

# SOCOM Commander: Navy SEALs to Focus on Strategic Reconnaissance, Working with Partners



A U.S. Navy SEAL throws an M18 colored smoke grenade during a sweep of a training compound during Sentry Rescue IV, a joint command initiative to develop tactics, techniques and procedures for personnel recovery scenarios, Arkansas, Aug. 26, 2021. *U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD / Tech. Sgt. Brigette Waltermire*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The commander of the nation's special operations forces said the Navy's SEALs will have an important role in the future in enabling commanders to understand the enemy's capabilities and intentions.

The SEALs, along with the special operations forces of the other U.S. military services, have had a super-sized role in

the Southwest Asian wars since 9-11, serving at the forefront of U.S. and coalition forces in the low-intensity conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and other locations.

With U.S. focus on deterring a future conflict with China and shifting the focus to high-end operations, the 70-000-strong special operations forces (SOF) also are shifting focus.

Speaking to the Military Reporters and Editors at a symposium in Arlington, Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, said the SOF are “more integrated than ever before,” including with inter-agency partners.

Clarke said he sees Navy SEALs as ‘working with partners, able to train, and also to conduct another key mission or activity, which is strategic reconnaissance. They can get in places that no one else can get they can be in the littorals – in subsea/subsurface domain – and are critical.”

Clarke said SOF are more than just a direct-action raid force, but the force will still maintain that capability, one which “we have honed to an exquisite degree.”

The commander said the SOF benefits from working closely with the general-purpose forces and that his command will look for every opportunity to leverage high-end training for its forces.

---

**Submarine      USS      Connecticut**  
**Grounded      on      Uncharted**

# Seamount, 7th Fleet Says



The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) departs Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for sea trials following a maintenance availability in this 2016 photograph. *U.S. NAVY / Thiep Van Nguyen II*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The nuclear-powered attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) “grounded an uncharted seamount,” 7th Fleet Public Affairs said in a Nov. 1 statement.

The Connecticut’s incident occurred on the afternoon of Oct. 2 while submerged in the South China Sea, while operating in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. There were no life-threatening injuries. The submarine made a transit to the naval base in Apra Harbor, Guam, for an assessment of the damage.

“The submarine remains in a safe and stable condition,” the Navy said at the time. “USS Connecticut’s nuclear propulsion plant and spaces were not affected and remain fully

operational.”

“The command investigation for USS Connecticut (SSN 22) has been submitted to Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet for review and endorsement,” the Navy said in the Nov. 1 statement. “Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet will determine whether follow-on actions – including accountability – are appropriate.”

In January 2005, the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS San Francisco (SSN 711) struck a sea mount while submerged southeast of Guam. The submarine’s bow sonar dome was crushed, but the pressure hull was not compromised. Dozens of crewmen were injured, and one later died of injuries. The submarine was repaired and returned to fleet service in 2009 with the bow from the ex-USS Honolulu installed.

The Connecticut, commissioned in 2005, is the second boat of the three-boat Seawolf class.

*Editor’s note: The original version of this article incorrectly described the Connecticut as having a 100-foot extension section for enhanced payloads. That submarine is the USS Jimmy Carter.*

---

**Adm. Christopher Grady  
Nominated for Vice Chairman  
of JCS**



Adm. Christopher W. Grady, appointed as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Command. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III announced Nov. 2 the president has nominated Navy Adm. Christopher W. Grady for reappointment to the rank of admiral, and assignment as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

Washington, D.C.

If confirmed, Grady, a surface warfare officer currently serving as commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia, would be the first Navy officer to serve as vice chief since Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr. retired in 2015.

As commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Grady is responsible for training, certifying and providing “combat-ready Navy forces to combatant commanders that are capable of conducting prompt, sustained naval, joint and combined operations in support of U.S. national interests,” according to the command’s mission statement. The command also supports U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Element North American Aerospace Defense Command, and U.S. Strategic Command.

Below are excerpts from Grady’s official biography:

Adm. Christopher W. Grady is a native of Newport, Rhode Island. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and was commissioned an ensign through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program. Grady is a distinguished graduate of Georgetown University where he earned a Master of Arts in National Security Studies while concurrently participating as a fellow in Foreign Service at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is also a distinguished graduate of the National War College earning a Master of Science in National Security Affairs.

He assumed command of U.S. Fleet Forces Command/U.S. Naval Forces Northern Command on May 4, 2018, and assumed duties of commander, U.S. Naval Forces Strategic Command and U.S. Strategic Command Joint Force Maritime Component Commander on Feb. 1, 2019.

In his most recent assignment, he was the commander, U.S. 6th Fleet and the commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO, while simultaneously serving as the deputy commander,

U.S. Naval Forces Europe and U.S. Naval Forces Africa.

At sea, Grady's initial tour was aboard USS Moosbrugger (DD 980) as combat information center officer and antisubmarine warfare officer. As a department head, he served as weapons control officer and combat systems officer in USS Princeton (CG 59). He was commanding officer of Mine Countermeasures Rotational Crew Echo in USS Chief (MCM 14) and deployed to the Arabian Gulf in command of USS Ardent (MCM 12). Grady then commanded USS Cole (DDG 67), deploying as part of NATO's Standing Naval Forces Mediterranean. As commander, Destroyer Squadron 22, he deployed to the Arabian Gulf as sea combat commander for the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Ashore, Grady first served on the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then as naval aide to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). He also served on the staff of the CNO as the assistant branch head, Europe and Eurasia Politico-Military Affairs Branch (OPNAV N524). He then served as executive assistant to the Navy's Chief of Legislative Affairs. Next, he served as the deputy executive secretary of the National Security Council in the White House. He then went on to serve as the executive assistant to the CNO.

Additional flag assignments include director of the Maritime Operations Center (N2/3/5/7), Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Commander, Carrier Strike Group One/Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group, where he deployed for nearly 10 months to the Western Pacific and the Arabian Gulf conducting combat operations in support of Operation Inherent Resolve; and Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic.

---

# AeroVironment Demonstrates Switchblade Loitering Missile Integration for Air Launched Effects from JUMP 20 UAS



AeroVironment's Switchblade 300 loitering munition, which can now be integrated with the larger JUMP 20 unmanned aircraft.

*AEROVIRONMENT*

ARLINGTON, Va., Nov. 3, 2021 – AeroVironment has successfully demonstrated integration of Switchblade 300 loitering missiles and JUMP 20 medium unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for increased mission autonomy and efficacy, the company said Nov. 3.

This Air Launched Effects (ALE) proof-of-concept demonstration took place in August 2021 with the goal of launching an inert Switchblade 300 from the JUMP 20 and successfully recovering

both air vehicles.

The systems were integrated by fixing the inert Switchblade 300 tube-launch system to the existing JUMP 20 platform's vertical lift boom with a custom-made bolt-on mount and firing system. Switchblade 300 was remotely fired using the JUMP 20 ground control solution with in-flight control taken by a separate Switchblade ground element. Both vehicles were successfully recovered, proving the demonstration event to be the first Switchblade 300 integration and air launch from a JUMP 20 Group 3 vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) platform.

"This end-to-end integrated solution enables customers with greater time on station than if they were to deploy a Switchblade on its own, resulting in the ability to conduct persistent real-time surveillance to increase the chance of identifying the correct target and minimizing collateral damage," said Brett Hush, AeroVironment vice president and product line general manager of tactical missile systems.

"It combines the combat-proven Switchblade loitering missile's lethality, reach and precision strike capabilities with low collateral effects and the VTOL, fixed-wing JUMP 20's advanced multi-sensor ISR services and 14-hour endurance."

---

**Coast Guard Offloads \$3.5  
million in Seized Cocaine,  
Transfers 3 Suspected**

# Smugglers



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez offloaded \$3.5 million in seized cocaine and transferred custody of three suspected smugglers in San Juan, Puerto Rico Oct. 29. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez offloaded \$3.5 million in cocaine Friday and transferred custody of three smugglers to federal agents in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said Nov. 1.

The USS Sioux City, operating with a Coast Guard LEDET 102 onboard, apprehended three men and seized 115 kilograms of cocaine after interdicting of a drug smuggling go-fast vessel Oct. 26 in the Caribbean Sea, approximately 100 nautical miles south of Isla Saona, Dominican Republic.

The apprehended smugglers, two Dominican Republic nationals and one Colombian, are facing federal prosecution in Puerto Rico on criminal charges of Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance Aboard a Vessel Subject to the Jurisdiction of the United States and Possession of a Firearm During and in Relation to a Drug Trafficking Crime. The charges carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life. Transnational Organized Crime Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jordan Martin from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case.

The interdiction is the result of multi-agency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area programs, and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Following the interdiction, the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez embarked the three-suspected smugglers and seized contraband for transport to San Juan.

Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico, while the USS Sioux City is a littoral combat ship homeported at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida.

---

# Cutter Bertholf Returns to Homeport following North Pacific Patrol



A Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) crewmember embraces his daughter after Bertholf returned home following a nearly three-month patrol, Nov. 1, 2021. The crew patrolled more than 27,000 miles alongside partner agencies to support international cooperation for Operation North Pacific Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard's annual Northern Pacific illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing patrol. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Matt Masaschi*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) returned to homeport in Alameda Monday, following a 105-day deployment throughout the North Pacific, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said Nov. 1.

The crew patrolled more than 27,000 miles for approximately three months alongside partner agencies to support

international cooperation for Operation North Pacific Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard's annual Northern Pacific illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing patrol.

An integrated international law enforcement boarding team inspected 28 fishing vessels in the North Pacific Ocean and identified 42 violations of conservation and management measures under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and North Pacific Fisheries Commission. The team discovered a total of 702 shark fins and 20 salmon during the inspections.

The detection of violations within both regional fisheries management organizations trigger processes to hold countries accountable for ensuring their fishing fleets comply with conservation and management measures designed to conserve important fish stocks. Coast Guard boardings and inspections are critically important as the only at-sea enforcement presence across vast ocean areas, helping to ensure the sustainable harvest of fisheries resources.

Operation North Pacific Guard is an annual multi-mission effort between the Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Pacific Rim countries and three regional fisheries management organizations to include the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, the North Pacific Fisheries Commission, and the North Pacific Anadromous Fishing Commission. Operation North Pacific Guard 2021 was jointly planned and executed with support from Canada, Republic of Korea, and Japan. Each nation provides surface and air patrols and shares information that guides patrol assets to detect and intercept the most likely illicit fishing activity.

"The crew of the Bertholf displayed remarkable perseverance throughout the duration of the patrol," said Capt. Timothy Brown, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf. "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is a major global

maritime security threat, and I'm incredibly proud of the Bertholf crew for their roles in confronting predatory and irresponsible actions in international fisheries."

---

## **Fluor Receives \$1.16 Billion Contract Extension for Navy Nuclear Propulsion Work**



Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) participates in a strait transit exercise with Carrier Strike Group 9 in this 2007 photo. Fluor Marine Propulsion has received a DoN contract extension for naval nuclear propulsion work. *U.S. NAVY*

IRVING, Texas – Fluor Marine Propulsion LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Fluor, has received a Department of the Navy

contract extension fiscal year 2022 for its part of its naval reactors work in a joint program overseen by the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration and the Department of the Navy, the company said Nov. 1.

The contract includes naval nuclear propulsion work at the Navy Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) sites in New York, Pennsylvania and Idaho. The one-year, cost-plus-fixed-fee option is valued at \$1.16 billion.

Fluor won the initial base Navy contract in a joint Department of Energy and Department of Navy competition in July 2018. The two contracts have an original potential value of \$30 billion over 10 years if all options are exercised.

For more than 70 years, NNL has developed advanced naval nuclear propulsion technology, provided technical support, and trained world-class nuclear operators to ensure the safe and reliable operation of the Navy's submarine and aircraft carrier fleets. The NNL is solely dedicated to the naval nuclear propulsion program and is comprised of nearly 8,000 engineers, scientists, technicians and support personnel.

---

**Revolutionizing Navy's  
Sustainment with a Single  
Digital Thread**



*Mike Lyden, Rear Admiral (Ret), Supply Corps, United States Navy*

Within a Naval career spanning 33 years, Mike Lyden served as Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command and 45th Chief of the US Navy Supply Corps from 2008 to July 2011 where he retired as a Rear Admiral. Mike later served as the first General Manager of the NATO Support and Procurement Agency.

Organizations with long standing “stove-piped” information technology solutions with decentralized governance are at a disadvantage in creating a single, interconnected, strategic scale and sustainable end-to-end digital sustainment solution necessary to achieve critical business requirements and true cost-wise data analytics. Navy is at a threshold where true integration of supply, maintenance and finance is possible and vitally necessary to achieve desired readiness gains through optimized investment and fully visible execution.

## **BACKGROUND**

Navy is the only Service that separates supply and maintenance authorities and functions among different Systems Commands (SYSCOMs) and the Fleet. Achieving true end to end integration and data integrity is near impossible in this environment. While trying to do the right thing, everyone is pursuing their own end state. According to the DON's 2020-2023 Business Operations Plan, "Leaders at every level across Navy are urgently partnering with key stakeholders, gleaning best practices from private and public sectors, and monitoring impact and performance to share lessons learned to integrate combat and support operations. However, *without overall coherence and coordination, great ideas often become siloed while others languish.*"

Multiple systems and databases, without overarching executive governance and end-to-end decision making, have diluted data integrity and slowed the comprehensive data analytics necessary to make definitive gains in readiness and reductions in overall cost. To a large extent the various communities and organizations in supply and maintenance continue to replicate previous "As-Is" processes in their COTS or newly developed software acquisitions.

This was particularly true in the implementation of Navy Enterprise Resource Planning (NERP) over the last decade. This led to underutilization of standard functionality, extensive customization, suboptimization, and a consistent inability to leverage and institutionalize best business practices.

However, with NERP, Navy has established a strong enterprise business backbone with single financial and wholesale supply systems. Together they can serve as a foundation to fully integrate supply and maintenance to finally maximize readiness dollars and outcomes.

True interconnectivity of sustainment, including integration and data integrity across supply and maintenance, cannot be effectively achieved by knitting together disparate systems

for supply and maintenance. The out-year costs remain too high to perpetuate existing systems into the future. Fortuitously, *the vice chief of naval operations' (VCNO) current Naval Sustainment System (NSS) architecture addresses long-standing supply and maintenance stovepipes to create a true end-to-end environment that delivers the common goal of readiness.* The Navy will have to be bold and directive to achieve true maintenance and supply integration.

## **THERE IS A BETTER WAY**

Navy's financial leadership embraced a single financial architecture on NERP as the foundation of its effort to achieve significant progress toward audit readiness and meet Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness (FIAR) requirements. The same strategy could be extended for supply and maintenance integration.

Leveraging the NSS architecture along with the existing NERP business backbone, now supercharged on SAP HANA and the Cloud, can bring true end-to-end process control to the supply and maintenance environment with very strong linkages to finance. To achieve this Navy leadership must become more directive in terms of adherence to common processes and systems to breakdown long standing stovepipes.

Further, there must be recognition that Navy's supply and maintenance process are not so unique compared to the commercial world and therefore should not require an extensive portfolio of disparate systems, databases and analytics, or force extensive and expensive customization of NERP.

Exploiting the existing capability in NERP, augmented with a technical upgrade into the SAP S/4HANA environment, can deliver the systems capability to support a fully interconnected supply and maintenance end state vision and establish the systems backbone to support the objectives of NSS.

The integration of supply and maintenance in NERP allows the realization of the digital thread necessary for the ubiquitous capture, access and use of data across supply and maintenance. An integrated solution allows: better demand forecasting, obligation of funds using a readiness-based paradigm that takes advantage of Navy-wide inventory visibility, and automated prioritization of fleet purchase requests.

It is this single digital thread that can revolutionize Navy's sustainment and achieve desired readiness.

## **IT CAN BE DONE**

The Navy currently runs finance and wholesale supply operations in Navy ERP on HANA within the National Security Services (NS2) Cloud. Planning, procurement, and other core functions are run as separate applications. Maintenance, from the field to depot level, is outside NERP altogether. To execute the complete sustainment processes, data is moved across multiple applications within a complex landscape with multiple views.

SAP has embedded several applications within S/4HANA, the next upgrade of its product. This unifies applications such as Advanced Planning and Optimization (APO), Advanced Available to Promise (AATP), Extended Warehouse Management (EWM), and Transportation Management (TM) into a single system, supported by a single database. Organizations that migrate to S/4HANA minimize siloed operations, get a powerful engine for analytics, and realize significantly increased functionality within the core solution.

Two industry examples bring perspective to the opportunities provided by this path:

Work at Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), a subsidiary of Huntington Ingalls Industries, includes design and construction of aircraft carriers and submarines. In an enterprise like this, world-class software isn't a

consideration; it's imperative. NNS previously ran SAP's ERP Central Component (SAP ECC) system similar to the current Navy ERP program. NNS successfully migrated 22 years of data effectively and error-free to SAP's S/4HANA system. Upon implementation, they realized improvements across multiple operational domains.

Airbus Defence and Space SE, a division of Airbus, faces changing market expectations, competition, and program and supply chain risks. Due to mergers and restructuring, they had accumulated three major ERP systems running siloed processes with limited data transparency across the business.

With their Finance Vision 2.0 they created one central finance community across the business, underpinned by lean processes and efficient systems. The company implemented the SAP S/4HANA solution for central finance. Critical data such as sales forecasts and project cash flows are now available instantly, and planning processes are now quicker and more agile. With a single authoritative source for all data feeds, they operate from real-time insights.

With a clear vision and focused executive direction, it can be done: a single, interconnected, strategic scale and sustainable end-to-end digital sustainment solution fully integrated with finance.

*SAP has enjoyed an extensive relationship supporting multiple Defense Departments and Ministries across the globe as they modernize and improve their asset management and mission readiness capabilities.*

*See SAP technology in action by visiting the Synchronized Planning for Defense video series, [found here](#).*

---

# AUKUS Agreement Will Provide Tomahawk Missiles to Australian Navy



A tomahawk land attack missile is launched aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54) during a live-fire demonstration as part of Pacific Vanguard (PACVAN) in 2019. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Taylor DiMartino*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The AUKUS agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States announced last month highlighted the plan to add nuclear-powered attack submarines to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), but the agreement also will add long-range precision-strike capability to the RAN in the form of Tomahawk cruise missiles to arm destroyers and also long-range precision missiles to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and to ground forces.

“Throughout the decade, Australia will rapidly acquire long-range strike capabilities to enhance the ADF’s ability to deliver strike effects across our air, land and maritime

domains,” the Australian Department of Defence said in a release. The management of this transition, and other capability acquisition options that will meet Australia’s strategic requirements, will be at the forefront of consultations through AUKUS over the next 18 months.”

RGM-109 Tomahawk cruise missiles will arm the RAN’s three Hobart-class destroyers to enable the ships to strike land targets. The Tomahawks will be housed in Mk41 Vertical Launch System cells. The Tomahawk is built by Raytheon Missiles and Defense.

The AGM-158B Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles (Extended Range) (JASSM-ER) will arm the RAAF’s F/A-18F Super Hornet strike fighters and, in the future, F-35A Lightning II strike fighters, to strike targets at ranges up to 900 kilometers.

Also, the AGM-158C Long-Range Anti-Ship Missiles (Extended Range) (LRASM) will arm the F/A-18Fs Both the JASSM-ER and the LRASM are built by Lockheed Martin.

Australia also will arm its land forces with unspecified precision-strike guided missiles “capable of destroying, neutralising and suppressing diverse targets from over 400 [kilometers],” the release said.

The Department of Defence also said it will be in “continuing collaboration with the United States to develop hypersonic missiles for our air capabilities.”

The Australian government also will be “accelerating \$1 billion for a sovereign guided weapons manufacturing enterprise – which will enable us to create our own weapons on Australian soil.”

The nuclear-powered submarines for the RAN are a long-way off in time, so the government plans a life-of-type extension of Australia’s Collins class submarine fleet, which “will enhance Australia’s ability to deter and respond to potential security

challenges.”

---

# USS Billings Returns Home After U.S. 4th Fleet Deployment



The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15) transits the Caribbean Sea, July 10, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin G. Collins*

MAYPORT, Fla. – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15) returned to Mayport, Florida, Oct. 30, following its successful first deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, said U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs.

Billings (Gold crew), along with the “Snowmen” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28, Detachment 5, deployed June 30, to conduct U.S. Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task

Force South's counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean Sea.

During their deployment, Billings, with its embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET), assisted in disrupting an estimated 1,597 kilograms of cocaine worth over an estimated street value of over \$111.8 million and removed 13 suspected drug traffickers from the narcotics trade.

When a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti Aug. 14, 2021, Billings joined in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) efforts as part of the Joint Force Maritime Component Command. Billings provided support as an afloat refueling base for Joint Task Force-Haiti aircraft and utilized its MH-60S Sea Hawk from HSC-28 to move personnel and transport life-saving aid to remote areas in need.

"I am incredibly proud of the Sailors on Billings for everything they accomplished this deployment," said Cmdr. Brett Seeley, commanding officer aboard Billings. "The incredible work ethic, professionalism, and resiliency of this team was crucial in conducting real world operations. Taking narcotics off the streets, easing suffering of the people of Haiti through HADR, and building partnerships in this part of the world has had tangible impacts and sets the stage for those who sail after us. I could not have asked for a better maiden deployment for our mighty warship and the Thundercat crew."

Billings conducted three bilateral maritime exercises with Jamaica and the Dominican Republic to strengthen partnerships and build interoperability between forces.

During a port visit to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, the ship hosted a reception onboard, welcoming Dominican Republic President Luis Rodolfo Abinader, Vice

President Raquel Peña and Chargé d'Affaires of U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo Robert W. Thomas.

Upon arriving in U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, Billings also participated in a surface training exercise with USS Sioux City (LCS 11) and USS Wichita (LCS 13), marking the first time three Freedom-variant LCS ships have been deployed and operating together at the same time.

Throughout the deployment, Billings partnered with other U.S. Navy warships, as well as numerous U.S. agencies from the departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security, in the effort to combat transnational organized crime.