

Carriers At War

4 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Strike Force Arabian Gulf

Strike Force Arabian Gulf showcases the role the United States Navy plays in maintaining stability in the Middle East region. A fly-on-the-wall approach portrays how the supercarrier USS George H.W. Bush prepares for action against the ever-evolving threat of ISIS and fulfills the U.S. Navy's mission statement: to deter aggression and maintain freedom of the seas. At the beginning of its newest deployment, the USS Bush gets the call to action almost as soon as it leaves the docks of Norfolk: it must travel through hostile waters and prepare to launch airborne attacks against ISIS in Iraq. The USS Bush makes its way from the peaceful seas of the Mediterranean and into the uneasy waters of the Suez Canal, where friendly faces are few and far between. As the carrier travels to its intended target in the Arabian Gulf, crewmen prepare for the impending attack. Although they have done this before, it has been several months since they have faced a mission of this magnitude. Pilots train for combat day in and day out to re-hone their impressive skills. When the USS Bush reaches the Arabian Gulf, crewmen prep the F/A-18 Super Hornets, ordnancemen load missiles onto each fighter jet and pilots climb into the cockpit to wait for the orders to launch. This is the moment the crew has prepared for, and everything runs smoothly. The crew completes a successful air strike against ISIS strongholds and preps for the remainder of their deployment. The pilots debrief the mission, aware that another strike could be just around the corner.

2. Ready to Launch

Ready to Launch provides a close-up view of the crew members of the USS George H.W. Bush, to capture what it takes to successfully operate an aircraft carrier. The 5,000 men and women on board must prepare for any eventuality—the pressure they face is immeasurable and they must stay calm under the most difficult situations and react with confidence and precision. Undertaking some of the most important missions to maintain security within the Earth's waters, Navy pilots climb into their plane and prepare for takeoff. But before that can happen, several other equally vital jobs and tasks must occur. Hungry stomachs must be fed. Supply deliveries must be made by helicopter. And there is never-ending activity on the flight deck. Ordnancemen maintain, transport, check and mount the weapons on each aircraft. Each and every bomb can be a potential disaster if mishandled. Once the weapons are built and installed, each aircraft is assigned a team of Landing Signal Officers who monitor, track and assist pilots with safe departure and landing. Easy enough, except they do this while positioned on the flight deck and potentially in harm's way. Meanwhile, the appropriately named Air Boss directs all aspects of flight deck operations from Primary Flight Control—the carrier's control tower—including launching, recovery and shipboard handling of the aircraft. One mistake and the flight deck can become a deadly scene. As the aircrafts successfully return on board, the crew is aware that this is just another mission complete, and that they must be prepared to do it all again the next day.

3. Air Wing

Air Wing focuses on the action-packed role that an aircraft carrier's air wing plays. The first tale begins onboard the USS Harry S. Truman. High above Iraq, LT Brown and other F-18 Super Hornets circle an ISIS stronghold, dropping ordnance to hit them where it hurts: in the wallet. As the dust settles, the damage is clear. For the next three months, pilots from the USS Truman continue to wipeout ISIS strongholds, dropping the most bombs ever in a single deployment. The next account occurs in August 1990, during Operation Desert Storm. It will take almost every plane in the air wing to give the US a fighting chance. LCDR Mark Fox and his wingman swarm over and demolish an Iraqi airfield. It's the first air-to-air kills for the Navy's new F-18 Hornet. The final chapter focuses on the USS Abraham Lincoln in 2008. To keep ground troops safe in Afghanistan, the Navy asks its F-18 Super Hornets to be a constant presence. LCDR Hansen and her wingman get the call that US troops need close air support to destroy a Taliban outpost. At 50,000 feet above, Hansen uses a GPS-guided bomb to lock onto coordinates given from the troops below and successfully destroys the outpost, enabling those on the ground to continue the fight without fear. Air Wing wraps up by looking into the future of the carrier air wing, and how it may evolve to ensure that US aircraft carriers will maintain a presence of strength and a mission of goodwill throughout all waters of the Earth.

4. USS Ford

The United States' powerful Navy gives it the ability to make global commons a highway to war. In the center of it all, the carrier, bringing \$3.5 billion worth of hi-tech aircraft. In 2008, Congress awards a construction contract for a new kind of carrier: "the Ford." For the next ten years, Huntington Ingalls / Newport News Shipbuilding is occupied by the U.S. Navy's new Ford-class carriers. As each part finishes, it's welded to other plates to make up the carrier's rooms. Individual rooms are combined into modules, creating large sections of the ship. The last step is to move these "superlifts" onto the rest of the ship, a feat that takes months of planning and a massive crane named Big Blue. In November 2013, the carrier faces its biggest obstacle yet: incorporating the technology. By the time the Ford is commissioned, the Navy has been testing the electromagnetic aircraft launch system, or EMALS, on land for almost four years. But in 2014, the Navy reveals that almost 10% of the launches have failed, putting the entire program at risk. Making matters worse, development cost for the Advanced Arresting Gear, or AAG, has grown to almost \$1 billion, six times the original cost. In July 2017, the U.S.S. Ford is finally commissioned into the Navy, and launches and lands the first F/A-18 off its deck, proving to the world that all the hard work has paid off. Looking ahead for the Ford-class, the future of aircraft carriers looks bright, leading the way to more advancements in Naval warfare.