



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73)
FPO AE 09560-2873

5750
Ser 04/0233
4 Apr 04


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.

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) LEADERSHIP

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| CAPT Martin J. Erdossy | Commanding Officer |
| CAPT Dennis G. Watson | Executive Officer |
| CAPT Dee L. Mewbourne | Executive Officer |
| CAPT Michael D. Davis | Reactor Officer |
| CAPT Thomas S. Rowden | Reactor Officer |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Chaplain |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Engineering |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Engineering |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Air |
| CAPT John C. McCabe II | Air |
| CDR [REDACTED], MC | Medical |
| CDR [REDACTED], MC | Medical |
| CDR [REDACTED], DC | Dental |
| CDR [REDACTED], DC | Dental |
| CDR [REDACTED] | AIMD |
| CDR [REDACTED] | AIMD |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Navigator |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Navigator |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Weapons |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Weapons |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Supply |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Supply |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Operations |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Safety |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Safety |
| CDR [REDACTED] | Combat Systems |
| LCDR [REDACTED] | Deck |
| LCDR [REDACTED] | Deck |
| LCDR [REDACTED] | Training |
| LCDR [REDACTED] | Training |
| LCDR [REDACTED] | Legal |
| LCDR [REDACTED] | Administration |

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) [REDACTED] 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 Standown
- 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
JTTEX 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

- 11 Columbian Coast Guard vessel ARC VALLE DE CAUCA visit
- 15 FACSFAC Presail
- 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