



U.S. Naval Test Pilot School wins CNO Aviation Safety Award



Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, commander, Naval Air Systems Command, presents the 2015 Chief of Naval Operations Aviation Safety Award to U.S. Naval Test Pilot School Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Timothy Davis and service members, civilian employees and contractors in front of the school's 1952-vintage NU-1B Otter March 31. (U.S. Navy photo)

PATUXENT RIVER, Maryland -- U.S. Naval Test Pilot School (USNTPS) won Navywide recognition for outstanding safety performance while instructing military pilots, flight officers and engineers in techniques for aircraft and aviation systems test and evaluation in 2015.

Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, commander, Naval Air Systems Command, and Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan, commander, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, presented the 2015 Chief of Naval Operations Aviation Safety Award to USNTPS March 31.

“When I consider the stable of aircraft that you support here -- from the oldest aircraft in the naval inventory to some of our most technologically advanced -- and where most of the students have a very limited time in the type of aircraft they are flying here, it is truly an awesome achievement for you all to receive this award,” said Grosklags.

USNTPS graduated 65 flight test pilots, flight test officers and flight test engineers in 2015. Although students are already experienced and accomplished military pilots and flight officers or civil service engineers, the school's 11-month course of instruction requires



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students to fly in aircraft with which they have little or no experience, practicing flight test maneuvers to which they have just been introduced.

The school's commanding officer credited that safe and successful graduation to a robust safety program and the deliberate use of operational risk management for every syllabus event.

"This has everything to do with the attention to detail, the communication and the integrity that each of you show every day on the deckplates here," said USNTPS Commanding Officer Marine Lt. Col. Timothy Davis. "We are only able to safely accomplish our unique mission by placing the proper emphasis on safety and ensuring everyone in the command understands and properly manages the risks involved."

Also central to the command's safe accomplishment of its mission is its aircraft maintenance department. Because students learn to test and evaluate a wide variety of aircraft, the maintenance department must support diverse, aging and sometimes unique airframes -- more than 40 aircraft of 12 different type/model/series, as well as visiting aircraft.

"It's impressive to note that in 2015 alone, the maintenance department logged about 57,000 work-hours in support of 4,700 sorties and 6,700 flight hours," said Grosklags. "Those maintenance activities serve as the foundation for these folks to safely fly that day or the next."

Depending on the airframe, the maintenance department must comply with requirements issued by U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force publications and processes, as well as Federal Aviation Administration and commercial flight authorities.

Grosklags also recognized several USNTPS people for their noteworthy individual contributions to the command's safe mission execution. These included Cmdr. Pete Walczak, Marine Maj. Allen Wold and William Cronkright, Chief Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Michael Thomas and civilians Barb Gordon, Keith Humphries, Scott Bear, Rich Gill and Melissa Guerin.

The annual CNO Safety Awards recognize outstanding safety performance or contributions to safety management in naval aviation, afloat units, shore activities and expeditionary units. Winners are selected by the Commander, Naval Safety Center, who serves as the CNO's special assistant for safety matters.



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The commanders of Naval Air Systems Command, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division and Naval Test Wing Atlantic join service members, civilian employees and contractors of U.S. Naval Test Pilot School to present the 2015 Chief of Naval Operations Aviation Safety Award March 31. The school was recognized for its outstanding safety performance while instructing military pilots, flight officers and engineers in techniques for aircraft and aviation systems test and evaluation in 2015. (U.S. Navy photo)