



# RHUMB LINES

*Straight Lines to Navigate By*



September 11, 2009

## The Future Force – Naval Aviation

*“We have many new airplanes on the flight line, and if you aren’t flying something new right now, you will be soon.”*  
– Rear Admiral David L. Philman, Director, Air Warfare

The Navy is investing in new and proven technology to balance the right capability and capacity to prevent and win in conflict today and hedge against the most likely future challenges.

### Programs Underway To Build The Future Naval Air Forces

- Aircraft Carriers – The Navy is committed to a force of 11 [nuclear-powered aircraft carriers](#) until at least 2040.
  - The Navy’s carrier force provides the nation the ability to flexibly respond to crises without concern for geography, political access or enemy threat. On any given day, aircraft carriers provide close air support for U.S. and coalition forces, forward presence, humanitarian assistance, partnership training and maritime domain awareness.
  - The new [Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers](#) are designed to significantly reduce total ownership costs while introducing new technologies and capabilities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Capable of operating legacy or future combat aircraft, these new carriers, along with existing Nimitz-class ships, will project dominant maritime combat power well into the future.
- F/A-18E/F and F-35C Joint Strike Fighter – The [F/A-18 E/F](#) is an advanced, multi-purpose strike fighter that enables aircraft carriers to project power at sea and ashore. The integration of the F/A-18 E/F into carrier air wings is nearly complete, with five additional squadrons slated to transition. As the Navy transitions from the F/A-18C model, the [F-35C](#) will enter service and round out our carrier air wings with stealth capabilities.
- EA-6Bs have started their transition to the [EA-18G](#) which is the future of airborne electronic attack.
- P-8A Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft – The [P-8A Poseidon](#) will replace the aging P-3C Orion, an aircraft that provides critical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and contributes to maritime domain awareness and anti-submarine warfare capability across the globe. The first P-8A was rolled out of the factory in July. The P-8A will begin to replace the P-3C in 2013.
- E-2D Advanced Hawkeye – The E-2D replaces the E-2C. The E-2D radar provides enhanced capabilities in the overland, littoral, and open ocean environments, improves performance against clutter and small targets and adds transformational surveillance and theater air and missile defense capabilities. Initial operation capability for the aircraft will be in fiscal year 2015.
- Unmanned Aircraft Systems – The Navy is investing in unmanned systems to meet increasing global demands from fleet commanders, coalition and joint forces for ISR capability. Earlier this year, the [RQ-4A Global Hawk Maritime-Demonstrator \(BAMS-D\)](#), the Navy version of the Air Force Block 10 Global Hawk, deployed to Southwest Asia in support of 5th Fleet operations.
- MH-60R/S multi-mission helicopters – The [MH-60R](#) will replace the SH-60B and SH-60F, providing forward-deployed surface and anti-submarine warfare. The MH-60S will conduct logistics, search and rescue, air ambulance, vertical replenishment, anti-surface warfare, mine counter-measures and naval special warfare.

Key Messages	Facts & Figures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naval aviation is undergoing a vitally needed re-capitalization period with many new aircraft types entering service over the next few years.</li> <li>• Recapitalization must continue in order for naval aviation to remain the force of choice for the Commander-in-Chief and combatant commanders in defense of this great nation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On an average day, at least five aircraft carrier strike groups and their associated five air wings are underway.</li> <li>• In addition to carriers, EA-6Bs, P-3s, helicopters, and transport assets are also worldwide deployed daily.</li> <li>• The current average age of naval aircraft is 19.5 years. This is the oldest average age in the history of naval aviation and is the impetus of recapitalization.</li> </ul>