

Flight Test Squadron Upgrades Locker Room with Helmet-Ready Storage and Integrated Charging

CHALLENGE

For one flight test squadron on the Florida coast supporting daily training and operations, outdated lockers had become more than an inconvenience. They were a liability.

The original MDF (medium-density fiberboard) units had long outlived their usefulness. In the humid Gulf Coast environment, the plastic-coated surfaces were peeling, the doors no longer shut properly, and some components had started to fall apart.

“We had one guy keeping his helmet in a cardboard box just to avoid damaging the visor,” said one of the squadron’s flight equipment technicians.

There wasn’t enough space for pilots to safely store flight bags, tablets, or gear. And nothing about the old system protected the most delicate equipment – including modern helmet assemblies with sensitive visors and electronic components.

The unit needed a solution that could organize critical gear, keep up with evolving mission demands, and actually reflect the professionalism of the crew it served.

SOLUTION

To tackle the problem, the unit partnered with Patterson Pope to design a new locker system that combined durability, safety, and flexibility. The result was a purpose-built solution tailored to modern operations:

- » **Integrated storage** for helmets, harnesses, G-suits, and tablets.
- » **USB charging ports** to keep mission electronics powered.
- » **Custom inserts** to cradle helmet visors and prevent damage.
- » **LED lighting and ventilation** for visibility and natural drying.
- » **Side-mounted nameplates and cubbies** for quick identification and organization.
- » **A distinctive custom finish** giving the lockers a professional look while setting them apart from neighboring units.

The installation was carefully phased to avoid disrupting operations. As one technician explained, “It took careful planning on both sides. We staged gear as flights continued, and the phased install kept everything moving.”

By working in stages, the team was able to maintain readiness while still transforming the space.



ACHIEVEMENT

The impact was immediate. Even with slightly fewer lockers overall, the system offered greater usable space and functionality. Gear that once had no clear home was now organized, secure, and easy to access.

"The pilots really like being able to store their applications and equipment," said one flight technician. "It just improves the day-to-day for everybody."

Morale rose across the board, as both aircrew and support staff benefited from the upgrade. Daily operations ran smoother, safety risks were reduced, and equipment was better protected.

Other units soon began taking note. Teams from elsewhere came to see the design firsthand, interested in making similar changes. Most importantly, the lockers were built with flexibility in mind, ready to accommodate new gear and evolving mission needs well into the future.

"Morale rose across the board."



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