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## The Martin P5M Marlin

The P5M *Marlin* was the last in a long line of military seaplanes produced by the Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Company between 1909 and 1960. Designed in 1946 to replace the venerable Martin PBM *Mariner*, the P5M-1 was the first U.S. Navy aircraft built specifically for ASW use. The P5M-1 entered service in 1952 followed by the P5M-2 in 1954. Although many new designs were considered throughout the 1950s, the P5M-2 was the last production flying boat used by the U.S. Navy. At the onset of the Vietnam conflict, the Navy's four remaining seaplane patrol squadrons VP-40, 47, 48 and 50 were called into action and played a significant role as part of *Operation Market Time*, from 1964 to 1967. The *Marlins* were retired in November 1967, officially ending 57 years of Naval Seaplane Aviation.

The National Museum of Naval Aviation (NMNA) in Pensacola, FL is home to the sole surviving example of a Martin P5M *Marlin*. The museum's aircraft is a Navy SP-5B, BuNo 135533. Delivered to the Navy in 1956, it saw active service with a number of squadrons through 1967. On November 6, 1967 VP-40's QE-10, BuNo 135533, flew the last operational flight of a navy seaplane at NAS North Island. QE-10 was restored by the Navy in 1968 and flown to NAS Patuxent River, MD, where after several years in storage it was barged to NAS Pensacola and placed on display at NMNA in 1976.

BuNo 135533 was brought in for Hurricane Ivan repair in June 2007. The museum's contract with the Navy Department was limited to storm damage repair, corrosion repair, and spot painting as necessary. The Mariner/Marlin Association (MMA) requested the exterior be fully repaired and painted. The additional cost of \$54,000 to complete the exterior restoration was made possible through generous donations by the MMA, VP-45 Association, Lockheed Martin Company and NMNA. The external restoration was completed in October 2007 and serves as a tribute to all who flew, crewed or supported the last of the Navy's fighting flying boats – the Martin P5M *Marlin*.



*PPC LCdr Don McGarrigle (VRF-32) prepares to launch the final flight of a U.S. Navy SP-5B seaplane from NAS North Island on July 8, 1968.*

*The special nose art applied to the bow of VP-40's QE-10 lists the names of the crew aboard the commemorative flight to NAS Patuxent River, where it was received in ceremony on July 12, 1968 by the Smithsonian Institution.*

*BuNo 135533 remained at NAS Pax River until 1975 when it was moved to NMNA for display.*

*- Bruce Barth Photo -*







