DoD Inspector General to Audit Navy's MQ-25 UAV Program



The Boeing unmanned MQ-25 aircraft on the flight deck aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) in 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandon Roberson*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The inspector general of the Department of Defense is planning to conduct an audit of the U.S. Navy's MQ-25 Stingray aerial refueling unmanned aerial vehicle program.

In a March 21 memorandum addressed to the undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, the director for Operational Test and Evaluation, and the auditor general of the Department of the Navy, the inspector general said, "The

objective of this audit is to determine whether Navy officials are effectively managing the MQ-25 Stingray program to meet operational capability requirements and user needs. We may revise the objective as the audit proceeds, and we will also consider suggestions from management for additional or revised objectives."

The MQ-25 program is designed to provide a UAV capable of refueling carrier-based aircraft, thus freeing more F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighters for their primary missions.

A prototype of the MQ-25A, built by Boeing, has flown and has demonstrated the ability to refuel F/A-18s, F-35 Lightning II strike fighters and E-2D Advanced Hawkeye early warning aircraft. The prototype, known as T1, also was put through flight deck handling trials at sea on board the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) in December 2021.

Boeing is under contract to build seven MQ-25As. The Navy anticipates it will procure a total of 72 Stingrays under current planning. Initial operational capability is planned for fiscal 2025.