

# Navy Air Warfare Director: Report on Next-Generation Fighter Due in Summer



WASHINGTON – The Navy’s analysis of alternatives (AoA) for its next-generation air-dominance fighter aircraft is almost finished, a Navy admiral told Congress.

“That AoA will be complete this spring,” Rear Adm. Scott D. Conn, director of air warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, said during an April 4 hearing of the Tactical Air and Ground Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

“The final report will come out this summer, and that will inform future choices reflected in future budget cycles in terms of what we need to do to get after the lethality that we need at a cost that we can afford.”

The F/A-XX air-dominance fighter will be a sixth-generation aircraft that eventually will succeed the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighter in the Navy’s carrier air wings.

The F-35C Lightning II joint strike fighter achieved Initial Operational Capability in February and will join the Super Hornet in carrier air wings. Strike Fighter Squadron 147 is the Navy’s first fleet F-35C squadron.

Conn said the Navy expects to attain a 50-50 percentage mix of F-35Cs and F/A-18E/Fs by about 2030. The Navy has ordered 78 Block III Super Hornets and plans to modify more than 100 older Super hornets to the Block III configuration.

“Any additional resources that would be available from an F-35 perspective would provide us some buffer to meet our

transition schedule as we get transition squadrons from Super Hornets into the Joint Strike Fighter,” Conn said.

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## **Marine Corps Sees Cargo UAVs as the Future of Logistics in Distributed Operations**



140318-N-P0203-138 QUANTICO, Va. (Mar. 18, 2014) A Kamen K-Max helicopter equipped with the Autonomous Aerial Cargo Utility System (AACUS) lifts off during an Office of Naval Research (ONR) demonstration held at the Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., as part of the Autonomous Aerial Cargo Utility System (AACUS) program. AACUS consists of a sensor and software package that when integrated into rotary wing aircraft enables autonomous, unmanned flight allowing the Marine Corps to rapidly resupply forces on the front lines as an alternative to dangerous convoys, manned aircraft or air drops in all weather conditions. (U.S. Navy photo by John F. Williams/Released)

WASHINGTON – The Marine Corps plans to continue experimentation with its two K-Max cargo unmanned aerial vehicles (CUAVs) and hopes to procure more to add to experimentation in logistics for distributed operations.

“We see this as the future of distributed operations in how we logistically supply ourselves,” said Lt. Gen. Steven R. Rudder, the Marine Corps’ deputy commandant for aviation, responding to a question about an unfunded requirement for \$18 million for the K-Max unmanned cargo helicopter from Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Connecticut) during an April 4 hearing of the Tactical Air and Ground Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

The Marine Corps owns two CQ-24A K-Max unmanned helicopters and deployed them to Afghanistan in 2011 through 2014 as an experiment in logistics to forward operating bases. Operated by contractors, they transported 4.5 million pounds of cargo, much of which would otherwise have been transported by 900 convoys of trucks through territory subject to ambush and improvised explosive devices.

“We endeavored to make them a program of record and are still working down that road,” Rudder said. “But we were not able to secure funding to get that flying in the fleet for test and operational usage for experimentation. We have since been able to secure funding for a cooperative research and development contract that we’re working with [the K-Max vendor].

“In the next few weeks [the two CUAVs] are going to be trucked back to Connecticut, and we’re going to give them to the vendor to let them work through a couple different things,” Rudder added. “One is autonomous logistics delivery. There are certain things you want on call but there are other things that you need going autonomously. The K-Max, with its lift capability and the way we conceive distributed operations in the future, if we get those airplanes, we’re going to configure them [the same] as we’re configuring a test vehicle in Connecticut with autonomy, which will allow them to have terrain-following radar and, [with] a push of a button, it will take the cargo to a particular point that was programmed in, drop that cargo and do it all day long. We’ve seen efficiencies with this over time.

“With the money we have funded right now – to do those two aircraft that we own – we will bring those back from Connecticut, hopefully by the end of next summer, to begin experimenting in [Marine Corps Air Station] Yuma [Arizona] and [Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center] Twentynine Palms [California], but the emphasis right now is to create a few more air vehicles so we can expand this usage,” he said.

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# HII Completes Acceptance Trials for National Security Cutter Midgett



PASCAGOULA, Miss. – National Security Cutter (NSC) Midgett (WMSL-757) has finished its acceptance trials, Huntington Ingalls Industries' (HII) shipbuilding division announced. Midgett, the eighth NSC Ingalls has built for the U.S. Coast Guard, spent two days in the Gulf of Mexico proving the ship's systems.

“The success of these trials is a direct result of the hard work and expertise of our shipbuilders, the INSURV team and our U.S. Coast Guard customer,” said George S. Jones, Ingalls' vice president of operations.

The U.S. Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) were on board, as Ingalls' test and trials team led the sea trials and conducted extensive testing of the propulsion, electrical, damage control, anchor-handling, small boat operations and combat systems. The team finished the trials with a completed full-power propulsion run on Midgett.

“With the success of these trials, NSC 8 is one step closer to becoming another highly capable, vital asset to the men and women of our Coast Guard,” said Derek Murphy, Ingalls' Coast Guard program manager. “Our dedicated NSC team has proven themselves once again, and we could not be more proud of what they have accomplished.”

Ingalls has delivered seven Legend-class NSCs and has two more under construction, including Midgett, set to be delivered

before the end of 2019. Stone (WMSL-758) is scheduled for delivery in 2020. In December of 2018, Ingalls received two fixed-price incentive contracts with a combined value of \$931 million to build NSCs 10 and 11.

NSC 8 is named to honor the hundreds of members of the Midgett family who have served in the U.S. Coast Guard and its predecessor services. At least 10 members of the Midgett family earned high honors from the Coast Guard for their heroic lifesaving deeds. Seven Midgett family members were awarded the Gold Lifesaving Medal, the Coast Guard's highest award for saving a life, and three were awarded the Silver Lifesaving Medal.

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## **State Department OKs Possible Sale of MH-60R Helicopters to India**



WASHINGTON – The State Department has approved a possible sale to India of 24 MH-60R Seahawk helicopters for an estimated cost of \$2.6 billion, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said in an April 2 release, the day the DSCA delivered the required certification notifying Congress.

India requested the MH-60R helicopters along with mission equipment, crew-served weapons and spare systems. The request includes 1,000 sonobuoys, 10 Hellfire missiles, four Hellfire training missiles, 30 Mk54 torpedoes and four Naval Strike Missile inert training missiles.

Support also would include spare engine containers; facilities

study, design and construction; spare and repair parts; support and test equipment; communication equipment; ferry support; publications and technical documentation; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistical and program support. The total estimated cost is \$2.6 billion.

The proposed sale will provide India the capability to perform anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare missions along with the ability to perform secondary missions including vertical replenishment, search and rescue, and communications relay. India will use the enhanced capability as a deterrent to regional threats and to strengthen its homeland defense. India will have no difficulty absorbing these helicopters into its armed forces.

The principal contractor will be Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems of Owego, New York.

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## **Leonardo Submits TH-119 for Navy Training Helicopter Competition**



PHILADELPHIA – Leonardo submitted to the U.S. Navy its proposal to manufacture and support up to 130 training helicopters, the company said in an April 2 release.

Manufactured in Philadelphia and featuring a Pratt & Whitney PT-6 engine, the TH-119 boasts the highest power margins in its class. Its Genesys Aerosystems' avionics equip pilots to

fly safely during low visibility and challenging weather while providing a foundation for transitioning to combat helicopters.

The “hot” pressure refueling in the TH-119 allows fuel tanks to be filled without shutting the engine down, leading to quicker turnaround and more time spent flying. A durable metal box-beam airframe stands up to the daily grind of training and enables repairs to be conducted on-site, unlike the repairs on most composite aircraft, which require lengthier off-site attention.

The TH-119 has completed its flight tests and meets all FAA requirements and safety standards for IFR certification. Based on the successful AW119 helicopter – in service in 40 countries and selected by military and government customers such as the Portuguese Air Force and New York City Department of Environmental Protection Police – the TH-119 is manufactured on an FAA-certified Part 21 production line within the United States. Leonardo’s Philadelphia plant also is building the U.S. Air Force MH-139 for Boeing.

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## **Navy Awards Two Contracts for MQ-4C for Upgrades, Advance Acquisition**



ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has awarded two contracts to Northrop Grumman Systems Corp. to advance the fielding of the new MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle.

Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) on April 1 awarded a \$12.8 million contract modification to upgrade three Tritons “from a baseline Integrated Functional Capability (IFC) 3 software configuration to a Multi-IFC 4 software configuration,” the contract announcement said. “This modification updates drawings and associated technical data in support of the MQ-4C IFC software configuration upgrade.”

Northrop Grumman also was awarded a \$7.2 million acquisition contract modification to extend “the period of performance and provides additional funding to procure long-lead components, material, parts and associated efforts required to maintain the MQ-4C Triton Unmanned Aircraft System planned low-rate initial production Lot 4 production schedule.”

Two MQ-4Cs have been delivered to the Navy’s Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19 detachment at Naval Air Station Point Mugu, California. The Triton was slated to reach Early Operational Capability last year with a deployment to Guam, but the deployment was put on hold after one of the MQ-4Cs was damaged in a landing mishap at Point Mugu.

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## **Coast Guard Cutter Seneca Returns Home After 86-Day Atlantic Patrol**



BOSTON – Coast Guard Cutter Seneca returned to its homeport in Boston on March 30 after an 86-day patrol in the northern Atlantic Ocean, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

During the patrol, Seneca's crew responded to four search-and-rescue cases. One notable case involved a disabled fishing boat taking on water 100 miles offshore during blizzard conditions. The crew rescued four fishermen and put the fishing boat in tow. The tow was later transferred to a 47-foot motor lifeboat crew from Station Rockland, Maine, for escort to shore.

Seneca boarding teams completed 31 living marine resource boardings to ensure safety and environmental regulations are being followed. The Coast Guard is the primary agency for at-sea enforcement of federal laws concerning U.S. aquatic food resources.

"I am incredibly proud of this crew's accomplishments during this patrol," said Cmdr. John J. Christensen, Seneca's commanding officer. "Their efforts ensured the continued preservation of our national fisheries, the safety of our offshore fishermen and the security of sea lanes to some of our largest marine transportation hubs. They did this all while keeping our 34-year-old cutter fully operational, enabling us to meet every mission, every time."

Seneca is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter with a crew of 14 officers and 86 enlisted personnel.

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## **Navy Secretary Names Destroyer in Honor of Korean War Helicopter Crewman**



WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer named a future

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer (DDG-131) in honor of a Korean War veteran and Navy Cross recipient, Aviation Machinist's Mate 3rd Class George M. Neal, the secretary's public affairs officer said in a March 26 release.

Neal, a Springfield, Ohio, native, served with Helicopter Utility Squadron One (HU-1), a Navy helicopter rescue unit embarked from Australian light cruiser HMAS Sydney during the Korean War.

"At significant risk to his personal safety, Petty Officer Neal distinguished himself by volunteering to go into harm's way into North Korea to rescue a fellow service member," Spencer said. "He was a hero, and I am proud his legacy will live on in the future USS George M. Neal."

Neal was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions on July 3, 1951, when while serving with HU-1, he and pilot Lt. j.g. John Koelsch attempted to rescue Marine Corps Capt. James Wilkins. Wilkins crashed near Yondong in North Korea after his Corsair took antiaircraft fire.

Koelsch and Neal located Wilkins and, under increased enemy fire, lowered the rescue sling. However, the helicopter was disabled and crashed. For nine days, Neal assisted Koelsch and Wilkins in evading enemy forces before being captured and held as a prisoner of war. Koelsch died during captivity but Wilkins and Neal were released and returned to the United States in 1952 with more than 320 fellow POWs. Koelsch was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers conduct a variety of operations from peacetime presence and crisis response to sea control and power projection. The future USS George M. Neal will be a Flight III destroyer capable of fighting air, surface and subsurface battles simultaneously and will contain a combination of offensive and defensive weapons systems designed to support maritime warfare, including integrated air

and missile defense and vertical launch capabilities.

The ship will be built at Huntington Ingalls in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The ship will be 509 feet long, have a beam length of 59 feet and be capable of operating at speeds in excess of 30 knots.

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## Marines Perform ‘Arduous’ Evaluation of New Grenade Launcher



MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Virginia –The Marine Corps plans to introduce a new weapon intended to enhance the lethality of infantry Marines on the battlefield, the Marine corps Systems Command said in a March 26 release.

The M320A1 is a grenade launcher that can be employed as a stand-alone weapon or mounted onto another, such as the M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle. Scheduled to be fielded in fiscal year 2020, the system will give fleet Marines the ability to engage with enemies near and far, day or night.

“The M320A1 will provide good range and accuracy, making the infantry squad more lethal,” said Lt. Col. Tim Hough, program manager for infantry weapons in Marine Corps Systems Command’s Ground Combat Element Systems.

The functionality of the M320A1 makes it unique, Hough said. Its ability to be used as a stand-alone or in conjunction with a firearm should help warfighters combat enemy forces. The weapon will replace the M203 grenade launcher that is

currently employed by Marines.

“The mounted version of the M320A1 is a capability we’re currently working on so that Marines have that option should they want it,” Hough added.

Before the Marine Air-Ground Task Force receives the M320A1, the Corps must draft technical documents for the weapon. These publications provide Marines with further information about the system.

In early March, Ground Combat Elements Systems collaborated with fleet maintenance Marines and logisticians from Albany, Georgia, to conduct various analyses to determine provisioning, sustainment and new equipment training requirements for the system.

The first evaluation was a Level of Repair Analysis, or LORA. A LORA determines when a system component will be replaced, repaired or discarded. This process provides information that helps operational forces fix the weapon should it break.

The LORA establishes the tools required to perform a task, test equipment needed to fix the product and the facilities to house the operation.

“It’s important to do the LORA now in a deliberate fashion so that we don’t do our work in front of the customer,” Hough said. “And it ensures the system they get is ready to go, helping them understand the maintenance that must be done.”

The second evaluation was a Job Training Analysis, which provides the operational forces with a training package that instructs them on proper use of the system to efficiently engage adversaries on the battlefield.

“This process helps us ensure this weapon is both sustainable and maintainable at the operator and Marine Corps-wide level,” said Capt. Nick Berger, project officer in infantry weapons at

MCSC. "It sets conditions for us to field the weapon."

Sustainability is key in any systems-acquisition process. The goal of the LORA and Job Training Analysis is to ensure the operator and maintenance technical publications of a system are accurate, which reduces operational ambivalence and improves the grenade launcher's sustainability.

The LORA is an ongoing process that continues throughout the lifecycle of the M320A1 to establish sustainability, Hough said. After fielding the M320A1, the Corps will monitor the system to ensure it is functioning properly.

During this time, the program office will make any adjustments and updates necessary.

"We're looking to have the new equipment training and fielding complete prior to fourth quarter of [fiscal 2019] to ensure they can be used and maintained properly once they hit the fleet," said Berger.

The analyses, which occurred over the course of a week, were no easy task.

"This was an extensive and arduous process," Hough said. "We scheduled three days for the LORA – all day – so you're looking at about 24 hours of work for the LORA. And that doesn't include reviews, briefs and refinements to the package."

However, at the end of the week, Hough expressed gratitude for all parties involved in the M320A1 analyses, which he called a success. He said the tasks could not have been completed without the help of several key individuals.

"I will tell you what's noteworthy is working with our contract support, the outside agencies and the deliberate efforts by our team – specifically Capt. Nick Berger and Steve Fetherolf, who is a logistician," Hough said. "Those two have

made a significant effort to get this together and move forward.”

Berger also expressed pride about the accomplishments of the analyses.

“This week has been a success,” he said. “We got the system in Marines’ hands, worked out the kinks and began to understand how we’re going to use this moving forward.”

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## **Coast Guard Demobilizes Two Alaska Forward Operating Locations**



KODIAK, Alaska – Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak aircrews demobilized forward operating locations (FOLs) in St. Paul and Cold Bay on March 15, concluding the supplemental coverage of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Chain, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a March 25 release.

The aircrews deployed on two-week rotations to increase readiness and decrease response times to the Bering Sea fishing fleet during periods of increased maritime activity.

Air Station Kodiak MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrews deployed to Cold Bay from Oct. 20 to Nov. 20, 2018, and then again from Jan. 15 to Feb. 19, 2019. Aircrews later deployed to St. Paul from Feb. 17 to March 15 in support of Coast Guard operations in the Bering Sea to provide search-and-rescue and maritime law-enforcement coverage.

In addition to the deployed Jayhawk aircrew, the Coast Guard

Cutter Alex Haley, the Coast Guard Cutter Douglas Munro and the Coast Guard Cutter John Midgett, with an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew embarked, provided supplemental SAR support and maritime law-enforcement coverage in the Bering Sea.

Throughout the three-month season, Coast Guard assets and crews conducted 24 SAR cases and provided more than 114 SAR hours, resulting in 19 lives saved and 29 assisted.

Due to the fishing fleet moving further north in the Bering Sea and to augment the cutter presence, Air Station Kodiak increased its readiness by deploying crews to St. Paul. Before re-opening the St. Paul FOL, it had been without a deployed crew since 2014.

To meet mission requirements, aircrews performed 15 HC-130 Hercules airplane logistics flights, totaling more than 90 flight hours from Kodiak to St. Paul. While forward-deployed, St. Paul MH-60 aircrews responded to two cases, resulting in one life saved and five assisted.

“This has been a great Bering Sea deployment season, and as the fleet shifted further north, it was an all-hands-on-deck evolution to mobilize our crews and reopen our facility in St. Paul mid-season,” said Lt. Cmdr. Tom Huntley, Air Station Kodiak Jayhawk assistant operations officer. “This shift allowed us to maintain our search-and-rescue posture and protect our critical fishing industry, and it allowed us to be ready and responsive when called upon.”

Both FOLs are part of the Coast Guard’s mobile presence and as such are focused on performing the services’ statutory missions to ensure maritime safety, security and stewardship throughout Alaska.

To follow the fishing fleet and to prepare for the projected increased summer maritime activity, Jayhawk aircrews are scheduled to deploy to FOLs in both Cordova and Kotzebue.