George Washington successfully tackles INSURV

Story and photo by MC3 William Pittman, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

The U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) and its crew successfully completed and passed its Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) Aug. 10.

INSURV inspectors reported aboard *George Washington* Aug. 6 to ensure the material condition of the ship has been maintained and to observe the ship and her crew in action during various equipment demonstrations.

"We want a board of naval officers that will inspect every ship periodically, and report to the Secretary of the Navy and to Congress on the status of the ships," said Rear Adm. Robert Wray, president of INSURV. "We've been doing it for 150 years and the significance is because this is the primary means that Congress and the Secretary of the Navy use to make sure our ships work."

Established in 1868 by Congress, INSURV serves to ensure that the ships of the U.S. Navy are properly equipped for prompt, reliable, sustained mission readiness at sea.

"The main purpose of INSURV is to assess the material readiness and material condition of the fleet, and each U.S. Navy vessel is inspected roughly every five years," said Lt. j.g. Matthew Graham, from Austin, Texas, *George Washington*'s assistant INSURV coordinator. "INSURV is considered the Super Bowl of inspections. The inspectors look at 18 functional areas that reflect the mission capability of the ship, and they look to make sure the ship and its equipment are operating as designed and that the ship's material condition is up to specifications."

Senior Chief Damage Controlman Gary Wise, from Clearwater, Fla., speaks with inspectors from the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) during a test of the hangar bay aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) counter measure wash down system aboard the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Aug. 6, prior to the ship returning to Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka. INSURV inspects U.S. Navy ships every five years of a ship's life to ensure mission readiness and material conditions are up to standards.

George Washington pulled out of its forward-operating port of Fleet Activities Yokosuka for two days to conduct demonstrations on the ship's anchor, rudder and other vital equipment. Going underway allows the ship to test radar, weapons, and other certain systems efficiently and safely because operating those specific systems in port is either impractical or dangerous. The inspectors, while underway, monitored *George Washington*'s hangar bay and flight deck counter-measure wash down systems, weapons elevator firefighting systems, close-in weapons systems, anchor drop and steering tests, and launch and recovery equipment.

"The ship is too large for any one person to take care of individually; it takes all hands," said Wray. "It's important that every Sailor on the ship does his or her job to keep it a great ship. That means keeping the equipment working and making sure that your material condition is good."

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Under Lausman's command, *George Washington* completed four Selected Restricted Availabilities; an emergency sortie in response to the March 2011 Japan tsunami and distressed civilian-nuclear power plant; and conducted four patrols in the 7th Fleet area of operations while hosting numerous senior government officials, defense and military leaders, and heads of industry from more than 13 Western Pacific countries.

"*George Washington* could never hope to maintain the operational tempo or excellence without support," said Lausman. "Support is vital to our success in maintenance, operational deployments and engagements with our vital maritime partners throughout the Western Pacific."

Guest speaker Task Force Seven Zero Commander Rear Adm. J.R. Haley addressed the ceremony attendees, welcoming Fenton to the *George Washington* family.

"The test of leadership is not how well a unit responds under optimum conditions; the test of leadership is how a team responds in adversity," said Haley. "*George Washington* responded superbly at every corner where she encountered obstacles, impediments, and unplanned events."

Fenton has served as executive officer of USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) and commanded USS Denver (LPD 9). His most recent assignment was chief of staff for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

"We must simultaneously safely operate our ship while preparing for sequential maintenance periods," said Fenton. "We must continue to aggressively identify and correct all discrepancies, train for operations and for personal professional development. I am proud to be your commanding officer and am excited about joining you for the ride."

Following the ceremony, guests were invited to a reception and cake cutting in the ship's hangar bay to celebrate the change of command.

Capt. G.J. Fenton, commanding officer of the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73), speaks during a change of command ceremony in the ship's hangar bay. Fenton relieved Capt. David A. Lausman as *George Washington*'s commanding officer.