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New test range operations center will speed naval aviation systems to the fleet



Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan, commander, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD), center, and Capt. Scott Starkey, commanding officer, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, lead representatives from their commands and the construction contractor in officially breaking ground on a new operations center for NAWCAD's Atlantic Test Ranges (ATR) Aug. 24. The project will enhance ATR's ability to support simultaneous test operations for current and future naval aviation programs, including unmanned systems and live, virtual, constructive battlespace environments. Reducing scheduling conflicts and providing more secure information-processing capability will support delivering new systems to the fleet faster. (U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Md. -- Representatives from Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD), Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River and construction contractor G-W Management Services officially broke ground on a new operations center for NAWCAD's Atlantic Test Ranges (ATR) Aug. 24.

The project will enhance ATR's ability to support simultaneous test operations for current and future naval aviation programs, including unmanned systems and live, virtual, constructive battlespace environments.

"It's great to see this project underway because the new operations center will help us meet the requirements of future major Navy programs, reduce scheduling conflicts and provide more secure information-processing capability for our test ranges," said Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan, NAWCAD commander. "That, in turn, supports delivering new systems to



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the fleet faster.”

The 17,000-square-foot addition to the existing ATR facilities on NAS Patuxent River will include secure, multipurpose mission test cells built to support current and future flight test programs such as the MQ-25A Stingray, Next-Generation Jammer, Next-Generation Air Dominance platform(s), and the Unmanned Aircraft Common Control Station, along with system-of-systems interoperability efforts.

“ATR is always pushing to remove constraints and provide the capabilities that naval aviation test programs need,” said Robert Vargo, ATR director. “I’m excited because this facility will provide well into the future the capacity and capability to get the mission accomplished on time. In short, this addition allows us to support the future now.”

“The NAS Patuxent River public works department does a terrific job supporting construction and renovation projects that enable the success of our supported commands,” said Capt. Scott Starkey, NAS Patuxent River commanding officer. “From restoring our runways to constructing new facilities, we’re proud to provide the best naval aviation research, development, test and evaluation capabilities in the Navy. I look forward to seeing this facility completed and starting its work of supporting our testers and warfighters.”

Construction is expected to be complete in late 2017.

NAWCAD’s Atlantic Test Ranges are fully-instrumented and integrated test ranges that provide full-service support for testing and training for naval aviation aircraft and aircraft systems throughout their service life. ATR manages more than 2,700 square miles of restricted air space over the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, Delaware and Virginia.