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!

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

RECCO:

ABOVE: *September 30th marks the 25th anniversary of the closing of NAS South Weymouth. The photo presented above shows VP-92's LY 409 flying over the base closure ceremony on September 30, 1997. The squadron had relocated to NAS Brunswick the previous summer and NAS South Weymouth's runways were already closed so, so a flyover was the only way for an aircraft to participate. Got something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.*

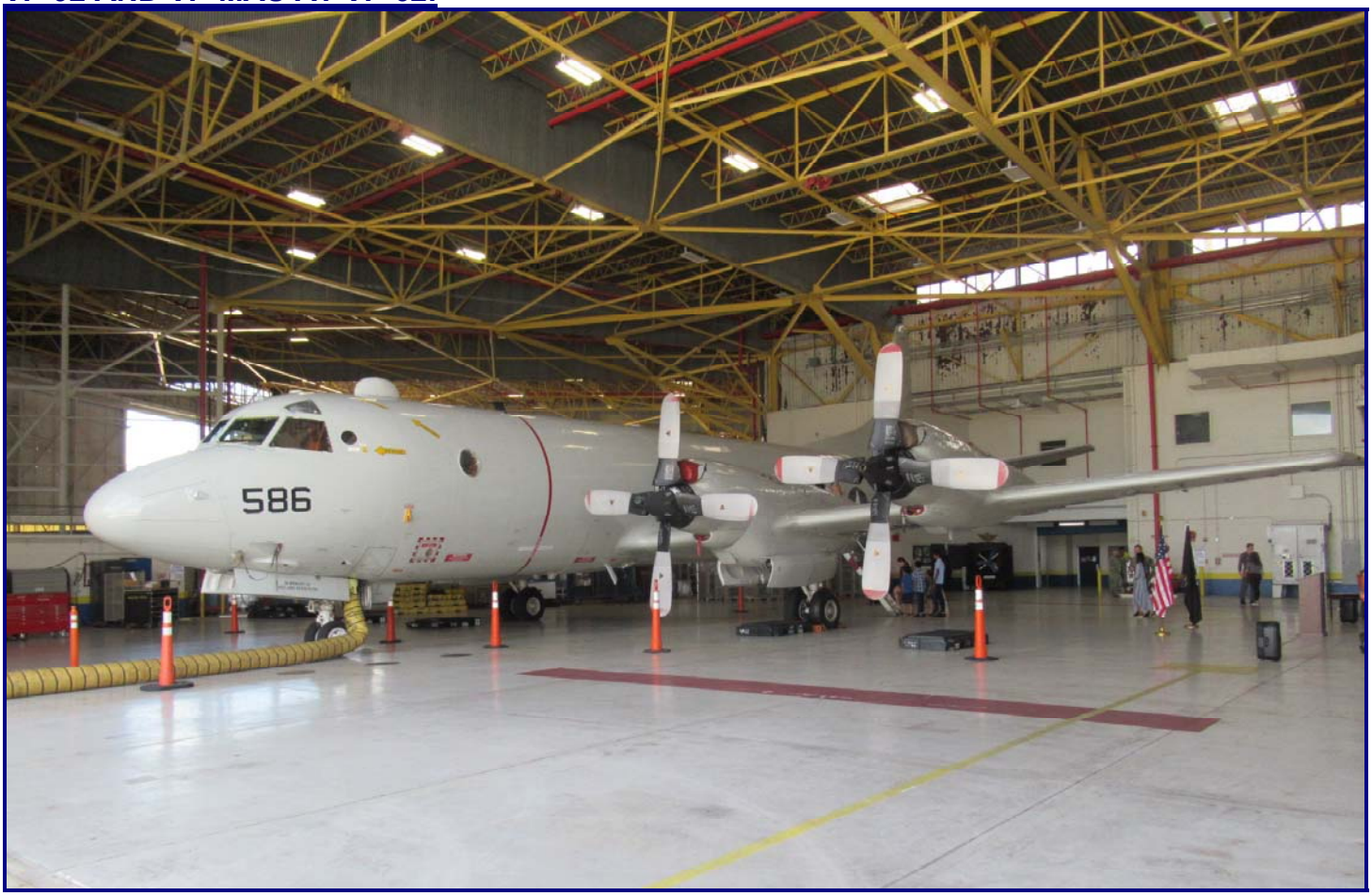
FINAL FLIGHTS:
It is out sad duty to report the recent deaths of James Berg and Laurie LaForge DeLeon. James was a pilot with VP-92 at NAS Brunswick while Laurie was a YN with the squadron at South Weymouth.

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 Tom Fuller for his recent contribution 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.

VP-92 AND VP-MAU AT VP-62:



Reserve patrol squadron VP-62 hosted an event at NAS Jacksonville, FL on Saturday June 4th to commemorate the end of an era as they prepared to send their last two P-3C Orions to the famous aircraft storage and disposal facility at Davis Monthan AFB in Tucson, AZ the following week. The photo above shows one of the last VP-62 P-3s, LT 586, on display during this sad and historic event.

VP-62's TAR and SELRES personnel will transition to the P-8A Poseidon over the next six months or so. The SELRES are actually all being mobilized and put on active duty so they can be trained full-time by VP-30 to operate and maintain the P-8.

VP-69 at NAS Whidbey Island, WA is now the only US maritime patrol squadron operating P-3s. The reserve squadron will give up its P-3s and begin transitioning to the P-8 in early 2023. Going forward, the only USN P-3 operators, for a short time at least, will be VP-30 (for foreign operator training) at NAS Jacksonville, VX-30 (they took over the role of P-3 model manager from VP-30) at NAS Patuxent River, MD, and VQ-1 (operating EP-3s) at NAS Whidbey Island.

VP-92 and VP-MAU Brunswick were both represented at the VP-62 event.

Among those representing VP-92 at this event were, in order of appearance in this photo at right, your newsletter editor, Rick Hodgekins, and Robert Allen. Rick and Bob live in Florida while your newsletter editor flew down from Massachusetts for the day. All three wore VP-92 command ball caps for the occasion.

Shown in this photo at left are Matt Mulford, Terry Trexler, and your newsletter editor. All three served together in VP-MAU Brunswick during the mid-to-late 1980s.

NEW VP-92 BALL CAP DESIGN AVAILABLE FROM SHIPMATE LARRY DALY:

Larry Daly, who was in VP-92 at NAS South Weymouth, now runs a custom embroidery shop in North Carolina called Eastern Embroidery. He can embroider the VP-92 Minuteman insignia and pretty much anything else you can think of on any fabric item you can imagine such as polo shirts, t-shirts, ball caps, golf visors, towels, aprons, etc. Recently, Larry came up with the new VP-92 ball cap design shown here. He can make these caps in any color, such as khaki if you were a CPO or officer, and customize them with your name, rank insignia, rating badge, crew, work center, wings, years of service, etc. If you'd like one, or any other kind of custom embroidery for that matter, contact Larry directly at easternemb@msn.com.

THE 2022 MINUTEMANCIPATION WEEKEND:

Over the weekend of September 26-28 VP-92 alumni Scott Andrews, A. J. Bucci, Rick Caesar, Brian Cloughber, Tom Drapeau, Darrell Davis, Pete Gamble, Tom Hagen, Mark Hausler, Marty McCormack, Steve O'Donoghue, Chuck Pierce, Sean Reid, Scott Savelle, and Matt Sharpe gathered at A. J. Bucci's palatial country estate in Middleton, RI for the 2022 "Minutemancipation Weekend". The highlight of this more-or-less annual event was a traditional New England shore dinner featuring lobster and steamed clams plus BBQ ribs and brisket. Though primarily an AW reunion, there were a few AOs and NFOs present.

THE 2023 NAS BRUNSWICK REUNION:

The Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum intends to hold a reunion at old NAS Brunswick over the weekend of Friday through Sunday September 15-17 in 2023. Although we were unable to get enough interest to have a VP Association reunion in the Weymouth area this year, we will make an effort to have a combined VP-92 and VP-MAU "mini reunion" at old NAS Brunswick on Saturday September 16th 2023 in conjunction with the base reunion. When we did this in 2021 about fifty former VP-92 people and about thirty VP-MAU people came. So, if you'd like to meet up with some of your old VP-92 or VP-MAU shipmates at Brunswick, ME next September please mark that date on your calendar and plan to come to Maine. No promises, but we'll try to have something special to give away to former VP-92 and VP-MAU people, while the supply lasts, just like we did last year.

CHINA'S EXPANDING SUB FLEET MAKES EXPERTS WORRY (China News 8/20):

Even to laypeople, the odds of a China-versus-Taiwan underwater faceoff seem unbalanced. China's submarine force: 66 boats in 2020 with 76 expected by 2030. Attributes: Nearly silent next-gen tech. Taiwan's submarine force: Four boats. Attributes: Two of the world's oldest operational subs, all use 20th-century tech.

The experts worry that Taiwan may lack the ability to fend off China without updating its military equipment, given that China has been investing in advanced weaponry and equipment— and overhauling its military command structure to modernize its armed forces as it eyes the war in Ukraine. China's defense budget in 2022 is $230 billion, the second largest in the world behind the U.S. By contrast, Taiwan's defense budget is $12.8 billion, 5% of China's.

The Naval News, the official newspaper of the British Royal Navy, pointed out on Aug. 11 that China's East Sea Fleet, which carries out operations around Taiwan, acquired a new submarine representing "the cutting edge of Chinese non-nuclear submarines." The boat, often referred to as Type 039, was placed to directly oppose the Taiwanese navy. "The East Sea Fleet submarine bases are north of the main Taiwanese Island, about 500 km south. It also faces off against Japan's island chain," reported Naval News, adding the boat was commissioned in 2021, and entered operation just over a year later, a very short timeline for a new class of submarine.

Seth Cropsey, founder and president of the defense think tank Yorktown Institute and former deputy undersecretary of the U.S. Navy, told VOA Mandarin that the Type 039 cannot be ignored. "The submarine, because of its stealth, is well suited to carry out a blockade, or to protect surface ships that are being used for an amphibious assault, or to launch missiles in an invasion," he said. "So, the submarine is an extremely important weapon platform."

Michal Thim, a research fellow focusing on Taiwan's defense policy at the Association for International Affairs in Prague, told VOA Mandarin in an email that it's impossible to confirm whether China's latest submarine has been deployed near Taiwan. "Submarine deployments and movements are among the most closely held secrets in any navy. What is already a long-standing concern for Taiwan, for Japan, and for the U.S. is the speed with which the Chinese navy submarine fleet has expanded," he said.

Holmes Liao, former adjunct distinguished lecturer at Taiwan's War College, said that Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense seldom, if ever, publicizes China People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) submarine activities near Taiwan. "Given the PLAN's warplane incursions into Taiwan's airspace and surface combatants menacing near the 12-nm territorial line, it's highly likely that the PLA's submarines have been active near or in Taiwan's maritime territory," he wrote in an email to VOA Mandarin.

Liao said the new PLAN submarine is allegedly very quiet and poses a significant threat even to U.S. Navy's surface assets. As an example, Liao said, "In 2005, a Swedish submarine Gotland conducted a series of simulated attacks against the newly commissioned Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier battle group. Throughout the exercise, Gotland launched torpedoes on multiple occasions without ever being detected by the U.S. ASW [Anti-submarine Warfare] assets. The episode shows that an advanced submarine can significantly threaten valuable surface combatants."

The focus on the two submarine fleets comes during a time of heightened tensions between Taiwan, a self-governing island and China, which views Taiwan as its own territory. Taiwan's defense ministry Friday said it has detected 17 Chinese aircraft and six Chinese vessels, with eight of those planes flown over the median line of the Taiwan Strait, which in an unofficial barrier between China and Taiwan. The Chinese military ramped up its tactics earlier this month in reaction to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Aug. 2 visit. This week, it is conducting daily drills in response to a surprise visit by another U.S. congressional delegation. Sources told Reuters that Chinese navy ships were active off both the east and west coasts of Taiwan.

According to a report released earlier this year by the Congressional Research Service, China has been steadily modernizing its submarine force and is expected to have 76 boats by 2030. By contrast, Taiwan has four boats. Two of them are World War II vintage ex-U.S. Navy fleet submarines, the world's oldest operational submarines. Richard Stirn, a former submarine technician who worked for the U.S. Navy, said he's not sure these two ships would still be able to launch weapons. "Taiwan today has four older boats using mid-century tech," he told VOA Mandarin.

Thim said that the other two are combat vessels that Taiwan acquired in the late 1980s. While all of them underwent substantial upgrading, they are "hardly a deterrent" toward China. "China, of course, now has around 60 conventional submarines and could use them in many ways to make life in Taiwan difficult. Enforcing [a] naval blockade, attacking surface combat ships, and hunting Taiwanese submarines," he said.

Taiwan has been trying to build its own submarines, but China has repeatedly prevented other countries from participating in Taiwan's submarine-building project. However, manufacturers from seven countries, including the U.S. and the U.K, secretly assisted Taiwan in upgrading its own advanced diesel-electric submarines. Thim said the U.S. provides both expertise and critical technology to Taiwan. "There is definitely room for improvement, the greater involvement of Japan — that makes excellent submarines — is one area that can be improved," he said.

Liao argued that Taiwan should focus [on] less expensive and more effective defensive weapons. He said Taiwan can deploy [a] Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) to listen for underwater sounds, particularly submarines, and can pinpoint the coordinates and depth of the intrusion. "To neutralize enemy submarines, smart naval mines and anti-submarine rockets are much more inexpensive and effective than submarines," he added.

China News article by Xiaoshan Xue

BOEING RECEIVES HAAWC PRODUCTION CONTRACT FROM US NAVY (Naval News 8/20):
The U.S. Navy has awarded Boeing a contract for the full-rate production of the High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare Weapon Capability, or HAAWC, with work expected to begin in the coming months. HAAWC is an all-weather add-on kit that enables the MK 54 torpedo to be launched near or below the cruising altitude of Boeing's P-8A Poseidon. "This is an important milestone because it brings HAAWC one step closer to becoming fully operational and deployed by the Navy," said Dewayne Donley, program manager.

The contract includes production of HAAWC Air Launched Accessory, or ALA, kits and containers for the Navy and international customers. There are also provisions for Boeing to provide engineering such as design studies, testing, prototyping and/or analyses of production related issues. Repair service provisions include hardware repair and maintenance services for government-owned HAAWC ALAs and associated hardware and equipment. A provision item order option also allows the Navy to procure spare hardware in support of the program.

Carried on board the P-8A multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft, the advanced weapon system will meet the Navy's operational need to conduct anti-submarine warfare from higher altitudes and longer distances. "Our solution transforms the MK 54 into a precision glide weapon in GPS-aided and GPS-denied environments," Donley said. "The HAAWC system provides flexibility by allowing the Navy to carry out anti-submarine operations throughout the full flight envelope of the P-8A." To date, the global operating P-8 fleet has amassed more than 450,000 mishap-free flight-hours.

The Boeing HAAWC consists of a modular Air Launch Accessory, or ALA, kit that attaches to a Mark 54 torpedo, transforming it into a precision-guided glide weapon. At the ALA separation point, the ALA deploys a stabilizer to enter the water as intended. The long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft is capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations, and performs humanitarian and search and rescue missions around the globe.

Naval News article by Naval News Staff

CHINA UNLEASHES NEWEST ATTACK SUB OFF TAIWAN COAST (NEWS.COM.AU 8/15):
As Australia's replacement submarine program continues to languish amid a minefield of political failures, China's latest design has just been deployed off the coast of Taiwan. And it may reveal the crucial role of such stealthy weapons in Beijing's battle plan. The strange new submarine was first spotted in satellite photographs last year by naval analyst H.I. Sutton and reported in Naval News. Last month, it was formally commissioned as an operational unit of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and deployed to China's East Sea Fleet. "This fleet faces off against Taiwan in a direct sense, being responsible for that area of operations," Mr Sutton reports.

As with all of China's military, the submarine force is undergoing rapid expansion and upgrade. But Beijing is putting particular emphasis on smaller, diesel-electric designs most suited to operating in the shallower waters of the East and South China Seas. According to a recent Brookings Institution think-tank report, that fits with one possible future conflict scenario – a blockade of Taiwan's ports. Beijing may hope to starve the independent island democracy into submission, and force it to accept Communist Party rule.

"To minimise China's own vulnerabilities and deny Taiwan good options for an immediate response, PLA attack submarines, rather than surface ships or aircraft, might be the principal assets employed," writes strategic analyst Michael O'Hanlon. And minimising risk appears to be what the new Chinese submarine is all about. It has a distinctive new conning tower (or sail). Instead of being streamlined to

improve water flow like most other designs, it's angular and faceted. This suggests a new radar or sonar deflection technology to reduce the threat of being detected. And that means the submarine can likely operate for extended periods and closer to hostile opponents.

"Its exact designation is not known (China does not feel the need to tell us!)" says Mr Sutton. "But Western analysts believe that it is the Type-039C or -D." And unlike Australia's submarine program, the design, development and construction of this new type has proceeded at pace. "It has now been commissioned as an operational boat, just over a year after launch. This is very fast for a new class of submarine," he adds.

Part of the reason for this is that it represents an evolution – not a revolution – in China's submarine design. It appears based on the Type-039 (Yuan class) hull that first entered service in 1998. Chinese state-controlled media reports the new version represents a significant upgrade over the original. "This type was equipped with more than 60 per cent of newly researched and improved equipment and underwent system reconfiguration," Wuchang Shipbuilding yard deputy director Xie Rui reportedly said.

The most obvious element is the shape of its sail. It houses periscopes, radars, communications arrays and sensors. In diesel-electric submarines, it also contains an exhaust pipe and a "snorkel" to bring air to the engine. This need to recharge batteries is a severe danger to such an otherwise small, silent submarine. Surveillance aircraft – such as the Australian P-8 Poseidon dangerously intercepted by a Chinese fighter over the South China Sea earlier this year – can spot it with radar long before it can spot them. Nuclear-powered submarines, such as those Australia now hopes to receive in the 2040s, don't suffer this risk. A stealthy sail, however, would allow the Type 39C/D to leave port and travel the hundreds of miles to its destination surfaced with less of a chance of being detected, Mr Sutton concludes.

"Overall, China retains a numerical and technological edge in submarines. This new design adds to this, showing that China is continuing to evolve and improve its non-nuclear boats." China has the world's largest fleet of diesel-electric submarines. Many are fitted with air-independent chemical packages that allow the diesel engines to run for a time while still deep under water. Whether the new 79-metre-long submarine utilizes these bulky systems or relies on the much-improved capacity of modern lithium-ion batteries (or both) remains unknown.

Mr Sutton says it is now working alongside older Yuan class boats out of the Daxie Dao Submarine Base closest to Taiwan. That means they can get to their intended area of operation as quickly and efficiently as possible. "China would use its attack submarines as the main lethal instrument of a blockade, targeting ships going in and out of Taiwan's ports with torpedoes and anti-ship missiles," predicts Mr O'Hanlon. "Taiwan would be very hard pressed to challenge these Chinese submarine operations, unlike a situation in which China uses surface ships or aircraft."

Beijing would also see the scenario as attractive. It won't put "loyal" Chinese citizens at risk. Embarrassing incidents involving foreign civilians would be avoided. And visible evidence of any losses and failure is greatly reduced. "The United States and Taiwan would presumably respond with a large-scale convoy escort operation, plus an anti-submarine warfare campaign," Mr O'Hanlon adds. This would almost certainly be forced to operate in a narrow corridor to the east of Taiwan, where deep water and distance make submarine operations more difficult. "China wins if it destroys enough ships that the allies run out of replacements and can no longer maintain the necessary length of the pickets; the allies win if and when they sink all of China's submarines," he concludes.

NEWS.COM.AU article by Jamie Seidel

UK SEEKS UNMANNED SUB HUNTING HELICOPTER (Breaking Defense 7/21):

It has been a busy year for aviation modernization in the UK — and a new announcement from the UK Ministry of Defense shows things aren't slowing down. The MoD announced today that it was awarding Italian defense giant Leonardo a design and development contract for a new uncrewed helicopter design for use by the Royal Navy.

The money isn't huge — £60 million ($71.5 million) over a four year agreement to deliver a three-ton technology demonstrator — but the payoff could be large, as the MoD is looking for the new system to fill a number of capability requirements. While the priority is to support anti-submarine warfare (ASW) missions, the MoD also suggested potential use cases for ship-to-ship resupply and casualty evacuation. Currently, the Royal Navy operates the Merlin Mk2 helicopter for ASW missions, equipped with Thales Sonar payload, Sting-Ray torpedoes, and Mk11 depth charges.

The demonstrator, which is expected to weight just 20% of the roughly 10,000 kg Merlin Mk2, will be designed to "track and communicate submarine activity" through the deployment of sonobuoys, an MoD statement suggested. Upon detection of a submarine, the uncrewed helicopter would then call for support from crewed assets, the statement said.

According to the UK's Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, the new aircraft could "provide a platform capable of delivering improved surveillance and intelligence, enabling crewed Royal Navy helicopters to re-deploy on alternative missions if required." "Designed to operate at lower cost than crewed aircraft, capabilities derived from the demonstrator could also reduce the exposure of Royal Navy personnel to hostile threats," the MoD statement continued. The uncrewed helicopter is due to undertake its first flight in 2025. A spokesperson for Leonardo told Breaking Defense that "The architecture is still being studied, so we are unable to share anything further at this point."

There is history between Leonardo and the MoD when it comes to uncrewed rotorcraft. In 2015, the company completed a two-year study in support of the MoD's Rotary Wing Unmanned Aerial System (RWUAS) Capability Concept Demonstration program. The effort featured the company's SW-4 Solo helicopter, which successfully conducted simulated deck landings at Llanbedr Airfield in May 2015. The UK is also part of a European effort looking at alternatives to the Merlin, signing an €26.7m ($28.2m) agreement in June with France, Germany, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands to define requirements for a new medium multi-role helicopter.

It has been a busy Farnborough Air Show for the British government, with both defense secretary Benjamin Wallace and outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson making appearances at the show. "I want you to know that this government believes in British aviation, and British technological genius and its power to bring jobs and growth across our whole country, uniting and leveling up across the whole country," Johnson said Monday. "And that is why we are investing so massively in defense, the biggest uplift since the end of the Cold War." On Monday, the MoD announced on Monday its intention to fly a demonstrator of the Tempest Future Combat Air System (FCAS) within the next five years. According to the MoD, the demonstrator will play a "critical role in proving the technology and design principles needed to deliver the UK's FCAS" which aims to enter service in 2035.

The maiden flight is expected to include a single, crewed aircraft flying at supersonic speeds and will be conducted in coordination with FCAS partners Italy and Japan. "FCAS is not just a plane. It is a whole platform for technological change and industrial spin-offs of all kinds, because the combat aircraft systems of the future will be very different even from the Typhoon and some of them will be manned, some of them will be crewed and some of them won't be," Johnson said. "And in developing

these new technologies and maintaining the air superiority that we have luxuriated in for so long and which is so crucial for our long term security, I want our country to be in the lead."

Meanwhile, companies expected to bid for the MoD's New Medium Helicopter (NMH) requirement paraded their solutions at Farnborough. The MoD is seeking up to 44 medium-lift, multi-role helicopters as part of a £900 million ($1.072 million) program scheduled to run over a seven-year period. The competitors which could replace the UK's current fleet of Airbus Helicopters' Puma HC2 and AS365 Dauphin and Bell Helicopters 212 and 412 from starting in 20214 include Leonardo's AW-149; Bell's 525 Relentless; ML-70 Black Hawks from AceHawk Aerospace; Lockheed Martin's S-70M Black Hawk; and Boeing's MH-139 Grey Wolf. No formal NMH program updates were provided by the MoD at Farnborough, however.

And in February, the US and UK announced an agreement to pursue a Future Vertical Lift Cooperative Program Feasibility Assessment. The agreement covers four lines of effort including the US Army's Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) and Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA) programs; Future Unmanned Aerial Systems; Air-Launched Effects; and Open Systems Architecture.

The assessment will provide the UK MoD with access to US Army requirements documents which could be used to inform their own decision-making processes, something which is not currently available to other NATO partners. These could be used to assist in the development of future rotorcraft requirements by the UK MoD which will also be in a position to purchase US Army FVL capabilities in the future. Interestingly, the US and the Netherlands announced a similar, if less in-depth, agreement on future rotorcraft development on Wednesday.

Breaking Defense article by Andrew White

NAVY'S GLOBAL HAWKS COME HOME AFTER 13-YEAR DEPLOYMENT (The War Zone 6/23):
On June 17, the last RQ-4A Global Hawk drone specially configured for the U.S. Navy as part of the Broad Area Maritime Surveillance Demonstrator program, or BAMS-D, landed in Patuxent River, Maryland to be greeted by the program's personnel responsible for its conception. Returning from a whopping 13-year-long deployment that was initially supposed to be a six-month concept demonstration, the remaining BAMS-D aircraft are on their way to tying off a storied career.

The BAMS-D program began in 2003 after the Navy awarded Northrop Grumman a contract to develop concepts of operation for a high-altitude, long-endurance maritime-focused unmanned system, which ended up laying the groundwork for the MQ-4C Triton. Originally called the Global Hawk Maritime Demonstration program, the Navy and Northrop Grumman then began working together to modify the U.S. Air Force RQ-4 Global Hawk's integrated sensor suite to include overwater radar and electronic support measures to better fit a maritime environment. Four of the early Block 10 RQ-4As were eventually modified for the program, which became known as BAMS-D.

The overall BAMS-D system is comprised of two Block 10 RQ-4A unmanned air vehicles, one Mission Control Element, two Launch and Recovery Elements, and one Tactical Auxiliary Ground Station as described by the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR). The aircraft is propelled by one Rolls-Royce AE3007H turbofan engine and clocks in at about 44 feet in length with a wingspan of 116 feet. They're also around 15 feet tall with a max design gross take-off weight of 26,750 pounds, which allows them to reach their flight ceiling of about 60,000 feet. The system's ground station is made up of a four-member crew, two of which remotely pilot the aircraft while the other two operate the sensors. The Global Hawk, and its BAMS-D offshoot, use a semi-autonomous control concept in

which no actual pilot flies the aircraft. Instead, it and its systems are directed via a desktop 'point and click' type interface.

According to NAVAIR, BAMS-D completed its first split-site deployment — where it operates overseas but is controlled during its mission in a different locale like the U.S. — in 2008 in support of the Trident Warrior and Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises held that year. Also during its early days in the field, the system became a significant enabler for humanitarian efforts by providing reconnaissance of wildfires in mountainous regions of California as well as assessing the damage left by Hurricane Ike.

“Northrop Grumman and the Navy deployed the system from Naval Air Station Patuxent River to Naval Air Station Point Mugu to participate in RIMPAC and Trident Warrior in the summer of 2008 where we flew 15 successful flights,” said Avis Anderson, sustainment director for Triton programs at Northrop Grumman when asked if we had any fond memories of BAMS-D. “A short period afterward, we received the order to deploy to Central Command in early 2009. The capability spoke for itself.”

In 2009, the Navy deployed the BAMS-D system to Al Dhafra Air Force Base in the United Arab Emirates where it was sent off to fly its supposedly brief demonstration for the Fifth Fleet, which is responsible for naval forces in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and parts of the Indian Ocean and is headquartered in Bahrain. However, as foreign tensions continued to rise in the Middle East, BAMS-D had its mission extended with each passing year. According to NAVAIR, BAMS-D went on to provide more than 50 percent of maritime intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) for its operational area and racked up over 42,500 flight hours in 2,069 overseas missions.

“By 2013, BAMS-D had ramped up its capabilities to fifteen 24-hour missions every month, supplementing its first deployed aircraft with a second aircraft,” reads the NAVAIR announcement. “Through the next nine years, BAMS-D provided uninterrupted operations and collected almost 1.4 million ISR scenes, highlighted over 11,500 targets of interest, and provided the fleet with over 15,000 tactical reports, becoming an indispensable asset for the warfighter.”

Among its missions is one that NAVAIR specifically highlighted in its announcement and was likely one of the last to be carried out by BAMS-D in-theater. In August 2021, NAVAIR notes that the system played a huge role in the United States’ withdrawal from Afghanistan and provided persistent ISR coverage for non-combatant evacuation operations.

The BAMS-D system’s deployment wasn’t entirely positive, though, because in 2019 one of its RQ-4As had been shot down by Iranian forces when operating over the southern approach to the Strait of Hormuz, near the Iranian port city of Kouhmobarak. The War Zone was the first to report that the aircraft involved was a BAMS-D, which few even knew existed at the time. As reasoning for the attack, Iranian forces claimed that the flight had violated their airspace, which was denied by the United States and nearly prompted a significant regional crisis. The incident also went on to highlight the Global Hawk’s vulnerabilities in relatively modest hostile air defense, which put an emphasis on the need for more survivable platforms that can still provide the same level of capability in high-threat environments. We must emphasize that the Global Hawk was never designed for missions into contested territory, so it isn't as if this was a new vulnerability, just one that became a bit glaring as a result of the incident.

Ironically, just days after BAMS-D returned home this month, Iran made the salvaged and reconstructed parts of the shot-down RQ-4A a fixture of a display in a local museum. It's not the first time they have touted wreckage of the RQ-4 before, though.

Even though the BAMS-D aircraft certainly provided valuable service for the United States throughout their deployment, the RQ-4As are aging. The USAF's Block 10 Global Hawks were retired by the service long ago. Because of this, the program was officially divested by the National Defense Authorization Act for the fiscal year 2022, and the Pentagon is now working toward addressing what might fill its shoes in the Middle East.

In a breakdown of the fiscal year 2022 budget published by The War Zone that you can read here, it was noted that the Navy was looking to retire its remaining RQ-4A drones which signaled an internal priority shift away from the BAMS-D system and instead toward further developing the MQ-4C Triton. In the same budget documentation, it was revealed that the purchasing of additional MQ-4C Tritons would be paused in order to allow the Integrated Functional Capability-4 design to mature. In 2021, the MQ-4C flew for the first time with its upgraded intelligence configuration, which brought it one step closer to replacing the dated BAMS-D. Regardless, MQ-4Cs are operational today in the Pacific in their maritime surveillance role and their capabilities are only set to grow.

“The MQ-4C program has been informed in almost every way by lessons we learned from the BAMS-D program,” Anderson said. “Perhaps the most important lessons we learned tie back to the 96% mission readiness rate. These systems are incredibly complex, especially when you consider the multi-intelligence configuration of Triton that we will introduce to the fleet in 2023. The BAMS-D program helped us understand the logistics and maintenance challenges to keep these complex aircraft ready to support warfighter needs, and everything we learned from BAMS-D will inform current and future Triton deployments.”

While BAMS-D's fate is looks sealed, other older RQ-4 Global Hawks are finding life in new roles. In 2021, Northrop Grumman revealed that it would be repurposing four Block 20 RQ-4 Global Hawks as surveillance platforms to monitor hypersonic missile tests. On top of that, the Air Force’s 319th Reconnaissance Wing today announced that it will divest a total of 20 Block 30 RQ-4s and transfer some of them to the Test Resource Management Center’s High Speed System Test department outfitted with entirely new sensor technology. Of course, a handful of other Block 20 Global Hawks have served on as flying communications gateways in the form of the EQ-4B BACN, but even those are now slated for retirement. Finally, NASA has also made great use of early-production second-hand USAF Global Hawks.

Regardless, BAMS-D really has been a remarkable program. A developmental initiative that turned into a semi-operational one that morphed into a continuous operational deployment for nearly a decade and a half. This was all with largely experimental systems and old airframes that were themselves somewhat experimental when they were built. All while influencing the next generation and reducing risk for those follow-on systems. I think it's safe to say the taxpayer got their money's worth on this program.

The Warzone article by Emma Halfrich

CHINA LAUNCHES THIRD AIRCRAFT CARRIER (Breitbart News 6/17):

China on Friday launched its biggest and most modern aircraft carrier, marking a major military advance for the Asian superpower. The announcement comes at a time of heightened tensions between China and the United States over Beijing’s sabre-rattling towards Taiwan, which it views as a breakaway province to be seized by force if necessary.

China’s carrier development programme is part of a massive overhaul of the People’s Liberation Army under President Xi Jinping, who has vowed to build a “fully modern” force to rival the US military by 2027. The new carrier, named Fujian, is the “first catapult aircraft carrier wholly designed and built

by China", said state broadcaster CCTV. Columns of sailors in white uniforms applauded under colourful clouds of smoke as jets of water arced over the gigantic vessel to mark its launch. Colourful streamers hung from its flight deck, on which large banners read: "Strive for the comprehensive construction of a… first-class navy."

The launch of the carrier marks a major milestone for the Chinese military. It has significantly more advanced technology than China's two other carriers, including electromagnetic catapults to launch aircraft off its deck, the official Xinhua news agency reported. The other carriers — the Liaoning and the Shandong — use a ski-jump-style ramp for takeoffs. And with a displacement of more than 80,000 tonnes, according to Xinhua, it is comparable in size to the supercarriers of the United States Navy, analysts said.

Collin Koh, a research fellow at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, said it could be a "game changer" for the Chinese navy. "The conventional flight deck with (electromagnetic catapults) will at least in theory allow the carrier to launch aircraft faster and with heavier payloads — which constitute key deciding factors during battle," he told AFP. "At a strategic level, the new carrier heralds the coming of age of a blue-water PLA Navy." Blue-water navies are able to operate around the world at vast ranges.

It will take years before the Fujian becomes operational, however. Authorities have not said when it will enter service. The Liaoning was commissioned in 2012, and the Shandong entered service in 2019. The Shandong was the first aircraft carrier entirely built by China. The United States has by far the most aircraft carriers in service at 11 ships, followed by China and Britain at two each, according to defence magazine Janes. Unlike the US Navy's nuclear-powered supercarriers, the Fujian uses conventional propulsion. Nuclear vessels have significant advantages over conventional ships as they can operate for long periods without the need to dock and refuel.

The launch of the carrier comes at a time of ramped-up geopolitical tensions as Washington looks to shore up military alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. Last year, the United States secured a historic deal with Britain to share nuclear submarine technology with Australia and has since made multiple arms sales to self-ruled Taiwan, provoking angry responses from Beijing. Meanwhile, China brokered an unprecedented security agreement with the Solomon Islands earlier this year which blindsided Washington and its allies, stoking fears of a Chinese military base in the Pacific.

In recent years, Beijing has deployed naval assets as a show of power in the strait that separates Taiwan from the Chinese mainland. It has also used fighter jets to repel freedom of navigation patrols by the United States and its allies. Chinese defence minister Wei Fenghe last week warned his US counterpart that Beijing would "not hesitate to start a war, no matter the cost" if Taiwan declared independence. State media reported that the PLA's newest aircraft carrier is named after China's Fujian province — which lies across from Taiwan.

AN END OF AN ERA FOR VP-62's P-3C ORION (VP-62 Press Release 6/13):

A sundown ceremony commemorating Patrol Squadron 62's P-3C "Orion" aircraft was held June 4 at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. The event marked the end of over 50 years of service with the aircraft. More than 500 past and present squadron members and families paid tribute to the aircraft as the squadron phases out its Lockheed P-3C Orion aircraft in anticipation of transitioning to the Boeing P-8A Poseidon.

Designed to replace the P-2 Neptune, Lockheed Martin's P-3A first entered the Navy in 1962. The P-3 Orion has been the backbone of the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force. The hulking aircraft has flown missions during the Vietnam Conflict, Operation Desert Storm, in Iraq and Syria

against the Islamic State, participated in countless search and rescue efforts, and created an invaluable network of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data.

VP-62 and fellow Naval Reserve units are called up to provide strategic depth and surge force capability with trained and qualified personnel and mission capable aircraft to meet the Fleet Response Plan, overseas contingency operations, and support the Naval Aviation Enterprise. The unit is comprised of over 300 members, half of which are Reservists complimenting and assisting their active duty and full time support counterparts.

During the P-3's 51 years of service with VP-62, the unit has amassed over 71,000 Orion flight hours participating in thousands of operational missions supporting the fleet throughout the world. VP-62 personnel have operated out of Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Crete, Denmark, El Salvador, Germany, Greenland, Japan, Iceland, Kuwait, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Sicily, Spain, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

"The Orion is known as many things," said Cmdr. Matt Piro, commanding officer of VP-62, during the VP-62 reunion. "The Orion, highly reliable, multi-role…but to us, she will always be an old, dear friend. The Orion will continue to serve with VP-69, the Navy's west coast patrol and reconnaissance reserve squadron, as well as VP-30 and VQ-1, but for the operational reserve squadron in Jacksonville, it is time to say goodbye. So from the men and women who flew and maintained the legendary Orion, we say thank you for your service and job well done."

When asked about the sundowning of the aircraft, AE1 John Griffin, a member of the VP-62 Maintenance Department stated, "It's going to be bitter sweet sundowing the P-3 Orion. I have spent a lot of time working and flying around the world on them. The whole maintenance department has done everything they can to keep them flying. It's going to be sad to see them go, but we are getting ready for the arrival of the new P-8 Poseidon."

This sentiment can be heard through the squadron and those who have flown and maintained the aircraft over the years. While the P-3 definitely had its challenges to maintain, most everyone loved the aircraft. VP-62 flew its remaining aircraft to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base is Tucson, Arizona last week where the aircraft are transferred to Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, a unit tasked with the long term storage and maintenance of aging military aircraft.

Lt. Cmdr Michael Rueda, one of VP-62's reservist pilots, said, "the P-3 is one of the last unadulterated flying experiences left in military or civil aviation. You feel one with machine as opposed to simply operating a computer system. Also, flying low is one of the greatest joys of aviation, and few fixed-wing aircraft fly lower than the P-3 at a 200-foot on-station altitude."

VP-62 is set to begin a transition and training period from October 2022- April 2023 learning to fly, operate and maintain the P-8A Poseidon. Upon completion of this transition period the unit will continue performing this same general set of missions with the P-8A, which first entered Navy service in 2013. These aircraft have been steadily replacing P-3Cs across the service. VP-62 will be the first reserve squadron to transition to the P-8A, leading its sister squadron VP-69 which will begin the process in the early 2023.

VP-62 News Release by LCDR Andrew Krall

CHINESE FIGHTER JET "CHAFFS" AUSTRALIAN PLANE (CNN 6/5):

A Chinese fighter jet's aggressive maneuvers endangered the crew of an Australian reconnaissance plane as it patrolled in the vicinity of the South China Sea, Australia's Defense Ministry claimed

Sunday. The Chinese J-16 drew alongside the Australian P-8 while it was on a routine surveillance mission in international airspace last month before releasing flares and chaff that entered at least one of the Australian aircraft's engines, Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles said. Military planes usually release chaff -- typically tiny strips of aluminum or zinc -- as a deliberate countermeasure to confuse missiles, but can also use it to sabotage pursuing aircraft.

In a statement, Australia's Defense Ministry described the encounter as "a dangerous maneuver which posed a safety threat to the P-8 aircraft and its crew." "The J-16 aircraft flew very close to the side of the P-8...in flying close to the side, it released flares," Marles told Australia's 9News in an televised interview. "The J-16 then accelerated and cut across the nose of the P-8, settling in front of the P-8 at a very close distance. "At that moment it then released a bundle of chaff, which contains small pieces of aluminum, some of which were ingested into the engine of the P-8 aircraft. Quite obviously, this is very dangerous," Marles said.

When ingested, chaff can damage a jet engine's blades and in extreme instances can even shut it down, said Peter Layton, a former Australian Air Force officer who is now a fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute. While the P-8 can operate on only one of its two engines, the alleged incident would have forced it to return to base, effectively ending its patrol, Layton said.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said his government had raised the issue with Beijing. "This was not safe, what occurred, and we've made appropriate representations to the Chinese government expressing our concern," Albanese said. The Australian aircraft was flying "in accordance with international law, exercising the right to freedom of navigation and overflight in international waters, and airspace," he said.

CNN has asked the Chinese government for comment on the Australian allegations. This is the second time in a week that Chinese aircraft have been accused of endangering the reconnaissance flights of other militaries. On Wednesday, Canada said Chinese warplanes buzzed its reconnaissance aircraft enforcing United Nations sanctions on North Korea. In some instances the Chinese warplanes came so close the Canadian aircraft had to change course to avoid a collision, the Canadian Armed Forces said. "In these interactions, PLAAF aircraft did not adhere to international air safety norms," said Dan Le Bouthillier, media relations chief of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Tensions between China and Australia have been simmering much of this year. In February, Australia alleged that a Chinese warship used a laser to "illuminate" an Australian P-8 in waters off the country's north coast. Directing a laser at an aircraft can damage the pilots' sight and put the aircraft in jeopardy, according to the US Federal Aviation Administration. The Australian government called that act "dangerous" and "reckless."

But Beijing said the Australian allegations were untrue and that its warship was acting in accordance with international law. It accused Australia of "maliciously spreading false information about China." China and Australia have also been at odds over Beijing's effort to pursue new security agreements with a range of Pacific island nations that have been close partners of Australia in the past. There have been other close encounters between Chinese and foreign warplanes over the years.

The worst of these occurred in 2001, when a Chinese fighter jet collided with a US Navy reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea. In that case, the pilot of the Chinese F-8 fighter was killed and the US plane had to make an emergency landing on China's Hainan Island. The 24 US crew members were held on the Chinese island for 11 days before their release.

CNN article by Brad Lendon

BOEING TO OFFER P-8A POSEIDON TO CANADA (Naval News 6/2):

Boeing and several Canadian industry partners announced their intent to collaborate to provide the capability and sustainability of the proven P-8A Poseidon for the Canadian Multi-Mission Aircraft (CMMA) requirement. Team Poseidon, consisting of CAE, GE Aviation Canada, IMP Aerospace & Defence, KF Aerospace, Honeywell Aerospace Canada, and Raytheon Canada, forms the cornerstone of a Canadian P-8 industrial footprint. The team builds on 81 Canadian suppliers to the platform and to more than 550 Canadian suppliers across all provinces contributing to Boeing's annual CAD $5.3 billion in economic benefit to Canada, supporting more than 20,000 Canadian jobs.

The Boeing P-8A is a proven military off-the-shelf solution with nearly 150 aircraft delivered to five nations to date. The P-8A Poseidon will improve Canada's capability to defend its northern and maritime borders while ensuring interoperability with NORAD and NATO allies. As a leading platform for reducing the environmental impact of military aircraft, the P-8 can operate on a 50% blend of sustainable aviation fuel today with aspirations to move toward 100% with investment in new technology.

"As a dedicated partner of Canadian industry for more than a century, Boeing is proud to bring together a world-class team of companies in support of our P-8 offering to Canada. Together, we will bolster Canada's aerospace and defense industry through a 100% Industrial and Technical Benefits commitment if awarded the CMMA contract." - Heidi Grant, President, Business Development, Boeing Defense, Space & Security and Government Services

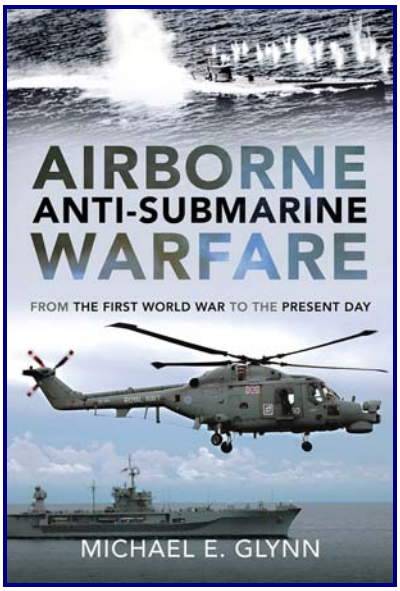
The P-8A Poseidon offers advanced anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and search and rescue capability, and is the only in-service, in-production multi-mission aircraft that meets all CMMA requirements. The P-8 also has the added distinction of strengthening the connection between national security and environmental stewardship.

"The P-8A Poseidon offers a unique opportunity for the Royal Canadian Air Force today in that all of the development costs have been paid by other P-8 customers. By its non-developmental nature, P-8 offers an affordable solution that will defend and protect Canadian security for future generations. With Canada at the forefront of cleaning and greening, it's fitting that Team Poseidon is elevating long-term environmental sustainability as an integral part of national defence." - Sean Liedman, Director of International Business Development for Mobility & Surveillance aircraft, Boeing Defense, Space & Security.

Having executed more than 450,000 collective mishap-free flight-hours, the P-8A Poseidon has proven its capability to operate around the globe in the harshest flight regimes including extended operations in extreme cold weather and icing environments. Current Boeing P-8 customers include the US Navy, Indian Navy, Royal Australian Air Force, Royal Air Force, Royal Norwegian Air Force, Royal New Zealand Air Force, Republic of Korea Navy and Germany Navy. Built on the proven 737 Next-Generation airframe, P-8's 86% commonality with more than 4,000 in-service 737NGs delivers lower life-cycle sustainment costs due to large economies of scale.

Naval News article by Naval News Staff

RECOMMENDED READING:



Here is a book that's well worth reading. "Airborne Anti-Submarine Warfare" by Michael Glynn (ISBN 978-1399092739) provides an excellent history of ASW as performed by aircraft from the First World War up to now. The book was released in May 2022 and the author flew P-3s and P-8s in the US Navy, so you know that it has to be up-to-date and as complete as possible within the constraints of classification. 345 pages with illustrations. You can order this book from any good bookstore for around $40.

ON THE INTERNET:

A friendly reminder that there is now a Facebook group for VP-MAU Brunswick to complement the one that has been up on Facebook for many years for VP-92. If you were a member of either squadron you should consider joining its Facebook group. Go to www.facebook.com and do a search on "VP-92" or "VP-MAU" to find them

PARTING SHOTS:

ABOVE: *VP-92 personnel on board a P-3C en-route to annual training sometime in the late 1990s.*

ABOVE: *Matt Sharpe, at NS Roosevelt Roads Puerto Rico, apparently not long after he first reported to VP-92 as a TAR during the early 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".