

Mace-Only Sortie Utilizes Eleven Royal Mace Jets

LT David Tarr, VFA-27 Public Affairs

ATSUGI, Japan (Aug. 16, 2012) Prior to embarking on the USS George Washington (CVN 73), the Royal Maces of VFA-27 finished up their three weeks at NAF Atsugi in style. Executing the "Mace Alpha Strike", all eleven F/A-18Es on the VFA-27 line simultaneously flew in support of Lt. Robert "Sassy" Kurland's four-versus-seven training flight. Mace jets filled all eleven positions, filling roles as both friendly and hostile forces.

Prior to the flight, VFA-27 Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Braden "Jimmy" Briller, brought the team together, stressing the significance of this event for the squadron.

"Some might wonder why we choose to fly an event like this," stated Briller, "Our superb maintenance and constant grooming of our jets at all levels has given us the ability and the confidence to demonstrate our mettle and to pull this off. Simply put, we're doing this because we can."

The qualifications and skill sets required by the squadron as a whole to successfully execute this event spanned all departments. "Having that many jets ready to fly is amazing, but preparing those jets for flight, launching and recovering them takes a dedicated, skilled team of people", said Senior Chief Ruben Barrera, Line Division LCPO. "The fact that we have so many hard-charging Sailors ready to step up in every shop with the requisite qualifications as Plane Captains, Troubleshooters and Collateral Duty Inspectors allows us to surge our capability and capitalize on great opportunities like this. Seeing the fruits of our hard efforts and teamwork in an event like this is a big payoff for the squadron."

Operations Officer, Lcdr. "Leno" Duffy, who organized the event, emphasized the uniqueness of this opportunity.

"Normally it takes a great deal of coordination to assemble the assets required for a flight of this nature. To be able to do it in-house is unbelievable. In my 14 years of experience in this business, I have never seen that in any squadron before."

The Royal Maces are currently embarked aboard the USS George Washington (CVN 73) conducting the second half of their 2012 deployment. During the first half of the patrol, the USS George Washington (CVN 73) and its embarked air wing, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, traveled more than 10,800 nautical miles; conducted exercises and operations with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy; and visited Busan, Republic of Korea (ROK), and Hong Kong, since departing Yokosuka two months earlier.

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