

# NAVAL AVIATION NEWS

THE FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION OF NAVAL AVIATION SINCE 1917

SPRING 2017

## MODERNIZING TRAINING

### WHAT'S INSIDE

- ▶ Watching JOs Innovate
- ▶ Producing Ready, Relevant Learning
- ▶ HSC-25 Employs High Velocity Learning
- ▶ Hitting Print: Additive Manufacturing





*As we continue to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Naval Aviation News, the U.S. Navy's oldest periodical, we want to encourage more fleet submissions and stories on the Naval Aviation mission. This issue contains three articles written by naval aviators and maintainers and we know you all want to see more as well. Email your story ideas and contact info to [nannews@navy.mil](mailto:nannews@navy.mil) and we'll follow up. — Ed.*



*Sailors walk across the flight deck of aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) as the IKE conducts a routine, scheduled transit through the Suez Canal.*

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Nathan T. Beard

# NAVAL AVIATION NEWS

SPRING 2017

VOLUME 99, NO. 2

## DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Flightline
- 7 Grampaw Pettibone
- 8 Airscoop

## FEATURES

- 14 **Future USS Ford Completes Builder's Sea Trials**

### MODERNIZING TRAINING

- 16 **Nimitz Strike Group Ready for Deployment**
- 18 **Producing Ready, Relevant Learning For Sailors**
- 24 **Marines Gain Critical Hands-On Experience Swapping F-35B LiftFan at Sea**
- 26 **HSC-25 Expedites Multi-System Qualifications Using High Velocity Learning**
- 28 **CMV-22B Osprey Completes F-35's Golden Mile**
- 30 **Hitting Print: Navy On Board With Additive Manufacturing**
- 36 **Navy Decommissions the Big E**
- 38 **EA-6B Prowler: Last of Dedicated Marine Corps Electronic Warfare Platforms**
- 40 **Boots on Ground: NAS Oceana Sailors and Marines Impress**
- 44 Professional Reading

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- Inside Back Cover Squadron Spotlight

## ON THE COVER



Marines with Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron (VMX) 1 replace an F-35B Lightning II LiftFan for the first time at sea aboard amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) during the short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) variant's third and final shipboard developmental test phase in November. (U.S. Navy photo by Kyle P. Hafer)

Across the Navy and Marine Corps, aviators, Sailors, Marines, squadrons, instructors and training centers are modernizing training by reassessing and reinventing their approaches. In *Flightline*, page 4, Capt. Ben Reynolds, commander, Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Pacific, applauds the innovative culture at Helicopter Maritime Strike Weapons School Pacific and encourages leaders to create similar environments. On page 16, the Nimitz Strike Group (CSG) becomes the first CSG to use the fleet warfighting training live, virtual and constructive (LVC) training concept. On page 18, learn how the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division is supporting CNO's Sailor 2025 initiative by exploring how and when training is delivered to Sailors. On page 26, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 25 Sailors apply CNO's high velocity learning principles to accelerate multi-system qualifications.

**On the Back Cover:** Marine KC-130J crewmasters Pfc. Vivian Beppler, left, and Master Sgt. Baron Morales guide Marine infantrymen from 2nd Battalion/6th Marines aboard their aircraft at the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at Marine Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., as part of the Marine Weapons and Tactics Instructor course in February. (Photo courtesy of Joe Copalman)

*The U.S. Navy's Oldest Periodical, Established 1917*



# EA-6B Prowler

## Last of Dedicated Marine Corps Electronic Warfare Platforms

Story and photos by Todd Miller

The unmistakable Grumman EA-6B Prowler comes into view on the horizon and streaks low across the hills of southern Virginia. “Dog 31” of Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (VMAQ) 3, “Moon Dogs,” is on a routine, low-level training mission.

**T**he flight ensures pilot and electronic countermeasures officers (ECMOs) meet the minimum 15 hours of monthly flight time to maintain proficiency. Additional time is spent training in simulators to address specific threat environments. The Prowler wings by, banking into the late afternoon sun, a visual metaphor as sundown for the Prowler fleet draws near.

Prowlers remain one of the premier electronic warfare (EW) aircraft in the services and are scheduled for sundown in 2019. Prowler squadron VMAQT-1, the “Banshees,” was decommissioned in 2016, and the current Marine Aviation plan has the remaining squadrons following, one per year—the VMAQ-4 “Seahawks” in 2017, the Moon Dogs in 2018, and the last Prowler squadron, the VMAQ-2 “Death Jesters” in 2019. The 18 remaining EA-6Bs are based at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, and are split among the three active squadrons, as needed. During this staged sundown, pilots and ECMOs have the option to transition to other aircraft or incoming EW platforms, or pursue new occupational specialties.

In many respects, the Prowler sundown is not a typical “retirement,” in which a platform with diminished capacity slowly fades away. Today’s Prowler is the most capable variant ever. The aircraft features an improved capabilities package and will receive upgrades to improve performance and operability to the end of its service life.

For more than 46 years—flown by the Navy since 1971 and Marine Corps since 1977—Prowlers have been involved in Navy, Air Force, Marine and coalition operations. Since 9/11, Prowlers have been deployed almost continuously. Recently, the aircraft served over Syria and Iraq to support the coalition fight against the Islamic State group.

By 2020, the Marine Corps will have adopted

a revolutionary change in how it addresses EW. Rather than replace the Prowler with a dedicated platform, the Marine Corps has adopted a distributed strategy where “every platform is a sensor, shooter and sharer.” This new paradigm brings together electronic warfare and cyber capability with the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) in a structure called the (MAGTF EW).

“Under MAGTF EW, the Marine Corps is leveraging emerging technologies and integrating multiple aviation platforms [unmanned, fixed-wing, tilt-rotor and rotary-wing assets], payloads, ground-based EW nodes and cyber capabilities to provide commanders with an organic and persistent EW capability—for every MAGTF—large and small,” said Capt. Sarah Burns, Marine Corps headquarters public affairs officer.

Within the MAGTF EW, each Marine Aviation platform will have the capability to carry its own pods packed with sensors and jammer payloads.

“This integration of manned and unmanned airborne and ground EW capabilities will provide the MAGTF commander with greater flexibility and control of the electromagnetic spectrum and, in many cases, give the commander a capability where previously they had none,” said 2nd Lt. Samuel Stephenson, Marine Corps public affairs officer for Marine Air Wing 2.

The Navy EA-18G Growler will continue the Prowler’s dedicated EW mission, while the Marine Corps’ F-35B and F-35C (replacing the AV-8B, F/A-18A-D and EA-6B) will provide the tactical aviation requirements with additional robust EW capability.

Todd Miller is an aviation writer and photographer. This article was first published Feb. 21 on [AviationPhotographyDigest.com](http://AviationPhotographyDigest.com). 🐦

An EA-6B Prowler of Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 3 from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., on a routine low-level training flight over southern Virginia.

Photo by Todd Miller courtesy of AviationPhotographyDigest.com