

# MARITIME SQUADRONS ASSOCIATION



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**Newsletter**

Jan 2023

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## *President's Message*

### Message from the President – January 2023

Dear Members,

A Happy New Year to you all. I trust you had a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas and New Year and, more importantly, that you have not been too greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the more recent extreme weather events, and are managing to stay safe and well.

#### **New Patron of MSA.**

As many of you would be aware, Air Marshal Robert Chipman was appointed as the new Chief of Air Force in July last year, replacing Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld. Prior to that, our then Patron, Air Vice-Marshal Joe Iervasi, was replaced by Air-Vice Marshal Darren Goldie as Air Commander Australia, which meant that we no longer had a Patron. Given these changes, I wrote to Air Marshal Chipman inviting him to resume the tradition of the Chief of Air Force being our Patron. I am pleased to advise that he has accepted the role.

#### **Annual General Meeting**

In a return to normality, our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held last October in conjunction with the Brisbane dinner—as usual, this was a most enjoyable night. The AGM was held before the dinner

and included the election of the Executive Committee and State Representatives as follows:

President	Keith Brent
Vice President	Barry Collins
Secretary	Maurice Richie
Treasurer	Geoff Hyde

ACT Rep	Keith Brent
NSW Rep	Rod Smallwood
QLD Rep	Barry Collins
Nth Qld Rep	Holger Hildebrandt
SA Rep	Noel Shelton
VIC Rep	Graham Wade
NT Rep	Jim O'Doherty

TAS Rep	<i>Vacant – No nomination</i>
WA Rep	<i>Vacant – No nomination</i>

No nominations were received for State Representatives for Tasmania and Western Australia, so these two positions remain vacant. If any members wish to nominate for either of these positions, please contact the Secretary or myself.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the efforts and work of the MSA Executive Committee and State Representatives during 2022.

## Vale Departed Members

We have noted with much sadness the deaths of the following members:

Arnie Delvins	(NAV – 11SQN, 292SQN, 92WG)	28 October 2021
Gary Kirk 2022	(AEO – 10SQN, 11 SQN)	10 February
Bob Martin	(AEO – 11 SQN)	05 April 2022
Darryl Donaldson	(ENGFITT – 11 SQN)	09 May 2022
[Peter Brown	(PLT – 10 SQN)	13 March 2021]
[Terry Neil	(PLT – 10 SQN)	04 August 2021]

## Amendments to Constitution

The AGM approved minor amendments to our Constitution to allow for:

- the holding of an online AGM,
- the inclusion of online/email voting, in addition to postal voting,
- the waiving of subscription fees for spouses of deceased members, who wish to be kept on our membership list (as Affiliate Members) in order to receive MSA newsletters so that they can keep abreast of the latest news, and
- the Treasurer or any State Representative, with the approval of the National Executive, being able to initiate the opening or closing of MSA bank accounts to meet the needs of the Association.

## MSA Activities

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on our regular MSA activities over the past 2–3 years. While it appears the situation is improving, health advice still indicates that we exercise a degree of caution, which can impact on our ability to hold functions and may restrict both interstate and intrastate travel. As a considerable number of our members are in the COVID-19 high-risk group, some may be reluctant to attend a function due to the potential risk, particularly if infections are still occurring. For now, all we can do is to plan for a function and continually review the latest health advice/restrictions. The final decision, however, on whether to hold any MSA event is one for the individual State Representatives, taking into account the prevailing situation and government/health advice at the time

### **Tentative dates for your diary:**

- Sunday 26 March 2023 – Canberra Lunch at The Dock, Kingston Foreshore
- Sunday TBA May 2023 – Adelaide Lunch TBC
- Saturday TBA July 2023 – NSW Dinner TBC
- Saturday 28 October 2023 – Brisbane Dinner and AGM at United Service Club TBC

I urge all members to support these functions.

## 2023 Canberra Lunch.

The 2023 Canberra lunch will be held at The Dock hotel on Kingston Foreshore on Sunday 26 March 2023. It will be conducted on a 'pay as you go' basis, where the hotel reserves some tables for us in an area and people order and pay for their own meals and drinks from the hotel menu. Further details have been sent out by separate email and are also contained later in this newsletter.

Stay safe and well,

*Keith Brent*

President

January 2023

## Member News

### Departed Members

Sadly, the Association has been informed of the passing of Geoffrey Jennings in hospital on 26 January after a brief illness. Lest we forget.

### New Members

There are no new members since the last newsletter.

### Member Updates

### Subscription time

With the start of the new year, it is time for subscriptions to be paid. The year for membership is based on the calendar year and the fee is \$10 per year. Those who are life members do not need to pay subscriptions.

Payments may be made by cheque (Maritime Squadrons Association) to my address: P.O. Box 507 Capalaba QLD 4157 or

by direct payment to the MSA account: NAB, Maritime Squadrons Association, BSB 084-126, A/c No 205114992.

Geoff Hyde, Treasurer [geoffhyde@bigpond.com](mailto:geoffhyde@bigpond.com)

## Email

If you are receiving this newsletter via Australia Post & you have an email address, then you can choose to receive newsletters and other updates via email (and save the Association some money). Just let the Secretary know your email address.

If you change your address or email, **please** inform the Secretary as soon as possible.

## Results of the MSA website survey

Thank you to all the members who responded to the survey.

The YES vote was 8

The NO vote was 38

Undecided 6

Several members forwarded comments for review.

Some members expressed surprise that there was a website although it has been on the masthead of the newsletter for many years.

The results will be forwarded to the Executive for further action.

## *News from here and there*

### RAAF Mediterranean patrol ends after 11 days 21/10/2022

NATO says it has forged a new partnership with the Royal Australian Air Force through its maritime security operation in the Mediterranean – and RAAF says it has certified the ADF's capability to connect to and operate within NATO architecture.

A RAAF P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft deployed from its base in Edinburgh, South Australia, to Sigonella, Italy, accompanied

by a team of 45 crew, maintenance and security personnel from the RAAF's No 11 Squadron.



*A Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft the ground at Naval Air Station Sigonella in Italy in support of Operation Sea Guardian 2022. Photo by Corporal John Solomon.*

The aircraft completed several flying missions over the Mediterranean Sea between 3 and 14 October, conducting overwater surveillance in support of NATO's ongoing maritime operation in the region, known as Operation Sea Guardian. NATO said the Australian P-8A added significantly to the maritime picture and overall maritime situational awareness of the operation.

This is the first time Australia has sent a P-8A to Europe, a journey which took three days.

Commander of Maritime Air at NATO's Allied Maritime Command HQ in Northwood, UK, Commodore Illias Raptis, said the Australian deployment was a tremendous success.

"The Royal Australian Air Force brought with them a very effective and powerful sensor in the P-8A maritime patrol aircraft," Commodore Raptis said.

"It made a significant contribution to the intelligence picture.

"That, combined with the professionalism, demeanour and flexibility of the deployed personnel provided outstanding results, highlighting Australia's importance as a partner to Operation Sea Guardian."

Commanding Officer No 11 Squadron, RAAF, Wing Commander Adam Saber said the deployment certified the Australian Defence

Force capability to connect to, and operate within, the NATO architecture.

“In this case, it was the P-8A, a highly capable and versatile multi-role aircraft – but this deployment was also more than just the aircraft – it meant our maintenance team working with host squadrons, our communications specialists and intelligence team connecting with the NATO networks and our logistics personnel moving mission equipment in and out of Europe.

“The result confirmed Australian capacity to seamlessly integrate into the coalition environment and retain our enhanced-operational-partner status.”

Thanking all NATO personnel who welcomed the RAAF, Wing Commander Saber said it was an extremely successful detachment and the Australian Defence Force learned a great deal from it.

“It was made far easier by the wonderful support provided from NATO Maritime Command, the Italian Air Force at Naval Air Station Sigonella, US Navy Combined Task Force 67, and Patrol Squadrons 9 and 4,” he said.

A Royal Australian Air Force P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft successfully concluded its participation in NATO’s Sea Guardian mission on Friday (14 October 2022).

Operating out of Sigonella airbase in southern Italy, the aircraft provided NATO’s maritime security mission in the Mediterranean with surveillance and reconnaissance data. The deployment marked the first time Australia has sent a P-8 aircraft to Europe and participated in the Sea Guardian mission.

### Exercise Malabar 15 NOVEMBER 2022

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) joined key regional partners India, Japan and the United States for Exercise Malabar 22 off the east coast of Japan.

This year marked the 26th iteration of the Malabar series of exercises, and the third time that all four nations integrated to advance collective planning, integration and employment of advanced warfare tactics.

Royal Australian Navy (RAN) ships HMAS *Arunta* and HMAS *Stalwart*, submarine HMAS *Farncomb* and a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft deployed on the exercise, which ran from 8 - 15 November 2022.

Deputy Chief of Joint Operations, Air Vice-Marshal Michael Kitcher said routine exercises and operations with Australia's military partners strengthened our ability to meet shared regional challenges.

"Australia regularly participates in exercises and training with regional partners to build mutual understanding and interoperability in support of an open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific," Air Vice-Marshal Kitcher said.

"The inclusion of a RAAF P-8A Poseidon for first time, along with RAN ships and a submarine, provided a valuable opportunity to focus on complex maritime warfare, interoperability and air-maritime integration."

## **HAAWC**

The U.S. Navy's P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft now have another weapon in their arsenal, the High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare Weapon Capability, or HAAWC. The service has now declared initial operational capability, or IOC, with HAAWC, which transforms air-dropped Mk 54 lightweight anti-submarine torpedoes into long-range, quickly-delivered standoff weapons.

HAAWC's manufacturer, Boeing, announced the Navy had declared IOC with the system in a press release today. The Navy had awarded Boeing a full-rate production contract for the HAAWC kits, with a total value of up to approximately \$121,426,700 if all options are exercised, in August.

"The initial operational capability milestone marks the readiness of HAAWC for fleet introduction for the Navy and its international partners," Dewayne Donley, the HAAWC program manager at Boeing, said in a statement. "We're excited to deliver greater flexibility and capability by way of higher-altitude launches from longer distances than previously possible."

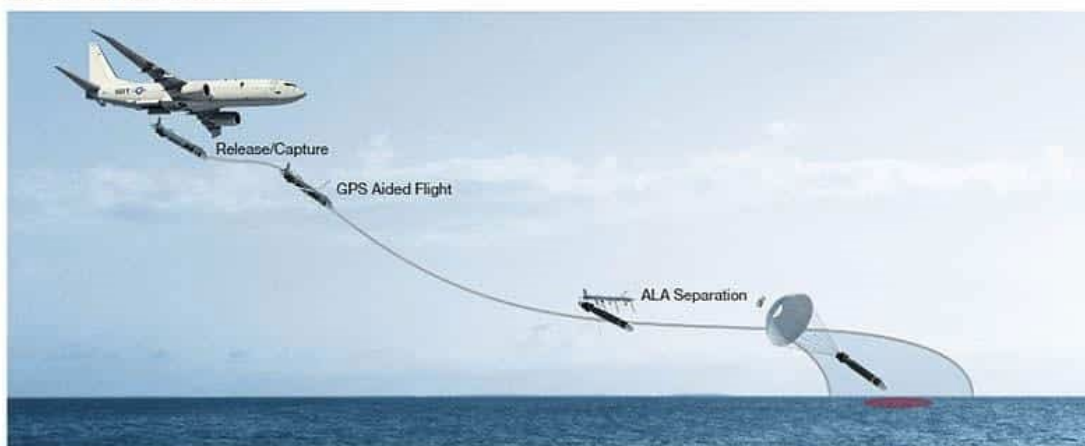




HAAWC consists of a wing kit, which Boeing refers to as the Air Launch Accessory (ALA), for the Mk 54 lightweight torpedo. After launch, the two pop-out wings deploy and the weapon glides to a designated target area using GPS-assisted guidance system that also has the ability to operate in a GPS-denied environment via inertial navigation alone, according to the manufacturer. After reaching the target area, the ALA releases the torpedo, which then drops into the water as it otherwise would, using a parachute in the tail to slow its descent and prevent it from being damaged when hitting the water.

The wings themselves are derived from the ones used on Boeing's AGM-84H/K Standoff Land Attack Missile-Expanded Response (SLAM-ER) air-launched cruise missile, while the guidance package is based on the one used in Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) precision-guided bombs.

HAAWC Employment Scenario



## Orion News

The Defence Portfolio Budget Statement (November 2022) revealed that the Royal Australian Air Force will begin replacing the two Lockheed AP-3C(EW) Orion signals intelligence (SIGINT) aircraft with 10 Sqn at RAAF Edinburgh with the first of four MC-55A Peregrine ISREW aircraft being acquired under Air 555 in the 2023 - 2024 financial year.

## Triton News

The Defence PBS also reveals that the first Northrop Grumman MQ-4C Triton high altitude long endurance (HALE) UAS will not enter service until the 2024-2025 financial year.

## Regional News

### New Zealand Takes Delivery of First P-8A Poseidon

New Zealand has received the first of four P-8A Poseidon aircraft ordered from American aerospace firm Boeing. A ceremony to mark the milestone was held at the Museum of Flight in Seattle, with representatives from the company and Wellington in attendance.



The delivery comes four years after New Zealand entered into a production agreement with the US Navy for the maritime patrol aircraft.

According to a New Zealand Ministry of Defence official, the P-8A Poseidon will boost the country's ability to patrol its maritime territories and respond to various threats. The aircraft will also "assist our South Pacific neighbors and deliver long-range search and rescue capability."

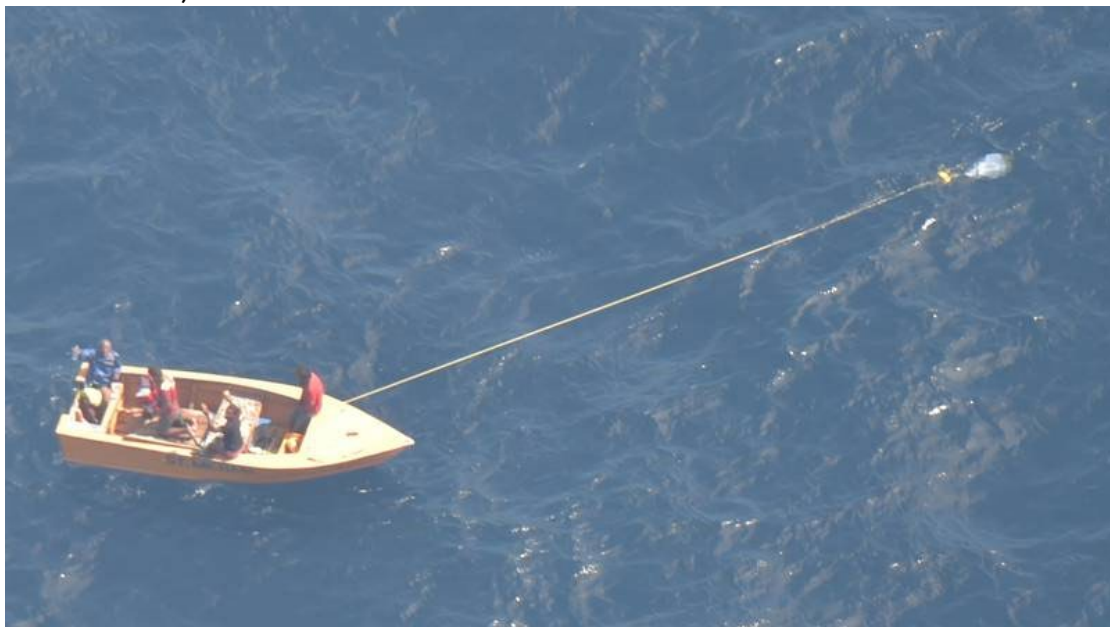
Boeing Defence Australia will provide sustainment services for New Zealand's fleet with the support of the P-8 International Program.

New Zealand's three remaining P-8 aircraft are all in advanced stages of production and will be delivered in 2023. The aircraft will replace New Zealand's current fleet of three P-3K2 Orions and will be based at Royal New Zealand Air Force Base Ohakea

*SEATTLE, Dec. 7, 2022*

### **RNZAF find missing Pacific fishers after five-day search**

November 24, 2022



Survivors on the boat from Kiribati. (Source: RNZAF)

A Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) Orion crew has found two missing fishing vessels carrying seven Kiribati and Fijian fishers after a five-day search operation in the region. However, a third vessel carrying three men was unable to be found.



The first search began on Saturday 19 November, the RNZAF said in a statement. The Orion crew was deployed to Kiribati to look for a six-metre wooden fishing boat with three men aboard, missing since the previous Wednesday, but "were unable to locate that vessel". Air Commodore Shaun Sexton said those involved in the search felt for the friends and family of the fishermen who weren't found.

On Saturday afternoon, the Orion crew received a second request, to look for a fishing boat from Kiribati with four people aboard. They found this boat on Sunday and delivered a pack to the people aboard including "an activated locator beacon, water, chocolate, a strobe light, a torch and a note with information about how the four would be rescued", an RNZAF statement said.

The four were then taken to safety early on Monday by a rescue crew from the Kiribati maritime coordination centre.

On Tuesday evening, 22 November the Orion crew were asked to search for a third vessel, a Fijian fishing boat carrying three people.



Survivors on the Fijian boat. (Source: RNZAF)

They found the boat "drifting in open water" but the people aboard appeared well, with one attempting to paddle using a makeshift oar. The Orion crew dropped a pack with a beacon and a radio to them, and Fijian police sent a rescue vessel to take them to safety. "It's been an incredible achievement by our crew, and search and rescue staff in New Zealand, Fiji, and Kiribati, to find two groups of

survivors that were drifting in boats without power in vast areas of ocean far from land or any other vessels," Sexton said.

### **New Zealand Defence Force to retire P-3 Orion planes early, leaves capability gap**

WELLINGTON, Dec 13 (Reuters) - The New Zealand Defence Force on Tuesday said it would retire five P-3K2 Orion aircraft five months earlier than planned because of staff shortages, leaving it with few planes for search, rescue and surveillance operations until at least July.

The Orion aircraft are being replaced by new Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, with the first arriving in New Zealand on Tuesday, the remainder to be delivered by mid-2023. However, the New Zealand government said in a statement that the first Poseidon would not be ready for operations until July 1.



A Royal New Zealand Air Force P3 Orion aircraft prepares to take-off from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Pearce Base March 23, 2014. REUTERS

### **Pacific rescue 'fitting' end to six decades of Orion ops.**

18 January 2023

An Air Force veteran says a recent rescue of two missing Kiribati fishers was a "fitting" way to retire the branch's Orion P-3K2 fleet after nearly six decades of operation. But the replacement P-8 Poseidons won't be rescue-ready until July, leaving a gap where the

force will be leaning on other agencies and countries to help out with any emergencies.

An Orion crew found the two men in their dinghy shortly after arriving in the search area on Monday, 16 Jan following an unsuccessful search by a US Coast Guard Lockheed C-130 aircraft. They had been missing for six days.

"It was fitting that once again, the P-3 and its crew have gone out and contributed to a lifesaving mission in the Pacific," RNZAF Air Commodore Shaun Sexton told Morning Report on Wednesday.

"It's done it many times over its 57-year history, and one more in its final month of service was pretty exciting."

New Zealand received five of its six Orions in the mid-, followed by another in the mid-1980s.

"They've had many modifications and improvements over the years - new wings, new avionics and communications and sensor systems," said Sexton.



The unique combination of upgrades over years resulted in their model name being upgraded from the original P-3 to P-3K2.

"They've operated from Antarctica through to northeast Asia, through to Europe - all around the world - but predominantly... supporting our Pacific whanau and neighbours with things like the search and rescue just conducted, and of course supporting New Zealand and surveying New Zealand's EEZs and protecting New



Zealand's interests. Looking after New Zealanders with local search and rescues as well."

One of them took its last flight in 2021. The others are being retired earlier than hoped due to "particularly high attrition amongst the skilled workforce that we need". The Defence Force in 2022 said personnel were being lured out of military careers thanks to growing salaries in the civilian sector.

"The early retirement allows to focus efforts on the P-8, the new Poseidon aircraft which will begin to fly around New Zealand in the coming weeks," said Sexton.

"That'll slowly, over the coming months, build up its capability and start to deliver some of the outputs of the Orion. There will be a period where we will be using some other aircraft, support from partners."

Sexton said the RNZAF "may ask" other countries to help if needed, otherwise they will work with domestic agencies like the Rescue Coordination Centre and National Maritime Coordination Centre.

A Defence Force spokesperson in December said the shortage was "exacerbated by the need to also transfer experienced staff in some areas to support the upcoming introduction of the new C130-J-30 Hercules fleet in 2024".

The first Poseidon P-8 arrived in December, and the rest will be here by April. Those already here will be in the air by February, and ready to take part in rescues by July.

"It will take another year after that - so towards the end of 2024 - before the P8 is fully ready, that we've got all the crews trained, the maintenance people ready to go, to deliver the full suite of surveillance and response force outputs that the P3's been delivering all these years," said Sexton.

The US Navy retired its last active duty Orions in 2020, and will phase them out completely later this year, also replacing them with P-8s.

### Before the P-8 - some interesting trivia

In the mid-1980s, the U.S. Navy made plans to replace the large number of Lockheed P-3 aircraft which would reach the end of their useful service lives during the 1990s. To limit costs the U.S. Navy

envisioned a modified P-3 with increased payload and updated avionics. This aircraft became known as the "P-3G" of which 125 should be procured over a period of five years up to 2001. However, the U.S. Navy was unwilling to select Lockheed's P-3G without any competition and issued the final "Request for Proposals (RFP)" in January 1987.

For the airplane named the P-7A "LRAACA" (Long-Range Air ASW-Capable Aircraft), Lockheed's competitors were:

- Boeing - proposal using a modified 757
- McDonnell Douglas - proposal using a modified MD-90

In October 1988, the U.S. Navy announced that Lockheed had won the competition, as the company's proposal was significantly cheaper than that of the competitors. The U.S. Defence Acquisition Board (DAB) recommended a full-scale development of the LRAACA on 4 January 1989.



The costs were planned to be about \$600 million, with a maximum cost limit of \$750 million. However, in November 1989, Lockheed announced a cost overrun of \$300 million due to the tight schedule and design problems.



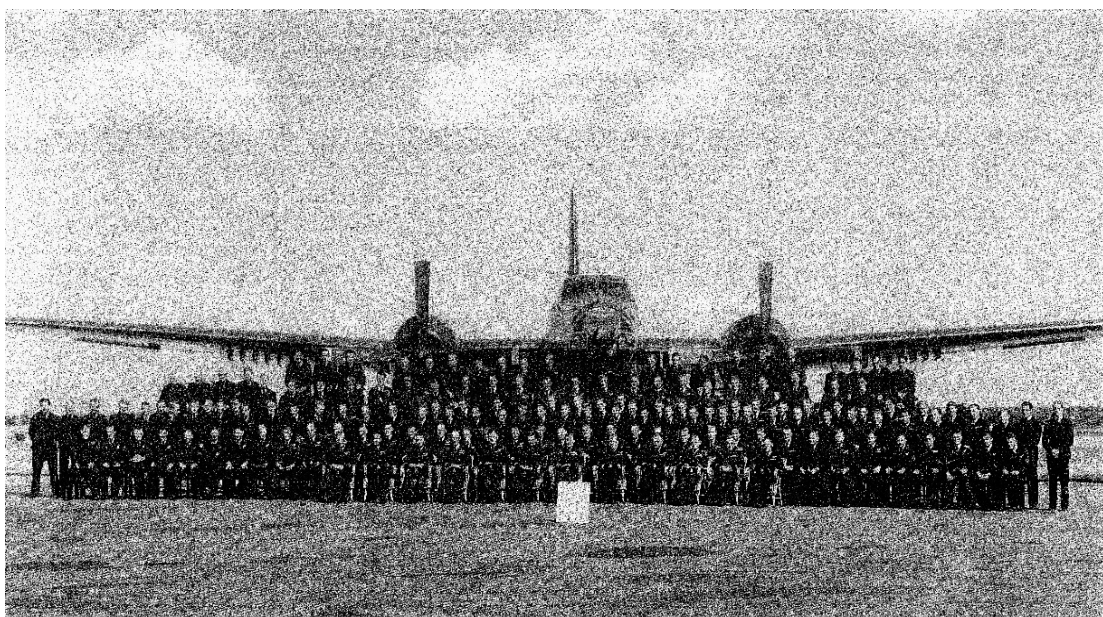
On 20 July 1990, the U.S. Navy stopped the P-7A program contract for default, "citing Lockheed's inability to make adequate progress toward completion of all contract phases".

The program was finally cancelled by the DAB in late 1990.

The P-7 was designed as an enlarged version of the original P-3C. The fuselage, of similar cross-section to that of the P-3, was lengthened by 2.40 m (8 ft), and the wingspan by 2.10 m (7 ft). The wing centre section was increased in length, which moved the engines farther away from the fuselage to reduce noise levels in the cabin. The tailplane was increased by about 25% in area, but shortened in height compared to that of the P-3. The P-7A was to be powered by four General Electric T407-GE-400 turboprops with 5-bladed propellers.

Initial plans included the Update IV electronics equipment of the P-3C. The cockpit was to be fitted with eight CRT displays and a stowable HUD for weapons delivery.<sup>[6]</sup> Other equipment included search radar, MAD, decoy flare launchers, electro-optical detector, radar warning receivers, IR suppression on the engine exhausts and laser deflection screens on the windows. The primary submarine detection sensor was to be the sonobuoy, of which 112 were carried internally; 38 more stowed for in flight reloading.

## A little local nostalgia



Not the clearest image but a photograph of No 11 Squadron at RAAF Pearce 1952 with an early model Neptune (A89-301) with the nose turret. Via Geoff Ward

### No 6 Course School of Radio 1962



**Back L-R:** David V Foote (Footie), Graham J Harvey (Harves), Rod P Doyle (Rockspider), Phil J Andrews (Andy), Noel S Ryan, Arthur J Hannam (Gus), Don P Stewart (Macannini), Nicholas T Cram (Nick).

**Front L-R:** W Barry MacDonald (Mac), Paul V Sykes (Samarai), Anthony E Lowe (Tony/Bones), Jim D O'Doherty (Doc), Jim Dunn (Trader), Jim V North (Trader), Don E Gallett (Big Euge), Anthony H Trafford (Tony).

## History Corner

### World War Two

#### Timeline 1942-43

October – The Guadalcanal campaign continues. The siege of Stalingrad drags on and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of El Alamein has been won by British and Allied forces.

November – “Operation Torch”, the invasion of North Africa begins. Tobruk is recaptured by Allied forces. Madagascar liberated from Vichy French control.

December – Buna is captured by Australian and US forces. German troops start retreating from Crimea.

By the end of 1942 17 ships in Australian seas had been sunk by Japanese submarines.

None of these ships had been sailing in convoys.

Submarine attacks resumed in January 1943. Submarines *I-10* and *I-21* sailed from Rabaul with *I-21* arriving off the coast of NSW around 14 January. It operated in that area until February, sinking six ships during the most successful patrol in Australian waters.

Around midnight of 28 January 1943 the submarine *I-165* shelled the small town of Port Gregory, north of Geraldton. All ten shells missed and did not disturb the residents.

## *In Europe*

### No 10 Squadron

On Friday, 13 November the Squadron lost an aircraft when it crashed near Mount Batten after a flight from Gibraltar. The crew survived but five passengers lost their lives. 316 operational hours were flown during December in spite of bad weather but there were no sightings of any U-boats. New Years Day brought success to Flg Off Beeton and crew when they coordinated an attack by a Royal Navy ship on the German blockade runner *Rhakotis*.

### No 461 Squadron

On 30 September the Squadrons first success was achieved when an out bound U-boat was attacked in the Bay of Biscay. During October the Squadron was temporarily deployed to Gibraltar for transport duties in preparation for Operation "Torch". During November a Sunderland was attacked by four enemy aircraft suffering only minor damage. Another aircraft and crew were lost while patrolling the Bay of Biscay. On 05 December another Sunderland was attacked off the coast of Spain by enemy aircraft. Violent gales during January 1943 limited operations. One Sunderland and crew disappeared on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## *In the Middle East*

### No 458 Squadron

During November 1942 the Squadron starts operations from

Gambut, Libya, with Vickers Wellington aircraft, flying anti-submarine patrols in addition to mine laying and shipping strikes.

### No 459 Squadron

In December the Squadron moved to Gambut alongside No 458. Maritime operations continued against Axis shipping and submarines using Lockheed Hudson aircraft.

## *In Australia and the Pacific*

### No 6 Squadron

In October 1942 the Squadron moved to Ward's Strip near Port Moresby sharing with No 100 Sqn, the entire maritime reconnaissance of the New Guinea area conducting unrewarding anti-submarine patrols. In addition the Squadron carried out supply drops, medevac trips and even some night time bombing missions. After deploying to Milne Bay later in the month the Squadron resumed regular maritime activities.

### No 7 Squadron

By early October the Squadron had converted from Lockheed Hudsons to Beaufort aircraft. The Squadron moved to Ross River (Townsville). A surfaced submarine was sighted by a crew on 15 December 1942 in the Northern area of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The crew operating from Horn Island lead by FLG Off Whishaw attacked the submarine with 250 lb bombs. No positive result was recorded. From January, uneventful patrols were made along the north-eastern coast.

### No 9 Squadron

The Squadron moved to Bowen in January 1943 and commenced anti-submarine patrols and associated reconnaissance missions around North Queensland using Supermarine Seagull V and Walrus amphibian aircraft.

### No 11 Squadron

The Squadron relocated from Bowen to Cairns on 11 Nov 1942



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P01490.002

A Catalina on the Bowen ramp

From Cairns many night raids were conducted against enemy shipping (including submarines) in the Lae – Salamaua – Finschhafen area.

On 06 January 1943 a Squadron Catalina sighted an enemy convoy and attacked. Three direct bomb hits sank a 12,000-ton transport ship.

## **No 14 Squadron**

Starting in December 1942, the Squadron was gradually re-equipped with Australian-built Beaufort aircraft and continued its routine maritime patrols off Australia's West Coast. On several occasions probable threats of enemy activity caused higher patrol workloads.

## **No 20 Squadron**

The Squadron Headquarters moved to Cairns on 20 November 1942 while maintaining detachments at Townsville, Cairns and Horn Island. Continuing seaward reconnaissance was the main duty, covering the entire New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. In addition, they were frequently tasked with night bombing missions and special operations.

## **No 32 Squadron**

The Squadron continued to be based at Camden and operating anti-submarine and convoy protection patrols. One highlight for the Squadron was flying protection patrols for the ocean liner *Queen Elizabeth* when it arrived in Sydney with the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, AIF returning from North Africa.

### **No 67 Squadron**

The Squadron formed on 06 January 1943 at Laverton with 180 staff and a compliment of 14 Avro Anson aircraft. In addition to the main base at Laverton, aircraft and crew operated anti-submarine and convoy escort patrols from Mallacoota, Yanakie, Bairnsdale and Warrnambool in Victoria. Aircrew reported sightings of submarines on four occasions during February but attacks were not made.

### **No 68 Squadron/No 69 Squadron**

Both of these Squadrons moved from outlying satellite fields to the main airfield at Geraldton. Operational patrols continued in the Geraldton area.

### **No 71 Squadron**

The Squadron was re-formed as a separate, operational unit on 26 January 1943. The unit Headquarters was based at Lowood (Qld) with detached Flights operating from Amberley and Bundaberg (Qld) and one at Coffs Harbour (NSW). From the end of January anti-submarine patrols became the primary duty supplemented by search and rescue flights and Army co-operation exercises.

### **No 73 Squadron**

After moving to Nowra in September, the Squadron was issued with 12 Avro Anson aircraft in October for anti-submarine patrols. The Squadron was divided into two Flights; one with six aircraft based at Richmond and the other at Nowra. "B" Flight moved from Richmond to Camden in November.

## **A Final Thought**

Only an armed people can be truly free. Only an unarmed people can ever be enslaved. *Aristotle*