

# CROSSWIND

## Navy working hard to improve aviation non-deployed readiness

By Anne Cossitt  
AIRPAC reporter

To increase non-deployed readiness of aviation squadrons throughout the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC), the Navy has implemented the Naval Aviation Readiness Integrated Improvement Program (NAVRIP).

The recent success of Navy aircrews deployed and operating on the tip of the spear as part of Operation Enduring Freedom demonstrates a high level of readiness among deployed forces. Over a period of years, however, the Navy sacrificed in the area of non-deployed aviation readiness to keep deployed forces at the highest levels of readiness. Subsequently, the readiness of those non-deployed units suffered.

The Thomas Group, a consulting company with expertise in process management, is assisting the Navy in addressing the fundamental change needed in naval aviation business processes to improve non-deployed readiness. They will work with the Navy throughout the NAVRIP process.

"NAVRIP is driving a fundamental change in the way we determine, manage, coordinate and prioritize naval aviation resource requirements during the IDTC," explained Cmdr. Bob Gilbeau, CNAP Supply Readiness officer. "It is the enabler that will allow us to do better with our existing resources with the objective of immediate and long term improvement of non-deployed readiness."

The program, led by flag officers from 17 commands including CINCPACFLT, CINCLANTFLT, AIRPAC, AIRLANT, NAVAIR,

CNET, NAVSUP, NAVICP, and DLA aims to set, reach and sustain non-deployed aviation readiness goals.

"We are focusing on streamlining and improving the readiness process, so that non-deployed squadrons get the right parts, at the right time, for the right sortie," said Capt. Doug Henry, AIRPAC Force Aircraft Material Officer.

"Before NAVRIP, the many commands associated with the myriad logistical elements that define readiness played in their own lane," said Capt. Mark Clemente, Commander, Fighter Wing Atlantic. "There was no formal cross-functional coordination. NAVRIP will get everyone speaking the same language and then working together to fix real problems."

### Boots on the Ground

A critical part of NAVRIP is Boots on the Ground (BOG). BOG teams, composed of maintainers and suppliers from the TYCOMs, NAVAIR, Program offices, NAVICP, DLA and the Thomas Group, will visit air stations to enable face-to-face interaction with the troops maintaining and supporting the aircraft. This will enable them to identify barriers to readiness improvement.

Recent BOG visits at NAS Whidbey Island and NAS Oceana enabled fleet aviators and maintainers to provide input to flag officers on readiness issues. These visits have already resulted in improvements.

"When we did the BOG at NAS Oceana, we found some real low hanging fruit...the easy fixes," Clemente added.

"For example, we repair aircraft 24 hours a day, in three shifts. The pre-expanded bin, which is where all of the consumables like nuts and bolts are, 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. That's an example of an easy process fix. There will be more difficult ones."

### Change the Process

As problems are brought to lead-

ership's attention through the BOGs, steps will be taken immediately to change the process, work-

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- Capt. Doug Henry

ing toward solving those problems consistently over time and ultimately eliminating barriers that make the process less efficient. In changing the process, aviators are implementing a long term, lasting solution; not merely using a temporary fix, such as asking for more money.

"The solution is not to buy more parts or to throw more money at the problem," said Henry. "The key is to improve the process."

### Aligned Efforts

A key element in the streamlining process will be balancing and aligning efforts between different supporting commands, such as the fleet, Naval Inventory Control Point (NAVICP), Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and the maintenance depots. Three cross-functional teams within the NAVRIP address the more difficult challenges.

Cross Functional Team One (CFT 1), headed by Rear Adm. Mike Malone, Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, defines appropriate, acceptable levels of readiness throughout the IDTC 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.

For optimal readiness to become

a reality, Cross Functional Team Two (CFT 2), headed by Rear Adm. Mike Finley, Commander, NAVICP and Steve Heilman, Assistant Commander for Industrial Operations, NAVAIR, is called the Providers.

With a sub team from BUPERS headed by Rear Adm. Jake Shuford, they are responsible for providing parts, people, aircraft and support equipment to squadrons through the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP), DLA, BUPERS and NAVAIR at the right time, with the right quality, so aviators can continue to meet critical training milestones on time. A crucial piece of this effort is determining and attaining an appropriate level of funding.

Cross Functional Team Three (CFT 3), headed by Rear Adm. Ken Heimgartner, Director of Fleet Readiness on the CNO's staff, is in charge of planning and programming to ensure that funding requirements are met.

### New Empowerment

Underpinning each CFT's efforts and a cornerstone of the NAVRIP is the concept of getting more out of existing resources through a focus on process improvement vice the traditional approach of throwing money at a problem.

"The key to success in this program is the coordination of effort between the CFT's," explained Dave Moulton of the Thomas Group. "NAVRIP will create a seamless process from one end of the IDTC to the other, with the end result being increased readiness."

"This program is very exciting, it's something that I've never seen in all my time in naval aviation," says Clemente. "It empowers the operational chain, the guys who care about flying, to dive into the issues and fix them."

More information on NAVRIP can be found on the AIRPAC web site at [www.airpac.navy.mil](http://www.airpac.navy.mil).