

AIRSCOOP

EDITED BY WENDY LELAND

CVW-9 in Iraq

F/A-18 Hornets of Strike Fighter Squadrons (VFA) 154 and 147, part of Carrier Air Wing 9 on board *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70), dropped 500-pound laser guided bombs on insurgents east of Baghdad, Iraq, on 4 April. On 8 May, F/A-18C Hornets from CVW-9's Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 and VFA-147 dropped precision bombs on anti-Iraqi forces.

H-1 Upgrades Update

Bell Helicopter Textron Inc., Fort Worth, Texas, was awarded a \$104 million modification to a previously awarded contract for the second low-rate initial production lot of H-1 upgrade aircraft. This brings the total in production to 10 UH-1Y Hueys and 6 AH-1Z Super Cobras. By 2014, the Marine Corps expects to procure 100 new Hueys and 180 new Super Cobras.

With an increased operational tempo for fleet UH-1N Hueys making fewer aircraft available to be remanufactured into UH-1Ys, in April the DoD approved the acquisition of new UH-1Ys beginning in 2008 as part of the third lot of low-rate initial production aircraft.

On 7 May, the new Huey and Super Cobra made their first shipboard landings, during sea trials on board *Bataan* (LHD 5) in the Virginia Capes.


Ex-America Sunk

The decommissioned aircraft carrier *America* (CV 66) departed the Navy's Inactive Fleet Facility on 19 April for her final mission: as a live-fire test and evaluation and weapons effect platform to evaluate damage control systems for the next-generation CVN 21. Following a series of tests, the carrier was sunk off the East Coast on 14 May.

Lakehurst Tests Robots

The Aircraft Platform Interface Laboratory at Naval Air Systems Command, Lakehurst, N.J., is developing machinery to reduce workload in labor intensive areas and replace humans in difficult or dangerous situations—namely, an aircraft carrier's flight deck. One project is a shipboard weapon loader that can “read” and respond to 20 gestures from a human operator. The gesture control system is also being used in a robot that will respond to gestures from a human handler and autonomously direct

continued on page 8



An F/A-18C Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 147 flies over Iraq during a combat mission on 20 April. VFA-147 Hornets and other aircraft of Carrier Air Wing 9 struck insurgent targets in Iraq in April and May. Photo by Cdr. Don Berry.



unmanned aircraft to a spotting position. These technologies have the potential to automate certain processes while keeping the humans in the loop.

For the Record

The **Multimission Maritime Aircraft** was officially designated P-8A on 30 March. An official nickname has not yet been decided. The program completed its second major technical review since contract award, and was approved to proceed to the preliminary design phase.

In conjunction with exercise Neon Falcon '05 from 17 to 23 February, Fifth Fleet assets practiced establishing and operating a command and control facility from a remote location in a forward operating area. The exercise

Jeffrey Tieman of the Lakehurst Artificial Intelligence and Robotics Lab controls the "Lab Rat," which responds to standard NATOPS hand signals for flight deck taxiing operations.



AN Peter Carricelli



A French Navy Rafale M fighter from *Charles De Gaulle* performs a touch-and-go on *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) during a multinational maritime exercise on 25 May.

included aircraft from the *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) carrier strike group.

The Navy announced cancellation of the FY05 complex overhaul for *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67), as well as the carrier's previously planned homeport shift from Mayport, Fla., to Norfolk, Va.

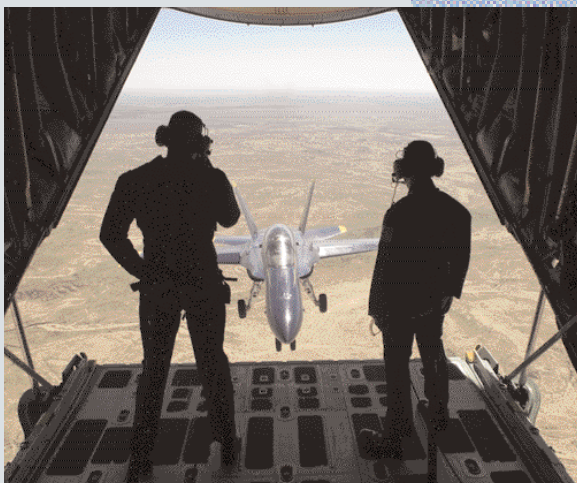
Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) was redelivered to the fleet on 25 March after a four year, approximately \$2.5 billion refueling and complex overhaul. On 28 March, Carrier Air Wing 7 personnel began to embark *Ike* for the carrier's flight deck certification.

The **MV-22 Osprey** began operational evaluation with Marine Tiltrotor Testing Squadron 22 on 28 March.

PH1 Aaron Ansarov



A03 Cira Nehring conducts final checks on a C-2A Greyhound of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 30 Det 4 prior to takeoff from Bahrain on 15 May.



Photos by PH2 Saul McSween

Above, during Navy Flight Demonstration Team training at NAF El Centro, Calif., on 11 March, SSgt. Donnie Morris and Sgt. Baron Morales observe from the ramp of "Fat Albert," the Blues' C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, as Lt. John Allison maneuvers his F/A-18A Hornet, right, into position for a photographic mission.



The **MH-60R Seahawk** entered operational evaluation with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 1, NAS Patuxent River, Md., on 9 May.

Electronic Attack Squadron 139, NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., received the Navy's first **ICAP III EA-6B Prowler** on 16 March.

Initial construction of the **E-2D Advanced Hawkeye** began in April. First flight of the systems development and demonstration aircraft is scheduled for 2007, with initial fleet delivery in 2011.

Mishaps

On 2 May, the pilots of two F/A-18C Hornets of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 were killed while operating in Iraq. The aircraft were part of Carrier Air Wing 9 on board *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70).

A T-34C Turbo-Mentor, TH-57B Sea Ranger and TH-57C Sea Ranger of Training Wing 5 suffered Class A damage following a hail storm at NAS Whiting Field, Fla., on 26 March.