

APR.01

11  
ISSUE

WMP

APR.08

IN THEATER, BUT THIS AIN'T A MOVIE.

Forward Motion

3 Stripes.



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**PHOTO OF THE WEEK**

Two F/A-18E Super Hornets, attached to the "TOMCATTERS" of STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON 31 (VFA-31), fly over the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78), the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81), and the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) JAMES (WMSL 754).

**PHOTO BY MC2 MAXWELL ORLOSKY**





# KNOW YOUR C2



CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE, GERALD R. FORD CARRIER STRIKE GROUP is the command-and-control element of the Joint Force's most flexible, capable warfighting team. CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE delivers combat capability from seabed to space, while providing global maneuver capability to the national command authority. The staff plans and directs the actions of teams led by five commanders: USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78), CARRIER AIR WING (CVW) EIGHT, USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, DESTROYER SQUADRON (DESRON) TWO, and the INFORMATION WARFARE COMMANDER.



## USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78)

USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78) is the world's most capable, adaptable, and lethal platform. It delivers the Joint Force's global power projection through sustained operations at sea facilitated by nuclear power, advanced technology, and its greatest resource – U.S. Navy Sailors. The ship supports all elements of CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE's warfighting capability combined with unmatched sustainment and resilience due to onboard repair capacity.



## USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81)

The Arleigh-Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81) is the air and missile defense commander for CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE. The ship is the first East Coast guided-missile destroyer to deploy in this capacity as the Navy's cruiser fleet phases out. While maintaining all inherent multi-mission capability of a destroyer, WINSTON S. CHURCHILL coordinates air and missile defense across the strike group, leveraging a highly-capable Aegis weapons system.



## CARRIER AIR WING (CVW) EIGHT

CARRIER AIR WING (CVW) EIGHT is the strike warfare commander for CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE embarked aboard USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78). The air wing and its nine squadrons project tactical air power over sea and land, while providing robust command-and-control, electronic attack, air, surface, subsurface, logistical, and search-and-rescue capabilities.



## DESTROYER SQUADRON (DESRON) TWO

DESTROYER SQUADRON (DESRON) TWO is the sea combat commander for CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE embarked aboard USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78). In this role, they lead and coordinate surface warfare (SUW), anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and surface anti-submarine warfare (SuASW), while also fulfilling roles as the screen commander, mine warfare commander (MIWC), maritime interdiction operations coordinator (MIO), and helicopter element coordinator (HEC).



## INFORMATION WARFARE

CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE's assured command-and-control, integrated fires, and battlespace awareness capabilities are managed and fused through its INFORMATION WARFARE COMMANDER. The management of these capabilities and systems ensures the strike group command, fleet, and combatant commanders have a common operating picture while maintaining tactical advantage.



# WOLVERINES of the WEEK

## HM3 Aaron



HM3 Olivia Aaron, from Los Angeles, is a general duty corpsman who enjoys playing video games, cooking, and knitting. She wants to commission through the EMPD2 program, which would allow her to pursue medical school.

April 1, 2025

## ABFAN Mashburn



Chicago's very own ABFAN Isiah Mashburn joined the Navy to better his life compared to his previous situation. He was raised by his uncle and is set on his many goals, including continuing his education and getting married.

April 7, 2025

## CSSN Montanez



CSSN Onix Zamier Montanez is the flag galley cook on watch representing Caguas, Puerto Rico (and CSG-12). His best memory is eating authentic pizza in Italy with his fellow CSs, and in fact loves baking pizza of his own.

April 8, 2025



# CVN78

Sailors assigned to Air Department conduct routine operations on the flight deck. **PHOTO BY MCSN PAIGE BROWN**

LT Daniel Lindauer, assigned to the "TRIDENTS" of HELICOPTER SEA COMBAT SQUADRON 9 (HSC-9), approaches the flight deck of the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78) in an MH-60S Seahawk.

**PHOTO BY MC2 MAXWELL ORLOSKY**



Sailors assigned to the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78), secure equipment following a general quarters (GQ) drill in the hangar bay. **PHOTO BY MC3 TAJH PAYNE**

INSTANT REPLAY



Sailors assigned to the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78), don firefighting equipment during a general quarters (GQ) drill in the hangar bay. **PHOTO BY MCSN JIMI BALISAGE**



GMSN Adonis Morasco, assigned to Weapons Department, disassembles an M-4 service rifle in the ship's armory. **PHOTO BY MC2 JACOB MATTINGLY**



AOAN Jaylen Bethea, assigned to Weapons Department, inspects a trainer bomb in the ordnance magazine. **PHOTO BY MCSN ALEX CASCO**

# CVW8



The world's largest aircraft carrier, USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78), conducts a replenishment-at-sea (RAS) with the fast combat support ship USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6) in the Atlantic Ocean. **PHOTO BY MCC MIKE DIMESTICO**



Sailors assigned to the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78), respond to a simulated casualty during a general quarters (GQ) drill. **PHOTO BY MCSN HECTOR RODRIGUEZ**



CS3 Justin Vicente, assigned to Supply Department, logs supplies in the hangar bay during a replenishment-at-sea (RAS). **PHOTO BY MCSN ALEX CASCO**

# COMPTUEX



BMSA Trey Avery, assigned to Deck Department, lays down a line in the hangar bay during a replenishment-at-sea (RAS).  
**PHOTO BY MCSN PAIGE BROWN**



# THEATER

AO1 Kristen Brown, assigned to Weapons Department, helps move ordnance in the ship's weapons magazine. **PHOTO BY MC2 MAXWELL ORLOSKY**

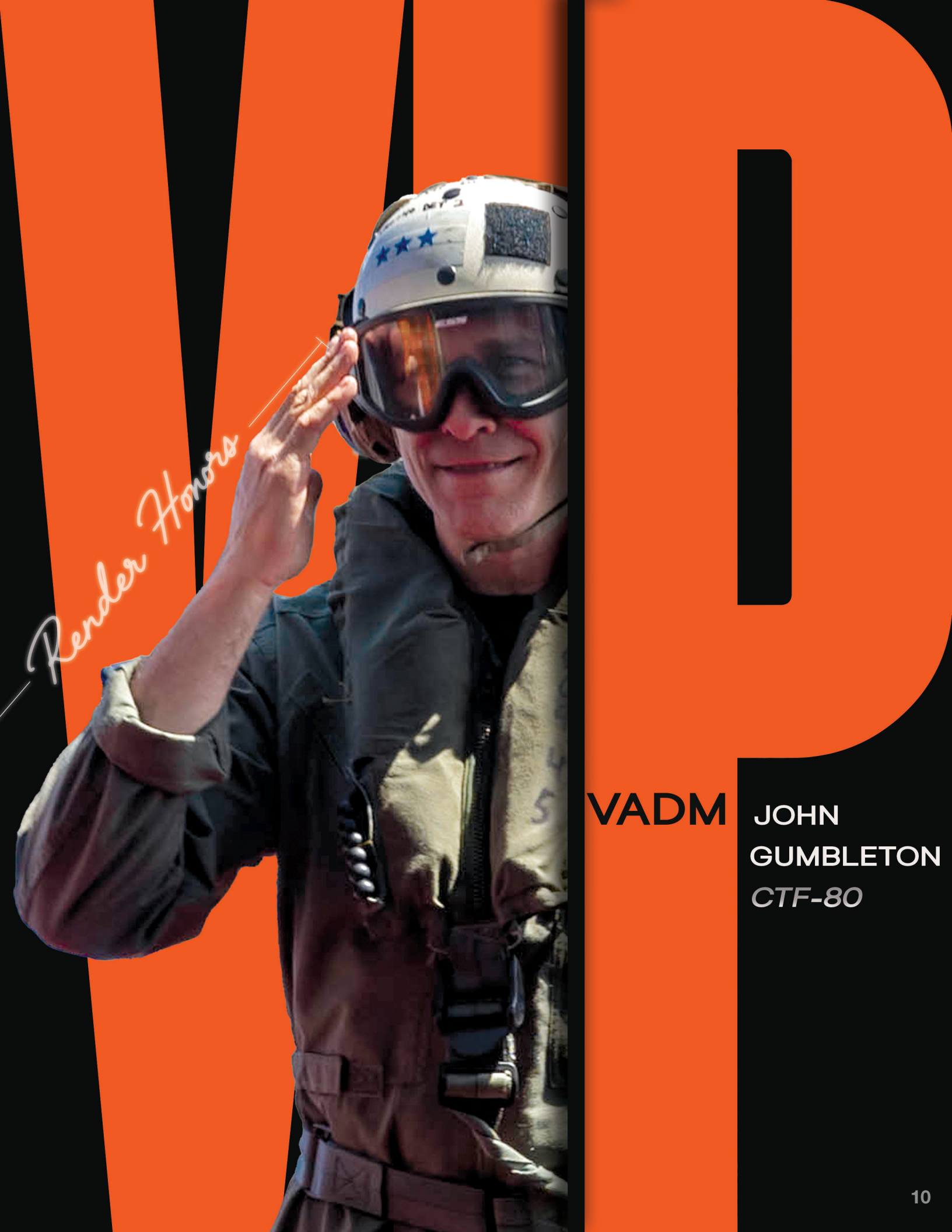


The Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS MAHAN (DDG 72) steams through the Atlantic Ocean.  
**PHOTO BY EM1 RYAN GREENWOOD**



▶ MORE HIGH LIGHTS





*Render Honors*

**VADM**

**JOHN  
GUMBLETON**  
*CTF-80*

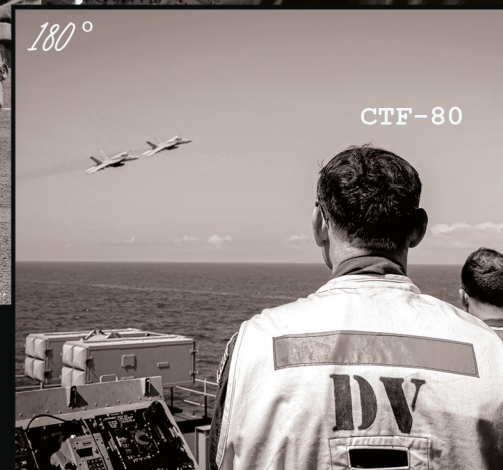


# COMPOSITE TRAINING UNIT EXERCISE

## "FLYBY"



**VADM John Gumbleton, Commander, TASK FORCE 80 (CTF-80), Deputy Commander, U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND (USFFC), met with the CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE (CSG-12) team aboard USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78) during COMPTUEX, Apr. 2.**



COMPTUEX is the Joint Force's most complex integrated training event and prepares naval task forces for sustained, high-end Joint and combined combat. In the months prior to the at-sea exercise, CSG-12 executed myriad integrated staff training and planning events including Fleet Synthetic Training that challenged its warfighting components to integrate as a unified force.

"The reality of warfighting today is that it requires collaborative efforts across all warfare domains and the Joint force," said RDML Paul Lanzilotta, Commander, CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE. "To see the amount our team has grown even within the first few weeks is significant, and it is imperative that we continue to learn, grow, and self-assess when we deploy."

COMPTUEX is led by CARRIER STRIKE GROUP FOUR (CSG-4), whose mission is to train, mentor, and assess integrated warfighting teams and independent deployers for global combat against peer competitors. CSG-4 uses Live Virtual Constructive (LVC) training to maximize time and resources while increasing the level of training provided. LVC enables the Navy and Joint Force to close high-end threat training gaps using synthetic tools while operating live tactical systems. LVC also enables the rapid exploration of new, multi-domain tactics through a near real-time, continuous feedback loop from deployed units.

Additionally, the exercise often provides opportunities to learn across services and areas of responsibility, and the GERALD R. FORD COMPTUEX is no different. For example, USS ROOSEVELT (DDG 80) from Forward Deployed Naval Forces — Europe, and USCGC JAMES (WMSL 754), are participating in the Ford's COMPTUEX.

"Exercises like COMPTUEX allow us to integrate with units across the strike group to build and develop relationships necessary for tactical excellence in all warfighting areas, said CAPT Rick Burgess, Commanding Officer, USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78). "My crew is eager to learn and understand the role we play in supporting each element of the strike group, and we are constantly assessing our performance to fine tune the capabilities of this incredible warfighting machine."



LOADING...

# COMPTUEX: ZERO DAY

## .....FOR THE NEXT MONTH, WE ARE AT WAR\_\_

Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) fully integrates CARRIER STRIKE GROUP TWELVE (CSG-12) as a cohesive, multi-mission fighting force to test the strike group's ability to carry out sustained combat operations. Knowing where we might go on deployment and what we'd be likely to find there, this is our last chance to practice before we play for keeps.

But how did we get here? COMPTUEX prep started the very day we returned from deployment. Since then, the clock was counting down until the time GERALD R. FORD Carrier Strike Group (GRFCSG) was back in the fight. The first step: get the equipment back in working order after a long mission, ASAP.

*"We learned a lot on our last deployment, and we took the opportunities during an extended maintenance phase to improve our software, our hardware, our procedures, and the way that we operate our equipment."*  
— FORD's Commanding Officer, CAPT Rick Burgess.

While the maintenance days may have felt long, the months were short in terms of the amount of time the Wolverines had to prepare. FORD completed a successful CIA (Carrier Incremental Availability) to accomplish the larger maintenance jobs like resurfacing the flight deck and repairing systems in the hangar bay, and upgrading equipment and spaces to make the ship both more effective and more habitable. *The next step: train the crew to use the ship to maximum effect.*

Knowing that most of the Wolverines from the previous deployment would move on before this next mission, passing on those lessons learned from deployment and getting new personnel spun up on FORD's unique systems and technology became a key strategic pillar for a successful work-up cycle.

Much of the credit for FORD's success in the simulated combat we're seeing today goes to those who mastered the ship before us.

"The easiest thing is doing what we know how to do, and the hardest thing is incorporating the people who aren't used to how we do things," said FC1 Trenton Cadwell. "We'll take insight from what other divisions and squadrons recommend and give them insight on what we recommend so we come to a middle ground and everything goes smoothly."



## .....FINALLY, THE ULTIMATE STEP: PUT IT ALL TO THE TEST\_\_

From the end of summer to this spring, FORD pulled in and out of port for various underways, spanning several days to several weeks in length. Whether we were alone or accompanied by guided-missile destroyers from Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 2, these mini-voyages served to try out our equipment and processes in the run-up to COMPTUEX.

Those tests included trapping more than 100 aircraft in a day for our Flight Deck Certification, recovering dummies from the middle of the ocean in a matter of minutes for a Search and Rescue qualification, and using Hollywood-esque special effects to simulate critical equipment casualties for the Total Ship Survivability Trial (TSST).





CONTINUE STORY?

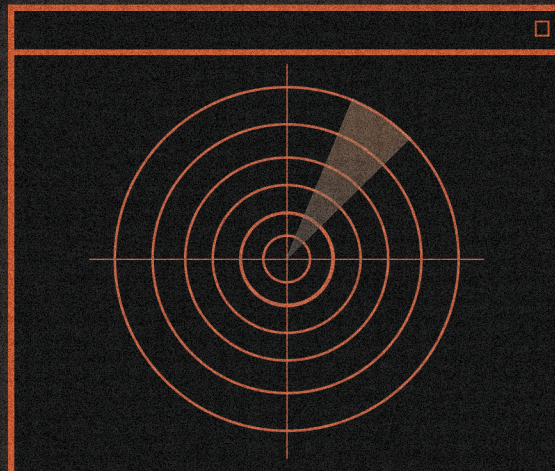
YES

NO



Needless to say, FORD conquered every step of the process. The crew demonstrated expert knowledge and capability, and accomplished increasingly difficult missions one after the other. To use a sports analogy, we advanced through the playoffs. Now we're in the Super Bowl.

"COMPTUEX is different from other Navy training exercises because its faster paced, so the exercises and training we've done beforehand come into play," said LT Samuel Perez, a communications officer assigned to the "Spartans" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 70. "The mission planning is quicker, and they expect us to know what we're doing quicker so that we're ready on deployment for the real thing."



COMPTUEX is an all-out battle. Like Battle Stations at boot camp and Hell Week at SEAL training, it is engineered to test mind, body, and character by replicating how the Sailors who preceded us fought and sacrificed, won and lost, survived and fell.

With cutting-edge training technology, every movement, every keystroke, every operation is monitored and recorded to evaluate efficiency. Scenarios are adapted in real time to poke at potential weaknesses and make scenarios more unpredictable and dynamic. Upon successful completion of COMPTUEX, a carrier strike group is considered ready to win in the most arduous combat the world can provide; certified for deployment.

This underway is already noticeably different from those previous. Department Heads and Senior Officers are randomly drilled on Level of Knowledge questions at their daily meetings to check for full awareness of the situation and mission. Other real ships, aircraft, and drones came from all over the Atlantic to pretend to be our enemies for the next month. PEDCON and EMCON statuses fluctuate as they would to keep us safe from enemies close by.

The free world is watching to see if the GRFCSG can defend it from adversaries that would do harm to us and our homeland. Our competitors are watching to see if they can get away with doing that harm on our watch.

The Navy considers this the most potent combat unit at its disposal, and expects nothing short of success from the caliber of Sailors and ships involved. Fortunately, this carrier strike group's greatest strength is its personnel.

*"I've met some incredible people on this ship, and being that our ship has won the prestigious Battenburg Cup Award for the entire fleet, I have the utmost faith that we will execute the mission and get the job done."*

*— AT1 Spencer Gardener.*

So, here we are.

.....COMPTUEX.

.....ZERO DAY.

.....ZERO ROOM FOR FAILURE.

.....GO GET SOME\_

LOADING DEPLOYMENT...



PLEASE WAIT, ENGAGING IN COMPTUEX...



USS GERALD R. FORD Cyber78 [Version 78.0.250403.0855]  
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BE ON THE ALERT! BE ON THE ALERT! BE ON THE ALERT!

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You are the first line of defense for protecting our network.

Do not wait for bad actors to enact their plans.

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!

If you receive a suspicious email or see suspicious activity on the  
network, alert cybersecurity IMMEDIATELY.

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—

WAITING.

WATCHING.





# 70

## SECNAV's Message

# 70



It is the honor and privilege of my lifetime to serve as 79th Secretary of the Navy. As I end my first week in office, I remain humbled by the extraordinary dedication and bravery you display every single day. Our Navy and Marine Corps stand unmatched today because of you, our people. Ships, aircraft, and advanced technology are crucial, but they are nothing without the Sailors and Marines who bring them to life. Your commitment, courage, and resilience makes our Navy and

Marine Corps the most lethal and vital force in America's arsenal. ADM William "Bull" Halsey once said, "There are no extraordinary men... just extraordinary circumstances that ordinary men are forced to deal with." Each day you prove yourselves more than capable of handling extraordinary circumstances. For this you have my utmost respect and admiration.

My priorities as your Secretary will always begin with you and your families. It is your sacrifice and talent that truly set our forces apart from every other military in the world. Caring for our Sailors and Marines means ensuring that you have everything you need to survive and thrive. It means providing the best family support, safe and comfortable housing, and fostering an environment where you feel valued and supported every day.

Ensuring you have the best weapons on Earth is a commitment I take very seriously. But weapons alone do not guarantee victory. They must be accompanied by unmatched, world-class training. Your dedication to constant training and self-improvement is what makes our Navy and Marine Corps feared around the globe. I pledge to make certain your training not only equips you to decisively defend our nation today but also prepares each of you to excel wherever your lives take you when you take off the uniform.

Revitalizing our shipbuilding and industrial base is crucial, and we will aggressively pursue improvements. We must build better ships and better aircraft, and put them under, on, and above the sea more quickly and more efficiently. Through responsible stewardship, disciplined budgeting, and robust oversight we will restore readiness, eliminate maintenance backlogs, and ensure every dollar contributes directly to mission success. We will also focus intensely on enhancing recruitment and retention so the Navy and Marine Corps remain the first choice of America's best and brightest.

ADM James Stockdale once mused about how he survived seven years as a prisoner of war, saying, "You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be." Today we will embody this wisdom. We will confront our challenges honestly, directly, and without hesitation, maintaining unwavering confidence in our ultimate success.

LGEN Victor H. Krulak, an innovative Marine leader, once declared, "Being ready is not what matters. What matters is winning after you get there." It is not enough to merely prepare. We must prevail. The days of risk aversion and hesitation are behind us. Change is coming. Together we will relentlessly pursue excellence and innovation. Your service, sacrifice, and devotion to duty inspire me every day, and I am committed to ensuring our Navy and Marine Corps remain the most formidable deterrent against anyone who seeks to threaten the American way of life. In the weeks ahead you will hear from me on how to provide feedback and help inform my readiness strategy.

You are the stewards of our proud naval tradition and the architects of our future. I pledge to support you in every possible way, ensuring that you have the resources, the tools, and the leadership necessary to uphold and advance this legacy of excellence.

Our adversaries must clearly understand that America's strength is unquestioned and unwavering. With a Navy and Marine Corps powered by Sailors and Marines who are cared for, respected, and fully supported, we will continue to achieve peace through undeniable strength. Thank you for your steadfast commitment, your service, and the sacrifices you and your families make daily. I am deeply honored and profoundly humbled to serve alongside you.

Together we will ensure our Navy and Marine Corps remain the greatest fighting force in the world.

*Semper Fortis, Semper Fidelis*

*From The  
Honorable  
John Phelan*





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## UPCOMING EVENTS\*

APRIL 10-11: SECNAV VISIT  
APRIL 15: AMMO ONLOAD  
APRIL 16: ET-10  
APRIL 17: RAS  
APRIL 19: RTHP  
APRIL 20: EASTER SUNDAY  
APRIL 26: FRIENDS AND FAMILY DAY CRUISE  
APRIL 27: POM1 BEGINS



...AND NOW YOU KNOW.

\*DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

MAKE XO'S PRIORITIES!  
YOUR PRIORITIES! COMPTUEX

ET-10

3M/INSURV PREPARATION

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

PAO LCDR RICKY RODRIGUEZ APAO LTJG IAN TUMULTY VPAO ENS JOHN PEARSON DPAO ENS GLENN FIELD  
DLCPD MCCS AMANDA DUNFORD PROD. LCPO MCC MIKE DIMESTICO DEPT. CHIEF MCC DAVID KOLMEL DEPT. LPO MC1 WESTON MOHR  
PROD. LPO MC1 RAYMOND MADDOCKS 1ST CLASS PETTY OFFICERS MC1 BRIAN GLUNT MC1 WILLIAM MCCANN  
PRODUCTION 2ND CLASS PETTY OFFICERS JACOB MATTINGLY TRINITY LERSCH MAXWELL ORLOSKY PRODUCTION 3RD CLASS PETTY OFFICER DANIEL RUIZ  
PRODUCTION E-3 & BELOW MCSN JIMI BALISAGE MCSN BRIANNA BARNETT MCSN PAIGE BROWN MCSN ALEX CASCO  
MCSN HECTOR RODRIGUEZ MCSA ZAMIRAH CONNOR MCSA ALYSSA LEE MCSA SPENCER STAGGS  
WITH SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE FROM LCDR MATTHEW STROUP MCC DOMINIQUE LASCO

DESIGNED BY MC3 TAJH PAYNE