Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, U.S. complete exercise Sea Dragon 2026



Sea Dragon anti-submarine warfare (ASW) competition participants pose for a group photo at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, March 18, 2026. Participating nations include Royal Australian Air Force, Royal New Zealand Air Force, Indian Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defense Force, and the United States Navy. Sea Dragon is a U.S.-led, multinational exercise designed to train anti-submarine warfare tactics and to operate together in response to maritime security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist First Class Ryan A. LeCompte)

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam – Exercise Sea Dragon 2026 successfully concluded at Andersen Air Force Base, marking the completion of 20 days of intensive multinational anti-submarine warfare (ASW) training, March 28.

Hosted by U.S. Navy Commander, Task Force (CTF) 72, two U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft from Patrol and Reconnaissance Squadron (VP) 4 and VP-45, joined a multilateral force of P-8A aircraft from the Indian Navy (IN), Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), and Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF).

Sea Dragon 2026 continues to enhance the shared maritime domain awareness interoperability developed during previous iterations. This iteration improved on participating nations' ability to conduct multinational ASW operations inside a complex and dynamic exercise environment.

"What we do in Sea Dragon builds more than skill—it establishes a ASW team across nations. The shared experience empowers us to fight together more effectively," said Lt. Paolo Aguilar, assigned to VP-4.

VP-45 naval aviator Lt. Caitlin Tucker stated, "Exercises like Sea Dragon highlight the strength of our partnerships and alliances. They show that together, we're stronger, more capable, and ready to deter any aggressor in the Indo-Pacific."

Sea Dragon 2026 featured a structured training format to include a mobile ASW training target, referred to as the MK-30 "Sled", for tracking drills. The exercise also featured a U.S. Navy anti-submarine warfare exercise (ASWEX), where exercise participants engaged in a hunt to locate an active U.S. Navy submarine in the area. This year, forces operated in the vicinity of Saipan to employ recoverable exercise torpedoes, and demonstrate expansion of capabilities trained among the five nations.

As with previous years, Sea Dragon 2026 included a competitive component in which each nation's performance was assessed and graded to earn the Dragon Belt award, testing each nation's ASW tactics and response effectiveness in a

realistic scenario.

This year, VP-3 of the JMSDF emerged victoriously, securing the Dragon Belt for 2026. The Dragon Belt was previously held by the RAAF since their victory in 2025.

Exercises like Sea Dragon 2026 demonstrate the U.S. Navy’s commitment to regional security and strengthening maritime partnerships with allied and partner nations. Exercise Sea Dragon has been held annually since 2019.

VP-4, part of CTF-72, is stationed in Whidbey Island, Washington, and is currently deployed to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan. VP-45, also part of CTF-72, is stationed in Jacksonville, Florida, and is currently deployed to Misawa Air Base in Misawa, Japan. Throughout the deployments, both squadrons will be conducting maritime patrol and reconnaissance and theater outreach operations within the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

U.S. 7th Fleet, the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.