



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 78

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

DEC 2019

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: VP-92 Lockheed P-3C Orion at Andrews AFB in 1995. Stephen Miller photo. Got something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

FINAL FLIGHTS:

We recently lost Fred Cantu and Gene Buckley, who were both in VP-92.

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. We'd like to thank Tom Carroll for his generous donation to the admin fund. We'd also like to thank another generous benefactor who wants to be anonymous.

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.

VP-92 SENSOR OPERATOR'S GET-TOGETHER:



During the weekend of August 23-25 a number of former VP-92 sensor operators converged at Rick Caesar's palatial country estate in New Hampshire. Shown above from left to right are Mark Hausler, Randy Minet, A. J. Bucchi, Steve "Odie" O'Donohugh, Mary McCormack, Marc Frattasio, Matt Sharpe, and Scott Savelle. Unfortunately, our host Rick Caesar was taking the group photo, so he's not in it!

THE 2019 VP ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION:

The VP Association's 2019 annual reunion was held at the Sons of Italy Hall in East Weymouth, MA on Saturday September 21st. A delicious meal was provided, once again, by Fasano's Catering and a good time was had by all. One problem was that the guest speaker from the Naval War College that we had lined up backed out and a substitute was not provided. Your newsletter editor ended up serving as the guest speaker and gave a presentation on the history of reserve maritime patrol aviation in New England. Despite the low turnout, which was really borderline with respect to the minimum headcount required by the caterer, we are going to try again next year. A friendly reminder that these annual reunions only work if enough people come and we're approaching the point where they will not be feasible to do. If you want the annual reunions to continue, then you need to support them by attending. Please try to come next year if you can. Some photos that were taken at this event follow.

Joe Mortland, Kevin Cahill, and Joe McCann looking over some of the ANA Patriot Squadron/Shea Naval Aviation Museum's wares at the reunion. Susan Zimmerman, who is a member of the ANA Patriot Squadron and the VP Association, helped tend the museum table.



Donald Canaday, Paul Lapinski, Joe Mortland, and Patrick Howe reminiscing by a table loaded up with memorabilia that some members brought to the reunion to show their old shipmates.



More than a few sea stories were told near the snack table before our meal was served.



Leo and Judy Salmeri and Ernie Godzure. It's pretty impressive that despite the passage of time Leo and Ernie can still fit into their dress blues. Those things fit were very tight under the best of circumstances.

Steve Jacob at the head of the chow line, followed by Tom Carroll, Joe McCann, Susan Zimmerman, and Arthur Hapenny. Our delicious buffet style meal was provided by Fasano's Catering of Braintree. Everybody was happy with the steak tips, chicken, and all the trimmings.



Tom Kenneally, Katherine Quinn-Trexler, Mary Ellen White, Jack and Mary Primiano, and Kevin Cahill enjoying their Fasano's meal.





Bernadette O'Brien, Maureen and Al Firnrrohr, Barbara Hanigan (tending the snack table) and Bill Hanigan. Doesn't Bernadette have a million dollar smile?



Donald Canaday, Jim Connolly, Les Connolly, and Skip Burton enjoying their meal. This year's gift to all attendees was sheets of early style VP-92 "guillotine" insignia "zap" stickers. These things are weatherproof, UV resistant, and suitable for application to car windows or transient aircraft.

Peter Nott,
Patrick Howe,
Paul Lapinski,
Frank Holland,
and Bob
Mandeville.



Ernie Goszur,
Judy and Leo
Salmeri, Jim
Fitzgerald, Joe
McCann, Steve
Jacob, and
Arthur
Hapenny.





Overview of the Sons of Italy function room in East Weymouth. Leo Salmeri, who is a member of the Sons of Italy, was a big help in securing this venue for us at a good price.



We had what would have been a great guest speaker lined up from the Naval War College, but he had to back out due to other commitments. So, your newsletter editor gave a substitute presentation on the history of Naval Air Reserve maritime patrol aviation in New England.

SUSAN ZIMMERMAN – ARTIST:

Susan Zimmerman was a SELRES AK1 in VP-92. She is also a talented artist. She painted this acrylic picture of a VP-92 P-3C Orion, which she sold at the recent VP Association reunion. Susan takes commissions. If you would like her to paint a picture of an aircraft for you, contact her directly via e-mail at birdlady650@gmail.com.



ETCHED GLASS VP-92 MUGS:

Among the many great items that we raffled off at the recent VP Association reunion were four big etched glass mugs like the one shown here. These mugs had the Minuteman insignia design shown here on one side and an image of a P-3 Orion along with the squadron's "LY" identification code on the other side. If you weren't able to make it to the reunion or were there but weren't one of the four lucky people to "win" one of these mugs, you can purchase one from the guy who made them for us, Howard Carman. You can contact Howard directly at howard.carman@gmail.com. Howard is a former P-3 flight engineer and a good guy. If you want one of these mugs, tell him that you want the same design that he made for Marc Frattasio. Howard can customize your mug, on request, with your name, rank, years of service, etc. These are made to order, but it only takes him a couple of weeks to get them done.



NAS BRUNSWICK REUNION:

There will be an NAS Brunswick reunion event from August 14th - 16th 2020. This event is being sponsored by the Brunswick Naval Museum. There's an air show featuring the Blue Angels scheduled on the old base that weekend. For more information contact president@bnamuseum.org.

RUSSIAN SUBS SURGE INTO THE ATLANTIC (National Interest 10/31):

The Russian navy in mid-October 2019 sortied eight submarines in the country's biggest undersea exercise since the Cold War. The eight submarines, including six nuclear-powered ships, sailed from their bases in northern Russia into the cold waters of the Barents and Norwegian Seas. At the same time, an additional two boats -- the nuclear-powered Sierra-class attack submarines Pskov and Nizhny Novgorod -- sailed into roughly the same waters for tests and training.

The 10 vessels represent around 20 percent of the Russian submarine force. For comparison, the U.S. Pacific Fleet with its roughly 30 subs as recently as 2013 reliably could deploy eight boats on short notice. The U.S. fleet in total operates more than 50 submarines split between the Pacific and Atlantic Fleets. This number is shrinking.

The eight vessels in the planned, 60-day Russian exercise are practicing protecting a "bastion" of open-ocean in which Russian ballistic-missile submarines can hide. "The aim of the massive operation is to get as far out to the North Atlantic as possible without being discovered by NATO," Barents Observer noted, citing Norwegian intelligence sources speaking to news outlet NRK.

The Russian exercise seems to underscore Moscow's new approach to undersea warfare. While the current war game reportedly is defensive in nature, the same submarines could conduct offensive operations from the same waters. During the Cold War, Soviet submarines needed to pass through the maritime chokepoint between Greenland, Iceland and the United Kingdom -- the so-called "GIUK Gap" -- in order to reach the open ocean and close within striking range of NATO ports and ships. That's not the case with newer Russian subs with their longer-range weapons.

"Russian submarines no longer have to transit the gap to have a dramatic impact on the European military balance," Andrew Metrick, an analyst with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., explained in *Proceedings*, the professional journal of the U.S. Naval Institute. "Rather, they can operate from the relative safety of bastions in the Norwegian and Barents seas and strike targets across Northern and Central Europe."

In attempting to counter the Russian subs, the United States and NATO should avoid slipping back into its own Cold War ways, experts warned. They said it takes creative thinking to understand, and counter, Russia's current undersea-warfare doctrine. A response centered on the GIUK Gap "risks misprioritizing future investments," Metrick wrote.

Assuming budgets remain at their current level, in the 2020s the Russian submarine fleet could include up to 10 Yasen-class guided-missile submarines plus upgraded Kilo-, Akula-, Oscar- and Sierra-class attack submarines, for a grand total of probably around 50 vessels. Many of the boats will carry the Russian navy's new Kalibr land-attack cruise missile, which apparently can strike targets as far away as 1,500 miles. Kalibr "gives the Russian navy a long-range strike capability it has never before possessed," Metrick wrote. A Yasen-class submarine could fire its 40 Kalibrs from the Russian side of the GIUK Gap and still strike strategic NATO ports in western Europe such as Bremerhaven. "This new reality cannot be addressed by focusing on the GIUK Gap," Metrick warned.

"To respond adequately, the United States and NATO must move beyond the outdated barrier-defense concept and fully embrace open-ocean [anti-submarine warfare], with far greater

emphasis on operating in contested waters well north of the Arctic Circle," Metrick advised. "Instead of static ASW barriers, the United States and NATO must shift to a model of mobile ASW nets that can be rapidly constituted and focused on likely areas of operation." "This will require developing a new generation of ASW capabilities," Metrick pointed out. "Chief among potential systems are large unmanned underwater vehicles with considerable on-station time to provide initial cueing for other ASW assets."

A new Russian submarine threat requires new NATO defenses. But the Western alliance should not despair, Metrick wrote. "By unshackling themselves from past modes of thinking and forging new and existing capabilities together, the United States and its NATO allies will be able to meet the evolving challenge posed by the Russian submarine fleet."

National Interest article by David Axe

RUSSIAN SUBS ON MISSION TO PROVE THEY CAN STRIKE THE US (Daily Mail 10/31):

Russian submarines are conducting a secret mission to sail into the North Atlantic and threaten the US East Coast, according to Norwegian intelligence. Ten submarines, at least eight of them nuclear-powered, set sail from the port of Murmansk early last week before some of them passed through the Greenland-Iceland-UK Gap, skirting British territorial waters. Those submarines are now heading out into the North Atlantic with the goal being to pass west of Greenland and as far into the North Atlantic as possible.

The mission, the largest fielded by Russia's Northern Fleet since the Cold War, is designed to prove that Moscow has the ability to strike the US East Coast, Norway's intelligence service said. It is also designed to test NATO's ability to track and respond to such an operation. Moscow has made at least part of the mission public, reporting that submarines are taking part in defensive and testing operations in the Barents and Norwegian sea. But Norway's intelligence service revealed the second, secretive, part of the mission to public broadcaster NRK.

Intelligence sources stressed that the mission is a full combat operation and not simply a drill. Norway's E-Service, Oslo's term for the intelligence services, said they are monitoring the submarines and have 'reasonably good control' of their locations at the current time.

Two submarines are known to be sailing to the west of Bear Island, located between Svalbard and northern Norway, near the Greenland Sea. Another two are known to be located to the south and east of the island, guarding the eastern entrance to the Barents Sea. Meanwhile two Sierra-Class submarines, Russia's most technologically advanced subs with titanium hulls, are carrying out deep-dive and weapons testing in the Norwegian Sea. That leaves another four vessels unaccounted for, meaning they are potentially participating in the Atlantic mission.

A spokesman for Norway's E-Service said: 'Russia wants to say that "this is our sea", we can do this. We are able to reach the United States. 'That is what Russia wants to tell us. They want to test the West's ability to detect and handle this.'

The existence of the mission was revealed at the same time Russia announced it had tested a new type of nuclear-capable submarine-launched ballistic missile. Russia's defence ministry released footage of the Bulava missile being launched from the nuclear-powered submarine Prince Vladimir. The 'successful' test launch from the northern White Sea hit a target 3,500 miles away in Kamchatka on the country's Pacific coast, the Russian military said. The state-of-the-art submarine is expected to enter active service in December.

The Knyaz Vladimir is the first upgraded 955A model to be produced in the Borei class of Russian nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines. It will enter service with Russia's Northern Fleet at the end of this year once it has completed trials including weapons tests, the fleet's commander said. The Bulava - or Mace - is seen as a cornerstone of the Russian military triad comprising sea, land and air launched weapons. The launch was carried out with a dummy payload and reached a test site in the far east of Russia.

On top of that, flight tests on Russia's new Sarmat ballistic missile are expected to begin early next year, according to Russian media. The hypersonic missile, also known as Satan-2, is due to be deployed in 2021 after Vladimir Putin hailed progress on its development. Moscow says Satan-2 can evade the United States' defence shield and is capable of destroying an area the size of England and Wales - or Texas. The weapon is seen as a crucial part of Russia's ongoing push to modernise its nuclear arsenal.

Daily Mail article by Chris Pleasance

RUSSIAN SUBS POWER INTO NORTH ATLANTIC (Telegraph 10/30):

Norway said it has discovered 10 submarines of the Russian northern fleet heading toward the Atlantic Ocean in the biggest such operation since the Cold War. The deployment began just before Russia's foreign minister and the commander of the northern fleet visited Norway to commemorate 75th anniversary of the Soviet liberation of Kirkenes from the Nazis. Meanwhile, the recently floated Prince Vladimir submarine test-fired a Bulava ballistic missile from the White Sea near Arkhangelsk across 10 time zones to the Kamchatka peninsula across from Alaska on Wednesday.

Eight nuclear and two diesel submarines left bases near Murmansk early last week, and stayed submerged as they entered the Norwegian Sea, Norway's military intelligence agency told state broadcaster NRK. That number would represent almost the entire underwater contingent of the northern fleet. Some of the submarines are aiming to pass through the Greenland-Iceland-K gap and enter the north Atlantic, according to Oslo. "Russia wants to say that 'this is our sea, we can do this. We are able to reach the United States'. That's what Russia wants to tell us. They want to test the West's ability to detect and handle this," the intelligence agency said.

The operation comes as the UK took delivery this week of the first of nine US-made Poseidon P-8A maritime patrol planes. The aircraft are slated in 2020 to begin monitoring the growing Russian submarine activity in the Arctic, previously one of Britain's key roles in Nato. Norway operates much older P-3 Orion turboprop patrol planes. While Moscow hasn't commented on the Norwegian report, the northern fleet said on Saturday that two titanium-hulled Sierra class nuclear submarines in the Norwegian Sea were conducting dives at their maximum depths and would be testing new weapons. That was less than 24 hours after Russian and Norwegian military commanders lunched together at celebrations of the countries' Second World War alliance in Kirkenes, near Norway's Arctic border with Russia.

Norwegian intelligence said two submarines were guarding the entrance to the Barents Sea and another pair was located west of Bear island in the Svalbard archipelago. It claimed that the operation was designed to last two months. Russian defence analyst Alexander Golts said he couldn't remember such a "massive deployment" by the northern fleet. He noted that it followed an embarrassment at the annual Thunder exercises this month, when a Pacific fleet submarine failed to test-fire a ballistic missile, reportedly due to a launch systems failure.

If accurate, the deployment of 10 submarines was a "very big and definite statement" about the growing naval capabilities of a country that has struggled to keep large numbers of such vessels at

sea since the Cold War, according to Justin Bronk of The Royal United Services Institute. It also showed Russia's ability to defend the Arctic "bastion" where its ballistic missile submarines lurk, a major part of its nuclear deterrence, he said. "The ability to put lots of boats in the way of any Nato forces coming up from the north Atlantic or the North Sea, it's a big feature of Russian active defence capability," Mr Bronk said.

Even as Russian submarines sailed west, foreign minister Sergei Lavrov met the king and prime minister of Norway at a memorial to Soviet soldiers in Kirkenes on Friday. After talks with his Norwegian counterpart Ine Eriksen Søreide, Mr Lavrov said Nato's increasing training activities in Norway, in which the Royal Marines have also participated, were destabilising to the northern European security. Ms Søreide expressed concern about Russian naval exercises off the coast of northern Norway in August, the largest since 1985. Defence minister Frank Bakke-Jensen told NRK that Norway was investing in its "military capability to monitor and operate in the northern territories" in response to the modernised and increasingly active Russian forces.

The Telegraph article by Alec Luhn

USN OFFICER BUSTED FOR "SMUGGLING EQUIPMENT TO CHINA" (Western Journal 10/22):

It's the stuff of nightmares: a Chinese-born United States Navy officer with access to top secret material is busted sending military-grade equipment and flash drives to his communist homeland. Unfortunately for our national security, this is exactly why the FBI says it arrested Lt. Fan Yang earlier this month.

Yang, who was born in China before immigrating to America and eventually becoming a Navy officer, is accused of smuggling boats, flash drives and other equipment to his native land, Navy Times reports. In addition to those charges, Yang is alleged to have sold a firearm to a Chinese national. Yang's wife, Yang "Yuki" Yang, was also arrested for her alleged role in the crimes.

Although these charges alone would be shocking, Yang's position in the Navy makes them even more worrying. Assigned to the Naval Air Station Jacksonville's Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Weapons School, Yang likely had privileged access to top secret anti-submarine materials.

Through a series of shell companies, Yang allegedly shipped flash drives which may have contained extremely sensitive information to China and was paid for his shady work through these same businesses. "The illegal exportation of sensitive technology to prohibited entities poses a clear, significant threat to our national security," Rachel L. Rojas, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Jacksonville division, told the Navy Times.

According to WJXT, Yang also used the string of companies to ship boats to the Chinese government. Yang's firearms charges stem from the officer's alleged straw purchase of a pistol for a Chinese national engaged in the boat smuggling scheme with him.

If these allegations are true, it wouldn't be the first time China has sought to gain from apparent loyalists taking advantage of America's open and welcoming atmosphere. Industrial espionage is nothing new for the country seeking to rob America of its manufacturing secrets, and the communist regime allegedly has employed students studying abroad in the U.S. to spy on military installations.

If the country had an inside man in the U.S. Navy, especially one with a top secret clearance, there's no telling how much information they had access to. China's race to build an anti-American defense web on its coast would benefit greatly from secrets leaked by a Navy officer. In a potential future conflict, any information handed over to the Chinese by Yang could cost countless American lives.

While Yang is innocent until proven guilty, the FBI and NCIS appear to be fairly certain they have unraveled the officer's tangled web. Hopefully this busts another Chinese spy and keeps the communist regime's hands off our military secrets.

Western Journal article by Jared Harris

US COMPLETES OPERATIONAL TRANSITION FROM P-3C TO P-8A (Janes 360 10/21):

The US Navy (USN) has completed its operational transition from the Lockheed P-3C Orion to the Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, the service has announced. The final deployment for the P-3C concluded on 9 October with the return of Patrol Squadron (VP) 40 'Fighting Marlins' to its homebase at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island. With its welcome home ceremony, VP 40 brought to an end more than 60 years of operational service by the P-3.

The USN has a program of record of 117 P-8A aircraft (compared to 250 P-3Cs), of which 72 will be stationed at NAS Jacksonville and 45 at NAS Whidbey Island. Seven East Coast squadrons are located at NAS Jacksonville in Florida, with six to be located at NAS Whidbey Island (VP 40 will complete the process in the coming months). While the USN plans to transition over to the P-8A for all its VPs by the end of 2020, a number of P-3Cs may remain in service after the date with the Special Projects Patrol Squadron.

Squadrons located at Wing 11, NAS Jacksonville, comprise VP-30 responsible for P-8A and Northrop Grumman MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial vehicle training, with P-8A operational units made up of VP-16, VP-5, VP-45, VP-8, VP-10, and VP-26. Those located at Wing 10, NAS Whidbey Island, comprise VP-4, VP-47, VP-9, VP-1, VP-40, and VP-46.

Janes 360 article by Gareth Jennings

NEW DETAILS ON TRAGEDY OF RUSSIAN SPY SUBMARINE LOSHARIK (Forbes 10/08):

The full scope may never be publicly known of the July 1 fire aboard a deep-diving submarine in the Arctic in which 14 Russian submariners lost their lives. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov described the submarine's mission as a "state secret." However, based on analysis of open sources, I can reveal details of the submarine's movements before and after the event.

The submarine is called Losharik, named after a Russian cartoon horse which is made of a series of balls. More on that later. In official sources she is known by her hull number, AS-12. She is operated by the euphemistically named Main Directorate of Deep-Sea Research, better known as GUGI. And she operates from Olenya Guba which is GUGI's secret base in the Arctic – the same base as the Russian Navy's beluga whales, one of which turned up in Norway in April.

Her mission is protected by state secrecy and obscurity. When I wrote analysis before the accident I was one of very few public sources. In layman's terms she is a spy submarine. Her work probably involves the seabed communications cables and sonar networks which litter the world's oceans. It should be mentioned that Losharik is transported to her missions attached to the underside of a much larger mother submarine. Her all-officer crew are elite submariners known as Hydronauts.

For this fateful mission the mother submarine, BS-64, first called at Severomorsk. I can now say that she arrived on June 24. I believe that Losharik was already under her. They were accompanied by an Oscar-II Class cruise missile submarine. That is possibly a coincidence, but it could also be for protection during some phases of the mission. Also in attendance was the giant Typhoon Class submarine Dmitriy Donskoy, which was later reported to have been involved in anti-submarine exercises around this time. It is unclear whether there is a connection between the presence of all

three submarines. For BS-64 the stop-off in Severomorsk may have been to load torpedoes. They left around midday on June 25, five days before the fateful accident.

On the afternoon of July 1 a fire broke out in the battery compartment of Losharik. The submarine is constructed from seven spherical titanium hulls strung together, except for the uninhabited rear two which contain the nuclear reactor and machinery. The orb-like hulls, although not visible from the outside thanks to a streamlined outer hull, are where the submarine's nickname comes from.

The accident occurred very close to the Russian coast, reportedly as Losharik was docking with the BS-64. The fire was in the battery compartment; even nuclear submarines have batteries as a backup. Some of the crew, including the captain, reportedly stayed in the affected compartment to ensure the safety of the others. These are the men who perished. This wasn't Losharik's first underwater accident. In 2012 she damaged her manipulator arms while on a mission under the Ice Cap. That time it was not fatal.

Losharik was able to dock with the BS-64, which raced back to Severomorsk to unload the injured submariners. By midnight a local news outlet, SeverLife.ru, broke the story. They reported that between 10 and 14 people died and that about 5 injured. Two of them were in intensive care. The story was later removed.

A camouflaged shelter was placed over a hatch on BS-64's back. Onlookers may have been unaware that the injured submarine was out of sight, attached to the bottom of the visible host submarine. While the story was still making headlines around the globe, on July 4 BS-64 discreetly slipped back to Olenya Guba. There special attention continued, with the camouflaged tent used again. Losharik will likely be returned to service. In the meantime BS-64 has been exercising with a smaller battery powered submersible attached to her back, possibly as a surrogate. The 'state secret' missions will go on.

Forbes article by H Sutton

RUSSIAN NAVY BUILDING NEW HEAVILY-ARMED SUBMARINES (National Interest 10/08)

The Russian navy is building new nuclear-powered submarines and deploying them more aggressively, seemingly reviving a Cold War approach to naval warfare. But in attempting to counter the Russian subs, the United States and NATO should avoid slipping back into its own Cold War ways, warned Andrew Metrick, an analyst with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Specifically, the Western alliance should not reinforce the geographic chokepoint between Greenland, Iceland and the United Kingdom, Metrick advised. A response centered on the so-called "GIUK Gap" "risks misprioritizing future investments."

"In the past few years, Russian submarine activities have become a focal point for U.S. and NATO planners, part of the larger discourse on Russia's revanchist role in the wake of its illegal annexation of Crimea," Metrick wrote. "Several military leaders have observed that Russian activities in the undersea domain have reached the highest levels seen in 20 years, and this heightened pace of operations has set off alarm bells from the United Kingdom to Finland and spurred comparisons to the Cold War."

During the Cold War, Soviet submarines needed to pass the GIUK Gap in order to reach the open ocean and close within striking range of NATO ports and ships. That's not the case with newer Russian subs with their longer-range weapons. "Russian submarines no longer have to transit the gap to have a dramatic impact on the European military balance," Metrick wrote. "Rather, they can

operate from the relative safety of bastions in the Norwegian and Barents seas and strike targets across Northern and Central Europe.”

Assuming budgets remain at their current level, in the 2020s the Russian submarine fleet could include up to 10 Yasen-class guided-missile submarines plus upgraded Kilo, Akula, Oscar and Sierra attack submarines, for a grand total of probably around 50 vessels. Many of the boats will carry the Russian navy’s new Kalibr land-attack cruise missile, which apparently can strike targets as far away as 1,500 miles. Kalibr “gives the Russian navy a long-range strike capability it has never before possessed,” Metrick wrote.

A Yasen-class submarine could fire its 40 Kalibrs from the Russian side of the GIUK Gap and still strike strategic NATO ports in western Europe such as Bremerhaven. “This new reality cannot be addressed by focusing on the GIUK Gap,” Metrick warned. To respond adequately, the United States and NATO must move beyond the outdated barrier-defense concept and fully embrace open-ocean ASW, with far greater emphasis on operating in contested waters well north of the Arctic Circle. Instead of static ASW barriers, the United States and NATO must shift to a model of mobile ASW nets that can be rapidly constituted and focused on likely areas of operation.

This will require developing a new generation of ASW capabilities. Chief among potential systems are large unmanned underwater vehicles with considerable on-station time to provide initial cueing for other ASW assets. In addition, the [U.S.] Navy will need a new family of disposable acoustic ASW payloads. A major element would be small, disposable UUVs and unmanned surface vessels deployed by ships, aircraft, submarines, or large UUVs that could quickly be seeded into an area and provide persistent ASW coverage for upward of a week.

These new capabilities will be effective only if they are paired with a new networking concept that knits together aerial, surface, and subsurface assets to understand the undersea battlespace. This is a daunting technical challenge, likely achievable only if subsurface platforms have considerable onboard processing and analytic capacity and are supported by persistent communication nodes.

A new Russian submarine threat requires new NATO defenses. But the Western alliance should not despair, Metrick wrote. “By unshackling themselves from past modes of thinking and forging new and existing capabilities together, the United States and its NATO allies will be able to meet the evolving challenge posed by the Russian submarine fleet.”

National Interest article by David Axe

VP-40 P-3Cs RETURNING HOME AFTER FINAL DEPLOYMENT (The Aviatorist 10/07):

On Oct. 3, 2019, three P-3C Orions belonging to VP-40 (the examples BuNo 162318 flying as “VVQE318”, BuNo 158222 “VVQE222”, and BuNo 160287 “VVQE287”), coming from Souda Bay, Crete, landed at Lajes Field. The aircraft were the first P-3s belonging to the “Fighting Marlins” to perform a stopover in the Azores, on their way from the type’s final deployment to Sheik Isa Air Base, in Bahrain. More P-3Cs are flying the same westward route to NASWI: two additional P-3Cs (reportedly BuNo 162773 and 162776) should make a stop in Lajes in the afternoon on Oct. 7.

Noteworthy, the first three aircraft could be tracked online while flying from Souda to Lajes, although flight tracking websites and DB had some mismatches in the registrations. The one using callsign VVQE287 (“Navy QE287”) showed on flight tracking websites with BuNo 161766 (although its real registration was 160287) whereas the one using callsign VVQE318 was shown as 162770. The aircraft nightstopped in the Azores and departed on Oct. 4, 2019, bound for Portsmouth International

Airport at Pease, on the US Atlantic coast. From there the Orions would continue their flights back to their homebase at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI), Washington.

VP-40's Orions had started deploying on Mar. 25, 2019, after finishing a 12-month inter-deployment readiness cycle at NASWI. Actually, the aircraft did not only deploy to Bahrain: some VP-40 P-3s went to Kadena, Okinawa, in Japan, within the 7th Fleet AOR. "From Sheik Isa, VP-40s P-3Cs are positioned to conduct routine anti-submarine warfare and counter-piracy patrols, among other missions, throughout the region, including around various strategic points, such as the Strait of Hormuz," Joseph Trevithick wrote in a story at The War Zone back in April. "The planes at Kadena, situated on the island of Okinawa, will be flying many of the same missions in the western Pacific and may find themselves tasked to help keep an eye out for North Korean ships looking to circumvent international sanctions. You can read more about the missions that VP squadrons undertake here."

The deployment to the Middle East of the VP-40's Orions marks the end of an era: the squadron is the last U.S. Navy's active duty P-3 Orion unit; upon completion of its final deployment in the 5th Fleet AOR (Area Of Responsibility), the "Fighting Marlins" will retire the P-3 beginning to begin a period of transition to the P-8A Poseidon. The sundown deployment of the VP-40 "Fighting Marlins" does not mark the end of the P-3 Orion activities on NASWI though. The Naval Reserve squadron, VP-69, is not scheduled to transition away from the P-3C during 2019. The VQ-1 will also continue to operate the EP-3E ARIES II SIGINT (Signal Intelligence) aircraft (a highly modified version of the P-3C that became famous on Apr. 1, 2001 when one such planes and its crew were detained for 11 days following a collision with a Chinese J-8IIIM fighter – that crashed causing the death of the pilot – and the subsequent emergency landing at Ligshui airbase, in Hainan island) for a few more years. Interestingly, as highlighted by Trevithick in his article, another P-3 unit slated to operate a special variant of the P-3C equipped with a variety of specialized intelligence-gathering hardware, for some more time, is Patrol Squadron Special Projects Unit Two (VPU-2), the "Wizards".

The Aviationist article by David Ceniotti

NORTH KOREA MAY HAVE FIRED MISSILE FROM SUBMARINE (BBC News 10/02):

North Korea may have fired a ballistic missile from a submarine, a move that came just hours after Pyongyang said it would resume nuclear talks with the US. South Korean officials said a missile launched near the port of Wonsan flew about 450km (280 miles) and reached an altitude of 910km, before landing in the Sea of Japan. If confirmed, this would be a significant escalation from the short-range tests it has conducted since May.

The news sparked swift condemnation. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said it was a violation of UN Security Council resolutions which ban North Korea from the use of ballistic missile technology. Just hours earlier, Pyongyang had said denuclearisation talks with Washington could finally resume later this week. Negotiations have been stalled since the Hanoi summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in February ended without an agreement.

This is the longest-range North Korean missile test for a considerable period. It was fired in a high, lofted flight path, reaching an altitude of some 910km. But if fired on a normal trajectory, experts believe it would have had a range of some 1,900km. It was fired from some kind of underwater platform, possibly a submarine but more likely a specially designed test-rig or barge.

It is a reminder that North Korea is making significant progress with its submarine-launched ballistic missile programme, seen as especially threatening because of the difficulty of finding and tracking boats in the deep ocean. Coming just ahead of the resumption of nuclear talks between US and North Korean officials, it's a reminder that Pyongyang believes that it is negotiating from a position of

strength - and must raise further doubts about obtaining any credible constraints on the development of its nuclear arsenal.

Experts said the proximity of the test and the talks announcement was deliberate. "North Korea wants to make its negotiating position quite clear before talks even begin," Harry Kazianis of the Center for the National Interest in Washington DC told the AFP news agency. "Pyongyang seems set to push Washington to back off from past demands of full denuclearisation, for what are only promises of sanctions relief."

The first reports came in the early hours of the morning when authorities reported that two missiles had been launched, with at least one landing in Japanese waters. Later Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshide Suga said at a news conference that one ballistic missile may have split into two before falling into the water.

Wednesday's launch would be the 11th missile test from North Korea this year, but authorities have expressed particular concern at the apparent range and capabilities of this one. North Korea had been developing submarine-launched ballistic missiles technology for some time before it halted all long-range missile testing.

South Korea's National Security Council expressed concern about the test and said it was placing "weight on the possibility" that it was a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported. The last SLBM tested by the North is thought to have taken place in August 2016, before President Trump even took office.

Two years later President Trump and President Kim made history by becoming the first sitting US president and North Korean leader to meet. But despite two further face-to-face meetings, there has been little progress towards any agreement on what to do about the North's nuclear capabilities.

BBC News article by Jonathan Marcus

CHINA LAUNCHES FIRST AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT SHIP (Seawaves 09/25):

China's first amphibious assault ship was launched today in Shanghai, coming closer to the completion of its construction project. The People's Liberation Army Navy said in a statement that after a brief ceremony starting at 9:20 am at an unidentified shipyard, waters began to be pumped into a dry dock in which the ship's hull was built.

Participants at the ceremony – officials from the central and Shanghai governments, officers from the Central Military Commission's Equipment Development Department and the PLA Navy, executives of the State-owned conglomerate China State Shipbuilding Corp as well as the vessel's designers and construction workers – applauded as they watched the launch process, the statement said, without providing more details about the event.

In shipbuilding terminology, launch refers to the process during which a nearly-finished ship is moved into water. It is one of the most important stages in a ship's construction because once a ship is launched, it means that its major structures have been readied and major work of the entire construction project has been done.

According to the Navy, the new ship, whose name remains unknown as the Chinese military usually makes public a warship's name at its commissioning ceremony, was domestically developed and constructed. It will have a strong capability to carry out amphibious combat and other tasks. The

Navy added that in the next phase, engineers will start outfitting and fine-tuning the vessel's equipment and then conduct mooring tests and sea trials.

Observers familiar with the PLA Navy's hardware have pointed out that the new ship is the first in the Type 075 class of amphibious assault ship, which is also defined as a type of landing helicopter dock. Foreign media reported it is being built at Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding, a major shipbuilder under China State Shipbuilding Corp.

Seawaves article by Seawaves Team

APPROPRIATORS SUPPORT LARGER P-8A FLEET (Defense & Security Monitor 5/23):

U.S. lawmakers want the Navy to address a standing requirement for additional P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft. The service included six P-8As in its FY20 budget request, which would complete the planned buy of 117 aircraft. The Navy actually has a warfighting requirement for 138 P-8As, but the 21 aircraft needed to meet that requirement are currently not a part of the formal acquisition plan. However, the Navy did include two aircraft in its FY20 unfunded priorities list in support of a larger fleet. The unfunded priorities lists are used to outline requirements that were unable to make it into the budget request. Lawmakers reference these lists as they complete their budget markups.

The 21 P-8As needed to meet the Navy's warfighting requirement include a dozen aircraft to recapitalize two Marine Patrol and Reconnaissance squadrons in the Navy Reserve, which are still flying the P-3C Orion. Those units will be decommissioned by 2023 unless they receive new aircraft.

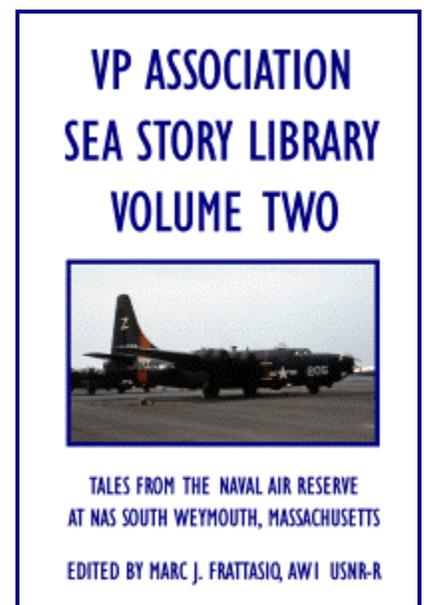
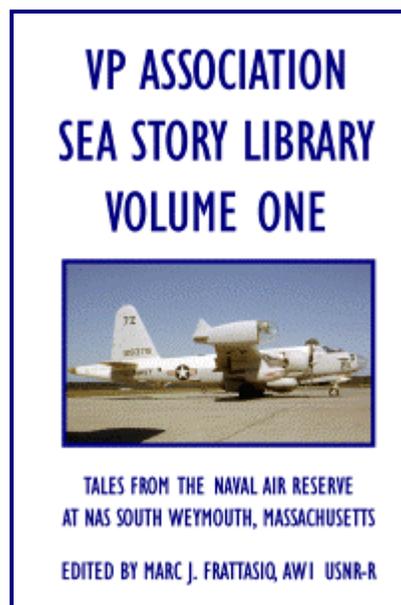
The House Appropriations Committee went a step beyond the Navy's FY20 wish list by adding three P-8As in its markup of the FY20 defense spending bill, released earlier this month. The committee also directs the Navy to submit a report to Congress within 90 days of the legislation being signed into law that outlines a plan to recapitalize the two Navy Reserve squadrons with P-8A aircraft by 2023, the date at which the Reserve P-3Cs will reach the end of their service lives.

Defense & Security Monitor article by Shaun McDougall.

RECOMMENDED READING:

A friendly reminder that your newsletter editor compiled two editions of NAS South Weymouth VP squadron related "sea stories" some years ago as a fund-raiser for this organization. Both books are still available and the proceeds benefit the VP Association. To order, go to the "Geedunk" page on our web site at www.vpassocaition.org.

If you have an amusing or interesting "sea story" from your time in the reserves at NAS South Weymouth that you'd like have included in a future third volume, please contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.



ON THE INTERNET:

There are fairly active groups on the popular social media web site Facebook for VP-92, NAS South Weymouth, and NAS Brunswick. You can check them out at www.facebook.com. You may also find Nevins Frankel's VP Navy web site at www.vpnavy.com very interesting too.

MONTHLY MEETING:

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

PARTING SHOT:



ABOVE: VP-92 SP-2H Neptune crew wearing Datsun jackets on the flight line at NAS South Weymouth in May 1974. Surely there must be a reason for the jackets, and I hope that somebody will tell us. Photo courtesy of Skip Burton. 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”.

