

Bell Offers Manned, Unmanned Tiltrotors for Navy's Next Rotorcraft



The Bell 280 Valor is currently offered as a replacement for the U.S. Army's H-60 helicopters, and Bell proposes they would be an ideal component of the Navy's DMO concept. *Bell*

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – Bell, a Textron company, is marketing its manned and unmanned tiltrotor aircraft to be the eventual replacements for the Navy's MH-60R/S helicopters.

Carl Forsling, Bell's senior manager for military sales and strategy, told *Seapower* April 4 at the Navy League's Sea-Air Space expo that the Bell tiltrotors would be ideal for implementation of the Navy's Distributed Maritime Operations concept because of their speed, range and payload.

The two tiltrotors are the versions of the unmanned Bell 247 Vigilant and the manned Bell 280 Valor.

The Valor, currently offered as a replacement for the U.S. Army's H-60 helicopters, is larger than the 247 and is designed to carry 8-12 passengers. It has two engines, one each at the wingtips driving a tiltrotor. Unlike those on the Bell-Boeing V-22 Osprey, the engines do not pivot, simplifying the mechanics of the movement and reducing cost. The maritized Valor would have a pivoting wing like the V-22 for storage in a ship's hangar. The aircraft would be hardened for electromagnetic protection and be maritized for corrosion control in the salt-water environment. It would assume the roles of the MH-60S, including plane guard, rescue, medical evacuation and logistics.

The maritized unmanned Vigilant would replace the MH-60Rs on surface warships such as guided-missile destroyers. The

folding rotors and pivoting wing would allow storage in a warships' small helicopter hangars. The Vigilant could be used for roles including surveillance, antisubmarine warfare, precision strike and aerial refueling.

With both aircraft replacing helicopters, the speed and range advantage would allow the tiltrotors to cover more area at a faster rate, Forsling said, while carrying heavier payloads.