

# Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group Returns from Western Pacific Deployment



26 February 2024

By Seaman Nathan Jordan

SAN DIEGO - Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), flagship of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1, returned to its homeport of Naval Air Station North Island, Feb. 23, following a four-month deployment to the Western Pacific.

Carl Vinson is joined by two other CSG-1 ships, the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59) and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Sterett (DDG 104), which returned to their homeport of Naval Base San Diego.

“This Carrier Strike Group and our Sailors’ deployment accomplishments demonstrate our unwavering contribution to the

Navy's global engagement strategy," said Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, CSG-1 commander. "During the past four months, we routinely flew and sailed anywhere international law allows to assure Americans, allies and partners of our commitment to bolstering regional security and stability in the Indo-Pacific. With the unwavering support of our families and friends, we were proud to sail and fly forward as a symbol and the promise of America's advantage at sea."

The strike group departed for the scheduled deployment from San Diego Oct. 12, 2023, to sail and maneuver across the U.S. 3rd and 7th Fleet areas of operations. While in 7th Fleet, CSG-1 participated in and supported numerous bilateral and multinational maritime exercises in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The strike group conducted routine port visits to the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Philippines and Hawaii. Individual ships in CSG-1 visited Australia, Japan, Guam, Saipan, and Palau.

"These port visits demonstrated U.S. commitment to the Indo-Pacific region and further enhanced relationships with the leaders and local populations," said Sardiello.

In total, the strike group supported U.S. relations with eight allied and partner nations through two Multi-Large Deck Events, Annual Exercise 2023, several bilateral, tri-lateral and multi-lateral maritime exercises in the Philippine Sea and South China Sea. CSG-1 worked alongside Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Singapore to reaffirm their commitment to regional stability and security in the Indo-Pacific.

Furthermore, CSG-1 integrated and operated seamlessly with the U.S. Joint Force conducting maritime exercises with Naval Special Warfare operators, unmanned surface vessels, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force and two multi-carrier

operations with the Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan CSGs.

In 133 days underway, the ship's crew conducted 10 underway replenishments, logged more than 13,000 flight hours and over 6,000 sorties, sailed more than 36,000 nautical miles, and safely received over 12 million gallons of fuel with zero mishaps. The Vinson crew conducted 9,540 launch and recovery evolutions, 7,835 aircraft moves, 651 aircraft elevator moves, issued nearly 12 million gallons of fuel to aircraft, and transferred nearly 5,000 pallets of cargo and mail.

"I couldn't be more proud of our Sailors. They executed with precision and discipline while strengthening our relationships with allies and partners. They were superb naval ambassadors in foreign ports," said Capt. Matthew Thomas, Carl Vinson's commanding officer. "These highly trained Sailors showed they are reliable, resilient, and ready to support and defend the American way of life every day."

Notable key leader engagements and visits aboard Carl Vinson included Republic of Korea Minister of Defense, defense chiefs from Indonesia and Malaysia, Commander of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, U.S. Ambassadors to Singapore and Indonesia, senior officers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, among others.

The Carl Vinson strike group deployed with flagship USS Carl Vinson and embarked CSG-1 staff, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 1 staff and the Ticonderoga class guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59). DESRON-1 ships included Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Hopper (DDG 70), USS Kidd (DDG 100), USS Sterett (DDG 104), and USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110).

The squadrons of CVW-2 embarked aboard Carl Vinson included

the F-35C Lightning II squadron, “Warhawks” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 97; the F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet squadrons, “Bounty Hunters” of VFA-2, “Stingers” of VFA-113, “Golden Dragons” of VFA-192; the “Gauntlets” of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 136, the “Black Eagles” of Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 113, the “Blue Hawks” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 78, the “Black Knights” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 4 and the “Titans” of Fleet Logistics Multi-mission Squadron (VRM) 30.

Vinson’s embarked air wing, deployed for the first time with the Navy’s newest Block III Super Hornets adding 4th generation plus capability to the largest joint strike fighter air wing in the Navy.

“As the U.S. Navy’s most advanced air wing, comprised of 4th and 5th generation strike fighters, advanced electronic attack, technologically-leading command and control, and versatile rotary wing capability, we deliver unprecedented lethality and survivability to CSG-1 ensuring that the strike force can operate and win in contested battlespace both now and well into the future,” said Capt. Timothy Myers, CVW-2 commander.

The Carl Vinson CSG is a multiplatform team of ships and aircraft, capable of carrying out a wide variety of missions around the globe from combat missions to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief response.

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## **HII Launches Virginia-class**

# Submarine Massachusetts at Newport News Shipbuilding



The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., Feb. 23, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) announced today that *Virginia*-class submarine *Massachusetts* (SSN 798) was recently launched into the James River at the company's Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS) division.

Shipbuilders transferred the submarine from a construction facility to the floating dry dock, where it was later submerged and moved by tugboats to a submarine pier at the shipyard for final outfitting, testing and crew certification.

"Following the christening of this mighty submarine in May, witnessing *Massachusetts* launch into the river is a source of immense pride for our shipbuilding team," said Jason Ward, NNS vice president of *Virginia*-class submarine construction. "We understand the importance of *Massachusetts*, and we will continue to execute with purpose to bring this important national security asset to life and deliver it to the Navy."

*Virginia*-class nuclear-powered fast attack submarines are built for a broad spectrum of open-ocean and littoral missions to replace the Navy's *Los Angeles*-class submarines as they are retired. *Virginia*-class submarines incorporate dozens of new technologies and innovations that increase firepower, maneuverability and stealth to significantly enhance their warfighting capabilities. These submarines are capable of supporting multiple mission areas and can operate at speeds of more than 25 knots.

Photos and video accompanying this release are available at: <https://hii.com/news/hii-launches-virginia-class-submarine-massachusetts-ssn-798-newport-news-shipbuilding/>.

*Massachusetts* is the 25th *Virginia*-class submarine and will be the 12th delivered by NNS, which is one of only two shipyards capable of designing and building nuclear-powered submarines for the U.S. Navy.

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## **US Coast Guard Cutter Thetis Disrupts Illegal Narcotics Trafficking During Caribbean Deployment**





Feb. 23, 2024

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis (WMEC 910) returned to their homeport in Key West on Friday following a 62-day patrol in the Central Caribbean Sea.

Thetis worked in support of the Joint Interagency Task Force-South alongside partners to deter illegal narcotics trafficking in the Central Caribbean. With an embarked MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron and support from the USS Farragut (DDG 99), Thetis interdicted approximately 2,646 pounds of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$34.8 million.

Thetis pursued two cases while patrolling the region and conducted law enforcement operations through close coordination with multiple maritime patrol aircraft and other Coast Guard assets. With the Farragut, Thetis interdicted more than 2,094 pounds of cocaine.

In another case, Thetis interdicted a go-fast vessel, resulting in the detainment of two suspected narcotics traffickers and the seizure of 441 pounds of cocaine.

“The cases we encountered on this patrol emphasize the importance of collaboration across departments and agencies in deterring the flow of illegal narcotics into the United States,” said Master Chief Petty Officer AJ Gibson, the command chief of Thetis. “I am extremely proud of the adaptability and determination displayed by our crew in successfully completing the mission.”

Thetis is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter with a crew of 100. Their primary missions are counter-narcotics operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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## Red Sea Update

The logo for SEAPOWER, with 'SEA' in light blue and 'POWER' in red, in a bold, sans-serif font.

The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States



USCENTCOM

Feb. 23, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. - On Feb. 22, at approximately 5 p.m. (Sanaa time), U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) forces conducted self-defense strikes against four Iranian-backed Houthi unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and two mobile anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCM) that were prepared to launch from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen towards the Red Sea.

On Feb. 23, between 3:30 and 5 a.m., CENTCOM forces shot down three Houthi one-way attack UAV near several commercial ships operating in the Red Sea. There was no damage to any ships.

CENTCOM forces identified the UAVs and ASCMs and determined they presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and to the U.S. Navy ships in the region. These actions will protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S. Navy and merchant vessels.

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## **R2S Breaks Ground on Iron Dome Manufacturing Facility in Arkansas**



Left to right: Clint O'Neal, executive director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission; Kevin Perry is president and Chief Executive Officer of R2S

Pini Yungman, Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Air & Missile Defense Division, Rafael; Annabel Flores, deputy president of Land & Air Defense Systems at Raytheon; Senator John Boozman, R-Arkansas; Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders; Rep. Bruce Westerman, R-Arkansas; Marine Brigadier General Stephen Lightfoot; James Lee Silliman, executive director of the Ouachita Partnership for Economic Development; and Calhoun County Judge Floyd Nutt

East Camden, Ark. (Feb. 21, 2024) – R2S has broken ground on its new manufacturing facility in East Camden, Arkansas. The facility will produce the Tamir missile for the Iron Dome Weapon System and its variant, the SkyHunter missile to be used by U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. allies.

R2S is a joint venture between Raytheon and Rafael Advanced Defense System. Raytheon is an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business.

This facility represents an investment of \$63 million for R2S and will create up to 60 new jobs in the region. The R2S

facility will build on RTX's existing production capacity at the Highland Industrial Park.

Company representatives joined Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders and state officials to announce the project in October 2023.

"It's an honor to join R2S for today's groundbreaking, just as it was an honor to announce this project in October and meet with company representatives last summer at the Paris Air Show," said Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders. "This investment will be a boon for the local economy: \$63 million and 60 new jobs. More than that, our world is a whole lot less secure than it used to be, and this facility makes our country safer. Thank you to all who made this announcement possible, and thank you to the team in Camden for helping our state stand out."

"Today, we mark a significant milestone in the Iron Dome program – one of the most important and advanced air defense systems in the world. The establishment of the new facility is the result of strong cooperation between Rafael and Raytheon, who joined forces about 18 years ago," said Pini Yungman, Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Air & Missile Defense Division, Rafael. "We have built and maintained fruitful collaboration based on the shared vision of both companies, committed to the highest level of technological innovation. The United States is a true partner; and local production, which we have aspired to for many years, will strengthen the partnership while safeguarding the interests of all sides. I am confident that we are ready for further cooperation in the future aimed at ensuring the security of the citizens of Israel and America."

"R2S is pleased to announce today that it's almost doubling the capital investment for the project here in Camden, Arkansas from \$33 million to \$63 million, and it may create up to 60 new jobs. This increase represents the commitment by both partners to support this critical project for the USMC

and to our allies around the world that depend on a reliable air defense system,” said Annabel Flores, deputy president of Land & Air Defense Systems, Raytheon.

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## **SECNAV Del Toro Announces Effort to Deter Adversarial Foreign Investment Risks, Protect Innovation and Technology**



22 February 2024

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced the formation of the Department of the Navy (DON) Maritime Economic Deterrence Executive Council (MEDEC) during a panel discussion hosted by the Aspen Institute and powered by the Bloomberg Foundation, Feb. 22.

MEDEC, co-chaired by our Principal Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (RD&A), Vice Admiral Francis Morley, and Chief of Staff Chris Diaz, will focus on mitigating adversarial foreign investment risks, innovation and technology protection, supply chain integrity initiatives, and coordination and protection of research efforts.

MEDEC is DON's acknowledgement of these risks and represents a commitment to identify and address them early, for the safety of our personnel, as well as the security of our allies and partners, depends on us getting this right.

"MEDEC's work is more than just preserving military advantages for our Sailors, Marines, and civilians. It is an effort to better support the business and investment communities that we rely on to design, test, and build the technologies and capabilities we adopt and field. The risks posed by adversarial capital investments and intellectual property theft affect all of us – from investors and industry leaders to our present-day Sailors, Marines, and civilians who support the DON," said Secretary Del Toro.

MEDEC, empowered to act by authorities already granted to the DON, is a component of Secretary Del Toro's whole-of-government national Maritime Statecraft approach, which calls for building up industries that are vital to our nation's efforts to re-build and sustain our comprehensive maritime power.

"It is imperative to bring together representatives from within the defense industrial ecosystem in a unified, focused

council to address Maritime Economic Deterrence within our department, allowing the DON to better synchronize our efforts and be leaders in the larger Department of Defense (DoD) Economic Deterrence initiative,” said Secretary Del Toro.

As the DON broadens its engagements with investment and business communities that are responsible for driving advances in critical technologies, MEDEC’s work becomes more important to ensure that the companies with which engage are properly shielded from adversarial influence.

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## **SECNAV Del Toro Names Ship in Honor of Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees James D. Fairbanks**





21 February 2024

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that the future Navajo-class Towing, Salvage, and Rescue (T-ATS) ship will be named in honor of [James D. Fairbanks](#), member of the Chippewa Tribe and the 13th Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees.

Secretary Del Toro made the announcement during a ship naming ceremony at the National Museum of the American Indian, Feb. 21.

The naming selection of the future USNS James. D. Fairbanks (T-ATS 13) follows the tradition of naming towing, salvage and rescue ships after prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.

“The names of thousands of indigenous heroes who have served with distinction in our military – and especially our Navy and Marine Corps – echo and inspire us still,” said Secretary Del Toro. “This Navajo-class ship bearing the name James D.

Fairbanks will carry his legacy of service forward and symbolize his dedication to the Seabees and our Nation."

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Chairman of the White Earth Indian Reservation Michael Fairbanks joined Secretary Del Toro for the ceremony honoring James D. Fairbanks, who was born and raised on the White Earth Indian Reservation in Northern Minnesota. Both spoke about the honor and meaning behind the naming of the Navy's newest T-ATS.

"What the Navy knows, and what White Earth [Nation] knows, is that stories matter. That history matters. That traditions matter. Honoring warriors like FORCM Fairbanks matters," said Governor Walz.

"Force Master Chief James Fairbanks was in our language an Ogiichidaa, a Warrior for our People – the Anishinaabeg, and the citizens of the United States. He served with distinction and valor with great honor," said Michael Fairbanks, Chairman of the White Earth Indian Reservation. "A Warrior in Native American culture holds a great deal of respect by tribal members. James Fairbanks was a true Warrior that represented the White Earth Nation and the U.S. Navy with honor. He unknowingly became a great role model for not only White Earth youth, but for all Native youth. Due to his exemplary leadership, he has earned the right to have a ship named in his honor."

Born Jan. 9, 1952, James D. Fairbanks served in both the U. S. Navy and Marine Corps. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1970 and served as an ordnanceman with 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines, until he was honorably discharged in 1972. He then worked as a civilian welder until 1977 before enlisting in the Navy. Fairbanks served with an amphibious construction battalion (ACB) until his honorable discharge in 1979. In 1986, he resumed Naval service as a Seabee. While deployed to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Fairbanks received the Bronze Star for meritorious leadership under proximate enemy fire and

threat of enemy attack. From 2005 to 2008, Fairbanks served as the 13th Force Master Chief for the Seabees, the highest-ranking enlisted Seabee and first Native American to hold this position.

Along with the ship's name, Secretary Del Toro also announced the sponsors for the future USNS James D. Fairbanks as Paulette Fairbanks Molin, the late Fairbanks' sister, and Mrs. Susan Sharpe, the spouse of the 19th Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees. They, in their role as sponsors, will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew.

"The USNS James D. Fairbanks is the namesake of a great leader, one who worked selflessly and tirelessly to serve our great country throughout his extraordinary career," said Fairbanks Molin. "He was a builder, but not just any builder, he was a Seabee."

Navajo-class ships will provide ocean-going tug, salvage, and rescue capabilities to support Fleet operations. The current capabilities are provided by Powhatan-class T-ATF Fleet Tugs and Safeguard-class T-ARS Rescue and Salvage vessels, which began reaching the end of their expected service lives in 2020. Navajo-class ships will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems.

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## **HII Begins Topside EMALS Testing on John F. Kennedy**

# (CVN 79) at Newport News Shipbuilding



## John F. Kennedy CVN 79 Dead Load Testing

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., Feb. 21, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) announced today that its Newport News Shipbuilding division (NNS) recently began topside testing of the electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS) on aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy (CVN 79).

EMALS, first integrated into USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), replaces the existing steam catapults currently in use on the U.S. Navy's Nimitz-class aircraft carriers.

Following successful “no-load” testing on catapults one and two, known as the ‘bow cats,’ the NNS team, alongside the John F. Kennedy crew, has now started “dead-load” testing. In this phase, large, wheeled, car-like structures of graduated weights up to 80,000 pounds to simulate the weight of actual aircraft are launched off the carrier’s bow into the James River. They are then retrieved and relaunched until the conclusion of the test program to ensure the catapults are

ready for their primary intended purpose: to launch all carrier-based fixed wing aircraft flown by the U.S. Navy.

The first dead loads used in this testing have special significance. Family members of shipbuilders signed them with messages of congratulations and gratitude during the shipyard's Family Day held in October.

Photos and video accompanying this release is available at: <https://hii.com/news/hii-newport-news-shipbuilding-carrier-cvn-79-dead-load-testing/>.

"As we make sustained progress in the construction, testing and turnover of John F. Kennedy, reaching the dead load testing phase is a visual demonstration of how far we've come," said Lucas Hicks, vice president, John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) new construction aircraft carrier program. "It is evident from the thousands of written messages that our shipbuilders and their families appreciate and understand the significance of our work. We are proud of the incredible teamwork that has brought us to this point, and remain committed to delivering this mighty aircraft carrier to the fleet so the crew can carry out the important mission ahead."

"The first dead-load launch off the flight deck is a historic moment for PCU John F. Kennedy, and a testament to the power of great teamwork between our JFK crew, HII team, and NAVAIR engineers," said CAPT Colin Day, commanding officer, PCU John F. Kennedy (CVN 79). "I'm particularly proud of our Air Department and the hard-working Aviation Boatswain Mates who worked tirelessly alongside the engineering and testing teams to get us to this critical moment."

Traveling more than 300 feet down the catapult track at more than 150 miles per hour, EMALS provides expanded operational capability at reduced costs, higher launch-energy capacity, and more accurate end-speed control, with a smooth acceleration at both high and low speeds. The launch profiles



have been optimized to reduce stress on the aircraft, in contrast to the sudden acceleration of steam catapults.

Kennedy is the second Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carrier under construction at NNS, which is the nation's sole designer, builder and refueler of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. In addition to Kennedy, two other Ford-class carriers are under construction at NNS: Enterprise (CVN 80) and Doris Miller (CVN 81).

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## **Cubic Awarded Contract from NAVAIR for KnightLink Systems**

SAN DIEGO, February 20, 2024 (NewsWire.com) – [Cubic Defense](#) has secured an Indefinite-Delivery/Indefinite-Quantity (IDIQ) contract to maintain, upgrade and support deployment of the Full Motion Video (FMV) System, known as KnightLink, for the Naval Air Systems Command's (NAVAIR) MH-60 Sierra (MH-60S) helicopter fleet.

"The KnightLink system for the MH-60S is a testament to the continued success of our low-rate production program and how the system enables mission capability at the highest level, thanks to robust hardware advancements that provide improved FMV acquisition and dissemination," said Russ Marsh, Vice President and General Manager of Secure Communications, [Cubic Defense](#). "Our mission is to support and empower the warfighter with state-of-the-art tools to maintain vital communications."

The KnightLink software provides a wide range of capabilities and video support including operational, vendor, flight test, laboratory aid and maintenance. The KnightLink hardware



includes the KnightLink Weapons Replaceable Assemblies (WRAs) and applicable cabling, as well as the procurement of additional hardware, interim sparing and Peculiar Ground Support Equipment (PGSE) to support fleet introduction.

The contract will provide several categories of deliveries, including software enhancements, hardware reinforcement and general maintenance. The sustainment of the FMV system and overall product improvement will lead to enhanced operations and fleet operability. KnightLink systems are already being developed and delivered from Cubic's Huntsville, Alabama, site.

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## **USS Delbert D. Black Returns To Homeport Following A Surge Deployment**



[By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jimmy Ivy](#)

20 February 2024

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) returned to its homeport of Naval Station Mayport, February 18, 2024, following a near 3-month surge deployment.

The ship deployed Dec. 1 to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe area of operations as part of deterrence efforts in the region following the outbreak of conflict in Israel.

Deploying with Mayport sister ship USS The Sullivans (DDG 68), Delbert D. Black demonstrated the operational practicality of relieving carrier strike group warships while on station. Upon entering the Mediterranean Sea, Delbert D. Black and The Sullivans relieved USS McFaul (DDG 74) and USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) and joined the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group. Drawing on crew proficiency and lessons from a Pre-Deployment Emergent Integrated Training event, Delbert D. Black was immediately capable of performing escort, screening, and

warfare commander functions expected of Carrier Strike Group units.

“The seamless integration of Delbert D. Black into ongoing operations established proof of concept for sustained and continuous combat operations at sea, which enhancing the surface Navy’s ability to fight and win,” said Cmdr. Adam Stein, commanding officer of Delbert D. Black.

Following the departure of Gerald R. Ford, Delbert D. Black continued presence operations in the Mediterranean Sea, enabling options and flexibility to operational commanders in theatre. Delbert D. Black went on to integrate operations with elements of Standing NATO Maritime Group Two, conduct joint training evolutions with the Italian Navy, and provide ballistic missile defense to the European continent.

“For many Delbert D. Black Trailblazers, departing for a surge deployment can be jarring, but I quickly learned how resilient the Sailors of this command were,” said Master Chief Keona Johnson, Command Master Chief (CMC) of Delbert D. Black. “We were ready for anything on this deployment, but still maintained high morale while answering our nations call. This crew was able to maximize qualifications and become stronger warfighters. I am a proud CMC because of this team and look forward to sailing safe again with all of my Sailors!”

During the 79 days underway, the ship’s crew conducted seven underway replenishments, logged more than 180 flight hours, sailed more than 21,000 nautical miles, and safely transferred 1.2 million gallons of fuel with zero mishaps. The crew operated at sea for a continuous period of 46 days through the holidays. Delbert D. Black’s Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) team hosted multiple events to help the crew keep their spirits up while away from their families.

“With the surge deployment, the crew spent the holidays at sea, but that did not stop the holiday spirit,” said Ens.

Rachel Anthony, Delbert D. Black's MWR Fun Boss. "While underway the crew enjoyed 20 MWR events, which included redecorating the main deck in holiday decorations, a lip sync battle and some delicious grilled cheese made by the command triad."

USS Delbert D. Black commenced their trans-Atlantic voyage the beginning of February to return to Mayport, coming home to a warm reception by friends and family on the pier.

"I was fortunate to return home from deployment on my birthday this year and was greeted by my family," said Damage Controlman 1st Class Tyler Pascale. "Seeing the birthday signs and welcome home signs along with my nephews smiles makes it all worth it."

Delbert D. Black is an Arleigh Burke-Class destroyer named for the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON), the Navy's most senior enlisted rank. MCPON Black is known as a trailblazer for his initiatives that improved quality of life for the Navy's junior ranks, and established the importance and value of having an empowered enlisted force in the Navy.