

Advanced Weapons Elevators Completed Aboard USS Gerald R. Ford



The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) departed Naval Station Norfolk to make the transit to Newport News Shipyard in support of its planned incremental availability, a six-month period of modernization, maintenance, and repairs, Aug. 20. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan Seelbach*

WASHINGTON – On Dec. 22, the 11th and final advanced weapons elevator aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) was turned over to the ship's crew, according to Program Executive Office Aircraft Carriers public affairs.

AWEs on this first-of-class aircraft carrier operate using several advanced technologies, including electromagnetic motors instead of more labor intensive, hydraulic systems. The advanced technology enables fewer sailors to safely move ordnance from weapons magazines to the flight deck with unparalleled speed and agility.

"This is a significant milestone for the Navy, ship, and her crew," said Rear Adm. James P. Downey, Program Executive Officer for Aircraft Carriers. "With completion of this final AWE, we now have the entire system to operate and train with."

Downey added the Navy-industry AWE team worked tirelessly in port and at sea to complete the elevators to ensure the availability of needed materials and engineering expertise. Multiple vendors have collaborated along the way to ensure seamless support to multi-shift, shipboard production efforts.

"The Navy-industry teaming provided the opportunities for hundreds of craftsmen, technicians and engineers, working

around the clock – through multiple underway and holiday periods – to get these advanced systems on line and operational,” said Downey.

The team logged the milestone in the midst of the ship’s six-month planned incremental availability at Huntington Ingalls Industries-Newport News Shipbuilding facility in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Gerald R. Ford is scheduled to complete the PIA this spring, followed by training and deployment.

“The end game is always operational readiness,” added Downey, “and Ford is on track to complete this PIA on schedule, conduct sea trials, and to move on to follow-on tasking.”