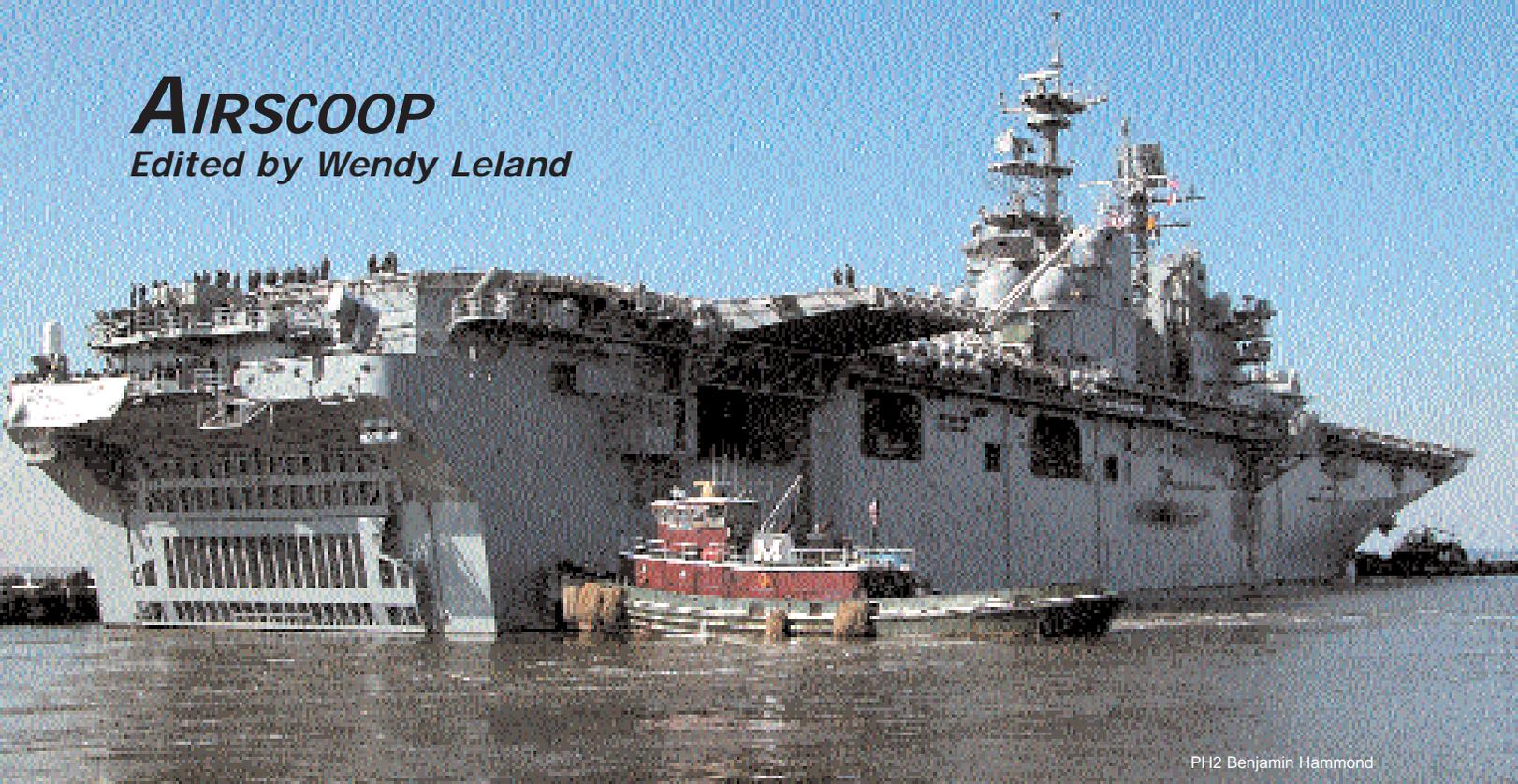


AIRSCOOP

Edited by Wendy Leland



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MH-60R Testing Continues

During testing at the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center, the MH-60R helicopter testing program logged its first shipboard landing, on board *Gettysburg* (CG 64), and the first in-flight launch of a sonobuoy. The Romeo modification also located a submarine using airborne low-frequency sonar while conducting a surface radar sweep using the multimode radar and electronic surveillance measures.



A Naval Air Systems Command MH-60R conducts an airborne low-frequency sonar operation during three weeks of testing in the Caribbean.

Iwo Jima (LHD 7), above, and ships of her amphibious ready group—*Nashville* (LPD 13) and *Carter Hall* (LSD 50)—began a regularly scheduled deployment in March, with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) embarked.

Last E-6A leaves Tinker

By TACAMO Public Affairs Office

On 4 February 2003, the Navy and Strategic Communications Wing 1 marked the end of an era as the last E-6A Mercury aircraft, above right, left Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., following a ceremony



honoring the aircraft's final flight. Tail number 409 is the last of 16 E-6As to undergo modifications to become an E-6B.

Aircraft 409 was the last TACAMO aircraft to be solely dedicated to the mission of sending messages to Trident missile submarines. Once the 10-month modifications are completed it will be able to communicate with all of the strategic forces, including bombers, ICBM missile silos and Trident missile submarines.

The upgrades include the addition of a battlestaff area, installation of the MILSTAR satellite communications system and incorporation of the UHF Command, Control and Communications system. "These added systems will allow a

battlestaff composed of members from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force to send messages to all of America's nuclear forces, including strategic bombers, ICBM missile silos and, of course, submarines," explained Capt. Gerald Geletzke, Commander, Strategic Communications Wing 1.

The upgrade program is the result of the additional role that the Navy E-6B took over on 1 October 1998 when the E-6B replaced the Air Force's EC-135 in performing the "Looking Glass" missions, which had been flown by the Air Force for the previous 29 years.

Mishaps

On 17 January, an F/A-18C Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 25 suffered Class A damage after departing the runway on rollout in Australia.

A Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 224 F/A-18D Hornet was lost over the southern California operations area on 17 January, with no fatalities.

On 22 January two AH-1W Super Cobras of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 775 collided during operations at Laredo International Airport, Texas. The pilots and copilots of both aircraft were killed.

An F-14D Tomcat of Fighter Squadron 213 crashed during operations with *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) near Puerto Rico on 26 January. The aircrew ejected safely and were recovered.

On 11 February, an E/A-6B Prowler of Electronic Attack Squadron 129 was lost at sea following an arrested landing on board *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) in the southern California operations area. The three-person aircrew ejected safely and was recovered.

On 18 February, an F/A-18C Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 147 crashed while operating from *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) in the western Pacific. The pilot ejected safely and was recovered.

An F/A-18C of Marine Fighter

OSPREY DROPS

The V-22 Osprey integrated test team completed a series of tests over Fort Bragg, N.C., to prove the Osprey's utility as an aerial delivery platform.

Thirty hours of flight time included testing of how deployment bags left behind after static-line jumps reacted in the aircraft's wake, and hung-jumper tests in both the conversion and airplane modes. Containerized delivery system tests with 500- and 1,000-pound bundles dropped up to four at a time, above, were also conducted.



Attack Squadron 314 suffered Class A damage after it free-fell on an elevator aboard *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) on 1 March.

On 12 March, an E-2C Hawkeye of Carrier Airborne Early Warning

Squadron 120 suffered Class A damage when its landing gear and wings collapsed and it caught fire after departing the runway upon landing at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.

Medals for War on Terror Established

In March, President George W. Bush issued an executive order establishing two military awards for actions in the global war on terrorism. The Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, above right, will be awarded to service members who serve in military operations to combat terrorism on or after 11 September 2001, most notably Operation Noble Eagle. The Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, right below, will be awarded to service members who serve in military expeditions to combat terrorism on or after 11 September 2001, such as Operation Enduring Freedom.

