

# USS Gerald R. Ford Commences Planned Incremental Availability



The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) departed Naval Station Norfolk to transit to Newport News Shipyard in support of her Planned Incremental Availability (PIA), a six-month period of modernization, maintenance, and repairs, Aug. 20, 2021. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class William Spears)

NORFOLK, Va. – The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) 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, Aug. 20, 2021, the ship's public affairs office said in an Aug. 21 release.

Ford's PIA was scheduled to serve as the final maintenance phase for the ship prior to her inaugural deployment next year.

"Team Wolverine is ready for this brief but important maintenance period in Newport News, because we're pumped for what comes next," said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer. "This is a first-in-class warship that will lead the future of carrier naval aviation for years to come, and this PIA is the last milestone for us to complete prior to our first work ups and deployment."

The move to Newport News comes on the heels a fast-paced and successful 21 months of post-delivery test and trials (PDT&T) and Full Ship Shock Trials (FSST), an intense testing and trials period crucial to ensuring the overall deployment readiness of Ford and improving upon the construction and ship trial process for follow-on carriers in the class, among them:

the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), Enterprise (CVN 80), and Doris Miller (CVN 81).

During PDT&T the crew completed all required testing, accomplished planned improvements and maintenance ahead of schedule, and learned valuable lessons to increase the reliability of Ford-class systems. At the same time, the ship also served as the sole East Coast platform for conducting carrier qualifications, qualifying more than 350 pilots.

Earlier this month Ford completed the final explosive event of FSST. 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 to confirm that it can continue to meet demanding mission requirements under the harsh conditions it might encounter in battle.

"This ship and the crew performed exceptionally well during shock trials, and much of the credit goes to the ship designers and builders who put in the technical rigor to ensure Ford-class carriers will sustain Naval Aviation for generations to come," said Lanzilotta.

The Gerald R. Ford-class represents the first major design investment in aircraft carriers since the 1960s. CVN 78 is engineered to support new technologies and a modern air wing essential to deterring and defeating near-peer adversaries in a complex maritime environment.