



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 34

DECEMBER 2008

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 02332, 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:



Yes, I know this is the VP Association, not the VS Association. However, some of our members originally started out in the reserve program with the VS squadrons assigned to NAS South Weymouth and later transferred over to VP. For the benefit of these guys, here's a lineup of RAW-91's "7Z" Grumman S-2 Trackers at South Weymouth about 1965. Many thanks to John Yaney for this photo. Got something similar to share? If so, please contact Marc J. Frattasio.

FINAL FLIGHTS:

Alan Warnick of 1710 Narrows Hill Rd, Upper Black Eddy PA 18972 lost his battle with cancer on October 26th. Al had been in VP-10 and had attended most of the VP Association's annual reunions.

ILL SHIPMATES IN NEED OF CHEERING UP:

Dempsey James (VP-10) of 6234 Bradley Way, Virginia Beach VA 23464 is recovering at home from a recent surgical procedure. He'd appreciate a card or letter from his old Navy friends.

ANNUAL REUNION NOTE:

It looks like 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.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO JIM TANNER AND THE DAV:

We'd also like to thank Jim Tanner (VP-912) of the Disabled American Veterans for all the help that he and his organization has provided to VP Association members and other veterans over the years.

ADMIN FUND DONATIONS:

As you know, the VP Association has no dues but 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 Ray Beauchemin, George Griffin, Bob Hickock, Paul Lapinski, Dana Larsen, Brad Mann, Paul McClosky, Leonard Parent, and Richard Smith for their recent contributions to the admin fund.

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.

VP-92 POLO SHIRTS:



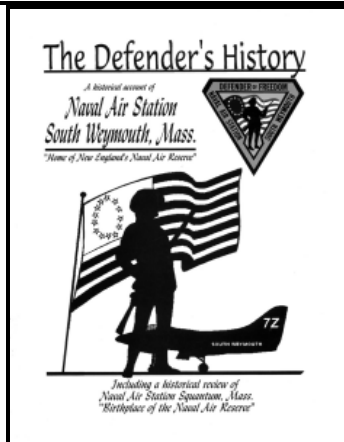
The VP Association sold light gray polo shirts featuring VP-92's "Minuteman" insignia embroidered in red, white, blue, and black as shown at left at this year's annual reunion and now they are also available via mail order. The shirts, which are available in a wide range of sizes, cost \$35 postage-paid per shirt. All proceeds from the sale of these shirts will go to the Admin Fund, which helps pay to send newsletters to shipmates who do not have e-mail service. A mail-order form for these shirts is located on the last page of this newsletter.

VP ASSOCIATION BALL CAPS:



We are also selling embroidered ball caps as an Admin Fund fund-raiser. Two styles are available. The first (left) has a head-on view of a P-2 Neptune with the words "Two Turning and Two Burning VP" on the front. The second (right) has a side profile of a P-3 Orion and the words "United States Navy Minutemen VP" on the front. Color choices are blue or khaki and you can have aviator wings, aircrew wings, or no wings on the back. The ball caps cost \$20 each postage-paid. Use the mail-order form on the last page to order.

REPRINTS OF FORMERLY RARE NAS SQUANTUM AND NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH BOOKS:



Reprints of "Squantum Weekend Warriors" and "The Defender's History", formerly long out of print and rare, are still available for \$20 plus shipping. Go to <http://www.lulu.com> to order. Sorry about the price increase but the printer recently raised his prices! All proceeds from the sale of both books go to the Admin Fund. While on the Lulu Press web site check out the VP-92 book, "The Minutemen of VP-92: The Story of New England's Naval Air Reserve Patrol Squadron" and ANA Patriot Squadron member Bill Horsch's Navy memoir, "ATCS Bill Horsch".

NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH VP SQUADRON PATCHES:

We are considering reproducing NAS South Weymouth-related VP squadron patches, again as an Admin Fund fund-raiser. First up will be the original VP-92 guillotine patch from the 1970-1979 timeframe. The price per patch will probably be about \$20. If you are interested, contact William Hanigan, 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02332, 781-585-4950, vpassociation@aol.com. Whether we do this or not will depend upon the level of demand since a minimum order quantity is required. **Please don't contact Bill unless you are willing to commit to buy a patch!** Patches for VP-911, VP-912, VP-913, VP-914, and VP-915 may be reproduced at a later date if there's interest.

LOST CONTACT:

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

RECENT CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

Please note new e-mail addresses for VP-92 alumni Pete Costello at costellopi@gmail.com, Arthur Donais at acritter@bellsouth.net, and John Shea at john_shea@dfci.harvard.edu.

NEW MEMBERS:

David Desmarais (VP-92)
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afcmdes@aol.com

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pziton@yahoo.com

RECOMMENDED READING:

The definitive work on the Lockheed P-3 Orion is "The Age Of Orion" by David Reade. Published by Schiffer Publishing Ltd. in 1998, the book covers the development and usage of the P-3 by the United States and internationally. The book features 223 pages and hundreds of photographs, most of them reproduced in color. You can order through any bookstore by asking them for ISBN# 0-7643-0478-X.

BALANCING ACT (Reproduced from "Seapower" Magazine):

Over the last decade, the Navy's maritime patrol and reconnaissance (MPR) forces have flown missions never before envisioned for them, including firing long-range cruise missiles at land targets and spying on insurgents in the mountains of Afghanistan and the cities of Iraq. The demands of the global war on terrorism have stretched the already widely dispersed force further even as its force level declines and it struggles to sustain a shrinking and aging aircraft fleet.

As commander, Patrol & Reconnaissance Group, Rear Adm. Michael L. Holmes is responsible to the commander, Naval Air Forces, for manning, training and equipping the MPR force of 17 patrol, special projects patrol and fleet air reconnaissance squadrons.

Holmes brought to the job extensive experience as a P-3 Orion patrol plane pilot, with eight tours of duty in U.S. and Canadian patrol squadrons, commanding two of them. He later commanded U.S. and allied MPR forces in the Mediterranean, and subsequently the MPR forces of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Holmes has introduced several initiatives to increase the capabilities of the MPR force, including integration of reserve crews to eventually allow corresponding reduction of some active-duty fliers. He discussed this and other initiatives for the MPR forces with Seapower Managing Editor Richard R. Burgess.

What challenges does the maritime patrol and reconnaissance community face today?

HOLMES: The challenge today is sustaining the airplanes until their replacements come along. The P-3 is the oldest fixed-wing platform flying today. The average life of the P-3 force is 27 years; some are 40 years old. Few of the operators on those airplanes are that old. We're now at a point in time in the life span of naval aviation when the average age of the airplanes is older than the average age of [the Navy's] ships. We're going to have to fly [the P-3] for another 12-15 years. The environment that we put this airplane in — down low, a couple hundred feet over the ocean and its salt environment — has really taken its toll. We have some serious fatigue issues that we are addressing today. The EP-3s (electronic reconnaissance aircraft) are getting old, and we are going to replace them about the same time as the P-3. The high altitude we put the EP-3 in is not as harsh as the salt environment of the P-3s' ASW (antisubmarine warfare) missions, so I am not quite as concerned about [the EP-3 fleet], plus we're taking old P-3s and refurbishing them and turning them into EP-3s.

Are there enough aircraft to meet the demand?

HOLMES: When I came into this job in September 2003, there were 227 P-3Cs in the Navy inventory. Lockheed Martin conducted a service-life assessment program on a P-3, and we looked at the results. Within a year we had retired 50 P-3s. Out of the remainder, we've had to put those through structural modifications. Counting the airplanes going through those modifications and the ones in phased depot maintenance, we've got about 46 percent of our inventory in some kind of deep maintenance. Consequently, there are not a lot of airplanes left on the ramp for the nine squadrons at home [plus the fleet readiness squadron and six reserve squadrons] to train with. It's common for a squadron coming off deployment to have only two airplanes to train with. So we've pooled our assets at each wing, including reserve assets. We had to, in order to meet the forward-deployment requirements. We have a lot of money invested in [structural modification programs], including omnibus contracts that combine all of the required structural work and new systems installations so that an airplane comes in only once and gets back to the fleet as soon as possible. I'm hoping that a year from now a squadron at home will have five airplanes on the ramp.

Are you still able to meet the requirements of the combatant commanders?

HOLMES: We are able to meet the combatant commanders' most immediate and pressing needs today. Every combatant commander with P-3s in their AOR (area of responsibility) would ask for more. When [I was a] lieutenant, we would deploy eight P-3 squadrons, each with nine airplanes, at eight different deployment sites, for a total of 72 P-3s at any given time. Today, we are down to three deployment sites [Sigonella, Italy ; Bahrain; and Misawa, Japan], using three squadrons at eight airplanes each, a total of 24 planes. That's a number that we are able to sustain. About a year ago, the P-3 was designated an LDHD (low-density, high-demand) asset because of the limited number we have. [The Fleet Response Plan] dictated quite a few changes to the MPR community. We now have East Coast squadrons deploying to West Coast deployment sites and vice versa. I think all of the crews should be exposed to as many of the areas we operate in as possible.

Is the MPR community making a difference in the global war on terrorism?

HOLMES: We are. The primary missions that we fly from our deployed sites are generally in support of OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom) and OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom). So we fly daily over Iraq as well as Afghanistan, flying out of Bahrain. We work very closely with the land forces component commander and his forces, the Army and the Marine Corps. They'd tell you that the P-3 is providing a vital part of their support and enabling them to get the job done. We provide the platform overhead with its electro-optical and infrared capability and the ability to see situational awareness on the ground — and to be able to pass that situational awareness to the forces on the ground. We typically fly with a Marine rider on board who knows his personnel and is passing on the information that the airplane is collecting.

How does the Navy's renewed emphasis on ASW affect the MPR force?

HOLMES: ASW has always been our core mission. The other missions sets that come with that — ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) and [maritime] interdiction — if you're doing ASW and using all of your sensors, then the overland ISR become fairly easy to adjust to. When our crews are home in the training cycle they focus on ASW. Unfortunately, their focus when forward-deployed has been on ISR, so there hasn't been a lot of ASW readiness generated on deployment. Since the CNO (chief of naval operations) has put new emphasis back into ASW, we have worked with the task force commanders to get as many ASW exercises [as we can] for our forward-deployed squadrons in order to keep their ASW readiness as high as possible. That's not easy in a place like the [Persian] Gulf.

How do you train against today's submarine threat?

HOLMES: In the Cold War, it was deepwater ASW, fairly easy against a loud target whose destination was usually predictable. Today, that's changed a bit. We typically don't see any nation putting submarines in an out-of-area deployment scenario like we did in the Cold War, so we don't have the advantage of taking a close look at any particular nation's submarines. We train with [foreign] diesel submarines — Chilean, Canadian, Australian, German — to get as much diesel time as possible. We think the toughest nut to crack for ASW is modern-technology, quiet diesel submarines operating on batteries or air-independent propulsion in the littoral environment.

What are you doing with crew training to reduce stress on the aircraft inventory?

HOLMES: We're buying a new simulator that's going to take a lot of the pilot training out of the airplane and put it in a simulator that's state-of-the-art and allows the pilot to have the same feel, look, smell of an airplane. To train the back-end crews, we're using our WSTs (Weapon System Trainers) to their maximum capacity in order not to use the airplanes for that function. I have reduced the number of pilots in each squadron, a conscious effort to go down to 30 pilots, down from 36 per squadron. Fewer pilots mean fewer landings on the airplanes and fewer requirements to train people. That's going to save quite a bit. Pilot training is really where you get the most wear and tear.

What is the advantage of consolidating the two EP-3 squadrons next month at Whidbey Island?

HOLMES: Just being co-located, the synergy from the training perspective is going to be great, because Whidbey is the electronic warfare training center of the Navy with the EP-3s and EA-6Bs there. Certainly there will be some consolidation in intermediate maintenance. We'll be able to close the base at Rota, Spain, and free up a considerable number of billets. Once we get consolidated, we'll be able to look within the squadrons and find some further consolidations. We may be able to share administrative departments. The aircraft may be pooled, if it makes sense money-wise, and I think it probably will.

Is the MPR force benefiting from active-reserve integration?

HOLMES: It will bring the reserve closer to the active force than it has been in the past. As an example, we assigned four reserve crews to go through training with Patrol Squadron 45 (VP-45), and those crews have been flying over Iraq, doing the same job as the VP-45 crews. I see an opportunity to reduce the number of active-duty crews. Once we develop a cadre of 12 VP reserve crews whose readiness is to the level I need, I'm going to reduce the active-duty force by an equivalent number.

Any new sensors or weapons coming in the near future?

HOLMES: We're excited about getting the Mk54 lightweight torpedo [in fiscal 2007]. OPNAV (the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations) is trying to find the money to fund a high-altitude torpedo to drop from 20,000 feet. We need to be able to do ASW from up high. The P-8A Multimission Maritime Aircraft (MMA) is very efficient at high altitudes. Envision sonobuoys with GPS (Global Positioning System) in them that know exactly where they're at. If you have contact on a submarine on a GPS sonobuoy, you know where that submarine is. If we can provide some guidance to a torpedo as it heads to a sonobuoy, we can do it more quickly, efficiently, effectively, with pinpoint accuracy. No longer would we have to mark on top (fly over) sonobuoys constantly at 20,000 feet, which is not pinpoint accuracy to be able to drop a torpedo on a sub. It will save us a lot of gas, and translate to speed and accuracy. We used to hunt submarines with all passive sensors, but that's not going to cut it with today's quieting technology. With today's diesel submarine, you're going to have to go active. We have been very aggressive with Extended Echo Ranging (EER, a sonobuoy with an explosive charge). I've seen a dramatic improvement in our ability over the past year and a half. Down the road, we [will] have Improved EER, which will allow us to monitor more sonobuoys and allow us to [discern] more false targets. Another improvement, Active EER, will produce an electronic ping from a sonobuoy so instead of having one charge we're going to be able to have multiple pings.

What is the outlook for the MPR force?

HOLMES: The P-8A MMA is fully funded. We're really excited about that airplane coming on line in 2013. It can't come a minute too soon, given the problems we've got with the old P-3. I don't envision sustaining 12 active patrol squadrons when we go to MMA, it will be some number less than that. The Aerial Common Sensor platform will replace the EP-3. The BAMS (Broad-Area Maritime Surveillance) UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) is going to play a big part in what [the MPR] community does in the future. The majority of the ISR that we're picking up with the P-3 and the EP-3 can be transitioned to [a UAV]. But you can't relegate ASW to an unmanned aerial vehicle, it's too dynamic and manpower-intensive. You have to be able to make decisions relative to an enemy submarine rather quickly.

A VETERAN'S PENSION BENEFIT WORTH EXPLORING:

There is a benefit known as "Aid & Attendance Special Pension" that provides veterans with a pension for assisted living and home-bound care. This special pension could provide \$1,519 per month to a veteran, \$976 per month to a surviving spouse, or \$1,801 per month to a couple. The benefit is dependent on health and financial need. For additional information and qualification, call 800-827-1000 and follow prompts or visit <http://www.va.gov> on the Internet. When you get to the web site there are several areas worth viewing. Click on "health care" and "benefits".

THE ASSOCIATION OF NAVAL AVIATION PATRIOT SQUADRON NEEDS YOUR HELP:

The Association of Naval Aviation Patriot Squadron is a group of Navy veterans and civilians who are establishing a museum dedicated to NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth at the "Southfield"

development (former NAS South Weymouth). The group operates from temporary quarters in the old base fitness center but will be moving into a permanent museum building in two years. Members meet monthly at various locations on Boston's South Shore and maintain the base museum, the Shea Field Memorial Grove, and the "7Z" A-4 Skyhawk jet. Membership costs \$15/year. To join send a check for \$15 to The ANA Patriot Squadron, 495 Shea Memorial Drive, South Weymouth MA 02190. Note, the ANA Patriot Squadron is really DESPARATE for new members who can assist with the upkeep of the Shea Field Memorial Grove (cleanup, grass trimming, painting, etc.) and with the establishment of the museum on former NAS South Weymouth. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated. If you've got the time and interest to pitch in and help these guys, please contact them.

JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON:

Danish aviation artist Mads Bangsø has added a collection of VP-92 aircraft to his gallery of superb aviation art prints. Mads can provide a print depicting any specific VP-92 SP-2H Neptune or P-3A, P-3B, and P-3C Orion in any color scheme and with whatever bureau number and side number that you wish. Want a standard "LY" Neptune or the unique orange-trimmed "Pilgrim Patrol" LY-4? How about a P-3A Orion in the original bicentennial Minuteman color scheme or a P-3B with the short-lived yellow lightning bolt on the tail? Mads Bangsø can also provide you with a print of a VP-92 P-3C in overall light gray with either the earlier small dark gray markings or the later larger full-color markings.



Two samples of Mads' work, a P-3A in Bicentennial colors with wheels down on the left and a P-3B with the yellow lightning bolt depicted in flight at right, are shown above. Mads can provide a profile print of any VP-92 aircraft depicted on the ground or in flight with your choice of color scheme, specific bureau number and side number, guillotine or Minuteman squadron insignia, base insignia, and up to three lines of text such as name and rank, position in the squadron, years of service, etc.

Here's another sample of Mads Bangsø's artwork, in this case a print depicting the squadron's earliest (SP-2H) and latest (P-3C) aircraft types together with the original VP-92 guillotine and later Minuteman insignias. Prints are available in three sizes at different price points. An 11" x 7" print costs \$76.98, a 14" x 20" print costs \$86.98, and a 24" x 32" print costs \$128.98. Quantity discounts are available. U.S. shipping is included in the prices quoted here. Framed prints are not available at this time but may be offered in the future.



To order prints or to view full color sample artwork on the Internet go to the U.S. Military Art web page's "US Aircraft/Squadron Prints" section at <http://www.usmilitaryart.com> or call them toll-free at 888-465-5389.

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.

Note, we will meet for lunch on December 18 instead of the last Thursday of this month due to Thanksgiving and Christmas.



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



----- Please Detach Here -----

VP-92 POLO SHIRT AND BALLCAP ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Size and Quantity of Polo Shirts Required: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ XXL _____

Quantity of Blue Neptune Ball caps with Aviator Wings _____ Aircrew Wings _____ No Wings _____

Quantity of Khaki Neptune Ball caps with Aviator Wings _____ Aircrew Wings _____ No Wings _____

Quantity of Blue Orion Ball caps with Aviator Wings _____ Aircrew Wings _____ No Wings _____

Quantity of Khaki Orion Ball caps with Aviator Wings _____ Aircrew Wings _____ No Wings _____

Total Amount Enclosed (\$35 Per Shirt and/or \$20 Per Hat): \$ _____

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