

Meridian pilots receive 'Wings of Gold' at ceremony in Pensacola

There was a naval aviator designation ceremony on June 4, in the Naval Aviation Museum on board NAS Pensacola. Ten U.S. Navy and Marine Corps aviators and one French navy pilot, who completed their training on board NAS Meridian, received their coveted "Wings of Gold" during the ceremony. The naval aviator designation ceremony is not prescribed specifically by U.S. Navy regulations, but has emerged as an honored product of the rich heritage of naval tradition.

It marks the culmination of nearly two years of specialized training, which has prepared these officers for the rigorous demands of aerial combat and carrier operations -- earning each the title of "Naval Aviator" and the right to wear the coveted "Wings of Gold."

The Training Squadron Seven and Nine naval aviators who received "Wings of Gold" include:

Lt. j.g. Michael Cianelli, USN, who was named VT-9's Student of the Month for October 2010 and Student of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2011. Cianelli earned the "Top Gun" award for his class. During Advanced Jet Flight Training, he earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 2. Cianelli completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Kyle Copeland, USN, who earned the "Best Bomber" award for his class. During Advanced Jet Flight Training, he earned four Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George

H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 1. Copeland completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Ensign Antoine Cozette, French navy, who earned three Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 3. Cozette completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

First Lt. Daniel Ertel, USMC, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training. He earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 2. Ertel completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

Lt. j.g. Ryan Graves, USN, who carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 2, when he was named VT-9's "Top Hook" for that carrier qualification evolution. Graves completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. Michael Koch, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Advanced Jet Flight Training. He earned two Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 2. Koch completed Advanced Jet Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Nicholas Laviano, USN, who earned four Navy "E's" for bombing

accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 1. Laviano completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Mark Lovrencevic, USN, who earned two Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 1. Lovrencevic completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

First Lt. Andrew Musto, USMC, who earned three Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 2. Musto completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Christopher Parrett, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training. He earned two Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 3. Parrett completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine; and

Lt. j.g. Nicholas Smith, USN, who earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 3. Smith completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven.