

# AIRSCOOP

EDITED BY WENDY LELAND

## Super Stallions Get New Gun

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 463 installed the GAU-21 ramp-mounted .50 caliber machine gun on squadron CH-53D Super Stallions, operating in Al Asad, Iraq (background photo). With a rate of fire almost 400 rounds per minute faster than the door-mounted XM-218, the ramp-mounted weapon provides 180 degrees of coverage behind and to the sides of the aircraft.

## For the Record

The **MH-60R Seahawk** was approved for full-rate production on 31 March. On 22 May, Lockheed Martin

announced receipt of two MH-60R production contracts. The first, worth \$76.5 million, is to complete work on 12 lot four aircraft. The second, worth \$51 million, authorizes the company to order long-lead items to support the Navy's purchase of 25 lot five aircraft.

Two successful shots of the **shaped trajectory Hellfire missile** were completed at test ranges in southern California on 2 May. The tests are part of an evaluation of modified flight control software on the thermobaric Hellfire missile (AGM-114N), designed to flatten the missile's trajectory to improve its usefulness against a variety of land targets. The Hellfire is fielded on AH-1 Super Cobras and H-60 Seahawks.

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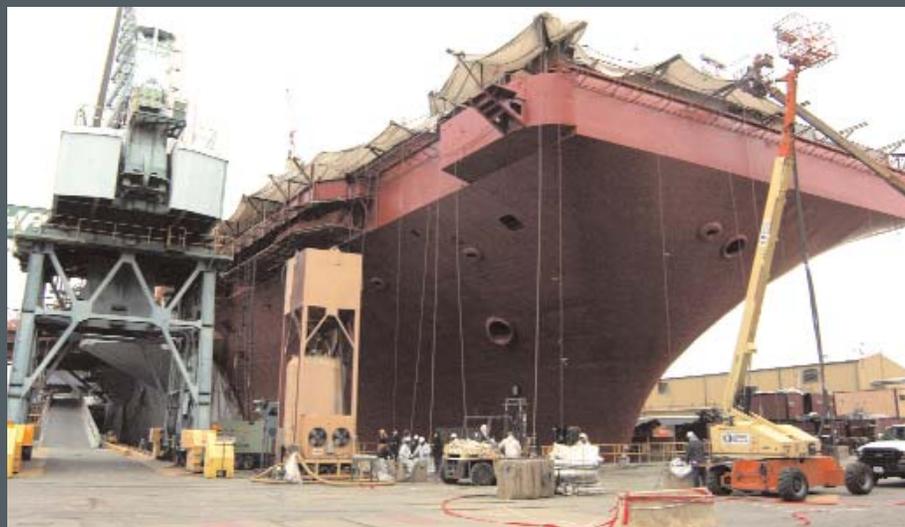
On 9 May two AH-1Z Super Cobras and two UH-1Y Hueys departed NAS Patuxent River, Md., for China Lake, Calif., to begin an approximately six-month operational evaluation of the **H-1 upgrade**, above.

The **ScanEagle** unmanned aerial vehicle surpassed 10,000 flight hours in two years supporting Marine Corps and Navy combat operations. The UAV completed 8,900 combat flight hours in Iraq since deploying with the I Marine Expeditionary Force in August 2004, and 1,600 hours supporting expeditionary strike group missions and oil platform security in the Arabian Gulf since deploying with the Navy in July 2005.

On 1 March ITT announced receipt of an \$82 million firm fixed price contract for full rate production of the **AN/ALQ-214(V)2 countermeasures system**, part of the Integrated Defensive Electronic Countermeasures system on the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet.

On 5 April Sikorsky Aircraft Co. received a \$3 billion contract to develop the **CH-53K**.

Right, her hull painted with red primer, **Carl Vinson (CVN 70)** sits in dry dock 11 at Northrop Grumman Newport News on 11 March during her scheduled refueling and complex overhaul. Photo by PH3 Joshua Hammond.



The Navy's first **RQ-4A Global Hawk** (BuNo 166509) arrived at NAS Patuxent River, Md., on 28 March to begin testing with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 20.

The Marine Corps took delivery of the thirteenth and final **UC-35D Encore** at Cessna Aircraft Co. facilities in Wichita, Kans., on 21 March.

## Mishaps

On 15 May an SH-60F Seahawk of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 8 suffered Class A damage to the main rotor blades and stabilator following a precautionary landing at NAF El Centro, Calif.

An F/A-18A+ Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 201 suffered Class A damage when it developed a bleed air leak while in flight, burning a portion of the aircraft, on 5 May at NAS JRB Fort Worth, Texas.

On 30 April an F/A-18E Super Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 14 suffered Class A damage from an engine fire during takeoff at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. The pilot aborted the takeoff and egressed on the runway.

An MV-22B Osprey of Marine Tiltrotor Maintenance Training Squadron 204 suffered Class A damage when it became airborne and landed hard during post engine start checks at MCAS New River, N.C., on 27 March.

On 25 March an AV-8B Harrier II of Marine Attack Squadron 513 suffered Class A damage after landing on a closed runway at Al Asad, Iraq.

An EA-6B Prowler of Electronic Attack Squadron 135 was destroyed when it crashed in Oregon following an engine failure on 3 March. The aircrew safely ejected.



Capt. Brent Thorud straps in to a Marine Attack Squadron 513 AV-8B Harrier II on the flight line at Al Asad, Iraq, on 21 May. Photo by LCpl. Brian J. Holloran.