

U.S. Navy to test next-generation supercarrier

President Donald Trump is scheduled to preside over the commissioning on July 22 of the Navy's newest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford. The \$12.9 billion vessel is the first in a new generation of aircraft carriers, featuring a host of changes over the current Nimitz-class fleet



F-35C Lightning II carrier variant

Island: Aft location gives more room for aircraft. Structure kept smaller by replacing multiple antennas with single radar housed in flat panels



Flight deck: Three aircraft elevators instead of four. Improved space utilisation and movement of fuel and weapons boosts aircraft mission rate by up to 25 percent



Catapults: Electromagnetic launch replaces steam power

Aircraft: Up to 90, including:

- F-35C and F/A-18 fighters
- AWACS surveillance planes
- EA-18 electronic attack jets
- SH-60 helicopters
- Unmanned aircraft (future)

Propulsion: Two nuclear reactors generate 600MW of electricity – triple that of Nimitz-class carrier

Technology: Greater automation enables less crew and lower costs. Maintenance reduced by 30 percent

Armament: Integrated system controls ship sensors, anti-air weapons (missiles and guns) and countermeasures

Specifications

Nimitz-class *USS Gerald R. Ford*

	<i>Nimitz-class</i>	<i>USS Gerald R. Ford</i>
Commissioning date	1975 (USS Nimitz)	2017 (planned)
Displacement (fully loaded)	88,000 tonnes	100,000 tonnes
Aircraft	60+	75+
Crew (including air wing)	5,200	4,539
Cost (2016)	\$8.9 billion*	\$12.9 billion

Nimitz *Flight deck: 18,200 sq m*

