

USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77)

THE AVENGER

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November 2011



THIS MONTH:

GHWB advancement | Thanksgiving dinner | Marseille port visit

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From the Command Master Chief



Greetings GHWB family and friends,

During the past month, your Sailors have done an outstanding job serving our country with pride and courage as we wrapped up combat operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.

Over the last five months, the flight deck of George H.W. Bush launched more than 2,200 sorties totaling in excess of 12,300 flight hours in direct support of Operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn, providing air support to our combat forces on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Last month was very dynamic for the crew. Before November even started, 26 of

your Sailors participated in the 36th Marine Corps Marathon through the Marine Corps Marathon Forward program. The marathon, a 26.2 mile race usually held in Washington D.C., was first offered to forward-deployed service members in 2006 through Marine Corps Marathon Forward. Although the participants didn't get to experience the thrill of running through Arlington National Cemetery, the National Mall and the Marine Corps War Memorial, they still enjoyed the bragging rights of completing a marathon while deployed in the Arabian Gulf. Each finisher received a Marine Corps Marathon finisher's medal.

In November, George H.W. Bush hosted our first-ever Captain's Cup, a competition to determine the most athletically dominant department. Approximately 400 Sailors from 13 departments participated in the events to determine who would reign supreme. Events included the 100-yard dash, mile-and-a-half run, tug-of-war, sit-up, push-up, and cycling competitions. At the end of the competition, the points were tallied to reveal Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9, "The Might Tridents," were victorious! Our Deck Department finished strong in second place and Operations Department completed the hat-trick, placing third.

I am certain your Sailors would have loved nothing more than to spend Thanksgiving with you; however, since that wasn't possible, we came together as a big family and celebrated Thanksgiving on board. Our Culinary Specialists prepared 400 pounds of ham, 50 whole turkeys,

nine large beef roasts and eight whole pigs. In addition to the various meats, the crew enjoyed many holiday favorites including 150 pounds of cranberry sauce, green-bean casserole, dressing, and sweet potatoes. For dessert we enjoyed 300 pumpkin, lemon meringue, apple, blueberry, cherry, Boston crême pies and assorted cakes and cheesecakes.

To finish the month, all enjoyed a port visit to the beautiful city of Marseille, France. The crew took in the sights, toured many museums and national monuments, and participated in ten different community relations events. Everyone made the most of our port visit and a significant number of Sailors were able to see Paris. Rarely does an aircraft carrier have the opportunity to visit London, Rome and Paris, three of the most popular cities in Europe, during one deployment.

The highlight of deployment came when we received our Navy-wide advancement results and experienced record-breaking levels by advancing 432 of our Sailors to the ranks of first, second and third class petty officers!

As deployment draws to a close, these Sailors have sacrificed much and asked for very little in return. Their tireless effort and dedication made the first operational combat deployment of our Navy's newest aircraft carrier an overwhelming success. The crew aboard George H.W. Bush has set the standard for the Fleet to follow! I am confident that we will continue to excel and succeed in all endeavors. †

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM SEPTEMBER:

- Successful port visit to Marseille, France
- 26 Sailors participated in the Marine Corps Marathon
- Steak Team Mission delivered steaks to the crew
- End of operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations
- Conducted a successful Thanksgiving dinner
- 432 Sailors advanced to the ranks of E-6 to E-4
- Completion of the ship's first-ever Captain's Cup

Sincerely,

CMDCM(SW/AW) Dave Colton
Command Master Chief



On the cover:

George H.W. Bush passes under the Friendship Bridge while transiting the Suez Canal. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.

Steaks



Story by MC3 Derrik Noack
Layout by MC3 (SW/AW) Greg Wilhelm
and MC3 Derrik Noack

from the Lone Star State

Sailors aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) enjoyed made-to-order steaks provided by the Steak Team Mission during a steel beach picnic on the ship's flight deck Nov. 2.

Steak Team Mission has grilled sirloins for troops all over the world since the organization was founded in 2002 by Harvey Gough, who once ran eight restaurants in Dallas. Gough created Steak Team Mission after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to show his support for military members. And as the Steak Team Mission approaches its 10-year anniversary, it shows no signs of slowing down.

"Just this year we served steak dinners for troops in Honduras, Afghanistan, Korea, Fort Sam Houston and now George H.W. Bush," said Ellen Manzo, a member of the Steak Team Mission.

The non-profit, Dallas-based organization brought their Texas heat to the ship's crew, who devoured the 4,700 steaks and jalapeno-stuffed side dishes – flown all the way from the United States.

"They really cooked up some high-quality steaks for us," said Aviation Electrician's Mate Airman Yunmie Lee, assigned to Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department's IM-3 division. "I think it was an ingenious way to show their appreciation."

No steak lunch is complete without a picnic. Sailors fanned out across the flight deck to soak

up the sun and play games like hacky sack, golf and baseball. "I love the atmosphere up here," said Boatswain's Mate Seaman Danielle Koerber, assigned to Deck Department's 1st division. "The weather is perfect for a picnic."

Although the day was all about Sailors taking a break and eating flame-grilled steaks, Steak Team Mission members also appreciated all that they took in during their time aboard the ship.

"I feel rewarded after seeing the ship and hearing about the different jobs everyone has," said Manzo. "Sailors here have been very appreciative, and it's definitely a two-way street. I appreciate and admire them for all they do."

Brock Compton, a member of the Steak Team Mission, said he was thankful for the opportunity to show his support and observe the camaraderie between Sailors.

"There is a family-like bond that exists between Sailors," said Compton. "It's been great to witness the way everyone looks out for one another."

Steak Team Mission's goal during their time on the ship was to boost the morale of the crew and give them an unforgettable experience – a goal that was clearly accomplished.

"These people came all this way on their own dime to serve us steak," said Electronics Technician 2nd Class Naomi Morgan assigned to Reactor Department's Control division. "That doesn't happen often. I'll definitely remember today as one of the highlights of this deployment." †



1. Sailors line up for a steak provided by the Dallas-based organization, Steak Team Mission, during a steel beach picnic. Photo by MC3(SW) Leonard H. Adams.
2. Chris Jones, a member of the Steak Team Mission, serves appetizers during a steel beach picnic. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.
3. Sailors enjoy steak and other food provided by Steak Team Mission during a steel beach picnic. Photo by MCSN(SW) Jessica Echerrri.
4. Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 3rd Class Preston A. Monah plays hacky sack during a steel beach picnic. Photo by MCSA(SW/AW) Brian Read Castillo.



George H.W. Bush Sailors Break Advancement Record

Story by MCCS(SW/AW) Misty Trent. Layout by MC3(SW/AW) Greg Wilhelmi



USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) produced record-breaking promotion numbers with the release of the results from the Fall 2011 Navy-wide Advancement Exam, Nov. 18.

The Navy's newest aircraft carrier, which is wrapping up its first operational deployment, advanced 432 Sailors to First, Second and Third Class Petty Officer, nearly 200 more than promoted off the previous cycle. In addition to breaking the ship's own advancement record, George H.W. Bush also experienced the highest promotion of all carriers in the past seven years with not only its total number but also its 30.3% advancement rate.

"Our Sailors truly connected the importance of studying to the results of Perform-to-Serve and the Enlisted Retention Boards," said Command Master Chief David Colton. "We provided the avenue through some creative training and incentive programs, but our Sailors were the ones who really put forth the time and effort to set themselves up for success."

One big incentive came in the form of a personal challenge from the ship's commanding officer, Capt. Brian "Lex" Luther. More than 240 Sailors advanced off the Spring 2011 exam, and during an all hands call, Luther offered a 96-hour special liberty if at least 275 Sailors advanced during the next cycle.

To meet that goal, members of the crew took advantage of down time on deployment to study for the fall exam, and the ship also offered additional opportunities to study. One command program, "Professional Pursuit," focused on Professional Military Knowledge (PMK) topics, to include Enlisted Surface and Aviation Warfare Specialist material, as well as damage control, 3M, and Navy history. Initiated by the ship's Training department and run by the First Class Petty Officers' Association, the program was a combination board game and television game show in which Sailors competed in teams of five on the ship's mess decks in elimination-style rounds. Competitors won prizes ranging from head-of-the-line passes to free drinks at the ship's coffee bar, Lonestar Café. Each winning week's winning team carried the Professional Pursuit trophy to their departmental spaces.

"I knew most of the PMK questions on the test because of Professional Pursuit," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Airman Vanessa Pierson of Air department, who was selected for advancement to Third Class Petty Officer. "It was fun and rewarding, not only because of how it helped me on the advancement exam, but because my team won the overall competition, we'll be some of the first Sailors to get off the ship when we return from deployment."

In addition to the challenge from the captain and unique study programs, Colton also credited leadership on the deckplates for creating an environment focused on success. For example, the ship's Legal department enjoyed 75 percent advancement, with three of four Sailors promoting. Chief Legalman James Connor credited his Sailors' performance to a tailored training program, rotating his personnel through various positions throughout the department, and a sense of personal ownership.

"We created a focused training plan geared towards the bibliographies," Connor said. "My Sailors implemented the Legalman 52-week training program, and they took ownership over their training topics and conducted outstanding training that benefited each of them."

The ship's educational services office (ESO) also played a critical role in the command's success. ESO verified nearly 1,550 service records and four electronic databases to ensure the flawless administration and processing of each exam. As a result, the Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center reported zero exam discrepancies for the ship. According to educational services officer Lt. j.g. Aquichia Brown, advancement to E-6 Navy-wide was 10.3 percent from the Fall cycle, and USS George H.W. Bush more than doubled it with 23.9 percent promoting to First Class Petty Officer.

"The crew looked around to see what they could do better and implemented tools such as Professional Pursuit, PMK training, and leadership group training," said Brown. "Of course, the dedication of Sailors applying themselves to study played the biggest part in all of this." †



Above: Executive Officer Capt. William P. Pennington proctors the E5 Navy-wide advancement exam on the mess decks. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jessica Echerri. **Top left:** Sailors take the E5 Navy-wide advancement exam on the mess decks. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jessica Echerri. **Bottom left:** The Professional Pursuit trophy sits on a table during a game. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Michael Smevog. **Bottom right:** Team "Pri Fly" raises their hands to answer a question during a Professional Pursuit game. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Michael Smevog.

RAS: Storing the Goods

Story and Layout by EM3 Jonhda Starling

Sailors aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) muster early in the morning in the hangar bay to prepare for another day of work. This day, however, aircraft and equipment are repositioned and chained up on the left side of the hangar bay. Caution tape marks an isle through the center, dividing the bay into sections from forward to aft. Today is the ship's last Replenishment-At-Sea (RAS).

ARAS consists of receiving and stowing supplies such as food, tools, parts and other equipment the ship needs in order to conduct its mission, and it's up to the ship's Supply Department to work as a unit, and come up with a coordinated method of distributing items from the flight deck to the storage areas.

On the flight deck, the cargo is strapped onto pallets and wrapped in nets as MH-

60S Sea Hawks fly to transport the supplies from USNS Wally Schirra (T-AKE 8) and USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195) to the flight deck of George H.W. Bush in a process known as Vertical Replenishment (VERTREP). The items are then placed on the aircraft elevators and lowered to the hangar deck.

Sailors then use forklifts and pallet jacks to transfer the palletized items off the aircraft elevators into the hangar bay, right of the taped off areas. Items are opened and hand-passed as Sailors make a serpentine trail from the hangar bay, through the passageways of the mess decks, to the freezers and storage facilities a few decks down.

However, each item must be accounted for before it can be stowed.

Culinary Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Vakeisha Meigs checks off a list

of items received as the working party taxis the items around in the hangar bay.

"We generally order items by necessity or special occasion," Meigs said. "They are ordered in a 14-day cycle. The goal is to have enough food and supplies for 30 days or more."

Hand passing items through the lower decks requires numerous personnel from various departments to work side-by-side in what is known as a working party.

Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Willie Pearson knows where each item is supposed to be stored. His job is to muster the working party and make sure the goods are stored properly. He sends one group to hangar bay three to move frozen goods, and one to hangar bay two to stow canned and dry goods.

"We need to have approximately 200 personnel on the working party to make this evolution happen," Pearson said.

Items must be taken aboard in a certain order to preserve their condition. Frozen items, such as meat and ice cream, are usually the first items stowed. Afterwards, the frozen vegetables and produce, followed by canned and dried foods.

Throughout the hangar bay, conveyors and cargo elevators can be

used to move items to assist the working party in order to distribute items more productively.

"The conveyors are faster and more convenient to work with than the elevators," said Aviation Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Edwin Flores, who is currently on temporary assigned duty with Supply. "Conveyors move in a constant cycle. The elevators, on the other hand, require Sailors to wait until the elevator is loaded or unloaded before continuing their work."

After the process of storing items is over, Pearson turns over clean-up responsibilities to the night shift. Sailors band pallets together and stack them on top of each other. Then, with the assistance of waste management personnel, the trash is separated and thrown away.

George H.W. Bush received 280 to 500 pallets of goods per week during this deployment — totaling to more than 9,800 pallets of items.

Ultimately, it was all about teamwork and retrieving the necessities for George H.W. Bush to carry on its mission.

"Everyone has put forth their effort these past seven months. We all have worked together as a team to get everything put away," said Meigs. "Now that RAS is over, it's time to relax and go home, regroup and recharge." †

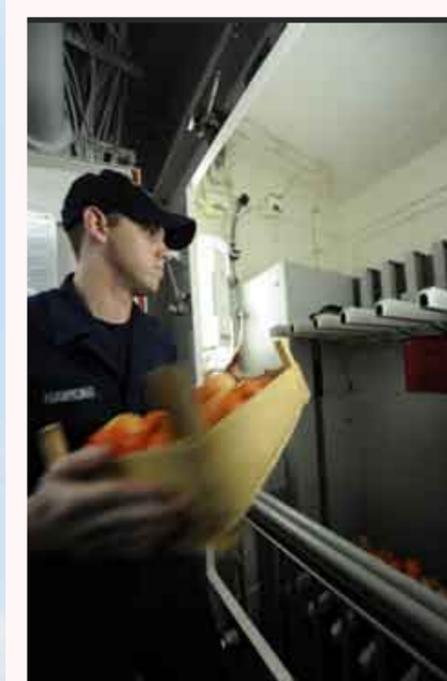


Top: Logistics Specialist Seaman Recruit Shane M. Power bans a stack of empty pallets and crimps the bans together. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Brian Read Castillo.

Middle left: Damage Controlman Fireman Colter G. Hawkins stacks crates of fruit in the vertical conveyor system. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Brian Read Castillo.

Middle right: Aviation Boatwain's Mate (Equipment) Airman (AW) Rachel A. LaPlant unpacks and sorts mail in the hangar bay. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.

Bottom: A working party forms a line in the hangar bay to pass food and other goods to designated areas. Photo by EM3 Jonhda Starling.



An MH-60S Sea Hawk, assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat (HSC) 9, transfers cargo to George H.W. Bush using VERTREP. Photo by MC3(SW/AW) Leonard Adams.



Captain's Cup

Story by MCSA Cody A. Ford
Layout by MC3(SW/AW) Greg Wilhelmi



The hangar deck of USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) was abuzz with excitement Nov. 16. Sailors cheered as their shipmates hit the deck in the push-up position. It was the beginning of the Captain's Cup, a competition to determine the most athletically dominant department, and the competitors needed all the motivation they could get.

The Captain's Cup was organized by Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Cynthia M. VanHorn of Deck Department, who organized a similar event at her last command in Naval Station Norfolk, Va.

"At my last command it was very successful and it was a great way to raise Sailors' morale," said VanHorn.

Approximately 400 Sailors from 13 departments participated in the events to determine who would reign supreme. Events included the 100-yard dash, mile-and-a-half run, tug-of-war, and sit-up, push-up, and cycling competitions.

First, second, and third place finishers of each event received individual certificates and had their photo taken with Capt. Brian E. Luther, the ship's Commanding Officer. Place finishers also earned points for their respective departments.

"The Captain's Cup definitely shows people's progress since the beginning of deployment," said Naval Air Crewman 2nd Class Cory R. Hedges, of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9. "It also brings us all together before we go home."

At the end of the competition the points were tallied to reveal HSC 9 as the winner. Deck Department finished in second place and Operations Department finished third. The top three departments received a Captain's Cup plaque, not to mention bragging rights.

"We're grateful for the opportunity to participate. There was a lot of stiff competition," said Cmdr. Brian Pummill, Commanding Officer of HSC-9. "I'm proud of my people. It reflects their hard work, whether it's working on helicopters or participating in a ship-sponsored competition."

In addition to the Captain's Cup, Sailors were given the opportunity to run in the Turkey Trot 5K, organized by the ship's First Class Petty Officer Association (FCPOA).

By charging an entrance fee of \$10 per runner, the FCPOA raised enough money to purchase gift



cards for junior enlisted Sailors with children born during deployment, said Legalman 1st Class (SW) Jonathan D. High of Legal Department.

"It feels good to give something back," said High. "The junior Sailors on board work extremely hard every day without question. It is definitely nice to put something together to support and help them out for a change."

Sailors also took the opportunity to push themselves to the peak of their fitness.

"The money was going to a good cause and I wanted to test my physical limits," Electronics Technician 1st Class (SW) Brittany N. Pronia of Reactor Department.

In the end, the day was about taking a break from the stresses of deployment, participating in friendly competition and contributing to a good cause.

"It's all about fun in the sun, getting out of the norm and helping raise money for some junior Sailors," said High. †

1. Sailors compete in a tug-of-war competition. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.
2. Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Delgado performs a pull up during the pull up event. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.
3. Sailors participate in the sit-up event. Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall.
4. Aviation Support Equipment Technician 3rd Class Antonio Escobedo, right, and Aviation Support Equipment Technician Airman Chris Jimenez participate in the mile and a half run. Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall.
5. Aviation Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Keith A. Benjamin finishes a bike race. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.
6. Machinist's Mate Fireman Tanner Parenteau participates in the push up event. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Brian ReadCastillo.



GHWB Celebrates Thanksgiving

Story by MC3 Derrick Noack
Layout by MCSA Cody A. Ford

Sailors were treated to an all-American Thanksgiving meal aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), Nov. 24, 2011.

No oven was left cold as 400 pounds of ham, 50 whole turkeys, nine large beef roasts and eight whole pigs cooked throughout the day. In addition to the various meats, the crew of nearly 4,000 was treated to many holiday favorites including 150 pounds of cranberry sauce, green-bean casserole, dressing, and sweet potatoes. Nearly 300 pumpkin, lemon meringue, apple, blueberry, cherry and Boston crême pies, as well as numerous cakes and cheesecakes were baked for the crew.

“We had 90 Sailors prepping, cooking, and baking for nearly 12 hours to make this meal a success,” said Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW/SCW) Patricia Alexander.

Everyone’s hard work did not go unnoticed. The aromas alone were enough to jog childhood memories.

“Smelling all of the food throughout the ship reminds me of home,” said Seaman (SW) Julie Nguyen. “My mom would always be in the kitchen when we woke up Thanksgiving morning, and smelling her cooking would get me and my brother excited. It’s like that here. I couldn’t wait for chow to open.”

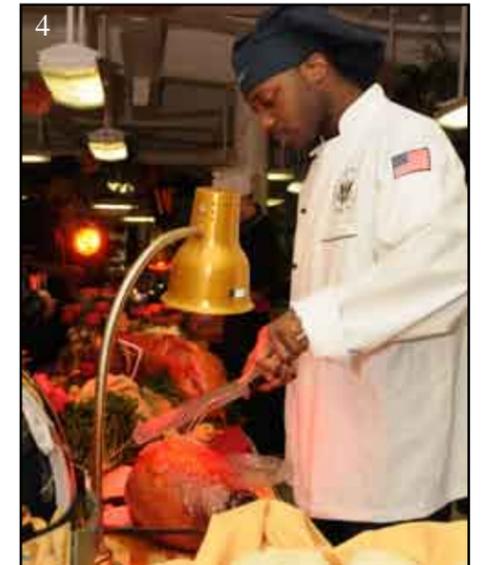
Crewmembers filled the mess decks, which were adorned with orange tablecloths and festive decorations hung from the ceiling. Officers served food and passed out dessert to enlisted personnel.

“I thought it was cool that the commanding officer served me dinner,” said Electrician’s Mate Seaman Yuming Ma.

For many young Sailors, this Thanksgiving was their first holiday away from home, but they didn’t let that put a damper on their spirit.

“At first the thought of spending Thanksgiving out at sea was discouraging,” said Culinary Specialist Seaman Melanie Washington. “It’s not as bad as I thought it would be. I had a lot of fun cooking and making a mess in the kitchen.”

Most American families gather around the dining table to catch up with one another on Thanksgiving, and for some Sailors, the same atmosphere



remained even thousands of miles away from home.

“I’ve become really close to my friends on the ship these past six months,” said Religious Programs Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Daniel AriasGarcia. “They have become family to me, and for them I am thankful.”

The commanding officer, Capt. Brian “Lex” Luther, addressed the crew and took a moment to share what he was thankful for.

“Today, I give thanks for the courage of your service throughout our workups and deployment,” Luther said. “Day or night, rain or shine, regardless of the weather or seas, there has not been a day when you haven’t given your all.” †



1. Aviation Ordnanceman Airman William Shaw pours gravy on his mashed potatoes. Photo by EM3 Johnda Starling.

2. Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Matthew J. McQuown serves a slice of ham to Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Jennifer C. Rogalski. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Molly Treece.

3. Aviation Support Equipment Technician Airman Christian S. Lazenbyblanton reads the Thanksgiving program on the mess decks. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Molly Treece.

4. Culinary Specialist Seaman Aaron J. Hammond slices a ham. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Molly Treece.

5. Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Charles Masten carves a turkey. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Molly Treece.

6. Cmdr. Phillip W. Heberer serves pie. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Molly Treece.

Au

Revoir

France!

Layout by MCSN Kevin J. Steinberg



Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho



Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jennifer Jaqua

Top: Sailors pose for a photo while on liberty in France.
Middle: The bust of Antinous at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France.
Bottom: Notre Dame.



Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Joshua Horton

1) A religious artifact is displayed at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. 2) Sailors of USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) pose for a photo after a basketball game during a community relations (COMREL) project. 3) A colorful flower shop along a sidewalk in France. 4) The Eiffel Tower. 5) Commanding Officer Capt. Brian Luther, left, and Carrier Strike Group 2 Commander Rear Adm. Nora Tyson, right, cut a cake with a member of the French navy during a reception ceremony. 6) George H.W. Bush is moored in Marseille, France. 7) Sailors play volleyball during a COMREL project. 8) Candles in the Notre Dame cathedral. 9) Sailors take part in a wine tasting tour. 10) Paris' Statue of Liberty, a replica of New York's Statue of Liberty, stands along the Seine River.

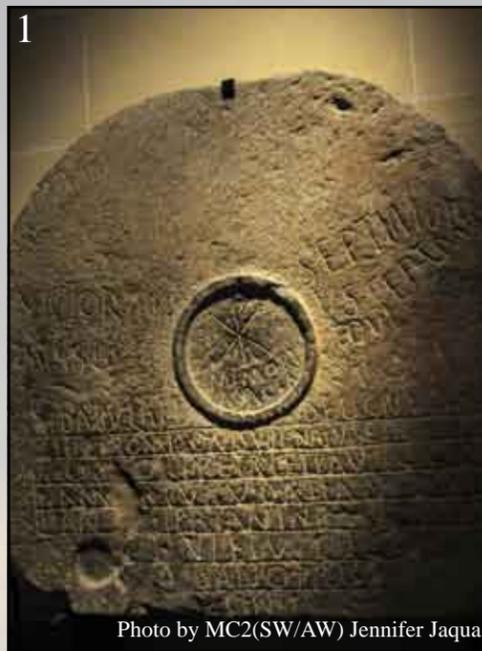


Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jennifer Jaqua



Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Molly Treece

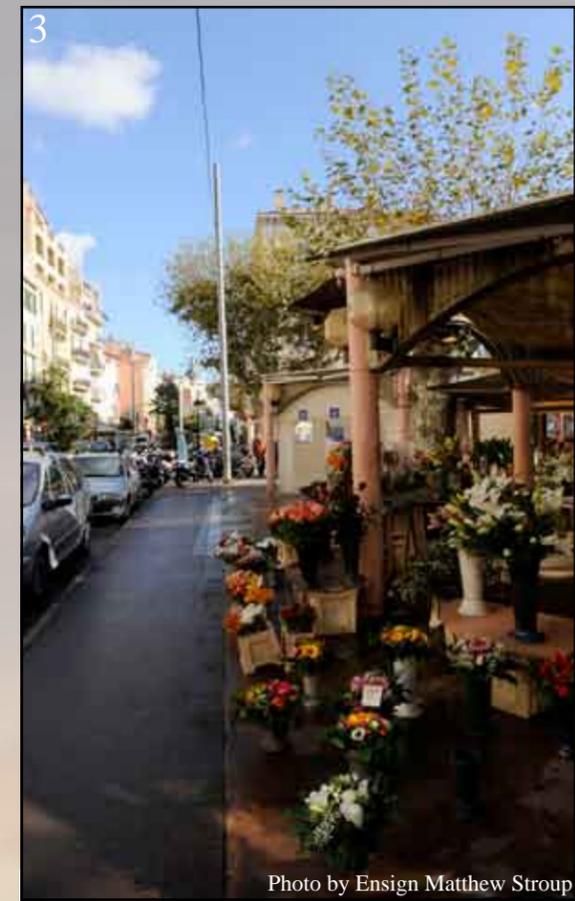


Photo by Ensign Matthew Stroup



Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho



Photo by MCSN Kevin Steinberg



Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall



Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Molly Treece



Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall



Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho



Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Joshua Horton



Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho



Photo by MCSN Kevin Steinberg

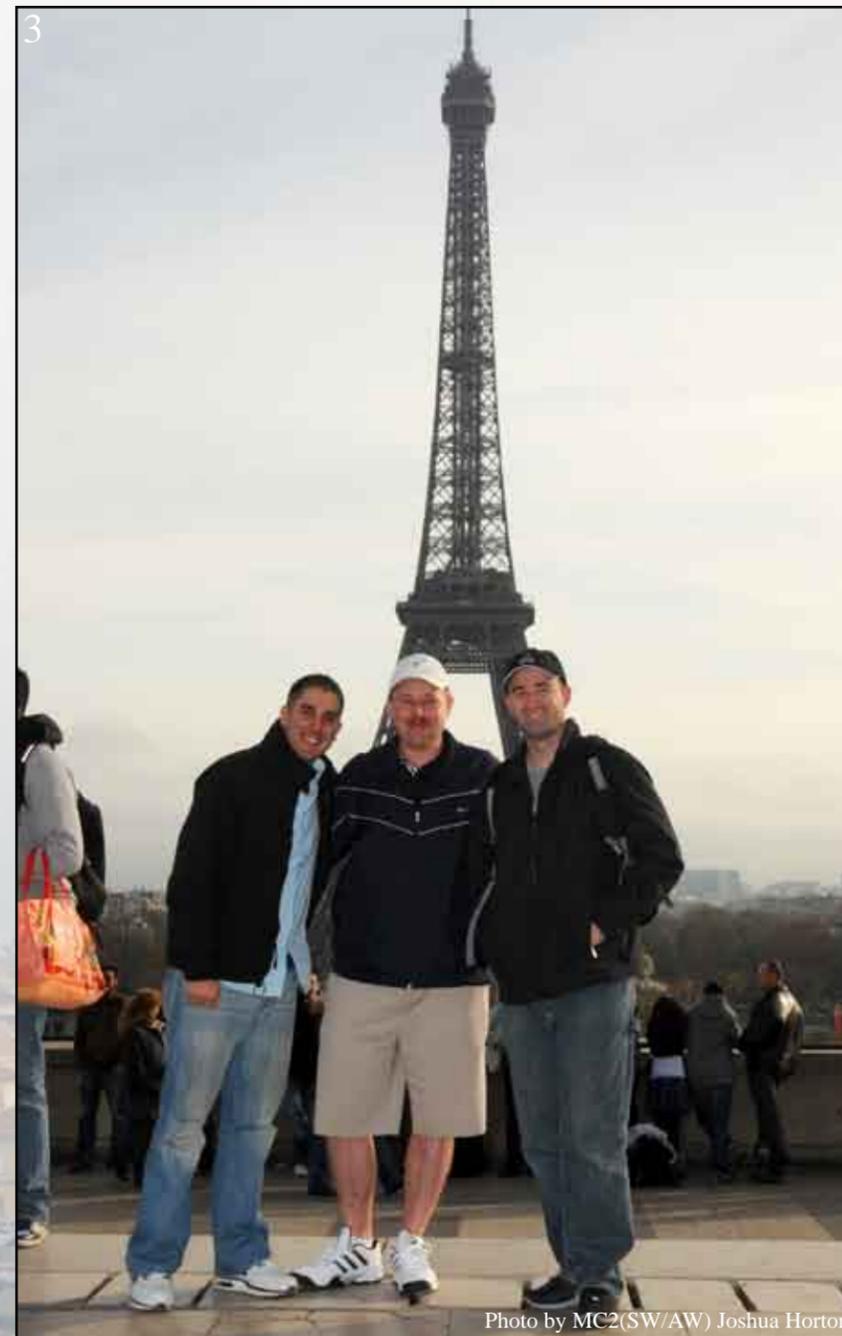


Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Joshua Horton

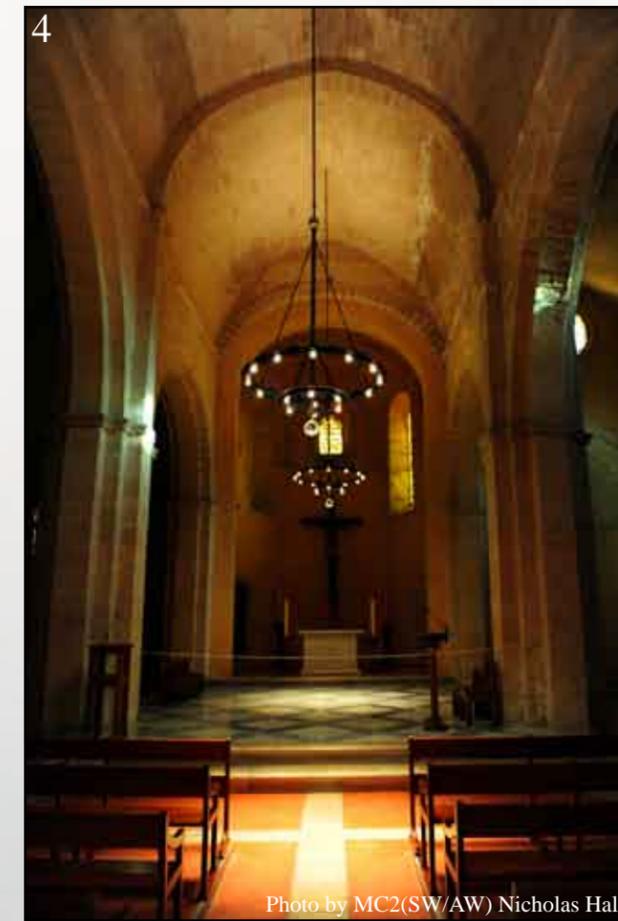


Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall



Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Joshua Horton

1) Seaman Julie Nguyen enjoys liberty in Paris. 2) Commanding Officer Capt. Brian Luther gives an interview for news media before a reception ceremony aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77). 3) Logistics Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Adam Ardire, left, Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) (AW/SW) Gary Moore, middle, and Scott Benning, the ship's Fit Boss, stand in front of the Eiffel Tower. 4) An altar and pews in Paris' Notre Dame cathedral. 5) A ferris wheel and the Concord in Paris. 6) The Mona Lisa is displayed at the Louvre in Paris. 7) From left to right: Master Chief Machinist's Mate Andrew Keyes, Chief Ship's Serviceman Frederick Burgess, Senior Chief Machinist's Mate Milton McDonald, Senior Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) James Magee and Senior Chief Ship's Serviceman Troy Palmer at the reception aboard George H.W. Bush. 8) A statue decorates one of the streets of Paris.



Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho



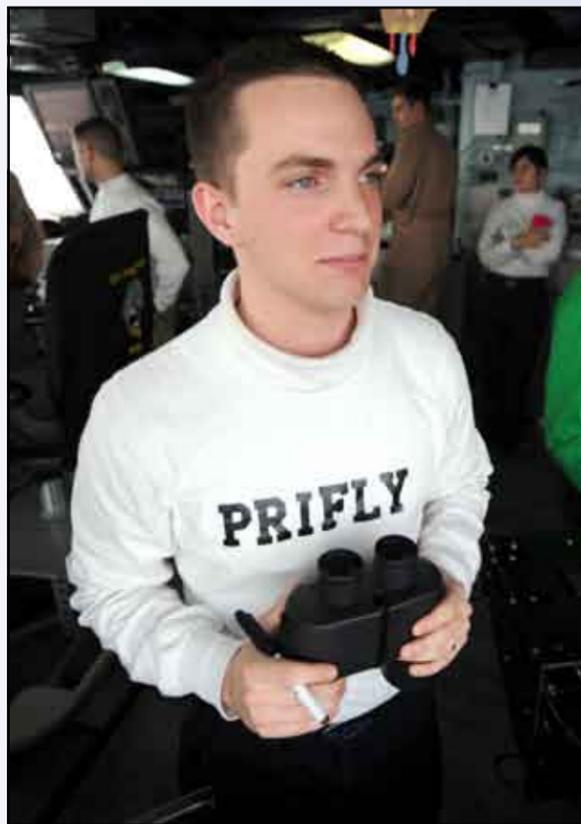
Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Joshua Horton



Photo by MCSN Kevin Steinberg

Pursuit of Excellence

Story and photos by MCSN Kevin J. Steinberg. Layout by MC3(SW/AW) Greg Wilhelmi and MCSN Kevin J. Steinberg



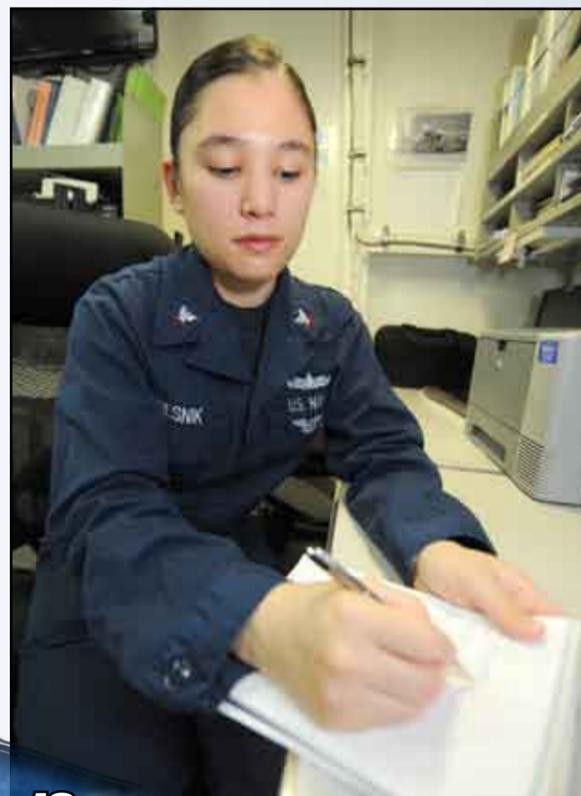
Blue Jacket of the Quarter

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Airman (AW/SW) David A. Price, from Air Department's V-5 division, is a native of Lafayette, La., and joined the Navy two years ago. Price said his father was in the Air Force as an electronics technician and his grandfather was a colonel in the Army for 20 years. Those figures in his life inspired Price to aspire to be in the military since he was a kid.

"He's a phenomenal Sailor, hard charger and one of the best," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 1st Class (AW/SW) Jamorn D. Driver, Leading Petty Officer for V-5 division.

His most memorable moment on the ship was meeting the ship's namesake during a visit to his division and shaking his hand. "It was the first President I had ever met," said Price. "It was an exciting experience I will never forget."

Price's tips for success are to work hard, be dedicated and always do what's right even when it is hard.



Petty Officer of the Quarter

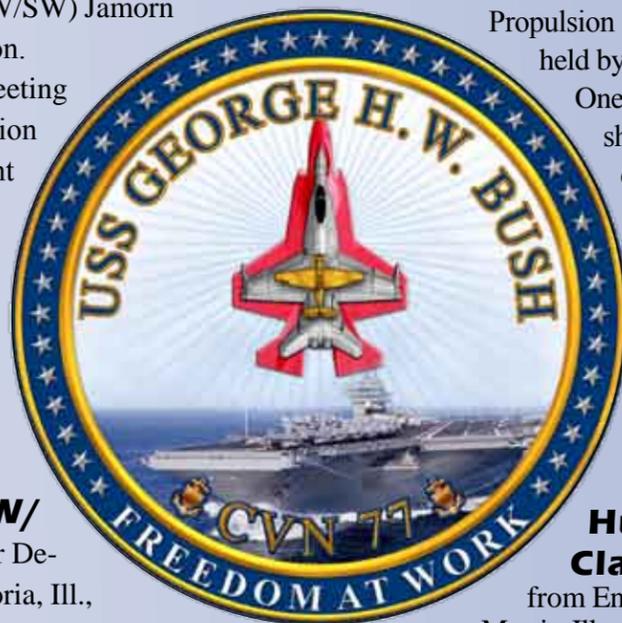
Electrician's Mate 3rd Class (SW/AW) Rebecca J. Resnik, from Reactor Department's Electrical division, is a native of Peoria, Ill., and joined the Navy four and a half years ago. She was inspired to join the Navy because her father, whom she admires, was in the United States Marine Corps.

"I grew up being raised in a military lifestyle and I always wanted to emulate my father and follow in his footsteps," said Resnik.

"EM3 Resnik is one of the hardest working Sailors I have met," said Master Chief Electrician's Mate (SW/AW) Brian C. Legg, Leading Chief Petty Officer for Electrical division. "She constantly takes on new jobs and challenges."

Resnik said one of her most cherished accomplishments during her time on the ship was earning her qualification as a Load Dispatcher. It brought her great satisfaction because it took her two years of studying, and because she is one of only two Third Classes to have the qualification.

According to Resnik, succeeding in the Navy is about paying attention and always being respectful.



Junior Sailor of the Quarter

Electrician's Mate 2nd Class (SW/AW) Nancy E. Huffman, from Reactor Department's Electrical division, is a native of Charlotte, N.C., and joined the Navy six years ago. She joined the Navy to help pay for college and is pursuing a degree online in Nuclear Engineering Technologies from Excelsior University.

"She's an outstanding Sailor and has qualifications far above her peers," said Lt. David S. Halliwell, Quality Assurance Officer. "I couldn't run my office without her."

She is the Assistant Quality Assurance Officer and is also a qualified Propulsion Plant Watch Supervisor, a qualification that is only held by three other Second Classes on the ship.

One of her most treasured memories on the ship is when she earned her qualification for Load Dispatcher. According to Huffman, qualifying for Load Dispatcher is the hardest qualification she had ever achieved. Her tips for success are to get as many qualifications possible.

"The more you do, the more you learn," said Huffman. "Do all you can because you never know what will help you."

Senior Sailor of the Quarter

Hull Maintenance Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Daniel D. Gibbs,

from Engineering Department's Repair division, is a native of Morris, Ill., and joined the Navy eight years ago. He was inspired to join the military because he had a brother in the Army who was medically discharged in boot camp, and another brother who was in the Air Force for four years. Gibbs said joining was always in the back of his mind growing up because of his brothers' military experience.

"He's an exceptional First Class," said Chief Machinery Repairman (SW/AW) Henry N. Freeman, Repair division Leading Chief Petty Officer. "He's constantly finding ways to better the department through training and being a mentor."

Gibbs also performs the duties of a Command Non-Destructive Testing Examiner, a position typically performed by a Chief Petty Officer.

His most memorable moment on the ship was trouble shooting the Vacuum Collection, Holding and Transfer (VCHT) system for the first time during sea trials. George H.W. Bush is the first aircraft carrier to use the VCHT system and there was little to refer to for trouble shooting efforts. The sea trials became memorable because of the fixes they had to do through trial and error.

"We were putting in about 18-hour workdays," said Gibbs. Gibbs' advice for success is to find a good mentor and listen to them.



MARINE CORPS MARATHON FORWARD FINISHERS

Story and layout by MC3(SW/AW) Greg Wilhelmi

MARINE CORPS MARATHON FORWARD

Twenty-six Sailors currently deployed aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) participated in the 36th Marine Corps Marathon Oct. 30 through the Marine Corps Marathon Forward program.

The Marine Corps Marathon, or “The People’s Marathon,” is a 26.2-mile race in Washington, D.C. that began on Nov. 7, 1976. The Marine Corps Marathon Forward program began in 2006 to offer forward-deployed service members a chance to participate.

Capt. Brian E. Luther, the ship’s Commanding Officer, came up with the idea to run the marathon on the ship’s treadmills. He worked with the ship’s “Fun Boss,” Joshua Watson, and the ship’s “Fit Boss,” Anthony Benning, to coordinate the event through Marine Corps Marathon Forward. Watson, Benning, and their teams were also in charge of making sure the treadmills could withstand the work load of three marathons each in one day.

“The whole team effort made everything work so well,” said Watson.

Due to the limited number of treadmills on board the ship, Watson split the runners into three groups to run at three different times throughout the day.

“I had never run a marathon before now,” Aviation Electrician’s Mate 2nd Class (AW) Steven T. Rohrbach. “The fact that it was while I was deployed is just a plus.”

In May, some of the Sailors took the opportunity to run in the Malvern Half Marathon during a port visit in Portsmouth, England. Doubling that 13.1 mile effort, and doing it on a treadmill, is not an easy task. However, a few of the Marine Corps Marathon Forward participants looked forward to the opportunity to complete both a half-marathon and a marathon while on deployment.

1. Lt. j.g. John Gnik, AIMD, 3:23:18
2. Ensign Greg Jones, VFA-31, 3:33:36
3. AWRC Mangai HoSang, HSC-9, 3:33:41
4. MCSN Molly Treece, Media Department, 3:36:37
5. AD1 Jonathan Fischer, AIMD, 3:39:21
6. AE2 Andrew Bredestege, VFA-31, 3:48:53
7. AVCM Stephen Vandergriff, AIMD, 3:49:14
8. Lt. Ryan Stickel, Supply Department, 3:52:40
9. Ensign Matthew Stroup, Media Department, 3:58:52
10. Lt. Brandon Heck, Health Services, 4:14:24

11. AE2 Steven Rohrbach, VFA-213, 4:16:39
12. Cmdr. Joshua Himes, CSG2, 4:22:14
13. Ensign Rebecca Anderson, VFA-213, 4:27:21
14. Lt. Cmdr. David Tulowiecki, Reactor Department, 4:43:20
15. ABH3 Hans Wiedenhofer, Security Department, 4:45:14
16. EM3 Anthony McCabe, Engineering Department, 4:56:38
17. EMFN Tyler Neal, Engineering Department, 4:56:50
18. Capt. Brian Luther, Commanding Officer, USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) 4:57:19
19. Lt. Monica Frey,

- Supply Department, 5:06:54
20. Lt. Benjamin Anderson, Operations Department, 5:12:48
21. Lt. Cmdr. Herlinda Sweeney, Public Affairs Officer, 5:27:13
22. AM2 Jung Lee, VFA-31, 5:27:36
23. EM3 Jacob Brown, Engineering Department, 5:51:09
24. CTM1 Jason Heinen, Operations Department, 5:54:43
25. EM2 Fernando Landeros, Engineering Department, 6:07:19
26. ABHAN Mario Molnar, Air Department, 6:12:03

“To say that I ran a half-marathon and a full marathon while deployed is a pretty big accomplishment,” Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Handling) 3rd Class (AW) Hans C. Wiedenhofer, USS George H.W. Bush Air Department.

Many of the runners were not accustomed to running long distances on a treadmill. Due to the limited space for free running and the 30-minute time limit on the ship’s treadmills, the training required to complete the distance had a few runners worried about the outcome.

“I started training about three months ago,” said Ensign Gregory R. Jones, Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 31. “That last month, I couldn’t find the time to train as hard as I should have and I felt it towards the end of the race.”

Jones has run in four other Marine Corps Marathons but this was his first on a deployed aircraft carrier.

Lt. j.g. John J. Gnik, USS George H.W. Bush Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department, was the fastest runner with a time of 3:23:18.

Although the runners didn’t get to experience the thrill of running through Arlington National Cemetery, the National Mall and the Marine Corps War Memorial – more commonly referred to as the Iwo Jima Monument – Sailors still enjoyed the bragging rights of completing a marathon while deployed on an aircraft carrier in the Arabian Gulf. Each finisher received a Marine Corps Marathon finisher’s medal and a certificate for his/her achievements along with a shirt and patch.

“If there’s a marathon out there that’s worth running, it’s the Marine Corps Marathon,” said Jones. “There are many other nice marathons, but none of them are like the Marine Corps Marathon.” †



1. Lt. j.g. John J. Gnik, left, receives a medal from Joshua M. Watson, the ship’s Fun Boss, after completing the Marine Corps Marathon.

2. Capt. Brian E. Luther, Commanding Officer, USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), runs on a treadmill during the Marine Corps Marathon. Photo by MCSN K. Cecelia Engruns.

3. Ensign Gregory Jones, left, receives a medal from Watson after completing the Marine Corps Marathon.

4. Cmdr. Joshua C. Himes looks at photos of his family while running the Marine Corps Marathon.

5. Lt. Cmdr. David J. Tulowiecki participates in the Marine Corps Marathon. Photos 1, 3, 4 and 5 by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.



5th Fleet wrap-up

Story by MCCS(SW/AW) Misty Trent Layout by MC3(SW/AW) Greg Wilhelmi



Sailors maneuver an F/A-18A Hornet from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 87 on the flight deck. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.

On Nov. 11, USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) and the embarked squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) EIGHT completed flight operations in support of Operation New Dawn (OND), marking the end of the combat phase of the aircraft carrier's first operational deployment.

George H.W. Bush departed its homeport of Norfolk, Va., May 11. After enjoying liberty calls in three European ports in the Sixth Fleet area of operations (AOR), George H.W. Bush transited the Suez Canal on June 18 and entered the Fifth Fleet AOR.

Over the course of nearly five months, the flight deck of George H.W. Bush launched more than 1,750 combat sorties totaling nearly 10,200 combat flight hours in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and 460 sorties totaling nearly 2,100 hours in support of OND.

The ship and air wing's primary mission was to provide support for ground forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. and allied forces on the ground called on CVW 8 aircraft to conduct 26 "show of presence" and 191

"show of force" missions, designed to show the enemy that there are fighter aircraft in the area. According to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 87 commanding officer Cmdr. Scott Troyer, the difference is how low they provide the noise.

"Show of presence lets them know that we're in the overhead. They can hear us, and they can probably see us. Show of force is significantly lower, significantly louder, and significantly faster," Troyer explained.

The squadrons also conducted 208 missions in support of troops in contact with enemy forces. According to Troyer, a "troops in contact," or TIC, is a high priority, close air support mission where the potential to drop ordnance is elevated. The aircraft may be flying in support of a convoy or counter IED mission, but will be redirected if troops on the ground are engaged in direct fire.

"Because of our success, there are many troops on the ground – Soldiers, Marines, British soldiers – that are going to be able to go home and spend Christmas with their families," Troyer said.

USS George H.W. Bush, Carrier Air Wing EIGHT Complete Five Months of Combat Flight Ops

While in 5th Fleet, the crew of USS George H.W. Bush conducted 30,668 aircraft moves, 1,591 elevator operations, and 9,140 flight deck launches and recoveries, all the while distributing more than 31 million gallons of fuel to support flight operations, in addition to logging more total flight hours than any of the last five CVN/CVW teams deployed to the region.

"By any metric, we blew 5th Fleet's doors off," said Troyer. "We flew more operational missions than any other carrier in recent memory. We supported more TICs. Our success rate was higher than any other. It's an entire team effort to get us to that mission success."

That mission success, Troyer said, is the definition of a successful CVN/CVW team.

"It requires the guy down in the reactor to make sure we have enough steam to launch the aircraft. It requires the folks down in the mess decks to ensure the Sailors have food in their stomachs. It requires the countless number of Sailors on the flight deck, ensuring that the aircraft are in the proper position to taxi them to their catapult. It requires the ordnance personnel down in the magazines to build up the bombs," said Troyer. "The very smallest part of this is when we launch the aircraft off the tip of the carrier."

The behind-the-scenes support came from every workcenter throughout the ship. Up on the bridge, the ship's Deck and Navigation team sailed more than 50,000 nautical miles, including 13 strait transits, while Reactor and Engineering departments maintained full propulsion and electrical power below decks.

"Once that jet is airborne and the time has come to employ the ordnance and the ordnance goes high order in that exact spot and you achieve mission success, that's what this team is all about," said Troyer. †



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 2nd Class Michael A. Riter signals to a pilot of an F/A-18C Hornet, assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 15, on the flight deck. Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Tony Curtis.



An EA-18G Growler, assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 141, launches off the flight deck. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 2nd Class Steven P. Lilly signals to a C-2 Greyhound, assigned to Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40, on the flight deck. Photo by MC3(SW) Billy Ho.

A Successful Return

Pro-active
for
post-deployment

Story and layout by MCSN(SW/AW) Michael Smevog

Logistics Specialist 2nd Class James McDowell, from Canyon City, Colo., assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 139, hugs his son during a homecoming ceremony at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Sept. 9, following a seven-month deployment supporting Operation New Dawn and Enduring Freedom aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76). Photo by MC2 Nardel Gervacio.



Sailors who are looking forward to their first homecoming from their first deployment have probably already imagined the scene. For those Sailors with family in the area, there are visions of their favorite home-cooked meal, some quality time with family and friends, and well-deserved down time after a long, arduous deployment. For single Sailors, some time to themselves and the freedom to come and go as they please.

Sometimes, however, challenges await on the homefront that Sailors never expected. Children who missed their parents may be needy, there's a list of chores and errands to be run, and spouses often want some well-deserved down time of their own after running the household single-handedly during that long, arduous deployment. And for those single Sailors... now what?

To help prepare the crew for the realities of homecoming, experts from Fleet and Family Support Centers are scheduled to come aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) to educate Sailors on some common homecoming issues. "Return and Reunion" teams will provide training seminars during the ship's transit to homeport, with the goal of reducing anxiety for Sailors and providing lessons learned from others. In short – "Making a Good Thing Better," as stated on the flyers advertising their visit.

Lt. Brandon M. Heck, the ship's psychologist, explained that returning is not necessarily all that Sailors expect it to be, but taking the right steps can help ensure that it is a good experience.

"There are usually a few typical problems that we encounter when we get home," said Heck. "I think they generally arise from the fact that we're going from a very controlled environment into a completely uncontrolled environment."

On board the ship, Heck said, the laws of accountability and discipline are required and strictly enforced. There is a very clear schedule, and everyone knows the consequences if the job's not done or if the rules are broken.

"Your spouse and children, who are probably not enlisted in the military, most likely operate in a different culture," Heck said. "Expecting your family to abide by ways that you are used to from the last seven months can cause a lot of conflicts."

Heck recommends good communication to stay on the same page with loved ones. Although everyone will initially be very excited, Sailors should slowly ease back

into their duties and places in the household. Chances are, some changes have been made since the ship deployed in May. Household routines may have shifted, and responsibilities once held by the Sailor are now likely taken care of by the spouse or older children.

Cmdr. Cameron H. Fish, the ship's leading chaplain, agreed that it can take time for a Sailor to integrate back into the household. He also said that the programs are statistically proven to make positive impacts on the Sailors at commands that use them, and he knows their benefit first hand.

"I'm married. I have kids, and I've never got it quite right," Fish said. "But I know that I've always learned something new and important at these briefs."

Many of the Return and Reunion team members are retired Sailors themselves, and while Fish says they do not claim to have all of the answers, they have many years of experience dealing with the issues that tend to come up when Sailors come back from deployments. The Returning to Children, Reunion & Intimacy, and New Parents of Infants briefs provide invaluable information in a relaxed, informal atmosphere.

"The team coming out is very good," Fish said. "This is their bread and butter."

The Return and Reunion seminars have plenty of valuable information for single Sailors as well. Many Sailors have been setting aside money for a new car, and the Car Buying Strategies session will provide helpful tips on making that big purchase. In addition, the Money Management and Consumer Awareness seminar will cover credit, financial management, and resources available to help Sailors become and stay financially healthy.

Finally, single Sailors are going to discover they have a lot more time on their hands when the ship ties up pier-side at Naval Station Norfolk, and the Singles Homeward Bound session will provide information about what's available in the Hampton Roads area.

Sign-ups for the classes were taken through department and squadron chiefs, but Fish said there will be ample opportunity for Sailors to attend the classes of their choice during the transit across the Atlantic.

The crew of USS George H.W. Bush is coming to the end of a successful deployment, and has worked hard to write the first chapter in the history of the Navy's newest aircraft carrier. As the countdown to homecoming continues, the Return and Reunion briefs will help every Sailor make a good thing even better. †

December 2011 Fleet and Family Support Center Calendar

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

			1 Credit Management Oceana 2:30-4p.m. Spending Plan Oceana 1-2:30p.m.	Changes Norfolk 1:30-3:30p.m. Resume Writing Yorktown 8:30-11:30a.m.	2 Federal Employment System Newport News 8:30-11:30a.m.
5 Federal Employment System Northwest 1-4p.m. Interview Techniques Yorktown 9a.m.-noon	6 Home Ownership Oceana 8:30a.m.-2:30p.m. Career Planning Norfolk 8:30-11:30a.m. Little Creek 1-4p.m.	7 Credit Management Northwest 2:30-4p.m. Identity Theft Norfolk 1-2:30p.m. Surviving the Holidays Northwest 1-2:30p.m.	8 Changes Norfolk 1:30-3:30p.m. Resume Writing Oceana 9a.m.-noon	9 Savings and Investments Newport News 8-9:30a.m. TSP Little Creek 9:30-11a.m.	
12 Money Management Norfolk 8-4p.m. Federal Employment System - Oceana 9a.m.-noon	13 Federal Employment System Norfolk 8:30-11:30a.m.	14 Retirement Planning Norfolk 1-2:30p.m. Savings and Investments Norfolk 8:30-10a.m.	15 Changes Norfolk 1:30-3:30p.m.	16	
19 Credit Management Oceana 10-11:30a.m. Savings and Investments Oceana 8:30-10a.m.	20 Resume Writing Oceana 9a.m.-noon Interview Techniques Little Creek 9a.m.-noon	21 Car Buying Strategies Norfolk 10-11:30a.m. Credit Management Norfolk 8:30-11a.m.	22 Changes Norfolk 1:30-3:30p.m.	23	
26	27	28	29 Changes Norfolk 1:30-3:30p.m.	30 Career Planning Little Creek 9a.m.-noon Job Search Strategies Little Creek 1-4p.m.	

To Register, contact: FFSC Oceana: 443-2923, FFSC Norfolk: 444-2102,
 FFSC Yorktown: 887-4606, FFSC Northwest: 421-8770, FFSC Little Creek: 462-7563