

Ike Carrier Strike Group Returns From Deployment



The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and its carrier strike group returned home to Norfolk Naval Station on Aug. 9 after seven months operating in 5th and 6th Fleets. U.S. NAVY

NORFOLK, Va. – The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower carrier strike group returned home to Norfolk Naval Station on Aug. 9 after seven months operating in 5th and 6th Fleet, commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet, said in a release.

Returning ships include the Nimitz-class carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS San Jacinto. More than 1,800 Navy aviators from nine squadrons from Carrier Air Wing Three 3 returned Aug. 6-7 to their home bases in Naval Air Station Oceana, Norfolk Naval Station, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, and Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida.

Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf, Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS James E. Williams and USS Truxtun are scheduled to return to Norfolk on Aug. 10. USS Stout remains on deployment and will return to Norfolk at a future date.

Dwight D. Eisenhower carrier strike group ships left Norfolk on Jan. 17 for the strike group's composite training unit exercise and follow-on deployment.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe, the Ike strike group continued operations to maintain maritime stability and security and ensure access, deter aggression, and defend U.S., allied and partner interests.

“Words cannot express the admiration I have for each and every

Sailor onboard. These young men and women were thrust into a situation no one could have predicted and they responded as only Navy Sailors can – they adapted and overcame the adversity. I witnessed their excellence day in and day out as they accomplished repairs never before attempted at sea,” said Capt. Kyle Higgins, Ike’s commanding officer.

Sailors assigned to the Eisenhower and San Jacinto transited to the equator and participated in a crossing-the-line ceremony, becoming the Navy’s first “Iron Shellbacks,” with more than 100 days at sea, on May 14. Ike petitioned Naval History and Heritage Command to commemorate this feat in conjunction with crossing the equator as a new title: “Iron Shellback.”

While in U.S. 5th Fleet, Vella Gulf, James E. Williams, Stout and Truxtun participated in Operation Sentinel, providing freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce in and out of the heavily transited Strait of Hormuz and Strait of Bab el Mandeb.

Carrier Air Wing 3 supported U.S. Central Command with 166 sorties and 1,135 flight hours in support Operation Freedom’s Sentinel and 112 sorties and 492 flight hours in support of Strait of Hormuz transits and deliberate presence patrols. During deployment, CVW-3 completed 10,466 rotary and fixed wing sorties, 7,751 traps with more than 21,995 mishap-free flight hours.

General Dynamics Bath Iron

Works, Union Reach Deal

RESTON, Va. – General Dynamics announced Aug. 8 that the negotiating teams from Bath Iron Works and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) Local S6 reached agreement on mutually acceptable terms to end the ongoing strike by shipyard workers in Bath, Maine.

Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service deputy director Rich Giacolone and IAM International President Robert Martinez helped to facilitate the tentative agreement.

“We are pleased to have reached agreement with our union partners and look forward to getting back to the job of building ships for the U.S. Navy,” said Phebe Novakovic, chairman and CEO. “We greatly appreciate the assistance of Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy Peter Navarro and AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department President Jimmy Hart for their help in bringing the parties together.”

About 4,300 members of the Local S6 have been on strike since June 22. The agreement is subject to ratification vote by the union’s members.

Littoral Combat Ship USS St. Louis Joins the Fleet



The newly commissioned Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS St. Louis comes to life Aug. 8 during its commissioning ceremony at Naval Station Mayport, Florida. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alana Langdon

MAYPORT, Fla. – The U.S. Navy commissioned the Freedom-variant

littoral combat ship USS St. Louis on Aug. 8, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 2 said in a release.

Due to public health safety concerns and restrictions of large public gatherings related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Navy commissioned St. Louis at a private event.

“Nearly 200 years after the first ship to bear the name was launched, today we commission the seventh USS St. Louis,” Navy Secretary Kenneth J. Braithwaite said. “Much like that sloop of war did in 1828, LCS-19 and her crew will protect the U.S. and our interests near and abroad.

Video from the commissioning ceremony is [here](#) on Facebook

“Whether conducting counter-narcotic operations in the Caribbean or working to enhance interoperability with partners and allies at sea, USS St. Louis will provide maneuverability, stability and lethality in today’s era of Great Power Competition.”

Adm. Craig Faller, commander of U.S. Southern Command, said littoral combat ships, like the St. Louis, have played an important role supporting operations in his command’s geographic area of focus.

“The littoral combat ship has proven to be an effective and adaptable platform capable of multiple missions in our area of responsibility,” Faller said. “It has become an end-game enabler for U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement authorities who disrupt transnational criminal organizations and the smuggling of deadly narcotics. Adding the LCS to our enhanced counter-narcotics operation is helping save lives.”



The USS St. Louis flies ceremonious flags at Naval Station Mayport. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alana Langdon

Rear Adm. Brad Cooper II, commander of Naval Surface Force

Atlantic, welcomed the ship, which brings capabilities to counter diesel submarine, mines, and fast surface craft threats.

“St. Louis brings speed and agility to the fleet,” Cooper said. “Congratulations to St. Louis’ captain and crew for all of your hard work to reach this milestone. You join a proud surface force that controls the seas and provides the nation with naval combat power when and where needed.”

Barbara Broadhurst Taylor, the ship’s sponsor, offered congratulations to everyone who played a role in delivering USS St. Louis to service.

“To witness the skill and commitment of the officers and crew of USS St. Louis as they brought our magnificent ship to life has been one of the greatest honors of my life. All of us in the great city of St. Louis are proud to be part of our ship’s historic legacy and extend our appreciation and lasting friendship to the crew and their families,” Taylor said. “Your patriotism and dedication to preserving peace and freedom inspires us. May God bless our ship and all who sail her.”

Charles Williams, assistant secretary of the Navy for energy, installations, and environment, expressed gratitude to the ship’s sponsor for their commitment to the Navy. “I want to express the Navy’s deep appreciation to the Taylor family. Much of what they do is anonymous but believe me when I say they are the preeminent philanthropic family of the St. Louis community and a donor to Navy causes,” Williams said.

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St. Louis' commanding officer, Cmdr. Kevin Hagan, reported the ship ready.

"I'm incredibly proud of the work the crew of St. Louis put in to get this ship ready to sail. I am absolutely honored to lead this crew through all of the trials required of a brand-new ship in the fleet," Hagan said. "Their perseverance and dedication will set the foundation for our crew and for all future crews that will call USS St. Louis their home."

St. Louis is the 22nd LCS to be delivered to the Navy, and the tenth of the Freedom-variant to join the fleet and is the seventh ship to bear the name. The first St. Louis, a sloop of war, was launched in 1828. It spent the majority of its service patrolling the coasts of the Americas to secure interests and trade. In addition, it served as the flagship for the West Indies Squadron working to suppress piracy in the Caribbean Sea, the Antilles and the Gulf of Mexico region.

Bell Unveils New Manufacturing Technology Center



FORT WORTH, Texas – Bell Textron Inc. unveiled on Aug. 10 its new 140,000-square-foot Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC) in Fort Worth, Texas, the company said in a release.

The MTC is a proving ground where Bell will test and refine technologies and processes – demonstrating manufacturing readiness and ability to successfully build and support Future Vertical Lift (FVL) aircraft. The facility provides

capabilities that span all of Bell's core manufacturing of rotor and drive systems, critical infrastructure and final assembly.

Since establishing a footprint in North Texas in 1951, Bell's facilities have been a hub for new technology in aviation. Many milestones, including first flight of the XV-15, V-22, 609 and 407, took place in the DFW metroplex. Building FVL aircraft will require the right blend of investment in manufacturing technology and a quality workforce, as well as strong partnerships with the state and community, to deliver an affordable, capable and reliable aircraft for the warfighter.

"The MTC is the next step in successfully deploying new manufacturing technologies and processes into Bell's future factories," said Glenn Isbell, vice president of rapid prototyping and manufacturing innovation for Bell Textron. "These future factories working together with our teammates and suppliers, will be designed to enable high-quality, high-rate production of the Bell V-280 Valor, Bell 360 Invictus and other future aircraft."

Digital connectivity and integration form the backbone of the MTC. The facility will be monitored and controlled by a network of IT, Internet of Things (IoT) and cybersecurity systems that manage the inflow and outflow of materials, as well as the movement of activity throughout the factory.

By deploying a networked software infrastructure, the MTC will produce a digital twin of itself that gives everyone a common operating picture of the building, the equipment and the processes.

DIU Awards ThinkKom Contract to Evaluate Comms Antenna for Navy Ships

HAWTHORNE, Calif. – The Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) has awarded a contract to ThinkKom Solutions to test and evaluate one of the company's commercial off-the-shelf aeronautical phased-array antenna systems as a solution for next-generation communications on U.S. Navy ships, the company said in a release.

Under the seven-month contract, ThinkKom is delivering a ThinAir Ka2517 antenna system for on-board testing to meet Navy requirements for multidomain tactical communications. The Ka-band antenna, based on the company's patented VICTS technology, will demonstrate the capability to be integrated onto a Navy ship. A concurrent design study phase will evaluate performance modifications requested by the Navy.

DIU is a U.S. Department of Defense organization focused exclusively on fielding and scaling commercial technology across the U.S. military to help solve critical problems. Through its agile processes, contract authorities and diverse team of experts, DIU has reduced the time it takes to identify a problem, prototype a commercial solution and implement it into the field to 12 to 24 months.

ThinkKom's industry-leading VICTS phased arrays are installed on more than 1,550 commercial aircraft and have accrued more than 17 million flight hours, demonstrating mean-time-between-failure rates well in excess of 100,000 hours. The Ka2517 terminals are in full production and currently operational on a fleet of U.S. government aircraft.

"ThinkKom's VICTS technology currently meets all of the DIU

requirements for a low-cost, low-risk COTS solution that can be deployed on a DDG 1000-class destroyer,” said Bill Milroy, chief technology officer for ThinKom Solutions. “With millions of hours of service under the extreme dynamic and environmental conditions of modern commercial and military jet aircraft, ThinKom’s low-profile, compact VICTS antennas are ideally positioned to meet the Navy’s performance requirements on a platform at sea.”

Coast Guard Offloads \$12 million in Seized Cocaine



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier offloads 430 kilograms of cocaine at Sector San Juan on Aug. 5. U.S. COAST GUARD DISTRICT 7 / Ricardo Castrodad

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The U.S. Coast Guard transferred custody of two suspected smugglers and 430 kilograms of seized cocaine to federal law enforcement at Sector San Juan on Aug. 5 following the interdiction of a go-fast boat in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard’s 7th District said in a release.

The interdiction was the result of multiagency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command’s enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force program and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case.

The estimated wholesale value of the seized drug shipment is more than \$12 million.

“The positive outcome in this case is a reflection of the professionalism and unwavering resolve of the Richard Dixon crew and of our fellow Coast Guardsmen and federal law enforcement partners involved in this case,” said Lt. Matthew Monahan, cutter Richard Dixon’s commanding officer. “Our collective efforts resulted in preventing 430 kilograms of cocaine from reaching the streets and the apprehension of two smugglers who will now have their day in court.”

The interdiction occurred on Aug. 2 afternoon following the detection of a suspicious 30-foot go-fast vessel, with two people aboard, by the crew of a patrolling U.S. maritime patrol aircraft.

The Richard Dixon responded to the sighting and interdicted the go-fast with the assistance of the cutter’s small boat. The cutter’s boarding team located 21 bales of suspected contraband aboard the go-fast that the smugglers attempted to conceal with a blue tarp. The boarding team placed the two men in custody and embarked them aboard the cutter along with the seized contraband.

The seized cocaine, destined for the United States, and two detainees were later transferred to the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier and transported to San Juan, where CCSF federal law enforcement agents received custody.

The Richard Dixon and Joseph Napier are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in San Juan.

Cutter Legare Offloads Nearly

5,000 Pounds of Interdicted Drugs



Coast Guard Cutter Legare crew members offload about 3,900 pounds of marijuana in the rain on Aug. 5 in Port Everglades, Florida. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicole J. Groll

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Legare’s crew offloaded nearly 5,000 pounds of interdicted contraband, worth an estimated \$25.7 million, on Aug. 5 at Port Everglades, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser crew also interdicted nearly 1,100 pounds of cocaine, and the Cyclone-class patrol ship USS Shamal crew with an embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment interdicted about 3,900 pounds of marijuana while on patrol in the Caribbean Sea from suspected drug smuggling vessels.

The Winslow Griesser is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Legare is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The USS Shamal is a 179-foot Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship homeported in Mayport, Florida.

Navy Escorts Army Logistics Support Vessels Out of 5th

Fleet after 20 Years of Duty



A Mark VI patrol boat (front), assigned to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 56 escorts the logistics support vessel Maj. Gen. Charles P. Gross (LSV 5) in the Persian Gulf, July 14, 2020. CTF 56 is responsible for planning and execution of expeditionary missions, including coastal riverine operations, in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jordan R. Bair

BAHRAIN – U.S. Navy warships assigned to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), escorted two U.S. Army Frank S. Besson-class logistics support vessels (LSV), assigned to U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT), as they transited out of the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, in July and August, U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs said in an Aug. 5 release.

The two LSVs, Major General Charles P. Gross (LSV 5) and Specialist 4 James A. Loux (LSV 6), had been forward deployed to the region for 20 years in support of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) tasking and were departing Kuwait as a result of an Army-wide restructuring and asset allocation.

Over the past two decades, U.S. naval ships regularly escorted the Army vessels as they transited the Persian Gulf, delivering supplies to U.S. Army units in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates from their forward deployed homeport in Kuwait.

“The importance of U.S. and partner forces operating together in the region while supporting our shared maritime security goals continues to be vital,” said Brig. Gen. Dianne Del Rosso, Deputy Commanding General, 1st Theater Sustainment Command. “The Logistics Support Vessels have been critical to training exercises and operations in the CENTCOM area of operations [AOR] for both the joint force and our strategic partners in the region.”

Escort ships during the outbound transit included at various

stages, USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), USS James E. Williams (DDG 95), USS Stout (DDG 55), patrol coastal ships assigned to CTF 55 and Mark VI patrol boats assigned to CTF 56.

NAVCENT forces regularly participate in joint operations with assets from ARCENT and other component commanders. Recent examples have included U.S. Navy warships conducting live fire exercises with U.S. Army AH-64E Apache attack helicopters assigned to ARCENT, and U.S. Air Force AC-130W Stinger II gunships assigned to Special Operations Command Central.

“The joint operations we conduct with other component commands in the CENTCOM AOR is crucial in supporting U.S. and partner nation interests in the region,” said Vice Adm. James Malloy, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. “I’m proud of the work we’ve been able to do with our ARCENT counterparts, and I look forward to what our joint team will continue to accomplish in the future.”

The U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse is comprised of 20 countries and includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb at the southern tip of Yemen.

Coast Guard Seizes 1,395 Pounds of Cocaine From Smuggling Vessel



The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750) and a go-fast

vessel interdicted in the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the Coast of Central America in late-July 2020. The Bertholf's crew boarded the boat and interdicted approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine and three suspected smugglers. This photo has been edited for law enforcement purposes. U.S. COAST GUARD

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard seized approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine in late-July with an estimated value of \$24 million from a go-fast vessel in international waters of the Pacific Ocean off Central America, the Coast Guard 11th District said in an Aug. 5 release.

A maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspected smuggling vessel and diverted the crew aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750) to the go-fast vessel's position.

Once on scene, Bertholf's crew launched a small unmanned aerial system to locate the suspected smugglers. After the suspected smugglers complied with orders to stop their boat, the Coast Guard crew boarded the vessel and discovered approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine. Three suspected smugglers aboard the vessel were detained.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of Presidential National Security Objectives. Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is

conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf, homeported in Alameda, was commissioned in 2008.

L3Harris to Provide Services for MSC Vessels

AYER, Mass. – L3Harris Technologies has been awarded a five-year indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract from the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command to provide product support services for ship control products installed on its vessels, the company said in an Aug. 4 release.

The work scope includes repair and maintenance of the control systems onboard the Henry J. Kaiser-class oilers (T-AO-187/199) and other MSC vessels. L3Harris will conduct appraisals, inspections, reports, repairs, and tests regularly throughout the contract period and any option years exercised under the contract. Required services include shipboard performance, onsite service during sea trials and in-shop engineering support.

MSC operates vessels that replenish Navy ships, conduct specialized missions and pre-position combat cargo at sea to support deployed U.S. forces and coalition partners.

“L3Harris is excited to provide ship control product support and services for the MSC vessels to enhance operational performance and specialized missions,” said Don Hairston, vice

president and general manager, C5 Systems, L3Harris. "Our reliable engineering services and ship control performance enable these critical vessels to conduct missions around the world."