



OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

NAVAL AVIATION TARGETS TERRORISM

By JO1(SW) Ed Wright

Operation Enduring Freedom (formerly Operation Infinite Justice) began in earnest on 25 September 2001 as the nation's war on terrorism was declared. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced the new name saying it was meant to remind Americans that the effort will take a long time. He added the name suggests that "this is not a quick fix . . . it'll take years, I suspect."

The initial strikes by the U.S. military against al-Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan began on 7 October 2001.

The first F-14 *Tomcats* and F/A-18 *Hornets* launched from the decks of *Enterprise* (CVN 65) and *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) beginning the war on terrorism in Afghanistan. The carefully targeted actions are designed to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a base for terrorist operations.

Speaking about the strikes from the White House, President George W. Bush said, "We are joined in this operation by our staunch friend, Great Britain. Other close friends have pledged forces as the operation unfolds. More than 40 countries have granted air transit



PH3 Saut Ingle

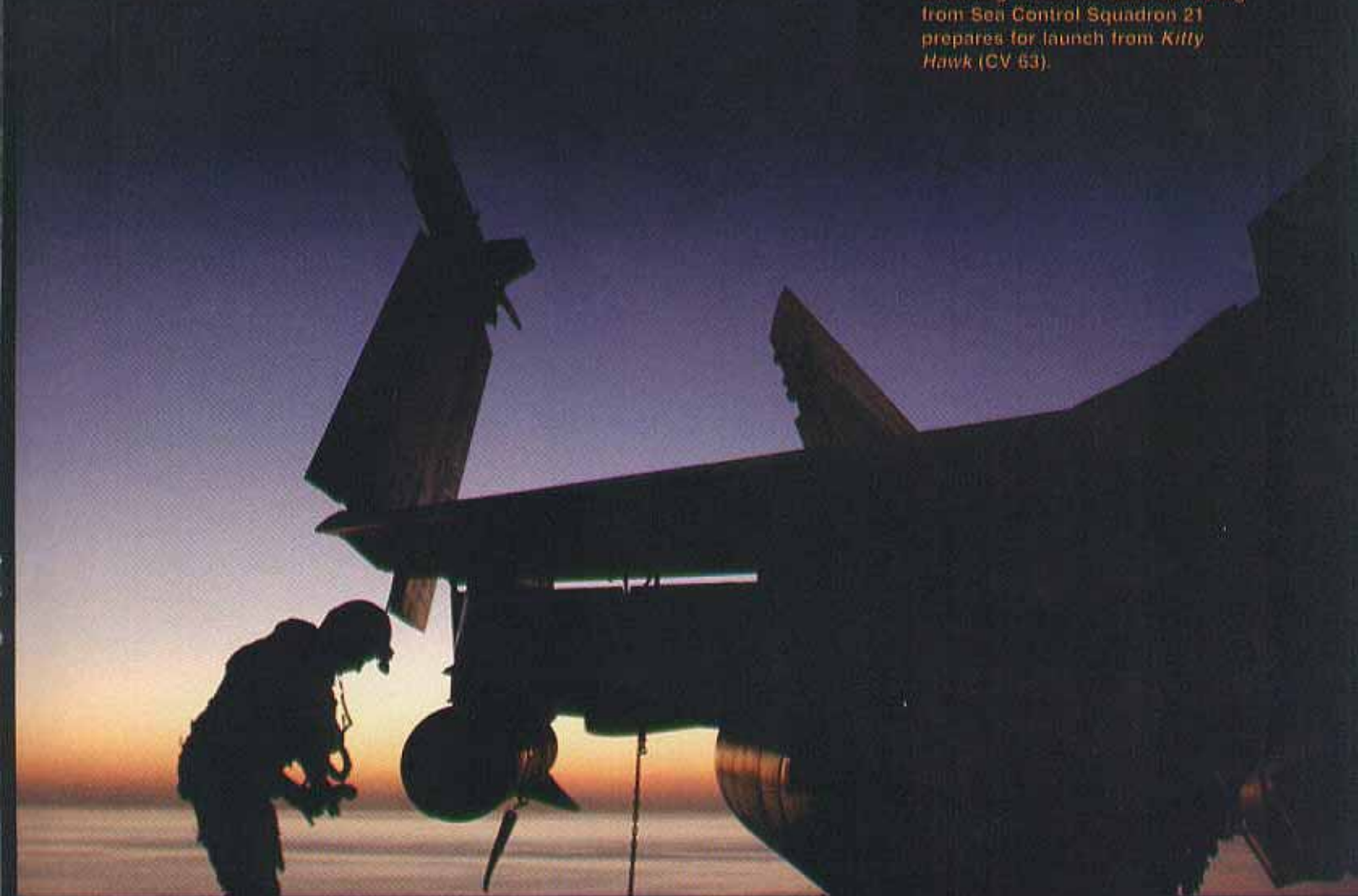


PHO John E. Woods



Sgt. Joseph R. Chenely

Clockwise from above: a flight deck crewman aboard *Peleliu* (LHA 5) directs an AV-8B *Harrier II* into takeoff position. The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) flew the first *Harrier* air strikes on Taliban targets on 3 November. An F/A-18 *Hornet* pilot inspects his aircraft prior to flight ops on board *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70). The flight deck of *Carl Vinson*, filled with aircraft loaded with ordnance, takes on a red glow during night flight operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. An S-3B *Viking* from Sea Control Squadron 21 prepares for launch from *Kitty Hawk* (CV 53).



PHO Saul Ingie



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or landing rights. We are supported by the collective will of the world." The president went on to say, "We did not ask for this mission, but we will fulfill it."

The involvement of the Naval Aviation community has been extensive. *Enterprise* was on her way home to Norfolk, Va., when she was ordered to turn around and head to the Arabian Sea to assist *Carl Vinson* in the initial air strikes. *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) was directed in October to sail toward the Arabian Sea from her home port of Yokosuka, Japan, to support the two carriers. *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) later entered the region to relieve *Enterprise* for her return home. *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) then left her San Diego, Calif., home port to relieve *Carl Vinson* on station.

In the war against terrorism, Naval Aviation forces are prepared to endure with steady aim, swift delivery and deadly impact until the mission is complete. ✈



PH2 Jason Scarborough



PH3 Saul Ingle



PHAN Inez Lawson



PH: Ted Banks

This page, clockwise from above: Sailors aboard the guided missile destroyer *John Paul Jones* (DDG 53) prepare to come alongside *Sacramento* (AOE 1) for an underway replenishment while *Enterprise* (CVN 65) awaits fuel. Aircraft from *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) stand ready for the call to action. On board *Peleliu* (LHA 5), a pilot with the 15th MEU (SOC) inspects his AV-8B *Harrier II* before taking off for a mission over Afghanistan. A Navy F-14 *Tomcat* takes on fuel from an Air Force KC-10 *Extender* while flying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



PH: Jason Scarborough

Facing page, clockwise from top: Two F/A-18 *Hornets* from *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) receive fuel from a British Royal Air Force VC-10 tanker. Another F/A-18 from *Carl Vinson* carries a strike payload consisting of the AIM-9 Sidewinder missile and the Joint Direct Attack Munition. A flight deck crewman directs an E-2C *Hawkeye* from Electronic Attack Squadron 123 after a safe landing aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71). A CH-46 *Sea Knight* delivers ordnance to *Carl Vinson* as *Princeton* (CG 59) maneuvers aft of the aircraft carrier. A flight deck crewman stands by to recover an EA-6B *Prowler* on final approach to *Carl Vinson*. An SH-60 *Seahawk* from Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron 14 lands on *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63).



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