Navy Contracts Northrop Grumman for Multi-Int Upgrades for MQ-4C Triton UAVs

A Northrop Grumman Corp. MQ-4C Triton takes to the skies over the California desert as the Triton low-rate initial production schedule progresses. Known as B8, this is the first production Triton to be upgraded to the multi-intelligence configuration to meet the Navy's critical maritime intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting needs. B8 was delivered to Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, on Feb. 1. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy has awarded Northrop Grumman two contracts to upgrade MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles with a multi-intelligence collection capability.

The Naval Air Systems Command awarded Northrop Grumman Systems Corp. of San Diego a $15.1 million contract modification to a previously awarded, fixed-price incentive contract to provide "additional labor and material to incorporate production engineering change proposals that modify MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft system production assets to an Integrated Functional Capability 4.0 [IFC-4] multiple intelligence configuration for the Navy and the government of Australia," according to a June 14 Defense Department contract announcement.

Another contract issued June 16 awarded the company $20.5 million to incorporate IFC-4 for MQ-4Cs construction numbers B13 through B15.

The MQ-4C's IFC-4 is designed to bring an enhanced multi-mission sensor capability as part of the Navy's Maritime

Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Targeting transition plan. The Triton in the IFC-4 configuration is designed to complement the Navy's P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft and eventually will enable the Navy to retire its EP-3E Orion electronic reconnaissance aircraft. The initial operational capability for the Triton will be declared in 2023 when IFC-4-configured Tritons are deployed in enough quantity to field one complete orbit.

The first production MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial vehicle to be upgraded to the multi-intelligence configuration was delivered to the U.S. Navy at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, on Feb. 1. The Triton, designated B8 by the manufacturer, Northrop Grumman, went through a 30-month modification period to the new configuration.

The two MQ-4Cs that were deployed to Guam for the U.S. 7th Fleet's Task Force 72 by Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19 (VUP-19) as part of the early operational capability deployment were in the baseline IFC-3 configuration. One has returned to VUP-19's facility at Naval Station Mayport, Florida, to support training.

Work on the new contract is expected to be completed in April 2025.