MH-60R Weapons System Successfully Completes Technical Evaluation

Aircraft Primed for Operational Evaluation and Fleet Introduction

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Subsurface and surface warfare systems developed for the U.S. Navy's MH-60R helicopter by prime systems integrator Lockheed Martin have successfully completed Technical Evaluation, clearing the way for Operational Evaluation and fleet introduction later this year. The next-generation helicopter weapons system will help protect U.S. Navy fleets from submarines and surface vessels well into the 21st century.

The aircraft entered Technical Evaluation (TECHEVAL) two months ahead of schedule in August 2004, with U.S. Navy test teams completing their evaluation February 15. The MH-60R program will now begin the final milestone -- Operational Evaluation (OPEVAL) -- in May. Delivery of the first four helicopters to the fleet is scheduled for December.

"TECHEVAL involved the most intense evaluation of the MH-60R aircraft's developmental and early operational capabilities," said Jeff Bantle, vice president of Multi-Mission Solutions at Lockheed Martin Systems Integration -- Owego. "Completion of this important milestone is a key accomplishment, and affirms the tremendous capability that the Romeo will bring to the fleet as the world's most technologically advanced naval warfare helicopter."

TECHEVAL verified performance of the MH-60R's systems against technical parameters established by the Navy. "We met, and in most cases exceeded, all 43 technical parameters on the U.S. government's most rigorous testing ranges," said Bantle. "The high-quality results represent an order-of-magnitude capability over current legacy aircraft. We are very excited the weapons system is on the verge of being delivered to the fleet."

During TECHEVAL, the Navy's HX-21 and VX-1 squadrons simultaneously tested the operational and development performance of all on-board weapons subsystems, with specific attention focused on the multimode radar, electronic support measures (ESM) and radar warning receiver, airborne dipping sonar and acoustics, and the fusion of multiple data sources to reduce operator workload.

A total of 630 flight test hours were conducted at four test ranges: ESM tests at Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, China Lake, CA, and at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Radar tests were conducted at the Southern California Off-shore Range near San Clemente Island, CA. Periscope detection and subsurface tests were successfully conducted against two Navy submarines during the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center (AUTEC) trials in the Caribbean in January and early February 2005. Additional system testing was conducted at the Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, MD.

Lockheed Martin is the systems integrator for the MH-60R, and also provides the digital cockpit, which is common to all MH-60S and MH-60R helicopters. Sikorsky designs and manufactures the MH-60S and MH-60R aircraft and is responsible for the mechanical and electrical modifications on the airframe.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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