

USCGC Munro Returns From Counter-Drug Patrol, \$440M Worth of Cocaine Interdicted



U.S. Coast Guardsmen assist in mooring evolution as the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755) returns home to Alameda, California, Nov. 25, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Danish Khan)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, Nov. 26, 2024

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755) returned home to Alameda, Monday following a two-month counter-drug patrol in international waters off the coasts of Central and South America in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

The 150-member crew deployed to the region, where they interdicted 11 vessels suspected of narcotics smuggling. The vessel interdictions resulted in the seizure of more than

30,000 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated \$440 million in wholesale value.

Before returning to Alameda, Munro [conducted a bulk offload of the illicit narcotics in San Diego](#) to facilitate the safe destruction of the narcotics in cooperation with federal agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Munro's crew conducted more than 50 hours of flight evolutions with an embarked helicopter from the U.S. Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON). The HITRON helicopter enhanced Munro's effectiveness by providing airborne use-of-force capabilities in the maritime domain, directly supporting the successful interdiction of six non-compliant vessels during the patrol. Munro's crew was augmented during the patrol with servicemembers from the Tactical Law Enforcement Team South. These teams are a part of the U.S. Coast Guard's elite maritime law enforcement units which deploy globally and are primarily focused on conducting high-risk law enforcement operations at sea, including counter-narcotic operations and interdicting drug smugglers.

Additionally, Munro responded to a search and rescue case 140 miles offshore of Humboldt Bay, ensuring the safety of two Canadian citizens and their sailing vessel through a rescue and assistance mission to restore the operability of the vessel's steering system and enable its safe transit to port for permanent repairs.

"Munro's crew demonstrated exceptional teamwork and persistence during an extraordinary patrol," said Capt. James O'Mara, Munro's commanding officer. "We transited the entirety of the Joint Interagency Task Force South area of operations and brought every capability to bear in order to prevent dangerous narcotics from reaching our shores. These cases happen day, night, and in a variety of weather conditions – it is very dynamic out there. But Munro's crew constantly adapted, rehearsed our tactics, and stayed laser focused to

get the job done. We know that a key ingredient to Munro's success and resilience is the unwavering support from our families and loved ones back home. Thanks – your support keeps us going.”

Munro is one of four Legend-class national security cutters (NSC) homeported on Base Alameda. There are currently ten commissioned NSC's currently operating in the fleet. NSCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, cyber, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment; aviation support facilities; stern cutter boat launch; and long-endurance station keeping. The 418-foot cutters serve as operational-level headquarters for complex law enforcement, defense and national security missions involving the Coast Guard and multiple partner agencies.

USS Indianapolis returns from four-fleet deployment

SEAPOWER

The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Indianapolis (LCS 17) returned to Naval Station Mayport, Fla. following a deployment to the U.S. 5th Fleet, 6th Fleet, and 2nd Fleet areas of operations, Nov. 26.

Indianapolis deployed in March 2024 as a dual-crewed command, conducting two exchanges of command between LCS Crew 112 and LCS Crew 118. This final deployment marked LCS Crew 118's second 5th Fleet deployment in 2024 and the consolidation of the crews into a single command. LCS Crew 118 deployed on May 5, 2024 to the U.S. 5th Fleet operating area to support the U.S. Navy's mission to promote freedom of navigation and the rules-based international order.

"What this team of amazing Americans achieved over the course of this deployment will pay dividends in the maintenance planning and tactics development arenas for years to come," said Cmdr. Matthew Arndt, USS Indianapolis' Commanding Officer. "As the workhorse of the Arabian Gulf, Indy executed the lower tier missions necessary to maintaining good diplomatic relations in the Middle East which allowed Standard Missile shooters to reposition to deal with bad actors in the Red Sea. I think it's pretty special that we were able to provide the 5th Fleet commander with more tools and options to aid in the free flow of commerce through a contested waterway."

Shortly after arriving at Naval Support Activity Bahrain, LCS crews 118 and 112 merged and integrated a detachment from the "High Rollers" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28 into the crew. Indianapolis and HSC 28 supported operations as part of Task Force 52. The ship also worked with Task Force 59, the Navy's first unmanned and artificial intelligence development force, to validate crewless technology and mesh networks. Indianapolis also supported other interoperability initiatives and aviation training events with regional partners.

"This deployment clearly marks a significant chapter in the

ship's history and serves as proof the LCS class is capable of fulfilling operational and strategic goals across all theater of operations, but most of all, this deployment records the mountainous amount of teamwork, dedication and grit from our Sailors and their friends and families who support them – without them none of this would be possible,” said Cmdr. William Green, USS Indianapolis’ Executive Officer. Indianapolis validated the littoral combat ship concept both operationally and through administrative successes. During the final months of an 18-month deployment, Indianapolis completed a Mobility Aviation Reset, two Initial Ship Aviation Team Training events to support HSC 28.7 and HSC 28.9, certified in Explosive Safety and Cyber Security, and demonstrated navigational excellence during a mobility navigation assessment.

The ship's deployed maintenance and repair experiences were supported by Forward Deployed Regional Maintenance Center (FDRMC) and included maintenance availabilities in locations throughout the Middle East region, and Rijeka, Croatia.

“The resilience and flawless performance of this crew during this historic deployment have exemplified the highest standards of naval excellence,” said Command Senior Chief Darrell Shelton, USS Indianapolis’ Senior Enlisted Leader. “Their unwavering dedication and skill ensured mission success and strengthened our maritime capabilities.”

LCS is a fast, agile, mission-focused platform designed for operation in near-shore environments yet capable of open-ocean operation. It is designed to defeat asymmetric “anti-access” threats and can support forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence.

U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse comprises 20 countries and includes three critical

choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb at the southern tip of Yemen.

U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners to advance U.S. national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs maritime forces ready to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic to ensure access, deter aggression, and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.

Truman Strike Group Concludes High-North Operations with Strait of Gibraltar Transit



Caption: USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) transits the Strait of Gibraltar. (MC3 Logan McGuire)

From Story by Lt.Cmdr. Courtney Callaghan, Lt. Brandon Dedmon and Lt. Camila Healey, Nov. 27, 2024

MEDITERRANEAN SEA – The Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (HSTCSG), including Italian Navy Carlo Bergamini-class frigate Carabiniere (F 593), and the Spanish Navy Álvaro de Bazán-class frigate Méndez Núñez (F-104) transited the Strait of Gibraltar for the Mediterranean Sea, Nov. 25, following over a month of operations with Allies and partners in the North and Norwegian Seas.

“Two months into deployment, and the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group has experienced an unprecedented amount of operations with our NATO Allies and partners,” said Rear Adm. Sean Bailey, commander of the HSTCSG. “It is truly impressive to watch the seamless integration of the armed forces of so many countries and multitude of ships and aircraft all operating as a unified fighting force. It is an absolute

testament to the strength and versatility of the NATO Alliance.”

HSTCSG arrived in the North Sea on Oct. 15, immediately engaging with Allies and partners, starting with the Portuguese Navy Frigate NRP Francisco De Almeida (F 333) and Royal Norwegian Navy replenishment oiler HNoMS Maud (A-530). Almeida seamlessly integrated into the carrier strike group as an immediate force multiplier, where the ship served as a horizon reference unit for the carrier and conducted Helicopter, Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (HVBSS) operations.

During that time, Maud provided the needed fuel for the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109) and USS Stout (DDG 55) to detach as a surface action group to conduct maritime operations in the Barents Sea, where the ships enhanced domain awareness, deterred adversaries, and practiced campaigning in the Arctic. On the way back, both ships pulled into Tromsø, Norway, for fuel, supplies, and rest and relaxation for the crew.

“It is important that U.S. naval forces demonstrate a calibrated presence in the Arctic by conducting routine operations in the region,” said Cmdr. Desmond Walker, commander officer of Stout. “We must take on all opportunities to enhance our capabilities toward potential campaigns around the world.”

In a display of transatlantic military cooperation and power projection, HSTCSG units conducted dual carrier strike group operations with the United Kingdom Royal Navy’s aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales (R09) for the 7-day NATO-led maritime vigilance activity Neptune Strike (NEST) 24.2, Oct. 24-31. The two carrier strike groups transferred operational authorities to NATO to conduct coordinated surface and air operations, including complex air defense, anti-submarine

warfare, and maritime strike operations.

Vigilance activity provides an example of the long-standing strategic partnership between the United States and its NATO Allies over the last 80 years. Today, upholding the international, rules-based order is more important than ever. Harry S. Truman participated in the first Neptune Strike vigilance activity, then called Neptune Shield, in Feb. 2022, shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine; marking the first time the United States placed a carrier strike group under NATO's control since the Cold War.

Before and during NEST, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 1 squadrons flew a multitude of missions with several countries to include Czech and Swedish Air Force JAS-39 Gripens, Danish F-16 Fighting Falcons, Royal Navy and Royal Norwegian Air Force F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, Finish F/A-18C Hornets. The ability to plan and fly tactical missions with Allies and partners explicitly demonstrates NATO's combat credibility in the air, expanding the striking range of any carrier strike group.

Following NEST, the strike group disaggregated to conduct port visits across the region. Harry S. Truman and Carabiniere navigated the Oslofjord with the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen-class frigate Thor Heyerdahl (F 314) to visit Oslo, Norway. At the same time, the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg went to Helsinki, Finland, and Stout went to Gothenburg, Sweden.

While at anchor in Norway, Harry S. Truman, Vice Adm. Jeffrey Anderson, commander of U.S. 6th Fleet, and Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Eric Meyer of the U.S. Embassy to Norway, hosted a 700-person reception featuring Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre as the distinguished visitor. Gettysburg and Stout also hosted receptions and office calls with host nation civilian and military leaders.

At the conclusion of their port visit, Harry S. Truman and the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen-class frigate Roald Amundsen (F 311) headed north into the Norwegian Sea to operate above the Arctic Circle, echoing the 2024 Department of Defense Arctic Strategy's "Enhance, Engage, and Exercise" tenants by enhancing our ability to campaign in the Arctic, engaging with Allies, and exercising with calibrated presence.

"Operating in the Arctic requires comprehensive coordination and adaptability," said Capt. Dave Snowden, commanding officer, USS Harry S. Truman. "Our ship is no stranger to these waters and, while these conditions are a proving ground that tested the ship, crew, and air wing, Team Truman and Tarbox demonstrated that we are capable of operating anywhere and anytime as a combat ready team."

In an increasingly dynamic region, Harry S. Truman's integration and collaboration with Allies and partners is a testament to NATO's combined force interoperability, combat-credible collective defense, and flexibility of threat response in a region seeing increased strategic importance due to climate shifts and global competition.

The carrier strike group consists of the flagship USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75); Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 1 with nine embarked aviation squadrons; staffs from CSG-8, CVW-1, and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 28; the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64); and two Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers, USS Stout (DDG 55) and USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109).

HSTCSG's mission is to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea and remain the cornerstone of the Navy's forward presence through sea control and power projection capabilities. You can find them on DVIDS at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/CVN75>.

USS Beloit Commissioned



Sailors aboard USS Beloit (LCS 29) man the ship and bring it to life during its commissioning ceremony in Milwaukee. (EJ Hersom)

From Lt. Ayifa Brooks, Nov. 25, 2024

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – The U.S. Navy commissioned its newest Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Beloit (LCS 29) November 23, 2024, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

“I take great pride in representing Wisconsin’s manufacturing economy and the workers who power it,” said the Honorable Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Senator, State of Wisconsin. “When it comes to our ship building industry our workers have helped sustain America’s security for our national defense for generations. We boast a successful history of building ships

and the city of Beloit has long played an essential role in that.”

Guest speakers for the event also included the Honorable Tony Evers, Governor of Wisconsin, who delivered the commissioning ceremony’s principal address. Remarks were also provided by Adm. James Kilby, Vice Chief of Naval Operations; the Honorable Gwen Moore, U.S. Representative, Wisconsin’s Fourth District; Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Carlos Del Toro; and Mr. Ali Ruwaih, Vice President, Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems, Small Combatants and Ships.

“Today we commission the Navy’s newest freedom-class littoral combat ship, the first ever to bear the name of the best city in Wisconsin, USS Beloit.” said Kilby. “Beloit will play a key role in implementing the Chief of Naval Operations’ strategy as a platform with a crew ready with the right capabilities, weapons, sustainment, and training deterring our adversaries and ready to fight.”

Beloit completed 19 certifications in just seven weeks after moving onboard and successfully passed each certification the first go round, scoring above the Navy’s standards for the LCS community including completing their Light off Assessment (LOA) in less than a week with flying colors.

“I would like to thank our employees and our industry partners for their resiliency and dedication to Littoral Combat Ship Freedom Class who demonstrated exceptional commitment and delivered outstanding results,” said Ruwaih. “The USS Beloit has been designed to protect and guide the crew as they carry forth the ship’s motto Forward for Freedom. I could not think of a more fitting description of an LCS Sailor who displays the most versatile set of skills to help ensure freedom of the seas.”

The audience was honored with the presence of veterans from

World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, the Iraqi war and many other significant battles. The Sailors, family and friends and community of Beloit were reminded of the profound responsibility that comes with such a legacy that the officers and crew of Beloit will undoubtedly uphold with honor, integrity and valor.

"Today is about the commissioning of a ship. But it's also a ceremony about a calling, a calling to serve and a calling to sacrifice," said Moore. "I am proud that this ship is being commissioned in the state where it was built. It will be the first commissioned ship named after Beloit, Wisconsin in honor of that city's contributions to the US Navy, especially the ship engines built in that city."

The ship's sponsor, retired Army Maj. Gen. Marcia M. Anderson, gave the first order to "man our ship and bring her to life."

"The commissioning of the USS Beloit is not merely a naval event – it is a celebration of American industrial might, a testament to the enduring spirit of the American people, and a tribute to the city of Beloit and the state of Wisconsin," said Del Toro. "Everywhere you go, you will sail Forward for Freedom – serving as a beacon of our nation's enduring commitment to independence and security for all and a reminder of the many thousands of Sailors and Marines who have gone before us."

"We are making history! Our Badger crew and the city of Beloit have worked and waited for this moment." said Kissinger. "We are incredibly blessed and humbled to celebrate the commissioning of the USS Beloit with the cities of Milwaukee and celebrating Beloit. Forward to Freedom!"

LCS class ships like Beloit will be equipped with Over the Horizon – Weapons System (OTH-WS) Naval Strike Missile (NSM). The OTH NSM provides the U.S. and its allies with long range

anti-surface offensive strike capability as well as increased coastline defense, deterrence, and interoperability. This will include the MK 70 Payload Delivery System (PDS) which uses combat proven MK 41 Vertical Launching System (VLS) technology to provide mid-range precision fires capabilities. The MK 70 enables rapid deployment of offensive capability to non-traditional platforms and locations.

The ceremony featured early successes, future developments, milestones, fair winds and following seas while showcasing a weeklong series of events celebrating the ship, its crew, community and namesake city.

Beloit is the 15th Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) commissioned in the United States Navy and the first to be commissioned in naval service to bear this namesake.

USS Beloit (LCS 29) was built by the Lockheed Martin and Fincantieri Marinette Marine in Marinette, Wisconsin, the named on Feb. 10, 2018, and authorized on Oct. 10, 2018. It was christened May 7, 2022, and completed acceptance trials the following year. The ship was delivered to the U.S. Navy on Sept. 30, 2024.

LCS is a fast, agile, mission-focused platform designed for operation in near-shore environments yet capable of open-ocean operation. It is designed to defeat asymmetric “anti-access” threats such as mines, quiet diesel submarines and fast surface craft. They are capable of supporting forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence.

USS Beloit will be homeported at Naval Station Mayport, Florida.

The mission of CNSP is to man, train, and equip the Surface Force to provide fleet commanders with credible naval power to control the sea and project power ashore.

For more news from Naval Surface Forces, visit DVIDS – Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

USS Boxer and 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit Return Home After Indo-Pacific Deployment



An F-35B Lightning II attached to VMFA-225 taxis before take-off from USS Boxer (LHD 4) in the Pacific Ocean. (Sgt. Amelia Kang)

From U.S. Third Fleet Public Affairs, Nov. 25 2024

SAN DIEGO – Sailors assigned to the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) and embarked elements of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) returned to homeport in San Diego and Camp Pendleton, this week after a deployment to the U.S. 7th and 3rd Fleet areas of operations.

As part of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and the 15th MEU (ARG-MEU), more than 2,500 Sailors and Marines participated in a wide range of joint and combined exercises and provided foreign disaster support, showcasing the ready and responsive combined-arms team of the Navy and Marine Corps.

“The tactical expertise, professionalism, and stealth of the Sailors and Marines who make up our amphibious force team is unmatched, and that was proven time and time again throughout our deployment to the 7th Fleet area of operations,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Tate Robinson, commodore of Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 5. “From exercising and training alongside our allies and partners to supporting foreign disaster response missions, our Navy and Marine Corps team demonstrated the true flexibility and maneuverability of the ARG-MEU construct, and I could not be more honored to serve alongside each and every member of this team.”

During deployment, Boxer and the 15th MEU participated in exercise Ssang Yong. The exercise strengthened the Republic of Korea-U.S. alliance through bilateral, joint training, contributing toward combined amphibious capability in defense of the Korean Peninsula.

In September, Boxer also sailed alongside and participated in a personnel exchange with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Kongo-class guided-missile destroyer JS Kongo (DDG 173) and conducted three replenishments-at-sea with the Royal New Zealand Navy’s Polar-class sustainment vessel HMNZS Aotearoa (A11) before returning to the Republic of Korea to participate in the Republic of Korea Armed Forces Day celebration. As part

of the celebration, Boxer and the 15th MEU welcomed more than 245 visitors to the ship for tours, giving the Sailors and Marines an opportunity to showcase their equipment, expertise, and professionalism while building relationships with the local community.

Later in September, the H-1 Helicopter detachment from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 165, Reinforced temporarily transferred to the expeditionary sea base USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5), marking the first time a full H-1 detachment operated from this class of ship. The detachment, consisting of UH-1Y Venom and AH-1Z Viper helicopters, conducted day and night close-air support training missions with live ordnance, enhancing the capability and capacity of the MEU's Marine Air Ground Task Force.

After departing the Republic of Korea, Boxer and the 15th MEU rapidly shifted course to head to the Philippines at the direction of U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command to support U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) efforts in foreign disaster response operations following Typhoon Krathon (locally known as Julian) at the request of the Philippine government. The Boxer ARG-MEU provided critical logistics support, transporting much-needed foreign disaster response supplies to remote locations in the Philippines alongside USAID, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and personnel from I Marine Expeditionary Force's Marine Rotational Force-Southeast Asia (MRF-SEA). The foreign disaster response mission exemplified the benefits of the unique construct of the ARG-MEU, providing commanders the flexibility to respond to crises with air and sea-based connectors, ultimately enhancing maneuverability and ability to respond whenever and wherever called upon.

Following foreign disaster response in the provinces of Cagayan and Batanes, Philippines, the BOX ARG-MEU remained in the region to participate in Exercise KAMANDAG 8, an annual

Philippine and U.S. Marine Corps-led exercise aimed at enhancing shared defense and humanitarian capabilities through realistic training scenarios and information exchanges. This year's iteration included participants from Australia, France, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

"Together, the entire 15th MEU and the three ships of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group have demonstrated an exceptional level of versatility, resilience, and operational capability," said Col. Sean Dynan, commanding officer, 15th MEU. "From crisis response during foreign disaster relief to supporting 10 theater exercises, the accomplishments of our amphibious force reflect the skill, resilience, dedication and professionalism of every Marine and Sailor. I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved together and the lasting impact this deployment will have on future operations in the Indo-Pacific working with our allies and partners."

Boxer is the flagship of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group. In addition to Boxer and the 15th MEU Command Element, units assigned to the ARG-MEU during the deployment included the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset (LPD 25), Harpers Ferry-class dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49), Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 5, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23, Tactical Air Control Squadron (TACRON) 11, Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 5, Assault Craft Units (ACU) 1 and 5, Beachmaster Unit (BMU) 1, Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/5, Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 15, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) (reinforced) 165, and Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 225 with embarked F-35B Lightning II aircraft. Harpers Ferry and Somerset returned to San Diego, Aug. 13 and Oct. 18, 2024, respectively.

Throughout the deployment, Boxer executed more than 3,500 launches and recoveries of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps aircraft, completing more than 2,100 flight hours in support

of the 15th MEU Air Combat Element, VMM-165 (REIN), VMFA-225, and the HSC-23 detachment. Embarked aircraft on Boxer include MH-60S Nighthawk helicopters, MV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, AH-1Z Viper helicopters, UH-1Y Venom helicopters, and F-35B Lightning II vertical and/or short take-off and landing aircraft.

Boxer's air department team received more than 350 pallets of food, stores, and equipment via vertical replenishment (VERTREP) and over 1 million gallons of JP-5 via underway replenishment (UNREP) and in port replenishment. Additionally, the Amphibious Air Traffic Control Center (AATCC) conducted more than 500 instrument approaches, both day and night, while the flight deck and hangar deck conducted more than 2,100 aircraft movement evolutions and 240 aircraft elevator movements in direct support of daily operations.

Boxer completed eight underway replenishments in the Indo-Pacific region with the Henry J. Kaiser-class underway replenishment oilers USNS Pecos (T-AO 197) and USNS Yukon (T-AO 202), the Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ships USNS Carl Brashear (T-AKE 7), USNS Charles Drew (T-AKE 10) USNS Cesar Chavez (T-AKE 14) and HMNZS Aotearoa, , and USNS Yukon, transferring more than 5 million gallons of fuel over the deployment period.

Boxer and the 15th MEU transited over 3,200 nautical miles in support of deterring aggression, crisis response, presence operations, and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific. Boxer conducted routine port visits to Guam, Japan, and the Republic of Korea.

The 15th MEU is based at Camp Pendleton and is part of I Marine Expeditionary Force. As a premiere global crisis response force, 15th MEU is trained and ready to operate within the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility with the Navy's U.S. 3rd Fleet.

Boxer is a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship homeported in San Diego. Commissioned Feb. 11, 1995, Boxer is the sixth ship to bear the name. Boxer's crew is made up of approximately 1,200 officers and enlisted personnel and can accommodate up to 1,800 Marines.

As an integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic and relevant training necessary to execute the U.S. Navy's timeless role across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat missions to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

Keel Laid for Future USS Sam Nunn

By Team Ships Strategic Operations, Nov. 22, 2024

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – The keel for the future USS Sam Nunn (DDG 133), an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, was laid during a ceremony on Nov. 22 at HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division.

The ship is named in honor of United States Senator Samuel Augustus Nunn Jr, who represented the state of Georgia, served as Chairman of both the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

As the living namesake, Sen. Nunn attended the keel laying ceremony alongside his daughter and ship's sponsor, Michelle Nunn.

A keel laying ceremony represents the joining together of the ship's first major modular components at land level. During the ceremony, the keel is authenticated when a welder etches the initials of the ship's sponsor into the keel plate. In addition to Ms. Nunn's initials, Sen. Nunn's initials were also etched into the plate.

"The future USS Sam Nunn and all who sail aboard her will honor the legacy of Sen. Nunn and his dedication to the men and women serving our country," said Capt. Seth Miller, DDG 51 class program manager, Program Executive Office, Ships (PEO Ships). "DDG 133 will be yet another player on the field providing the most advanced capability to our Navy and the nation.

DDG 51 Flight III destroyers feature the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar and incorporate upgrades to the electrical power and cooling capacity plus additional associated changes to provide greatly enhanced warfighting capability to the fleet.

Future destroyers USS Ted Stevens (DDG 128), USS Jeremiah Denton (DDG 129), USS George M. Neal (DDG 131), and USS Thad Cochran (DDG 135) are also under construction at Ingalls.

PEO Ships, one of the Department of Defense's largest acquisition organizations, is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships and craft, auxiliary ships, special mission ships, sealift ships and support ships.

Task Group 59.1 Conducts Digital Talon 3.0



241105-A-B0737-1011 U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (Nov. 5, 2024) An unmanned aerial vehicle, operated by U.S. Naval Forces Central Command's Task Force 59, prepares for launch on an unmanned surface vessel during exercise Digital Talon 3.0 in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. (Official U.S. Army photo)

By Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs
| November 24, 2024

MANAMA, Bahrain –Task Group (TG) 59.1 conducted the third iteration of exercise Digital Talon in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, Nov. 5.

Known as Digital Talon 3.0, the exercise tested the electronic and mechanical effectiveness of robotics and autonomous systems (RAS), the capabilities of over-the-horizon communications between unmanned systems, and testing aerial

autonomous launch and recovery of an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) off a unmanned surface vessel (USV).

Lt. Luis Echeverria, commanding officer of TG 59.1, said Digital Talon 3.0 expanded the over-the-horizon capabilities of these unmanned systems.

“Under Digital Talon 3.0 we were able to test the remote launch of a loitering munition, and vertical take-off and landing of UAVs from a USV,” said Echeverria. “These evolutions resulted in the successful remote launch of a loitering munition at sea.”

Commander, Special Operations Forces Central Command, the Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Devastator (MCM 6) and the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) also participated in Digital Talon 3.0.

The first Digital Talon exercise, held in October 2023, and the second iteration a month later, advanced lethality and kinetic applications for unmanned systems. Digital Talon 3.0 examined more advanced tactics, according to TG 59.1’s executive officer, Royal Navy Lt. Samuel Hendy.

“As with all pioneering ventures and first-of-its-kind feats, there are plenty of challenges to overcome, lessons to be analyzed, but we are a learning organization and it all combines to further benefit 5th Fleets’ understanding and employment of this state-of-the-art warfare,” Hendy said. “If there is one thing we can take away, Digital Talon 3.0 affirms that the U.S. Navy, as well as her partner nations, remains at the forefront of cutting-edge unmanned system integration and deployment.”

Established in January 2024, Task Group 59.1, dubbed “The Pioneers,” tests industry solutions and focuses on the operational deployment of unmanned systems teamed with manned operators to bolster maritime security across the Middle East

region. TG 59.1 reports directly to Task Force 59, the Navy's first Unmanned and Artificial Intelligence Task Force. TF 59 integrates unmanned systems and artificial intelligence with maritime operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to support maritime security and stability in the Middle East region. It has tested, upgraded, evolved and operated with more than 23 different unmanned systems.

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet's area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. This expanse, comprising 21 nations, includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb.

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant Returns Home After 46-Day Patrol in the Windward Passage



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) and French Navy Frigate FS Ventôse (F733) conduct joint exercises at sea, Sept. 29, 2024, while underway in the Windward Passage. The crew of Valiant conducted a 49-day migrant interdiction operations patrol in the region to protect life at sea and enforce U.S. maritime law. (Photo courtesy of FS Ventôse)

Nov. 22, 2024

From Coast Guard 7th District, Nov. 22, 2024

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) returned to their home port at Naval Station Mayport, Nov. 7, following a 49-day migrant interdiction operations patrol in the Windward Passage.

Valiant's crew deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while operating in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility. Throughout the patrol, the crew of Valiant conducted maritime safety and security missions to protect life at sea and enforce U.S. maritime law.

While at sea, Valiant rendezvoused with French Navy Frigate FS Ventôse (F733) during the vessels' independent patrols off coastal Haiti, where the two crews conducted North Atlantic

Treaty Organization (NATO) exercises. Valiant's crew applied cutter refueling at sea techniques and exercised NATO code signaling with their French counterparts. Valiant's small boat team received the unique opportunity to perform small-boat operations with a French warship. And Ventôse embarked a team from Valiant for a simulated boarding, where Coast Guard members shared techniques, procedures and best practices with their French counterparts.

International professional exchanges at sea such as these are vital for strengthening partnerships between nations, clearing the path for joint operations where shared missions, such as search and rescue and maritime drug interdiction, overlap.

Additionally, the crew of Valiant provided care for 363 Haitian migrants and conducted their safe repatriation home. Valiant's crew also transferred nearly 1,000 pounds of illegal narcotics and 14 suspected drug traffickers to proper authorities.

HSTF-SE serves as the Department of Homeland Security lead for operational and tactical planning, command and control, and acts as a standing organization to interdict unlawful maritime migration attempts with federal, state and local partners. HSTF-SE continues to enhance enforcement efforts in support of OVS, which is the 2004 DHS plan to respond to mass maritime migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Florida Straits.

Valiant is a multi-mission, 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. Its primary missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security and national defense operations.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit www.GoCoastGuard.com to learn more about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be

found [here](#).

Last of the Sea Dragons to Qualify on the MH-53E



Lt. Jack Griffin, one of the last two naval aviators to qualify to operate the MH-53E Sea Dragon, stands next to an aircraft. Griffin and Lt. Keven Humphreys and Lt. Jack Griffin are completing the final phases of their training while

assigned to training squadron Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 12 in Norfolk. (U.S. Navy photo)



Lt. Keven Humphreys, one of the last two naval aviators to qualify to operate the MH-53E Sea Dragon, stands next to an

aircraft. Humphreys and Lt. Jack Griffin are completing the final phases of their training while assigned to training squadron Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 12 in Norfolk. (U.S. Navy photo)

[by Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic Public Affairs](#)

22 November 2024

NORFOLK, Va. – The last two naval aviators to qualify to operate the MH-53E Sea Dragon are completing the final phases of their training while assigned to training squadron Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 12 in Norfolk.

Lt. Jack Griffin and Lt. Keven Humphreys are set to close the chapter on the aircraft's 42-year history of qualifying pilots to operate the storied MH-53E Sea Dragon.

This specialized helicopter, renowned for its Airborne Mine Countermeasures (AMCM) capabilities, is drawing close to the end of its operational life with a sunset ceremony planned for March 2025. The MH-53E, introduced to the U.S. Navy in 1982, has long served as a critical asset in mine hunting, sweeping, and neutralization, as well as a heavy-lift aircraft transporting troops and equipment.

Since 1986, HM-12 has qualified over 580 naval aviators to operate the MH-53E spanning nearly five generations.

As the Navy phases out this iconic aircraft, Griffin and Humphreys will be the last pilots to master its unique skill set while the last two remaining squadrons – HM-12 and HM-15 – prepare for the sundown of this aircraft type model series. Both men originally set their sights on serving as naval officers but did not initially envision becoming naval aviators.

Humphreys credits his inspiration to join the aviation

community from experiences a close friend of his brothers shared after joining the U.S. Marine Corps to serve as a fighter pilot.

“Growing up, I looked up to my best friend’s brother,” Humphreys recalled. “I knew I wanted to serve and become a leader in the military, but becoming a pilot wasn’t initially part of my plan. Seeing him as a leader and a pilot was pretty cool, though.”

Griffin emphasized what he likes best about serving in the MH-53E community.

“The MH-53E community is extremely tight-knit,” Griffin said. “There is a close relationship between pilots and aircrewmembers. Everyone is down-to-earth and focused on the mission. I really appreciate how well the crews work together to get the job done.”

As the MH-53E nears its retirement, Griffin and Humphreys are still preparing for their final missions and upcoming overseas deployment and will continue to enhance their proficiency with the aircraft.

“We are excited to be here,” Griffin said. “We love what we do and where we are right now.”

A special ceremony will be held to honor Griffin and Humphreys as they mark the end of an era and their place in history as preparations are being made to sundown the MH-53E Sea Dragon. This event will celebrate their contributions and the legacy of an aircraft that has played a pivotal role in Naval Aviation history.

Gulfstream Again Selected for C-20, C-37 Fleet Support



Gulfstream Special Missions Awarded Significant Contract to Service U.S. Military Aircraft

From Gulfstream Aerospace Corp.

SAVANNAH, Ga., November 22, 2024 – Gulfstream Aerospace Corp., a business unit of General Dynamics (NYSE:GD), has been [awarded](#) a contractor logistics support services (CLS) contract from the U.S. Air Force Life Cycle Management Center for C-20 and C-37 fleets. This contract extends over a seven-year period and provides services to the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army and U.S. Coast Guard.

“For nearly 60 years, Gulfstream has been a trusted partner to governments and military organizations worldwide, and we are honored that the U.S. Air Force has once again selected our

company to support the U.S. military's fleet," said Mark Burns, president, Gulfstream. "This demonstrates the strength of our world-class Customer Support network and its ability to support all of our customers' missions. Gulfstream's Special Missions business delivers cutting-edge aircraft expertly engineered for a wide range of critical operations and is currently experiencing unprecedented activity with customers around the world."

The latest CLS contract is valued at \$991 million and includes a wide variety of support such as global maintenance, component overhaul, repair and modification services. Gulfstream Customer Support will perform the work at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland; Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; Ramstein Air Base, Germany; Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay; and Naval Base Ventura County, California.

To date, Gulfstream has delivered more than 200 special missions aircraft to over 40 countries, including all branches of the U.S. military and key U.S. government agencies.