

TRITON: 2017 5 Years and Going Strong

By Liz McCann

Five years ago, Northrop Grumman rolled out its first MQ-4C Triton, a high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aircraft system designed specifically for maritime environments. Early this fall, the first Early Operational Capability (EOC) Triton aircraft will be delivered to Naval Air Station Point Mugu, Calif., part of Naval Base Ventura County.

In the past few years, Triton's mission and technology have transformed. More than just a U.S. Navy version of the RQ-4 Global Hawk, the Triton has a sensor package designed specifically to detect, track, classify and identify ocean vessels. The aircraft also incorporates improvements for the maritime sensor suite, gust loads, hail and bird strikes, lightning protection and engine inlet anti-icing. These features allow the aircraft to

descend and ascend through harsh maritime weather environments to gain a closer view of ships and other targets at sea when needed.

Triton will deploy in operational orbits, with one aircraft on station, another flying home, a third en route and a fourth getting prepped. These orbits can cover 3.6 million nautical square miles in one day. The EOC MQ-4C Tritons delivered to Point Mugu are just the beginning, as later versions also will be equipped with Multi-INT technology, further expanding Triton's intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) mission. (r)

40 Triton's wings are designed to withstand 40% stronger winds than the maximum gust load the aircraft is expected to experience in the real world.

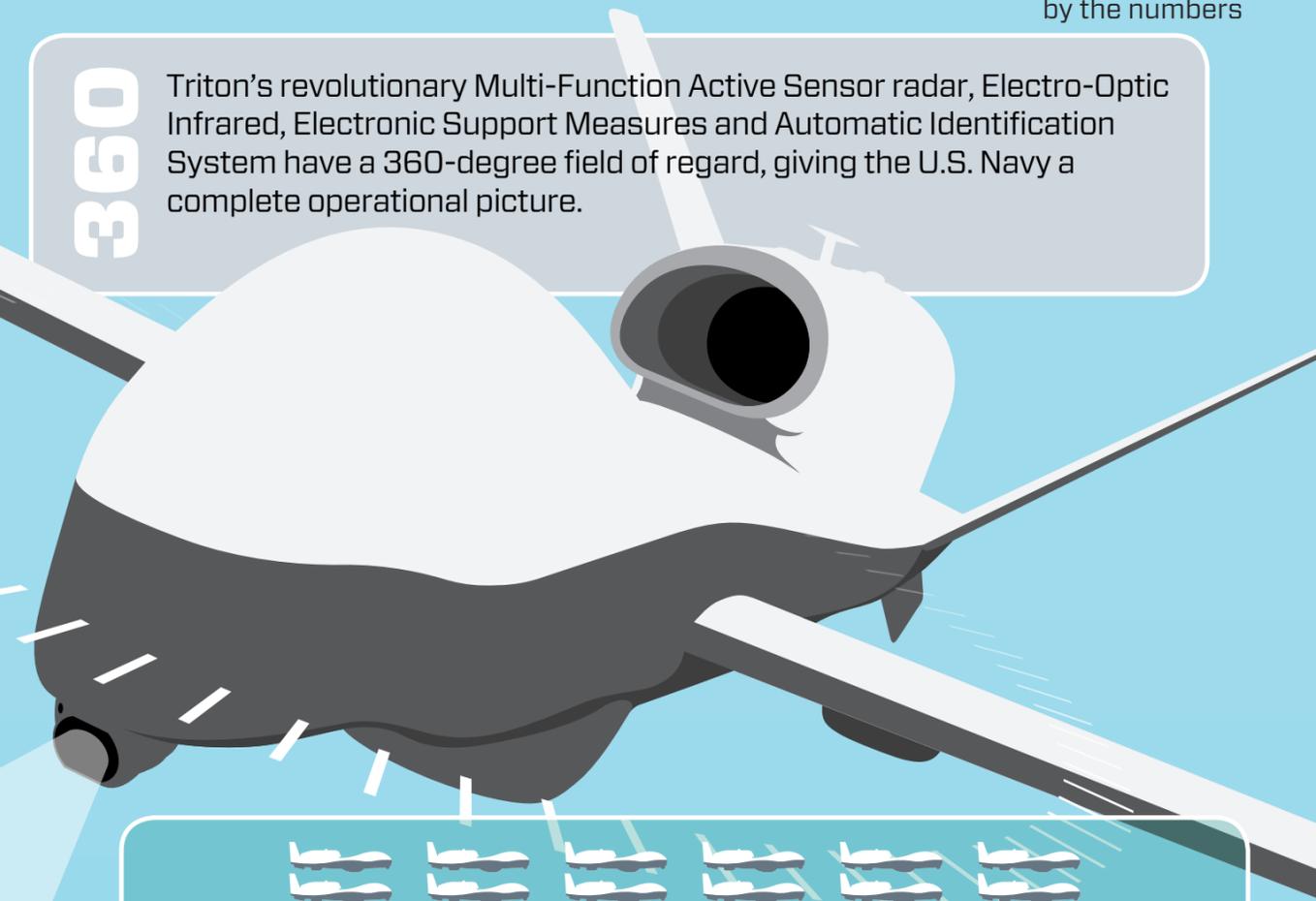
130.9 The MQ-4C Triton's wingspan of 130.9 feet is longer than that of some commercial airliners.

Boeing
737-900
112.6 ft

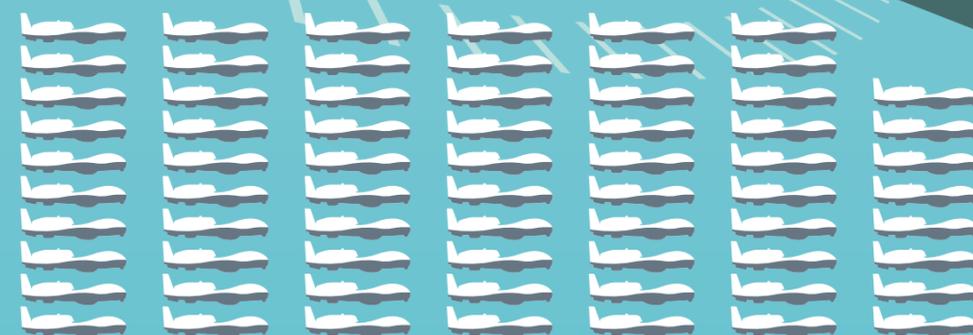


360

Triton's revolutionary Multi-Function Active Sensor radar, Electro-Optic Infrared, Electronic Support Measures and Automatic Identification System have a 360-degree field of regard, giving the U.S. Navy a complete operational picture.

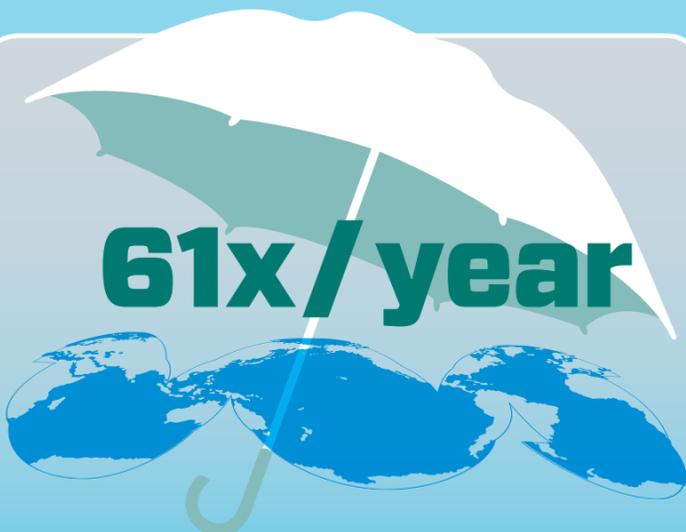


68



The U.S. Navy's program of record ultimately calls for 68 MQ-4C Triton aircraft.

61x/year



Triton missions are capable of covering the equivalent area of all the Earth's oceans 61 times a year.

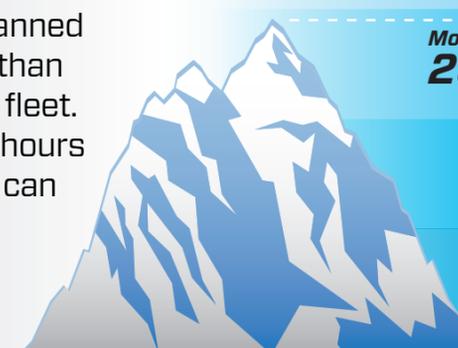
50,000 ft

55,000

Once operational, the Triton unmanned aircraft system will provide more than 55,000 annual flight hours to the fleet. During 20 years, that's 1.2 million hours of persistent maritime ISR. Triton can also fly upward of 50,000 feet.



Commercial Airliner
35,000 ft



Mount Everest
29,029 ft

Infographic designed by Greg Tenorio