

USS George Washington Transits to Japan



Sailors man the rails aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) as the ship departs Naval Air Station North Island, Oct. 1, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 August Clawson)

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SAN DIEGO – The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) departed the San Diego area for routine operations Oct. 8, beginning its transit to Yokosuka, Japan.

George Washington assumed the role of the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed carrier, replacing USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), which operated out of Yokosuka for nearly nine years before departing Japan in May.

“USS George Washington departed San Diego to begin the final phase of its redeployment to Japan, where it will once again serve as the Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier,” said Rear Adm. Greg Newkirk, commander of Carrier Strike Group 5. “It will take up station alongside the always-ready forces postured in the area of responsibility. George Washington, with all its capabilities, represents America's commitment to stability in the region where it will sail and fly with our partner navies as we strive to move from interoperability to true interchangeability.”

George Washington completed its midlife refueling and complex overhaul (RCOH) at Newport News Shipbuilding in May 2023, conducted pre-deployment certifications and inspections over the course of 10 months, and departed Norfolk, Virginia, in April for its Southern Seas deployment around South America, arriving in San Diego in July.

The forward-deployed Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, which recently completed training at Naval Air Station Fallon in Nevada, will embark George Washington to transit the Pacific Ocean and return to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in Japan.

“I am incredibly proud of this team and everything they have accomplished this year,” said Capt. Timothy Waits, commanding officer of George Washington. “This crew, alongside Carrier Air Wing 5, is trained, tested, and ready to return to 7th Fleet as the Navy’s premier forward-deployed aircraft carrier.”

This marks the second time that George Washington has served as the Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Japan aircraft carrier. In 2008, it became the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to be forward-deployed to Japan before being relieved by Ronald Reagan in 2015.

After operating in the U.S. 3rd Fleet and 7th Fleet areas of operations, George Washington will arrive in Yokosuka in late fall.