

USS George Washington Next Carrier in Line for F-35C Capability



Capt. Joshua Appezzato, air boss, aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73), delivers motivating remarks to the air department at quarters on the flight deck in this 2021 photo. The carrier will be the next to receive modifications to operate the F-35C Lightning II. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Robert Stamer*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's next aircraft carrier to receive modifications to operate the F-35C Lightning II strike fighter is the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73), according to a Navy official.

USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) – the first carrier to deploy with the F-35C – and USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) currently are deployed to the Western Pacific with F-35Cs as part of their air wings. USS George H. W. Bush (CVN 77), having emerged in August from a Drydock Planned Incremental Availability at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia, operated the F-35C in mid-December for the first time.

Rear Adm. Jim Downey, program executive officer for carriers, speaking Jan. 21 to reporters, detailing the plan through fiscal 2025, said the George Washington was in the final stages of its mid-life Refueling and Complex Overhaul at Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia. The USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) would follow George Washington in receiving the F-35C modifications and would be followed by USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), which recently began RCOH.

The second Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carrier, the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), will be the first ship of its

class to receive F-35C modifications. The lead ship, USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), is scheduled to receive the modifications during a Planned Incremental Availability period in fiscal 2025.