Navy Air Warfare Director: C-2 Aircraft Retirement Moved Up to 2024

WASHINGTON – The replacement of the Navy's C-2A Greyhound carrier on-board delivery (COD) aircraft with the CMV-22B Osprey tiltrotor transport aircraft has been moved up three years because of accelerated procurement of the needed Ospreys, a Navy admiral said.

"The initial plan was to sundown the C-2 in 2027," Rear Adm. Scott D. Conn, director of Air Warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, testified Sept. 28 before the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee. "With additional adds [CMV-22Bs] we've been able to push that left to FY '24. The CMV-22 will IOC [reach initial operational capability] in the Navy in 2021. That is mapped to our first F-35 deployment for [F135] engine [transport] considerations. Transition will be complete by FY '24."

The Navy operates two squadrons of C-2As (for a total of 34 aircraft) which send out detachments of two aircraft with each carrier deployment.

Conn noted that the C-2A is more than 30 years old and is accordingly more difficult to sustain.

"We have gone from a 32 percent mission-capable rate in 2017 to 40 percent in '18, so the trend is in the right direction, but it is nowhere near where we want it to be," he said. "We're going to continue to make those investments to make sure those aircraft are safe to get airborne until the end of its service life. I have to fully fund that aircraft until I'm completely done with it."

He said the CMV-22 on a hot tropical day fully loaded with

10,000 pounds of cargo will be able to fly in excess of 1,100 nautical miles, “which meets our requirements for combat operations.”

The first CMV-22B in being built at the Boeing plant in Ridley, Pennsylvania, and will be delivered in 2020.

Conn said the CMV-22 will enjoy a shortened test program because its modifications are slight.

“We have to do a modified operational test,” he said. “The only thing we’re testing are that things that are different on the CMV-22 as compared to the MV-22. That’s going to be a very compressed test.

“We then IOC and get our first three aircraft to deploy in 2021,” he said. “There is no means by which I can accelerate that any further when you look at the [facilities construction], the training that’s required for our Sailors to operate and maintain, and the aircrew that have to fly it and get the hours they need. We’re going as fast as we can go. Any additional aircraft at this point would relieve or provide a shock absorber during the transition as we go from transition to deployment to follow-on detachments until we’re completely divested of our C-2.”