

Pentagon: FDA Vaccine Approval Opens Way for Mandatory Military Vaccinations



U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Orbie VanCurine, a native of Mansfield, Texas, with Combat Logistics Battalion 22 (CLB-22), prepares a COVID-19 vaccine during the opening of the state-run, federally supported Center City Community Vaccination Center at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia on March 3, 2021. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / 1st Lt. Kevin Stapleton / Combat Logistics Battalion 22*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine paves the way for the Defense Department to require all military personnel to be vaccinated against the coronavirus strain, officials say.

Because the three available anti-COVID vaccines were only approved for human application by the FDA under an emergency use authorization (EUA), no one – including members of the military – could be compelled to get vaccinated. More than 73% of active duty personnel had received at least one shot of the vaccines by mid-August. However, thousands more service men and women declined to roll up their sleeves for inoculation.

"Now that the Pfizer vaccine has been approved, the department is prepared to issue updated guidance requiring all service members to be vaccinated," Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby told reporters Aug. 23. He said a timeline for completing vaccination of the total force would be provided in coming days.

"We're going to move forward, making that vaccine mandatory,"

Kirby said. "We're preparing guidance to the force right now. In other words, how we want to see it get done. We're working through that right now."

Kirby noted Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced Aug. 9 that with the increasing spread of more lethal COVID variants, he intended to mandate vaccination as soon as the FDA licensed one of the three available anti-COVID vaccines from Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson. If none received FDA licensure by mid-September, Austin said he would seek a waiver from President Joe Biden to make vaccination mandatory for the military, which Biden indicated he would grant.

In announcing FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 in individuals 16 years of age and older, acting FDA Commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock said, "the public can be very confident that this vaccine meets the high standards of safety and effectiveness, and manufacturing quality the FDA requires of an approved product."

For service members with religious objections to receiving the vaccine, exemptions are governed by the individual military services' regulations, Kirby said Aug. 10, adding there are provisions for medical exemptions to mandatory vaccination, including pre-existing medical conditions.

Meanwhile, the number of COVID-19-related deaths among uniformed personnel has climbed to 34 as of Aug. 18, including the first death in the Marine Corps.

Sgt. Edmar J. Ismael died on Aug. 14 in Seattle due to complications related to COVID-19. Ismael, 27, a native of Alaska, was an electrician assigned to Support Platoon, Engineer Support Company, 8th Engineer Support Battalion, II Marine Expeditionary Force, according to a Marine Corps statement.

Across the uniformed services there has been a total of 222,138 cases of COVID-19, resulting in 1,998 service members

requiring hospitalization while 211,034 have recovered.

USS Billings and USNS Burlington Support Haiti Relief



An MH-60R Seahawk helicopter, assigned “Easyriders” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 37 delivers cargo to the Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport USNS Burlington (T-EPF-10) Dec. 10, 2020. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Maria G. Llanos*
CARIBBEAN SEA – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15) and USNS Burlington (T-EPF-10), a spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ship, operated by Military Sealift Command are supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations off the coast Haiti, Aug. 22, the U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet said in an Aug. 23 release.

Both ships are supporting U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) following a 7.2-magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on Aug. 14, 2021.

“As the maritime component for this mission, we are on scene ready to provide whatever support we can to USAID,” said Capt. Peter Ehlers, Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC). “Our ships, aircraft, and personnel are ready to provide relief to the people of Haiti.”

Burlington is utilizing its ScanEagle unmanned aerial system

to obtain aerial images of the destruction on the ground which helps relief planners determine where supplies are needed, what airfields can be used, and what roadways are accessible.

Both Burlington and Billings, along with her embarked MH-60S Seahawk assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28, will be prepared for any additional tasking such as afloat refueling from U.S. Southern Command Joint Task Force-Haiti, commanded by Navy Rear Adm. Keith Davids, which was stood up to coordinate military support.

They join other U.S. Southern Command components and U.S. Coast Guard ships already on station, in addition to allies and partners from the Netherlands, France, and United Kingdom.

USS Billings and USNS Burlington have been to deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations to support Joint Interagency Task Force South's mission, which includes counter-illicit drug trafficking missions in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command's joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American region.

Joint Force Command Norfolk,

U.S. 2nd Fleet Change of Command



Vice Adm. Daniel Dwyer reads his orders during his change of command ceremony aboard the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) Aug. 20. Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis was relieved by Vice Adm. Daniel Dwyer as Commander, Joint Force Command Norfolk, Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet, and Director, Combined Joint operations from the Sea – Centre of Excellence. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kris R. Lindstrom*

NORFOLK, Va. – Joint Force Command Norfolk and U.S. 2nd Fleet held a change of command ceremony aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), Aug. 20, the fleet said in an Aug. 22 release.

Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis was relieved by Vice Adm. Daniel Dwyer as commander, Joint Force Command Norfolk, commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet, and director, Combined Joint Operations from the Sea – Centre of Excellence (CJOS-COE).

“Today’s ceremony marks a changing tide. So often in life a beginning or ending of an era goes unmarked, and it is not until much later that we can look back and say ‘that is where it all began,’ or, ‘that is when things changed,’” Lewis said. “I cannot overstate the amount of work that goes into building two commands of this nature. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people have supported both 2nd fleet and Joint Force Command Norfolk since establishment, and a ‘thank you’ is truly not enough.”

On Sept. 30, 2011, after 65 years of faithful service to the U.S. Navy, 2nd Fleet was disestablished until then-Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. John Richardson, formally reestablished the command during an official ceremony on Aug 24, 2018. Lewis, a native of Los Altos, California, served as the first

commander of the re-established 2nd Fleet, and was later named the commander of the newly established NATO command, JFC Norfolk.

Prior to assuming the responsibilities of 2nd Fleet and JFC Norfolk, Dwyer's previous assignment was the director of plans and policy at U.S. Cyber Command at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland.

"Under the exceptional leadership of Adm. Lewis, JFC Norfolk and 2nd Fleet have become the commands that our nation and alliance both wanted and needed," said Dwyer. "During this era of strategic competition, it is evident that the Atlantic and Arctic play a critical role in reinforcing common maritime norms, providing for economic freedom for North America and Europe, and for the ultimate goal of continued peace."

Adm. Christopher Grady, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, exercises operational authority over 2nd Fleet and CJOS COE, and was a guest speaker and presiding officer during the ceremony.

"Provided only one year to operationalize a fleet battle staff capable of conducting sustained major combat operations in the Atlantic and High North, and with only 11 officers and four enlisted personnel at the start, Vice Adm. Lewis' deft leadership and tireless efforts resulted in Second Fleet achieving initial operating capability in just nine months," Grady said. "And true to his vision, he designed a fully integrated team that is lean, agile, and lethal in all domains and across the spectrum of conflict."

Gen. Tod Wolters, the commander of U.S. European Command and NATO's Supreme Allied Command Europe exercises operational authority over JFC Norfolk, and also spoke and presided during the ceremony.

"Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis comprehensively led his force and found a way to make this organization better through his sheer

willingness and will power,” said Wolters. “He found a way to take his component of JFC Norfolk and mesh it with all the components of NATO organizations and other commands to make them quicker, smarter and faster.”

JFC Norfolk provides a critical capability to NATO, providing for fuller situational awareness to the SACEUR based in Belgium. The command mission is to secure the strategic lines of communication between North America and Europe.

Second Fleet exercises operational authorities over assigned ships, aircraft, and landing forces on the East Coast and throughout the Atlantic.

CJOS COE is a maritime focused NATO-accredited military think tanks established in May 2006 and with 13 member nations represented on the staff. CJOS is the only center of excellence in the U.S., and one of 25 NATO centers worldwide, whose collective wealth of international experience, expertise and best practices helps to improve alliance readiness for the future.

Del Toro Taps Berger to Perform Duties of the Undersecretary of the Navy



Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. Kathleen H. Hicks swears in Meredith Berger as the assistant secretary of the Navy at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., Aug. 5, 2021. *DOD / U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jack Sanders*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro

selected Meredith Berger to perform the duties of the undersecretary of the Navy effective Aug. 25, the Navy announced in an Aug. 23 release.

Berger who is currently serving as the assistant secretary of the Navy for energy, installations and environment, will relieve James F. Geurts, who will retire Aug. 28 after 34 years of government service.

"The Department of the Navy has been strengthened by the wisdom and leadership generated by Mr. Geurts," said Del Toro. "I value his commitment to our personnel in uniform, his service to our great nation and his teamwork and communication amongst the personnel in this building. I know that Ms. Berger will carry on this strong tradition of collaboration as she performs the duties of the undersecretary of the Navy."

Geurts served for 22 years in a variety of acquisition positions, focused on engineering and program management while on active duty in the Air Force. Afterwards, he served as the U.S. Special Operations Command acquisition executive before joining the department in December 2017 as the assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition. He was selected to perform the duties of the undersecretary of the Navy in February 2021.

"It's been an honor serving the Sailors, Marines and their families," said Geurts. "I have great confidence that the Department of the Navy team is well positioned to take on the many challenges they will face in the uncertain future."

Berger holds a bachelor of arts in American Studies and Spanish from Vanderbilt University, a juris doctor from Nova Southeastern University and a master's degree in public administration from the Harvard Kennedy School. She has served in various positions in state and federal government to include the Florida Department of Financial

Services, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Defense. Berger served as the deputy chief of staff to the secretary of the navy from 2014 to 2017.

“I am driven by the mission of supporting the department’s nearly one million Sailors, Marines, and civilians who do the brave work of defending our nation,” Berger said. “Ensuring they have the resources necessary to tackle current and future challenges, improve warfighting, and build resiliency and readiness is my top priority.”

US, Singapore Reaffirm LCS, P-8 Rotational Deployments



Vice President Kamala Harris is greeted by Cmdr. Brandon Cornes, commanding officer, aboard the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Tulsa (LCS 16), Aug. 23, 2021 in Singapore. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Richard Cho*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The United States and Singapore have reaffirmed a strong military partnership that includes continuing rotational deployments of U.S. naval units to Singapore, the White House said.

Singapore, an island nation at the tip of the Malay peninsula in the South China Sea, hosts a U.S. naval logistics presence at a base in Changi, one that has hosted the first rotational deployments of the U.S. Navy’s littoral combat ships. The location’s importance to regional security has increased with the development in recent years of Chinese bases built in atolls in the South China Sea.

In an Aug. 23 statement, the White House announced cooperation with Singapore on a number of issues, including military partnership.

“Singapore provides critical access for U.S. military units deployed to the region, hosting nearly 1,000 service members, civilians, and dependents which support port visits and sorties transiting the country’s military airfields – while Singapore has the second largest military presence in the United States of any foreign partner, with 1,000 Singapore military personnel and dependents stationed across the country,” the statement noted.

“The United States and Singapore remain deeply committed to working together to uphold regional peace, security, and stability,” the statement said. “The United States and Singapore reached agreements that reaffirm the strength of our bilateral Strategic Partnership, the critical importance of our security relationship, and the U.S. enduring commitment to maintaining a robust presence in Southeast Asia, including through rotational deployments of U.S. P-8 aircraft and littoral combat ships to Singapore.”

Navy’s UISS Completes Initial Operational Test and Evaluation



A developmental, early variant of the Common Unmanned Surface Vehicle (CUSV) autonomously conducts maneuvers on the Elizabeth River during its demonstration during Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2020 at Naval Station Norfolk. *U.S. NAVY*

/ Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Grant G. Grady

WASHINGTON – The Program Executive Office for Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) has completed the ship-based Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) for the Unmanned Influence Sweep System (UISS) program onboard the littoral combat ship USS Manchester (LCS 14) off of the California coast, the Program Executive Office-Unmanned and Small Combatants Public Affairs said in an Aug. 23 release.

The ship-based IOT&E, conducted in May and June, included end-to-end minesweeping missions versus Navy Instrumented Threat Targets and demonstrated UISS supportability and integration with the LCS seaframe. The IOT&E team conducted pier-side and underway launch and recovery, maintainability demonstrations, and end-to-end mission execution in support of Initial Operational Capability and delivery of capability to the Fleet.

Designed for the LCS as part of the mine countermeasures mission package, the UISS consists of a mine-countermeasures unmanned surface vehicle (MCM USV) and a towed minesweeping payload for influence sweeping of magnetic, acoustic, and magnetic/acoustic combination mines. UISS can also be launched from vessels of opportunity or from shore.

“Completion of this operational test event achieves a major milestone for the UISS Program of Record and demonstrates continued progress to fielding the full capability of the MCM Mission Package aboard LCS,” said Capt. Godfrey “Gus” Weekes, LCS Mission Modules program manager (PMS420). “The test event demonstrated for the first time both the capability and sustainability of a minesweeping capability using an unmanned system from an LCS in an operationally realistic environment. I want to highlight the adaptability and dedication of the test teams across many organizations in executing these critical tests despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19.”

LCS MCM sailors performed all operations during the UISS IOT&E

events, including shore- and ship-based launch and retrieval, command and control, system maintenance, mission planning and post-mission analysis. Pending data analysis and concurrence of operational effectiveness and suitability, the next phase will be approval by PMS420 for UISS to proceed to Initial Operational Capability.

USS Gerald R. Ford Commences Planned Incremental Availability



The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) departed Naval Station Norfolk to transit to Newport News Shipyard in support of her Planned Incremental Availability (PIA), a six-month period of modernization, maintenance, and repairs, Aug. 20, 2021. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class William Spears)

NORFOLK, Va. – The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) departed Naval Station Norfolk to make the transit to Newport News Shipyard in support of her Planned Incremental Availability (PIA), a six-month period of modernization, maintenance, and repairs, Aug. 20, 2021, the ship's public affairs office said in an Aug. 21 release.

Ford's PIA was scheduled to serve as the final maintenance phase for the ship prior to her inaugural deployment next year.

"Team Wolverine is ready for this brief but important maintenance period in Newport News, because we're pumped for what comes next," said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's

commanding officer. "This is a first-in-class warship that will lead the future of carrier naval aviation for years to come, and this PIA is the last milestone for us to complete prior to our first work ups and deployment."

The move to Newport News comes on the heels a fast-paced and successful 21 months of post-delivery test and trials (PDT&T) and Full Ship Shock Trials (FSST), an intense testing and trials period crucial to ensuring the overall deployment readiness of Ford and improving upon the construction and ship trial process for follow-on carriers in the class, among them: the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), Enterprise (CVN 80), and Doris Miller (CVN 81).

During PDT&T the crew completed all required testing, accomplished planned improvements and maintenance ahead of schedule, and learned valuable lessons to increase the reliability of Ford-class systems. At the same time, the ship also served as the sole East Coast platform for conducting carrier qualifications, qualifying more than 350 pilots.

Earlier this month Ford completed the final explosive event of FSST. During the four-month testing evolution, the first-in-class aircraft carrier withstood the impact of three 40,000-pound underwater blasts, released at distances progressively closer to the ship to confirm that it can continue to meet demanding mission requirements under the harsh conditions it might encounter in battle.

"This ship and the crew performed exceptionally well during shock trials, and much of the credit goes to the ship designers and builders who put in the technical rigor to ensure Ford-class carriers will sustain Naval Aviation for generations to come," said Lanzilotta.

The Gerald R. Ford-class represents the first major design investment in aircraft carriers since the 1960s. CVN 78 is engineered to support new technologies and a modern air wing

essential to deterring and defeating near-peer adversaries in a complex maritime environment.

ONR Awards General Atomics Contract for LDUUV Motor, Energy Storage System



The First publicly released photo of ONR's Large Displacement Unmanned Underwater Vehicle – Innovative Naval Prototype (LDUUV-INP), from 2015. *OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH*

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced in an Aug. 20 release that it has been awarded a design contract from the Office of Naval Research (ONR) to develop a concept for integrating a unique GA-EMS motor and next generation power system into a Large Displacement Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (LDUUV).

The planned systems will provide the LDUUV with power for propulsion and an energy storage system to support improved system performance necessary for future LDUUV operations.

“Our energy and battery systems have been successfully demonstrated and proven safe for use on a variety of underwater manned and unmanned vehicles,” stated Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS. “Over the course of the last two years, the motor has undergone lab testing, and power system has completed underwater testing. Both systems have performed successfully, demonstrating capabilities to both power and propel underwater vehicles. Together, the systems are proving to be key technologies to provide the combined power, energy density, and improved vehicle performance necessary to help

meet the objectives.”

Development and testing of both motor and power systems continues in order to optimize performance. An LDUUV with the integrated motor and power propulsion system eventually will undergo at-sea testing during a later phase of the program.

USS Curtis Wilbur Returning Home After 25 Years in Japan



The fleet replenishment oiler USNS Tippecanoe (T-AO 199) conducts a replenishment at sea with USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer. *U.S. NAVY / Christopher Bosch*

YOKOSUKA, Japan – USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54) departed Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, Aug. 18, following 25 years of service as a forward-deployed ship to U.S. 7th Fleet, the fleet said in a release.

Curtis Wilbur arrived in Yokosuka, Japan in September 1996 and operated in the Indo-Pacific while assigned to Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy’s largest forward-deployed DESRON and U.S. 7th Fleet’s principal surface force. The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer is en route to San Diego, scheduled for routine maintenance and operations as a part of U.S. 3rd Fleet.

“Curtis Wilbur has been a Destroyer Squadron 15 mainstay in the Forward Deployed Naval Forces for the past 25 years,” said Cmdr. Anthony Massey, USS Curtis Wilbur’s commanding officer. “She executed countless operations and exercises in support of United States’ strategic interests and maintained free and

open Indo-Pacific sea lanes while navigating the most highly contested waterways in the world.”

Curtis Wilbur’s numerous years in U.S. 7th Fleet included many highlights across all warfare areas and helped forge lasting relationships with partner nations and allies in the region. The ship participated in multiple bilateral anti-submarine operations with the Republic of Korea navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, to include submarine detection exercises and joint anti-submarine warfare tactics. as well as participated in various bilateral operations across all domains with the Royal Australian Navy, the Royal Thai navy and the Royal Saudi navy.

Curtis Wilbur integrated with multiple U.S. Navy battle groups, strike groups, and expeditionary strike groups in surface, subsurface, fire support, Ballistic Missile Defense, and air and strike warfare operations. The ship’s most recent operations include enforcing U.N. Sanctions against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, routine operations in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, Freedom of Navigation Operations and bilateral operations with the Royal Australian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. Additionally, Curtis Wilbur participated in multiple joint operations with the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force.

“As the first Aegis destroyer forward-deployed to Japan, Curtis Wilbur leaves behind a legacy of warfighting excellence and operational performance that set the standard for every destroyer that followed,” said Capt. Chase Sargeant, Commander, Task Force (CTF) 71. “For the last 25 years, the ‘Steel Hammer of the Fleet’ boldly sailed the Indo-Pacific as part of the long grey line of warships of Destroyer Squadron 15 that maintained the freedom of the seas and protection of our national interests.”

Curtis Wilbur also spent time in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operation conducting maritime interception operations in the

Arabian Sea in support of U.N. resolutions in the region, and later supported Operation Enduring Freedom with the Kitty Hawk Battle Group.

Curtis Wilbur provided humanitarian assistance to the people of Dili, East Timor, and supported some of the first on-site help for Operation Tomodachi following the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami.

Massey stated the memories Curtis Wilbur Sailors have made in U.S. 7th Fleet, and especially Japan, will be enjoyed for long after the ship leaves the region.

“While forward-deployed, many Curtis Wilbur Sailors have developed lifelong friendships, met spouses, and started families in Japan,” said Massey. “I cannot express how deeply thankful I am to the people of Japan for making us part of their family and letting us enjoy all the great things Japan has to offer – from its cuisine and towering landscapes to the beautiful countryside.”

With arrival of USS Higgins (DDG 76) and USS Howard (DDG 83) to their new forward-deployed location in Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan on Aug. 16, Curtis Wilbur is scheduled to join U.S. 3rd Fleet, which leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary for an effective global Navy. U.S. 3rd Fleet works consistently with U.S. 7th Fleet to complement one another and provide commanders capable, ready assets across the spectrum of military operations in the Indo-Pacific.

USS Arlington Arrives in Haiti to Support USAID



The San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24) transits the Atlantic Ocean Aug. 14, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jesse Schwab*

CARIBBEAN SEA – The San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24) arrived in U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations off the coast Haiti to begin humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, Aug. 21, said Lt. Laura Price, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet.

Arlington departed Naval Station Norfolk Aug. 17 to support U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) following a 7.2-magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on Aug. 14, 2021.

“Our initial focus is to concentrate on saving lives while alleviating suffering for the people of Haiti,” said Capt. Eric Kellum, commanding officer of Arlington. “Assisting those in need due to a natural disaster is something this team is trained and ready to do. Our presence here demonstrates our nation’s commitment to supporting our partners in this part of the world.”

Arlington has approximately 600 Sailors and Marines which includes service members embarked from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment to provide lifesaving and humanitarian assistance support. The ship is augmented by two MH-60 Seahawk helicopters from the “Chargers” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 26, a landing craft, utility (LCU) from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 2, Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 2, in addition to staff from Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 40, and amphibious and aviation planners.

The mission forms part of an inter-agency framework lending aid to Haiti, including the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), which was deployed Aug. 14 immediately after the earthquake occurred. U.S. Southern Command Joint Task Force-Haiti, commanded by Navy Rear Adm. Keith Davids was stood up to coordinate military support, with Arlington deployed as a maritime component.

Arlington joins other U.S. Southern Command components and U.S. Coast Guard ships already on station, in addition to allies and partners from the Netherlands, France, and United Kingdom.

USS Arlington, homeported in Norfolk, Virginia, is part of Expeditionary Strike Group 2, whose mission is to provide timely, operational, amphibious expertise in support of national tasking to sustain maritime security and defense of the nation.