



Your Host WA2AXO December 4, 2018

Those who showed on the repeater were, WA2AXO,
Nothing heard today. Only the repeater ident.

I will be on the air Tuesday's on 146.685 MHZ (PL 110.9) at
12PM EDT. This is the Great South Bay Radio Club Repeater.

Tomorrow is the Lunch at **Hibachi Grill and Supreme Buffet**
1114-1116 Deer Park Ave
North Babylon, NY

Hope to see you there!! 12:00 PM

It is a shame you had such an "eventful" trip home. The infrastructure of
America is crumbling, you got a first-hand look at was the way to travel. But glad
you made it home safe, maybe sound too. Hope the good memories made will
erase the negative ones.

John Zottoli

Sent to us by Joseph Cincotta

World
Why the Marine Corps and Navy Will Miss the EA-6B Prowler
The National Interest Edward Chang, The National Interest Sat, Dec 1
8:00 AM EST

Edward Chang

Security,

The end of an era.

Why the Marine Corps and Navy Will Miss the EA-6B Prowler

In early November 2018, Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron Two (VMAQ-2) "Death Jesters" departed Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar and returned to their home base of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, North Carolina. The 250 Marines were not only undoubtedly overjoyed to return home after a deployment that began in April, but were also proud to hold the distinction of having completed the final operational deployment of the Northrop Grumman EA-6B Prowler electronic warfare (EW) aircraft, set to be retired in 2019.

Though the United States Marine Corps and Navy have been gradually phasing the Prowler out of service since 2009, its twilight saw as heavy a workload as ever. When the Islamic State had Iraq teetering on the brink in the summer of 2014, the EA-6B's of VMAQ-2 and VMAQ-3 "Moon Dogs" flying from Al Udeid and VAQ-134 "Garudas" aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush were among the first units to respond to the emergency. VMAQ-4 relieved VMAQ-3 in August that year and pulled triple-duty; in addition to ongoing missions over Iraq, Prowlers flew into Syria when Operation Inherent Resolve expanded there, along with the occasional trip into Afghanistan.

VAQ-134's deployment aboard Bush was the navy's final operational use of the EA-6B and eventually retired the plane in 2015. Marine Prowlers, on the other hand, kept up the pace, with the four squadrons deploying in rotating fashion to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey between April 2016 and April 2018 before returning to Qatar one last time that same month. The Prowler's contribution to the war against ISIL can be described as nothing short of remarkable, doing everything from jamming ISIL's communications and radio frequencies used to detonate Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) to escorting bombers during the air strikes against the Bashar al-Assad regime in April 2018. In this role, the EA-6Bs were charged with the possible duty of suppressing Russian and Syrian air defenses should the need arise.

Although the navy was its largest operator, the Prowler originated out of the Marines' need for a dedicated EW aircraft. Using the pre-existing A-6 Intruder airframe, Grumman (which merged with Northrop in 1994) developed the EA-6A "Electric Intruder" in the 1960s as a stopgap until the superior EA-6B entered service. Eventually, the navy sought to replace its aging Douglas EKA-3B Skywarrior EW planes as well. The Prowler then made its navy debut in 1971 and flew missions over Vietnam, while the Marines swapped out its two-seat EA-6As for the four-seat EA-6B later that decade. Since then, it has participated in every major U.S. military operation overseas.

At 59'10", 31,160 lbs., the Prowler was almost six feet longer and 5,000 lbs. heavier than the Intruder. It was powered by two Pratt & Whitney J52-P408A turbojet engines, allowing it to fly at subsonic speeds up to

566 knots. Over the decades, the Prowlers were regularly upgraded through programs called Expanded Capability (EXCAP) and Improved Capability (ICAP). The most consequential modification was perhaps the ability to fire AGM-88 High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles (HARM), which was introduced in 1986 in the ICAP II Block 86 variant. This turned the EA-6B into a Suppression of Enemy Air Defense (SEAD) platform, a capability its air force counterpart, the General Dynamics EF-111A Raven, would never possess.

The final Prowler variant in service was the ICAP III, introduced in 2005. With it came the AN/ALQ-218 jamming system receiver installed into the aircraft, noticeable as the distinctive bulge atop the tail, and operated in conjunction with the AN/ALQ-99 jammers carried underneath the fuselage and wings. ICAP III also had the AN/USQ-113(V)4 communications jammer, and, as with previous variants, could gather electronic intelligence (ELINT). This made another critical capability available for combatant commanders, as the Navy had retired its final dedicated carrier-borne ELINT platform, the Lockheed ES-3A Shadow, in 1999 and its only other ELINT plane was (and still is) the land-based Lockheed EP-3E Aries II. Only four squadrons would ever operate the ICAP III.

The Prowler's five hard points allowed up to four HARMs or five ALQ-99s to be carried. Usually, however, a Prowler carried up to two HARMs to allow for at least two jamming pods and fuel in an external drop tank to be carried. Marine ICAP IIIs had access to the AN/AAQ-28(V)4 LITENING targeting pod; this was used primarily for intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance, since the EA-6B did not carry any other ordnances besides HARMs. The EA-6B crew was comprised of a pilot and four Electronic Countermeasures Officers (ECMO); when supporting a strike, an ECMO was often mission commander. Depending on a mission, a Prowler sometimes flew with two ECMOs.

At its height, EA-6B operated across four Marine squadrons and fourteen active-duty Navy squadrons, plus one training and two reserve squadrons. Aboard carriers, Prowler squadrons typically deployed between four and six airframes; during its last few land deployments, the Marine squadrons deployed with six. Several of the Navy squadrons were designated "expeditionary," meaning they were intended for forward-deployment to air bases ashore instead of being deployed as part of carrier air wings. This was to remedy the retirement of the Air Force's EF-111, which left the Prowler the only tactical EW aircraft in the entire U.S. inventory.

Though never downed in combat nor having garnered the reputation of a "widow-maker," fifty-one Prowlers were lost during its service life, resulting in forty-eight aircrew fatalities. It was also involved in a few high-profile accidents over the years.

On the night of May 25, 1981, an EA-6B of VMAQ-2, coincidentally enough landed aboard USS Nimitz too far right of the centerline of the flight deck and collided with a row of parked aircraft, resulting in a massive explosion and fire. In one of the worst carrier disasters in history,

fourteen crewmembers were killed and forty-five more injured, along with the complete destruction of entire planes and considerable damage to others. The three EA-6B crewmembers, Capt. Elwood Armstrong and 1st Lts. Laurence Cragun and Steve White were killed on impact.

On February 3, 1998, VMAQ-2 was involved in yet another high-profile incident, this time with international implications. An EA-6B was flying a low-level training mission in Italy when it struck and severed a cable supporting an aerial tram system. A car fell 260 feet and killed all 20 aboard, all nationals of six different European countries. The Prowler was able to limp back to Aviano Air Base, where it was forward-deployed at the time.

Of the four crewmembers, only the pilot and navigator, Capts. Richard Ashby and Joseph Schweitzer, faced court-martial for involuntary manslaughter and negligent homicide. Over a year later, both men were either acquitted or had their charges dropped, inciting international outrage. The case took a bizarre turn, however, when it was found Ashby and Schweitzer destroyed a videotape recorded during the flight, containing incriminating evidence. Both officers were then charged and convicted of obstruction and conduct unbecoming, resulting in their dismissal from the Marines and a half-year prison sentence for Ashby.

Later that same year on the night of November 8, a Navy EA-6B of VAQ-130 “Zappers” was cleared to land on USS Enterprise while the landing area was still occupied by a Lockheed S-3B Viking. The Prowler made a last-second attempt to evade collision, but it was too late—it struck the S-3, resulting in an explosion and fire. Miraculously, the two Viking crew members survived, but all four of the Prowler crew—LCDR Kurt Barich and LTJGs Meredith Loughran, Charles Woodard, and Brendan Duffy—perished.

Beginning in 2009, the EA-6B was gradually relieved of duty by the Boeing EA-18G Growler. Like the Prowler, the EA-18G was adapted from an existing airframe—the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet. But while the EA-6B did not retain many of the capabilities of the A-6, the Growler retains many of the features of the Super Hornet. For example, the Growler carries air-to-air weaponry, allowing it to defend itself against hostile fighters. The Prowler had no such capability and was virtually defenseless against attack, thereby requiring escort, diverting fighters such as F-14s and F/A-18s away from other critical missions. The Growler is also highly-automated, mitigated the loss of two ECMOs.

The Prowler’s retirement leaves the C-2A(R) Greyhound and the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye as the only remaining Grumman-built carrier-based aircraft. With almost half a century of service to boast, the EA-6B was a stalwart, outlasting even the legendary F-14 Tomcat, another Grumman product, along with its progenitor, the A-6. As the carrier air wing becomes increasingly dominated by Boeing’s Super Hornets and Lockheed Martin’s Lightning IIs, the Prowler’s retirement marks the end of a memorable and storied era of naval aviation.

Edward Chang is a freelance defense, military, and foreign policy

writer. His writing has appeared in The National Interest, The American Conservative, Real Clear Defense, and War Is Boring.

News from Paul

Well, I am going to get my shorts Thursday and also my presurgery the same day. Then next week will go to the heart doc. For clearance. The 19th is the sugery date.

The first Wednesday of the month Lunch will be held at:

Hibachi Grill and Supreme Buffet
1114-1116 Deer Park Ave
North Babylon, NY
(631-274-0888)

On the webpage now we have AIL Record **September,1982**
New December 4,2018

On The Web Page

AIL Records.

September 1959
October 1959
December 1959
January 1960
February 1960
March 1960
April 1960
May 1960
December 1960
May 1961
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November 1958
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July 1982
August 1982
September 1982

Please be reminded that you can find the AIL Retiree News Letter on my web page on Tuesday.

Click below for the web page

<http://pauls-page.com/index.htm>

If you cannot click and bring site up then type it into your browser.

Please remember that your news could be in this newsletter. Let friends know how you are doing. I am sure they would like to know!

KEEP THE NEWS COMING PLEASE!

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Our lunch meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month.

Retiree breakfast gatherings are held every Thursday at 8:30 AM, Olympic Diner on Deer Park Ave in Deer Park

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Note: I am putting anything that tells a story about the history of AIL on my web page. Please if you have any relative information, please send it to me. Thank you.

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Send photos either by e-mail, attachment (jpg or gif or pdf) or via regular mail. (I have a scanner)

My address is:
18 Burton Lane
Massapequa, NY 11758-5314

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The opinion expressed by a member is not necessarily the opinion of your host. That is all the news I have from here, so best wishes to all, Paul.

My E-mail paulcl@bellatlantic.net

Web Page <http://pauls-page.com/index.htm>