Raytheon’s Next Generation Jammer Mid-Band Ready for Production

An EA-18G Growler from Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 23, located at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, conducts a Next Generation Jammer Mid-Band (NGJ-MB) flight test over Southern Maryland recently. VX-23 supports the overall NGJ-MB Test and Evaluation program that has seen more than 145 hours of flight test. NGJ-MB received Milestone C approval June 28 and support to award low-rate initial production contract. *U.S. NAVY / Steve Wolff*

El Segundo, Calif. – Raytheon Intelligence & Space, a Raytheon Technologies business, has completed Milestone C for the U.S. Navy’s Next Generation Jammer Mid-Band, or NGJ-MB, the company said in a June 29 release.

“We’re well into development testing. It’s time to move towards production,” said Annabel Flores, vice president of Electronic Warfare Systems at Raytheon Intelligence & Space. “We’re ready to give the Navy and our Australian partners a leap forward towards the electromagnetic spectrum superiority they need.”

The recommendation from the Milestone Decision Authority is based on the program’s achievements to date and an assessment of readiness to enter low-rate initial production, or LRIP.

“The Milestone C decision drives home the stability and maturity of NGJ-MB,” said Flores. “The system is ready for validation and LRIP, and we’re gearing up for the delivery of this critical capability to the fleet.”

To date, NGJ-MB has successfully completed over 145 hours of developmental flight-testing using mission systems and aeromechanical pods. NGJ-MB has also completed over 3,100

hours of anechoic chamber and lab testing at Naval Air Stations Patuxent River, Maryland, and Point Mugu, California. Chamber tests evaluated the system's performance both on and off the EA-18G Growler aircraft, in addition to jamming techniques and reliability testing.

NGJ-MB is the Navy's advanced electronic attack system that offensively denies, disrupts and degrades enemy technology, including air-defense systems and communications. NGJ-MB uses the latest digital, software-based and Active Electronically Scanned Array technologies. This allows operators to non-kinetically attack significantly more targets and at greater distances.

EXU-1, Marines, NSWC Indian Head Team Up for Joint Forces

Ships participating in BALTOPS, the Baltic Operation Exercise. *ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY / Sailor First Class Bryan Underwood*

INDIAN HEAD, Md. – When the Navy's Expeditionary Exploitation Unit-1 (EXU-1) teamed up with the U.S. Marine Corps' Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization (LEON) group for the first joint evolution with Marine explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) operators, they received some unexpected help from the Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Division's (NSWC IHD) Energetics Manufacturing (M) Department, the NSWD IHD said in a release.

Due to the inherent mission of EXU-1 and their expertise in expeditionary exploitation, the Marine Corps saw an opportunity to bolster that capability with the innate ordnance disassembly and inerting capability used by Marines

for ordnance exploitation.

“Recognizing these complimentary capabilities, and the need for naval integration to succeed in the power competition, we devised an internal exercise to demonstrate the utility in Marines augmenting EXU-1,” said Master Gunnery Sgt. Jamie Lee, the EOD chief for the Marine Corps Detachment at NSWC IHD. “As this plan developed, additional opportunities with the Energetics Manufacturing Department and LEON were presented, allowing the Navy-Marine Corps EOD team to execute on a larger scale with support from Marine Corps Base Quantico EOD.”

This ultimately led to continued integration and successful capability development at the recent Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) exercise: the annual maritime-focused U.S. European Command and U.S. Naval Forces Europe exercise in the Baltic region.

“Navy and Marine EOD units possess the core EOD capabilities necessary to support [Department of Defense] and service level mission essential tasks. We differ slightly in the service specific niche EOD capability development,” said Lee. “In this case, Marine EOD is unique amongst the services in their ordnance disassembly and inerting skillsets, to include the depth of information and reporting generated in a tactical/expeditionary environment. Augmenting the technical exploitation capability of EXU-1 with Marine Corps ordnance exploitation skillsets provides the ability for on-site ordnance exploitation and analysis for near real-time information to support the intelligence cycle.”

According to Greg Johnson, EXU-1’s foreign materiel director, what started out as a joint exercise between the LEON platoon and EXU-1 became an opportunity to gather unused ordnance to use as training aids thanks to the input and hard work from the department’s employees.

“We had a requirement we were working on which generated a

relationship between the U.S. Marine Detachment (MARDET) and EXU-1 so we were looking to push our combined capabilities out to the field for the operators to integrate," he said. "We were meeting with M Department personnel on a separate issue when the subject came up about them having excess ordnance they were planning on disposing."

This joint initiative was the first time this was done to such a large scale, in a compact timeline to support multiple Navy and Marine Corps exercises. A large quantity of excess ordnance items including landmines, anti-tank and anti-personnel munitions, and shallow water mines were made inert by the MARDET operators for use as training aids and various exercises at Camp Pendleton, California. This evolution between the three groups occurred in approximately two months, resulting in quicker deployment of these training aids to the joint force EOD operator and at a significant cost savings as new material purchases were not required.

M Department personnel "were instrumental with logistics such as transportation of the ordnance to Quantico, inspection of the equipment and handling the paperwork," said Johnson. "There was no work plan. They just jumped on board and fully supported us the entire time. They came in early, they stayed late, they did everything they could to help us accomplish the mission."

According to Christopher Bruce, a supervisory technician with the department's Explosives and Energetics Division, what originally happened as circumstance turned into an opportunity to provide the joint service warfighter with much-needed training aids quicker than anyone expected.

"A few meetings occurred and we discussed EXU-1's needs and wants," he said. "From there we began coordination with them directly to provide information into items they felt would help support their needs in training and exploitation."

After several planning meetings, the department's Explosives and Energetics Division and Magazine Logistical Support gathered the requested items and began inspections at the command's Explosive Production Facilities to allow the ordnance to be safely shipped from NSWC IHD to various training sites. Once the inspections were complete, both divisions and EXU-1 collaborated to load multiple vehicles in just a few days to be transported off station to training sites.

"Our hope is that this collaboration is one of many. We want to continue to provide real-world items to the warfighter for training to help develop knowledge and understanding," said Bruce. "I personally am extremely grateful for all the time and dedication from all members involved. So many hours of sacrifice for an urgent need and it all accumulated with a great outcome."

MARTAC Selects Blue Sky Network's SkyLink for Its USVs

MARTAC will equip its unmanned surface vehicles with Blue Sky Network's SkyLink system. *BLUE SKY NETWORK*

SAN DIEGO – Blue Sky Network has been selected by MARTAC, an innovative provider of unmanned surface vehicles (USVs), to equip their USVs with Blue Sky Network's device and data management solution, SkyLink, Blue Sky announced in a release.

SkyLink by Blue Sky Network leverages the Iridium Certus

network as well as local GSM/LTE services for continuous, end-to-end sensor reporting, two-way messaging, asset utilization, and IoT/M2M monitoring. The device is small-form and low space, weight and power (SWAP) for use in any location or environment, with demonstrated versatility in both manned and unmanned maritime applications.

“To work with MARTAC is a great honor,” said Tucker Morrison, CEO of Blue Sky Network. “Autonomous missions are becoming more prevalent, and it’s the powerful, cutting-edge solutions like MARTAC’s USVs that inspired us to develop SkyLink.”

“We look forward to partnering with MARTAC to provide real-time command and control datalink for autonomous and remotely-piloted operations via our SkyLink solution,” said Jason Hicks, vice president of business development at Blue Sky Network. “SkyLink is a lightweight, durable, and low-latency solution that enables Iridium Global Line of Sight for beyond-visual-line-of-sight performance, supporting the vast needs of MARTAC’s Devil Ray and MANTAS USVs.”

“We are very excited to be working with Blue Sky Network’s leading edge, low SWAP, multi-carrier network for our USVs. Our Devil Ray and MANTAS vessels operate beyond human capability and therefore reliable, robust, low-latency communications anywhere in the world is critical,” said Tom Hanson, COO of MARTAC.

First Canadian Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessel

Commissioned

The Royal Canadian Navy officially welcomed into service the first Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ship, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Harry DeWolf, with the time honored tradition of a Commissioning Ceremony, on 26 June 2021 at Her Majesty's Canadian Dockyard Halifax NJ Jetty. Three cheers by the ship's company. *MARLANT Public Affairs / Mona Ghiz*
HALIFAX, Nova Scotia – Premier Iain Rankin, also minister responsible for military relations, participated in the June 26 commissioning of Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Harry DeWolf, the Royal Canadian Navy's lead ship in its class of Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessels, the premier's office said.

The Harry DeWolf is the first ship completed as part of the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy and was built at Irving Shipbuilding's Halifax Shipyard. The ship is named after Vice Adm. Harry DeWolf, a former head of the Royal Canadian Navy from Bedford. This is the first time a class of ships will be named after a prominent Canadian navy figure in the RCN's 108-year history.

the Harry DeWolf will help to assert Canadian sovereignty in Arctic and coastal Canadian waters in addition to supporting international operations as required. It will deploy for its first mission in August.

"Nova Scotia has long been known for its expertise in shipbuilding, and now we have the first commissioned vessel ready for deployment," said Rankin. "The economic value of these ship contracts is vital to Nova Scotia, providing millions of dollars in direct and indirect impact. Over 1,100 Nova Scotians were directly employed in the construction of HMCS Harry DeWolf at the Halifax Shipyard, and the construction of the remaining ships will provide opportunities for thousands more. Since 2015, 2,100 employees were hired in Halifax alone, with more jobs to come."

In support of the multi-billion-dollar shipbuilding contract awarded to Irving Shipbuilding, the government of Nova Scotia launched programs to help Nova Scotian workers and companies take part in shipbuilding opportunities, including partnering to provide the Pathways to Shipbuilding program.

Pathways to Shipbuilding provides equitable access to opportunities, programs and training for Nova Scotians who are historically underrepresented in the shipbuilding trades. Through the program, women, African Nova Scotians and indigenous people are able to gain skills allowing them to take part in shipbuilding opportunities. More than 65 apprentices from underrepresented groups have completed the pathways program.

“Many Nova Scotian families have long histories serving our country on land, sea and in the sky,” said Rankin. “I want to congratulate them today, along with all our expert shipbuilders on the momentous commissioning of the Harry DeWolf into the service of the Royal Canadian Navy. It’s a proud day for Nova Scotia and for our country.”

“Irving Shipbuilding and its many partners take great pride in seeing HMCS Harry DeWolf officially join the Canadian Navy,” said Kevin Mooney, president of Irving Shipbuilding. “Today’s commissioning is proof that Canada’s bold initiative to revive its shipbuilding industry is working. As the lead vessel of the Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ship [AOPS], our Navy has taken Harry through many demanding trials since delivery last July and achieved one success after another. Irving’s new generation of talented shipbuilders is ready to meet the challenges that lie ahead, with the remainder of the Navy AOPS ships on track, the Coast Guard AOPS variant completing the design phase, and design and build plans well underway on the new Canadian Surface Combatant.”

The Pathways program is funded through federal and provincial governments and with support from the Nova Scotia

Apprenticeship Agency, Nova Scotia Community College, Irving Shipbuilding, Unifor and many community partners such as Women Unlimited, the East Preston Empowerment Academy and Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.

"I was looking for a new career path with opportunity for growth. I'd worked in male-dominated professions all my adult life," said Antonia Wareham, graduate of the first Pathways to Shipbuilding Program in 2015, and currently a journeyman welder and mentor at the Halifax Shipyard. "I knew I could do anything I put my mind to. It's an unexplainable feeling to know that you've worked on something that may very well outlive you. I'm incredibly proud."

Peraton to Deliver Next-Gen Capabilities to U.S. Navy Unmanned Maritime Systems

Explosive ordnance disposal technicians assigned to EOD Mobile Unit 2 expeditionary mine countermeasures company 2-2 prepare to launch an unmanned undersea vehicle to search for a potential target during an ExMCM certification exercise in April. *U.S. NAVY / Chief Mass Communication Specialist Jeff Atherton*

HERNDON, Va. – Peraton has been awarded a position on the Unmanned Maritime Systems Support II (UMSS II) indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contract to provide hardware and software development, as well as in-service operational support, for the U.S. Navy's unmanned maritime systems, the company said in a June 29 release.

The IDIQ covers work across both unmanned surface and subsurface systems engaged in waterborne and underwater mine countermeasures missions on behalf of Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal. The IDIQ is worth up to $250 million over an eight-year period.

Peraton will compete for task orders covering a broad range of requirements, including specification and design, fabrication, installation, testing and evaluation, fielding, maintenance, training, and configuration and program management for the Navy's unmanned maritime systems.

Peraton has supported the Navy's unmanned activities since 2001. Over the span of the first UMSS IDIQ, Peraton has received 20 task orders, providing technical and operational support to Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific for unmanned underwater vehicles, marine mammal systems and CONUS and OCONUS fleet units.

"We are honored to continue our decades-long partnership supporting the Navy's mine countermeasure mission," said Jeff Bohling, president of the company's Defense Solutions sector. "We are committed to delivering next-generation capabilities to the warfighter."

"Our experience fielding unmanned technology and our familiarity with the evolving needs of the fleet operator enables Peraton to provide sailors operating around the world with the critical tools they need for successful mission outcomes," said Matt Clements, UUV program manager. "We are excited to build upon our trusted relationship with the Navy and continue supporting the nation's national security mission at sea."

Vanilla UAS Demonstrated in Unmanned System Battle Problem

A Vanilla ultra endurance land-launched unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) undergoes operational pre-flight checks during U.S. Pacific Fleet's Unmanned Integrated Battle Problem (UxS IBP) 21 at Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu. *U.S. NAVY / Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Michael Schutt*

POINT MUGU, Calif. – Vanilla Unmanned successfully demonstrated multi-day maritime domain awareness (MDA) operations during the Pacific Fleet's (PACFLT) inaugural Unmanned Integrated Battle Problem (UxS IBP) in April, the company said in a release.

Vanilla's 45-hour, 23-minute unrefueled flight took off from Naval Air Station (NAS) Point Mugu and performed maritime domain awareness (MDA) tasking in coordination with manned PACFLT units. The beyond-line-of-sight flight provided high-definition electro-optical video over satellite communications at ranges greater than 200 nautical miles from Vanilla's ground control station.

The multi-mission Vanilla took off partially fueled and returned to base on schedule with fuel reserves sufficient for nearly doubling the length of this MDA sortie.

The UxS IBP event also showcased Vanilla's proprietary truck-mounted launch and recovery system, a key enabler for runway-independent operations that has been proven in repeated off-road launches and recoveries.

"This flight showed Vanilla can provide a tactical capability without necessarily needing to be launched from the front line. It's a concept of operations unique to Vanilla's

endurance and propulsion," said Dan Edwards, Platform Aerospace chief technology officer. In addition to the heavy lift multi-mission variant that flew in UxS IBP, a vertical-takeoff-and-landing variant is in advanced development and will begin flights in early 2022.

Prior to the flight, Vanilla was showcased at the UxS IBP Distinguished Visitors event for senior Navy leadership, including Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas W. Harker, Commander of U.S. 3rd Fleet Vice Admiral Scott D. Conn, and Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. Lorin Selby. The overall event demonstrated how Vanilla could integrate into the Navy's Unmanned Campaign Framework, providing a variety of C5ISR capabilities in coordination with both manned and unmanned units.

Vanilla's participation in UxS IBP was supported by PACFLT and the Office of Naval Research (ONR), as well as NAS Point Mugu and the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.

Austal USA Delivers Future LCS USS Savannah to U.S. Navy

The future USS Savannah (LCS 28). *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA delivered the future USS Savannah, the 14th Independence-variant littoral combat ship (LCS), to the U.S. Navy June 25, the company said in a June 28 release. Savannah (LCS 28) is the seventh ship Austal has delivered to the Navy in less than two years, highlighting Austal's unique capability in the serial production of ships for the U.S. Navy.

“Delivering yet another quality ship on time and on budget demonstrates the important role Austal USA plays in the shipbuilding industrial base and value of Austal USA’s highly skilled workforce. Delivering two major ship programs on schedule and on budget is something our team is incredibly proud of, ”Austal USA Interim President Rusty Murdaugh said. “It has been especially rewarding to hear the very positive feedback from the Navy commanders and Sailors on how well these ships are performing operationally, especially in the in the South China Sea where they are conducting routine patrols.”

Austal’s production efficiency continues to soar. Already a leader in on-time and on-budget delivery, the company has reduced overall time of construction from ship to ship. LCS 28 was completed in just under three years, a full 12-month improvement over earlier ships in the program.

Five LCS and two expeditionary fast transports are currently under construction at Austal’s Alabama shipyard. Two additional ships, LCS 38 and EPF 15, are under contract and will soon be under construction. Austal USA was recently awarded a design contract for the U.S. Navy’s light amphibious warship that would be manufactured on Austal USA’s new steel construction serial production line.

LCS is a fast, agile, focused-mission platform designed for operation in near-shore environments yet capable of open-ocean operation. It is designed to defeat asymmetric “anti-access” threats such as mines, quiet diesel submarines and fast surface craft. The Independence-variant LCS integrates new technology and capability to support current and future mission capability from deep water to the littorals.

Crowley Maritime, University of North Florida to Establish Crowley Center for Transportation and Logistics

University of North Florida President David Szymanski, left, and Crowley Maritime Corp. President and CEO Thomas B. Crowley Jr. announce the endowment. *CROWLEY MARITIME CORP.*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Crowley Maritime Corporation and the University of North Florida (UNF) announced June 25 that Crowley has donated $2.5 million as an endowment gift for the creation and operation of a new center of excellence named the Crowley Center for Transportation and Logistics (CCTL).

The center will reside in UNF's Coggin College of Business and utilize interdisciplinary faculty expertise from across the University.

Headquartered in Jacksonville, where UNF is located, Crowley is a global leader in logistics, marine and energy solutions for the commercial and government sectors. As one of the U.S. maritime industry's leading employers with nearly 130 years of experience and innovation development, the company has recently advanced into new energy supply chain solutions such as offshore wind, as well as digital innovation at its locations across America, the Caribbean, Central America and beyond.

Crowley and the company's charitable work have historically supported logistics careers in its industry. The company's $2.5 million donation to UNF establishes a landmark commitment to the growth and development of skilled, talented students to be innovative leaders in transportation and logistics and faculty researchers leading data analytics through the

establishment of the center.

“This donation represents a strategic investment in our industry’s future – the talent and knowledge our leaders of tomorrow and the research needed to propel our industry forward successfully,” said Tom Crowley, the company’s chairman and CEO. “We are humbled to be able to play a role in supporting the advancement of researchers, students and their careers in transportation and logistics. The University of North Florida, a dynamic leader in education in one of the global hubs of logistics services, is the rightful home to our new center.”

The center is designed to be a world-leader in transportation and logistics research, education and industry engagement. The endowment will help fund the CCTL operations and leadership, faculty support, visiting scholars, pertinent industry research, pursuit of federally funded grants and contracts, student recruitment in the areas of transportation, logistics and data analytics, and course development.

“UNF is extremely appreciative of this generous gift by Crowley to establish a distinguished center of transportation and logistics research and education that will foster a collaborative environment of continued logistical growth, development and innovation,” said UNF President David Szymanski. “Our partnership and alliance with Crowley will allow UNF’s Coggin College of Business and the Crowley Center for Transportation and Logistics to be at the forefront of cutting-edge education and research and help prepare our students with skills for the workforce.”

UNF’s Coggin College of Business’ transportation and logistics program is considered among the best in the nation due to an active and supportive regional professional community and a high-tech Logistics Information Technology Solutions Lab for students to learn about state-of-the-art supply chain tools and solutions.

Jacksonville is often lauded as “America’s Logistics Center” and has many geographic advantages as an international transportation hub. Crowley’s shipping and logistics services serving Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and Central America have operated in the city for decades, providing containerized, oversized, refrigerated and recently, liquefied natural gas (LNG) supply chain services.

The combination provides a wealth of opportunities for UNF transportation and logistics graduates.

“Crowley Maritime’s gift to establish this center is not only important for the Coggin College and UNF but is a major investment in Jacksonville,” said Richard Buttimer, dean of UNF’s Coggin College of Business. “This center will train future generations of transportation, logistics and supply chain leaders, and will ensure that Jacksonville and Northeast Florida has a world-class pool of talent and leadership for this vital industry.”

Intrepid Tiger II EW Pod Takes First Flight on MV-22B Osprey

The MV-22B Osprey flies for the first time June 15 with the latest Intrepid Tiger II (V)4 (IT II) Electronic Warfare payload. This marked the start of developmental flight testing for IT II (V)4 and the first time the payload is mounted internally on an aircraft. *U.S. NAVY*

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Marine Corps’ newest Intrepid Tiger II (IT II) Electronic Warfare (EW)

capability flew for the first time on an MV-22B Osprey June 15, the Naval Air Systems Command said in a June 24 release.

“The significance of this developmental test flight was two-fold,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Michael Orr, Airborne Electronic Attack (AEA) Systems (PMA-234) program manager. “Not only was this the first time we’ve integrated the Intrepid Tiger II capability onto an Osprey but also the first time the capability has been incorporated internal to a platform.”

PMA-234 Marine Air-Ground Task Force EW Team Lead Bill Mellen said the typical, externally mounted pod was not an option because the MV-22 tilt rotor aircraft does not have traditional wing stations from which to mount podded payloads. The AN/ALQ-231(V)4 IT II system’s upgraded design consists of a roll-on/roll-off rack-mounted payload, controlled from a laptop in the aircraft cabin.

The IT II is a precision, on-demand, EW weapon system designed to provide Marine Corps fixed and rotary wing aircraft with an organic, distributed, and networked EW payload that can be controlled from the cockpit or by a ground operator.

The (V)4 system design will include state-of-the art upgrades, utilizing government and commercial-off-the-shelf technologies and jammer techniques that will allow the Marine Corps to keep pace with the ever-evolving threats on the battlefield, and provide the needed adaptability to allow for future iterations of expanded frequency coverage and advanced capabilities, said Mellen.

“As the 21st Century Battlespace becomes more complex and more contested, military assets must support themselves across the entire spectrum of threats,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Brian Taylor, V-22 Joint Program Office program manager. “The fielding of this upgrade provides a significant and incremental improvement in the V-22’s organic electronic

warfare capability, providing commanders more options to support our Marine Corps ground forces. This improves both operational safety to our aircrews and operational success to the commander, our ultimate goals in everything we do."

Following successful integration on the MV-22B, the IT II team will further expand the V4 design to include a counter-radar capability on the KC-130J aircraft, hoping to leverage much of the MV-22B technology, including the in-cabin rack-mounted payload design, Mellen said.

The IT II (V)4 is scheduled to begin fleet deliveries for the MV-22B in fiscal 2023 to achieve initial operating capability by the end of fiscal 2024 with an inventory objective of 42 total systems.

The IT II (V)1 is flown on the AV-8B Harrier, F/A-18 A++/C/D Hornets, and KC-130J aircraft, while the IT II (V)3 is flown on the UH-1Y Huey helicopter.

Navy Orders 9 CH-53K Helicopters for Marine Corps

The CH-53K King Stallion executing night vision goggle helicopter aerial refueling. *U.S. NAVY / Dane Wiedmann*

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – A contract to build nine CH-53K King Stallion helicopters with an additional contract option for nine more aircraft was awarded to Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company, on June 25, Naval Air Systems Command said in a release.

The low-rate initial production (LRIP) fiscal 2021 Lot 5

contract will deliver nine aircraft in 2024 as part of a 200-aircraft program of record for the U.S. Marine Corps. The Lot 5 contract contains an option for Lot 6, for an additional nine aircraft with a contract award in FY22.

“This contract award is a testament to the hard work and dedication from the team to execute this critical program in support of the U.S. Marine Corps’ heavy lift requirement,” said Col. Jack Perrin, heavy lift helicopter program manager.

The Lot 5 contract is for $878.7 million, bringing the Sikorsky element of the aircraft cost of those nine aircraft to $97.6 million each. The Lot 6 aircraft cost reduces to $94.7 million each, for a Lot 6 total contract cost of $852.5 million. These costs do not include engine and other government furnished equipment.

The fiscal 2021 Lot 5 and 2022 Lot 6 contracts represent an average unit airframe cost reduction of $7.4 million from fiscal 2020 Lot 4 to FY22 Lot 6.

The program will start initial operational test and evaluation (IOT&E) in July 2021 and is poised to support the Marine Corps’ declaration of initial operational capability. In preparation for commencement of IOT&E, three System Demonstration Test Article aircraft are currently being operated by the Marine Corps’ Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron One, VMX-1, at Marine Corps Air Station New River, North Carolina.

“As the long-range logistic support backbone for the U.S. Marine Corps, it is essential that we get this critical capability to the fleet as quickly and as affordably as possible,” said Perrin.

The Lot 5 award brings the program total aircraft, either delivered or on contract, to 33.