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Newport News Built USS George Washington Arrives in Japan

The Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding-Newport News built nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) arrived at its new home port just south of Tokyo, in Yokosuka, Japan on Sept. 25. The carrier will replace *USS Kitty Hawk*.

House Approves \$612B Defense Bill with Military Pay Raise

The Virginian-Pilot, September 25, 2008

By Dale Eisman

Congress is poised to send President Bush a \$612 billion defense spending plan for 2009, with billions more certain to follow by spring as expenses for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to mount.

The House cleared the plan Wednesday by a vote of 392-39 after a week of conferences with Senate leaders over its final shape. A Senate vote is expected before Congress adjourns next week for the fall election campaigns; it could come as soon as today.

The bill largely tracks the defense budget proposal submitted by Bush in February. Lawmakers agreed to his plan to add 7,000 soldiers and 5,000 Marines to the armed forces and will provide a 3.9 percent pay increase for all service members, half a percentage point more than Bush sought.

But Congress blocked an administration plan to raise the health insurance premiums paid by more than 1 million military retirees. Defense officials had argued for several years for the increase, saying that rising health care costs are cutting into funds they need for new weaponry and other defense programs. With an Oct. 1 deadline looming for passage of the annual bill, Bush won several key battles over his stewardship of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Facing a veto threat, lawmakers backed away from provisions that would have limited the use of private security contractors in war zones.

They also scaled back a proposal, championed by Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., that Bush be required to seek Congressional approval of a long-term security agreement with Iraq now being negotiated by the administration. The final bill will require only that the agreement be shared with Congress before it is signed.

For Hampton Roads, the final bill would provide \$2.7 billion for continued construction of the aircraft carrier Gerald Ford, the first of a new series of nuclear-powered carriers to be built at Northrop Grumman's Newport News shipyard.

The legislation also includes \$2.1 billion to finance a Virginia-class attack submarine, constructed in part at the Newport News yard, and another \$1.4 billion to permit the Navy to purchase parts needed to accelerate its construction schedule for additional submarines.

The Navy has been building the subs at a rate of one per year, but lawmakers from Virginia and Connecticut - home to another sub-building yard - want to shift to a two-per-year schedule in 2010 or 2011.

Other major Navy projects in the bill include \$2.5 billion for the third and apparently final ship in a series of new destroyers to be built at yards in Maine and Mississippi. The Navy announced in midsummer that it would stop the DDG-1000 series after just two ships and instead build additional Arleigh Burke destroyers. The Burke ships have been the centerpiece of the surface fleet since the early 1990s, and Navy leaders say they are better able than the DDG-1000s to carry new missile defense radar systems. But after lobbying by New England's congressional delegation, the Navy agreed to add one more ship.

Multibillion-Dollar Contract Awarded For New Carrier Due In 2015 **Inside the Navy, September 15, 2008**

By Zachary M. Peterson

The Navy last week awarded Northrop Grumman a \$5 billion contract for the detail design and construction of the service's next-generation aircraft carrier, the Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78), slated for a 2015 delivery, a date the company's program manager is confident will be met.

In 2005, the Navy gave a separate \$2.7 billion contract for advance construction on the new carrier. The full contract comes in advance of the keel laying planned for next year.

The new class of carriers, of which Ford will be the first, feature new nuclear-propulsion and electrical plant designs, electromagnetic catapults instead of steam, advanced arresting gear and new integrated warfare systems.

The Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) is perhaps the most challenging new system on the carrier. In November 2007, the Navy announced EMALS, manufactured by General Atomics, had passed a critical design review. In April, the first full-size test motor generator completed factory acceptance testing.

Of the carrier's 21 new technologies, EMALS is one of three that "present the greatest risk to the ship's cost and schedule," according to a March Government Accountability Office report titled "Defense Acquisitions: Assessments of Selected Weapon Programs." Problems with developing the motor generator delayed the program by several months, as testing was scheduled to start in February 2008. To keep up with the CVN-78's construction schedule, the Navy had considered delivery of EMALS before completing testing, an idea the GAO also took issue with.

"We're working very closely with the Naval Sea Systems Command and Naval Air Systems Command and the subcontractor General Atomics to ensure that we understand all issues and risks associated with [EMALS] and we're working with them to meet the ship's schedule," Mike Shawcross, vice president for the Ford-class carrier program at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding, told Inside the Navy Sept. 10 after the contract was announced.

The Ford and the follow-on carrier, CVN-79, mark the first new aircraft carrier design since the Nimitz-class carriers of the 1960s. The new technologies aboard the ship and the new design will allow the Navy to save costs over the lifetime of the carrier, according to Capt. Brian Antonio, the Navy's program manager for CVN-78.

"These improvements provide transformational warfighting capabilities and enable reduced manning, ultimately reducing the total ownership cost of each Ford-class carrier by approximately \$5 billion over the life of the ship," Antonio said in a Sept. 10 statement.

More than 80 percent of the design of the new carrier is complete in computer modeling, Shawcross said.

"In about 2010 the product model will be complete," he added.

Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding in Newport News Began Construction of The Aircraft Carrier Gerald R. Ford, CVN-78, In 2005 Under A Separate Contract. **Navy Times, September 11, 2008**

By Christopher P. Cavas

Contract awarded for first carrier of new class

The shipyard is the sole builder of nuclear- powered ships for the Navy.

The Navy awarded Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding a \$5.1 billion contract Wednesday to begin construction of the first ship of a new class of aircraft carrier.

Northrop's Newport News, Va., shipyard will build the carrier Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), lead ship of the first new class of nuclear-powered U.S. aircraft carriers in more than four decades.

The Newport News yard is the only shipyard in the world currently capable of building the large aircraft carriers used by the Navy. CVN 78-class ships are expected to displace around 100,000 tons with a length of nearly 1,100 feet. The design of the new flattops includes a new flight deck with an improved weapon handling system, advanced arresting gear, a newly developed electromagnetic aircraft launch system, new and simplified nuclear propulsion plants and a new electrical power generation system.

The last 10 aircraft carriers belong to the Nimitz class. Construction on the carrier Nimitz (CVN 68) began in 1967 and the ship entered service in 1975. The tenth and last ship of the class, the George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), is expected to be delivered to the Navy in 2009.

The new, seven-year cost-plus incentive fee contract covers the detail design and construction of the Gerald R. Ford. Advance construction of the ship began in 2005 under a separate contract valued at \$2.7 billion. Total cost of the new carrier is expected to be about \$11 billion; Keel-laying is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2009 with delivery to the fleet in 2015.

Northrop also announced the delivery of the USS Green Bay (LPD 20), the fourth and latest unit of the San Antonio LPD 17-class of amphibious transport dock ships. The Green Bay ran its Navy acceptance trials in August and was turned over to the service on Aug. 29.

The ship successfully rode out Hurricane Gustav at its building yard in Pascagoula, Miss., Northrop said.

The Green Bay, which will be homeported at San Diego, is expected to be commissioned into service early next year.

Navy Awards Northrop Grumman \$5 Billion for CVN-78 Construction **Defense Daily, September 11, 2008**

The Navy yesterday awarded Northrop Grumman [NOC] Shipbuilding Newport News a \$5.1 billion contract to build the next-generation aircraft carrier CVN- 78, the Gerald R. Ford.

Under this contract, Northrop Grumman will complete the detail design and construction of CVN-78, which includes engineering; integration; related development efforts including drawing and work package development; advanced planning; design weight estimate; life cycle support products and related logistics data; production planning; test and evaluation; further definition of initiatives to reduce CVN-78 class total ownership costs; and data necessary to support construction of CVN-78, according to the Navy.

Work is expected to be completed by September 2015, according to the Navy.

CVN-78 is the Navy's first major investment in aircraft carrier design in more than three decades and features many improvements over the 1960's Nimitz-class design. CVN-78 includes a new flight deck with an improved weapons handling system, advanced arresting gear, a completely re-engineered Electro-Magnetic Aircraft Launch System, new and simplified nuclear propulsion plants, a new electrical power generation system and reconfigurable design architecture, the Navy said

CVN-78 was officially named Gerald R. Ford by the Secretary of the Navy in January 2007 and will be constructed in Newport News, Va. The keel is scheduled to be laid in late 2009, and the ship is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy in 2015. The Navy plans to build 11 Ford-class aircraft carriers, and construction of Ford-class aircraft carriers is projected to continue through 2058.

Newport News Shipyard Gets \$5.1B Contract for Carrier Ford

The Virginian-Pilot, September 11, 2008

By Kathy Adams

Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding in Newport News will design and construct the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford under a \$5.1 billion contract the company signed with the Navy on Wednesday.

The local shipyard began advance construction of the carrier in 2005 under a separate \$2.7 billion contract and was expected to receive the new contract because it is the sole builder of nuclear-powered ships for the Navy.

"It means a lot to the company," said Mike Shawcross, vice president of the program for Northrop Grumman.

The James River shipyard is Hampton Roads' largest private employer, with 19,000 workers. The company is renegotiating the terms of its contract with about 8,000 of its workers represented by United Steelworkers of America Local 8888. The labor contract expires Oct. 26.

About a third of the Ford's 1,200 structural units are already under construction in Newport News. The keel is scheduled to be laid next fall and delivery to the Navy is slated for 2015, according to Navy and Northrop Grumman news releases.

The Ford will be the first in a new class of carriers succeeding the 10-ship Nimitz class. The last carrier in that class, the George H.W. Bush, was completed in 2006.

The Ford is designed to be more flexible and efficient than the Nimitz class, with improvements designed to reduce crew size and operating costs, according to Northrop Grumman and the Navy.

Features include an enlarged and rearranged flight deck, an improved weapons-handling system, more flexible command and control spaces, greater electrical power generation capacity and room for future technology.

Those improvements will allow the Navy to reduce crew sizes and likely save \$5 billion over the life of the ship, the Navy said.

"It will bring superior war-fighting capability and meaningful quality-of-life improvements for sailors," said Capt. Brian Antonio, the Navy's manager for the Ford-class carrier program. "Most important, CVN 78-class carriers will be able to adapt and evolve to defend this nation and our allies well into the 21st century."

The Navy plans to build 11 aircraft carriers in the Ford class through 2058, according to a Navy news release.

"This contract award is an important and historic milestone for our company, our Navy and our country," Matt Mulherin, vice president and general manager for Northrop Grumman's Newport News operations, said in a news release. "It represents an incredible opportunity for the great shipbuilders of Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding to build the first new aircraft carrier class in more than 40 years. The work we are doing today will play a significant role in America's defense for many generations to come."

Yard Gets \$5.1 Billion Carrier Contract

Daily Press, September 11, 2008

By Peter Frost

Northrop Grumman will design and build the new Ford class. At its peak, 4,500 will be working on the carrier.

Northrop Grumman Corp.'s Newport News shipyard on Wednesday was awarded a \$5.1 billion contract to build the next generation aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford, marking a major milestone for both the yard and the Navy.

Though the contract comes as no surprise — Northrop's Newport News yard is the sole builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers for the Navy and does not compete for carrier contracts — it will ensure work force stability in Newport News through 2015 and provide a steady revenue stream for the shipbuilder.

The Ford is the lead ship in the newest class of carriers, and it will represent the first major design change to the carrier platform since the Nimitz class was initiated in the 1960s. Newport News is scheduled to complete the 10th and final ship of that class, the George H.W. Bush, later this year.

"This is very important to us," said Mike Shawcross, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding's vice president of the Ford program. "It allows us to continue to support the Navy ... and is a continuation of carrier construction at the yard."

As production ramps down on the Bush as it nears completion, workload on the Ford will build, allowing Northrop to retain experienced shipbuilders.

Advanced design work and construction of various Ford units has been under way in Newport News for several years. Today, the yard employs about 3,000 workers in design and engineering and another 900 in production on the Ford. About one third of the ship's 1,200 structural units are already under construction.

At its peak in 2012-2013, Northrop will have about 4,500 workers employed on the ship.

The Ford will begin to take shape in November 2009, when its keel will be laid in Newport News. Northrop is scheduled to deliver the ship in September 2015.

While the Ford class will include many of the same design features of the Nimitz class, Northrop and the Navy have added several new technologies to the ships, including a new flight deck with an improved weapons handling system, advanced arresting gear to catch landing aircraft, a re-engineered launch system and a new nuclear propulsion plant design.

The redesign will allow the Navy to increase the daily number of flights on and off the ship from 120 to about 160, said Capt. Brian Antonio, the Navy's program manager for the Ford class, in an interview earlier this year. That's crucial, he said, because launching aircraft is a carrier's chief mission.

Design changes also allow for about 700 fewer sailors required in the ship's company, resulting in big savings for the Navy.

"The more people you take off the ship, the more people you remove from having to support them. That's 700 fewer mouths you have to feed, 700 less rations you have to store and fewer people to prepare the food for them," he said.

Including advanced design work and initial acquisition costs, the price tag for the Ford comes in at about \$13.9 billion. Recurring costs for future Ford-class ships will be about \$8 billion, Antonio said. That \$8 billion also includes all government-furnished equipment, such as combat systems, radar and communications and other new equipment.

Northrop's share works out to about \$7.8 billion, including Wednesday's award and a separate design contract worth \$2.7 billion in 2005.

The Navy plans to build 11 Ford-class aircraft carriers, and construction is projected to continue through 2058.

\$7.8 billion Northrop Grumman's total projected share of the Ford's \$13.9 billion price tag. A \$2.7 billion design contract was awarded in 2005.

About the shipyard

Northrop Grumman's Newport News shipyard is the nation's sole builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and one of two builders of nuclear-powered submarines.

Employees

About 21,000

Major projects

Carriers: Building the George H.W. Bush and Gerald R. Ford; maintenance of the USS Enterprise and mid-life overhaul of the USS Carl Vinson.

Submarines: Assembling portions of five submarines and repairing another. Expected to complete the New Mexico in 2009; expected to finish maintenance on the USS Toledo later this year.

Other: Helping build portions of three surface ships for Northrop's Gulf Coast shipyards.

Who Was Carl Vinson And Why Is This Carrier Named After Him? The Virginian-Pilot, September 6, 2008

By Kate Wiltrout

USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) transits the James River in 2007 en route to a pier-side dock after completing an 18-month dry dock period at Northrop Grumman Newport News.\

Most aircraft carriers have pretty obvious names: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt.

So who was Carl Vinson, and what did he do to get one of the most fearsome pieces of U.S. military might named after him?

The thousands of sailors assigned to the Vinson - which has been undergoing a midlife nuclear refueling in Newport News since late 2005 - probably know the answer.

Vinson was the youngest member of Congress when he took office in 1914, a few days shy of his 31st birthday. He went on to become one of its longest-serving members.

The Georgia congressman retired in 1965, after 50 years and one month of federal service. (The carrier's Web site says Vinson's service exceeds anyone elected to Congress since it first convened in 1789 - which was true until 1994, when Rep. James Whitten of Mississippi surpassed that mark.)

But longevity wasn't enough for Vinson to merit an aircraft carrier. That honor came because Vinson spent decades running the House Armed Services Committee - and he was instrumental in passing legislation that provided for the construction of 92 major warships. Many people consider him the father of the two-ocean Navy.

Melvin B. Hill Jr., who served as director of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia from 1983 to 1996, wrote in a profile of Vinson that his influence over defense policy was so great that when asked by reporters in 1952 about the possibility of being appointed secretary of defense by President Eisenhower, Vinson replied, "No, I'd rather run the Pentagon from here."

It was at Vinson's 90th birthday celebration in 1973 that President Nixon announced that the nation's third nuclear carrier would bear Vinson's name.

Vinson witnessed the ship's launching in 1980 - he was the first living American to have a ship named after him - but he died before the carrier was commissioned in 1982.

Shipbuilder, Union Begin Talks for New Labor Pact Virginian-Pilot, September 3, 2008

By Kathy Adams

Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding and the union that represents about a third of its workers are scheduled to begin haggling today over facets of the workers' contract, which expires next month.

United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 is seeking higher wages to compensate for the cost of living; better retirement plans; sick pay; and protection from rising health care costs.

Fred Redmond, chief negotiator and vice president of the national union, said preliminary discussions have been positive and he is confident they will reach an agreement before the contract expires Oct. 26.

"We have some very critical and serious issues to discuss, but we're very optimistic that we'll reach an agreement," he said.

Jennifer Dellapenta, a Northrop Grumman spokeswoman, declined to comment.

Several hundred workers rallied outside the company's Newport News shipyard Aug. 17 to garner support in the upcoming negotiations.

The union represents about 80 percent of the company's 8,000 union-eligible hourly workers. The Northrop Grumman shipyard, the sole builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers for the Navy, employs about 19,000 people, making it Hampton Roads' largest private employer.

In 2004, contract negotiations between the company and Local 8888 resulted in an agreement without a strike. But in 1999, the local and its 6,000 members went on strike for 117 days during negotiations with Newport News Shipbuilding Co., which Northrop Grumman acquired in 2001.

Improving retirement benefits and keeping out-of-pocket health care expenses low are two of the union's chief priorities, Redmond said. Workers also want paid sick days so they don't have to use vacation or annual leave for health needs.

A strike is a last resort, Redmond said.

"Hopefully, due to the discussions that we're going to have, we'll be able to reach an agreement," he said. "We definitely want to try to do anything we can to avoid a strike."

Northrop Names New Director for Warfare Sector

Daily Press, August 26, 2008

By Peter Frost

Newport News

Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding on Monday announced it has promoted Chuck Jefferson to director of its advanced capabilities group for surface warfare.

Jefferson, who joined the Newport News shipyard eight years ago, is responsible for surface combatant ship capture programs, including early concept development and studies. He also will be responsible for the Navy's next-generation cruiser, the CGX class, and providing support for all aircraft carrier programs.

He will report to Pete Diakun, a vice president.

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