



News Release

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Highest Secretary of the Navy Safety Award Presentation Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst wins Navy Safety Achievement Award

29 July 2003 – Naval Air Engineering Station (NAES) Lakehurst has been recognized with the Secretary of the Navy Achievement in Safety Ashore award based on the overall quality of its occupational safety and health programs for medium sized industrial activities in the United States. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Ms. Connie DeWitte will present the award at NAES Lakehurst on **Wednesday, July 30, 2003, at 9:00 A.M.**

MEDIA ARE INVITED AND SHOULD ARRIVE AT THE FRONT GATE BY 8:30 A.M.

During the consideration process, thirty-four areas were considered such as staffing, mishap reduction, industrial hygiene, safety councils, training, supervisory program, operational risk management, partnerships and cost data. Though an annual award, three-year trends for items such as, mishap trends, fire trends, compensation cost trends were evaluated.

As a winner of this award, the base will be authorized to fly the Secretary of the Navy safety flag for one year.

“Declining resources, old as well as new sophisticated equipment, increased regulatory requirements and the primary concern for employee safety lead us to implement a groundbreaking process review and measurement system which proactively address both occupational safety and health issues,” said Steve Rudowski, deputy public safety director. “We strongly believe our program is one of the finest and most innovative leading edge safety programs in the department of the Navy and it rests on the shoulders of supervisors and every employee.”

With seven full time safety professionals, a proactive approach and a team-wide effort, NAES Lakehurst has maintained the lowest injury rate in years according to Rudowski. The base lowered the total injury cases from 246 in fiscal year 1994 to 65 in FY 2002 with the help and dedication of Lakehurst compensation program manager and the occupational health nurse. NAES Lakehurst attained one of the highest scores during its most recent inspector general inspection. Navy occupational safety and health oversight inspections provide uniform measurement for the chief of naval operations to assess safety performance in the award review process.

In addition to this latest recognition, NAES Lakehurst recently earned the 2002 superior performance award for most outstanding federal safety and health council in the country from the department of labor, occupational safety and health administration (OSHA). NAES Lakehurst safety professionals served as the chairman and vice-chairman of the Southern New Jersey federal safety and health council during this period, representing all federal sites (20,000 federal employees) in New Jersey.

To Rudowski, all this is a by-product of the success of his safety team, the public safety department, and individual supervisors and employees throughout the base. Safety assessments and operational risk management (ORM) planning done by program managers throughout the base have also contributed to the overall success of the safety program. Lakehurst engineers who plan aircraft launch and recovery tests use ORM principles to identify and

evaluate risks and implement controls to reduce them in the planning and operational stages. Safety specialists have been integrated into various product and developmental teams at Lakehurst. Since this began, teams have successfully completed all test operations without personnel injuries, materials failures or operational delays.

“This award reflects a well integrated safety process and that protecting people is our most important undertaking,” concluded Rudowski. “It takes a base-wide team effort to prevent personnel injuries, accidents and property damage so that we all have a safe and healthful work environment.”

NAES Lakehurst individuals are welcome to report unsafe practices and also make their own recommendations. An employee suggestion led to prototyping and manufacturing's machine shop purchasing a hoist to position lathe chucks weighing 40-100 pounds each. Several employees saw a device in a trade show to reduce back strain and it was purchased. In a maintenance repair shop, employees manufactured in-house a guard for a reciprocating saw from available materials.

In ways not as conspicuous to many on base, the public safety department has partnered with many local, state and federal agencies and organizations to promote sharing knowledge and experience and share its resources. For instance, the base partners with Ocean County traffic safety committee and police academy to support accident reconstruction training and emergency vehicle obstacle avoidance training. Forty local police and fire departments have attended this training. NAES Lakehurst safety partnerships have included neighboring Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base fostering the Joint Installation Partnership concept. This has helped further develop relationships with the explosives and aviation safety program.

Regional fire and police rescue units regularly use base hangars for training and practice. The New Jersey urban search and rescue task force trains and is regularly supported as requested. NAES Lakehurst public safety personnel assisted in recovering 9/11 twin towers victims and Lakehurst industrial hygienists aided in sampling and cleanup from the attack on the Pentagon.

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