



Six P2V air tankers' last deployment — to retirement homes

The aircraft are going to their final resting place 71 years after the model was first introduced to the U.S. Navy.



Above: P2V on the Whoopup Fire southeast of Newcastle, Wyoming, 2011 — flying off into the sunset. Photo by Bill Gabbert

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In 1947 the first P2V Neptune flew for the U.S. Navy serving in the maritime patrol and anti-submarine role. In 2017, 70 years later, the last P2V's to work as air tankers in the United States retired. As the U.S. Forest Service contract for what they called "legacy" air tankers expired, Neptune Aviation transitioned their fleet of war birds to aircraft several decades younger, jet-powered BAe-146 airliners. After working out some early bugs with the completely redesigned retardant delivery system, the newer quad-jets have performed admirably.

Neptune announced today that it has found new homes for its venerable fleet of P2V's.



Neptune's P2V fleet at Alamogordo, New Mexico, March 2018. Photo by Dan Snyder.

“Over the last two years 14 different organizations submitted official proposals to Neptune Aviation to acquire our retiring P2V airtankers,” according to Dan Snyder, Neptune Aviation Services’ Chief Operating Officer. “After a significant amount of coordination with museums and airports I’m happy to announce the locations for the retired P2V fleet.”

–Alamogordo Airport/ALM (Alamogordo, New Mexico)

N203EV (former Evergreen Tanker 142) *This is John's old VP-10 LD-10 128382*

I flew in this plane for 3 years 1960-62

–Estrella Warbirds Museum (Paso Robles, California)

<http://www.ewarbirds.org>

Tanker 07 (P2V-5)

–Glendive Airport/GDV (Glendive, Montana)

Tanker 05 (P2V-5)

–T61 Memorial & Klamath Falls Air Base (Lakeview, Oregon)

Tanker 06 (P2V-5)

–Yankee Air Museum (Belleville, Michigan)

<http://yankeeamuseum.org/>

Tanker 45 (P2V-7)

–San Diego Air & Space Museum (San Diego California)

<http://sandiegoairandspace.org/>

Tanker 43 (P2V-7)

The P2V began aerial firefighting services during the 1970's, when the U.S. Navy began to phase the aircraft out of service. Missoula based Neptune Aviation Services has operated the P2V since 1993. In fact, Neptune had been the largest remaining civil or military operator of the aircraft, with as many as 10 under US Forest Service (USFS) contracts in a single year.



Neptune retires their P2V air tankers