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## **Northrop Grumman Lands \$9.6 Million for Enterprise Work: Daily Press, October 1, 2008**

By Peter Frost

Northrop Grumman was awarded a \$9.6 million contract for building various replacement units on the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, the Navy announced this week.

The carrier, which arrived in the Newport News shipyard in April for a 16-month maintenance period, is the oldest nuclear-powered flat-top in the fleet. Work is expected to wrap up in September 2009.

The Navy this week also awarded Virginia Beach-based Hourigan Construction Inc. with a \$46.7 million contract for hanger and airfield improvements at Naval Station Norfolk.

Work includes building a new helicopter hanger with an air traffic control tower and making airfield improvements at the station. The project is expected to be complete by November 2010.

## **Congress Ignores Navy's Carrier-Reducing Request, Rep. Taylor Seeking More Data: Defense Daily, October 15, 2008**

By Emelie Rutherford

The Navy's request to dip its aircraft carrier fleet from 11 to 10 was not granted by Congress in the recently passed fiscal year 2009 defense authorization bill, though a key lawmaker said he remains open to the proposal.

The Navy asked Congress in February for a waiver to dip below the legally required aircraft-carrier fleet of 11 for a roughly three-year stint--between the time the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) is inactivated near the end of 2012 and the Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) is commissioned in late 2015. Extending the Enterprise to 2015 would cost more than \$2 billion and create technical, maintenance, and industrial-base challenges, the service has argued.

The final defense authorization bill passed by the House and Senate does not grant the waiver, leaving it to be reconsidered next year during budget deliberations.

House Armed Services Seapower subcommittee Chairman Gene Taylor (D-Miss.), told Defense Daily in an interview he is waiting for "a clear understanding of what is going to be built and how quickly it's going to be built" when weighing the service's carrier waiver.

Taylor has suggested an "either-or" aircraft-carrier strategy to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead.

"That would be, 'OK, if it's going to cost you a couple of billion of dollars only to get one or two more years out of this carrier [the Enterprise], if you would put that \$2 billion towards a surface combatant or a down payment on a submarine or towards an amphibious-assault ship that we can use for the next 30 years, then I personally would be willing to let that ship go," Taylor said.

"I would certainly let that either-or proposal go before the subcommittee, and let the other members have their say," he added.

Navy spokesman Lt. Clay Doss said for the carrier waiver the service's "plan is to reengage" next year.

Robert Work, vice president of strategic studies at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, predicted Taylor's "either-or" strategy will play out in favor of allowing the carrier fleet to temporarily drop to 10.

He noted that while Congress is very cautious about allowing Navy ship numbers to drop, it did allow the service to decrease its aircraft-carrier requirement from 12 to 11 ships in 2006, ahead of the decommissioning of the John F. Kennedy (CV-67) last year.

Work, who supports the Navy's request, said the onus now is on service officials to convince lawmakers like Taylor that the Navy can meet its operational commitments with 10 carriers by adjusting maintenance cycles during the three-year period.

"They can make the case that they can meet their forward-presence requirements in peace time, they can make the case that for a three-year period they will be able to meet their contingency requirements and therefore--although it does entail some risk--it's worth it," Work said.

The Navy has a plan for mitigating the operational impacts of a 10-carrier force, according to the shipbuilding plan it sent Congress in February. The service "has developed a workable strategy; using deployment cycle lengths, Fleet Response Plan variations, and rescheduled ship maintenance availabilities," it says.

HASC Seapower subcommittee Ranking Member Roscoe Bartlett (R-Md.) said he wonders if the United States didn't have aircraft carriers if it would build them today.

"The technologies that might obviate the need for aircraft carriers are things like intercontinental ballistic missiles that can reach anywhere on earth within a half hour," Bartlett told Defense Daily in an interview. "Our aircraft carriers can't be near everything on earth within a half hour, but intercontinental ballistic missiles can. Precision munitions, cruise missiles, supersonic cruise missiles [can]. There's just lots of technologies that we have today that where it might be a tough sell to sell aircraft carriers now, as expensive as they are, and with their vulnerability."

Bartlett said he does not know what will happen with the Navy's carrier waiver, yet questioned if the current carriers are still optimal.

"We used to send several planes to one target, we now send a single plane to several targets," he said. "The lethality now is immeasurably larger than it was then. If we're going to have aircraft carriers, why does it need to be any bigger than the minimum size necessary to launch and retrieve an airplane?"

## **Carl Vinson Launches First Weather Balloon in Three Years: US Fed News, October 16, 2008**

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., Oct. 16 -- The U.S. Navy issued the following press release:

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kristan Robertson, USS Carl Vinson Public Affairs

The operations department aboard USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) launched a weather balloon from the ship's flight deck Oct. 1, an evolution that has not been conducted since the ship entered its refueling complex overhaul (RCOH) shipyard period in late 2005.

The launch, which signals the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier's rapidly approaching return to the fleet, marked a significant milestone for the department's meteorology and oceanography division.

"We have been working for the past six weeks to prepare for this test for training purposes and to ensure the equipment is able to receive information properly," said Chief Aerographer's Mate (AW/SW) Jason Ehlenberger, leading chief petty officer for the division.

The balloon, which expands to 20 feet in diameter as it rises up to 1,000 feet per minute, carries a radiosonde beneath it to collect and transmit information about atmospheric pressure, temperature, dew points, wind direction and speed by utilizing global positioning satellite (GPS) technology.

Upon receiving the data transmissions, the ship's aerographer's mates then send an encoded naval message to the Fleet Numerical Meteorology Center (FNMOC) in Monterey, Calif., where the data gathered by the Carl Vinson crew is used in weather forecasts that are released to the public. Data from balloon launches at more than 900 locations worldwide helps to keep the forecasts accurate.

"We use our weather information on Carl Vinson to help with navigation and flight operations when we have aircraft on board," said Ehlenberger. "But the information is also used to help people around the world because we are basically one more point of information to help ensure accuracy."

The balloon launch proved successful, providing weather information for forecasts, as well as hands-on training for crew members on board. When the ship gets underway, weather balloons will be launched twice daily from the fantail and be carried by wind over the open seas.

Carl Vinson is undergoing its scheduled RCOH at Northrop Grumman Newport News shipyard. The RCOH is an extensive yard period that all Nimitz-class aircraft carriers go through near the mid-point of their 50-year life cycle.

During RCOH, Carl Vinson's nuclear fuel will be replenished and the ship's services and infrastructure will be upgraded to make her the most state-of-the-art aircraft carrier in the fleet and prepare for another 25 years or more of service.

## Coming Back To Life, Shipyard, Crew Ready Carl Vinson for Second Quarter-Century of Service: Seapower, October 2008

By Richard R. Burgess

When the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson returns to sea in March, following a 40-month refueling and complex overhaul (RCOH), its skipper, Capt. Ted Carter, will have only a few months at the helm before he moves on to his next assignment. His relief will have the privilege of taking the renovated ship to its homeport and on to its next deployment.

However, Carter is no less appreciative of his role in taking Carl Vinson through one of the most complex tasks asked of a commanding officer.

"I came here about one year into the complex overhaul and my task has really been to manage the crew through the overhaul and the transition," he said. "Make no mistake about it, until my absolute last day onboard Carl Vinson, my focus is on the crew, bringing this ship back to life and making it a successful combat-ready ship."

Carter, an F-4 and F-14 flight officer and former executive officer of the carrier USS Harry S. Truman, understands the once-in-a-quarter-century impact he and his crew will have on the ship — and the Navy at large — and of the importance of getting it right.

"You only get to build out the crew of an aircraft carrier twice in a 50-year [ship] lifespan; [once] when the ship is built new and [once] when the ship goes through a complex overhaul," he said. "The personality that the crew has as we come out of this overhaul will pretty much be going into motion for the next 25 years."

Carl Vinson, the third ship of the Nimitz class of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, is going through the final months of its RCOH, which includes a refueling of the nuclear reactors that will power the ship for the last 23 years of its planned service life, a thorough renovation and the installation of many upgrades.

The RCOH is being conducted by Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding's shipyard at Newport News, Va., where Carl Vinson was launched 28 years ago.

The RCOHs for USS Nimitz and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower cost \$3.15 billion and \$3.18 billion, respectively, in fiscal 2006 dollars, according to Alan Baribeau, a spokesman for the Navy's program executive officer for carriers. Carl Vinson's RCOH is expected to top out at \$3.12 billion.

Carl Vinson will be followed in RCOH in September by the next youngest Nimitz hull, USS Theodore Roosevelt. Northrop Grumman is executing a \$558 million contract for advance planning and materials procurement for the Theodore Roosevelt RCOH, which is to be funded in the 2009 budget.

Carter said the Carl Vinson RCOH is on budget. When the ship emerges for sea trials in March, it will be "as modern [an] aircraft carrier as there is in the Navy fleet."

In addition to upgrades to its radar and navigation systems, the carrier is receiving the Rolling Airframe Missile system and the Cooperative Engagement Capability, a system of networks that enhance ship and strike group defense by integrating sensors and fire-control systems.

The ship's combat systems "should be very similar to [those on] the George H.W. Bush," said Jim Hughes, vice president for carrier overhauls for Northrop Grumman, which is delivering the 10th and last Nimitz-class carrier to the Navy in January.

Hughes, who worked on Carl Vinson when it was being built and was director of aircraft carrier engineering for the first two RCOHs, said, "We leverage a lot of the technology that's being designed for and installed on new-construction ships."

The island superstructure of Carl Vinson has been modified to a configuration similar to that of George H.W. Bush, he said, "which gives advantages with respect to aircraft launch and recovery and primary flight-control [systems] as well as the layout of combat systems."

One of the major improvements to the ship is an alteration of its electrical power distribution system to increase capacity and accommodate new systems, especially the thousands of computers on a ship that was built before the personal computer age.

"The overall generation capacity on the ship was fine," Hughes said, "but getting it distributed to all the places on the ship is something that we've increased, so that gives the ship an increased service-life margin for even more growth after they leave here."

Carl Vinson will push through the water with four new 21-foot-diameter Rolls-Royce propellers, the first to be installed during an RCOH and the same design installed on the George H.W. Bush.

After acceptance sea trials, Carl Vinson will go through a shakedown cruise to thoroughly test and certify its systems, including the navigation system, the flight deck and the precision-approach landing system. Also to be conducted will be combined combat systems ship qualification trials, "a series of at-sea exercises and tests to verify that the shipboard [combat] systems had been installed correctly and can be operated and maintained safely and effectively," Carter said.

The carrier then will return for the post-shakedown availability and restricted availability periods to allow for adjustments or repairs of systems and more equipment upgrade installations. Upon completion, the ship will be ready for working up for fleet service and a change of homeport to San Diego.

Despite the Navy's plans to reduce the size of crews on its future ships, the RCOH will not result in any substantial reduction in the crew of the Carl Vinson, which is nominally manned by about 3,300 Sailors.

During the overhaul, the crew size dropped to about 2,500 at one point, Carter said. Because of low demand for their skills during an overhaul, many specialists in operations and intelligence were diverted to other units, where they were more needed. The crew also supported the Navy's need for individual augmentees, deploying an average of more than 40 Sailors worldwide in any given month during the overhaul.

"The biggest challenge for the Sailors of Carl Vinson during RCOH is to remember that this warship exists to do the nation's bidding, and not to be in the overhaul environment," said Capt. Steve Koehler, the carrier's executive officer. "Due to the length of the availability and the invasiveness of the work, it has been a long time since a lot of our Sailors have worked doing the job the Navy has trained them to do. While we have maximized training both locally and aboard other ships, there is still a lot of production work done by our Sailors."

"When Sailors join the Navy, they don't necessarily join to go into a complex overhaul," said Carter. "So getting the command climate right, getting our Sailors to understand the team effort that's here, [is critical]."

#### Importance of Teamwork

One of the major challenges for the carriers' chief petty officers, said Command Master Chief Glenn Mallo, is "leading on the deckplates in an environment that is not the normal operating environment for Sailors."

Explaining to Sailors the importance of the RCOH and the value of teamwork with the shipyard workers was a key to successful leadership, he said.

“Over half of the crew is comprised of junior Sailors. Because a majority of these Sailors belong to the millennial generation, their understanding of the ‘whys’ enabled them to be more effective and efficient on a personal basis,” Mallo said.

Carl Vinson sent Sailors on temporary duty to other carriers to help them maintain their skills so they would not have to start from scratch when the ship became operational.

While Northrop Grumman performed the bulk of the overhaul, Carl Vinson’s crew took on many refurbishment tasks. The crew overhauled more than 25 berthing compartments, from bare metal to decking, wiring, painting, cabinets and lockers. The crew replaced more than 1,284 racks and 2,275 lockers, saving \$1.2 million in labor costs.

The crew’s paint team painted more than 1,400 compartments, saving \$5 million in labor costs. Tile and cable removal also were performed by the crew. A find-it/fix-it team took care of tasks that needed to be done on the spot.

The ship and shipyard formed habitability teams to perform “grooming tasks,” checking a compartment to see if it was indeed ready to live in or work in, complete with functioning air conditioning, electricity, heat, hot water and Internet connection. The crew also formed a fire watch team about 18 months into the overhaul, saving approximately \$10 million in labor costs without significantly altering the Sailors’ work day.

“The Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department took over another facility, called a ‘light industrial facility,’ where they did powder coating for new equipment,” Carter said. “They took almost every door off every space in the ship and overhauled it.”

“This project is so massive that the entire crew is involved,” Koehler said. “The entire availability has been challenging and every department has stepped up to ensure the whole ship works as a team to get all of the required work done.”

“All of this together really is about bringing this ship back to life as well as taking ownership of our own aircraft carrier as soon as we can,” Carter said.

The ship’s leadership worked to “frontload the crew’s work so that most of the production work was done in the first three quarters [of the overall], so that in the last quarter, the crew would be concentrating much more on their own individual training so we could bring the ship back to life,” he said.

For much of an overhaul, when the ship is stripped down to bare metal, it is not habitable by the crew. A floating accommodation facility is provided to house some offices and support services, such as medical, dental and food service facilities, as well as sleeping quarters for personnel who need to stay onboard the carrier.

The roughly 3,000 crew members were berthed all over the Hampton Roads area, to such an extent that the ship created a transportation department to move the crew daily between berthing and the ship, a task that required the ship to certify drivers for government vehicles. Carter said the ship’s vehicles logged more than 1 million miles during the first 33 months of the RCOH.

“We’ve had to be fairly inventive in terms of how we [maintain] frequent contact with all of our Sailors between senior management and leadership,” said Carter, who listed town hall-style meetings and leadership calls with satellite locations as two of the methods of communication. Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, the parent command of all Navy facilities in the region, provided support to the crew in myriad ways, including berthing the crew off site; morale, welfare and recreation services, such as event tickets; and the Fleet Family Services Support Center just outside the shipyard.

The crew started moving back onboard the ship in August, a process that took several weeks.

“While keeping the eye on the prize of operating the warship has been difficult, the [crew move-aboard milestone] has really allowed the Sailors to see the light at the end of the tunnel and they are fired up, ready to get to sea,” said Koehler.

Moving onboard, the crew had much to be pleased with: easy-to-clean tile floors on the mess decks; new and upgraded equipment in all seven galleys and eight messes; flat-screen television sets in the wardrooms, chief’s mess and crew mess decks; new crew lounge areas; two new gyms (plus one more to be installed later) with new workout equipment; new mattresses and pillows.

“I couldn’t promise them that it would be the Hilton,” Carter said. “But I did promise them that they will feel secure, safe, and it’s a place that they’re going to want to not only work, but live.”

“A crew move-aboard is a major event and there are a million things that can hold you up,” Hughes said, noting that it was one of the most successful he had seen. “The [commanding officer] was incredibly pleased. When he’s happy, we’re happy.”

### Challenges and Advantages

The Carl Vinson RCOH also represented challenges and new capabilities for the Newport News shipyard. With another carrier — USS Enterprise — in for work and two others under construction or planning — George H.W. Bush and Gerald R. Ford — mustering the workers with the right skills at the right ship at the right time was a scheduling challenge for a finite work force, Hughes said.

The RCOH benefited from a new facility, Pier 3, which was used because George H.W. Bush was being built at the outfitting pier that usually is used for RCOH work. The new pier featured office space for 300 employees on the second story, right across the gangway from the ship.

Hughes said the structure was a “tremendous advantage,” enabling the crew to more easily integrate with the yard force, get tools to the ship more quickly and minimize the time workers had to be off the ship. The pier also featured a lunch facility to reduce time away for workers.

Northrop Grumman also used environmentally controlled tents — the size of football fields — under which to resurface the flight deck with non-skid material. The tents enable the yard to work without the rescheduling and workaround normally necessitated by poor weather. The shipyard employs a full-time, dedicated knowledge manager, Hughes said, “to capture lessons going forward” for this and future RCOHs.

“That’s the hard part: stopping while you’re in the middle of learning something and writing it down to carry it forward,” he said. “When we get close to an upcoming event, they highlight [lessons] without us having to go look for the things we stumbled across in the past.”

Carter and Hughes highlighted the teamwork that is critical to the success of the RCOH.

“The thing that has made this overhaul different from others is the teamworking relationship that we’ve had between Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding and [Navy’s] supervisor of shipbuilding,” Carter said. “The combined integrated effort that brings in the innovation, the commitment, the determination and the willingness to work together to accomplish this amazing feat could not be done if we didn’t have that triad relationship. I think we’re creating a standard for future overhauls to work within.

“Getting our Sailors to realize that they’re not the only great Americans working on putting the ship back together, that they have other contracted civilians doing that, putting that together into an integrated team has been a challenge but one I think they’ve taken on very well.”

“[The Carl Vinson crew] did a great job leveraging everything the previous [RCOH] crews had told them,” Hughes said. “They changed their organizational structure before they came in to go from a warfighter to a maintainer. They set their compartments up to align with our organizational

structure. And they did a tremendous job with being prepared to come in and work with us, which made our job easier.

"The way this team has integrated has been phenomenal," he said. "We truly operate as a single entity. They understand that there is no 'us,' there is no 'them,' it's all 'we.' It's certainly been taken to a new level on this [RCOH]."

**Northrop Grumman Wins Contract to Upgrade Steering Systems for USS Carl Vinson**  
CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va., Oct. 28, 2008 -- The U.S. Naval Sea Systems Command has awarded a contract to Northrop Grumman Corporation's (NYSE:NOC) Sperry Marine business unit to upgrade the steering control systems for the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70).

The cost-plus-fixed-fee contract has a total value of \$2.1 million. The work will be carried out at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding's Newport News shipyard during the ship's first scheduled maintenance period following its refueling and complex overhaul. Sperry Marine will replace the steering units and helm control console on the bridge and install new electronics and software. The contract also provides for engineering support and documentation.

"This contract advances the Navy's goal of modernizing and standardizing critical systems throughout this class of vessels," said J. Nolasco DaCunha, vice president of Sperry Marine. "Sperry Marine previously completed the same upgrades for eight other Nimitz-class aircraft carriers."

Commissioned in 1982, the USS Carl Vinson was the third Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. The ship is currently undergoing a 40-month complex refueling overhaul, in which the nuclear fuel is being replenished and the ship's services and infrastructure are being upgraded to prepare for the next 25 years of the projected 50-year service life.

Sperry Marine, headquartered in Charlottesville, Va., and with major engineering and support offices in New Malden, United Kingdom and Hamburg, Germany, provides smart navigation and ship control solutions for the international marine industry with customer service and support through offices in 16 countries, sales representatives in 47 countries and authorized service depots in more than 250 locations worldwide.

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## Shipyard Workers Approve Contract in 945-833 Vote: Virginian-Pilot, October 31, 2008

Shipyard workers approved a new labor contract with Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding on Wednesday by a slim margin, the union and the company announced Thursday.

Of the shipyard union's 6,000 dues-paying members, 1,783 cast ballots, with 945 voting yes, 833 voting no and five disqualified for improperly filling out the ballot, said Dwight Kirk, a spokesman for United Steelworkers of America Local 8888. The contract will affect roughly 8,000 hourly workers in the Newport News shipyard through March 10, 2013.

After nearly two months of negotiating, officials with Northrop Grumman and the union said they're glad the contract was settled.

"We are pleased that the union members voted yes for the contract, and we look forward to moving ahead, together, to build ships for the world's greatest Navy," said Bill Ermatinger, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding's vice president of human resources and administration, in a statement. "We believe the contract is a very fair and competitive one with a strong economic package and significant benefit enhancements. Most importantly, we believe it is a contract worthy of our great shipbuilders at Newport News."

The contract includes annual wage increases of between 3.75 and 4 percent for four years, improves the pension plan, rewards workers who serve for more than 30 years, and, for the first time, provides paid sick and personal leave.

Fred Redmond, the union's chief negotiator, called it "a legacy contract."

"It assures the economic security of our members and retirees for many years to come," said Redmond, who also is vice president for human affairs of the international union. "It is even more impressive given the dire economic climate where jobs are being slashed, wages are being cut or frozen and pension plans are disappearing."

Not all the workers are satisfied with the agreement. Opponents say the raises are insufficient to cover benefits costs and the cost of living. They also argue that it does nothing for retirees.

"They only brought us crumbs," said Preston McKellar Sr., a welder who has worked at the shipyard for more than 40 years.

The agreement is the second consecutive contract negotiated without labor disruptions. The last strike occurred in 1999, when 6,000 workers were off the job for 117 days. The 2004 contract passed without incident.

A strike this time around could have crippled the shipyard's efforts to complete the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush by the end of the year. It already has delayed the completion date twice and has some employees working mandatory overtime on the project.

The next step will be educating workers on the new deal, said Alton Glass, the local union president, in a statement.

"Winning the best contract in the world won't mean a thing if our members, officers, stewards and department representatives don't understand how it can and will improve their lives and livelihoods," he said.

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