



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 79

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

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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, marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

RECCO:



ABOVE: Islamic Iranian Air Force P-3F rigging the USNS Alan Shepard in the Gulf of Oman on November 11th 2019. The Iranians purchased new P-3s from Lockheed during the years leading up to the overthrow of the Shah. The P-3Fs were developed specifically for Iran. They were equipped with minimal sensor equipment and were basically visual and radar patrol aircraft. See the *International Business Times* article reproduced in the following pages. USN photo by PH2 Michael Lehman. Got something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

FINAL FLIGHTS:

We lost two shipmates recently, Dave Freund and Gordon "Skip" Burton. Dave was a P-3 flight engineer in VP-92 at NAS Brunswick and Skip, who was in VP-911 and VP-92, was an AW on P-2s and P-3s at NAS South Weymouth.

THE ADMIN FUND:

The VP Association has no dues but contributions are welcome to help defray the cost of web site hosting, postage, and other expenses.

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

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

LOST CONTACT:

Be sure to inform George Driscoll at gnddriscoll@gmail.com about home or e-mail address changes.

CONTACT GAINED:

We have a new member, Thomas Lee, who was a radioman in VP-92 at NAS South Weymouth between 1977 and 1982. If you served with Tom you can contact him at tlee0425@gmail.com.

BILL BOWE'S NEW LICENSE PLATE:



Bill Bowe, who was a warrant officer in VP-92's maintenance department for many years, wants everybody out there to see his new vanity plate.

HOW TO ACQUIRE A P-3 CREW SEAT:

Your newsletter editor has been actively seeking to acquire a crew seat from a P-3 Orion for many years. You'd think that with the Navy having essentially retired the aircraft, with only a few exceptions, that P-3 seats and other components would be fairly easy to find on the surplus market. However, this is not the case.

Numerous inquiries to the Navy, the General Services Administration, and non-military P-3 operators NASA, NOAA, and the Customs Service all proved to be dead ends. As a last resort, I wrote to every civilian company that I could find that operates P-3s in fire-fighting service. One company from Canada offered me an incomplete crew seat, everything except the cushion, headrest, and seatbelt, for \$8,500. That was out of the question for two reasons, the first being the price and the other being that it was missing so many components! Then, a company based in California offered me a complete crew seat, as-is and where-is, for \$1,000. They sent me a few photos showing the seat in place in the aircraft, and I immediately accepted.

The seat that I purchased is a starboard aft observer seat from P-3A Bureau Number 151357. This has special significance to me because this aircraft was assigned to the VP-MAU at NAS Brunswick for a time during the mid-to-late 1980s, where it was designated "Lima Bravo Zero Four" (LB 04). While with the VP-MAU, this aircraft was stripped of all ASW equipment and was used for pilot proficiency training and cross-country flights. I have many hours in my logbook sitting in this seat as an observer. After the VP-MAU was disestablished in 1991 the aircraft was transferred to VP-30, where it was used mainly for pilot training. It was retired to the boneyard at Davis Monthan during the mid 1990s and was sold to be broken up for parts. Its presently sitting in a private aircraft storage yard in Tucson, AZ where it is has been gradually stripped for parts for more than 20 years.

Having secured the seat, I now had to find a way to get it to Massachusetts. I thought about flying out to Tucson, but worried that I'd get it but have no way to bring it back with me. I wasn't sure that I'd be able to find a company out there that would ship it or that I'd be allowed to bring it on an airliner as checked baggage. I looked on the Internet and found a company in Tucson that specializes in crating and shipping furniture and antiques. I called and found them friendly and accommodating. They even offered to pick the seat up for me at the storage yard, which avoided a trip. All they needed was an address and a contact telephone number. I paid the storage yard, which was separate from the company that owned the aircraft stored there, \$390 to have their people remove the seat and its rails for me. The shipping company picked the seat up, built a really nice crate for it (\$250), and made arrangements to have it trucked to Massachusetts (\$700). Total cost for the seat was \$2,340. Yikes!

It wasn't over yet though. The headrest and cushion were basically shot, being heavily faded, stained, and torn. Thanks to the power of social media, I was able to secure these parts plus several other items that I can use to bring the seat back to almost-new condition if I want to. At this stage of the game I am trying to work up the courage to disassemble the seat to replace the back net, arm rest coverings, and a few other minor parts.

The photos presented below show (left) the seat in my wife Faith's truck after we picked it up at the trucking company's warehouse in Avon, MA, unpacked it, and loaded it on the truck and show (right) the seat in my house cleaned up and fitted with a new cushion, head rest, and put back on its rails.



STEVE MCDEVITT:



Here's a recent photo showing Steve McDevitt behind the controls of a TBM Avenger torpedo bomber over NASA's Cape Kennedy launch facility in Florida. Steve, who was an AW in VP-92 at NAS South Weymouth, in later years obtained a commercial rating and is an airline pilot. When he is not flying airline routes, Steve volunteers for the Collings Foundation, where he flies several Second World War vintage military aircraft including the Avenger and B-24 Liberator.

A few years ago your newsletter editor was flying a Citabria with his wife Faith, who was an AK in VP-92, near Plymouth, MA when a familiar voice made an inbound position report over the Plymouth Airport UNICOM. I inquired if the speaker was Steve McDevitt, and the answer was "affirmative". I asked what he was flying and where he was, and he replied, "I'm flying a B-24 and I'm over Plymouth Harbor". I thought that he was joking, and changed course towards Plymouth Harbor to see for myself. Sure enough, up ahead was unmistakable shape of the Collings Foundation's B-24. I tried to form up with Steve, but was unable to keep up. The B-24 was just too fast for me. Steve was giving rides from Plymouth Airport as part of the Collings Foundation's annual "Wings of Freedom" tour.

LARRY DALY AND EASTERN EMBROIDERY:

VP-92 alumnus Larry Daly operates a custom embroidery and screen-printing business called Eastern Embroidery located in North Carolina. Your newsletter editor has been dealing with Larry for many years. All the polo shirts and ball caps that this organization sells at the VP Association's annual reunions come from Eastern Embroidery. Larry provides high-quality products at excellent prices. He has the ability to embroider or screen-print pretty much anything on just about anything.

Larry recently produced several long-sleeved polo shirts for me in a variety of colors featuring full-sized embroidered naval aircrewman's wings with my name and rate embroidered right below them. I'm really happy with these shirts and have been wearing them to work regularly. A few photos of one of these shirts is presented on the following page:



Larry can embroider polo shirts, ball caps, and other things with aircrew, naval flight officer, or naval aviator wings, all Navy rates and rank insignias, the VP-92 Minuteman insignia as used on the tails of the squadron's aircraft, the NAS South Weymouth base insignia, P-3 Orion and P-2 Neptune designs, etc. If you'd like Larry to do something for you, contact him directly at easternemb@msn.com.

BILL POLLOCK SIGHTS SUBMARINE:



Bill Pollock, who was a pilot with VP-92 between 1985 and 1993, wants his old shipmates to know that he's still on the lookout for submarines. Bill is flying for an airline and he recently spotted this US sub and its escorts while departing San Diego, CA on a passenger run. Bill said, *"I got this picture with my phone. I must admit that it brought me back to many great times with the best crew-members and squadron mates I could have ever asked for."*

THE VP ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION:

We're planning to have our annual reunion in Weymouth, MA on Saturday September 19th. Most likely the event will be held at the Sons of Italy Hall in East Weymouth, which is the same place that

we've held it for the past two years. At this point we're not sure what the reunion banquet menu will be. For the past couple of years we've used Fasano's Catering, which has provided a terrific meal that everybody has enjoyed. However, last year we fell below their minimum number of guests, and although they honored their commitment to provide a meal for us, we had to make some adjustments to the menu. We've said this before, but it bears repeating, we will not be able to continue the annual reunions for much longer if attendance keeps falling. If you live within driving distance of Weymouth, please consider coming to the reunion this year. If you come, then try to get a shipmate to come too.

THE NAS BRUNSWICK REUNION:

There will be an NAS Brunswick reunion event over the weekend of August 14th through 16th. This event is being sponsored by the Brunswick Naval Museum. There will be many special events scheduled in and around the Brunswick area for reunion-goers and an air show featuring the Blue Angels on the old base that weekend. For more information contact president@bnamuseum.org.

THE REAL HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER (Daily Mail 02/06):

The U.S. Navy has spent weeks trawling the North Atlantic in the hunt for a Russian submarine that was known to have deployed into the waters off the East Coast of the United States. The Project 885 Yasen class guided missile submarine Severodvinsk has the latest Russian technology and was thought to be just a few hundred miles from the North American coast in the fall of 2019. Such was the worry of the U.S. military, the search involved a large number of Navy submarines, ships, and maritime patrol aircraft, all of which proved fruitless after the sub remained undetected throughout.

The vessel, which can carry up to 40 Kalibr missiles, among other weapons, is known for having an especially low acoustic signature and proves especially difficult to pick up on all manner of sophisticated detection equipment including sonar. The worry from Navy commanders was the possible presence of nuclear missiles with a range of up to 1,600 miles so close to the U.S. mainland.

The mission to find the secret sub was remarkably similar to that of the plot of the Tom Clancy novel and 1990 film, *The Hunt For Red October*, which told the story of a Soviet submarine equipped with innovative stealth technology. In the film, the submarine Red October was heading for the east coast and was virtually invisible. It appears that such technology is on board the Russian's latest spy sub, the Severodvinsk, of which the country hopes to build eight similar vessels.

Some Russian sources such as *Russia Beyond the Headlines* have suggested that Severodvinsk is equipped with active anti-torpedo defenses and some sort of anti-air capability. The 13,800-ton, 390-foot long, submarine is highly automated vessel with a crew of only 32 officers and 58 enlisted submariners according to USNI News. The sub also carried anti-submarine missiles and has the capability to lay mines along with its normal complement of torpedoes. The Russian attack boat was under construction since 1993 before it began sea trials in 2011 and then fully operation in 2014.

News of the essentially failed mission comes as U.S. sailors have been warned to be on alert as they sail to and from ports along the Eastern seaboard and to no longer assume the Atlantic Ocean is a 'safe haven'. The unsettling warning came earlier this week from Vice Admiral Andrew 'Woody' Lewis, the commander of the US Second Fleet and NATO Joint Force Command for the Atlantic.

"The homeland is not a sanctuary. Sailors can expect to be operating in a contested space once they leave Norfolk," Lewis said during a maritime security event on Tuesday at the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Over the last 20 years, most of the time we got underway from Norfolk in order to operate somewhere else, not in the Atlantic," Lewis said. "Our ships can no longer expect to operate in a safe haven off the east coast or merely cross the Atlantic unhindered to operate in another location,"

Lewis was speaking just as the Pentagon also confirmed it had deployed a new, low-yield submarine-launched nuclear warhead known as the W76-2. Vice Admiral Lewis says the issue is a rise in the number of increasingly deadly Russian submarines patrolling the East Coast - the same waters the U.S. Navy operate out of. "We don't have to look hard to see that the world is only getting more complicated... the Atlantic Ocean is a battle space that can't be ignored. We are seeing an ever-increasing number of Russian submarines deploy in the Atlantic. And these submarines are more capable than ever, deploying for longer periods of time with more lethal weapons systems."

The stark warning came just weeks after reports that a Russian spy ship was lurking in waters off the East Coast and operating in an unsafe manner. "We have seen some of our ships, the USS Mahan for example, in the early stages of their training cycle operating on station in the Atlantic with a Russian intelligence ship when it visited our coastline late last year," Lewis said. "Real world requirements do not discriminate. The intelligence ship did not care at what phase of training our ships were in or if it had achieved its full certification."

The Russian ship, the Viktor Leonov, was operating in an "unsafe manner" off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia according to the Military Times. "This unsafe operation includes not using running lights while in reduced visibility conditions, not responding to hails by commercial vessels attempting to coordinate safe passage and other erratic movements," the Coast Guard posted on a bulletin in December. "Vessels transiting these waters should maintain a sharp lookout and use extreme caution when navigating in proximity to this vessel. Mariners should make reports of any unsafe situations to the United States Coast Guard," the Coast Guard said in its safety message.

The Russian spy ship was operating a "couple hundred" miles off the east coast. It's not the first time the Viktor Leonov has been spotted conducting intelligence operations off the U.S. coastline. In 2017, the Leonov was trailed by a Coast Guard vessel but was operating in international waters. The Russian surveillance ship has been spotted conducting operations on a U.S. submarine base in New London, Connecticut, and other Navy bases in Florida and Virginia as far back as 1998. "They routinely deploy intelligence vessels worldwide to monitor the activities and particularly naval activities of other nations, but then again conducted lawfully in international waters and not unlike operations we conduct ourselves," then-Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis said in 2017 about the Leonov.

The Navy's 2nd Fleet became fully operational on New Year's Eve. The fleet was originally created to keep an eye on Russia during the Cold War but the Navy dissolved the fleet in 2011 in order to focus on counter terrorism in the Middle East and Afghanistan. However, in recent years with Russia once again emerging as a threat, the Navy again resurrected the 2nd Fleet in an attempt to once again dominate the waters of the Atlantic and Arctic.

Daily Mail article by James Gordon

RUSSIAN SUBS ARE MORE ACTIVE IN THE ATLANTIC (Business Insider 2/5):

Russian submarines are a growing challenge for the US Navy in the Atlantic, and the new US fleet in charge of that part of the world is relearning how to deal with them, its commander said Tuesday. "The Atlantic is a battle space that cannot be ignored. Our new reality is that when our sailors toss lines over and set sail, they can expect to be operating in a contested space once they leave Norfolk," Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis, head of the Norfolk, Virginia-based 2nd Fleet, said Tuesday. "We are seeing an ever-increasing number Russian submarines deploy in the Atlantic, and these submarines are more capable than ever, deploying for longer periods of time with more lethal weapon systems," Lewis said at an event hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the US Naval Institute in Washington, DC.

Lewis' warning is only the latest from a US official about Russia's increasingly capable submarines. Russia has devoted considerable time and resources to its sub force since it and the Russian navy as a whole deteriorated in the 1990s. The current Russian sub fleet is far from the size of and much less active than its Soviet predecessor, but its boats are quieter and more sophisticated.

New Russian sub-launched missiles, capable of striking across mainland Europe, are a particular concern, but as Lewis said Tuesday, the US is finding that Russian subs are present in areas where the US Navy was once unaccompanied. "Our ships can no longer expect to operate in a safe haven on the East Coast or merely cross the Atlantic unhindered," Lewis said. US sailors, like those aboard the new Navy carrier USS Gerald R. Ford as it did aircraft compatibility testing off the Virginia coast last month, "have the mindset that they are no longer uncontested and to expect to operate alongside our competitors each and every" time they're underway, Lewis said. "The USS Mahan, for example, [was] in the early stages of their training cycle operating on station in the Atlantic when a Russian intelligence ship visited our coast line last year," Lewis added. "Real-world requirements do not discriminate. The intelligence ship did not care at what phase of training our ships were in or if it had achieved its full certification."

The 2nd Fleet was reactivated in July 2018 and reached full operational capability on December 31, 2019. Its return is part of a broader effort to refocus on so-called great-power competition with more advanced opponents, namely Russia and China. In addition to activating new units, that shift has meant relearning skills that waned as the military focused on low-level conflicts. One of the biggest skill sets that needs to be rebuilt is anti-submarine warfare, or ASW, an exacting mission that requires numerous ships and planes, advanced technology, and a lot of patience. US and NATO navies let their attention to ASW drift after the Cold War and amid wars in the Middle East. Sonar operators were sometimes given new duties, and ASW assets like P-3 Orion and S-3 Viking patrol craft were sent on different missions, sometimes over land where their sensors could be used against new targets. "The thing about ASW that we are relearning ... is it's an all-domain fight, not just an undersea fight," Lewis said. "It's a fight in the air. It's on the surface. It's in the subsurface down to the seabed, and it's in space." "That all-domain integrated fight, or problem, that we're looking at is ... a really hard challenge," Lewis added. "That's something that we're leaning into, getting back into very much so."

Western navies are reinvesting in ASW, rolling out better gear aboard their ships and buying new platforms — the P-3's successor, the P-8 Poseidon, chief among them. (The availability of sonobuoys those assets need is a concern.) The P-8s "are really good in their mission, and their mission is ASW," Lewis said. "They are really, really good." "The all-domain and the coordination between the destroyers and the ASW-capable helicopters on board the destroyers in conjunction with the undersea assets, submarines and other undersea assets, with the P-8s — it's a big team that's pulled together," Lewis added, "but we're on the right trajectory."

In addition to 2nd Fleet, which is responsible for the western Atlantic up into the Arctic, Lewis leads Joint Force Command Norfolk, a NATO command meant to support readiness and defend lines of communication and resupply routes in the North Atlantic. In those roles, Lewis works closely with NATO navies, some of which have officers in his command structure. Lewis's vice commander at 2nd Fleet is Canadian Rear Adm. Steve Waddell. At Joint Force Command, Lewis' deputy is a British officer — "the intent is to pull the continents together," Lewis said. "I've also got on my 2nd Fleet staff a Norwegian officer. I've got a French submariner, and I've got a British logistician," Lewis said. "They have a very unique perspective as regional navies," Lewis added. "There's some really good insights that we get from those partnerships, and this goes to integration. It's much better to have lots of friends than fewer friends. That's what the Russians don't have, is very many friends." These are

partners who "military and strategically are absolutely more than willing to jump in" and work with the US Navy, Lewis said.

For 2nd Fleet operations, Lewis' command works closely with the Canadians as well as other US military branches, namely the Coast Guard and Marine Corps. Across the Atlantic, he said, the fleet partners largely with "the Nordic, Baltic, Atlanticist nations." For Joint Force Command Norfolk, which Lewis described as a "hybrid command," there is a NATO force structure with a small core of officers that can come from any of the 29 NATO member countries. The relationships aren't limited to NATO. Lewis pointed to this year's iteration of Baltic Operations, at which Sweden and Finland joined 14 other NATO countries for exercises around the Baltic Sea. "You get in a fight, you want the Swedes and Finns on your side," Lewis said. "This whole Viking thing is for real."

Business Insider article by Christopher Woody

QATAR TO ACQUIRE SUBMARINES (Forbes 2/4):

Qatar may become the first Arab Gulf state to operate submarines. A new memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Italian defense giant Fincantieri covers the "supply of cutting-edge naval vessels and submarines." Italy is known to be supplying warships to the Emiri Navy but the inclusion of subs is fresh information. It is significant because it could change the naval balance in the region.

The Qatari submarines may be part of a much larger 5 billion euro deal with Italy agreed in 2017. That deal included a large helicopter carrier, called a Landing Platform Dock (LPD), four warships and two patrol boats. It also involves shore support and help with a new offshore naval base. Submarines are expensive, but Qatar can afford to invest in growing its navy. It is sitting on the world's third-largest natural gas and oil reserves and has the highest per-capita income in the world.

Currently Iran is the only submarine operator in the Arabian Gulf, also known as the Persian Gulf, save for the occasional U.S. Navy or European submarine. Two of Qatar's neighbors, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, both have stated needs to acquire submarines. Qatar has difficult relations with these countries so the submarine acquisition could be seen, at least in part, as a response to these moves.

They are not the first Arab Gulf states to seek submarines, however. Infamously, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein attempted to purchase midget submarines after the 1991 Gulf War. His supplier would have been an Italian company called Cos.Mo.S. The illicit deal, part of the Oil-for-Food Program scandal, was the downfall of the Italian firm. The submarines were never delivered.

Forbes article by H. I. Sutton

EAST COAST NO LONGER A "SAFE HAVEN" THANKS TO RUSSIAN SUBS (The War Zone 2/4):

A senior U.S. Navy officer says that his service no longer considers the East Coast of the United States as an "uncontested" area or an automatic "safe haven" for its ships and submarines. This is a product of steadily increased Russian submarine activity in the Atlantic Ocean, including the deployment of more advanced and quieter types that can better evade detection. U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Andrew "Woody" Lewis made these comments at a gathering the U.S. Naval Institute and the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank jointly hosted on Feb. 4, 2020. Lewis is the commander of the Navy's 2nd Fleet, which the service reactivated in 2018 specifically to address the surge in Russia's submarine operations in the Atlantic. This fleet, headquartered at Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads in Virginia, reached full operational capability in December 2019.

"Our new reality is that when our sailors toss the lines over and set sail, they can expect to be operating in a contested space once they leave Norfolk," Lewis said. "Our ships can no longer expect to operate in a safe haven on the East Coast or merely cross the Atlantic unhindered to operate in another location." "We have seen an ever-increasing number of Russian submarines deployed in the Atlantic, and these submarines are more capable than ever, deploying for longer periods of time, with more lethal weapons systems," he continued. "Our sailors have the mindset that they are no longer uncontested and to expect to operate alongside our competitors each and every underway."

Lewis did not offer any specific details on the total number of Russian submarines the U.S. military believes are on patrol in the Atlantic at any given time compared to previous years. There has been significant debate about the exact scale of Russia's undersea activities, especially compared to peaks in the Soviet Navy's operations at the height of the Cold War, and whether the Kremlin has only been able to generate the additional deployments by pulling resources from the Pacific region. However, it's undeniable there has been at least a relative spike in Russia's submarine activity in the Atlantic in recent years. In October 2019, Norwegian state broadcaster NRK reported that the country's top military intelligence agency, the Norwegian Intelligence Service (NIS), also known as the Etterretningstjenesten or E-tjenesten, was monitoring the largest single Russian submarine exercise since the end of the Cold war, involving at least 10 submarines, eight of which were nuclear-powered types, including two nuclear-powered attack submarines from the Project 945A Kondor class, also known as the Sierra II class.

NRK's report also said that the E-tjenesten believed that the goal of the exercise was to demonstrate the Russian Navy's continued ability to deploy a large number of submarines far into the Atlantic while remaining largely undetected. This, in turn, showed the ability of that force, which might have included ballistic missile and guided-missile submarines, the latter of which may be able to carry Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles in the future, to hold targets on the East Coast of the United States at risk. As The War Zone noted at the time, the exercise could also give Russian submarines an opportunity to train on flooding the so-called GIUK Gap – standing for Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom – which refers to paths between the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. It could also demonstrate their ability to maintain a defensive posture off the shores of Norway to present a threat to NATO members and protect Russia's own assets in the far north, including its naval bases in the northwest region of the country and ballistic missile subs sailing hidden under the Polar ice cap.

"The Kalibr-class cruise missile, for example, has been launched from coastal-defense systems, long-range aircraft, and submarines off the coast of Syria," U.S. Admiral James Foggo, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe and Africa, had said in 2018. "They've shown the capability to be able to reach pretty much all the capitals in Europe from any of the bodies of water that surround Europe." Though last year's exercise was a particularly large demonstration of Russia's submarine capabilities, it does appear to be indicative of the kind of increasing challenges the Navy is seeing in the Atlantic, as a whole. Despite limited defense budgets, the Kremlin continues to invest heavily in the development and fielding of newer and more advanced submarines that are better able to elude U.S., as well as NATO, forces.

One of the War Zone's sources said that a large number of Navy submarines, ships, and maritime patrol aircraft spent weeks in the fall of 2019 attempted, without success, to locate the Project 885 Yasen class guided missile submarine Severodvinsk after it reportedly deployed into the North Atlantic. The type, which can carry up to 40 Kalibr missiles, among other weapons, is known for having an especially low acoustic signature. Russia has two further improved Project 885M Yasen-M class subs under construction now and plans to eventually build at least six of these upgraded versions, in total. The Yasen-M notably includes a new reactor that features an updated cooling system that reportedly further reduces the noise the submarine generates.

The Russian Navy also launched a new special mission submarine, the K-139 Belgorod, a modified Oscar II class guided-missile submarine, last year. Suffice to say it appears to have significant intelligence-gathering capabilities and will also reportedly be able to carry Russia's new and controversial Poseidon long-range nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed 'doomsday' torpedo. Belgorod is just one of Russia's fleet of special-purpose submarines, which also includes the unique Project 10831 Losharik spy submarine. This boat was heavily damaged in a fire on July 1, 2019, but the Russian Navy plans to repair it and return it to service. Russia's more advanced submarine fleets also include diesel-electric types, including the Project 636 Varshavyanka class, or Improved Kilo class, and the Project 677 Lada class, both of which are attack submarine types. The latter of these features an air-independent propulsion system, which makes it especially quiet.

Increased Russian naval activity in the North Atlantic is also not entirely limited to submarines. Vice Admiral Lewis highlighted how the USS Mahan, an Arleigh Burke class destroyer, was in the middle of training when it was tasked with monitoring the Vishnya class spy ship Viktor Leonov, in December 2019. The Viktor Leonov caused something of a stir when the U.S. Coast Guard announced that it had received reports that the ship was sailing in an "unsafe manner" off the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia. It also operated off the coast of Florida for a time. There was never any indication that the Coast Guard had corroborated those reports and it was unclear where the ship originated from in the first place. The Russian ship, which has made numerous trips to the Western Hemisphere over the years, left waters off the East Coast of the United States before the end of the year. It then returned for a time to the waters off Florida in January 2020. Earlier in 2019, the Navy had also notably shadowed Russia's first-in-class Project 22350 frigate Admiral Gorshkov as it sailed in the Caribbean as part of world tour following its commissioning. This warship is the Russian Navy's most modern vessel to date.

Lewis said that all of this has impacted how the Navy prepares ships and submarines and their crews for deployments, with a greater focus on high-end operations during pre-deployment exercises and a greater emphasis on operational security in case someone is watching. 2nd Fleet, which does not technically have any ships assigned to it and shares administrative space with U.S. Fleet Forces Command at Hampton Roads, is primarily responsible for overseeing these preparations. "Each one of these certification events gets more and more complex, more and more what we would call high end," Lewis explained. Recent composite unit training exercises that the 2nd Fleet has overseen, which are capstone events for the deployment of larger groups of warships, such as carrier strike groups and expeditionary strike groups, "are the best and most challenging operating I've ever done in my time in the Navy," he continued.

The U.S. Navy had also announced in 2018 that it planned to eventually create a submarine "aggressor" unit that could help train ship and submarine crews, as well as those on maritime patrol aircraft, to respond to the growing submarine threat in the Atlantic, as well as that of Chinese submarines in the Pacific. It could also help in the development of new tactics, techniques, and procedures for both submarine and anti-submarine warfare. "We talk about how we fight," Vice Admiral Lewis said. "We have to tie that to how we train, because we're never going to be better than how we train." From his description of the situation in the North Atlantic, it sounds like Navy ships, submarines, and aircraft have increasing opportunities now to put that training to the test in what might have been considered routine transits a decade ago.

War Zone article by Joseph Trevithick

NAVY TO EXPAND P-8'S MISSION (The War Zone 2/3):

The U.S. Navy says that it is interested in dramatically expanding the arsenal of weapons that its P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft are capable of carrying. The service says that it wants to start

by integrating the AGM-158C Long Range Anti-Ship Missile, or LRASM, on the planes, but then potentially move on to add various air-launched naval mines, precision-guided bombs, and the Miniature Air Launched Decoy, or MALD, to the available loadout options. There has been a debate within the Navy for years about giving the P-8As the ability to employ more types of munitions and other stores, which could turn these aircraft into arsenal ships of sorts capable of performing missions beyond anti-submarine, anti-surface warfare, and search and rescue.

On Jan. 28, 2020, Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) issued a notice on the Federal government's new central contracting website beta.SAM.gov, asking for contractors to submit information about their capabilities for integrating LRASM and the various other weapons onto the P-8A. LRASM, which is derived from the AGM-158B Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile-Extended Range (JASSM-ER) land-attack cruise missile, entered service last year on the Navy's F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, as well as the U.S. Air Force's B-1B bombers.

"The Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR), PMA-290 (Program Office for P-8A aircraft), is soliciting information from industry to determine potential contractors who have the skills, experience, qualifications, and knowledge required to perform aeromechanical and software integration of the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) onto the P-8A aircraft," the contracting notice reads. There is also "the potential to include, but not limited to, the following additional weapon systems: 500 lb to 2,000 lb class of Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) variants, Mk62/63/65 mines, Small Diameter Bomb (SDB-II), Miniature Air Launched Decoy (MALD), Bomb Rack Unit BRU-55, and Universal Armament Interface (UAI). Engineering tasks for this effort includes, but are not limited to upgrades to the Boeing Tactical Open Mission Systems (TOMS) and Stores Management Computer (SMC) software and interfaces, test planning, execution, data reduction, and reporting on flight test efforts."

At present, the P-8A's armament options consist of the AGM-84D Harpoon anti-ship missile and the Mk 54 air-launched lightweight torpedo. The Navy is also already working on integrating Mk 54s with the High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare Weapon Capability (HAAWC) kit onto the aircraft, which you can read about in more detail in this past War Zone piece. HAAWC adds pop-out wings and tail fins to the standard torpedoes, which will allow Poseidon crews to employ them from standoff range. The stealthy LRASM, which has been in development since 2014, is an obvious choice to give the P-8As a more capable standoff anti-surface warfare weapon over the aging Harpoon and has been a planned addition to the aircraft's arsenal for some time.

The possible addition of the Mk 62, 63, and 65 naval mines, collectively known as the Quickstrike family, which you can read about in-depth in this past War Zone story, also makes good sense. The Navy has been re-investing heavily in naval mine warfare, including developing new air, surface, and submarine-launched types, as a means of improving its ability to respond to a future large scale and very likely distributed maritime conflict, especially in the Pacific region. There are standoff wing kits now in development for the Mk 62 and Mk 63 mines, which would also enable the Poseidons to emplace maritime minefields from a safer standoff distance. The U.S. Air Force is already actively exploring this concept using its B-52H bombers.

Small Diameter Bomb II (SDB-II), now also known as the GBU-53/B StormBreaker, is a small munition with standoff capabilities and a multi-mode guidance capability, allowing it to engage static or moving targets in any weather and at standoff ranges. A P-8A loaded with GBU-53/Bs would be a powerful tool against swarms of manned or unmanned small boats. The ability of the Poseidons to carry a large number of those munitions in place of larger weapons, combined with the aircraft's range, sensor, and endurance abilities, could enable it to provide a more persistent defense against those types of threats across a broad area. The Navy's largely retired P-3C Orion maritime patrol

aircraft had the ability to engage smaller targets from a distance with AGM-65 Maverick air-to-surface missiles, a capability that did not get carried over to the P-8A.

The inclusion of Joint Direct Attack Munition-series GPS-guided bombs and the Miniature Air Launched Decoy (MALD) are especially interesting because they point to potential future mission sets for the P-8A beyond purely maritime operations. With the exception of Laser JDAM variants, munitions in this family are not capable of engaging moving targets, such as ships or other watercraft sailing on bodies of water.

The same standoff wing kit in development now for certain Quickstrike mines was also originally intended to help give JDAMs additional range and could become an additional capability for the P-8As in the future. StormBreaker also has the ability to engage land-based targets, including moving vehicles. Again, the P-8A's range and endurance, combined with its overall payload capacity, and its vast array of sensors, could help turn the aircraft into more of a multi-mission weapons truck.

Similarly, the various versions of MALD, including the newest MALD-X, could distract and confuse the air defense systems on enemy warships and shores. In addition to helping to protect itself on the way to a target area, the P-8A could use its large payload capacity to employ significant numbers of MALDs in support of other combat aircraft and cruise missiles as they wend their way to objectives.

It's not necessarily surprising that the Navy would be interested in growing the P-8A's arsenal and, as a result, its mission sets. There has been a debate going on about exactly this in the Navy's maritime patrol community since around when the Poseidon first entered Navy service in late 2013.

In 2014, a Navy maritime patrol pilot that had time flying the P-3 and the P-8 told The War Zone's own Tyler Rogoway, then writing for Foxtrot Alpha, the following: "There are currently two schools of thought in the maritime patrol community right now when it comes to how the P-8 should be used. One where it works closely along the lines of its predecessor, and follows the P-3's traditional mission sets of ASuW [anti-surface warfare], ASW [anti-submarine warfare], and limited ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance], and another where the P-8 can be adapted more dramatically for a litany of missions, including direct attack on ground targets. Personally, I believe the P-8A should also be equipped with a more robust set of weapons and sensors for the fight against smaller vessels in constrained littoral environments."

"Harpoon is a great weapon, but it's too imprecise to use with civilian shipping nearby and in dense target environments close to shore. P-3C had a robust short-range ASuW capability with AGM-65 Mavericks, and we saw that used in Libya. We took a major step back capability-wise with only Harpoon being deployed aboard the P-8. I would equip P-8A with an off-the-shelf targeting pod such as the AAQ-33 Sniper [Advanced Targeting Pod], which is currently found on everything from USAF F-16s to B-52s. Couple the targeting pod with short-range, laser-guided munitions such as AGM-65 Laser Mavericks, AGM-176 Griffin, and/or or Small Diameter Bombs and you have a lethal and persistent weapons system."

By 2017, a P-8A pilot from the Navy's Patrol Squadron Five (VP-5), the "Mad Foxes," told The War Zone that this same debate was still ongoing, explaining: Tyler Rogoway: "There seems to be two different forms of thought within the maritime patrol community as to how the P-8 and its mission set will evolve. One points to a much broader set of missions, where P-8s may even support ground troops, or provide overland armed reconnaissance, or even work as an arsenal ship along with other functions. The French are doing some of this with their old Atlantique IIs today, kinetic missions included. On the other hand, more traditionalists in the maritime patrol community want to keep the aircraft locked more strictly in traditional ASW, ASuW, sea control and surveillance roles.

How do you think the P-8 and its crews will evolve in the coming years?" Pilot: "This is purely my own opinion, but what we have seen from the fleet and combatant commanders, is that they want to keep the P-8 a maritime ISR and submarine tracking platform. The aircraft is optimized for this mission set, but it is being expanded with future capabilities like AAS [Advanced Airborne Sensor]. I believe that you will start to eventually see an evolution of the P-8 over time, in that as the P-3 and EP-3 begin to be phased out, the P-8 will slowly pick up those mission sets. I do not think it will ever become a true overland weapons truck asset; however, the plane definitely has the capability to accomplish these mission sets if the need arises."

The recent NAVAIR contracting announcement strongly suggests that the proponents of expanding the P-8A's mission set and giving it the ability to carry additional munitions and other stores to realize that expansion, have won the debate after all these years. It's not entirely clear what the Navy's timeline might be for when the aircraft may gain the ability to employ weapons such as SDB-IIs or JDAMs, but the goal certainly now seems to be to integrate these munitions in the future. The contract notice says that the prospective period of performance would run from 2021 to 2026.

The added armament options could be of interest to the P-8A's growing international user base, as well. Australia and India already operate Poseidons, while the United Kingdom is looking to stand up its first squadron this year. Norway, New Zealand, and South Korea all have aircraft on order and there are a number of other prospective customers, as well. All told, the next few years look set to be a very important and exciting time for the Navy's P-8A squadrons and their place in the service's overall concepts of operation.

The War Zone article by Joseph Trevithick

FIRST TRITON DRONES ARRIVE IN GUAM (Defense News 1/27):

Two new U.S. Navy drones arrived in Guam over the weekend for their first mission in the Pacific region, expanding the reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities in the area, the service said in a Jan. 27 news release. The MQ-4C Triton drones, manufactured by Northrop Grumman, will serve to help develop a concept of operations for the high-altitude, long-endurance systems, according to the Navy. "The inaugural deployment of Triton UAS brings enhanced capabilities and a broad increase in Maritime Domain Awareness to our forward Fleet commanders," Rear Adm. Peter Garvin, commander of the Patrol and Reconnaissance Group, said in the release.

Northrop Grumman says the Triton can detect, track, classify, and identify ships and can fly nonstop for more than 24 hours. The drones will operate under Commander Task Force 72 in 7th Fleet, which will use the aircraft for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions to complement the P-8A Poseidon, a military aircraft that provides anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare capabilities.

In December 2017, Northrop Grumman received a \$255 million contract modification to build three MQ-4C Tritons along with ground stations, tooling and related support equipment. Germany recently canceled plans to buy Tritons for about \$2.5 billion, as officials believed the aircraft wouldn't meet a deadline to adopt Europe's airspace safety standards.

Defense News article by Chiara Vercellone

SWOs WILL SOON GET TO WEAR NEW LEATHER JACKETS (Stars and Stripes 01/09):

Navy surface warfare officers will soon be issued new leather jackets to wear and show their expertise and create a sense of pride. The new jacket is similar to the famous aviation bomber jacket and is "meant to build esprit de corps" and symbolize the "tactical warfighter expertise" of being a

qualified surface warfare officer, the Navy said in an announcement Thursday. The jacket will be available starting in June.

“The surface warfare community has a long-standing history of excellence and an uniquely identifiable item is one way to signify the outstanding achievement and professionalism of our surface warfare officers,” Vice Adm. Richard Brown, commander of Naval Surface Forces, said in the announcement. “Those who wear the jacket will be easily identified as a part of a long lineage of professional ship drivers and maritime warfighters.”

The jacket is black leather and has knitted cuffs and waistband, a pointed collar, and is fully lined. It also has two front pockets with flaps and a Velcro nametape patch on the left side. Surface warfare officers will primarily wear the jacket while at sea with their at-sea uniforms. They can be worn when officers are ashore as an optional outer jacket but only with the service uniform.

Active, Reserve, and full-time support officers who have earned the surface warfare officer qualification will be allowed to wear the jacket. Officers who later move to a different job specialty outside of surface warfare can still wear the jacket and can also wear it when they leave the Navy.

Stars and Stripes article by Caitlin Kenney

NAVY PLANS TO STOP BUYING P-8 POSEIDON SUB HUNTERS (Forbes 12/02):

The U.S. Navy’s 2021 budget proposal apparently will request no new money to purchase the service’s only long-range anti-submarine aircraft, despite a growing undersea threat and a shortfall in aircraft designed to cope with that threat. The P-8 Poseidon multi-mission aircraft, a militarized version of the Boeing 737 jetliner, conducts anti-submarine, anti-surface and shipping interdiction missions from land bases, flying much further with greater payload than any carrier-based plane can.

Poseidon rotates frequently to the bases of overseas allies as it conducts maritime surveillance of the Northern Atlantic, Western Pacific and other areas. The plane uses acoustic sensors and radar to detect hostile warships, and carries munitions such as torpedoes that would be used in wartime to destroy such threats. However, the Navy says it has a validated warfighting requirement of 138 Poseidons to cope with Russian and Chinese naval forces, and it looks likely to stop purchases at 117—far short of that requirement. **Congressional appropriators are asking the Navy how it would replace the aging sub hunters in two Navy Reserve squadrons—which must retire in the near future—if production of the P-8 is prematurely terminated.**

During the Cold War, the Navy operated three dozen squadrons of land-based sub hunters as it sought to counter the threat posed by hundreds of Soviet submarines and the powerful surface fleet of the Red Navy. Today it has only a dozen active-duty squadrons, plus those two reserve squadrons—even though the Russians continue to invest in new undersea technology and the Chinese Navy is building out its own submarine force.

The Russian undersea fleet is smaller today than it was during the Cold War, but its boats are becoming more capable—more survivable, more lethal—and Moscow is signaling that submarines will remain a priority in its military preparations. As David Axe, defense editor of The National Interest, observes, “Where the Russian navy is all but abandoning the production of new aircraft carriers, cruisers and other ‘blue water’ surface warships, it has recommitted to sustaining a large fleet of big, long-range submarines.” The newer submarines in the Russian fleet are harder to track than legacy vessels, and some are equipped with anti-ship missiles that can hit adversary vessels hundreds of miles away. Last month, the Russians conducted their biggest undersea military exercise since the Cold War, sending ten subs into the North Atlantic to test the defenses of NATO.

China's undersea fleet is not as capable as Russia's, but it is improving rapidly. In fact, a recent study by the respected RAND Corporation notes a tenfold gain in Chinese undersea capabilities since U.S. aircraft carriers operating near Taiwan managed to escape detection in 1996. RAND attributes the gain in Chinese capability to quieter subs and the introduction of cruise missiles into the submarine force. Like Russia, China operates a mixed fleet of both nuclear-powered and diesel-electric subs. The nuclear-powered subs, some of which carry long-range ballistic missiles, have much greater range and endurance than conventionally powered subs. However, the diesel-electric are thought to be quieter, and thus are well-suited to control chokepoints between China's marginal seas and the broader Pacific. U.S. naval intelligence fears these subs will increasingly be cued as to the movement of U.S. warships by overhead (i.e., orbital) systems.

The geographical circumstances in which the Russian and Chinese navies operate provide ample opportunity for the deployment of P-8 sub hunters within range of their undersea quarry. But 117 Poseidons will not be sufficient to continuously monitor all areas of interest as hostile submarine forces grow more stealthy and more numerous. Prime contractor Boeing has done a good job of keeping the P-8 on schedule and under budget, leveraging the economies of scale made possible by a global installed base of thousands of 737 commercial transports. The Government Accountability Office has noted the success of the Poseidon's acquisition strategy, which stressed adapting proven hardware to emerging threats.

India, Australia and the United Kingdom have signed on to the program, and other countries such as Norway and South Korea are signaling interest. Dozens of Cold War maritime patrol aircraft around the world will need to be replaced in the next decade. Whether they are replaced by the P-8, though, will depend on whether the U.S. Navy keeps buying the plane to fill out its warfighting requirement.

Because Poseidon is based on a version of the Boeing 737 that is no longer manufactured for commercial carriers, if production ceases it will likely never resume. Suppliers will stop making unique parts and money will be too scarce to shift the mission for a handful of additional sub hunters to the next-generation 737 MAX. So the Navy either meets its warfighting requirement now or it never does. One benefit of doing so is to maximize the interoperability of the U.S. Navy's land-based surveillance aircraft with the allied fleets which will share its missions in the future.

There's no mystery about why the Navy hasn't funded additional Poseidon purchases in future years. It is short of money. Despite a sizable increase in funding from the Trump Administration, the service has little hope of ever getting near the fleet size of 355 warships it says it needs to cover the world. Tradeoffs are being made in the purchase of submarines, sealift and other assets vital to countering military moves by Russia and China. But filling out the Poseidon fleet to the number actually needed by warfighters is not a heavy lift in budgetary terms. The planes cost less than \$200 million each, and are much cheaper to keep flying than most military aircraft, thanks to their commonality with commercial 737s. It is very unlikely the Navy will ever get a better deal than it would today by purchasing more P-8s off an assembly line at the peak of its performance.

If the Russian and Chinese undersea fleets keep improving at the pace recently seen, the U.S. Navy is going to need all the Poseidons specified in its warfighting requirement. Stopping now at less than the number the Navy itself says are needed would be a false economy that could lead to operational catastrophe in a future conflict.

Forbes article by Loren Thompson

IRANIAN P-3 BUZZES U.S. NAVY SHIPS (International Business Times 11/30):

The U.S. Navy has reported that an Iranian P-3F Orion aircraft on a maritime patrol flew dangerously close to its ships that were conducting a resupply mission in the Gulf of Oman. The U.S. Fifth Fleet is operating in the area in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the central region through which a large chunk of the world's oil exports flow.

A single-pass might be able to be overlooked because Iranian airspace is not far from the location. However, according to a report by Defense Blog, the P-3 Orion flew several times near the USNS Alan Shepard and the USS Normandy on the Nov. 11. The Navy did not take any military action, but the situation was monitored very closely.

Buzzing of naval ships by aircraft of rival nations in international waters is not uncommon but with Iran it has come months after the U.S. Navy shot down one the country's drones, and probably a second one, in July on a similar surveillance mission. The Navy said at the time of the incident that the USS Wasp shot down the drone because it was "a safety of flight problem." Those shootings also came soon after the Iranians shot down a U.S. drone and President Trump ordered an attack on Iranian targets before canceling the order barely minutes before the assault began.

The P-3 Orion is a land-based long-range anti-submarine warfare aircraft primarily used for weather operations in most countries. The aircraft was produced by Lockheed Martin for Iran between 1975 and 1976. Despite the degrading tensions between the two countries the Orion was continuously used in service by the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force during a tumultuous time in its history.

According to a report by Defense Blog, there are still a total of four P3F Orion aircraft in service with the Iranians. Incursions of this nature don't come as any surprise to anyone in the military as tensions between the United States and Iran have reached a fever pitch in recent months, with Iran's purported attacks on Syrian oil fields using their Houthi Rebels to carry out missions.

The U.S. military has been able to maintain composure toward Iran though, in order to avoid an international incident in a strategic sea lane. The U.S. military regularly patrols the area and enforce international maritime law, allowing for safe passage through the heavily contested area. In this case, aside from releasing the footage, there has been no specific comment by the U.S. military or its allies in regards to the situation. Iran has also not made a statement as to the intentions of the P3 Orion.

International Business Times article by Benjamin Minick

HOW THE PHILLIPINES WILL PATROL THE SOUTH CHINA SEA (National Interest 11/26):

In a move that won't please China, the Philippines is planning to acquire U.S. P-3 long-range maritime patrol planes. "It will be good if we acquire even one P-3 Orion," said Department of National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana. "Provided it has all its original equipment. Otherwise it will just be another transport plane. We will find out if we can get one or two."

Lorenzana said the patrol aircraft would enhance the Philippines ability to monitor the region. The Orions would be "very important as our domain awareness will be greatly enhanced," he said. "The defense chief said he will soon make a formal request for the acquisition of the American aircraft," according to a Philippine government news release. The purchase would be made through the U.S. government's Excess Defense Articles Program.

Currently, the Philippines has a limited maritime patrol capability. The Philippine Navy has five TC-90 patrol planes donated by the Japanese navy in 2017 and 2018. Based on the ubiquitous Beech King Air civilian turboprop aircraft, the TC-90 has a range of about 1,200 miles. With a range of 2,380

miles, the Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion is in a different league. Based on the Lockheed L-188 Electra airliner, the venerable Orion has been the mainstay of U.S. long-range maritime patrol since the early 1960s. Though being retired in favor of the P-8 Poseidon (itself based on the Boeing 737 airliner), the P-3 can be equipped with sophisticated sensors as well as Harpoon missiles, anti-submarine weapons, and mines.

Given the nation’s limited financial resources, the prospect of getting long-range aircraft—even if the planes are elderly—at a bargain price is tempting. The Excess Defense Articles Program comprises “DoD and U.S. Coast Guard-owned articles no longer needed and declared excess by the U.S. Armed Forces,” according to the U.S. government. “This excess equipment may be offered at reduced or no cost to eligible foreign recipients on an ‘as is, where is’ basis in support of U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives.”

However, one obstacle may be what kind of Orions the Philippines gets. “There has been a lot of sensitivity in the Philippines during previous EDA transfers regarding whether original technology would remain on board,” says Brian Harding, an Asian security expert at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. “That’s why Defense Secretary Lorenzana has been clear that the P-3s need to have their full equipment package to be useful.”

Nonetheless, Harding believes Orions for the Philippines “makes a lot of sense.” “The P-3s would complement surveillance aircraft recently provided by Japan and help with both maritime domain awareness. They could also potentially be useful on land, as intelligence from P-3s was used during the Marawi siege.” In 2017, Philippine forces battled Islamic rebels who seized the city of Marawi.

However, the Philippine experience with surplus American aircraft has not always been a happy one. In 1977, Manila purchased thirty-five ex-U.S. Navy F-8 Crusader fighters. But poor maintenance left most of them rusting and unable to fly. Another potential obstacle could be China, which may not be pleased with the prospect of the Philippines acquiring long-range aircraft that can operate over South China Sea waters and islands claimed by China and other nations. However, Harding doesn’t believe this will be a problem. “It is not controversial that the Philippines should have better awareness of what’s happening in their waters,” Harding said.

National Interest article by Michael Peck

RECOMMENDED READING:



Here’s an interesting book that I came across recently, “Sea Stories: Tales Told By An Old School, Politically Incorrect Chief” by Bob Stockton. The title provides a pretty accurate summary of what the book is about. Your newsletter editor purchased a copy to give to an 95-year-old former ATCS from NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth, who’s not doing too well these days. He told me that he really enjoyed it and I take that to be an endorsement. You can purchase this book in Kindle and paperback version from www.amazon.com.

ON THE INTERNET:

There are fairly active groups on the popular social media web site Facebook for VP-92, NAS South Weymouth, NAS Brunswick, and for the P-3 Orion. There are also Facebook groups out there for just about every Navy rate and many commands, past and present. You can check them out at www.facebook.com. While you are on the Internet, be sure to check out Nevins Frankel's VP Navy web site at www.vpnavy.com. There's probably nobody out there who has done more to help preserve the history and heritage of U.S. Navy maritime patrol aviation than Nevins. His web site is a valuable repository of photos and stories.

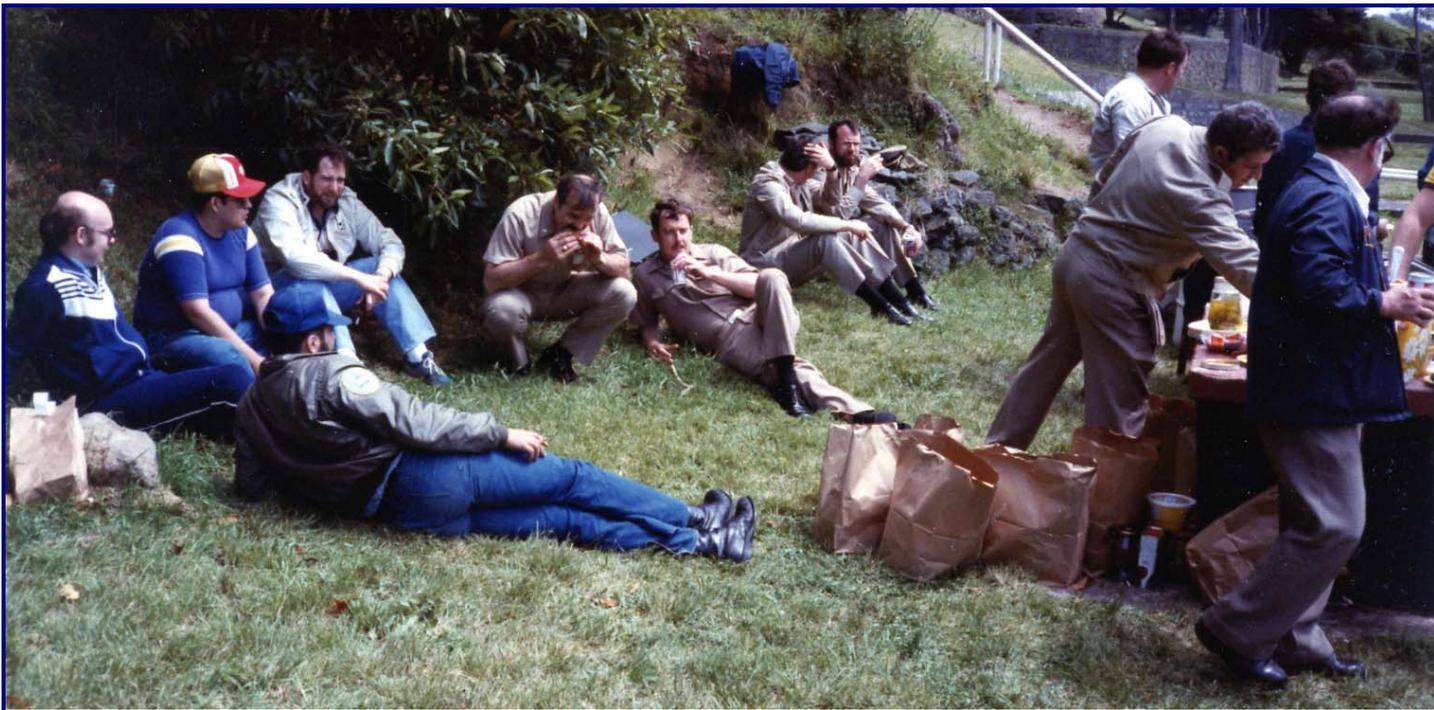
MONTHLY MEETING:

Members who can do so are welcome to join us for lunch on the second Thursday of the month at Warren's Place in South Weymouth, MA (this is in the Whole Foods Plaza off Route 18) from 11:30 to 13:30.

PARTING SHOTS:



ABOVE: It looks like this VP-92 crew is celebrating somebody's birthday or some other special occasion on top of the sonobuoy chute on board a P-3A or P-3B Orion sometime between 1975 and the late 1980s.



ABOVE: VP-92 party during annual training in Bermuda in the 1980s. **BELOW:** The squadron's NATOPS training department at NAS South Weymouth. Looks like pre-CPO Bob Allen among others. Got something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.



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

