

National Military

Navy working hard to improve aviation non deployed readiness



by Lt.jg. Anne Cossitt

In order 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 (NAVRIIP).

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. However, over a period of years, 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. The Thomas Group will work with the Navy throughout the NAVRIIP process.

"NAVRIIP is driving a fundamental change in the way we determine, manage, coordinate and prioritize naval aviation resource requirements during the IDTC," explains Cmdr. Bob Gilbeam, CNAP Supply Readiness officer. "It is the enabler which 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 Captain Doug Henry, AIRPAC Force Aircraft Material Officer.

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

A critical part of NAVRIIP is Boats on the Ground (BOG). BOG teams comprised 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," explains Capt. Clemente. "For example to change the process, working towards 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," explains Capt. Henry. "The key is to improve the process."

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 NAVRIIP 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 aircraft. 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 Hehman, 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 avia-

tors 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.

Underpinning each CFT's efforts and a cornerstone of the NAVRIIP 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. "NAVRIIP 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."