

AIRSCOOP

EDITED BY WENDY LELAND



PH2 Michael Sandberg

High Speed Vessel Modernizes Naval Warfare

The High Speed Vessel (HSV) 2 *Swift* may be the most technologically advanced Navy vessel produced to date, with information technology capabilities that are revolutionizing naval warfare. The 294-foot, aluminum-hulled catamaran, above, has a crew of only 42 personnel, but automation compensates for the reduced manning. Nearly every function of the ship, from navigation and steering to engine and damage control, is conducted and monitored using commercial, off-the-shelf hardware and software.

In August 2003, the Military Sealift Command leased the vessel for two years, with the option of another five-year lease from Bollinger/Incat USA, LLC, Lockport, La. The HSV-2 is a modified commercial craft with a flight deck and hangar for two H-60 helicopters, a stern vehicle ramp capable of supporting an M-1 tank, communications for a wide range of missions and a load-

compensating crane that can launch and recover small boats and unmanned vehicles up to 26,000 pounds. During sea trials, a fully loaded *Swift* topped out at speeds of more than 45 knots, transiting to a port 100 miles away in just over three hours. Currently being used as an interim mine warfare command and support ship, the HSV-2 provides versatile mission capabilities and a potential platform for future littoral combat ships.

EA-6B ICAP III Undergoes OPEVAL

The EA-6B Prowler Improved Capability (ICAP) III airborne electronic attack weapon system began operational evaluation (OPEVAL) in April with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 9, China Lake, Calif. Once the system passes this final phase of testing, the Department of Defense can approve it for full production. The Navy could receive the first ICAP III EA-6B in early 2005.



ICAP III's advanced selective-reactive jamming ability focuses jamming power more effectively on specific radar frequencies and counters frequency-hopping radars designed to defeat older jamming systems. The system's geolocation capability enables it to locate emitters with targetable precision and pass the information to others in the battle management network.

New Computer for Super Hornet

A new version of the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet's advanced mission computer (AMC) will bring faster processing speed and throughput capability to the fleet, the ability to capture and view digital and analog video in the cockpit and include upgrades to accommodate the EA-18G and several advanced weapon systems. The AMC Type III is scheduled to be retrofitted into fleet aircraft beginning in 2007.

VAQ-128 Deactivated

The *Fighting Phoenix* of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 128, based at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., concluded six and a half years of service in a deactivation ceremony on 7 May (officially 30 September).

Established on 9 October 1997, VAQ-128 was the last of four Navy expeditionary EA-6B Prowler squadrons,

comprising both Navy and Air Force personnel, which stood up to provide joint airborne radar jamming support when the Air Force's EF-111A Raven was retired. Deployments took VAQ-128 aircrews to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Sicily and Japan in support of Operations Southern Watch, Desert Fox, Northern Watch and Iraqi Freedom. The squadron returned from its final deployment in January after swapping four upgraded Prowlers with VAQ-136, permanently assigned to *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) in Japan. Cdr. Charles F. Drummond was the last CO of the *Fighting Phoenix*.

Korean Defense Service Medal Authorized

In April, the Korean Defense Service Medal was authorized for issue to qualified Navy personnel who served in support of the defense of the Republic of Korea from 28 July 1954 to a future date to be determined by the Secretary of Defense. The area of eligibility (AOE) encompasses all land area of the Republic of Korea, the contiguous water out to 12 nautical miles and all air spaces above the land and water areas. Service members must have been assigned, attached or mobilized to units operating in the AOE and have been physically deployed in the AOE for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days. Further eligibility and awarding authority information is contained in NAVADMIN 099/04.

Photo by PH2 Michael B. W. Watkins





Newest Amphibious Ship Named

Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England announced the name of the Navy's newest amphibious transport dock ship, *San Diego* (LPD 22), which honors the long-standing relationship between the Navy and city residents. (An artist's concept of the *San Antonio* (LPD 17)-class ship is illustrated above.) Three previous ships carried the name: the armored cruiser ACR 6 named in 1914, the WW II cruiser CL 53 and the combat stores ship AFS 6.

Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, Avondale Operations, New Orleans, La., will build the 684-foot ship, which will carry a crew of 360 Navy sailors and 700 Marines. *San Diego* will give expeditionary strike groups greater speed, ability and reach.

Oriskany Slated as Artificial Reef

The Navy announced in April that it will transfer the decommissioned carrier *Oriskany* (CV 34) to the state of Florida for use as an artificial reef. The selection represents another step forward in the Navy's efforts to safely reduce its inventory of obsolete ships by cost-effective means that benefit the marine environment. The ship is expected to be in place as a reef in summer 2004.

For the Record

The Naval Air Systems Command awarded the Government Systems Division of Rockwell Collins, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a \$79 million contract in March for the system development and demonstration of Block I modifications to the **E-6B Mercury**. The Block I program includes an improved mission avionics processor system; digital airborne intercommunications switching system/intercommunications system; ultra-high frequency command, control and communications equipment; and new environmental control and electrical power generation systems.

John F. Kennedy (CV 67) tested a newly developed rapid-cure repair system kit for nonskid surfaces from 19 February to 3 May. Current materials take up to seven days to cure, are time consuming to apply and interfere with flight operations. The new product is a 30-day, 1,600-landing, primerless, nonskid material that is user friendly and cures in 24 hours, even in inclement weather. The fast-cure nonskid system brings cost savings and increased fleet readiness.

On 22 April, the **V-22 Osprey** fleet surpassed the 2,000th flight hour milestone since the program's return to flight in May 2002. In addition, Osprey number 24



Left, two MV-22 Ospreys conduct a test flight from Edwards AFB, Calif. Below, H-1 Integrated Test Team pilots Herb Moran and Maj. Eldon Metzger fire weapons for the first time from a UH-1Y during testing at Fort A. P. Hill, Va. The 40-flight test phase involves firing more than 12,800 rounds of ammunition and 700 rockets, flares and chaff to test the helicopter's ability to successfully launch and fire weapons.

returned on 29 April from a successful six-month detachment in Halifax, Nova Scotia, conducting aircraft icing tests.

Aviation career continuation pay (ACCP) was approved in April for full-time support (FTS) pilots and naval flight officers. The pay, authorized for FY 04, will be used for duty in department head, officer in charge and command billets. Eligible officers may receive bonuses of \$15,000 based on designator and length of contract. Authorization for FTS ACCP is outlined in NAVADMIN 101/04.

Lockheed Martin Corporation, Bethesda, Md., and Sikorsky Aircraft, Stratford, Conn., received Lot 2 low-rate production contracts totaling \$152 million to complete four **MH-60R** maritime helicopters, scheduled for delivery to the Navy in 2006.

General Atomics, San Diego, Calif., was awarded a \$145 million contract to design, build and deliver a full-scale, shipboard-representative **Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS)** to the Naval Air Systems Command at NAES Lakehurst, N.J., by 2006. The EMALS will replace the present steam catapults on board the future class of aircraft carriers. The system is intended to provide better performance, with less manpower, at a lower life cycle cost. It will be capable of launching all conventional and short takeoff fixed wing aircraft projected in the inventory through 2050.

The **AIM-9X Sidewinder** was approved for full-rate production on 15 May. The system design incorporates a fifth-generation focal plane array seeker for robust guidance performance and infrared countermeasure resistance and jet vane control for agile turning.

The **H-1 Upgrade Program** achieved 2,000 flight hours in May after successful AH-1Z weapons accuracy testing and UH-1Y external loads testing at the Army's Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz. On 17 May at Fort A. P.



Hill, Va., the UH-1Y fired weapons for the first time during a test flight.

Mishaps

On 26 March, an F/A-18 Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 15, NAS Oceana, Va., crashed at Raleigh-Durham International Airport in North Carolina. The pilot was uninjured. The Hornet was part of a two-plane flight on a routine cross-country training mission with a planned stop at Raleigh-Durham to refuel. The other aircraft landed safely.

A Fighter Squadron 31 F-14D Tomcat based at NAS Oceana, Va., crashed into the Pacific Ocean approximately two miles west of Point Loma, Calif., on 29 March. After launching on a training mission from *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), the Tomcat experienced engine trouble. The aircraft was diverted to land at NAS North Island, Calif., but crashed en route. The two aircrew members ejected safely and were picked up and transported to the NAS North Island Medical Clinic, where they were found to be in good physical condition.

The pilot of an F/A-18 Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 203 was listed in fair condition with a broken leg at Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn., after safely ejecting when the aircraft crashed during a training mission on 29 March. At the time of the incident, the pilot was performing a low-level navigation flight on an FAA-approved route while returning to his home base at NAS Atlanta, Ga.