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09-024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2009

MCPON Visits USS Ronald Reagan

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USS Ronald Reagan Public Affairs*

AT SEA ABOARD USS RONALD REAGAN IN THE GULF OF OMAN – Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Rick D. West visited the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) in the Gulf of Oman Sept. 12-13, while the ship and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW 14) were conducting operations in support of coalition forces on the ground in Afghanistan.

The visit is one of several stops for West to meet with service members during his trip to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility (AOR).

“Ronald Reagan’s mission is very important,” said West. “I just got back from Iraq and Afghanistan, and those Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines know when they need air support, USS Ronald Reagan is there for them.”

Ronald Reagan and CVW-14 have been providing 30 percent of all air support to coalition ground forces in Afghanistan since July 6, flying more than 1,500 sorties in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“Ronald Reagan has some great warriors,” said West. “Your job out here is on target. Those folks on the ground appreciate it.”

While touring the ship the first day of his visit, West discussed with Sailors his goals as MCPON. He met with chief petty officer selectees where he explained the importance of leaders to challenge their Sailors and set the example.

“Anytime we get a chance to meet with a chief, especially a MCPON, to gain some of their knowledge and share that with our Sailors, it’s key to our success,” said Chief (Select) Hospital Corpsman (NAC/AW) Scott Heintschel of Helicopter Anti-Submarine (HS) Squadron 4.

West held an all-hands call in the hangar bay the second day of his visit. He told Ronald Reagan’s Sailors to finish the deployment strong and remain safe while on liberty. He also talked about the importance of humanitarian missions, Individual Augmentee tours, participating in volunteer projects and his push to make warfare qualifications mandatory for all Sailors.

“The warfare program is about knowing what to do at the right time to save a ship or shipmate in a time of peril,” said West.

Sailors also asked West questions about issues affecting them.

“PTS (Perform to Serve) stood out for me,” said Information Systems Technician 2nd Class (SW/AW) Erica Gomes. “You can’t just come in and do your job; you have to stand out. I think it will streamline the Navy and make Sailors perform better.”

Healthcare, advancement and uniforms were other concerns brought up to MCPON. West said the Navy will begin testing of new variations of the Physical Training Uniform (PTU) very soon.

The Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group is on a routine deployment to the 5th Fleet AOR. Operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet are focused on reassuring regional partners of the United States' commitment to regional security, which promotes global economic stability and local prosperity.

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