NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. - The Common Aviation Support Equipment program office (PMA-260) achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC) for the Navy’s electronic Consolidated Automated Support System (eCASS) Sept. 29 at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia. The milestone event was celebrated Oct. 11 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony conducted by Capt. Keith Nixon, commanding officer of Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic (FRCMA), and Capt. Thomas Dall, PMA-260 program manager.

In the next few years, more than 340 eCASS units will replace aging Consolidated Automated Support System (CASS) units, or be newly installed, on the Navy’s aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships, and in the Aircraft Immediate Maintenance Departments, Fleet Readiness Centers, Foreign Military Sales, and the industrial base.

“For nearly 30 years, CASS has been the workhorse of the fleet,” Dall said. “Replacing
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CASS with eCASS’ Automatic Test Systems (ATS) enables maintainers to meet growing operational and maintenance requirements and increased complexities to support legacy aircraft and future aircraft platforms. With new computers, modernized onboard test equipment and a Windows-based user interface, the eCASS transition will provide the fleet with speedier support at a reduced cost.”

The advanced hardware and software, onboard fault detection and environmental monitoring system within eCASS provides station maintainers a more accurate picture when testing for faulty components. These improved troubleshooting procedures provide increased production and reduces the time required to complete periodic maintenance or troubleshooting.

When compared to the original CASS station, the eCASS footprint is significantly smaller thanks to a reduction in size of the internal electronic components. In addition, the internal components of eCASS were designed to allow the maintainer to effectively remove and replace faulty components from the front of the station, simplifying station repair.

eCASS also leads the mark in internal cooling compared to its predecessor. This increased cooling capacity no longer requires work centers to maintain a 55 to 65 degree threshold to maintain operation; eCASS has been proven to flawlessly operate at 66 to 76 degrees, reducing the facility cost of climate control.

With its updated components, decreased testing and maintenance times, a space-saving footprint and reduced facility requirements, the Navy’s new eCASS ATS stations are expected to reduce man-hours and production costs overall.

PMA-260 manages the procurement, development and fielding of Common Ground Support Equipment and Automatic Test Systems that supports every type/model/series aircraft within the Naval Aviation Enterprise.
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Service members from Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic pose for a group shot in front of the Navy’s first two operational electronic Consolidated Automated Support System (eCASS) stations at NAS Oceana, Virginia, Oct. 11. (U.S. Navy photo)