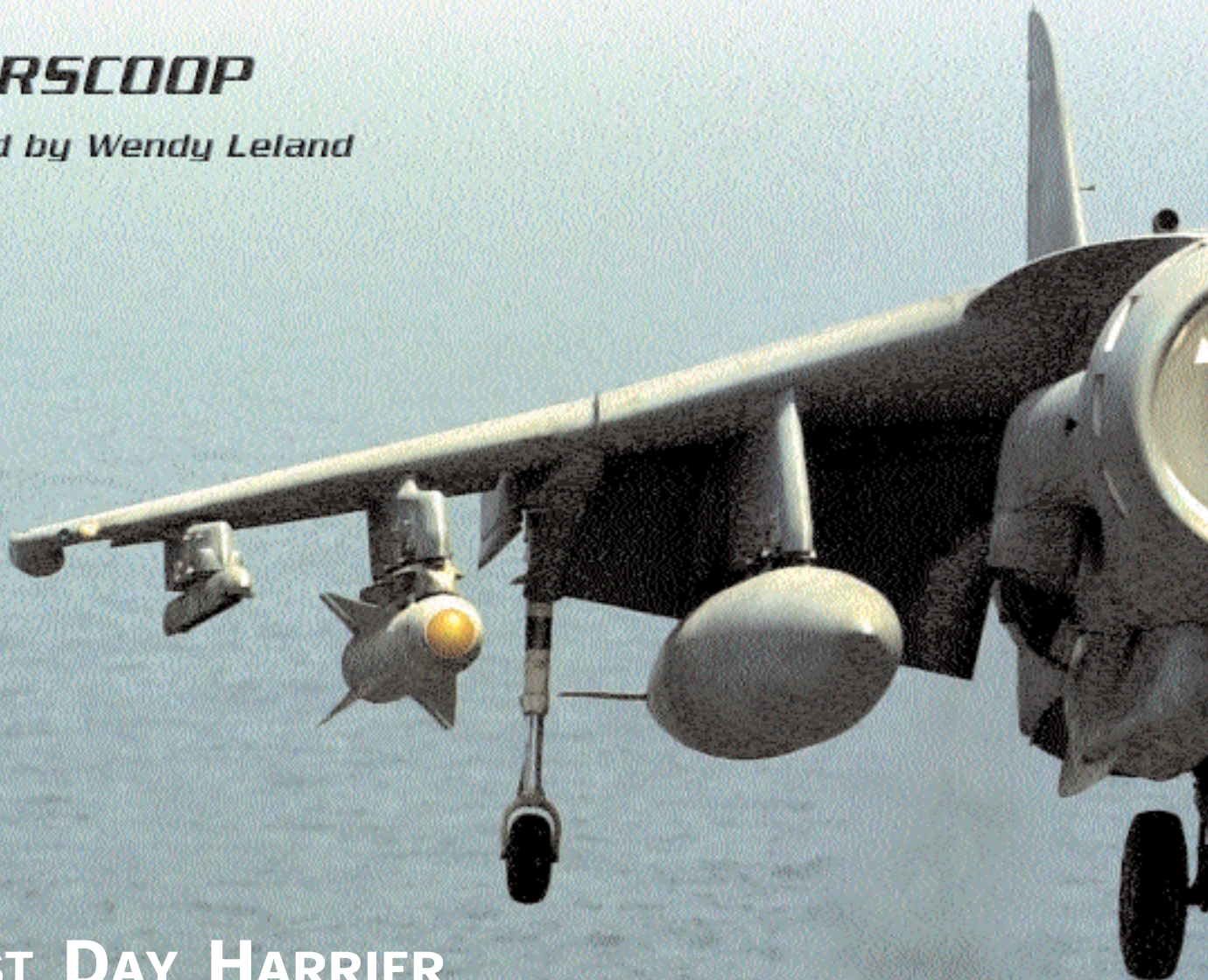


AIRSCOOP

Edited by Wendy Leland



LAST DAY HARRIER TO NADEP FOR UPGRADE

The last of 74 Marine Corps day-attack AV-8B *Harrier II*s was inducted at Naval Aviation Depot Cherry Point, N.C., on 11 December to begin transformation into a night-attack/radar-equipped *Harrier II Plus*. Upgrades such as a more powerful Rolls-Royce engine, reconditioned APG-65 multimode radar components and a cockpit compatible with night-vision goggles are installed in a new fuselage, along with 287 reused or modified components from the day-attack version. This last upgraded aircraft is expected to return to the fleet in late 2003.



Above, NADEP Cherry Point personnel accepted the final day-attack AV-8B *Harrier II* to be upgraded to the night-attack/radar-equipped version. Top, the *Harrier* fleet will be enhanced by the addition of the Litening II pod with improved targeting capabilities. Photo by PHCM Terry Cosgrove

Litening II Gives USMC Improved FLIR

The Marine Corps accepted the first of 47 AN/AAQ-28 Litening II targeting pods for the AV-8B *Harrier II* on 7 December 2001. The pod incorporates a 640-by-512-pixel forward-looking infrared camera, which demonstrated about a 25 percent improvement in target recognition range compared to the previous 256-by-256-pixel version. The pod gives the *Harrier* the capability to autonomously deliver precision-guided munitions such as laser-guided bombs and missiles,



and enhances the aircraft's day and night target acquisition and low-level night flight capabilities.

Northrop Grumman Nets Newport News

On 7 November 2001, Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., signed a merger agreement with Northrop Grumman Corp., Los Angeles, Calif. Now known as Northrop Grumman Newport News, it is a \$4 billion shipbuilding enterprise with expertise in every class of nuclear and non-nuclear naval ship.

New Aviation Training Program Introduced

The Naval Air Training Command began the Introductory Flight Screening program in December 2001 at NAS Pensacola, Fla. The program provides prospective aviators 25 hours of classroom and flight instruction with certified civilian instructors prior to entering the



PH3 Douglas M. Peartman

Navy flight training pipeline.
For the Record

Enterprise (CVN 65), above, entered Norfolk Naval Shipyard,

MAVERICK PLUS SYSTEM COMPLETES S-3B DEVELOPMENTAL TESTING



Developmental testing of the S-3B Maverick Plus System (MPS) was completed in October 2001 at NAS Patuxent River, Md. The MPS project will provide every fleet *Viking* with the capability to carry, target and launch the AGM-65E Laser Maverick and AGM-65F IR (infrared) Maverick air-to-surface missiles, as well as the AGM-84H/K Standoff Land Attack Missile-Expanded Response (SLAM-ER) weapon.

In addition, MPS also provides the S-3B crew with post-launch control of the SLAM-ER. The system greatly improves the *Viking's* ability to conduct combat antisurface warfare operations using each of these missiles, and also introduces the ability for overland strike missions using SLAM-ER.

MPS developmental testing was conducted in seven phases, which included extensive ground testing, carrier suitability, separation and captive carriage tests and two live-fire events. The first live-fire test scored a direct hit on a small boat using Laser Maverick and an SH-60B *Seahawk* helicopter as the designating platform. The second scored a direct hit on a simulated mobile missile launcher using SLAM-ER fired at 85 nm and controlled at 110 nm from the target. The missile was both fired and controlled by a Naval Force Aircraft Test Squadron S-3B with an F/A-18 *Hornet* standing by for backup control.

The new precision weapon capability provided by MPS takes advantage of the S-3B's legacy sensors, long



The S-3B Maverick Plus System will enable fleet *Vikings* to carry a variety of missiles, such as the Laser Maverick, top, and the SLAM-ER, above and left.

flight range and endurance, and the resources of a multicrew cockpit. Following the conclusion of operational testing in early 2002, the

new system is expected to deploy with Sea Control Squadron (VS) 38, NAS North Island, Calif., and VS-30, NAS Jacksonville, Fla.

Thanks to MPS Developmental Test Project Officers Lts. Kevin Quarderer and Tim Hill for contributing to this story.

Portsmouth, Va., on 2 January for an extended drydock selected restricted availability, for which Northrop Grumman received a \$191 million contract.

On 19 December 2001 at Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division China Lake, Calif., the **Advanced Antiradiation Guided Missile** program completed the fourth successful missile firing in the

advanced technology demonstration phase.

Mishaps

A UH-1N "Huey" of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 365



PH3 Saul Ingle

was destroyed but there were no fatalities following a mishap on 6 December 2001.

An F/A-18E *Super Hornet* of Strike Fighter Squadron 115 was damaged on 3 January when the right main mount did not extend on landing in Memphis, Tenn.

Seven Marines were killed when a KC-130R *Hercules* of Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352 crashed in Pakistan on 9 January.

An F/A-18A *Hornet* of Strike Fighter Squadron 203 was damaged and the pilot ejected when the nose

landing gear collapsed on landing rollout in Georgia on 16 January.

Two crewmen were killed when a CH-53E *Sea Stallion* of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361 crashed in Afghanistan on 20 January.

PHAN Tina Lamb

Top, for a split second after the catapult stroke, an F/A-18 Hornet and a flight deck shooter are blurs of motion during flight ops on board Carl Vinson (CVN 70) as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Right, on 16 January John C. Stennis (CVN 74) trails a crisp wake as evidence of her handling capabilities. Stennis deployed two months ahead of schedule to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

