USS George Washington replenishes while at sea

Story and photo by MCSA Brian H. Abel,
***USS George Washington* Public Affairs**

PHILIPPINE SEA – *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) and its crew successfully restocked the ship's stores and JP-5 fuel supply during a replenishment-at-sea (RAS) and a vertical replenishment (VERTREP) July 18 with the Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler *USNS Tippecanoe* (T-AO 199) and the Military Sealift command dry cargo and ammunition ship *USNS Amelia Earhar*t (T-AKE 6).

Approximately 400 pallets of stores, maintenance materials, mail and more than 5 million gallons of JP-5 fuel were safely delivered aboard the aircraft carrier via cargo stations, fuel lines and helicopters from the "Chargers" of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) 14.

"The crew and air wing seem to always be motivated for a RAS," said *George Washington*'s Command Master Chief, Shaun Brahmsteadt. "They start slow and then they get into the flow; it's amazing to see all the supplies brought onto the ship and moved under decks so quickly."

With such an organized feat aboard the ship, safety is a priority for the departments extensively involved in the coordination and execution of the RAS and VERTREP.

"The first thing we have to do is inspect all of the float coats that are used by the crew during a VERTREP to make sure all components work," said Logistic Specialist 1st Class Dametriec Holmes, from Chicago. "The department has a safety brief one hour prior to the VERTREP and we go over the lessons we have learned from the past. Safety is drilled into our heads, so it comes second nature."

***USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Sailors from S-6 division reposition supplies during a (replenishment-at-sea with fleet replenishment oiler *USNS Tippecanoe* (T-AO 199) and a vertical replenishment with dry cargo ammunition ship *USNS Amelia Earhart* (T-AKE 6) July 18. *George Washington* took on more than 400 pallets of stores, maintenance parts, mail and more than 1.5 million gallons of JP-5 jet fuel.**

Sailors reported on station for the RAS and VERTREP at 4:00 a.m. to prepare for the event, which began at 5:30 a.m., but planning and preparation started days before the evolution took place.

"It's important to get adequate rest and hydration the day before a RAS or VERTREP. Sailors need to drink more water and fewer drinks with caffeine," said Holmes. "All department heads meet to plan out all actions a few days before the RAS and VERTREP."

The successful completion of a RAS and VERTEP means *George Washington* maintains its mission readiness and the ship's crew enjoys the fresh food.

"People get tired of eating the same goulash. The fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and variety of food lift morale," said Holmes. "We bring on great food like yellow bananas, not bananas with brown spots, fresh tomatoes, which are red, shiny and soft and fresh berries. I know a Culinary Specialist who likes to make banana bread."

"A RAS means fresh fruit and vegetables for the crew," said Brahmsteadt. "Our number one concern is the fuel for the aircraft and the food to nourish the crew so we can complete the mission."

The replenished stock aboard *George Washington* ensures that the ship and crew are ready to promote security and stability for all in the Asia-Pacific region.