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AIRSCOOP

Edited by Wendy Leland

SEAHAWKS GRANTED FLIGHT HOUR EXTENSION

In April, the Naval Air Systems Command cleared the in-service Seahawk fleet to continue flying to 12,000 hours. The current flight hour limit of 10,000 was expanded to allow H-60B/F/H model aircraft to continue flying during the transition phase while the MH-60R multimission helicopter comes online.

For the Record

The **Improved Capability III** version of the EA-6B Prowler weapons system entered low rate initial production, with Northrop Grumman receiving a $91 million contract for 10 operational systems.

In May, the **V-22 Osprey** testing program surpassed 500 flight hours, and the **UH-1Y/Z** upgrade program achieved 1,000 flight hours.

The first group of Naval Flight Officer students began training in the **T-6A Texan II** at NAS Pensacola, Fla., on 30 June.

On 8 July Acting Secretary of the Navy Hansford T. Johnson announced that the aircraft carrier ***Midway* (CV 41)** will be donated to the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum in California.

A new website allows users to buy test and measurement equipment through the **Navy Inventory Control Point** by logging on to http://navicpmart.com.

Facing page, an SH-60 Seahawk hovers over *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) during vertrep operations on 27 April. Right, testing personnel at NAS Patuxent River, Md., celebrate the 1,000th flight hour of the UH-1Y/Z upgrade program in May.

PH3 Yesenia Rosas

An F/A-18E Super Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 14 launches from *Nimitz* (CVN 68) on its way to *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) on 30 March. Carrier Air Wing 11 provided four Super Hornets to CVW-14 to achieve the best mix of fighter and tanker capabilities during the war in Iraq.

Mishaps

On 19 May a CH-46E Sea Knight of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 crashed in Iraq, killing four personnel on board.

An EA-6B Prower of Electronic Attack Squadron 137 suffered Class A damage when the ALQ-99 pod departed the aircraft in flight at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash.

On 16 July an MH-53E Sea Dragon of Helicopter Support Squadron 4 crashed at NAS Sigonella, Sicily, killing four crew members.

The T58-GE-16A Engine Reliability Improvement Program (ERIP) CH-46E engine was officially presented to the fleet in a 21 May ceremony at MCAS New River, N.C. The program will deliver 446 engines for the Marine Sea Knight fleet, extending the engine life, improving reliability, reducing life cycle cost and restoring power margins with a new engine core. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 266 received the first four ERIP engines in April.

Above, four MV-22 Ospreys turn on the tarmac at NAS Patuxent River, Md., before test flights on 1 May. Right, a VQ-4 E-6B Mercury undergoes electro-magnetic testing at NAS Patuxent River, Md.

A Sea Control Squadron 32 S-3B Viking and an F/A-18C of Strike Fighter Squadron 82 worked together to conduct a successful strike by a Standoff Land Attack Missile–Expanded Response, right, on 6 May at NAS Fallon, Nev. The Hornet launched the SLAM-ER from 30,000 feet at a range of 50 miles. From a distance of over 100 miles, the Viking crew established data link and assumed control of the missile. Utilizing the missile's stop motion aimpoint update capability, they adjusted the missile's trajectory and guided it to the target. Above, a VS-32 Viking flies with a SLAM-ER practice pod at Fallon.

Airborne UAV Control Demonstrated

The Naval Air Systems Command, NAS Patuxent River, Md., demonstrated airborne control of an unmanned aerial vehicle on 1 April. NAVAIR's NP-3C "Hairy Buffalo" test platform took control of the UAV and its sensors while in flight and acted as an airborne command, control, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance collection node. The tests were designed to determine the feasibility of using the future multimission maritime aircraft as an airborne command and control platform for UAVs. Takeoff and landing, right, were controlled by systems on the ground.