



# 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 66

[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](mailto:marc_frattasio@yahoo.com).

## RECCO:



**ABOVE:** SP-2E Neptunes at NAS South Weymouth on a cold winter day sometime during the late 1960s. If you have similar things to share contact Marc J. Frattasio at [marc\\_frattasio@yahoo.com](mailto:marc_frattasio@yahoo.com).

## FINAL FLIGHTS:

Ken Dion passed away recently in Brockton, MA due to complications from Alzheimer's disease. He was an ADCS with VP-92 at NAS South Weymouth.

## THE 2016 ANNUAL REUNION:

Our annual reunion was held on Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup> at the VFW Hall in East Weymouth instead of at our normal location, the Weymouth Elks Hall. Over 50 VP Association members and guests attended this year. As was announced at this event, we will NOT hold a VP Association annual reunion in 2017 and are encouraging members to attend an event that is being organized by former VP-92 commanding officer Scott Bailey and other former VP-92 personnel to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the squadron's disestablishment instead. More details about what's in the works for 2017 are presented in next section. A few photos taken at the reunion are presented below:



**ABOVE LEFT:** Frank Holland, Bob O'Brien, and Paul Lapinski visiting the ANA Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation Museum before heading to the Weymouth VFW Hall. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Kevin Cahill, Mary White, Mary Primiano, Jack Primiano, Den Forbes and other members socializing in the VFW Hall before the meal was served. **BELOW:** Wayne Thomas at the head of the chow line.





**ABOVE:** If you look real closely at this table you'll notice that Ernie Godzur was wearing his old "Cracker Jack" dress uniform. That's a tight-fitting outfit under the best of circumstances. How many of you can still fit into yours? **BELOW LEFT:** Suzzane and Peter Carpenter. **BELOW RIGHT:** Faith Frattasio and Susan Zimmerman.





**ABOVE:** Bill and Barbara Hanigan and Joe Mortland are hanging on every word spoken by our guest speaker, author John Galluzzo. John was unable to bring any copies of his book “Squantum and South Weymouth Naval Air Stations” to the reunion to sell. If you go to almost any bookstore in eastern Massachusetts you should be able to find this book in the Arcadia Press “Images of America” section. Alternatively, you can order on-line from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). It’s a very good book that’s filled with great photos of the both NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth. For \$20 you can’t go wrong! Don’t forget to check out John Galluzzo’s newest book (November 2016), “Massachusetts Aviation” as well. There are many photos of NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth in there too!



We always have something to give out to everybody who comes to the annual reunion. This year we handed out small enameled VP-92 squadron insignia pins. We still have a few left over. If you’d like one while the supply lasts, send a check for \$7 to Barbara Hanigan, 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02332. Be sure to include a note along with the check indicating that you want one of the VP-92 squadron insignia pins that were handed out at the recent reunion.

### **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. A big “thank you” to Bob Allen, Tom Carroll, Andre Castellano, Les Connolly, Paul Lapinski, Art Ricca, Leo Salmeri, Harvey Shore, and Fred Squires for their recent generous donations to this organization.

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

If you have an e-mail address and get your newsletter in the mail then we do not have your e-mail address. If this is your situation, please contact George Driscoll at [gnddriscoll@gmail.com](mailto:gnddriscoll@gmail.com) ASAP so we can send the newsletter 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 really be better for us to send it to you via e-mail.

### **LOST CONTACT:**

Please be sure to inform George Driscoll at [gnddriscoll@gmail.com](mailto:gnddriscoll@gmail.com) whenever your street or e-mail address changes so we can update our contact list.

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

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VP-92

### **VP-92 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY REUNION:**

Although anybody is welcome to join us, the VP Association is basically the alumni association for VP-92 and its predecessor reserve patrol squadrons. As you should know, VP-92 was officially disestablished on November 30, 2007 at NAS Brunswick, ending a sixty-year heritage of USNR patrol aviation in New England. 2017 will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disestablishment of VP-92.

This is an important milestone that must be commemorated. Scott Bailey, the last CO of VP-92, and other former squadron personnel are organizing a reunion event to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the decommissioning of VP-92. This event will be held in the Brunswick area over a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday during late July or early August 2017. This event will probably feature a Portland Seadogs sporting event on Friday night, a clambake on Saturday, and a golf tournament and memorial event on the old base on Sunday. More details will be provided in future issues of this newsletter and on the VP-92 Facebook group at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) as this event approaches.

We have been asked not to hold a VP Association reunion in 2017 and encourage all members to consider going to the VP-92 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion instead. We are complying with this request and are asking all members to consider going to Brunswick to attend this important squadron reunion.

### **NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY REUNION:**

There's another important anniversary coming up in 2017, that being the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the decommissioning of NAS South Weymouth, which happened on September 30<sup>th</sup> 1997. A 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary NAS South Weymouth reunion will be held at the Randolph Elks Hall in Randolph, Massachusetts on Saturday September 30, 2017. Please note that this is about the same date that we would normally hold the VP Association reunion. Although we strongly encourage all VP Association members to go to the VP-92 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion event in July or August, those persons who can't travel to Maine are welcome to come to the South Weymouth event in September.

The NAS South Weymouth reunion will start at noon and will go until 5 PM. It will include memorabilia displays, a continuous slide show of historic images pertaining to NAS South Weymouth, a presentation on the history of the base, and a buffet meal. All attendees will get a special commemorative NAS South Weymouth polo shirt based upon an actual design sold at the Navy Exchange on the base during its final years. The ANA Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation Museum will be open from 9 AM to noon on the day of the reunion for all attendees to visit. We are going to try to have a guest speaker who was involved with the BRAC process and closing the base.

For more information and to express interest in going please join the "NAS South Weymouth Reunion" group on Facebook at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). As with the VP-92 reunion, we will present more information about this event in the VP Association newsletter as the date approaches.

### **NAS BRUNSWICK MUSEUM MAJOR FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN:**

The Brunswick Naval Museum and Memorial Gardens, a group that intends to establish a military heritage museum in the former base chapel building on old NAS Brunswick, Maine, has kicked off a major financial donation effort called the "Wheels Up Capital Campaign". The museum seeks to raise a total of \$770,000 to make improvements to the building, pay off their mortgage, and set up exhibits. The museum is a 501c3 non-profit educational organization, thus, contributions should be tax deductible. For more information go to the museum's web site at [www.brunswicknavalmuseum.org](http://www.brunswicknavalmuseum.org).

### **NAVY'S MOVE TO STRIP JOB TILES WILL HURT MORALE (Washington Examiner 10/06):**

Rep. Ron DeSantis, a former Navy lawyer who advised a SEAL commander in Iraq, is criticizing the Navy's decision to jettison its centuries-old tradition of referring to sailors by job titles, arguing the move will likely damage enlisted morale. The Florida Republican on Tuesday voiced deep concerns about the Navy's decision, announced last week, to strip every enlisted sailor of their "rating" title, or specialty, in favor of a code for that position similar to other branches of the military. So job titles such as boatswain's mate, yeoman and master-at-arms will be replaced with seaman, petty officer and chief. The change has its roots in the military's decision to open all jobs to women, which prompted reviews of job titles to see if they should be made more gender-neutral. The Navy's review prompted a follow-on "deep dive" look at the entire system, and personnel officials say the ratings change isn't directly connected to the original gender directive.

The move to drop the job titles sparked a social media firestorm from critics who argued the action would scuttle hundreds of years of tradition and strip the titles that had defined sailors' jobs and identities throughout their Navy careers. "The practice of using ratings for enlisted personnel specialties is a centuries-old naval tradition that predates the founding of the United States," DeSantis said in a statement to the Washington Examiner. "These ratings are a source of pride for enlisted sailors, who represent the backbone of the U.S. Navy."

In announcing the change, the Navy last week said the move was the beginning of a career overhaul that would give enlisted sailors more career flexibility within the service and could lead to better chances to land civilian jobs after leaving the service. DeSantis, a Harvard Law graduate who served as a Navy lawyer from 2004-10, argued that the ratings system isn't broken, "but this change tosses tradition out the window and will likely hurt enlisted morale." "The Navy's justification for making the radical change has been, at best, underwhelming," he said. During his years as a Navy lawyer, DeSantis worked directly with detainees at Guantanamo Bay, and in 2007 deployed to Iraq with the troop surge where he served as a legal adviser to a SEAL commander in Fallujah.

Over the weekend, a critic launched a White House petition asking President Obama to overturn the decision, which over the past few days quickly racked up more than half of the 100,000 signatures required for a presidential response. The White House launched "We the People" on [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov)

in 2011, allowing citizens to petition the executive branch in an effort to help create a more open and responsive government. Petitions must reach 100,000 signatures in 30 days in order for White House staffers to review it and issue an official response. Neither Obama nor the White House has said whether the president knew about the Navy's decision to dump the job titles or whether he signed off on it. A White House official referred the Examiner's questions about the decision-making process to the Pentagon for comment.

Along with widespread outrage from current and former sailors on social media, the Fleet Reserve Association National Headquarters, a nonprofit that represents the interests of enlisted Navy, Coast Guard, Marine veterans and active duty personnel, promoted the White house petition on its Facebook page Tuesday. "For 241 years, Navy personnel have been identified by their job specialty, knows as a 'rating.' The oldest rates such as Boatswain Mates and Gunners Mate predate the founding of this country," the post said. "Being known by your job title was a sense of pride. A sign of accomplishment. #FLEETRESERVE."

*Washington Examiner article by Susan Crabtree*

### **THE END OF RATINGS (Navy Times 10/02):**

"Choose your rate, choose your fate." It's a saying every sailor has heard — and as of late September, it's history. That's the news as the Navy has eliminated every sailor's rating title in favor of generic rank-specific titles like petty officer 2nd class, a move intended to encourage training across specialties and to help them later transition into the civilian workforce with more skills. "We're going to immediately do away with rating titles and address each other by just our rank as the other services do," said Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Robert Burke in a Sept. 19 interview. "We recognize that's going to be a large cultural change, it's not going to happen overnight, but the direction is to start exercising that now."

The announcement signals a tectonic shift in Navy's personnel system, where sailors have long identified with their individual occupations — ratings — first and foremost. They're the stuff of murals aboard ship and ink on arms. The magnitude of the move isn't lost on the Navy's top leaders, who recognize this move will be unpopular and stress the changes will allow sailors to move easily between related fields and choice more duty stations. The move ends every enlisted rating, some of them like Gunner's mate, Quartermaster and Boatswain's mate that dated back to the Continental Navy. The Navy has had nearly 700 different rating titles in that time — all of which are now history. It starts the Navy on the most radical personnel overhaul in a generation, one that will change the way sailors are trained and advanced — it could even end the semi-annual petty officer advancement test. "We're going to take a new approach to the enlisted ratings with the idea that we would provide more assignment flexibility, more training opportunities and better civilian credentialing opportunities," Burke said.

This began with Navy Secretary Ray Mabus' mandate in January to eliminate the use of the word "man" from rating titles to make the enlisted service more appealing to women. In June, the Marine Corps — also under the Mabus edict — announced they'd take "man" out of 19 occupational titles. The Navy has gone much further. Their more controversial approach will eliminate the rating title every sailor uses and aims to scrap the existing advancement system and start over. Burke said this will eliminate conflicts as the Navy moves to a more modern personnel system over the next few years. The promise is that sailors will soon be able to qualify in multiple skills and across today's traditional rating lines. That will mean they can apply for a wider variety of jobs, duty stations and have more chances to move up the ranks.

For the first time in the Navy's history — every sailor's title will be the same. For E-3 and below sailors, the only title will be "seaman." Though the title "seaman" still has "man" in it, the working group found no workable alternatives, according to now retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens, who was the driving force for these changes. "We just didn't have any good substitutes for seaman," Stevens told Navy Times in an interview this summer. "One was mariner, but no one liked that — the other one was sailors, but that was convoluted because we all refer to ourselves as sailors. So we kept it and the secretary agreed."

Gone in name will be the other non-rated designations — airman, fireman, constructionman and hospitalman. These designations will be converted to codes. Now sailors' jobs will be identified by a four-character combination, known as a Navy Occupational Specialty. Consider the three most historic ratings, once abbreviated as GM, BM and QM. They'll now be B320, B400 and B450, respectively. The service has translated every previous rating and special skill into over 160, four digit alpha-numeric NOS codes. Navy Enlisted Classifications will still fall under an NOS as they did with a rating, to denote skills not common across the rating.

"Petty officers will be addressed as petty officer and then their name, or petty officer third, second or first class more formally — chief, senior chief and master chief for the senior enlisted," Burke said. For example, Yeoman 2nd Class (SW/EXW) Snuffy Smith will now have the title, Petty Officer 2nd Class (SW/EXW) Snuffy Smith. When Smith reaches the chief's mess, he'll be Chief Petty Officer (SW/EXW) Snuffy Smith. As seen above, warfare qualifications will continue to be abbreviated in sailor titles. "Sailors take great pride in earning those coveted warfare designations and they like to place those behind their ratings because they want people to know they've earned them, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (IDW/SW) Steve Giordano said. "That won't go away — they will still have those as part of their titles." The only exception to the job title rule will be the MCPON.

Much about the overhaul remains to be determined. Case in point: ratings badges. These insignia are for ratings that no longer exist — now they're NOS classifications — and there are a few ideas on what to do. Keep them. Dump them. Replace with something new. "It's definitely our plan to cross that bridge, but it will be one of the last things we'll do for a couple of reasons — one depends on how we draw the career fields lines and something may fall out, based on that. I just don't know yet," Burke said. "We may want to go to something that signifies the new career fields or stay with something for the NOS — or we may want to simply go to something like the anchor, constitution and Eagle," Burke said referring to the insignia on the chest pockets of the blue-and-gray Navy working uniform. "We just want to see where we end up on this journey before we re-badge ourselves, so it's all open." In the meantime, sailors can hold off on having their dress blues and whites sleeves resown.

Sailors will soon be able to qualify for more skills and even advance in multiple NOS quotas. To get there, the Navy is reviewing how to redraw the community lines that distinguish skills by specialty. "Today we have 12 career fields that group the [over 90] Navy enlisted ratings we have today," Burke said. "Most sailors will be hard pressed to tell you what they are because they are outdated for the most part." "We want to redraw those career field lines with two major objectives," Burke said. "First, we'll regroup the now Navy Occupational Specialties so that the training and experience is similar between the career fields. If we do that right, we'll be able to pinpoint additional training or experience that a sailor needs to move into a different, but related NOS."

These have been grouped into broad categories like aviation, surface engineering and nuclear power. These would become broader career fields that group sailors by skill type. "Maybe there's a field we'd call aviation maintenance," Burke explained. "We'd like to get to the point in the first step where we can move sailors between types of engines, and then maybe move between engines and



airframes and into avionics, too — then possibly move between maintaining combat systems on an aircraft to combat systems on a ship.”

As the Navy designs and fields newer ships, Burke said more commonality between systems will make these kinds of leaps more possible. Burke says they'll achieve that through modular training via the new Ready Relevant Learning system that is coming online this year for every career field in the Navy, providing constant training throughout a sailor's career. It can be used to qualify sailors as they advance in a given skill set — or to give them new skills to cross them into a related field.

“You might have to go to a brick and mortar schoolhouse for a couple weeks, but it will be at a fleet concentration area so you are not going to have to leave home,” Burke said. “You might only need enough training that could be accomplished through an app on a smart device, or through a distance learning course — or even by acquiring an additional certification at your current shop or at your squadron.” But acquiring the new NOS won't require you to go back through another “A” school, he said. What will happen is the Navy will simply look at your existing skills and design a custom program to fill in the gaps. “If you complete those requirements, you could shift into a different NOS,” Burke said. “And that shift will bring with it an increase in assignment options, more detailing flexibility — more homeports to choose from, more types of platforms.”

It could even put more money in your pocket. “It will open up more timing options — maybe move into an NOS that has special or incentive pay or even a re-enlistment bonus.” The new system allows sailors to hold onto your old skills, and learn new ones that allow you to move between different billets. “Then, unlike today, where you cross-rate and you don't go back,” Burke said. “Our idea is the lines between NOSs will be blurry and will allow you to move back and forth.”

For now, the advancement system will be organized by NOS. But how it works may be radically changing in coming years. It could mean instant promotions and the end of the test. The Navy currently advances to vacancies in given career fields Navy-wide twice a year, where sailors are ranked by rating based on their performance, occupational knowledge and more. The biggest way to gauge their knowledge is via the semiannual petty officer test. The new system will rank them by NOS.

As the Navy improves it's information systems, the twice a year system could get dumped. Instead, advancements will happen year-round, anytime vacancies occur. As part of this, MCPON Stevens had advocated for dumping the advancement test and going to a new, points-based system similar to those used by the Army and Marine Corps. The Navy is still working through proposals to change the advancement system under NOS, such as getting rid of the tests. “I think that's one possibility we're looking at,” he said. “But we're just getting started in deciding where we need to go with the advancement exams.”

“With this ability to move back and forth between multiple Navy Occupational Specialties, we have to really think through what that does. Will you have to meet the requirements to advance in all of [the skills you have qualified in] or just one and how that would impact assignments?” Burke stressed that any changes to the advancement system will be announced well in advance of their implementation and for now, sailors will advance along the new NOS lines. “So if any sailor out there is wondering if they have to do anything different in preparing for their next exam, the answer to that is no, not yet, and we'll give you adequate time to prepare when it does happen. We're very sensitive to the need to do that very methodically.”

One thing is certain: civilian certifications will play an even greater role in sailors career paths. Right now, the Navy operates a web site that for more than a decade has helped sailors acquire civilian

certifications for the Navy skills they hold. It's called Navy Credentialing Opportunities Online. The Navy plans to take that a step further and incorporate certifications into career paths so qualified personnel will readily attain the credential via their training. "We can draw these lines intelligently to describe our occupations in a way that make sense for [civilian] certifications," Burke said. "For example, an air traffic controller would be tied into a path so that when they leave the Navy, they leave with the appropriate level of an FAA air traffic control certification."

Aviation maintenance sailors could work towards the coveted FAA Airframes and Powerplants certifications. Surface engineers and deck sailors could net themselves Coast Guard licenses. Many of these valuable and time-consuming certifications that sailors had to get on their own time will now be part of their careers in the future. Moving up the ranks could depend on getting them. "If an advancement exam does exist in the future it could also serve to help qualify sailors for a certification as well," Burke said. "It depends on what your certification will be — some are federal, but most of them are state level certifications and no two look exactly the same — but we are now heading down this road."

### **DUTCH ROBOTICS COMPANY MOVING TO UNION POINT (Wicked Local 9/14):**

The redevelopment of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station has finally landed its first large-scale commercial tenant after years of struggling to woo companies to buy into a project that not long ago seemed on the verge of fizzling out. Dutch robotics company Prodrive Technologies last week signed a deal to develop a 300,000-square-foot U.S. headquarters on about 7.5 acres of land. LStar Communities, the company overseeing the redevelopment, provided the land for free as an incentive to draw in a flagship tenant. Prodrive plans to open the facility by the end of 2017 and have about 300 jobs by 2020 at Union Point, the property formerly called SouthField. A potential second phase could expand the facility to 550,000 square feet with 500 jobs by 2024.

The deal marks a major milestone for the redevelopment and for LStar, which took over the project last year and has worked to turn it around after it struggled for years with delays and a bureaucratic logjam that required legislation to untangle. "It's a great day for the project and we're really excited to finally have something of this significance to announce," said Matthew Barry, president of LStar's New England division. Barry declined to provide a value for the land given to Prodrive, but LStar recently sold five acres of land to a residential developer for \$12.6 million.

LStar officials had said previously they would give away land to the first large-scale commercial tenant as a way to draw in additional companies to fill up a planned 6 million square feet of commercial space. Plans for Union Point also include 3,900 homes and apartments. The first housing units went up in 2011 after years of delays and hundreds more homes and apartments have followed. But the commercial development that was supposed to be the backbone of the redevelopment and pump new tax revenue into town coffers has been slow to follow.

"Prodrive has long outgrown the opportunities of its home in Holland and is eager to place its new roots in the thriving technological ecosystem of greater Boston," Prodrive founder and CEO Hans Verhagen said in a statement. "We are excited to watch Union Point grow from the sprawling field of possibilities that it is into the hub of industry and culture that we are confident it will become."

LStar announced in May that it had secured its first commercial tenant, Hingham software startup DejaVu Concepts, which plans to move into 30,000 of renovated office space left behind by the Navy. But the Prodrive deal is in line with the kind of cornerstone commercial tenant LStar and its predecessors have said will be necessary to anchor future development. LStar recently signed agreements with developers Patrinely Group, of Houston, and The Keith Corp., of North Carolina, to build 325,000 square feet of office, retail and medical space. Those developers haven't yet secured

tenants. In addition to the free land, Prodrive is also working out a tax incentive plan with Weymouth, Mayor Robert Hedlund said. The tentative deal would allow the company to pay lower taxes to start out, but they'll ramp up over time. Still, Hedlund said, having the company move in will pay off quickly for the town. "It's a great company so that makes it doubly exciting and doubles the level of enthusiasm," Hedlund said. "It's a prestigious company for Weymouth to host."

Prodrive currently has its only U.S. office in Cambridge. Prodrive will also make a contribution to the Weymouth schools as part of the deal with LStar, but that agreement is still being finalized, Barry said. State officials worked to attract Prodrive to Massachusetts and then connected the company to Union Point. In a statement, state Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash called the deal with Prodrive "a victory for Union Point" and for Massachusetts. "I am excited to welcome Prodrive to Massachusetts, and to the technology and advanced manufacturing ecosystems that continue to innovate and expand in the Commonwealth," Ash said.

Union Point includes 1,400 acres of land in Weymouth, Rockland and Abington. All of the new buildings are on the Weymouth section. The state recently started work on a half-mile extension of the Delahunt Parkway on the former base, which is aimed at allowing more traffic onto the property and making it more attractive to developers. LStar still needs to come up with a long-term source of water and sewer capacity to sustain continued development.

*Wicked Local article by Christian Schiavone*

### **RUSSIAN FIGHTER COMES WITHIN 10 FEET OF US NAVY PLANE (ABC News 9/7):**

A U.S. Navy reconnaissance plane had a close encounter with a Russian fighter that came within 10 feet of the aircraft as it flew in international airspace over the Black Sea. It is the latest encounter between the two militaries that American officials have labeled "unsafe and unprofessional".

According to defense officials, the incident occurred this morning as a U.S. Navy P-8A maritime reconnaissance aircraft flew over the Black Sea conducting "routine operations." It was approached by a Russian SU-27 "Flanker" fighter jet that made "an unsafe close-range intercept" of the Navy plane. During the 19-minute encounter, the Russian fighter jet initially maintained a 30-foot distance from the American aircraft. But it then closed to within 10 feet of the P-8A aircraft, which one official said "is considered unsafe and unprofessional."

Another official said that the U.S. crew attempted to contact the Russian pilot but received no response in return. "U.S. Navy aircraft and ships routinely interact with Russian units in the area and most interactions are safe and professional," said Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman. "However, we have deep concerns when there is an unsafe maneuver. These actions have the potential to unnecessarily escalate tensions between countries, and could result in a miscalculation or accident, which results in serious injury or death."

In recent months there have been several other close calls involving Russian aircraft and American planes and warships. In April, a pair of Russian fighters buzzed the destroyer USS Donald Cook as it was operating in the Baltic Sea. A video of the encounter released by the U.S. Navy showed the aircraft repeatedly buzzing the ship, including one pass where a Russian fighter flew as close as 30 feet to the American ship.

News of the latest "unsafe and unprofessional" encounter comes on the same day that Defense Secretary Ash Carter accused Russia of "unprofessional" behavior. Speaking at Oxford University today, Carter included Russian interactions in international airspace among a list of examples for how Russia is eroding international norms. "With its violations of Ukrainian and Georgian territorial

integrity, its unprofessional behavior in the air, in space, and in cyber-space, as well as its nuclear saber-rattling -- all have demonstrated that Russia has clear ambition to erode the principled international order that has served the United States, our allies and partners, the international community, and Russia itself so well," said Carter.

*ABC News article by Luis Martinez*

### **HALF-MILE ROAD COULD FIRE UP DEVELOPMENT AT OLD NAVY SITE (Boston Globe 9/1):**

A half-mile stretch of road could be the key that unlocks one of the biggest development sites in Greater Boston. That's what builders and state and local officials say about a half-mile extension of the road inside the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station, now the site of a 1,400-acre, \$2 billion, mixed-use development. Long a white whale, the project — known as Southfield until it was recently rechristened Union Point — has been stalled for years, despite the white-hot real estate market around Greater Boston. It has been delayed in part because there's no way to get from one side of the development to the other. There is an access road from Route 3 on one side, and another from Route 18, but nothing connecting the two in the middle. Now, for \$6.7 million in state money, that's set to change. On Thursday, officials led by Governor Charlie Baker will be in Weymouth to break ground for the road. "It has been a reminder of the unfulfilled promise of this place," said Kyle Corkum, managing partner at LStar, a North Carolina developer that bought the project last year from Starwood Land Ventures. "Simply opening up the road makes possible a lot of commercial development that wouldn't happen otherwise."

The state spent nearly \$45 million in 2011 building a 1.8-mile parkway from the eastern side of the vast former air base, which straddles parts of Weymouth, Rockland, and Abington. But the road abruptly ends at a mostly abandoned section of the old base so desolate that it's now used for movie sets. A half-mile away is another road that connects to the South Weymouth commuter rail station and busy Route 18. While hundreds of single-family homes have been built in recent years around the edges of the project, the middle of the site remained hard to reach, a ghost town of old hangars and barracks and tarmac. That left the state paying \$1.9 million a year to cover debt service on bonds for the existing road, funds that were supposed to come from new tax revenue from development. Closing the gap has long been the goal, but paying for it has proved hard. Starwood was pushing the state to come up with \$20 million to \$40 million to finish the parkway and to build a flyover over railroad tracks and improve entryways to the project. While state officials were supportive, they balked at the price tag. "The extension at a reasonable price made sense," Baker said in an interview. "But the \$40 million number was a nonstarter." Last year, Starwood, which had taken over the project in its much larger 2013 purchase of the developer LNR Property Corp., sold it to LStar. The new developer went back to the state and they quickly agreed on a simpler road, with a price tag of \$6.7 million. "It didn't take a lot of convincing," said Baker, who will preside over the groundbreaking Thursday.

There have been other changes. This spring, all three towns adopted zoning rules that will enable vastly more commercial development — millions of square feet of multifamily housing and office buildings as high as 10 to 12 stories — in what had been envisioned as mostly single-family subdivisions. The plan now, Corkum said, is to create a mixed-use hub for the South Shore, with a town center, walkable neighborhoods, and, eventually, enough office space to match what's in Cambridge's Kendall Square, perhaps two times over. "We could have sold that [housing] overnight," Corkum said. "But we knew we had a chance to do something so good, so transformative to the region." LStar is also close to a deal with Weymouth that would bring more water to the site, enabling more development faster. Mayor Robert Hedlund said that could be signed within days. "This will really unlock the potential of the site," Hedlund said. "They've been hamstrung."

With the road plan, the water and the rezoning, the project has sparked strong interest from companies looking for more space — or less-expensive space — than they can find in central Boston, Corkum said. He expects to announce several major commercial tenants soon and is in talks with an “enormous” office user that would bring hundreds of well-paying jobs. “That would not have been possible without this road,” Corkum said. It will still take at least a decade to build out Union Point, Corkum estimated, perhaps longer. But after 20 years of waiting for something big to happen there, Hedlund is looking forward to some real progress, he said. “The momentum is finally here,” he said. “I think you’re going to see everyone’s vision for this place finally come to fruition.”

*Boston Globe article by Tim Logan*

### **FUTURE OF NAVY’S RESERVE PATROL SQUADRONS UNCERTAIN (Seapower 8/23):**

The Navy’s two reserve patrol (VP) squadrons are not scheduled to receive the new P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, making their future uncertain, the Navy’s air boss said. The two squadrons — VP-62 at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla., and VP-69 at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. — fly the P-3C Orion, which is scheduled to be retired from fleet service in 2019, under current planning.

Speaking to an audience Aug. 18 at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, Vice Adm. Michael Shoemaker, commander, Naval Air Forces, said, “It’s not in the plan right now to transition [the two squadrons] to P-8. They will be used extensively as we finish the P-3 to P-8 transition on the active side to fill some of the gaps in some of the capabilities that they bring to the [Western Pacific].”

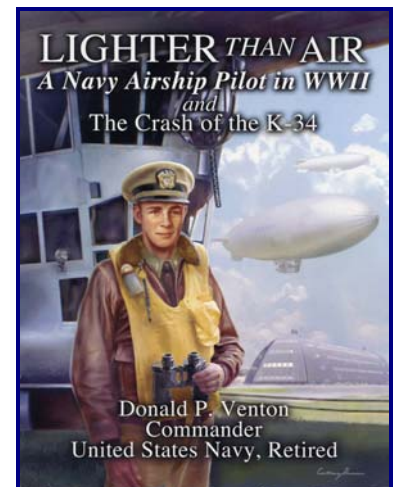
Shoemaker said the two reserve squadrons “participated routinely in forward-deployed detachments augmenting our active forces.” He said that “in a perfect world” with unlimited resources the Navy would upgrade the reserve squadrons to the P-8, “but we’re not in that position from a resource perspective. We’re watching that closely. We will need them around for a little while.”

Shoemaker said the best P-3Cs would be transferred to the two reserve squadrons as the P-3 in replaced in active-duty squadrons. The active-duty VP community is halfway through the transition, with six of 12 operational squadrons completed. At the height of the Cold War, the Navy had 13 reserve VP squadrons and two VP reserve master augmentation units in addition to 24 active-duty VP squadrons.

*Seapower Article by Richard Burgess*

### **RECOMMENDED READING:**

Blimps played an important role in maritime patrol and airborne ASW for many years. NAS South Weymouth started off as a blimp base and operated them until 1961. Only NAS Lakehurst had blimps longer than NAS South Weymouth. This new book, “Lighter than Air: A Navy Airship Pilot in WWII and The Crash of the K-34” is the USN memoirs of Second World War blimp pilot Donald Venton. Venton spent time at NAS South Weymouth with ZP-11 and was on the ZNP-K type blimp K-34 when it crashed off the coast of Cape Cod during the war. Although the book has only one chapter about NAS South Weymouth, Venton’s description of life on the base during the war makes it well worth having. To obtain a copy on-line go to the link for the book on the “geedunk” page of our web site at [www.vpassociation.org](http://www.vpassociation.org) or send a check for \$25 to Naval Airship Association, PO Box 700, Edgewater FL 32132.



**ON THE INTERNET:**

A friendly reminder that if you have Internet access you should consider joining the Facebook pages for VP-92, NAS South Weymouth, and NAS Brunswick at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

**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:** AK1 Susan Zimmerman (center) and two friends off-duty during a VP-92 detachment to Lajes sometime during the late 1970s or early 1980s. That's the USAF chow hall visible in the background. Got something similar to share? Send to Marc Frattasio at [marc\\_frattasio@yahoo.com](mailto:marc_frattasio@yahoo.com).



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

