AIRSCOOP

Edited by Wendy Leland

SHARP EYE IN THE SKIES

On 28 August, a prototype Shared Reconnaissance Pod (SHARP) demonstrated its real-time imagery capability as it flew over Washington, D.C., above, aboard an F/A-18F *Super Hornet* from NAS Patuxent River, Md. The SHARP system is an all-digital tactical reconnaissance system capable of wide-area coverage at long ranges in both visible and infrared wavelengths. A replacement for the Tactical Airborne Reconnaissance Pod System, SHARP can be installed on multiple platforms, and is capable of simultaneous air and ground screening. In the future, real-time dissemination of high-resolution digital data to the ground will be enhanced with a data link to multiple ground stations. Strike Fighter Squadron 41 is expected to be the first squadron to receive the SHARP system upon fleet introduction in 2003.

UAV Command Established

On 29 August, the office of the Secretary of Defense announced the establishment of a temporary organization to address issues related to military use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Led by the Navy and headquartered at NAS Fallon, Nev., the Joint UAV in Time Sensitive Operations Joint Test and Evaluation Office will attempt to find commonality for the different types of UAVs used in the four military services.

NATTC Teaches Fuels

The Naval Air Technical Training Center, NAS Pensacola, Fla., has begun a new course to provide aviation boatswain's mates (fuels) with hands-on experience before reporting to the fleet. The six-week course teaches students how to manage, maintain and operate the fuel system from the moment fuel is delivered to the ship to delivery to the aircraft. A replica of a fuel

Ltjg. Craig Dalton

Instructor ABF1 Scottie Williams, left, demonstrates the fuels trainer to ABF3 Eric Castleberry, a student at the Naval Air Technical Training Center.

pumping system—including a fueling console, hoses, reels, pumps and a mock airplane—mimics shipboard operations. Students communicate through shipboard phones, adding further realism to the training.

MH-60R's Maiden Flight

The MH-60R multimission helicopter completed its maiden flight on 19 July at Sikorsky Aircraft, Stratford, Conn. This was the first SH-60B to be remanufactured into the Romeo configuration. In August the helo flew to NAS Patuxent River, Md., where developmental flight testing on two prototypes is being conducted. Instrumentation was installed at Pax followed by installation of avionics and mission systems suites and a glass cockpit at Lockheed Martin Systems Integration in Owego, N.Y. A total of nine remanufactured MH-60Rs will include four test articles and five low-rate

An F/A-18 *Hornet* of Strike Fighter Squadron 81 launches from *George Washington* (CVN 73) on 16 September.

PH2 Lisa Marcus

For the Record

On 10 August, Navy **F/A-18 *Hornets*** participated with Air Force and British aircraft in a strike on Iraqi military sites in response to hostile actions against coalition aircraft patrolling the no-fly zones.

The Northrop Grumman Corp., San Diego, Calif., received the first engineering and manufacturing development **RQ-8A *Fire Scout*** vertical takeoff and landing unmanned aerial vehicle.

The Marine Corps took delivery of the first production **KC-130J *Hercules*** tanker, above, on 31 August. A total of seven were planned for acceptance through October.

Northrop Grumman received a $73 million contract for the **LITENING II** pod for Marine Corps AV-8B *Harriers*. The pod combines night and day targeting and navigation capabilities.

The F/A-18E *Super Hornet* performed a successful guided launch of the **Joint Direct Attack Munition** on 29 August at China Lake, Calif.

LCpl. Bradley Shaver

MCAS Miramar, Calif., received a Cessna *Citation Encore,* designated **UC-35D,** above, the third of seven *Citations* intended to replace Marine Corps CT-39 *Sabreliners* for operational support airlift. Two UC-35Cs are assigned to NAS New Orleans, La. MCAS Futenma, Japan, and NAF Washington, D.C., will each receive a UC-35D by spring 2002.

The Marine Corps launched a $200 million program to improve the engine reliability of the **CH-46E *Sea Knight.*** The T58-16 Engine Reliability Improvement Program centers on installation of new General Electric engine cores, with the first prototype to be delivered in spring 2002.

Northrop Grumman received a Navy contract to develop an airborne mine detection system for the Marine Corps. The **Coastal Battlefield Reconnaissance and Analysis** system is a multispectral payload flown on a tactical unmanned aerial vehicle to provide amphibious forces with accurate battlefield intelligence, including minefields, obstacles and fortifications.

The **arc fault circuit breaker** made its first flight aboard a Navy C-9 *Skytrain II* at NAS Norfolk, Va., in August. Designed to protect civilian and military aircraft from wire-related mishaps, the breaker, which is scheduled to enter production in 2002, is being developed jointly by the Navy, the Federal Aviation Administration and private industry.

Mishaps

A Fighter Squadron 2 F-14D *Tomcat* operating from *Constellation* (CV 64) crashed into the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean on 9 August. Both aviators were lost at sea.

An F/A-18A *Hornet* assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 115 crashed at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., on 22 August, killing the pilot.

On 28 August a U.S. Naval Test Pilot School OH-58C *Kiowa* crashed into the water off NAS Patuxent River, Md., injuring one of the pilots.

The crew was uninjured but the aircraft damaged when an F/A-18C *Hornet* of Strike Fighter Squadron 105 suffered an engine fire upon takeoff from NAS Oceana, Va., on

The first upgraded TAV-8B *Harrier,* above, was completed and returned to VMAT-203, MCAS Cherry Point, N.C. The upgrade includes night vision capability, new and more powerful engines, structural enhancements and new mission software. Seventeen aircraft will be upgraded, providing the Marine Corps with night-capable training aircraft that more closely represent fleet *Harriers*.

Kyle Welke

An F/A-18E *Super Hornet* of Strike Fighter Squadron 122 refuels Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron aircraft.

HELIOS HITS A HIGH MARK

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's solar-powered, propeller-driven Helios aircraft set a new world record altitude of 96,500 feet on 13 August. The remotely piloted wing—built by AeroVironment Inc., Monrovia, Calif.—took off from Kauai, Hawaii, and flew for almost 17 hours, passing the old altitude records of 80,200 feet for propeller-driven aircraft and 85,068 feet for any aircraft not powered by rockets. Production versions of the Helios wing may be used as long-term environmental monitors or as communications relays.