

August 8, 2013

X-47B returns to Pax River concluding historic carrier demonstration phase



The Navy's unmanned X-47B lands at NAS Patuxent River, Md. after a 30-minute flight from NASA's Wallops Island Flight Facility on Virginia's Eastern Shore, Aug. 8. (U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, Patuxent River, Md. – The Navy's X-47B Unmanned Combat Air System (UCAS) demonstrator safely returned to Naval Air Station Patuxent River Aug. 8 from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia after recently completing a number of historic firsts for carrier-based unmanned aviation.

The X-47B, known as Salty Dog 502, was temporarily at Wallops following two successful [arrested landings on USS George H.W. Bush \(CVN 77\)](#) July 10. The unmanned aircraft diverted to the NASA facility on the third landing attempt when a minor error was detected in one of its three navigation computers.

"This was the first time the X-47B was operated at a divert site and proved to be a great real-time learning event for the test team," said [Capt. Jaime Engdahl](#), Navy UCAS program manager. "Our team worked closely with NASA personnel over the past few weeks to coordinate the return flight to Pax River."

The two X-47B air vehicles will reside at Patuxent River while the Navy UCAS program continues to assess potential opportunities for additional test operations here and at-sea.

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These efforts will focus on reducing risks for the follow-on Unmanned Carrier Launched Airborne Surveillance and Strike (UCLASS) program and help the Navy to better understand how to operate unmanned systems of this size in the areas of research and development, said [Rear Adm. Mat Winter](#), who oversees the Program Executive Office for Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons.

To date, the N-UCAS program has conducted a total of sixteen precision approaches to the carrier flight deck, including five planned tests of X-47B wave-off functions, nine touch-and-go landings, two arrested landings and three catapult launches during three at-sea evolutions in an eight-month period.



The Navy's X-47B Unmanned Combat Air System demonstrator takes off from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia on its return to NAS Patuxent River, Md., Aug. 8, after after recently completing a number of historic firsts for carrier-based unmanned aviation. (Photo credit: NASA/Patrick Black)