



PRESS RELEASE

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News Release No. 01-1
Date: 27 January 2003
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State-of-the Art Maintenance System

NAVAIR Lakehurst Program wins Department of the Navy Award

Monday, January 27, 2003 – NAVAIR Lakehurst will be honored in mid-February at the Ronald Reagan Center in Washington D.C. by receiving the Department of the Navy E-Gov Award for developing a new and innovative Electronic Business Program – a software technology called AUTOREAD.

AUTOREAD enables sailors on our nation's most advanced nuclear-powered aircraft carriers to record and transmit maintenance checks of the highly critical launch and recovery equipment on a hand-held personal data assistant (PDA) similar to a Palm Pilot. In the past, this was accomplished the old-fashioned way: with a pencil and paper. Not a bad method, and very effective; but consider writing in the dark on a cold and raining deck onto forms that needed to be copied onto clean forms and then sent to shore via mail, one can easily see that a new method that would be both timely and accurate was necessary to keep up with the 21st Century demands of our fighting force.

This is where the experts at NAVAIR Lakehurst and commercial partners at Specialty Systems Inc. and Antech Systems Inc. came through. In the short period of 120 days, they managed to design, develop and deploy a pilot program to meet the objectives of reducing workload, increasing data accuracy and improving the quality of life

for the sailor on board the ship. According to Chris Reymann, the project manager at NAVAIR Lakehurst, “the schedule was a real challenge, especially getting permission to put a pilot program on board a carrier, obtaining technical waivers, training personnel and providing support for exercises at sea.”

With the PDA (waterproof encased “shock boxes” designed to protect their electronics from the rigors of at-sea life), mechanics aboard carriers can use the hard plastic stylus shaped like a small pencil to press on a lighted display screen. The device completes computations and generates schematic drawings of parts to aid sailors. If a sailor enters a measurement for wear and tear on the engines that control the arresting cables, the computer can instantly spit back whether the reading indicates there is a problem.

“They can sync the information back into the computers in the office and send it across the ship and to me back on shore,” said Chief Petty Officer Joe Osborn, a NAVAIR Lakehurst fleet liaison representative who supervised the initial distribution and use of the PDA’s on board the aircraft carrier *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75). “This new system cuts down work hours and transcription errors, plus the sailors at sea don’t have to wait for answers. A quicker turn around means a quicker solution to a possibly crippling problem,” according to Osborn.

This will be all the more critical with the increased deployments of aircraft carriers to support Operation Enduring Freedom. Expanded operations means greater maintenance requirements, and anything that can be done to improve tracking and diagnosing problems will pay significant dividends in keeping the planes flying from our carriers in the remote reaches of the world.

With the selection of NAVAIR Lakehurst as a recipient of the Department of the Navy’s E-Gov Award, it is clear that the men and women assigned to this Naval Air Engineering Station located in central

New Jersey, play a vital and significant role to the defense of our nation. With BRAC 2005 – base realignment and closing issues facing all Department of Defense installations within the next two years, New Jersey citizens and elected officials need to express their support for the continued existence of the military bases that serve this state and our nation.

-NAVAIR-

"NAVAIR provides advanced warfare technology through the efforts of a seamless, integrated, worldwide network of aviation technology experts. From professional training to carrier launch; from sensor data to precision targeting; from aircraft and weapons development to successful deployment; from real-time communication to aircraft recovery NAVAIR provides dominant combat effects and matchless capabilities to the American warfighter."