

# THE WOLVERINE

JANUARY 2022

## 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

RECOGNIZING SUCCESS

COMMADING OFFICER  
REFLECTS ON 2021  
ACHIEVEMENTS

COMPLETED PDT+TI!  
CSG INTEGRATION!  
SHOCKTRIALS! CSSQT!  
STARTING PIA!

PHOTOS OF THE YEAR INSIDE!

# THE WOLVERINE

USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78)

## MEET THE TRIAD

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### FRONT COVER PHOTO

USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) displays a dressed ship to commemorate Independence Day, July 5, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Edly)



## THIS MONTH IN NAVAL HISTORY

### January 4, 1989

VF-32 F-14 Tomcats from USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67) shoot down two hostile Libyan MiGs with AIM-7 [sparrow] and AIM-9 [sidewinder] missiles in the central Mediterranean north of Tobruk in international waters.

### January 6, 1945

USS Walke (DD 723) is attacked by four kamikazes while laying mines. After the third plane struck the ship, burning gasoline envelopes the bridge and Cmdr. George F Davis, the commanding officer is horribly burned. Remaining on his feet, he conns the ship, directs damage control efforts and sees to the destruction of the fourth plane. Assured of the ship's survival, Davis is taken down below, where dies a short time later. For his heroic conduct, he is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.





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SHOCK TRIALS

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# Gerald R. Ford's Commanding Officer Reflects on 2021

The crew of USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) faced many tests and trials during 2021, and true to form, they accomplished even more than what was expected. Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer, highlights some of Ford's most memorable and successful accomplishments this year.

For the first eight months of the year, Ford completed Post-Delivery Test and Trials (PDT&T) and the historic Full Ship Shock Trials (FSST), before transiting to Newport News Shipyard in late August to commence a six-month Planned Incremental Availability (PIA).

"This crew displayed a phenomenal amount of resiliency and proficiency during each phase of our operational development," said Lanzilotta. "While navigating COVID-era difficulties, we were able to get underway during six separate months this year and demonstrate what it means to be undeniably excellent."

Ford commenced Independent Steaming Event (ISE) 15 on Jan. 28, conducting various drills and system tests as part of PDT&T and continuing carrier qualifications (CQ) for fleet replacement squadron pilots and student naval aviators.

"The crew made history during that underway when the 'Gladiators' of VFA-106 completed the first use of the F/A-18's Precision Landing Mode during initial CQ on an East Coast aircraft carrier," Lanzilotta noted. "We harnessed a fusion of capabilities, PLM coupled with Ford's revolutionary Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG), and showcased the future of Naval Aviation."

During ISE 17 in March, Ford's combat systems team completed phase 2A of Combat Systems Ship's Qualification



Trials (CSSQT), participating in multiple complex evolutions to demonstrate their proficiency in operating the warship's defensive systems. They executed radar tracking exercises, Close-In Weapon System

engagements against high-speed maneuvering surface targets and succeeded in tactical dual-air detect-to-engage operations against Hawker Hunter aircraft. Phase 2A was very important to the Apr. 17 completion of CSSQT where test evaluators noted, "the crew crushed it, firing off four missiles [two RIM-116 and two ESSM], and all of them were conducted with precision control by the combat direction center watch teams."

"CSSQT was a live-fire, hands-on opportunity to prove the self-defense capability of this fine warship. We always intend to use our embarked air wing to influence our adversaries at great ranges from the ship, but if they're able to get a shot at us, this event showed our crew the formidable nature of our organic weapons," said Lanzilotta. "Even in my early days as Commanding Officer, it was apparent to me that the crew takes tremendous pride and ownership in the execution our warfare areas, and I could not be more proud of our Sailors during these historic accomplishments."

Additionally, during April's ISE 18, Ford conducted the second round of fully-integrated operations with Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12 and executed basic-phase level training events which typically don't occur until a CSG officially commences work-ups for deployment. CSG-integrated operations included the participation of all warfare commanders, to include a Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 2 guided-missile cruiser, USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), which had recently returned from deployment.

In an interview with reporters, Lanzilotta commented on the multiple scenarios the CSG team executed during ISE 18, stating "one of the things that I took away, maybe an evolutionary or even revolutionary step forward for Ford-class, is the command and control that's built into the ship – the internal communications coupled with external communications, how we operate as the ship's company within the carrier strike group command and control structure, how that information flows in terms of passing targets from one weapons system to another. We've been able to do all of that, which is more than just a single target coming in very predictably and shot out of the sky; we certainly did that, but we took that up a level and were able to see how

the command and control setup on the Ford-class, I think, is a step up and more smooth, more efficient than the previous ship class."

Each ISE played a pivotal role in completing the necessary testing of many of the ship's "first-in-class" systems, to include the accumulation of 8,157 catapult launches and arrested landings on EMALS and AAG, and were crucial to laying the foundation of training and readiness that will ensure the crew sees continued success in 2022.

Following the successful completion of PDT&T, Ford executed an arduous three-month schedule to complete FSST.

"The summer of 2021 should forever be known as 'boom time,'" joked Lanzilotta. "This phenomenal crew withstood the shock of three 40,000 lb. charges - each progressively closer to the ship than the last - sustaining zero significant casualties. The crew's expertise in damage control and ship handling was evident by the way they fought the ship - every crew member was in the right place at the right time and ensured that we were able to sail back to Norfolk on our own power. There is no denying that Ford is shock proven."

With the accomplishments of 2021 in the history books, and PIA more than halfway complete, Lanzilotta said the crew has already started shifting gears back to an operational mindset.

"Crew Cert III is coming up soon with dock trials to follow, and because of the tremendous work from the Sailors and Newport News shipbuilders, Ford is on schedule to depart the yards on time, execute sea trials, and return to our homeport of Norfolk early next year," said Lanzilotta.

Lanzilotta added that he is exceedingly impressed with the work-ethic and dedication from the crew throughout this year.

"The crew's efforts are what make Warship 78 so great," said Lanzilotta. "I can't wait to be a part of what accomplishments this mighty warship and her crew achieve in 2022."



# Gerald R. Ford Successfully Completes Combat Systems Ship's Qualification Trials

By Lt. j.g. Alexander Fairbanks

Sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) successfully completed Combat Systems Ship's Qualification Trials (CSSQT) April 17, representing a major milestone in validating the ship's capability to defend itself and the crew.

The trials, which commenced in February, consisted of five phases. The completion of the final phase, 2C, and CSSQT overall, is the culmination of years of planning, training, ingenuity and thousands of working hours for the ship's current and previous crews.

"I could not be more proud of our Sailors and their historic accomplishment," said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer. "CSSQT was a live-fire, hands-on opportunity to prove the self-defense capability of this fine warship. We always intend to use our embarked air wing to influence our adversaries at great ranges from the ship, but if they're able to get a shot at us, this event has shown our crew the formidable nature of our organic weapons."

According to ship's CSSQT project officer, Larry Daugherty, phase 2C was the "prove it" phase for the ship, which had already completed multiple detect-to-engage scenarios with live aircraft. In 2C, Ford faced off against rocket propelled drones capable of speeds in excess of 600 miles per hour; towed drone units (TDU) that simulate rockets; and remote controlled, high-speed maneuvering surface targets (HSMST).

The crew countered, relying on their skills and training to operate Ford's advanced defense systems. They used the rolling airframe missile (RAM) launchers, firing off RIM-116 missiles; the NATO launchers to fire the evolved sea sparrow missiles (ESSM); and the Mk-15 Phalanx Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) to fire armor-piercing tungsten bullets at 4,500 rounds per minute.

"The crew crushed it, firing off four missiles [two RIM-116 and two ESSM], and all of them were conducted with precision control by combat direction center (CDC) watch teams, they executed perfectly," said Daugherty. "All command and control decisions were made correctly, and the [systems] were engaged when they were supposed to be engaged and everything went out on time."

The ship's defense missiles engaged the drones and CIWS took out the TDUs and HSMSTs. All three TDUs were destroyed, and two of those TDUs were ripped to shreds, according to Daugherty.



An evolved sea sparrow missile (ESSM) launches from one of Ford's weapons sponsors during combat systems ship's qualification trials (CSSQT), April 16, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Zachary Melvin)

All three HSMSTs were destroyed as well.

"Those Sailors not only took out the first two HSMSTs, they punched holes in them, set them on fire, and they both sank," said Daugherty. "On the third one, the CIWS operator was so good that he actually hit the target further out than the weapon system's maximum effective range and put it [dead in the water] DIW."

As the first crew to fire Ford's missiles and complete this mission, it is a huge accomplishment, according to Chief Warrant Officer 2 Todd Williamson, Ford's fire control officer, and it began with the on-load of the missiles.

"Getting missiles transported and loaded onto a ship is a big movement that requires national coordination between multiple entities," said Williamson. "The ship's Fire Controlmen and Weapons Department were the backbone of the handling evolution, while Ford's Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department provided material handling equipment readiness support. Our [In-Service Engineering Agents] ISEA were also on-hand to provide oversight."

The first few days of the nearly week-long exercises for 2C were some of the most challenging, according to Williamson. "For Weapons Department and Combat Systems Department, it was two 18-hour back-to-back days just to get set-up and complete telemetry checks," he said.

The telemetry checks provide the capability to record the flight performance characteristics and fusing of RAM and ESSM missiles to ensure they are capable of hitting their intended targets, according to Daugherty.

There were other system checks, system and equipment tuning, ordnance uploads, preventative maintenance checks and casualty repairs, which collectively made for an extremely complex series of exercises. According to Fire Controlman 2nd Class Douglas Huyge, who has been aboard Ford for two years, his team was up for the challenge.

"I am 100 percent impressed with the way the division worked together to achieve this goal," said Huyge. "People who are in leadership positions dream of dream-teams like this, we worked hard to get here and we executed the mission."

CSSQT is the culminating combat systems test of Ford's 18-month post-delivery test and trials (PDT&T) phase of operations. Following PDT&T this month, Ford will commence preparations for Full Ship Shock Trials, scheduled to occur during the summer, to validate the ability of new construction ships to carry out assigned missions and evaluate operational survivability after exposure to an underwater shock.

"[CSSQT] was probably the single-handed greatest feeling I've felt on this ship so far," said Huyge, describing how he felt watching the live-fire evolution in CDC, after many years of hard work. "I would say what I felt was fulfillment. It was a high level of fulfillment."

USS Gerald R. Ford is a first-in-class aircraft carrier, and the first new aircraft carrier designed in more than 40 years. The ship is underway for Independent Steaming Event 18 (ISE 18), as part of her PDT&T phase of operations.







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# PHOTOS OF THE YEAR

## 2021

1. Ford transits the Atlantic Ocean, Jan. 28, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Jackson Adkins)

2. Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Morgan Heather, from Columbia, South Carolina, assigned to the "Blacklions" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 213, inspects an F/A-18F Super Hornet, on Ford's flight deck, April 20, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Jackson Adkins)

3. An F/A-18E attached to the "Ragin' Bulls" of Strike fighter Squadron (VFA) 37, approaches Ford's flight deck, while the guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) steams in the Atlantic Ocean, April 18, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Zack Guth)

4. Fire Controlman 2nd Class Anthony Anadon, from Stockton, California, assigned to Ford's combat systems department, prepares an Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM) for upload into a missile launcher during an ammunition onload, April 9, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Angel Thuy Jaskuloski)

5. F/A-18E/F Super Hornets attached to the "Gladiators" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 106, conduct flight operations on Ford's flight deck Feb. 8, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Zachary Melvin)

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6. Ford's burial detail participates in a burial-at-sea ceremony on the ship's aircraft elevator June 6, 2021. Thirty souls were laid to rest during the burial at sea ceremony held aboard Ford. (Photo by MC2 Dalton Lowing)

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7. Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Kelly Idrovo, (middle), from Hancock, Wisconsin, assigned to Ford's deck department, signals to the winch operator during small boat operations, June 16, 2021. (Photo by MCSN Trenton Edly)

8. Sailors assigned to Ford's combat systems department upload rounds into the ship's close-in weapon system, July 14, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Zachary Melvin)



# Ford Completes Final ISE: Next Stop, Shock Trials

By Mass Communication Third Class Jackson Adkins



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 1st Class Andra Coleman, from South Carolina, assigned to Ford's air department, stands watch as the safety gear officer, April 19, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Riley McDowell)

USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) completed her 18th and final Independent Steaming Event (ISE) after 16 days at sea in the Atlantic Ocean, April 30, 2021.

During ISE 18, Ford accomplished carrier air wing integration, conducted integrated strike operations, conducted Combat Systems Ship's Qualification Trials (CSSQT) phase 2C and hosted French Armaments Procurements Agency (DGA) executive leadership group who visited to witness first-hand Ford's first in class technology.

"From making noise on the flight deck, to the weapons sponsons, and even with the French Marine National, Ford accomplished many firsts in her last ISE," said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer. "The crew's hard work has made Ford even more lethal heading into the first phase of shock trials."

Ford's combat systems department completed phase 2C of CSSQT, a Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) requirement for ships that have undergone a significant combat systems upgrade, and new constructions. CSSQT is a NAVSEA requirement to verify that ship's personnel can operate and maintain their combat systems in a safe and effective manner.

Rear Adm. Craig Clapperton, commander, carrier strike group 12,

participated with Ford and all warfare commanders who conducted their second iteration of integrated operations, to include a destroyer squadron (DESRON) 2 asset recently back from deployment.

During phase 2C, for the first time ever, Ford's combat systems operators launched two RIM-116 rolling airframe missiles (RAM) and two NATO sea sparrow RIM-162G missiles utilizing aerial tracking. Operators also fired 20,000 20mm rounds from the close-in weapons system (CIWS) successfully engaging low-cost modular targets.

"The mission was an overall success. We accomplished and excelled at every milestone they set up for us," said Fire Controlman 2nd Class Jonathan Smoot, from Fort Worth, Texas, assigned to Ford's combat systems department. "This evaluation will be the basis of how future Ford-class carriers will operate, from over the side mutations handling, to loading, to crane handling, and eventually shooting four missiles flawlessly. This CSSQT set the standards for the Ford-class now and well into the future."

Ford conducted flight operations with the "Blacklions" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 213, "Ragin' Bulls" of VFA-37, and "Bear Aces" of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 124. Ford completed 301 sorties during 10 days of flight operations.

"The Ford and Carrier Air Wing 8 team completed fixed air wing operations creating huge momentum for future operations and successfully displayed the capabilities of Ford's flight deck during Ford's final ISE," said Lt. Christopher Jones, Ford's aircraft handling officer. "The team displayed increased sortie rates and vastly improved mission readiness."

Ford completed a total of 8,153 traps during her post-delivery test and trials phase of operations.

Wrapping up ISE 18, French Armaments Procurements Agency (DGA) executive leadership visited Ford to view the electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS) and advanced arresting gear (AAG) in operation, to enable France to refine the design of the Future French Carrier. This was Ford's first overnight embark.

"I love any opportunity to showcase our mighty warship and this fine crew; but this visit was especially beneficial to the future of naval aviation, as our French counterparts were able to see us execute exercise scenarios on par with real-world operations," said Lanzilotta. "Their ability to get first hand experience of our system, and speak to our technicians will pay huge dividends to our operations together in years to come."



# Gerald R. Ford Successfully Completes Full Ship Shock Trials

By Program Executive Office, Aircraft Carriers public affairs

Background: USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) successfully completes the third and final scheduled explosive event for Full Ship Shock Trials while underway in the Atlantic Ocean, Aug. 8, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Jackson Adkins)

USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) successfully conducted a third explosive event off the coast of Jacksonville, FL, on 8 Aug., marking the completion of the ship's Full Ship Shock Trials (FSST).

Shock Trials validate a ship's shock hardness and ability to sustain operations in a simulated combat environment using live ordnance. During the four-month testing evolution, the first-in-class aircraft carrier withstood the impact of three 40,000-pound underwater blasts, released at distances progressively closer to the ship.

"The Navy designed the Ford-class carrier using advanced computer modeling methods, testing, and analysis to ensure the ships are hardened to withstand harsh battle conditions," said Capt. Brian Metcalf, manager for the Navy's future aircraft carrier program office, PMS 378.

"These shock trials have tested the resiliency of Ford and her crew and provided extensive data used in the process of validating the shock hardness of the ship."

Metcalf said that the goal of the tests is to ensure that Ford's integrated combat systems perform as designed and added "the tests demonstrated—and proved to the crew, fairly dramatically—that the ship will be able to withstand formidable shocks and continue to operate under extreme conditions."

CVN 78 is returning to the Tidewater area for a six month Planned Incremental Availability (PIA). As the PIA begins, teams will conduct additional detailed inspections, assess any damage sustained during the shots, and continue modernization and maintenance work in advance of workups for the ship's deployment in 2022.

Rear Adm. James P. Downey, program executive officer for aircraft carriers, rode the ship during the first and third shock evolutions, and observed the historic trials, first-hand. "FSST has proven a critical investment in the Ford-class development," said Downey. "The ship and crew performed exceptionally in these very strenuous conditions and continued their operations throughout the shock events, demonstrating the ship's

'fight-through' capability."

"We're designing and building these aircraft carriers to sail in some of the world's most contested security environments. So when you think about the threats to warships posed by non-contact blasts and the number of sea mines in the inventories of navies around the world, the gravity and consequence of these shock trials really come into focus. The Navy's ongoing investment in the design, including this modeling, will help ensure the resiliency of Ford's integrated, mission critical systems in underway threat environments."

Downey added that the trial's ultimate success hinged on the extraordinary performance of ship's force, in coordination with crews on several surface and aviation platforms that support FSST.

"The countdown to the actual shot is choreographed down to the smallest detail, and the coordination between the ship and the other surface and aviation platforms, as well as the on-scene environmental scientists has been impressive."

FSSTs are complex evolutions, conducted during a precise operating schedule in compliance with exacting environmental mitigation requirements, respecting known migration patterns of marine life and protected species. Ford's shock trials required exacting coordination across multiple Navy/Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) organizations and experienced FSST teams.

Prior to each shot, the FSST team notified mariners to avoid the test area, and implemented extensive protocols to ensure the safety of military and civilian personnel participating in the operation. A team of more than a dozen scientists, biologists, and observers were assigned to Ford, nearby support vessels, and observation aircraft. Observers used high-powered lenses to detect marine life at great distances, through ocean waves and white caps.

During the sequence of events leading up to each shot, crews operated in a heightened state of watchful readiness in anticipation of the ultimate go/no-go

decision, which had to be made between 4:00 and 8:00 a.m. on the day of the scheduled blast.

Ford's Commanding Officer, Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, was the tactical commander that ordered the go/no-go decision, based on the interplay of several crucial variables, such as ship and crew readiness, weather, and sea state, as well as pre-set environmental mitigation measures, designed to protect any marine life spotted within the test area.

"Safety was always the driving consideration throughout the shock trials," recalled Lanzilotta. "So, once we were ready and in position, pausing the countdown to the shot could really test our focus and persistence."

"In spite of months of detailed preparation, you can't always count on the weather," he said. "But the crew hung in there, and showed the great tenacity and professionalism reflective of their pride in our Warship."

"So many pieces had to fall into place to execute Ford's FSSTs within the testing window," said Capt. Lanzilotta. "Success required equal measures of technical expertise, trust, and courage—traits you'll find in great supply on Warship 78 and throughout the entire Ford Shock Trial Team. These shots have only strengthened my confidence in the durability of this ship, and the excellence of the crew who came out here to own it, and absolutely crushed it."

The U.S. Navy has conducted FSSTs over several decades, most recently for the Littoral Combat Ships USS Jackson (LCS 6) and USS Milwaukee (LCS 5) in 2016; as well as on the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19) in 2008, the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) in 1990, and the guided missile cruiser USS Mobile Bay (CG 53) in 1987. The last aircraft carrier to execute FSST was USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) in 1987.

The Navy conducted the Gerald R. Ford shock trial testing in accordance with Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 9072.2, and as mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2016. The first two shots of the FSST sequence occurred on June 18 and July 16.



# This is Ford Class: Maintaining a Habitable Ship During PIA

Story by MC1 William Spears

“We owe it to them to keep them informed and to ease the load of being in the shipyard.”



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 3rd Class Juan Macdonado, from Houston, Texas, assigned to air department, dismantles Products Research and Chemical Corporation (PRC) in Ford's aft galley, Aug. 31, 2021. (Photo by MCSN Trenton Edly)



Gen. John E. Hyten, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, center right, receives a brief on Advanced Weapons Elevators from Lt. Cmdr. Paul Castillo, right, Ford's (CVN 78) ordnance handling officer, on the flight deck during a ship visit, Oct. 25, 2021. (Photo by MC2 Angel Thuy Jaskuloski)

The clang of machinery echoes throughout the decks of USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78); these aren't the usual sounds of ship life, however, these are the sounds of a ship executing a Planned Incremental Availability (PIA), or more simply put – a six-month period of modernization, maintenance and repairs.

One challenge faced by a ship's leadership during any maintenance period is how to maintain the ship's livability for the crew. That is where Lt. Cmdr. Greg Syers, from Omaha, Nebraska, comes in, he is Ford's habitability officer and his job is to ensure that the ship remains livable during this maintenance availability.

“My job as the habitability officer is to make sure that the work that is being done around the ship minimally impacts the quality of life for the Sailors aboard the ship,” said Syers. “One way we do that is if there is a berthing being affected by a planned outage of ventilation, lighting or potable water, we make berthings temporarily available to those Sailors that are on duty and most importantly, the Sailors that we have living aboard. We owe it to them to keep them informed and to ease the load of being in the shipyard.”

Currently, there are approximately



Lt. Daniel Lee, from Fresno, California, assigned to USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) reactor department, observes Naval Station Norfolk during a sea and anchor evolution, Aug. 20, 2021. Ford departed Naval station Norfolk to make the transit to Newport News Shipyard in support of her Planned Incremental Availability (PIA), a six-month period of modernization, maintenance and repairs. (Photo by MC3 Jackson Adkins)

4,000 jobs planned for Ford's PIA, but not all of these jobs will directly impact habitability. However, each of the jobs is evaluated for possible impacts by Syers and his habitability team.

"Our main goal for PIA is to leave the shipyard on-time and make preparations for Ford's inaugural deployment next year, and part of those preparations include completing maintenance that will affect the daily lives of our Sailors," said Capt. Jeremy Shamblee, Ford's executive officer. "As Big XO, my main priority is our Sailors. I want to ensure that our Sailors who live and work aboard the ship are informed about the maintenance items being completed and have designated spaces they can use if their assigned spaces are affected by the work being done during PIA."

As with any large-scale maintenance project, there will be an impact to the crew. Currently, the most extensive job impacting habitability is the aft mess decks resurfacing job where PRORECO (PRC), a marine deck-coating made of a resin sealer and color epoxy designed to resist heavy abrasion, impact and other potential movements, is being replaced. There are also a few hundred other PRC jobs that are going to cause passageway closures, some in berthings and staterooms, where Sailors will not be able to inhabit those spaces. As those jobs take place, Sailors will have to modify transit routes through the ship or utilize temporary berthing areas.

In addition to PRC jobs that impact ship transit and space access, the inspection, cleaning and possible repair of tanks, voids, piping and other equipment will inevitably affect habitability.

"Another big job that we have coming down the pipeline is the inspection and cleaning of the ship's jet propellant five (JP-5) fuel tanks," said Syers. "The accesses to those tanks are located in berthing areas and it takes about three weeks per tank to complete the job. Those spaces will be uninhabitable, so we have already made sure that Sailors in affected berthings will have alternative sleeping arrangements."

For large projects that impact thousands of people, communication is paramount. Syers and his habitability team, which includes a representative from every department, meet twice a week

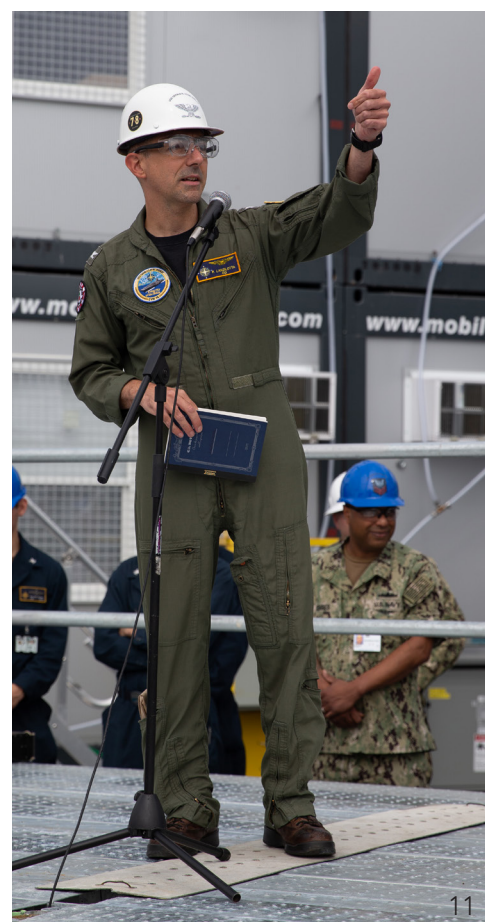


to discuss the jobs that are happening that week, and to make a plan for the jobs to deconflict any impacts expected in the coming weeks. From these meetings, Syers and his team draft up a document called "Habitability Happenings," that is published at the beginning of every week in the ship's internal weekly newsletter, "The Wolverine Weekly Digest."

"This is a complete team effort from the habitability team to the departmental reps and construction supervisors at Newport News Shipyard, to SUPSHIP (Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair Newport News) evaluating what we are able to do," said Syers. "It is an integrated endeavor to ensure that we get this project done on time and with the least habitability impact to the Sailors possible so that we can go operate forward at our scheduled time."

As Ford begins this maintenance period, her Sailors and their families can be assured that there is an entire team of people ensuring that the ship remains livable and their concerns are heard.

Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer, addresses the attendees of a CO's all-hands call on the flight deck, Nov. 8, 2021. (Photo by MC3 Adonica Muñoz)







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**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**FROM USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78)**