

More Returning Theodore Roosevelt Sailors Test Positive for COVID-19



The USS Theodore Roosevelt, still moored at Naval Base Guam on May 15. Theodore Roosevelt's COVID-negative crew returned from quarantine beginning on April 29 and is preparing to return to sea. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Conner D. Blake

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ARLINGTON, Va. – Despite 14 crewmembers testing positive for COVID-19 a second time, the virus-stricken aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt is running a pier-side simulation to prepare for eventual return to sea after months sidelined at Naval Base Guam.

The first deployed Navy warship to suffer a COVID-19 outbreak, the TR has been docked in Guam since March 27, undergoing a bow-to-stern intensive cleaning while most of the nearly 5,000 crewmembers were disembarked and quarantined or isolated on Guam. After 14 days under observation ashore and twice testing negative for the virus, crewmembers began returning to the ship by the hundreds in late April.

[See: Hospital Ship Mercy Bids Farewell to Los Angeles](#)

The returning crew are conducting a simulation called “Fast Cruise,” that recreates normal underway conditions, while still moored in Guam.

“Fast Cruise is the culmination of all systems being online and operationally checked as the crew executes major at sea evolutions while being pier side. The crew will simulate normal underway conditions and test the critical systems required to sustain the ship away from the pier,” Pacific

Fleet spokesperson Cmdr. J, Myers Vasquez said in a statement March 19. "As TR prepares to return the ship to sea their way forward is conditions-based and is dependent on the recovery of the crew," the statements added. It was not clear whether the most recent re-infections would slow the carrier's return to its mission. "Due to operational security concerns, the U.S. Navy does not address future ship movements or operations," Vasquez's statement noted.



Ensign Rocky Bowman (right) checks Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Justin Banks into the USS Theodore Roosevelt on May 16 after Banks completed off-base quarantine. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Erik Melgar
Nine more Sailors have joined five others who tested positive for COVID-19 last week, a Navy official said May 18. All were among more than 1,100 crew members who were diagnosed with the virus and taken off the ship and isolated or quarantined for 14 days. To return to the carrier after two weeks of observation, Sailors had to test negative two straight times. The initial five who were re-infected were among hundreds of crewmembers who have returned to the Roosevelt since late April.

"Fast cruise is a major milestone for the ship and for the crew," said Capt. Carlos Sardiello, commanding officer of the Teddy Roosevelt. "Our Sailors have tested all of the ship's systems individually, but this is our opportunity to integrate all of that together and show that Theodore Roosevelt is ready and able to go back to sea."

Following a successful fast cruise, the ship will commence underway training and carrier qualifications to support the air wing's return to operational readiness.

Sardiello, who previously commanded the ship, took over again in early April when his replacement, Capt. Brett Crozier, was relieved of his command. A fleetwide investigation is looking

into how the COVID-19 outbreak on the Theodore Roosevelt was handled by the chain of command and whether Crozier should be restored as the carrier's commander.

During the ship's infection surveillance, a single active case of tuberculosis also was identified and diagnosed. The diagnosed individual was removed from the ship, isolated and will remain under the direct care of the Navy's health system until cleared by doctors, according to a March 14 statement from the Navy. A thorough contact investigation has been conducted, and those Sailors have been medically evaluated and cleared. There are no other active cases pending.