

Carrier Air Wing 5 Completes Air Wing Fallon Training in Rare Full-Strength Participation



Two F/A-18E Super Hornet strike fighters of VFA-146. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1Gavin Graham)

From MC1 Class Keenan Daniels, 19 September 2024

NAVAL AIR STATION FALLON, Nev. – Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5 recently completed Air Wing Fallon (AWF) training as a fully integrated air wing, taking advantage of the scheduled hull swap between Nimitz-class aircraft carriers USS George Washington (CVN 73) and USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) at Naval Air Station (NAS) Fallon, Sept. 13, 2024.

Typically, CVW-5 operates with limited participation in AWF due to operational demands in the Indo-Pacific as part of the

U.S. Navy's forward-deployed naval forces (FDNF). However, the hull swap created a unique scheduling opportunity, allowing the entire air wing to train together.

"The true value of the AWF course and training at the Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center (NAWDC) stems from our ability to test the air wing in effectively countering peer threats through the synchronization of kinetic and non-kinetic fires while fully integrating all air wing platforms," said Capt. John Stigi, strike department head, NAWDC. "Carrier Air Wing 5 seamlessly integrated fixed-wing fighters, command and control platforms, and rotary-wing assets equipped with advanced sensors to locate and destroy targets, while applying contested logistics and expeditionary advanced basing tactics to achieve mission success at significant ranges."

NAS Fallon hosts the Navy's premier integrated training facility, providing live, virtual and constructive training opportunities. For five weeks, CVW-5 mission-planned, rehearsed in a virtual environment, refined tactical plans and executed live-flight missions. AWF remains unique, with all NAWDC strike instructors being hand-selected junior officer weapons and tactics instructors (WTIs) from every CVW platform, delivering top-tier tactical instruction.

"I am confident that CVW-5 departs Fallon fully prepared for globally deployable operations across all mission areas," Stigi said. "CVW-5's exceptional performance reflects the hard work of the Sailors and chiefs who provided outstanding maintenance in challenging high desert conditions, and the leadership who maintained a laser focus on warfighting excellence throughout the exercise."

George Washington relieved Ronald Reagan as the forward-deployed carrier in August and is scheduled to return to Yokosuka, Japan. The completion of AWF ensures CVW-5 remains fully trained and ready to support missions in the Indo-

Pacific.

“Air Wing Fallon delivers the highest caliber of tactical training that naval aviation provides to carrier air wings prior to deployment,” said Capt. Patrick Corrigan, commander CVW-5. “As CVW-5 is stationed in Japan, it’s over nine years since the entire team completed the course. I am extremely proud of our team, who had just four weeks to integrate the F-35C, the new EA-18Gs and the DSSC 4.0 E-2Ds into the air wing before starting AWF. This process rigorously tested every element of mission planning, tactical execution and debriefing, and as a result, we are now a more lethal air wing. The NAWDC strike team has crafted a world-class training syllabus, and with our newly upgraded air wing, we are fully prepared to return to operations in the South China Sea.”

The hull swap between George Washington and Ronald Reagan, along with CVW-5 readiness, plays a critical role in ensuring that the most advanced and capable warships operate in the Indo-Pacific, providing security and stability throughout the region.

CVW-5 includes Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 102 “Diamondbacks,” Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 27 “Royal Maces,” Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 147 “Argonauts,” Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 195 “Dambusters,” Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 141 “Shadowhawks,” Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30 “Titans,” and Airborne Command & Control Squadron (VAW) 125 “Tigertails,” operating F/A-18F Super Hornets, F/A-18E Super Hornets, F-35C Lightning II’s, EA-18G Growlers, C-2 Greyhounds and E-2D Hawkeyes.

As the type commander for Naval Aviation, Commander, Naval Air Forces’ mission is to “man, train and equip deployable, combat-ready Naval Aviation forces that win in combat.”