NAVAIR logisticians visit Navy’s newest carrier

By Jacquelyn Millham
AIR 6.0 Communications Support

After touring the Navy’s newest aircraft carrier—USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78)—24 NAVAIR logisticians from Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, have a better understanding of the role they play in producing Naval Aviation readiness.

“The day-to-day activities of AIR 6.7 are in direct support of the fleet, but many civilians have never been on a ship,” Industrial and Logistics Maintenance Planning/Sustainment Department (AIR 6.7) Military Director Capt. Bryant Hepstall said. “Not everyone can comprehend the maintainer’s operational environment without seeing it firsthand,” he explained. “The one-day trip to see the ship at its homeport (Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia) was an opportunity for our logisticians to talk with their customers face-to-face. I wanted them to see from a Sailor and Marine perspective how our products impact their ability to perform naval aviation’s mission.”

Commissioned July 2017, USS Gerald R. Ford is the first U.S. aircraft carrier in its class. The ship’s new design—the first in 40 years—including advanced weapons systems as well as the capacity to support a larger complement of aircraft than older Nimitz-class carriers. The new configuration also enables the ship to operate with fewer Sailors.

For Ronald Klasmeyer, Engineering Technical Services Policy Branch, the visit to Ford was his first to an aircraft carrier. He said feedback from the crew detailing how well NAVAIR products work resonated with him. “To properly design systems, we need to keep in mind what is and is not possible aboard a carrier,” he said. “Sizes, voltages, bandwidths and storage space all need to be factored in advance.”

Early Testers, command histories available at public library

By Donna Cipolloni
NAS Patuxent River Public Affairs

Tester issues through 1962, along with Naval Air Test Center and NAS Patuxent River command histories through 1952, have been digitized and are now publicly available through the St. Mary’s County Public Library.

In February 2017, using funding provided for historic preservation purposes, an archivist from Louis Berger meticulously photographed each individual page of the newspapers and the command histories, which were quarterly reports of significant events that occurred aboard the installation. The funding amount covered the digitizing of approximately 5,000 pages.

“What we do here is historically significant and always has been,” said Mike Smolek, Pax River’s cultural resources manager. “There’s meaningful history here that’s worth preserving and this now opens up some of the earliest years to a wider audience.”

When the funding was originally approved for the project, Smolek met with IT representatives from St. Mary’s County Library to see how they went about digitizing old issues of the local community newspapers, The Enterprise and Beacon, which are available for searching online.

“In the course of that discussion, we also talked about the possibility of them housing our digitized files,” he said. “At the end of the project, we approached them again and asked if they were interested.”

Fortunately, they were.