

Sailing The 'Big Stick'



USS 'Theodore Roosevelt' completes Carrier Qualifications

The aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 11 completed carrier qualifications 2 June 2020. *Theodore Roosevelt* qualified pilots from the “Tomcatters” of Strike Fighter Squadron VFA-31, “Golden Warriors” of VFA-87, “Blue Diamonds” of VFA-146, “Black Knights” of VFA-154, “Liberty Bells” of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 115, “The Gray Wolves” of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 142, and the “Providers” of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron VRC-30.

The “Eightballers” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron HSC-8, and the “Wolf Pack” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron HSM-75 also worked with the ship in support of carrier qualification operations.

“It is very gratifying to be able to return to our primary mission in the Indo-Pacific,” stated Capt. Steve Jaureguizar, Commander, Carrier Air Wing CVW-11. “The carrier air wing joined together with the carrier is the bedrock of naval aviation and power projection.”

Carrier qualifications are a time for naval aviators to refine their skills practiced during field carrier landing practice (FCLP) for sustained operations at sea aboard the aircraft carrier. Carrier qualifications fortified the operational relationship between CVW-11 and the *Theodore Roosevelt*.

“It felt great to get back in the cockpit and launch from the catapult while at sea,” stated Lt. William Leagon, a naval aviator

assigned to VAQ 142. “As a naval aviator this is what we signed up to do and it’s really exciting to get back to business.”

USS *Theodore Roosevelt* and CVW-11 are on a scheduled deployment to the US 7th Fleet area of operations to provide maritime security, maintain freedom of the seas in accordance with international law and customs, “and operate with international partners and allies to promote regional stability and prosperity.”

