

AAG remains Navy's choice for next-gen recovery system

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. --- On the heels of continued progress of the Advanced Arresting Gear's test program, to include completion of the 350th trap of an F/A-18E *Super Hornet* in December, senior Navy officials announced the decision to continue with AAG as its choice of recovery system aboard the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79).

The determination to continue with AAG was the outcome of a thorough review by an AAG Resource Requirements Review Board (R3B) in November 2016. The board was co-chaired by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (ASN) for Research, Development and Acquisition (RDA) Sean Stackley and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson. The board also considered an option to revert to the legacy recovery system, Mk-7. An independent review team (IRT) chartered by Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD AT&L) Frank Kendall came to the same conclusion and recommended continuation of AAG on Ford-class aircraft carriers.

"AAG works," said [Capt. Steve Tedford](#), Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment (PMA 251) program manager, whose team manages the recovery system program. "The progress of AAG testing this past year has been significant and has demonstrated the system's ability to meet Navy requirements. The team overcame many challenges to get the system to this point and ensure its readiness to support CVN 78 and future Ford-class ships."

"It has been a difficult challenge, but getting the system into test to verify its readiness to meet Navy requirements has been the team's focus this past year," said [Rear Adm. Mike Moran](#), Program Executive Officer for Tactical Aircraft Programs (PEO(T)), who oversees PMA-251 program office. "The government and contractor team made the necessary hardware changes and implemented a build-test-fix software methodology that has incrementally improved the performance of the system, which will be ready to trap the first F/A-18 *Super Hornet* on Ford later this year.

"There is much left to be done to qualify the entire air wing for deployed operations, but this team is on the right track and focused on delivering the performance the Navy requires," Moran added.

AAG has been the focus of much scrutiny in recent years, after encountering delays in developmental testing and subsequent redesign efforts of the water twister, one of the system's major components. With the upgraded hardware in place, the program has forged forward with an extensive land-based test program. As of December 2016, more than 1,400 dead-load arrestments and 351 test arrestments of the *Super Hornet*, the first aircraft type/model/series to undergo test on the system, have been completed. Simultaneously, the system is undergoing commissioning testing aboard CVN 78.

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"There is still a lot of work ahead, but we have the right team in place to get AAG and all of the [benefits](#) that come with it delivered to support the warfighters of today and the future," said Tedford.

Upon completion of AAG performance testing with the *Super Hornet*, the team began generating the first Aircraft Recovery Bulletin (ARB) to support pending Aircraft Compatibility Testing on board CVN 78, where a number of aircraft launch and recovery equipment systems, including the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), will be used.

The AAG team continues multisite test operations with the next type/model/series, the E-2/C-2 platform, and PMA-251 proceeds with the necessary acquisition activities to ready the system for installation aboard CVN 79 and the future USS Enterprise (CVN 80).