK and the US. Conceived as a replacement for the P-3 Orion, development of the P-8 began in 2004, with its maiden flight in April 2009. The aircraft shares 86% commonality with the 737NG, the civilian variant the P-8 is based upon.

Shephard News article by the Shephard News Team

RECOMMENDED READING:

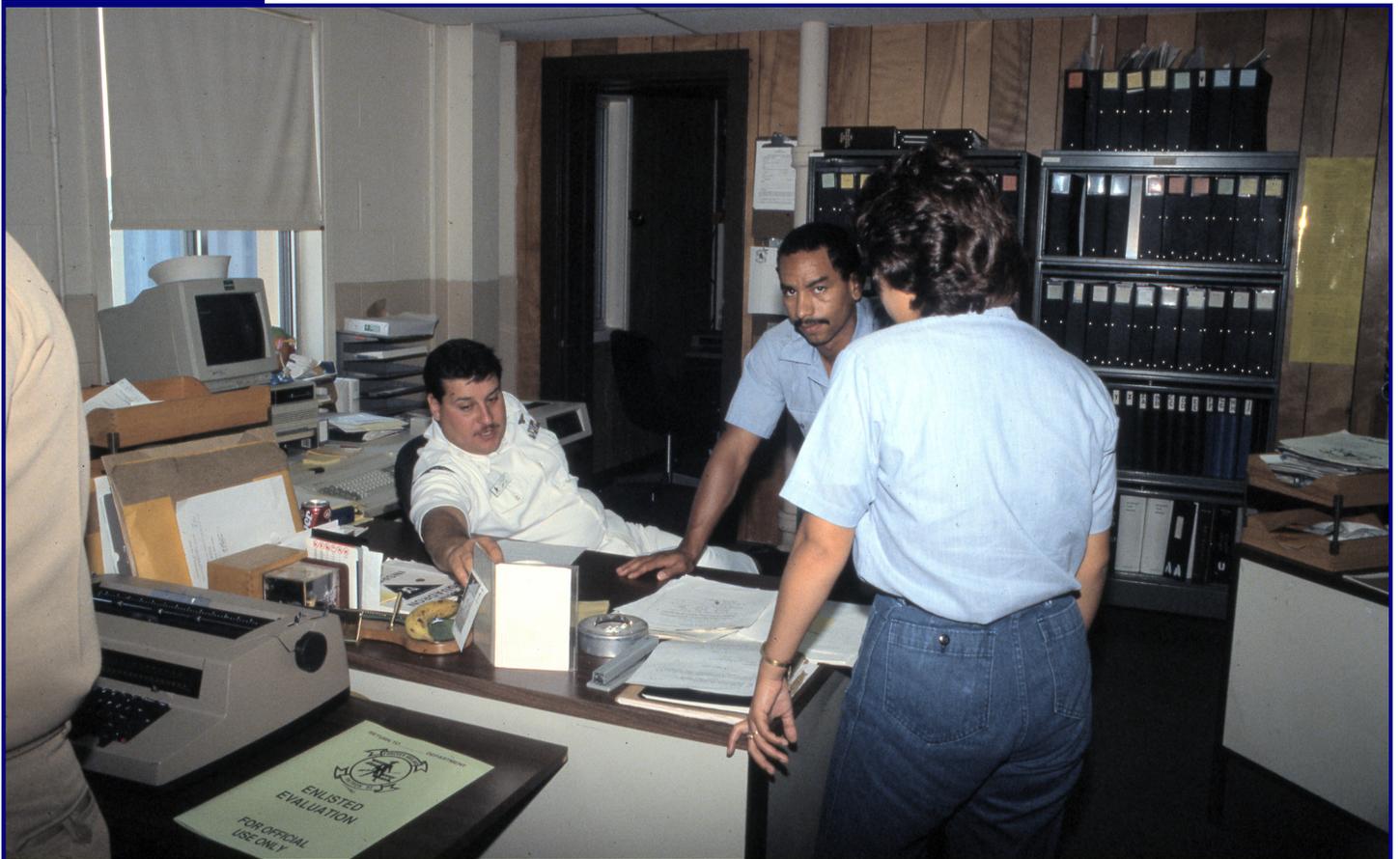
Here is a new book, released on April 28th, that's worth looking at. "Great Maritime Patrol Aircraft of the World" is described as an "...action-filled, illustrated history of 17 history-making aircraft, bringing to life the stories of their creation and of the men who flew and fought in them". The author, Ralph Dean, is a retired USN captain and P-3 pilot. The publisher, Schiffer Military History, is well-known for the high quality of their books. You can be sure that the P-2 Neptune and the P-3 Orion are well covered in this book. The ISBN is 978-0764367946. You can check it out on-line at Amazon.com.



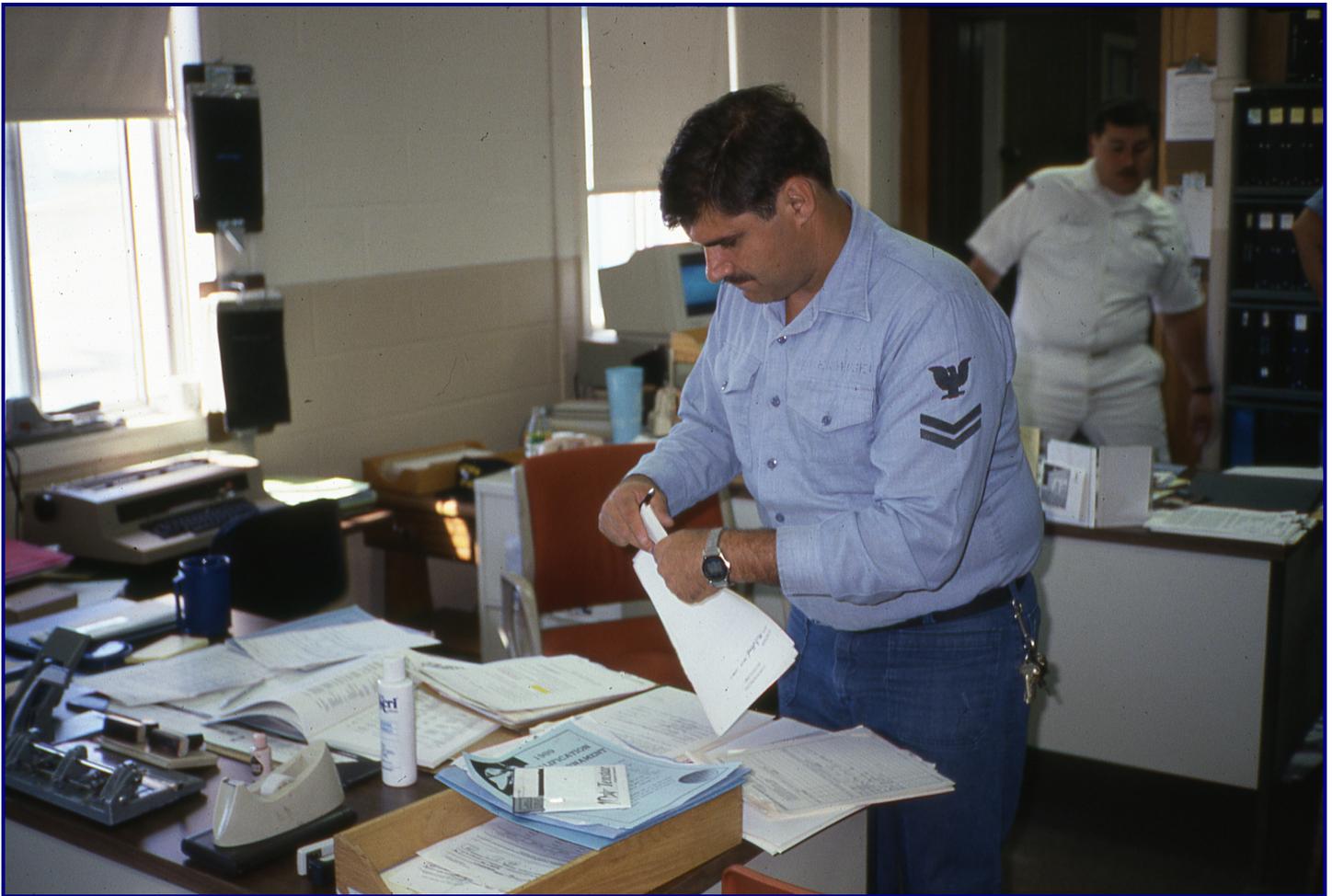
ON THE INTERNET:

Here is a link to a short video, presented on "X" (the social media platform formerly known as Twitter), that purports to show the Japanese P-3C that skidded off a runway in May - https://x.com/chi0203atlas/status/1788119816727069033?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etwetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1788119816727069033%7Ctwgr%5Ecca74c20fd962a861fda5268b8d707e7176812ab%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Ftheaviationist.com%2F2024%2F05%2F08%2Fjmsdf-p-3c-off-runway%2F

PARTING SHOTS:



ABOVE: VP-92 admin spaces at NAS South Weymouth sometime during the 1990s.



ABOVE: These images were all taken in the VP-92 admin spaces at NAS South Weymouth in the 1990s. Have 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".

