

MARITIME PATROL AVIATION Era



Lockheed's P-2V Neptune and Martin's P-5M. Predecessors to the US Navy's P-3 Orion.

Commander, Fleet Air Wing Ten and Commander, Fleet Air Wings Pacific (COMFAIRWINGPAC)



With the introduction of Navy P-3 Orion Squadrons in the Pacific Fleet, ***Fleet Air Wing TEN*** was recommissioned on 29 June 1963 at Naval Air Station Moffett Field, California to provide the command and control necessary to coordinate the new organization. During that period, the jet fighter and attack aircraft based at Moffett were moved to Naval Air Station Lemoore, California.

In 1964, it became clear that the Pacific ASW patrol forces should be commanded by a flag officer as ***Commander, Fleet Air Wings, U. S. Pacific Fleet***. An organization similar to that had been in effect in the Atlantic Fleet for many years. NAS Moffett Field, as the planned home base for all West Coast Patrol squadrons, was selected as the site for the new ***COMFAIRWINGSPAC*** Headquarters. Under this command, three Patrol Wings assumed regional control of operations within the Pacific Fleet AOR.

In 1965, the growing intensity of ASW and surveillance operations being conducted in the South Chins Sea in support of South Vietnam required that a wing level staff be stationed in the Southwestern Pacific to plan and direct these critical missions. To meet that goal, the staff of ***Commander, Fleet Air Wing TEN (FAW 10)*** was restructured with almost half of the officers and men being transferred to a new wing staff under ***Commander, Fleet Air Wing EIGHT (FAW 8)***.



For the next seven years ***FAW 8*** and ***FAW 10*** alternately covered the Far East responsibility on a six-month rotational basis. Deployment operations were first conducted from Naval Station Sangley Point near Manila, and later from NAS Cubi Point on Subic Bay. Each staff returned to direct ASW operations at Moffett Field upon completion of its overseas

deployment. The staff was oriented towards its flight mission responsibilities and all hands were closely involved in the command and control of current operations.

FAW 10 returned from its last deployment in February 1972. At the end of July, with the winding down of the Vietnam Conflict, the rotating Wing deployments were canceled and **FAW 8** was deactivated. **FAW 10** had already commenced transition to new duties as staff permanently based at Moffett Field and took on new responsibilities in training, logistics, planning and maintenance. At the same time, the Moffett **Tactical Support Center**, the most modern facility for computerized ASW analysis and automated command and control, became part of **FAW 10** and its personnel became an important addition to the staff. The new facility and its highly experienced specialists gave **FAW 10** an overall capability unmatched in the Navy. Over the years, the **TSC** was renamed to **ASWOC** (ASW Operations Center), and then back again.

Fleet Air Wing TEN was disestablished on 30 June 1973 due to fiscal cutbacks in the Navy. The responsibilities of **FAW 10** were assumed by *Commander, Fleet Air Wings, U.S. Pacific Fleet*, now *Commander, Patrol Wings, U.S. Pacific Fleet* (**COMPATWINGSPAC**).

COMPATRECONFORPAC



COMPATWINGSPAC was renamed to Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Force, Pacific (**PATRECONFORPAC**) in June, 1999. With the closure of NAS Moffett field, **PATRECONFORPAC** relocated to MCAS Kaneohe, HI, and assimilated command of *PATWING Two*. In 2003, **PATRECONFORPAC** relocated again to NAF Misawa, Japan, and *PATWING Two* was re-established. *PATWING One* also relocated to NAF Misawa from NAF Kami Seya, and was assimilated into **PATRECONFORPAC**.



PATWING 1 at NAF Kami Seya, Japan was responsible for all maritime patrol and reconnaissance operations within Seventh Fleet, including the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. *PATWING One* moved to NAF Misawa, Japan, and became responsible for all MPA activities in the Fifth and Seventh Fleets, as Commander, Task Force 57 (CTF-57) in the 5th Fleet AOR, and Commander, Task Force 72 (CTF-72) in the 7th Fleet AOR. MPA assets from both *PATWING Two* and *PATWING Ten* provide forward-deployed support to *PATWING One*.



PATWING 2 at NAS Barbers Point was responsible for operations in the Hawaiian AOR. *PATWING Two* squadrons were *VP-1*, *VP-4*, *VP-6*, *VP-17*, *VP-22* and *VP-28*, all operating from their home port at NAS Barbers Point, HI. During the 1980s and '90s, *VP-6*, *VP-17*, *VP-22* and *VP-28* were decommissioned. With the closing of NAS Moffett Field, **COMPATWINGSPAC** relocated to MCAS Kaneohe Bay, HI, and assimilated the duties of *PATWING Two*, which was disestablished. When **PATWINGSPAC** relocated to

Misawa, *PATWING Two* was reestablished and resumed its original mission in the Hawaiian AOR.

Between 1963 and 1967, seven Maritime Patrol squadrons transferred to NAS Moffett Field and transitioned from P-2s and P-5s to the P-3 Orion aircraft, operating under command and control of *PATWINGSPAC*. These were *VP-9*, *VP-19*, *VP-40*, *VP-46*, *VP-47*, *VP-48*, and *VP-50*. *VP-31* was the PACFLT Replacement Air Group (RAG) P-3 model manager and training squadron for all PACFLT P-3 squadrons. ***Patrol Wing TEN*** was recommissioned at Naval Air Station Moffett Field, California on 1 June 1981 to provide direct command and control over these seven Moffett-based operational patrol squadrons.



With the inception of Commander, ASW Forces Pacific (*CTF 12*) based at Pearl Harbor, HI, *Patrol Wing TEN* assumed duty as ***Commander Task Group TWELVE PT ONE*** (*CTG 12.1*) in May 1988.

During the 1980s and '90s, *VP-19*, *VP-48*, and *VP-50* were decommissioned. *VP-9* and *VP-47* moved to MCAS Kaneohe, HI. *VP-31* decommissioned and the Navy moved all P-3 training responsibilities to *VP-30* at NAS Jacksonville, FL.

Patrol Wing Ten was reduced from seven to two squadrons, *VP-40* and *VP-46*, and was relocated to NAS Whidbey Island, Washington in December 1993 when NAS Moffett Field was closed. With the closure of NAS Agana, Guam in 1994, Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One (*VQ-1*) was assigned to Whidbey Island and the Wing TEN family, at which point Patrol Wing TEN became ***Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing TEN***.

VP-1 joined the Wing in July, 1995 when NAS Barbers Point closed. *PATRECONWING TEN* is also augmented at Whidbey Island by *VP-69*, a Reserve Force squadron. The Wing provides support to forces around the world, including detachment sites in Diego Garcia, B.I.O.T.; Bahrain; Misawa, Japan; Kadena, Japan; Masirah, Oman and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and continues daily peacetime operations from the Eastern Pacific to the Persian Gulf in America's first line of defense. Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Two (*VQ-2*) left its long-standing home port assignment at NAF Rota, Spain and also relocated to NAS Whidbey Island under ***PATRECONWING TEN***.



RESPATWING/PATWING Four



To demonstrate the integration of Reserve Forces into the Fleet, *Patrol Wing Four* was established under command of Commander, Reserve Patrol Wing, Pacific (*COMRESPATWINGPAC*). This wing was comprised of *VP-60* at NAS Glenview, IL, *VP-65* at NAS Pt. Mugu, CA, *VP-67* at NAS Memphis, *VP-69* at NAS Whidbey Island, *VP-90* at NAS Glenview, IL, and *VP-91* at NAS Moffett

Field. Under the hat of *PATWING Four*, this wing became an operational asset to *PATWINGSPAC*. With the early 1990 force downsizing, *RESPATWING/PATWING Four* was disestablished, and *VP-60*, *VP-67*, *VP-90* and *VP-91* were decommissioned.

Patrol Squadron 46 (RC)



The modern era of naval operations at Moffett Field began in January, 1963 when ***Patrol Squadron 46*** moved from NAS North Island. Just ten years earlier, *VP-46* had traded in their *PBM Mariners* for the “new” *P-5M Marlins*. In 1959, *VP-46* moved from seaplanes to the land-based P-2V. Now only four years later, they began preparations for transition from their Neptunes to the new P-3A Orion as the new airborne ASW platform for the Pacific Fleet. By January, 1964, the squadron had successfully completed their transition and had begun operating within the Northern and Western Pacific theaters in support of PACFLT missions.

In December, 1966, ***VP-46*** transitioned to the new P-3B, and supported PACFLT operations from deployments to Adak, Alaska; Naha, Okinawa; Sangley Point, Philippines; Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam; and Iwakuni, Japan. In December, 1976, *VP-46* transitioned to the P3-C Update I model. *VP-46* deployed to Keflavik, Iceland in March, 1980, making the first post-WW II deployment from the west coast to the Atlantic Fleet AOR. *VP-46* made its first full-squadron deployment to Diego Garcia and the Indian Ocean in August, 1983, as the first west-coast Harpoon-capable P3 squadron.

In August 1986 and January 1988, ***VP-46*** returned to Diego Garcia. During their 1990 at-home cycle, *VP-46* transitioned to the P3-C Update III, and then deployed again to Diego Garcia, with split detachments to the Persian Gulf and Kadena, Okinawa. After their 1993 split deployment to Misawa and Kadena, after 31 years at Moffett Field, ***VP-46* moved to their new home port of NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, where they continue to operate.**

Patrol Squadron 31 (PR)



On January 4, 1963, ***Patrol Squadron 31 Det Alpha*** was formed and transitioned to Moffett Field and set up training activities for the P-3 Orions, while the main body of ***Patrol Squadron 31*** continued P-2V and P-5M training activities at NAS North Island. This new unit consisted of four officers and ten enlisted, who set up shop in Hangar 3 with two bicycles as their motor pool. After passing flight and maintenance certification provided by Lockheed Aircraft, Burbank, ***Det Alpha*** enrolled their first class of students as ***Patrol Squadron 19*** from NAS Alameda and their P-2Vs to Moffett. By December, 1963, *VP-19* became operational and began flying missions within PACFLT.

On 8 January, 1966, *VP-31 Det Alpha* moved from Hangar Three to Hangar One. On 1 July, 1966, the unit was renamed to *VP-31 Detachment Moffett*, with the parent squadron, *VP-31* remaining at NAS North Island, continuing to train P-2 Neptune and P-5 Marlin aircrews.

On 1 January, 1967, *Detachment Moffett* became the *VP-31* parent squadron, and the unit in San Diego became *VP-31 Detachment North Island*. This change occurred to accommodate the increasing numbers of students receiving orders to P-3 squadrons. P-5 Marlin training ceased at the North Island Detachment, but they continued training to crews on P-2 Neptunes, until the unit disestablished in 1970.

On 7 July, 1971, *VP-31* received CNO approval for P-3A/B Fleet replacement Aviation Maintenance Program (FRAMP), designed to train aircrew and ground personnel in transition from older models of the P-3 to newer versions.

VP-31 received tasking in June, 1974, to train Iranian Navy aircrews on specially-configured version of the P-3, the P-3F. Flight training activity was completed in December, 1974, and ground support/maintenance training completed by 6 June, 1975.

VP-31 was disestablished on 1 November, 1993 due to closure of NAS Moffett Field, and consolidation of training resources into one training squadron, VP-30 at NAS Jacksonville, FL.

Patrol Squadron 9 (PD)



VP-9 also made the short move from NAS Alameda to Moffett Field in December, 1963, trading in their P-2Vs for P-3As. By the summer of 1964, *VP-9* was flying the Fleet's first operational P3 missions in the Far East from its deployment site at Naha air Base, Okinawa. The squadron transitioned to P-3Bs in 1966, returning to Naha AB. In April, 1967, *VP-9* provided a three-plane detachment to Agana, Guam, and then deployed the full squadron to Adak, AK in November. *VP-9* deployed to Southeast Asia in 1969, and to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan in 1970 and late 1971, deploying detachments to Misawa, Japan and U'Tapao, Thailand. The squadron made deployments to Cubi Point, RP; Guam; and Okinawa from 1973 to 1977; then to Misawa, Japan in 1978 and to Adak, AK in 1979.

VP-9 became the second west coast squadron to deploy to NAVSTA Keflavik, Iceland in late 1980, providing extensive surveillance operations throughout the North Atlantic and Norwegian Sea. The squadron returned to Adak in October 1981 for four months, and then forward-deployed to Kadena for two months in support of Seventh Fleet operations. In 1982, *VP-9* was the first squadron to deploy for six months to Diego Garcia, deploying again to "Dodge" in 1984. This time they provided a detachment at Kadena, as well as operating out of Berbera, Somalia and Masirah, Oman.

In June, 1985, *VP-9* became the first full squadron to deploy to Adak in over 15 years. In November, 1986, *VP-9* became the first squadron to deploy to WESTPAC (Misawa and Cubi Point) with the APS-137 ISAR radar suite. In July, 1988, *VP-9* redeployed to Diego Garcia, with detachments to Kadena and Arabian Gulf, and in February, 1990, they deployed to Misawa.

VP-9 returned to Moffett Field in August 1990 and began transition to the P3-C Update III, and in 1991, the squadron made three one-month detachments to Panama assisting CJTF-5, as well as a three month detachment to Adak. *VP-9* began its tri-site deployment in January 1992 to Panama, Adak and Moffett, demonstrating the flexibility of its aircraft and crews to contend with extreme variations of weather and missions. In June, 1992, *VP-9* received orders to change home port from NAS Moffett Field to NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii. With the closure of Barbers Point, ***VP-9* relocated across the island of Oahu to MCAS Kaneohe Bay, where the squadron continues to operate.**

Patrol Squadron 47 (RD)



The spring and summer of 1965 found ***VP-47*** transitioning from their SP5-Bs at NAS Whidbey Island, WA to P-3As at Moffett. Their first deployment was in January 1966 to Naha, Okinawa and Sangley Point, Republic of the Philippines. The squadron returned to Naha in June, 1967, as one of the first Bullpup missile-equipped squadrons in WESTPAC. *VP-47* made two more deployments to Naha and Sangley Point in 1968 and 1970, and then began the transition to P3-Cs upon their return to Moffett.

By June, 1971, *VP-47* was the first operational P-3C squadron in PACFLT, and deployed to Adak, Alaska. The squadron began its tri-site deployment concept in 1972, deploying aircraft, air crews and maintenance teams to Adak, and Guam, while maintaining operational support to the fleet from Moffett. In February 1976, *VP-47* deployed to Misawa Air Base in northern Japan, returning again in July, 1977. While on this deployment, the squadron maintained site support at Kadena, Atsugi, Guam and Cubi Point. *VP-47* continued WESTPAC deployments to Kadena in 1979; Adak from May 1979 to May 1980; Misawa in January, 1981; Misawa in June, 1982; Kadena in August, 1984; Diego Garcia in January, 1986; Misawa in August, 1987; a split-deployment to Kadena and Moffett in January, 1989; Adak in June, 1990; Misawa in December, 1991. During this deployment, *VP-47* maintained detachments in Cubi Point, Kadena, Diego Garcia, Townsville, and Masirah, Oman. *Patrol Squadron 47* left Moffett Field for its new home port at NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii on June 21, 1993,, and continued its support to the Pacific Fleet. With the closure of NAS Barbers Point, ***VP-47* now operates out of MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.**

Patrol Squadron 48 (SF)



VP-48 transferred home port from NAS North Island, CA to NAS Moffett Filed in 1966, and made the transition from P-5M Marlin seaplanes to P-3B Orion land base patrol aircraft in late 1968. Their first deployment took them to Adak, Alaska, in 1969, where they qualified 11 flight crews. Subsequent deployments took the squadron back to South East Asian waters for continued support to Operation Market Time.

In November 1971, *VP-48* transitioned to the P-3C and began preparations for their tri-site deployments in January, 1972, rotating flight crews and maintenance teams between Moffett Field, Adak, Alaska, and Agana, Guam. In 1975, *VP-48* established the first P-3C deployment site in Misawa, Japan, and then maintained a detachment at Adak during 1977. *VP-48* deployed again to Misawa in 1978 and then to Kadena, Okinawa in November, 1979, with detachments to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean in support of the Iranian hostage crisis of '79-'80 as well as assisting with rescue operations of South East Asian "Boat People".

From 1980 through 1989, *VP-48* deployed seven times to Alaska, WESTPAC and the Indian Ocean in support of "real-world, cold-war" operations in support of Commander Task Group 72 (CTG-72) and Seventh Fleet battle groups, encompassing the entire spectrum of P-3C mission capabilities. After a NORPAC deployment from Adak ending in June, 1989, *VP-48* began transition to the P-3C Update III. *VP-48* then deployed with their new mission platform to NAF Kadena, Okinawa in June 1990, being ready to support Operation Desert Storm from Kadena and then from Cubi Point, RP, where they provided extensive battle group support and joint operations with units from Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Korea, and Brunei. They also flew multiple Search and Rescue (SAR) missions, resulting in the rescue of over forty persons.

The squadron returned to Moffett Field in mid-January, 1991, and in February, *VP-48* was given preliminary orders for disestablishment. ***Patrol Squadron 48* was decommissioned on May 23, 1991 in ceremonies at NAS Moffett Field.**

Patrol Squadron 40 (QE)



Home-ported at NAS North Island, San Diego, *VP-40* deployed throughout the South East Asian and Philippine AORs in P-5M Marlins. The squadron made the USN's last seaplane deployment to NAS Sangley Point in February, 1967. Upon their return in November, 1967, they changed home-ports from North Island to NAS Moffett Field and transitioned to the P3-B aircraft.

VP-40 made its first P3 deployment in January, 1968 to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, with detachments out of Cam Rahn Bay, Viet Nam. Their next six-month deployment was back to their old base at Sangley Point, Philippines in August, 1970, and then to Naha Air Base, Okinawa in July, 1971. *VP-40* then deployed to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan in late 1972, and again in winter of 1973-74.

VP-40 transitioned from the P3-B to the P3-C in 1975, and established a nine-month three-plane detachment at NAS Adak, Alaska. Their next deployment was to NAF Misawa, Japan in February, 1977, introducing operational data link to WESTPAC. The squadron returned to Okinawa in July, 1978 maintaining detachments in Diego Garcia, Guam, Cubi Point, Philippines, Atsugi, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. *VP-40* next deployed a three-plane, four crew detachment to Adak in July, 1979.

VP-40 made three six-month deployments to Misawa, Japan from July 1980 to December, 1983, conducting operations throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and the Arabian Sea. During

1983, the squadron participated in SAR operations for the downed Korean Air 007 in the Sea of Japan. *VP-40* represented the Pacific Fleet in their October 1984 deployment to Keflavik, Iceland, with detachments throughout Europe, Azores, Bermuda and Central America.

VP-40 transitioned to the P3-C Update III in 1985-86, and deployed this platform to Kadena, Okinawa in 1986-87 for its WESTPAC inauguration. They deployed in 1988 to NAF Misawa, with detachments to Kadena and Pohang, Korea, and again to Kadena in 1989. The squadron's 1991 deployment took them back to Misawa and Diego Garcia, where they supported the Liberation of Kuwait. They also supported operations from Eilson AFB, AK, and Howard AFB in support of JTF Four. Their November, 1992 deployment took the squadron to Alaska, Panama and Key West. Upon their return to NAS Moffett Field in 1993, the squadron received orders to change home-port, and left the Bay Area after 26 years and **relocated to NAS Whidbey Island, WA, where it continues to operate.**

Patrol Squadron 19 (PE)



VP-19 moved from NAS Alameda to Moffett Field in September 1963 and transitioned from P-2V Neptunes to P-3A Orions. The squadron deployed to NAS Adak, Alaska on 23 October, 1964, returning to Moffett Field in July 1965, marking the first winter deployment of a P-3 squadron to Adak, and one of the longest detachments to date. *VP-19* deployed to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan on 1 August, 1966, and provided multiple detachments to conduct patrols over the South China Sea off Viet Nam, marking the first deployment of the squadron to a combat zone since the Korean War.

VP-19 transitioned to the P-3B in 1967, and then deployed to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan in February, 1968 under operational control of *FAW-6* and supported operations in the Sea of Japan in response to the North Korean seizure of the USS *Pueblo*. *VP-19* also supported operations off Viet Nam, with detachments from NAS Agana, Guam, NAS Sangley Point, Philippines, and U-Tapao Air Base, Thailand. On 28 May 1969, *VP-19* deployed to NAS Adak, Alaska, and provided support for the Atomic Energy Commission's nuclear weapons testing in the vicinity of Amchitka Island.



VP-19 deployed again to MCAS Iwakuni in 26 July 1970, and detached three flight crews to Cam Rahn Bay Air Base, Viet Nam, to support Operation Market Time in the South China Sea AOR. The squadron redeployed to NAS Cubi Point, Philippines on 1 November 1971, with detachments to U-Tapao Air Base for its fourth mission to the Viet Nam Theatre.

VP-19 redeployed to NAS Cubi Point on 23 October 1974, and participated in Valiant Heritage, the largest PACFLEET exercise in the North Pacific since World War II. *VP-19* was tasked with SAR missions as part of *Operation Frequent Wind* from 18 – 30 April 1975, in support of the evacuation of American citizens from the capitol of Viet Nam.

VP-19 transitioned to the P-3C "Update I" in May 1975, and deployed to NAS Adak on 5 May 1976, and then again to Adak on 1 January 1977. During this deployment, the squadron

participated in a record 20 SAR missions. On 28 December, 1979, *VP-19* deployed to NAF Misawa, Japan; and participated in operations to rescue Vietnamese “boat people”. In July 1987, the squadron ‘split-deployed’ to NAF Diego Garcia, BIOT, and NAF Kadena, Okinawa, with a four-plane detachment to King Abdul Aziz Air Base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

VP-19 deployed again to NAF Misawa, Japan from August 1990 to March 1991. On 28 August, a single aircraft and crew forward-deployed to the Persian Gulf in support of *Operation Desert Shield*, and were augmented by a three-plane detachment in December to support *Operation Desert Storm*. Additional detachments were maintained at NAF Kadena and Diego Garcia.

***Patrol Squadron 19* was decommissioned in ceremonies at NAS Moffett Field on 17 May, 1991.**

Royal New Zealand Air Force



The Royal New Zealand Air Force’s (***RNZAF***) ***No. 5 Squadron*** temporarily emigrated to Moffett Field in 1966 to make the transition from Sunderlands to P-3Bs. Conversion and training of their five-airplane fleet was completed in 1967, and *No. 5 Squadron* began Orion operations in the South Pacific and Indian Oceans and areas around Antarctica. Subsequent upgrades to the squadron’s aircraft in 1983 were sufficient enough to generate a new P-3 variant, the P-3K. One final P-3K was purchased in 1985. A service life extension program (SLEP) was initiated in 1997, and completed in 2001, adding another 25 years life expectancy to the airframe. One P-3K supported Operation Enduring Freedom out of United Arab Emirates in November, 2004. *No. 5 Squadron* continues to operate its six-airplane fleet out of their home base at RNZAB Whenuapai, New Zealand. However, this air base may close by 2006, and the squadron will move to RNZAF Base Okakea, New Zealand.



Patrol Squadron 50 (SG)



VP-50 was the last squadron to deploy as a seaplane asset, as they left their P-5M Marlins in San Diego and moved to Moffett Field for transition to P-3As in the spring of 1967. The squadron took their new aircraft back to Sangley Point, Republic of the Philippines twice and once to NAF Kadena, Okinawa in the late 60’s and early ‘70s, with detachments to NAF Cam Rahn Bay, Republic of Viet Nam, providing anti-infiltration combat patrols off the coast of Viet Nam, and surface surveillance patrols in the Gulf of Tonkin. In 1971, *VP-50* transitioned to the baseline P-3C, and, six months later, began its first tri-site deployments to Adak, Alaska, NAS Agana, Guam, and Moffett Field, completing the third of these deployments in 1974.

In February 1977, *VP-50* completed its first “full” deployment to NAF Misawa, Japan, with a second in July 1978. These deployments focused on ASW prosecutions, maritime air patrols, and numerous Japanese and Korean allied operations. In June 1979, *VP-50* re-deployed to NAF Kadena, and maintained a continuous detachment at Diego Garcia in support of Indian Ocean

operations. They also supported refugee operations searching for Vietnamese “Boat People”. After an at-home training cycle, *VP-50* assumed the detachment at Adak in July 1980, re-assumed a full-deployment to NAF Misawa in June 1981, and then back to Adak again in October 1982, with another split deployment to Misawa and Adak in December 1983.

In September 1984, *VP-50* detached six aircraft and seven flight crews to NAS Adak and Eielson AFB, Alaska in support of northern sea operations, and six aircraft and eight flight crews to NAF Misawa in support of FLEETEX 85-1 in November 1984. In July 1985, the squadron deployed to Diego Garcia providing battle group support to USS Constellation, USS Midway and USS Kitty Hawk while detached to remote sites in Somalia, Masirah, Oman, Mombassa, Mogadishu, Djibouti and Cocos Islands. The squadron also participated with the Australian armed Forces in Exercise Coral Sea in October 1985, as well as conducting operations from Cubi Point, Kadena, Misawa, U’Tapao, Thailand, Mauritius, La Reunion, and Guam before returning home in January 1986.

VP-50 returned to Diego Garcia in January, 1987 for six-plus months, and returned to NAS Moffett Field in July for transition to the P-3C Update III, becoming the first squadron to receive the U-III “Retrofit Package”. After an extensive training cycle with their new capability, *VP-50* returned to NAF Misawa in April 1988, and maintained a detachment at NAF Kadena, and then returning to NAS Moffett Field in February, 1989. *VP-50* deployed again for another six months in November 1989, providing a split-site force with seven flight crews and five aircraft to Cubi Point, and four flight crews and three aircraft to Diego Garcia. In August 1991, *VP-50* returned to NAS Adak, AK for their final deployment. The squadron conducted the last U.S. Maritime Patrol Aviation prosecution of former Soviet submarines.

VP-50 returned to its Moffett Field homeport in January 1992, and received official orders for disestablishment the following month. ***Patrol Squadron 50* was decommissioned in ceremonies conducted at NAS Moffett Field, CA on May 21, 1992.**

Royal Australian Air Force



l a n d i n g

Not to be outdone by their Kiwi brethren, the Royal Australian Air Force's **(RAAF) No. 11 Squadron** also spent time at Moffett Field during 1968, making the transition from P-2V Neptunes to P-3Bs. During one crew training evolution, a two-month old Orion sheared one of its gear (*undercarriage*) on touchdown, and spun down the runway, bursting into flames as it came to a stop. All crewmen escaped the flames, and even managed to take all their flight books and equipment with them as they left. *No. 11 Squadron* returned to RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia where it continues to operate.



No. 10 Squadron received 10 P-3C Update IIs in May, 1975, and began transition from P-2Vs to Orions. *No. 10 Squadron* also moved to RAAF Base Edinburgh, in mid 1977. Both squadrons have received upgraded aircraft and are now flying the AP-3C.

Royal Norwegian Air Force



The Royal Norwegian Air Force's *No. 333 Squadron* transitioned to P-3Bs at Moffett Field from January to March, 1969 with the addition of five aircraft. They returned to *Andoya Flystasjon*, in northern Norway in April, and have been flying operational missions ever since. The squadron added four P-3Cs.

Spanish Air Force



The *Spanish Air Force* added to its fleet of two P-3As in 1987 with the purchase of five former Norwegian Air Force P-3Bs and *No. 22 Squadron* spent several months transitioning at Moffett Field.

Imperial Iranian Air Force (IIAF)



The Imperial Iranian Air Force purchased six P-3Fs in 1975 and transitioned flight crews and ground maintenance personnel at NAS Moffett Field.

Navy Reserves at Moffett Field

In the spring of 1967, a new Reserve element was formed as ***NARTU Alameda, Detachment Moffett***, and was affiliated with *VP-31* in Hangar 3. This new effort was to evaluate the possibility of USNR “weekenders” making the transition from P-2 Neptunes and S-2 Tracker squadrons at NAS Alameda to the P-3 aircraft. Active Duty Reservists (TAR) personnel from this new detachment learned to operate and maintain *VP-31*’s aircraft and eventually began training weekend reservists in the fall of 1967. Within one year, three reserve squadrons deployed to NAS Barbers Point for their two weeks active duty and training with Fleet assets in the Hawaiian AOR. (Note: Barber’s Point squadrons and crews were still flying P-2V Neptunes.) When *VP-31* moved from Hangar 3 to the east side of Hangar 1, the Reserve units moved along with them, setting up new spaces on the west side of Hangar 1.

In 1970, having demonstrated the capability to effectively fly and maintain Orions, the Reserve unit began receiving its own P-3As and returned *VP-31*’s aircraft to their host. In order to make room for the new ***FASOTRAGRUPAC*** facilities in Hangar One, the reserve unit moved back across the field to new spaces in Hangar Two and was renamed ***NARTU-Det Moffett***, and later to ***NARCEN Moffett***.



Patrol Squadron 91 (PM)



On November 1, 1970, ***Patrol Squadron 91*** was recommissioned, with personnel and aircraft from the main NARCEN structure, and became part of the total Reserve Force concept. This designator came from the old WW-II PBY squadron. Within a few months, they had full custody of 9 P-3A’s. (Note: A detachment was formed at NAS Patuxent River, MD as ***VP-91 Det-Pax***, which took sub-custody of 4 of these aircraft. Eventually, both units were completed to a full 9-plane contingent, and the Pax River Detachment was renamed *VP-68*.)



Over the years, *VP-91* gained status within the Fleet and Maritime Patrol community. In 1983, *VP-91* transition from P-3As to the P3-B/Mod aircraft and renamed their squadron nickname to the “Stingers”. Their new patch reflected the punch the new aircraft provided.



In February, 1990, *VP-91* began transition to the P-3C Update III, receiving the last two aircraft from the Lockheed production line. With a full compliment of Update-III aircraft, *VP-91* was as capable of any fleet squadron. Reflecting on their WW II heritage, *VP-91* renamed themselves again, this time to be called the “Black Cats”, reflecting their lineage to the PBY Catalina.

With the closure of NAS Moffett Field and transfer or decommissioning of fleet P-3 squadrons in July 1994, *VP-91* occupied new spaces in Hangar Three and became the remaining P-3 presence at the new Moffett Federal Airfield. With the closure of NAS Alameda, the Naval Air Reserve command relocated to Moffett as NAR Santa Clara, and became the senior military command. *VR-55*, a C-130 squadron, also arrived and took up residence in Hagar One.

As part of the Reserve Force downsizing and other budgetary considerations, **VP-91 was decommissioned on 31 March, 1999**, ending the P-3 era at NAS Moffett Field.

VP-Master Augment Unit (VP-MAU) (PS)



Patrol Squadron Master Augment Unit (VP-MAU), Moffett Field was established by the Secretary of the Navy on 20 December, 1986, to “direct, supervise and coordinate the training of personnel assigned to attain maximum combat readiness for immediate employment with Fleet Patrol Squadrons.” The mission of this new unit was to train Naval Reservists to fly and maintain each variant of the P-3C within the Fleet in order to immediately provide fully-qualified augmentation with any Fleet squadron. *VP-MAU Moffett* immediately set forth to implement this directive, and within a year, *COMPATINGSPEC* and *COMRESWINGSPAC* signed an MOA which established the policies under which *VP-MAU* Reservists could operate and maintain Fleet P-3C aircraft for maritime patrol training on a continuous basis. These policy guidelines effectively permitted *VP-MAU Moffett* to assume permanent custody of Fleet aircraft. *VP-MAU* came under the administrative control of *NARCEN, Moffett*, and under operational direction of *PATWING Ten*.

In 1987, *VP-MAU Moffett* deployed four fully qualified flight crews and maintenance support which integrated with *VP-48* at Cubi Point and *VP-47* at Misawa, Japan. In 1988, the MAU pooled its aircraft with *VP-40*, *VP-46* and *VP-50* to ensure mission-capable aircraft during an unexpected funding shortfall within the Fleet. Ten MAU crews augmented Fleet squadrons and operated throughout the Fleet where they were needed most, as well as flying drug interdiction missions in support of Coast Guard operations. In 1989, *MAU-Moffett* continued supporting Fleet and Real-World operations augmenting flight and maintenance crews wherever needed, as well as participating in the joint Pacific exercise, PACEX 89. ***VP MAU-Moffett was disestablished on 17 August, 1991 in ceremonies at NAS Moffett Field.***

Tactical Support Centers



Tactical Support Centers (**TSC**) are a critical part of the *COMPATRECONFOR* mission and operations. TSCs plan, direct and control MPA operations. Their functions include mission planning, preflight and postflight support, crew briefing and debriefing, on-station tactical direction and control, analysis, and training. Third Fleet TSCs are in major fixed facilities at both Wing 2 (MCAS Kaneohe) and Wing 10 (NAS Whidbey Island), and are permanently staffed by full-time, Wing personnel.



Seventh Fleet TSCs fall under command of *CTF 72*, and are staffed by permanent and deployed personnel. The commanding officer of the on-scene deployed VP-squadron assumed command of the TSC as an element of *CTF 72*.

TSC Misawa was identified as *CTG 72.1*; TSC Kadena was identified as *CTG 72.2*; and TSC Diego Garcia was identified as *CTG 72.8*. TSCs at NAS Agana, Guam and NAS Cubi Point have been disestablished.

Mobile Operations Command and Control Units (**MOCCs**) provide TSC-like support for remote P-3 detachments. Modular transit cases contain all necessary communications, data processing, and analysis equipment to support P-3 operations from remote facilities, and provide a reach-back capability to the organic TSC. Three PACFLT MOCCs, *MOCC East-Pac*, *MOCC Mid-Pac*, and *MOCC West-Pac*, provide the flexibility to deploy and support maritime patrol assets to any air base in the region.

Naval Air Maintenance Training, Detachment 1012



In order to keep the Orion flying, many dedicated maintenance mechanics, technicians, and other support personnel were available around the clock. Most of them learned their trades under the tutelage of the highly-experienced instructors of Moffett Field's "Orion University" at ***NAMTRADET 1012***. While *VP-31* provided flight line on-the-job training under its FRAMP program, ***NAMTRADET*** provided a fully-immersed classroom environment with labs focused on specific aircraft systems.