

USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71)

# ROUGH RIDER

COMPTUEX Vol. II

August 13, 2017

**IN THIS EDITION**  
**Last of a Fighting Breed**  
TR's Number One Priority  
**From the Bottom Up**  
Third Fleet. Arriving.

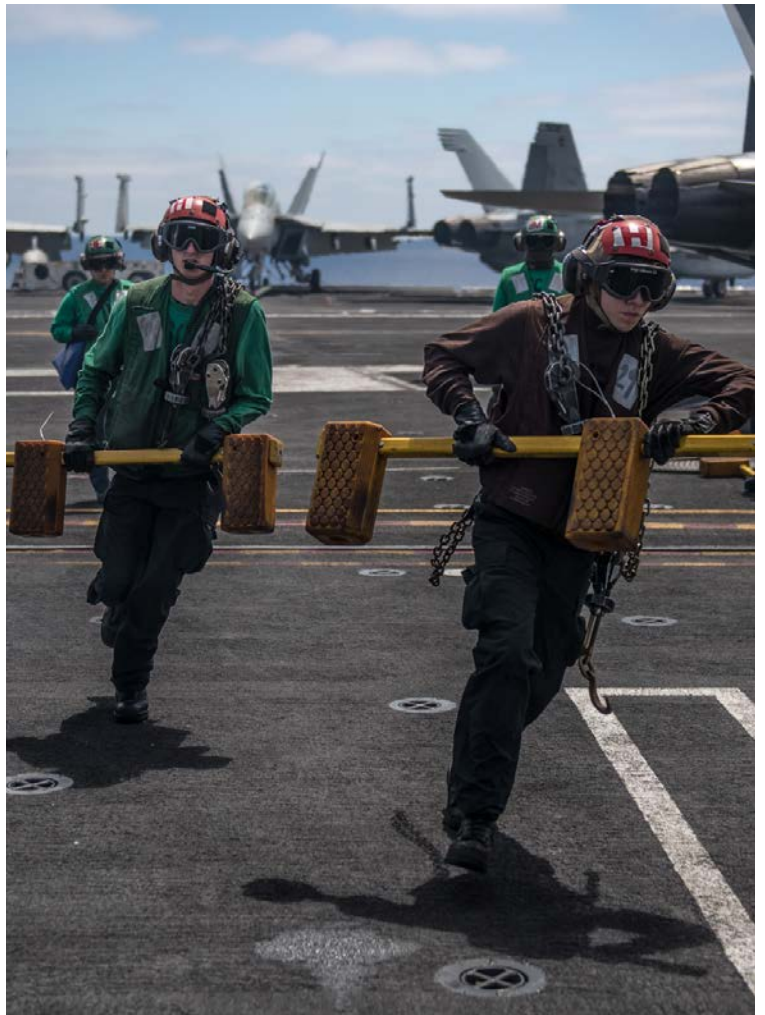
170811-N-DM308-018 PACIFIC OCEAN (Aug. 11, 2017) The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) transits the Pacific Ocean during a strait transit show of force exercise. Theodore Roosevelt is conducting a composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX) with the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group in preparation for an upcoming deployment. COMPTUEX tests a carrier strike group's mission readiness and ability to perform as an integrated unit through simulated real-world scenarios. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Paul L. Archer /Released)











Photos by Theodore Roosevelt Media Team









By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Alex Corona USS  
Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Public Affairs

The Checkerboards of Marine Strike Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 312 embarked aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) are one of two Marine F/A-18C Hornet squadrons detached to aircraft carriers. As the rise of the F/A-18 Super Hornet continues and the introduction of the F-35 is on the horizon this kind of Marine aviation is slowly sundowning.

The two Marine aviation squadrons that remain aircraft carrier qualified have 17 pilots in each squadron. As the Navy continues to phase out F/A-18C Hornet these numbers will continue to fall.

The Marines assigned to the Checkerboards will continue to fight on and carry out their mission with the Theodore Roosevelt crew.

“What we are doing out here is unique to the Marine Corps,” said Capt. Eric Davis, safety officer of the Checkerboards. “We have some the highest readiness rates of any legacy squadron that isn’t forward deployed.”

According to Davis the reason why the Checkerboards have a high readiness rate is due to the attention to detail that the Marines take when performing maintenance on their aircraft. The jets are more than 20-years-old and they have been maintained so well that they are still performing at peak condition.

“We don’t have the same advanced systems as the F/A-18 Super Hornets,” said Davis. “We have better fuel burn, require less gas and for our size we carry a lot of ordnance.”

Davis said, aside from the differences in aircraft the Marines are trained differently than Sailors. Every Marine on board has a rifle kit and can quickly mobilize as a provisional infantry unit.

“Any Marine can go from working on a jet to becoming a warfighter in just a few moments,” said Cpl. Zachary Conditt, assigned to the Checkerboards. “That infantry mentality remains with us from our basic training.”

Despite the Marines infantry background their



main goal on board is to keep flight operations running and keep ordnance dropping. In order to do this, the Checkerboards have to put in more man hours to maintain the older aircraft.

“In order to ensure the safety of our pilots we have to work twice as hard on these older aircraft,” said Conditt. “We take pride in being Marines, ordnance and a part of the ‘controlled chaos’ on the flight deck.”

The Checkerboards put a lot of work into maintaining and supporting their aircraft. They will continue with their hard work ethic and demonstrate the value of having their air wing attached to the Theodore Roosevelt.

“While we take pride in our fighting capabilities our supply, logistics and operations teams are responsible for a lot of our successes,” said Davis. “We travel all the way from South Carolina so needless to say there is a lot of coordination that needs to happen.”

Davis said that whenever the call is made for the squadron to ‘Fight On!’ they are ready to travel

across country to do so. They will always remain ready until the Navy tells them otherwise.

The Checkerboards are slated to deploy with Theodore Roosevelt later this year.





# NUMBER ONE

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Austin Clayton  
USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Public Affairs

Taking a step out the door can be a dangerous act. On an aircraft carrier it can be a deadly one. Between flight operations, hauling of ammunition, moving aircraft and electrical power coursing all around you, life on a carrier requires more precaution than most.

The precautions and safety principles that help guide Sailors are monitored by shipboard safety personnel aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).

“The number one goal is to create a culture where the ship can execute its mission without taking unnecessary risks,” said Cmdr. Benjamin M. Elfert, Theodore Roosevelt’s safety officer. “We have fundamental principles of operational risk management (ORM) which drives us toward not taking unnecessary risks. We make that decision at the right level. Following ORM and





# E P R I O R I T Y

creating a culture of safety will make a big difference.”

Carrier safety can be challenging when balanced against the high intensity environment of flight operations. It can be a deadly combination.

“Naval aviation on an aircraft carrier is a very dangerous evolution in a very dangerous environment,” said Elfert. “If you follow the procedures, you are actually faster than if you try to take short cuts. Typically, if you take a shortcut you end up hurting yourself or making some chaotic situation worse.”

On the carrier, safety is the number one concern for all the crew. You can’t operate a moving city with half your crew injured due to lack of safety. More importantly in this industrial environment, the lack of safety can lead to a Sailor not going home at all. Theodore Roosevelt’s Electrical Officer, Lt. Miguel Gonzalez told such a story with a heavy heart.

When Gonzalez was a 1st Class petty officer on the Los Angeles-class submarine USS Ashville (SSN 758) he became good friends with another 1st who later became a chief while aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76).

“A good friend of mine was stationed aboard the Reagan and he lost his life,” said Gonzalez. “He didn’t have the right PPE (Personnel Protective Equipment) on and he was working on an electrical breaker down in the

propulsion plant spaces. He ultimately lost his life. His family and friends suffered.”

A Sailor losing his life on a ship affects their family, friends, and the whole crew. Something like PPE saves lives every day.

“Safety has to be your number one priority whether you’re doing the work or it’s people working for you,” said Gonzalez. “If you have questions, you can’t be afraid to ask them.”

Gonzalez called it a “gut feeling” that Sailors should trust when they think something is wrong and he wanted them to not be afraid to step up and say something. Elfert Agreed.

“As an aviator there’s numerous times we can look back and say we prevented a mishap from occurring from following procedures,” said Elfert. “It just takes one person, it doesn’t matter the rank, from the lowest to the highest, if one person steps up and says something doesn’t look right they can prevent a mishap.”

Safety procedures set in place were written in blood. This means that someone has either given their life or bled to ensure future Sailors stay safe.

“Ultimately all I want, and all everyone wants, is to stay safe, go home and see their friends and family and enjoy the time off that they have,” said Gonzalez.





A close-up portrait of Capt Carlos Sardiello, a man with dark hair and a serious expression, wearing a dark naval officer's cap with a gold band and a gold eagle insignia. The background is dark and out of focus.

CAPT CARLOS SARDIELLO  
COMMANDING OFFICER  
USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT

# FROM THE

**Q: What is your mission or your vision for the ship and her crew?**

*CO: The mission for Theodore Roosevelt is a carrier in Naval Aviation. Making sure we succeed in the tasking that's presented to us and I believe that starts with the bottom up. Taking care of folks and equipping them to succeed in life. If we give them the tools, train them right off the bat; we build a huge base of talent that makes us more successful, makes them better at what they do and ultimately drives the mission of launches, recoveries and safe operations.*

**Q: Why is it important for Sailors to take advantage of your "open for questions" sessions after an All Hands call?**

*CO: I want to be approachable from all levels of the chain of command. I'm not going to drill down into a problem and short circuit all the efforts of the chain of command but I think it's a fair question for the crew to get a chance to know me. We're certainly a hierarchical organization but we're flatter now in our ability to deal with problems. There are good ideas from all levels on the chain. If someone has a good idea they're afraid to say or not sure about, I'll listen. Bounce it off me. It makes us better and hopefully sets the example for middle management to be open to listening to their Sailors. They absolutely should be. It's a good way to collect lessons and things that might change and also to outreach to the crew to know them as people and they know me.*

**Q: Is there anything on your mind, any message you want to get out to the crew or anything else you want to add about anything?**

*CO: I'm very proud of what this crew has accomplished so far through the work ups. I want to make sure that everyone here succeeds at their personal and professional goals. I'm going to take a lot of time to make sure we are planning as far ahead as possible so that we keep a level-loaded schedule that keeps the quality of life at a reasonable type and frequency and also gets the job done. Any time that we're going to have days off or holiday periods, we're going to communicate that as far in advance so that people can have a life. We work really, really hard so the more that you can plan your own personal life, the better it is for everyone.*



# BOTTOM UP

CAPT FRED GOLDHAMMER  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT

## **Q: What is COMPTUEX?**

*XO: COMPTUEX is the final piece of training we're going to do before we're ready to deploy to prove to ourselves and to our assessors, the friendly folks from Strike Group 15 who are grading us, that we are combat ready. For the next four weeks we are out here, we are going to push ourselves to the maximum of our capabilities to make sure we know exactly what we need to do if the nation asks us to do that for deployment.*

*XO: So, for the those who haven't done a deployment or carrier workup before, COMPTUEX is really the hardest part. Everything you see out here is going to be a lot higher intensity, on purpose, so that by the time you do it for real, it won't seem as challenging to you because you'll have that confidence of knowing that you've done the harder thing before.*

## **Q: How does every individual Sailor play a role on the ship?**

*XO: Everybody on board this ship plays a critical role to make sure everything happens in sequence in the right order every time. On a day to day basis, it may not be obvious to you that you're irreplaceable, but that's a fact. Every single person is critical in making sure all the missions we're going to fly during COMPTUEX happens successfully. We value what you do, and we want you to succeed and get better because we want this team to succeed. The important thing is understanding that you're an important team member on this ship; that doesn't matter if you're a TR ship's company, airwing, strike group staff, destroyer squadron staff, on the small boys out there; it all comes together as a strike group as one team fury carrier strike group 9.*

## **Q: What I would you like to say to the crew?**

*XO: I'd like to say thank you. It's been a hard year both for the air wing and for ship's company for everything that's led up to this point. It's really driven us to the point we are today, and we're succeeding so well as a airwing and a ship team is because of all the hard work that's come to this point. We have had a really successful year, and none of that would've been possible without your hard work and your investment. Please keep it up, we're almost at the finish line for work ups, and we're going to get to the good part which is the deployment. Deployment is the easiest and best part, so just hang in there a little bit longer.*





# THIRD FLEET. ARRIVING.

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Paul L. Archer  
USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Public Affairs







The aircraft Carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) received a visit from Commander U.S. Third fleet, Vice Adm. Nora Tyson, while at sea conducting a composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX), Aug 9.

Vice Adm. Nora W. Tyson, commander, U.S. Third Fleet, landed on Theodore Roosevelt via helicopter and met with Rear Adm. Steve T. Koehler, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 9, Rear Adm. Ross Myers, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 15 and Capt. Carlos A. Sardiello, commanding officer, Theodore Roosevelt.

"The visit was fantastic," said Koehler. "Having the Admiral come aboard first hand to see all the great work the USS Theodore Roosevelt Strike Group (TRCSG) is doing during COMPTUEX just shows how important this exercise is in preparation for the upcoming deployment."

Once on board, Tyson addressed Theodore Roosevelt's crew known as the "Rough Riders" via the 1MC, elaborating on the fact that every evolution they complete during COMPTUEX prepares them for any obstacle that might come their way when they reach the 5th and 7th Fleet area of operations.

"COMPTUEX is designed to push you to your maximum capabilities, it's final test before getting your opportunity to prove why we are the greatest Navy the world has ever seen," said Tyson. "If you can communicate effectively and act efficiently as a strike group, then you can handle any threat that presents itself around the world."

Tyson then met with senior leadership from CSG 9, CSG 15, Destroyer Strike Squadron (DESRON) 23, Carrier Air Wing (CAG) 17 and USS Theodore Roosevelt to discuss how vital a role all

parties involved are to mission success.

Capt. Carlos Sardiello felt Tyson's message in regards to COMPTUEX was loud and clear.

"How we handle the fast pace and unique exercises COMPTUEX throws our way will set the tone headed into deployment," said Sardiello. "Every Sailors role is critical and COMPTUEX will ensure Theodore Roosevelt is combat ready."

CSG 15 staff is currently embarked on Theodore Roosevelt evaluating the performance of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG) during COMPTUEX.

COMPTUEX evaluates the strike group's deployment readiness by testing command and control functions, crew safety evolutions, search and rescue operations, damage control testing and operational capabilities of a carrier strike group, ultimately certifying the TRCSG for deployment.

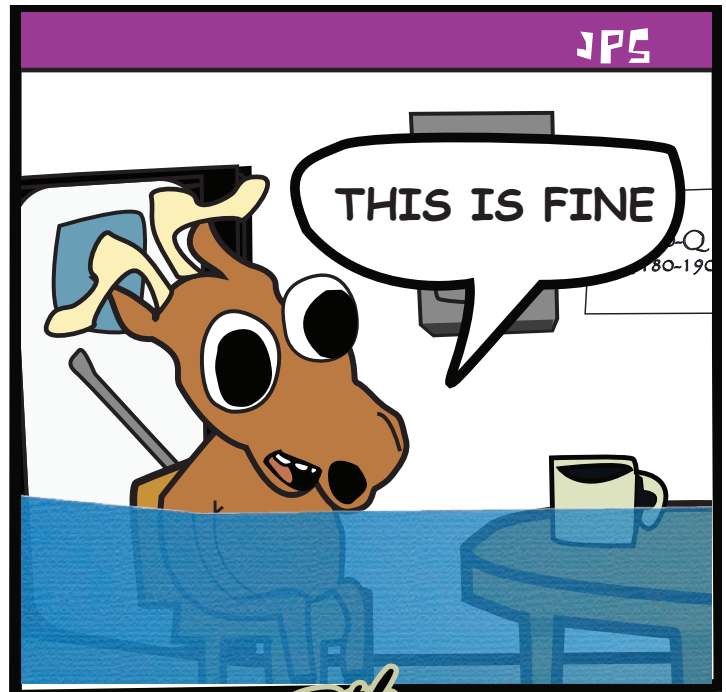
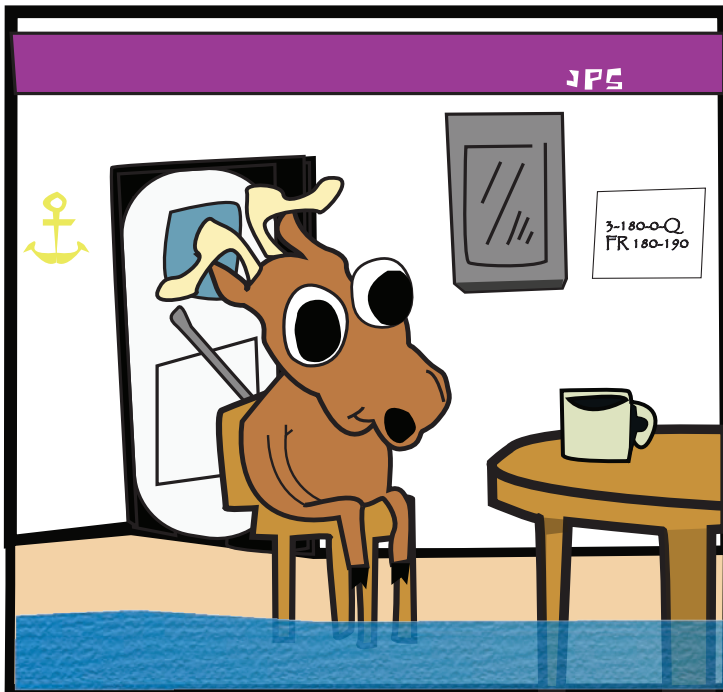
Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group consists of Theodore Roosevelt, the guided-missile destroyers USS Halsey (DDG 97), USS Higgins (DDG 76), USS Sampson (DDG 102) and USS Preble (DDG 88), the guided-missile cruiser USS Hue City (CG 52), Carrier Air Wing 17 and Destroyer Squadron 23.





# BULLY

A THEODORE ROOSEVELT CVN 71 COMIC BY MC3 JIMMI LEE BRUNER



*Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup>*

	CH. 121	CH. 122	CH. 123
0900/2100	STARWARS EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY 2	STAR TREK: BEYOND
1220/0020	HOT TUB TIME MACHINE	CLERKS	GRAVITY
1430/0230	THE DEPARTED	BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT	THE LONE RANGER
1615/0415	22 JUMPSTREET	ARRIVAL	EX MACHINA
1800/0600	THE MAGNIFICENT 7	X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST	THE BIG SHORT
1945/0745	JURASSIC WORLD	ABOUT TIME	BIRDMAN





**NAME:** BMSN Cassandra Liriano

**HOMETOWN:** Worcester, Massachusetts

**Favorite Thing About the Navy:** "Port calls overseas."

**Message to the crew:** "Explore as much as possible when on dry land."

**Favorite Food:** Mangos and Abuela's cooking.

**Favorite Movie:** Waitress

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All items for publication in The Rough Rider must be submitted to the editor no later than three days prior to publication.

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[@TheRealCVN71](http://about.me/ussTheodoreRoosevelt)





A stylized graphic of an eye, rendered in shades of brown, olive green, and dark blue, positioned behind the main text.

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TO DENY YOUR  
ADVERSARY VITAL  
MISSION INFORMATION**

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