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Navy Lifts Secrecy Veil on Regulus Missile

Guided Missile Took 7 Years' Development

AFTER seven years of development, much of it at Point Mugu naval air missile test center, the Regulus guided missile program has reached the point where the navy is permitting release of limited information concerning engineering and technical phases of the development.

The Regulus is designed for launching from submarines, surface ships and shore bases. It was developed by Chance Vought Aircraft, Inc., under sponsorship of the navy's bureau of aeronautics.

The launching equipment for the missile can be installed in a short time on several types of vessels at relatively low cost and with only slight modifications to the ship itself, the navy said.

The submarine Tunny, at Port Hueneme, was specifically modified to launch the Regulus. The Tunny is a converted World War II submarine that has been modernized by addition of a snorkel and streamlining of the hull and rossing lever. A tank for stowing a guided missile and a launching rack was installed.

A group of officers and enlisted men of the Tunny were specifically trained at Point Mugu in operation and maintenance of the Regulus.

In an authorized press release, Chance Vought described development and use of the Regulus as follows:

"Although the assault missile, and certain other configurations, will employ a drone version of Regulus, tactical employment will also include those techniques and guidance systems associated with the operation of all-weather, distantly controlled guided missiles. Such plans will make it possible to utilize the missile in various ways without the expense of building a missile for each function.

"The test and training versions of the Regulus missile are equipped with tricycle landing gear so that the missile may be recovered after completion of its flight. This recovery feature, important because the missile is not lost after each flight, A flight test vehicle, during the early stages of development, approximates the cost of a jet fighter. To evaluate a jet fighter, approximately 100 hours of flight testing are required to obtain the same flight test information on a non-recoverable missile comparable to the Regulus, around 200 missiles would have to be used if each were expended. The recovery feature permits the number to be cut down to about 30.

"Also, much important test data, which might be lost if the missile were destroyed, are recovered and used to good advantage in subsequent flights. Several test missiles now in use have been flown many times at subsonic and supersonic speeds and have been recovered without damage.

"The navy states that as many as 15 flights have been made with a single vehicle, cutting to one-tenth the cost of a comparable operation involving loss of each vehicle after each test. Experience in landing Regulus has shown that it now is recovered through the use of a parachute-type brake on an average sized runway.

"The tactical missile has no landing gear but carries a warhead.

"In appearance, Regulus resembles a conventional, sweptwing jet fighter. It is about 30 feet in length.

"Service plans envisage a wide use of the Regulus missile both as tactical weapons and as recoverable test vehicles. Tactically, Regulus will be used against appropriate land targets and in amphibious warfare by the marine corps and the navy. The recoverable version is being used to train operating units in launching and guidance techniques and can be used as a high speed drone for anti-aircraft guided missiles and aircraft gunnery.

"Navy-Convair Operation at Chance Vought's Dallas, Texas, plant, Regulus has completed the first phase of its operational tests in a completely satisfactory manner, and performance has exceeded early design specifications. The missile was initially developed in 1948, and Regulus was first flown at Edwards air force base in 1950.

"Overwater testing has been conducted at the navy's air missile test center, Point Mugu, Calif.

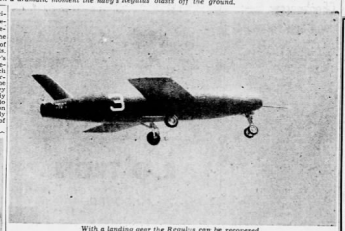
"Prior to 1950, the navy initiated several projects to fly aircraft by remote control. These projects met with varying degrees of success, but for reasons of weight, lack of dependability, and cost not only these projects but similar projects of the other services remained generally in the development stage. In 1950, however, the navy's bureau of aeronautics outlook for development of a life-size remotely controlled maneuverable target airplane to provide a means of assessing the effectiveness of the fleet's anti-aircraft defenses. This project was successful. Five remotely controlled target aircraft were first used for service fleet firings in October, 1950, and since that time have been provided in increasing numbers.

"The navy's guided missiles are laid down to satisfy specific navy operational requirements. The missiles are designed to extend or improve the defensive and striking power of its combatant units and fleets.

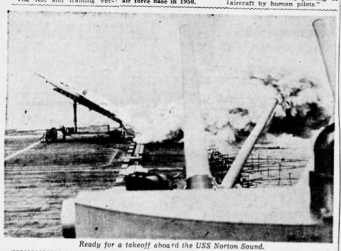
"The shapes of the navy's missiles vary extensively, depending upon the function which the missile is designed to perform. All, however, have these characteristic in common: They are remotely or automatically controlled and, therefore, do not require in their operation those characteristics normally associated with the piloting of aircraft by human pilots."

In a dramatic moment the navy's Regulus blasts off the ground.

The Regulus soars into space.



With a landing gear the Regulus can be recovered.



Ready for a takeoff aboard the USS Norton Sound.

HERE'S A SWITCH

MILFORD, Conn. —(UP)— A board of education member, John C. Novak, 33, announced his resignation because he wanted to get a job as teacher. Novak, who owns a contracting business, said he prefers teaching and the salary of a teacher against the ups and downs of private business.

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