

TRCSG Continues to Make Impact in Gulf

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By Journalist 2nd Class Steve Murphy, USS Theodore Roosevelt Public Affairs

ABOARD USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (NNS) -- The USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG), along with Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Maritime Security Operations (MSO) for more than two months, and continues to make a positive impact on the Gulf region.

Since departing Naval Station Norfolk, Va., Sept 1., the nearly 7,500 Sailors who make up TRCSG and CVW-8, have used teamwork to successfully support Iraqi oil platform security; Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations; and provide support to coalition troops in Iraq.

“I am extremely proud of the 7,000 Sailors in our strike group, each one of whom makes a vital contribution every day to our success, whether at sea fighting terrorism or helping to set the conditions for security and stability in this region,” said Rear Adm. James A. Winnefeld, commander, Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group. “Together, we’re all determined to carry this important mission through, until our last day underway.”

CVW-8's Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 141 led the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group's first combat flights in support of OIF, when it began flying combat sorties Sept. 24.

Since then, aircraft from CVW-8, which consists of Fighter Squadron (VF) 213 and VF-31; Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 87 and VFA-15; Sea Control Squadron (VS) 24; Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 124; and Helicopter Squadron (HS) 3; have conducted strikes in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom while protecting coalition ground troops.

From Sept. 24 through Nov. 1, CVW-8 conducted 2,070 sorties, 624 in support of OIF and 557 in support of Maritime Security Operations.

USS San Jacinto (CG 56) has been a key factor for success during TRCSG deployment with its use of VBSS Teams.

VBSS operations pressurize the maritime environment, playing a significant role in shaping the environment and setting the conditions for other forces to engage international terrorist organizations (ITO). These operations intercept vessels that may support international terrorist organizations by transferring personnel or such items as weapons and drugs. VBSS operations are intended to detect, deter, and deny ITOs the use of the maritime environment.

The Sailors of the San Jacinto VBSS teams have inspected more than 50 local fishing dhows in order to enhance maritime security and provide goodwill packages to fishermen.

USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79) and USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) have been busy in the northern Persian Gulf as a part of the TRCSG by providing protection in Iraqi territorial waters and their two major oil terminals, Al Basrah and Khawr Al Amaya (KAAOT).

In addition to providing security, Oscar Austin Sailors also helped to better the lifestyles of the Sailors, Marines, and Iraqis who live and work on the platforms. Several culinary specialists and a food service assistant were sent to the KAAOT oil platform to cook fresh, hot meals for those service members.

“From the moment we got to the oil platform, we were welcomed with open arms,” said Chief Culinary Specialist (SW) Antonio Barrios. “All the Sailors were happy to have a good meal at their table and the taste of home cooking on their lips. I had a great time helping them out.”

The efforts of Oscar Austin, Donald Cook and San Jacinto have been effective in denying international terrorists use of the maritime environment and demonstrate TRCSG's team effort in the Persian Gulf region, both on land and at sea.

The Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group includes the Norfolk-based aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt, with its embarked air wing, CVW-8; the Norfolk-based guided-missile cruiser San Jacinto; the Norfolk-based guided-missile destroyers Oscar Austin and Donald Cook; the Spanish frigate SPS Alvaro de Bazan (F101); and the combat logistics ships USNS Mount Baker (T-AE 34) from Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J., and USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) from Norfolk.

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051018-N-9362D-010 Persian Gulf (Oct. 18, 2005) - The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) underway in the Persian Gulf. Roosevelt and embarked Carrier Air Wing Eight (CVW-8) are underway on a regularly scheduled deployment conducting maritime security operations in the Persian Gulf. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Randall Damm (RELEASED)



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