

May 22, 2013

## Navy Triton Unmanned Aircraft System completes first flight

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The U.S. Navy's MQ-4C Triton unmanned air vehicle takes the skies for its initial flight from Northrop Grumman's facility in Palmdale, Calif., May. 22. (Photo courtesy of Northrop Grumman)

**PALMDALE, Calif.** –The Navy's newest unmanned Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft platform, the [MQ-4C Triton Unmanned Aircraft System \(UAS\)](#), completed its first flight from Palmdale, Calif. May 22, marking the start of tests which will validate the Northrop Grumman-built system for future fleet operations.

During the 80-minute flight in restricted airspace, the MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft, controlled by ground-based Navy and Northrop Grumman personnel, reached 20,000 feet altitude.

“This flight represents a significant milestone for the Triton team,” said [Rear Adm. Mat Winter](#), who leads the Program Executive Office for Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons at Naval Air Systems Command, Patuxent River, Md. “The work they have done and will continue to do is critical to the future of naval aviation, particularly to our maritime patrol and reconnaissance community.”

The MQ-4C Triton provides the fleet with a game-changing persistent maritime and littoral ISR data collection and dissemination capability, said Winter. It will be a key component of the Navy's Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force family of systems.

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As an adjunct to the manned [P-8A Poseidon](#), the MQ-4C Triton will be a major part of the military's surveillance strategy for the Asia and Pacific regions. The Triton will fly missions for 24 hours at altitudes greater than 10 miles, allowing the system to monitor 2,000 nautical miles of ocean and littoral areas at a time.

The P-8A Poseidon is the Navy's new multi-mission maritime aircraft being built to replace the P-3C Orion long-range anti-submarine warfare aircraft.

"When operational, the MQ-4C will complement our manned P-8 because it can fly for long periods, transmit its information in real-time to units in the air and on ground, as well as use less resources than previous surveillance aircraft," said [Rear Adm. Sean Buck](#), Patrol and Reconnaissance Group commander, who also witnessed today's flight. "Triton will bring an unprecedented ISR capability to the warfighter."

The MQ-4C Triton UAS will be based at five locations around the globe. Triton operators will disseminate data in real-time to fleet units to support surface warfare, intelligence operations, strike warfare and search and rescue

"Our goal is to mature the Triton UAS before supporting the Navy's maritime ISR mission," said [Capt. Jim Hoke](#), program manager for the Persistent Maritime UAS office (PMA-262), which oversees the Triton program. "The data we collect the next few years is essential to certify the system for operational use."

Flight tests will continue in California for the next several months before the team transitions the aircraft to Patuxent River in the fall.

[VIDEO: The MQ-4C Triton unmanned air vehicle conducts its intial flight from Palmdale, Calif.](#)

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