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Telephone: (732) 323-2811  
(732) 323-1079  
FAX: (732) 323-7676

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Contact: Thomas Worsdale, Public Affairs Officer  
Lawrence Lyford, Deputy Public Affairs Officer

## Aircraft Launch Bulletins Move into Digital Age with Cutting Edge Calculator

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March 1, 2011: LAKEHURST, NJ – Flight crews responsible for launching aircraft from the decks of carriers are transitioning into the computer age, with the aid of an Office of Naval Research (ONR) TechSolutions effort to move paper tables onto handheld devices.

The Catapult Capacity Selector Valve (CSV) Calculator, which is being developed at Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) Lakehurst, NJ with New Jersey-based contractor Specialty Systems, could eventually eliminate the need for paper-bound launch bulletins. The device underwent final test and evaluation at the end of January aboard USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). Eleven members of the Truman's flight deck crew recently underwent three days of training with the Catapult CSV Calculator.

The capacity selector valve is used to set the energy level needed for a launch on an aircraft carrier. Calculations are based on aircraft type, weight and wind speed, among other variables.

Currently, all that information is contained in a loose-leaf notebook. Crews must manually look up the data to determine the energy level for each launch. Launch bulletin updates are e-mailed to the ship from NAVAIR. The Sailors have to print them out and enter the data into the notebooks by hand.

Based on a request from the Fleet and with guidance from Captain Drew Swenson, Military Director for Support Equipment and Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment at NAVAIR Lakehurst,

Specialty Systems engineers Tom Breslin and Bob Swigon were tasked with developing a computerized device to improve on this system.

In six short months and at an extremely reasonable development cost of \$135,000, the prototype CSV Calculator was designed. Now, "instead of relying on the book, the launch bulletins are stored in the calculator, and they are updated automatically," said Stephanie Everett, ONR's TechSolutions Program Manager.

According to designer Bob Swigon, "the ruggedized Catapult CSV Calculator is expected to increase efficiency and safety of the launch process, while also reducing wear on catapult machinery. The calculator also performs automatic error checking."

"There will be a final project assessment before it goes to the fleet," Everett said. The purpose of the final assessment is to verify that the device is usable under operational conditions, and to verify that it produces the same results as the paper tables.

The goal is to eventually outfit all Nimitz-class carrier flight deck crews with the calculator. During testing, the device will be used in parallel with paper notebooks to verify the electronic calculations, said Master Chief Charles Ziervogel, ONR's command master chief, who oversees TechSolutions. "The calculator is not yet certified for use by itself."

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