

Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group Departs for Deployment



From Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs, June 24, 2025

NORFOLK, Va. – Nearly 4,500 Sailors assigned to the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group departed Naval Station Norfolk and Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, June 24, for a regularly-scheduled deployment to the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility.

The strike group deployed as an integrated naval force in support of economic prosperity, national security, and national defense.

“Carrier Strike Group Twelve is the most capable, adaptable, and lethal naval mission package in the world,” said Rear Adm. Paul Lanzilotta, commander of Carrier Strike Group Twelve. “Our force stands prepared and ready to execute sustained, multi-domain operations at sea, wherever and whenever tasked, in support of American security and economic prosperity.”

Deploying units include flagship USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), commanded by Capt. Dave Skarosi; the nine squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, commanded by Capt. David Dartez; Arleigh Burke-class destroyers within Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 2, commanded by Capt. Mark Lawrence; and Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), homeported at Naval Station Mayport and commanded by Capt. Judson Mallory.

“I am beyond proud of the work the warfighters on this ship have put in to prepare for this deployment, and thankful for the families and friends who continue to support them,” said Capt. Dave Skarosi, commanding officer of Gerald R. Ford. “I have no doubt that this ship and crew will face and overcome any challenges with overwhelming force and fortitude, showcasing the power and lethality of the Ford-class carrier to the world.”

Guided-missile destroyers of DESRON 2 include USS Mitscher (DDG 57), USS Mahan (DDG 72), USS Bainbridge (DDG 96), and USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98). Forrest Sherman deployed from Naval Station Norfolk on May 6, 2025.

Squadrons of CVW 8, embarked aboard Gerald R. Ford include 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”; and a detachment from Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40 “Rawhides.”

The Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group provides combatant commanders and America’s civilian leaders increased capacity to underpin American security and economic prosperity, deter adversaries, and project power on a global scale through

sustained operations at sea.

For more information on the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group, please visit: <https://www.c2f.usff.navy.mil/csg12/>. For more information on USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), please visit: <https://www.airlant.usff.navy.mil/cvn78/>.