



****WINTER, 2008****

Online Newsletters at <http://vp1pops.com/newsletters.html>

ALOHA! The Patrol Squadron ONE (VP-1) P-3 Orion Pioneers (POPS) is a group of Navy veterans, and their Families, who served in VP-1 during and immediately after its transition from the SP-2H Neptune to the P-3B Orion between the years 1969 to 1974.

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Current Officers: President Rich Haglund, 3570 Deerfield Drive South, Salem, OR 97302; 503-378-7621; ralh503@yahoo.com; **Co-Vice Presidents** Rick Salas, 10020 NE 234th Street, Battle Ground, WA 98604; 360-687-9636; dundusty@aol.com; Gary Spees, 1539 NW Silver Street, Bremerton, WA 98311; 360-692-2967; gary2967@msn.com; **Secretary/Treasurer** Reisse Perin, 7721 Settlers Avenue, Boise, ID 83704; 208-322-0188; reisse@rlpcpa.com; **Chaplain** Carson Hunt, 376 County Road #1, South Point, OH 45680; (740) 646-3158; ccae@zoominternet.net; **Internet Information Coordinator/ Webmaster/Newsletter Editor** Ken (KB) Sherman, 89 Adams Road, North Grafton, MA 01536; 508-839-6580; asa66@charter.net

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HOW TO JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP To join or renew your VP-1 POPS Membership, contact **Secretary/Treasurer Reisse Perin, 7721 Settlers Avenue, Boise, ID 83704; 208-322-0188; reisse@rlpcpa.com. Or, print membership form at http://vp1pops.com/member_form.html and mail-in.**

All membership dues, new or renew, for the next Biennial (2008-2009) are \$15.00. It has been the custom to pay at the ongoing reunion in the past. Biennial VP-1 POPS dues are normally assessed in January of each even numbered year.

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P-3 Squadron CO Relieved After Crash

(www.vpnavy.org)

The commanding officer of VPU-1 was relieved following the crash of the P-3 aircraft he was piloting on 21 October 2008. The aircraft was destroyed by fire. Capt. James Hoke, Commander of [NAS Brunswick, Maine CPRW-5](#), relieved Cmdr. Llewellyn Lewis, who was the commanding officer of the [NAS Brunswick, Maine](#)-based Special Projects Squadron One ([VPU-1](#)) "due to loss of confidence in his ability to command," according to a Navy press release. The release said additional corrective action will be taken at the end of an investigation of the October aircraft mishap in Afghanistan.

Base spokesperson John James said Lewis and his crew returned to Brunswick shortly after the crash.

In Lewis's stead, Executive Officer Cmdr. Craig Lee has assumed command of the squadron.

Lee started leading the squadron on a temporary basis after a [P-3](#) Orion Lewis was piloting overshot a runway at [Baghrum Air Base, Afghanistan](#) and crashed. During the incident, the aircraft's right main landing gear collapsed and both right engines caught fire.



No one was killed in the crash although one crew member sprained an ankle as a result.

But the crash, which was the first in 30 years involving a [NAS Brunswick, Maine](#)-based [P-3](#), rendered the plane out of commission and represents a multi-million-dollar loss. [P-3](#) Orions, 23 of which fly out from Brunswick, were last produced for the U.S. Navy in 1990 for \$36 million apiece.

[VPU-1](#) flies a specialized version of the recon plane, the [P-3](#) "Reef Point," which includes additional long-range cameras and electro-optical sensors, said John Pike, a defense expert and director

of GlobalSecurity.org.

During a deployment in Afghanistan, "they are basically looking for Taliban movements and convoys," Pike said.

The crash is the second Class A mishap this year for the [P-3](#). The previous one, in July, was the first in more than 10 years. In that incident, a P-3 from VP-1 under post-maintenance flight check entered a spin and barely recovered in time.

Navy officials have grown increasingly concerned about the [P-3s](#). The Navy grounded 39 Orions in December — roughly 20 percent of the fleet — citing "structural fatigue" and fears that wing sections could break off in flight. One more [P-3](#) was grounded in March.

[Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan](#) is the largest U.S. military base in Afghanistan and a main flying hub.

The crash is under investigation, officials said.

From: Don G [oldfogy@cablespeed.com]
Subject: Carol Adams Passing

F Y I

----- Original Message -----

From: Mac McComas

Just got a call from Jack Adams and he was all broken up. He said that his wife Carol had died

2 weeks ago and he wanted me to get out the word. I called the MacRone Funeral Home in Ruidoso, NM, and they confirmed that Carol Adams had passed away 2 weeks ago. I have a good friend here in Grayville named Jack whose wife in not in good shape and at first I thought it was him. Please spread the word to the rest of POPs.

Jack's address is 245 Country Club Road, P. O. Box 4698, Ruidoso, NM 88345. Phone:

575-259-2315

Mac McComas

From: McKinney, Michael [mailto:michael.mckinney@lmco.com]

Subject: LM Aero BNAS Field Office Closes

On September 30th the Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Field Office at the Naval Air Station Brunswick, ME, closed its doors after supporting the U.S. Navy and the P-3 community there for over 43 years. Mr. William (Al) Sinyard, P-3 Airframe field engineer assigned at NAS Brunswick also retired upon his P-3 OEM Airframe task at Brunswick being terminated by NATEC. Brunswick VP squadrons start departing Brunswick in Nov. 08 and will change their homeport to NAS Jacksonville.



Sometimes You Shouldn't Go Back...

From: Mike McQuaiq [mmcquaiq@totalplbg.com]

Subject: FW: Subic and Cubi O'Club

Thought you gents would enjoy some of these pic's. The narration is sad to read. Reminds me of going back to Utapao in '84 from what I'd remembered from the 72-73 days.

Squid

From: "Larry Nevels" <lnevels@austin.rr.com>

Subject: Subic and Cubi O'Club

from JP (FedEx pilot)

Sometimes it's best not to go back.

My trip to Subic...what a disappointment! While the trip to/from was no prob (beautiful, high speed toll-way...through Angeles City and Clark), when I got to Subic, I was shocked. When I crossed "fecal



river,” I literally didn't know whether I was coming or going. Olongapo looked the same on both sides. There were two RPN ships in port, so I was able to ID where the waterfront was.

My trip to Cubi NAS was no different. I struggled, but finally found the Cubi O Club. The front doors had a steel bar through them, preventing entrance. I walked around back, to find a family living in the club! Roosters were clucking among the weeds, where the nice lawn overlooking the RW and the bay used to be. The Ready Room bar was

still there, but all sadly in need of paint. At the BOQ, more families were living in the rooms. The BOQ swimming pool was partially filled with green, fetid water, crud, and bugs. The two Navy exchanges (Cubi/Subic) were very poor copies of KMart. Fedex was operating out of the old air wing hangar. No paint had been applied since the USN moved out. The only bright spot was the Binictican Valley golf course...now called the Subic Bay Golf Course. It was in great shape. Only three foursomes were on the course (Sat afternoon). Apparently the last touchup work really accomplished on the base was in 1996, when the RP hosted an APEC summit at Cubi. Eight private home were built just above the runways, but below the O Club...one home for each



world leader...They are now privately owned...but are starting to show wear/tear so common in this harsh environment. Everything else was overgrown, buildings slowly receding back into the jungle. No lawns were without thigh-high weeds. Fences falling over, parking lots empty and chained off, with weeds growing among the cracks.



Cubi Ready Alert Vehicle, c 1971

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From: Ross Bonny [rfbonny@yahoo.com]
Subject: Hi to all shipmates

Great to hear from you again! Hope all is well, as it is with us, and that you and yours have a Merry Christmas, or Hanukkah, or whatever you prefer. I'm not particularly into the Christmas festival, except I like the pagan parts. And, I recently found a bottle of Manischewitz wine on the shelf, and it reminded me of our crew dinner in Taipei...

... I don't remember what we did enroute -- probably hunt for a sub... Anyway, as I recall, we landed in Naha and discussed our dinner plans. Bob Fuller expressed a desire for a steak and potatoes meal, but the rest of us outvoted him to have a more local dinner.

We went to a nice restaurant and ordered things like Peking Duck. When drink orders were solicited, most of us expressed a desire for wine. KB spoke up and asked if they had any Manischewitz (or was it Mogen David?) grape wine. The waitress went to the wine cellar and found a bottle and brought it out, and had to dust it when it came. It's one of my fondest memories of the deployment.

I may not have all my facts perfect after 40 years, but the basics are true enough. Hope I've jogged your memory...

Hurricane IKE was a fairly major occurrence here in Spring, just north of Houston. We felt lucky for the near-misses of Katrina and Rita and were hoping that being 90 miles north of the coast would spare us the worst of Ike. Well, it did -- we didn't suffer nearly as much as those on Galveston Island and just north of there, but the fact that we did get some problems this far north of the coast gives testament to the strength of the storm.

We had enough wind to blow over three of our trees, only one of which did damage to a corner of our house, and remained leaning on our roof afterward. After the storm, it was amazing how many 'contractors' showed up to get trees off of roofs. Since our leaning tree was threatening more dire circumstances if it slid off (such as the air conditioning outside machinery), we hired the guys with the big crane to pick up the tree - for \$4K. That seemed to be the going rate. Grinding the stump and roots of that tree and the other trees was also very lucrative for the contractors who flooded out area. I must say that the USAA adjuster was prompt and fair. If you leave the Navy, don't leave USAA.

While the neighborhood lost electrical service for about 10 days, we were fortunate to have installed a year ago a natural gas-powered standby generator which would power our entire house (within reason) and which kept us powered and able to cook, air condition (very nice during that outage) and run lights and TV, etc. We consequently became very popular with friends and family. Our son and father-in-law spent several days with us, and as my neighbor from across the street told me today, we were the 'Starbucks' of the block.

We've since had to get rid of the three trees, the bird feeder, and the mailbox. I try to take the philosophical position that as much of a pain as a hurricane can be, it happens only once in a long while and beats contending with snow every year.

Both my wife and I are now retired pilots, she from NWA and me from Delta. We each worked for five airlines (not always the same ones) and finally qualified for some retirement. Although the industry has been rough on our retirements, we saved conservatively and are doing OK on our pensions.

Our best to all our VP-1 friends. As I look back on the history of VP-1, and of the history of the entire VP Navy, I appreciate more and more what I was a part of, especially my squadron mates. Merry Christmas!

Ross Bonny

From: Garry Spees [gary2967@msn.com]

Subj: Hi, all

This has been quite a year. Kalen will graduate from Whitworth University this spring with two degrees, one in Mathematics and the other in Computer Science. He hopes to work in the computer software field...

Kiran is still living with 'grama' Margie Howe and friend Lavon. She enjoys working at Mills Music in Poulsbo (north of Bremerton and Silverdale). She has become very active in our church, Central Kitsap Presbyterian Church (CKPC). She is a Deacon and also on the worship committee. A few months ago she was elected as a member of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). That is an awesome responsibility and will take a lot of her time for the next 18 months. Kiran still sings in the chancel choir.

Melanie is still involved with theater. This summer, she was paid to house manage The Sound of Music at Leavenworth Summer Theater (LST). She enjoys working with old friends up there and making new ones. After serving seven years on the CSTOCK Board of Directors, she is no longer on the board. Upon hearing the news, two other theaters inquired about her serving on their board. She declined. In June, Melanie suffered a stress fracture in her left foot. Healing has been problematic and she has been in a cast and on crutches for two months.

I've been retired from teaching for three and a half years and loving every moment of it. I continue to be a part of the music ministry at CKPC, singing in the chancel choir. In the fall I became more active, some times playing drums with the praise team at the contemporary style 9:15 service.

This summer, Kalen and I rebuilt the back fence and porch at home and also cleared a lot of brush at the cabin. He has performed in a number of musicals this year. At BCT in Bremerton, he played Uncle Max in The Sound of Music in April. In May he performed in Beauty and the Beast playing Maurice (Belle's father) at Forest Theater, an outdoor theater in rural Kitsap County. In June, Gary and Melanie moved to the cabin for the summer. He played Uncle Max again in The Sound of Music, this time with LST. He also played percussion for Kiss Me Kate with LST. It has been such fun renewing old friendships and making new ones. Currently he is directing a musical, Narnia, at CSTOCK in Silverdale. You can check out his talented cast at the Narnia webpage www.cstock.org/shows/narnia-2009/. Narnia opens February 13, 2009.

Both Melanie and Kiran are working with Gary on "Narnia." Kiran is creating artwork, and has designed the logo for the production. Both she and Melanie are helping design and sew costumes. Melanie is working on props. She plans to create a mold and cast the witch's wand.

Last winter we enjoyed playing in the snow at the cabin. There was five feet of snow on the ground. With fireplace and wood stove blazing we stayed nice and toasty. May God's blessings be upon you and your family.

Merry Christmas and have a wonderful New Year,
Gary, Melanie, Kiran and Kalen Spees



P-8 Faces \$900 Million Budget Cut

By Tony Capaccio, Dailyherald.com

Dec. 23 (Bloomberg) -- Boeing Co.'s new Navy P-8 patrol aircraft for spotting enemy submarines and ships faces a cut of more than \$900 million in the Defense Department's proposed fiscal 2010 budget in order to pay for a new warship, according to budget documents.

Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England, in an Oct. 31 budget memo, approved shifting away as much as \$940 million to complete payment for a new DDG-1000 destroyer that Congress partially funded this fiscal year. The ship is the last of three the service says it will buy from Northrop Grumman Corp. and

General Dynamics Corp.

The proposal is an indication the Navy is willing to cut new aviation programs -- even one designed to replace P-3 maritime patrol craft in operation since the 1950s -- to sustain its long-range shipbuilding goal. The Navy wants to have 313 vessels in the fleet by 2020, including new ships added as others retire, up from 283 deployable vessels today.

The Navy proposed getting two aircraft instead of six in the initial production of a program that would eventually have 113 planes and cost \$32.8 billion, according to charts prepared this month by the Pentagon Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation.

The Navy "has identified four P-8s and operating and maintenance" funds to pay for the destroyer, the charts showed. Navy spokesman Lieutenant Commander Victor Chen said the Navy won't discuss any aspect of its fiscal 2010 plan. Boeing spokesman Charles Ramey said in an e-mail today the Chicago-based company wasn't aware of any proposed reductions. Boeing, which gets about half of its revenue from defense, is also the world's second-largest commercial plane maker.

"The program is progressing per plan and the feedback we've received from the Navy has been very positive," he said.

The aircraft, a military derivative of the 737-800, is in its design and development phase, with the first test flight and delivery to the Navy of the test aircraft next year, Ramey said.

Boeing is assembling the aircraft at its facility in Renton, Washington.

Boeing's P-8 partners include Northrop Grumman and Raytheon Co., which are making radar and electronics. CFM International, a joint venture of General Electric Co. and French-owned Snecma SA, will make the engines.



The proposed P-8 cut is part of a \$580.8 billion budget -- about \$68.7 billion, or 13.4 percent, larger than this year's budget, according to charts prepared this month by acting Pentagon Comptroller Douglas Brook.

The proposed budget adds \$3.3 billion for Navy shipbuilding overall, the second-largest category of new spending after \$5 billion for tactical aircraft. The fiscal 2010 ship plan also includes the purchase of two more DDG-51 destroyers, which the Navy said this year it wanted to continue buying instead of up to seven DDG-1000 vessels, according to the documents.

The 2010 plan also requires the Navy this month to submit for Pentagon review a revised long-range shipbuilding plan that accounts for reduced defense budgets.

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From: Sharon Ford [sharon.ford.16@gmail.com]

Subj: Hi! From The Girls

Greetings from Kansas. This is Roy and Betty Mahon's youngest two daughters; Sharon Mahon Ford and Sally J. Mahon. We were together for the holidays and were searching/playing on the web and found a VP-1 reunion site. How fun to read old familiar names! Drees, McAllisters, Truaxs and yourself! We think of you guys often and with affection.

Fast update:

Suzanne is 50; a nurse; married to Terry since age 18; have three children and four grandchildren. Living in Lawrence, KS.

Sharon is 48; teacher; married to John for 25 years; have four children for 25 years; have four children and one that adopted us...No grandchildren; living in Garden City, KS.

Sally is 42; props set manager; lost her life partner in Aug. (very difficult time); no children; living in Pittsburg, PA.

As you know, we buried Dad in September of 1996 in Springtown Texas. Mom is buried here in Garden City; death date was Jan. 1987.

We would love to hear from you and know how things are going...

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From: K.B. Sherman [asa66@charter.net]

Subj: Ramo

Hello, Ladies! Good to hear from you.

Your dad was one of my best friends in VP-1. We met when he was a navigation instructor at VT-29 in Texas and I was a student NFO. He and I got orders to VP-1 at the same time. Ramo was a great guy. I met you all in Corpus when you were very little, in 1969. I remember Sally running around the living room in her Dr. Denton jammies. Your mom was also very welcoming to us young ensigns.

I remember hearing from Ramo when your mom died. My biggest regret is that we didn't make a greater effort to see one another over the years, although we would talk once in a while. I remember how hard it was when he was forced out of the Navy for being "too old," and then how happy he was when the Reserves recognized what a great officer he was and promoted him up to CAPT.

In 1995, after my plane crash, I was badly hurt. While I was at home recovering, your dad would call me and try to cheer me up. He indicated that he had some health problems but never complained. A year later I heard from his second wife when he died. I was very surprised and more sad we hadn't made the effort to see one another over all those years. I heard from one of you – Sharon? – thereafter once or twice and have wondered how you were..

KB Sherman

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From: Sharon Ford [sharon.ford.16@gmail.com]

Subj: Dad

How wonderful to get your update and know I found the right KB! I appreciate all your nice words about dad... I will share a funny with you about his funeral

Dad was buried in his dress whites and the buttons were missing so Brenda — his second wife — went out and bought buttons. Not being truly military, she just bought buttons and had them sewn on. She got the wrong branch and when we got there his NAS Dallas military friend, Billy Bob, was hovering over the casket and muttering something...he was cutting off the buttons and another friend was bringing over the correct NAVY ones for them to sew back on. To most people, this would not be funny but to us, we just roared in laughter!

The picture you sent is one that I remember hanging on our fridge in Hawaii and still in Garden City! I can't wait to print it off and put it on mine now too. Thanks for doing that. I am technology illiterate but will figure out away to send you a pic of us girls soon. My kids can always help!

I did sent Dan and Ona Truax's son an email too but have not heard from him. I still keep up every few years with Carla Vaughn and use to keep up with McArthurs. So glad we found you again too!

...I will work on getting the pic to you and a more detailed update on us girls. Would love to see a pics and hear more ... Guess without our folks we live via their friends now to know what they would be doing!! ha reverse empty nest??? ha

Take care

Sincerely,
The girls

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From: Frank Conkle [frank.conkle@co.travis.tx.us]

Subj: You might be a VP sailor if:

While cruising at 10,000 feet in a P-2 you've ever used the after station deck hatch as a refuse dumping station.

You discovered that the retro will fire a round, even when you're on the deck.

You found it amusing to pull on the P-2's rudder control tab cable during check flights, just to hear the pilot scream.

You learned early on that crossing the wing beam headfirst could be painful.

You would find yourself singing along with the rhythm of the background noise on the HF radios.

You knew the head on a P-3 was unusable because it was filled with helmet bags and personal gear.

You often found yourself wanting to shoot the ground-pounder that would help you raise the ladder through the door, before grinning and saying, "Hope you don't crash".

You knew the layout of Cavite City better than the layout of your hometown.

You knew how to parlay a case of painted-label San Miguel into a generator and refrigerator for your hooch.

From: DM CROWE [dmcrowe@cox.net]

Subject: FW: VP-16 and VP-46 return after deployments

By LTJG Kevin Harrington, VP-16 PAO

The first combat aircrews of VP-16 "War Eagles" and maintainers of Consolidated Maintenance Organization Eleven (CMO-11) "Black Tips" Maintenance Detachment Team B (MDT-B) returned Dec. 1 to an emotional reunion with family and friends at NAS Jacksonville.

During deployment, VP-16 was tasked with covering an area of responsibility (AOR) that encompassed nearly half of the globe. "I have never seen a squadron spread over such a large area and accomplish everything as well as we have. The total dedication to each other and the mission was humbling to watch. To be a part of this superb group of warriors is the highlight of my Navy career," remarked VP-16 Executive Officer Cmdr. Anthony Corapi.

In June, VP-16 assumed command as Commander, Task Group 72.2/72.4 at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan while simultaneously deploying four combat aircrews (CAC), maintenance personnel and a command element to NAS Sigonella, Italy in support of Commander, Task Force 67.

>From Japan, VP-16 launched a forward detachment of one aircraft, one combat aircrew and maintenance personnel to execute global war on terror missions at Clark Air Base, Philippines. In October, VP-16 assumed command as Commander, Task Group 67.1 in Sigonella and dispatched two combat aircrews to the Fourth Fleet AOR to carry out counter-drug operations from Comalapa Forward Operating Location, El Salvador.

This extraordinary deployment for VP-16 demonstrated the global reach of the War Eagles and showcased exceptional mission accomplishments. Operating simultaneously from three AORs, VP-16 executed more than 600 sorties and flew over 2,900 flight hours with better than a 92 percent mission completion rate. VP-16 Operations Officer Lt. Cmdr. Aaron Dimmock noted, "This high operational tempo is a true testament to each individual Sailor's dedication to the team and mission."

Historic achievements include the first-ever airborne acoustic intelligence and imagery collection against a foreign diesel submarine on an out-of-area patrol in the Pacific Command (PACOM) AOR.

In October, VP-16 carried out unprecedented simultaneous anti-submarine warfare (ASW) prosecutions within European Command and PACOM, achieving 39 hours of on-top time and over 54 hours of total deployment contact time on foreign submarine forces. This led the War Eagles to record the first "sector kill" in the North Atlantic in over nine years. Shortly after arriving in El Salvador, VP-16 combat aircrews located a suspected drug runner during a high-visibility maritime interdiction mission, resulting in the seizure of more than 1.2 million metric tons of illegal drugs. VP-16 executed 25 detachments across the globe to include most of Southeast Asia, Australia, Africa, South and Central America and Europe. These detachments were vital in supporting over 35 theater security cooperation engagements, humanitarian missions, allied exercises, real-world ASW operations and fleet support missions with over 28 different countries.

VP-16's successful six-month deployment to support the commanders of Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Fleets made 2008 one of the most extraordinary years in VP-16's maritime patrol and reconnaissance history. The performance of every member of the War Eagle and Black Tip team made this deployment one for the record books.

"This was a total team effort. My hat is off to the maintainers from CMO-11 Det Team B. I've never

seen such a quality maintenance effort. They allowed us to excel on station and support the theater commanders," stated VP-16 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Mark Creasey.

VP-46 RETURNS AFTER SIX-MONTH DEPLOYMENT IN AFRICA, ASIA AND MIDDLE EAST

After six months stalking pirates and hunting submarines in the Gulf of Aden, Asia and the Middle East, the "Grey Knights" of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station's patrol squadron 46 are returning home this week.

The last of the squadron's seven P-3C "Orion" surveillance and reconnaissance planes return home Tuesday afternoon, Navy officials said Tuesday.

The group has been deployed to four sites covering Africa, Asia and the Middle East since May, hopscotching around to log 4,300 hours and fly 650 missions supporting the Navy's 5th, 6th and 7th Fleets.

In addition to deterring piracy and tracking submarines, the squadron provided real time intelligence and surveillance and reconnaissance information to ground combat troops.

In a press statement, VP-46's commander, Cmdr. Carlos Sardiello, praised his sailors' character and fortitude, calling their performance "brilliant."

"The Grey Knights did it all and came home safely, extending their record to 44 years and 305,000 flight hours mishap-free," Sardiello said.

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Subject: FW:JW USN Downs USAF (Blast from the past)

"If it weren't for the United States military, there'd be NO United States of America."

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On an early fall afternoon in September, 1987, Vodka 51, an RF-4C, departed Aviano Air Base in Italy bound, for the Mediterranean. Their job that day was to find the US aircraft carrier USS Saratoga. Of course, part of Exercise Display Determination, a joint USAF, USN and NATO exercise, taking place in the Med, was for Navy assets to defend the carrier and stop detection of its location. The search for the carrier and the defense of it, as always, were to occur within the exercise ROE.

Vodka 51 was flying a special RF-4 TEREK that day. TEREK, Tactical Electronic Reconnaissance, was the AN/ALQ-125, which enabled detection of electronic beeps and squeaks that could emanate from various sources, one being an aircraft carrier group. That's how Vodka 51 planned to find the Saratoga.



USAF RF-4C Phantom II  
Photo by Gunter Gronstein

After the flight across Northern Italy and into the Mediterranean, the first order of business for Vodka 51 was to hit a tanker for airborne refueling. Join up and hook up with the tanker was routine and uneventful. While taking gas the RF-4 crew noticed a Navy F-14 had joined on the tanker's wing. Thinking nothing of it Vodka 51 concentrated on the task and hand and, once topped off, disconnected and left the tanker track to start their search. As they turned away, Vodka noticed the Tomcat did not stay with the tanker but appeared to follow them.

Vodka 51 got their TEREK equipment up and running then started their flight search pattern to hunt for the Saratoga. As it seems to happen on occasion, the cosmic stuff decides not to work and, on this day, the TEREK gear failed to operate. However, the RF-4 guys did notice the TACAN channel that was in use on the Saratoga three days prior was up and transmitting. That would allow them to make the briefed intercept of the Saratoga. As the Vodka 51 started down to the intercept altitude they lost sight of the Tomcat. Fifteen minutes after departing the tanker, a massive explosion engulfed the RF-4. Both the pilot and the WSO were able to eject. Although ejection parameters were not ideal, 550Kts, 5500 feet and negative 2.5 G's, it was better than not getting out at all. All the egress equipment worked as briefed and, once they regained consciousness, they both found themselves under parachute canopies that settled them down to the warm waters of the Mediterranean. Their time in the water was relatively short, 45 minutes. A Navy rescue helicopter picked them up and brought them to the carrier. Vodka 51 had finally found the Saratoga.

Once they had been medically checked over and given dry clothes Vodka 51 met with the carrier CO. He asked them if they knew what had happened. When they said they thought they might have had a mid-air with the F-14 that had been following them, the CO said, "No, that F-14 was one of ours and

he shot you down.” The WSO’s response was, "I thought we were on the same side, sir!" To which the Admiral answered, "Normally we are."



USN F-14B Tomcat  
Photo by Mark Wheless

After departing the tanker, the F-14 had indeed followed Vodka 51. The Tomcat was being flown by a young, Navy LTJG, tactical call sign "Smoke," a player in the exercise, whose task it was to defend the carrier. Apparently, this was going to be quite an atta-boy, quickly eliminating an adversary so early in the exercise. It was his luck that day to see the RF-4 come on station and to be able to follow him into the exercise area after refueling. It was also his luck, or misfortune, that day to be flying with live ordinance for Fleet defense when he was re-tasked from that role to participate in the exercise. The F-14 HUD video recorded his call to the carrier asking, within exercise rules, to engage the RF-4. He was given clearance, within exercise rules, to shoot and destroy Vodka 51. On the video you can plainly hear the Navy fighter pilot call up his left missile. You can hear him say everything is good, announce he’s firing the missile and a release cue is displayed. However, the left missile had a motor malfunction and didn’t fire. You can hear the pilot is somewhat confused when no missile departed the rail. Next you hear on the HUD video as the Tomcat pilot called up his right missile and announce everything is good. This time when the release cue is displayed you also see the F-14 is inside the Break X signal, that he’s 2500 feet behind the RF-4 and the Air Force jet’s Zweibrucken AB, Germany tail flash, ZR, can plainly be seen. Then a live AIM-9 flashes into the HUD field of view and makes its way to the RF-4 where it impacts in front of the tail section resulting in a huge explosion. While all this is going on, you can hear the RIO’s profanity filled screams asking his pilot what has he done. Then starting a rescue effort the RIO transmits, “MAYDAY, MAYDAY MAYDAY, WE’VE JUST SHOT DOWN THE F-4 AT 060/05 FROM MOTHER, NO CHUTES, NO CHUTES, NO CHUTES.”



A few interesting side notes.

One of the ROE's of the exercise was that no participating aircraft were allowed to carry live missiles.

The Navy LTJG, when asked later by the accident investigation board, said, yes, indeed, he intended to shoot a live missile. He was not court-martialed but put on non-flying duties and never flew again.

This very same LTJG's father was an active Navy Vice Admiral who, when flying combat missions in Vietnam, accidentally shot down his wingman.

The pilot of Vodka 51 has ever since been known as "Squidbait." He's had numerous back surgeries as a result of the Martin-Baker ejection; the most recent, earlier this year, 2008.

The accident board determined that Vodka 51 was very lucky to have almost full fuel tanks. Had those fuel tanks been mostly empty, filled with fuel vapors, the explosion would have been much more massive, ripping the RF-4 apart and almost certainly killing the crew.

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### **US Navy Plans for EP-3E Replacement Even as Manned Aircraft Era Ends**

In November, 2008, the US Navy's Naval Air Systems Command held an EP-X Industry Day to give contractors an update on its procurement plans regarding the replacement for the Navy EP-3E SIGINT aircraft. In December, the Navy will release a Broad Agency Announcement calling for specific requirements of a replacement aircraft, the EP-X. EP-X is to replace both the EP-3E SIGINT duties as well as add Multi-intelligence (Multi-INT) duties.

By spring of 2009 NAVAIR is expected to issue three, 13-month, \$13M contracts to reduce the competing industry teams to two for competition in the technology demonstration phase. Selection of a final team is tentatively scheduled for 2012. Previously, three teams (Boeing, Northrop Grumman, and Lockheed Martin) had finished smaller concept-refinement contracts. Boeing is building the P-8A replacement for the P-3C and perhaps has a leg up at this point. A P-8 variant was initially considered to replace the EP-3E until the Army balked at using it for the Aerial Common Sensor replacement. The P-8 was originally proposed in two variants: the Search & Attack Version and the Surveillance & Intelligence Version. Whether the issue was really one of size or one of Army-Navy competition and turf-warring is open to conjecture.

Multi-INT duties are to involve networked ISR involving both manned and unmanned aircraft, satellites, ground stations and naval vessels. EP-X is to conduct manned ISR and targeting in conjunction with the Broad Area Maritime Surveillance UAV that will also work in conjunction with the P-8A Poseidon ASW aircraft. However, the UAV and UCAV world has been in a constant state of uproar since the Army abandoned its proposed Embraer RJ-145 SIGINT airplane in 2006 after it was determined that the proposed new Aerial Common Sensor aircraft could not handle the job. Even before that decision was made, the Navy was balking at the use of the -145 to replace the EP-3E as the former was far smaller than the EP-3E and thus could not carry the crew and equipment the Navy insisted was necessary for the job. Similarly, possible aircraft from EADS and General Dynamics were judged too small.

If the reader thinks this saga is confusing, it is. Because in addition to the issues noted above, another major factor is the US military's head-long rush to unmanned tactical and intel aircraft. As noted previously, the capability of UAV systems and aircraft doubles every 18-24 months – similar to that of personal computers. This, combined with a new administration openly hostile to military spending and a public that no longer accepts any losses of personnel in a war, is becoming an irresistible force in demanning military platforms. The new Littoral Combat Ship is designed to be operated by just 40 people

vs. over 300 for a WW II destroyer of the same size. The [X-47 UCAV](#) is about to be rolled-out for subsequent testing aboard Navy aircraft carriers and the RQ-8A Fire Scout VTUAV is now being deployed in the fleet. The BAMS UAV RQ-4B Maritime Hawk is in development and may be produced as a UCAV with weapons release capabilities. The Nav Log expects that, after the dust settles, the EP-X will be an unmanned aircraft employing the Multi-INT technology also under development. In what can only be considered [an O'Henry twist](#), the last manned military aircraft are likely to be logistic, the plain, unsung airplanes that carry people and gear from Point A to Point B. Not very dashing, but somehow fitting.

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From: Carson [mailto:ccae@zoominternet.net]

**Subject: Branson Books**

Aloha KB et al,

I have plenty of Branson Bash Books left. I have sold an even dozen so far and I think there is a check in the mail for the one that will make a baker's dozen. I've also sold a couple of hundred dollars worth of portraits from the reunion and for Christmas Mac's wife bought him a copy of the P-3 climbing in Pensacola. I still haven't hit the break even point yet.....but some year. Many thanks to all who have purchased. If I sell enough I plan on attending the San Diego Reunion.

I'm planning on it anyway, but I don't want to lug a box of books there if I can help it.

They are still \$25 per copy, but if I take them to the reunion the price will be going up. Portraits start at \$20 which is a bargain basement price as each one has \$50 or more of retouching that I did even before I would put them in the book. They are printed on a top of the line printer that uses archival inks to help them last a a hundred or more years. I have had excellent feedback on both the book and portraits.

I noticed last week that my e-mail address is listed incorrectly on the web page roster. If that gets corrected maybe it will help with sales. Also, Gary Blocker and I are not yet listed as being paid up. I recall sending in a check to cover both of us sometime last summer. By the way, Gary stopped by again last week as he was traveling through this neck of the woods. We had a great meal at Jim's Spaghetti and Restaurant in Huntington, WV.

Hope this helps with your inquiry. If you have any questions email or call. My cell # is 740 646-3158.

\*Grace and Peace,\*

Carson



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