



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73)

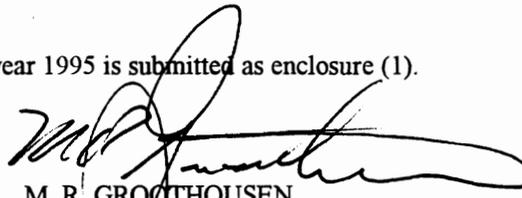
To: Director of Naval History, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

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Encl: (1) Command History for CY 1995

1. Per reference (a), the command history for calendar year 1995 is submitted as enclosure (1).



M. R. GROOTHOUSEN  
By direction

## **USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) COMMAND HISTORY 1995**

### **COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION**

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73), sixth of the NIMITZ-class nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, was commissioned on July 4, 1992 at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. Home ported at Norfolk, she is an asset of Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, under Vice Admiral Richard C. Allen and an operational unit of the Second Fleet under VADM Jay Johnson.

Commanded by Captain Malcolm P. Branch, GEORGE WASHINGTON is tasked with numerous missions, the primary one being to conduct sustained combat air operations. In this role, the ship serves as the flagship for Commander, George Washington Battle Group commanded by Rear Admiral Henry C. Giffin, who relieved RADM Alexander J. Krekich in March 1995.

GEORGE WASHINGTON's embarked air wing, Carrier Air Wing SEVEN, is commanded by Captain Ronald D. McElraft. The air wing's task is to conduct sustained offensive air operations against land, surface and subsurface targets and to defend the battle group in support of assigned missions.

The air wing employs 75 aircraft including: the F-14B Tomcat fighter flown by the Dogs of VF 143; the F/A-18C Hornet strike-fighter operated by the Wildcats of VFA 131 and the Knighthawks of VFA 136; the A-6E Intruder medium attack aircraft flown by the Blue Blasters of VA 34; the EA-6B Prowler electronic warfare aircraft flown by the Patriots of VAQ 140; the S-3B Viking anti-submarine warfare aircraft flown by the Topcats of VS 31; the E-2C Hawkeye airborne early warning aircraft flown by the Bluetails of VAW 121; the ES-3B Raven flown by the Black Ravens of VQ 6; and the HH-60/SH-60F helicopter flown by the Night Dippers of HS 5. The tailcode for Carrier Air Wing SEVEN is "Alfa Golf."

Additionally, GEORGE WASHINGTON serves as the base of operations for Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY SIX while at sea, and has served as a platform for joint operations with Army and Marine Corps aviation and ground units as part of the deployment work up cycle.

## USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) DEPARTMENT HEADS

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| CAPT William L. McKee     | Executive Officer   |
| CAPT Robert Chapman       | Reactor Officer     |
| CAPT Moses L. Stith       | CRMD                |
| CDR Eddie J. Gardiner     | Engineering         |
| CDR Jack Mills            | Medical             |
| CDR Dean A. Bailey        | Medical             |
| CDR Steve Wallace         | Dental              |
| CDR Roger A. Houk         | Dental              |
| CDR Thomas Vandenberg     | AIMD                |
| CDR Dennis K. Christensen | AIMD                |
| CDR Gerry Mauer           | Navigator           |
| CDR David E. Erickson     | Weapons             |
| CAPT John Drerup          | Supply              |
| CDR Carl T. Bright        | Supply              |
| CDR Robert L. King        | Operations          |
| CDR Bob Schniedwind       | Safety              |
| CDR Debra Straub          | Information Systems |
| CDR Janice M. Hamby       | Information Systems |
| LCDR Anthony R. Schallert | Deck                |
| LCDR Keith R. Wettschreck | Training            |
| LCDR Mark D. Budensiek    | Legal               |
| LCDR Randy Clifton        | Administration      |

## 1995 CHRONOLOGY

### January

- 1 Inport Norfolk, Virginia.
- 3 Conducted inert ammunition offload.
- 4 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 6 Underway for Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia.  
Moored Pier 5 Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia.
- 11 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 13 Conducted Martin Luther King, Jr. Worship Service at the Dry Dock Club.
- 17-20 CNAL QA Audit
- 18 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 23-26 CAAC Team Visit
- 25 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
RADM Thomas J. Porter, NAVSEA 07, Visit.
- 26-27 Nuclear Power School Instructor Familiarization Visit.

### February

- 1 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 7 Conducted Nuclear Accident Drill.
- 8 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Conducted Reactor Accident Drill.
- 15 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 20 Observed President's Day.
- 22 VADM Richard C. Allen, COMNAVAIRLANT visit.
- 23 RADM Katharine L. Lawton, Director, Customer Service, Space and Electronic Warfare  
(CNO N60)

### March

- 6-10 3M Assist Visit.
- 7 Held E-4 Advancement Exam.
- 8 Conducted Zone Inspection.

9 Held E-5 Advancement Exam.

13 CDC Team Trainer.

13-14 COMNAVAIRLANT Aircraft Handling team Assist Visit.

14 Held E-6 Advancement Exam.

15 Conducted Zone Inspection.

15-17 COMLOGGRU 2 Stream Team Assist Visit

20-24 PAATG Team Visit.

22 Conducted Zone Inspection.

24 RADM Henry C. Giffin, III, GWs new Battle Group Commander visit.

27 Commanding Officer, USS JOHN C. STENNIS (PCU 74) visit.

28 Conducted CIWS ammo onload.

28-29 CSTT Team Training.

29 Conducted Zone Inspection.

30 Conducted Dock Trials.

31 Kansas City NJROTC tour.

**April**

1 Conducted JP5 onload.

3-5 Conducted Fast Cruise.

5-13 Stream Team Assist Visit.

7-12 Underway for Sea Trials.

9 Conducted General Quarters Drills.

10 Conducted General Quarters Drills.  
COMNAVAIRLANT SPAR Familiarization day embark.

10-11 GWBATGRU Sponsored DV embark.

11 Conducted General Quarters Drills.

11-12 Portsmouth, Va. Chamber of Commerce embark.

- 12 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Conducted Precision Anchorage evolution.  
Moored Pier 12 North, Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.
- 14 Notre Dame High School NJROTC Tour.  
Malaysian Midshipman Tour .
- 15 COMDESRON 26 Visit.
- 16 Conducted Easter Sunrise Service.
- 17 Held luncheon honoring ship's Ombudsmen.
- 19 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65) guests tour.
- 20 Conducted GEORGE WASHINGTON Change of Command. CAPT Malcolm P.  
Branch Relieved CAPT Robert G. Sprigg.
- 21 NCIS tour.
- 23 Naval Safety Center Sponsored Boy Scout tour.
- 24 BUPERS Placement Officer Tour.  
VAW 121 Sponsored Middle School tour/dinner.
- 25 Asst. SECNAV (Manpower and Reserve Affairs ) Pang and MCPON visit.  
Conducted ammo onload.
- 26 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
French Carrier (Charles de Gaulle) tour.  
Navy Contracting Intern Training tour.
- 28 Defense Industrial College tour.  
NATO Defense College Senior Course tour.
- 29 Syms Middle School tour.  
Dental and Medical Recruiting Group tour.
- 30 Local Cub Scout tour.  
Azalea Festival Queen and Court tour.  
USNA Midshipman tour.

**May**

- 1 Decatur, Ga. NJROTC tour.  
Inter-American Defense Board tour.
- 2 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
NATO Member Journalist Tour.  
Navy Motion Picture Service Survey Group Tour.  
VADM Katz, COMNAVSURFLANT, sponsored guest tour.

3 Underway for local operations.  
Conducted precision anchorage evolution.  
Conducted Zone Inspection.

3-7 NAVSEA CVX Program Office embark.

5 Congressman Patrick Kennedy day embark.

5-6 CINCLANTFLT Sponsored Fortune 500 CEO embark.

6 Harvard Fellows day embark.

7-8 CAPSTONE embark.

8 Conducted CIWS PACFIRE.

8-9 Virginian Pilot Staff Familiarizaion embark.

9 Asst. SECDEF (Reserve Affairs) Deborah E. Lee day embark.

9-10 CINCLANTFLT sponsored DVs embark.

11 OSD Sponsored JCOC Familiarization day embark.

12 Conducted General Quarters Drills.

12-13 Congressional Delegation Lightfoot embark.

13-14 NPMTT Visit.  
STAFFDEL Arapis embark.

14-19 Supply ASMAT Visit.

16-18 Ammo onload with USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69) and USS MOUNT  
BAKER (AE 34).

19 Conducted Precision Anchorage Evolution.  
Moored 12 South, Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.  
JFACC/ISIS Indoctrination visit.

20 USS Franklin D. Roosevelt Reunion tour.  
Northern Virginia Girl Scout Troup tour.  
Northern Virginia Boy Scout tour.  
COMLOGRU 2 Sposnored tour.

21 Virginia Exceptional Kids pierside tour.

22 Shamrock High School NJROTC, Decatur, Ga. tour.  
CINCLANTFLT Adopt-A-School (Sewells Point Middle School) tour  
COMNAVSURFLANT Adpot-A-School (Azalea Gardens Middle School) tour.

22-23 Command PRT.

22-25 Pre-CAMSEE Visit.

- 22-26 Summer Safety Awareness Week.
- 23 DESRON 26 visit.  
CINCLANTFLT Adopt-A-School (Sewells Point Middle School) tour  
COMNAVSURFLANT Adpot-A-School (Azalea Gardens Middle School) tour.
- 24 CINCLANTFLT Adopt-A-School (Sewells Point Middle School) tour  
COMNAVSURFLANT Adpot-A-School (Azalea Gardens Middle School) tour.  
Pittsburgh Greater Works Academy tour.  
Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 25 Azalea Gardens Middle School tour.  
Sewells Point Middle School tour.  
Armed Forces Staff College Seminar Course tour.  
Armed Forces Staff College JCCC Course tour.
- 26 GW Night at Harbor Park  
Portsmouth Naval Hospital Psychiatric Interns tour.
- 28 HMCS FREDERICTON crew tour.
- 29 Observed Memorial Day.  
Congressman Scott and Chinese University President tour.  
Ship open for General Visiting.
- 29-30 Command PRT.
- 30 First Baptist Church Choir, Paris, TN tour.
- 31 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Jay Cox High School tour.

## **June**

- 1 JAST/AIMD Program Office, Washington, DC tour.
- 2 ONI Intelligence Interns tours.
- 3 Boy Scout Troop 807, Fairfax, Va. tour.
- 6 New Bronas High School Marine JROTC, New Bronas, TX tour.
- 7 Underway local operations.  
Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 7-8 Jan Morris, author, embark.
- 8-9 RADM Lynch and CINCLANTFLT sponsored Civic Leaders embark.  
CINCLANTFLT day embark.
- 9 Conducted Mass Casualty Drill.  
Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 9-10 CINCLANTFLT sponsored Fortune 500 CEOs embark.

10 Conducted General Quarters Drills.

11 Medical sponsored Health Promotion Fair held on after mess decks.

11-12 Ms. Judith Miller, DoD General Counsel and RADM Grant, Navy JAG embark.

12 COMDESRON 26 arrives.  
Conducted General Quarters Drills.

13 Conducted General Quarters Drills.

13-14 RADM(Ret) Miller, CEO Navy Memorial Foundation and COMDESRON 26 guests embark.

14 Conducted General Quarters Drills.

14-15 Mr. Neil Planzer, Deputy FAA Administrator and guests embark.

15 Conducted General Quarters Drills.

16-17 Atlanta Community Leaders embark.

17 CODEL Canady (Rep. Charls Canaday, Fl.) day embark.  
Conducted General Quarters Drills.  
Conducted Mass Casualty Drill.

19 VADM(Ret) Dunleavy and Dr. Robertson embark.  
Royal Navy guests embark.

21 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Conducted General Quarters Drills.

23 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Moored 12 South, Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

24 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools tour.  
Commanding Officer, Dam Neck tour.

25 COMNAVBASE sponsored Hampton Roads area kids tour.

26 Cable Broadcasting Executives tour.  
Old Dominion University Graduate Students tour.

26-28 Command Assessment.

27 Reproductive Hazards Board tour.

28 Conducted Zone Inspection.

29 Defense Logistics Agency Staff tour.

30 Ship's picnic at Kings Dominion.

**July**

- 1 Mr. John V. Cuddy, BUMED Comptroller tour.
- 4 Ship's third birthday.  
Ship open for General Visiting.
- 5 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Armed Forces Staff College tour.
- 6 Mr. Joe Fengler, Senate Appropriations staff member tour.  
Russian Exchange Students tour.
- 7 Ambassador Kanwal Sibal, Deputy Chief of Mission, Indian Embassy tour.  
Ft. Eustis 222nd Aviation Detachment tour.
- 8 Ambassador Helmut Tuerk, Austrian Ambassador to U.S. tour.  
USS WILLIAM R. RUSH Association Reunion Group tour.
- 10 Conducted ammo onload  
Armed Forces Staff College tour.
- 11 OSD Theater Battle Management Group tour.
- 12 Underway local operations.  
Conducted precision anchorage.
- 12-18 Participated in Exercise Boastful Labor.
- 13-14 Business Executives for National Security embark.
- 14-15 Fortune 500 CEOs embark.
- 16-17 CAPSTONE embarks.
- 17-18 CINCLANTFLT/COMNAVAIRLANT sponsored DV's embark.
- 17-20 American Game and Fish Magazine embark.
- 18-19 Fortune 500 CEOs embark.
- 20 Moored 12 South, Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.
- 22 Underway Family Day Cruise.  
Moored 12 South Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.
- 24 SECNAV, CNO, NAVSEASYSKOM, NSW tour.
- 25 Princess Anne Community Center tour.  
Kissimmee, Fl Boy Scouts tour.
- 26 Navy League tour.  
CINCLANTFLT sponsored German visitors tour.

- 27 Mrs. Michaela Geiger, German Parliamentary State and Deputy Secretary of State tour.
- 28 Old Dominion University tour.  
COMNAVAILRANT sponsored tour (Mr. Ponti and family)
- 30 CINCLANTFLT sponsored tour (Ms. Victoria Rivas-Vasquez)
- 31 "Yes We Can" tour.

**August**

- 1 Sea Cadets tour.
- 2 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Armed Forces Staff College tour.  
COMAEWWINGLANT newly winged NFO's tour.
- 3 Command General Staff College tour.
- 4 United Nations Staffers tour.  
Army Veteranarians tour.
- 5 Ms. Carol M. Browner, Director, Environmental Protection Agency tour.
- 7 Bowie High School NJROTC tour.
- 8 Armed Forces Experimental Training Center tour.
- 9 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Old Dominion University Japanese Students tour.  
International Conference of Chemical Educators tour.
- 10 Conducted ammo onload.  
Armed Forces Staff College tour.
- 11 NATO Flag Officers tour.
- 12 Former Congresswomen Ms. Beverly Byron tour.
- 14 Former President George Bush and Mrs. Barbara Bush tour.  
COL Cees Van Egmond, Netherlands Royal Marine Corps tour.
- 15 Underway local operations.  
Conducted precision anchorage evolution.
- 15-18 NMPTT.
- 16 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 18 Conducted General Quarters Drills.  
Moored Pier 12 South, Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

- 22 SES-APEX tour and luncheon.  
Navy Relief Coordinators tour.
- 23 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 24 Fair Hope, Alabama NJROTC tour.  
Joint Chief of Staff/Office of the Secretary of Defense tour.  
Federal Armed Forces University, Munich, Germany tour.
- 26 RADM Moses and GTE Vice President tour.
- 29 Partnership for Peace Coordination Cell tour.  
Northern Virginia Youth Group tour.
- 30 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Federal Armed Forces Command and Staff College tour.
- 31 Senior Defense Analyst for the Library of Congress tour.  
Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory tour.

### September

- 1 CAPT Bardone, former CO of USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71) tour.  
USS BALTIMORE (SSN 704) Wardroom tour.
- 3 Japanese Midshipman tour.
- 4 Observed Labor Day.
- 5 His Excellency Takakazu Kuriyama, Ambassador of Japan tour.
- 6 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Medical Flag Officers tour.
- 7 Conducted ammo onload.  
Rural Electric Association tour.  
Held E-4 Advancement Exam.
- 9 Commanding Officer, VF 101 tour.  
Armed Forces Staff College tour.
- 11 MARDET Change of Command.  
Decatur, Georgia NJROTC tour.
- 12 RADM Robert M. Moore, Chief of Supply Corps tour.  
Mr. K. A. Nambiar, Secretary of Defense, Ministry of Defense, India tour.  
Held E-5 Advancement Exam.
- 13 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Hampton Roads Hotel/Motel Association tour.  
Ukrainian Delegation tour.

- 14 Conducted ammo onload.  
Military Health Care Advisor tour.  
Mr. Krystian Piatkowsky, Senior Advisor to the President of Poland tour.  
German Exchange Midshipman tour.  
Held E-6 Advancement Exam.
- 15 Russian Theater Missile Defense Exercise Delegation tour.  
RADM(Ret) Hayworth Guests tour.
- 16 Smithsonian Institute tour.
- 19 Norwegian Intelligence Service tour.
- 20 Conducted Zone Inspection.  
Fleet Technical Naval Air Warfare Center tour.
- 21 Underway COMPTUEX..  
Conducted precision anchorage evolution.
- 21-24 GEORGE WASHINGTON/COMNAVAIRLANT DV's embark.
- 22 Dr. Paul Kaminski, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology day  
embark.
- 23 Conducted Mass Casualty Drill  
Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 23-24 GEORGE WASHINGTON/COMNAVAIRLANT DV's embark.
- 24 Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 24-25 COMCARGRU 4/GEORGE WASHINGTON DV's embark.
- 24-26 Bill Curtis F/A-18 Documentary Film Crew arrives.
- 25 Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 25-26 MGEN Chen Kaizeng, Defense Attache, Peoples Republic of China embark.
- 26 Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 27 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 28 Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 29 Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 30 - 1 Oct Congressional Staff Delegation embark.

**October**

- 1 CAPSTONE day embark.

- 2 Conducted PASSEX with French ship FS VENTOSE  
Commanding Officer, FS VENTOSE day embark.
- 3 Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 3-5 GEORGE WASHINGTON/COMNAVAIRLANT DV's embark.
- 4 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 5 Commander, German Naval Aviation Flotilla day embark.
- 5-7 Congressional Staff Delegation embark.
- 6 Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 7 Ponce DV's day embark.
- 8 Anchored Ponce, Puerto Rico.
- 9 Conducted general visiting.
- 10 Conducted general visiting.
- 11 Underway COMPTUEX.  
Conducted all hands Safety Standdown.  
Celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month (Multi-Cultural Committee sponsored)
- 13 Observed Navy's 220th Birthday with cake cutting ceremony on after mess decks.  
Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 14 LCDR Dave Morgan, VFA 131, conducts 30,000 trap aboard ship.
- 14-15 OLA sponsored legislative staff members embark.
- 15-16 Discovery Channel embark.
- 17 Conducted General Quarters Drills.
- 18 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 19 COMFAIRCARIB DV's day embark.
- 25 Conducted Zone Inspection.
- 26-27 Intrepid Museum DV's embark.
- 27 Moored Pier 12 North, Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 28 Empire Test Pilot School (British) tour.

**November**

- 2 Underway COMPTUEX.

3 Naval Safety Center day embark.  
OLA sponsored Press Secretaries day embark.

4-5 U.S. Representative Danny Lee Burton embark.  
Former Secretary of Treasury, Mr. William Simon embark.

5-6 CINCLANTFLT/GEORGE WASHINGTON DV's embark.

6 2,200 Sailors spell "Go Navy" on the flight deck for video production in support of  
Army-Navy game.

6-7 GEORGE WASHINGTON DV's embark.

7-8 Chicago Young Presidents Organization embark.

9 Moored Pier 12 North Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

11 U.S. Coast Guard International Officer's Course tour.

13 Terry Parker High School, Jacksonville, FL NJROTC tour.  
Norwegian Intelligence Service tour.

15 CAPT Christian Dobberthien, Director of German Naval Intelligence tour.  
Marine Corps Command and Staff College International Officers tour.

16 Roanoke, VA AFROTC tour.

17 National War College Students tour.  
Montigue High School, Williamsburg, VA tour.

18 William and Mary Swim Team tour.  
Chantilly, VA and Rockville, MD Boy Scouts tour.

20 Armed Forces Staff College tour.

21 Good Order and Discipline Standdown.

22 USACOM/CINCLANTFLT/COMNAVAIRLANT Guests tour.

24 Local Flag Officers guests tour.

27 Canadian Forces Command and Staff College tour.

28 French Naval Personnel tour.  
Navy Chief Executive Officer Conference tour.

29 Underway JTFEX 96-1.

29-30 COMCRUDESGRU 2 DV's embark.

30-1 Dec CINCLANTFLT DV's embark.

**December**

1 CINCLANTFLT Guest day embark.

1-2 Legislative Staff Delegation embark.

2-3 Dep Director DLA embark.  
New York Navy League embark

5-6 Chief Scientist, USAF embark.

6 Congressional Spouses day embark.  
CINCLANTFLT day embark

7 COMSECONDFLT JFACC day embark.

7-9 Congressional Staff Delegation embark.

8-9 Mr. John B. Emerson, Deputy Asst. to the President for Political Affairs and Mr.  
William J. Cassidy, Jr., Deputy Asst SECNAV for Conversion and Redevelopment  
embark.

9-10 Mr. Seth Waxman, Associate Deputy Attorney General embark  
SACLANT International Military Staff embark.

9-12 Mr. Angelo, Director, DoD Readiness, Programming and Assessment embark.

10-11 Mr. Pete Powers, First Deputy Mayor of New York City embark.

11 Dr. Stephen Joseph, Assistant SECDEF (HA), VADM Harold M. Koenig, Navy Surgeon  
General and LTGEN Edgar R. Anderson, Air Force Surgeon General day embark.

12 USACOM Media embark for JTFEX 96-1.

12-14 CNO Executive Panel day embark.

13-14 Dr. John Hamre, Under SECDEF (COMPTROLLER) embark.

14 JAST day embark.

16 Moored Pier 12 North, Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

18 Wedding: ADCS(AW) Richard Dale and Pamela Marie Wood are married on board by  
ship's chaplain.

19 Children's Christmas Party.

20 GW Holiday Party - Spirit of Norfolk.

21 GW Holiday Party - Spirit of Norfolk.

25 Observed Christmas.

26 French Consulate tour.

- 28           NAVAIR video team visits GW.
- 29           COMPATWINGSLANT tour.  
              GW Holiday Party - Spirit of Norfolk.
- 31           Moored Pier 12 North, Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

## NARRATIVE

January 1, 1995 found USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) pierside at its homeport of Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. During the year, two events were focal points for the ship. First was a Selected Restricted Availability at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Va. and successfully completing work-ups for deployment in January 1996.

On January 6, the GEORGE WASHINGTON departed NAVSTA for NNSY to conduct a three month SRA. While in the shipyard, extensive upgrades and modifications were made to the ship's engineering spaces, communications capabilities and living spaces. After successfully completing the yard period, GEORGE WASHINGTON was underway April 7-12 for sea trials.

April 20 saw the changing of the guard aboard GEORGE WASHINGTON when CAPT Malcolm P. Branch relieved CAPT Robert G. Sprigg to become the third Commanding Officer of the "Spirit of Freedom". Nearly 2,000 Sailors and guests were in attendance at the ceremony with Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Mike Boorda as the guest speaker. CAPT Branch had served previously as the ship's commissioning Executive Officer.

During the underway period from May 11-19, GEORGE WASHINGTON conducted another first for the ship. During the first week, VMFA 142 became the first reserve Marine attack fighter squadron to qualify as a deployable unit of a carrier air wing. Four F/A-18s, 10 pilots and 20 enlisted Marines from the squadron were aboard to conduct carrier qualifications.

On July 4, GEORGE WASHINGTON celebrated its third birthday. A small ceremony hosted by CAPT and Mrs. Branch was held in Hangar Bay 2. The ceremony included cake cutting with the youngest and oldest crew members, AN Randall Schmidt and senior medical officer CDR Jack Mills. Following the ceremony, the ship opened its doors to the public for general visiting hosting 2,774 visitors.

A "Passing of the Badge" ceremony was conducted August 4 on GEORGE WASHINGTON's flight deck as AFCM(AW) Jesse J. Elliott relieved ABCM(AW) Douglas Ausderau as the ship's Command Master Chief. Elliott is the ship's third CMC.

On August 14, GEORGE WASHINGTON was honored by a visit from former President George Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush. This was the second visit to the "Spirit of Freedom" for Bush. The previous visit was on July 21, 1990 when the former first couple participated in the ship's christening at Newport News Shipbuilding. While aboard ship, the former first couple had a chance to visit one-on-one with GW Sailors and dine with them on the Mess Decks. Before departing, the Bush's also addressed the crew in a packed hangar bay. Mrs. Bush, the ship's sponsor, left the crew with the following statement saying, "You are the peace makers and the peace keepers...God bless you all."

Another significant milestone for the ship during August, was the establishment of Supply Department's S-7 Division. This new 12-Sailor division represents the evolution of an on board hazardous material waste and control program that places top priority on the Navy's goal of safeguarding the environment. The establishment of this new division was a move to further consolidate the control of hazardous material aboard GEORGE WASHINGTON.

On September 21, GEORGE WASHINGTON got underway for its TSTA III/FEP training phase in preparation for the ship's COMPTUEX. Fleet Training Group was aboard for the nine day TSTA III/FEP to assess the ship's overall readiness to conduct training and to evaluate the ship's various training teams ability to effectively train the crew. FTG found well-established training teams with a highly motivated crew earning the ship an overwhelming passing grade to continue with its preparations for deployment.

With COMCARGRU FOUR embarked, GEORE WASHINGTON rolled right in to its COMPUTEX a graded evaluation period. The ship and embarked air wing, Carrier Air Wing SEVEN, conducted several exercises in the Puerto Rican OPAREA and made a port visit to Ponce, PR. Following additional training and a brief port visit to Norfolk, VA., GEORGE WASHINGTON embarked its own battle group, COMCRUDESGRU 2, and completed its extensive six-week training period.

On November 29, GEORGE WASHINGTON got underway for its final graded training evolution prior to its deployment in January 1996. During this three-week training period, the "Spirit of Freedom" had the opportunity to train with every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and foreign services in simulated hostile scenarios. Training was conducted in ASW, AAW, Mine Countermeasures, Maritime Interdiction and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations. Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) 96-1 afforded the George Washington Battle Group an opportunity to train for possible real world contingencies. The end result was a well prepared battle group certified to deploy in support of national authority requirements.