

MARINE CORPS WARFIGHTING LABORATORY

Project Phoenix has three purposes: to continue the assessment of the M3M .50-Caliber Weapon System aboard assault-support helicopters to determine if it can effectively meet the requirement for a common defensive weapon system; to examine rotary-wing (RW) aircraft effectiveness and survivability during urban operations; and to discover and evaluate enabling technologies and training devices to aid the aviation fleet in training and mission execution.

Background: The Lab began examining the urban environment in 1997 as part of the Urban Warrior series of experiments and has continued urban experimentation through Project Metropolis. Project Phoenix originated during the Project Metropolis experimentation and was formed to examine the aviation aspect of urban operations.

Project Phoenix has focused on the survivability of RW assets against both Man-Portable Air Defense and anti-air artillery threats in the urban environment. At the same time, close-air support, casualty evacuation, resupply, assault support and reconnaissance operations have been examined to determine the effectiveness and ability of aircrews to perform these missions in an urban environment with various threats.

In 2001, Project Phoenix was designated to assess the effectiveness and utility of the M3M .50-Caliber weapon System as a possible system to meet the requirement for a common defensive weapon system for Marine Corps assault-support helicopters. The assessment is being done in cooperation with Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One; Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR); Headquarters, Marine Corps; HMX-1; and Fabrique Nationale. The fourth phase of the assessment was completed in December 2004 at NAVAIR.

Description: Project Phoenix examines the effectiveness of current tactics used by RW aircraft

PROJECT PHOENIX

fact sheet



conducting urban operations and then incorporates different methods. One example is using sniper assets to suppress enemy air threats to determine if the tactics will enhance aviation support during urban operations.

Project Phoenix will continue the assessment of the M3M .50-Caliber Weapon System. The final phase will include assessment of the M3M on the CH-53E helicopter's left- and right-side, door-gun systems. The assessment is part of the transition to NAVAIR. This effort will be conclude by the end of fiscal year 2004.

Deliverable Product: Assessment reports and recommended changes to tactics, techniques and procedures.

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