

Commander, U.S. SIXTH Fleet Visits Patrol Squadron FOUR

LTJG Dustin Wilmoth

On Friday January 11th, Patrol Squadron FOUR (VP-4) welcomed Vice Admiral Frank C. Pandolfe, Commander, U.S. SIXTH Fleet, at the squadron's main deployment site on Naval Air Station Sigonella, Italy. VADM Pandolfe oversees approximately 40 ships, 175 aircraft, and 21,000 personnel, which comprise the major operational component of Naval Forces Europe and Naval Forces Africa. VADM Pandolfe was given a tour of the Partial Aircrew Trainer (PACT-3) simulator at the Commander Task Force 67 (CTF-67) Tactical Operations Center. The PACT-3 simulator is used to train combat aircrews for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) missions and ensures each aircrew maintains a high level of ASW readiness on deployment. "Giving the Admiral a glimpse of what we do in the aircraft was a great opportunity to highlight the capabilities of the P-3C," said Navigator LTJG Chandler Hasemeyer of VP-4. VADM Pandolfe also visited with CTF-67 Staff and recognized several of their Sailors during an awards ceremony. During his tour of the P-3C Orion, he was briefed on the specific capabilities of each crew station within the P-3C and was provided a data transfer demonstration between the aircraft and his personal email account. The P-3C Orion is a maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft with a wide range of mission capabilities ranging from overland intelligence gathering to maritime drug traffic interdiction. "With recent upgrades to the P-3C we are able to provide critical updates in near real-time, giving a Fleet Commander like VADM Pandolfe the information he needs to make time-critical decisions in his strategically important AOR. The Admiral's visit was a unique opportunity to provide him with a demonstration of how our new capabilities enhance the way we collect and distribute this

vital information.” said Pilot LT Isaiah Gammache. At the completion of his tour on Naval Air Station Sigonella, VADM Pandolfe went to the Augusta Bay port facility to tour the surface ships associated with Commander Task Force 65. The VP-4 "Skinny Dragons" have been deployed since late November and are scheduled to return in June to their home base at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe.



VADM Pandolfe says farewell to VP-4 Commanding Officer, CDR Brent Strong, after a successful tour of the P-3C Orion on Naval Air Station Sigonella. Photo taken by MCSA Menhardt.