

Navy Reserve Receives Its First P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft



TUKWILA, Wash. (March 6, 2024) Cmdr. James Tilden (fifth from left), executive officer of Patrol Squadron 62, presents a dedication plaque to Vice Adm. John B. Mustin (sixth from left), chief of Navy Reserve and commander of Navy Reserve Force, after taking delivery of the first new P-8A Poseidon for the Naval Air Force Reserve during a ceremony at Boeing Military Delivery Facility in Tukwila, Washington, March 6, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Harry Andrew D. Gordon)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – The first Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft for the Navy Reserve has been delivered to Patrol Squadron 62 (VP-62).

In March 6 ceremonies at the Boeing Military Delivery Facility in Tukwila, Washington, Vice Adm. John B. Mustin, chief of Navy Reserve and commander of Navy Reserve Force, was on hand for the delivery, where a dedication was presented to him by Cmdr. James Tilden, executive officer of VP-62.

VP-62, based at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, is one of two Navy Air Reserve patrol squadrons. It formerly operated the P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft. The transition brings the Navy closer to full operational capability with the P-8A. The other reserve VP squadron, VP-69 at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, also will be equipped with the P-8A.

Coast Guard offloads \$4.5 million in seized cocaine, transfers custody of 2 smugglers to federal law enforcement in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico



March 8, 2024

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier offloaded 182 kilograms of cocaine and transferred custody of two male smugglers to federal law enforcement authorities in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Friday.

The British Royal Navy HMS Trent (P224), operating with a Coast Guard LEDET onboard, seized the contraband and apprehended two smugglers, Dominican Republic nationals, following the interdiction of a go-fast vessel in Caribbean Sea waters southwest coast of Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, March 3, 2024.

The interdiction is a result of interagency efforts in support of the Coast Guard's Western Hemisphere Strategy and Operation Unified Resolve. The Drug Enforcement Administration is leading the investigation in this case.

"We appreciate the work and collaboration of our British Royal Navy partners in stopping drug smuggling vessels in the high seas," said Cmdr. Gerard Wenk, Coast Guard Sector San Juan chief of response. "The work we do together daily with our federal and local and regional partners helps protect and bring stability to the Caribbean region from this threat."

"Drug smuggling organizations pose the greatest threat to the safety and health of our citizens," said DEA's Caribbean Division Special Agent in Charge Denise Foster. "The dedication of all maritime surveillance assets is crucial to the success of the mission at hand, we will continue to work with our counterparts and allocate all our law enforcement resources to make a greater impact in vulnerable areas where criminal organizations dedicated to drug trafficking are causing greater damage."

The Coast Guard's efforts under Operation Unified Resolve contribute to the interagency results being achieved daily under Operation Caribbean Guard, which coordinates efforts between the Coast Guard, DHS, and Commonwealth and Territorial law enforcement partners, who are working diligently to deter, detect and disrupt illicit maritime trafficking to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Detecting and interdicting illegal drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. The Joint Interagency Task Force South in Key West, Florida conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard's Seventh District, headquartered in Miami.

Under Secretary Raven Visits United Kingdom and Norway to Discuss Regional Security, Highlights Importance of Interoperability



March 8, 2024

From Under Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs

OSLO, Norway – The Under Secretary of the Navy Erik

Raven visited the United Kingdom and Norway, March 3-8, to meet with partner navies, government and military leaders, Sailors and Marines, and to observe a NATO arctic exercise.

The international trip began in London, and was followed by visits to Oslo, Trondheim, Evenes, and Alta in Norway.

In London, Raven met with First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff of the United Kingdom Adm. Sir Ben Key, Minister of the Armed Forces James Heappey, and Chief Defence Nuclear Maddie McTernan where they discussed Ukraine, U.S.-UK Carrier Cooperation, and AUKUS progress.

The Under Secretary visited Barrow-In-Furness to speak with Royal Navy leaders, Sailors, and industry partners about undersea warfare, to include progress made on implementing AUKUS Pillar I. He toured shipyard facilities, a dry-dock, and the Submarines Academy for Skills and Knowledge.

"I want to thank Admiral Key and the Royal Navy for their global contributions to maritime security and stability," said Raven. "We fly, sail, and operate on a daily basis with the United Kingdom, and together our strong partnership helps us to ensure security, stability, and prosperity."

In Norway, Raven met with Norwegian Minister of Defense State Secretary Anne-Marie Aanerud, Chief of Defense Staff Lt. Gen. Ingrid Gjerde, Chief of Staff, Chief of Defense General Erik Kristofferson, and Norwegian Intelligence Service Vice Adm. Andreas Stensønes.

Discussions focused on military capabilities, maritime surveillance, security challenges in the Nordic region, and ways to further increase cooperation and interoperability.

"The Arctic is a region of strategic importance," said the Under Secretary. "Working together, the Navy and Marine Corps are supporting maritime statecraft while maintaining freedom of navigation and adhering to the rules-based

international order.”

“Working with our Allies and partners, we will preserve the Arctic as a space free of conflict, where nations act responsibly, and where economic and energy resources are developed in a sustainable, transparent manner.”

Raven toured the Marine Corp Prepositioning Program-Norway in the Frigaard Cave in Trondheim, Norway. At Evenes, he observed a combat craft demonstration in the Norwegian fjords and met with U.S. Navy Seabees providing maritime support.

The trip concluded with the observation of the NATO-led arctic exercise Northern Response 24, in Alta. Nordic Response 24 is hosted by Norway and supported by Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe, along with contributions from all U.S. military services. This is one of a long list of impactful engagements underscoring the longstanding alliance between Norway and the United States. With diplomatic relations forged nearly 120 years ago in 1905, the two nations and their militaries remain strategically and operationally synchronized.

“The rules-based international order depends on free and open oceans, and the militaries and service members of the European nations participating in this exercise have an instrumental role in upholding that standard,” said Raven. “Realistic exercises like Northern Response 24 allow us to work with like-minded nations to strengthen our partnerships and ensure we are trained, ready, and interoperable for crises or conflict.”

More than 20,000 service members from 14 nations are participating in Nordic Response 24. Participating nations include: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States.

The trip marked Raven’s second to the United Kingdom and his

first to Norway.

NAVAIR returns V-22 Osprey to flight status



Mar 8, 2024

Naval Air System, PAX River – Effective March 8, 2024 at 7 a.m. EST, Naval Air Systems Command is issuing a flight clearance for the V-22 Osprey thereby lifting the grounding. This decision follows a meticulous and data-driven approach prioritizing the safety of our aircrews.

A U.S. Air Force investigation began following the tragic loss of eight Airmen during the November 29, 2023, mishap off Yakushima, Japan. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the fallen.

In response to the preliminary investigation indicating a materiel failure of a V-22 component, the V-22 grounding was initiated on December 6, 2023. The grounding provided time for a thorough review of the mishap and formulation of risk mitigation controls to assist with safely returning the V-22 to flight operations.

In concert with the ongoing investigation, NAVAIR has diligently worked with the USAF-led investigation to identify the materiel failure that led to the mishap. Close coordination among key senior leaders across the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Air Force has been paramount in formulating the comprehensive review and return to flight plan, and this collaboration will continue.

Maintenance and procedural changes have been implemented to address the materiel failure that allow for a safe return to flight. The U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Air Force will each execute their return to flight plans according to service specific guidelines.

NAVAIR remains committed to transparency and safety regarding all V-22 operations. The V-22 plays an integral role in supporting our Nation's defense and returning these vital assets to flight is critical to supporting our nation's interests. NAVAIR continuously monitors data and trends from all aircraft platforms, so service members are provided the safest, most reliable aircraft possible.

The safety of our pilots, aircrew and surrounding communities remains of paramount importance.

Marine Corps Returns MV-22 to Flight Status



HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS – The Marine Corps returned its MV-22s to flight on March 8, following Naval Air Systems Command’s (NAVAIR) announcement that deemed the aircraft safe to fly.

In a release announcing the flight clearance, Naval Air Systems Command said, “This decision follows a meticulous and data-driven approach prioritizing the safety of our aircrew.”

The Nov. 29, 2023, crash of an Air Force CV-22 off the coast of Japan remains under investigation. The tragic mishap is what precipitated the temporary grounding of all services’ V-22s. The grounding provided time for a thorough review of the mishap and formulation of risk mitigation controls to assist with safely returning the V-22 to flight operations.

The Marine Corps, after a thorough review of all available engineering data and with revisions to the flight manual in place, is now enacting a deliberate plan to return all 17 MV-22 squadrons to full capability. Close coordination among key senior leaders across all three services, the Marine Corps, Air Force, Navy and the Safety Investigation Board (SIB) has been paramount in formulating the comprehensive review and return to flight plan, and this collaboration will continue.

The Marine Corps' three-phased approach begins with a focus on regaining basic flight currency, rebuilding units instructor cadres, and achieving proficiency in Core and Basic skill training for pilots and aircrew. After that, squadrons will follow well-established training and readiness manuals to gain proficiency in basic and advanced mission sets, demonstrating their ability to conduct the core missions of an MV-22 Squadron. Finally, squadrons will conduct specific pre-deployment training for their next assigned mission, executing the advanced, all-weather tactics that distinguish our MV-22 squadrons among other aviation capabilities and units. The second and third phases of this plan will vary in length, and some units will extend into the late Spring or early Summer of 2024 before they return to operational capability.

"The Marine Corps has confidence in the Osprey and we are laser focused on the safety and mission readiness of our pilots and aircrew," said Lt. Gen. Bradford J. Gering, Deputy Commandant for Marine Corps Aviation. "Our people have been and will always be our top priority. The Air Force CV-22 mishap is a tragedy, and we honor the legacy of those eight fallen service members by diligently and deliberately applying what we have learned from that day as we return to flight operations. We have worked extensively on plans and timelines that support a deliberate, methodical, and safe return to flight. We are flying the Osprey again because our airworthiness authority cleared it for flight, because we

trust our well-established operational risk management procedures, and most of all because we trust our professional pilots, aircrew and maintainers to safely get this combat-proven aircraft back into the fight.”

Since mid-January, Marines in Africa have been flying the MV-22 safely, under a very specific operationally necessary banner. Those missions, in support of U.S. Africa Command priorities, have been conducted safely and demonstrate the range, speed, and maneuverability the MV-22 provides the combatant commander.

Amphib Warship Part Suppliers Press Congress for Stability in Shipbuilding



The future USS *Richard M. McCool Jr.* (LPD 29), the Navy's next

Flight I San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship, seen on sea trials. (HII)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. companies that supply components and parts for the U.S. Navy's amphibious warfare fleet expressed support for the Marine Corps baseline requirement of 31 large and medium amphibious warfare ships in the U.S. fleet and the industry's need for stability and predictability in schedules.

Retired Coast Guard Capt. Paul J. Roden, chairman of the board of the Amphibious Warfare Industrial Base Coalition (AWIBC), which represents approximately 650 companies throughout the United States, told Seapower that the Marine Corps has stressed that "ready and available" 31-ship requirement is "not a ceiling, it's the floor."

Roden stressed the point that it is difficult for suppliers to produce efficiently when production schedules are unpredictable. He said that the stability needed is best achieved when the large-deck amphibious assault ships (LHAs) are built with construction intervals of four-year centers and the amphibious platform dock ships (LPDs) are built with intervals of two-year centers.

Full funding by Congress for LPD 33 in the fiscal 2025 defense budget is a priority for the AWIBC, he said.

AWIBC recently conducted a survey of its member companies.

Regarding the shipbuilding intervals, "50% of the survey respondents replied that extending those would result in an increase in cost of their products and services. When you are throwing uncertainty to any procurement, then there is risk, and risk is addressed by cost, so it is really in the Navy's best interest to maintain those centers."

Roden said that if an LHA or LPD were delayed by a year or

more, “40% of all of our members [companies] would anticipate needing to lay off workers due to uncertainty and not having full capacity in plants of the AWIBC suppliers. About a third said they would have to explore commercial contracts as well as de-prioritize shipbuilding, but in many cases, there is just not a commercial market.”

He said that “about 70% of our respondents said that the most helpful thing that the government could do is provide predictability and stability.

“One way of going about that – that has been proven successful in other programs—is through multi-ship and multi-year procurement strategies,” he said.

Roden also said that “just over 50% of the suppliers that contribute to both amphibious warship and submarine programs ... said that steady amphib contracts benefit their company’s capacity and capability to deliver on submarine programs. Having predictability and stability in shipbuilding programs allows suppliers to make investments. If they know the business is coming, they can make investments in work force training, enhancing work force, investing in equipment, investing in other infrastructure that would improve the quality and on-time delivery of products.”

Lawmakers Stand Firm for 31 Amphibious Ship ‘Floor’



Gen. Mahoney speaks to members of the Amphibious Warship Industrial Base Coalition. *Brett Davis*

WASHINGTON □ The U.S. Marine Corps needs a minimum of 31 amphibious ships and Congress is prepared to force the issue if the Pentagon balks, lawmakers from the House and Senate told members of the Amphibious Warship Industrial Base Coalition on March 7.

“Until they [the Marine Corps] can walk on water, we better be building more ships,” said Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Virginia).

He and other lawmakers from both parties said amphibious ships are critical for projecting both hard and soft power around the world.

Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) said a floor of 31 amphibious ships is written into defense authorization, but a previous Navy budget projection “never once” hit that 31 number. He said Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Lisa Franchetti has assured him the new one will.

"We're going to make them build what the Marine Corps needs," Sullivan said.

Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi) said, "this is the most dangerous national security climate we've had in decades. Thirty-one amphibs. Three hundred and fifty-five ships. Do the right thing."

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) said maintaining an adequate amphibious fleet is "an issue of national security for all of us."

General Chris Mahoney, the assistant commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, also addressed the group and noted how easy it is for adversaries to interfere with international shipping, citing the attacks by Houthi rebels in the Red Sea.

"I'm going to remain in lockstep with the CNO when she says, 'I need more players on the field,'" Mahoney said. "We need to keep the [production] lines hot, multiple lines."

Houthis Kill Innocent Civilians with Missile Attack



USCENTCOM

March 6, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – At approximately 11:30 a.m. (Sanaa time) March 6, an anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) was launched from Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist-controlled areas of Yemen toward M/V True Confidence, a Barbados-flagged, Liberian-owned bulk carrier, while transiting the Gulf of Aden. The missile struck the vessel, and the multinational crew reports three fatalities, at least four injuries, of which three are in critical condition, and significant damage to the ship.

The crew abandoned the ship and coalition warships responded and are assessing the situation.

This is the fifth ASBM fired by Houthis in the last two days. Two of these ASBMs impacted two shipping vessels – M/V MSC Sky II and M/V True Confidence – and one ASBM was shot down by USS Carney (DDG 64).

These reckless attacks by the Houthis have disrupted global trade and taken the lives of international seafarers.

March 6 Red Sea Update

TAMPA, Fla. – At approximately [7:14](#) p.m. (Sanaa Time) March 6, United States Central Command conducted self-defense strikes against two unmanned aerial vehicles in a Houthi controlled area of Yemen that presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and U.S. Navy ships in the region.

These actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S. Navy and merchant vessels.

Marine Commandant Returns to Full Duty Status

March 5, 2024

HEADQUARTERS, MARINE CORPS – The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Eric M. Smith, has returned to full duty status after recovering from an October 29 cardiac arrest.

He resumed his full duties and authorities as the Commandant effective March 5, 2024.

The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Christopher J. Mahoney, who has been performing the duties of Commandant since November 3, continues to serve in his role as Assistant Commandant.

General Smith and his family appreciate the full support of Congress, the leadership at the Department of Defense, Department of the Navy, the Joint Force, and all who extended them their well wishes during his recovery.

VCNO Visits Newport News; Discusses Maintenance, Quality of Service



07 March 2024

WASHINGTON – Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jim Kilby visited HII’s Newport News Shipbuilding, in Virginia, to discuss submarine and aircraft carrier maintenance and Quality of Service in the shipyard, March 5.

Kilby began his visit receiving updates from the shipyard’s leadership on the shipyard’s major programs, infrastructure investments and workforce developments.

NNS is the sole designer, builder and refueler of the Navy’s aircraft carriers and one of two builders of nuclear-powered

submarines.

"This is where the current and future of our Navy's air and undersea dominance starts," said Kilby. "It's an immense undertaking to build these nuclear-powered platforms, and we must continue to work closely together and continually improve processes and deliver these carriers and submarines time and on budget."

The shipyard is building the Navy's newest Ford-class aircraft carriers. The future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) began its topside testing of the electromagnetic aircraft launch system last month. EMALS, first integrated into USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), replaces the existing steam catapults currently in use on the Nimitz-class aircraft carriers.

Kilby also toured manufacturing facilities where NNS is building modules for the new Columbia-class submarines. The Columbia-class will replace the Ohio-class as the Navy's contribution to the nuclear triad, which remains the most survivable leg of the U.S. strategic nuclear deterrent force.

"The partnership we have with this shipyard and its suppliers is critically important to our Navy, our nation and our national defense," said Kilby. "The future of our nation's sea-based deterrent starts here."

During the visit, Kilby focused on the Sailors' Quality of Service during the maintenance periods on the shipyard, with stops at Sailor housing, dining and medical facilities, and spoke with leadership from USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), currently undergoing a refueling and complex overhaul.

Kilby also met with carrier and submarine leadership from other crews in the shipyard

"Every Sailor has volunteered to be in the Navy and we need to make sure we're supporting their quality of life and work," said Kilby. "This means access to quality food, housing,

medical care and a command they can trust to take care of them.”

The Navy has taken a critical eye on Sailors’ Quality of Service, especially while in a maintenance period. Commander, Navy Installations Command, Vice Adm. Scott Gray joined Kilby on the trip. Gray leads the Navy’s Quality of Service Cross Functional Team.

“I am incredibly thankful for the commitment NNS and the city of Newport News has made to improve our Sailors’ Quality of Service,” said Gray. “The Navy recognizes we need to do better and we can’t do this without the support from industry, our Navy communities and Congress.”

Specific focus on NNS includes off-site housing options for Sailors undergoing maintenance, improved access to medical care, expanded access to healthy food options and improving WiFi connectivity. This includes free, high speed WiFi aboard Stennis’ berthing barge.

The Navy launched a WiFi pilot program in January at 12 permanent party unaccompanied housing located onboard Naval Station Norfolk, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, and Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

The Wi-Fi pilot is part of a new and larger program called the Virtual Single Sailor Program, which directly supports the Quality of Service of Sailors.