



AIRSCOOP

Edited by Wendy Leland

5 MILLION HOURS AND COUNTING

On 12 December 2002, the F/A-18 Hornet surpassed 5 million total flight hours. The first squadrons airborne on the day of the milestone included Strike Fighter Squadron 192 from *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63), shown below flying past Mount Fuji, Japan; Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 122, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan; and pilots from the Royal Malaysian Air Force.

The Hornet continues to be a versatile airframe in use throughout the fleet and beyond. Facing page, an F/A-18C Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 15 launches from *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) during training operations in the Atlantic Ocean on 13 January. Right, an F/A-18A modified with the active aeroelastic wing takes off from NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on 15 November. The checkout flight initiated a NASA-Air Force flight research program to investigate the potential of aerodynamically twisting flexible wings to improve maneuverability of high-performance aircraft at transonic and supersonic speeds.



Carla Thomas



LCdr. William Koyama

AMPHIBIOUS TASK FORCES DEPLOY



PH3 Gregory Badger

Loaded with Marines and medium- and heavy-lift helicopters, *Boxer* (LHD 4) heads to sea on 17 January. *Boxer* is part of Amphibious Task Force West, which also includes *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6), *Cleveland* (LPD 7), *Dubuque* (LPD 8), *Comstock* (LSD 45), *Anchorage* (LSD 36) and *Pearl Harbor* (LSD 52). Amphibious Task Force East also deployed recently, comprised of *Kearsarge* (LHD 3), *Bataan* (LHD 5), *Saipan* (LHA 2), *Ponce* (LPD 15), *Portland* (LSD 37), *Gunston Hall* (LSD 44) and *Ashland* (LSD 48).

Expeditionary Experiment Underway

In a 2003 experiment, an expeditionary strike group (ESG), centered around *Peleliu* (LHA 5), will provide surface and submarine force warfighting capability to the traditional amphibious ready group (ARG).

Currently, ARGs include a Marine expeditionary unit (MEU), an amphibious assault ship, a dock landing ship and an amphibious transport ship. The *Peleliu* ESG will be comprised of an MEU and amphibious assault ship, along with *Dubuque* (LPD 8), *Germantown* (LSD 42), *Port Royal* (CG 73), *Decatur* (DDG 73), *Jarrett* (FFG 33) and *Topeka* (SSN 754). *Peleliu* will embark a flag officer in command with an operational staff. In addition to the West Coast-based ESG, an Atlantic Fleet ESG will also deploy in 2003, allowing a comparison of two different approaches.

Part of the Chief of Naval Operations' Sea Power 21, the ESG concept could increase the number of independent operational groups the Navy can deploy from 19 to 38, providing highly mobile,

self-sustaining forces that are able to undertake missions across the entire spectrum of operations.

For the Record

Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Va., completed the planned incremental availability of *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) on 4 November 2002.

The integrated APG-70 **Active Electronically Scanned Array** radar was demonstrated on 20 November 2002 at Raytheon Company facilities in El Segundo, Calif. The new radar, designed to enhance the capabilities of the F/A-18 Hornet, is scheduled to enter flight testing at China Lake, Calif., in mid-2003.

On 29 November 2002, aboard *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), LCDr. Matthew Tysler became the first pilot to achieve **1,000 flight hours in the F/A-18E Super Hornet**.

In November 2002, an **AH-1Z Super Cobra** surpassed 10,000 fatigue life hours during low-cycle testing, exceeding the AH-1W's fatigue requirement by 4,000 hours.

In December 2002, the **AH-1Z Super Cobra** completed envelope expansion testing at NAS Patuxent

River, Md., accomplishing over 400 flight test hours in the first 24-month testing phase. External stores jettison testing is up next for the program.

Mishaps

A backseater in a Fighter Squadron 213 F-14D Tomcat inadvertently ejected at NAS Fallon, Nev., on 6 November 2002 and was safely recovered.

On 14 November 2002, the pilot of a Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101 F/A-18D Hornet ejected safely during a flight over the southern California operations area and was recovered.

An F/A-18D Hornet of Fighter Squadron 125 suffered Class A damage from a fire on the flightline at NAS Lemoore, Calif., on 20 November 2002.

On 18 December 2002, the pilot of a Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center F/A-18A Hornet ejected safely over NAS Fallon, Nev.

An F/A-18A Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 97 suffered Class A damage when it departed the runway on rollout from NAS Lemoore, Calif., on 6 January.

OSPREY RESUMES TESTING



PH3 Clark Desire

In November 2002, the V-22 Osprey Integrated Test Team commenced the first phase of high rate of descent testing. Expected to conclude in spring 2003, Phase I focuses on a rate of descent no greater than 800 feet per minute combined with a forward speed of less than 40 knots. The second, more experimental, phase will fully explore the Osprey's flight envelope, including its characteristics in regard to ring vortex state.

On 8 January, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Michael W. Hagee, right, took the first VIP flight in a V-22 Osprey since the aircraft's return to flight in late May 2002. The 20-minute flight was conducted from NAS Patuxent River, Md., headquarters of the V-22 Integrated Test Team. The Osprey's return to flight testing included at-sea testing of the tilt-rotor aircraft on board *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) on 14 January, top.

