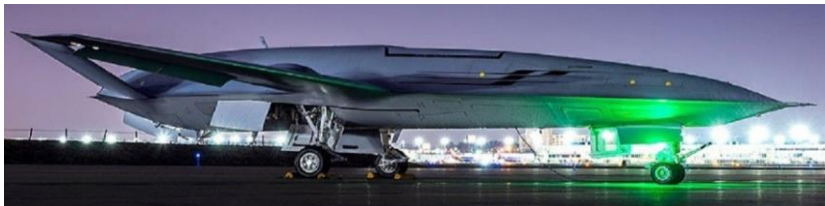


FACT SHEET

Carrier-based aerial refueling system

In 2016, the Navy expanded the prospect of carrier-based drones as tanker aircraft. Previously called the Unmanned Carrier Launched Airborne Surveillance and Strike System, the Carrier Based Aerial Refueling System (CBARS) was designed to free five or six strike-fighters per air wing. Therefore, a dedicated tanker drone could address the more immediate problem of the F/A-18E *Super Hornet's* relatively short legs when it's reconfigured to be used as an airborne tanker, leaving the intelligence and surveillance roles to other platforms.

The purpose of the CBARS is intended to address a growing problem for the U.S. Navy: It still finds itself relying upon Air Force tankers for the range needed for many missions. Organic air wing tankers have entered a descending graveyard spiral: from the classic KA-3 *Sky Warrior* (retired in 1987) to the less capable but useful KA-6D *Intruder* (killed in 1997) to the marginal S-3 *Viking*.



Q-25 Stingray is a next-generation unmanned aerial refueling aircraft being developed by Boeing for the US Navy's CBARS program. The unmanned

aerial vehicle will offer carrier-based unmanned aerial refueling capability to the US Navy. The UAV completed its maiden test flight in September 2019 and received its experimental airworthiness certificate from the FAA.

The initial operational capability of the aircraft is expected to be achieved by 2024. The UAV will help reduce the dependence on F/A-18E/F combat strike fighters for tanking tasks and increase their availability for strike fighter missions. Boeing is developing the [MQ-25 Stingray](#) at its St Louis site in Missouri, US.

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