Why Jets Fly Over Your Home

Carrier Landing Pattern

Navy jets fly in a racetrack landing pattern, just as do passenger jets on hold at a busy airport. The straight legs allow pilots to correct course following a bearing or beacon, while the turns keep pilots circling near the carrier. The legs can be expanded to add more jets waiting to land.

Student Practice

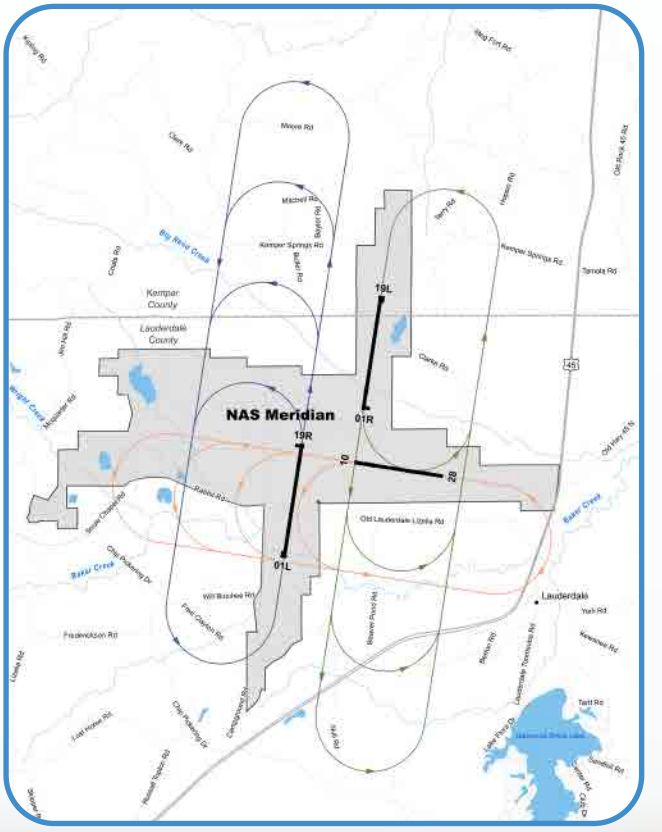
Students practice every aspect of carrier landings until they master the skills. Reactions at the ship must be instinctive when the lives of over 5,000 crewmen and aviators are at stake.

Reference Point

Students who practice landing using "ground control points" will not have them at sea. The only reference point there is the carrier. Students learn to orient only by the runway end, just as they will orient only by the carrier deck at sea.

Pilots Must Use the Same Pattern

Every pilot in the Navy follows the same landing pattern to avoid collisions, just as cars traveling on a highway avoid collisions by staying in the right lane.



T-45 final approach on USS Carl Vinson

Contact the NAS Meridian's Community Plans and Liaison Officer at 601-679-3896 for additional information.

How a Pilot Lands a T-45C on an Aircraft Carrier

1. Pattern Entry

Pilots enter the pattern at 800 feet high and 250 to 300 knots from behind and right of the carrier.

2. Break

The pilot performs a 180-degree overhead turn at 800 feet to enter the landing pattern.

3. Downwind

The pilot descends the aircraft to 600 feet and performs landing checks (e.g., flaps, landing gear, tail hook) prior to Base Leg, in preparation for landing.

4. Base Leg

The pilot begins a gradual descent in a 180-degree approach turn, until intercepting the extended centerline of the carrier's landing area.

5. The Final or "Groove"

The pilot rolls the aircraft to wings level on the extended centerline to allow a 15- to 18-second groove before aircraft touchdown.

6. Touchdown

The aircraft tail hook catches the arresting wire upon landing.