

NAVRIP

NAVY TACKLES INTERDEPLOYMENT READINESS

By Ltjg. Anne Cossitt

The ongoing success of Naval Aviation personnel as part of Operation Enduring Freedom demonstrates the high level of readiness of deployed forces. But between deployments, readiness naturally ebbs, increasing the effort needed to ramp up again. The Thomas Group, a consulting company with expertise in process management, is assisting the Navy in improving nondeployed readiness through the Naval Aviation Readiness Integrated Improvement Program (NAVRIP).

“NAVRIP is a fundamental change in the way we determine, manage, coordinate and prioritize Naval Aviation resource requirements during the interdeployment training cycle,” explained Commander Bob Gilbeau, Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (AIRPAC) supply readiness officer. “It will allow us to do better with our existing resources.”

The program is led by flag officers from 17 commands, including Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; AIRPAC; Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR); Chief of Naval Education and Training; Naval Supply Systems Command; Naval Inventory Control Point (NAVICP); and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).

A key element in the process is aligning efforts



Top, HC-8 CH-46 Sea Knights wait out a snowstorm at NS Norfolk, Va. Naval Aviation commands' efforts to maintain readiness during interdeployment cycles will be aided by the NAVRIP program. Above, "Boots on the Ground" visits allow NAVRIP teams to gather information on obstacles to interdeployment readiness from personnel at all levels of the chain of command.

between different supporting commands, such as the fleet, NAVICP, DLA and the maintenance depots. “Before NAVRIP, the many commands associated with the myriad logistical elements that define readiness played in their own lane,” said Captain Mark Clemente, Commander Fighter Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. “There was no formal cross-functional coordination. NAVRIP will get everyone speaking the same language and then working together to fix real problems.” Three cross-functional teams were created to address the more difficult challenges.

The first team defines appropriate, acceptable levels of readiness throughout the interdeployment training cycle





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and then builds a training and readiness matrix tailored for each airframe. The team works with type wings to schedule squadron training requirements and conduct the right training at the right time. A second team is responsible for providing parts, people, aircraft and support equipment to squadrons at the right time and with the right quality so aviators can continue to meet critical training milestones. The third cross-functional team is in charge of planning and programming to ensure that funding requirements are met.

While it may seem that this program only affects the highest levels of the chain of command, its success relies on input from Sailors throughout the fleet. Teams of maintainers and suppliers from the type commands, NAVAIR, program offices, NAVICP, DLA and the Thomas Group travel to naval air stations to conduct “Boots on the Ground” (BOG) visits to interact with the troops maintaining and supporting aircraft in order to identify barriers to readiness improvement.

Recent BOG visits at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., and

NAS Oceana, Va., enabled fleet aviators and maintainers to provide input to flag officers on readiness issues. These visits have already resulted in improvements. For example, at Oceana “we repair aircraft 24 hours a day, in three shifts,” explained Capt. Clemente. “The pre-expanded bin, containing consumables like nuts and bolts, was open for only two shifts. The third repair shift would have to wait until the bin opened the next day. There was an easy fix to that—keep the bin open during the third shift.” As problems are brought to the leadership’s attention through BOGs, steps will be taken to change the process, working toward solving those problems consistently over time and ultimately eliminating barriers that make the process less efficient throughout the fleet.

Capt. Clemente concluded, “This program empowers the operational chain, the guys who care about flying, to dive into the issues and fix them.” And that’s a win-win situation. ✈

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