

P-8A Poseidon completes flutter program



A P-8A Poseidon conducts open weapons bay door tests during a flutter exercise over the Atlantic Test Range.
(U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The P-8A Poseidon moves another step forward to Operational Assessment next year, as the aircraft completes a major testing milestone. The P-8A Integrated Test Team (ITT) completed the clean flutter program in June and has begun loads testing.

Flutter flight testing was conducted over the past year on a "clean" aircraft, which means an aircraft with no external stores. Also, the weapons bay doors were tested in open and closed positions.

Flutter is described as a vibration that continuously builds in intensity. The interaction between aerodynamics, structural elasticity and inertia produces vibration on an aircraft. Data collected by the ITT demonstrates that the P-8A maintains a safe margin to flutter throughout its flight envelope.

"Completing the flutter program means that P-8A meets the U.S. Navy's required flutter safety margins," said Tony Schmidt, P-8A assistant program manager for Test & Evaluation. "It also clears the way for us to begin the next phase of the test program - loads testing."

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During loads testing, the ITT evaluates the flight performance of the P-8A carrying weapons and equipment typical for a maritime patrol mission. The team will continue to expand the test envelope of the P-8A as required by the Navy.

The P-8A program is set to enter into Initial Operational Capability in 2013.