



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 87

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

MAR 2022

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 SP-2H Neptune “Lima Yankee Eleven”, Bureau Number 147959, at NAS South Weymouth sometime during the early-to-mid 1970s. Got something similar to share? Contact Marc Frattasio at marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

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 a recent generous donor who asked us to keep his name confidential but also wanted everybody to know that he wanted to honor Bill Hanigan.

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.

JOHN P. "SEAN" COFFEY CONFIRMED AS USN GENERAL COUNSEL (Yonkers Tribune 2/10):



Seventy-nine U.S. Senators yesterday confirmed Village of Bronxville resident John P. “Sean” Coffey to the position of general counsel of the Department of the Navy. Coffey was nominated as general counsel by President Joe Biden in August 2021. Coffey is a retired Navy captain and former federal prosecutor.

“Sean is an outstanding litigator and natural leader, and we are extremely proud that he is taking this important position in service to his country,” said Kramer Levin co-managing partners Paul H. Schoeman and Howard T. Spilko. “His unique talent, experience and background will prove to be a significant asset for the Department of the Navy.” As chair of Kramer Levin’s Complex Litigation group, Mr. Coffey has successfully overseen a variety of high-profile matters on behalf of both plaintiffs and defendants since joining the firm in 2013. Earlier in his career, he served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York.

A U.S. Naval Academy graduate, Mr. Coffey served as an active-duty naval flight officer, hunting Soviet submarines during the Cold War, and as a junior staff officer at the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the

Pentagon, at which time he entered the evening J.D. program at Georgetown Law. While earning his law degree, he also served as the personal military assistant to Vice President George H.W. Bush. He left active duty to pursue his legal career in New York but remained in the Navy Reserve for 18 years, retiring in 2004 at the rank of captain [**after serving as the commanding officer of VP-92**].

Mr. Coffey said, “It is hard to put into words my excitement at being confirmed to become the next general counsel of the Department of the Navy. I thank President Biden and the Senate for this honor and will work hard to validate their trust. I thank my friends at Kramer Levin for the eight wonderful years I spent as their colleague. I can think of no better place to practice law, but the opportunity to return to public service as chief counsel for the Navy and Marine Corps is a calling I am eager to accept. I will miss Kramer Levin dearly, but look forward to working alongside the outstanding lawyers at Navy OGC in the service of our nation and our sailors, Marines, civilian staff and their families.”

The Department of the Navy Office of the General Counsel (OGC) has more than 800 civilian lawyers in 140 offices and is the second-largest civilian law department in the federal government (DOJ is the largest). Mr. Coffey will be sworn in on Monday, February 14th.

VP-92 ALUMNI LUNCHEON:



The photo above shows Leo Salermi, your newsletter editor, Nancy Woodward, and Krystina Maksymowicz, all former SELRES in VP-92, having lunch at the Abington Ale House restaurant in Abington, MA a few miles down the road from old NAS South Weymouth on Saturday December 4th.

CDR JOHN J. SHEA ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN WINGS OF GOLD MAGAZINE:

Your newsletter editor had an article about CDR John J. Shea (USNR) published in the Winter 2022 issue of the Association of Naval Aviation’s “Wings of Gold” magazine. See www.anhq.org for details. CDR Shea’s name may be familiar to you since Shea Memorial Drive and the Shea Memorial Grove on NAS South Weymouth were named for him. The article is reproduced on the next pages:

In Remembrance

Commander John J. Shea, USNR

tribute & photos submitted by Marc J. Frattasio, AW1 USNR (Retired), ANA Patriot Squadron



LT John Shea, USNR c1930 (U.S. Navy photo from author's collection)

CDR John J. Shea, USNR, is an important part of the history and heritage of NAS Squantum, Massachusetts, the birthplace of the Naval Air Reserve.

John Joseph Shea was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts on January 13, 1895. A devout Catholic

with a strong sense of duty and a patriotic love for his country, he volunteered to serve in the Navy during the First World War on June 11, 1918, just a few days after he graduated from college.

He successfully completed flight training, was commissioned as an

Ensign, and was designated a Naval Aviator in 1919.

After Shea was honorably released from active duty in 1921, he joined the U.S. Naval Aviation Association, a group of veteran Navy pilots from the Boston area who wanted to continue flying.

Members of the Association petitioned to use the abandoned First World War seaplane base in the Squantum section of nearby Quincy to establish and operate a reserve aviation training program for the Navy. On August 15, 1923 the old base at Squantum was re-activated and commissioned as Naval Reserve Air Station Squantum.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Jack Shea was a highly visible and active figure at Squantum. It was largely through his initiative that Squantum was expanded from its starting point as a seaplane base in 1923, to a seaplane base with a turf airfield, capable of operating landplanes by 1930, and then finally becoming a modern Naval Air Station. This transformation was accomplished just in time for NAS Squantum to serve on the front line of the Battle

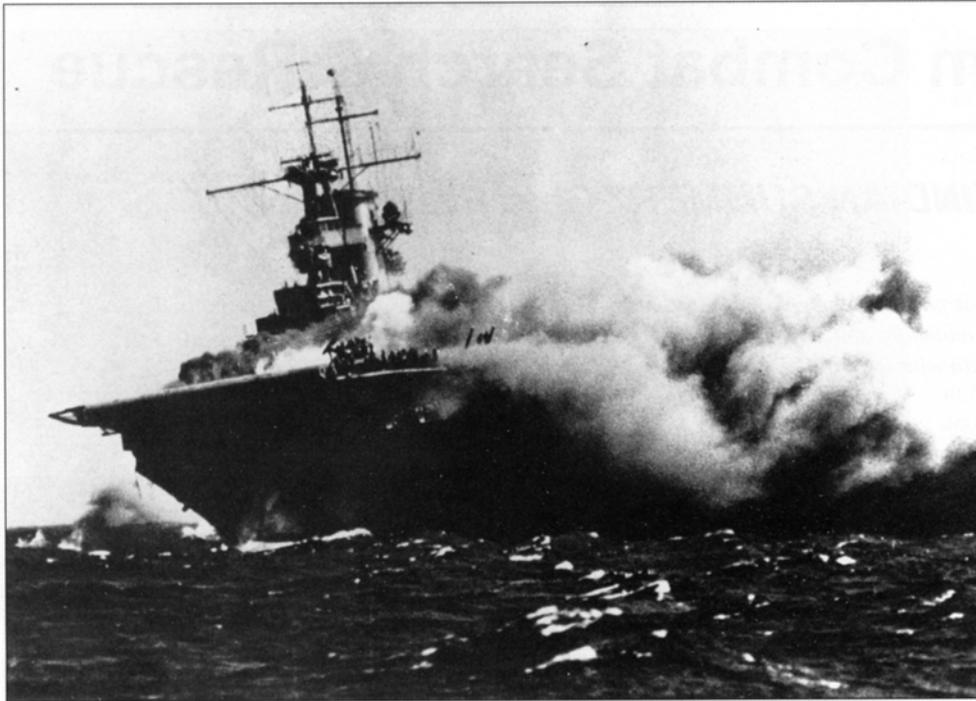
of the Atlantic during the Second World War.

In 1940, LCDR Jack Shea was activated as part of a general call-up of Reservists in response to the Second World War starting in Europe, and in March 1942 he was transferred to the aircraft carrier USS Wasp (CV-7) as Assistant Air Officer.

LCDR Jack Shea was killed in action on September 15th, 1942 when USS Wasp was hit and sunk near the Solomon Islands by torpedoes fired by the Japanese Imperial Navy.

When last seen by his shipmates, LCDR Shea was helping to fight raging fires on the carrier's wooden flight deck. His Navy Cross citation reads, in part, "Lieutenant Commander Shea disregarded the danger from the fires, flying debris, and exploding ammunition to carry on his fight." He was posthumously promoted to Commander and was awarded the Navy Cross and Purple Heart.

He was only 43 years old when he died, and he left behind a wife and four-year-old son. CDR Shea became famous after a letter he wrote to his son, John Shea Jr., also known as "Jackie", was printed in a pamphlet



USS Wasp (CV-7) burning and listing after being torpedoed, Sept 15, 1942 (U.S. Navy photo)

Today, CDR John J. Shea is remembered and honored through the continued existence of Shea Memorial Drive and the Shea Memorial Grove Park on old NAS South Weymouth. The CDR Shea memorial plaque has been relocated to in front of the flagpole at the Shea Memorial Grove park, and the Patriot Squadron strives to ensure that CDR Shea is remembered through our Shea Naval Aviation Museum. It is worth noting that Claudette Shea, widow of John Shea Jr. of "Letter to Jackie" fame, is a member of the Patriot Squadron.

by his sisters Cecelia and Dorothea, public school teachers in Boston. The so-called "Letter to Jackie" was subsequently reproduced in newspapers and magazines across the country and served as an inspiring morale-builder during the early months of the war in the Pacific, at a time when things were not going so well for the United States.

The men and women associated with NAS Squantum never forgot Jack Shea. On July 20th 1946 the airfield on the base was officially named "Shea Field" in his honor. After NAS Squantum was closed in January 1954, the CDR Shea memorial plaque was relocated to NAS South Weymouth, the airfield was named "Shea Field", and the main road through the base was renamed Shea Memorial Drive.



CDR Shea's widow Elizabeth and son "Jackie" at the dedication ceremony for the memorial plaque at NAS Squantum, July 20, 1946 (U.S. Navy photo from author's collection)

PETE FRIRÉE IS BACK:

Pete Friree, who ran the QA department at VP-92 during the early 1990s, wants all his old Navy friends to know that he is now living in Maine. If you'd like to reach out to him, you can e-mail him at jrwardenstpats@gmail.com. If you knew him in the squadron, he'd love to hear from you.

2022 VP ASSOCIATION REUNION:

September 2022 will mark the 25th anniversary of the closing of NAS South Weymouth. Because of this, there is some consideration being given to holding a VP Association reunion in the Weymouth area in September of this year to commemorate this event. It would be useful to know how many people would definitely attend so we can determine if its worth the considerable effort and expense to organize. The ticket price would be about \$40 and would include a meal and probably some kind of NAS South Weymouth related "swag". If you would definitely go, send an e-mail message to marc_frattasio@yahoo.com. We're only interested in hearing from people who will definitely go and we'd like to make a go or no-go decision in time to make an announcement in the June newsletter.

NAVY AIRCRAFT HAD 'EXTREMELY CLOSE' ENCOUNTER WITH RUSSIAN JETS (CNN 2/16):

A US Navy aircraft had an "extremely close" encounter with multiple Russian military jets over international waters in the Mediterranean this weekend, according to multiple US officials directly familiar with the US military reports of the incident. The sources would not detail precisely how close the Russian aircraft came to the US Navy P-8 maritime patrol aircraft or where precisely the encounter occurred, but the maneuvers by the Russians were described as "unsafe and unprofessional." "We have made our concerns known to Russian officials through diplomatic channels," said Captain Mike Kafka, the Pentagon's Director of Defense Press Operations.

The initial reporting indicates there was a subsequent additional encounter after that between US and Russian jets, which were Sukhoi SU-35 fighters, according to a defense official. Several of the officials indicated there is video of the incident. But the Biden administration has yet to publicly acknowledge any of the details amid rising tensions with the Russia as it masses troops on the border with Ukraine.

On Wednesday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the US had not observed any "meaningful pullback" of Russian forces near Ukraine, despite Russian state media reporting that troops would be leaving Crimea. The Russian ambassador to the European Union, Vladimir Chizhov, told Die Welt, a German newspaper, that there would be no attack on Ukraine "in the coming weeks, nor months." But the US and NATO remain broadly skeptical of Russian statements about de-escalation because of the overwhelming forces positioned so close to Ukraine and the Kremlin ambiguity about their fundamental purpose.

The encounters between US and Russian aircraft over the Mediterranean Sea, though hundreds of miles away from Ukraine, only add to the sensitivity of the situation. It is not unusual for Russian aircraft to approach US military aircraft but the majority of the interactions are considered safe and professional by the US. "While no one was hurt, interactions such as these could result in miscalculations and mistakes that lead to more dangerous outcomes," Kafka said.

CNN also has reported that US military aircraft escorted a Russian cargo plane and fighters across an air exclusion zone in eastern Syria on Tuesday when the Russians failed to give appropriate advance notification of their flights, according to other US officials. US officials continue to say these close and unexpected encounters risk a miscalculation that could lead to a military incident. "The US will continue to operate safely, professionally and consistent with international law in international waters and airspace," Kafka added. "We expect Russia to do the same."

ASW PLANE TAKES OFF CAUSING SONIC BOOM FELT ACROSS UK (NewsOTime 2/15):

The RAF Boeing Poseidon MRA1 (P-8A) left the Scottish Highlands this morning and according to the British Geological Survey was behind a number of reports of a sonic boom. The occurrences were felt in Lancashire, as well as Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire at roughly 11am. A statement from British Geological Survey said: "Data from BGS seismic networks were examined and signals consistent with a possible sonic origin were recorded at that time. "British Aerospace confirmed they did have aircraft airborne at the time and two RAF aircraft but cannot confirm at this time if any had gone supersonic."

The RAF aircraft P-8A later travelled over Guernsey and the English Channel on Tuesday morning, according to Mirror Online. It was also seen over South Devon and the Torbay area before heading towards Wales. The flight comes amid high geopolitical tensions in Europe; centred on the Ukraine/Russia border with fears of an 'imminent' invasion being ordered by the Kremlin. The plane is a multi-role maritime patrol craft armed with sensors and weapons systems for anti-submarine warfare. It is also used in surveillance and search and rescue missions.

Flight trackers showed it first flew over South Devon, then circled Guernsey, then headed back north. There is also significant RAF activity in Wales. It comes amid fear Europe is just hours away from all-out war in Ukraine. Russia has more than 100,000 troops massed near the border with its eastern European neighbours. Kremlin political leaders deny Western accusations that it is planning to invade, but say it could take unspecified "military-technical" action unless a range of demands are met, including barring Kyiv from ever joining the NATO alliance.

But American intelligence agencies predicted Kremlin chiefs will order an attack on Ukraine at 3am local time tomorrow. Moscow troops could target Kyiv's military and government command and control centres with a barrage of air strikes before tanks roll over the border. At the same time Russian amphibious warships could storm Ukraine's southern coastline. UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss warned a Russian invasion 'would not stop at Ukraine'.

The ominous news arrives hours after Russia pulled back forces from the Ukraine border. Some Kremlin troops in military districts adjacent to their eastern European neighbours are returning to bases after completing drills, Russia's defence ministry was quoted as saying today. It's a move that could de-escalate frictions between Moscow and the West. But large-scale drills across the country continue.

An estimated 126,000 Russian troops were stationed on Ukraine's eastern flank, 80,000 Russian and Belarus soldiers to the north and Kremlin warships to the south, packed with special forces and marines. While 30,000 separatist troops were dug in among Moscow special forces on a 250 mile frontier of trenches in the contested Donbas region. Attack helicopters were brought into position over the weekend, joining artillery and tanks already waiting on the frontline.

According to the Royal Air Force website, Boeing's Poseidon MRA1 (P-8A) is a multi-role maritime patrol aircraft. It is equipped with sensors and weapons systems for anti-submarine warfare, as well as surveillance and search and rescue missions. The Poseidon's comprehensive mission system features an APY-10 radar with modes for high-resolution mapping, an acoustic sensor system, including passive and multi-static sonobuoys, electro-optical/IR turret and electronic support measures (ESM). This equipment delivers comprehensive search and tracking capability, while the aircraft's weapons system includes torpedoes for engaging sub-surface targets.

FIRST POSEIDON P-8A WILL SOON BE DELIVERED TO SOUTH KOREA (Naval News 2/4):

According to information published by Militarnyi on February 4, 2022, the first Poseidon P-8A maritime patrol aircraft has rolled out of the paint shop and will soon be delivered to the Republic of Korea Navy. The Boeing P-8A is truly a multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft designed to conduct anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and search and rescue missions. The aircraft was developed and is produced by American company Boeing Defense, Space & Security, based on a modified 737-800ERX two jet engines civilian aircraft.

The P-8A can fly higher (up to 41,000 ft) and get to the fight faster (490 knots). Shorter transit times reduce the size of the Area of Probability when searching for submarines, surface vessels, or search and rescue survivors. P-8 is also designed for low altitude missions and has already proven its abilities supporting humanitarian and search and rescue missions. The P-8A can be armed with torpedoes, Harpoon anti-ship missiles, and other weapons. The Harpoon also called AGM-84 is an all-weather, over-the-horizon, anti-ship missile, developed and manufactured by McDonnell Douglas (now Boeing Defense, Space & Security). It gives the Poseidon the ability to challenge enemy naval movements, either in support of offensive operations or in order to defend friendly forces.

RUSSIA'S NEXT SUBMARINE IS GOING TO BE A BEAST (National Interest 1/27):

In March 2018, President Vladimir Putin mentioned for the first time Russia's efforts to develop a nuclear-powered unmanned underwater vehicle that could carry both conventional and nuclear warheads. The second Russian Navy submarine to serve as a basic carrier of the Poseidon nuclear-capable underwater drone will be floated out in late June, the state media reported. The Khabarovsk will reportedly be able to carry up to six Poseidon unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs). "The Khabarovsk [Project 09852] will be floated out in late June at the earliest. There is no exact date so far," a source from the Russian defense industry told TASS.

Naval News, with data from Covert Shores, has described the new submarine as similar but smaller than the Project 955 "Borei" SSBN. The estimated length of the new submarine is about 120 meters compared to the 160 meters for the BOREI. In addition, it was noted that it is even possible that the submarines may share many components and even hull sections. Khabarovsk, the lead boat of the Project 09851, is the first of four planned nuclear-powered submarines and it was laid down in 2014 with plans for it to be launched this year. The Khabarovsk-class boats should be capable of carrying weapons such as torpedoes, anti-ship and land attack missiles and as these will be fitted with a nuclear reactor and pump jet propulsion system should have unlimited range, while sea endurance will be limited only by food supplies.

The Poseidon is a unique UUV with a nuclear propulsion system and nuclear warhead, and it can operate as an autonomous nuclear torpedo with a nearly unlimited range. The Pentagon reports confirmed the existence of the UUV in 2016. It can reportedly carry a nuclear warhead with a blast yield of two megatons (MT), and it can reach underwater speeds of 108 knots—significantly faster than traditional torpedoes. The weapon platform is capable of destroying enemy infrastructure facilities, aircraft carrier strike groups (CSG) and other targets. The Poseidon drones, along with other nuclear-power submarines, which act as the carriers for the weapons, make up part of Russia's so-called oceanic multipurpose system. A source in the Russian defense industry told TASS that the Poseidon drone is capable of destroying an enemy naval base or hit at an enemy's important coastal economic facilities—which could be read to include a city such as New York or Boston.

In the March 2018 state-of-the-nation address to both houses of the Russian parliament, President Vladimir Putin mentioned for the first time Russia's efforts to develop a nuclear-powered unmanned underwater vehicle that could carry both conventional and nuclear warheads. The first basic carrier of the Poseidon was the Project 09852 special-purpose nuclear submarine Belgorod, which was

floated in April of last year and which is expected to enter service with the Russian Navy this coming September. In addition to carrying the Poseidon, the Belgorod can carry rescue deep-water drones.

National Interest article by Peter Suci

NORTHERN FLEET STAGES WAR GAMES (The Barents Observer 1/26):

Several of the Northern Fleet's large warships sailed out from Severomorsk on Tuesday and are currently conducting combat tasks outside the coast of the Kola Peninsula. The Barents Sea naval exercise will train coordinated combat actions between ships, submarines, aircraft, air defense units and garrisons of Russia's largest fleet. One aim is to protect shipping along the Northern Sea Route.

One of the warning areas pre-announced is in international waters but within Norway's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) north of the Varanger fjord. "We have not seen any activity within this area that would require a warning zone," said spokesperson with the Norwegian Armed Forces, Lt. Col. Ivar Moen, in a phone interview with the Barents Observer. NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) is a warning to civilian ships and aircraft to be aware that a military drill takes place, with either shootings or special flight patterns that could pose a danger to civilian activity. Last year, Norwegian fishermen said they were deeply troubled by increasing Russian military exercises in the Barents Sea.

Lt. Col. Ivar Moen said the exercise this week was announced and expected. We are monitoring the [Russian] activity to obtain a best possible situation awareness," he said. There are several other warning areas in the Barents Sea activated for the coming days with the largest being in the eastern Barents Sea along the coast of Novaya Zemlya.

The exercise in Arctic waters comes in addition to the group of Northern Fleet vessels that sailed out from Severomorsk last Saturday and currently are steaming south along the coast of Norway towards the Irish Sea where another warning area is activated in early February, a move by the Russian navy that has spared strong criticism by the Government in Dublin. The Barents Observer yesterday published photos taken by the Norwegians of the five Northern Fleet ships sailing south. A U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft flying out of Keflavik on Iceland has both Tuesday and Wednesday been over the Russian warships. On Wednesday, a U.S. KC-135T tanker aircraft based at Mildenhall in the UK flew north over the Norwegian Sea to provide fuel to the P-8 from Keflavik that for hours was monitoring the movement of the Russian navy group.

Meanwhile, in the Barents Sea, the Northern Fleet exercise includes up to 30 ships, 1,200 personnel, about 140 units of military equipment and up to 20 aircraft, according to the press service in Severomorsk. A video posted by the Defense Ministry in Moscow shows some of the vessels now exercising in the north, among them the anti-submarine destroyer "Severomorsk", the frigate "Admiral Gorshkov" and the large landing ship "Ivan Gren". Interestingly, the video also shows that Russia's largest combat vessel, the nuclear-powered battlecruiser "Pyotr Velikiye" stays at port and is not involved in any of the ongoing navigations.

Amid international tensions over Ukraine and the security architecture of Europe, Moscow earlier in January said all fleets of the country would hold a coordinated exercise, from the Pacific in the east to the Arctic Ocean in the north and the Black Sea in the South, as well as in the Baltic Sea and west Atlantic. The Northern Fleet based on the ice-free coast of the Kola Peninsula is the largest of Russia's four fleets.

The Barents Observer article by Thomas Nilsen

NORWAY'S P-3C MPA TRACKS RUSSIAN SURFACE GROUP OFF COAST (Naval News 1/26):

During a regular patrol over Norway's surrounding seas, a Norwegian P-3C Orion Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) detected and observed a group of five Russian Navy ships off the Norwegian coast. The Norwegian P-3C Orion took out on a normal operation in the High North around 12.20 a.m. on Tuesday (25 Jan.). The MPA, which took off from Andøya on a regular basis, tracked a group of Russian warships south along the Norway coast in waters north of Finnmark.

A total of five Russian naval vessels were identified by the P-3 Orion: an Admiral Gorshkov-class frigate, an Udaloy-class anti-submarine warfare destroyer, a Slava-class cruiser, a Kaliningradneft-class tanker, and a Sliva-class support vessel. Russia declared earlier this week in open sources that it will undertake a series of maritime military drills in the coming months. The zones announced for participation were the Atlantic, Pacific, Nordic, and Mediterranean, with over 140 warships and support vessels taking part.

The Russian vessels sailed legally in international waters, although Norway continually monitors all movements in Norwegian surrounding areas. Our P-3C Orion's primary mission is to monitor Norwegian marine areas and assert Norwegian sovereignty. This is to ensure that you have a clear knowledge of the situation and an outline of your own responsibilities. In addition to maritime surveillance and reconnaissance, the P-3C looks for foreign submarines and assists in search and rescue efforts. For more than 60 years, Orion has completed these missions from Andøya Airport.

Norwegian Navy Press Release translated by Naval News Staff

AUTHORITIES TAKE DOWN COLUMBIAN NARCO SUB BUILDER (AutoEvolution1/26):

When talking about submarines, most of us would associate them with the armed forces of various nations. But there's a different, unique type of submersibles that's definitely not meant for respectable missions. The so-called "drug submersibles" or "narco subs" are improvised underwater vehicles used for narcotics shipments, and one of the men who turned this into art was recently taken down by Columbian authorities.

The news that Oscar Moreno Ricardo was arrested in Medellin, Columbia, earlier this month made headlines. You can bet that Hollywood will soon make a movie about this man because his life really is greater than fiction. After starting out as a speedboat pilot, he eventually began building semi-submersibles for Mexican cartels and Columbian armed groups back in 2005. Over the years, he became so famous that he was nicknamed "the king of narco submarines."

Of course, Ricardo's activity was just one small piece of the puzzle. According to InSight Crime, these types of vessels have been used for cocaine transportation for over three decades, and their design and performance have constantly increased, which makes them harder to detect. In 2021, 31 of these vessels were seized in Columbia.

The fact that experienced builders, such as Ricardo, are developing drug submarines that are more and more sophisticated was proven two years ago when a rare narco submarine powered by electric motors was seized. At that time, the Columbian Navy, together with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, discovered a high-capacity submarine that was surprisingly "sustainable," being equipped with two electric motors and ten tons of powerful batteries. It had a six-ton capacity for illegal cargo and the ability to fully submerge.

According to the U.S. Naval Institute (USNI), that advanced vessel probably cost \$1.5 million to build. Most narco submarines are typically worth around \$30 million, have a smaller payload of 1.6 tons, and can only go partially underwater. The fact that these illegal vessels are so technically advanced

shows that those who build them are just as wanted by authorities as to the drug cartel leaders themselves. One legendary narco submarine developer went down, but these stealthy ships remain a major threat.

AutoEvolution article by Otilia Dragan

RUSSIAN WARSHIPS STEAM TO EXERCISE IN IRISH WATERS (The Barents Observer 1/25):

As fears grow about a military conflict in Ukraine and escalating security turmoil in Europe, three of the largest navy ships in Russia's Northern Fleet are currently sailing outside northern Norway on their way to war games southwest of Ireland. The warships started the voyage westbound in the Barents Sea on Saturday and were met by Norway's Coast Guard vessel "Andenes" outside the coast of Finnmark on Sunday. Due to bad weather, storms with high waves, the ships moved slowly, partly at 3-4 knots, for about 48 hours around Finnmark before entering the Norwegian Sea Tuesday.

A Norwegian P-3C Orion maritime surveillance aircraft flew over and took photos during daylight on Tuesday near North Cape where the Barents Sea meets the Norwegian Sea. There are five ships sailing together, of which only the fuel tanker "Vyazma" has the AIS turned on and can be followed by civilian tracking systems, like MarineTraffic.com. The three warships are the anti-submarine hunter "Vice-Admiral Kulakov", the frigate "Admiral Kastanov" and the cruiser "Marshal Ustinov." The latter is the 3rd largest vessel in the Northern Fleet. Sailing along is also the navy rescue tug SB-406. Most likely, a nuclear-powered submarine is also following the navy group underneath the surface. Norway's coast guard ship "Harstad" is on watch not far from the Russian ships which are sailing in international waters. The Norwegian Armed Forces said in a statement that it constantly follows all Russian military movements near the country.

It was last week Moscow announced a major navy exercise involving 140 combat and supply ships from all four fleets, from the Pacific to the North Atlantic. Three of the Northern Fleet's amphibious assault ships that in mid-January were flexing muscles in the Baltic Sea and made Sweden to increase military readiness, sending troops to the island of Gotland, are now sailing into the Mediterranean Sea. Likely on their way to the Black Sea amid growing tensions and part of Russia's military buildup in the area. Simultaneously as the warships from the Northern Fleet's main base Severomorsk on the Kola Peninsula started the voyage, Russia announced it intended to conduct a live firing exercise some 240 kilometers southwest of Ireland in the North Atlantic in early February.

On Monday, Russia's Ambassador to Dublin, Yury Filatov, arranged a press briefing where he assured that there is "nothing to be disturbed about" and that all the media attention in Ireland to the exercise has become part of a "propaganda campaign" against the Russian threat. The embassy posted a recording of the press conference on Twitter.

In the second half of March and early April, NATO kicks off a Norwegian-led large-scale exercise north of the Arctic Circle, where both a British and a U.S. aircraft carrier group will participate. Last time Norway was home to a large exercise, the Trident Juncture in 2018, Russian warships announced a live missile shooting exercise in the same waters outside southern Norway as NATO vessels were sailing and aircraft were flying.

While three of Russia's largest warships now sail south, the Northern Fleet on January 25 started another exercise in home waters and on land near the border to Norway and Finland. It is planned to involve up to 1,200 personnel, about 140 units of military and special equipment, up to 20 aircraft, up to 30 ships, submarines and support vessels, according to a press release from the Headquarters in Severomorsk. Severomorsk is the main base of the Northern Fleet. This Arctic drill is part of the larger all-navy Russian exercise. In the coming days, preparedness of military command and control

structures of the fleet will be assessed in both planning and real actions to resolve crisis situations in the Arctic waters, the fleet informs.

Sailings in the Barents Sea include the frigate “Admiral Gorshkov”, the anti-submarine ship “Severomorsk” and the large landing ship “Ivan Gren”. Submarines and units from the air force and coastal air defense take part. “The military personnel of the Northern Fleet will work out the issues of protecting the communications of the Northern Sea Route, the protection and defense of the garrisons of the Northern Fleet, and exercises will be held to counter imaginary terrorist groups, as well as to block and destroy them,” the statement from the navy said.

The Barents Observer article by Thomas Nilsen

RAF COMPLETES POSEIDON FLEET AS NINTH P-8A ARRIVES IN UK (Flight Global 1/11):

The UK Royal Air Force (RAF) has received the last of its nine Boeing P-8A Poseidon MRA1 maritime patrol aircraft, with the twinjet having landed at its Lossiemouth base in Scotland on 11 January. Flight tracking services indicate that the aircraft (ZP809) completed a nonstop, 8h 46min flight from Seattle, Washington; a distance of 3,820nm (7,060km).

“The ninth aircraft joins the Royal Air Force fleet already conducting maritime patrols, including anti-submarine warfare, to secure the seas around the UK and abroad,” says Boeing Defence UK. Boeing delivered the RAF’s first P-8A to its Kinloss base in February 2020, with the service declaring initial operational capability with the type just two months later. Poseidons were temporarily operated from the site while infrastructure work was being completed at nearby RAF Lossiemouth.

Flown by the RAF’s 120 and 201 squadrons, the 737NG-based type represents a successor capability for the retired British Aerospace Nimrod MR2 maritime patrol aircraft fleet, which left use in 2010. Facilities at RAF Lossiemouth now include a £100 million (\$135 million) Atlantic Building hangar, capable of accommodating three P-8As simultaneously, squadron operations, and also with mission support and training facilities including simulators.

Boeing Defence UK is under contract to support RAF operations with the Poseidon, with around 200 of its employees to deliver maintenance, training and support. The Lossiemouth base also will in the future be home to the RAF’s fleet of three 737NG-based E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning and control system aircraft. “The first two [are] currently undergoing modification in Birmingham”, Boeing says, with this work being performed by STS Aviation Services.

Flight Global article by Craig Hoyle

INDIAN NAVY'S P-8I NEPTUNE MPA COMMENCE OPERATIONS (Naval News 1/4):

The Indian Navy's Boeing P-8I Neptune Maritime Patrol Aircraft commenced operations from INS Hansa, Goa with two aircraft arriving on 30 December 2021. The aircraft were inducted after fitment of indigenous equipment and Flight Acceptance Trials. On arrival, the aircraft were welcomed by a MiG 29K formation. The Indian Navy had acquired the first batch of eight P-8I aircraft in 2013 that are stationed at INS Rajali, Arakkonam. The second batch of four additional aircraft will be based at Indian Naval Air Squadron 316, to be commissioned at INS Hansa. Boeing delivered the 11th P-8I to the Indian Navy in October 2021.

INS Hansa is the naval air station where a French Navy Rafale M fighter will be conducting ski jump tests starting this week. The test campaign will assess if the French-made carrier fighter is able to launch from Indian Navy aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. Boeing previously demonstrated this capability

for its F/A-18E Super Hornet from a similar land-based facility. The Rafale M and Super Hornet are competing for an Indian Navy procurement contract.

The P-8A is a long-range multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations. A military derivative of the Boeing Commercial Next-Generation 737 airplane, the P-8A combines superior performance and reliability with an advanced mission system that ensures maximum interoperability in the battle space.

The P-8I is a customized export variant of the P-8A featuring specific equipments for the Indian Navy. Two major components not fitted on the P-8A are a Telephonics APS-143 OceanEye aft radar and a magnetic anomaly detector (MAD). India has received eight of the P-8I variant to date with four more in production to be delivered from April 2020. It intends to procure six more aircraft.

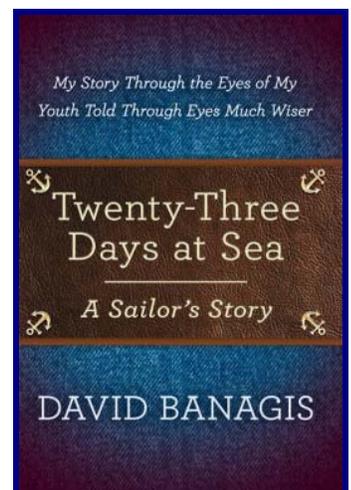
The P-8A is militarized with maritime weapons, a modern open mission system architecture, and commercial-like support for affordability. The aircraft has been modified to include a bomb bay and pylons for weapons – two weapons stations on each wing – and can carry 129 sonobuoys. The aircraft is also fitted with an in-flight refueling system. With more than 180,000 flight hours to date, P-8 variants the P-8A Poseidon and the P-8I Neptune, patrol the globe performing anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; humanitarian; and search and rescue missions.

The United Kingdom is one of six international customers for the P-8A Poseidon. The first British Poseidon MRA Mk1 was delivered in 2019. The U.S. Navy is on contract to receive 128. As a cooperative partner with the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Program Office, Australia began receiving their P-8A aircraft in 2016 with eight delivered and four more in production; Norway will begin receiving their five P-8As in 2022; both New Zealand and South Korea have signed agreements with the U.S. Navy to purchase four and six aircraft respectively. The German Navy is the latest customer to date.

Naval News article by Xavier Vavasseur

RECOMMENDED READING:

David Banagis passed away recently. Although he was not a member of the VP Association, nor was he ever associated with any regular Navy or reserve patrol squadrons, he did serve at NAS South Weymouth for many years during the 1950s and 1960s. At first he served with the Naval Air Development Unit and then later transferred into the base's administration department. He retired from NAS South Weymouth as a YNC and at that time was the commanding officer's yeoman. Dave published his Navy memoirs, "Twenty-Three Days at Sea". It's an interesting book that features quite a bit of material about old NAS South Weymouth. Its well worth reading. You can check it out at <https://www.authorhouse.com/en/bookstore/bookdetails/474756-Twenty-Three-Days-at-Sea>



ON THE INTERNET:

In recent months we've had questions come up from the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran that can be answered by checking out this on-line military retiree survivor checklist at <https://www.military.com/benefits/survivor-benefits/military-retiree-survivor-checklist.html> This web

document should be of interest to anybody in this group that's drawing military retirement or will do so at some point in the future.

Also, a friendly reminder that there is now a Facebook group for VP-MAU Brunswick to complement the one that has been up on Facebook for many years for VP-92. If you were a member of either squadron you should consider joining its Facebook group. Go to www.facebook.com and do a search on "VP-92" or "VP-MAU" to find them

PARTING SHOT:



ABOVE: VP-92 personnel visiting Pearl Harbor sometime during the 1980s. Note the USS Arizona memorial visible in the background. Have 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".

