



VP ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

AN ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS WHO SERVED WITH THE NAVAL AIR RESERVE PATROL SQUADRONS BASED AT NAS SQUANTUM MA, NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH MA, AND NAS BRUNSWICK ME.

NOTE, CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF ANY U.S. NAVY PATROL SQUADRON ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US!

ISSUE 59

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

MAR 2015

Welcome to another edition of the VP Association newsletter. Until further notice please direct all VP Association-related inquiries or correspondence to Marc Frattasio, PO Box 30, Pembroke MA 02339, 781-294-4491, vpassociation2@gmail.com.

RECCO:



ABOVE: Bob Kowalewski forwarded this photo of a VP-92 P-3A over Provincetown that was taken by Dave Previti. Anybody remember the year or the reason for this photo shoot? If you have similar things to share contact Marc J. Frattasio at vpassociation2@gmail.com.

FINAL FLIGHTS:

Clarence "Buster" Williams passed away in December. He was an AWCS who served as a TAR with VP-92. Grant Southward passed away in January. He was a blimp pilot with ZP-11 at NAS South Weymouth during the Second World War. Francis Wall and Larry Middlebrook both passed away in January. Both men were in VP-92.

ILL SHIPMATES IN NEED OF CHEERING UP:

Bill Hanigan (stroke) is expected to leave Wingate at Silver Lake, 17 Chipman Way, Kingston, MA 02364 by the middle of March. Send e-mail messages to billhanagan@icloud.com. After March 15th he should be home at 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02332. Dana Larsen (Alzheimer's) is now residing at The Atrium at Faxon Woods, 2003 Falls Blvd, Quincy, MA 02169. Former VP-92 TACCO Dick Moore has serious dementia and is now living in an assisted living facility in Texas. For more information such as his address please contact Ken Sherman at asa663@verizon.net.

THE ANNUAL REUNION:

The s annual reunion will be held on Saturday October 24th. Details to follow in the June newsletter.

THE ADMIN FUND:

The VP Association has no dues but contributions are always welcome to help defray the cost of web hosting, postage, and other administrative expenses. A big "thank you" to Robert Jones for his very generous recent donation.

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

If you have an e-mail address and get a hard-copy newsletter in the mail we do not have an e-mail address for you. If this is your case please contact Marc Frattasio at vpassociation2@gmail.com so we can e-mail it to you. Remember, this group does not charge dues and operates on a shoestring thanks to volunteer labor, memorabilia sales, and donations. Please note that despite concerns that we might have to suspend them, we are continuing the mailings. Bill's wife Barbara has been handing printing and mailing so far. We are still trying to sort out who is going to do what within this organization going forward and may have to reach out for help. If you have an e-mail address and have been getting paper newsletters, it would be better in this difficult time to send it to you via e-mail.

LOST CONTACT:

Please be sure to let Marc Frattasio know whenever your street or e-mail address changes so we can update our files. Please note new contact information for Rafael Coll, 96 Smithsanders Ct, Smithfield, NC 27577-6209, 919-209-4248, rafaelcoll@sbcglobal.net, for James Dimare at 8 Phillips Rd, PO Box 870, Onset, MA 02558, 508-295-1971 and for Dexter Morrison at PO Box 277, Readfield, ME 04335, julietmorrison@roadrunner.com.

NEW MEMBERS:

Ed Lambert
ed@95wxtk.com

A SHORT NOTE FROM SEAN REID:

I'm not sure if any of you ever read the blog "CDR Salamander," (<http://cdrsalamander.blogspot.com>) but it's pretty amusing. There was a recent post about the P-8 and one of the comments was about the Reserves continuing to fly P-3s. Some guy responded who sounds like he must've been one of the active duty JO's stuck in the barracks in Roosey while we drove our rental cars to the Conquistador. The money shot is the line: "Look, I'm sure that individually most VP reservists are good guys. The problem is when you get them together in a squadron they are hugely ineffectual. And there's this sense of "back-in-the-day" entitlement. It's like a retarded fraternity." Sounds about right! At least I got my chuckle for the day and made me think of all you clowns!

A NOTE AND PHOTO FROM JIM FITZGERALD:



I saw this on the front page of the Navy.mil web site today. Had to share. "Rear Adm. Tom Reck, vice commander of U.S. 6th Fleet, delivers remarks during the closing ceremony for Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership 2015 aboard the Military Sealift Command joint high-speed vessel USNS Spearhead (JHSV 1) in Accra, Ghana. Spearhead is on a scheduled deployment to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility in support of the international collaborative capacity-building program Africa Partnership Station. U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Adam Cole (Released). "Note, for those who don't know it, RADM Reck was a long-time pilot and former commanding officer of VP-92.

A SHORT NOTE FROM MARC CONNOLLY:

That "unidentified colleague" of the other Marc (Marc Courtemanche) with a "C" at the back of the last VP Association newsletter was me, Marc Connolly. I think that's why we had that picture taken of the two "Marc C's" in a P-3B for sure.

A LONG NOTE FROM ANDREW SNOWDON:

Here is an unsolicited article I recently wrote ("A Southern Pivot") for an internal NCIS periodical. I thought it might be an interesting newsletter read for many of the VP-ers who spent so much time flying counter-narcotics missions in the SOUTHCOM AOR.

I presently run the NCIS Southeast Field Office that covers Florida, Georgia, the Carib and Central/South America. It provides good visibility on the transnational crime problem down south. It all started with those 10-hour burners out of Rosey Roads and Panama back in the early 90s!

I was an NFO in VP-92 from 1990-97. Fighting CAC-6 with fellow NFO Jack Sauve, PPC Dave Webster, AO Tom Drapeau, and company.

Two centuries ago, James Monroe recognized the geostrategic importance of locking down central and South America. His calculus remains equally relevant today. As a retrenchment of United States forces occurs after eleven years of expeditionary conflict, an opportunity exists. Defense resources should be redistributed to protect the southern approaches to America.

The threat posed by aggressors currently operating in Latin America is more immediate and proximal than any potential shooting war with China. And yet the national strategies remain squarely fixed on Asia. If a pivot of military resources is to occur, America would be wise to remove its southern blinders.

Through the years, the United States has reacted to nefarious incursions into Latin America, most notably from the communists. Today, the looming threat comes from non-state actors. Mao, and more recently ISIS, demonstrated the difficulties non-state actors can impose on hegemon.

America has wrestled with transnational crime syndicates operating throughout Latin America for decades. Established drug trafficking networks and proven shipment routes combined with innovative tactics, techniques and procedures have been the signature of an elusive threat. True, the international drug business has been alive for years without representing a palpable national security risk. But drugs do not define the existing threat to the south. Once adequately compensated, criminal networks would just as readily deliver terrorists and weapons across our border. The issue is not one of drugs, but of instability.

Islamic terrorists have established a foothold in Latin America. Given their shared opposition of U.S. interests, Iran has found a natural ally in Venezuela. Hezbollah sets up shop in places where Iran ventures, with fundraising its primary focus. What's worse, terrorist groups have sought exploratory partnerships with the drug trafficking networks.

Terrorists and drug traffickers share a similar architecture. Both are loose knit, compartmentalized and known to use proxies when possible. Those interested in Hezbollah or ISIS fundraising would be naturally drawn to the Latin American cash cow – cocaine. It was not unexpected when the DEA's Operation Titan identified a direct nexus between Hezbollah, cocaine trafficking and money laundering.

Other terrorists seek to radicalize local populations. Those who share an opposition to an enhanced American sphere of influence in Latin America, the drug runners, would be obvious targets for radicalization.

Venezuela's relationship with Iran carries a destabilizing potential for the United States. It has been suggested that Venezuela even facilitates FARC operations along the shared border with Colombia. Drug trafficking cartels would rather not risk added scrutiny by lashing up with terrorists. But when groups occupy the same operating space and are enabled by the same state sponsors, there may be few alternatives to active collaboration.

In 2011, the failed Quds Force assassination attempt on the Saudi ambassador to the United States originated in Latin America utilizing drug cartels. The same year, a human smuggling ring based in Belize introduced nearly 300 Somalis into the United States undetected. It is expected that al-Shabaab was represented among them, the same al-Shabaab that has pledged retribution for the recent death of their leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, by way of a U.S. drone strike. Drug runners risk imprisonment if stopped in international waters whether drugs are seized or not. It becomes a safer

proposition to smuggle humans. Established drug networks can just as easily ferry illegal migrants- none of which announce their terrorist leanings-without drawing unwanted attention from American policy makers.

Said Jaziri, the Tunisian zealot who condemned a Danish cartoonist to death for his unacceptable depiction of Mohammad in a newspaper, attempted unsuccessfully to use the southern avenue into the United States by way of Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize and Mexico. While his intentions were unknown, his interest in cloaking himself in the Latin American jungles was clear. Jaziri's chosen route of travel took him through lands controlled by drug lords.

Today, the Islamic State, or ISIS, dominates the headlines. American military strategies have historically favored "away games" rather than risking conflict on U.S. soil. ISIS would clearly like to challenge that assumption by answering what they view as incursions into their self-proclaimed Islamic State with forward attacks of their own in the United States. Some suggest that ISIS operatives are already present in America. The southern approaches must be secured to prevent access by those who would seek to join them.

The frequency of reports describing the lash up of terrorists and Latin American criminal networks is surging. The mounting threat on our southern doorstep is disquieting. It demands an ambitious interagency response.

In furtherance of the Asia pivot, DoD interdiction assets in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific have become far more scarce. General John Kelly, SOUTHCOM Commander, testified before congress in early-2014 that he is forced to watch 74% of identified narcotics movements travel north unimpeded. There are insufficient maritime assets available to stop them.

As SOUTHCOM interdiction capability reached its nadir, interagency partnerships, foreign collaboration and human intelligence gathering down range has peaked. Targets and tactics are being exposed. But there remains a wide gulf between information gathering and interdiction capacity. Today, the pangas, go-fasts and semi-submersibles carry drugs. Tomorrow, they could carry something far more sinister.

Given the paucity of maritime interdiction assets available, today's military strategy focuses on enabling partner nations to actively confront the drug networks. That prospect is not entirely comforting. The "Northern Triangle" comprises Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador and represents the most violent swath of land on the globe. Per capita homicide rates there dwarf those of Afghanistan and Colombia combined. Lawlessness pervades. The marriage of American intelligence and partner nation interdiction assets has represented an inconsistent defense screen.

Ecuador is going rogue, having decided to expel any remaining DoD footprint from the country. Ecuadorian riverines have been used as construction sites for fully submersible drug running submarines- the same submarines that could easily reach American shores with a terrorist's payload. An increase in transnational criminal activity has already been noticed there. Ecuador's relaxed anti-crime posture has not gone unnoticed by those wishing to access America's southern shores.

Hispaniola has emerged as the primary trans-shipment location in the eastern Caribbean. From there, trafficking routes that originate in Colombia and Venezuela continue on to the eastern seaboard and Europe. Few obstacles are presented to the traffickers there. Drug networks are increasingly using the go-fast boats that were favored in the 1980's due to the diminished threat of interdiction. Less need for stealth exists.

In opposition of terrorist expansion in the hemisphere, American strategy should focus on area denial, a concept borrowed from the Asian theater, to secure the southern approaches to the states. This requires an honest strategic reassessment and delivery of DoD assets where the most proximal threats exist, even at the expense of reduced deterrence in the China Sea.

Roosevelt Roads closed. Howard AFB closed. Today, what little flying that occurs down range is staged out of Curacao and Comalapa, El Salvador. Maritime, aviation and ISR assets should be delivered south before a regrettable headline demands it. Monroe, after all, was on to something.

NAS JACKSONVILLE PLANES MOVING TO CECIL AIRPORT (First Coast News 02/05):

The Navy will move its planes from Naval Air Station Jacksonville to Cecil Airport in June while the primary runway at NAS Jax is renovated, according to Times-Union News partner First Coast News. "They've done a lot of thinking and planning about this," said Russ Stalvey, who serves on the Cecil Airport Advisory Committee. Stalvey's house and farm are directly in the path of planes taking off at Cecil. He's not worried about increased noise in his neighborhood once the planes start taking off from Cecil. "They have to do some of the parking of some of the aircraft on one of the runways which is not used very much," Stalvey said.

The planes can't stay at NAS Jacksonville because the base is renovating its primary runway. In September of last year, the runway was repaired after a massive hole broke open in the cement. Documents obtained by First Coast News estimate the runway and a new LED lighting system will take about 13 months to install. "The scheduled repair and improvements is necessary to meet Navy Air Operations Safety Criteria and to ensure compliance with FAA airfield regulations," said NAS Jax spokeswoman Miriam Gallet. "At this point it's can't be pro on con. It's going to happen," said Bill Lewis. Lewis serves on the Argyle Area Civic Council and lives 3.5 miles from the Cecil Field gate.

With more people and more planes, security and traffic at the base will increase. The Navy, however, is not releasing how many planes and how many people the temporary move will impact. "JAA does have security that they will likely beef up as well as bring in additional security to keep the people out there safe," Stalvey said. The Navy says they have a big campaign that will start in April to advise residents on the Westside of any traffic changes or new security protocols. The planes will officially relocate from NAS to Cecil Airport in June.

First Coast News story by Clark Fouraker

CHINESE CONSTRUCTION DRIVES SUBARMINE REVIVAL (Forecast International 01/30):

Over the next 10 years, at least 133 new submarines are projected to enter service worldwide, according to Forecast International's 2015 edition of "The Market for Submarines." This is the fifth year in succession that the projected number of new submarines has increased following the low point reached in the early 2000s. There are a number of reasons for this revival of construction, including a bow wave of delayed construction programs held over from the late 1990s onward and increasing international tensions expressed as disputes over territorial waters. However, the most significant factor is the intense effort made by the Chinese Navy to modernize and strengthen its submarine arm. More than a quarter of all the new submarines to be built over the next 10 years will enter service with the Chinese Navy.

The Chinese submarine fleet is now a very different force from its ancestor of a decade ago. The submarines based on old Russian designs from the 1950s have been withdrawn from service, and the last few examples of Chinese developments from that basic design are being decommissioned. They are being replaced on a one-for-one basis by new classes of diesel-electric attack submarines that draw heavily on modern Russian, German and Japanese influences. The Project 041 may not be quite as capable as the latest products of European and Japanese shipyards, but it has closed the

gap greatly and is regarded as being a serious contender on the high seas. More importantly, almost 30 percent of the new diesel-electric submarines entering service during the next 10 years will be Chinese.

Another significant change has been the reappearance of a Chinese nuclear-powered submarine construction program. While construction of nuclear-powered attack submarines has been much slower than expected, with only 7.5 percent of new SSNs projected over the next decade coming from Chinese yards, China's nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine program has picked up serious momentum. More than half the SSBNs built over the next decade will be Chinese.

There is no doubt that the Chinese submarine fleet is much more formidable than its equivalent of 20 years ago. The question is, why have the Chinese invested so heavily in this arm of their Navy? Attempts to answer this question have led to a fever of speculation about the Chinese trying to establish a worldwide power projection capability or challenge the U.S. Navy for dominance of the Pacific Ocean. Other, less extreme suggestions include establishing an entry-denial capability that would stop the U.S. Navy from interfering with Chinese naval operations. Yet, what all these assessments neglect is the fundamental fact that countries build navies to serve their own national interests. The converse of this is that the national interests of China, as determined by the Chinese themselves, can be assessed by looking at its fleet and how it is deployed.

The answer to that question is particularly clear with the Chinese submarine fleet. While the Chinese have indeed invested heavily in their SSBNs, the priority in deployment is not to Qingdao on the eastern coast, where they might reasonably be expected to deploy against the United States. Instead, all the new SSBNs have been deployed to a new, southern SSBN base on Hainan, where they are better placed to operate against Chinese regional enemies. The lack of emphasis on and slow construction of SSNs suggest that the Chinese Navy does not anticipate any serious threat to its SSBNs – certainly not a reasonable assumption if the perceived enemy is the United States, but a very reasonable one if said enemies are regional powers with limited ASW capability. Deploying SSKs against the U.S. Navy requires something much better than the existing Chinese designs, but those submarines are entirely adequate to operate in the face of the limited regional ASW capability.

Thus, evidence from Chinese naval construction and deployment strongly suggests that China's naval buildup is purely in support of existing Chinese regional interests. Assuming that Chinese interests remain regional in nature and do not envision any kind of real confrontation with the United States, then we can expect to see continued construction of China's SSKs and SSBNs while SSNs take a back seat. Thus, Chinese submarine construction will continue to drive production forecasts for this sector.

Forecast International article by Stuart Slade

VP-26 BEGINS HISTORIC LAST DEPLOYMENT OF THE P-3C ORION (USN 01/26):

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (NNS) -- The "Tridents" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 26 begin their last deployment with the P-3C Orion aircraft with a send-off of their first two planes out of Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Jan. 22. The historic occasion was attended by senior leadership, family and friends of VP-26 sailors and members of the Jacksonville community.

"This is a historic deployment for you," said Rear Adm. Matthew J. Carter, commander of Patrol and Reconnaissance Group. "You are the last operational P-3 squadron on the East Coast. Once you go, we are a P-8 only force. That does not diminish anything you do with this aircraft. America has given us the best, and this aircraft is still a very capable airplane."

Carter knows firsthand how much the P-3 community has contributed to the success of the Navy's mission. He served as both executive officer and commanding officer of VP-26, and he told the Sailors just how special it is to wear the Trident colors. "We have been flying this aircraft for 50 years," said Carter. "The whole squadron, from the admin department, the maintainers and the aircrew has continued to go out and do great things, and I know you are going to go out on this deployment and do great."

Preparing the squadron for a deployment presents its challenges which include everything from packing up parts and equipment, preparing junior sailors for their first deployment and making sure Sailors are up to date with their training. "Seeing that there are not many P-3s around and this being the last P-3 deployment for the East Coast," said VP-26 Command Master Chief James B. Daniels. "Getting parts has been a big issue. Also, since most of our preparations have been during the holidays, we needed to work hard to make sure our Sailors were trained on what is expected of them and they were ready for deployment, but the squadron has met its challenges and is ready to go."

The support from family and friends is an integral part of the success of the sailors. "My family is so supportive and so much a part of my life," said Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class David Heder. "Having to leave them is the hardest part of deployments." Heder's wife and two children were there to show their support. Heder said that he was a little nervous and sad to leave his family.

"I'm looking forward to this as much as I can," said Heder. "I miss my family when I'm away, but I have a job to do and I enjoy it because I learn something new every day, and I'm challenged every day." Heder said this is his second history-making deployment since he has been in the Navy. "I actually helped introduce the P-8 while I served at VP-30," said Heder. "It's cool to be able to say that I was a part of the P-8 coming in and now a part of the P-3 going out in Jacksonville."

Retired Chief William W. Stewart, from the aviation structural mechanic community and a Jacksonville resident, was present to witness this historic day. Stewart served 30 years in the Navy and was factory-trained on the P-3 in 1962. "I was assigned to VP-9 as an airframes chief after training with Lockheed on the P-3s and went on their first deployment with the aircraft in November 1964," said Stewart. "It's kind of sad to see the P-3 go, but it's an evolution. It's a new age; we have cell phones, wide-screen TVs and now the P-8s."

VP-26 became the Navy's first operational P-3B squadron in January 1966, when the squadron received the first production of the P-3B while stationed at Naval Air Station, Brunswick, Maine. "I am so proud of all the sailors who have worked so hard to keep these aircraft flying for so many years," said Cmdr. Gregory Smith, VP-26 commanding officer.

Navy Press Release by MCS1 John Smolinski

NAVY WANTS TO INCREASE USE OF SONAR-EMITTING BUOYS (Associated Press 01/25):
SEATTLE (AP) — The U.S. Navy is seeking permits to expand sonar and other training exercises off the Pacific Coast, a proposal raising concerns from animal advocates who say that more sonar-emitting buoys would harm whales and other creatures that live in the water. The Navy wants to deploy up to 720 sonobuoys at least 12 nautical miles off the coasts of Washington, Oregon and Northern California. The devices, about 3 feet long and 6 inches in diameter, send out sonar signals underwater so air crews can train to detect submarines. "It sounds drastic in numbers, but it's really not drastic in its impact," said John Mosher, Northwest environmental manager for the U.S. Pacific Fleet. "Anti-submarine warfare is a critical mission for the U.S. Navy."

The Navy's training range is home to endangered whales such as orcas, humpback and blue, as well as seals, sea lions and dolphins. Critics say the noise from sonar can harass and kill whales and

other marine life. They worry the Navy is expanding training exercises without also increasing efforts to reduce the impacts. Steve Mashuda, a lawyer with the public-interest law firm Earthjustice, said they're not asking the Navy to stop training in the area. "But it's a big ocean out there. You don't need to have all of those square miles of training available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," said Mashuda, whose group previously sued over permits issued to the Navy.

The Navy needs authorization from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, since explosive detonations, sonar and vessel strikes have the potential to disturb, injure or kill marine mammals. Its current five-year permit expires this year. The Navy's preferred alternative proposes 30 bombing exercises a year, as well as increased air-to-surface missile exercises and anti-submarine tracking activities that use sonar. It is taking comments through Feb. 2 on its updated proposal.

Meanwhile, a separate Navy proposal to begin electronic warfare training in national forests in the state has also stirred opposition. People say they're worried about noise, public safety and other potential impacts. The Navy wants to improve training for jets based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. They propose using mobile electronic emitters in Olympic, Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee national forests so pilots could practice detecting those signals.

The Navy says no weapons are being used. Heavy-duty pickup trucks will be equipped with emitters that send electromagnetic signals into the sky that are similar to signals used by cordless phones and Bluetooth devices. The vehicles, which haven't been built yet, will be similar to a television news satellite truck. "There's absolutely nothing to be afraid of. There's no safety issue for the public, wildlife or the environment," Mosher said.

The Navy needs special use permits from the U.S. Forest Service to use forest roads and pull-outs. In Western Washington, a fixed-emitter is proposed for Pacific Beach while mobile trucks would use 15 sites in the Olympic National Forest and additional sites on state lands. The Navy is proposing eight other sites in north-central Washington in the Okanogan and Colville national forests. Mosher said the plan would allow the Navy to train closer to home. Air crews now fly to Idaho for the training.

Associated Press article by Phuong Lee

CHINA "NEVER PAID" BUSINESSMAN WHO BOUGHT AIRCRAFT CARRIER (AFP 01/20):

The Chinese businessman who bought an unfinished Soviet-era vessel that became his country's first aircraft carrier was quoted Tuesday as saying that Beijing never repaid the \$120 million it cost him. Entrepreneur Xu Zengping paid Ukraine a \$20 million fee for the Varyag, which was eventually commissioned into the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy as the Liaoning. But the price ballooned once towing it to China -- a process that was delayed for years -- and other costs were included. Xu also revealed that the ship was still fitted with its original engines at the time it was transported to China, contrary to reports.

Xu, a former PLA basketball player, was chosen to negotiate the acquisition, posing as a businessman who wanted to use it for a floating casino in Macau, and then giving it to the authorities. But he told Hong Kong's South China Morning Post newspaper: "I still haven't received one fen (one hundredth of a yuan) from our government. I just handed it over to the navy." After years of refurbishment the ship finally went into service in 2012, a symbolic milestone for China's increasingly muscular military.

According to the SCMP, China considered buying the carrier outright in 1992 but declined, largely in order to avoid raising tensions with the United States, given that memories of the Tiananmen Square crackdown three years earlier were still vivid. Around four years later, Xu was approached by

Chinese naval officials to do the deal. They cautioned that the navy lacked funding and that Beijing did not support the project, telling him he would effectively be betting on government policy changing.

The report also highlights the close connections between some wealthy magnates and China's military, at a time when Chinese investment overseas is subject to increasing scrutiny. It said little about the source of Xu's wealth, describing him as "Hong Kong-based" with interests in property and tourism, and said he was motivated by a desire to boost China's military development.

The Varyag was a victim of the collapse of the Soviet Union, which left the Ukrainian shipyard building it in dire financial straits. The ship's purchase, which was completed in 1999, was settled by Xu and its Ukrainian owners "over several days of alcohol-soaked negotiations", the newspaper reported. Xu said the vessel's four Soviet-era motors were intact and "perfectly grease-sealed" at the time, contradicting reports that the sale was for little more than a hull and superstructure. "The Chinese side deliberately released false information about the removal of the engines to make it easier for Xu and the shipyard to negotiate," the paper quoted a source familiar with the deal as saying. But he was left relying on friends to lend him tens of millions of dollars to complete the operation, Xu said, adding that the navy declined to pay on the grounds it "didn't have the budget in the late 1990s because of China's poor economy".

The newspaper quoted an officially published book as saying Xu "bargained with the State Council for years over compensation, but Beijing would pay only the US\$20 million auction price" -- without making clear whether it did so. It also cited an anonymous source as saying Xu was saddled with the costs because naval officials who had asked him to take on the mission had either died or were in jail.

China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said she was "not aware of the matter" when asked about the report at a regular briefing on Tuesday. Xu said: "I was chosen to do the deal. I realised it was a mission impossible because buying something like a carrier should be a national commitment, not one by a company or an individual." He added: "I didn't feel real relief until it was commissioned by our navy 12 years later. The feeling was like seeing my child grow up and marry."

US SPY PLANE SPOTTED OVER RAF LOSSIEMOUTH (Fannell's Red Star Rising 01/09):

A United States spy plane has been spotted at RAF Lossiemouth over the past week, piquing the curiosity of locals and prompting anger over Scotland's lack of maritime patrol aircraft. The Ministry of Defence revealed yesterday that at least one US Navy P-3C Orion sub hunter is currently operating out of the base – but refused to discuss its purpose. A spokesman said: "We can confirm that the UK recently requested assistance from allied forces for basing of maritime patrol aircraft at RAF Lossiemouth for a limited period. "The aircraft has been conducting maritime patrol activity with the Royal Navy, we do not discuss the detail of maritime operations."

Last December it was reported that the MoD had called in Nato spy planes to help in the hunt for a foreign submarine off the west coast Scotland. At the height of the operation, five aircraft from four different nations were understood to be involved in the search for the mystery vessel, along with Royal Navy war ships. It was never revealed whether any foreign submarine had entered UK territorial waters. Such patrol duties would previously have been performed by the Nimrod fleet, which was retired in 2010.

Moray MP Angus Robertson said the presence of the US aircraft showed there was a gap in the UK's air capabilities since the loss of the spy planes, which were formerly based at RAF Kinloss. "Assistance from the US and other allies is welcome in filling the gap created by the MOD scrapping the entire Nimrod fleet," he said. "However, it is unsustainable not having domestic MPA capability. The UK government have their priorities all wrong, as a maritime nation Scotland needs maritime

patrol aircraft. "All neighbouring nations with armed forces have them, including the Irish, Danes and Norwegians. It is embarrassing and dangerous that we don't."

The Nimrod aircraft, which entered service in 1969, were involved in maritime operations around the world. During the Cold War, Kinloss squadrons carried out anti-submarine duties, locating and shadowing Russian naval units, and latterly played a key role in protecting the UK's maritime interests and supporting land-based operations in the Persian Gulf. Following the Nimrod disaster* on September 2, 2006, in which 14 servicemen were killed when their aircraft crashed over Kandahar in Afghanistan, a coroner called for the entire fleet to be grounded. The RAF's 73-year association with Kinloss came to an end three years later when the Army's 39 Engineers Regiment moved in.

Note, the BOI report concluded that fuel probably escaped into a bay on the starboard side of aircraft XV230 either because of a leaking fuel coupling or an overflowing fuel tank. The fuel probably caught fire when it made contact with hot air pipes - through a gap in insulation - which can reach temperatures of 400C. President of the BOI, Group Captain Nick Sharpe, said there was no information to "positively identify" the cause of the crash, but enough to "probably" determine what happened. The Nimrod had received 22,000lbs of fuel in an air-to-air refuelling operation on 2 September 2006, but within 90 seconds of completion a fire alarm in the bomb bay and a smoke warning sounded. The crew initially aimed to land at Kandahar airport, but with the plane on fire and rapidly losing pressure, witnesses reported an explosion within six minutes of the first alarm.

PERISCOPE SPOTTING RADAR SOFTWARE POISED TO GO WIDE (www.c4isrnet.com 12/09):

The Navy has successfully tested software that detects submarine periscopes peeking above the waves, even when seas are choppy. The Automatic Radar Periscope Detection and Discrimination (ARPDD) system can distinguish a periscope from radar clutter on the ocean, according to a Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) announcement. "This system represents our first successful application of automatic target recognition on an aircraft," said ARPDD team lead Dave Breitigam.

The software passed an operational test on an AN/APS-153 multimode radar mounted on a MH-60R Seahawk. "Researchers developed the complex algorithms that are the basis of ARPDD's capability," NAVAIR said. "The mathematical equations are bundled into computer software programs designed to accurately detect submarine periscopes and distinguish them from other objects or disturbances on the water's surface. An operator can then make a final periscope confirmation based on the data and take appropriate action." ARPDD achieved initial operational capability in 2013. The latest test is a prelude to full-scale production.

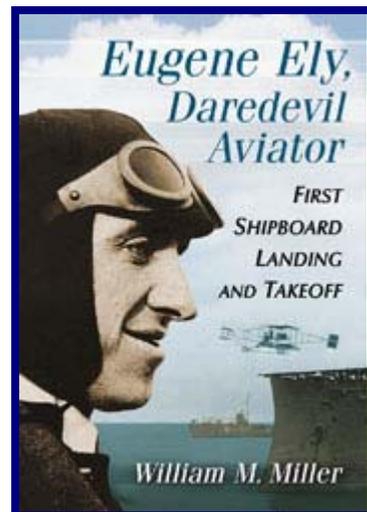
C4ISR & Networks article by Michael Peck

AUTHOR TO SPEAK AT SHEA NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM ON OLD NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH:

Author Len Sandler will give a lecture at the ANA Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation Museum (www.anapatriotsquadron.org) at 495 Shea Memorial Drive on old NAS South Weymouth starting at noon on Saturday April 25th. Mr. Sandler wrote a book about Army Sergeant First Class Jared Monti, who was killed in combat in Afghanistan on June 21, 2006 while trying to rescue a wounded comrade. For his heroic actions, SFC Monti was posthumously given the Medal of Honor. SFC Monti was born in Abington, MA and raised in Raynham, MA. He was the first Massachusetts resident to get the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War. He was also the inspiration for Lee Brice's #1 country hit song, "I Drive Your Truck". Mr. Sandler's lecture will last about an hour, including a Q&A session. He will autograph copies of his book that are brought to the museum or purchased from him there before or after the lecture. For more details about SFC Monti, Mr. Sandler, or his book "See You on the High Ground", go to seeyouonthehighground.com on the Internet.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Familiar with the name Eugene Ely? If not, you should be. Ely was a pioneering civilian pilot who, among other things, was the first person to take off and land an aircraft from a ship. Historian William Miller has recently written a book about Ely entitled, "Eugene Ely, Daredevil Aviator" (ISBN 978-0-7864-9677-8). If you are interested in naval history this book is well-worth reading. You can order it through any decent book store or purchase it on-line at <http://www.mcfarlandbooks.com>. It is available hard cover, soft cover, and Kindle editions. Check it out!



ON THE INTERNET:

Remember ADM Elmo Zumwalt? He was the progressive CNO during the early 1970s best known for long-haired sailors and beer vending machines. You can check out a list of his famous "Z-Grams" at <http://www.patriotfiles.com/index.php?name=Sections&req=viewarticle&artid=1344&page=1>.

MONTHLY MEETING:

Members who can do so are welcome to join us for lunch on the last Thursday of every month at Waxy O'Connor's Irish Pub at 94 Hartwell St. in Lexington, MA from 11:30 to 13:30. The pub is just outside the Hanscom Field Hartwell gate.

PARTING SHOT:



ABOVE: The old main gate on Route 18 at NAS South Weymouth. A familiar sight on drill weekends for many of us but now long gone. Marc Frattasio collection.



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

