

# Net Crew Keeps Enterprise Sailors in "Good Hands"

By JOSN Sara M. Gray,  
USS Enterprise Public Affairs Office

**S**trapped into safety harnesses and swinging gently with the wind 75 feet above the pier, the USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65) "net crew" faces daunting challenges. But they don't mind: Suspended precariously above the pier and harbor, they simply go about their business as they repair and replace the ship's safety nets, critical to preparing the carrier for getting underway.

"The importance of manufacturing and installing safety nets is vital to getting ready for sea," said ABH1(AW/SW) Marcus D. Johnson, the group's supervisor.

The net crew formed last November and, during the inspection phase of the ship's repair period, found 104 of the ship's 150 safety nets needed replacement. While new nets were actually made at Ship's Intermediate Maintenance Activity (SIMA) Norfolk, Petty Officer Johnson and his crew assisted in their manufacture. Once SIMA finished making the nets, the net crew would have to remove the old nets and install the new ones.

According to Petty Officer Johnson, each net took an hour to make, once the technique was mastered. Each net had to be measured, then hand-woven and pounded together, and a border added around the edges.

Each net must pass specific safety tests, including being able to support 1,000 pounds for 10 minutes. After passing that test, each net was again measured and inspected for broken strands, rips, or tears. *Enterprise's* net crew finished making the new nets in mid-December: They then had to tackle installation.

"Manufacturing the nets was easy," said ABH3 Brian Y. Chance, from the ship's Air Department. "I loved making them—installing them is the hard part."



A USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65) Sailor is barely visible as he works on one of the ship's deck-edge nets. The *Enterprise* is undergoing overhaul in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

Installation was not for the faint of heart: it required great responsibility and total situational awareness. Safety harnesses and other equipment had to be examined daily.

Nonetheless, net crew members maintained their enthusiasm. "I like being a part of the net crew, because it is something new and fun to do, but it also requires a lot of responsibility," said Petty Officer Chance. The net crew worked seven days a week to install the new nets. Reliable safety nets had to be installed before returning to sea. The lives of all *Enterprise* Sailors—but especially of those working on the flight deck—rely on deck-edge nets to keep them from falling overboard.

"I can't say enough how proud I am of these Sailors. They have worked extremely hard without complaint, enduring long hours and facing so many hazards to get this job done," said their supervisor, Petty Officer Johnson. "They are the ones who deserve the credit and appreciation for an outstanding job." 🌟