

# Navy Opens First Training Facility for Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems



Col. Victor Argobright, Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems (PMA-263) program manager, officially opens the Navy Training and Logistics Support Activity East July 27 at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Va. From right to left, he is joined by Frank Ball, director of operations, Air/Ground Systems Engineering Amentum; JEBLCFS Commanding Officer Capt. Michael Witherspoon, and Lee Hess Jr., Navy TALSA East project manager. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy opened a new facility at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on July 27 that is dedicated to training Sailors who will operate the service's Family of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (FoSUAS), the Naval Air Systems Command said Aug. 2.

The facility, known as Training and Logistics Support Activity (TALSA) East, is the first dedicated Navy facility for

unmanned aircraft operators to complete SUAS training.

Previously, Naval SUAS operators received training directly from the original equipment manufacturer, through contractor-lead training, or at one of the four Marine Corps TALSA's when seats were available.

"Navy UAS training takes a leap forward today with the opening of this first-of-its-kind facility," said Marine Corps Col. Victor Argobright, PMA-263 program manager whose team will manage training at TALSA East. "Our FoSUAS team has been working diligently for nearly two years to provide high-quality training and certifications to our Navy personnel."

The TALSA is a central location for scheduling and formal entry-level SUAS courses that provide initial qualification training for systems currently in use by the operating forces. It also supports centralized storage of unit systems, supply, and maintenance services.

Scheduling at Navy TALSA East is flexible and tailored to student requirements. The first official course in the new facility will begin Aug. 8 for SkyRaider R80D.

"Being the first of its kind SUAS facility dedicated to training and logistics is a force multiplier for our Navy and Marine Corps," said Navy Capt. Michael Witherspoon, JEB Little Creek-Fort Story commanding officer. "This could not have been possible without the close coordination and collaboration of PMA-263, JEB Little Creek-Fort Story Public Works, the renovation team and the trainers here onboard the installation.

Navy TALSA East currently supports training for The Vertical Take-Off and Landing SkyRaider R80D, Skydio X2D and PD-100 Black Hornet 3. The Naval Expeditionary Combat Command will join the Naval Special Warfare community in fiscal year 2023 to also use the training and logistics support that the TALSA provides.