



Gahagan assumes command of NAWCAD



Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan addresses members of Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) Patuxent River, Maryland, after assuming command from Rear Adm. Dean Peters, left, while Commander, Naval Air Systems Command Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags observes March 23. NAWCAD is the principal research, development, test and evaluation and fleet support activity for manned and unmanned aircraft for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. (U.S. Navy photo)

PATUXENT RIVER, Maryland -- Naval aviation's research, development, test and evaluation command for aircraft and aircraft systems changed hands at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, March 23.

Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan assumed command of Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) from Rear Adm. G. Dean Peters in an 8 a.m. ceremony in front of NAWCAD headquarters, building 2185.

"NAWCAD has a tremendous impact on naval aviation as a whole -- the health of naval aviation and how it moves forward," said Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, commander, Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR). "During his tenure, Rear Adm. Peters took on some of NAVAIR's and naval aviation's toughest and most vexing challenges."

During his year-and-a-half as NAWCAD commander and assistant NAVAIR commander for research and engineering (AIR 4.0), Peters focused attention on several fleet issues and



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led efforts to better position the organization for fiscal sustainability.

To address immediate F/A-18 and EA-18G engineering needs, Peters used engineers enterprise-wide to decrease turnaround time for engineering products and increase annual repair output of F/A-18 A-D aircraft.

Guiding investments in aircraft engine reliability and improved maintenance practices across the fleet, Peters enabled a three- to 12-month increase in on-wing time for engines, increasing the number of fleet aircraft ready for tasking and avoiding more than \$77 million in repair and rework costs.

Under Peters, the command's Lakehurst component established NAVAIR's first metal additive manufacturing capability. This enabled production of flight-critical components in support of the V-22, with follow-on plans to support the H-1, H-53, F/A-18 and AV-8B.

During Peters's tenure, F-35C and F/A-18F aircraft with Naval Test Wing Atlantic conducted at-sea testing of the MAGIC CARPET flight control system to improve safety, efficiency and success rates in recovering fixed-wing aircraft on board aircraft carriers.

"NAWCAD's mission of research, development, test and evaluation is critical in delivering capability to the fleet and to combatant commanders," said Peters, whose next assignment is as Program Executive Officer for Air Anti-Submarine Warfare, Assault and Special Mission Programs (PEO(A)). "To the men and women of NAWCAD, thank you for what you have done and for what you are going to do -- solving hard problems, wringing out weapons before the fleet gets them and training the next generation of people who will continue to do that in the future."

Gahagan, who graduated from North Carolina State University and was commissioned in 1986, has served in Atsugi, Japan; Patuxent River, Maryland; and Miramar and Monterey, California, among other locations. He is a 1991 graduate of U.S. Naval Test Pilot School and a 1997 graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School. He is also a graduate of the Defense Systems Management College and the Naval War College. He previously commanded Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 20 and was program manager for E-2/C-2 (PMA-231).

"To the men and women of NAWCAD, I look forward to making a positive impact for the Navy together," said Gahagan, who previously served as NAVAIR director of Integrated Warfighting Capabilities. "We need innovative, creative ideas coupled with good technique and execution in tackling the challenges of naval aviation today. We are here to lead, not just to manage. That is a critical distinction, and I look forward to working with all of you to make it happen."

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10,000 government and military personnel operate research laboratories, test ranges, test facilities and aircraft to support the fleet's acquisition and sustainment requirements.

NAWCAD's components are primarily located at Patuxent River, Maryland; Lakehurst, New Jersey and Orlando, Florida, including Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division in Orlando and Naval Test Wing Atlantic at Patuxent River. Its mission areas include air vehicle technology, propulsion, avionics, human systems, training systems, ground support systems, aircraft launch and recovery equipment, ship and shore electronic systems and air platform systems integration. It operates with an annual business base of more than \$3 billion.



Rear Adm. Dean Peters congratulates the new commander of Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD), Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan, along with Commander, Naval Air Systems Command Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags March 23. Military members and civilian leaders of NAWCAD attended the change of command ceremony in front of NAWCAD headquarters at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland. (U.S. Navy photo)



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Commander, Naval Air Systems Command Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags thanks Rear Adm. Dean Peters, center, for his leadership of Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) and welcomes incoming NAWCAD commander Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan, left, during a change of command ceremony at Patuxent River, Maryland, March 23. (U.S. Navy photo)