



## ABRAHAM LINCOLN CARRIER STRIKE GROUP PENNY PRESS

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### **Back at it Again**

By: Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ian Thomas

PACIFIC OCEAN – Announcements ring out over the intercom system as Sailors in colored jerseys race about the flight deck. Engineers fine-tune their machines to boost efficiency in every area of the ship. Fire controlmen and intelligence specialists plot target approaches and develop new solutions to modern issues. Every Sailor in Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 3 is operating at peak efficiency, ready to reach new levels of excellence. With engines roaring and ships at full-speed-ahead, for the Sailors of CSG 3, it's just like the good old days of deployment.

“SUSTEX stands for sustainment exercise, an evolution where we maintain our readiness to enter the high-end fight and answer the call if the nation needs us,” said Rear Adm. Kevin Lenox, commander, CSG 3. “Those high-end warfighting skills aren't something we can practice on deployment, which means we haven't practiced them since work-ups. We're back out here to do a series of complex exercises and make sure that if we're called upon, we'll have all the skills and they're current skills to be able to enter that fight.”

From an outside perspective, the operations of a ship may seem inherently safe, routine and simple. Although there is a great deal of repetition in daily operations, it takes a continual and conscious effort to ensure that everything goes according to plan.

“We make what we do on the flight deck look easy,” said Lenox. “However, it is the most dangerous and complex workplace in the entire world. My number one priority while underway is safety. We have to execute this evolution without hurting anyone and we need to demonstrate that we’re still capable of winning in the high-end fight with all of our warfighting skills.”

With the necessarily high emphasis on safety comes an understanding that things aren’t as easy as they seem. It takes all hands to operate and maintain a multi-billion dollar piece of warfighting equipment, and it heavily depends on the skills and training that each Sailor possesses.

“There is another aspect of warfighting, and that’s having heart and courage,” said Lenox. “I’ve gotten to see that first hand. We remain a lethal team that can go out and keep pace with anything our enemies can throw at us.”

For the Sailors on the ships and in the squadrons that make up CSG 3, their mission is more than an order. It’s a chance to excel as professionals and as a team, inspiring everyone from their junior Sailors to those at the very top.

“Whether they’re in the cockpit or down in the mess decks, they’re an inspiring group of folks,” said Lenox. “The idealism they have, and the energy and heart they bring to everything they do — I definitely wouldn’t want to go up against this team if I was anyone else in the world. The success that we all have starts at the deck plate level, so I’m really

proud. These past two weeks at sea have been one of the highlights of my career, it's a real privilege to lead this team."