



The cockpit of the MH-60T model (right) has been enhanced from the legacy HH-60J model (left), including installation of five multi-function displays showing flight instrument data, weather radar information, forward-looking infrared and camera imagery and an integrated traffic collision avoidance system as well as electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) sensor system and enhanced location and tracking capabilities. U.S. Coast Guard photos.

Acquisition Update: Final Jayhawk Completes Conversion to MH-60T Model

Feb. 19, 2014

The Coast Guard H-60 conversion and sustainment project achieved an important objective when CGNR 6024 arrived at Air Station San Diego

Feb. 18, 2014, becoming the 42nd

and final H-60 Jayhawk to return to operational status after receiving extensive avionics and sensor upgrades.

Since 2008, the Coast Guard has converted its fleet of 42 H-60 Jayhawk helicopters from the legacy HH-60J models to the present MH-60T configuration. With completion of this phase of the conversion, the project focus shifts to its next major phase, the Block 2 Upgrade (B2U), which will upgrade flight planning and navigation capabilities over the next two years.

A partnership between the Acquisition Directorate and the Coast Guard Aviation Logistics Center in Elizabeth City, N.C., the H-60 conversion and sustainment project was developed to enhance the multi-mission capabilities of the H-60 Jayhawk fleet. The first segment of the project modernized the legacy fleet of HH-60Js by replacing avionics with the Department of Defense Common Avionics Architecture System (CAAS) glass cockpit. CAAS includes five multi-function displays showing flight instrument data, weather radar information, forward-looking infrared and camera imagery and an integrated traffic collision avoidance system. The second segment of upgrades, including the installation of an electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) sensor system, provides enhanced location and tracking capabilities critical in both law enforcement and search and rescue missions. Airborne Use of Force capabilities were added previously under a separately funded project.

Additional work to replace obsolete components will be completed as the helicopters go through programmed depot maintenance, said Cmdr. Walt Horne, H-60 platform manager and sponsor representative for the conversion project. Installation of enhanced digital engine control units will provide additional power to engines in emergency situations and already has been completed on five aircraft. New advanced diagnostic vibration management systems will allow digital monitoring of vibrations throughout the aircraft, which can aid in detecting weakening components.

The next phase of the H-60 project is the Block 2 Upgrade, which will address the findings of the Operational Assessment completed in January 2011 as well as Federal Aviation Administration required navigation performance/area navigation standards.

“Once these aircraft were fielded, we began collecting data from the upgrade,” Horne said.

The data was used to prioritize additional changes necessary for optimal safety and increased effectiveness of the aircraft. Design reviews for B2U Phase 1 have been completed, and test and evaluation is planned for later this spring/summer. Phase 2 of B2U is scheduled to get under way in July with testing planned for mid-2015.

Following completion of the conversion process, the MH-60T fleet is expected to remain in operation through 2027.

Lt. David A. Birky, a pilot assigned to Air Station Elizabeth City, called the upgrades “life changing.” For example, with the new EO/IR capabilities, the crew can read the boat name and registration information from 300 feet away, rather than having to be within 50 feet as with the H-60Js. The added distance makes it easier to assess the overall state of affairs “and is much safer for both the (helicopter) crew and the people on the boat,” he said.

The Coast Guard currently operates MH-60Ts at Aviation Training Center Mobile, Ala., and the following seven air stations: Air Station Kodiak, Alaska, Air Station Sitka, Alaska, Air Station San Diego, Air Station Clearwater, Fla., Air Station Cape Cod, Mass., Air Station Elizabeth City, N.C., and Air Station Astoria, Ore.