

NAVAIR LAKEHURST: ONE-STOP SHOP FOR THE FLEET



By Pattie Odoardo

PH2 James K. McNeil

You're deployed aboard a carrier somewhere in the Arabian Gulf. Before you begin your daily aircraft launches, you conduct tests on the launch valves. While checking your equipment readings, you realize that you don't meet the requirements in order to begin launches. What do you do? You call the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) Lakehurst, N.J.

"Without a doubt you must be able to launch those birds at any given time. Even the smallest inclination that something is wrong must be corrected immediately," emphasized Lieutenant Thomas Chorlton, Test Operations Officer.

When the fleet has a problem, NAVAIR Lakehurst is the first to be notified. Being on an aircraft carrier thousands of miles away doesn't prevent you from calling NAVAIR Lakehurst and speaking to an engineer who knows the design thoroughly, and is ready and willing to help you solve your problem.

NAVAIR Lakehurst fleet support helps ensure successful missions around the globe, performed by aircraft such as this VF-213 F-14 Tomcat launching from Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) during training in the Caribbean Sea.

Lakehurst's Engineering and In-Service Support engineers are continually talking to the fleet, working to develop answers and solutions. The solution is provided to the Prototyping and Manufacturing

experts who determine the "best fix," which is then given to Test Operations where the equipment is put on gear that is fleet representative. Test operations are fully instrumented and it is ensured that all of the equipment has passed fleet and functionality testing prior to being shipped out. "Our gear at test sites is exactly like the gear on the carriers. NAVAIR Lakehurst is the only command to have such capabilities," said Captain Mark Bathrick, Executive Officer.

NAVAIR Lakehurst is the Navy's center of excellence for aircraft launch and recovery systems and support equipment. Its responsibility on the carrier includes the catapults that launch the aircraft, the arresting gear that recovers the aircraft, the visual landing aids that guide the aircraft back to the ship and the support equipment

that is used to handle, service, maintain and test the aircraft and its propulsion and avionics systems.

Since 11 September 2001, in its primary role NAVAIR Lakehurst has provided worldwide support for Operation Enduring Freedom against worldwide terrorism. Its members have been deployed on numerous occasions to resolve problems on a variety of ships and air stations. Its role included repairs to catapults and arresting engines on the aircraft carriers *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) and *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) in the Indian Ocean. Expert technicians also performed landing system repairs on *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) in Hong Kong and the assault ship *Bataan* (LHD 5) in the Mediterranean Sea.

Its engineers have completed helicopter recovery system repair on a destroyer in the Persian Gulf and created an expanded runway apron aircraft position movement plan at the U.S. Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia, B.I.O.T., in the Indian Ocean. Engineers also deployed a minimum operating strip lighting kit and supplemental airfield lighting kit to the U.S. Marine Corps in Afghanistan.

With 22 field offices throughout the world, NAVAIR Lakehurst provides on-site support to the complete aircraft



Right, Sailors work beneath the elevated platform of the 1959-vintage catapult in use at NAVAIR Lakehurst. It has survived many modifications to keep pace with the changing needs of aircraft carriers. Below, Test Department personnel “topside” ensure the catapult’s mechanisms are safe for the next no-load launch.

Photos by Kathleen Bozan





Photos by John Campoli

Above, engineers use templates on a scaled carrier deck to identify form and fit issues after an air wing complement change. Right, engineers check out a component of the Improved Fresnel Lens Optical Landing System, designed and developed by NAVAIR Lakehurst.

launching and recovery product line. The Lakehurst team also certifies shipboard aviation fuel systems and configuration management of Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Division spaces aboard aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships.

Collocated with the air and surface type commanders of both the Pacific and Atlantic fleets, as well as with each Marine air wing, NAVAIR Lakehurst personnel are always ready to deploy to remote locations throughout the world with minimum notice. "These people have suitcases packed at their desks on a daily basis," said Joseph McGuckin, head of the Fleet Technical Services Representatives Division. "Recent experience has demonstrated the Fleet Technical Services representatives' willingness to go in harm's way to support forward-deployed warfighters." To McGuckin, they are unsung major contributors to the effectiveness of the warfighting forces.



Testimony to the fact that the Navy and the country have benefited from NAVAIR Lakehurst's actions is the unparalleled availability of catapults and arresting gear on the aircraft carriers participating in Operation Enduring Freedom. "This superb readiness is a tribute to the training and morale of the Sailors and Marines, coupled with the logistical support and the technical services provided by the NAVAIR Lakehurst team," McGuckin added. "The fleet has been underway an unprecedented number of days and has been flying on a

Clockwise from right, Lakehurst software designers work on developing the Integrated Shipboard Information System to monitor aircraft ops on board carriers. Sailors check the central charging panel under the catapult for the proper steam and capacity valve settings. Product Evaluation artisans prep a jet car for a test to qualify cable samples to be used in the manufacture of cross-deck pendants.



and Rescue Team. As a tenant organization, it utilizes Lakehurst's facilities and provides training to NAVAIR firefighters and emergency medical technicians on collapsed building and confined space rescue procedures, a service that is provided at no additional cost to the Navy.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service is a worldwide federal law enforcement organization whose mission is to protect and serve the Navy and Marine Corps and their families. It acts as the focal point of all counter-intelligence activities impacting Navy facilities and personnel within the Northeast geographic area. The service provides ongoing educational programs and command briefings focused on keeping Lakehurst personnel up to date on current terrorist and



continuing basis during this all-important mission to combat terrorism."

Currently, the NAVAIR Lakehurst representatives are working closely with their Coast Guard customers to develop and enhance the operational capability of the Coast Guard cutter fleet in support of homeland defense. Already, they play a critical role in helping the Army develop future combat systems.

Situated in the heart of New Jersey, NAVAIR Lakehurst has more than 7,430 acres and is the largest Naval Aviation facility in the Northeast. Lakehurst is adjoined with the Army Training Center at Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base, forming a 38,000-acre mega-base complex.

The tenant commands at NAVAIR Lakehurst further enhance the base's capabilities with the unique services they provide and their support of homeland defense and security missions.

One of the first to respond to the 11 September attack was the New Jersey State Police Urban Search



criminal threats potentially affecting the area.

The Lakehurst team is definitely warfighter-centric. It brings a world-class image to the NAVAIR community and is a positive reflection of all that is good about Naval Aviation.

Ms. Odoardo is assigned to NAVAIR Lakehurst Public Affairs.

Right, an engineer and technician perform a camera setup on the Helicopter Operations and Surveillance System, which acts as a rear-view mirror to provide the ship's captain with the status of air operations.



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