

# THE WOLVERINE

PREPARING  
FOR FLIGHT OPS

PIA COMPLETE  
FORD COMPLETES PIA, DEPLOYMENT  
READINESS COMES NEXT

JANUARY 2023AH  
NAVY WEEK

FORD TACKLES SAVANNAH NAVY WEEK  
WITH AN ALL WOMEN TEAM

PLAYING FOR  
A PURPOSE

FORD SAILOR JOINS ARMED FORCES TEAM

## FORD'S

FORD'S FUEL-UP  
ALSO INSIDE: FORD CELEBRATES  
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

SECNAV  
CELEBRATES

## 2022

## YEAR IN REVIEW

## FORD'S JOURNEY,

## PREPARATION AND ACTION ON DEPLOYMENT

## PHOTOS OF THE YEAR INSIDE!

FORD NAMES  
SAILORS VISIT MICHIGAN TO HONOR LATE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD

SCOTIA  
FORD AND NATO ALLIES DROP ANCHOR IN CANADA FOR  
FORD'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL VISIT

FIRST EUROPE  
COMPLETING CYCLIC  
SILENT WOLVERINE  
PHOTOS OF THE MONTH INSIDE!





# THE WOLVERINE

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FRONT COVER PHOTO

A graphic collage of all 2022 Wolverine Covers



# Secretary of the Navy Visits USS Gerald R. Ford to Celebrate “100 Years of Carrier Aviation”

Story by MCSA Manvir Gill  
Photos by MC3 Jackson Adkins



Secretary of the Navy the Honorable Carlos Del Toro addresses the crews of the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), USS Bulkeley (DDG 84), USS Gettysburg (CG 64) and USS McFall (DDG 74) during an all-hands call in Ford's hangar bay, during a ship visit, March 10, 2022 in support of the centennial of Navy aircraft carriers.



Secretary of the Navy the Honorable Carlos Del Toro, right, autographs a portrait of himself on USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) quarterdeck, during a ship visit, March 10, 2022 in support of the centennial of Navy aircraft carriers.

Throughout the 2022 calendar year, the U.S. Navy is commemorating 100 years of aircraft carriers, celebrating the strategic importance of aircraft carriers and the future of naval aviation while honoring their history.

As part of his celebration of this important milestone, The Honorable Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), visited the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), March 10.

Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer, led Del Toro on a tour of the ship, discussing and showcasing several unique systems and equipment, including the state-of-the-art Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System.

"It was a real honor to host Secretary Del Toro and have the opportunity to show him first-hand the capabilities and advantages of our first-in-class warship," said Lanzilotta. "This crew put in a lot of hard work to ensure we came out of the shipyard on time and operationally ready which shows real ownership, and I believe we were able to demonstrate that to SECNAV today."

Ford's Ordnance Handling Officer Lt. Cmdr. Paul Castillo and several aviation ordnancemen gave SECNAV an Advanced Weapons Elevator (AWE) demonstration, bringing training ordnance from the magazines, through the hangar bay and up to the Ford's unique weapons handling transfer area.

"It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to demonstrate the AWE and ordnance movement for the Secretary of the Navy," said Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Karen Smith, from Austin, Texas. "A lot of hard work goes into what weapons department does as a whole, and we were able to show that we always do what it takes to complete the mission."

Ford's AWEs are smart elevators that add redundancy and survivability to the ship using touchless charging and Wi-Fi cables instead of hydraulics.

"The capability of this aircraft carrier is like nothing we've ever seen in our United States Navy," said Del Toro. "The technology and capability of this ship and future Ford-class carriers are unmatched. I am undeniably impressed by this crew's professionalism, perseverance, and dedication in getting this ship ready to crew."

Del Toro also had the opportunity to eat lunch with Ford's newest Sailors of the quarter.

"It is clear that the Secretary of the Navy looks out for the well-being of Sailors," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Nicholas Allen, from Columbia, Connecticut, assigned to Ford's medical department and Ford's Sailor of the quarter. "He remembers his experience as a commanding officer and Sailor himself and it shows in his leadership style. He talked about PPV (public private venture) housing initiatives and the families of Sailors

and their importance. It shows that he really does care about those in the fleet."

Following lunch, Del Toro and the Sailors of the quarter cut a cake in honor of the Centennial of United States Navy Aircraft Carriers.

Before discussions with Lanzilotta on the ship's preparations for deployment, Del Toro conducted an all-hands call with Ford's crew and Sailors from USS Gettysburg (CG 64), USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), USS McFall (DDG 74) and USS Bulkeley (DDG 84). He congratulated the Ford crew on their successful completion of the ship's six-month Planned Incremental Availability (PIA) and sea trials.

"You all just finished your PIA, and you're about to deploy now: it all gets better from here," he said. "The work, the energy that each and every one of you have put into making the capabilities on this ship the best that they can be is extraordinary."

Del Toro emphasized the critical role that Ford-class carriers play in the Navy's warfighting capabilities.

"The United States Navy brings power projection to anywhere that it's needed across the world in a time of crisis," he said. "We deploy to protect the national security interests of the American people. On behalf of your entire United States Navy, thank you for the hard work that you have done here on USS Gerald R. Ford."

# USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) Completes Inaugural Planned Incremental Availability, Prepares for Workups and First Deployment

Story from Program Executive Office Aircraft Carriers Public Affairs

USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) successfully completed sea trials off the coast of Virginia this week, marking the successful conclusion of its inaugural Planned Incremental Availability (PIA).

The milestone follows six months of modernization and maintenance work at Huntington Ingalls Industries-Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia. On February 28, the ship sailed to its home at Naval Station Norfolk, where CVN 78's crew will begin several months of training and certification in preparation for the ship's first deployment in Fall 2022.

The first-of-class aircraft carrier entered PIA in September 2021, after completing Full Ship Shock Trials (FSST) off the coast of Mayport, FL. Gerald R. Ford and its crew performed exceptionally well during shock trials, conducting three explosive events using live ordnance on 18 June, 16 July, and 8 August.

The Navy collects data from shock trials to validate a ship's shock hardness and ability to sustain operations in a simulated combat environment under extreme conditions.

At the start of CVN 78's PIA, teams conducted detailed inspections,

assessing potential damage sustained during FSST. The Navy had conducted shock trials on the Nimitz-class carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) in 1987, and used those results plus other modeling and simulation to estimate the potential impact from the explosive events on the overall PIA workload. FSST-related repairs during Gerald R. Ford's PIA proved fewer than anticipated.

"Ford required only 20 percent of the repair work we saw with TR," said Rear Adm. James P. Downey, program executive officer for aircraft carriers. He added that of the required FSST-related repairs, about 85 percent were completed by ship's force, as opposed to work that needed to be completed by the shipyard.

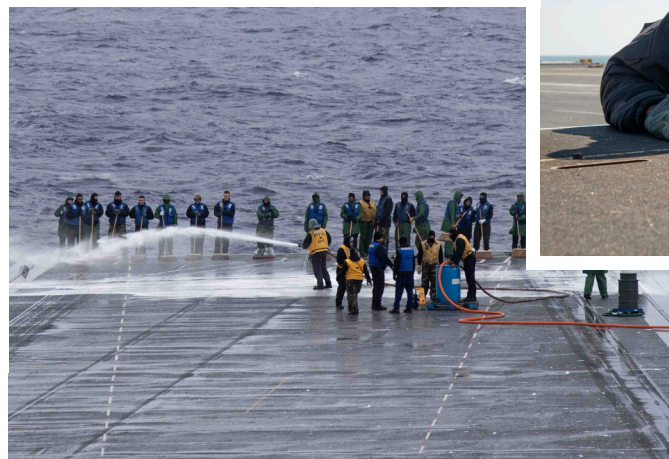
"That's an impressive testament to the design of the ship and the resiliency of her crew," said Downey, who rode the ship during the first and third shock evolutions. Downey added that the Navy will continue to incorporate lessons learned from CVN 78's FSST to further harden follow-on ships in the Ford class, the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), Enterprise (CVN 80), and Doris Miller (CVN 81).

While completing these repairs

during the PIA, the Navy-Industry team also performed required modernization and maintenance on CVN 78. The work ranged from updating Gerald R. Ford's galley to modernizing the ship's Consolidated Afloat Networks and Enterprise Services (CANES) system—a program the Navy has implemented across the Fleet to enhance shipboard computing systems and to consolidate multiple legacy networks.

Modernization work on the Navy's newest class of aircraft carrier has been streamlined, when compared to work on Nimitz-class ships. Ford's reconfigured command and control spaces, for example, accommodate new technologies without the need for cutting into decks and overheads.

"Historically, about 40% of modernization work on Nimitz-class carriers goes into rip out, which involves cutting and welding," said Downey. "The Navy specifically designed Ford with a flexible infrastructure, so you can build in new capabilities to enhance system integration that facilitate immediate operational gains for the warfighter"





## *Advanced Weapons Elevators Completed*

Four months into the PIA, the Navy-Industry team turned over to CVN 78's crew the ship's 11th and final Advanced Weapons Elevator (AWE), marking a significant milestone for one of the ship's most complex new technologies. Gerald R. Ford-class AWEs employ electromagnetic motors as opposed to more labor intensive, hydraulic systems, which enables fewer sailors to move ordnance safely from weapons magazines to the flight

deck with unparalleled speed and agility.

Downey praised the Navy-Industry AWE team for working tirelessly both in port and at sea to complete the elevators last year.

"The Navy-Industry teaming provided opportunities for hundreds of craftsmen, technicians and engineers, working around the clock—through multiple underway periods—to get these advanced systems on line and

operational," said Downey. He added that multiple vendors delivered a steady stream of needed materials and engineering expertise, which enabled ship's force to foster a seamless integration of multi-shift, on-board production efforts.

"The end game is always operational readiness," Downey said, adding that CVN 78 is on track to commence workups and move on to follow-on tasking.

## *Work Ups and Deployment*

In the coming months USS Gerald R. Ford will prepare for its upcoming deployment. The ship will embark its air wing, CVW-8, and will begin rounds of system qualification tests, flight deck certification, three phases of air warfare training, and a Combat Systems Operational Readiness Evaluation.

Ford's Commanding Officer, Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, says the crew is ready to resume their accelerated pace of training and operations, critical in bringing the ship to operational readiness.

"The crew of this mighty warship had a buzz of excitement, even when pier-side and performing drills overnight during Fast Cruise. Gerald R. Ford's Sailors were ready to return

to sea. They know their jobs and are committed to a continuous cycle of learning and improving. Sea Trials demonstrated, without a doubt, that the PIA was successful, enabling live interaction on the high seas with hundreds of upgraded systems and processes. We also increased our confidence in our training, which builds on the inherent lethality of this extremely capable warfighting platform."

The PIA also represented the transition of CVN 78 from the Navy's Gerald R. Ford Class program office (PMS 378), which oversees the construction of Gerald R. Ford Class ships, to the In-Service Aircraft Carriers program office (PMS 312) responsible for the sustainment,

maintenance, and modernization of in-service aircraft carriers for the bulk of their 50 year service lives. Capt. Charles Ehnes, PMS 312 program manager, agrees that the crew's efforts and growing expertise of ship board systems helped fuel the ship's momentum during PIA.

"For the past six months, the Navy-Industry team has been focused on an on-time delivery of Ford out of the CNO's availability," explained Ehnes. "Granted, Ford is unique among the nation's carriers, so some of the maintenance requirements offer unique challenges. But the approach to this PIA—as it is with all PIAs across the carrier fleet—has one commonality at its core. The mission is delivering readiness. It's what we do."





# Ford Completes Flight Deck Certification

Story by MC2 Nolan Pennington

An F/A-18E Super Hornet, attached to the "Golden Warriors" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 87, launches from USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) flight deck, March 28, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Zachary Melvin)



USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) completed its Flight Deck Certification (FDC) and Carrier Air Traffic Control Center (CATCC) certification on March 29.

Once out to sea, F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, E-2D Hawkeyes, and MH-60S Nighthawks assigned to Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8 conducted operations to prove the ship's and crew's capabilities. To achieve certification, Ford conducted more than 400 day and night catapult launches and trap recoveries. Prior to getting underway, Ford's air department was evaluated on its ability to respond to flight deck emergencies and firefighting.

"Ford and Carrier Air Wing 8 were meticulous during the whole certification evolution," said Senior Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Carl Higdon, the air department's leading chief petty officer. "Every Sailor aboard contributed to our success of the mission. I'm really proud to be a part of this team."

Following flight deck certification, flight operations continued to keep pilots' carrier qualifications and proficiency current, demonstrating Ford's contribution to air wing and fleet readiness through capabilities provided by the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launching System (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG).

"Flight deck certification is a significant milestone in

preparation for our first deployment," said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer. "We have more tests and evaluations to complete during our next underway periods, and I have no doubt that our Sailors will rise to the challenge and accomplish the mission."

Ford will head underway again this month for additional milestone events that will prepare the ship for a scheduled deployment later this year.

"We put our first-in-class warship to the test and our crew delivered," said Lanzilotta. "From the air controllers and flight deck crews to the catapult and arresting gear teams, our crew showed a level of professionalism that enabled a successful air wing integration with Carrier Air Wing 8. The best part, I think, is seeing our teammates from Carrier Air Wing 8 come aboard and fit right in with our enthusiastic and motivated approach to getting the job done. I look forward to seeing what we can do together in the coming months."

USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) is the first of the Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers and represents the first major design investment in aircraft carriers since the 1960s. Ford's flight deck certification and carrier qualifications are part of the basic training phase prior to the ship's first deployment.



An E-2D Hawkeye, attached to the "Bear Aces" of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 124, approaches USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) flight deck, March 28, 2022. (Photo by MCSN Manvir Gill)



An MH-60S Nighthawk, attached to the "Tridents" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9, prepares to land on the flight deck, April 20, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Zachary Melvin)



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 1st Class Aaron Wilson, from Atlanta, assigned to air department, stands watch as the arresting gear officer as an F/A-18E Super Hornet, attached to the "Golden Warriors" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 87, prepares to land on the flight deck, April 19, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Zachary Melvin)



An F/A-18E Super Hornet, attached to the "Ragin' Bulls" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 37, lands on the flight deck, April 19, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Zachary Melvin)



Aircraft attached to the Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8 are staged on the flight deck, April 20, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Zachary Melvin)









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# PHOTOS OF THE YEAR

## 2022

1. Sailors assigned to Ford's weapons department and the "Golden Warriors" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 87, load an F/A-18E Super Hornet with training ammunition on the flight deck, April 22, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Nolan Pennington)

2. Sailors assigned to USS Gerald R. Ford's weapons department stand armored watch as the ship transits to Halifax, Nova Scotia, for its first international port visit, Oct. 28, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Zack Guth)

3. Quartermaster 3rd Class Nicklaus Hughes, from Portsmouth, Virginia, assigned to Ford's navigation department, holds a signaling flag as the bow walker during a fueling at sea with fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196), March 23, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Zack Guth)

4. The first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) steams in the Atlantic Ocean in formation with ships assigned to the Gerald R. Ford Strike Group, Nov. 7, 2022. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jacob Mattingly)

5. Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Airman Robinson Fernandez, from Culpepper, Virginia, assigned to Ford's air department, observes flight operations on the flight deck, March 28, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Nolan Pennington)

6. The crew of USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) man the rails as the ship returns to Naval Station Norfolk, Nov. 26, following the inaugural deployment with the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group. (Photo by MC2 Nolan Pennington)

7. Sailors assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 6 fast rope from an MH-60S Knighthawk, attached to the "Tridents" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9, on Ford's flight deck, Oct. 26, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Jackson Adkins)

8. Flag bearer Chief Aviation Electronics Technician Jennifer Warzecha, from Portland, Connecticut, assigned to Ford's aircraft intermediate maintenance department, bows her head in prayer during a burial at sea ceremony on the ship's aircraft elevator, July 12, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Jackson Adkins)

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# Ford Gets Locked and Loaded, Receives 541,000 Pounds of Ordnance

Story by MC3 Jacob Mattingly

Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Adrian Casiano, from Hartford, Connecticut, assigned to Ford's weapons department, operates a forklift on the flight deck during an ammunition on-load with USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12), April 9, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Riley McDowell)



USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) conducted a conventional ammunition on-load, April 9, in support of workups and training for an upcoming deployment. Ford successfully on-loaded approximately 541,000 pounds of ordnance using both connected transfers and vertical lifts from the dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12).

More than 400 Sailors from Ford's weapons, deck and aircraft intermediate maintenance departments participated in the event, collecting more than 200 pallets from the flight deck and hangar bay then transporting them to multiple advanced weapons elevators to be stored in the ship's magazines.

"All weapons divisions were involved with the evolution and personnel worked from the magazines to the flight deck to ensure everything was safe and efficient," said Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Joshua Hitcho, from New Zionsville, Pennsylvania, assigned to Ford's weapons

department. "The whole evolution went smoothly. It was impressive to watch, and I am proud to be part of the team that made it happen."

The on-load started with Ford pulling alongside William McLean and shooting lines over to establish communications and connect distance lines. Once attached, MH-60S helicopters attached to the "Tridents" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 9, began to lift ammunition over to Ford's flight deck and pallets of ammunition were transferred via connected replenishment.

"We on-loaded both live and training ammunitions to help support Carrier Air Wing 8 and our security forces on board for this underway," said Lt. Cmdr. Paul Castillo, from San Diego, Ford's Ordnance Handling Officer. "Every carrier needs ammunition to complete the mission. There is nothing we can't do when we have a fully loaded ship."

The ammunition from this on-load

is essential for arming aircraft with live ordnance during carrier qualifications and carrier strike group integration.

"It feels good because we get to show what weapons department really does. We spent a lot of time and hard work to get to this point and it paid off," said Hitcho. "Getting the entire department together as a group was great, everybody was excited and ready to go. Everybody was in the right place at the right time, it was a small part of a bigger picture."

Unloading ammunition while underway is critical to Ford's ability to supply the embarked air wing with ordnance needed to conduct its missions. This successful evolution will bring Ford one step closer to deployment readiness.

"I could not be prouder of our Sailors. The whole department doing what we were meant to do was the pinnacle of my time here," said Castillo. "This on-load is a big piece of the puzzle for our ship to do what carriers were meant to do."



LEFT: Sailors assigned to Ford's deck department prepare to unload a standard underway replenishment fixture during an ammunition on-load with USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12), April 9, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Nolan Pennington)

RIGHT: Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Matthew Kelly, from Temecula, California, left, and Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Jared Padgett, from Charles County, Maryland, both assigned to Ford's aircraft intermediate maintenance department, move ordnance in the hangar bay during an ammunition onload, April 9, 2022. (Photo by MC2 Angel Thuy Jaskuloski)





# Ford Successfully Completes Combat Systems Operational Readiness Exercise

Story by ME3 Thomas Willis



AOAN Ian Denger, back, from Panora Island, Iowa, and GM2 Brandon Decker, from Dallas, both assigned to weapons department, observe a MK 38 - 25 mm machine gun system operate during a live fire exercise as part of a combat systems operational readiness exercise (CSORE), July 8, 2022. (Photo by MC3 Tyler Slavicek)

Sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) successfully completed the Combat Systems Operational Readiness Exercise (CSORE) while underway July 5 to July 14, marking a crucial turning point in the ship's deployment readiness.

CSORE is an exercise meant to check the functionality of combat systems and test the crew's ability to handle threats to the ship.

Fire Controlman 2nd Class Tyler Westbrook, from Detroit, the Lead Petty Officer for the combat systems CS-7 division, reported that the crew used the Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) and MK-38 25 millimeter guns to engage simulated drone combatants on the surface and in the air.

"The primary job of the MK-38 guns in all this was to disable and sink the 'hostile' surface vessels coming toward the ship," said Westbrook. "CIWS had a similar purpose in the event. The equipment and operators were tested in their ability to locate, track, and engage inbound surface and air contacts."

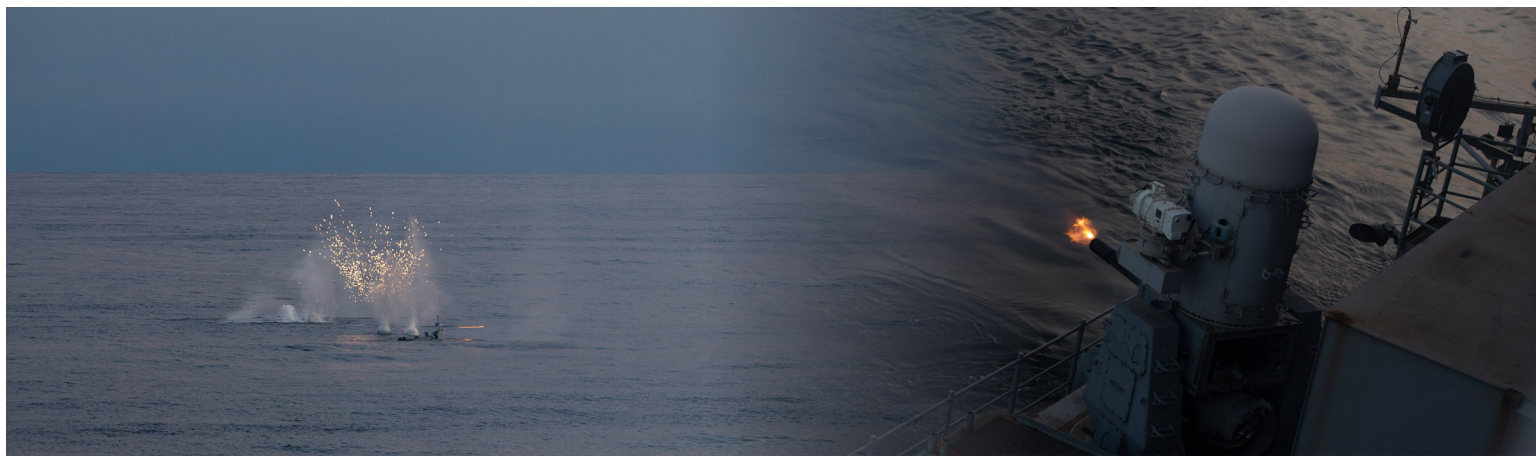
Before the event could begin, the crew worked tirelessly to ready the equipment. Numerous hours were spent performing pre-fire checks on the mounts. After the mounting and equipment checks, the crew then had to load the CIWS weapons. According to Westbrook, it was no small feat.

The work was not done in vain, as the crew and equipment passed the tests. The crew walked away glowing with pride.

Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Hector Mejia, from Los Angeles, the Lead Petty Officer of weapons G-2 division, assisted in handling the MK-38 guns, and had positive words about the event.

"Being a part of CSORE with the MK-38's and getting experience everything first-hand was amazing," Mejia said. "My proudest moment was watching the MK-38's operate as designed and destroy surface contacts with speed and precision of action."

"CSORE is one of the most rewarding events I have ever participated in," Westbrook said, echoing Mejia's sentiment. "It shows that we are able to defend Ford and her Sailors from whatever may be sent her way."



A collage of Ford conducting a live fire gunnery exercise on an unmanned training attack craft as part of a combat systems operational readiness exercise (CSORE), July 8, 2022. (Photos by MC2 Zack Guth)



# *USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) conducts annual namesake visit in Michigan*

*Story by USS Gerald R. Ford Public Affairs - Photos by MC2 Zack Guth*

Sailors assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) visited Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor and Albion, Michigan to honor the legacy of the ship's namesake, the late President Gerald R. Ford, and connect with local community members, August 31 to September 4, 2022.

During the five-day namesake visit, 12 Sailors from CVN 78 spent time with members of the Ford Family and Ford Foundation, built relationships with members of the local communities and explored locations that were significant to Gerald R. Ford's life and career.

The 12 Sailors flew into Gerald R. Ford Airport in Grand Rapids, Michigan on August 31 and held a dinner that night with two of President Ford's nephews, Bob and Greg Ford, discussing "Uncle Jerry" stories and how much it meant to President Ford that the Navy's next generation of aircraft carriers was named after him.

"You don't know how much this namesake visit means to me, our family and our community," said Greg Ford, nephew of President Ford. "Integrity at the Helm" is a perfect descriptor of what Uncle Jerry was all about. To see you folks (on the ship) and know that you're there representing Integrity at the Helm means a lot to us. It means a lot to the entire Ford Family. We really appreciate everything that you do."

On September 1, the Sailors held a wreath laying ceremony at the tomb of Gerald R. Ford and Betty Ford, placing 12 roses on a wreath and floral arrangement at the tomb. A few Sailors spoke with local television and radio news outlets about the significance of the event.

"We came out here as a namesake tour to learn more about President Ford as well as his ventures up in Michigan," said Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Esteban Reyes during an on-camera interview.

Following the wreath laying ceremony, the group of Ford Sailors visited the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, which houses materials and documents that represent the life of Gerald R. Ford. Inside, Sailors viewed items from Ford's youth, his time as a boy scout, his naval, congressional and presidential career, and a scale model of the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78).

That afternoon, the Sailors visited Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital, a women-founded rehabilitation hospital with roots dating back to 1891. Mary Free Bed named its cancer rehabilitation program after First Lady Betty Ford to pay tribute to her efforts toward normalizing the conversation around breast cancer. Betty Ford was "the first prominent woman to speak openly about breast cancer," paving the way forward for women with breast cancer and saving women's lives around the world, according to a representative of Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital. Additionally, she was a founding member of the guild that governs the hospital.

After the Sailors toured Mary Free Bed's facility, they spent two hours with a group of veterans receiving care at the hospital. There were veterans from each branch of

Master Chief Hospital Corpsman Phillip Jean-Gilles, from Miami, USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) executive assistant to the command master chief, places a rose during a wreath laying ceremony in honor of former President Gerald R. Ford and First Lady Betty Ford at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, September 1, 2022.



military service at the meet and greet. During the engagement, Cmdr. Richard Rosenbusch, Ford's assistant air officer, personally handed a USS Gerald R. Ford command ballcap to each veteran who attended. A few of the veterans had tears in the eyes when they received their ballcap.

"Those veterans were so touched by your visit," said Donna Calvaruso, member of the Gerald R. Ford Historical Legacy Trust. "You impacted them. You really did."

The evening of September 1, the 12 Sailors visited the DeVos Family Center for Scouting, Adventure Point, to spend an afternoon with local Scouts and participate in rock climbing.

On September 2, the Sailors traveled to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where they visited the "Big House" football stadium, spoke with several members and leaders of the Naval Officer Reserve Training Corps program and observed the hydrodynamic and marine engineering tow tank on campus.

While in Ann Arbor, the Sailors also visited the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, which holds more than 25 million pages of documents and photos from Ford's life. There, the Sailors viewed Ford's personal office, many letters addressed to him and Betty Ford and a close-up view of specific documents from his naval, congressional and presidential career, including his application to the naval reserve, as well as photo reels and a video documenting





his speech at the USS Nimitz (CVN 65) commissioning ceremony on May 13, 1972.

Later that evening, the Sailors visited the Albion College Ford Institute for Leadership to participate in a panel and speak with students, veterans, civic leaders and members of the Albion community.

"I have never been on a ship that understands and has so much pride in their namesake as we do on the USS Gerald R. Ford," said Cmdr. Rosenbusch during his opening remarks at the Albion College panel.

On September 3, the Sailors attended an Albion College Football game against Carthage College from Kenosha, Wisconsin where they interacted with the Albion community and Carthage College family members. During the halftime show, the Ford Sailors were recognized on the field and introduced to all attendees of the football game by Susan Ford Bales in a recorded voice message played on the stadium speakers.

"I am particularly happy to welcome the crew members from dad's namesake aircraft carrier, USS Gerald R. Ford, CVN 78," said Susan Ford-Bales, daughter of President Ford, in a recorded message played on Albion College's field. "Crew members, dad would be most proud to welcome you to Michigan. I am acutely aware that you and the USS Gerald R. Ford are about to be deployed into harm's way. I know that everyone gathered today joins me in wishing you fair winds and following seas."



Sailors assigned to USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) observe an Albion College football game at Sprinkle-Sprandel Stadium in Albion, Michigan, September 3, 2022.

The 12 Ford Sailors who attended the annual namesake visit were:

- Cmdr. Richard Rosenbusch, from New Baltimore, Michigan
- Lt. Ian Loomis, from Ottumwa, Iowa
- Ensign Paula Niederland, from Englewood, New Jersey
- Master Chief Hospital Corpsman Phillip Jean-Gilles, from Miami
- Air Traffic Controller 1st Class Cheryl Ehrenfeld, from Livonia, Michigan
- Aviation Electrician's Mate 1st Class Frank Weyer, from Jonesville, Michigan
- Machinery Repairman 2nd Class Bowen Kincaid, from Battle Creek, Michigan,
- Fire Controlman 2nd Class Tyler Westbrook, from Port Huron, Michigan
- Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Esteban Reyes, from Toledo, Ohio
- Air Traffic Controller Airman Kyle Kurth
- Retail Service Specialist Kasey Wetters, from Birmingham, Michigan

USS Gerald R. Ford, homeported in Norfolk, Virginia, is conducting work-ups for the ship's first scheduled deployment this fall.



Lt. Ian Loomis, from Ottumwa, Iowa, assigned to USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) air department, shows a video of the Ford with a member of the local Boy Scouts of America troop at the DeVos Family Center for Scouting, Adventure Point in Grand Rapids, Michigan, September 1, 2022.



# Norway Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, SECNAV Visit USS Gerald R. Ford

Story by MC1 Spencer Fling



Rear Adm. Gregory Huffman, right, commander, Carrier Strike Group 12, briefs His Excellency Jonas Gahr Store, Prime Minister of Norway, and distinguished visitors during a ship visit in USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) commanding officer's in-port cabin, Sept. 19, 2021. (Photo by MC2 Jackson Adkins)

NORFOLK, Va. - Prime Minister of Norway Jonas Gahr Støre, Norway's Minister of Defense Bjørn Arild Gram, and the U.S. Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro visited the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) Sept. 19, 2022.

This underway embark coincided with Støre's visit to the United States to meet with officials in Washington D.C. and talk to key U.S. military leaders.

The visit to Ford provided Rear Adm. Gregory C. Huffman, commander of Carrier Strike Group 12, and Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer, the opportunity to showcase the ship's operational capabilities.

"Hosting Norway's Prime Minister and Minister of Defense today provided an opportunity to share with our allies how this latest generation of aircraft carriers enables our Sailors to work alongside one another to improve interchangeability and enhance regional stability," said Lanzilotta. "Ford's cutting-edge capabilities and new operational concepts offer a deployable asset that is unmatched by our adversaries and will shape Navy warfighting for decades to come."

This was the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense's first visit to a Ford-class aircraft carrier. While aboard, they toured some of Ford's unique systems and advanced technologies and observed flight deck operations during the launch and recovery of aircraft on the flight deck.

"The U.S. is our most important ally. The U.S. pledge to support Norway and Europe in times of crisis and war is essential to our security. Norway and the U.S. have a long tradition of close defense cooperation. We are now seeking to develop this even further," said Støre.

Støre and Del Toro also had the opportunity to hold a series of strategic meetings aboard.

"It was a pleasure to welcome Prime Minister of Norway, Jonas Gahr Støre, on his first official trip to the United States," said Del Toro. "His and Minister of Defense Bjørn Arild Gram's visit aboard the USS Gerald R. Ford allows these leaders to learn more about our operations at sea and how Allies such as Norway train and operate alongside us. I am incredibly proud of the outstanding work all the Sailors and Marines aboard Ford have put in to get the ship where she is today."

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, center, is piped aboard the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) during a ship visit, Sept. 19, 2022. (Photo by MC3 Adonica Munoz)



# *Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group Departs for First Deployment*

*Story by USS Gerald R. Ford Public Affairs*



USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) conducts an ammunition onload, Sept. 27, 2022. (Photo By MC2 Jackson Adkins)

The first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), flagship of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (GRFCSG), departed from Naval Station Norfolk on its first deployment to conduct operations and training exercises alongside NATO allies and partners throughout the Atlantic Ocean, Oct. 4.

“This deployment is an opportunity to further advance the operational capabilities of the Ford and demonstrate the advantages that Ford and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8 bring to the future of naval aviation, to the region and to our Allies and partners,” said Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, commander of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12. “Now more than ever, it is increasingly important for the United States Navy to reinforce our relationships with our allies and partners as we contribute to promote a peaceful, stable, and conflict-free Atlantic region.”

Innovation and interoperability are the key focal points of the GRFCSG’s deployment, allowing allied and partner nations to strengthen the collective defense of the Atlantic as well as to mature integration for future operations.

“USS Gerald R. Ford is going to sail on the high seas with our partners,” said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford’s commanding officer. “We want interoperability, we want interchangeability with our partners. Our NATO partners that are sailing with us – we’re going to work with them every day, every night. That’s what it means to operate on the high seas. Air defense exercises. Long-range maritime strike. We’re going to be doing pretty much every mission set that’s in the portfolio for naval aviation, and we’re excited about that.”

While deployed, GRFCSG will operate with air, maritime and ground assets from several NATO allies and partner nations to strengthen deterrence and defense efforts

and improve effectiveness and interoperability. Together, GRFCSG, allies and partner nations will participate in training events, including long-range maritime strike, air defense, anti-subsurface warfare and distributed maritime operations.

The U.S. commands participating in the GRFCSG deployment include CSG 12, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, Destroyer Squadron 2, USS Normandy (CG 60), USS Ramage (DDG 61), USS McFaul (DDG 74), USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116), USNS Joshua Humphreys (T-AO 188), USNS Robert E. Peary (T-AKE 5), and USCGC Hamilton (WHEC 715).

The U.S. aircraft squadrons participating in the GRFCSG deployment include Strike fighter squadrons VFA 213, VFA 31, VFA 37 and VFA 87; Tactical electronics warfare squadron VAQ 142; Carrier airborne early warning squadron VAW 124; Fleet logistics support squadron VRC 40; Helicopter maritime strike squadron HSM 70; and Helicopter sea combat squadron HSC 9.

“It’s an exciting time to lead the aviators of Carrier Air Wing Eight as we embark on Ford’s first deployment,” said Capt. Daryl Trent, commander, CVW-8. “This group of individuals have worked so hard to prepare every aspect of the air wing to integrate with Ford’s new technologies and have done so with excellence. It’s also fitting that when USS Nimitz deployed for the first time in 1976, it was CVW-8 who was embarked. Now, in 2022, CVW-8 is again the first air wing to embark on this newest class of aircraft carriers.”

The nine participating nations are: U.S., Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden.

The deployment involves approximately 9,000 personnel from nine nations, 20 ships and 60 aircraft.



# Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group returns to homeport concluding inaugural deployment

Story by MC3 Adonica Muñoz

The first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), flagship of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (GRFCSG), returned to its homeport at Naval Station Norfolk, Nov. 26, after successfully completing its inaugural deployment to the U.S. 2nd Fleet and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility.

During the scheduled deployment, Ford operated with eight NATO Allies and partners to strengthen interoperability and interchangeability, conducting a range of maritime operations and exercises.

"This deployment brought together an incredible group of Allies and partners with one single focus – to contribute to a peaceful, stable, and conflict-free Atlantic region through our combined naval power," said Vice Adm. Dan Dwyer, commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet and Joint Force Command, Norfolk. "Opportunities to interoperate and integrate make our nations, our navies, and the NATO Alliance stronger."

While deployed, GRFCSG participated in Exercise Silent Wolverine, demonstrating high-end naval warfare and integrated NATO interoperability in the maritime approaches to Europe. Silent Wolverine was an opportunity for Ford to train and test capabilities under deployment conditions for the first time, while demonstrating the U.S. commitment to Allies and partners through seamless integration.

"We sailed with our Allies and partners and trained together, tirelessly, day and night, and we are stronger for it," said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer. "Through integrated and combined operations such as live and inert ordnance expenditure by Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, and air defense, we set the stage for operating with Ford-class technologies in a deployed environment. We completed more than 1,250 sorties, expended 78.3 tons of ordnance and completed 13 underway replenishments – and we accomplished this because of what Ford-class aircraft carriers bring to the fight."

The Sailors participating in Ford's first deployment integrated multiple foreign

nations' ships into the strike group to operate together efficiently.

"Leading the men and women of the Gerald R. Ford Strike Group has been awe-inspiring. Every day these Sailors committed themselves 100% to a safe and successful inaugural deployment of Ford and the strike group," said Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12. "This deployment laid a strong foundation for the strike group, created momentum to carry us forward for future operations, and has prepared us to answer our nation's call when needed."

Ford made its first international port visit in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and its first European port visit in Portsmouth, U.K. For Ford Sailors, these port visits offered a long-awaited opportunity to explore a foreign culture.

Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Selena Penaloza, from Orlando, Florida, assigned to Ford's deck department, has been stationed on Ford for three years before deploying for the first time.

"It was amazing getting to see the [ship's] first deployment and my first port visit. This deployment has been a new experience for everyone onboard. We've been working more than on other underways and standing more watch, and it's all for a great cause."

Ford is the first new U.S. aircraft carrier designed in more than 40 years, introducing 23 new technologies that offer impressive advances to its aircraft launch system, propulsion, power generation, ordnance handling and more. Ford's advanced technologies reduce the amount of personnel required to maintain and operate the ship's systems compared to Nimitz-class carriers.

The Sailors of Ford are shaping the



The crew of the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) man the rails as the ship returns to Naval Station Norfolk, Nov. 26, following the inaugural deployment. (Photo by MC3 Adonica Munoz)

future of naval aviation.

"On our ship, you don't hear Sailors saying, 'that's the way we've always done it' because we're using new gear, new technologies," said Lanzilotta. "Our Sailors are the ones who make all of these new technologies real. The Sailors make it come to life. I am so proud of all their hard work and dedication that made Ford operational and allowed the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group to conduct a successful first deployment."

While operating in the Atlantic, Ford hosted 215 distinguished visitors, 175 foreign dignitaries, 46 NATO flag officers and senior enlisted leaders, and more than 60 U.S. and international reporters aboard.

The flagship set sail from Norfolk, Virginia, Oct. 4, and traveled more than 9,275 nautical miles with the strike group.

The nine nations that participated in Ford's deployment were: U.S., Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden.

The U.S. commands and units that participated in the GRFCSG deployment include: CSG 12, CVW 8, Destroyer Squadron 2, Ticonderoga-class guided-





## Partner Nations Operated With:

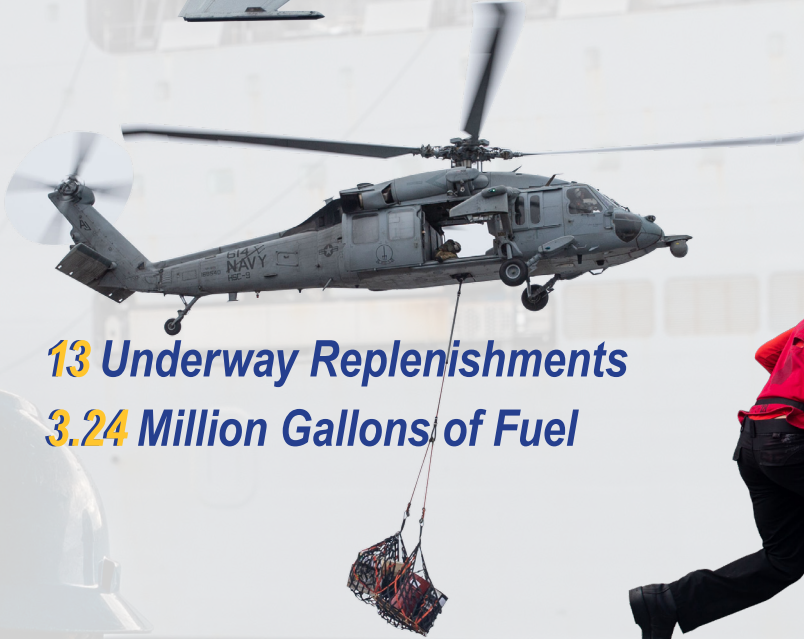


**2,396 Flight Hours**

**≈1,250 Sorties**

**Meals served onboard:**

**≈950,000**



**13 Underway Replenishments**

**3.24 Million Gallons of Fuel**

**78.3 tons of ordnance expended**

**158 live bombs**

**23,699 rounds**



missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60), Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers USS McFaul (DDG 74), USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116), and USS Ramage (DDG 61).

The nine U.S. aircraft squadrons assigned to CVW-8 that embarked Ford for this deployment were strike fighter squadrons VFA-213, VFA-31, VFA-37 and VFA-87; tactical electronics warfare squadron VAQ-142; carrier airborne early warning squadron VAW-124; fleet logistics support squadron VRC-40; helicopter maritime strike squadron HSM-70; and helicopter sea combat squadron HSC-9.

**Distinguished Visitors & Dignitaries Hosted: 400+**



**Distance Traveled:**

**9,275 Nautical Miles**





# French, German, and Dutch Military Leaders visit U.S. Navy's Newest Aircraft Carrier

Story by MC2 Zack Guth



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jeff Towry, right, Ford's weapons engineer, briefs military leaders from Germany, the Netherlands and France on the advanced weapons elevator. (Photo by MC3 Trenton Edly)

Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer, presents Gen. Eberhard Horn, Chief of Defence, Vice Adm. Rene Tas and Rear Adm. Jean-Marie D'Hebrail a certificate in Ford's in port cabin. (Photo by MC3 Jacob Mattingly)

Military leaders and government officials from France, Germany, and the Netherlands visited the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), during exercise Silent Wolverine, Nov. 11, 2022.

Rear Adm. Jean-Marie D'Hebrail, deputy commander, French Navy's Atlantic Fleet Command, Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, a chairperson of German Parliament, Gen. Eberhard Zorn, German Chief of Defence, Vice Adm. Rene Tas, head of the Royal Netherlands Navy, and other France, Germany, and the Netherlands military leaders arrived aboard the ship to observe everything that Ford has to offer to the future of Naval aviation.

"It was the first deck landing in my life," said Maj. Gen. Andre Steur, director, Operational Policy and Plans, Royal Netherlands Navy. "Such a wonderful experience. But more importantly, it's great to be here with Allies because of the situation in the world. The threats that are proliferating all around us require us to work together and operate together. And it's wonderful to be here – to be on one of the newest and biggest battleships in the world, and see it work together with Allies all around. It's an honor."

The group landed on the ship's flight deck in a C-2A greyhound from the "Rawhides" of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40.

After arriving aboard, the leaders were greeted by Rear Adm. John Meier, commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic (AIRLANT), Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12, and Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer.

Vice Adm. Jan Kaack, Commander of the German Fleet and Chief of the German Navy has been on carriers in the past but like Maj. Gen. Steur, he has never had the experience of the trap landing onto an aircraft carrier.

"I have been on a carrier early on, several years ago, but this was my first landing," said Kaack. "It was a great experience. I'm so glad that my frigate Hessen can provide some coverage for the carrier. Just a great visit and opportunity [to be here]."

While aboard, they observed flight operations of F/A-18 Super Hornets and E-2D Hawkeyes, which are aircraft embarked as part of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8. The group also visited the pilot house, flight deck control, hangar bay, observed a demonstration of the ship's advanced weapons elevators, and discussed integrated training exercises.

French Navy Rear Adm. D'Hebrail said the U.S. Navy and French Navy have worked together and trained together every day, every year, on every ocean.

"The incoming of the Ford here

in this area is a real opportunity to improve our procedures and training together," said D'Hebrail. "The U.S. Navy is the biggest in the world, so it's very interesting for us to be able to train in high intensity [exercises] with Allies like the U.S. Navy, which have a lot of [opportunities] to train. The U.S. Navy is one our best Allies inside NATO."

Before departing the ship, they exchanged gifts with Huffman and Lanzilotta to honor the visit, and their countries' partnerships.

"The most important part of interoperability is the people," said Kaack, as he presented Lanzilotta with a plaque. "Meeting people builds friendships, and friendships build trust."

The GRFCSG is scheduled to continue integrating and training with the Marine Nationale, Deutsche Marine, Spanish Armada, Royal Netherlands Navy, Royal Danish Navy, and Royal Canadian Navy throughout exercise Silent Wolverine.

"Strengthening the bonds among our NATO Allies is key to maintaining security in the Atlantic and across the globe," said Rear Adm. Greg Huffman. "Being able to host leaders of French, German, and Dutch navies aboard while at sea increases this unified approach toward stability in the region."



# THE WOLVERINE

USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78)

## MEET THE TRIAD

### COMMANDING OFFICER

CAPT Paul Lanzilotta

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CAPT Matthew Mulcahey

### COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

CMDCM Bryan Davis

## MEDIA DEPARTMENT

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

LCDR David Gardner

### ASSISTANT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS

ENS Paula Niederland

### DEPARTMENT LCPO

MCCS Ryan Wilber

### PRODUCTION LCPO

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MC2 Brian Glunt

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## THIS MONTH IN NAVAL HISTORY

### January 3, 1943

USS Humboldt (AVP 21) rescues 10 survivors from the Philippines motor-ship Dona Aurora, which was sunk by Italian submarine Enrico Tazzol on Dec. 25, 1942.

### January 9, 1918

The Naval Overseas Transportation Service, now the Military Sealift Command, is established to carry cargo during World War I.

### January 16, 1991

Operation Desert Storm begins to liberate Kuwait from Iraq. After three months, Iraq requests a cease fire, which is formalized by the United Nations in April.

### January 20, 1903

President Theodore Roosevelt issues an Executive Order placing Midway Islands under the jurisdiction of the Navy Department due to recurring complaints of Japanese squatters and poachers.

## FOR MORE CONTENT

Want to see more about USS Gerald R. Ford?

<https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/CVN78>



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USS Gerald R. Ford CVN 78



2023



NEW YEAR  
NEW ADVENTURES