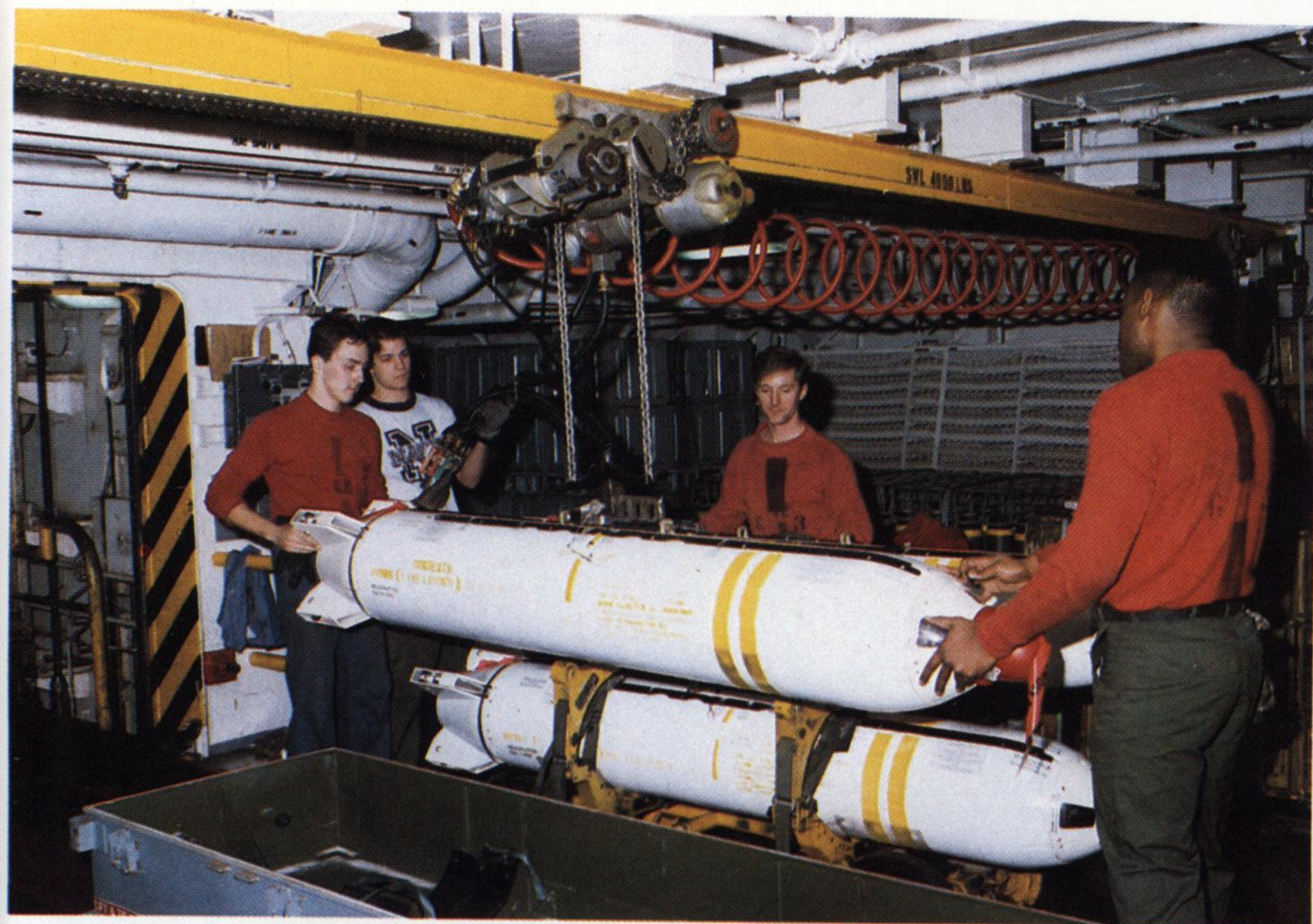


The Men of Kennedy Prepare for War!



Almost exactly 18 hours after the commanding officer, Capt. Phil Gay, stated during Captain's Call that the appropriate mood going into war should be somber, the crew found his words to be true.

At 2:57 p.m., RAdm. Riley D. Mixson, Commander Red Sea Force, announced over USS John F. Kennedy's 1MC his

congratulations to the ship for being able to carry out President Bush's orders and participate in air strikes on Iraq, strikes the ship's crew and air wing train a lifetime for.

"You have trained hard. You are ready. Now let's execute. For the air crews, we are all very, very proud of you. I wish you good hunting and God speed. God bless all of you," he added to his announcement.

Some of the crew reacted with temporary elation--high fives, raised fists, and shouts of apparent joy ran throughout the ship. After a few minutes, however, the mood did become somber.

After months of waiting, the war had started. At last!

