Navy Exploring Options for Multi-Engine Training Aircraft to Replace T-44



Marine 1st Lt. Matthew Reith performs a preflight inspection of a Navy T-44C Pegasus training aircraft on the flightline at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas. U.S. Marine Corps/1st Lt. Pawel Puczko

ARLINTON, Va. – Naval Air Systems Command is looking at options for an aircraft to replace the T-44C Pegasus multi-engine training aircraft, but the ultimate choice may not be "new." The Navy is exploring options for adapting an existing aircraft design to the service's Multi-Engine Training System (METS).

According to a draft request for information (RFI) posted May 26, the Navy is looking at existing twin-engine aircraft to replace the service's fleet of 54 T-44Cs used to train Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard pilots to fly aircraft such as the V-22 Osprey, E-2C/D Hawkeye, P-8 Poseidon, P-3 and EP-3 Orion, C-130/KC-130/HC-130 Hercules, E-6 Mercury, C-40 Clipper, HC-27 Spartan and HC-144 Ocean Sentry.

The T-44A, a variant of the Beech King Air 90 business aircraft, first entered service in 1980. The existing T-44As all have been modified to the T-44C configuration.

The Navy said the METS should have an FAA type certification for single- and dual-pilot operations under day and night visual flight rules and under instrument flight rules. It shall cruise at speeds greater or equal to 195 knots and shall be able to operate at a minimum of 20,000 feet above sea level. The aircraft also should have an endurance of 3.5 or more flight hours.

The pressurized aircraft cockpit will have side-by-side seating, as well as a jump seat for an instruct. The cockpit will be equipped with multifunction displays with digital moving map; redundant VHF and UHF radios; an integrated GPS/inertial navigation system; Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast; flight management system; weather radar, radar altimeter, and a cockpit data recorder.

The METS aircraft also shall have tricycle landing gear and a reconfigurable cargo bay in the cabin.