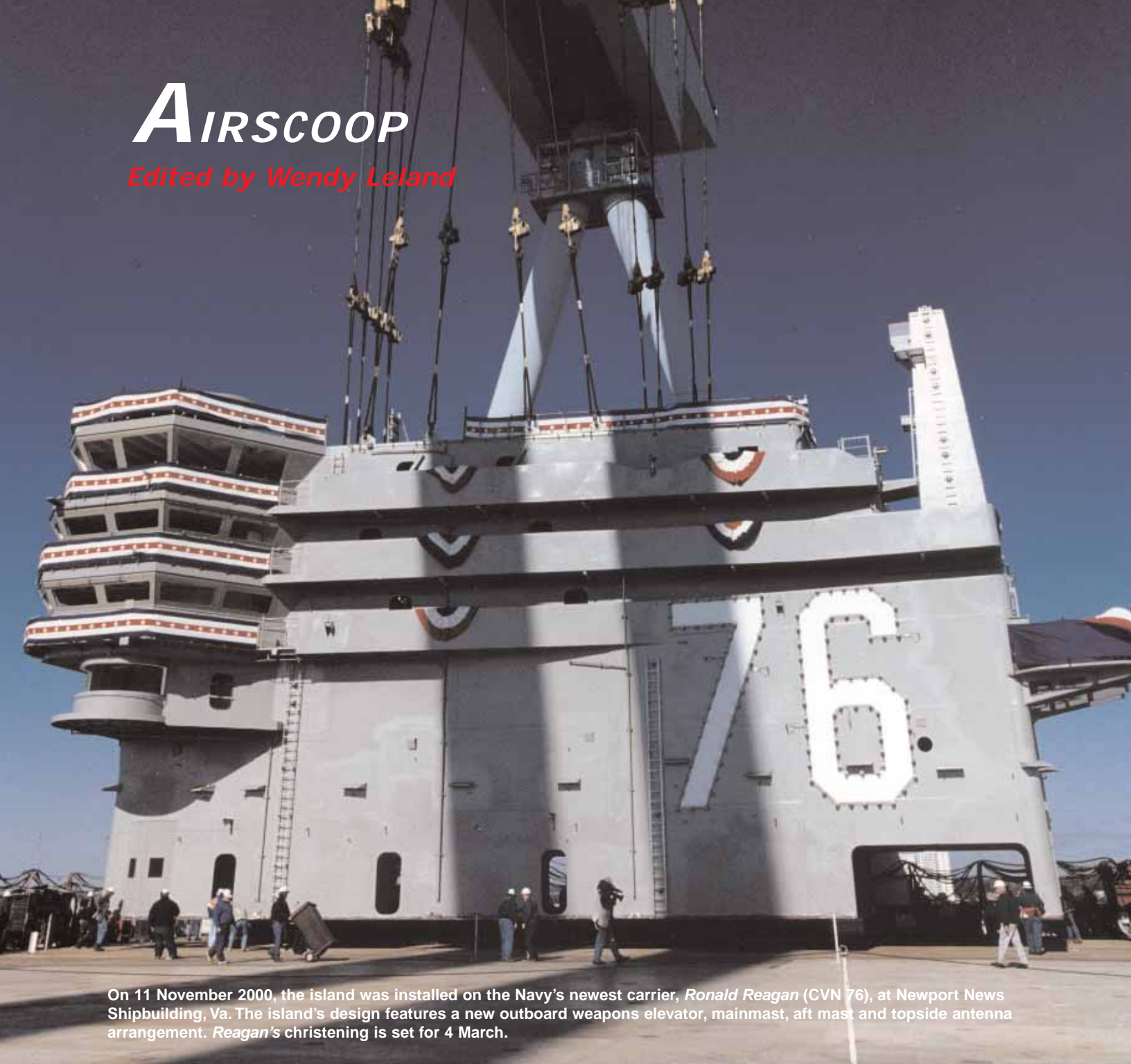


AIRSCOOP

Edited by Wendy Leland



On 11 November 2000, the island was installed on the Navy's newest carrier, *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), at Newport News Shipbuilding, Va. The island's design features a new outboard weapons elevator, mainmast, aft mast and topside antenna arrangement. *Reagan's* christening is set for 4 March.

John Whalen/Newport News Shipbuilding

Gulf War Pilot Reclassified MIA

In January, former Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig announced that the status of Cdr. Michael Speicher was changed from killed in action/body not recovered to missing in action. Speicher's F/A-18 *Hornet* was shot down in the first day of the air war over Iraq on 17 January 1991.

CH-60S Tries on Ships for Size

In fall 2000, the CH-60S helicopter completed another shipboard testing phase with flight tests aboard *Bataan* (LHD 5) and USNS *Concord* (T-AFS 5) to evaluate the helo's compatibility with the ships in both static and flight modes. The dynamic interface phase of the test program will

evaluate the aircraft aboard all classes of aviation-capable ships.

Circuit Breaker Buzz

A new circuit breaker designed to detect arcing electrical faults in aircraft wiring was ground tested last fall in a C-9 *Skytrain II* at NAS Patuxent River, Md. The new device improves on modern thermal breakers by detecting faults caused



The Lockheed Martin Joint Strike Fighter prototype, above, broke the sound barrier on 21 November 2000. Left, the engine-driven lift fan is installed in the short takeoff/vertical landing version at Lockheed Martin facilities.

by breaks in wire insulation before arcing can cause a fire or other mishap—a common worry in aging aircraft. A prototype is expected to be tested in flight conditions by the end of 2001.

Solutions for the Fleet

A fledgling website may help Sailors find solutions to technical problems. Questions submitted at www.anchordesk.navy.mil/nre/

techsol.nsf are reviewed and researched by Navy science advisors. The new program will be tested through April, and following review, formal introduction to the fleet is expected in July.

UPGRADED SUPER COBRA TAKES FLIGHT

The AH-1Z *Super Cobra* made its first flight on 7 December 2000 at Bell Helicopter Textron's Arlington, Texas, facility. The H-1 upgrade program will remanufacture 100 UH-1N transport helicopters and 180 AH-1W *Super Cobra* attack helicopters into an advanced configuration with common engines and flight components. Flight testing at NAS Patuxent River, Md., is expected to begin in March.



For the Record

The Boeing Co., Seattle, Wash., announced in January that the Navy ordered a sixth **C-40A Clipper**.

In January, Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., announced receipt of a Navy contract for design and construction of the 10th *Nimitz*-class ship, **CVN 77**, which is expected to incorporate new technologies as a transition to the next-generation aircraft carrier.

On 31 January, the Naval Air Systems Command ordered all Navy and Marine Corps **F/A-18A, B, C and D** models to be inspected for cracks in the wing fold transmission system attaching lugs, after routine inspections revealed aircraft with corroded or cracked lugs.

Mishaps

On 6 December 2000, an S-3 *Viking* of VS-32 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean. The aircrew ejected safely and was rescued.

Four Marines were killed when

an MV-22 *Osprey* of VMMT-204 crashed aboard MCAS New River, N.C., on 11 December 2000.

A T-45A *Goshawk* of Training Air Wing 2 was damaged, but the

crew was not injured, when the port mount extended in flight and hyperextended upon landing aboard NAS Kingsville, Texas, on 26 January.



In the 1990s, Naval Aviation Depot North Island, Calif., pioneered a unique process to replace the center barrels—which support the wings and landing gear—of F/A-18 *Hornets*. Originally designed to repair planes that suffered crash or hard landing damage, the process will now be used to extend the service life of fleet *Hornets* until they are replaced by the E/F model *Super Hornet*. Over 350 *Hornets* are scheduled to receive the center barrel upgrade at NADEP North Island by 2012.

SUPER HORNET HIGHLIGHTS



Above, the first fleet F/A-18E/F *Super Hornet* assigned to VFA-115 arrives at NAS Lemoore, Calif., on 7 December 2000 at the hands of squadron XO Cdr. Jeff Penfield. Left, VFA-122's Ltjg. Corey Pritchard is the first student in the fleet readiness squadron to carrier qualify in the *Super Hornet*.