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The new T-45C Goshawk jet trainer for the U.S. Navy, equipped with a new digital cockpit known as Cockpit-21, was introduced at a ceremony today at Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, Miss. This is the first Goshawk to enter Training Wing One at NAS Meridian.

T-45 aircraft equipped with Cockpit-21 are designated T-45C. These aircraft have two multi-function displays in each cockpit; the displays provide navigation, weapon delivery, aircraft performance and communication data.

"We owe our future U.S. Navy and Marine Corps pilots the very best training on the very best equipment," said Capt. Tim Heely, U.S. Navy program manager for the T-45 Training System (T45TS). "The innovation and excellence provided by the T45TS ensures those pilots are fully trained and fully qualified to take on the challenges of operational duty in the cockpits of the most sophisticated aircraft in the world today."

The digital Cockpit-21 upgrades the analog cockpit produced in earlier T-45A aircraft and provides the Navy with a state-of-the-art cockpit to train pilots destined for the F/A-18 Hornet, the AV-8B Harrier II and other carrier-based aircraft.

"Some of the finest pilots have graduated from Meridian. Now the T-45 training system will help carry on this great tradition," said Mike Sears, president of McDonnell Aircraft and Missile Systems, the Boeing business unit that builds the T-45. "The new digital Cockpit-21 will give student aviators the ability to manage data just as experienced pilots do in the most modern fleet aircraft."

Student pilots in Meridian will begin flight instruction in the T-45C Goshawk in July 1998 in Training Squadron 23. Current plans call for NAS Meridian to have a full complement of 104 T-45Cs by 2003.

The Goshawk, which had its first flight in April 1988, is fully operational at Naval Air Station Kingsville, Texas. Undergraduate jet pilot training in the T45TS began in January 1994 at NAS Kingsville. The first class of 10 graduates earned its wings in October 1994. Plans call for the current T-45A fleet at NAS Kingsville to be upgraded to the T-45C configuration with the Cockpit-21 digital cockpit beginning in 2002, to be completed by 2007.

The T45TS is the first totally integrated naval aviator training system developed for and used by the U.S. Navy. Boeing provides the two-seat, single-engine T-45 Goshawk aircraft, advanced flight simulators, computer-assisted instructional programs, a computer-based training integration system and contractor logistics support.

British Aerospace is the principal supplier to Boeing of airframe components, and Hughes Training Systems is the supplier for the flight trainers. The aircraft's Adour engine is built by Rolls-Royce Ltd.

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