



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

ISSUE 35

MARCH 2009

Welcome to another edition of the VP Association newsletter. As always, please direct all general VP Association-related inquiries or correspondence to William Hanigan, 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02359, 781-585-4950, vpassociation@aol.com. Please send all newsletter-related correspondence to Marc J. Frattasio, P.O. Box 30, Pembroke MA 02359, marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

RECCO:



Here's one for the old timers. Consolidated PBY-6A Catalina (note the taller tail fin in comparison to the shorter PBY-5A tail fin that's just visible at left) "Zulu-Two-Zero-Two" from NAS Squantum's VP-ML-69 is having some maintenance performed on its port engine during an annual training detachment to NAS Miami, FL in the summer of 1950. Many thanks to Joe O'Neill for this photo. Got something similar to share? If so, contact Marc J. Frattasio.

FINAL FLIGHTS:

Bill Caradonna, formerly of VP-911 and VP-914, died peacefully on January 2 after a brief illness. He was buried with full military honors at St. Mary's Cemetery in Salem, MA. To the end he was very proud of his service to his country and valued his Navy "family". Memorial donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, Massachusetts Chapter, 311 Arsenal St., Watertown MA 02472.

ILL SHIPMATES IN NEED OF CHEERING UP:

Arthur Sansone (VP-92), Walter "Okie" O'Connell (VP-911 and VP-92), and Robert Wilson (VP-10) are all recovering after recent hospital procedures. You can contact Arthur at 55 Liberty Lane, Norwood MA 02062, 781-762-4999, asansone55@yahoo.com; Walter at 123 Colonel's Lane #4, South Weymouth MA 02189, 781-335-0553, wocon24376@aol.com; and Bob at 1596 Broadway, South Portland ME 04106, 207-772-0555, vp10_archives@juno.com.

ANNUAL REUNION NOTE:

This is a friendly reminder that the VP Association's next annual reunion banquet will be held at the Officer's Club at Hanscom AFB on Saturday September 26, 2009. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend if you can. We'd love to see you there. Tell all your old shipmates and plan on bringing some photos and memorabilia if you can. A banquet reservation form will be in the next issue of the newsletter, which will be circulated in June.

IDEAS AND ASSISTANCE NEEDED:

Those of us who are trying to keep the VP Association going are open to ideas that anybody might have for activities, products you'd like us to commission and sell (like the recent hats, shirts, and patches), etc. Perhaps there's a better venue or time of year to hold the annual reunion. Perhaps you've got a better location for the monthly luncheon meetings. Perhaps you'd like to have a picnic or a clambake or something like that in the summer. We're open to any and all practical ideas that anybody might want to submit for consideration. Also, we're seeking anybody who'd like to volunteer to assist us with the annual reunion, various projects, and activities. If you've got any ideas for the group or would like to register your availability to help out in any way, please contact William Hanigan at 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02359, 781-585-4950, vpassociation@aol.com. If you have any pertinent news or information that might be useful for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter please send to Marc J. Frattasio at P.O. Box 30, Pembroke MA 02359, marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

ADMIN FUND DONATIONS:

As you know, the VP Association has no dues. This organization is run on a shoestring through voluntary labor and whatever funds we can raise through the sale of memorabilia, etc. Voluntary contributions are always welcome to help defray the cost of printing and mailing newsletters to shipmates who do not have e-mail. We'd like to thank William Formwalt, Robert Jones, Jack O'Brien, John Sasser, Francis Wall, and John Yaney for their recent and much appreciated contributions to the administration fund.

ADMIN FUND FUND-RAISERS:

If you missed out on buying a VP Association ball cap (P-2 Neptune or P-3 Orion styles) or a VP-92 polo shirt and wish to buy any (if we still have them) or would like to get your name on a waiting list in the event we restock in the future please contact William Hanigan, 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02359, 781-585-4950, vpassociation@aol.com.

Bill Hanigan had a few extra examples of the replica VP-911, VP-912, VP-913, VP-914, VP-915, and VP-92 (original guillotine insignia) squadron patches that we recently commissioned. If you'd like to buy any (if we still have them, that is) or would like to get your name on a waiting list in the event we restock in the future please contact William Hanigan.

Please note that copies of the books that were recently produced as fund-raisers for the VP Association's Admin Fund (the 1967 VP-910 cruise book reprint, the "Defender's History" reprint, the "Men of Squantum" reprint, and the "VP Association Sea Story Library: Volume One") are still available directly from the printer, Lulu Press. To order go to the Lulu Press web site on the Internet

at <http://www.lulu.com> and do a search on the keywords "VP Association", "NAS South Weymouth" or "NAS Squantum" to find them.

SPEAKING OF THE COST OF PRINTING AND MAILING NEWSLETTERS...

If you have an e-mail address and have been receiving this newsletter through the U.S. Postal Service then we do not have a valid e-mail address for you. If this is your situation, please contact Bill Hanigan via e-mail as soon as possible so we can begin sending your newsletter to you by e-mail.

LOST CONTACT:

Please be sure to let Bill Hanigan know whenever your street or e-mail address changes.

RECENT CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

Gerard Hayes (VP-92) 35 Meeting Hill Lane Hanover, MA 02339 781-826-5616 gerald.b.hayes@navy.mil	Patrick Kelly (VP-MAU, VP-92) 11 Coulombe Street Acushnet, MA 02743 p.j.Kelly@comcast.net
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Please note new e-mail addresses for VP-92 alumni William Bonn at william.bonn@roadrunner.com, Marc Courtemanche at zrenec@aol.com, Arthur Sansone at sansone55@yahoo.com, and Robert Tyrseck at btirseck@comcast.net.

NEW MEMBERS:

George T. Foster
50 King Street
Apartment #1
Brockport, NY 14420
904-703-7962
george@mordennavalaviation.com

CAPTAIN GERARD "DOC" HAYES MOBILIZED!

Captain Gerard Hayes, who VP-92 alumni will know as "Doc Hayes" has been mobilized with the Navy's construction battalions (the SeaBees). He's presently in California but will soon be going to Afghanistan, where he is expected to remain through October. The good doctor would appreciate hearing from his old friends from VP-92. You can contact him via e-mail at gerald.b.hayes@navy.mil. Please note that the Navy misspelled his name (Gerard vs Gerald) when they set up the navy.mil e-mail account for him. According to his wife Kerry, this e-mail address is good and it should follow him wherever he goes while he's on active duty.

HELP WANTED:

Your newsletter editor is looking to borrow VP-92 cruisebooks for any years other than 1978 and 1987/1988. If any other cruisebooks surface (at least one more was produced for a cruise with SP-2Hs in the early 1970s) then a compilation of VP-92 cruisebooks similar to the recent reproduction of the 1967 VP-910 cruisebook may be created. If you have any VP-92 cruisebooks to loan for the cause, please contact Marc J. Frattasio at your earliest convenience.

DELIVERS FIRST RED-STRIPED P-3 BACK TO THE FLEET (Navy Press Release):

Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) completed repairs on the first Red-striped P-3C and delivered the aircraft to its squadron in Brunswick, Maine. The term "Red-stripe" comes from the diagonal red stripe on the Airworthiness Bulletin that grounded 39 P-3C aircraft in December 2007 for structural fatigue concerns on a portion of the lower outer wing, called Zone 5. These 39 aircraft

comprise approximately one quarter of the P-3C fleet, many of which have been flying for more than 25 years. The P-3 groundings were not the result of an aircraft incident, rather the result of ongoing analysis obtained through the structural engineering focused P-3C Fatigue Life Management Program (FLMP). This program monitors the fatigue status, flight hour usage, and operational profiles on aircraft. In materials science, fatigue is the progressive and localized structural damage that occurs when a material is repeatedly stressed. FRCSE is leading the way in repairing these aircraft and returning them to the Fleet. The Zone 5 repair consists of replacing five of the nine lower wing planks and the aft lower wing spar.

Commodore Kyle Cozad, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing Eleven (CPRW-11) recently addressed the artisans who repair the P-3 at FRCSE. He thanked them for their support of the Warfighter, and reinforced the importance of their contributions. "The repair of these aircraft means that we return aircraft to our flight line which provides combat readiness and trained crews to the combatant commanders in theater. That mission begins here at FRCSE, so we want to say thanks for all you do. When the Zone 5 repairs are completed at FRCSE, it provides an additional 5,000 flight hours for the aircraft, extending the service life by eight to 10 years."

The Zone 5 repairs are very extensive, requiring 21,000 man-hours of work and 6,000 holes drilled for rivets. All this work is accomplished while the wing is attached to the aircraft. The extensiveness of the repair process presents another issue: stabilization and alignment of the work surfaces. The wingspan on a P-3 is more than one hundred feet long. Special blue shoring was developed to support the wing during the repairs and to prevent it from bending and twisting. The normal Phased Depot Maintenance (PDM) repair process is not as extensive, so the special shoring was previously not required. Greg Wallace, P-3 General Foreman, explains the importance of the special shoring. "The blue shoring was actually needed for the alignment issues that we had with the wings. We had to come up with a way to ensure the wing did not move while it was in work. The shoring locks down the wing and keeps it within prescribed alignment specifications."

FRCSE began working on the first two Zone 5 aircraft in January 2008, overcoming many obstacles in the process. P-3 Product Officer Lt. Cmdr. Katy Baldwin praised the coordinated effort from many groups. "This effort would not be possible without the highly skilled and innovative talents of our artisans, engineers, and support personnel." The staff developed new repair procedures using AIRSpeed (Lean) methodologies, to replace the affected material, and even manufactured parts that were not available from vendors. FRCSE currently has nine Zone 5 aircraft in work, and eight inductions expected next year.

The P-3 was originally designed as an Anti-Submarine Warfare platform, but in the post-Cold War era the mission was expanded to include overland intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. Whether the P-3 is flying in Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, or as a first responder following natural disasters in Galveston or New Orleans, the mission must be completed with fewer aircraft available. Thanks to the artisans at FRCSE, more P-3s will be returning to the Fleet.

EMPTY AIRCRAFT (From www.strategypage.com):

The U.S. Navy is training four of its personnel (three P-3 pilots and one civilian) to operate RQ-4 Global Hawk UAVs.

The Navy has two RQ-4s on order, and intends to replace its aging fleet of P-3 maritime reconnaissance aircraft with a mix of new P-8A manned aircraft and RQ-4s equipped with sensors optimized for maritime operations. The 4 navy trainees are in an accelerated course (4 months instead of 5) and will be made available to help fly U.S. Air Force RQ-4s. The Air Force can use the

help, as the RQ-4s have been in the air for 20,000 hours over the last decade. The rate of use is accelerating.

Although the Boeing 737-based P-8A is a two engine jet, compared to the four engine turboprop P-3, it is a more capable plane. The P-8A has 23% more floor space than the P-3, and is larger (118ft wingspan, versus 100ft) and heavier (83 tons versus 61). Most other characteristics are the same. Both can stay in the air about 10 hours per sortie. Speed is different. Cruise speed for the 737 is 400kts, versus 300kts for the propeller driven P-3. This makes it possible for the P-8A to get to a patrol area faster, which is a major advantage when chasing down subs spotted by sonar arrays or satellites. However, the P-3 can carry more weapons (9 tons, versus 5.6.) This is less of a factor as the weapons (torpedoes, missiles, mines, sonobouys) are, pound for pound, more effective today; and that trend continues. Both carry the same size crew, of 10-11 pilots and equipment operators. Both aircraft carry search radar and various other sensors.

The 737 has, like the P-3, been equipped with bomb hard points on the wings for torpedoes or missiles. The B-737 is a more modern design, and has been used successfully since the 1960s by commercial aviation. Naval aviators are confident that it will be as reliable as the P-3 (which was based on the Electra civilian airliner that first flew in 1954, although only 170 were built, plus 600 P-3s. About 40 Electras are still in service). The Boeing 737 first flew in 1965, and over 5,000 have been built. The P-8A will be the first 737 designed with a bomb bay and four wing racks for weapons.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Air Force and Navy are buying the B version of the RQ-4 Global Hawk UAVs, at a cost of \$58M each. This version is larger (wingspan is 15ft larger, at 131ft, and it's 4ft longer at 48ft) than the A model, and can carry more equipment. To support that, there's a new generator that produces 150% more electrical power. The RQ-4 has a range of over 13,000NM and a cruising speed of 325kts.

The first three RQ-4Bs entered service in 2006. At 13 tons, the Global Hawk is the size of a commuter airliner (like the Embraer ERJ 145), but costs nearly twice as much. Global Hawk can be equipped with much more powerful, and expensive, sensors. These more the double the cost of the aircraft. These reconnaissance-satellite-quality sensors (especially AESA radar) are usually worth the expense; because they enable the UAV, flying at over 60,000ft, to get a sharp picture of all the territory it can see from that altitude. The B version is supposed to be a lot more reliable. Early A models tended to fail and crash at the rate of once every thousand flight hours.

The maritime RQ-4 is seen as the ultimate replacement for all manned maritime patrol aircraft. The P-8A will probably be the last manned naval search aircraft. Some countries are using satellite communications to put the sensor operators who staff manned patrol aircraft, on the ground.

Some nations propose sending aircraft like the P-3 or P-8 aloft with just their flight crews, having all the other gear operated from the ground. This enables the aircraft to stay in the air longer, and carry more gear.

SQUADRON'S DEPARTURE MARKS KEY PHASE (From the Brunswick Times Record):

Today marks the beginning of the end of Brunswick Naval Air Station. The first of its five squadrons, Patrol Squadron 8, leaves Brunswick for good this morning, starting an outflow of sailors and families who will both close a 65-year-old military installation and irrevocably change a community.

The squadron's first planes depart today, en route to a six-month deployment in the Middle East. The rest of the squadron's nearly 300 personnel will follow during the next week.

When they return in June from the desert's monochromatic environment, they won't be flying into Maine's vibrant green and blue landscape and uncluttered airspace. Instead, they'll start the exodus of Brunswick's P-3 Orion squadrons to their new headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla. Three more squadrons will leave this summer and one more in December 2009 to facilitate the scheduled base closing in May 2011.

Capt. William Fitzgerald, commanding officer at BNAS, said the squadron's departure won't cause any immediate change on the base, which still provides support services for the remaining 85 percent of the base's active military personnel. But it does serve as reminder of an event constituting the focus of his command. "I think it's symbolic, certainly, of the beginning of the end of Naval Air Station Brunswick," Fitzgerald said. "If people had doubted if the base closure was going to happen, this ought to be a pretty good reminder that the base closure process has begun."

He said the squadron, which has participated in every major military operation since World War II, has been headquartered in Brunswick since 1971. With its departure, the squadron leaves 37 years of history and tradition in the town. "I think the community loses something with its going," Fitzgerald said.

To some, 2011 might seem a long way off, but the reality of closure hits today for VP-8 commanding officer Cmdr. Eric Wiese, who according to tradition, will lead the departing squadron in the first plane scheduled to deploy. His take-off was scheduled for 11 a.m. today.

Wiese has spent three tours in Brunswick and is saddened to lead the squadron from Brunswick. This week, he's watched the walls in Hangar Five be divested of VP-8 memorabilia, as the squadron packs up its belongings to leave an empty hangar and a history in Brunswick rooted deep in the Cold War when P-3 Orions tracked and hunted Soviet submarines. "To sum up, it's the end of an era," he said.

The squadron's departure also has significant personal impact for Wiese and many of the sailors under his command. "We've made some great friends in our three tours here," he said, about his own family of five children and one foster child. "It's a very emotional time for families because there's so much to do," he said, not only as squadron jobs become hectic with deployment preparations and family lives grow increasingly chaotic negotiating a move to Jacksonville.

Aviation Electrician David Adauto has been in Brunswick for more than four years, and his wife and three girls are preparing to leave as soon as he deploys. "I was really sad they are leaving the base," he said. "You don't worry about violence here. You don't worry about crime. It's a safe environment." Like some of his squadron members, he'll also miss Maine for other reasons, too. "The skiing," for one, he said. "Having four seasons," for another, said Lt. Eliot Weston, who added he had a housemate who vowed he'd return to Brunswick someday.

Some sailors took advantage of a two-week leave period to move their families to Jacksonville already, so spouses and children won't have to move on their own. In the meantime, they've been living as "geographic bachelors," waiting to deploy. Other families will move at the end of the school year, when a second squadron departs for good from the base. And still others will move sometime during the next six months. "They are like pioneer women," Wiese said. "They're going to move their families on their own during deployment."

Deployment isn't easy for any family, especially during the holidays. Even with the added difficulty of knowing they will not return to Brunswick, the members of VP-8 and their families have stayed focus on the immediate task of preparing for the squadron's departure. "Brunswick squadrons are known

for their professionalism and attention to detail and operational excellence," Wiese said. "That's just been a tradition in Brunswick." The squadrons' departure ends another Navy tradition in Brunswick, one of cooperation and camaraderie with the community outside the fence.

"I'm not sure that it's sunk in: the impact to the local community and, more importantly, the local economy," said Capt. James Hoke, commanding officer of Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing Five, which encompasses all the Brunswick's squadrons. "This starts the process." More than most other military installations, Brunswick's base seems to blend seamlessly with the community, he said, recalling stories of how Pleasant Street motel owners welcomed cashless sailors on their first night in town.

Starting now — and especially this summer as the brunt of families leave — military neighbors and friends, who are leaving to play a critical role in the fight overseas, and their families will become fewer and fewer as the squadrons follow VP-8's migration to Jacksonville, he said. "It's absolutely sad. This base is such a great set-up. The area is so great for families," he said. "But the nation has made a decision, so we press ahead and comply with the law."

Here's the first P-3 to leave NAS Brunswick FOREVER. It's VP-8's C.O CDR Eric Wiese leading a deployment to the Middle East. When VP-8 returns to CONUS they are going directly to Jacksonville, FL. Brunswick closes in late 2010. Wave "goodbye" to maritime patrol aviation in New England! Many thanks to Dave Jarvis for this photo.



NAVY P-8 TO REPLACE THE P-3? DON'T COUNT ON IT (@ gps333@charter.net):

The P-8A, a Boeing 737-800 ERX that is the replacement for the P-3C, is becoming increasingly less cost effective and affordable. If any are built for the fleet, the total number is likely to be far below the official goal of 108 aircraft.

The P-3 fleet is disintegrating from overuse at such a high rate that Navy squadrons no longer "own" their own airplanes - what was typically nine aircraft. Instead, all flyable P-3s now belong to the Wing and are "loaned" to squadron aircrews on a mission-by-mission basis. From 288 flyable P-3Cs in 2003, the Navy has less than 100. The P-3 fleet has been aged prematurely by the shift away from ASW to overuse in overland surveillance and weapons delivery since 1991. Ground commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan love the Orion's ability to loiter over a battle area for 8-10 hours, providing real-time visual and electronic surveillance.

A number of factors make it likely that the 108 aircraft goal is becoming unrealistic. One is cost. When the P-8A development and manufacturing costs are fully amortized, each P-8A will cost approximately \$416M in 2004 dollars. Remember, the Navy has to buy ships, whose costs are rising at staggering rates. The Littoral Combat Ship, the Navy's answer to coastal, "brown water" fighting, has had two of the first four ships canceled for 100% cost overruns. The goal of 55 LCSes is in serious doubt. The just canceled DDG-1000 saw its price per hull exceed \$3B, triggering a Congressional revolt and ending what was to have been at least seven ships to just two "technology

demonstrators," a la the Seawolf-class nuclear attack submarines. CVN-X, the follow-on to the Nimitz-class nuclear aircraft carrier, is in limbo with the Navy saying little about its future. CGN-X, the follow-on to the Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser, also looks doomed. Building of the Burke-class guided missile destroyer will, instead, be extended for an undetermined number of additional ships with enhanced capabilities and major upgrades of onboard sensors and greatly increased electrical generation capabilities for new weapons and much more powerful radars. The Navy Program Executive Officers for the various new ship classes has been repeatedly shaken-up in the past several years, with multiple firings of high-level Navy and civilian personnel. Forty-five billion dollars for 108 P-8As seems increasingly undoable.

The other half of the P-8 plan to replace the P-3 is the Broad Area Maritime Surveillance Unmanned vehicle program. While the Navy has been struggling with this, too, for years, it looks like the RQ-4 Maritime Global Hawk UAV/UCAV will be chosen. At \$123M a copy (including development costs) it isn't cheap, but it has many attractive features. One is the lower cost than the P-8. Another is not having to carry a crew for which the Navy has to pay a small fortune in training and support. Another is the ever greater capability of unmanned systems, which, like computers, double their capability for the same price every eighteen months. The RQ-4 can fly for 24 hours or more, affording unmatched persistent surveillance capability. Yet another is avoiding the loss of personnel in any combat situation - something an ever more militarily ignorant citizenry demands of its armed forces. Arming the RQ-4s becomes even more attractive when one considers as well the recent arrival of mini-sonobouys that may be dropped and monitored from the UCAV as well.

The P-8 program is going to be scaled-back in favor of increasing the responsibility and perhaps the numbers of the BAMS program. The P-8s are to be based at two CONUS sites - NAS Whidbey Island, WA, and NAS Jacksonville, FL, plus a detachment at MCAS Kaneohe, Hawaii. The Pacific and Atlantic wings will probably have a dozen P-8s each, with the Fleet Replacement Squadron at NAS Jacksonville signing for another 18 or so. That makes 42. The Hawaiian detachment may borrow from the Pacific wing, or may have as many as another six aircraft basically based at Kaneohe. That's 48. Add some wiggle room and as many as 60 P-8s may be built, although that's unlikely. That's all we'll have, plus as many RQ-4s as can be pried-away from the USAF.

One has to understand a little about anti-submarine warfare for this scenario to make sense. There are basically three kinds of ASW: detection, tracking, and localization/attack. Detection is done any number of ways. For the maritime patrol aircraft (MPA), it's usually done at altitude using sonobouys, either based upon intelligence or upon detection by some other asset. This is easy on the airframe because higher-level flight is usually smooth and more aggressive high-G maneuvers are rare. Passive tracking (using the target's noise and not generating any yourself) of a located target can also be relatively sedate and again, at a higher altitude. Things get hairy during localization for an attack. For this the P-3 uses active sonobouys that "ping" to provide a distance and bearing to the target, which now knows you are there and begins high-speed evasive maneuvering. The P-3 also uses magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) to provide an "on top" mark from the sub's steel hull. This is low-level, yanking and banking flight that puts the aircraft through a lot of relatively high-G stuff as a result of steep turns and low-level turbulence, which really wears on both the airframe and crew (see Romancing Julie at http://navlog.org/romancing_julie.html). The Navy is trying to extend the life of its remaining p-3s as much as possible by minimizing low-altitude flight. One step has been to create a kit that turns the P-3's Mk 54 torpedo into a glide bomb that may be launched from altitude. The P-8 is being designed without MAD, a clear nod to minimizing low-altitude flight, both for airframe ease and limiting a target's chances of detecting a tracking airplane.

The Navy has funding for the first five P-8s. Three are for ground testing and two are to fly, the first in 2009. The P-3s are being re-winged, a plan to extend their airworthiness until replaced by the P-8

beginning in 2012/2013. What the MPA world will look like by then - not to mention the Navy and its budget - cannot yet be accurately foretold. All MPA flight may be transferred to UCAVs, as is the trend for all tactical flight in the US military. The Lockheed P-3 line has been reopened to provide new wings for the P-3 fleet. How long before someone at Lockheed pitches producing entirely new Orion-21s (<http://www.spyflight.co.uk/orion%2021.htm>) or even the P-7? Lockheed did so before it lost out to the Boeing version MMA. What is known is that we are entering as dangerous a period to our national security as any since the 1930s.

NAVY ANNOUNCES P-8A SQUADRON BASES:

Boeing will deliver the first P-8A Poseidon test aircraft to the Navy in 2009. The Navy plans to purchase 108 P-8As to replace its fleet of P-3C aircraft. In preparation for the U.S. Navy's transition to the P-8A Poseidon, the Department of the Navy has announced the basing decision for the Poseidon fleet. According to a Department of Defense release, five fleet squadrons and a fleet replacement squadron will be based at Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville, Fla., four fleet squadrons at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., and three fleet squadrons at Marine Corps Base Hawaii Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, with periodic squadron detachment operations at Naval Air Station North Island. Introduction of the P-8A squadrons is projected to begin no later than 2012 and be completed by 2019. Boeing currently is building five test aircraft, three flight-test and two ground-test, as part of the System Development and Demonstration contract signed with the Navy in 2004. The first aircraft will be delivered to the Navy in 2009. The Navy plans to purchase 108 P-8As to replace its fleet of P-3C aircraft. The P-8A Poseidon is a long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft.

RETIRED RESERVISTS MAY DRAW FUNDS EARLIER:

The Department of Defense recently issued new guidelines for early receipt of retired pay for members of the reserve components. Instead of having to wait until age 60 to receive Reserve retired pay, eligible members may receive retired pay prior to age 60 but not before age 50. Under interim changes to Department of Defense Instruction 1215.07, Service Credit for Reserve Retirement, issued under a law passed by Congress effective Jan. 28, 2008, reserve component members are able to reduce the age at which they are eligible to receive retirement pay by three months for each cumulative period of 90 days served on active duty in any fiscal year. Note, before you get too worked up over this, note that any active duty performed prior to January 28, 2008 does not count! See <http://www.military.com/news/article/reservists-may-qualify-for-early-retired-pay.html> for details.

DID YOU KNOW?

NAS South Weymouth's RAW-91 was the last reserve air wing in the Naval Air Reserve Training Command to fly the Goodyear FG Corsair (retired in July 1955) and Consolidated P4Y-2 Privateer (retired in December 1957)?

RECOMMENDED READING:

The definitive work on the P-2 Neptune is "Lockheed P2V Neptune: An Illustrated History" by Wayne Mutza. Published by Schiffer Publishing Ltd. in 1996, this book covers the development and usage of the Neptune in all its variants by the USN, USNR, Army, Air Force, internationally, and by civilian operators. The book has 286 pages and hundreds of photographs, most of them reproduced in color. You can order it through any bookstore by asking them for ISBN# 0-7643-0151-9.

ON THE INTERNET:

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service produces a monthly newsletter with information of interest to all military retirees. To view these newsletters on the Internet in PDF format go the DFAS web site at <http://www.dfas.mil>.

MONTHLY MEETING:

Don't forget that we meet for lunch on the last Thursday of every month at the Officer's Club at Hanscom AFB in Bedford, MA from 1130 to 1330. Please join us if you can. If you don't have a military ID (base stickers are no longer required) contact Okie O'Connell at 781-335-0553 or Bill Hanigan at 781-585-4950 so your name can be added to the base's security access list. Note, all persons without a military ID are required to enter the base at the civilian gate, not the Hartwell gate.

PARTING SHOT:



Here's a group of VP-92 aircrew and maintenance personnel lined up on the ramp of an unidentified military base during a cross-country flight conducted during 1976. Recognize anybody you know in this shot? Many thanks to Bill Hanigan for this photo. Got something similar to share? If so, contact Marc J. Frattasio.



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

