

# THE WOLVERINE

APRIL 2023

## FORD'S COMPTUEX

THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED AND CAPABLE AIRCRAFT CARRIER COMPLETES THE FINAL STEP IN CERTIFYING AS A COMBAT-DEPLOYABLE WARSHIP

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

REFLECTING ON TRAILBLAZERS OF THE PAST,  
CELEBRATING THE WOMEN SERVING ABOARD FORD

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH INSIDE!



# THE WOLVERINE

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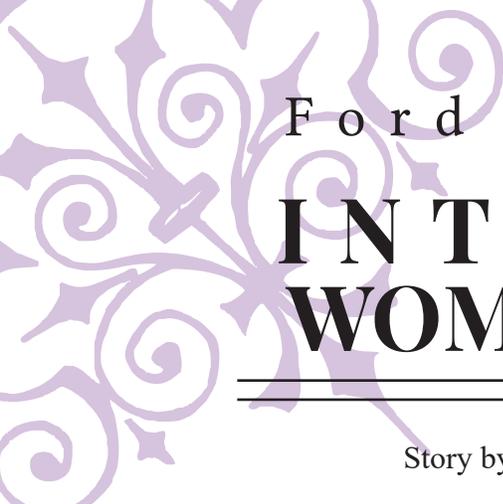
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### FRONT COVER PHOTO

ABH1 Carlos Rodriguez, assigned to Ford's air department, prepares to direct aircraft during flight operations on the flight deck, March 13, 2023.  
Photo by MCSN Simon Pike



# Ford Sailors Reflect on INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COLOR DAY

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Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Grace Lyles

Sailors aboard the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) celebrate International Women of Color Day, March 1, 2023.

“Aboard Ford, we celebrated International Women of Color Day in alignment with Women’s History Month,” said Chief Retail Services Specialist Ana Marrerosuarez, program manager for Ford’s Multicultural Heritage Committee. “We made posters, videos and stories that celebrate women in today’s Navy and the accomplishments they provide daily to the mission.”

International Women of Color day has been recognized by the National Institute for Women of Color since 1986 and acknowledges the achievements of the women of color who have paved the way in U.S. Naval history and for Ford’s Sailors serving today. According to the Naval History and Heritage Command website, in 1942, Lt. Susan Ahn Cuddy became the first Asian American woman to serve in the U.S. Navy as part of the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) program. Although black women were permitted to serve in the Navy temporarily during World War I, they were not officially authorized to do so until 1944. The first two black female naval officers, Lt. j. g. Harriet Pickens and Ensign Frances Wills, were commissioned on December 26, 1944.

Chief Yeoman Edna Young was the first black American woman to enlist in the Navy in July 1948. That year, Lt. Cmdr. Maria Emiliana Aquino became the first Native American woman to serve as an officer in the Medical Service Corps.

In 1978, Capt. Joan Bynum was the first black woman to be promoted to her rank of O-6. That same year, Brenda “Raven” Robinson became the first black female pilot and only the 42nd woman to earn Wings

of Gold for completing naval aviation training.

In 1993, Cmdr. Lynn Chow became the first female Navy gunnery officer aboard a combatant ship. In 2000, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Roseanne Oliveros became the first female Hispanic Seabee Diver. In 2010, Capt. Kathlene Contres was the highest-ranking Hispanic American woman officer in the Navy until she retired.

By 2014, Admiral Michelle J. Howard was chosen as the Vice Chief of Naval Operations after having been the first black woman to command a ship. Howard was also the first black woman to achieve ranks of two and three-star admiral.

These trailblazers of the past, as well as Ford’s strong Sailors, provide inspiring examples of resiliency and courage. According to [diversity.defense.gov](http://diversity.defense.gov), in 2016, more than 19,000 U.S. Navy Sailors were women of color. Today, Ford recognizes how far women of color in the Navy have come and how much further they will go in the future.

“I am the only person who has the power to determine my future and I am the only obstacle in my way,” said Seaman Nacolette Carr, from Miamisburg, Ohio, assigned to Ford’s supply department. “I think the Navy does very well with inclusion and I think just continuing to keep people informed of the past and how far we’ve come has accomplished so much.” Ford is proud to have women of color serving and assisting with daily operations to achieve mission readiness.

“I think of myself as a Sailor, as an officer, not as a gender,” said Lt. Cmdr. Wanda Colon, Ford’s principal assistant supply officer. “When I get a task, I try to do my best, work hard, and that’s how I succeed.”

# Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group commences multi-week exercise to fully certify as combat-deployable U.S. warship

**BY CARRIER STRIKE GROUP 12 PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

The Sailors, ships, squadrons and staffs of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (GRFCSG) commenced their final deployment certification exercise, Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX), March 2.

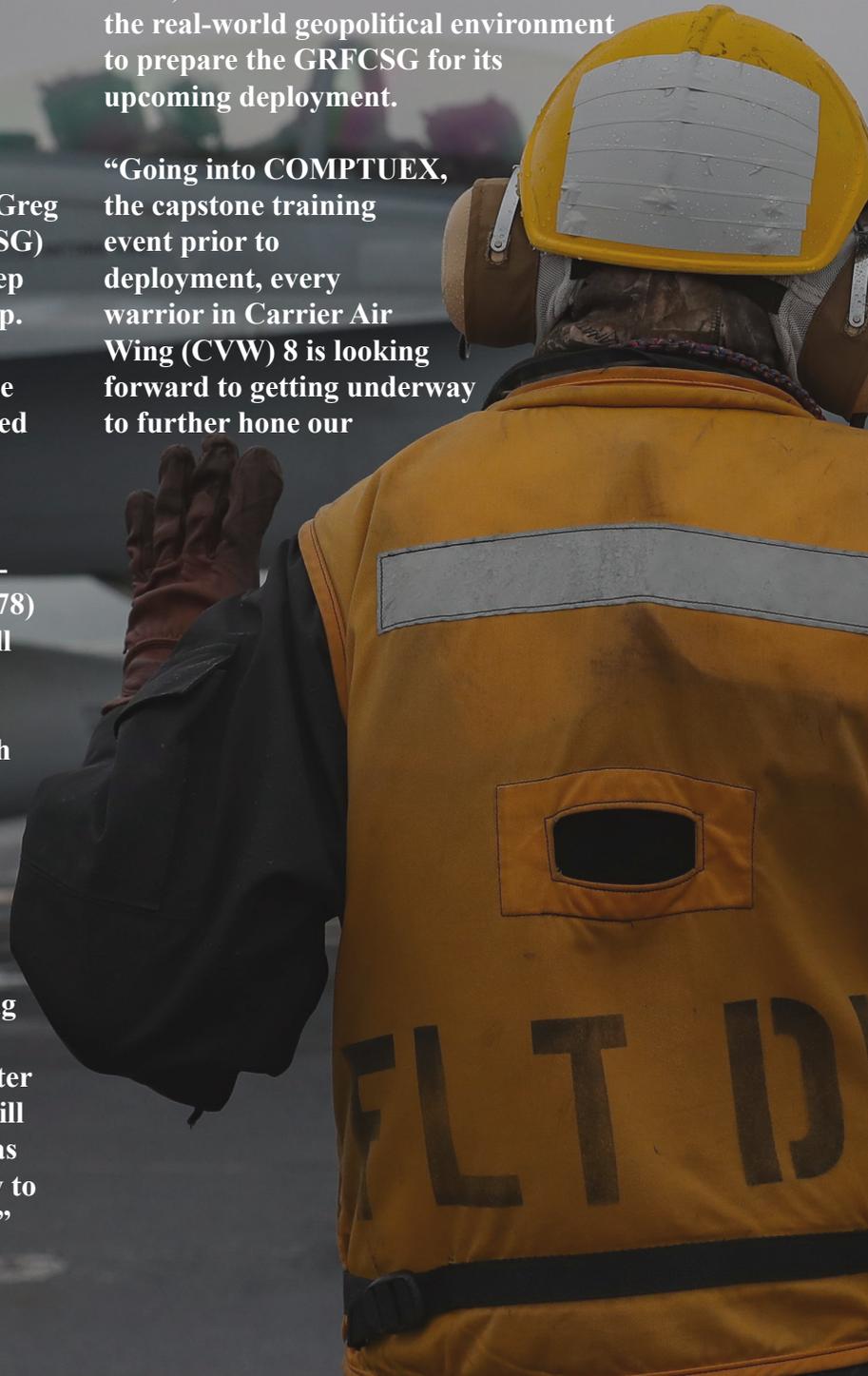
“The GRFCSG demonstrated to the world what high-end naval warfare and integrated NATO interoperability looks like when it sailed on its inaugural deployment in 2022,” said Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, Commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12. “Now, the strike group is initiating its final step in fully certifying as a combat-deployable warship. COMPTUEX will further demonstrate that our carrier strike group is a combat-ready naval force capable of conducting a full spectrum of integrated maritime, joint, and combined operations.”

Orchestrated by CSG 4 staff, COMPTUEX is designed to test and push the limits of the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) through a thorough, multi-week scenario that will prepare the crew for high-end warfighting.

“It is an honor to lead our awesome team through this challenging exercise, and I am confident our Sailors will deliver,” said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford’s commanding officer. “Gerald R. Ford Sailors and those hard-working professionals on our extended team, Carrier Air Wing Eight and embarked staffs have worked diligently toward this goal for years, learning and mastering an array of new systems. Their fortitude and resiliency inspires and humbles me every day. After we complete COMPTUEX, Ford and our crew will be fully integrated with the carrier strike group as a cohesive, multi-mission fighting machine, ready to sail over the horizon to support national tasking.”

Focused on a range of simulated combat situations, including aircraft, submarine and missile attacks, ship casualties and engineering and communication drills, COMPTUEX’s scenario will evolve and mirror the real-world geopolitical environment to prepare the GRFCSG for its upcoming deployment.

“Going into COMPTUEX, the capstone training event prior to deployment, every warrior in Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8 is looking forward to getting underway to further hone our



tactical edge while operating from the sea onboard the world's most advanced and capable aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford," said Capt. Dan Catlin, Commander, CVW 8.

This will be Ford's first COMPTUEX. This training will allow the carrier strike group to increase staff proficiency across various warfighting functions and provided a unique experience to exercise naval interoperability.

"The Greyhounds are excited for the challenges we'll face during COMPTUEX to prepare ourselves to deploy as part of the Gerald R Ford Strike Group," said Capt. Mac Harkin, Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 2. "We are excited to be a part of this team along with Ford, CAG 8, IWC and Normandy as we train and prepare for our upcoming deployment."

The GRFCSG includes the staffs of CSG 12, CVW-8 and DESRON 2 stationed in Norfolk, Va. Participating units include the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60), and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Ramage (DDG 61), USS McFaul (DDG 74) homeported in Norfolk, Va. and USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) homeported in Mayport, Fl. CVW-8 squadrons include strike fighter squadrons VFA-213, VFA-31, VFA-37

and VFA-87 stationed in Norfolk, Va. at Naval Air Station Oceana; electronic attack squadron VAQ-142 stationed in Whidbey Island, Wash. at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island; airborne command and control squadron VAW-124 stationed in Norfolk, Va. at Naval Air Station Oceana; fleet logistics support squadron VRC-40 stationed in Norfolk, Va. at Naval Air Station Oceana; helicopter maritime strike squadron HSM-70 stationed in Jacksonville, Fl. At Naval Air Station Jacksonville; and helicopter sea combat squadron HSC-9 stationed in Norfolk, Va. at Naval Air Station Oceana.

USS Gerald R. Ford is the U.S. Navy's newest and most advanced aircraft carrier. As the first-in-class ship of Ford-class aircraft carriers, CVN 78 represents a generational leap in the U.S. Navy's capacity to project power on a global scale. Ford-class aircraft carriers introduce 23 new technologies, including Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System, Advanced Arresting Gear and Advanced Weapons Elevators. The new systems incorporated onto Ford-class ships are designed to generate a higher sortie rate with a 20% smaller crew than a Nimitz-class carrier, paving the way forward for naval aviation.

CSG 4 is a team that consists of experienced Sailors, Marines, government civilians and reservists, who mentor, train and assess U.S. 2nd Fleet combat forces to forward deploy in support and defense of national interests. CSG 4's experts shape the readiness of U.S. 2nd Fleet Carrier Strike Groups (CSG), Expeditionary

Strike Groups (ESG), Amphibious Readiness Groups (ARG) and independent deploying ships through live, at sea and synthetic training, as well as

academic instruction. Along with its subordinate commands, Tactical Training Group Atlantic (TTGL) and Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Atlantic (EWTGL), CSG 4 prepares every Atlantic-based CSG, ARG and independent deployer for sustained forward-deployed high-tempo operations.

**"EVERY WARRIOR IN CVW 8 IS LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING UNDERWAY TO FURTHER HONE OUR TACTICAL EDGE WHILE OPERATING FROM THE SEA ONBOARD THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED AND CAPABLE AIRCRAFT CARRIER"**

**- Capt. Dan Catlin**

# Celebrating the Women aboard USS Gerald R. Ford

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Trinita Lersch

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brian Glunt



Women in the Navy, unofficially, began with the “Sacred Twenty” who were appointed after President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a bill establishing the Navy Nurse Corps on May 13, 1908.

Then, on July 30, 1942 President Roosevelt signed Public Law 689, which created the Navy’s women’s reserve program also known as Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service or “WAVES.” This allowed women to enlist and commission into the Navy.

Although it took more than 50 years for them to be able to serve aboard a combatant ship, the Navy finally issued the first orders for women to be assigned aboard the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) on March 7, 1994.

Today, women serve in every rank and rate, sea and shore.

The women assigned to the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) have much to say about their experience in the Navy.

“Reflecting on Women’s History Month reminds me that my service represents those who tirelessly fought for me to be able to fully serve,” said Chief Legalman Shana Clark, assigned to Ford’s legal department.

Ensign Mackenzie Culver, from Columbus, Ohio, joined the Navy by attending Officer Candidate School on April 15, 2022, and then commissioned July 15, 2022. Culver is assigned to the media department aboard Ford.

“I would say an influential woman in my life would be my mother,” said Culver. “One of the cool things about my mom was that she was a working mom. I really appreciated that because it taught me that, my mom going after her dream, encouraged me to become



career driven as well. It's kind of why I'm so career driven, because I had a mom that cared about her career as well."

"My late grandmother," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Keara King, assigned to Ford's medical department, when asked what woman in her life inspired her. "She is the reason I am where I am in the Navy today. She was my biggest fan and the reason I joined."

Women being successful with their careers has been a positive influence on Culver's and King's experience in the Navy.

"I think just seeing other females being commanders, captains and admirals and knowing that if I continue to push I can pave that way as well," said Culver.

"I think that has been one of the most positive experiences. Knowing that I can have that future and I can have that career."

"Just witnessing women break barriers every day," said King. "It's Fleet Master Chief April Beldo, Capt. Amy Bauernschmidt, and Adm. Michelle Howard. They are the voices of reason when society tells us women aren't capable of being the best of the best! There isn't any reason why I or someone else can't be the first female Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy."

For King, there are too many historical figures to mention than just one.

"I don't have one in particular, I'm all about women empowerment," said King. "Anything that makes us shine. There are so many historical figures who have paved the way for us to be able to do half the things we are able to do. Any woman who has stood firm in who she is, what she stood for and no matter the adversary, kept going, that's who I look up to."

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# PHOTOS OF THE MONTH

## MARCH 2023

1. HT2 Dillion Wilhere, from Ashland, Kentucky, assigned to Ford's engineering department, conducts tig welding in the machine shop, March 4, 2023. (Photo by MC2 Nolan Pennington)

2. ABF1 Joan Abreu, from New York, and ABF3 Joseph Tanner, from Russellville, Arkansas, both assigned to Ford's air department, conduct a jet fuel purity check during a refueling-at-sea, March 7, 2023. (Photo by MC2 Nolan Pennington)

3. An MH-60S Knighthawk attached to the "Tridents" of HSC-9, takes off from Ford's flight deck during a vertical replenishment-at-sea with the Spearhead-Class Expeditionary Fast Transport USNS Newport (T-EPF 12), March 13, 2023. (Photo by MC2 Darien Kenney)

4. AEAN Austin Carman, assigned to the "Tomcatters" of VFA-31, performs routine maintenance on an F/A-18E Super Hornet in Ford's hangar bay, March 5, 2023. (Photos by MC2 Jacob Mattingly)

5. An MH-60S Knighthawk attached to the "Tridents" of HSC-9, delivers a pallet to Ford during a vertical replenishment-at-sea with the Spearhead-Class Expeditionary Fast Transport USNS Newport (T-EPF 12), March 13, 2023. (Photo by MC3 Manvir Gill)

6. QM3 Austin Audain, from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, assigned to Ford's navigation department, holds a signal flag on the flight deck during a replenishment-at-sea, March 7, 2023. (Photo by MCSN Simon Pike)

7. Sailors assigned to Ford's deck department conduct small boat operations in Ford's port boat davit, March 12, 2023. (Photo by MC3 Grace Lyles)

8. Pilots assigned to the "Blacklions" of VFA-213 conduct pre-checks on an F/A-18F Super Hornet on Ford's flight deck, March 20, 2023. (Photo by MC2 Darien Kenney)

9. EOD2 Nicolas de Villiers, from Highlands Ranch, Colorado, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 6, searches for an inert floating mine during a mine countermeasure exercise, March 7, 2023. (Photo by MC2 Jackson Adkins)

10. ABH3 Joseph Gonzales, from Chicago, assigned to Ford's air department, signals to aircraft on the flight deck, March 11, 2023. (Photo by MC3 Manvir Gill)

11. AD3 Arianna Mazzone, from Jacksonville, Florida, and AM2 Zach Thomason, from Rome, New York, both assigned to the "Tridents" of HSC-9, take out the radiator of a MH-60S Knighthawk in Ford's hangar bay, March 8, 2023. (Photo by MC3 Aaron Arroyo)

12. Sailors assigned to Ford take the Navy-wide 2nd class petty officer advancement exam on the mess decks, March 10, 2023. (Photo by MC2 Adonica Muñoz)



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# THE DIRECTOR - ABH

The flight deck of an aircraft carrier is one of the most dangerous working environments in the world. It is unforgiving. One step out of line could cause a serious injury or damage to highly valued assets. The organized chaos has a poetic rhythm that changes day-by-day.

Aviation Boatswain's Mates (Handling) or "aircraft directors" keep the flight deck mission going, keep everyone safe, and ultimately get the aircraft where they need to be.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Third Class Shelby Bilodeau, from Arlington, Texas, assigned to the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) air department, helps carry out Ford's mission by keeping the flight deck a safe and effective platform to project the United States Navy's power and global presence.

"What it means to me to be an aircraft director is knowing that I am able to help complete the mission by getting the aircraft onto the catapults and launching them so that they can complete their mission," said Bilodeau.

Being an aircraft director on the flight deck is a huge responsibility, presenting many potential dangers. Each handler is a highly qualified professional in their field and are trusted with the safety of multi-million-dollar aircraft and every Sailor's

life on the flight deck. Their expertise is unparalleled.

Bilodeau's son is where her dedication and strive comes from. She dons her cranial and float coat everyday to set an example for him.

"What motivates me every day to do my job is my son," said Bilodeau. "I joined the Navy to provide a better life for him and because of him, he inspires me to be a better mom for him and to be better for myself."

It's not always easy. Whether they are cold, hot or tired, the mission cannot continue on without aircraft directors' hard work and focus.

Bilodeau is a very influential figure in her field and aboard Ford. Her dedication to her job and safety of her peers positively impacts the ship as a whole. All ABHs that step foot on Ford's flight deck have big shoes to fill.

"I am hoping that when I leave the Ford, I leave it better than the way I found it. I am hoping that I have been able to inspire others to better themselves and what they do," said Bilodeau. "I want to pass down any knowledge that I have to others that I work with and just be able to leave a positive impact on everybody that I meet regardless of their rate and rank."

# H3 Shelby Bilodeau



"WORK HARD AND  
TAKE ADVANTAGE  
OF ALL  
OPPORTUNITIES.  
DON'T BE  
AFRAID TO  
GET OUT  
OF YOUR  
COMFORT ZONE"

-  
CS1 CURRY

# CURRY IN

Story by Ensign Mackenzie Culver and Mass Communicator  
USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) Public Affairs

Culinary Specialist 1st Class Laffeyette Curry, from Columbus, Georgia, works to ensure the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) conglomerate galley is operating efficiently to feed more than 4,000 people daily.

Curry joined the Navy in hopes of meeting new people, seeing the world and creating a life for himself. Since joining the Navy in 2007, he has met and worked with people from all walks of life and been able to travel to Spain, Dubai and Greece with hopes of travelling to Brazil and Singapore.

Since his culinary training, or "A" school, was only 4 weeks long, Curry says most of his "know-how" has come from on-the-job learning. During his first assignment aboard USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), he also worked in the aft galley and Chiefs Mess.

"It was the hardest I have ever worked, but it taught me a lot about what I am capable of," Curry said.

During his next assignment in Afghanistan, he managed the Dining Facility (DFAC), which served the Marine Corps Special Operation Command (MARSOC) and Green Beret teams. Curry added that his favorite meal to cook for the special forces was tater tot

# THE KITCHEN

Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Jennifer Newsome,

With Ford-class aircraft carriers now having a central, conglomerate galley configuration, he oversees the preparation and serving for the officer's wardroom, Chiefs Mess and junior enlisted mess deck.

casserole and some of his best memories happened while deployed overseas.

After Curry moved back to the U.S. and joined the crew aboard USS Iwo Jima, he worked hard and went the extra mile to become the maintenance material management (3M) subject matter expert, which allowed for new responsibilities and opportunities. As a result of his hard work and dedication, he was meritoriously promoted from the rank of second class to first class petty officer, in addition to receiving various awards and volunteering certificates.

During his shore tour at Oasis Galley, in Mayport, Florida, Curry exemplified how Sailors can maximize their time outside of work by receiving his bachelor's degree in supply chain management and logistics through the Navy's Tuition Assistance program.

Now serving as Ford's aft galley supervisor, Curry is also responsible for the distinguished visitor dinners, in which he is in charge of creating the menu for the three course meal served to guests visiting USS Gerald R. Ford. After the menu is created and approved, the preparations can begin to ensure a seamless process for the next day's dinner. Curry requested this duty station in order to experience this specific type of event planning and specialized meal creation.

"The biggest difference is how much more versatile the culinary specialists become because they are cooking for a larger group," explained Curry.

Curry added that Ford's culinary specialists focus on teamwork and have bigger responsibilities due to the new galley setup, which he claims is the reason for so many compliments.

With the new responsibilities that come with operating the conglomerate galley, his junior Sailors receive the opportunity to take charge and branch out in terms of cooking new foods. Recently, the culinary specialists have been creating unique ice cream flavors, like cinnamon toast crunch and mocha.

He wants to use his naval experience to give back to junior Sailors by showing them the ropes and what is possible in the culinary specialist rate.

Reflecting back on his time thus far in the Navy, Curry advises junior Sailors to work hard and take advantage of all available opportunities and offers the advice to not be afraid to get out of a comfort zone and to not fall into the wrong crowd.

Curry's short-term goal is to become a chief petty officer and obtain his bachelor's degree in psychology.



# National Dentist's Day

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jennifer Newsome

ATLANTIC OCEAN — Sailors aboard the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) celebrate National Dentist's Day, March 6, 2023.

Dental care plays a significant role in your overall health. Neglecting proper oral hygiene can lead to serious diseases and cause permanent damage.

"It's important to have dental care aboard [Ford] for many reasons such as dental emergencies, cavities that need to be filled, tooth abscesses, chips/breaks in the tooth, etc.," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Earlena Sylvester, from New York, dental technician aboard the Ford. "Proper treatment for these issues is needed to relieve pain, discomfort and prevent further issues."

The dental department onboard is equipped to handle everything from routine cleanings to oral surgeries. They are knowledgeable about their craft and have tips for maintaining oral care.



"We recommend our patients use soft bristle brushes in circular motions to protect their gums," said dental departmental lead chief petty officer, Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Latorya Armstrong, from Gates County, North Carolina. "As far as recession, once your gums are gone, they're gone! Be gentle with them."

Brushing your teeth is important, but it's not the only thing you should be considering in your oral hygiene routine.

"Brush your tongue," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd

Class Malacia Ashford, from Columbia, South Carolina, a dental technician aboard the Ford. "One of the main causes of bad breath comes from bacteria and residue left on your tongue."



If you are a coffee drinker or have a sweet tooth, there is a simple way to help protect your teeth.

"Drinking water right after eating or drinking sugary substances or staining beverages such as coffee or tea helps to remove the sugar from sitting on your teeth, which could lead to cavities," said Ashford. "It also helps prevent staining on your teeth."

Taking care of not only teeth but oral hygiene as a whole is not only significant to health but also in presentation to others.

"The first thing I notice about a person is their smile," said Armstrong. "Knowing that I can make a difference brings me joy."

A little extra effort put into good oral hygiene practices goes a long way in maintaining the integrity of your teeth and gums, which makes for a happier, healthier YOU, according to Armstrong.

"We are here to help Sailors maintain mission readiness and bright smiles," said Armstrong. "You can't fight if you can't bite!"

"Dental procedures aren't something I really enjoy going through, but the positive and compassionate manner of the dental Sailors makes the experience more comfortable," said Cmdr. Doug Ivanac, from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, ship's navigator and dental patient. "Dental is an amazing department."

For more information about the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), visit <https://www.airlant.usff.navy.mil/cvn78/> and follow along on Facebook: @USS-GeraldRFord, Instagram: @cvn78\_grford, Twitter: @Warship\_78, DVIDS [www.dvids.net/CVN78](http://www.dvids.net/CVN78) and LinkedIn at USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78).

# 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

ENS Mackenzie Culver

### DEPARTMENT LCPO

MCCS Ryan Wilber

### PRODUCTION LCPO

MCC Gary Prill

### DEPARTMENT LPO

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### PRODUCTION LPO

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MC3 Trinita Lersch

MC2 Jacob Mattingly

MC3 Grace Lyles

MC2 Jennifer Newsome

MC3 Simon Pike

## 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

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## THIS MONTH IN NAVAL HISTORY

### April 1, 1893

Navy General Order 409 establishes the rate of Chief Petty Officer.

### April 4, 1949

The North Atlantic Treaty is signed in Washington, D.C., establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The treaty promotes peace, stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area with a collective defense effort.

### April 16, 1947

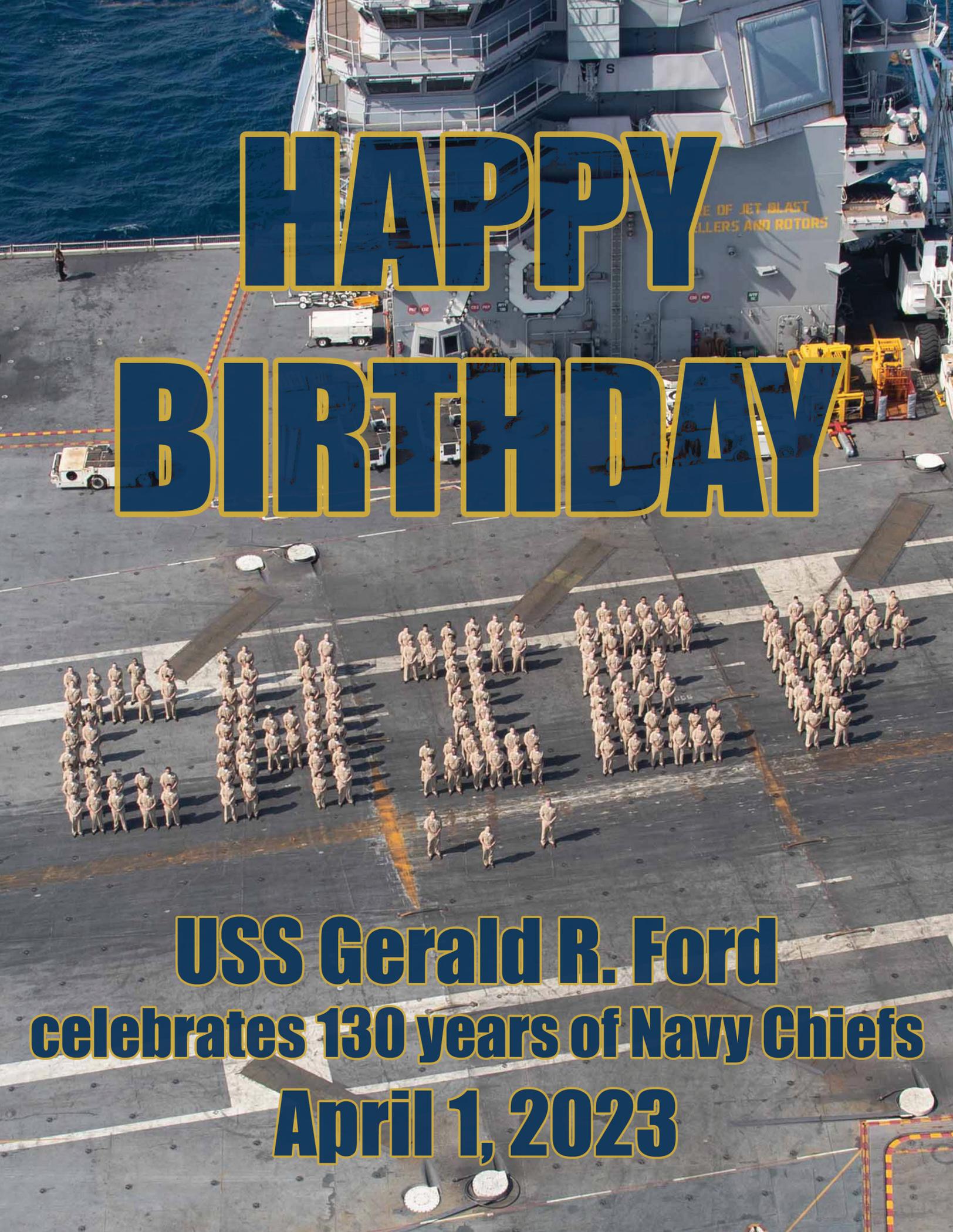
Congress passes Army-Navy Nurses Act, giving Navy Nurse Corps members commissioned rank.

### April 30, 1798

Congress establishes the Department of the Navy as a separate cabinet department. Previously, naval matters were under the cognizance of the War Department. Benjamin Stoddert is named as the first Secretary of the Navy.

## BACK COVER GRAPHIC

A graphic celebrating the 130th anniversary of Navy Chief Petty Officers aboard the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), April 1, 2023.  
Graphic Illustration by MC2 Adonica Muñoz

An aerial photograph of the deck of the USS Gerald R. Ford. The deck is dark grey with white and yellow markings. In the upper portion, there are various pieces of equipment, including a white van and a yellow forklift. A sign on the side of the ship reads "AREA OF JET BLAST HAZARD FOR ALLIERS AND ROTORS". In the lower portion, a large group of crew members in tan uniforms are standing in a grid-like formation on the deck. The ocean is visible in the top left corner.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

**USS Gerald R. Ford  
celebrates 130 years of Navy Chiefs  
April 1, 2023**