

From the Air Boss

By VADM David Buss, Commander, Naval Air Forces

There is an undeniable truth we continue to see reinforced on the global stage nearly every day: the deterrent value and immediate striking power our aircraft carriers and their embarked air wings bring to bear make them not only essential assets sought in times of crisis by our nation's leadership, but also national treasures. That said, the marked challenges in defending both the capability and capacity of our nation's carrier fleet will, I predict, persist into the future. We ought never shy from those challenges.

Despite the nation's fiscal woes, I am proud to know when the President calls, when security is threatened, he calls for the aircraft carrier to deliver. As we have seen most recently with the precision air strikes in Iraq by Carrier Air Wing Eight (CVW-8) aircraft launching from the flight deck of USS *George H.W. Bush* (CVN 77) in the Arabian Gulf. Today, just as we've witnessed so many times in the past, the forward-deployed aircraft carrier remains the strategic response of choice. Operating forward, deployed far from home, delivering forward presence and combat power in a way that can only be accomplished by the centerpiece of our Navy, the nuclear powered aircraft carrier and its embarked air wing conduct the nation's business when strategic interests are at stake. Forward, present, relevant.

Looking ahead to our future, we see a security environment characterized by political, societal, environmental, and technological upheaval and change. Yet even as we face these challenges, one fundamental truth is clear: we continue to live in an era in which the ability to sprint to where you are needed most, if you are not already there, those qualities inherent in naval forces as evidenced by this aircraft carrier and her crew will be at a premium. We simply must understand this as a nation and as a Navy.

There is no other platform in our armed forces that combines those necessary attributes of combat power, mobility, versatility, and rapid response like our Navy's aircraft carriers. Our warfighting forces are ready today to use the traditional and the visionary, standardized and revolutionary. Our goal is to maintain readiness in the most efficient and sensible way. At the heart of maintaining this level of readiness are the Sailors we put on the flight lines, on our carrier decks, and in the aircraft every day. Our warfighting forces remain ready when called to action. Again, witness northern Iraq today.

Our People

Since I took command as our Navy's Air Boss, I have stated unequivocally that our most important asset is our people. Our mission is to take care of all our officers, enlisted personnel, and their families, while meeting the readiness needs of our force. While we must assign all personnel in accordance with Navy directives and policies to meet the needs of the Navy, we are actively engaged with the Chief of Naval Personnel and the Navy Personnel Command to satisfy the professional and personal goals of the individual. We are committed to the officers and troops in Naval Aviation, and we work very hard on the key issues that affect their career path and goals.

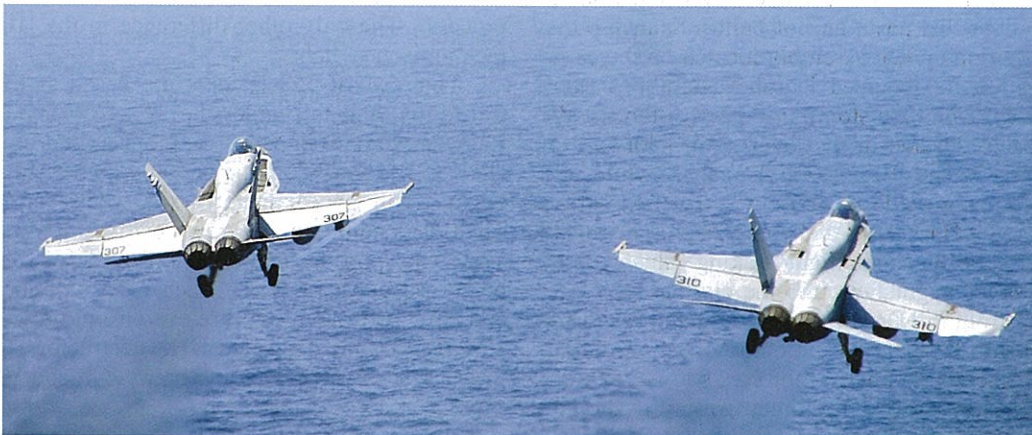
I am committed to the future health and readiness of the fleet. Promotion opportunity and competition is extraordinarily keen across the Navy, as we have seen with recent selection board results. The future of Naval Aviation is inextricably linked to selecting the best, brightest, and most fully qualified the fleet has to offer to lead our aviation units at every level. As the leader of Naval Aviation, I am committed to clearly articulating aviation community values and warfighting requirements to all selection boards so that we continue to select the "best of the best" to lead us into our future.

Our Forces

Among the world's flying forces, Naval Aviation has a reputation for excellence that is second to none. Here you can pilot some of the world's most cutting-edge aircraft; oversee the intricate communications, navigation, and weapons systems they carry; expertly maintain extraordinarily complex aircraft and their systems; or help ensure the safety and success of the people and equipment involved – from takeoff to landing. It has always been so in Naval Aviation, and will be for our future.

With all that has been achieved recently and historically in Naval Aviation, it is clear there is much work yet to be done. Naval Aviation leadership remains committed to addressing our most pressing issues and proactively ensuring we always remain ready for whatever mission comes our way. With active participation and communication among Naval Aviation leaders at every level, we will ensure we have a Naval Aviation force that is combat capable, and ready, regardless of the fiscal environment ... today and in the future! Fly, Fight, Win!

Air Boss Sends.



In the Persian Gulf, 30 August 2014, FA-18Cs from VFA-15 launch from USS *George H.W. Bush* on a 5th Fleet mission. (MC3 Joshua Card)