

Current Readiness & Enterprise AIRSpeed Newsletter



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Knowledge-based excellence equals cost-wise combat

By Jacquelyn Millham, Current Readiness/Enterprise AIRSpeed Public Affairs

Enterprise behavior has yielded impressive results that can be observed throughout Naval Aviation:

- Strike Fighter Squadron 115 recently achieved an 85 percent Navy Enlisted Classification Fit after they came off cruise, upgraded aircraft, surged, and before leaving for a Home Port Change to Japan – all of which was done in a month's time.
- Fleet Readiness Center Site Oceana's ready for issue rate for the B5SB Armament Computer is at 97 percent – the fastest TRR in the Enterprise among high demand sites.

Results such as these, however, have all been achieved in CONUS and in places such as Japan and Hawaii. One question remains: Can the same cost-wise readiness be pursued and maintained in theater?

The "Garudas" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 134 would

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Efforts continue to close the NEC Fit gap

By Lt. Cmdr. Donald Gaines, Lead Aviation Enlisted Detailer, PERS-404 Navy Personnel Command and NAE Total Force NEC Award Barrier Removal Team Member and Bradley Hoel, NAE Total Force Team Member

As mentioned in the June Current Readiness/Enterprise AIRSpeed Newsletter, Volume 7, Issue 4 (<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=33>), the effort to close the Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) Fit gap is a continual process with a multitude of challenges that must be addressed.

One of the challenges is ensuring that the recording of earned NECs is done in a timely manner to improve NEC FIT data accuracy. The current cycle time for an NEC to be awarded within the Corporate Enterprise Training Activity Resource System (CeTARS)

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The Naval Aviation Enterprise, Current Readiness and Enterprise AIRSpeed web sites have moved to a temporary URL!

Join us at:

NAE: <http://nae.ahf.nmci.navy.mil/>

Current Readiness:

<http://cr.ahf.nmci.navy.mil/>

Enterprise AIRSpeed:

<http://airspeed.ahf.nmci.navy.mil/>

We can also be found on Twitter (type in naepao or NAEAIRSpeed) and on Facebook.

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We value your inputs!

You may soon be asked to participate in the NAE Strategic Communications Assessment Survey. After you receive the e-mail, please

take a few minutes to respond via the link provided in the message. Questions? E-mail NAE@navy.mil.

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is approximately 27 days; the actual time required for some NECs to be awarded is approximately 68 days. This 41-day delay results in many Sailors completing required training or courses of instruction but reporting to their final duty stations without the earned NECs reflected in their records.

To address barriers related to this process, NAE Total Force chartered the NEC Award Process Barrier Removal Team (BRT). The intent of this BRT was to gain an understanding of the NEC award process, identify delays and reduce cycle time.

The team consolidated subject matter experts across the fleet, including representatives from the Navy Education and Training Command N7/N732A, the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit Oceana Training Department, the Navy Personnel Command (NPC) Personnel Readiness and Support Branch (PERS-4013), the NPC Aviation Assignment Branch (PERS 404), the NAE Total Force database team, an NAE Total Force Black Belt, the NAE Total Force action officer and several Total Force team members.

The team successfully used Lean Six Sigma's DMAIC process (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control), a methodology which has increased the efficiency of Total Force as well as the NAE.

The team performed several data analysis "deep dives" on the award process which established the need for improvement, identified root causes of the delay in cycle

time, and revealed areas of opportunities.

A list of systemic barriers were submitted to Navy Total Force (NTF) for action, adding to the action item list produced by the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower & Personnel) (OPNAV N1) NEC Fit Lean Six Sigma team.

They also identified several best practices and included:

- a process to reduce the NEC award cycle time and waiting time;
- an organizational process map for the NEC award process within CeTARS and the Navy Enlisted Personnel System (NES);
- creating an NEC manual standard operating procedure (SOP) instruction/auto update feature;
- a recommendation and process to update and revamp NES screening tables;
- a recommendation to establish a requirement for an NEC error report within CeTARS.

The NEC Award LSS project also re-emphasized the importance of establishing controls to ensure that the best practices are being employed and sustained.

The recommendations and suggestions from this BRT have been adopted by the OPNAV-sponsored NEC Fit LSS team and the NTF working group. They will have a positive impact on reducing the NEC award cycle time and administrative errors in NEC reporting. ■

In their own words:

E2E sheds light on an intrinsic trait of a good leader

Commentary by Lt. Col. Anthony Barnes, Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352 Commanding Officer

Editor's Note: In March 2008, Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 352 served as the prototype for End-to-End (E2E) and became Naval Aviation Enterprise's first organizational-level maintenance activity to undergo formal AIRSpeed implementation. Not only did the prototype establish the way forward for future organizational-level designs and marked the first time a type/model/series' National Item Identification Numbers were mapped from the flight line to the depot, it was also the first squadron to measure its readiness using Current Readiness' metrics and reporting framework. What follows is Lt. Col. Anthony Barnes' account of VMGR-352's success story.

Recently, my operations officer engaged in a conversation with a smart-looking, Master of Business Administration-type businessman.

The discussion revolved around management and leadership. The businessman asked, "Can you be a good leader without being a good manager?"

That's a good question we all need to ask ourselves! Sometimes our leadership abilities are measured by how we handle a crisis.

The problem is that many of our crises are created by a poor understanding of the system in which we operate day in and day out.

To the commanding officers (CO), operations officer (OPSO), maintenance officers (MO), maintenance material control officer (MMCO) and air coordination transportation officer (ACTO), I ask, "Do you understand the system you are operating in and how supporting units align to your squadron? Are you actively managing your assets? How do you define your goal

and whether or not it is achieved?"

At the unit level, the Current Readiness' metrics and reporting construct has provided a great service to all type/model/series communities by establishing measurable aircraft ready for tasking standards that reveal readiness gaps. With the goal defined and the gaps identified, the question now becomes, "How do I close those gaps?"

The first step is to map and understand the system or "mission

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Artisans, CPI tools help MALS 31 make significant gains

By Jacquelyn Millham, Current Readiness/Enterprise AIRSpeed Public Affairs

Artisan integration is a key reason why Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MALS) 31 realized an 89 percent decrease in the hydraulics/pneumatics/line manufacturing work center's operating costs since December, said Lt. Col. Russell Blauw, MALS 31 commanding officer during a "Boots-on-the-Ground" (BoG) site visit Aug. 7. This was the third time the command hosted the event.

In the time period measured from

January to October 2008, equipment determined to be beyond capable maintenance (BCM) was 29 percent of the work center's demand. That translated into operating costs of \$233,000 per month. Now, BCMs are six percent of demand and operating costs for the work center are \$31,000 each month – an 87 percent reduction.

MALS 31 Marines also showcased their efforts to improve their open purchases process during the BoG. The Squadron Support Division (SSD) had been experiencing delays in customers picking up open purchases, impacting time to reliably replenish (TRR) and future open purchases.

A value stream analysis and a rapid improvement event were conducted in Open Purchases/ Servmart. As a result, SSD established a policy on how long each section could keep open purchases; marked gear to indicate the number of days an item was held at SSD; reworked space flow; eliminated logbooks and Supply Response Division technical research; created a local catalog for squadrons that list items carried by Servmart; consolidated signature and authorization blocks; created a customer service desk and developed its standard operating procedures; and produced a CD

to instruct customers on the new operating procedures.

Instead of taking 15 to 30 days from request to receipt of equipment, open purchases now take seven to 10 business days. The time to process open purchase requests have decreased from 429 hours to 219 hours – a reduction of 210 hours. Servmart processes requests within 67 hours, down from 133 hours.

Another improvement that yielded significant results for MALS 31 is the change in the component removal procedure of the Electronic Control Unit switches. Maintainers in the Avionics Department were finding that the flex print – a component that connects switches to circuit boards – would tear during transportation and repair. The damage was responsible for 24 percent of the work center's BCMs and led to increasing maintenance costs.

In addition, the component's buffer was reduced to zero on 34 occasions during a six-month period, which attributed to nine expeditious repairs that accumulated 765 subsystem capability impact reporting hours on the flight line. Because the damage had to be repaired off-site, it would often take another 50 days to receive a ready-for-issue (RFI) component.

To avoid damage to the component and keep it on station, maintainers now leave the switch attached during transporting and solder removal by the Microminiature Repair Branch. After the flex print is removed, the defective module is removed and replaced with an RFI module and resoldered.

Since its last BoG visit in 2007, MALS 31 has completed the consolidation of its ground support equipment facilities to one centralized hangar, giving the command direct access to the flight line, reducing check-in time of equipment needing maintenance and providing maintainers more room to work with less travel.

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AS2 Richard James, Ground Support Equipment Training noncommissioned officer, explains to Rear Adm. Richard O'Hanlon, Commander, Naval Air Forces, Atlantic and Current Readiness Cross-functional Team co-lead, how the Ground Support Equipment has improved its time to reliably replenish (TRR) from 153 days before the introduction of the Buffer Management Tool in 2006, to today's TRR of 13 days. Photo by MCAS Beaufort Public Affairs.

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answer that question with a resounding “Yes!”

VAQ-134’s man-hour and aviation depot-level repairable, aviation fleet maintenance and aviation fuel costs were 63 percent lower than the same recorded costs during its previous deployment a year earlier and are 75 percent below the current community average. The squadron produced 20 more combat sorties per month than its predecessor in theater and flew 37 percent more hours as a squadron this deployment than it did last deployment.

All with the same number of jets, with the same Bureau Numbers and under the same circumstances – while deployed to Afghanistan.

How did they do it? These results were accomplished by employing the same enterprise behaviors and continuous process improvement methodologies used by their counterparts in CONUS.

VAQ-134 continues to fly more combat hours in Afghanistan than any other EA-6B squadron or Naval Aviation Enterprise type/model/series; Much of the same management strategies and approaches used in CONUS were applied while deployed, said Cmdr. David Slayton, VAQ-134 commanding officer. “The big difference was optimizing the schedule, mitigating the arduous environment where we could, and taking care of our people.”

The Garudas started by using Lean to redesign their spaces – which were basic wood huts – to fit their requirements. First, they were gutted. The textured floors, which held dirt and required many man-hours to clean and maintain, were replaced. Then workspaces were built for specific rates, tools and functions. “For example, the avionics technician shop needed to be much different than the airframes shop or the mechanics

shop – so we did that based on the work flow required in each area,” said Slayton.

The squadron also inherited a collapsible hangar called a “clamshell” and moved its fabrication shop, phase tools and other required items needed for scheduled major maintenance. “All of these [improvements] cut down on



The “Garudas” of VAQ-134

the running around to complete the most basic tasks. This was step one – make the spaces work and work well,” he said. This resulted in the improvement of the Sailor’s working conditions.

Taking a fresh look at flight requirements also prompted changes in the scheduling of sorties. Instead of accepting “what had always been done,” VAQ-134 worked with the Coalition Air Operations Center and the Combined Air Forces Component Commander, matched its schedule to the threat and identified what its customers needed from them. This resulted in more time to maintain aircraft, more sorties flown and limited the number of hours maintainers spent outside in the heat of the day launching and recovering jets.

VAQ-134 also worked with engineers at home. “We collaborated with [Naval Air Systems Command Program Manager] 202 to acquire the right gear and clothing for our folks to use in Afghanistan’s extreme environment,” said Slayton. “We issued

state-of-the-art flight jerseys/shirts to our maintainers. These shirts are like under armor with the added benefit of being fire resistant -- exactly what we needed for our troops on the flight line and in a combat zone. These shirts are very lightweight, sweat wicking and very comfortable to wear.”

Slayton also said that preparation also was a key component to the unit’s success and believes that maintenance training time and days are “sacred” during both non-deployment and deployment. “My personal rule of thumb, every man-hour of good, hard-hitting, quality maintenance training and learning saves a squadron eight maintenance man-hours – we are validating this right now,” he said.

Having the right people at the right place with the right qualifications is just as important, said Slayton. “It’s not easy acquiring the right people; it does not happen by accident. That is something we need to fight hard for. It takes aggressive manpower management.”

And the right people should be placed in critical positions, said Slayton. “We put our best and brightest in quality assurance (QA) after they have proven themselves as leading petty officers and great leaders. They are teachers, mentors, facilitators – they lead the training and are there for our junior Sailors as a resource.

“A strong knowledge-based QA identifies where we have challenges and identify solutions. If they are lacking training, we will keep having the same gripes – and we own that cost. Likewise, when we fix something right the first time, we own those savings,” said Slayton.

But none of these strategies by themselves are a silver bullet, he said. “All of these facets reinforce each other. I love it when a plan comes together.” ■

(Intrinsic continued from Page 2)

generation factory” for which your squadron is manned, funded, and equipped. With this information, one can identify and understand the constraint. Once the constraint is understood, exploitation of the constraint can begin and everything else can be subordinated to the constraint to increase output or performance.

Let me put this in real terms. For most squadrons, the aircraft is the constraint. In

all systems, the constraint defines capacity. Once capacity has been defined you can begin a fact-based discussion on what can or cannot be supported. Defined capacity drives solid planning and execution. Squadrons can then avoid over flying the airframe, preserve its projected lifecycle and increase the readiness of both the aircrew and the aircraft. By maximizing the constraint, we now get the most “bang” for America’s buck while getting the “X” when we fly. Ask yourself how often your squadron gets the “X” the first time.

Let me share our story! At VMGR-352, we began by getting all the primary players on the same sheet of music. I did this by requiring each of them not just simply

The “X” refers to a specific mission goal.

to watch the movie, *The Goal*, but to read the actual book written by Eliyahu M. Goldratt. With this baseline of knowledge, our system was examined, and it became evident the aircraft was the constraint. (This may not always be the case. You may find instructors, collateral duty inspectors, or aircrew to be your constraint.)

Next, we asked, “How can we relieve the pressure on the constraint? How can we make the aircraft more available?” One way we did this was by taking a hard look at how we were using the simulator. Each community has to take a good hard honest look at what can be accomplished in the simulator both from initial code perspective and re-fly perspective.

Secondly, we relieved pressure on the constraint by ensuring the right student was paired with the right instructor in the right conditions (day/night, high light level, low light level, etc.) the first time and in the correct sequence.

Thirdly, on the maintenance side, we asked ourselves, “Are the maintenance shifts phased correctly?” Relative to the airfield hours, when does maintenance show up and how are the personnel balanced between day and night crew? This is just a taste of

our reasoning as we analyzed the constraint.

As the first operational squadron to implement End-to-End (E2E), we have seen remarkable results. Our material readiness and aircrew readiness are well above the norm by a wide margin. We reduced total flight hours by over 650 hours for Fiscal Year (FY) 09 compared to FY08 and increased overall readiness substantially.

It is imperative that COs maximize the potential capacity of their resources prior to asking for more. In other words, optimize the resource or constraint that the industrial base currently provides.

So I ask you, “What is your squadron’s constraint and what can you do to relieve the pressure on that constraint?” *The Goal* will change the way you think. When the CO, OPSO, MO, MMCO, and ACTO change the way they think and set the conditions, the squadron changes. Understanding the Theory of Constraints and applying it properly is the perfect complement to Current Readiness for closing readiness gaps.

The results prove E2E to be invaluable to the NAE. And my experiences tell me that being a good manager of resources is an intrinsic trait of being a good leader. ■



Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Handling) 1st Class Michael Quintos launches an AV-8B Harrier jet aircraft during the fly off of Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 211, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (31st MEU), from the amphibious assault ship *USS Essex* (LHD 2) in August. Members of Maintenance & Supply Integration Performance Improvement Branch are currently collecting data to prepare for the second type/model/series to undergo End-to-End organizational-level design – the AV-8B community. Site visits to the commands are scheduled to begin in January. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Greg Johnson/Navy.mil)

New leadership in the NAE

- Rear Adm. Timothy Matthews reported as Commander, Fleet Readiness Centers and Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) Assistant Commander for Logistics and Industrial Operations in August 2009. His last assignment was as commander of Fleet Readiness Center Southeast. He replaces Rear Adm. Paul Grosklags who is currently assigned as vice commander of NAVAIR.
- Brenda Sanders was officially named as Maintenance & Supply Integration Performance Improvement Branch deputy lead in July. She replaces Ann Wood who left to become NAVAIR's Intergrated Warfighter Support Services Division director in 2008.



Rear Adm.
Timothy Matthews



Increased agility

Lance Cpl. Ethan Schreffler (left) and Cpl. Joseph Moore (right), aircraft communications, navigation, electrical and weapon systems technicians with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367, review a UH-1 Yankee Super Huey helicopter weapon systems checklist during Enhanced Mojave Viper aviation training at the Combat Center's Prospect training area in August. The H-1 Huey and Super Cobra will soon be supported by new man-transportable, automatic test equipment – the Reconfigurable Transportable Consolidated Automated Support System (RTCASS). RTCASS, which began to be delivered to Marine Corps intermediate-level maintenance activities in June, was specifically designed to support deploying Marine Corps aviation units. It currently runs more than 750 weapon system boxes and circuit cards for the V-22 Osprey, AV-8B Harrier, F/A-18 Hornet and EA-6B Prowler. To read more about RTCASS, go to http://www.navair.navy.mil/press_releases/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.view&Press_release_id=4193&site_id=29. Photo by Cpl. Nicole A. LaVine/Marines.mil.

(Artisans continued from Page 1)

Looking to replicate its hydraulics/pneumatics/line manufacturing work center's success, MALS 31 leadership is in the process of expanding its repair capabilities on the nose wheel and steering power units repair process by providing artisans who are already onsite with specialized tools. The command believes that the increased capability would reduce the \$268,000 in operating cost by \$200,000 – a potential 74 percent reduction. They also have requested an artisan for the Electric Shop.

BoG attendees also visited two of MALS 31 customers – Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 122 and VMFA-115. There they heard maintainers' concerns about the aging Kapton wiring in the F/A-18 aircraft, out of reporting aircraft due to modifications, and training on new software systems.

Naval Aviation Enterprise and MALS 31 leadership also discussed the surge of equipment inducted into the MALS by squadrons coming back from deployment; how the command's knowledge base is being eroded as older, seasoned Marines rotate to another command or retire; the need to establish additional maintenance capabilities in the Fleet for repairing subassemblies for the Generator Control Unit (GCU); the feasibility of providing GCU troubleshooting in C schools; and Command Fleet Readiness Center providing toolboxes and tools for artisans.

Rear Adm. Richard O'Hanlon, Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic and Current Readiness Cross-functional Team co-lead; Maj. Gen. James Flock, Commanding General 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing; James Beebe, Commander Naval Air Forces executive director; and representatives from Headquarters, Marine Corps Aviation Support Logistics, Naval Air Systems Command, Navy Inventory Control Point, and contract services attended the event.

NAE representatives took the issues back to their commands for further examination and possible resolution. ■

Links of interest

1. **DoD Instruction for the “Implementation and Management of the DoD-Wide CPI / LSS Program.”**
This instruction establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides guidance for the DoD-wide implementation of the CPI/LSS program.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=41>
2. **FRCSE repairs broken wings of a Hornet**
Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) has pioneered a repair solution to fix F/A-18 Hornet internal wing cracks by designing new parts and in some cases, improving the design of existing ones.
http://www.navair.navy.mil/press_releases/index.cfm?fuseaction=press_release_view&press_release_id=4181&site_id=7
3. **FRCSE wins CNO 2008 Aviation Safety Award**
Fleet Readiness Center Southeast won the prestigious Chief of Naval Operations 2008 Naval Aviation Safety Award for its outstanding aircraft maintenance and operations safety record.
http://www.navair.navy.mil/press_releases/index.cfm?fuseaction=press_release_view&press_release_id=4183&site_id=7
4. **Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Almanac – July/August 2009 edition**
Read how FRC SW is pursuing AS9100/9110 registration to become the fourth in DoD and the first in the Navy to achieve the certification. The certification signifies that the awarded maintenance, repair and overhaul operation has met specific additional requirements that pertain to safety, reliability and airworthiness issues related to commercial, private and military aircraft.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=28>
5. **NAVSEA’s *Who’s on Watch* August edition.** Read about improvement efforts on the Ram Pump Ejection System and the DT-699 high frequency sail array.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=27>
September edition. Read about Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Port Hueneme Division, NSWC Human Capital Management Department, Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Newport’s Physical Operations Department’s Facilities and Installation Support Division and NSWC Corona’s Force Training Assessment Department, Instrumentation Engineering Division’s rapid improvement events.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=25>
6. **Rhumb Lines**
 - **The Future Force - Naval Aviation**
A look at programs underway to build the future naval air forces.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=35>
 - **Fleet Readiness Enterprise – Providing Forces Ready for Tasking**
Read about the Fleet Readiness Enterprise’s enables collaboration among the other enterprises.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=30>
 - **Aircraft Carriers: Multi-mission Capable**
This edition discusses the multi-mission capabilities of aircraft carriers and how they enable the Navy to execute the six core capabilities of the Maritime Strategy.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=32>
 - **Littoral Combat Ship Down Select**
Read about how the Navy’s decision to move forward with the down select between the two distinct and unique Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) designs to one design in fiscal year 2010.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=29>
 - **F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets: Multi-mission Capable**
A discussion on the multi-mission capabilities of F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets and how they enable the Navy to execute the Maritime Strategy.
<https://n1.fcc.navy.mil/tools/get.aspx?ID=31>