GW departs for fall deployment

By MC2(SW) John J. Mike,
***George Washington* Public Affairs**

The *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group departed Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), Oct. 6 for its second annual fall deployment in support of maritime security and to participate in ANNUALEX 2009, the premiere bilateral exercise between the U.S. and Japan.

USS George Washington (*GW*) (CVN 73) recently completed a month-long maintenance and repair period at CFAY after returning from her inaugural summer deployment Sept. 3.

"As we sail back to sea, we look forward to building upon the successes of our inaugural summer deployment fostering strong and positive relationships with numerous global maritime partners throughout the 7th Fleet area of responsibility," said *GW* Commanding Officer Capt. David A. Lausman. "The crew of the *George Washington* and Carrier Air Wing Five enjoy working closely with navies in training environments building interoperability and understanding.

"The real strength in building a true global maritime partnership is an exposure to the manner in which we each analyze and address the various security issues of the region. The unique diversity each partner brings to the problem solving table translates directly to increased security and stability throughout our critical shared maritime environment."

A key element of this year's fall patrol will be *GW* working alongside the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force as part of the largest and most complex yearly bilateral military exercise between Japan and the United States.

"Our participation in ANNUALEX is important because it enhances the interoperability between the U.S. Navy and Japan" said *GW* Operations Officer Cmdr. Anthony Calandra. "Being able to work closely with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force allows us to build closer ties with our host country while at the same time helping us to work efficiently as a team in a time of crisis."

An F/A-18C Hornet from the Golden Dragons of Strike Fighter Squadron 192 lands aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) during the first day of flight operations Oct. 6.
U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Jacob D. Moore

Lassen celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

By Lt. j.g. Douglas Gates,
***USS Lassen* Public Affairs**

The crew of the Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer *USS Lassen* (DDG 82) recognized the achievements and contributions of Hispanic Sailors during a celebration held Sep. 27 while underway.

Hospitalman Apprentice Katherine Jacquez, who participated in the ceremony, was pleased with the crew's attentiveness and interest.

"A lot of people really enjoyed themselves, and I think that they learned a lot from us," said Jacquez. "I felt proud to be able to share my heritage with my shipmates."

(Right) SKSN Andrew Navarro leads a group of sailors in the performance of traditional songs during the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration on the flight deck of *USS Lassen* (DDG 82) Sept. 27.
U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Matthew R. White

The ceremony, hosted by the *Lassen* Multicultural Committee to mark Hispanic Heritage Month, included a history of Hispanic personnel in the U.S. Navy and traditional dances to popular Hispanic music.

"It's important for everyone on the ship to be aware of the contributions and accomplishments of Hispanic Sailors," said Chief Warrant Officer Felix Cruz. "I wasn't aware of some of the great things that members of the Hispanic community have done for us."

More than 63,000 Hispanic Sailors and civilians serve in the Department of the Navy. Notable historic achievements by Hispanic personnel include David Glasglow Farragut, son of a Spanish immigrant, serving as the Navy's first admiral; Lt. Eugene Valencia, a pilot who, with 23 victories during World War II, remains the U.S. Navy's third-ranking ace of all time and honorable service by Cmdr. Everett Alvarez, the grandson of immigrants from Mexico, who became the first American prisoner of war in North Vietnam.

Hispanic Heritage Month is the period to recognize the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States and to celebrate Hispanic heritage and culture. The observation, which was started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week, was approved by President Lyndon Johnson and was later changed in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan to cover a 30-day period starting Sept. 15 and ending Oct. 15.

McCampbell assists in humanitarian mission

Story and photo by MC2 Byron C. Linder,
Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Sailors aboard guided-missile destroyer *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85) began a transit from Hong Kong to Padang, Indonesia Oct. 3 at the request of the Indonesian government, to assist in humanitarian efforts in Sumatra following two earthquakes.

McCampbell was finishing a scheduled port visit to Hong Kong, and was called to join the amphibious transport dock ship *USS Denver* (LPD 9) to provide helicopter support and deliver relief supplies to remote areas of Sumatra affected by the disasters.

McCampbell's embarked helicopter detachment, the "Warlords" of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light (HSL) 51 Detachment 5, is preparing to support the disaster relief effort during the ship's transit.

"Right now, we are preparing to provide support with cargo transportation when we get there. Our aircraft is full of equipment right now, and we are going to take some things out so we can load up the helos with as much cargo as possible," said Senior Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Chatchai Kampitak, maintenance manager for HSL 51. "We are preparing our aircraft now to make sure everything is up to support whatever missions will be called for, and to support the flight schedule."

McCampbell Commanding Officer Cmdr. Charles Johnson, expressed his appreciation for the *McCampbell* crew's support of the disaster relief effort.

"We will be able to have a very positive effect," said Johnson. "During the transit, we've asked for departments to get a list of volunteers who want to go ashore and provide assistance, and the crew's response has been tremendous. We were anchored off the coast of Bitung less than two months ago to celebrate the 64th anniversary of Indonesia's independence, and participated in the Indonesia International Fleet Review. Our experience there was incredibly positive. The memories and friendships we made in Indonesia are still fresh in all our minds, and we are honored to come back to provide all the assistance we can in their time of need."

Chief Warrant Officer Terry Boone, hands stickers to members of an Indonesian native percussion team before an international parade featuring Sailors assigned to *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85) Aug. 18. At the request of the Indonesian government, *McCampbell* has been asked to return and assist with humanitarian efforts in Sumatra following two earthquakes.