

USS George H.W. Bush Completes Drydocking Availability at Norfolk Naval Shipyard



(Aug. 26, 2021) The aircraft carrier USS George H. W. Bush (CVN 77) transits the Atlantic Ocean after completing a Docking Planned Incremental Availability at Norfolk Naval Shipyard. GHWB is operating in the Atlantic Ocean in support of naval operations to maintain maritime stability and security in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied and partner interests. *U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Novalee Manzella*

NORFOLK, Va. – USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) departed Aug. 26 for sea trials, marking completion of one of the largest and most complex aircraft carrier availabilities conducted at Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY), NNSY Public Affairs and USS George H.W. Bush Public Affairs said in a joint Aug. 26 release.

The Drydocking Planned Incremental Availability (DPIA), which began in February 2019, marked Bush's first time out of the water since 2006. The shipyard workforce contributed 762,500 workdays of the 1.3 million workday availability, with the ship's crew, Alteration Installation Teams and contractors comprising the rest.

The DPIA included a number of complicated planned efforts including a complete shaft and propeller overhaul, rudder refurbishment, catwalk and tank preservation, and modernization and upgrades to electronic and combat systems, catapults, and hotel services.

“At the beginning of this challenging availability I shared

with the project team this would be a marathon event due to the large work package and the length of time it would take to return George H.W. Bush to the Fleet,” said Project Superintendent Jeff Burchett. “At that time, we had no idea what we would face with the COVID 19 pandemic and the additional challenges it brought to the team to overcome such a major obstacle on top of the planned work. The team stepped up and worked through it.”

The ship’s commanding officer Capt. Robert “Aggs” Aguilar was complimentary of the collaboration between NNSY and the crew.

“The end of this maintenance period marks the beginning of our team’s ability to execute our primary mission which is to provide combat capability to Fleet and Joint Force commanders whenever and wherever it is needed,” said Aguilar. “We remain grateful for the teamwork with Norfolk Naval Shipyard to get us back to sea. Now the crew of George Herbert Walker Bush will bring the ship to life and return her to full operational capability.”

NNSY implemented process improvement and innovations in several areas of the availability, including the U.S. Navy’s first organic cold spray repairs at any of the four public shipyards to repair components on Bush. Laser scanning was used to facilitate installation of sponsons onboard, supporting first time quality. Additionally, the shipyard’s special emphasis group developed unique weight handling equipment using electric winches for servicing components while in dry dock.

“The team has been all-in with either fixing or elevating any issues as they occurred, with non-stop execution in mind to ensure USS George H.W. Bush was returned to the Fleet,” said Shipyard Commander Capt. Dianna Wolfson. “With such an extensive and challenging availability, it took a daily commitment from our team members in delivering technical excellence and skilled craftsmanship on Bush so it could be

ready to excel in its mission and demonstrate Freedom at Work.”

The ship will now complete sea trials and multiple certifications before beginning a pre-deployment training cycle.

“It’s been a unique privilege leading the project team of this availability throughout its entire duration at Norfolk Naval Shipyard,” said Burchett. “When starting the project, we adopted a quote from George H.W. Bush himself: ‘This is my mission and I will complete it.’ It’s taken a lot of teamwork and perseverance, on top of working through unexpected challenges, but today we can say the mission is complete and USS George H.W. Bush—and the Navy—is all the better for it.”