



# NEWS RELEASE

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Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training  
230 Chevalier Field Avenue  
Pensacola, Florida 32508-5168  
(850) 452-9700, ext. 3122; DSN 922

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Contact: Jena Stephenson, Administrative Officer/Public Affairs Officer

Article by Maj. Richard F. Schofield (USMC), CNATT Functional Integration Directorate

## **CNATT launches NEC Course Challenge Program**

PENSACOLA, FLA. - In May, 2008, the Naval Aviation Enterprise (NAE) Total Force Team was tasked by Vice Adm. Tom Kilcline, Commander, Naval Air Forces (CNAF) and the Air Boss, to identify and remove barriers contributing to the Strike Fighter Squadron's Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) FIT GAP (qualification shortfalls) in Lemoore, Calif. As part of that process, barriers were ranked and teams were directed to develop plans for removing these individual barriers.

One of the barriers addressed was the lack of a standardized, disciplined process for Sailors who had not received required training en route to their operational command, but had acquired the Knowledge, Skills, and Aptitude (KSA) through on-the-job training, to be evaluated for NEC qualification. There was a lack of objective criteria and no process to ensure that these Sailors had all of the required KSAs.

Operational requirements and demands on an individual Sailor's technical expertise often prevent Fleet maintainers from returning to formal schools to complete NEC-mandated courses. A growing consequence of these constraints often extends well beyond individuals or units. Community Managers, Wings, Training stakeholders, and operational planners are handicapped in their attempts to accurately depict mission/unit readiness.

The Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training (CNATT) organized a team to research and develop a standardized process that would result in the awarding of an NEC after objective criteria were met, thus ensuring integrity of the NEC qualification. As a result of this research, CNATT initiated development of a NEC Course Challenge program in June 2008 targeting

skilled Fleet Sailors who are recognized as subject matter experts by virtue of experience, on the job training, and performance. The program recognized and leveraged this expertise and provided Navy leadership a sanctioned alternative for NEC qualification.

In order to capture the essence of CNAF's Barrier Removal Team, the initial phase of this emerging program incorporated a collaborative set of business rules, a specific pool of candidates, and a prescribed method for employment. Geographic location and Type Model Series (TMS) structure made CNATT Unit (CNATTU) Norfolk (H60) and CNATTU Oceana (F18) the logical choices for the initial "pilot" activities. CNATTU Norfolk and Oceana would be able to facilitate, manage, and measure a program that rewards Sailors for their individual hard work and dedication without compromising the NEC.

Guided by a basic set of business rules, Lt. Cdr. J. A. Vargas and Lt. T. R. Martinez, CNATTU Training Officers, worked with TMS Assistant Maintenance Officers, Lt. W. Palmer and Lt. S. B. Johnson, during the final months of 2008. They queried resident operating squadrons to identify Sailors who met or exceeded KSAs and hosted each challenger through a systematic process designed to test the individual's written and practical knowledge. By December 2008, 16 Aviation Technicians were officially awarded their respective career NECs through Navy Analysis Manpower Center accreditation without the formal classroom training.

This course challenge process provides a standardized and efficient alternate NEC-generating path for experienced Fleet personnel without comprising the integrity of the NEC, and it contributes to a more accurate measurement of unit and Fleet readiness.