

Australia Announces Procurement of Fourth MQ-4C Triton UAV

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va.—The Australian Defence Force (ADF) will procure a fourth MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), the Australian government announced in a Sept. 19 release.

The Triton's builder, Northrop Grumman Corporation, is scheduled to deliver Australia's first Triton and its ground and support systems in 2024. The UAVs will be operated from RAAF Tindal, in the Northern Territories by 9 Squadron, which will be headquartered RAAF Edinburgh, South Australia.

"Defence Industry Minister Patna Conroy said the purchase of the additional Triton will enhance operations from Australia's northern bases, a priority under the Defence Strategic Review," the release said.

Northrop Grumman continues production of the latest configuration of the Triton, the multi-intelligence Integrated Functional Configuration 4 (IFC-4) for the U.S. Navy. Earlier this month, the U.S. Navy declared Initial Operational Capability for the Triton, which has been deployed to Guam to establish its first orbit. The Triton deployed to Guam in 2020 for Early Operational Capability. The Navy's program of record for the Triton calls for 27 aircraft, including the development aircraft.

Australia also plans to upgrade its fleet of 14 P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft between 2026 and 2030 with "enhancements to anti-submarine warfare, maritime strike and intelligence collection capabilities," the release said.