

First Four Naval Aviators to Graduate from T-54A METS Program at Training Air Wing Four



The first four newly winged naval aviators to graduate from from the T-54A METS Program pose for a photo during their winging ceremony at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Sept. 5, 2025. The winging ceremony is a time-honored tradition where new naval aviators receive their Wings of Gold. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Alan Wang)

From the [Chief of Naval Air Training](#) Public Affairs

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas—Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) celebrated a significant achievement this week as the first four student naval aviators from Training Air Wing FOUR (TW-4) successfully completed their multi-engine training in the

Navy's new T-54A "Multi-Engine Training System" (METS), known as the Marlin II.

The U.S. Navy declared initial operational capability for the T-54A in May 2024, giving future naval aviators a modern platform to prepare them for the advanced aircraft they will fly in the fleet. These graduates represent the inaugural class of the Navy's upgraded advanced training pipeline, designed to replace the long-serving T-44C Pegasus after over 40 years of service.

"This is a proud moment for TW-4 and the entire naval aviation community," said Capt. Paul Penn, Commodore of TW-4. "These students embody the future of our multi-engine fleet, and their success reflects years of careful planning, testing, and teamwork to ensure the T-54A delivers world-class aviators."

Based on the King Air 260 platform, the T-54A introduces advanced avionics, digital displays, and enhanced safety systems to the Navy's undergraduate multi-engine syllabus. Integrated with a comprehensive suite of high-fidelity simulators and a redesigned curriculum under the METS program, students now train on systems and procedures more closely aligned with fleet aircraft they will go on to fly, such as the P-8A Poseidon, E-6B Mercury and C-130J Hercules.

With the first four graduates now moving on to their fleet replacement squadrons, TW-4 is ready to expand T-54 training for more naval aviators in the years ahead. The program plans to ramp up as additional aircraft and simulators are delivered, aiming for full operational capability soon.

"The METS program is about more than just a new aircraft," Penn emphasized. "It's about equipping our students with the skills they need to excel in a complex, demanding operational environment. Today's milestone confirms we are on the right track."

For the new winged pilots, this achievement is not only a personal milestone but a significant contribution to the Navy's operational readiness and warfighting advantage across the fleet.

Headquartered at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, the Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) oversees five training air wings and 17 training squadrons across Florida, Mississippi, and Texas. These squadrons conduct primary, intermediate, and advanced flight training for student naval aviators, naval flight officers, and air vehicle pilots. CNATRA remains steadfast in its mission to train, mentor, and deliver the highest quality naval aviators prepared to win in competition, crisis, and conflict.