

COVID-19 outbreak on U.S. warship blamed on commanders

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The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), front, Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill (CG 52), left, and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS John Finn (DDG 113). (Photo: US Navy)

Washington, February 10 (RHC)-- A Pentagon watchdog is blaming commanders of aircraft carrier USS Roosevelt for the spread of the coronavirus among the crew.

“USS Theodore Roosevelt leadership team allowed social gathering areas to remain open,” read an inspector general report publicly released Monday. “Furthermore, the USS Theodore Roosevelt leadership decided to prematurely release sailors from quarantine because conditions in quarantine were crowded, and they believed that the quarantine caused more sailors to become infected.”

Capt. Brett Crozier, the vessel’s commander, outlined the dire situation and pleaded for help to evacuate the vessel after its first case of the virus was reported on March 24, 2020.

Published Thursday and publicly released Monday, the report recommended that strategic naval leadership “develop a plan of action and milestones for Navy Component Commands to conduct biennial Pandemic Influenza and Infectious Disease exercise.” It also called for “implementation of restriction of movement, pre-deployment sequesters, personal protective equipment supply requirements, and shipboard quarantine procedures.”

The Navy’s response to infection of more than 1,200 sailors aboard the USS Roosevelt, erupted into a political firestorm in the spring of 2020. The number of the Covid-19 cases amounted to about 27 percent of the 4,800-member crew.

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