

First Australian MQ-4C Triton to Arrive in Mid-2024, Official Says



The Australian government's first MQ-4C Triton was unveiled Sept. 15 in Palmdale, California. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*
PALMDALE, Calif. – The Australian government will receive its first MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft at Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Tindal in the Northern Territory in 2024, an official said at an unveiling ceremony here Sept. 15.

Air Vice-Marshal Robert Denney, the RAAF head of Air Force capability, said during the ceremony that when the RAAF receives the aircraft, it will be used for many capabilities beyond its core intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance functions.

“It will revolutionize the ways the Australian Defense Forces

conduct operations with our allies,” he said.

The aircraft was unveiled at manufacturer Northrop Grumman’s high-altitude, long-endurance aircraft production site in Palmdale. Both Australian and U.S. government officials were on hand to talk about the Triton and the ongoing cooperation between Australian and U.S. defense forces.

Australia was a cooperative program partner in the Triton program as it was being developed. As a result, they will be able to share data with the United States that is collected by both countries’ Tritons.

Rear Adm. Stephen Tedford, program executive officer for Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons for the U.S. Navy, said during the ceremony that continued partnership between Australia and the United States will “allow both of our nations to better project military power, maintain our competitive edge, and maintain peace and stability in the region.”

He noted that Australian personnel had been embedded in the Triton program since 2009.

“Since that time, this platform has expanded its capabilities far beyond those it started with,” he said. “I am confident that our dedicated team ... will work tirelessly to deliver this aircraft and many more to come.”

The MQ-4C provides persistent ISR capabilities in a maritime environment, making it useful as a long-endurance surveillance platform in the Asia-Pacific region.

Northrop Grumman started building the first Australian Triton in October 2020 at its facility in Moss Point, Miss. In December 2021, the fuselage and one-piece wing were joined together in Palmdale. Production completion is planned for 2023 ahead of delivery in 2024.

Littoral Combat Ship USS Coronado Decommissioned



Capt. Marc Crawford, center, commodore of Littoral Combat Ship Squadron ONE, gives the order to decommission Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Coronado (LCS 4) during a decommissioning ceremony Sept. 14. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Vance Hand*
SAN DIEGO – Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Coronado (LCS 4) was decommissioned in San Diego, Sept. 14, the Navy said in a release.

As an operational unit, Coronado and its crew played an important role in the defense of the nation and maritime freedom. As a test and training ship, Coronado and its Sailors were key to determine the operational configuration and deployment capabilities of today's LCS platform.

"Today we recognize the great contribution Coronado and its crew made in developing the operational concepts foundational to the current configuration and deployment of littoral combat ships," said Rear Adm. Wayne Baze, the ceremony's guest speaker and commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 3. "Thanks to Coronado, the future of LCS looks bright."

Coronado and its Sailors contributed a tremendous amount of work and time to ensure the future success of the LCS program during the ship's time in naval service. The ship worked alongside allied and partner nations while on a 14-month rotational deployment to the Indo-Pacific in 2017, including inaugural port visits to Cam Ranh, Vietnam and Lamut, Malaysia. While deployed, Coronado supported presence operations and maritime security operations to include the advancement of the LCS manned-unmanned teaming concepts through successful targeting exercises with an embarked MQ-8B Fire Scout. The ship's successful operations demonstrated the relevance of LCS as a platform that provides flexible options and tactical advantages.

"Since April 5th, 2014, Coronado has been the vanguard for proving the capabilities of the LCS platform and establishing the mission sets," said Cmdr. Spike Lamson, Coronado's commanding officer. "The dedication of her crews and supporting teams have guaranteed the future success of this class of ship and the crews that will operate them over-the horizon. I am proud to have served alongside her Sailors, and I am grateful for the opportunity to give Coronado the farewell she deserves."

Built by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama, Coronado was commissioned April 5, 2014, at Naval Air Station North Island. The ship deployed to U.S. 7th Fleet, integrated with a carrier strike group, performed exercises with partner navies and conducted joint maneuvers with other U.S. Navy warships. Upon decommissioning, Coronado will be designated as Out of Commission, In Reserve asset, and its Sailors will receive

follow-on orders to new assignments.

The first USS Coronado (PF 38) served in World War II and was decommissioned in 1945. The second USS Coronado (AGF 11) served in U.S. 2nd, 5th and 6th Fleets and as the flagship for Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet. The second Coronado was decommissioned in 2006 and sunk during Exercise Valiant Shield in 2012.

AeroVironment Introduces Puma VNS, a Visual-Based Navigation System for Small UAS



An illustration of a Puma small UAS equipped with the new Puma VNS, which determines the precise location of an aircraft during flight without relying on GPS. *AEROVIRONMENT*

ARLINGTON, Va. – AeroVironment Inc. on Sept. 15 introduced Puma VNS, a visual-based navigation system for Puma 2 AE and Puma 3 AE small unmanned aircraft systems that will enable GPS-denied navigation across increasingly GPS-contested environments.

The system will provide operators with continually advanced navigation capabilities, features and functionality through anticipated software and hardware updates, the company said in a release. The system will also enable the integration of future autonomy capabilities.

“Puma VNS gives operators an unprecedented advantage in the battlefield,” said Trace Stevenson, AeroVironment vice president and product line general manager for SUAS. “Operators now can execute missions with more confidence in GPS-contested environment with the system’s new navigational capabilities.”

The next-generation navigation system features a suite of down-looking sensors that gather imagery data and track features on the ground, as well as an embedded compute module to process and determine the precise location of an aircraft while it is in flight. Designed with the operator in mind, the system automatically transitions to and from GPS-denied navigation mode without any input from the operator.

Puma VNS is available as an add-on option for new Puma 3 AE system orders and as a retrofit kit for fielded Puma 2 AE and Puma 3 AE systems.

CNO: Navy Needs to Maintain the Lead on Ship Design



An artist's conception of the future USS Constellation (FFG 62). *FINCANTIERI MARINETTE MARINE*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The chief of naval operations praised the trend of the Navy leading the teams developing its ship designs in a recent interview, citing a recent success, and looking forward to more with the next-generation frigate and destroyer designs.

“We’re learning a lot, as we can see with FFG [the FFG 62 Constellation-class frigate program],” said Adm. Michael Gilday, speaking in a Sept. 14 interview with Deputy Editor Bradley Peniston during Defense One’s State of Defense webinar, commenting on the subject of the Navy’s DDG(X) next-generation destroyer program.

“We’re beginning to make progress on that first ship [FFG 62],” Gilday said.

“I think it’s important that the Navy maintain the lead on

design," he said. "So, what we've done with DDG(X) is we've brought in the private shipbuilders so that they can help inform the effort. So, it's a team, but it's Navy-led. So, both of the companies that produce DDGs are involved in that initial design. Our intent is to go into build with a mature design. So, that would mean at more than the 80% complete point when we actually start bending metal.

"We have seen great success of that, with Columbia [-class ballistic-missile submarine] as an example, where we were at more than 80% design that we began that first hull," Gilday said.

"So that's going to be something that we're going to play close attention to, because it actually drives down technical risk," he said. "Technical risk has been a challenge for us, whether it has been Zumwalt [DDG 1000], LCS [littoral combat ship] or Ford [aircraft carrier] in particular. [With] those three builds, we have accepted technical risk, and it has cost us in terms of keeping those ships not only on budget but also on schedule."

The CNO said the design plan for DDG(X) will be to migrate the Arleigh Burke-class DDG combat systems to the larger-hull DDG(X), much as with the successful migration of the combat systems of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser to the Arleigh Burke in the late 1980s. He said the DDG(X) also will have increased space, weight, and power to handle future capability growth over time, possibly to include hypersonic missiles, which require larger launchers than the current Mk41 and MK75 vertical launching systems.

New SMS Promotes Safety Mindset, Focus, Across Navy, Marine Corps

NORFOLK, Va. – The Department of the Navy has released its new Safety Management System (SMS), signaling significant changes toward a safety focus and mindset that embraces critical self-assessment and self-correction from the deckplate on up, Naval Safety Command Safety Promotions-Public Affairs announced Sept. 14.

The Naval Safety Command is tasked with implementing the Navy Safety and Occupational Health Manual, OPNAV-M 5100.23 CH-2, which follows the release of the command's updated mission, functions and tasks (MFT), enhancing its authorities and assessment roles. The SMS applies to every Sailor, Marine and civilian employee and to all activities across the naval enterprise.

"This new SMS marks a fundamental shift in how the Safety Command will guide the Navy's efforts to identify and communicate risk aligning with the CNO's 'Get Real, Get Better' initiative," said Safety Command Commander, Rear Adm. Christopher M. Engdahl. "The SMS takes a systems approach to managing risk and assuring effective risk controls and accountability are in place."

Key takeaways from the new publication expound upon the four desired outcomes for a unified and resilient SMS:

1. Safe Place. Ensure a safe work environment and that emergency protocols and systems are operable and regularly tested.
2. Safe People. Personnel across all levels are trained, qualified and comply with established procedures and are

risk aware and fit to work (general health and well-being).

3. Safe Property/Materiel. People have the right tools, equipment and infrastructure that are safe to operate and operate safely.
4. Safe Processes/Procedures. Current standard operating procedures, emergency and safety procedures and maintenance standards are accessible.

The new SMS is a formal, systems-based approach to managing risk and assuring the effectiveness of risk controls to meet these desired outcomes. The SMS provides a framework for risk resilience focusing on the behaviors of self-awareness, self-assessment, self-correction and continual learning. The new SMS was developed by benchmarking the best practices of high-performing organizations in both government and commercial sectors.

“We must all adopt a learning mindset,” said Engdahl. “A high level of rigor, discipline and transparency are critical. Leaders must share what they learn from not only best practices but also actions contrary to procedures or processes to help others succeed, find the best solution, and adjust plans and processes as needed.

“Our Navy needs everyone to be active in mitigating risks to their operational environment and that of their fellow Sailors and Marines,” he said.

Garmin G3000 Selected to

Modernize Navy and Marine Corps F-5 Aircraft



An F-5N Tiger-II from the “Sun Downers” of Fighter Squadron Composite 111 takes off from Naval Air Station Key West’s Boca Chica Field in 2020. *U.S. NAVY / Danette Baso Silvers*

OLATHE, Kansas – Garmin International Inc. announced Sept. 13 the selection of the Garmin G3000 integrated flight deck by Tactical Air Support Inc. as part of a contract with the U.S. Department of Defense’s F-5N+/F+ Avionics Reconfiguration and Tactical Enhancement/Modernization for Inventory Standardization (ARTEMIS) program.

Tactical Air first selected the Garmin G3000 for their F-5 adversary aircraft training fleet in 2018. This recent award builds upon Tactical Air and Garmin’s strategic relationship now serving the DoD fleet of F-5 adversary aircraft. Garmin’s commercial-off-the-shelf G3000 open architecture supports integration with a wide range of mission equipment including military sensors, helmet mounted displays and advanced electrically scanned radar systems.

"It is an honor to team with Tactical Air and have our versatile G3000 integrated flight deck chosen for the ARTEMIS contract with the Department of Defense," said Carl Wolf, Garmin vice president of aviation sales and marketing. "Garmin is proud to see our integrated flight deck technologies, deployed now on over 25,000 aircraft, also being adopted by the U.S. military and enhancing the mission and safety capabilities of our nation's warfighters."

The F-5 is a supersonic, multi-role tactical fighter and attack aircraft that in this role will provide air-to-air combat training, close-air support training, tactical development and evaluation support. The upgraded F-5 Advanced Tiger will be used in an aggressor training role, and the G3000 will transform the cockpit with one large area display and two touchscreen controllers. These upgrades bring modern safety systems and new tactical capabilities to the older airframes while also solving parts obsolescence and reliability issues within the existing avionics system.

"Tactical Air is thrilled to have Garmin's cutting edge G3000 in the F-5 AT cockpit," said RC Thompson, Tactical Air CEO. "The Garmin integrated flight deck gave us an outstanding COTS solution to the Navy and Marine Corps' recently purchased fleet of F-5 aircraft to make them an even more capable adversary fighter for our aviators to train against."

The G3000 boasts a large and vibrant high-resolution flight display that seamlessly interfaces to the F-5's existing mission computer, enabling advanced mapping, tactical radio capabilities, radar display and more. The non-proprietary interface, software-based human-machine interface and mission integration will enable the DoD to rapidly deploy new technologies in the future, while providing access to the latest in commercial Communication, Navigation, Surveillance/Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) capabilities. Tactical Air has integrated the L3Harris ForceX mission computer along with a wide range of military sensors,

communications equipment, and weapons systems into the G3000 touchscreen HMI.

In addition to night vision goggle compatibility, the G3000 contains modern, state-of-the-art synthetic vision technology that blends an “out-the-window” view of surroundings on the large area, primary flight displays, which is particularly helpful during nighttime operations and during close air support missions. Additional features within the G3000 integrated flight deck on the F-5 include Terrain Awareness and Warning System, Traffic Collision Avoidance System and Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B IN) traffic.

USNS Mercy Team Concludes Pacific Partnership in Solomon Islands



Pacific Partnership 2022 leadership, Solomon Island leaders and members of the international diplomatic corps in the Solomon Islands pose for a photo during the PP22 Solomon Islands closing ceremony aboard Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Woitzel*

SOLOMON ISLANDS – The Solomon Islands-Pacific Partnership 2022 team wrapped up two weeks of collaboration across several lines of effort during a closing ceremony on board USNS Mercy (T-AH 19), on Sept. 10, Leslie Hull-Ryde of Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific, said in a Sept. 14 release.

Now in its 17th year, Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. This year, the hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) serves as the PP22 mission platform.

While this year's mission marked Mercy's inaugural visit to Solomon Islands, Pacific Partnership 2022 returned to the Solomon Islands late August, continuing to build on a

foundation established during the previous four PP missions here.

“It’s great to bring Pacific Partnership back to Solomon Islands and continue to deepen these friendships and partnerships we hold so dear,” said Capt. Hank Kim, Pacific Partnership 2022 mission commander.

Pacific Partnership is a unifying mission that fosters enduring friendship and cooperation among many nations. This year’s mission in the Solomon Islands includes participants from the host nation, the United States, Japan and Australia.

“This collaborative effort amongst our partners and hosts is what this mission is all about,” Kim said. “As we learn from each other and grow as professionals, we enhance our collective ability to respond to any disaster we may face. As the Pacific Partnership moto goes, ‘we are preparing in calm to respond in crisis’.”

PP22 events are coordinated with the host nation and are planned based on the requirements and requests of the Solomon Islands. Engagements in Honiara and beyond included medical care and exchanges, engineering projects, discussions on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and community outreach events, including band concerts and sporting events.

During the mission stop, the PP22 team conducted more than 5,800 medical engagements, including more than 4,500 dental procedures, distributing more than 1,000 eyeglasses, and performing more than 50 surgeries; more than 80 consultations with local pet owners; a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief workshop that included the Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Office and other first responders; 16 band concerts; and four engineering projects. In addition to events in Honiara and Guadalcanal Province, Pacific Partnership activities, to include medical knowledge exchanges, took place

in Gizo and Malaita.

In addition to Solomon Islands, this year's Pacific Partnership mission included stops in Vietnam, Palau, the Philippines and engineering engagements in Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

CNO Visits Aviation Commands, Tailhook Convention



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday meets with Sailors during lunch at Naval Air Station Lemoore. Gilday traveled to Nevada and California, Sept. 8-13, to meet and speak with Sailors and Navy leaders. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication 1st Class Michael B. Zingaro*

LAS VEGAS – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday

traveled to Nevada and California, Sept. 8-13, to visit local commands, meet with Sailors and attend conferences, the CNO's public affairs office said in a release.

Gilday visited Naval Air Station Fallon, Naval Air Station Lemoore, and Reno, Nevada.

He first visited Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center in Fallon, Nevada, for the Aviation and Surface Warfare Commander's Symposium, where he spoke.

"We need to continue to ensure tactical aviation readiness and improved ground forces training can meet the demands of today and the threats of tomorrow," said Gilday. "NAS Fallon and the Fallon Range Training Complex is the nation's premier training environment comprised of airspace and challenging ranges ... it's a true center of warfighting excellence where our air wings are preparing to win high-end conflict."

He then traveled to Reno, Nevada, for Tailhook Association's Hook '22, a three-day event that featured presentations and panels with leaders from across naval aviation. At the symposium, he met with Sailors, attended a winging ceremony for three new aviators and was the guest of honor at the Tailhook Banquet, where he provided remarks.

"The aircraft carrier and its unmatched weapons system, the embarked air wing, represents what is and what will remain the centerpiece of naval combat power," said Gilday. "The carrier has been a versatile platform for more than a century and will continue to be so because we have adapted the air wing to a changing world and its capabilities to a changing threat spectrum."

"The carrier is the world's most lethal and flexible military machine and the most effective tool for sea control and power projection ever created," he added. "The aircraft carrier, naval aviation and our Navy have a great legacy and an even greater future thanks to our people."

The symposium was a chance for junior officers, senior leaders, aircrew, Navy civilians, retirees and industry partners to gather and talk about items of interest to naval aviation, such as the Air Wing of the Future, unmanned capabilities, readiness, maintenance, training and manning.

Following Hook '22, Gilday travelled to NAS Lemoore, California, for F/A-18 and F-35 program updates and to meet with Sailors.

“The men and women here are shaping the future of our force,” said Gilday. “Advanced capabilities help to ensure our Navy will maintain warfighting advantages against increasingly competitive adversaries,” said Gilday.

“Going forward, we will continue investing in the next generation air dominance family of systems, manned and unmanned aircraft, netted sensors and weapons, and in our aircraft carriers,” the CNO said. “The last 100 years of carrier aviation has been impressive and we will continue to adapt and carry on that adaptation and warfighting ethos ... the carrier is here to stay.”

The Navy recently deployed its first Navy F-35C and CMV-22B as part of the USS Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group. Additionally, the first Marine Corps F-35Cs deployed with the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group. The USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) will deploy for the first time later this year.

USS Ronald Reagan Departs

Yokosuka to Resume Patrol



Sailors man the rails aboard the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), as the ship departs Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Sept. 12. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Natasha ChevalierLosada*

YOKOSUKA, Japan – The U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), and its strike group departed Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka Sept. 12 to continue promoting peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, according to the ship's public affairs.

Ronald Reagan's departure marks the end of a scheduled maintenance availability period.

"We're excited to be back at sea, and are grateful for the excellent support from our maintenance teams ashore," said Capt. Fred Goldhammer, Ronald Reagan's commanding officer. "Not only was our completion of scheduled maintenance and in

port training beneficial in ensuring the combat readiness of 'Warship 76,' but this brief period allowed our crew an opportunity to recharge and reconnect with our families and friends."

While departing, hundreds of Reagan Sailors manned the rails in service dress white uniforms as the ship made its way to sea for the second time this year.

During this routine deployment, Ronald Reagan, its strike group ships, the embarked Carrier Air Wing 5, Carrier Strike Group 5 and Destroyer Squadron 15 staffs, will continue working with allies and partners, promote adherence to a rules-based international order, as well as maintain presence and flexibility.

Prior to Reagan's return to Yokosuka, the ship conducted operations in the Philippine Sea.

The Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group includes the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville (CG 62), as well as Arleigh Burke-class destroyers USS Barry (DDG 52) and USS Benfold (DDG 65), assigned to DESRON 15.

The Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group is forward-deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Under Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with 35 maritime nations.

Defense Associations in Letter to Congress Ask That CR Includes Inflation

Arlington, Va. – The National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA), along with the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) and the Professional Services Council (PSC) – a group of defense associations known as the “Tri-association” – sent a letter today to Appropriations Committees’ leadership requesting expedited completion of the fiscal 2023 defense appropriations bill.

The bipartisan letter urged Congress to consider the impacts of inflation when setting the topline for a continuing resolution, or CR. NDIA’s president and CEO, David L. Norquist, said, “if left unaddressed, inflation will significantly weaken our national defense. We look forward to working with Congress to take comprehensive and bipartisan steps to address this challenge.”

“Our letter offers concrete ways to mitigate the impacts of cost growth due to inflation and labor market forces through Congress, the executive branch, and industry working together on solutions,” said David Berteau, president and CEO of the Professional Services Council.

“Inflation is everywhere and impacting us all. We cannot allow it to undermine our national security as well. Everyone needs to be concerned, and policymakers must work to address the impacts immediately,” said Eric Fanning, president and CEO of AIA.

As inflation reached a 40-year-high this year, the typical practice of setting CRs at the previous year’s level would leave the service budgets running at a 9% deficit from the funding level required to maintain the buying power Congress

intended in its 2022 enacted budget, as cited in the letter.

The Tri-association letter requests Congress allow new starts and quantity increases where bipartisan support exists to allow industry and the Department of Defense to meet requirements and respond to threats.

“Given our nation’s security challenges, Congress should be encouraging the Department and industry to move faster to field new technologies, not directing them to pause,” it said.

It further highlights the harm to businesses, especially smaller businesses, of failing to adjust contracts based on inflationary impacts.

The associations view the call as a necessity step to protect our national security, ensuring that those in our military are provided with the equipment for their mission.