1,000th Student Completes Training in Boeing T45TS

"The best pilots in the world aren't born, they're trained here," announces the billboard near Naval Air Station Kingsville, Texas. Those words are particularly significant to the 17 student naval aviators who earned their wings April 7 at Naval Air Station Kingsville and Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss.

Lt. j.g. Brian Hess, U.S. Naval Reserve, is the 1,000th student to earn the coveted naval aviator's wings following training in the Boeing T-45 Training System.

Robert Feldmann, Boeing program manager for the T-45 program, congratulated Hess during the ceremony and said, "Looking ahead to the next 35 years, we anticipate that 10,000 naval aviators will graduate in the Goshawk."

Students receive their intermediate and advanced-level pilot training in the T45TS, a total system concept that includes the Boeing-built T-45 aircraft, advanced flight simulators, computer-assisted instructional programs, a computerized training integration system and a contractor logistics support package.

Seventy-four T-45A model aircraft are in service at Naval Air Station Kingsville; 34 T-45C models are in service at Naval Air Station Meridian. The new, digitally equipped T-45C Goshawk entered service in December 1997 and will replace the remaining T-2C Buckeyes at Naval Air Station Meridian.

The digital cockpit, which is more representative of current tactical fighter configurations, will enhance the U.S. Navy's ability to train pilots destined for the F/A-18 Hornet, the AV-8B Harrier and other sophisticated aircraft.

T-45s at Naval Air Station Kingsville and Naval Air Station Meridian have logged more than 270,421 flight hours.

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