

Navy Awards Advance Acquisition for Low-Rate Initial Production of MQ-25



A Boeing unmanned MQ-25 aircraft is given operating directions on the flight deck aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Hillary Becke*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded Boeing a contract for advanced acquisition of the MQ-25A Stingray aerial refueling unmanned aerial vehicle.

The Naval Air Systems Command awarded Boeing a \$47.5 million “firm-fixed-price advance acquisition contract for the production and delivery of MQ-25 Stingray low-rate initial production lot 1 for the U.S. Navy,” a Sept. 28 Defense Department contract announcement said.

Boeing was selected Aug. 30, 2018, for the design, development, fabrication, testing, delivery and support of four MQ-25As, followed in April 2020 with an order for three more, according to the Navy's program office. The MQ-25 test asset, known as T1, made its first flight Sept. 19, 2019. In summer 2021, the MQ-25 T1 test asset successfully refueled three different carrier-based aircraft: F/A-18F, F-35C and E-2D aircraft in 2021. The Unmanned Carrier Aviation Demonstration was conducted in December 2021 on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77). This event marked the first time the MQ-25 T1 test asset was tested aboard an aircraft carrier.

The MQ-25 will leverage existing line-of-sight and beyond-line-of-sight communications links and interface with existing ship- and land-based command and control systems. MQ-25 will be an integral part of the future carrier air wing, increasing the mission effectiveness range with its enhanced refueling capabilities and increasing the number of F/A-18E/Fs available for the strike fighter mission by relieving them of the tanking role. The MQ-25 will also pioneer manned-unmanned teaming and pave the way for future unmanned systems to pace emerging threats.

The MQ-25 Stingray is designed to deliver a robust aerial refueling capability and secondary intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability that extend the range and operational capability of the carrier air wing and carrier strike group, according to the Navy's program office. The MQ-25 will leverage existing line-of-sight and beyond-line-of-sight communications links and interface with existing ship- and land-based command and control systems.

The MQ-25A is scheduled to achieve initial operational capability in 2025. It is anticipated that 72 air vehicles will be procured.

Work under this contract is expected to be completed in

September 2026.