

AIRSCOOP

Edited by Wendy Leland



HORNET MILESTONES

The F/A-18 community celebrated the 4 millionth flight hour of the Hornet in a unique commemoration on 14 September. Rather than a single aircraft marking the milestone, the Navy designated a specific time for the ceremonial flight hour, enabling any F/A-18A, B, C or D Hornet or F/A-18E/F Super Hornet airborne at that time to be part

of the event.

A 25 August ceremony at the Boeing Company's St. Louis, Mo., facilities marked the end of F/A-18 Hornet production. Marine Aircraft Group 11 accepted D-model number 161, the last of more than 1,400 Hornets delivered to the Navy and Marines. Ted Carlson captured these F/A-18Ds from VMFA(AW)-121 over the Salton Sea.

In the Works

The **Joint Precision Approach and Landing System** technology demonstrator, manufactured by the Raytheon Co., successfully demonstrated both pilot-controlled and fully coupled approaches at NAS Patuxent River, Md. Shipboard trials aboard *Enterprise* (CVN 65) in November will test the system's capabilities using the differential Global Positioning

System to compensate for a flight deck's inherent roll and yaw.

In July the Naval Air Systems Command awarded four concept exploration study contracts for the **Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft/Broad Area Surveillance** program. The contractors—Northrop Grumman Corp., the Boeing Co., Raytheon Aircraft, and Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co.—will explore various options for eventual

replacement of the fleet's P-3 *Orions* and EP-3E *Aries IIs*.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and the Navy awarded contracts to the Northrop Grumman Corp. and the Boeing Co. for analysis and preliminary design of a **Naval Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle**.

The first **KC-130J** aircraft made its maiden flight on 9 June,



and the Navy and manufacturer Lockheed Martin have begun testing the new tanker/transport aircraft. Improvements include an electronically controlled refueling pod that can pump up to 300 gallons of fuel per minute, glass cockpit instrumentation compatible with night vision goggles, twin head-up displays, more powerful engines and all-composite six-blade propellers. Eight KC-130Js are on order for

the Marine Corps, with the first expected to arrive at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., in late 2001.

For the Record

The Naval Force Aircraft Test Squadron, NAS Patuxent River, Md., is testing an avionics upgrade package for the **C-2A Greyhound**. The upgrade includes a terrain avoidance warning system, terminal

collision avoidance system and multifunction digital radios.

The guided missile destroyer **McCampbell (DDG 85)** was christened on 2 July at Bath Iron Works, Maine. The ship is named for Navy ace and Medal of Honor recipient Capt. David McCampbell.

The **Standoff Land Attack-Expanded Response** missile began full-rate production.

A Harrier jet is shown in a steep climb over a landscape with a grid pattern of fields. The jet is discharging several infrared decoys, which appear as bright, white, smoke-like trails. The jet's canopy is open, and the number '513' is visible on the nose. The background is a clear blue sky.

HARRIER HIGHLIGHTS

Following testing at NAWS China Lake, Calif., the **LITENING II targeting pod** for the AV-8B *Harrier* will make its way to the fleet. The pod provides an air-to-ground laser target designation capability, enhanced day and night target acquisition, and improved low-level night flight and air-to-air capabilities.

Marine Corps *Harrier* pilots at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., have an **upgraded simulator** which incorporates the AV-8B *Harrier II's* APG-65 radar. Augmenting the existing night simulator at Yuma, this new version's flat-panel projection system provides realistic imagery that can be projected to a head-up display and used with a simulated night vision goggle system. When the operational flight trainer at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., is upgraded to the new system in FY 2002, both AV-8B bases will have two radar night attack trainers.

Left, Ted Carlson captured a VMA-513 *Harrier* discharging infrared decoys over California.



ON THE CUTTING EDGE

The Naval Force Aircraft Test Squadron, NAS Patuxent River, Md., is testing a new eight-blade propeller for the E-2C *Hawkeye* and C-2 *Greyhound*. A replacement prop was needed because the original prop is no longer manufactured and there are not enough in the inventory to last until 2015, the projected date for the replacement of both aircraft.

The new design includes technologies that were not available when the original item was created. Narrower, more aerodynamic composite blades are designed to incur less stress damage; the hub is made from a modern steel composite that does not sacrifice strength for weight; and the electronic prop system, versus the old hydromechanical system, allows for less maintenance. Eight blades may look out of place on a relatively small aircraft, but keeping the number of blades in a multiple of the original four allows the aircraft's electronics to remain the same, rather than be changed to compensate for different harmonic frequency vibrations emitted by the prop. After fleet introduction in late 2001, all C-2s and E-2s are expected to have the new prop by 2006.

Mishaps

An F/A-18D *Hornet* of Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 533, MCAS Beaufort, S.C., crashed into the water off Beaufort on 7 July. Both aircrew members were rescued.

A T-38A *Talon* of the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, NAS Patuxent River, Md., crashed at Pax on 11 July, killing both occupants.

Both crew members of an F-14B *Tomcat* of Fighter Squadron 11, NAS Oceana, Va., operating from *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) ejected safely over Saudi Arabia on 26 July.

A T-45B *Goshawk* of the Naval Strike Aircraft Test Squadron, NAS Patuxent River, Md., was damaged by an uncommanded extension of

the starboard landing gear during a high-G turn. The aircraft landed safely at Pax.

A Navy-contracted Piper *Navajo Chieftan* on a routine shuttle flight from NAES Lakehurst, N.J., to NAS Patuxent River, Md., crashed in New Jersey on 9 August, killing all 9 passengers aboard.

An MH-53E *Sea Dragon* of Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15, NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, crashed in the Gulf of Mexico on 10 August. All 6 occupants were killed.

Two F/A-18D *Hornets* of Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 242, MCAS Miramar, Calif., collided in midair near MCAS Yuma, Ariz., on 11 September. One plane crashed,

killing both aircrew members; the other landed safely.

A T-34C *Turbo-Mentor* of Training Squadron 10, NAS Pensacola, Fla., crashed in Alabama on 27 September, killing the instructor pilot and student.

The pilot perished when a Strike Fighter Squadron 25 F/A-18C *Hornet* crashed in the Arabian Gulf following takeoff from *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) on 29 September.

Correction

The web address in the Sep–Oct 00 issue referencing Navy policy on corrective eye surgery was incorrect. It is http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/prk/refractive_surgery_information.htm.