

U.S. Navy grounds 39 aging P-3C aircraft

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Navy is grounding 39 of its 161 aging four-engine, P-3C turboprop patrol planes over concerns of wear and tear on the airframes. The aircraft went into service in 1969. John Milliman of Naval Air Systems Command told the Florida Times-Union there were concerns about potential cracks in the trailing edge of the wing between the engines. He said 10 of the 39 planes due for assessment are currently in service around the world, and would be brought home soon. The Navy aircraft are used to hunt submarines, find and attack surface ships, lay mines, and electronically and visually monitor battlefields, the Jacksonville, Fla., newspaper said. Milliman said the P-3Cs are committed to use for about 12 more years. He said between 2013 and 2019, they will gradually be replaced by P-8 Poseidons, which are a variant of Boeing's 737 jetliner, the report said.

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