September 27, 2012

Bacon relieves Hartigan as PMA-273 program manager

Capt. Leon Bacon, incoming program manager for the Naval Undergraduate Flight Training Systems Program Office (PMA-273)here, is piped aboard during the PMA's change-of-command ceremony held Sept. 21 at Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Twenty (VX-20) here. Bacon comes to the PMA after serving as chief of staff for the Program Executive Office, Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons here. (U.S. Navy Photo)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. -- The Naval Undergraduate Flight Training Systems Program Office (PMA-273) change-of-command ceremony, held at Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Twenty (VX-20), on Sept. 21, marked the end of an era for the outgoing program manager.

Capt. Andrew Hartigan, who served as PMA-273's program manager since 2008, retired from the Navy with more than 27 years of service, and transferred the reins of command to Capt. Leon Bacon, who comes to the PMA after serving as chief of staff for the Program Executive Office, Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons.

"PMA-273 is a fleet force multiplier, so it is imperative that we have the right person lead that program office," said Rear. Adm. Donald Gaddis, program executive officer for Tactical Aircraft, here. "Captain Andrew 'Harley' Hartigan was that person. Harley did an outstanding job as program manager. We thank him for his faithful service to our country and wish him fair winds and following seas."

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PMA-273 provides the required training assets and contractor logistics support to the Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA), headquartered at Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi, Texas. CNATRA produces qualified pilots and naval flight officers who are ready to meet the requirements of Fleet Replacement Squadrons.

“Because of the support PMA-273 provides to CNATRA, CNATRA aircraft log approximately 25 percent of the total annual Navy and Marine Corps flight hours,” Gaddis said. “This figure shows the significant impact the PMA has on naval aviation. Captain Bacon has big shoes to fill, but I am confident in his abilities and welcome him to the PEO(T) team.”

Bacon, a native of San Jose, Calif., received his commission from Aviation Officer Candidate School and in January 1988 was designated a naval aviator.

Upon completion of fleet replacement training, he reported to Patrol Squadron Forty at NAS Moffett Field, Calif., where he received his warfare designation as a patrol plane mission commander and instructor pilot in the P-3C Orion. Bacon participated in deployments to Adak, Alaska; Cubi Point, Republic of the Philippines; and Misawa, Japan.

After his first operational tour, he served as a Fleet Replacement Squadron staff instructor pilot and the operations officer to Patrol Squadron Thirty-One. His next assignment was as assistant Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization evaluator for Commander, Patrol Wings U.S. Pacific Fleet stationed at NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii.

Bacon was deployed with USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) as an Aircraft Launch and Recovery officer in support of operations Desert Storm and Southern Watch. During his tour, the crew of the Vinson was awarded the Battle “E” Efficiency Award. After his tour with Vinson, Bacon served as the assistant maintenance officer and operations officer with Patrol Squadron Four. He was deployed to Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory and to the Arabian Gulf. While serving with VP-4, he flew multiple combat missions in support of Operation Desert Fox.

Bacon joined the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations staff at the Pentagon where he worked in the Warfare Policy Directorate and was subsequently chosen to serve on the Navy’s 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review team. He then reported to the Bureau of Naval Personnel (Sea Duty Component) in Arlington, Va., where he served as the assistant program manager for Training Systems. In March 2003, he reported to Patrol Squadron One at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., as executive officer and assumed command of the Screaming Eagles in 2004. While in command of VP-1, the Screaming Eagles completed a successful 7th Fleet deployment and directly supported Operation Enduring Freedom’s flight operations.

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Bacon reported to NAS Patuxent River, where he has served as the P-3 assistant program manager for logistics. In 2008, he served with the Office for the Administrative Review of Enemy Combatants in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Returning to NAS Patuxent River in October 2008, he assumed the position as the P-8A Poseidon integrated product team lead, where he led the program through the initiation of a dynamic flight test program as well as a successful Milestone-C decision review. In June 2011, he assumed the position of PEO(U&W) chief of staff.