HS 14 assists *GW* with anti-submarine warfare during AE 11

Story and photo by MC2 William Pittman, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN – Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron (HS) 14, embarked aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) is one of the many assets Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5 uses to conduct anti-submarine warfare (ASW) during Annual Exercise 2011 (AE 11).

HS 14 Sailors are working long hours conducting maintenance on the squadron's SH-60 Seahawk helicopters in preparation for numerous flights over the Pacific in search of simulated enemy submarines.

"HS 14's main focus for AE 11 is the ASW mission that we do," said Lt. Brian Carnes from O'Fallon, Ill., an HS 14 Sea Hawk pilots. "We work in conjunction with the carrier and the other surface vessels in the area. They use their sonar equipment to find contacts and we send our helicopters to further investigate."

HS 14 Seahawks track possible submarines contacts by using two ASW capabilities: passive sonobuoys that can be dropped into the water to allow pilots to listen for contacts and dipping sonobuoys which allow Seahawks to actively ping various contacts with underwater pulses.

AMAN Corey Weatherstine from Baltimore, a Sailor attached to Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron (HS) 14, inspects a rotor of an SH-60 Seahawk helicopter while conducting maintenance aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Nov. 1. HS 14 Sailors are currently supporting the embarked Carrier Air Wing 5 with anti-submarine warfare during Annual Exercise 2011.

"Our range may not be as large as what surface vessels have for their active sonar, but the advantage that we have is that we can get up close and personal with the submarines," said Carnes. "That allows us to move around to where that contact is, see it from different aspects and get positive classification of the target."

Searching for enemy submarines during AE 11 also allows HS 14 pilots and naval air crewmen to train in various ASW techniques.

"This is great training for us because it's not every day that we get actual live contact with a submarine," said Carnes. "Playing with a sub, you get to see them employ their tactics in real time. We also get to employ our tactics in real time, see how we can improve and make ourselves better."

HS 14 maintenance crews are working hard to ensure the helicopters are in proper working order for increased amounts of flight time during AE 11.

"Basically we run the aircraft," said Aviation Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Khaled Atef from Annandale, Va. "We [on the maintenance side] make the aircraft ready to fly, whether we grease the lockpins or inspect the engines and rotor heads, or the aviation electronics technicians work on the sonar."

HS 14 maintainers also bring helicopters from the flight deck down to the hangar bay for daily inspections.

"When we bring the aircraft down to the hangar bay, we tear it down and build it back up. Then we send them back to the flight deck to do a functional check flight," said Atef.

"We have an incredible maintenance department that works around the clock," said Carnes. "Those guys never get a break. Whether they're in the hangar bay or in the flight deck they keep a great attitude, work hard and keep a pretty positive atmosphere."

As hard as HS 14 maintainers are working, most of them are used to the strenuous pace, said Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class Faruq El from Philadelphia.

"This isn't really so stressful, this pace seems natural now," said El. "After Operation Tomodachi earlier this year and now after being underway for so long, this seems like a natural routine now."

Another reason for the lack of stress is because the crew feels like the mission is worthwhile.

"You have to enjoy what you're doing when you have a mission like we do. You feel like you contribute to the fight," said Carnes. "The fact that we get to do that day in and day out is a great motivator to keep us driving forward. Everyone would like a day off and a no-fly day, but in reality, we are essential to the mission. When you feel that need, it's good motivation to keep it going."

In addition to *George Washington* and CVW 5, other U.S. ships participating in AE 11 include the guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63), the guided-missile destroyers *USS Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54), *USS Dewey* (DDG 98), *USS Lassen* (DDG 82), *USS Stethem* (DDG 63) and *USS Wayne E. Meyer* (DDG 108). Other ships include the amphibious ship *USS Tortuga* (LSD 46), mine countermeasure ships *USS Guardian* (MCM 5) and *USS Patriot* (MCM 7); as well as U.S. submarines, maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft.

DCNO for ops, plans, strategy addresses HASC subcommittee

From Navy Office of Information

WASHINGTON – The Navy's deputy chief of naval operations for operations, plans and strategy appeared before the House Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee Nov. 3.

In a session which was billed as "A Day Without Seapower," Vice Adm. Bruce Clingan explained to members of Congress why America's Navy is needed and what the country is able to accomplish because of seapower.

"As it has for more than 200 years, our Navy today delivers a credible capability for deterrence, sea control and power projection, to prevent crises, contain conflicts and win our nation's wars," said Clingan. "We remain forward at the maritime crossroads, protecting the interconnected systems of trade, information and security that underpin our nation's economic prosperity."

Throughout his testimony, Clingan referenced several examples of the daily impact U.S. Navy seapower has at home and abroad.

He spoke of the benefits of maintaining a strong presence overseas.

Additionally, he spoke about the effect sustained surge operations have had on the Navy.

"The benefit of [our] forward forces is a commitment to our allies with whom we have common defense agreements, to our partners who look to us to protect their interests and their economic well-being in a world that relies on container ships for moving 90 percent of their commerce," he said.

We can also look at the rapid response the Navy provides to achieve and support our national interests, Clingan added.

Clingan additionally addressed potential impacts of the Budget Control Act.

Clingan noted that significant budget reductions could result in reduced capability, capacity and proficiency the fleet needs to accomplish U.S. Navy global missions.

"In an ever-changing and uncertain global environment, one fact remains clear," he said in a statement issued prior to the hearing. "The United States is, and always will be, a maritime nation."