

Meier: Ford CVN to Range Widely in the Atlantic for U.S. 2nd Fleet



The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) departed Naval Station Norfolk to transit to Newport News Shipyard in support of its planned incremental availability, a six-month period of modernization, maintenance, and repairs, Aug. 20, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class William Spears*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy’s newest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), will operate all over the North Atlantic this year when it completes its current shipyard availability, a Navy admiral said, and will operate under the auspices of the U.S. 2nd Fleet.

“Ford is doing amazingly well, coming out of the shipyard here for initial employment,” said Rear Adm. John F. Meier, commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic, speaking Feb. 1 during a panel discussion at the Technology, Systems and Ships Symposium conducted by the American Society of Naval Engineers.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for us to demonstrate the new technology,” Meier said. “We’re going to do that as a service-retained employment, so not part of the normal global force deployment schedule, but we will be working with partners, we’ll be working all over the place as 2nd Fleet takes charge of that carrier and operates with a wide variety of operations up and down the coast, across the Atlantic [and] down in the Caribbean.”

Meier said the Ford’s upcoming operations would be “a really great opportunity to show off that aircraft carriers are in fact extremely maneuverable, upwards of 700 [nautical] miles a

day. And robust – most especially robust when you think about the refueled range of the aircraft that fly from them.”

The Ford currently is in a planned incremental availability at Newport News Shipbuilding. All 11 weapon elevators have been certified as of December. Since it began flight operations, it has completed 8,100 catapult launches and the same number of arrested landings, said Rear Adm. Jim Downey, program executive officer for aircraft carriers, also speaking at the event.