

Navy Establishes New MH-60R Helicopter Squadron



U.S. Navy Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Jonathan Shaffer, left, and Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Devante Sims remove chocks from an MH-60R Seahawk helicopter assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike (HSM) 74, on the flight deck of the guided missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64) Nov. 24, 2013, in the Gulf of Oman. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Lorenzo J. Burlison/Released*

NORFOLK, Va. – The U.S. Navy establishes a new helicopter squadron, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50, onboard Naval Air Station (NAS) Mayport, Florida, Oct. 1, the commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic Public Affairs said in a release.

Primarily, HSM-50 "Valkyries" will be fully equipped with MH-60R Seahawks and will provide expeditionary aviation detachments in support of littoral combat ships and expeditionary independent deployers to meet global force management missions.

"I'm honored and humbled to have the opportunity to serve as HSM-50's first commanding officer," said Cmdr. Carolyn Peterson. "Every member of Valkyries will have a major impact as we establish this squadron from the ground floor and create a strong, resilient, combat-ready unit prepared to deploy MH-60R detachments to fight and win at sea. I am excited and encouraged as we move forward as a team, face challenges head-on, and continue to serve in the defense of our nation."

Peterson, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, served in a number of assignments including tours as an instructor pilot, a helicopter initial shore assignments officer, a Carrier Air Wing MH-60R operational squadron department head, and a joint

planning officer in Anchorage, Alaska. She is a graduate of Air Force Air Command and Staff College Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) Phase One, and earned a Master's of Science in Aeronautics: Safety Systems.

The MH-60R Seahawk, a versatile multi-mission platform, is used to support a number of operations spanning: anti-submarine warfare, electronic warfare, surface warfare, command and control, non-combat operations, and fleet support for operations and logistics. It can also integrate mission systems with other ships to provide early warning indications of surface contacts and longer-range pursuit of subsurface contacts.

HSM-50 is expected to conduct a formal establishment ceremony in the summer of 2022 and the squadron will fall under Helicopter Maritime Strike Wing Atlantic.