

# AIRSCOOP

*Edited by Wendy Leland*

## GREYHOUNDS BEGIN SLEP

The first C-2A *Greyhound* to begin a structural life enhancement program (SLEP) arrived at Naval Air Depot North Island, Calif. Structural enhancements to the center wing section and rewiring are expected to extend the life of the 36 fleet C-2As, to 15,000 flight hours and 36,000 landings. NADEP North Island will perform the SLEP on two *Greyhounds* in 2002 as part of the validation and verification process, followed by two aircraft in 2003 and four in 2004, reaching an eventual total of six per year.

## Test Squadrons Redesignated

On 1 May, test squadrons without alphanumeric designations were officially redesignated as air test and evaluation squadrons in keeping with fleet standards. Previous and revised designations are as follows: Naval Force Warfare Aircraft Test Squadron, NAS Patuxent River, Md.—VX-20; Naval Rotary Wing Aircraft Test Squadron, NAS Patuxent River, Md.—HX-21; Naval Strike Aircraft Test Squadron, NAS Patuxent River, Md.—VX-23; Naval Weapons Test Squadron Point Mugu, NBVC Point Mugu, Calif.—VX-30; and Naval Weapons Test Squadron China Lake, NAWS China Lake, Calif.—VX-31.

## Black Stallions Activated

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 772, a reserve CH-53E *Super Stallion* squadron based at NAS JRB Willow Grove, Pa., was activated on 14 February for one year. Attached to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263, MCAS New River, N.C., the HMH-772 *Black Stallions* will provide heavy lift capability for the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit's aviation combat element, augmenting the deployment capability of the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing.

## Brite Star Looks Forward

The AN/AAQ-22D Brite Star forward-looking infrared system successfully completed laser designation testing at Yuma Proving Grounds, Ariz., in March. Designed to replace the AN/AAQ-22C system on board the Marine Corps' UH-1N "Huey," Brite Star includes a camera, enhanced optics, improved tracker modes and a laser designator.



## H-60 Highlights

On 31 March, the Green Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 3 received the first three MH-60S *Knighthawks* to be delivered to an operational squadron here, during a 4 April ceremony at Owego, N.Y., an MH-60S *Knighthawk* (upper left) flies an American flag during the first flight of the MH-60R *Seahawk* with the total weapon system on board (below).

## For the Record

Raytheon Aircraft, Wichita, Kans., received a \$30-million contract for seven T-6A *Texan II* training aircraft. The Navy has ordered more than 40 *Texan IIs*, with the first scheduled for delivery by year's end.

Northrop Grumman received a \$42-million planning contract for continued preparations toward the overhaul and refueling of *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70).

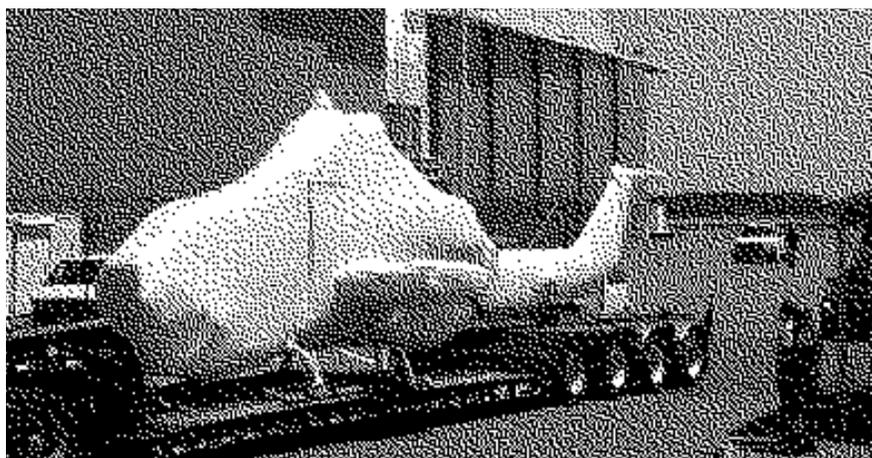
The first AH-1Z *Super Cobra*

entered the envelope expansion testing phase at NAS Patuxent River, Md.

## Mishaps

A Naval Weapons Test Squadron China Lake, Calif., HH-1N "Huey" crashed in California on 28 March, killing two crew members and injuring four others.

An MH-53E *Sea Dragon* of Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14 suffered Class A damage following an emergency



The third AH-1Z *Super Cobra* arrives under wraps at NAS Patuxent River, Md., in May for testing with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 21.

Ted Gross

landing in Bahrain on 2 April.

Two members of Naval Weapons Test Squadron Point Mugu, Calif., were killed when their QF-4 *Phantom II* crashed during the Point Mugu air show on 20 April.

A Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light SH-60B *Seahawk* was lost on approach to *Paul Hamilton* (DDG 60) off southern California on 4 May. Three crew members suffered first-aid injuries.

Two T-39N *Sabreliners* of Training Squadron 86 were lost and seven crew members killed following a midair collision in the Gulf of Mexico on 8 May.

## National Defense Service Medal Authorized

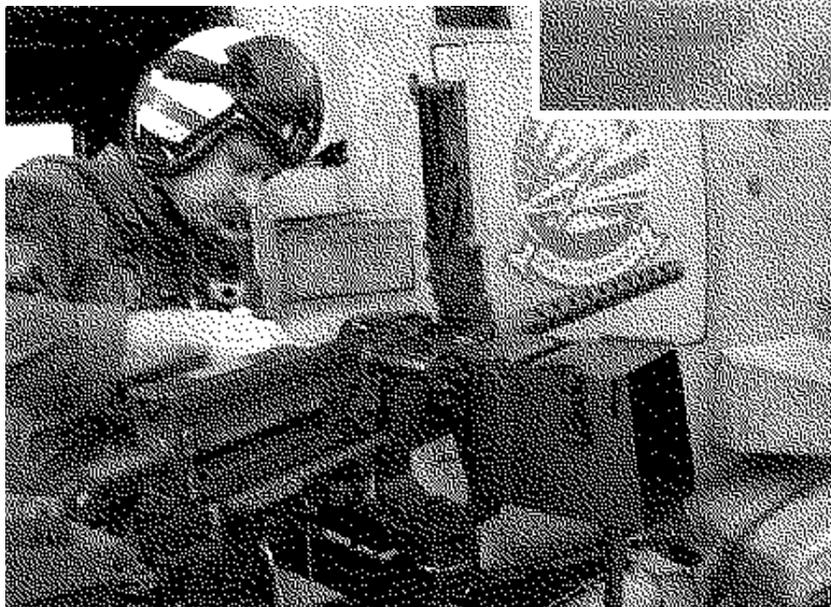


In recognition of the contributions made by service members in response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. and ongoing operations against the terrorist threat, Executive Order 10448 authorized members of the U.S. armed forces on active duty on or after 11 September 2001 to be awarded the National Defense Service Medal. A closing date is yet to be determined. The medal was previously issued for service during the Korean War, the Vietnam War and for southwest Asia service from 1990 to 1995.

# CHARGERS TARGET KILLER TOMATOES



PH3 John E. Woods



PH3 Adam R. Gomez

Left, before the Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 14 *Chargers* launch from *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) on a 7 May gunnery training exercise, AW1 Lance A. Easterling inspects a .50 caliber machine gun aboard one of the squadron's H-60 *Seahawks*. Above, the object of the gunners' scrutiny during the live-fire exercise is the inflatable red "killer tomato" target.

# *SUPER HORNET HIGHLIGHTS*

The Navy's newest aircraft, the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, is now entering the fleet in force. In December 2001, Fighter Squadrons 14 and 41 were redesignated strike fighter squadrons (VFA) to reflect their transition from the F-14 Tomcat to the Super Hornet. Above, VFA-14 celebrated its "safe for flight" certification with the squadron's first operational flight on 16 April. Right, a VFA-115 F/A-18E launches from Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) on 3 May. Below, an F-model Super Hornet of VFA-41 prepares to launch from Nimitz (CVN 68) on 13 May.

