



Kurt M. Lengfield

Fire Scout Lands Alone

The Fire Scout unmanned aerial vehicle made its first autonomous shipboard landing on 16 January, above. The RQ-8A, the predecessor to the MQ-8B currently in development for the Navy and the Army, completed nine autonomous landings on *Nashville (LPD 13)* off NAS Patuxent, Md., over a two-day period. The aerial vehicle is part of the Vertical Takeoff and Landing Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (VTUAV) system, which also includes shore-based and ship-based ground control systems; tactical control system software; and the Unmanned Common Automatic Recovery System. The first flight of the production MQ-8B airframe is expected in August, with initial operating capability planned for FY08.

Ship Clips

The Navy's newest *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer, *Forrest Sherman*, was commissioned on 28 January. The ship is named for Adm. Forrest Sherman, a distinguished Naval Aviator whose assignments included command of the carrier *Wasp* (CV 7) in WWII, and who served as Chief of Naval Operations from November 1949 until his death on 22 July 1951.

Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) entered Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Va., on 9 January to begin her docked planned incremental availability.

George Washington (CVN 73) and *John C. Stennis (CVN 74)* completed flight deck certification on 3



February and 8 February, respectively, marking the carriers returning to operational status following maintenance periods.

On 14 February *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) set sail with Carrier Air Wing 8 on board to begin the carrier's tailored ship's training availability period.

Hawkeye Conducts Refueling Tests

Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 20, NAS Patuxent River, Md., tested the capability of the E-2C Hawkeye to refuel in flight. An E-2C Hawkeye fitted with a refueling test probe successfully plugged the basket during tests with a VX-20 KC-130 Hercules on 19 December 2005, and with a VX-23 F/A-18E Super Hornet on 5 January, above. Testing instrumentation on the E-2 gathered data to evaluate flying qualities, noise, field of view, and basket movement during tanking, which will be used to determine the course of future testing.

For the Record

The **H-1 upgrades program** completed developmental testing on 17 February.

Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 40 accepted the first **rewired C-2A Greyhound** during a 14 December 2005 ceremony at NS Norfolk, Va.

Miramar Gets New Dunker

The Aviation Survival Training Center on board MCAS Miramar, Calif., unveiled the new 9D6 Multiplace Egress Trainer on 17 January. The new dunk tank includes functioning doors and windows; can be outfitted with crew seats from different aircraft types; and uses buoyant tanks to create an unpredictable roll to enhance the realism of underwater egress training.



JOSN Michael Leporati

Above, on 2 February students participating in the water survival refresher course exit the new dunk tank as other students await their turn at MCAS Miramar's Aviation Survival Training Center. Right, a Navy diver oversees two students as they prepare for egress.



PH2 Scott Taylor

An HH-60H Seahawk of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 2 prepares to retrieve members of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment 9 during casting and recovery operations on 10 March. Photo by PHAN Justin R. Blake.

Safety Stand Down Called in March

On 3 March Commander, Naval Air Forces VAdm. Jim Zortman directed a Navy-wide aviation safety stand down to be conducted by nondeployed squadrons by 10 March, and by deployed squadrons as operations permit. VAdm. Zortman said the action was the result of a series of mishaps that occurred over the preceding two months. “While no single factor can be attributed to these incidents, it’s important that we stop our daily training and thoroughly review our procedures and the risks of the environment in which we operate,” he said.

Mishaps

On 21 February the pilot of a VMFA-122 F/A-18C Hornet ejected safely but the aircraft was lost at sea off NAS Key West, Fla.

Two CH-53E Super Stallions of HMMH-464 collided over the Gulf of Aden on 17 February, killing 8 Marines and 2 Air Force personnel who were on board.

On 10 February a T-45C Goshawk of Training Air Wing 1 suffered Class A damage when the engine foddred while parked for troubleshooting at NAS Meridian, Miss.

During a flight at NAS Key West, Fla., on 6 February, the pilot of a VFA-125 F/A-18D Hornet successfully ejected after a loss of aircraft control due to multiple inflight emergencies.

On 28 January the pilot of a VFA-25 F/A-18C Hornet successfully ejected following a ramp strike on *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) during operations off Australia. The aircraft was lost.

Two aviators were killed when their T-34C Turbo-Mentor of VT-27 crashed near Waldron OLF, Texas, on 27 January.

On 26 January an AV-8B Harrier II of VMAT-203 suffered Class A damage when it rolled following a hard vertical landing at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.



