

USS James E. Williams Crew Prepares For Maiden Voyage
Story Number: NNS060427-06 Release Date: 4/27/2006 11:57:00 AM

By Photographer's Mate Airman Mandy McLaurin, Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) — The guided-missile destroyer USS James E. Williams (DDG 95) will deploy May 2 on its maiden voyage as part of the Global War on Terrorism Surface Strike Group (GWOT SSG) 06-2.

This deployment has come sooner than expected for the ship's crew and is part of a surge deployment under the Navy's Fleet Response Plan.

"When I first heard of the surge deployment, I was a little surprised, as was the rest of the crew," said Interior Communications Electrician 1st Class (SW) Adam Tabbert. "We knew we were making a deployment next year, and a surge deployment doesn't come along very often for a newly constructed ship."

This "surge" deployment of James E. Williams is designed to be flexible and will provide presence and strike power to support joint and allied forces afloat and ashore. Under the Fleet Response Plan, a simple realignment of schedules makes this deployment possible.

James E. Williams will join the Naval Station Norfolk, Va.,-based amphibious transport dock USS Trenton (LPD 14) and the guided-missile cruiser USS Hue City (CG 66) homeported at Naval Station Mayport, Fla., which surged April 18 as part of the global war on terrorism Surface Strike Group (GWOT SSG) 06-2.

Despite the acceleration in schedule, this deployment didn't catch the crew off guard. Since its commissioning Dec. 11, 2004, the crew has been able to finish its underway training and certifications, ensuring the ship is ready for what's to come.

Half of the ship's crew has never been on a deployment, but Cmdr. Ian Hall, James E. Williams' commanding officer, said they've stepped up to the challenge.

"We have had an accelerated training cycle since January. The ship has been going flank speed and making the most out of every opportunity to train," said Hall. "It's been a busy time, and the crew has done admirably."

As a surface strike group, James E. Williams, Trenton and Hue City will enhance naval presence for combatant commanders in support of the ongoing global war on terrorism. All three ships can operate independently or in conjunction with other maritime forces.

"We're looking forward to going out and being an active participant in the global war on terrorism," said Hall. "We're ready."

James E. Williams is named after the most highly decorated enlisted Sailor in naval history, Boatswain's Mate 1st Class James Elliott Williams. Williams was awarded the Medal of Honor for his achievements, demonstration of extraordinary bravery and leadership in the Vietnam war along with many other decorations, including the Navy Cross, for his role in both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

For more news from around the fleet, visit www.navy.mil.



*Official U.S. Navy file photo
of USS James E. Williams
(DDG 95).*