



## T-2C Buckeye ends 56-year Navy career

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The U.S. Navy's last T-2C Buckeye takes its final flight over the Chesapeake Bay Sept. 25, 2015. Since 2008, three T-2s belonging to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 20 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, had flown 1,978 sorties, 2,672 flight hours and 850 photo/safety chase events. (U.S. Navy photo)

**NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md.** — The Navy's last flying T-2C Buckeye made its final flight at Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River, Maryland, Sept. 25, capping 56 years of the aircraft type's service to the fleet.

Although T-2s were officially retired from service in 2008 with a "sundown" ceremony, Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 20 at NAS Pax continued to use three Buckeyes as safety chase aircraft during test and evaluation flights of the E-2D Hawkeye, P-8A Poseidon and MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial system.

"The T-2s have been a reliable and valuable part of our squadron for the last seven years, following what was already a distinguished career of training thousands of naval aviators," said VX-20 Commanding Officer Cmdr. William Selk, who conducted the final flight in aircraft 320, along with retired naval aviator Kent Vandergrift. "We're sad to see her go, but we're thankful for all those years of faithful service. The T-2 has earned its place in naval aviation history many times over."

The two-seat, twin-engine jet was first introduced in 1959 for training including



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carrier-based arrested recoveries. The Buckeye had trained more than 11,000 Navy and Marine Corps student pilots before it was replaced by the T-45 Goshawk.

With the retirement of the T-2, VX-20 is transitioning to the C-38 to serve as chase aircraft, radar test targets and pilot proficiency aircraft.

Some additional statistics:

- VX-20 ferried aircraft 320, 518, and 713 from Pensacola to Pax River Aug. 29, 2008.
- The aircraft provided chase support for four ACAT-ID programs: E-2D, P-8A, MQ-4C, AAS.
- From then until now, they flew 1,978 sorties, 2,672 flight hours and 850 photo/safety chase events.
- In that time, only 67 maintenance-related cancellations happened.
- Aircraft number 320 ended its final flight Sept. 25 with a total of 13,945 flight hours on record.



The U.S. Navy's last T-2C Buckeye returns from its final flight Sept. 25, 2015, capping 56 years of the aircraft type's service to the fleet. Although T-2s were officially retired from Navy service in 2008 with a "sundown" ceremony, Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 20 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River continued to use three Buckeyes as safety chase aircraft during test and evaluation flights of the E-2D Hawkeye, P-8A Poseidon and MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft system. (U.S. Navy photo)



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Retired naval aviator Kent Vandergrift and Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 20 Commanding Officer Cmdr. William Selk stand with aircraft number 320 following its final flight Sept. 25, 2015. Since 2008, the jet had served as a safety chase aircraft during test and evaluation flights of the E-2D Hawkeye, P-8A Poseidon and MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft system. It had accumulated a total of 13,945 flight hours on record. (U.S. Navy photo)