

Navy Advances \$65 Million for Materials for 3 MQ-4C Triton UAVs



The contract through Naval Air Systems Command will see Northrop Grumman build two MQ-4C Tritons for the U.S. Navy and one for the Royal Australian Air Force. NORTHROP GRUMMAN ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has allocated funds for long-lead components for the next production lot of the MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles, including one for Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), according to a May 30 Defense Department contract announcement.

The Naval Air Systems Command has awarded to Northrop Grumman Systems Corp. a not-to-exceed \$65 million advance acquisition contract toward the Lot 5 low-rate initial production of three Tritons, two for the U.S. Navy and one for the RAAF. The contract also provides for three ground stations, two for the U.S. Navy and one for the RAAF.

As of last month, Northrop Grumman had delivered three production MQ-4Cs to the U.S. Navy.

The Australian government has identified a requirement for seven Tritons for the maritime surveillance role. Two have been ordered to date.

The U.S. Navy's Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19,

the first Triton squadron, is on track to deploy the Triton for an Early Operational Capability deployment to Guam later this year. It will take two MQ-4Cs to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam to support the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Rear Adm. Brian Corey, program executive officer for Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons, speaking May 6 at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space expo in National Harbor, Maryland, said the two Tritons making the first deployment will be in the aircraft's baseline configuration.

The baseline configuration, Integrated Functional Capability 3 (IFC 3) includes the Northrop Grumman AN/ZPY-3 Multi-Function Active Sensor (MFAS) maritime radar, Raytheon MTS-B electro-optical/infrared sensor turret, Automatic Identification System receiver and an electronic support measures system.

Corey said the current priority of the Triton program is to "put forward the IFC 4 [Integrated Functional Capability 4] capability [in the Triton] to do much of the EP-3E mission."

The MQ-4C is scheduled to replace the EP-3E electronic reconnaissance aircraft when the UAV's IFC 4 multi-intelligence capability is installed and certified for operations.