From: Commanding Officer, USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73)
To: Director, Naval Historical Center, 805 Kidder Breese SE, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374-5059

Subj: USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) COMMAND HISTORY FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2003

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H

Encl: (1) Command History for CY 2003
(2) Welcome Aboard Brochure
(3) Commanding Officer’s bio
(4) Commanding Officer’s photo
(5) Diskette

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are submitted as command history for calendar year 2003.

M. J. ERDOSSY
USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73)
COMMAND HISTORY 2003
(UIC 21412)

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. Homeported in Norfolk, VA., USS GEORGE WASHINGTON is an asset of Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, commanded by Rear Admiral James Zortman, who assumed command on July 10, 2002. At the beginning of this year, USS GEORGE WASHINGTON was moored at Pier 14S after several significant events including a six-month Planned Incremental Availability, sea trials, flight certification, carrier qualifications for Fleet Replacement Squadron, inspection by the Navy Board of Inspection and Survey, ORSE, COMPTUEX and weapons onload. GW ended the year moored at Pier 14S making preparations for deployment in January 2004.

Captain Martin J. Erdossy was in command during 2003. The ship served as the flagship for Commander, Carrier Group EIGHT, commanded by Rear Admiral Denby H. Starling, II.

Carrier Air Wing SEVEN, commanded by Captain Kenneth Floyd was the ship’s main armament. The air wing provided the capability to conduct sustained offensive air operations against land, surface and subsurface targets, and to defend the strike group in support of assigned missions.

There were 69 aircraft assigned to Carrier Air Wing SEVEN, including the F-14B Tomcat fighter flown by the “Pukin’ Dogs” of VF-143 and “Red Rippers” of VF-11; the F/A-18C Hornet strike fighter flown by the “Knighthawks” of VFA-136 and “Wildcats” of VFA-131; the E-2C Hawkeye airborne early warning aircraft flown by the “Bluetails” of VAW-121; the S-3B Viking sea control aircraft flown by the “Topcats” of VS-31; the EA-6B Prowler electronic attack aircraft flown by the “Patriots” of VAQ-140; the HH-60H/SH-60F Seahawk helicopter flown by the “Nightdippers” of HS-5; and the C-2A Greyhound carrier onboard delivery (COD) aircraft flown by the “Rawhides” of VRC-40.
2003 NARRATIVE

Sailors from USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) were still enjoying their Post Overseas Movement period after the 2002 deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom when Father Time clicked the calendar over to 2003.

After returning from her six-month Mediterranean/Arabian Gulf deployment, USS GEORGE WASHINGTON remained in surge status for two months, but the ship and her crew got underway one last time before the shipyard. What was meant to be strictly an ammunition offload turned into another news-making adventure for USS GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Four people rescued from a burning fishing vessel February 2 were treated on board USS GEORGE WASHINGTON for mild hypothermia and second-degree burns. One of the survivors was identified as an U. S. Navy Sailor stationed at Naval Station Mayport, FL.

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON entered Norfolk Naval Shipyard February 25. The move from Naval Station Norfolk took GW off surge carrier status for scheduled upgrades, maintenance, and repairs.

The USS GEORGE WASHINGTON basketball team wrapped up its short, six-game season February 26. The team turned area heads by winning some hard fought victories before USS WASP (LHD 1) doused GW's flame in the championship game of the Norfolk-area Forces Afloat Basketball Tournament. In spite of the deployment schedule and the rigors of hangar bay practices, the team finished the season in second place.

Rear Admiral James M. Zortman addressed the crew March 24 to proudly inform them that they'd been chosen Atlantic Fleet’s Battle “E” winner for the 2002 calendar year. Not only did USS GEORGE WASHINGTON earn its fifth efficiency award, all departments eligible for individual awards attained their respective honor. Winning departmental honors were Air, AIMD, Combat Systems, Damage Control, Deck, Reactor/Engineering, Medical, Navigation, Operations, Supply, and Weapons. Those separate distinctions contributed major points toward the Battle “E” grade and helped earn the ship further recognition as “best of the best” by receipt of the Battenberg Cup.

For over a decade USS GEORGE WASHINGTON served as the flagship for Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group TWO. In a brief ceremony on board the aircraft carrier March 31, GW Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) was transferred to Commander, Carrier Group EIGHT, which was under the command of Rear Admiral George E. Mayer, making him GW’s new strike group commander. Rear Admiral Mayer welcomed GW to his team, which was comprised of Carrier Air Wing SEVEN, USS VELLA GULF (CG 72), USS LEYTE GULF (CG 55), and units from Destroyer Squadron TWENTY EIGHT.

Deck Department Sailors donned their dress-white uniforms April 10 for a departmental inspection. But after this inspection, falling out of ranks meant walking off the brow and loading onto two buses to visit the USS WISCONSIN (BB 64) and Nauticus Museum in downtown Norfolk. “The inspection went outstanding and they looked better than I’ve ever seen a Deck Department look,” BMC(SW/AW) said. “Coming to Nauticus was kind of a reward for all the hard work they’ve done while in the shipyards.”
USS GEORGE WASHINGTON left Norfolk Naval Shipyard August 13, after her six-month planned incremental availability (PIA) period. GW put a PIA team together that industrially compared to our own military’s “shock and awe” campaign. There were 23 separate teams, and each team had its own specific specialty. GW also had 11 zone managers who were liaisons from the PIA teams to civilian shipyard workers.

After leaving Norfolk Naval Shipyard, GW faced a strenuous and compressed work-up cycle preparing the ship for combat readiness. As GW got one step closer to her combat-ready status, every Sailor from the Commanding Officer down could look at the yard period as not only another great Navy experience, but also a great experience for the ship itself.

The ship cast away the mooring lines, shifted colors and made headway down the Elizabeth River for sea trials. The main purpose of sea trials was to work the kinks out of the ship that had been pier side for so long. With sea trials successfully completed the ship was working her way deeper into work-ups and toward total combat readiness.

Aircraft had not landed on the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON flight deck since February 2003, but the Sailors of Air Department worked around the clock, and the flight deck was certified for flight operations August 25. This feat was accomplished only nine days after pulling out of NNSY. Getting flight deck certification from the Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Handling Team was a major step toward being a combat-ready warship, an accomplishment that takes some ships months to acquire. “We went from having scaffolding on the flight deck to being operational in almost seven days,” said LCDR , GW’s aircraft handling officer. Under the ever-watchful eye of the COMNAVAIRLANT inspectors, GW; with the help of CVW-3, completed its certification. “I think right now we are ready to leave on deployment,” boasted Singleton.

The first Friends and Family Day Cruise on the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON since 1999 began just after dawn on August 29. Grandparents, parents, spouses, children and friends flooded GW’s quarterdeck beginning at 5:30 a.m. to experience life on a Navy aircraft carrier. Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN provided the air power demonstration.

Crew members of the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON pulled together September 11 when the number four wire separated, injuring seven Sailors on the flight deck and plunging an F/A-18D Hornet into the sea. That is when GW personnel learned the real purpose of all the casualty drills and training. Every department on the ship was somehow tasked during the incident. From the first people on the scene who gave immediate attention to the wounded, to the person who drove the ship, everyone involved learned just how important their individual job was. Although the Hornet was lost, the pilot was recovered, and there were no fatal injuries.

September continued to be a busy month for the GW crew. On September 14, a helicopter from HS-7 was dispatched to USS TRENTON (LPD 14) with one of GW’s medical officers on board. A USS TRENTON Sailor was experiencing chest pains and the GW medical crew escorted and rendered treatment to him prior to his flight to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

The Board of Inspections and Surveys came on board the week of September 22 for the first in a series of inspections to ensure USS GEORGE WASHINGTON was
ready for its scheduled 2004 deployment. INSURV checked different systems, such as
damage control equipment, and the overall habitability of the ship.

The final feather in the busy month of September was a special group of visitors.
USS GEORGE WASHINGTON welcomed 350 retired Sailors from the USS
FORRESTAL (CVA 59) Association September 27. The outcome was GW Sailors
enjoyed conversations with their super-carrier predecessors about new and old
equipment.

These days, every Sailor watches the USS FORRESTAL fire movie at boot camp,
but GW Sailors got to hear the stories directly from the men who were there. Emotions
ran high for everyone when USS FORRESTAL Sailors began to explain some of their
experiences. The GW Sailors who worked around the elevators and jets every day
imagined the crisis these veterans faced, and it touched many GW Sailors who listened to
the stories.

For two hours, GW’s crew and USS FORRESTAL’s crew mingled, sharing
memories and ideas, both learning something new. The day ended with a better
understanding and many thanks from both crews.

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON got underway in October for the Tailored Ships’
Training Availability (TSTA) to train the crew to increase readiness. TSTA was a three-
part training and testing evolution designed to increase the ship’s readiness and
effectiveness, and involved all components, including the air wing, that will deploy with
the ship in 2004.

GW successfully completed its pre-deployment ammunition on load November
18. All departments on board GW pulled together to finish the three-day evolution
bringing about 1,300 lifts on board GW. Some were delivered by helicopter from USS
THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71), but most were transferred through cargo stations
7, 9, and 17 from USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6). The lifts consisted of all types of bombs,
missiles and even small arms ammunition.

November 18 was also a historic day for GW with the successful 100,000th trap on
the flight deck. The pilot, LCDR of Strike Fighter Attack
Squadron 136, said he knew that the big 100,000 was coming up, but there was no telling
which pilot would hit the lucky number. was glad to find out he had been the
lucky one and considers it a major milestone in his career.

A second tragic incident happened November 21, when Airman David Wilson
died in the line of duty in a single vehicle accident in the hangar bay. A memorial service
followed a few days later.

The “Topcats” of Sea Control Squadron 31 held their change of command
ceremony November 30 in the forecastle on board USS GEORGE WASHINGTON.
VS-31 Executive Officer, CDR Edward Baron, formally relieved CDR Kevin Ruce, who
had led the “Topcats” for one and a half years. CAPT Kenneth Floyd, Commander,
Carrier Air Wing SEVEN, was the guest speaker. Ruce didn’t have to move far for his
new orders; he became the Operations Officer for GW.

Reactor Department successfully completed its Operational Reactor Safeguard
Examination in December. The ORSE inspection certified GW to maintain and operate
her nuclear power plants. “It’s all about being able to give the captain the propulsion he
asks for,” said LCDR, the Reactor Training Assistant, “and the catapults
the steam they need to complete our mission.”
After 40 days at sea where she successfully completed her Composite Training Unit Exercise, USS GEORGE WASHINGTON returned to Pier 14S, Norfolk Naval Station on December 19. After a short POM leave period, the crew began making preparations for a January 2004 deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism.
**January 2003**

03  FOX Sports media visit
08  MSNBC Interview with Commander, George Washington Battle Group
15  COMLANTFLT Senior Medical Officer visits
16  Nuclear LDO Detailer visit
18  RADM Kemp and Guest visit
21  COMCRUDESGRU TWO offload
    COMDESRON TWO EIGHT offload
    Martin L. King Day Commemoration
    Safety Standdown
    Joint Armies DV's
22  Fast Cruise
    Safety Standdown
22-24 Discovery Channel embark
25  CIWS PACFIRE
25-26 COMNAVAIRLANT DV visit
25-27 NFL Super Bowl embark
26-27 COMNAVAIRLANT DV embark
28  Ammo cross deck with USNS ARCTIC (T-AOE-8)
30  Health Promotions Committee Presentation

**February 2003**

02  GW rescues four people from fishing vessel off the coast of Florida
03  Ammo cross deck with USNS ARCTIC (T-AOE-8)
10  NPDC DV tour
12  Finnish Chief of Defense tour
13 COMCARGRU FOUR and guests embark

14 PEO Carrier Visit
   Commanding Officer, USS SEATTLE (AOE 3) visit
   MOGAS Offload

15 Commanding Officer, USS EISENHOWER (CVN 69) visit
   NJROTC, Columbia H.S., Columbia, Tenn., visit
   Defense Intel Agency Visit
   Boy Scout Troop 1249, Bowie, MD
   CO/CMC Visit Mt. Vernon
   Trailer onload for Norfolk Naval Ship Yard period

19 NPDC tour

20 Cub Scout Pack 490 visit

21 Yellow Gear offload

22 Deputy COMLANTFLT, VADM Konetzni, visit

24 VADM Konetzni visitors
   Food Service Magazine visit

25 Entered Norfolk Naval Shipyard for Planned Incremental Availability

26 GW Basketball team completes season in second place

**March 2003**

07 CVW-7 visit

31 GW ISIC changed to Commander, Carrier Group EIGHT

**April 2003**

05 USJFCOM-J44 visit

**May 2003**

03 Community Relations project: Kidney Walk

09 CNRMA visit

19 SES visit
22 Safety Standdown
   COMNAVSURLANT, RADM Etnyre, visit
   Quality of Life Survey

29 National Capital Council Navy League working visit

**June 2003**

07 Community Relations project: St. Pius X School, Habitat for Humanity
14 Community Relations project: Children's Fun Run, Gradfest for Salem H. S.
21 Community Relations project: St. Pius X School, Habitat for Humanity
25 GW presented COMLANTFLT Battenberg Cup award
28 Community Relations project: Habitat for Humanity
30 Medical Technical Assist Visit

**July 2003**

09 ALRE Assist Visit
12 Community Relations project: St. Pius X School, Habitat for Humanity
17 COMCARGRU EIGHT, RDML Starling visit
21 Moriah Wind System Training, CSD
24 CSPAT Inport
31 COMCARGRU EIGHT, RDML Starling, visit

**August 2003**

04 COSR Phase I WEPS
05 JP-5 Fuel Certification Inspection
06 Safe-For-Sea ammunition onload
11-12 Inport NNSY fast cruise
13 Underway from NNSY
14 CIWS PACFIRE
Steering PMS/Full-throw, full power test
.50 CAL SHOOT

15 Shipboard Electronic Systems Evaluation Facility AN/ULM-4 Range
NAV/OPS/ENG

16 Reserve Engineering Duty Officer visit

19 COMCARGRU EIGHT moves aboard
GEORGE WASHINGTON STRIKE GROUP BGIE-GC

20 SAR helicopters fly on
New Beginnings Church of Christ Youth Group visit

21-27 Underway for flight deck certification

23 Rendezvous with USNS PATUXENT (T-AO-201)
CSPAT at Sea

24 CART II Brief
Board of Inspection and Survey Preparation and Readiness Evaluation Period

27 PACFIRE

29 Family Day Cruise (2,500 guests and vendors on board)

**September 2003**

04 FOTC Syndicate Meeting
BAE Systems DV tour
Mass casualty drill
Joint Forces Staff College DV tour

05 Warfare Commanders Wrap Up
Guests of Rep. Schrock visit
Fort Eustis Officer Program visit

06 Crestview Baptist Church Group visit

08 Guests of Rep. Forbes visit

09-19 Underway for carrier qualifications

09-11 Discovery Channel embark
10 CART II Brief

11 Lost F/A-18D when #4 wire broke; pilot recovered; seven personnel injured
Rendezvous with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO-196)

11-12 COMLANTFLT DV embark

12 Pre-INSURV events

14 MEDEVAC and rendered aid to Sailor from USS TRENTON (LPD 14)

15 Yoke training for all Division Officers, CPOs, and DCPOs

16 .50 cal/ M240 Shoot
CPO pinning

23 INSURV team arrives
JTFEX 04-1 Mid Planning Conference

23-24 Underway for INSURV
CNAL media embark

24 RADM Zortman arrives via helo
LINKEX

24-25 COMNAVAIRLANT embark

27 USS FORRESTAL (CVA 59) Reunion – 350 guests

30 Mass casualty drill
Challenge Athena installed

October 2003

01 Detailer visit

02 Industrial College of Armed Forces visit

03 Nuclear reactor accident training drill

04 USS HENRY A. WILEY (DM 29) reunion group

06 GWCSG Battle Group Inport Exercise Coordination Meeting (OPSO/CSO)

10 CENTCOM AOR Orientation Brief
Columbian Coast Guard vessel ARC VALLE DE CAUCA visit

16-31 Underway

16 Mobile Training Team Inbrief

17-18 COMNAVAIRLANT DV embark

19 Rendezvous with USNS ARTIC (T-AOE-8)

19-20 COMNAVAIRLANT DV embark

20-21 COMNAVAIRLANT DV embark

23 Fueling-at-sea/replenishment-at-sea with USS BULKELEY (DDG 84)

24-25 COMNAVAIRLANT DV embark

25 Senator John Cornyn, R-Texas visit
   Received flight deck certification

25-26 Guests of GW CO embark

31 PNC Green’s commissioning ceremony

**November 2003**

01 NJROTC visit

03 Washington Foreign Press Center visit

04 Undersecretary of the Navy (Personnel) inport tour

05 Enlisted Aviation Detailers Visit
   COMSECONDFLT, VADM Roughead, visit

06 COMCARGRU FOUR visit

07 COMCARGRU FOUR load aboard
   BGIE Debrief

08 CVW-7 onload
   HS-5 Fly on
09  Weapons onload
11  Rendezvous with USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6)
12  NATO Sea Sparrow missile upload
    13RX calorimetric testing
13  Underway to Dec. 19 for COMPTUEX
13-14 Commander Naval Training Center Command embark
    Guests of Navy League embark
14-15 COMFLTFORCOM embark
15  FAS USS VELLA GULF (CG 72)
    CIWS upload
16  CIWS pacfire
17  100,000th trap on the flight deck by F/A-18 Hornet from VFA-136
18  Rendezvous with USNS BIG HORN (T-AO-198)
19  DTE CIWS pacfire
    MISSILEX
20  CIWS pacfire
21  AN David Wilson died in a one vehicle accident in hangar bay
    Rendezvous with USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6)
23  EW jamming Lear training
24  Memorial service for AN David Wilson
26  Rendezvous with USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6)
30  VS-31 Change of Command

**December 2003**

01-04 Key West port call
10  Rendezvous with USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6) “Fly Alongside”
10-11 COMNAVAIRLANT DV visit
13 Underway replenishment with USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6)

14 Began ORSE inspection

18 Completed ORSE inspection
Underway replenishment with USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6)

19 Inport Naval Station Norfolk Pier 14S after 40 days at sea for COMPTUEX
Begin POM periods to Jan. 8, 2004
CVW-7 offload