

Carrier Strike Groups Combining COMPTUEXes With Deployments



Aircraft from Nimitz Carrier Strike Group fly in formation over the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) while an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter from the Battle Cats of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 73. Nimitz is underway conducting composite training unit exercise. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Keenan Daniels

ARLINGTON, Va. – The aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) and its escorting ships arrived in the U.S. Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility on July 24, where its strike group is relieving the USS Eisenhower carrier strike group (CSG). The Nimitz CSG, like the Eisenhower CSG before it, participated in a Competitive Unit Training Exercise (COMPTUEX) and departed coastal waters on deployment without the normal post-exercise return to port prior to deployment.

The COMPTUEX is a final exam for a CSG prior to deployment. Traditionally, until recently, a CSG would get a homeport period of a month or so for crew leave and final deployment.

By combining a COMPTUEX and a deployment on the same at-sea period, the Navy introduces more flexibility and less predictability in deployments, in the spirit of the Dynamic Force Employment concept.

Another benefit is that the CSG reduces risk of infection by COVID-19 of its crew during the period between COMPTUEX and deployment.

The Nimitz departed its West Coast homeport on April 27 but remained in the Eastern Pacific its COMPTUEX before turning west in June. The CSG participated in dual-CSG operations with

the USS Theodore Roosevelt and USS Ronald Reagan CSGs and operated in the South China Sea. The Nimitz CSG also participated in exercises with the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean while en route to the North Arabian Sea.

According to a Navy release, the Nimitz CSG, commanded by Rear Adm. James A. Kirk, includes Nimitz and its embarked carrier air wing, CVW-17; Destroyer Squadron 9, the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59); and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Sterett (DDG 104) and USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114).

The Eisenhower CSG has been deployed for more than six months, having departed the East Coast on Jan. 17. The CSG included the Dwight D. Eisenhower, with CVW-3 embarked; Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers USS San Jacinto (CG 56) and USS Vella Gulf (CG 72); and Arleigh Burke-class destroyers USS James E. Williams (DDG 95), USS Stout (DDG 55) and USS Truxtun (DDG 103).