



FRCSW opens new helo facility



A multi-mission H-60 Seahawk helicopter is maneuvered into the new FRCSW helicopter facility aboard Naval Air Station North Island. (U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR STATION NORTH ISLAND, Calif. – Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW) marked the beginning of a new era in Navy helicopter maintenance February 8, as the first multi-mission H-60 Seahawk helicopter was positioned in the command's new 100,000 square-foot helicopter maintenance facility.

Costing almost \$50 million, the building (325) is the Navy's first and only facility solely dedicated to the support and service of the H-60 Seahawk.

The design of the new hangar is the result of a collaborative effort between Naval Base Coronado, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest (NAVFAC) and Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) H-60 Multi-Mission Helicopter Program, PMA-299.

"This building is a generational leap forward in supporting our aviation fleet. It sets the tone for the future of FRCSW and is a physical representation of one of our four pillars within the command strategy: That of infrastructure renewal," said FRCSW Commanding Officer Capt. Timothy Pfannenstein.

Pfannenstein also spoke of the significant impact the new hangar will have in improving the



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readiness of H-60 aircraft to the fleet.

“With 30 bays, we will perform maintenance without aircraft waiting for spots. Reducing wait generates readiness,” he said. “The building will consolidate our Integrated Production Team, which will reduce transit time for talent, skills, materials, and tools and generate efficient use of all of our resources. Doing so reduces costs and improves speed. Doing both generates readiness.”

The facility features an energy-efficient design which uses natural light to the fullest extent possible and is constructed with exterior building skins which sandwich the insulation for both cool and heat, reducing energy costs.

Construction of the new facility began in December 2012 and resulted in the demolition of 10 buildings, three of which were used to maintain the H-60s.

FRCSW serviced and returned approximately 50 H-60s to various squadrons last year, or about half of the fleet’s needs.