



Press Release

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News Release No. 9-1
Date: 9 Sep. 2002
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Base serves homeland defense and homeland security NAVAIR Lakehurst protects and serves nation

The Naval Air Systems Command Lakehurst continues to do its part in homeland defense while preparing for more responsibilities.

Long before the terrorist attack in New York City, the Pentagon in Virginia and the plane crash in Pennsylvania, the base began using its strategic location to support those protecting our homeland. Now, it is the hub of New Jersey's homeland security and more is planned.

Since 1998, the base has provided a critical staging area for the New Jersey's Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue (TF-1) team as it fulfills its own mission to rescue victims of mass terrorist attacks. Organized under the New Jersey state police office of emergency management, this tenant team drives or flies to "ground zero" for self contained operations for several weeks before returning.

When it needed a secure field with piles of rubble of all varieties to practice urban rescue they got it and now dogs train at the base regularly. "In fact, the whole American Rescue Dog Association will be training in classrooms and facilities at Lakehurst the middle of October," said state trooper Danny Mitten with TF-1.

Far enough removed from these urban centers to avoid chemical or biological or nuclear compromise the USR team at the base can assemble and depart from this secure facility or through Ft. Dix and McGuire Air Force Base. This alternative provides immediate one-hour airlift response to key East Coast cities of New York, Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

Currently, NAVAIR Lakehurst provides facilities to house its vehicles with tons of specialized equipment organized for immediate use. The base also provides specialized training facilities and large unoccupied areas for rescue and recovery dog certification.

Since September 11th, in its primary role, NAVAIR Lakehurst also has provided worldwide support for the Enduring Freedom military operations against worldwide terrorism. Its members have been deployed on numerous occasions to resolve problems on many varieties of ships and air stations. Its role included repairs to catapults and arresting engines on the aircraft carriers USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), and the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) in the Indian Ocean. Members performed optical landing system repairs on the USS John C. Stennis (CVN74) in Hong Kong and the assault ship USS Bataan, LHD5 in the Mediterranean Sea.

Its engineers have also done helicopter recovery system repair on a destroyer in the Persian Gulf and created an expanded runway apron aircraft positioning movement plan at the Naval Air Station Diego Garcia base. Engineers also deployed a minimum operating strip lighting kit and supplemental airfield lighting kit to the U.S. Marine Corp in Afghanistan.

With 22 field offices throughout the world, NAVAIR Lakehurst provided on-site support to the complete aircraft launching and recovering product line. The Lakehurst team also certified shipboard aviation fuel systems and configuration management of Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Division (AIMD) spaces aboard aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships.

Collocated with the air and surface Commanders of both the Pacific and Atlantic Fleet as well as with each Marine Air Wing, its people are always ready to deploy to remote locations throughout the world with minimum notice. “These guys have suitcases packed at their desks on a daily basis”, said Joseph McGuckin, division head for the Fleet Technical Services

Representatives Division. “Recent experience has shown the Fleet Technical Services representatives willingness to go in harms way to support forward deployed warfighters.” To McGuckin, they are unsung major contributors to the effectiveness of many warfighters.

Testimony to the extent that the Navy and the country have benefited from NAVAIR Lakehurst Team’s actions is the unparalleled availability of the 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” concluded McGuckin. “The fleet has been underway an unprecedented number of days and has been flying on a continuous 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, it serves a critical role in helping the Army develop future combat systems.

The tenant commands at NAVAIR Lakehurst further enhance NAVAIR Lakehurst capabilities with the unique services they provide and their support for homeland defense and homeland security missions. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), for instance, a worldwide federal law enforcement organization serves as the focal point of all counterintelligence activities impacting Navy facilities and personnel within this geographic area.

With an eye to the future, NAVAIR Lakehurst has runway complexes, restricted airspace, large enclosed structures, secluded parachute drop zone, world-class industrial prototyping, manufacturing and aircraft maintenance facilities and unique research, development, testing and engineering capabilities ready to serve future homeland security challenges and worldwide military operations. It seeks new organizations as tenants or partners to maximize its future use.