

20 aviators earn 'Wings of Gold' in August ceremony

There was a naval aviator designation ceremony on Aug. 5, in the Chapel on board NAS Meridian. Eighteen U.S. Navy and Marine Corps aviators and two French navy pilots 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."

Aviators who received their "Wings of Gold" included:

Lt. j.g. John Barstow, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Advanced Flight Training and also was designated a Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) Distinguished Naval Graduate. 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 29. Barstow completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

Ensign Edouard Bonavita, French navy, 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 30. Bonavita completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

Lt. j.g. Ryan Colesar, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training and was VT-9's Student of the Month for December 2010. 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 29. Colesar completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Thomas Crisp, USN, who, during Advanced Jet Flight Training, earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy and received the Chief of Naval Air Training "Top Gun" award for outstanding achievement in the Air Combat Maneuvering syllabus. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 30. Crisp completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

Lt. j.g. Matthew Deppen, USN, 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 31. Deppen completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

First Lt. Brian Grygo, USMC, 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 30. Grygo completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Kevin Held, 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 30. Held completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

Lt. j.g. Thomas Imperato, Jr., 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-

69) on July 30. Imperato completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

Lt. j.g. Patrick Kennedy, USN, who earned the "Top Gun" award for his class and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 31. Kennedy completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Jonathan Larsen, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List with Distinction and earned four Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 31. Larsen completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Alexander Levy, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training. 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 30. Levy completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Taylor Oakes, 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 29. Oakes completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

First Lt. Robert Phillips, USMC, who earned the "Best Bomber" award for his class. 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 31. Phillips completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training

Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Christopher Pollock, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training and earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 30. Pollock completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

Lt. j.g. Christopher Reidy, USN, 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 29. Reidy completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Nicolas Reszkiewicz, French navy, who was awarded the Academic Achievement Award in Primary Flight Training. During Advanced Jet Flight Training, he earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 29. Reszkiewicz completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

First Lt. Joshua Southerland, USMC, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training. 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 31. Southerland completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine;

Lt. j.g. Kirk Spowart, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training and earned three Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Advanced Jet Flight Training. He carrier qualified in the T-45C

on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 30. Spowart completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Seven;

Lt. j.g. Grant Strickland, 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 Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 31. Strickland completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training

Squadron Seven; and

Lt. j.g. Joshua Witt, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training and was VT-9's Student of the Month for November 2010. During Advanced Jet Flight Training,

he earned three Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) on July 30. Witt completed Advanced Jet Flight Training with Training Squadron Nine.