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12
ISSUE

WMD

JUL.01



IT'S TIME TO MAKE OUR MARK

2025

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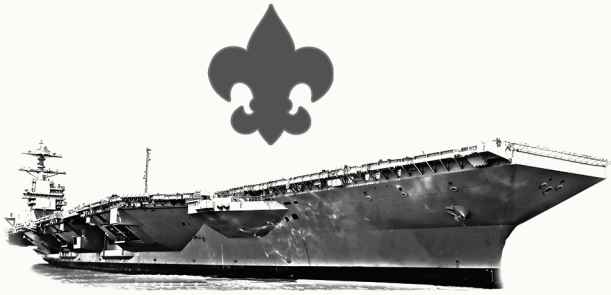
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GRFCSG25

Gerald R. Ford

For immediate release
Contact: Ford Media
5307

ATLANTIC OCEAN (June 24, 2025) - The following statement was released today by USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78), through her executive officer and second in command CAPT Christopher Williams, Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group 2025 (GRFCSG25), deterring threats around the globe, in response to questions about her 2nd deployment:

“We’re back.”

- 30 -

GERALD R FORD

CARRIER
STRIKE GROUP
LEADERSHIP



CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE

Commander: RDML Paul Lanzilotta
Chief of Staff: CAPT Matthew Lambert
Command Master Chief: CMDCM Damiean Williams

USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78)

Commanding Officer: CAPT David Skarosi
Executive Officer: CAPT Christopher Williams
Command Master Chief: CMDCM Michael Smith

CARRIER AIR WING 8 STAFF

Commander: CAPT David Dartez
Deputy Commander: CAPT Jacob Rose
Command Master Chief: CMDCM Johnny Stewart

CARRIER AIR WING 8 SQUADRONS

STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON (VFA) 37 / "Ragin' Bulls"
STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON (VFA) 213 / "Blacklions"
STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON (VFA) 31 / "Tomcatters"
STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON (VFA) 87 / "Golden Warriors"
ELECTRONIC ATTACK SQUADRON (VAQ) 142 / "Gray Wolves"
AIRBORNE COMMAND AND CONTROL SQUADRON (VAW) 124 / "Bear Aces"
HELICOPTER SEA COMBAT SQUADRON (HSC) 9 / "Tridents"
HELICOPTER MARITIME STRIKE SQUADRON (HSM) 70 / "Spartans"
FLEET LOGISTICS SUPPORT SQUADRON (VRC) 40 / "Rawhides"

INFORMATION WARFARE

Commander: CAPT David Marino

DESTROYER SQUADRON TWO STAFF

Commodore: CAPT Mark Lawrence
Deputy Commodore: CAPT Christopher Forch
Command Master Chief: CMDCM James Hayes III

DESRON-2

USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)
USS MAHAN (DDG 72)
USS BAINBRIDGE (DDG 96)
USS FORREST SHERMAN (DDG 98)

USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81)

Commanding Officer: CAPT Judson Mallory
Executive Officer: CDR Rory Larson
Command Master Chief: CMDCM Jacelyne Augustin





CVN78

Capt. David Skarosi, commanding officer of USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), answers questions at a press conference on Naval Station Norfolk before departing for a scheduled deployment. **PHOTO BY MC3 ALEX CASCO**

Senior Chief Logistics Specialist Adonis Quickordonez, assigned to the Supply Department aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) observes colors on the flight deck as the ship prepares to depart for a scheduled deployment.

PHOTO BY MCSN PAIGE BROWN



Sailors man the rails aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) as the ship departs for a scheduled deployment **PHOTO BY MC2 MARIANO LOPEZ**

INSTANT REPLAY



Sailors assigned to Deck Department aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) handle a mooring line on the fantail as the ship departs Naval Station Norfolk for a scheduled deployment. **PHOTO BY MC2 TAJH PAYNE**



Sailors assigned to USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) heave a line in the foc'sle during sea and anchor detail as the ship departs for a scheduled deployment **PHOTO BY MC3 ALEX CASCO**



Sailors assigned to USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) heave a line in the foc'sle during sea and anchor detail as the ship departs for a scheduled deployment. **PHOTO BY MC3 ALEX CASCO**

DECK

Sailors assigned to Deck Department aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), participate in a man overboard drill. **PHOTO BY MCSN JARROD BURY**



A Carrier Air Wing 8 MH-60S Sea Hawk attached to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 9 conducts a vertical replenishment between the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), and Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77).

PHOTO BY MC2 MAXWELL ORLOSKY



Sailors assigned to Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) connect cargo to a Carrier Air Wing 8 MH-60S Sea Hawk attached to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 9 during a vertical replenishment with USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78).

PHOTO BY MC2 MAXWELL ORLOSKY

THE TIME

Capt. David Dartez, Commander, Carrier Air Wing 8, disembarks an F/A-18E Super Hornet attached to Strike Fighter Squadron 87, after landing aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78). **PHOTO BY MC2 JACOB MATTINGLY**



IS NOW.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate Airman (Fuel) Tanner Letterman, assigned to Air Department aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), removes a fuel hose connector from a Carrier Air Wing 8 E/A-18G Growler attached to Electronic Attack Squadron 142, on the flight deck during routine flight operations.

PHOTO BY MC3 JIMI BALISAGE



Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Izak Foster, assigned to Weapons Department aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), observes a Carrier Air Wing 8 MH-60S Sea Hawk during a munitions transfer on the flight deck. **PHOTO BY MC2 TAJH PAYNE**

★
▶ **MORE HIGHLIGHTS** ★



Steel, Salt, & the Start of Deployment

By: MC2 Jacob Mattingly

Before the sun has fully crested the horizon, the mighty hull of USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN) 78 creaks against Pier 11 for the last time in a long time. Deckhands coil lines. Engines growl to life deep within the ship's core. Above deck, Sailors in crisp white uniforms cast shadows across the nonskid as they man the rails looking out across Naval Station Norfolk one more time.

The deployment marks another major milestone for the Gerald R. Ford Strike Group as it heads across the Atlantic in support of maritime security, deterrence, and regional stability across key theatres.

"I am a bit nervous and really excited to deploy," said Air Traffic Controlman 2nd Class Gabriella Hernandez, one of Gerald R. Ford's first-time deployers. "It definitely doesn't feel like it's actually happening, it just sort of feels like a normal underway. But this is what I signed up to do. I want to see the world and experience everything I can while I'm active duty in the Navy."

For many Sailors aboard Gerald R. Ford, this will be their first time deploying. There's a nervous excitement in the air as new opportunities reveal themselves, but the ache of bidding farewell to loved ones is still fresh.

"It was really hard to say goodbye to my family back home," Hernandez said. "But they understand this is important to me. They're proud of me, and I know I'll come back with stories I wouldn't get anywhere else."

For all the youth and inexperience, there's even more knowledge and confidence from senior Sailors who have dedicated their lives to this work. Together, they make possible this and future deployments.

"For many of our Sailors, this is their first deployment," said Gerald R. Ford's Command Master Chief Mike Smith. "It's an opportunity for them to take what they've learned in training and apply it under real-world conditions, alongside allies and partners. That kind of growth is what shapes great Sailors and great teams."

It's in those moments of shared challenge that each department works in sync to accomplish a common goal. The long hours and hard work build unity and solidarity.

"There's something powerful about seeing our Sailors out there, because we've worked hard to get here," said Smith. "From day one in the summer of 2024, they're trained to operate in these high tempo environments, and I have the utmost confidence that our team is well prepared to meet any challenge head on."

According to Smith, that level of readiness matters, especially when Sailors face long days, high operational tempo, and the relentless pace of life at sea.

"You're definitely in this with your shipmates," said Religious Programs Specialist 2nd Class Michael Day. "Yeah, it's hard, but remember, we're all in this together. Being out here and doing something real and important is what makes us a strong team."

As Gerald R. Ford heads over the horizon, the noise fades behind her, lines cast off, rails clear, and Norfolk slowly shrinks in its wake. What lies ahead is uncertain and won't be easy, but that's what makes it worthwhile.

For the Sailors aboard, this isn't just a movement on a map. It's the beginning of something bigger.

This is more than just a deployment.

This is the journey.

And it's just getting started.

A silhouette of a firefighter in full protective gear, including a helmet with a visor and a radio. The firefighter is shown from the chest up, facing slightly to the left. The background is a solid red color with a faint, large Maltese cross watermark in the center. The text "It's only getting hotter." is written in a large, white, sans-serif font at the top of the image.

It's only getting hotter.

HYDRATE!

There's only one way to reliably beat the heat, and that's to drink plenty of water. Monitoring your hydration throughout the day will prevent heat-related casualties, like heat stroke & fainting, and lead to increased mission efficiency.

A worker in a blue protective suit and mask is working on industrial machinery. The worker is wearing a blue jacket with 'HSE' on the sleeve, a white mask, and yellow gloves. They are holding a yellow tool. The background shows various industrial components like pipes and valves.

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KEEPING THINGS FLOWING...

**WHAT HTs
DEAL WITH
SO YOU DON'T
HAVE TO**

Story by MCSN Paige Brown

WHILE MOST OF THE CREW RESTS, HULL MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS (HTs) ABOARD USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78) REMAIN READY AROUND THE CLOCK. AT 0300, THEY RESPOND TO CRITICAL SANITATION ISSUES—CLOGGED PIPES, BROKEN VALVES, AND SYSTEM REPAIRS THAT DEMAND IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. WORKING IN TIGHT, HOT SPACES DEEP WITHIN THE SHIP, HTs KEEP VITAL SYSTEMS RUNNING SMOOTHLY, ENSURING THE CARRIER REMAINS MISSION-READY.

“There’s always someone who steps up, staying up late with no extra pay, to fix these problems,” said Hull Maintenance Technician Fireman Michael Thomas. “HTs spend hours unclogging systems and managing waste for more than 3,500 Sailors.”

The ship’s Vacuum Collection, Holding, and Transfer (VCHT) system manages sewage and wastewater using vacuum technology. Waste moves through pipes into holding tanks, then is pumped ashore or discharged at sea in accordance with environmental regulations. The system is essential to maintaining cleanliness and supporting daily operations.

“One challenge is calcium buildup inside the pipes, which only gets acid-flushed every 48 to 60 months,” said Chief Hull Maintenance Technician Joshua Maza.

Only human waste and ship-issued single-ply toilet paper are authorized for flushing, but foreign materials still find their way into the system, which, according to Maza, is why it’s so important to educate the crew about the system and its limitations.

“Sailors might not be aware that the waste doesn’t travel straight to the tank,” Maza explained. “It moves 4 to 6 feet with each flush. When a clog happens, we may have to flush an entire zone or open pipe sections to clear it.”

The job requires teamwork, technical skill, concerted effort, and a strong stomach, which is a lot to ask of anyone.

New HTs are trained in a wide range of skills. While welding is a key part of the job, maintaining sanitation systems is a major responsibility—especially on an aircraft carrier.

“My expectation was that I’d learn to weld and get good at it,” said Hull Maintenance Technician Fireman Makhi Redd. “The reality? I became a plumber first, worked hard to learn the VCHT system, and then improved my welding skills.”

These Sailors, like the VCHT system for which they’re responsible, are resilient—it takes more than a flushed belt buckle to stop them.

“We can get parts delivered by VERTREP, and we keep plenty of piping on board to replace sections if needed,” said Maza.

Hull Maintenance Technicians perform critical repairs and maintenance that keep the ship’s sanitation systems operational. Their extremely valuable contributions to the ship benefit the health and living conditions of the crew and helps maintain the readiness of USS Gerald R. Ford.

“IT’S CONSTANT WORK, AND SOMETIMES YOU’RE IN TIGHT, DIRTY SPACES,” SAID MAZA.

“WHAT HELPS IS THE PEOPLE IN THE SHOP. THEY RELY ON EACH OTHER LIKE FAMILY.”

UPCOMING EVENTS*

JULY 4: INDEPENDENCE DAY STEEL BEACH PICNIC



...AND NOW YOU KNOW.



*DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE



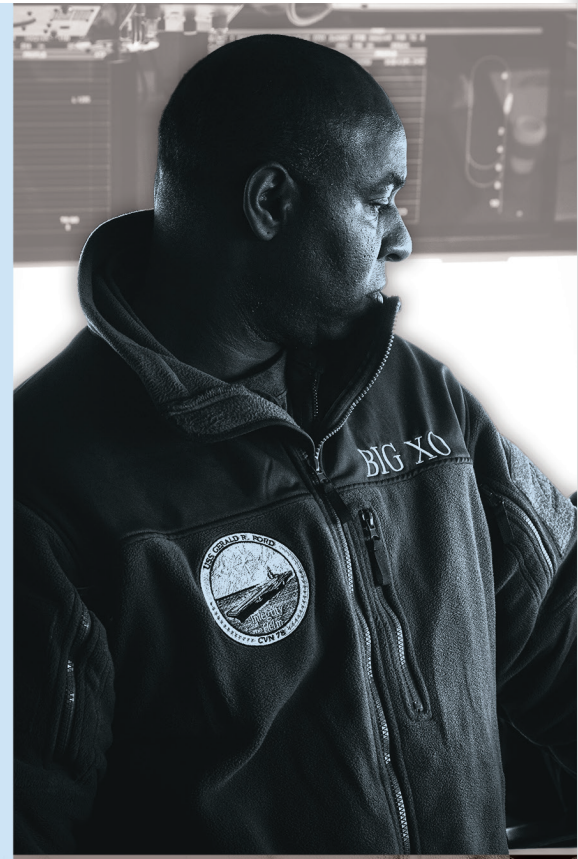
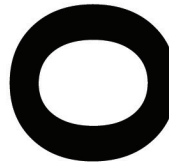
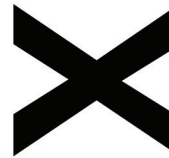
XO'S

PRIORITIES

1. System Grooming
2. Carrier Qualifications
3. TRANSLANT Preparations



Know Big XO's top 3 priorities.
Message brought to you by GERALD R. FORD
CARRIER STRIKE GROUP 2025 (GRFCSG25).
For further inquiries, consult your chain of command.



FOR MEDICAL: 7878 IS FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE | 211 IS FOR CASES OF DANGER TO LIFE, LIMB, OR EYESIGHT

SEE YOUR PHOTOS AT THIS CANES SHAREDRIIVE FILE PATH:

(((ALL HANDS ACCESS)))\1-Media\Photos\##MEDIA DAILY PHOTOS##

TUNE IN TO CHANNEL 212 FOR COMMON SPACE WALK-THROUGH TRAINING

USS GERALD R. FORD MEDIA DEPT. PRESENTS A MEDIA78 PRODUCTION **WWD MAGAZINE**

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