



Northrop Grumman's MQ-8C Fire Scout to Undergo Electromagnetic Interference Tests In Prep for Ship-based Flights

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U.S. Navy to use unmanned helicopter in operations next year

SAN DIEGO, May 5, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- In preparation for ship-board flights this spring, the Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC)-built MQ-8C Fire Scout will be tested for its ability to operate safely in the intense electromagnetic environment aboard U.S. Navy ships.

NORTHROP GRUMMAN

A blue swoosh graphic that starts under the "N" of Northrop and curves under the "M" of Grumman.

A photo accompanying this release is available at <http://media.globenewswire.com/noc/mediagallery.html?pkgid=25132>.

The MQ-8C Fire Scout uses specially-designed cages, known as Faraday cages, to protect sensitive equipment on the aircraft from signal interference.

"All Navy aircraft must go through electromagnetic interference testing to ensure they can operate safely in the ship environment," said Capt. Patrick Smith, Fire Scout program manager at Naval Air Systems Command. "We're confident that the design of the Faraday cages and other engineering work done on the MQ-8C Fire Scout will pass these tests."

The MQ-8C is based on a larger helicopter airframe and can fly almost twice as long and carry three times more intelligence-gathering sensor payloads than the MQ-8B variant.

During the program's design phase, a team of engineers created a new modular Faraday cage that protects electronic systems in flight.

"Almost 95 percent of what makes up the MQ-8B variant is reused in the MQ-8C to save money and the time needed to conduct a test program. However, we took advantage of lessons learned to incorporate a more modern shielding device in the new aircraft," said George Vardoulakis, vice president, medium range tactical systems, Northrop Grumman.

The Faraday cages are built by Summit Aviation in Somerset, Kentucky, and installed during final assembly at Northrop Grumman's Unmanned Systems Center in Moss Point, Mississippi.

Since first flight Oct. 31, the MQ-8C Fire Scout has flown 102 flights. The initial flight tests will validate that the autonomous control systems of the helicopter are working properly before its first ship-based demonstration.

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