

# CRUISING FOR TROUBLE

THE USS GERALD R. FORD IS NOW ON ITS FIRST FULL-STRENGTH DEPLOYMENT —  
PROTECTING THE FREEDOM OF THE USA AND ITS ALLIES

BY MYLES CARLEY

USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78) steams the Atlantic Ocean on 9 October 2022 during simulated straits transit with the *Gerald R. Ford* Carrier Strike Group. On deck are aircraft of Carrier Air Wing 8 (CVW-8). Construction of the world's largest aircraft carrier began on 11 August 2005, when Northrop Grumman held a ceremonial steel cut for a 15-ton plate that forms part of a side shell unit of the ship. The keel was laid down on 13 November 2009. She was christened on 9 November of 2013. *Gerald R. Ford* entered the fleet replacing the decommissioned USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65), which ended 51 years of active service during December 2012. Originally scheduled for delivery in 2015, she was delivered to the Navy on 31 May 2017 and commissioned by President Donald Trump on 22 July 2017. Her first partial deployment departed 4 October 2022. Not only the largest aircraft carrier, she is also the largest warship ever constructed. (USN)

Captain Rick Burgess, commanding officer of the USS *Gerald R. Ford* addresses sailors during a steel beach picnic in the Adriatic Sea on 4 July. On 3 January 2007, former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced the carrier would be named after Ford and that he had personally told Ford of the honor during a visit to his home in Rancho Mirage, California, a few weeks before Ford's death. This makes the aircraft carrier one of the few USN ships named after a living person. (USN/William Spear)



Sikorsky MH-60R Sea Hawk assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 70 (HMS-70) comes onto the flight deck of *Gerald R. Ford* on 3 July while maneuvering in the Adriatic Sea. On 10 September 2008, the USN signed a \$5.1 billion contract with Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia, to design and construct the carrier. Advanced construction under a \$2.7 billion contract began in 2005. It was built at the Huntington Ingalls (formerly Northrop Grumman) Newport News Shipbuilding facilities. (USN/Aaron Arroyo)



Dragging vapor trails through the humid air of the Mediterranean Sea on 1 July, an F/A-18E Super Hornet attached to Strike Fighter Squadron 87 (VFA-87) prepares to touch down on the *Gerald R. Ford*'s deck. During August 2011, the carrier was said to be half-way structurally complete. In April 2012, the important milestone of completing the carrier up to its waterline was reached when the critical lower bow was lifted into place. This was the 390th of the nearly 500 lifts of the Integral modular components from which the vessel is assembled. (USN/Nolan Pennington)



*Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer USS *Roosevelt* (DDG-80) heads into a Mediterranean Sea sunset on 15 June during *Gerald R. Ford* Carrier Strike Group operations. By 19 December 2012, construction had reached 90% structural completion. Of the nearly 500 total structural lifts needed to complete the ship, 446 had been accomplished. (USN/Tatiana Stelle)