

THE WOLVERINE

MAY 2023

FORD WELCOMES NEW CO

CAPTAIN RICHARD BURGESS RELIEVED CAPTAIN PAUL LANZILOTTA IN A CEREMONY ONBOARD

THE MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

COMMEMORATING AND CELEBRATING THE CHILDREN WHO GROW UP IN MILITARY FAMILIES

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH INSIDE!



THE WOLVERINE

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FRONT COVER PHOTO

Capt. Paul J. Lanzilotta and Rear Adm. Gregory Huffman, commander Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12 speak to Capt. Richard Burgess commanding officer of the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) during a change of command ceremony in the ship's hangar bay, April 24, 2023.

Photo by MC2 Jacob Mattingly

FORD COMMEMORATES THE MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Story by Gerald R. Ford Public Affairs

I remember it like it was yesterday, living in Fairfield, California. Though this was in the day of pagers and landlines; no smart phones searched the internet, or tablets that instantly fed you the news as it was happening.

I woke up for school like I would any other Tuesday. As I got my things together, I didn't have any idea what horrors the day would bring.

I left for

school and soon arrived at my first class. My teacher turned on the class television just after the initial reports of the first plane hitting the World Trade Center.

In that moment I knew the world had changed.

For many people that day, the world as they knew it would forever be different, the U.S. entered into a war that the country would fight for the next 10 years. Even though we were on completely different sides of the country, my sister and I both

knew our immediate world would be impacted. This wasn't the first time I had helped my father pack his bags for a deployment. Our father was gone a lot; sometimes a few weeks and other times for months.

Children across the world dealt with the same struggle as my sister and I. The children of Sailors, Marines, airmen and soldiers have watched as their mother or father packed for a deployment, not knowing how long they would be gone, or if they would make it back.

"My father served in the Navy, he was a Chief Machinist Mate," said Lt. Ian Loomis,

one of first-in-class aircraft carrier

USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) shooters. "He was gone a lot, and eventually he decided to 'geo-bach' (geographical bachelor), in order to give us more stability."

For the month of April we celebrate those brave children, the ones who share the experiences of growing up with parents who miss birthdays, holidays, sporting events and graduations in support of their country.

"My father's service instilled a desire to serve in me," said Loomis. "Even though the times he was gone was difficult for my family, he taught me that I could still serve my country and balance a family at the same time."

This year marks the 36th anniversary of the Month of the Military Child, a program started by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who established the Defense Department commemoration in 1986.

USS Gerald R. Ford Holds Change of Command

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brian Glunt

In a time-honored naval tradition, the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) held a change of command ceremony aboard the ship in port Naval Station Norfolk, April 24.

Capt. Rick Burgess relieved Capt. Paul Lanzilotta and assumed duties as the commanding officer of USS Gerald R. Ford in a ceremony attended by Navy leadership, family, friends and crew.

During the ceremony, Lanzilotta thanked the crew for their hard work, dedication and service to their country during his time as commanding officer.

“To the crew of this mighty warship, nothing can compare to

the appreciation and admiration that I have for what you do every single day. Your dedication to each other and your contagious enthusiasm for our mission sets the bar for the waterfront and for every warship in the Navy. You are the finest Sailors on the planet and I will forever have a soft spot for each and every one of you,” said Lanzilotta.

Lanzilotta, a native of Long Island, New York and graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, became USS Gerald R. Ford’s fourth Commanding Officer after assuming command in February 2021. He led Ford through the completion of post-delivery test and trials (PDT&T), the first full ship shock trials for an aircraft carrier since 1986, the ship’s first planned incremental availability (PIA) completed on-time, strike group and air wing integration, and completed the ship’s first deployment in the U.S. 2nd Fleet and U.S. 6th Fleet areas of responsibility in fall 2022.

Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, Commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12, served as the event’s guest speaker and remarked on how Lanzilotta’s leadership over the last two years have enabled the ship and the crew to be ready for operational deployment in 2023.

“Captain Lanzilotta’s leadership and dedication to the Ford crew over the last two-plus years have been truly inspiring to see,” said Huffman. “Capt. Lanzilotta built a culture of success with the Sailors of this mighty warship and molded a Ford team trained, ready and certified for combat deployment. His commitment delivered the many advancements that the Ford-class aircraft carriers bring to our national defense and 21st century naval aviation.”

After reading his orders, Lanzilotta thanked his wife and children for their support and announced that he will report to Naval Air Force Atlantic for duties as directed by the commander.





“It is an honor to join the team as commanding officer of USS Gerald R. Ford, the Navy’s most advanced aircraft carrier,” said Burgess. “I am humbled for the opportunity to work alongside and sail with such an accomplished crew and demonstrate to the world what Ford-class aircraft carriers bring to the fight during our upcoming deployment.”

Burgess reported to Ford during the ship’s final deployment certification exercise, Composite Training Unit Exercise, which demonstrated and certified

CSG 12 as a combat-ready naval force capable of conducting the full spectrum of integrated maritime, joint, and combined operations.

Burgess commanded VFA-103, The Jolly Rogers, from July 2013 to November 2014; served as Executive Officer of USS George H. W. Bush (CVN 77) from June 2019 to December 2020; and commanded the nation’s first Expeditionary Sea Base, USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), from May 2021 to August 2022.



GERALD R. FORD CARRIER STRIKE

By Carrier Strike Group 4 And 12 Public Affairs



The Sailors, ships, squadrons and staffs of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (GRFCSG) successfully completed composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX), April 2, 2023.

COMPTUEX, orchestrated by the Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 4, is a certification exercise conducted during the integrated phase of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan.

“Throughout COMPTUEX, the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group team demonstrated a learning mindset and focused on continuous improvement,” said Rear Adm. Jeffrey “Caesar” Czerewko, commander, CSG-4. “I am confident that this strike group is adaptable, capable and lethal. My staff coaches, mentors, trains and assesses across every mission area and we leveraged the capabilities of the live, virtual, constructive infrastructure to put the CSG-12 team into an intense and realistic month-long scenario. This was the first COMPTUEX assessment with a Ford-class nuclear powered aircraft carrier and this impressive group set the bar high for future ships of the class.”

The GRFCSG includes the staffs of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8 and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 2. Participating units include Ford-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), Ticonderoga-class guided-

missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60), and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Ramage (DDG 61), USS McPaul (DDG 74) and USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116). CVW-8 squadrons include the “Black Lions” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 213, the “Tomcatters” of VFA-31, the “Ragin’ Bulls” of VFA-37 and the “Golden Warriors” of VFA-87; Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 142; the “Bear Aces” of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 124; the “Rawhides” of Fleet Logistics Squadron VRC-40; the “Spartans” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 70; and the “Tridents” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9.

COMPTUEX is designed to fully integrate the GRFCSG, under the command of CSG 12, as a cohesive, multi-mission fighting force and test the strike group’s ability to carry out sustained combat operations from the sea. COMPTUEX lasts several weeks, during which units are tested on their proficiency and readiness through scenario-based, live training, that increases in complexity and intensity.

The exercise allowed the ships, aircraft, and staffs to work together in response to specific scenarios across all warfare areas, and to refine their ability to communicate and fight alongside one another in a realistic training environment that included academic, synthetic and live training events.





THE STRIKE GROUP COMPLETES COMPTUEX

“COMPTUEX served as a doctorate-level test of the strike group’s ability to operate collectively across the spectrum of warfare areas while incorporating the first in class Gerald R. Ford into the strike group,” said Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, Commander, CSG-12. “The robust scenarios challenged every facet of our warfighting capability, enabling growth and learning at every level, allowing us to further refine our warfare tactics and processes. The exercise solidified our already-cohesive strike group, and I’m extremely proud of the team’s determination and eagerness to constantly learn and improve in the most demanding situations. Our readiness is the highest it has ever been, and I feel fortunate for the opportunity to deploy with this amazing team.”

The strike group also conducted the sixth iteration of NATO training in COMPTUEX (formerly referred to as the NATO vignette), in a scenario developed by CSG-4 and Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Center of Excellence (CJOS-COE).

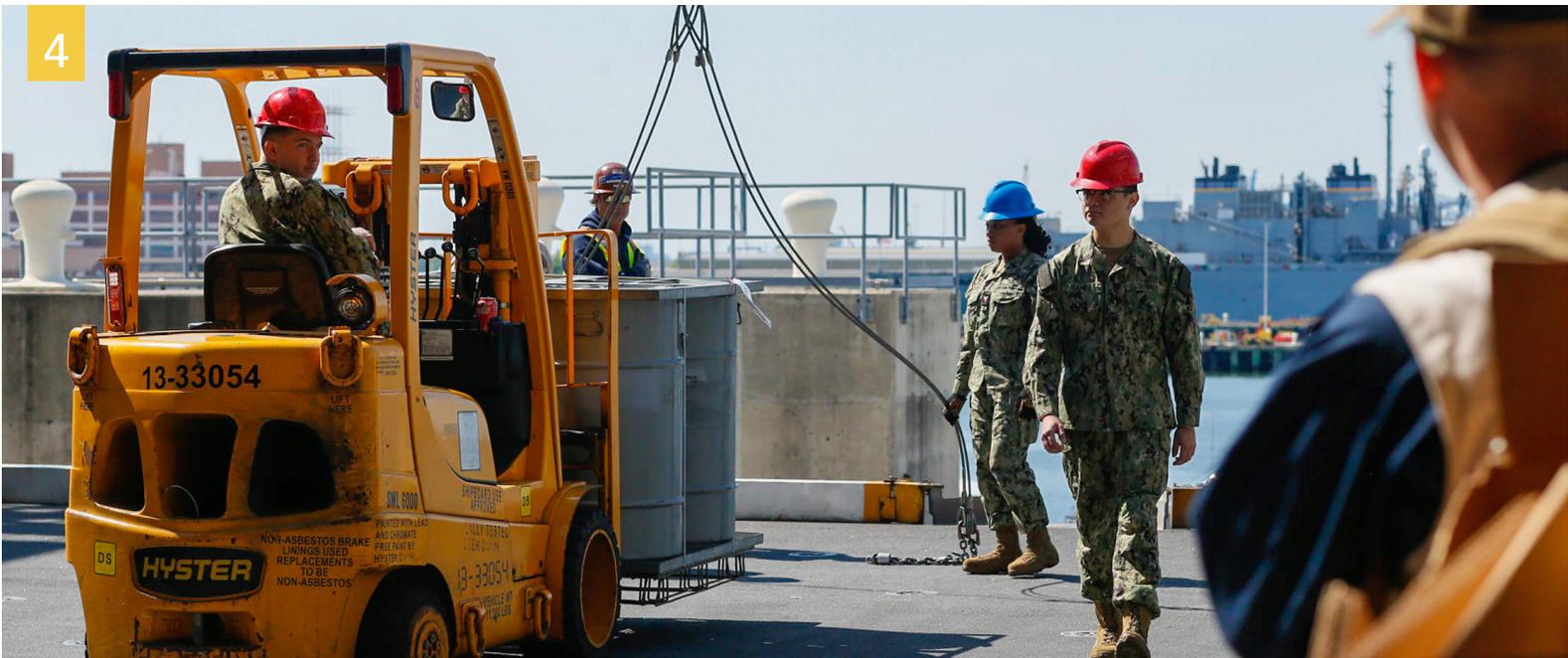
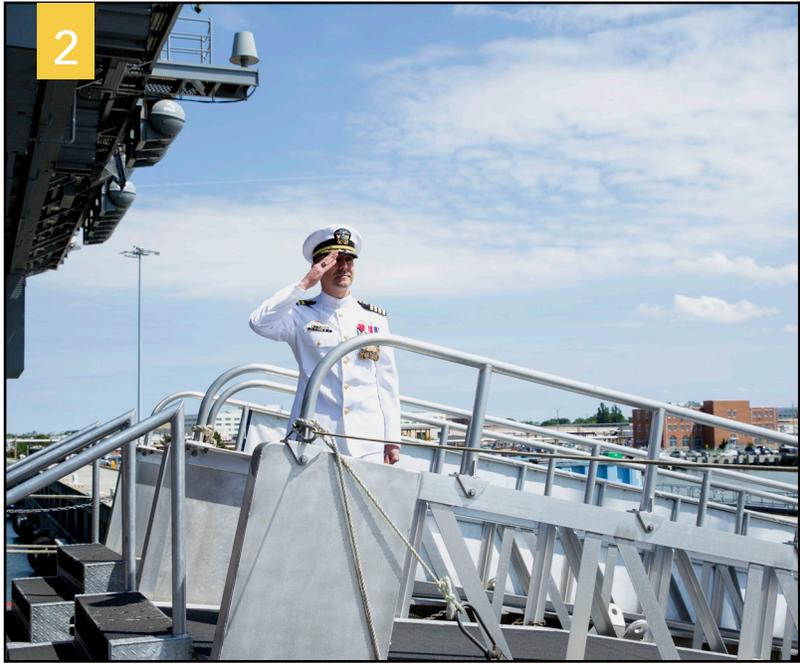
“COMPTUEX validated the strike group’s NATO interoperability, assuring our Allies and partners that the FORD Carrier Strike Group is ready to operate under either US or NATO command structure as the situation requires,” said Vice Adm. Daniel Dwyer, commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet and Joint Force Command Norfolk. “Ford completing

COMPTUEX leads the way for a global deployment and continued integration with NATO. The Alliance is stronger than ever, and any opportunity for our forces to train and exercise together under a single command structure increases our ability to effectively defend the Alliance as a single unified force.”

The GRFCSG team rehearsed a transfer of authority (TOA) of command and control between a notional higher headquarters, led by CSG-4, and Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO), NATO’s rapidly deployable joint headquarters in Portugal. The strike group used NATO reporting procedures, messaging formats and chat capabilities, reinforcing command and control and aligning communications channels to ensure a seamless process in the event of a crisis. NATO operations in COMPTUEX also support the development of interoperability requirements for future force generation and improve allied maritime command and control linkages that are vital in all phases of warfare.

Gerald R. Ford provides the national command authority flexible, tailorable warfighting capability as the flagship of a carrier strike group that maintains maritime stability and security to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied and partner interests.





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PHOTOS OF THE MONTH

MARCH 2023

1. Sailors parade the colors in the hangar bay during the ship's change of command ceremony, April 24, 2023, at which Capt. Richard Burgess relieved Capt. Paul J. Lanzilotta as the commanding officer.

(Photo by MC2 Jacob Mattingly)

2. Capt. Paul J. Lanzilotta salutes Ford's ensign after a change of command ceremony, April 24, 2023. During the ceremony, Capt. Paul J. Lanzilotta was relieved by Capt. Richard Burgess as Ford's commanding officer.

(Photo by MC3 Trinita Lersch)

3. AZ2 Daniel Fuller, from Chandler, Arizona, assigned to air department, pets a service dog from Mutts with a Mission in the hangar bay, April 19, 2023.

(Photo by MC3 Aaron Arroyo)

4. Sailors transport oncoming equipment during an ammunition onload, April 26, 2023.

(Photo by MCSA Tristan Richardson)

5. Sailors assigned to deck department handle mooring lines on the ship's fantail, April 02, 2023.

(Photo by MC2 Jennifer Newsome)

6. Capt. Paul J. Lanzilotta launches his boots off the flight deck, April 1, 2023.

(Photo by MC2 Jennifer Newsome)

7. Sailors spray down the ship's flight deck during a washdown, April 1, 2023.

(Photo by MC3 Grace Lyles)

6



7



THE BARBER - RSSN I



The United States military holds a high standard for appearance. Public appearance is keen to the military and grooming standards are put in place to establish good order and discipline. The saying “perception is reality” goes a long way and one detail to prove that saying can be as simple as a fresh haircut.

Retail services specialists hold many responsibilities on an aircraft carrier, one of which is running the barber shop and keeping Sailors within grooming standards.

EDWIN ALBERTO CRUZ

Retail Services Specialist Seaman Edwin Alberto Cruz, from Cayey, Puerto Rico, assigned to the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) supply department, helps uphold the Navy's professional appearance even while underway.

Every Sailor in the Navy comes from a very different background and all have unique stories. Cruz's background and prior experiences only adds to the Navy's diversity and builds a stronger cohesiveness.

Cruz lived in Puerto Rico for 25 years before enlisting in the Navy and reporting to USS Gerald R. Ford. He did not have a formal education in cosmetology however, he taught himself with the resources available.

"I started at my house cutting my brother and his friend's hair. I mostly learned on YouTube and cutting my own

hair," said Cruz. "As soon as I started cutting hair here, everybody liked it and came in through here asking for me."

Cruz has come a long way in his field since reporting aboard Ford, but not just in cutting hair. English is not his first language. In fact Cruz started learning English when he went to Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois.

"My first day in boot camp I spoke no English. So, I had to make friends who spoke both languages to translate for me," said Cruz. "It was kind of hard because I lived in Puerto Rico for 25 years, so that was my first time speaking English. I think I'm doing well. I'm still learning and it's a hard process."

Through his experience and training aboard Ford, he has become a go-to barber. His dedication leaves an impression on his clients that extends throughout the ship.

"I like everyone sitting in my chair to walk off with a smile and good haircut," said Cruz. "I always tell my friends, be presentable and humble. Have a good haircut, shiny boots and pressed coveralls. Smile no matter what, even if you are having a bad day."

Cruz's standards for appearance and attitude reflects highly on the Navy's overall outlook. Values such as his build a more professional and strong Navy.

"I love this barbershop. I think this is one of the best spaces on the ship," said Cruz.

Cruz's drive and success are not the only reasons he joined the Navy and continues to serve.

"My wife, my daughter, I do this for them," said Cruz. "They mean everything to me."

Photo and Graphic by MC2 Jackson Adkins

Below the Mess Decks with the Culinary Specialists

Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Grace Lyles

Sailors assigned to the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) supply department work hard to manage all of the food used to feed the crew in the ship's dry storages, freezers and refrigerators.

Up to nine decks beneath Ford's galleys, Culinary Specialists stock, take inventory and manage the supply department's food cargo. A crew of just 20 Sailors manage the food in each freezer, refrigerator and dry storage space in order to provide the ship's crew, approximately 4,500 Sailors, with about 14,000 meals a day.



"Our day-to-day job is to make sure the food gets to the galleys," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class Jamail Trahan, cargo division leading petty officer, from Beaumont, Texas, assigned to Ford's supply department. "Right now, every day, we bring up at least \$7,000 worth of food to each galley."

The ship's food storage holds enough cargo to feed the whole crew for at least four weeks. A replenishment-at-sea, also called a RAS, occurs about every two weeks to ensure the food remains fully stocked. According to Trahan, RAS days are the hardest ones in cargo. With large amounts of food coming in, it is crucial to receive help from the rest of the ship. During RAS, about 100 Sailors from various departments assist in organizing and loading food cargo onto Ford's elevators and down into the freezers, refrigerators and dry storage spaces.



Every piece of food on the ship must be accounted for on the administrative side of cargo. Even the smallest items must be properly inventoried to maintain accountability.

"It's exactly like a restaurant. We operate like a big business," explained Trahan. "It's a daily grind. It's not just what you see on the surface. There's a lot that has to get done, just for you to get that plate, and that chicken or whatever we're serving that day."

While underway, the cargo crew works during meal hours. This is because daytime traffic can make it difficult to move food from one end of the ship to the other. Despite this, Trahan says

one benefit of working in cargo is the relaxed atmosphere and the sense of pride derived from feeding the ship's crew.

"Our satisfaction is seeing everybody enjoying that meal and knowing that every piece of food on this ship was touched by our cargo team," said Trahan. "We got it all to the galley. That's probably the most enjoyable part for me."



USS GERALD R. FORD HONORS

MEMORIAL DAY

MAY 29TH 2023



THE WOLVERINE

USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78)

MEET THE TRIAD

COMMANDING OFFICER

CAPT Rick Burgess

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

MC1 William Spears

PRODUCTION LPO

MC2 Brian Glunt

EDITOR

MC2 Adonica Muñoz

STAFF

MCC Julie Matyascik

MC1 David Kolmel

MC2 Jackson Adkins

MC2 Jacob Mattingly

MC2 Jennifer Newsome

MC2 Nolan Pennington

MC3 Aaron Arroyo

MC3 Manvir Gill

MC3 Triniti Lersch

MC3 Grace Lyles

MC3 Simon Pike

MCSN Tristan Richardson

MCSN Maxwell Orlosky

FOR MORE CONTENT:

Want to see more about USS Gerald R. Ford?

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



@cvn78_grford



@Warship_78



@USSGeraldRFord



USS Gerald R. Ford CVN 78

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THIS MONTH IN NAVAL HISTORY

May 1, 1822

Sixty men from USS Alligator, USS Grampus, and the chartered ship Jane, capture four pirate schooners near Sugar Key, West Indies.

May 6, 1945

USS Farquhar (DE 139) sinks the last German submarine, U 881, in the North Atlantic.

May 13, 1908

The Navy Nurse Corps is established by Public Law No. 115, though nurses have been volunteering onboard Navy ships prior to the Civil War.

May 29, 1781

During the American Revolution, the Continental frigate Alliance, under command of Capt. John Barry, battles HMS Atalanta and HMS Trepassy off Nova Scotia. After several broadsides by Alliance, the British ships surrender.

BACK COVER GRAPHIC

A graphic commemorating Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.
Graphic Illustration provided by Multi Cultural Heritage Committee

A stylized graphic of a hand in shades of blue and purple, appearing to hold or support the text from above.

ASIAN
AMERICAN

AND PACIFIC
ISLANDER

HERITAGE MONTH

Decorative abstract shapes in orange and blue at the bottom of the page, including a large orange semi-circle and smaller blue and orange dots.