



AIRSCOOP

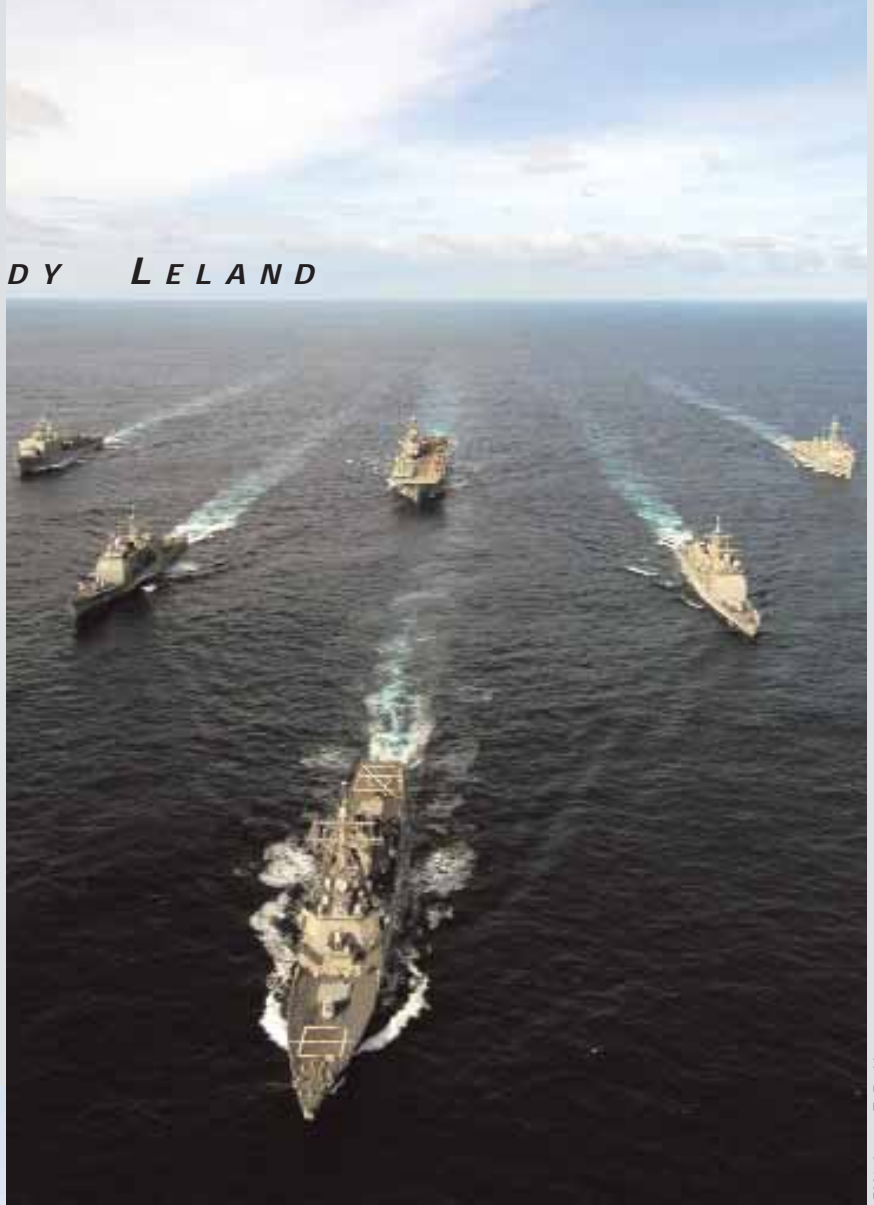
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Second ESG Deploys

The second Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) deployed in February with Marine Expeditionary Unit 22 embarked. Led by *Wasp* (LHD 1), the East Coast-based ESG comprises *Leyte Gulf* (CG 55), *Yorktown* (CG 48), *Shreveport* (LPD 12), *Whidbey Island* (LSD 41), *McFaul* (DDG 74) and *Connecticut* (SSN 22).

Boxer Deploys for Iraq

Boxer (LHD 4) deployed to the Arabian Gulf to transport Marine personnel and equipment in support of force rotations in Iraq. Sixteen helicopters and supplies were delivered to Marine Air Group 16; *Boxer's* air cushioned landing craft transported 150 trucks and trailers to Kuwait; and



PH1 James E. Perkins



PH3 Teresa J. Ellison

Above, the surface ships of Expeditionary Strike Group 2 underway during the first deployment of an East Coast-based ESG. Left, an MH-60S of HC-6 delivers supplies to *Whidbey Island* (LSD 41). Facing page, ABH2 Reuben Nicholson watches a VFA-131 F/A-18C Hornet as it prepares to land on board *George Washington* (CVN 73), supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom in the Arabian Gulf.

CH-53E Super Stallions delivered tugs and equipment to Kuwait. Scheduled for 10 days, the offload was completed on 25 February after only five.

Upgraded Displays for Hawkeyes and Hornets

The Navy's oldest Hawkeyes, Group II E-2Cs, are being modernized with the replacement of the three operator stations' enhanced main display units (EMDU). The new EMDU kits consist of active-matrix liquid crystal displays, optical mice and circuit card assemblies. Each kit is 40 pounds lighter than the original, and requires only one maintainer. Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 121 utilized

the new flat panels on deployment, and VAW-126's Hawkeyes have also been upgraded.

A Strike Fighter Squadron 151 F/A-18C Hornet became the first operational aircraft to receive the new Advanced Multipurpose Color Display (AMPCD). A replacement for current F/A-18C/D Hornet and AV-8B Harrier displays that are based on a cathode ray tube, the new high-resolution liquid crystal displays provide a clear view in extreme lighting conditions and are compatible with night-vision goggles. They have been shipped to MCAS Miramar, Calif., for installation in Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 aircraft, and are scheduled for installation in AV-8B Harriers later this year.

Hornets to Get LITENING

The Marine Corps' F/A-18D Hornets will soon begin to receive the LITENING AT advanced targeting system. The self-contained multisensor laser target designating and navigation system is a

follow-on to the LITENING II and ER pods currently in use in AV-8B Harrier IIs. The AT pod features advanced image processing for target identification and coordinate generation; forward-looking infrared sensor; charge-coupled device television sensors; laser spot tracker/range finder; infrared laser marker; and an infrared laser designator. The new system will enhance the Hornet's ability to perform close air support, precision attack and other missions.

H-1 Upgrade

In February, the AH-1Z and UH-1Y flight testing program was paused because of decreased structural strength in tail boom components caused by increased engine exhaust temperatures and higher loads and torque from the upgraded T-700 engines. The tail booms were modified for greater heat tolerance, and the test aircraft were returned to flight. A kit designed to turn the exhaust away from the tail boom of fleet AH-1W Super Cobras is being installed in the test aircraft.

Search and rescue swimmers are hoisted into an SH-60F Seahawk from HS-11 after an unusual reenlistment ceremony conducted in the Arabian Sea while embarked aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).



PH2 Jason Scarborough



PH1 Brien Aho

For the Record

Nimitz (CVN 68) began her six-month planned incremental availability on 23 February.

The **V-22 Osprey** conducted air-to-air refueling tests on 22 March with a fixed refueling probe. This is the first step toward testing a retractable probe.

The Naval Air Systems Command accepted a **T-6A Texan II** for testing at NAS Patuxent River, Md. Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 20 will use the aircraft to test critical safety-of-flight issues and reliability and maintainability modifications in support of both the Navy and Air Force primary training programs.

The Boeing Co. received a \$61 million contract for the second low-rate initial production of the **Active Electronically Scanned Array** for the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet.

Northrop Grumman received a \$570 million contract for a second multiyear procurement of the **E-2C Hawkeye**. Eight aircraft will be purchased, with deliveries beginning in FY 07. The contract includes both Hawkeye 2000s and training aircraft.

AMS3 Hezekiah Crandall uses an air-powered sander on the intake of an F-14B Tomcat of VF-143 in the hangar bay of *George Washington* (CVN 73) in the Arabian Gulf.

Mishaps

An F/A-18 Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 82 crashed off the coast of South Carolina on 24 March. The pilot was not injured.

On 10 March a Marine Forces Pacific UC-35 crashed at MCAS Miramar, Calif. There were four fatalities, and the aircraft was destroyed.

An F/A-18C Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 94 suffered Class A damage when it departed the runway on landing rollout and overturned at NAS Lemoore, Calif., on 10 March.

On 4 March, an SH-60B Seahawk of Light Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 40 suffered Class A damage following a hard landing at NS Mayport, Fla.

An Electronic Attack Squadron 141 EA-6B Prowler suffered Class A damage at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., on 26 February following a main mount collapse upon landing.

On 24 February, a Training Squadron 9 T-45C Goshawk suffered Class A damage when it crashed during rollout at NAS Meridian, Miss.