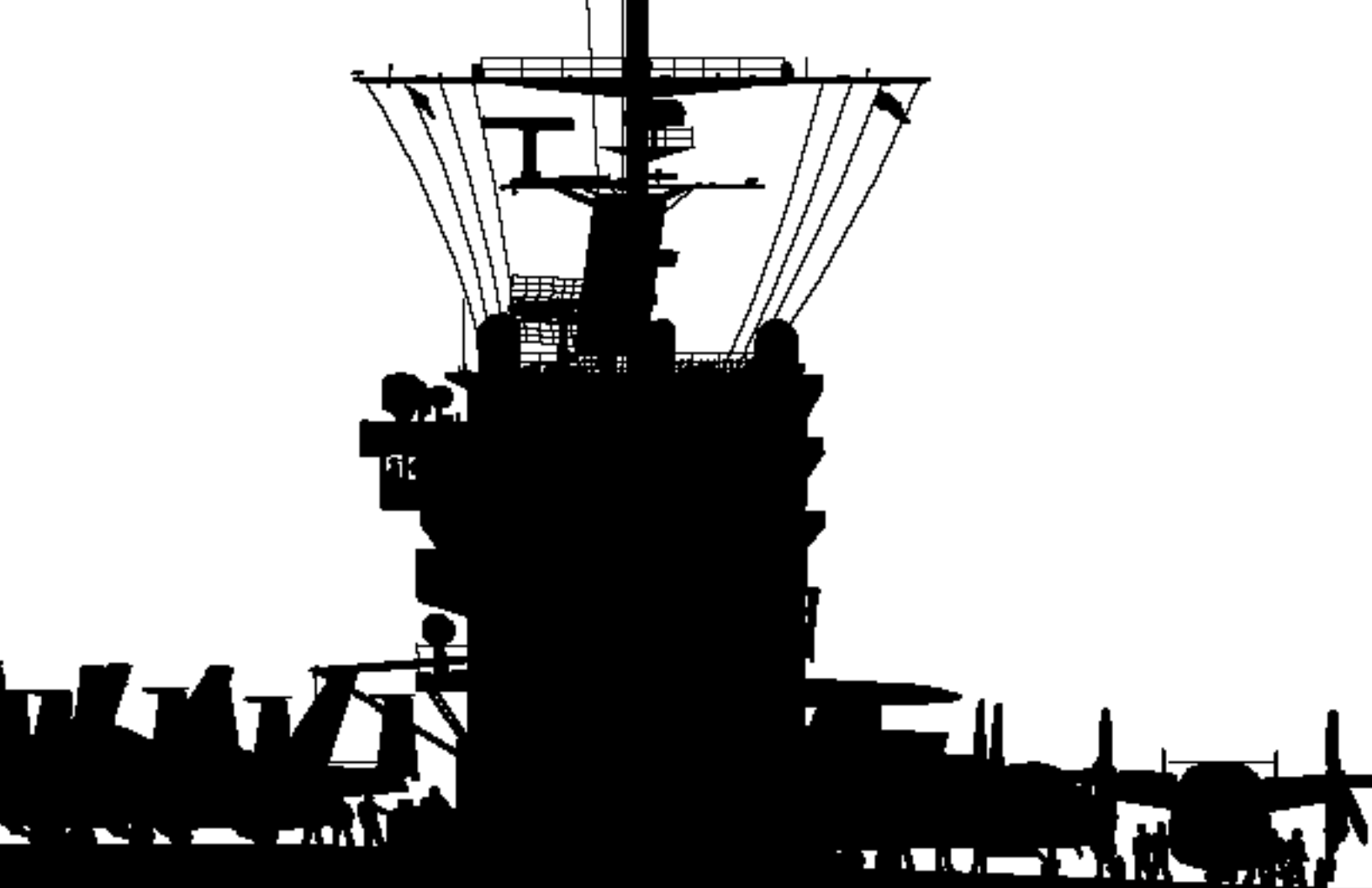


# Naval Aviation Vision:

New Challenges . . .

Enduring Realities





*This article is a condensed version of the definitive vision document developed by the fleet and produced by the Director, Air Warfare: Naval Aviation . . . Forward Air Power . . . From the Sea.*

By Stephen J. Kapurch

Edited by Sandy Russell and Wendy Karppi

**W**hen Lieutenant T. G. “Spuds” Ellyson qualified in the Navy’s first aircraft in 1911, subsequently becoming Naval Aviator No. 1, and when 1st Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham, USMC, reported to the aviation camp at Annapolis, Md., on 22 May 1912—recognized as the birth date of Marine Corps aviation—no one imagined that in a little more than 85 years Naval Aviation would stand at the dawn of a new century with power and

expeditionary capabilities unmatched by any other force.

Today, Naval Aviation plays a central role in every naval mission, from establishing battle space dominance to projecting power ashore. Operating from sea bases, Naval Aviation can reach littoral trouble spots quickly, provide self-sustained, long-range operations for extended periods, and move at a moment’s notice to respond to emergent situations. Forward-deployed

naval forces and Naval Aviation are a superb means of signaling U.S. capabilities and resolve to friends and foes alike.

Naval Aviation’s proven ability to adapt to changing times will be tested in the 21st century as the strategic environment, operational concepts and technology continue to evolve. To ensure that we will continue to be ready for these challenges, we needed a road map to chart where Naval Aviation is going and how it intends to get there.

Illustration by Morgan I. Wilbur

## The Naval Aviation Vision

The process began in July 1996 with the first of three fleet conferences, whose participants represented a true cross-section of Naval Aviation—Marine and Navy personnel from the fixed- and rotary-wing communities, and shore- and sea-based senior fleet operators. In these sessions, the participants reviewed the direc-

tion provided by our National Military Strategy; analyzed joint requirements; integrated the visions of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps; and assessed the geopolitical, economic and technological future.

These meetings resulted in the Naval Aviation Vision, a document that will serve as our guide to the future. Designed as a focal

point around which Naval Aviation will develop a consensus on its future direction, the Vision will be a “living” document, updated and adjusted over time to reflect operational, technological and programmatic changes.

The Vision outlines five key elements that underpin all aspects of Naval Aviation, each of which has been defined in terms of specific goals that must be achieved if we are to adapt in the future.





**Naval Aviation Vision Statement:**

***Naval Aviation . . .  
Forward Air Power . . .  
From the Sea . . .***

***Providing a robust and credible forward presence through  
flexible response and dominant power projection.***





# The Five Central Elements of the Vision

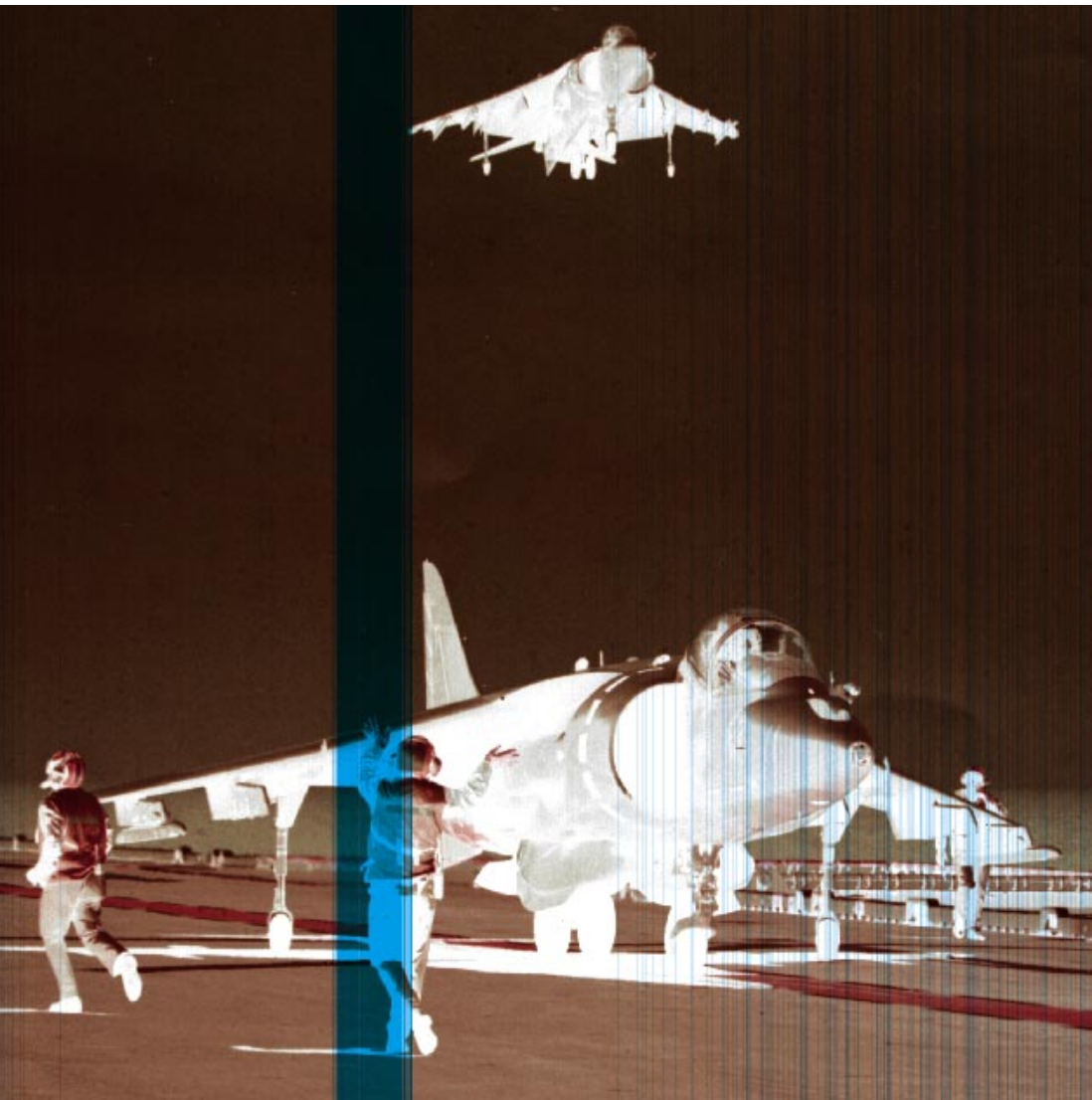
The Naval Aviation Vision is based on Joint Vision 2010 and the direction of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The Vision contains five critical elements, the first of which is its greatest asset—our people. This element coupled with technology and innovation and the ability to be self-sustained creates a unique forward presence, which provides the National Command Authority with a flexible response to any contingency.



## Quality and Motivated People.

Naval Aviation will comprise the nation's most talented and highly trained personnel, motivated by strong leadership espousing the core values of the Department of the Navy: honor, courage and commitment. The best educated and most qualified young men and women will be recruited to fill the enlisted and officer ranks. Naval

Aviation personnel will be technically trained and fully capable of operating and maintaining the most sophisticated aviation weapons and support systems. Naval Aviation will maintain high retention rates through improved quality of life programs, including educational opportunities, monetary compensation, advancement and leadership positions.



PH3 Amado Gonzalez



Ted Carlson





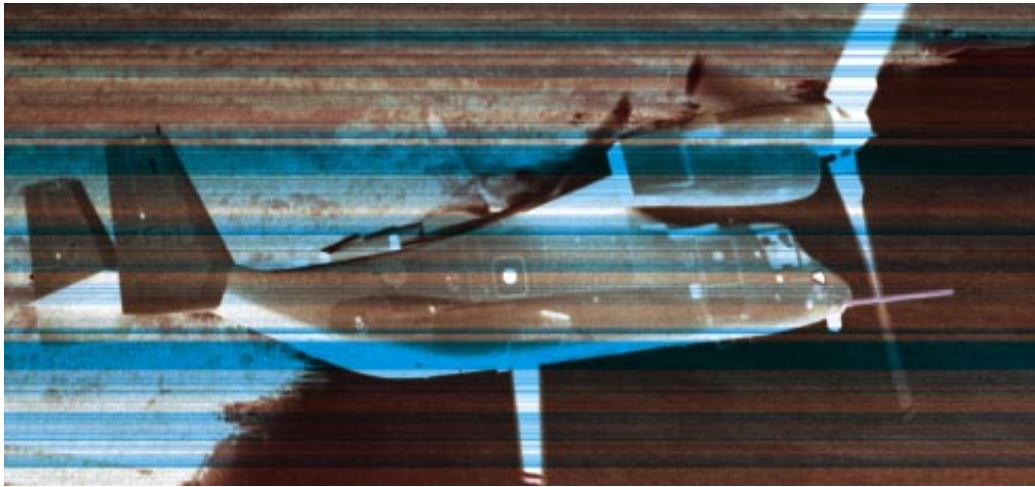
## *Quality and Motivated People*

**I**mplementing our vision for the future is important to ensure continued success well into the next century. We must be organized, trained and equipped to meet the challenges that will confront us. Our goal, therefore, is to give our people the tools they need to do what they have always done—to go in harm's way and prevail.



Mike Corrado



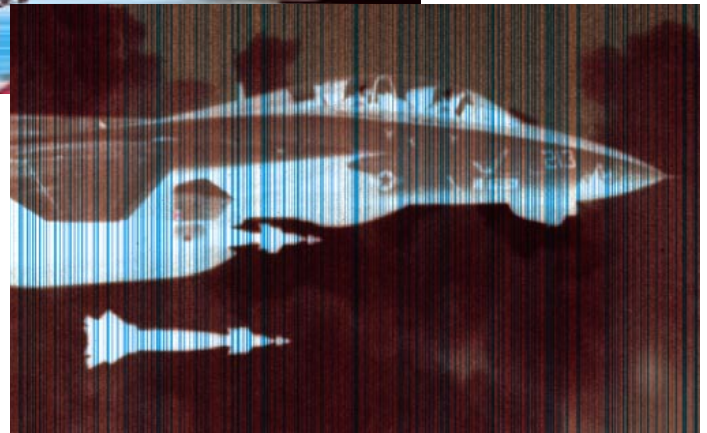


## Technology and Innovation

**N**aval Aviation is taking full advantage of ongoing technological and doctrinal innovation that will be the basis for operational excellence in the next century. Naval Aviation's leadership will remain ready to adapt to new imperatives of warfare, including the prospects that future adversaries will harness technologies and approaches that may not be symmetrical to ours. We must be ready to ensure that we—not our foes—enjoy the advantage of operational and technological superiority.



Vance Vasquez



PH3 Matthew L. Poehler

### Technology and Innovation.

Naval Aviation will aggressively pursue the application of advanced technology and innovative operational concepts to ensure the deployment of an affordable, effective force in this era of unpredictable threats by building on proven, existing capabilities and maintaining an environment that supports innovation; partnering with industry to leverage the use of commercial off-the-shelf technology; anticipating exploitation of our emerg-

ing technologies by our adversaries; and using technology as a force multiplier and as a means of reducing costs and improving the effectiveness of all Naval Aviation disciplines.

**Sustainment.** Naval Aviation is supported by cost-effective, focused logistics that ensure a rapid response across all mission areas. Naval Aviation will achieve and maintain superior sustainment by aggressively influencing the acquisition process to provide max-

imum weapon system reliability and maintainability; capitalizing on state-of-the-art logistics information technology; reducing the forward-deployed joint-service logistical footprint; skillfully managing integrated logistic support resources for optimum performance; and institutionalizing the concept of focused logistics throughout the support community.

**Unique Forward Presence.** The Navy will strive to enhance its worldwide forward presence through

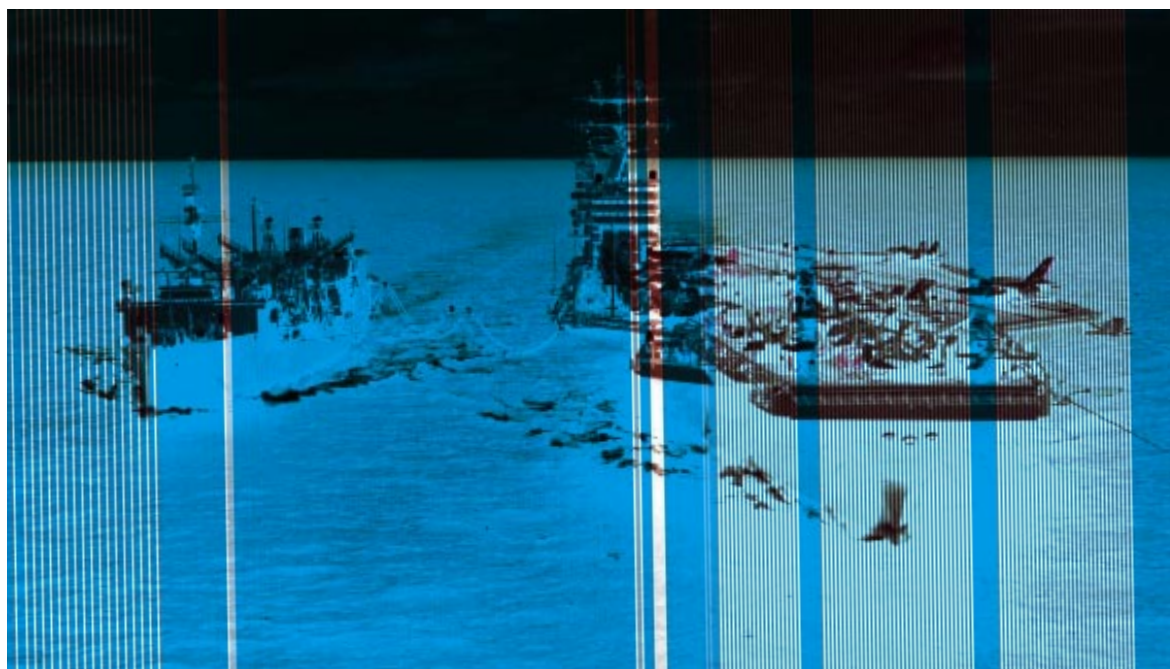
multinational exercises, port visits, foreign military training and representation on allied staffs. These activities plus the active efforts of personnel assigned to overseas naval air installations are meant to provide timely and sustainable on-scene protection of U.S. national interests, and foster closer relationships with our friends and allies.

**Flexible Responsiveness.** Naval Aviation will continue to supply the National Command Authority with

capable, credible options ranging from nonlethal deterrence to rapid, precise and decisive engagement. To accomplish this, we will provide the necessary doctrine and training, situational/battlespace awareness and command and control systems, and appropriate munitions and weapon systems; enhance mobility to enable the rapid concentration of forces; and utilize Naval Aviation's unique warfighting capabilities to achieve battlespace dominance at sea and in the littoral.

## Building on the Past for the Future

To prepare for the challenges of the next century, Naval Aviation must embrace new concepts and utilize creative thinking in order to adapt our forces as dictated by fiscal requirements, while ensuring mission success. We have already begun the process of balancing today's realities with tomorrow's needs in many aspects of Naval





Aviation, such as aircraft carriers and aviation-capable amphibious ships with their embarked air wings and aviation combat elements.

### *Aircraft Carriers*

A comprehensive plan to modernize our aircraft carrier force for the next century is based on a dual-track strategy, which combines the modernization of existing carriers with the addition of new ships to the force. The “near-term”

element of the dual-track strategy is the procurement of the tenth and final *Nimitz*-class carrier, CVN 77, in FY 2002. Scheduled for commissioning in 2008, CVN 77 will replace the conventionally powered *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) after 47 years of service. CVN 77 will be a “smart” transition ship, incorporating new technologies resulting from research and development efforts that are currently underway. The second element of the

dual-track strategy is the design of an entirely new class of aircraft carriers, now referred to as CVX (see *NANews*, Jan–Feb 97).

Major improvements and equipment upgrades to existing ships’ systems will continue to keep our current carrier force ready to meet the challenges of the future. We are also revamping our maintenance plans to decrease the number of long-term shipyard maintenance periods our carriers must undergo.



PH3 Chris Vickers

### *Unique Forward Presence*

**N**aval Aviation has long been at the forefront of U.S. power projection capabilities. As a carrier and its air wing or an amphibious ready group deploy, they represent a unique forward presence that provides a broad spectrum of warfighting capabilities. By leveraging technology, innovative tactics and highly trained people, these forces provide the National Command Authority with a wide range of crisis-management and combat capabilities.



PHAN Kris White

