



Capt. Freed, USMC

Operating from *Nimitz* (CVN 68), a Marine Fighter Squadron F/A-18 *Hornet* refuels from an Air Force KC-10 tanker while flying over Kuwait on 17 October 1997. *Nimitz* with Carrier Air Wing 9 embarked arrived in the Persian Gulf region in October to support enforcement of the UN-sponsored no-fly zone over Iraq.

CH-60 Takes Off

The Navy's next helicopter came one step closer to reality on 6 October when a demonstrator CH-60 flew at Sikorsky Aircraft facilities in Stratford, Conn. The CH-60, designed to replace the H-46 *Sea Knight* fleet for helicopter combat support missions, is a hybrid of the Army UH-60 *Blackhawk* and Navy SH-60 *Seahawk* helicopters. Based on the *Blackhawk* airframe with its double-door design and provisions for mounting an external stores support system, the CH-60 utilizes *Seahawk* engines and dynamics—including the SH-60's automatic rotor blade folding system, folding tail pylon, improved durability gearbox, rotor brake and automatic flight control system—and can carry a *Seahawk* hoist for search and rescue missions. The Army and Navy each loaned a helo to Sikorsky to build the demonstrator.

As part of the 35-hour test program by an integrated Navy-Sikorsky crew, the CH-60 conducted its first shipboard demonstration off Long Island, N.Y. The demonstrator helo completed 17

landings, 3 hot refuelings and 12 vertical replenishment cycles aboard USNS *Saturn* (T-AFS 10) on 19 November 1997. If the CH-60 receives Navy approval for low-rate initial production in

The first CH-60 fleet combat support aircraft conducted its initial shipboard demonstration off Long Island, N.Y., on 19 November 1997.



early 1998 as expected, the first helo would be delivered to the fleet in 1999.

Goshawk Gets Cockpit-21

The Navy's newest jet trainer will soon make students' transitions from training to operational carrier-based jet fighters easier. On 31 October 1997 Boeing rolled out the first T-45C *Goshawk*, equipped with the new digital Cockpit-21, in Saint Louis, Mo. The digital cockpit replaces the analog one with two multifunction displays in each cockpit to provide navigation, weapons delivery, aircraft performance and communications data, plus upgraded head-up displays.

The first Cockpit-21 *Goshawk* was sent to NAS Patuxent River, Md., for testing of the production configuration, and a second will be delivered to Training Air Wing 1 at NAS Meridian, Miss., in December. The T-45C will eventually replace the remaining T-2C *Buckeyes* and TA-4J *Skyhawks* at Meridian, and the *Goshawk* A models currently in use at NAS Kingsville, Texas, will be upgraded.

Navy Approves Paint Stripper

The Navy has approved the Boeing Company's Flashjet Coatings Removal System for use on metallic fixed-wing aircraft, with approval for use on composite fixed-wing aircraft expected early next year. The system will first be used to strip T-45A *Goshawks* at NAS Kingsville, Texas. Boeing is also developing a mobile system that will be used on P-3 *Orions* at NAS Jacksonville, Fla., in 1998. The patented process combines pulsed light energy and a steady stream of dry ice pellets to remove up to four square feet of paint per minute for under \$4 a square foot—less than one-third the cost of manual removal and one-sixth the cost of chemical stripping, with 99 percent less waste.



New Survival Aid

Navy and Marine commands can now add a new technology to their personal survival kit: the SEE/RESCUE High Visibility Locating Device. Designed by Rescue Technologies Corporation, the SEE/RESCUE passive signaling device is a compact, high-strength, 40-foot-long fluorescent orange polyethylene streamer that will remain afloat and extended to a maximum width (6" to 18", depending on the model) indefinitely, providing a large, continuous visual target for rescuers. When stored, the reusable device takes up less room than a single flare. Tests detected the streamer in the water from 1.5 miles away at an altitude of 1,500 feet. The Navy approved the SEE/RESCUE device for procurement by Navy and Marine commands with discretionary funds.

NRL Tests Target Detection

The Naval Research Laboratory (NRL), Washington, D.C., successfully demonstrated real-time, hyperspectral detection of airborne and ground targets in October 1997. A P-3 *Orion* from NRL's flight detachment group at NAS Patuxent River, Md., utilized a pulsed laser to designate ground and airborne targets, and transmitted real-time, high-reso-

The compact, highly visible and reusable SEE/RESCUE locating device is now approved for purchase by Navy squadrons.



lution imagery to the ground using an advanced tactical airborne reconnaissance system common data link pod. The test flights demonstrated daytime operation using a visible hyperspectral sensor; future tests will employ an infrared hyperspectral sensor for day/night operation. These experiments may lead to future reconnaissance systems, including an autonomous uninhabited air vehicle for use in combat.

Looking for a Few Good Ideas

The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory has established an e-mail address to gather ideas from Marines around the globe. In conjunction with the lab's current Urban Warrior experimental phase, input on five topics is desired: improving urban warfighting skills; preparing for sea-



James Bean

NAWS Point Mugu, Calif., Sailors load a Standoff Land Attack Missile (SLAM) onto a pylon of a Strike Fighter Squadron 146 F/A-18C *Hornet*.

based logistics to support operations in urban settings; increasing fire and targeting precision; command, control, communications, computers and intelligence in the urban area; and how to utilize aviation assets in a city environment. To submit ideas through the Banyan system, select "mail" from the Banyan address book, and scroll to the Warfighting Mail mailbox. Input may also be submitted through the lab's homepage at <<http://mcwl-www.cwl-main.org>>.

Newport News Shipbuilding Expands

Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), Va., announced 18 December 1997 that it had purchased Continental Maritime Industries of San Diego, Calif. Continental Maritime will operate as a wholly owned subsidiary of NNS, focusing on repair programs for the Navy's West Coast fleet. The acquisition allows NNS to broaden its services to the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier fleet, beginning with *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), which will become the first nuclear carrier home-ported in San Diego in summer 1998.

Kitty Hawk to Replace Independence

Kitty Hawk (CV 63) is scheduled to replace *Independence* (CV 62) as the Navy's forward-deployed carrier in the western Pacific. The 36-year-



PH3 Michael Lewis

Independence, above, will be decommissioned after *Kitty Hawk* takes her place on station in the western Pacific in July 1998.

old *Kitty Hawk* is undergoing a year-long comprehensive overhaul at her current home port in Coronado, Calif., and a drydock upkeep period at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash. She is scheduled to depart the West Coast on 15 July

1998 and rendezvous with *Independence* in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, following Exercise RIMPAC 98. Japan-based Carrier Air Wing 5 will transfer from *Independence* to *Kitty Hawk*, which then will proceed to Yokosuka, Japan, her new home port. *Independence* went through a similar turnover in 1992 when she relieved *Midway* (CV 41), which had been home-ported in Japan for two decades.

Independence is scheduled for decommissioning at Bremerton in September 1998 following her return to the continental United States. With the 1998 commissioning of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75), the United States will retain 12 carriers in the active fleet.

Super Hornet FRS Set for NAS Lemoore

The Navy has designated NAS Lemoore, Calif., as the home base for the F/A-18E/F *Super Hornet* fleet readiness squadron (FRS). The FRS, which will train crews to fly and maintain the *Super Hornet*, will be designated Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122.

VFA-122 will carry on the traditions of Attack Squadron (VA) 122, which trained crews to fly and maintain the A-7E *Corsair II* attack aircraft; VA-122 was disestablished in May 1991 when the A-7E was being withdrawn from service. No date has been set for the official establishment of VFA-122, but it is unlikely to be later than January 1999. The first *Super Hornets* to be assigned to VFA-122 are scheduled to arrive in Lemoore in

November 1999; however, pilot training is slated to begin in June 1999. The long-range FRS activation plan calls for an estimated 92 *Super Hornets* and 1,550 associated personnel to be assigned to Lemoore, which also serves as

home base for the Navy's West Coast F/A-18C *Hornet* strike fighter squadrons.

A nine-month rehabilitation of a hangar to house the new squadron is expected to begin in early 1998.

For the Record . . .

- An F-model *Super Hornet* completed the F/A-18E/F program's

2,000th flight hour at NAS Patuxent River, Md., on 8 December 1997.

- VP International, an association of maritime patrol aviation pilots, navigators and crewmen, has dedicated a monument at Canadian Forces Base, Greenwood, Nova Scotia, Canada, to honor the crew members of land-based maritime patrol aircraft who lost their lives while serving in any theater of maritime flight operations during

the past 30 years, a period that covers much of the cold war. Canadian Air Force Lt. Gen. A. M. DeQuetteville unveiled the monument.

- The decommissioned aircraft carrier *America* (CV 66) has been towed from Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Va., to the Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility in Philadelphia, Pa., where she will be berthed as part of the mothballed fleet.

On 18 October at MCAS Camp Lejeune, N.C., AV-8B *Harrier II Plus* attack jets and AH-1W *Super Cobra* helicopters bombarded an "enemy" radio site on the ground, clearing the way for CH-46E *Sea Knights* and CH-53 *Super Stallions* to land. Part of a week-long helicopter raid course, this exercise simulated a mission requiring rapid insertion and extraction of troops. Here, a Lima Company Marine communicates with the pilot of a *Sea Knight* preparing to land and retrieve infantrymen.



Pic. Justin T. Watkins

Activated

HMLA-773 Det A

An 18 October 1997 ceremony at NAS JRB Willow Grove, Pa., marked the activation (officially 1 October) of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA) 773 Detachment A.

The permanent detachment's parent squadron, HMLA-773, is based at NAS Atlanta, Ga. The det flies the AH-1W *Super Cobra* helicopter gunship and the UH-1N "Huey" utility helicopter, the same models used by active duty counterparts.

Detachment A will operate seven AH-1Ws and four UH-1Ns.

Established

VAQ-128 Fighting Phoenix

A 9 October 1997 ceremony at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., marked the establishment (officially



1 October) of Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (VAQ) 128. The new squadron is the fifth and last Navy joint expeditionary electronic warfare (EW) squadron currently planned to support Air Force expeditionary wings.

The *Fighting Phoenix* flies the EA-6B *Prowler* electronic warfare aircraft, which is replacing the Air

Force's EF-111A *Raven* electronic warfare aircraft supporting Air Force expeditionary operations. VAQ-128 joins VAQs 133, 134, 137 and 142 in the expeditionary EW role. Like its sister squadrons, VAQ-128 includes Air Force flight personnel among its crews. As an expeditionary squadron, VAQ-128 will deploy to various theaters of operation in support of joint U.S. or multinational forces. Although flying primarily from land bases, the squadron will maintain carrier qualification.

Cdr. Peter S. Frano is the first commanding officer of VAQ-128. The *Flying Phoenix* carries on the traditions of Attack Squadron 128, an A-6 *Intruder* fleet readiness squadron that was disestablished in September 1995.

VQ-11 Bandits

A 2 August 1997 ceremony at NAS Brunswick, Maine, marked the



Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 11 was established at NAS Brunswick, Maine, becoming the Naval Air Reserve's first and only VQ squadron. The *Bandits* fly the Navy's only two EP-3J versions of the P-3 *Orion*.

establishment (officially 1 July) of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 11. Known as the *Bandits*, VQ-11 is the Naval Air Reserve's first and only VQ squadron.

The new unit differs from fleet VQ squadrons in that its mission is not to collect signals intelligence from potential adversaries, but to simulate hostile electronic threats by jamming the radars and communications of friendly ships during fleet exercises. To accomplish its mission, VQ-11 operates the Navy's only two EP-3J versions of the P-3 *Orion* patrol plane. The EP-3Js were transferred from reserve Patrol Squadron 66, which operated the aircraft as an additional duty after it received them in 1993 when Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 33 was disestablished.

The EP-3Js were modified from P-3Bs during the early 1990s by Chrysler Technologies Airborne Systems (now part of Raytheon) in Waco, Texas. The aircraft mission suite includes USQ-113 communications intrusion, deception and jamming equipment, an ALQ-170 missile seeker simulator, an AST-6 radar signal simulator, a ULQ-21



noise/deception jammer pod, and chaff dispenser pods. VQ-11 also operates a standard P-3C patrol plane for crew training and detachment logistics.

Cdr. Alan A. LaBeouf is the first CO of the *Bandits*.

VR-1 Starlifters

A 4 December 1997 ceremony at NAF Washington, D.C., marked the establishment (officially 1 May) of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VR) 1. The new Naval Air Reserve squadron operates two C-20D *Gulfstream III* transport jets.

VR-1 was formed from a Commander, Fleet Logistics Support Wing detachment which had operated the C-20Ds from NAF Washington since the early 1990s. VR-1's mission is to provide executive transportation for the Department of the Navy, executives of the Navy secretariat and Navy and Marine Corps flag officers assigned to the Washington, D.C., area.

Cdr. Wayne G. Chechila is the first CO of the *Starlifters*. The squadron carries on the traditions of an earlier VR-1 that was disestablished in October 1978.

VR-51 Windjammers

A 22 November 1997 ceremony at MCAF Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, marked the establishment (officially 1 June) of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VR) 51. The new Naval Air Reserve squadron operates two C-20G *Gulfstream IV* transport jets.

VR-51 was formed from a Commander, Fleet Logistics Support Wing detachment which had operated the C-20Gs from Hawaii since 1995. VR-51's mission is to provide rapid-response airlift of passengers and cargo in the Pacific region.

Cdr. James W. Rampey is the first CO of the *Windjammers*. The squadron is the second to carry the designation VR-51; the first was disestablished in 1994 after 24 years of service.

Disestablished

VP-24 *Batmen*

A 13 April 1995 ceremony at NAS Jacksonville, Fla., marked the disestablishment of Patrol Squadron (VP) 24 (officially 30 April) after 52 years of service. Cdr. Steve A. Seal was the last CO of the *Batmen*.

VP-24's long history began during WW II when the squadron was formed from a cadre of VP-71 personnel and established at NAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, on 10 April 1943 as Bombing Squadron (VB) 104. Equipped with the PB4Y-1 *Liberator* patrol bomber, VB-104 was sent into action in the southwest Pacific in August 1943, flying from Guadalcanal on strike and reconnaissance missions against Japanese islands and shipping. After operating briefly from Munda airfield on New Georgia, the squadron returned to the United States in March 1944 for rest and reorganization.

After training work-ups at NAAS Kearney Field, Calif.; NAS Hutchinson, Kans.; and Kaneohe

Bay, the squadron was redesignated Patrol Bombing Squadron (VPB) 104 and returned to combat in November 1944, resuming strike and reconnaissance missions from the captured airstrip on the island of Morotai in the Netherlands East Indies. VPB-104 continued the same operations after moving to Clark Field in the Philippines. On one memorable mission, a PB4Y-1 crew led by Lt. Paul Stevens intercepted a Japanese “Emily” flying boat off the coast of China and shot it up so badly it was forced to beach itself on the Chinese coast. The flying boat’s passenger, VAdm. Yamagata, en route to Japan for an interview with Emperor Hirohito for the position of under secretary of the Imperial Japanese Navy, committed suicide on the beach rather than surrender to Chinese partisans. VPB-104 was the only patrol squadron to receive two Presidential Unit Citations for WW II actions.

At war’s end, VPB-104 moved to NAS Floyd Bennett Field, N.Y., and switched to the PB4Y-2 (later P4Y-2) *Privateer* patrol plane. Redesignated VP-104 on 15 May 1946, the squadron changed home base to NAS Atlantic City, N.J., the following week as one of two Atlantic Fleet squadrons armed with the ASM-N-2 Bat glide bomb. On 15 November 1946, VP-104 was redesignated Heavy Patrol Squadron (landplane) (VP-HL) 4. In 1947, the squadron received the PB4Y-2B version, making four deployments to Argentina, Newfoundland, and one each to Port Lyautey, Morocco, and Luqa, Malta, between 1947 and 1954. VP-HL-4 moved to NAS Patuxent River, Md., in April 1948 and was redesignated VP-24 on 1 September 1948. The squadron moved to NAS Chincoteague, Va., in 1954.

The squadron, equipped with the P2V-6M *Neptune*, was one of two Navy squadrons selected to

deploy the Petrel guided missile in March 1956. On 1 July, VP-24 was redesignated Attack Mining Squadron 13 with the primary mission of aerial mining. The *Batmen* deployed twice to Malta (before shifting home base to NAS Norfolk, Va., in 1959) and once to Keflavik, Iceland, with the P2V-6M.

While deployed to Keflavik, on 1 July 1959, the squadron was once again redesignated VP-24.

In November 1959, VP-24 received its first P2V-7S (SP-2H) versions. The squadron deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in late 1962 and again in early 1963, conducting quarantine surveillance and monitoring the removal of Soviet missiles and bombers from



Scorpion, which was lost at sea in May 1968.

After a Keflavik/Lajes deployment in 1969, VP-24 became the third Atlantic Fleet squadron to switch to the P-3C version, completing the transition in March 1970. After two more deployments to Keflavik, VP-24 made its final home base change to NAS Jacksonville in October 1972. After a 1973 deployment to Keflavik/Lajes, the *Batmen* maintained a series of “mini-detachments” at Bermuda and Lajes in 1974, as a test of an alternative to the full-squadron/split-site deployments common in this era. From 1974 until 1991, VP-24 made 11 major deployments to Bermuda, Sigonella, Lajes and Keflavik, heavily involved in tracking Soviet submarines and ships, and supporting cold war fleet operations and crisis response efforts.



Flying several different aircraft in its roles as a bombing squadron, patrol bombing squadron and attack mining squadron, VP-24’s final platform was the P-3C *Orion*.

Cuba. By 1967, VP-24 made deployments to Rota, Spain; Keflavik; Guantanamo Bay; Sigonella, Sicily; and Souda Bay, Crete, with its SP-2Hs, tracking Soviet submarines and shipping, among other missions.

On 5 July 1967, VP-24 moved back to Patuxent River in conjunction with its transition to the P-3B *Orion* patrol plane. With the transition complete in December 1967, the squadron deployed in March 1968 to Rota, maintaining a detachment in Lajes, Azores. The *Batmen* assisted in the search for the nuclear-powered submarine

In the early 1990s, VP-24 received the Update III retrofit version of the P-3C. The *Batmen* made two more deployments with this version, to Sigonella in 1992–1993 and Keflavik in 1994–1995. The squadron flew missions in support of Operation Sharp Guard, enforcing sanctions against the former Yugoslavia. Returning to Jacksonville for the last time on 9 February 1995, VP-24 quickly drew down its operations in preparation for disestablishment.

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