

Station PAPA

Station PAPA Ocean Weather Station "P" is commonly called Station PAPA after the code word for the letter P in the phonetic alphabet used by radio operators. Station PAPA is located in the N Pacific Ocean (50° N, 145° W) and has a water depth of 4200 m. Weather ships, stationed there from 1949 through 1981, were intended primarily to support aviation by providing surface and upper air weather observations and navigational assistance as well as potential rescue for downed aircraft. They also provided search-and-rescue services for mariners and were used to collect a wide variety of scientific data for oceanographic and meteorological research and for [WEATHER FORECASTING](#). Several international scientific experiments were conducted near Station PAPA to take advantage of the presence of the weather ships and the large base of existing information from the site.

Initially the ships stationed at OWS "P" were provided by the US Coast Guard. Canadian occupation of the station began in 1950 using converted frigates (CCGS St. Catharines and CCGS Stonetown) operated by the Canadian Coast Guard. These ships were replaced in 1967 by the CCGS Quadra and CCGS Vancouver, built and equipped specially for the task. OWS "P" was continuously occupied; each weather ship spent 6 weeks on station and one travelling to and from its home port of Esquimalt, BC. Required to remain within 100 km of the station position, the ships normally drifted while on station, occasionally steaming upwind to remain within the grid. The ships were withdrawn in 1981 as an economy measure.

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