

After the final wave to the crowd from the hangar deck of the Nimitz, the president went inside where there was a large cake, about 10 feet long, which was a replica of the ship. Covered with battleship gray icing. Ford took a leag sword and, after adjusting position for photos, cut a piece out of cake. When it fell into a bouquet of flowers sitting adjacent to the cake, a naval officer with a more manageable knife, cut a piece and gave it to the president.

Before he had cut the cake with the sword, Ford said, "This is a beautiful job." After he cut it, he said, "Can I take it?" As he stood eating his cake from a paper plate, with a plastic fork, he said, "This is one of my weaknesses."

Nobody else moved to take a piece of cake and Ford stood there eating his with photos snapping away.

Then to the flight deck and takeoff. As Ford boarded AFI, he carried a ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ USS Nimitz flight cap, with a bill like a base ball cap. Don't know where he got it.

(Greener came back to say that Rickenover was, in fact, there).
beckman, joyce, gibbons