

the victim as GW is scheduled to start a three-year midlife Refuelling and Complex Overhaul from 2016. GW is set to be replaced by the USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN-76) in 2015, so the decommissioning of CVN73 will not affect the operational readiness in the Pacific. This overhaul is expected to cost well over US\$3 billion which is a direct saving.

This is not the first time the US Navy is looking to a reduction of the carrier-strength. In 2011, the US Navy already looked to a 10-ship, nine-CVW fleet. At that time, the GW was also mentioned as the carrier that could be decommissioned. It was then calculated that the US Navy could save some US\$7 billion in decommissioning GW during the period 2012-2021. This 2011-calculation did not include further savings over the 2012-2042 period, the operational (refuelled) life-span of the GW. Decommissioning the GW would cost about \$2 billion.

In the early sixties', the US Navy operated 26 carriers (including some World war II leftovers). Reduction started and during the early eighties up to the early nineties, fifteen carriers were in use. In 1991, a reduction brought the force back to fourteen, in 1993 to thirteen and in 1994 to twelve. Eventually, in 2007 another one was decommissioned and the carrier-fleet was reduced to eleven, a number set by law. Currently, the fleets consists of ten carriers, caused by the decommission of the USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65) before it had been replaced by the USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-77). The US Navy has ten Carrier Air Wings on strength to man the eleven carriers (one carrier is always one in long-term overhaul). If another carrier will be decommissioned in 2015, it is logical that one CVW will also disappear.

FRCSW = Fleet Readiness Center South East, NAS Jacksonville (FL)

FRCSW = Fleet Readiness Center South West, NAS North Island (CA)

EA-6B
161779 VMAQ-4 ex AG-501/VAQ-140 **P-102** jan14
161882/NE-503 pres Miramar ex NE-503/VAQ-131 **P-105** feb14
Another Prowler made its last flight to a museum, this time 161882 was added to the collection of the Flying Leathernecks Aviation Museum, Miramar (CA).

MQ-8C
168456/VX-8456 VX-30 f/f 12feb14 feb14

KC-130J-30 168073/073	LMTAS-Marietta f/f 13jan14	382-5740	jan14
KC-130T-30 164598/RU-598	VR-55	ex QH-598/VMGR-234 382-5263	feb14
E-2D 168321/604	VX-1	f/n	feb14
F/A-18A 162411/6	FRCSW	ex 309th AMARG 243/A193	12
F/A-18C 163431/40 164266/400 165182/AD-350 165228/AG-405 165404/NE-406	FRCSW VFA-94 VFA-106 VFA-131 VFA-34	ex 40/NSAWC 626/C005 ex NA-410 1029/C245 ex AC-304/VFA-37 1305/C407 ex NE-410/VFA-34 1415/C453 ex AG-405/VFA-131 1432/C461	oct13 feb14 nov13 jan14 oct13
F/A-18D 163488/AD-404 163497/AD-417 164254/XE-444	VFA-106 VFA-106 VX-9	ex NJ-430/VFA-122 723/D017 ex RB-94/FRCSW 736/D019 ex XE-401 1017/D076	feb14 feb14 feb14
F/A-18E 165900 166430/NH-201 166443/NJ-146 168352/NJ-225 168867/NJ-255	FRCSW VFA-147 VFA-122 VFA-122 VFA-122	ex NE-201/VFA-137 .../E055 ex NG-206/VFA-14 .../E075 ex NH-206/VFA-147 .../E088 f/n E2.. ex nmks E2..	oct13 feb14 feb14 sep12 feb14
F/A-18F 165890/AD-244 166979/141 168485/NJ-176	VFA-106 VFA-41 VFA-122	ex NF-114/VFA-102 .../F050 ex NJ-170/VFA-122 F254 ex SD-124/VX-23 F259	feb14 feb14 feb14
EA-18G 166855/XE-500	VX-9	ex NJ-551/VAQ-129 G-1	feb14
SH-60B 164854/66	HSM-37	ex TH-66/HSL-37 70-1937	jan14
HH-60H 163785/NW-312 163786/NW-314 163793/NW-307 165116/SA-615 165257/NW-311 165258/SA-620	HSC-85 HSC-85 HSC-85 HSC-3 HSC-85 HSC-3	ex AA-615/FRCSW 70-1623 ex NF-615/HS-14 70-620 ex NK-7/HS-4 70-1670 ex AG-615/HS-5 70-2261 ex AA-617/FRCSW 70-2290 ex NW-301/HSC-85 70-2291	feb14 feb14 feb14 oct13 feb14 oct13



Up close and personal with a Marines AV-8B at Mesa! Apparently not affected by the government shutdown, some VAM-211 aircraft dropped in from MCAS Yuma. (Phoenix/Mesa Gateway, 5 October 2013, Henk de Ridder)