

[From Fall 2005]

## **A Letter from T.R. Bear**

T. R. Bear here. Just wanted to update you on what I've been up to. I've been serving duty on the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt for awhile now. Seems fitting since we share the same name. The ship's nickname is "the Oil Stick". After the tragedy of 9/11 we were called to duty in the Gulf. I've served 2 Gulf tours and a Mediterranean cruise before we went into dry-dock for repairs and an overhaul.

We got out of dry-dock just after Thanksgiving of 2004. At that time I had the pleasure of meeting some locals from Chincoteague Island that are serving with me on the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt. You may know them. They are Cassandra Brower and Marty Birch.

Once we left dry-dock we had to do what is called coast runs and complete 'trials' in order to be certified to get our aircraft back on board ship. Everything has to be in working order before they will let us go back out on long tours. On one of our coastal runs, our ship was called to assist in a rescue during a bad storm off the coast of North Carolina. The U.S. Coast Guard was unable to get to the sail boat that was in trouble because of the conditions. We completed that rescue mission successfully. What a great feeling to know that we were in the area and able to help.

In June we hosted a family day. The families had to be onboard by 3 a.m. and we departed for the open sea around 8 a.m. They were able to tour the ship with their spouses or sons and daughters that are serving, watch movies, play games, and eat all they wanted. We went about 30 miles offshore and treated the families to an air show. They got to see how we catapult the aircraft off the ship and land them and watch a helicopter refuel. The best part of the air show was the sonic booms performed by the F-14 Tomcat and the F-16. You see the airplane cross in front of the ship, everything goes deadly silent, all of a sudden you see a puff of cloud as the airplane passes through and a couple of seconds later a very loud boom that rocks the ship. We were back into Norfolk, VA by 7 p.m.



We have just come off a one month cruise that took us down to Florida. We completed our trials in record time setting a new Navy standard for ship training. We had been told that we would never be able to complete the trials in one month's time. But, we sure fooled them. Got it done in less time and were able to return home early. With one last week of training completed we are now ready to go on our first major cruise since we got out of dry-dock. We are scheduled to leave for a 6 month Gulf tour sometime in September of this year.

That about sums up the last few years. I ask that you keep us all in your thoughts and prayers. The men and women that I serve with give their total dedication to preserve our way of life. I am proud to be serving with them. As we make our way through the Gulf, I will do my best to keep you updated. Until next time.

Your Friend, T. R. Bear

