

Little news tidbits for your consideration.

- Initial reports say that the Ball Aerospace 95-megapixel camera carried on the Kepler spacecraft is so sensitive, that it can “see a star’s reflected light on an orbiting planet”. (Source: AW&ST, Aug. 17, 2009)
- NASA has slipped pad abort (PA-1) tests of the Orion crew module into from September 2008, to April 2009, and now into early 2010, because of “development problems with the avionics ... [and] issues with the control electronics in part of the launch abort system (LAS).” (Source: AW&ST, Aug. 17, 2009)
- The U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory has eliminated Northrop Grumman and MMIST from the competitive range for an unmanned cargo lift/resupply vehicle – leaving the Lockheed Martin/Kaman K-MAX and the Boeing Hummingbird as the final bidders. (Source: AW&ST, Aug. 17, 2009)
- Boeing’s and NASA’s X-48C hybrid wing body began flight tests at the Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards AFB – as part of NASA’s plans to develop low-noise and low-emissions “N+2” subsonic fixed-wing development program. (Source: AW&ST, Aug. 17, 2009)
- Launch of the \$800 million Space-Based Space Surveillance (SBSS) satellite via Orbital Science’s Minotaur IV rocket has been delayed “indefinitely” because of problems with the launch vehicle that affect the entire fleet. Reportedly, there is a problem with government-furnished equipment (GFE) that supports the launch vehicle’s third stage. (Source: AW&ST, Oct. 12, 2009)
- Congress has approved a legislative waiver that will allow a temporary reduction in the number of the U.S. Navy’s active aircraft carriers. For a 33-month period (between 2012 and 2015), the Navy will sail 10 carriers instead of 11. The reduction permits the Navy to avoid spending more than \$1 billion to extend the life of the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) until the USS

Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) is ready to enter service. (Source: AW&ST Oct. 12, 2009)

- The U.S. Navy is changing the way it evaluates bids. Future evaluations will include the lifetime energy cost of building and powering a system, as will each bidder's commitment to energy efficiency. Navy Secretary Mabus reportedly has proposed a "Great Green Fleet" composed of environmentally friendly warships utilizing nuclear power, hybrid electric systems that utilize biofuels, and biofuel-powered aircraft. (Source: AW&ST Oct. 19, 2009)

- The U.S. Air Force reported that its Multi-Platform Radar Technology Insertion Program (MP-RTIP) is experiencing schedule delays. The \$1.2 billion development program, which has previously encountered technical setbacks (radar calibration issues), is running a year late in integration testing into the Global Hawk Block 40 UAV, according to the Air Force. The program has not reported any significant cost growth. (Source: AW&ST, Nov. 16, 2009)

- The U.S. Navy hopes to install upgrades on Increment 4 of its P-8 Poseidon multimission maritime aircraft that would permit the crew to directly control the Broad Area Maritime Surveillance (BAMS) UAV and is seeking a common graphical user interface for both programs. (Source: InsideDefense.com, Nov. 16, 2009).