Bell 407GXI Helicopter Earns IFR Certification

FORT WORTH, Texas – Bell Textron Inc. announced that the Federal Aviation Administration has issued an instrument flight rules supplemental type certificate for the Bell 407GXi helicopter. The certification is a requirement for the U.S. Navy Advanced Helicopter Training System competition, enabling the Bell 407GXi to replace the Bell TH-57 Sea Ranger as the Navy's training helicopter.

Should the Bell 407GXi be selected for the Navy's helicopter trainer program, the company plans to conduct final assembly of the aircraft in Ozark, Alabama.

"The team did a great job ensuring the Bell 407GXi achieved the FAA's IFR certification necessary to meet all of the Navy's requirements," said Mitch Snyder, president and CEO of Bell Textron. "Bell is an instrumental part of the Navy's training program and has been for more than 50 years, and we look forward to continuing the tradition for the next generation of naval aviators."

A Bell to Bell transition offers low risk to the Navy by streamlining instructor pilot and maintainer transition training as well as using common

support equipment and infrastructure. The 407 airframe has proven capabilities
as the platform for the MQ-8C Fire Scout for the Navy.

Bell supports more than 1,600 Bell 407s globally. These aircraft have
nearly 6 million flight hours across the fleet and are actively performing
flight training as well as military and para-public missions helicopter
mission-set.

The
407GXi's Garmin G1000H NXi Flight Deck enhances situational awareness and
reduces pilot workload by delivering easy-to-read information at a glance. The
Bell 407GXi's new IFR capability will allow all-weather operations while
continuing to provide multimission capability safely, reliably and effectively.

Navy Issues Draft Request to Industry for Large USV

The medium unmanned surface vehicle prototype Sea Hunter moored at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. The Navy has issued a draft RFP for a large unmanned surface vehicle, another of the vessels planned for its future surface fleet. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Nathan Laird
ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has issued a draft Request for Proposals for its planned Large Unmanned Surface Vessel

(LUSV), one of the vessels planned for its future surface fleet.

“The LUSV will be a high-endurance, reconfigurable ship able to accommodate various payloads for unmanned missions to augment the Navy’s manned surface force, the Aug. 9 announcement on the FedBizOps website said.

“With a large payload capacity, the LUSV will be designed to conduct a variety of warfare operations independently or in conjunction with manned surface combatants. The LUSV will be capable of semi-autonomous or fully autonomous operation, with operators in-the-loop (controlling remotely) or on-the-loop (enabled through autonomy).”

Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) intends to award multiple contracts for conceptual designs from the defense industry. A final RFP is to be issued in the fourth quarter fiscal 2019.

On July 16, the Navy issued an RFP for the Medium Unmanned Surface Vehicle (MUSV), another vessel planned to be part of its future fleet concept. That RFP calls for “a pier-launched, self-deploying modular, open architecture, surface vessel capable of autonomous safe navigation and mission execution.”

The Navy is expected to field the LUSV and MUSV as adjuncts to its future surface fleet that will include the future surface combatant and the new FFG(X) guided-missile frigate as well as Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers and the Independence- and Freedom-class littoral combat ships.

Coast Guard, Partner Agencies Recover 1,300 Pounds of Marijuana Near Catalina Island

About 1,300 pounds of marijuana is shown at Coast Guard Station Los Angeles-Long Beach, which was seized by the station's crew near Catalina Island. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard and partner agencies responded to a report of multiple bales of narcotics in the water near Santa Catalina Island on Aug. 13, the Coast Guard 11th District said in a release.

A concerned citizen notified Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach watchstanders, reporting multiple bales of what the caller believed to be narcotics floating near Santa Catalina Island.

A Coast Guard Station Los Angeles-Long Beach 45-foot response boat-medium crew and a Baywatch Isthmus boat crew responded to investigate.

Coast Guard and Baywatch crews recovered 43 bales from the water. The bales were transferred to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, who

confirmed the bales consisted of marijuana weighing about 1,300 pounds with an estimated street value of $1 million.

“We appreciate the assistance provided by our partners and vigilant mariners in keeping these drugs off of our streets,” said Lt. Andrew L. Fox, the Station Los Angeles-Long Beach commanding officer. “We encourage anyone who sees suspicious activity on the water, signs of distress, or hazards to navigation to contact Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles Long Beach personnel on VHF channel 16 or at (310) 521-3801.”

The origin of the bales is unknown. The case remains under investigation by agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations and the Coast Guard Investigative Service.

Response to the report was coordinated through an interagency structure known as a regional coordinating mechanism (ReCoM). Located in San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco, the ReCoM partnerships include the Coast Guard, CBP’s Office of Air and Marine Operations and Office of Field Operations, U.S. Border Patrol and ICE’s Homeland Security Investigations, in cooperation with state and local law enforcement partners operating along the California coast.

Coast Guard Interdicts 146 Haitian Migrants

Haitian migrants sit on the deck of the Coast Guard Cutter William Trump after being interdicted at sea on Aug. 11 north of Isla De Tortue, Haiti. U.S. Coast Guard

MIAMI –

The Coast Guard interdicted 146 Haitian migrants Aug. 11 about 69 miles north of Isla De Tortue, Haiti, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter William Trump (WPC-1111) interdicted a 40-foot migrant sail freighter with 146 migrants aboard. The cutter crew safely embarked 120 males, 22 females and four minors.

"These illegal ventures attempting to immigrate to the United States in ill-equipped and severely overloaded vessels are extremely dangerous, especially during the hurricane season, when weather and sea conditions can rapidly change in minutes, putting migrants in danger of being lost at sea," said Capt. Jason Ryan, chief of the enforcement branch of the Coast Guard 7th District.

"The Coast Guard and our partner agencies coordinate efforts to interdict and stop these

unlawful migration attempts into the United States. Migrants caught attempting
to gain access into the U.S. through these dangerously illegal undertakings at sea
will be repatriated to their country in accordance with existing U.S.
immigration policy.”

The William Trump crew met the Coast Guard Cutter Resolute (WMEC-620) and safely transferred the migrants to the Resolute’s crew, who repatriated the migrants to their country of origin on Aug. 13.

A total of 3,414 Haitian migrants have tried to illegally enter the United States by sea in fiscal year 2019, compared to 2,727 in fiscal 2018. These numbers represent the total number of at-sea interdictions, landings and disruptions in the Florida Straits, the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean.

Advanced Arresting Gear on USS Gerald R. Ford Ready for Propellers and Jets

An F/A-18F Super Hornet performs an arrested landing aboard USS Gerald R. Ford. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Elizabeth Thompson
PATUXENT
RIVER, Md. — The U.S. Navy’s newest aircraft carrier Advanced Arresting Gear
(AAG) system received the green light to recover all props and jets, according

to an Aircraft Recovery Bulletin (ARB), the Program Executive Office (Tactical Aircraft Programs) public affairs office said Aug. 13.

The ARBs enable propeller aircraft – C-2A Greyhounds, E-2C Hawkeyes and E-2D Advanced Hawkeyes – and jet aircraft – F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and E/A-18G Growlers – to perform flight operations aboard the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford.

"The entire team did a tremendous job accelerating the schedule and working through challenges," said Capt. Ken Sterbenz, program manager for the Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment program office (PMA-251). "This achievement is another significant step toward ensuring the system can support the ship's full air wing."

ARBs are official Navy instructional documents identifying the weights and engaging speeds authorized for shipboard arrestments of specific aircraft.

"Release of the ARBs signifies Naval Air Systems Command's 'stamp of approval' for the AAG system to safely recover these type/model/series aircraft aboard the Navy's newest class of aircraft carriers," said Jeff Mclean, deputy program manager for AAG system design and development.

The team, in collaboration with prime contractor General Atomics, continues to perform requisite system development and demonstration testing at land-based test sites located at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. Comprehensive testing of new systems like AAG is critical because it ensures the technology meets Navy requirements and that it is safe for use in the fleet, Mclean added. The team conducted more than 2,500 dead-load arrestments at the Jet Car Track Site and 1,420 manned aircraft arrestments at the Runway Arrested Landing Site.

“The pace of system testing was consistently demanding and required numerous team members to perform their duties in difficult conditions and in all types of weather in order to meet critical program milestones leading up to these ARB releases,” Mclean said. USS Gerald R. Ford is the lead ship in the Ford-class of aircraft carrier, the Navy’s first new class of aircraft carriers in more than 40 years.

The AAG system is designed to arrest a range of aircraft, reduce fatigue to the aircraft and provide higher safety margins while reducing manpower and maintenance. AAG is one of more than 20 new systems incorporated into the design of the Ford class.

Top Pentagon Future Technologies Official Pushes Offensive Hypersonic Weapons Capability

Michael Griffin, the undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, speaks to a Hudson Institute forum on Aug. 13. Hudson Institute via YouTube

The Defense Department is developing a space-based sensor system and an associated communication network to defend the nation against hypersonic weapons. But the military's top future technologies official also wants to field an offensive capability.

Although the United States led the world in developing significant parts of hypersonic technology, "we choose not to weaponize it," Michael Griffin, the undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, said Aug. 13.

But "our adversaries are developing hypersonic weapons." In response, "I came into office wanting DoD to make a big deal of that. I want to be the offense. I want to hold others hostage. … Hypersonic technology is the key to that."

In addition to the research being conducted by defense agencies, the U.S. Navy, Army and Air Force all have programs to produce hypersonic missiles, with some test flights expected within a year.

Griffin said the danger from hypersonic weapons is that they "overfly our air defense and underfly missile defense. They're a new class of threat we have to deal with," he told a Hudson Institute forum. And that requires sensors in space that can detect and track hypersonic missiles, which can fly more than five times the speed of sound and, unlike ballistic missiles, can maneuver.

Because they fly so low and so fast, "by the time we see them, it's too late in the kill chain" to intercept them. "We have to see them farther out. Radar detection ranges are "about as good as they're going to get," he said. "If this were exclusively a land conflict, the solution would be to forward-deploy radars." But intelligence suggests a future war would be "a maritime conflict," Griffin said.

Because there are "not a lot of islands out there" to put radars on, "we have to move to space. You can see a lot from space." Hypersonic weapons also present a dimmer target than ballistic missiles so the space-based sensors need to be in a lower orbit than those looking for ballistic missiles, he explained.

"The sensor layer is critical. But if it can't talk among itself, it won't be efficient. The network underlays everything we need to do, in space, land and maritime. That's what we don't have today," Griffin said.

Developing that network is one of the main jobs of the Space

Development Agency (SDA), which then-acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan created in March, Griffin said. SDA was placed under Griffin, but if Congress agrees to create a Space Force, as President Donald Trump proposed, and Griffin supports, SDA would move into the Space Force, he said.

Asked about the ground-based midcourse missile defense system, which includes the 44 interceptors in California and Alaska, Griffin said he has “a great deal of confidence” in that system, even though the Missile Defense Agency stopped its program to develop a new kill vehicle for the interceptors because preliminary tests indicated it would not be successful. Now the MDA and his office are looking for alternatives, Griffin said.

Under official U.S. policy, the current missile defense system is not designed to counter an attack from Russia or China, which have more ballistic missiles than it could handle. Building a system to defend against Russia and China would be a budgetary issue, not a technology challenge, Griffin said.

“We know how to do it,” he said.

Marine JLTV Achieves Initial Operational Capability

A JLTV is displayed at School of Infantry West (SOI-W) on Feb. 28. U.S. Marine Corps/Cpl. Juan Bustos

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – The Marine Corps' Joint Light Tactical Vehicle is officially ready to deploy and support missions of the naval expeditionary force-in-readiness worldwide, the Marine Corps announced.

Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Combat Development and Integration declared that the JLTV program – part of the Light Tactical Vehicle portfolio at Program Executive Officer Land Systems – reached initial operational capability (IOC) on Aug. 2, nearly a year ahead of schedule.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipxyGBgmLLU

"Congratulations to the combined JLTV team for acting with a sense of urgency and reaching IOC early," said James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition.

"Changing the speed in which we deliver, combined with coming in under cost and meeting all performance requirements, is a fine example of increasing Marine Corps capabilities at the speed of relevance, which enables our Marines to compete

and win on the modern battlefield.”

The JLTV, a program led by the U.S. Army, will replace the Corps’ aging high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle fleet. The JLTV family of vehicles comes in different variants with multiple mission package configurations, all providing protected, sustained, networked mobility that balances payload, performance and protection across the full range of military operations.

“The warfighting capabilities the JLTV provides our Marines far exceed the capabilities offered by its predecessor,” said PEO Land Systems’ John Garner. “I’m proud of what our team, in collaboration with the Army, has accomplished. Their commitment to supporting the warfighter delivered an exceptional vehicle, ahead of schedule, that Marines will use to dominate on the battlefield now and well into the future.”

Several elements need to be met before a program can declare IOC of a system, which encompasses more than delivery of the system itself. The program office also had to ensure all the operators were fully trained and maintenance tools and spare parts packages were ready.

“IOC is more than just saying that the schoolhouses and an infantry battalion all have

their trucks," said Eugene Morin, product manager for JLTV at PEO Land Systems.
"All of the tools and parts required to support the system need to be in place,
the units must have had received sufficient training and each unit commander
needs to declare that he is combat-ready."

For the
JLTV, this means the program office had to fully field battle-ready vehicles to
the Marine Corps schoolhouses – School of Infantry East at Camp Lejeune, North
Carolina; School of Infantry West at Camp Pendleton, California; The Basic
School at Quantico, Virginia; and the Motor Transport Maintenance Instruction
Course at Camp Johnson, North Carolina – and to an infantry battalion at II
Marine Expeditionary Force. The program office started delivering vehicles to
the schoolhouses earlier this year and started delivering vehicles to the
infantry battalion last month.

On Aug. 2,
Lt. Col. Neil Berry, the commanding officer for 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines,
notified Morin and his team of the unit's combat readiness with the JLTV. On
Aug. 5, The Director, Ground Combat Element Division at CD&I notified PM
LTV of its IOC achievement. The JLTV is scheduled to start fielding to I MEF
and III MEF before the end of September.

According
to LTV Program Manager Andrew Rodgers, during the post-

acquisition Milestone C
rebaseline of the JLTV schedule in January 2016, IOC was projected to occur by
June 2020.

Rodgers
says that detailed program scheduling, planning and, most importantly, teamwork
with stakeholders across the enterprise enabled the program office to deliver
the vehicles and reach IOC ahead of schedule.

“It was
definitely a team effort, and we built up a really great team,” Rodgers said.
“In terms of leadership, our product managers’ – both Gene Morin and his
predecessor, Dave Bias – detailed focus and ability to track cost, schedule and
performance was key. Neal Justis, our deputy program manager, has significant
prior military experience working for the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition,
logistics and technology, so having him on board knowing how to work the
Pentagon network was a huge force multiplier.”

Rodgers is
quick to note that, although the team has reached IOC, this is only the
beginning of the JLTV’s future legacy.

“We are really at the
starting line right now. Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will see
JLTVs in the DoD,” Rodgers said. “We’ll easily still have these assets
somewhere in the DOD in the year 2100. Welcome to the start of

many generations
of JLTVs.”

VCNO Bullish on Strike Fighter Readiness Goal

Cmdr. Brandon M. Scott, commanding officer of the “Gladiators” of Strike Fighter Wing, VFA-106, (right) discusses hangar conditions with Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Robert P. Burke during a hangar tour at Naval Air Station Oceana. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Mark Thomas Mahmod

ARLINGTON,
Va. — The vice chief of naval operations has praised the progress made by the
naval aviation F/A-18 Super Hornet strike fighter community in improving its
readiness and is optimistic that a readiness goal of 80% will be reached by Oct.
1.

In a blog
post Aug. 12 on the Navy Live blog, VCNO Adm. Robert Burke wrote of his recent
visit to the commander of Strike Fighter Wing Atlantic and Strike Fighter Squadron
106 (VFA-106) at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia, “to get a firsthand look
at the changes to aviation maintenance practices and to gain insight on the
challenges and priorities of aviators and maintainers,” he said. VFA-106 is the

East Coast fleet replacement squadron for the F/A-18 community.

“It has been less than a year since the Navy set out to restore strike fighter readiness rates to 80%, and the one-year deadline of Oct. 1 is approaching,” Burke said. “For the aviation community, the endeavor to increase the mission-capable rate of F/A-18E/F Super Hornets posed a challenge that naval aviation leadership attacked with fervor.”

Burke was referring to the directive from then-Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force to increase the readiness rates of its fighter communities to 80% by Oct. 1. The services had been experiencing readiness rates lower that 50% that had negatively affected numbers of mission-capable aircraft, flight hours for pilots and pilot morale and retention.

Burke said that VFA-106 was the most recent squadron “to initiate reforms under the Naval Sustainment System (NSS), starting in April of this year. VFA-106 has the largest inventory of Super Hornets on the flight line, as they are responsible for training newly winged aviators for the fleet.

“In short, this squadron is the largest contributor to the strike fighter readiness

recovery," he said. "Since VFA-106 maintenance performance impacts overall
Super Hornet readiness status more than any other squadron, the recent
implementation of NSS procedures had a significant impact on the overall goal. …
VFA-106 learned from the FRS squadron [VFA-125] at NAS Lemoore who completed
early iterations of NSS changes. This rapid learning and improvement drove
VFA-106 to reduce maintenance turnover timeframes, raise the average mission
capable (MC) aircraft numbers, and return several long-term down aircraft to a
flying status."

Burke said he
spoke with two junior Sailors who were plane crew chiefs to ask their opinion
of the NSS process.

"With pride,
they both spoke of ownership, of learning the whole aircraft, well outside of
their rating expertise, and of true teamwork," he said. "This is a great
example of U.S. Navy Sailors being given tremendous responsibility – and
running with it!"

Burke said
that VFA-106 "is reaching the point where lack of MC aircraft is no longer a
limiting factor to pilot production, even when supporting operations in
multiple locations or underway on the aircraft carrier.

"These are powerful results that will ensure we have enough

instructors and pilots in the future," he said. "Success at VFA-106 is one example of how the Naval Aviation Enterprise is working together to achieve our 80% readiness goal," Burke said.

"Because NSS addresses all elements of aviation maintenance – people, parts and processes – to make permanent changes that increase aviation readiness and lethality, we are seeing improvements that are sustainable for the future. Through collaboration and a whole-of-aviation approach, the Naval Aviation Enterprise is on its way to achieve and sustain its readiness goal."

Coast Guard, Partners Conduct Enforcement Operation Covering More Than 500 Miles of East Coast

The U.S. Coast Guard conducted a maritime law enforcement operation Aug. 9 and Aug. 10 from Carteret County, North Carolina, to Brevard County, Florida, in coordination with 104 units from several federal, state and local agencies. U.S. Coast Guard

CHARLESTON,

S.C. – The U.S. Coast Guard and partner agencies conducted a maritime law

enforcement operation Aug. 9 and Aug. 10 from Carteret County, North Carolina,

to Brevard County, Florida, that covered more than 500 miles of coastline, the

Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Coast Guard crews conducted the operation in coordination with 104 partner agency units from several federal, state and local agencies. The operation focused on the education and enforcement of boating safety and maritime security throughout the Southeast.

“We thank each organization for the level of coordination and collaboration in planning and executing this year’s iteration of Operation Shrimp and Grits,” said Rear Adm. Eric Jones, commander of Coast Guard 7th District.

“The operational contributions to our collective missions of maritime security and marine safety, with special emphasis on enforcing compliance with passenger charter, living marine resources and recreational boating safety laws, go a long way toward achieving the objectives of each of our agencies. We trust the collaborative nature of these types of interagency operations will also contribute to our ability to respond holistically in times of crisis. Thank you all and *Semper Paratus*.”

During the operation, 62 law enforcement/fire vessels, 18 auxiliary vessels, two fixed-wing law enforcement aircraft, two auxiliary fixed-wing aircraft, five helicopters, 4 Civil Support Teams, an aircraft-mounted Mobile Detection System and a Transportation Security Administration surface inspection

team were used.

Over the two-day operation, 568 vessel boardings were conducted resulting in 48 U.S. Coast Guard violations, 22 Department of Natural Resources and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission violations, 35 local police department citations, and 12 vessel terminations.

Violations were issued for various reasons, to include: BUI [boating under the influence], possession of controlled substances, fisheries violations, illegal charter enforcement and recreational boating safety.

MARAD Seeks Comments on Domestic Maritime Centers of Excellence Designation Policy

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) announced in an Aug 9 release progress in establishing Centers of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education (CoE), which would recognize and support community colleges and training institutions that prepare Americans for careers in the maritime industry. The Maritime Administration is seeking public comment on the proposed policy.

"These
educational institutions benefit America's national security and economy by
growing and strengthening our maritime work force," said U.S. Transportation
Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

“America must be a strong maritime nation to continue its global leadership in the world,” said Administrator Buzby, “which is why the Maritime Administration wants to spotlight institutions that excel at training Americans to serve on our domestic waters, dockside, and in related industries. The maritime industry provides rewarding, good-paying careers that also help to support our national and economic security goals.”

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2018 provides the Secretary of Transportation with discretionary authority to designate eligible and qualified entities as CoEs. CoE designations will serve to assist the maritime industry in obtaining and maintaining the highest quality workforce while also enhancing diversity and inclusion within its workforce.

When the CoE program is ready to accept applications, institutions can apply to the Maritime Administration to seek designation as a CoE by highlighting their success in preparing workers for maritime careers. If designated as a CoE, institutions may enter into cooperative agreements with the Maritime Administration to advance recruitment of students and faculty, enhance facilities, award student credit for military service, and potentially receive assistance in the form of surplus equipment or temporary use of Maritime Administration vessels. The public may submit comments until Sept. 17, 2019 on the CoE policy by visiting http://www.regulations.gov, searching for “MARAD-2018-0088” and following the embedded instructions.