



F-35 Lightning II Program

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7th Fleet Commander Visits Wasp, Observes F-35B Flight Operations For the First Time

By Commander, 7th Fleet Public Affairs

WESTERN PACIFIC -- Vice Adm. Phil Sawyer, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet visited the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) on April 2 to see Navy-Marine Corps integration firsthand as both services continue on deployment.

On Wasp, Sawyer met with senior leaders and discussed F-35B Lightning II capabilities and how it adds to the lethality of the Navy-marine Corps team.



WESTERN PACIFIC (April 2, 2018) Vice Adm. Phil Sawyer, commander 7th Fleet (right), discusses flight operations with other Sailors and Marines in the hangar bay aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) as part of an at-sea visit. Sawyer made the visit to Wasp in order to meet with the Wasp crew and 31st Expeditionary Unit Marines as well as observe firsthand the capabilities of the F-35B Lightning II from Wasp. (Photo by MC1 Daniel Barker)

Wasp, flagship of the Wasp Expeditionary Strike Group, is on a routine patrol with Marines of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. Wasp embarked a detachment of F-35Bs on March 5, marking the first time the aircraft has deployed in the Indo-Pacific region.

“The F-35B is a game-changer, not only for the Navy-Marine Corps team, but for the way we operate here in 7th Fleet,” said Sawyer, who observed a takeoff and landing of the F-35B while aboard. “The Up-Gunned ESG—to which F-35B is a key component—gives our amphibious force unprecedented reach and lethality.”

Sawyer also met with Sailors and Marines while touring Wasp for the first time since the ship forward-deployed to Sasebo in the middle of January.

Wasp and other ships of the Wasp ESG recently completed Amphibious Integration Training with the MEU across a number of mission areas such as amphibious assault, Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief (HADR), Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS), and tactical aircraft recovery. The training demonstrated the Navy-Marine Corps team's ability to carry out complex operations from the sea as a combined force.

"The Wasp ESG and the MEU embody the 'crisis response force' moniker," said Sawyer. "I'm confident you're ready for anything."

Another important piece of this underway period was the continued integration of the F-35's Autonomic Logistic Information System (ALIS) with Abraham Lincoln. ALIS is a secure, off-board fleet management tool that integrates F-35 mission planning, maintenance, supply chain and sustainment information. Operators were able to plan, maintain, and sustain F-35C systems by transmitting up-to-date data to users and maintainers worldwide.

Seventh Fleet, which is celebrating its 75th year in 2018, spans more than 124 million square kilometers, stretching from the International Date Line to the India/Pakistan border; and from the Kuril Islands in the North to the Antarctic in the South. Seventh Fleet's area of operation encompasses 36 maritime countries and 50 percent of the world's population with between 50-70 U.S. ships and submarines, 140 aircraft, and approximately 20,000 Sailors in the 7th Fleet.



PHILIPPINE SEA (March 29, 2018) The Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) transits the Philippine Sea prior to conducting a replenishment-at-sea with the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Tippecanoe (T-AO 199). Bonhomme Richard, along with the Wasp Expeditionary Strike Group, with embarked 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, is operating in the Indo-Pacific region to enhance interoperability with partners, serve as a ready-response force for any type of contingency and advance the Up-Gunned ESG Concept. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Levingston Lewis)