

Navy Awards Boeing Additional Funds for MQ-25 Drones for Testing



The Boeing-owned MQ-25 test unmanned aerial vehicle, T1. (Boeing)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has awarded Boeing funds to enhance the production of MQ-25A Stingray carrier-based aerial refueling unmanned aerial vehicles, bringing to five the number procured for testing.

The Naval Air Systems Command awarded The Boeing Company a cost-plus-fixed-fee, cost-plus-incentive-fee, fixed-price incentive (firm-target) \$657.1 million contract modification for the aircraft, according to a March 29 Defense Department contract announcement.

“This modification adds scope for the production and delivery of two additional MQ-25 System Demonstration Test Article

aircraft (air vehicles four and five), to include associated tooling and communication system changes for the Navy,” the announcement said. “Additionally, this modification definitizes obsolescence phase two for non-recurring engineering to address product baseline obsolescence to support low-rate initial production for the MQ-25 Stingray program.”

The MQ-25A is a single-engine carrier-based UAV designed to refuel other aircraft while in flight. The Navy is procuring the Stingray to refuel F-35 Lightning II and F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighters, EA-18G Growler electronic attack aircraft, and E-2D Advanced Hawkeye command and control aircraft.

Procurement of the MQ-25A will allow the Navy to free up Super Hornet strike fighters from the aerial refueling role for their primary combat missions. It also will help preserve the service life of the Super Hornet fleet.

The Navy ordered four development models of the MQ-25A in August 2018, followed by an order for three more in April 2020. The company-owned prototype made its first flight in September 2019 and in 2021 demonstrated its ability to refuel the F-35C, F/A-18E/F, and the E-2D. The September 2022, the Navy awarded Boeing a contract for advance materials for Low-Rate Initial Production Lot 1. Initial operational capability is expected in 2026. The Navy plans to procure 72 Stingrays.

Lockheed Martin Conducts

Historic LRASM Flight Test



Orlando, Fla., April 3, 2024 – The U.S. Navy in partnership with Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT] successfully conducted a historic Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) flight test with four missiles simultaneously in flight.

During the 12th Integrated Test Event (ITE-12), the U.S. Navy was able to demonstrate the weapon's inherent high-end lethality from mission planning through kill chain integration and its effects on the target. All mission objectives were met, reinforcing high confidence in the weapon's capabilities and superior firepower.

"We have continued to invest in the design and development of LRASM's anti-surface warfare capabilities to ensure that warfighters have the 21st century security solutions they need to complete their missions and come home safely," said Lisbeth Vogelpohl, LRASM program director at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "This event was a testament to our commitment to deliver reliable products that work each and every time, ensuring those who serve stay ahead of ready."

ITE-12 was the next 'big-step' in LRASM's evolution. The successful test was a graduation exercise for the missiles' latest configuration and lays the foundation for increased capabilities to come.

As a member of the AGM-158 family of cruise missiles, LRASM delivers long-range, highly survivable and lethal capability against highly defended surface combatants that no other weapon in the inventory can provide.

Navy and Air Force fighters to train as a joint force in NAWCAD's Joint Simulation Environment



A pilot tests a U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor cockpit simulator headed for installation in the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division's Joint Simulation Environment. The Navy installed a division of four Raptor cockpits alongside a division of eight F-35 Lightning cockpits in its advanced tactical trainer so Navy and Air Force fighter pilots can train as a joint force starting in 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Terri Thomas)

[Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Apr. 2, 2024](#)

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – Navy and Air Force fighter pilots will begin training as a joint force at the [Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division](#) (NAWCAD)'s [Joint Simulation Environment](#) (JSE) starting in 2024.

NAWCAD installed a division of four U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor cockpits into the Navy's premier simulation test and training facility alongside its division of eight F-35 Lightning cockpits in January.

"When America is engaged in conflict, the DOD will bring joint capability to bear from every service across all domains,"

said NAWCAD Commander Rear Adm. John Dougherty IV. "We've replicated this ability in the Joint Simulation Environment, a force multiplier helping aviators deter aggression and—if necessary—prevail in conflict."

The new addition of fifth-generation fighter simulators brings Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and allied partners into the hyper-realistic digital range that consists of cockpits, domed simulators with 4K projectors, and aircraft software to enable pilots to fly wartime scenarios in a near-exact virtual environment. Tactical groups training in NAWCAD's JSE fly more sorties over one week than they do over a year on open-air ranges.

"Open-air ranges are extremely constrained with safety limitations that prevent warfighters from training like they'd fight," said NAWCAD JSE Director Blaine Summers. "The JSE is where fifth-gen fighters train to hone their tactics and fight like their lives depend on it."

Developed by Navy engineers and industry partners, NAWCAD's JSE is a powerful training and test facility designed to adapt and grow, utilizing hardware and software from actual DOD aircraft, weapons, and other defense systems. The JSE has all the equipment and experts needed to keep the facility running smoothly from its cockpits, to its software and simulators, to its mission debriefing rooms where pilots get feedback on their performance during training.

In this highly realistic digital range, aviators experience the consequences of their mistakes, including mission failure, loss of systems, and even loss of life. The JSE enables pilots to learn those hard lessons, immediately adjust, fly again, and continue the learning process to become a highly capable tactical aviator.

The JSE was initially designed to support F-35 Lightning's operational testing as there was no way to safely and

adequately represent real-world conflict on an open-air range. Today, the DOD is scaling the Navy's technology for additional digital range facilities supporting programs like F-35, F-22, and E-2D. In addition, the DOD has made training in the JSE a formal part of the Navy's Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor Program—commonly known as TOPGUN.

Over the next year, NAWCAD will incorporate additional test and training cockpits including the F/A-18 Hornet, EA-18 Growler, and E-2 platforms to train fighters for future flight lines. The warfare center will also deploy its second training system onboard a Navy carrier, USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).

The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division employs more than 17,000 military, civilian and contract personnel. It operates test ranges, laboratories and aircraft in support of test, evaluation, research, development and sustainment of everything flown by the Navy and Marine Corps. Based in Patuxent River, Maryland, the command also has major sites in St. Inigoes, Maryland, Lakehurst, New Jersey, and Orlando, Florida.

April 1 Red Sea Update

U.S. Central Command, April 1, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. — At 9 a.m. (Sanaa time) April 1, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed an Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist unmanned surface vessel (USV) in self-defense.

It was determined this USV presented a threat to U.S. and coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region.

These actions are necessary to protect our forces, ensure freedom of navigation, and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

NAS Sigonella Welcomes First MQ-4C Triton



Naval Air Station (NAS) Sigonella, Italy – The first MQ-4C Triton arrived at Naval Air Station (NAS) Sigonella, March 30, 2024.

By Lt. j.g. Andrea Perez, Naval Air Station Sigonella Public Affairs, March 31, 2024

NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Italy – The first MQ-4C Triton arrived to Naval Air Station (NAS) Sigonella, March 30, 2024.

The MQ-4C's arrival to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations marks the second forward-deployed detachment for VUP-19. A total of three detachments are planned when the program is fully operational. Deployments like this enhance U.S. Navy interoperability with NATO Allies and partners.

"The addition of the MQ-4C Triton, right here in Sigonella, is another milestone in the successful development of the Triton program," said Capt. Aaron Shoemaker, Commanding Officer, NAS Sigonella. "We are proud to support VUP-19 [Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19] as they integrate with the Fleet to expand the roles of unmanned aircraft systems operations in our region and beyond."

The MQ-4C Triton is the Navy's newest Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Maritime Patrol asset and augments the capabilities of the P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft.

To prepare for the arrival of the Triton in Italy, VUP-19 "Big Red" held a ceremony to celebrate the deployment and the opening of a new Triton hangar at NAS Sigonella, March 2.

VUP-19, homeported in Florida at Naval Air Station Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport, boasts more than 300 Sailors and officers from various aviation ratings and officer communities who maintain and operate the Triton around the world. Aircrew gather and process surveillance information utilizing data fusion tools that integrate sensor data from multiple aircraft into a comprehensive networked picture to further assist in building an accurate threat representation.

VUP-19 achieved initial operation capability in September 2023 during its deployment to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

Naval Air Station Sigonella provides consolidated operational, command and control, administrative, logistical and advanced logistical support to U.S. and other NATO forces. The installation's strategic location enables U.S., allied, and

partner nation forces to deploy and respond as required, ensuring security and stability in Europe, Africa and Central Command.

March 30 Red Sea Update

U.S. Central Command, March 31, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – At 8:30 a.m. (Sanaa time) March 30, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) forces successfully engaged and destroyed two unmanned aerial systems (UAS) in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen in self-defense. One was engaged over the Red Sea and the other was engaged on the ground prepared to launch.

It was determined these unmanned aerial systems presented a threat to U.S. and coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region.

These actions are necessary to protect our forces, ensure freedom of navigation, and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

Navy Resources Arrive in Baltimore to Support Key

Bridge Efforts



By Navy Public Affairs, 1 April 2024

BALTIMORE – The Chesapeake, a 1000-ton lift capacity derrick barge, the Ferrell, a 200-ton lift capacity revolving crane barge, and the Oyster Bay, a 150-ton lift capacity crane barge have arrived to Baltimore Harbor. An additional 400-ton lift capacity barge is on track to arrive early next week. The barges, contracted through Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) will support the U.S. Coast Guard led Unified Command in its effort to clear and re-open the channel.

The barges will be used by the Navy's Supervisor of Salvage and Diving (SUPSALV) to remove submerged portions of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. SUPSALV will accomplish the work in phases. Following an overall assessment, work will focus on disassembling and removing the bridge section by section. The disassembled pieces will be lifted onto barges, which will then be transported away.

An additional 12 crane and support vessels to include tugs, survey, dive and crew boats, are in the mobilization process and will arrive to Baltimore in the coming days. SUPSALV will manage the operation and use of all assets to provide

centralized oversight of all salvage operations.

SUPSALV is a world leader in the ocean engineering discipline of marine salvage, towing, pollution control and abatement, diving and diving system safety, salvage equipment procurement and underwater ship husbandry.

RTX's SM-6 intercepts ballistic missile target at sea



Test of enhanced software succeeds against sophisticated medium-range ballistic missile

PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE FACILITY, Hawaii (March 29, 2024) – A Standard Missile-6 (SM-6) built by Raytheon, an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business, intercepted a medium-range ballistic missile

target at sea in its final seconds of flight, after being fired from the USS Preble (DDG 88). This test verified some of the missile's enhanced capabilities when launched from a Baseline 9.C2 variant of the Aegis Combat System.

The SM-6 missile can perform anti-air warfare, anti-surface warfare and advanced ballistic missile defense at sea. This latest flight test, designated as Flight Test Aegis Weapon System (FTM)-32, involved the SM-6 Dual II (Block IA) configuration with newly qualified software that significantly enhances the missile's capabilities for the U.S. Navy fleet.

"This test demonstrated that the latest versions of the SM-6 and combat system provide the critical capability to destroy an incoming sophisticated missile threat," said Kim Ernzen, president of Raytheon Naval Power. "Raytheon is committed to ensuring our technology stays ahead of evolving threats and is available to sailors as quickly as possible."

FTM-32 was the seventh flight test of the SM-6 against ballistic missile targets and the fourth test utilizing the Dual II (Block IA) configuration.

Deployed on U.S. Navy ships, SM-6 delivers a proven over-the-horizon offensive and defensive capability by leveraging the time-tested Standard Missile airframe and propulsion system. It's the only missile that supports anti-air warfare, anti-surface warfare and sea-based terminal ballistic missile defense in one solution, and it's enabling the U.S. and its allies to cost-effectively increase the offensive might of surface forces.

The U.S. Department of Defense has approved the sale of SM-6 to several allied nations.

Leidos-designed low-profile vessels participate in U.S. Army's Project Convergence Capstone 4 exercise



RESTON, Va. (March 29, 2024) – Two [Leidos](#)-designed uncrewed and autonomous-capable low-profile vessels (LPVs) recently participated in the Project Convergence Capstone 4 military exercises in California. Leidos (NYSE:LDOS), a Fortune 500 innovation company, delivered the vessels to the U.S. Marine Corps last year.

“Leidos once again designed and delivered innovative solutions with these LPVs, and it was great to see them participate in Project Convergence,” said Dave Lewis, Leidos senior vice president, Sea Systems Business Area. “The prototypes we’ve delivered will help create new disruptive logistics

capabilities for the Marine Corps. Its low profile and long range are intended to help the vessels achieve a higher mission success rate supporting dispersed Marine fire units than conventional methods.”

The LPV’s low-to-the-water visual profile helps to reduce probability of detection. The vessels are intended to transport a logistics payload of up to five tons over a range of 2,000 nautical miles, and have been built to experiment with different autonomous control systems. The two LPV prototypes were delivered last year to the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory for testing and technical assessment. Their participation in the joint and multi-national Project Convergence Capstone 4 exercises represents the next stage of testing and experimentation with the vessels’ capabilities alongside warfighters.

Leidos designed the LPVs under contract with MilTech, a Montana State University research lab and an authorized National Government Partnership Intermediary.

The delivery of the LPV prototypes complements Leidos’ extensive maritime autonomy portfolio. Leidos-designed and built autonomous vessels [recently completed joint naval exercises](#) in the western Pacific as part of the Navy’s Integrated Battle Problem 23.2. Last year, Leidos was [awarded](#) a U.S. Navy task order to manage, operate and maintain the Navy’s Overlord and medium unmanned surface vessels.

U.S. Navy and JSDF conduct

Tomahawk Land Attack Missile Training

By MC1 Ryan M. Breeden, U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs, March 29, 2024

YOKOSUKA, Japan – Sailors assigned to Surface Combat Systems Training Command (SCSTC) hosted members from the Japan Self-Defense Force aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS McCampbell (DDG 85) and Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, to conduct tomahawk land attack missile training, March 25-28.

The training provided Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) officers with the knowledge required to coordinate shipboard cruise missile operations in route to Full Operational Capability.

The United States Ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, visited McCampbell to observe the shipboard portion of the training March 28.

“We are ahead of schedule, and that’s exactly what we have to do to keep up deterrence and maintain operations within this area of operations,” said Emanuel. “We will give our partners, our allies, the Japanese Navy, the capacity that their investing in. This is not a one and done, this is going to happen again.”

The training included classroom instruction, followed by a shipboard walkthrough and demonstration, aligned to the U.S. Navy cruise missile command curriculum.

“It was a privilege to conduct Cruise Missile Command training with our Japan Self-Defense Force counterparts over the past few days,” said Cmdr. Michael Arnold, Officer in Charge of SCSTC WESTPAC. “This training marks a significant milestone in

Japan's strategic acquisition of the Tomahawk Weapon Control System and our collaborative first step in mastering this new capability. Together, we fortify our alliance, demonstrating our united commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and upholding the principles that ensure regional peace, stability, and a rules-based international order."

The week-long training provided participants with a hands-on overview of the Tactical Tomahawk Weapons Control System consoles and associated equipment, and participants were able to execute a simulated generic strike mission scenario.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the largest forward-deployed fleet in the world, and with the help of a network of alliances and partners from 35 other maritime-nations, the U.S. Navy has operated in the Indo-Pacific region for more than 70 years, providing credible, ready forces to help preserve peace and prevent conflict.