V-22 Flies with Night Vision Goggles

The Bell Boeing Tiltrotor Team broke new ground on March 3, 1998, with the first ever V-22 Osprey night flight utilizing night vision goggles (NVG).

Osprey No. 10, piloted by Capt. William Witzig, U.S. Marine Corps; and Major Bill Wainwright, U.S. Marine Corps, took off from the Patuxent River Naval Air Warfare Center at 7 p.m. and flew for 2.1 hours. The flight covered the entire normal operating envelope of the aircraft, including speeds of up to 250 KCAS and multiple approaches to hover.

According to Wainwright, "The flight went better than we could have hoped. It was amazing how much it was like a day flight."

Witzig and Wainwright flew with a neutral density filter covering the color multi-functional displays (MFDs). This allowed the pilots to run the MFDs in day mode, increasing contrast and reducing background illumination.

"We were pleasantly surprised at how much situational awareness was provided by the glass cockpit, the FLIR (forward looking infrared system), and the fourth generation NVGs," said Wainwright.

To date, night flight testing has included evaluation of the FLIR, avionics testing, austere landings, and general evaluation of V-22 as a "night flyer." The avionics testing included waypoint and flight plan guidance, while austere landing testing encompassed straight approaches to the ground and approaches to hover in unprepared landing areas.

NVG instructor training also took place on the initial flight and will continue, along with more NVG testing, with Osprey No. 10 in April.

The V-22 is being developed for U.S. Marine Corps combat assault, U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command long-range infiltration/exfiltration, and U.S. Navy combat search and rescue, fleet logistics support and special warfare missions.

The Bell Boeing Tiltrotor Team comprises Bell Helicopter Textron of Fort Worth, Texas, a wholly owned subsidiary of Textron, Inc., and Boeing of Philadelphia, a unit of The Boeing Company in Seattle, Wash.

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