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## 31 Heroes, 1 WOD

Julie Kelly reflects on the 31 Heroes WOD performed on the flight deck of the USS Midway in San Diego.

By Julie Kelly

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All images: Jessica Elaine Tyler

Sept. 3, 2011: Just another September day to many, but to those of us in the CrossFit community, it was much more than that. It was a day to remember the 31 heroes whose NATO helicopter was shot down in Afghanistan's eastern Wardak Province on Aug. 6, 2011.

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### A Salute to the Fallen

It was 6:34 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 3, when my alarm went off. I didn't know if it was the five IPAs I had consumed the night before, the fact that I had gone to bed only three hours earlier, or the six straight days of hard and heavy WODs that made my alarm sound more like a freight train than a piece of cheap Japanese engineering. All I know is there was nothing I wanted to do less than 95-lb. thrusters on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier. (In fact, I didn't do 95-lb. thrusters. I had to scale down to 65 lb. Fran weight was good enough for me!)

Alas, I rallied and made my way down to the historic landmark that resides in San Diego's harbor. The USS Midway is a World War II-era aircraft carrier that is now used as a military museum and attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to San Diego every year. The Midway is arguably as much a part of the San Diego skyline as the Opera House is to Sydney's, or dare I say as the World Trade Center was to New York's.



*Laid down in 1943, the USS Midway saw action in the Vietnam War and Operation Desert Storm. She was decommissioned in 1992 and became a museum ship in 2004. She hosted a memorial CrossFit WOD in 2011.*



*Heavy thrusters started the memorial workout, which was timed much like Fight Gone Bad.*

The CrossFit San Diego crew and AM 760's Mike Slater Show welcomed the participating boxes aboard the ship, bright eyed and bushy tailed for the 7 a.m. registration. This event was similar to other CrossFit functions I've attended in that no one in the crowd seemed to mind the early registration time on a day usually meant for catching up on a few Zs. What made it different, however, was the reason we all gathered on that chilly morning with coastal fog in the air: our country had lost 31 of our most respected, honored and courageous soldiers.

The workout was suitably challenging.

Three rounds for total reps of:

Thrusters (155/105 lb.)

Box jumps (30/24 inches)

Push-ups (hand release)

Double-unders

Burpees



*At 24 and 30 inches, the box jumps were a tough test for the athletes.*



Teams consisted of two people, and only one athlete worked at a time. Teams stayed at each station for 2:04 before moving on, and there was a 1-minute rest after Round 1, and a 2-minute rest after Round 2. The total WOD time was 31 minutes.

In a recent debate with a former Zumba-instructor-turned-CrossFitter, I couldn't help but notice that she seemed to use the term "exclusive" when mentioning reasons why she hadn't tried CrossFit earlier. I simmered on it for a moment when I realized that her comment bothered me for a reason that wasn't readily available. I now wish I could find that Zumba instructor to explain to her that it's not exclusivity that makes CrossFit unique; rather, it's the degree in which we deviate from that notion. CrossFit has been the most inclusive and welcoming experience of my life.



*In CrossFit, the fallen are never forgotten.*

All the Navy SEALs and other U.S. servicemen whose lives were taken on July 6 might not have been CrossFitters, but that's not the point. The point is we've always taken care of our own, and we consider "our own" to include the families of the men and women who dedicate their lives to serving our country, CrossFitters or not.

So if that's what she meant by "exclusive," then hell, where do I sign up?



### About the Author

*Julie Kelly lives in San Diego, Calif., and has been CrossFitting since mid-2010. An avid dog lover and mountain girl at heart, Julie has two mutts who proudly serve as her constant sidekicks, patient listeners and outdoor recreational consultants. When asked what she loves most about CrossFit, the workouts are rarely at the top of her list. Rather, she says, "It's the feeling that all CrossFitters share in knowing we can go anywhere in the world, walk into a box, and be welcomed with open arms and embraced as family."*