

U.S. Navy Doubles UAS C2 Capacity with Second MD-5C, Powered by Skunk Works MDCX



PALMDALE, Calif. – The U.S. Navy has doubled its fleet capacity to operate the MQ-25A Stingray unmanned aircraft system (UAS) over a five-month period, standing up a second operational MD-5C Ground Control Station (GCS) powered by Lockheed Martin Skunk Works MDCX autonomy platform.

Skunk Works engineers MDCX for the U.S. Navy's MD-5C that is installed in the Unmanned Air Warfare Center (UAWC), the dedicated onboard command center for unmanned carrier aviation.

USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) received the first operational MD-5C in March 2026, followed by USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) in August 2026.

Why it matters

The MD-5C is a highly complex system-of-systems, which includes the government Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence network, Lockheed Martin's MDCX™ software and hardware, and additional government-produced

ancillary equipment. Within the GCS, MDCX is the mission planning and execution software that enables Navy operators to command and control the MQ-25A Stingray, extending carrier air wing reach and freeing manned aircraft for higher-priority missions.

What Our Partners are Saying

“These two operational unmanned air warfare centers aboard CVN 71 and CVN 76 bring us closer to integrating unmanned carrier aviation into the fleet,” said Capt. Daniel Fucito, PMA-268 program manager. “Thanks to the incredible work from our joint Navy and Lockheed Martin team, these carriers are ready to fly the MQ-25A. By pairing our unmanned systems with our manned aircraft, we are building a more resilient, adaptable force that is better prepared to win the fight.”

A Ready-Now Capability

“MDCX is delivering on the promise of a ready-now, open-architecture command and control platform for the fleet,” said Ben Tongue, MDCX Program Manager. “In five months, we’ve doubled the number of U.S. Navy carriers ready to fly the MQ-25A Stingray. Our team, in close coordination with the Navy, is establishing the command and control backbone for the Carrier Air Wing of the Future.”

This install continues a series of MDCX milestones spanning ship, shore and flight test – evidence of proven platform autonomy, multi-platform control and scalable operation footprints built on operationally proven systems and Skunk Works integration expertise.

From Lockheed Martin, Sept. 30, 2026