



T-34C Mission Support Aircraft

NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base operates a T-34C training plane for mission support and pilot proficiency.

Mission support aircraft such as the T-34C accompany research flights for photography and video data collection, and also as safety chase. At Armstrong, the T-34C is primarily used for chasing remotely piloted unmanned air vehicles which fly slower than NASA's F-18's mission support aircraft can fly. It is also used for required pilot proficiency flying.

Another example of the T-34C's utility as a support aircraft is its role in validating detect-and-avoid technology in Unmanned Aircraft Systems. In April 2016, NASA Armstrong began flying the T-34C as an "intruder" in the Unmanned Aircraft Systems integration

into the National Airspace System's (UAS-NAS) Flight Test Series 4. Equipped with ADS-B and TCAS I, it is one of six aircraft to fly as an intruder in the test. The T-34C's job includes flying within a pre-determined distance to NASA Armstrong's Ikhana, on a specifically charted course, to test detect and avoid systems that were integrated on Ikhana with the purpose of providing the UAS pilot on the ground with situational awareness and alerting of nearby aircraft and provide the UAS pilot with timely information to maintain a safe distance.

In its role as a military trainer, the instructor pilot would ride in the back seat, while the student would be in the front seat. As a NASA mission support chase plane, the back seat would be occupied by a photographer or flight test engineer on research missions.

NASAfacts



NASA's T-34C flies over Lake Isabella in Southern California.