



THE NAVAL AVIATION ENTERPRISE AIR PLAN



...One Vision, One Team

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“If value is defined as worth, importance, or usefulness, then it can be argued that over the course of the past 100 years no single asset in the U.S. military arsenal has provided more value than the aircraft carrier...and its embarked air wing.”
- Rear Adm. Michael Manazir, Director, Air Warfare (OPNAV N98)¹

Aircraft Carriers and Embarked Air Wings: Responsive, Relevant and Affordable

In a rapidly evolving defense environment of budget cuts and capability streamlining, it’s easy to target high price tags while overlooking long-term, strategic value. The nuclear powered aircraft carrier is a unique asset that has a seemingly high price tag, but brings a strategic and powerful military capability that is unmatched on this planet and provides a rich return on investment for American taxpayers. The aircraft carrier strike group, with its embarked air wing, has time and again demonstrated effectiveness and efficiency that is responsive, relevant and affordable.

There is a continuing need for a military that is extremely flexible in a world with rapidly evolving threats, geopolitical needs and a shrinking budget. Our military, and specifically our Navy, can bring to bear the aircraft carrier to meet those threats and needs while delivering the highest value in austere fiscal times. Easily adaptable to changing missions, aircraft carriers are uniquely maneuverable and their main weapon system – the air wing – can be upgraded without change to the CVN. The first step of winning any battle is being present, and carriers are able to do so more than any other asset in our nation’s arsenal. As Vice Adm. David Buss, Commander, Naval Air Forces/Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Vice Adm. William Moran, then Director, Air Warfare; and Rear Adm. Thomas Moore, Program Executive Officer, Aircraft Carriers, pointed out in *Foreign Policy* (Apr 13), “the CVN/CVW combination is the only maritime force anywhere in the world capable of delivering effects along the entire spectrum -- from assistance to coercion -- with the ability to rapidly transition into large-scale major combat operations if required.”

Rear Adm. Michael Manazir added that this “asymmetric advantage grants us access to maritime domains that no other country can influence across the full range of military options.”¹ The carrier-air wing team is vital to America’s ability to participate in international trade and provide the freedom of navigation required to enable a global economy. Whether providing power projection or mere presence, the aircraft carrier has never been more relevant. It is unmatched by any other military asset and does not require over-flight or basing rights.

To help control cost within Naval Aviation, the Naval Aviation Enterprise has dedicated efforts over the last decade to developing a culture of cost-wise readiness and collaboration, leading to enhanced results and efficiency without sacrificing effectiveness. Carriers deliver an extended service life of 50 years – nearly 50 percent longer than other ship classes. As a 2002 Defense Science Board study indicated, the “nuclear-powered aircraft carrier provides the best combination of sustained on-station time, sortie-generation capability, sea-keeping, and defensive ability at the most reasonable value for the defense dollar.”

¹Manazir, M. C. (2014). Responsive and Relevant. *Proceedings Magazine*.

Latest NAE Award Winners

Questions? Ask: nae@navy.mil

Jan 14: Cmdr. Christopher Couch, Naval Air Systems Command & AO2 William Chandler, Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic

Feb 14: William Glenn, Naval Air Force Atlantic & AT2 Amethyst Taala, Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic

Main Points

Facts/Figures/Resources

- Carriers and their embarked air wings enable the forward projection of U.S. military power, embodying the U.S. Navy tenet “Operate Forward.”
- The CVN/CVW combination is uniquely capable of responding to the full range of military operations, from humanitarian assistance/disaster relief to combat.
- Each aircraft carrier is designed for a 50-year service life, during which time it can adapt to support a variety of platforms as air wings evolve—making it a smart, cost-effective investment.

- Seventy percent of the earth is covered in water, 80 percent of the planet’s population lives within close proximity to coastal areas and 90 percent of global commerce is conducted by sea.
- With a current fleet of 10 aircraft carriers, the U.S. Navy regularly has a continual forward presence, ensuring freedom of navigation and providing flexible response capabilities in times of crisis.
- An aircraft carrier flight deck can typically generate 120-160 sorties per day.