Onboard the USS Carl Vinson

By Khong Jia Ren and photos by Terence Tay

Everyone gathered at SMKTD’s bus stop for a trip to Port Klang to go onboard The USS Carl Vinson, an aircraft carrier. A total of twenty four boys, five officers and our SMKTD’s BB Club teacher in advisor, Mr Woo Kim Tong waited anxiously for this one in a lifetime experience. Our captain, Mr Aaron Tan led us in prayer before we set off for this unforgettable trip.

After an hour’s drive, we finally reached our destination – The Port Klang Cruise Centre where The USS Carl Vinson is berthed. We were punctual but unfortunately, the person in-charged was not there yet, so we had to wait. So, while waiting, we decided to have some snacks at the various restaurants that were specially setup at the centre. The USS Carl Vinson is 244 feet (74 meters) tall, 1092 feet (333 meters) long and 252 feet (76 meters) wide, and weighs a whooping 95,000 tonnes, that’s equivalent to “95,000,000Kg!”. It is also a home to a total of 4,500 young men and women serving on board. It is just like a floating village!

Before we could board the ship, we had to go thru a security check, just like the ones at the airport. No one was denied entry though the metal detector did go on quite a few times probably because of our belts! The moment we've been waiting for, meeting the ship face to face and actually going onto the ship, something which many may not get such apportunity, we are so thrilled! There were numerous types of aircrafts on the flight deck. We were escorted to the main deck and were welcomed and then divided into two groups, each group is guided by 3 navy sailors. Then, the officer in charge gave us a short briefing and we went on our separate tours.

First stop, at the hanger, a briefing about safety precaution on the ship, next stop, we had to climb up a few narrow and steep stairs to the museum that was dedicated to “Carl Vinson” a very important person in US history, and finally the moment we’ve all been waiting for... the landing point of the aircrafts- the flight deck, it was hot and but breezy, aircrafts were in their respective places, the officer explained to us and photos were taken, had fun and a wonderful time. While on the flight deck, we were fortunate to witness crew members maintaining one of the aircraft! They were testing their engine and it was really loud!

We also had a chance to go to the command deck, where everything is controlled from here. We various equipment and crew member showed us how a ship is navigated. There was also this special seat where the ship's captain sits and does his job. Some of the boys even sat on the captain's seat! This is one area where we were not allowed to take any photos.

Around 12pm, we were brought down to the main deck for souvenirs, and where there’s souvenirs , it also means its time to say goodbye.. Some of us was hoping for more stories of the ship but everything must have an end. Not hoping it was too soon to end, we said our final goodbyes to our fellow friends on the USS Carl Vinson and headed back to the Cruise Centre, the sailor escorting us were given a chance to represent USS Carl Vinson to receive an appreciation award from our captain.

We reached our destination at Taman Desa at 1pm after this wonderful and unforgettable experience.

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