



USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN RETURNS TO SEA

Story by JOC Joe Staker and JO2 Bob Leach

USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) will bring its six-month Planned Incremental Availability (PIA) in Puget Sound Naval Shipyard to a close Sept. 15 when the ship goes to sea for the first time since March 31. The ship will "fast cruise" at the pier in the Controlled Industrial Area, testing engines and equipment, for two days prior to its departure. The 95,000-ton aircraft carrier is expected to arrive at Naval Station Everett Sept. 20 following five days of scheduled sea trials.

"I couldn't be more pleased with the tremendous accomplishments of the PSNS/ABE team," stated Capt. J. J. Quinn, commanding officer. "The team's commitment to excellence and unparalleled work ethic were the driving forces behind the completion of this PIA period two full weeks in advance of the Oct. 1 end date mandated by the Chief of Naval Operations." In support of this undertaking, maintenance teams from ship's force, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Todd Pacific Shipyard Inc., SUPSHIP Puget Sound, and the Trident Refit Facility cooperated in a combined effort encompassing more than 150,000 mandays of labor onboard the giant ship.

Cmdr. Brian Miller, chief engineer and PIA Department head, along with Capt. Andy Sevald, the ship's reactor officer, managed a diverse work package which included: significant increase in air conditioning capacity, additional jet blast deflector capabilities, a metal and glass shredder system, two self-contained navigational gyros, the relocation of aircraft electrical service system stations, the overhaul of high pressure air compressors, the installation of a 32-ton, 2,000-square foot prefabricated fitness facility and numerous other improvements adding up to over 80 million taxpayer dollars. Additionally, Abraham Lincoln's Reactor Department completed a major electrical ship alteration, as well as modernization upgrades to existing equipment.

Sixteen berthing compartments were rehabilitated and 800 racks (beds) were replaced, significantly improving the quality of life for the ship's 2,900 crewmembers and 2,500 air wing personnel.

One PIA Department spray team will be happy to bring the yard period to a close, having painted 240 spaces over the six-month period. "Ships always use a lot of paint when they come into the yards," said Engineman 1st Class (SW) James Lee, Hazardous Minimization Center supervisor. "The crew uses about 20 gallons of white paint in an average month at sea, but they have used almost 1,200 gallons during each month of the availability."

As the aircraft carrier gets underway, it will sport a new coat of paint from the island to

the waterline -- about 2,500 gallons of 'haze gray,' courtesy of the hard-working Deck Department.

The ship's largest department, Air, also posted some impressive numbers. Members worked together with shipyard personnel to replace 160,000 square feet of 'non-skid' surface coating on the 4.5-acre flight deck, complete 508 work packages on aircraft launch and recovery equipment, and replace a 29-ton jet blast deflector shield. Work on scaffolds under tarpaulins resulted in the chipping, priming, and painting of 2,200 square feet of vertical surface on the ship's island structure as well as 45,000 square feet of catwalks and light lockers.

One of the smallest departments, Dental, set up their operations on a nearby barge and treated 2,000 patients.

Another unusual program was organized by the Religious Ministries Department, where cross-sound commuters on Washington State ferries and the Victoria Clipper III grew accustomed to seeing Commuter Bible Chat Groups comprised of Abraham Lincoln sailors sharing fellowship.

Throughout the PIA, more than 800 sailors commuted up to five hours each day from Everett and Whidbey Island, rising at 5 a.m. and returning home at 6:30 p.m. Capt. Tim Thomson and Cmdr. Steve Workman coordinated a flexible plan employing fast ferries, foot ferries, autos, and buses. On at least two occasions, early morning commuters were startled to find themselves in the company of prominent visitors: Adm. Archie Clemens (Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet) and Rear Adm. Kevin Green (Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group THREE) solicited sailors' opinions on trips from Seattle to Bremerton.

Many crewmembers spent part of their last weekend driving their privately owned vehicles to Everett Naval Station and returned to Bremerton by chartered bus. Approximately one in six stood duty on the ship, fine-tuning equipment and bringing stores aboard. Others found time to participate in community projects which included the Habitat for Humanity construction site on Cottman Avenue in Bremerton.

USS Abraham Lincoln will arrive at Naval Station Everett's Pier Alfa at approximately 1:30 p.m. Sept. 20. The base will be open to the public for the homecoming, celebrating with up to 2,000 friends and relatives expected to welcome the ship back to its homeport.

The ship will show off its new look when it participates in Fleet Week activities Oct. 9-12 in San Francisco, Ca.