

USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77)

# THE AVENGER

Volume 2, Issue 2

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**IN THIS ISSUE:**

COMPTUEX

From Hangar to Flight

Medal of Freedom

## From the Command Master Chief



Friends and Families,

This past month has reminded me how proud I am to be a part of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77). Our successful completion of Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX), Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) and our liberty

call in Mayport, Fla., proved just how capable and responsible our Sailors are.

No matter the task that was set before them, they rose to the occasion and showed a motivation that you should be proud of as well. If our Sailors come home and tell you about this underway simply saying, "we got the job done," I want you to know that there was far more to this mission. Each and every Sailor gave all they had to help prepare this great ship for its upcoming deployment.

During COMPTUEX, our Sailors proved that we could manage our ship with skill as well as work with the entire Strike Group to meet each

challenge that faced us. After such an exercise, liberty was definitely deserved by all. I am proud that our Sailors showed maturity and discipline during this first port call. More impressive was the way our Sailors dove back into their work a few days later, ready to complete JTFEX.

Sometimes the scenarios in these exercises strained the crew but each time, we learned how to stand our ground and defend our ship. Each Sailor played their part in a professional manner. Whether it was ensuring there were clean dishes for our Sailors to eat on, carefully charting a path to keep our ship on course, or leading others to perform to their potential and beyond, each action of our crew contributed to our success this underway. This was an all hands effort, from the George H.W. Bush Sailors to those assigned to our embarked squadrons and the cruisers and destroyers in the Strike Group.

We succeeded because our Sailors were motivated, and a good deal of that motivation definitely came from many people who weren't on our ship. To all our friends and family, thank you for your continued support. Each letter, e-mail, and care package really makes a difference to our Sailors. You play an important part in helping us defend freedom.

Please remember that our future deployment will again test our Sailors and we will need your continued support. We have a challenging path ahead of us but with your help and this talented crew, I have no doubt that our ship and our crew will make our country proud.



Sailors from USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) Weapons Department's G-1 Division attach pole pendants to an MH-60S Seahawk from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9 during a vertical replenishment with USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), Feb. 17. Photo by MCSN Dustin Good.



### On the cover:

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 3rd Class (AW) Kevin D. Messer, of Air Department's V-2 Division, performs preventative maintenance on arresting gear on the flight deck, Feb. 6. Photo by MC3 Leonard Adams.

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# COMPTUEX/JTFEX: “NON-STOP ACTION, ALL DAY LONG”

Story by MCCS(SW) Misty Trent



A Sailor aboard USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) simulates extinguishing a fire during a mass casualty drill on the flight deck, Jan. 30. Photo by MC3 Tony Curtis.

Layout by MC3 Timothy Walter



Lt. j.g. John Gnik, from Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department's IM-2 Division, shoots during a 9mm weapons qualification on an aircraft elevator, Feb. 2. Photo by MCSN Dustin Good.



A Sailor signals to an F/A-18A+ Hornet from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 87, Jan. 31. Photo by MC3 Tony Curtis.



Sailors from Weapons Department conduct a vertical replenishment, Feb. 17. Photo by MC3 Kevin J. Steinberg.

The George H.W. Bush (GHWB) Carrier Strike Group was certified surge-ready for deployment after successfully completing its first Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) and Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX), Feb. 21.

The Strike Group assets departed their various homeports on or about Jan. 19 to begin final exercises before embarking on its first overseas deployment scheduled for spring of this year.

“This Strike Group was absolutely ready for these exercises, and our Sailors hit the ball out of the park,” said Commander, Carrier Strike Group Two, Rear Adm. Nora W. Tyson. “This is America’s newest strike group in America’s newest aircraft carrier, and our team is strong and ready to go. At the end of the day, COMPTUEX and JTFEX are really tests of our ability to work as a team, and we nailed it. From the Sailors on USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) supporting the squadrons in the air wing to the cruisers and destroyers doing their job protecting and defending the carrier along with performing maritime security operations, everyone did their part, and because of that, this team excelled.”

During COMPTUEX, the GHWB Strike Group entered into an intensive training scenario loosely based on geo-political conditions from around the globe. The scenarios, designed and executed by Strike Force Training Atlantic (SFTL), simulated many real-world situations that the Strike Group could encounter on deployment, including small boat attacks, mines, strait

transits in hostile waters and aerial, surface and sub-surface threats. Each scenario built on the one before, testing both the individual components of the Strike Group, as well as its collective effectiveness.

“COMPTUEX is a complicated and advanced exercise, and it requires every asset within the Strike Group to be fully trained and ready to execute their mission,” said SFTL commander Rear Adm. Dennis E. FitzPatrick. “I was very impressed with the level of commitment to success I saw throughout the Strike Group. The dedicated Sailors of the Strike Group were trained, mentored and assessed, and excelled at every challenge SFTL placed in front of them.”

COMPTUEX was a 23-day evolution, and included all assets within the Strike Group, from the flagship George H.W. Bush to the squadrons of Carrier Air Wing EIGHT (CVW-8), the guided-missile cruisers USS Gettysburg (CG 64), USS Monterey (CG 61), and USS Anzio (CG 68), Destroyer Squadron 22 ships USS Mitscher (DDG 57) and USS Truxtun (DDG 103), and the Spanish frigate ESPS Almirante Juan de Borbón (F 102). All told, nearly 7,500 Sailors played a direct role in the evolution.

“The amount of coordination that goes into an exercise like COMPTUEX is phenomenal. The only way it works, the only way the assets within the Strike Group accomplish their own individual missions, is if they communicate effectively and work together. That teamwork mentality is vital, and our success during

COMPTUEX and JTFEX tells me that this Strike Group is ready to deploy in support of our nation’s interests and execute any tasking we may receive,” said Tyson.

FitzPatrick echoed Tyson’s sentiments.

“Teamwork is the key to mission accomplishment, and COMPTUEX and JTFEX are designed to test you. Every single Sailor had a role to play and every unit was critical to success. From the cruisers, to the destroyers, to the squadrons, to the aircraft carrier; each is strong

as a single unit, but integrated effectively together and their overall strength is greater than their sum. This Strike Group knows how to work together and achieve mission success,” said FitzPatrick.

Sonar Technician (Surface) 1st Class (SW/IUSS) Thomas Hoban, assigned to Operations Department aboard USS George H.W. Bush, is responsible for coordinating the Strike Group’s antisubmarine warfare efforts, acting as the liaison between USS George H.W. Bush and the other ships in the Strike Group.

“This has been a very high operational tempo underway, from tracking submarines at 3 a.m. to standing your watch to going into general quarters,” said Hoban. “It’s been non-stop action all day long.”

During COMPTUEX, boarding teams from ships throughout the Strike Group performed more than 20 practice visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) evolutions, and the eight squadrons assigned to the embarked air wing flew nearly 3,800 hours during 1,800 sorties.

On Feb. 11, George H.W. Bush moored pier-side at Naval Station Mayport for



An F/A-18C Hornet assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 15 takes off from the flight deck of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77), Feb. 4. Photo by MCSN Billy Ho.

the carrier's first ever liberty port. During the three-day visit, Sailors participated in events sponsored by the ship's Morale, Welfare and Recreation Office, including trips to Walt Disney World and the Daytona International Speedway, as well as a community relations project at the Florida Baptist Children's Home in Jacksonville. Other Strike Group ships visited Port Canaveral, Port Everglades, and Key West.

"We just relaxed and did some shopping and got something good to eat," said Information Systems Technician 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Jesse C. Daniel of George H.W. Bush's Combat Systems Department. "It was really nice to catch up on sleep and recharge and get some time to clear my head."

The Strike Group returned to sea Feb. 14 to begin the final exam – JTFEX. For nearly 10 days, SFTL evaluated the overall combat readiness of the GHWB Strike Group, specifically focusing on the Strike Group's ability to interact and operate with other U.S. military and coalition forces.

The Spanish frigate Borbón and its 240 sailors were fully integrated throughout both exercises, including several exchange visits between Borbón and George H.W. Bush Sailors. Because Borbón will participate in the early stages of the Strike Group's deployment,

full engagement of crews, systems and protocol was critical. French navy assets, including the destroyer FS Primauguet (D 644) and the submarine FS Perle (S606), joined the Strike Group for JTFEX as well.

"The scenarios [the crew] experienced during COMPTUEX/JTFEX are based on real-world operations today's carrier strike groups can expect to face in the deployed environment," said FitzPatrick. "Geo-political situations are fluid and ever-changing across the globe, and leadership needs the multi-mission flexibility a strike group brings to their area of responsibility. The mission of our carrier strike groups can change at a moment's notice depending on real time events, and the George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group Sailors are ready to deploy and accept any mission given to them."

"The Navy's carrier strike groups are critical to the nation's maritime strategy," said Tyson. "Our combined capabilities allow us to deploy to any region around the globe to lend support, whether it's to U.S. forces on the ground or to mariners in distress or to countries reeling from natural disaster. We are a powerful force for good, and our success during COMPTUEX and JTFEX is proof that this Strike Group is ready to take on any tasking we are given."

## Navy Trivia

Aiguillettes, the colored cords worn by naval personnel in special duties, are always worn on the left shoulder with the exception of those serving as aides to foreign heads of state or aides to certain White House officials.

# MCPON Message to the Fleet: No Second Chances for Drug Abuse



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)(SS/SW) Rick D. West, released the following message on drug abuse, which focuses on "Spice," herbal products and other designer drugs, to the fleet, Feb. 11.

Shipmates,

There has been an alarming rise in the number of Sailors who are choosing to use 'Spice,' herbal products and other so-called designer drugs; and this must come to an immediate stop.

More than 150 Sailors are currently being processed for 'Spice' use, possession or distribution, and this is UNSAT.

Overall, the Navy has separated 1,374 Sailors in FY09; 1,308 Sailors in FY10; and 302 Sailors during the first quarter of FY11, for drug abuse. These unexpected losses negatively affect our commands' manning levels, which in turn affects the commands' operational and warfighter readiness. The Navy's policy on drug abuse is simple and clear – zero tolerance, and there are no second chances.

NAVADMIN 108/10 states the following on drug abuse:

'Drug abuse includes the wrongful use, possession, manufacture, or distribution of a controlled substance. Drug abuse also includes the unlawful use of controlled substance analogues (designer drugs), natural substances (e.g., fungi, excretions), chemicals (e.g., chemicals wrongfully used as inhalants), propellants and/or prescribed or over-the-counter drugs or pharmaceutical compounds with the intent to induce intoxication, excitement, or stupefaction of the central nervous system, and will subject the violator to punitive action under the UCMJ and/or adverse administrative action.'

If you didn't know, 'Spice' is a mixture of natural herbs and synthetic cannabinoids, that when smoked, produce a marijuana-like 'high' that decreases motor skills, impairs coordination and concentration, and effects short-term memory and senses. The effects of these substance is unpredictable when combined with alcohol, and since the chemical blends are continuously manipulated and the strength of the synthetic chemical used is unknown, there is no way to know what you are getting in the drugs nor what the long-term health risks are if used.

Some of the side effects from these drugs included uncontrolled vomiting, excessive sweating, flushed skin, increased heart rate and high blood pressure, and loss of consciousness. If this sounds like a good time to you, then go ahead and hand over your rank and paycheck, and possibly your life.

Bottom line: The use and even just the possession of 'Spice,' herbal products, designer drugs, chemicals used for huffing, salvia divinorum, or products containing synthetic cannabinoid compounds are prohibited. Leadership, along with Naval Criminal Investigative Service, is aggressively working to catch personnel who are possessing, using, or distributing drugs; and when you get caught, your career will be over.

Drug abuse goes against our Navy's core values and ethos, and it is a threat to lives, unit and mission readiness and morale. It is every Sailor's responsibility to deter drug abuse. If you do the crime, you will do the time ... remember zero tolerance and no second chances.

HOOYAH!

**Some examples of substances mentioned above where the wrongful use constitutes drug abuse includes, but is not limited to the following:**

- Products that contain synthetic cannabinoid compounds, such as "Spice," genie, blaze, dream, ex-ses, spark, fusion, dark knight, yukatan fire, and K2.

- Natural substances such as salvia divinorum and mushrooms.

- Common items abused by inhaling or huffing, such as Dust Off, glue, paint thinner and gasoline.

- Over-the-counter products such as Robitussin and Coricidin HBP.

- Prescription medications such as Oxycodone, Vicodin, Adderall, and Valium.

## Navy Trivia

Most of the watches in the Navy are four hours long.



# WELCOME TO BLACK SHOE COUNTRY



## STORY AND LAYOUT BY MC3 TIMOTHY WALTER

It can instill pride in its wearer or just as easily shame. When fitted improperly, the sometimes forgotten uniform item can become the paramount problem to solve. When shined to a glassy veneer or roughed beyond recognition, it can make or break a personnel inspection. And occasionally, as was the case with Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Randal Cribb, a shoe can become a source of inspiration.

That inspiration is on display for all to see in the foc'sle of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77). On a bright red bridge crane, normally used to remove the hawse pipe covers during anchoring evolutions, two crossed anchors flank a simple declaration: Welcome To Black Shoe Country.

Visitors and ship's crew often question the significance of such a quote in a compartment dominated solely by massive stud link anchor chains. Indeed, Cribb finds himself explaining the answer on nearly every tour that passes through his space. And if anyone is to blame, the responsibility lay

solely with Cribb.

"It was my idea," he said with a slight smile, explaining that he got approval just in time for it to display for an audience during the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration held in the foc'sle, Nov. 22, 2010.

As the leading petty officer of Deck Department's 1st Division, Cribb controls the foc'sle which houses two 60,000 lbs. anchors and their chains. One would be wise to never step over Cribb's anchor chains or on his shoes. The former is a matter of safety, the latter a matter of pride.

Cribb's shoes represent more than just a mishmash of material that shields this Sailor's sole. As a member of the surface fleet, Cribb has inherited a title of "black shoe." Similar to the separation between the enlisted "blue shirts" and "khaki" leadership, the term separates a surface Sailor from one in naval aviation, or "brown shoe."

The military and black shoes have a long storied past together but starting on Nov. 13, 1913, naval aviators began wearing a brown variety. A subsequent change in the uniform regulation would also give Chiefs in the aviation community the option to wear brown shoes. For all others, black shoes were the rule, thus creating the distinction and the terms.

Over time, pride in the monikers developed with each group embracing it, or in some cases, using it as a slight for the other. Cribb was no exception.

"I'm a surface guy. It was a smart comment," he said.

Even though the "black shoe" name can sometimes be used an underhanded comment, Cribb took it upon himself to use it as a way to define and defend a pride that he gained throughout his career.

"My last ship was a frigate. That's all surface guys, so we had a lot of pride and a lot of camaraderie in our ship," he said.

Those who frequent the weekly church services held in the foc'sle or any one of the gatherings that use the space will see that it has been clearly staked out to remind those that the warfare is fought in many ways – and here it's surface warfare.

Many from the aviation community have seen the sign

spread across the bridge crane and appreciate its dedication to heritage. In fact, Lt. j.g. Rob Dalton of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9 liked the sign in the foc'sle and thought it was "well done."

"It's fantastic that they do that. I think that anyone should always have pride in what they do," Dalton said. "I think it inspires the new people coming into that community."

For many enlisted Sailors who arrive to GEORGE H.W. BUSH, particularly those who are undesignated, their introduction to the surface community often starts with Deck Department and Cribb. Prior to becoming rated in another designation, or striking, Sailors will paint, maintain boat decks, assist in mooring operation, and perform other tasks that are commonly associated with traditional naval life.

While there, Cribb directs the new Sailors in the time-honored taskings, all the while trying to instill his personal pride in the surface fleet as well as being a Boatswain's Mate.

"Anyone can make rate, only God makes Boatswain's Mates," Cribb said.

Cribb's pride is apparent from the crossed anchor tattooed on his right hand to the slogan now written in the forecandle. And those who work for him come to respect the rate.

"It's one of the few old-school jobs that exist in today's modern Navy," said Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brian M.

Brooks. "A computer can't haul in a line."

Prior to striking into his current rate, Brooks served in Deck Department for three months. While there, Brooks and the others in Deck not only played the part of black shoes, they actually had to keep two pair on hand – one for ceremonies and watch and the other for doing a Sailor's work.

Later on when Cribb needed to make a stencil for the bridge crane, it would be Brooks – now working in the Media Department – who took the order. The tasking at first made him pause in question. In fact, most of Deck had the same response when hearing of Cribb's idea.

"They were kind of surprised. Everybody thought it was a joke until they saw it up," Cribb said.

When Cribb did explain the reasoning for the sign to Brooks, it made sense.

"We are the body of the ship. We are the below-deck workers. We are the black shoes. That's who we are," Cribb said.



## Navy Trivia

There are three material conditions of readiness that affect the degree of watertight integrity of the ship: XRAY, YOKE, and ZEBRA.

## Navy Trivia

The first steel warship for the U.S. Navy, the gunboat Dolphin, was commissioned on Dec. 8, 1885.

# STEP BY STEP:

*How to get an aircraft from the hangar bay into the air*

Story and layout by MCSN Tyrell K. Morris



Photo by MC3 Kevin J. Steinberg



Photo by MC3 Leonard Adams



Photo by MC3 Kevin J. Steinberg

The power of an aircraft is evident as it launches from the flight deck, gracefully glides through the air and disappears among the clouds. Few people stop to think about all the hard work that is required to get that aircraft into the air. When an aircraft takes flight, it is the culmination of many individuals working together behind the scenes to achieve the primary purpose of an aircraft carrier – launching and recovering aircraft.

The Sailors assigned to USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) spend countless hours day in and day out preparing aircraft for flight. This can be a difficult and sometimes stressful task, but BUSH'S aviation ratings are always manned and ready to accomplish the mission.

Behind all the glitz and glamour of an aircraft in flight, there is a process that must occur. First, any maintenance the aircraft may need is completed. Maintenance can be as simple as painting or conducting inspections, or as complex as an engine change or troubleshooting electrical issues and avionics.

From Top: Sailors from USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) Air Department take an MH-60S Seahawk from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9 off of an elevator in the ship's hangar bay. Air Department Sailors move an F/A-18F Super Hornet from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 inside the hangar bay. Air Department Sailors move a F/A-18C Hornet from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 15 on the ship's flight deck.

When maintenance is complete, all panels on the aircraft are closed and all loose gear is removed to prevent foreign object debris (FOD). The most common FOD includes nuts, bolts, safety wire, rubber seals, and pins. An aircraft can be severely damaged if one of these things, or a combination, mistakenly navigates its way into the engine.

"Even the smallest piece of FOD can rip an engine apart if it gets in the wrong place," said Aviation Machinist Mate 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (AW) Ross Abbott of Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department.

If FOD finds its way into the engine of an aircraft, it can bounce around like a pinball hitting everything in its path. It will break blades, get trapped in bearings, clog plumbing lines, and can ultimately cause an engine fire. That is why FOD walkdowns are so important and conducted on both the hangar bay and flight deck.

Getting the aircraft from the hangar bay up to the flight deck is the next step. Moving a huge aircraft in an enclosed space with people, equipment, and other aircraft requires environmental awareness and attention to detail.

"Good judgment, good vision, and decision-making are the keys to safely moving aircraft on both the hangar bay and flight deck," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) First Class (AW/SW) Gregory M. Piazza, Leading Petty Officer of Air Department's V-3 division.

Yellow shirts, or aircraft directors, and blue shirts, or aircraft handlers, move the aircraft to the ready position and onto the elevator. V-3 division moves aircraft and controls the elevator on the hangar bay level. V-1 division moves aircraft and controls the elevator from the flight deck level.

"Aircraft movement is a coordinated effort between the hard-chargers in the hangar bay and the hard-chargers on the flight deck," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) First Class (AW/SW) David P. Thompson, Leading Petty Officer of V-1 division.

When the aircraft is placed on the elevator, it has to be secured by tie-down chains. The elevator operator topside communicates with the elevator operator below to make sure the elevator is clear and safe and no personnel are on the elevator.

The Aircraft Handling Officer (ACHO) is overall responsible for all movement of aircraft on the flight deck as well as in the hangar bay and gives

permission to move the elevator up or down as soon as he receives permission from the Officer of the Deck (OOD).

"Everyone must be in place and ready to complete their assigned tasks as soon as the aircraft comes off the elevator," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 1<sup>st</sup> Class (AW/SW) Enzo Gandolfo, Assistant Leading Petty Officer of V-1 division.

The squadron has to be ready to double check and confirm no other maintenance is required. Depending on the severity, the squadron will perform maintenance on the flight deck if it's minor or send it back down to the hangar bay for something severe. V-4 division is standing by to fuel the aircraft and the aviation ordnancemen are ready to upload bombs if necessary. Now it is time to direct the aircraft to the catapult for launch, which is manned by V-2 division.

"GEORGE H.W. BUSH couldn't sustain flight operations without the dedication and hard work of each division contributing to the process," said Gandolfo.

Each division from the Air Department plays an integral role in this process. All of the divisions working together demonstrates effective teamwork, a quality that is required for all Sailors.

"No division is more important than another and our ability to work together to complete the task at hand is what's really important," said Gandolfo.

As the shooter takes his position and the engine of the aircraft gives a deafening roar, everyone involved only has a brief moment to be proud of all their dedication and hard work because as soon as the aircraft races down the flight deck and takes off, it is time to do it all over again.



Photo by MC3(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall

An F/A-18F Super Hornet assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 213 performs a touch-and-go on USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77).

## Navy Trivia

In 1914, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels said, "the science of aerial navigation has reached a point where aircraft must form a large part of our naval force for offensive and defensive operations."

## Navy Trivia

A wood-hulled ship named Avenger (MCM 1) was commissioned on Sep. 12, 1987. It was designed to locate and sweep contact and influence mines.



# Distinguished Visitors

ENJOY A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CVN 77 SAILORS

Story by MCCA(SW) Misty Trent

Background by MC3 Leonard Adams

Layout by MCSN Jess Echerrri

Six Congressmen on the House Armed Services Committee visited USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) Feb. 6-7, as part of the Navy's Distinguished Visitor (DV) Embark program.

Rep. Todd Platts (R-PA), Rep. David Wu (D-OR), Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX), Rep. Betty Sutton (D-OH), Rep. John Runyan (R-NJ), and Rep. Mo Brooks (R-AL) toured the ship, watched the Super Bowl with the crew, and had breakfast with Sailors from their home states.

The Navy's DV Embark program is designed to increase the public's understanding and appreciation for the U.S. Navy by providing a rare opportunity to see Sailors in action.

During the tour of the ship, DVs interact with Sailors from all departments to get a snapshot of what a day at sea is like aboard the Navy's newest aircraft carrier. Visitors, led by officer escorts from various departments, receive briefs from Flight Deck Control and have the opportunity to watch flight operations on the flight deck and night flight operations from Vulture's Row. Additionally, they tour the Pilot House, Doro Bush Koch Library, Combat Direction Center, an arresting gear machinery room, Medical, and the foc'sle, among other places.

Guests typically have no prior exposure to the U.S. Navy and often include educators, small and large business owners, community leaders, and elected officials. They are often active in their communities, and influential in businesses and government.

"Probably the greatest benefit of the DV Embark pro-

gram is it affords our guests an opportunity to share their experiences with their friends, family, and co-workers ashore," said Lt. Ken Radford of Medical Department, an escort officer for the ship's DV Embark program. "The public has a vested interest in seeing their tax dollars at work and the GHWB DV embark program provides them that opportunity."

"I really hadn't thought about this prior to being on the ship, but the logistics of how water and food are provided, how solid waste and wastewater are disposed of, how the crew is cared for in their medical and dental needs, and how the ship has its own police force and jail, judge and legal staff were all very interesting," said Sanford Minkoff, Lake County Attorney and a member of the Lake County Board of County Commissioners in Tavares, Fla., who visited the ship Feb. 5-6.

In addition to helping educate the American public about the mission of the U.S. Navy, the DV Embark program can also impact military support and programs sponsored by local and national businesses. Following a March 2010 visit, a group of executives from the Chick-Fil-A restaurant chain was so impressed by their experience that they donated meals to the crew and family members for the ship's summer picnic in August.

According to Radford, the indirect benefits of the program are just as meaningful. He recently escorted a group of educators on an overnight visit to the ship, and

shared one teacher's feedback.

"She made a point that teachers should never give up on a student that may appear as if he or she is not headed directly to college after high school. Many of these high school graduates may enlist in the military and perform jobs that require very high levels of responsibility. In particular, she was amazed at the aircraft maintenance that was being performed on the jets and how some of these Sailors were probably in high school just last year," Radford said.

While the visitors are often most impressed by the activity they watch on the flight deck, the interaction with the crew is what leaves the most lasting impression.

"A business leader made a comment towards the end of his DV embark at how impressed he was with the pride and professionalism of the crew," said Radford. "After he finished his tour, he specifically said he would look at naval service on a resume as a huge benefit when hiring potential employees."

"The two most interesting things to me were learning about the crew and the actual operation of the 'city at sea,'" said Minkoff. "I was impressed by the crew composition, both in the number of women in the crew including leadership positions, as well as the young age of the crewmembers. At each stop on the tour, one



Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) talks with USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) Sailors while eating breakfast in the Chief Petty Officers' Mess. Photo by MC3(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall

could not help being impressed by the dedication of these young crewmembers, particularly their ownership in their work and equipment."

Guests typically arrive via a carrier onboard delivery aircraft, or COD, and have the opportunity to experience both an arrested landing and a catapult-assisted take-off with the "Rawhides" of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40. The average embark is approximately 24 hours, and the DVs pay for all associated costs of the visit, to include food, lodging and travel.



# THE SYMBOLS OF SUCCESS

Story and layout by MC3 Timothy Walter

**N**ine departments of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) were recognized for their superior performance throughout the ship's first year of operation, as part of the 2010 Commander, Naval Air Forces (COMNAVAIRFOR) Carrier Battle Efficiency Award Competition, commonly referred to as the Battle "E" Award.

Every aircraft carrier and their respective departments are graded yearly on their ability to perform their duties at a level of distinction that exhibits a continued readiness to meet the challenge of combat. Whether it is successful completion of the rigorous Operational Reactors Safeguard Examination (ORSE) by the Reactor Department or Health Services keeping each Sailor up-to-date on immunizations, each department must prove its operational competence.

"Eligibility for all awards demands day-to-day demonstrated excellence in addition to superior achievement during certifications and qualifications conducted

throughout the competitive cycle," according to COMNAVAIRFORINST 3500.20C.

For the newest aircraft carrier to join the fleet, receiving so many awards in the first competitive cycle confirmed the dedication and direction of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH.

The ship can now claim the following awards: Black "E" for Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department, Red "DC" for Damage Control, White Crossed Anchors with Black "D" for Deck Department, Red "E" for Reactor Department, Blue "M" for Health Services, White Ship's Wheel for Navigation Department, Blue "E" for Supply Department, Black "W" for Weapons, and Purple "E" for Carrier Maintenance.

With each earned award also comes the honor of placing it conspicuously on the ship's island as a reminder to onlookers and crew of the excellence achieved in the past year.

"We look forward to seeing the Black "W" on display up on the island with all the other departmental awards, and hopefully

see a Battle "E" up there in the near future," said Weapons Department Ordnance Handling Officer Lt. Cmdr. David Fowler.

Each award will soon add shades of color to the otherwise gray superstructure of GEORGE H.W. BUSH. However, each is only valid until the next round of awards, at which time it must be added to or erased. A department that maintains the same level of achievement during the subsequent cycle can add one diagonal service stripe for each year it receives the award, up until five consecutive years, at which point a star is placed above the letter or symbol.

Like most departments, though, Reactor Department isn't worried about any stars or stripes, said Master Chief Electronics Technician (SW/AW) John Brinkos.

"The primary mission of every department on the ship should be to do its part to make sure the ship is meeting its readiness capability and doing its job of a successful deployment. If we're doing that, everything else will fall in place," Brinkos said.



Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class (AW/SW) Archie L. Gittens, of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH's (CVN 77) Weapons Department G-4 Division, fires a pistol for Small Arms Qualification June 18. Photo by MC3 Kevin J. Steinberg.

The Weapons Department of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH received its first Black "W". The award acknowledges the department's high level of safety and efficiency in ordnance handling and stowage, torpedo and mine readiness, as well as the ability to effectively provide embarked squadrons with the ordnance necessary to conduct sustained carrier strike operations, according to Ordnance Handling Officer Lt. Cmdr. David Fowler.

"These awards are significant milestones for each department. It's a tribute to the constant teamwork, professionalism, and attention to detail displayed by everyone on board to contribute to the ship's overall success," said Fowler. "Since 2010 was the first year GEORGE H.W. BUSH was eligible and we brought it home, we've set the bar pretty high for those who follow."



Sailors of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) combat a simulated fire in the ship's hangar bay during a general quarters drill, Oct. 13. Photo by MC2(SW) Nathan A. Bailey.

For the Engineering Department's Damage Control Division aboard USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH, earning a Red "DC" is something to be proud of, even if not everyone knew what it was at first.

"A lot of the junior personnel never knew what a Red "DC" was," said Damage Controlman 1st Class Paul Andersen, adding that upon explaining the award, those in the division were proud of their success.

"Damage control on a ship like this means life or death. Everyone needs to work together as a team," Andersen said. "It's really big accomplishment for a new carrier."

The award comes after "hundreds of hours training" which included a toxic gas drill and even the unexpected fire that broke out aboard the ship.

"Anytime you hear the bells ring, we are the initial responders," he said. "We will go to any space on this ship. It could be the island, all the way on the 0-9 level way to the 7th deck with the reactor plant."

Plans are already being made to place the Red "DC" on the department doors. However, he said the award doesn't change their commitment to continued readiness for the rest of the underway and the upcoming deployment.

"Right now, we are running drills almost on a daily basis," he said. "It's constant training. We never stop training."



Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class Joseph W. Wallace, from USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department's IM-2 Division, assembles pieces of sheet metal inside the ship's airframe shop, Jan. 28. Photo by MC3 Leonard Adams.

For the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD) of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH, the Black "E" simply means one thing – the job is getting done.

"We do what we do and that is to support the aircraft squadrons," said AIMD Maintenance Material Control Officer Lt. Cmdr. Shawn Rumbley.

The Black "E" represents AIMD's "ability to support the embarked air wing through the performance of our intermediate level maintenance," he said, adding that they have to maintain over 9,000 items of support equipment.

One of the key components in that support is making sure that the aircraft can operate properly by keeping a low backlog on maintenance. Rumbley said their efforts go a long way in helping to sustain and support the mission of the GEORGE H.W. BUSH.

"If we support the squadrons in the way we are supposed to support them, then all this stuff will happen."

As for 2011, Rumbley remains confident that AIMD will again show its dedication and more.

"We're always trying to take it the next level," he said.

## Navy Trivia

The quarterdeck is not actually a deck but rather an area designated by the ship's commanding officer to serve as a focal point for ceremonies and official business.

## Navy Trivia

Officers' country is the part of the ship where officers have their staterooms and wardrooms. The area is usually lined with blue tiles to clearly distinguish the walkways.

Each day, one of the smallest departments aboard USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH helps steer one of largest vessels on the sea. And while moving from point A to point B may sound easy, add in navigational hazards, variations in sea floor levels, not to mention a few man overboard drills in-between and the only easy thing to see is the challenge faced daily by the Navigation Department.

In 2010, their skill in executing safe routes and responding quickly to drills earned the department its first White Ship's Wheel, an honor that Navigation Department's Leading Petty Officer Quartermaster 1st Class (SW/AW) Christopher Dorner is quick to share.

"[We passed] every one of the drills with a lot of our junior guys. With their dedication and their willingness to learn, they're the ones that won us the white wheel," Dorner said.

Whether it was rushing to spotlights to search for the man overboard, raising the Oscar flag or practicing visual communication using semaphore, Dorner said his department worked hard to win the white ship's wheel.

"It was really big deal because we know how much time and effort and work we put into it to win it. We worked hard from the Navigator, making sure everything was going in the right direction, all the way down to that junior Quartermaster who was studying and training and ready to do the semaphore," Dorner said.

Looking forward to another White Ship's Wheel, Dorner expressed confidence in the crew that steers the ship.

"There is always room for improvement but then again, my guys are stellar performers who always do their job. There is not too much to improve on them," Dorner said.



Sailors chart a course in the ship's bridge, Feb. 1. Photo by MC3 Leonard Adams.



Sailors assigned to USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) Deck Department hold a phone and distance line during an underway replenishment with USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196), Oct 22. Photo by MCSN Betsy Lynn Knapper.

Placing a massive aircraft carrier on a specific patch of ocean real estate is no small task but when precision anchorage evolutions were required of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH, Deck Department stood out, said Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Randal Cribb, Deck Department Leading Petty Officer.

"When we did [precision anchorage] last time we were within five feet," said Cribb, who noted that the allowable tolerance is nearly four times as large. "Another time we were within two feet."

From the foc'sle to fantail, each evolution dealing with mooring, underway replenishment, crane operation or anchoring calls on the Deck to perform with precision. For their outstanding efforts in 2010, Deck earned their first White Crossed Anchor with Black "D."

Even before hearing news of the award, Cribb felt confident that his department's achievements over the past year had merited that recognition.

"Going through the inspection cycle, I pretty much already expected our guys to win. It shouldn't have been a question," Cribb said, adding that next year he expects the same.

"If we did that well, as we should, we should be good next year for the Battle "E" because we'll be the one on deployment, sending out the aircraft," Cribb said. "The motivation level for this next year is up because we are going on deployment. I think we'll have better results."



USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) steams in the Atlantic Ocean, June 9. Photo by MC3(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall.

With constant drills, training, testing and dedication, USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH Reactor Department displayed their ability throughout 2010 to safely provide the ship with propulsion, electricity, potable water and the steam necessary to launch the aircraft off the flight deck and earned their first Red "E."

"It was the first time we were in the running to receive the Red "E." First time out, we accomplished it," said Master Chief Electronics Technician (SW/AW) John Brinkos.

In 2010, Reactor Department faced their first Operational Reactor Safeguard Examination, commonly referred to as ORSE, which defined a majority of their consideration for the Red "E."

"ORSE was the big driving factor and we did very well," said Brinkos.

Having made it successfully through one year, Brinkos is already quick to focus on the nearing deployment and challenges to come.

"We are proud but we recognize that we go through an Operational Reactors Safeguard Examination every year. So we know all we do lays the foundation to have Reactor Department be a successful department," he said.

After winning the 2010 Ship's Store Excellence Award for the Atlantic Fleet and placing runner-up in two more awards, it was little surprise to Supply Officer Cmdr. Tim Jett that his department aboard USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH came away with the Blue "E".

"That's pretty good for [our] first year," Jett said.

Whether it's a hamburger in the galley, the screws on a MH-60S Seahawk, or a simply box of paper, there are few things aboard GEORGE H.W. BUSH that aren't handled in some way by the Supply Department. Jett said the ability of his department to track and delivery hundreds of thousands of line items – 13,000 aviation components alone – comes directly from the attitude of the approximately 450 personnel that make up Supply.

"They really work hard together. The energy level is just ridiculously high," Jett said. "I think it's only going to be better."

Jett said teamwork was the key to the earning the Blue "E" and his goal for the department is to simply encourage that mentality.

"We have such an important role in this ship in providing morale and service to the crew and all our guests. Now we get to focus on the fun part looking toward deployment, all the fun things were going to do on the port visits and integrating with the Strike Group," Jett said. "That's where you really become a team."



Logistics Specialist 1st Class (AW/SW) Rodney M. Moats, of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) Supply Department's S-8 Division, left, and Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 1st Class (AW/SW) Gregory M. Piazza, of Air Department's V-3 Division, bring cargo into the ship's hangar bay March 9. Photo by MC3 Brent Thacker.

## Navy Trivia

In 1947, Capt. H.G. Rickover informally requested the first study of the application of a high-pressure, water-cooled reactor for a naval submarine.

## Navy Trivia

CVN stands for Multipurpose aircraft carrier (nuclear propulsion).

The Medical Department of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH received its first Blue “M” for its excellence in providing health services to the ship. The award encompasses the department ability to respond to general quarters, provide stretcher bearers for wounded personnel, ensure the ship’s Sailors have up-to-date immunizations, as well as respond to mass casualties.

“It encompasses everything we’ve done in that year and says that we’ve met all the requirements that we were supposed to and more,” said Medical Department Leading Petty Officer Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW/AW/FMF) Mark Gornitzka.

Gornitzka said training has paid a key role in developing the abilities of the personnel in Medical, particularly in responding to mass casualty drills.

“We have progressively gotten much better and more efficient. People are responding and taking it seriously even though it’s a drill,” Gornitzka said. “Because we did so many of them and we got so much better at them, our proficiency has increased. It helps us in the long run not just for the Blue “M” but as a department.”

With constant training and drills planned, Gornitzka said their abilities to serve the ship should only increase in the future.

“If we just keep moving in that positive direction, we should be fine for next year,” Gornitzka said.



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW/FMF) Carl R. Parker, of USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) Medical Department, draws blood from Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Mychel D. Vannette, of Weapon Department's G-3 Division. Photo by MCSN Betsy Lynn Knapper.



USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) sails in the Atlantic Ocean, Oct. 10. Photo by MC3(SW/AW) Nicholas Hall.

Due to the contribution of all hands and the guidance of the Material Maintenance Management, or 3M, Department, USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH was awarded the Purple “E” for its efforts in carrier maintenance. When the department heard about the award, Senior Chief Mineman (SW/AW) Steven Jones said they were “ecstatic” that their hard work was noticed.

“It recognized the efficient use of material and personnel resources as a foundation for sustained training and flight operations,” Jones said, adding that the award’s honor extended beyond his department.

“It’s not just 3M department. The whole entire ship plays a large role in the Purple “E,” Jones said. “Sailors that are part of ship’s company are responsible for ensuring that the ship meets its 50-year life cycle.”

Jones said that for the Sailors aboard GEORGE H.W. BUSH, the ship itself represents the true prize, even more than the Purple “E.”

“Really the award is knowing that your ship is capable of sustaining combat readiness missions by being out there doing what we do best,” Jones said.

As for the following years of maintenance and repair, Jones said the attitude of the ship will determine if the Purple “E” earns its stripes.

“It takes the practices of the entire ship to win the Purple “E,”” Jones said. “It’s a matter of having pride and ownership of one of the best warships in the fleet.”

## Navy Trivia

A knot is one nautical mile per hour, or about 1 1/8 statute miles per hour. When a ship goes 20 nautical miles per hour, its speed is said to be 20 knots (but never 20 knots per hour).



# USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH NAMESAKE RECEIVES PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

Story by MCCS(SW) Misty Trent

The namesake of the U.S. Navy’s newest aircraft carrier, former President George H.W. Bush, received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in a ceremony at the White House, Feb. 15.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the nation’s highest civilian honor, awarded for “an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors.”

“His life is a testament that public service is a noble call,” said President Barack Obama, referring to nearly 70 years of service ranging from Bush’s years as a Navy pilot in World War II, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, U.S. Envoy to China, and ultimately as the 41st President of the United States.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom was initially established in 1945 by President Harry S. Truman as the Medal of Freedom to honor civilian service during World War II.

“His humility and his decency reflect the very best of the American spirit,” said Obama. “This is a gentleman, inspiring citizens to become points of light in service to others.”

Obama awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to 15 individuals, including investor and philanthropist Warren Buffett; the Honorable John Lewis, civil rights activist and Congressman from Georgia; Yo-Yo Ma, renowned cellist and member of the President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities; author and poet Dr. Maya Angelou; and former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland and sister of former President John F. Kennedy, the Honorable Jean Kennedy Smith.

Obama quoted former President Kennedy in his opening remarks, stating that “a nation reveals itself not only by the men and women it produces, but by the men and women that it honors, the people that it remembers.”

Bush was honored for exemplary diplomatic skill, “ending the Cold War without firing a shot,” as well as his humanitarian relief efforts following the Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.

“President George Herbert Walker Bush has led a life marked by a profound commitment to serving others,” according to the award citation. “Over the arc of his life, President Bush has served our nation as a tremendous force for good, and we proudly salute him for his unwavering devotion to our country and our world.”

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is awarded annually, with recipients selected by the President or recommended by the Distinguished Civilian Service Awards Board. Bush joins five other U.S. Presidents who have received the award, including Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan.



President Barack Obama speaks with former President George H.W. Bush inside the White House prior to awarding him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Feb. 15. Official White House photo by Pete Souza.

## Navy Trivia

The neckerchief worn with enlisted dress uniforms is 36-inches square and is tied using a square knot (also referred to as a reef knot).

# Down & Dirty: CVN 77 Sailors lend helping hands to children's home

Story, photos and layout by  
MCSN Tyrell K. Morris



You could hear the buzz of excitement everywhere on the ship. Some Sailors were on the mess decks developing plans for how they would spend their weekend while others were in their berrthings putting the finishing touches on those civilian outfits. The vast majority were already in the hangar bay anxiously waiting...and then it happened.

### **LIBERTY CALL, LIBERTY CALL!!!**

After three weeks, these were the words every Sailor was dying to hear so they could let loose and relax after the USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH Strike Group completed its Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) and pulled into Naval Station Mayport for the ship's first liberty port.

As most Sailors were sprinting to the quarterdeck to respectfully request permission to go ashore and begin liberty, there were a few Sailors who patiently waited and stayed behind so they could volunteer their time helping others.

More than 20 Sailors assigned to USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) and its embarked air wing participated in a community relations (COMREL) event at the Florida

Baptist Children's Home in Jacksonville, Fla., Feb. 12.

The Florida Baptist Children's Home has been in existence since the early 1940s and can provide shelter for up to 40 children in need of a safe haven due to unfortunate life circumstances. The Sailors spent approximately four hours digging up dead grass and smoothing out soil to beautify the property grounds of the children's home.

Luther Scarboro, director of maintenance, has worked at the children's home for 12 years and his generosity has impacted the lives of many young people.

"Since I've been working here I've learned how to become a better Christian by serving others," said Scarboro.

There are several high schools and civic organizations that volunteer at Florida Baptist Children's Home throughout the year. They help with landscaping and any special programs to make the children feel at home.

"Having volunteers is absolutely critical and we wouldn't be able to keep up the property grounds or the children's home itself without volunteers," said Scarboro.

Aviation Machinist's Mate 3rd Class William Bethea, from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 213, is from Jacksonville, and was excited about being able to volunteer in his hometown.

"I'm thankful God gives me the opportunity to see

different places and me giving back to the community, especially the community where I'm from, is a way for me to show my appreciation," said Bethea.

Information Systems Technician Chief Petty Officer Karen Cannon served as the COMREL Public Affairs Officer at her last command in Guam, so when she was given the chance to be the team leader

for this particular COMREL she jumped at the opportunity.

"Community service is very important to me," said Cannon.

Participating in COMRELS is a guaranteed way to stay out of trouble on liberty, a great way to relieve stress, and meet other shipmates.

The 23 Sailors who participated in the COMREL left a lasting impact on the Florida Baptist Children's Home, their staff, and particularly the children who receive shelter there.

From left: Aviation Machinist's Mate 3rd Class William Bethea, of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 213, smooths out soil at Florida Baptist Children's Home in Jacksonville, Fla., Feb. 12. Chief Information Systems Technician Karen Cannon, of Combat Systems Department's CS1 division, dumps dead grass in a wheelbarrow. Sailors assigned to USS George H.W. Bush perform landscaping work. Lt. Joel Degrave, chaplain for Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, digs up dead grass.

## Navy Trivia

When boarding a boat, airplane, or vehicle, senior military personnel are the last to board and the first to exit.

## Navy Trivia

A messing compartment is where enlisted personnel eat. Officers' eating quarters are called wardrooms.

# MED STUDENT SEA TRIALS

## Medical Dept. trains the future of Navy medicine

Story and layout by MCSN Jessica Echerrri

USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77) is the first and only aircraft carrier to take part in a program at Uniformed Services University of Health Services (USUHS) that gives military medical students on-the-job training in a real-life working environment.

Capt. Lee Mandel, the ship's senior medical officer, collaborated with USUHS to make GEORGE H.W. BUSH a certified teaching affiliate. As a certified teaching affiliate, doctors in GEORGE H.W. BUSH'S Medical Department mentor up to two medical students at a time, helping them to experience Navy medicine on a carrier.

This program is part of the students' fourth year of medical school, during which they participate in various training programs, called clinical elective rotations, at different military hospitals around the world.

Ensign Jason Weiner and Ensign Gabriel Valerio are the second set of students to take advantage of the ship's training. During their four-week rotation on board, they will examine patients and assist in Ship's Surgeon like any Navy doctor would be expected to do. All their work is supervised and checked by a doctor on board.

"We've spent almost four years studying medicine," Valerio said. "But real life is medical and operational. Here, we're learning so much more of the operational side."

Medical students receive a background in preventative medicine but get little to no exposure to the public health aspects of the being a

Navy doctor, Mandel said. Medical Department is in charge of preventative medicine programs such as, galley health inspections and potable water certification. Navy doctors must supervise all public health related responsibilities.

"It's an aspect you don't have to face in a hospital," Mandel said.

Adjusting to a carrier's medical capabilities compared to those of a hospital can also be challenging at times, said Valerio. Doctors need to rely heavily on physical exam skills because diagnostic capabilities, like CT scans, are not available.

There are two sides to being a Navy doctor, Weiner said. "You're a doctor doing your job for the patient and you're doing

your job for the Navy. It can be hard to say, 'I know your leg hurts, but you can still work on it.'"

Mandel said one of his main goals for the program is to show Navy medicine students what it is like to practice medicine in the fleet.

"They'll never forget what it's like during a medical emergency," Mandel said. "What it's like to respond to any space in the ship in less than four minutes."

Mandel said he plans to make the program, which is open to all branches of service, a permanent fixture on the ship, possibly leading to other carriers adopting similar programs.

"I really appreciate the opportunity to come out to the ship," Valerio said. "This experience has helped me to grow so I can better serve the Navy and my patients."

“Real life is medical and operational. Here, we’re learning so much more of the operational side.”

Ensign Gabriel Valerio  
USUHS Medical Student



Ensign Jason Weiner, a medical student at the Uniformed Services University of Health Services, performs surgical training in the operating room on board USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN 77).

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