

General Lists Marine Corps VTOL Development Priorities for Congress



BALTIC SEA (May 18, 2022) U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Ryan Mortensen and Capt. Jeffrey Jaeckel, both AH-1Z pilots assigned to the Aviation Combat Element, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, take-off during flight operations aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD3) in the Baltic Sea, May 18, 2022. The Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit are participating in the Estonian-led exercise Siil 22 (Hedgehog 22 in English). Siil 22 brings together members of the Estonian Defense Force and Sailors and Marines under Commander Task Force 61/2 to enhance Allied interoperability and preserve security and stability in the Baltic region. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Brittney Vella)

WASHINGTON – The Marine Corps general in charge of aviation requirements detailed for Congress the service's priorities for vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) platforms during testimony regarding the 2024 defense budget hearings.

"Our VTOL Family of Systems has three lines of effort," said Lieutenant General Michael S. Cederholm, deputy commandant for aviation, testifying April 19 before the Tactical Air and Land Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

"The first one is logistics," Cederholm said. "We're looking at a risk-worthy, unmanned logistics connector. We're in the process of developing and working through our process and Initial Capabilities Requirement Document right now. That's gone through and is sitting at the MROC [Marine Requirements Oversight Council] for decision."

Cederholm said the second line of effort "is attack/strike. We have taken a different approach because we're at different stages of modernization. The Marine Corps is in a unique position – a good one. The relative health of our fleet and the nascent age of our fleet of H-1s [AH-1Z and UH-1Y helicopters] and V-22s. We're just transitioning to the 53Kilo [CH-53K helicopter]. This gives us an opportunity to – in the future – not wait but very expeditiously and thoroughly explore the intersection point between budget, requirements, and future capabilities. We can look at the attack/strike role and what are the advances in teaming, autonomy; advances in lethality and survivability."

The general listed the third line of effort, "is to replace our extant platforms like the MV-22 when it ages out with the Next-Gen Assault Support."

Cederholm said he "is excited [about] where the Marine Corps is. We have a sense of urgency, but we also have time to be thorough in our approach to unmanned in the future."

U.S. Marine Corps Activates Second F-35C Squadron



[Release from 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing](#)

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES

04.15.2023

Story by [2nd Lt. Andrew Baez](#)

[3rd Marine Aircraft Wing](#)

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. – Third Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) reactivated Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 311, an F-35C Lightning II squadron, at Marine Corps

Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, California, April 14, 2023. VMFA-311 is the U.S. Marine Corps' second F-35C squadron. The F-35C is a land and/or carrier-based platform boasting long-range flight and high weapons payload capabilities. Formerly VMA-311, the Tomcats have made their mark on Marine Corps aviation for decades, and now will continue their legacy.

Notable Tomcats veterans include Ted Williams and John Glenn. Ted Williams left a Major League Baseball career for service in World War II and Korea, and later was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. John Glenn was a distinguished fighter pilot in World War II and Korea, who later became an astronaut and public servant.

Third MAW Commanding General Maj. Gen. Bradford J. Gering is also a Tomcat. "Having twice served in VMA-311, the Tomcats hold a special place in my heart," Gering said. "We are extremely excited to add another F-35C squadron to 3rd MAW. The range and operational flexibility that VMFA-311 will bring to I Marine Expeditionary Force is impressive and adds to our warfighting capacity in every domain."

The Marine Corps is undergoing a key transition to the F-35 to maintain its advantage in future conflicts, thereby deactivating VMA-311 on Oct. 15, 2020. The reactivation of VMFA-311 marks the transition for the squadron to the F-35C Lightning II, which brings its unique capabilities to 3rd MAW as a long-range complement to their existing aviation assets.

"The F-35C brings a long-range fighter/attack platform with the most advanced stealth and sensor capabilities in the Marine Corps," said Lt. Col. Michael P. Fisher, the commanding officer of VMFA-311. "The Harrier was a great weapon that served the Marine Corps well and has been replaced with a more advanced and capable platform. The F-35 was designed for the near-term and future fight."

The reactivation supports the 2022 Marine Corps Aviation Plan, which outlines ongoing modernization efforts across Marine aviation. The plan prioritizes readiness, reinforces the importance of flying from the sea, and refocuses on manpower, support to logistics and modern capabilities.

“We are taking an aggressive approach to build capabilities that will move, sustain, and support the individual Marine while making the force more lethal, effective, and survivable,” said then-Deputy Commandant for Aviation Lt. Gen. Mark R. Wise in the 2022 plan.

The Tomcats, a notable squadron of “firsts” for Marine Corps aviation, originally commissioned in 1942 as Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 311 as a at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, where it first deployed in support of the World War II island hopping campaign.

The squadron led the way for Marine Corps aviation in many groundbreaking events: it was the first Marine squadron to use fighter aircraft for dive bombing missions, flew the first Marine combat mission with jets in 1950 during the Korean War, was the first Marine squadron to employ the AV-8B Harrier in combat during Operation Desert Shield, the first to fly combat missions in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, and participated in the first combat sortie of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

“This reactivation is not about the aircraft, it’s about the people,” said Col. Shannon M. Brown, commander of Marine Aircraft Group 11. “Looking at what this squadron did over the years is impressive considering its 13 Navy Unit Commendations. The Tomcats are all about fighting and winning and now this legacy is entrusted to Lt. Col. Fisher.”

“We will never forget where we came from,” Fisher said in his remarks. “Let’s make history.”

Imagery from the ceremony will be available at:
www.dvidshub.net/unit/3MAW.

Leidos to Develop Autonomous Uncrewed Aerial Resupply System for U.S. Marine Corps



[Release from Leidos](#)

RESTON, Va. (April 18, 2023) – [Leidos](#) (NYSE:LDOS), a FORTUNE 500 science and technology leader, was recently awarded a new prime contract to develop an uncrewed aircraft system (UAS) that can autonomously resupply forward-deployed ground forces. The firm-fixed-price, multiple-award contract has a period of

performance of 18 months to build a single prototype for the Marine Corps.

“Leidos leads the industry in taking cutting-edge innovations and making them mission-ready today,” said Tim Freeman, Leidos senior vice president and Airborne Solutions operations manager. “The ability to autonomously deliver hundreds of pounds of supplies over long ranges will be a game-changer for the warfighter. We look forward to demonstrating how the Leidos’ SeaOnyx solution will help deliver a logistics advantage to the Marines and other branches of the military.”

Under the contract, Leidos will develop, deliver and demonstrate an autonomous medium unmanned logistics system – air (MULS-A) prototype. The prototype will then be used to perform a logistics distribution mission at the tactical edge of the battlefield. The goal of the project is to demonstrate a prototype UAS that can carry a logistics payload between 300 and 600 pounds to a combat area with a radius of 25 to 100 nautical miles. The work will be performed at locations in Colorado, Ohio, Oregon, California, Nevada and Arizona.

Leidos teamed with Phenix Solutions to design the SeaOnyx prototype. Phenix is a non-traditional, veteran-owned small business defense contractor that develops UAS aircraft for a variety of missions.

Marine Corps to Activate Second F-35C Squadron



Caption: PHILIPPINE SEA (April 19, 2022) An F-35C Lightning II, assigned to the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, launches from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), April 19, 2022. VMFA-314 will be joined this month by VMFA-311, being re-activated to be the Marine Corps’ second F-35C squadron. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes)

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps is scheduled to activate its second F-35C Lightning II strike fighter squadron at the end of the week, Headquarters Marine Corps announced in a media announcement.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 311 (VMFA-311) will be re-activated from its former Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VMA-311) identity in ceremonies on Friday, April 14, 2023, at [Marine Corps Air Station \(MCAS\) Miramar](#), California. The squadron will become the second operational Marine Corps squadron to operate the carrier-based F-35C version. VMFA-314, also based at Miramar, was the first, and has completed one deployment

with the F-35C, on board USS Abraham Lincoln.

VMA-311 was an AV-8B Harrier II squadron that was deactivated in October 2020. It was based at MCAS Yuma, Arizona. It had operated the AV-8 since 1988.

VMA-311 was established on December 1, 1942, as Marine Fighter Squadron 311 (VMF-311) and deployed to the Pacific Theater in April 1943, equipped with F4U-1 Corsair fighters. The squadron eventually operated from Okinawa in March 1945 and conducted dive bombing and combat air patrol missions.

The squadron became the Marine Corps' first operational jet squadron in 1948, operating F9F Panther fighters, and during the Korean War flew the Corps' first jet combat mission. After the war, the squadron upgraded to the F9F-8 Cougar. The squadron was re-designated VMA-311 on June 1, 1957, and by 1958 was operating the A4D Skyhawk.

The squadron flew its A-4s in combat in the Vietnam War from April 1965 through January 1973.

After transition to the AV-8B, VMA-311 deployed to Saudi Arabia, and, in Operation Desert Storm, became the first squadron to fly the Harrier II in combat. In November 2001, the squadron also became the first Harrier squadron to fly in combat during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The squadron also flew combat missions in Iraq beginning in March 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lt. Col. Michael P. Fisher will be the first commanding officer of VMFA-311.

USMC Use GA-ASI MQ-9A for Training Exercise



[Release from General Atomics](#)

MQ-9A Used for Live-Fire and Simulated Exercises

SAN DIEGO – 30 March 2023 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) is working with the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) on a series of Service-Level Training Exercises (SLTE) using a company-owned MQ-9A Unmanned Aircraft System to support the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC). The SLTE 2-23 is being conducted near Twentynine Palms, Calif. with participation from Joint Forces. The training ensures participants are prepared for the future dynamic environment.

Contracting the use of MQ-9A enabled USMC to begin integrating Group 5 unmanned aircraft into the Marine Air-Ground Task Force for the first time within the various exercises. GA-ASI began flying the MQ-9A on Feb. 3, 2023, with a combination of

GA-ASI and VMU-3 pilots and sensor operators. The aircraft flew out of GA-ASI's facility at the Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz., with flights over training ranges in Southwest-Continental United States (CONUS). The MQ-9A is providing its proven Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) data package – including GA-ASI's Lynx® Multi-mode Radar – to provide the USMC with extraordinary situational awareness and simulated close air support.

“GA-ASI is always ready and willing to support the USMC exercises,” said GA-ASI Vice President of DoD Strategic Development, Patrick Shortsleeve. “We know that being able to utilize an actual MQ-9A is critical to the success of these exercises and helps the USMC ramp-up their training program.”

The SLTE Program consists of a series of exercises, including the live-fire Integrated Training Exercise (ITX), Marine Littoral Regiment Training Exercise (MLR TE), and Force-on-Force (FoF) MAGTF Warfighting Exercise (MWX). MAGTFTC executes the SLTE Program, which includes simulated and live-fire armed exercises, to enhance the readiness of the Fleet Marine Forces and support the Marine Corps' responsibilities to national security.

GA-ASI was [contracted by the USMC](#) in 2022 to deliver eight MQ-9A Extended Range (ER) UAS as part of the ARES Indefinite-Delivery/Indefinite-Quantity (ID/IQ) contract.

USMC Rotational Arctic

Presence Bolsters US and Allied Training



U.S. Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, set up camouflage netting to conceal vehicles during Exercise Joint Viking near Bardufoss, Norway, March 9, 2023. Marines are deployed to Norway as part of Marine Rotational Forces Europe 23.1 which focuses on regional engagements throughout Europe by conducting various exercises, arctic cold-weather and mountain warfare training, and military-to-military engagements, which enhance overall interoperability of the U.S. Marine Corps with allies and partners. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Christian M. Garcia)

By Dr. Lee Willett

LONDON – The U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) has been increasing its permanent presence in the Arctic in recent years, using rotational deployments. The impact of this rotational presence is being demonstrated again in the multinational exercise

‘Joint Viking,’ which is taking place in March ashore and at sea in and around Norway’s northern fjords.

For ‘Joint Viking’ and the parallel U.K.-led ‘Joint Warrior’ exercise, 20,000 allied aircrew, sailors, soldiers, marines, and supporting personnel are present, including USMC forces. Participating USMC forces are drawn from a pool of more than 1300 marines, from Combat Logistics Battalion 6, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force, that are supporting rotational activities and exercises as the Marine Rotational Force – Europe 2023 (MRF-E 23) deployment.

As ‘Joint Viking’ and other exercises are joint and combined activities, USMC forces are training alongside U.S. Air Force, Army, and Navy personnel, as well as NATO allies and other partners, Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Knowles USMC, Battalion Commander 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, told [Seapower](#).

“The rotational training has been beneficial for both US Marines and service members from allied and partner countries,” said Knowles. “The Marines are receiving world-class training, which improves overall Marine Corps readiness, and sends Marines back to their units better trained to fight and win in any environment.”

While noting that exercises like ‘Joint Viking’ are long-planned activities that are not conducted in response to any specific threat from any specific adversary, such exercises still enable US, allied, and partner forces to “continue to enhance readiness, capability, and flexibility in response to changing security environments”, said Knowles. In particular, he added, “We are focused on strengthening the development of joint leaders and teams who understand the synergy of air, sea, and land power in a joint, multi-domain environment.”

The MRF-E 23 rotation and associated exercise series will conclude in September, and the USMC units deployed on this rotation will return to base at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Curtiss-Wright Awarded Contract to Provide U.S. Marine Corps with Expeditionary Network Communications Technology



[Release from Curtiss-Wright](#)

DAVIDSON, N.C. – March 23, 2023 – [Curtiss-Wright Corporation](#), (NYSE: CW) today announced that it has been awarded a follow-on contract by the United States Marine Corps (USMC) to provide small form factor network router and switch modules to

support communications modernization with highly portable expeditionary

[network communications technology](#). Under the contract, Curtiss-Wright will provide a [Modular Open Systems Approach \(MOSA\)](#) deployed baseband system for the Marine Corps Wideband Satellite-Expeditionary (MCWS-X) program.

“As a leading supplier of tactical battlefield communications solutions, we are very proud to provide the Marine Corps with our proven field-deployable network communications technology to support the MCWS-X program,” said Lynn M. Bamford, Chair and CEO of Curtiss-Wright Corporation. “This contract further strengthens the long and successful relationship we have with the USMC and highlights Curtiss-Wright’s ability to enhance interoperability and improve cost efficiencies with electronics systems that adhere to the DoD’s mandate for solutions based on the Modular Open Systems Approach.”

Curtiss-Wright is performing the work within its Defense Solutions division in the Defense Electronics segment. The products covered by this agreement will be shipped to the USMC from the Curtiss-Wright Defense Solutions facility in Portland, Oregon.

For more information on Curtiss-Wright’s Defense Solutions division products, please visit <https://www.curtisswrightds.com>.

Marine Corps Officially Updates Logistics Doctrine



[Marine Corps Updates Logistics Doctrine](#)

21 March 2023

HEADQUARTERS, MARINE CORPS –

The Marine Corps has officially updated its logistics doctrine with the publication of Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 4, Logistics, March 21, 2023. This publication provides Marines a conceptual framework for understanding how logistics is an essential aspect of every military operation.

This publication is a revision of the 1997 version by the same name. It places the time-tested, combat-proven principles outlined in the previous version in an updated warfighting context. This updated publication draws on the increasing importance of information and data, and highlights the global challenges associated with sustaining an expeditionary force.

“Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 4, Logistics represents a significant update to our logistics doctrine,” said Lt. Gen. Edward Banta, Deputy Commandant for Installations and

Logistics. “It provides a common framework for all Marines involved in logistics operations and will help ensure that we are able to sustain our operations in the most effective and efficient manner possible.”

The future fight requires Marines to operate when logistics is contested, thereby requiring the force to innovate and leverage new technologies for comparative advantages against potential adversaries. Both strategic- and operational-level logistics is critical and requires a fundamental understanding of logistics limitations and opportunities in the information age.

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 4, Logistics is available online at [MARADMIN 146/23](#).

General Outlines Transcom's Mission, Challenges



[Release from the Department of Defense](#)

March 16, 2023 | By David Vergun

Providing global logistics to sustain the force and provide humanitarian aid over air, land and sea is a capability the Defense Department enjoys, unmatched by any other nation, said Air Force Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, commander, U.S. Transportation Command, who spoke yesterday at a McAleese-sponsored event in Washington, D.C.

“Mission success depends on the nation’s capacity and capability to transport and supply its forces,” she said.

In response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Transcom has delivered large quantities of munitions and weaponry to Ukraine from the U.S., allies and partners, she said.

[Spotlight: Support for Ukraine](#)

“The entire enterprise proudly continues to enable Ukraine’s national defense, and that in turn delivers success for our allies and partners,” she said.

Despite the significant demands of the European theater, Transcom continues to execute its global mission in support of joint and combined exercises with geographic combatant commands, she said.

Global power projection relies on accessible basing and overflights overseas, she said, requiring diplomatic alignment with allies and partners.

Within the United States, mobilization and logistical movement depends on a good network of highways, railways and pipelines, she said.

“The combination of our organic logistics and commercial capabilities must continue to present a credible deterrent for delivering,” she added.

Achieving this requires proactive effort, she said. “In 10 years, more than 50% of the U.S. government’s sealift ships will reach the end of service life. For this reason, Transcom supports the Navy’s strategy to recapitalize the fleet by acquiring used sealift vessels on the commercial market, and to provide the secretary of defense discretionary authority to purchase new ships.”

Joint force global projection also relies on air refueling as the backbone of rapid global mobility, she said. To meet this requirement, Transcom supports modernization of the tanker fleet, along with upgrades to existing aircraft.

Transcom is also embracing secure artificial intelligence and machine learning tools to accelerate decision making in the transportation space, she said.

[Spotlight: Focus on Indo-Pacific](#)

Van Ovost noted that the Indo-Pacific region is the most challenging theater, with vast ocean distances to be crossed and a scarcity of logistics hubs.

General Officer Announcement

[Release from the Department of Defense](#)

MARCH 15, 2023

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today that the president has made the following nominations:

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. James W. Bierman, Jr., for reappointment to the grade of lieutenant general with assignment as deputy commandant for plans, policies, and operations, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. Bierman is currently serving as commanding general, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan.