

The logo for Defense One, featuring the words "Defense" and "One" stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font against a black rectangular background.

# The Battle of USS Theodore Roosevelt: a Timeline

By Bradley Peniston

April 7, 2020

*Eastern time unless noted. Last updated: 9:11 a.m. on April 13.*

**January 17:** USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71, or TR), a Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, departs Naval Base San Diego with 4,865 sailors aboard and Capt. Brett Crozier in command. TR sails in company with its strike group on a deployment to the western Pacific region.

A special “preventive medical unit” is aboard, one of four embarked on the ships of the strike group. But no Navy ship has COVID-19 test kits. “There are currently no FDA-approved testing platforms that are suitable for placement on forward operating Naval Ships,” a Navy official told *Breaking Defense* around March 18. “So, the ships in the Pacific do not currently have the ability to conduct diagnostic testing for COVID-19. Depending on location, specimens can be sent for testing at shore based labs.”

**February 7:** TR arrives in Guam for a scheduled port visit.

**February 26:** Defense Secretary Mark Esper directs combatant commanders to tell him before they make decisions about protecting their troops from COVID-19, the *New York Times* reports. His aim is to keep the military from contradicting President Trump, who that day declared that the 15 U.S. cases “within a couple of days is going to be down to close to zero.”

**February 28:** Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly says 7th Fleet ships will spend at least 14 days between port visits in a bid to slow the spread of the virus.

**March 5 (in Vietnam):** TR arrives for a port visit in Danang, just the second by a U.S. carrier since the Vietnam War. At the time, there were no known active cases of COVID-19 in the country, although 16 earlier known cases had resolved. All sailors returning from liberty ashore will be screened for COVID symptoms, including by taking their temperature.

**March 8:** New cases of COVID-19 are discovered in Vietnam, including two British tourists in Danang.

**March 9:** TR departs Danang.

**March 10 and onward:** Crewmembers fly on and off the ship as part of normal operations.

**March 15:** A sailor aboard the amphibious assault ship Boxer in San Diego becomes the first known COVID-19

case aboard a U.S. Navy warship.

**March 18:** The Navy finds two more shipboard cases: one sailor on the littoral combat ship Coronado in San Diego, one on the destroyer Ralph Johnson in Washington state.

**March 22:** The first TR sailor is diagnosed with COVID-19.

**March 24:** Two more TR sailors are diagnosed with COVID-19. They are medevaced off the ship.

**March 25:** Five more TR sailors are diagnosed with COVID-19 and medevaced off the ship.

**March 26:** TR begins testing entire crew for COVID-19. In Washington, Acting Secretary Modly and other Navy officials say the carrier will pull into port in Guam, fulfilling plans for a second port visit there, and that no TR sailor will be allowed to leave the pier, save those being treated at Naval Hospital Guam.

**March 27:** TR is pierside in Guam for the second time in its deployment.

**March 28:** Eight sailors have been sent to Naval Hospital Guam for treatment for COVID-19.

### **Saturday, March 29**

Modly tells his chief of staff, Bob Love, to contact TR CO Capt. Crozier, and the two exchange emails. Crozier and his superior officers are “struggling to reach a consensus on a plan of action, according to three people familiar with the discussions,” the *Washington Post* reported. “Among them were Rear Adm. Stuart Baker, who was embarked on the ship as its strike group commander, and Adm. John Aquilino, the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Both admirals favored smaller mitigation efforts than Crozier wanted because of concerns about taking the carrier out of action and jeopardizing the mission.”

### **Monday, March 30**

Love talks with Crozier by telephone, according to Modly, who said his staffer made it “very clear that if [Crozier] felt that he was not getting the proper response from his chain of command that he had a direct line into [Modly’s] office...The CO told my chief of staff that he was receiving those resources and he was fully aware of the Navy’s response, only asking that he wished the crew could be evacuated faster.”

**Later:** Crozier sends an unclassified 4-page memo via unclassified email to 20 or 30 Navy people, including his staff and leaders inside and outside his chain of command. Attached to an email that begins, “Dear Fellow Naval Aviators,” the memo asks for urgent approval and help in executing his proposal to remove all but 10 percent of his crew from the ship, lest sailors die “unnecessarily.”

Crozier wrote: “The spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating. Decisive action is required....We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die.”

Crozier’s immediate boss, Rear Adm. Baker — embarked aboard Roosevelt as the commander of its strike group — learns about the letter from Crozier’s group email. (per Modly)

**Later in the morning:** Modly holds a conference call about the letter with CNO Gilday; Adm. John Aquilino, Pacific Fleet commander; Vice Adm. Bill Merz, 7th Fleet commander; Rear Adm. Bruce Gillingham, the Department of the Navy surgeon general.

**7:47 a.m. (9:47 p.m. in Guam):** Crozier posts to TR’s official Facebook page: “The TR Team is working with the

great folks at Naval Base Guam to get Sailors off the ship and into facilities on base to help spread the crew out." (Facebook [post](#), [screenshot](#))

Evening: Modly [holds](#) a second conference call about the letter.

## Tuesday, March 31

About 300 COVID-19 tests are [performed](#) aboard TR today.

Modly's chief of staff again phones Crozier, [according](#) to Modly, and [gives him](#) his personal cell phone number.

**4 a.m.:** Crozier's letter is obtained and [published](#) by the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

**Morning:** Modly arrives in Los Angeles to visit USNS Mercy and [learns](#) of the letter.

**12:40 p.m.:** Modly [tells CNN](#) the Navy is responding to Capt. Crozier's proposal, and working to evacuate the ship.

**Modly:** "The key is to make sure that we can get a set of crew members that can man all those critical functions on the ship, make sure they're clean, then get them back on while we clean the ship and get the other crew members off."

**Modly:** "The problem is that Guam doesn't have enough beds right now, so we're having to talk to the government there to see if we can get some hotel space, or create some tent-type facilities there."

**Afternoon:** Some 1,000 sailors have [left](#) the Roosevelt, Modly tells MSNBC.

**Afternoon:** Defense Secretary Mark Esper [tells](#) CBS News, "I don't think we're at that point" where the carrier should be evacuated. "Well, I have not had a chance to read that letter, read it in detail. Again I'm going to rely on the Navy chain of command to go out there to assess the situation and make sure they provide the captain and the crew all the support they need to get the sailors healthy and the ship back at sea."

**Later:** Modly [briefs](#) Esper on the TR situation and plan.

**Evening:** Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Robert Burke [sends](#) a message to all commanding officers: "these are the facts about COVID-19, to inform the measures that you're taking in accordance with the CDC guidelines."

## Wednesday, April 1

**Morning:** Crozier and other shipboard leaders have briefed sailors on the evacuation plan, and [begun](#) to execute it.

Out of 1,273 TR sailors tested so far, 93 have tested positive for COVID-19 — 86 of those exhibiting symptoms, 7 asymptomatic. 593 more have tested negative, with the balance of tests still in processing.

[About 500](#) tests are performed aboard TR today.

About 1,000 sailors have [left](#) the ship.

About [1,700 hotel rooms](#) have been found for TR sailors to occupy in isolation.

The [plan](#), according to Modly, is:

To leave "700 to 800 to 1,000 people" on or near the ship to operate its nuclear reactors, guard the weapons, and keep the ship ready to sail.

To take 2,700 total off in "the next few days or so" and keep them in isolation for 14 days apiece.

"We are in conversations with the governor of Guam to see if there's an ability to free up some hotel space" for the TR sailors coming off the ship.

**Sometime during the day:** Modly [calls](#) Crozier directly.

Modly [asks](#), "What's the story?" and Crozier answered: "Sir, we were getting a lot more cases. I felt it was time to send out a signal flare."

Modly later says the conversation left him uneasy: "I said, 'How are you feeling? Do you feel like you have enough ventilators? Clearly, if [50] people are going to die, that means you need enough ventilators.' He said, 'Oh, sir, I feel

comfortable we have enough ventilators here.’ How many do you have? ‘Six.’ I said, ‘That’s going to be enough?’ That does not comport with a death statistic that says 50 people are going to die.”

**Sometime during the day:** Modly (he later says) receives direct communications from sailors who say the situation is less dire than Crozier’s memo suggests.

**Morning:** Modly has a phone conversation with Rear Adm. Stuart Baker, embarked aboard Roosevelt as commander of its strike group.

**12:24 p.m.:** James Stavridis, retired admiral and former Supreme Allied Commander, writes on Bloomberg Opinion that Crozier “made the right choice, and the Navy will back him up.”

**About 4 p.m.:** At the Pentagon, Modly holds a joint press conference with CNO Adm. Michael Gilday, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell L. Smith, and Navy Surgeon General Rear Admiral Bruce L. Gillingham to talk about the situation on the Roosevelt.

Gilday says he’s not inclined to punish Crozier: “We’re not looking to shoot the messenger here.”

Modly: “We don’t have any forensics that would indicate that that was what caused or brought the virus onto the ship.”

Modly: “The fact that he wrote the letter up to his chain of command to express his concerns would absolutely not result in any type of retaliation. This is what we want our commanding officers to be able to do.”

Modly: Commanders “should not be inhibited from telling us and being transparent about the issues that they see. But they need to do it through their chains – their chains of command. And if they’re not getting the proper responses from their chains of command, then they need to maybe go outside of it.”

Gilday: The Navy is holding twice-daily COVID-19 “synchronization sessions” that put out information to all four-three- and two-star admirals and their staffs.

Gilday: “We think that there was a communications breakdown, potentially, with the crew of the Theodore Roosevelt...I think that the misunderstanding, perhaps, was the requirement at speed to get people off the ship. And so we had been identifying spaces and getting people off the ship. We are now moving people at speed to get them off – to get them off the ship.”

The Roosevelt is the only one of the 94 U.S. warships at sea with known COVID cases. Modly: “Some of the other ships that we have that have some active cases on it are in port, not deployed ships. And those numbers are all in the single digits.”

Smith: “That letter getting outside of our Navy lifelines really reduced and diminished the ability of the ombudsman network to communicate to families in a way that probably would have been a lot more settling... But in speaking with people that are on the ship, morale does seem high.”

**After the press conference:** Modly calls Esper to say that “the direction I was headed” was to relieve Crozier. “And he told me that he would support my decision, whatever that might be.”

## Thursday, April 2

A total of 114 Roosevelt sailors have tested positive for the coronavirus, and the ultimate number is expected to be “in the hundreds.”

About 3,000 spaces have been found for TR sailors to live in isolation on Guam. (per Modly)

**7 a.m.:** In a phone call, Modly asks Baker if he knew about Crozier’s memo in advance. Baker says no — and he adds that Crozier told him later that he didn’t ask for permission because he knew Baker wouldn’t give it.

**Later that morning:** Modly reaches the conclusion that “Captain Crozier had allowed the complexity of his challenge with the COVID breakout on the ship to overwhelm his ability to act professionally when acting

professionally was what was needed most at the time. We do and we should expect more from the commanding officer of our aircraft carriers...It unnecessarily raised alarms with the families of our sailors and Marines with no plan to address those concerns. It raised concerns about the operational capabilities and operational security of that ship that could have emboldened our adversaries to seek advantage. And it undermined the chain of command, who had been moving and adjusting as rapidly as possible to get him the help he needed.”

**No later than 2 p.m. (4 a.m. in Guam):** Modly sends word down the chain of command that Crozier is to be relieved. Rear Adm. Stuart Baker, commander of the Roosevelt strike group, performs the relief. TR's executive officer, Capt. Dan Keeler, is placed in temporary command, until Rear Adm.-select Carlos Sardiello — Crozier's predecessor as TR CO — can arrive to take command.

**Morning:** CNO Gilday directs VCNO Burke, to “conduct an investigation into the circumstances and the climate across the entire Pacific Fleet to help determine what may have contributed to this breakdown in the chain of command.” Burke's report is to be done on Monday, April 6.

Navy officials later say the investigation will “consider command climate and circumstances surrounding the response, including communication throughout the administrative and operational chains of command.”

**Probably no later than 3 p.m. (5 a.m. in Guam):** Crozier, in a ballcap and carrying a small backpack, is met on the TR's hangar deck by several hundred crew members, who have formed a neat hundred-foot corridor for their departing commander. Crozier walks past the silent sailors, saluting all the way, until he gets to the long aluminum ramp that leads down to the pier. Then the sailors break into cheers and shouts. "Cap-tain Cro-zier! Cap-tain Cro-zier!" The captain looks back under a pitch-black predawn sky, gives a short wave, and gets into a waiting car.

**About 5 p.m.:** At the Pentagon, Modly calls a short-notice press conference with Gilday and announces that he has ordered Crozier relieved of command.

Modly: Crozier was relieved because he “demonstrated extremely poor judgment in the midst of a crisis” by sending the March 31 letter to people outside as well as inside his chain of command. “What it does, it undermines our efforts and the chain of command’s efforts to address this problem and creates a panic. And creates a perception that the Navy’s not on the job, the government’s not on the job.”

Modly: Crozier was “absolutely correct” in raising his concerns. The error was “the way in which he did it – by not working through and with his strike group commander to develop a strategy to resolve the problems he raised, by not sending the letter to and through his chain of command and to people outside his chain of command, by not protecting the sensitive nature of the information contained within the letter appropriately, and lastly by not reaching out to me directly to voice his concerns after that avenue had been clearly provided to him through my team.”

Modly: The letter “creates a perception that the Navy’s not on the job, the government’s not on the job.”

Modly: “I received absolutely no pressure” from Esper or the White House. “I’ve had no communication with the White House about this.”

### Friday, April 3

A total of 137 TR sailors have tested positive for COVID-19, 95 of them symptomatic.

**4:25 a.m.:** Capt. Dan Keeler posts to TR's official Facebook page a message from Modly "to the crew of the Theodore Roosevelt and their families back here at home. I am entirely convinced that your Commanding Officer loves you, and that he had you at the center of his heart and mind in every decision that he has made. I also know that you have great affection, and love, for him as well. But it is my responsibility to ensure that his love and concern for you is matched, if not exceeded by, his sober and professional judgment under pressure..." The 407-word missive

resembles a short version of a speech Modly will deliver himself less than three days hence.

**Between 5:45 and 8:30 a.m.:** About a half-dozen videos are posted to social media that show hundreds of TR sailors gathered on the hangar deck to cheer Crozier as he walks off the ship.

Modly's firing has proven controversial, with many former Navy officers questioning the decision on social media and to news outlets.

**Midday:** A group of Democratic senators formally asks the Pentagon's inspector general to investigate Crozier's firing.

**Midday:** Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz., says the House Armed Services Committee will almost certainly hold a hearing on the matter when Congress is able to return to Washington.

**Midday:** Gallego and others note that it took the Navy 24 days to remove the commanding officer of the destroyer Fitzgerald after a 2017 collision that drowned seven sailors, and 41 days for the captain of the destroyer John McCain to be relieved after a similar incident that killed 10 sailors.

**Midday:** Modly talks to radio host Hugh Hewitt, a fierce defender of the Trump administration.

Modly: "We have to be careful with the information we share and how we share it...But that's not what happened in this instance. And that's the reason why I took the actions that I did yesterday...There is no way that you can control where that information's going to go. And so what happened, very, very predictably, and should have been predictable to him, is that the media picked up on it...And then we're scrambling around to try and understand whether or not what he's saying in this statement is true, whether or not the Navy is actually doing what it's supposed to be doing when he knew full well at the time that everything he had been asking for was flowing into theater as fast as possible."

Modly: Crozier "did not even talk to his command master chief about this, so the enlisted people on the ship were not aware of what his feelings were on the state of the ship. And it just was extremely bad judgment. And I'm not saying that in the next instance where he has some type of high risk crisis that he's having to deal with that he would react as poorly as he did there, but I couldn't afford to take that risk at this particular time. And so that's why he's being reassigned."

Modly: "This was the hardest thing I've ever had to do, particularly in this job."

Modly: The qualifications of the air wing's aviators — essentially, their approvals to fly — will not expire for "well over 30 days...And so I think we're going to be through this by then in terms of being able to sustain that. But they're working all kinds of contingencies to figure out okay, if this thing extends longer than that, what do we do? And you know, obviously, we're thinking through that not just there, but across the whole fleet."

**Midday:** Tweed Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt's great-grandson, writes in the *New York Times* that Crozier acted honorably — and indeed echoed a message the future president wrote during his own Army days. (Former Navy aviator Ward Carroll tells that story, here.)

**12:26 p.m.** *Washington Post* columnist Max Boot writes that Crozier is the first, and so far, the only U.S. government official punished for actions regarding the mismanaged coronavirus pandemic.

**1:33 p.m.:** 2020 Democratic hopeful Joe Biden retweets one of the videos, adding, "Captain Crozier was faithful to his duty—both to his sailors and his country. Navy leadership sent a chilling message about speaking truth to power. The poor judgment here belongs to the Trump Admin, not a courageous officer trying to protect his sailors."

## Saturday, April 4

**Afternoon:** 1,548 TR sailors have been moved to shore, well short of the goal of 2,700.

**4:24 p.m.:** Mike Mullen, retired admiral who served as Chief of Naval Operations and Joint Chiefs chairman, tells

*Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius: “I think the firing was a really bad decision, because it undermines the authority of the military commanders who are trying to take care of their troops, and significantly negatively impacts the willingness of commanders to speak truth to power.”

Ignatius writes: “One of the surprising aspects of the Roosevelt drama is how closely Modly became involved in matters that would normally be handled by uniformed officers. Appointed undersecretary with White House support in 2017, Modly has been an aggressive communicator since becoming acting secretary in November, following the firing of Richard Spencer, who had clashed with Trump over the treatment of Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher.”

**About 6 p.m.:** At a press conference, President Trump endorses Modly’s decision to fire Crozier: “I thought it was terrible, what he did, to write a letter. I mean, this isn’t a class on literature. This is a captain of a massive ship that’s nuclear powered. And he shouldn’t be talking that way in a letter.”

**Evening (Sunday morning in Guam):** 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Bill Merz flies to Guam and meets with Roosevelt staff and crew to assess and support the COVID-19 efforts.

## Sunday, April 5

**1 a.m. (Saturday 7 p.m. in Hawaii):** Modly calls Ignatius (a son of former Navy Secretary Paul Ignatius) from Hawaii. He says he moved quickly to fire Crozier because he feared that Trump would order it done: “I didn’t want to get into a decision where the president would feel that he had to intervene because the Navy couldn’t be decisive.”

**9 a.m.:** 155 TR sailors have tested positive for COVID-19.

Crozier, who had been showing COVID-like symptoms on Thursday, tests positive for the disease.

**5:43 p.m.:** Ignatius writes: “Navy sources had said Modly told a colleague that Trump ‘wants him [Crozier] fired,’ and though Modly denied getting any direct message to that effect, he clearly understood that Trump was unhappy with the uproar surrounding the Roosevelt.”

**11 p.m. (Monday 1 p.m. in Guam):** Modly arrives aboard TR "with little warning."

Modly gives a remarkable 15-minute speech about Crozier to the remaining crew over the ship’s public address system.

Modly: “If [Crozier] didn't think that information was going to get out into the public, in this information age that we live in, then he was A) too naive or too stupid to be the commanding officer of a ship like this. The alternative [“B”)” is that he did this on purpose. And that's a serious violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which you are all familiar with.” [Note: Many press reports about this speech say that Modly called Crozier “stupid,” which is not quite true. The fuller context shows that Modly was building an argument that the captain aimed to put the information “out into the public.”]

After the word “stupid,” a sailor can be heard on the audio recording hollering, [REDACTED]

Modly: Crozier’s memo was a “betrayal of trust” to me and to you, he told the crew. “What your captain did was very, very wrong.” (On the recording, a sailor can be heard responding, “He was only trying to help us.”)

Modly: “There is never a situation where you should consider the media a part of your chain of command. You can jump the chain of command if you want, and take the consequences, you can disobey the chain of command and take the consequences, but there is no, no situation where you go to the media. Because the media has an agenda. And the agenda that they have depends on which side of the political aisle they sit. And I’m sorry that's the way the country is now, but it's the truth. And so they use it to divide us. They use it to embarrass the Navy. They use it to embarrass you.” [Note: On Oct. 30, 2019, Modly “had only praise for the press” when he addressed the Military Reporters and Editors association, MRE president John Donnelly reports. Video of his remarks is here (37:00-43:00).]

**Modly:** “Let me tell ya something, the only reason we are dealing with this right now is because a big authoritarian regime called China was not forthcoming about what was happening with this virus.”

**Modly:** “If I could offer you a glimpse of the level of hatred and pure evil that has been thrown my way, my family's way, over this decision, I would. But it doesn't matter. It's not about me....There was very little upside in this decision for me...Still, I understand you may be angry with me for the rest of your lives. I guarantee you won't be alone. But being angry is not your duty.”

**Modly** quoted a 2018 [speech](#) he made to Naval Academy graduates: “Love the people you are ordered to lead...And value their lives to the point that you will always consider their safety at every single decision you make.”

**Modly:** “No one expected this pandemic,” he said, echoing a [falsehood](#) pushed recently by President Trump despite [years of warnings](#) from the U.S. intelligence community, various administration officials, and public-health leaders.

**11:30 p.m. (Monday 1:30 p.m. in Guam):** About 30 minutes after setting foot on board, Modly [leaves](#) without touring the ship.

## Monday, April 6

[172](#) TR crew members, plus Crozier, have tested positive for COVID-19.

[61 percent](#) of the crew have been tested.

[1,999 sailors](#) have moved off the ship.

**9:07 a.m.:** The *Daily Caller* [posts](#) a story about Modly's speech, along with a rough transcript.

**Noon:** *Task & Purpose* posts an [audio recording](#) of the speech, and CNN soon posts a [full transcript](#).

“The leaked transcript and audio threw gasoline on an already roiling controversy over Crozier's ouster in Washington,” *Defense One's* Katie Bo Williams [writes](#). “Former defense officials and multiple Democratic and Independent lawmakers called for his resignation after the remarks became public.” Among them:

**12:04 p.m.:** Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., [tweets](#) “@EsperDoD should immediately fire him.”

**12:28 p.m.:** “The acting Navy secretary is unfit for office,” [tweets](#) former Republican congressman Justin Amash, I-Mich. “He should resign or be removed immediately.”

**Midday:** The *New York Times* [publishes](#) a response by Modly to Tweed Roosevelt's letter. “I have the utmost respect for Mr. Roosevelt and his family's immense heritage of service to the nation. In the case of Captain Crozier, however, he is wrong.” The letter is also [posted](#) to the Navy's own site and [removed](#) hours later.

**About 1:15 p.m.:** Modly [issues](#) a statement about his speech and the reaction to it, saying, in part, “I stand by every word I said, even, regrettably, some profanity that may have been used for emphasis.”

**Afternoon:** TR public affairs officers [tell](#) crew leaders to pass the word that sailors need “the person's permission to record them and post it online. If they posted SECNAV's iMC [PA system] remarks on social media, they need to take it down immediately.”

**Late afternoon:** Navy officials [tell](#) *USNI News* that the investigation into the 7th Fleet command climate, once slated to wrap up today, will be extended “a few days” in order “to gather facts and refine the inquiry's recommendations.”

**Later afternoon:** House Armed Service Chair Adm Smith, D-Wash., says in a [statement](#): “I no longer have confidence in Acting Secretary Modly's leadership of the Navy and believe he should be removed from his position.”

**About 6 p.m.:** At a White House press conference, Trump [calls](#) Crozier's memo a “mistake” but appears to about-face from his Saturday condemnation.

**Trump:** “They called him Chopper. His name was Chopper. He was a great helicopter pilot...I know a lot about helicopters.”

**Trump:** “With all of that said, his career prior to that was very good, so I’m going to get involved and see exactly what’s going on there, because I don’t want to destroy somebody for having a bad day.”

Roughly 6 p.m.: Modly lands at Andrews Air Force Base. His flight to Guam would cost more than \$243,000, according to a Navy estimate provided to the *Washington Post*. [Note: This rough calculation of Modly’s landing time assumes that his flight left Guam about a half-hour after he walked off the Roosevelt, then refueled for an hour in Hawaii and flew straight back to Washington from there. Total flight time from Guam to Washington is about 17 hours.]

**Early evening:** Esper tells Modly to apologize.

**About 9 p.m.:** Modly issues a statement, saying in part, “I want to apologize for my recent comments to the crew of the TR. Let me be clear, I do not think Captain Brett Crozier is naive or stupid. I think, and have always believed him to be the opposite. I believe, precisely because he is not naive and stupid, that he sent his alarming email with the intention of getting it into the public domain in an effort to draw public attention to the situation on his ship. I apologize for any confusion this choice of words may have caused.”

## Tuesday, April 7

230 sailors have tested positive for COVID-19, up 57 percent in a day.

**Morning:** Modly submits his resignation to Esper, who accepts it. The news is not made public for several hours.

**Midday:** Speaker of the House Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-California, calls for Modly's removal.

**3:02 p.m.** News breaks of Modly's resignation.

**4:42 p.m.:** In a tweet, Esper publishes a statement on Modly's resignation, including that he is appointing current Army undersecretary Jim McPherson as acting Navy Secretary. He says the investigation led by VCNO Adm. Robert Burke will continue, and any action to be take against Crozier will wait until after the Burke inquest is complete.

**6:18 p.m.:** Asked about Modly's resignation during a White House press conference, Trump says, "I had no role in it. I don't know him. I've heard he was a very good man."

## Wednesday, April 8

TR sailors who remain aboard to maintain and disinfect the carrier’s 3,000-plus spaces are “fashioning homemade masks out of T-shirts at the direction of the Pentagon” because they have have been given latex gloves but no masks, family members tell the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

286 TR sailors have tested positive.

93% of the crew has been tested.

2,329 sailors are isolated ashore, with more than 2,500 still aboard.

Modly is in quarantine after visiting the Roosevelt, *USA Today* reported, adding: "It is unclear whether members of the crew aboard Modly's plane have been quarantined as well. The Navy lists the crew as a pilot, co-pilot, crew chief, flight attendant and load master."

Vice Adm. Merz, 7th Fleet commander, takes questions from TR sailors for 80 minutes.

## Friday, April 10

Navy leaders issue new COVID-19 guidance on Friday: "individuals identified as having confirmed or probable COVID-19 will be placed under isolation and evacuated off the ship as soon as practical if developing more severe symptoms."

## Saturday, April 11

550 of the TR's sailors have COVID-19, more than 10% of the crew of 4,865.  
92% of the crew has been tested: 3,673 tests were negative with about 230 pending.  
3,696 sailors have moved off the ship.

## Monday, April 13

A TR sailor dies of COVID-19. This is the sailor who was found unresponsive in isolation accommodations on Guam and taken to the ICU on April 9.

## Tuesday, April 14

589 TR crew members have tested positive for COVID-19. 3,922 have tested negative. 92% of the crew has been tested.

Four TR sailors are being treated at Naval Hospital Guam, one in the ICU.

4,024 sailors, or nearly 83% of the crew, have moved to isolation accommodations ashore.

## Corrections

An earlier version of this piece misstated who sent the March 31 message to commanding officers. It was VCNO Burke.

An earlier version of this piece misstated who directed the command-climate investigation. It was CNO Gilday.

## Documents

Transcript (as delivered) of press briefing by Acting Secretary Thomas B. Modly, Adm. Michael Gilday, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell L. Smith, Rear Admiral Bruce L. Gillingham, Surgeon General of the Navy, in the Pentagon's media briefing room on Wed., April 1, 2020

Transcript (as delivered) of press briefing by Modly and Gilday in the Pentagon's briefing room on Thurs., April 2, 2020, beginning at 4:49 p.m. EDT

Transcript and audio recording of Modly's April 6 speech to Theodore Roosevelt sailors.

Statement, Modly, afternoon of April 6

Statement, Modly, evening of April 6

Statement, Esper, evening of April 7

Bios: Thomas Modly, Capt. Brett Crozier

## ***Suggestions? Corrections? Additions? Send them to [bpeniston@defenseone.com](mailto:bpeniston@defenseone.com).***

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<https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2020/04/timeline-battle-uss-theodore-roosevelt/164408/>