**VA**: VX-1 qualifies base Sailors on air warfare

By MC2 Victoria Kinney  
**VX-1 Public Affairs**

Air Test and Evaluation (VX) 1’s enlisted aviation warfare specialists (EAWS) program recently qualified its first Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River Sailor July 3.  

Religious Program Specialist 2nd Class Federico Valois, assigned to Pax River’s Religious Programs Center, is one of the first Sailors assigned to the base to join VX-1’s EAWS program, which began training NAS Patuxent River and other tenant command Sailors in October 2017.  

The qualification program recognizes enlisted Sailors who have achieved a significant level of professional skill and knowledge in support of Naval aviation. Requirements for the program include completing a warfare qualification card consisting of three phases: demonstrating practical knowledge during walk-arounds of VX-1 aircraft; completing a comprehensive written exam; and completing an oral board presided over by four EAWS-qualified board members.  

So far, 11 Sailors outside of VX-1 have signed up for the program and work weekly with VX-1 Pioneers for in-depth training about the mission of surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft as well as its mechanical functions.  

"I think it’s a great thing that we have opened this program to the base and its tenant commands because Sailors will now have the chance to step out of their comfort zone and learn about different aviation platforms and have the chance to earn their wings," said Logistics Specialist 1st Class Mery Mattingly, VX-1’s EAWS coordinator for Sailors outside the command. "It also shows great initiative on the Sailor’s part by going the extra mile to obtain a qualification outside of their own command."  

Sailors who are interested in joining the program are encouraged to speak with their chain-of-command and enroll with VX-1’s EAWS coordinator.

**US**: US Naval Test Pilot School accepts flying classroom, ASTARS III

By Brittany Machnicki  
**NAWCAD Public Affairs**

The United States Naval Test Pilot School (USNTPS) welcomed Airborne Systems Training and Research Support (ASTARS) III aircraft, the newest generation of flying classrooms June 29 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River.  

ASTARS III, the third generation of flying classroom for the USNTPS curriculum, is a custom tailored C-26A Metroliner equipped with military equipment and subsystems. A custom tailored simulation lab was also built in conjunction with the aircraft to have matching crew stations. The ASTARS objective is for students to familiarize themselves with the aircraft and its systems in a simulation lab before flying airborne for the first time which increases the efficiency of flight time spent with instructors in the air. USNTPS’ original ASTARS is a divested P-3; ASTARS II is a leased modified Saab 340 and the contract will end in fall 2018.  

"The amount of proactive collaboration on this project is unprecedented," said Jerry Swift, director of NAWCAD’s AIRWorks, the command’s systems integration office that cultivates the command’s organic capability to develop rapid warfighter solutions.  

In fall 2015, the U.S. Government gave the C-26A to the USNTPS after it retired from conducting counter narcotics missions along the Mexican border. The aircraft arrived with minimal documentation and maintenance records requiring extensive work and support from the aircraft’s configuration control.  

The aircraft’s upgrade was a group effort between a number of organizations: USNTPS, AIRWorks, the Tactical Airlift, Adversary and Support Aircraft program office (PMA-207), and SMS Aerospace, a subsidiary of Elbit Systems of America. Each group was represented at the hangar on a daily basis by pilots, engineers, artisans, supply chain specialists, program managers, test representatives, and other crew members who worked side-by-side at the modification site in San Antonio, Texas. The project structure reduced programmatic cycle times while maintaining the aircraft’s configuration control.  

The approach was another example of extraordinary effort coordinated by AIRWorks bringing together warfare center talent, industrial partnerships and emerging technologies. In partnership with NAWCAD’s Aircraft Modification Prototyping and Production (APSD) group, AIRWorks has provided the Navy affordable alternatives including rapid prototype and production of the H-60 gunner seat, integration of V-22 ballistic missile protection and C-27 maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance modifications.  

With facilities in Patuxent River, Maryland; Lakehurst, New Jersey; and Orlando, Florida, NAWCAD supports the research and development, engineering, test and evaluation of all Navy and Marine Corps air vehicle systems and trainers.  

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