

Groundbreaking Ceremony

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P203

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI, Japan- Naval Air Facility (NAF)

Atsugi held a groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a P-203 Aviation Simulation Training Facility. At the ceremony Mr. Yamaguchi, chief priest of Fukami Jinjya shrine performed a Jinchinsai, which is a Shinto Ceremony praying to the gods to assure the safety and success of all endeavors for the construction of a new building.

NAF Atsugi officials, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force officials, U.S. Army Corps of Engineering-Japan District officials and representatives from the Tsuchiya Corporation were asked to participate in the ceremony.

According to the Military Construction Program documents presented to Congress in 2011, the facility includes one motion based operational flight trainer, two weapons tactics trainers, one aircrew

virtual environment trainer, trainer instructor station/computer room, contractor operations and maintenance of simulators workshop, briefing and debriefing rooms, a tactical library vault, an administrative office, a parts storage room, bathroom, mechanical room, and communication room to support the MH-60R and MH-60S helicopter training simulators.

“The project is starting now primarily to meet the future needs of the aircraft as the FDNF [forward deployed naval forces] transitions,” said Cmdr. David Walt, commanding officer of HSL-51. “We are transitioning to more capable, more modern helicopters specifically MH-60R and MA-60S and that will be happening in the coming years.”

“With the trainer being here now,” said Cmdr. David Loo, executive officer of HSL-51. “Some of the instructors can come out and we can have integrated training with our simulators here [that are] connected back to Hawaii to San Diego.”

This project supports the Chief of Naval Operations guidance for 2004 to develop a Fleet Aviation Simulator Trainers (FAST) plan. FAST seek to improve tactical readiness and envision reducing the number of required aircraft flight hours by substitution of simulator events.

“This simulator for the pilots definitely helps them build that tactical skill set,” said Walt. “It also has that future capability to

integrate with ships on the waterfront so we can do simulated training collectively as a strike force as opposed to just a single aircraft.”

“It’ll also keep families home,” said Loo. “Normally when we send our folks out for simulator training they end up going back state side, they leave their families here and may end up being gone anywhere from 3 to 8 weeks depending on which training they are going back for.”

If the trainers are not available in NAF Atsugi, most of the syllabus events will have to be accomplished in the aircraft. However, some events cannot be accomplished in the aircraft, and will be forced to be waived or modified, resulting in a general degradation of the entire training program as stated in the documents presented to congress.

“The integrated training capability that this is bringing is a critical skill or critical capability that FDNF has needed for sometime and it’ll make us a stronger more capable and ready war fighting force in the future,” said Walt.