

George Washington Returns to Yokosuka



Sailors man the rails as USS George Washington (CVN 73) returns to Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan. (MC3 Lucas Hastings)

By Ensign Kenadall Hill, Nov. 22, 2024

YOKOSUKA, Japan - The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) returned to Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan as the United States' only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, Nov. 22.

This marks the second time George Washington has served as the forward-deployed naval forces-Japan (FDFN-J) aircraft carrier. In 2008, it became the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to be forward-deployed to Japan before being relieved by USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) in 2015.

"A US carrier represents the most advanced maritime capability we have, and it's the most advanced investment we can make in the security of Japan and of the Western Pacific," said Vice

Adm. Fred Kacher, Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet. "The George Washington returns with modernized, cutting-edge technology that represents our investment in deterrence and security in this region."

During George Washington's transit from Norfolk, Virginia to Japan, the crew completed Exercise Southern Seas in U.S. 4th Fleet and a seven-week transit from San Diego.

"Arriving here in Yokosuka has been a milestone for this crew for many months, and for some the journey started in April when we departed from Virginia," said Capt. Tim Waits, commanding officer of George Washington. "I could not be more proud of this team. Not only have we arrived safely and on time, but from day one of deployment we have met every goal, exceeded all expectations, and were ready for tasking the day we arrived in the 7th Fleet area of operations."

George Washington, with embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, recently participated in the multi-domain exercise Freedom Edge with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and Republic of Korea Navy in the East China Sea. U.S. participation included Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 147, the first F-35C Lightning II squadron to join FDNF-J, adding fifth generation strike fighter jets to the roster of forward-deployed carrier-based aircraft in the Indo-Pacific region.

"We are proud to bring George Washington back to Yokosuka and back to the location of the most meaningful time in the ship's history," said Rear Adm. Greg Newkirk, Commander, Task Force 70 and the George Washington Carrier Strike Group. "Her crew is made up of both returning friends and many new to Japan, where they and their families will create lifelong memories and friendships in this magnificent Japanese city. Together, the combined community – back dropped by the JMSDF fleet and America's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier – represents a shared vision of peace and prosperity across the region. We

are truly allies, friends and family.”

George Washington recently hosted distinguished visitors at sea, including U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel; Japan’s Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. OKANO Masataka; and the mayor of Iwakuni City, Mr. FUKUDA Yoshihiko.

CVW-5 includes VFA 147 “Argonauts,” VFA-102 “Diamondbacks,” VFA-27 “Royal Maces,” VFA-195 “Dambusters,” Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 141 “Shadowhawks,” Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRM) 30 Detachment 5 “Titans,” Airborne Command & Control Squadron (VAW) 125 “Tigertails,” Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 12 “Golden Falcons,” and Helicopter maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 77 “Saberhawks,” operating F/A-18F Super Hornets, F/A-18E Super Hornets, F-35C Joint Strike Fighters, EA-18G Growlers, CMV-22 Ospreys, E-2D Hawkeyes, MH-60S, and MH-60R Helicopters.

George Washington is 7th Fleet’s premiere forward-deployed aircraft carrier, a long-standing symbol of the United States’ commitment to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific region, and operates alongside allies and partners across the U.S. Navy’s largest numbered fleet.