Coast Guard Cutter William Hart Returns Home

A crew member of Coast Guard Cutter William Hart (WPC 1134) embraces his family on the pier at Coast Guard Base Honolulu, May 31, 2025. The crew of the William Hart traveled more than 7,000 nautical miles during their 46-day patrol of Oceania. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Avery Tibbets)

Coast Guard 14th District External Affairs, May 31, 2025

HONOLULU – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter William Hart (WPC 1134) returned to Honolulu Saturday following a 46-day patrol in support of Coast Guard District Fourteen's Operation Blue Pacific in Oceania.

The William Hart crew departed Coast Guard Base Honolulu in April and traveled more than 7,000 nautical miles spanning from the Hawaiian Islands to the Kingdom of Tonga. Patrolling in support of Operation Blue Pacific, the cutter's crew worked

alongside Pacific Island Countries to enhance maritime domain awareness, combat illegal fishing activities and reinforce a shared commitment to maritime governance and regional stability.

Reinforcing U.S. border security and territorial integrity, the William Hart crew also patrolled U.S. and neighboring Exclusive Economic Zones, including those in American Samoa. These operations advanced the United States' commitment to securing our borders and maritime approaches to detect, deter, and interdict illegal activities and threats to the homeland.

Leveraging existing bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements, the William Hart crew conducted seven vessel boardings and seven observation reports alongside Pacific Island law enforcement partners within the respective exclusive economic zones. The cutter's crew also conducted two fishery boardings on the high seas in concert with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing within the region.

During William Hart's patrol, the crew made port calls in American Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. The crew hosted tours for members of the Fijian Navy, U.S. Embassy Nuku'alofa, and the Tongan Royal Navy. The crew also engaged with the next generation of maritime professionals, providing tours for students from the National University of Samoa Maritime School and the Ministry of Police Maritime Division. A sporting event hosted by the Tongan Royal Navy, alongside personnel from an Australian naval vessel, further solidified regional camaraderie. In Samoa, a dinner hosted by the Australian Embassy served to strengthen diplomatic and maritime partnerships.

"This patrol emphasizes the Coast Guard's vital role in promoting maritime security and regional stability throughout Oceania, while safeguarding U.S. interests" said Lt. Cmdr.

Stephen A. Hills, commanding officer of the William Hart. “Our crew worked alongside our Pacific partners to strengthen maritime governance, counter illegal fishing and narcotics trafficking and build lasting relationships that enhance safety and sovereignty across the region.”

The William Hart is the third 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter homeported in Honolulu. The cutter’s primary missions are maritime law enforcement, search and rescue and national defense.

USS Tripoli Forward Deploys to Japan

America-class amphibious assault carrier USS Tripoli (LHA 7) transits San Diego Bay, May 19, 2025. The ship departed Naval Base San Diego to complete a homeport change and join forward-deployed naval forces in Sasebo, Japan as part of a scheduled rotation of forces in the Pacific. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Sara L. Eshleman)
From Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, May 19, 2025

SAN DIEGO – The America-class amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli (LHA 7) departed Naval Base San Diego May 19 to forward deploy to Sasebo, Japan, as part of a scheduled rotation of forces in the Pacific. The Tripoli will replace the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), which will depart Sasebo and move to San Diego.

“The Tripoli is ready to defend U.S. interests abroad and strengthen our long-standing partnership with Japan,” said Capt. Eddie Park, commanding officer of the Tripoli. “I am extremely proud to lead this hard-working and motivated team of Sailors and Marines overseas to support security, stability and prosperity in this vital region.”

The forward presence of the Tripoli supports the United States’ commitment to the defense of Japan, enhances the national security of the United States and improves its ability to protect strategic interests. The security environment in the Indo-Pacific requires the most capable ships to enable rapid response times for maritime and joint forces.

“The U.S. has a vital relationship with Japan, and their hospitality and professionalism are unmatched,” said the Tripoli’s executive officer (XO), Capt. Patrick Sullivan, whose previous assignment was deputy commander of Naval Surface Group Western Pacific in Sasebo. “I’m honored and excited to return as the XO of such a highly capable warship to honor our nation’s security commitment to Japan.”

San Diego has been the Tripoli’s homeport since September 2020. Since then, the Tripoli supported multiple exercises including Valiant Shield, Iron Storm, Kamandag, Steel Knight, and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Patrol 22.2. The ship also completed numerous maintenance availabilities and earned various fleet and type commander excellence awards.

“This crew has been diligently preparing to forward deploy since last year,” said Park. “I am fully confident in the crew’s abilities to execute any mission assigned to us.”

The Tripoli was commissioned July 15, 2020, and is the second America-class amphibious assault ship built for the United States Navy. The ship is named after the U.S. Marine Corps victory against Tripoli at the Battle of Derna during the First Barbary War in 1805.

The mission of Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet is to man, train, and equip the Surface Force to provide fleet commanders with credible naval power to control the sea and project power ashore

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Vigor Marine CM San Diego Completes USS Tripoli (LHA 7)

Vessel's early departure shows skill, commitment of San Diego team

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (May 30, 2025) – Vigor Marine CM San Diego, a division of Vigor Marine Group, has successfully completed a Continuous Maintenance Availability on USS Tripoli (LHA 7), returning the vessel five days ahead of schedule. More than 250 skilled workers supported the effort to get the Tripoli back to the fleet ahead of schedule, allowing the vessel to commence its rotation to Japan.

"This successful availability showed our skilled workers'

commitment to excellence and to the success of our customer, the U.S. Navy," said Adam Beck, Head of Maintenance and Modernization Pacific for Vigor Marine Group. "We are aware of the importance of quality, on-time maintenance to the success of the warfighter and we are proud of our team for the work they do in support of our national defense."

This CMAV consisted of a comprehensive body of work, including platform repairs, tank repairs and preservation, bulkhead shaft seal repair, pump mechanical seals, service diesel generator repair, piping replacements, rotating machinery/pump overhaul and replacement, refrigeration compressor overhaul and various aircraft/cargo weapon elevator repairs. Work was completed at the CM San Diego shipyard from February through mid-May.

"The expert team in San Diego not only completed this work ahead of schedule, they did it with a strong focus on working safely," said Carlos Aguayo, President of Vigor Marine CM San Diego. "Our strong relationship with the Navy is founded on our commitment to their success and our safe, quality performance. We are grateful to be a partner of choice and look forward to further opportunities to support our valued customer."

Vigor Marine CM San Diego, formerly Continental Maritime of San Diego continues work on the USS Russell (DDG 59) DSRA, USS Momsen (DDG 92) and the planning for an upcoming SRA on the USS Sterett (DDG 104). This is the second time CM San Diego has been trusted with an availability on the Tripoli. The work not only supports the U.S. Navy, it provides hundreds of family wage jobs in San Diego, and thousands across the entire Vigor Marine Group footprint.

USNS Comfort Departs Norfolk in Support of Continuing Promise 2025

by LaShawn Sykes – USN Military Sealift Command, May 30, 2025

NORFOLK, Virginia (May 30, 2025) – The U.S. Navy Mercy-class hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) departed Naval Station Norfolk to begin its summer deployment to the U.S. Southern Command area of operation in support of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S.4th Fleet's Continuing Promise 2025, May 30.

After several months of detailed planning, Comfort is on-track to conduct mission visits to Grenada, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic.

“Continuing Promise has been conducted since 2007, with a mission to forge enduring partnerships by providing medical and humanitarian aid, thereby creating a lasting reputation for goodwill throughout the region,” said Capt. Ryan Kendall, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 40, and mission commander of Continuing Promise.

The focus during each mission stop will be working alongside partner nation medical personnel to provide direct patient care and technical expertise in community clinics to improve medical readiness, strengthen partnerships, and enhance the combined capabilities of the U.S. Navy and partner nations to respond to public health disasters and humanitarian crises.

The Continuing Promise team also includes a U.S. Army veterinary element from the 248th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Service Support), which will collaborate with host nation colleagues to provide direct public health education and animal care at local veterinary organizations in-country. U.S. Navy Seabees from Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 11 will assist in host nation led community engineering projects. U.S. Navy experts will host seminars and training exercises with host nation civilian officials and military professionals covering disaster preparedness and response. These exchanges aim to support host nation facilities, improve readiness, and empower local and national officials with the knowledge and experience to act with confidence during emergencies.

The U.S. Fleet Forces Band, “Uncharted Waters,” will also support the Continuing Promise mission. The band will embark on USNS Comfort to conduct classes at community schools, collaborate with military and civilian musical organizations in partner nations, and entertain local communities with concerts at each mission stop. This cultural exchange aims to strengthen community ties and foster goodwill.

Capt. Stephen P. Arles, commanding officer, USNS Comfort,

expressed excitement about working with the band and professional medical team. He added, “This is the Comfort’s eighth deployment supporting Continuing Promise. The team is eager to collaborate with partner nations, exchange knowledge, and aid those in need, strengthening the legacy of the Continuing Promise mission.”

USNAVSOUTH/FOURTHFLT is the trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South America maritime forces leading to improved unity, security and stability.

For more information about the mission, please visit https://www.fourthfleet.navy.mil, and follow at https://www.facebook.com/NAVSOUS4THFLT, https://x.com/navsous4thflt, and https://instagram.com/usnavysouth4thflt/.

For more news from Military Sealift Command, visit https://sealiftcommand.com/.

Marine Attack Squadron 231 completes its final Harrier flight at Cherry Point

U.S. Marines Corps AV-8B Harrier II with Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 231 taxis during the squadron's final flight ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, May 29, 2025. VMA-231 conducted a ceremony to celebrate its last Harrier flight before its deactivation in September. In 2026, the squadron will reactivate as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 231 and prepare to operate the F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Bryan Giraldo)
From 2d Marine Aircraft Wing Strategic Communications

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. – Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 231, known as the "Ace of Spades," marked the end of an era with its final AV-8B Harrier II flight on Thursday, culminating decades of rich history and distinguished service with the iconic vertical takeoff and landing aircraft.

First commissioned in 1919, VMA-231 is the Marine Corps' oldest flying squadron and has served with distinction in multiple conflicts worldwide over the last century. After adopting the Harrier II in 1985, VMA-231 supported major

overseas operations to include Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Allied Force, Odyssey Dawn, Inherent Resolve, and most recently, Prosperity Guardian.

The squadron's final flight and colors casing ceremony took place at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and represented a significant milestone in the Marine Corps' ongoing fifth-generation tactical aircraft transition. Attendees of the ceremony included active-duty Marines and Sailors with VMA-231, their families, and veterans who had previously served with the squadron. Maj. Gen. William Swan, commanding general of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), and Maj. Gen. James Wellons, commanding general of 3rd MAW, as well as several distinguished guests, community leaders and former commanding officers of the squadron were also in attendance.

"Today is not a sad day," stated Lt. Col. Paul Truog, current commanding officer of VMA-231, during the ceremony, "This is a momentous day for Marine aviation. It's a day that we're going to celebrate."

Truog, alongside Sgt. Maj. Christianna Wolford, will oversee VMA-231's official deactivation in September 2025. The squadron will then reactivate as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 231 in fiscal year 2026. As VMFA-231, the squadron will continue the unit's storied legacy with fifth-generation capabilities as an F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter squadron.

"Everybody knows that VMA-231 is transitioning to F-35s. The Wing, the [Marine Aircraft Group], and the squadron are going to be more capable of responding to any crisis. But that capability is not just because it's our most technically advanced weapons system," Truog said in his remarks. "That capability is because of the Marines and the pilots that, in record amounts, raise their hands saying, 'I want to continue on, I want to keep moving forward.'"

Truog’s comments referred to the many Marines who will continue the squadron’s earned legacy as future members of VMFA-231 and who will continue their service by piloting, maintaining and supporting F-35 aircraft in squadrons across the Marine Corps.

“They’re going to take that, they’re going to go forward in Marine aviation, and they’re going to make Marine aviation better,” he added.

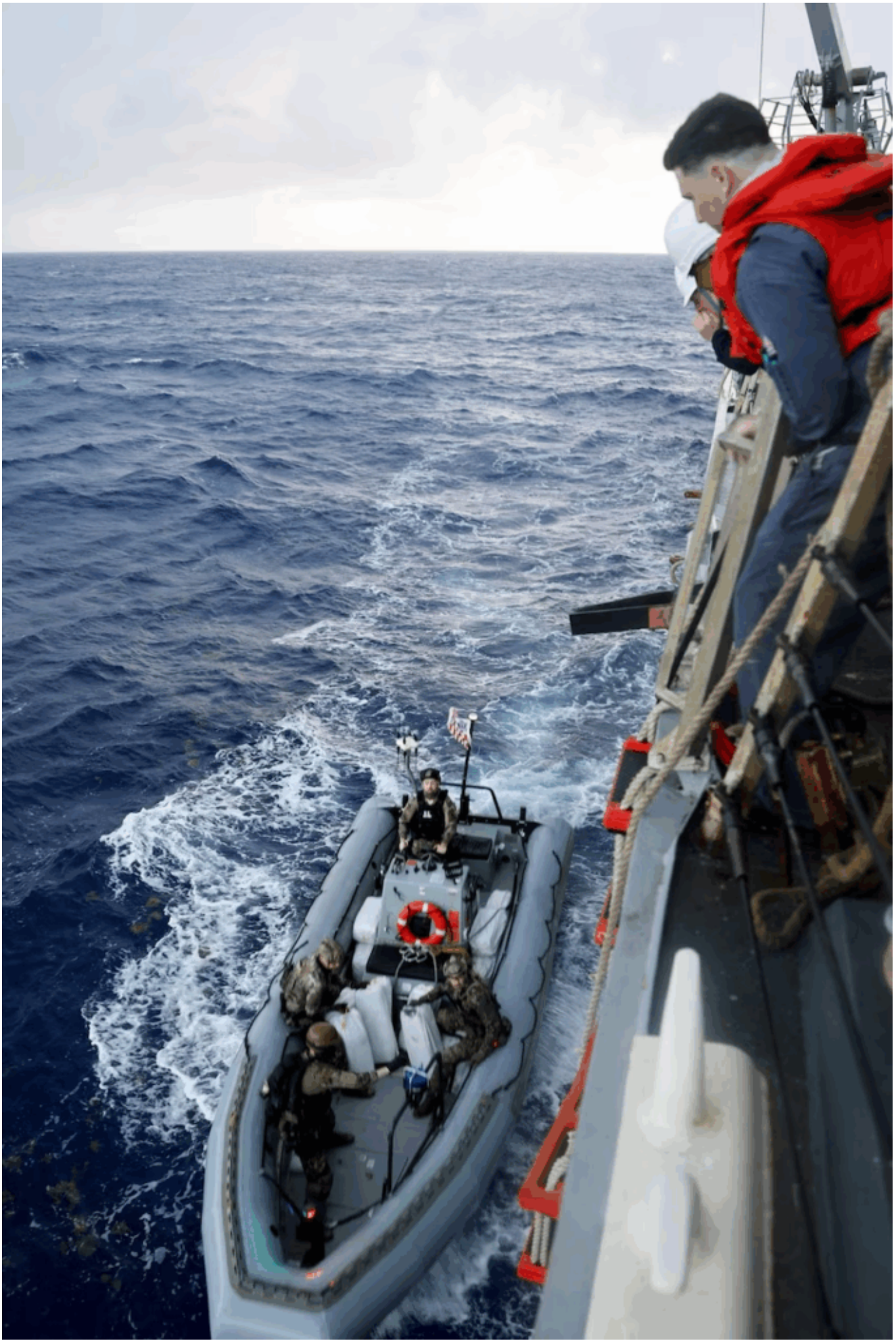
The squadron’s transition from the legacy AV-8B Harrier II to the F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter is representative of 2nd MAW’s ongoing modernization efforts to meet the needs of the future fight. As the aviation combat element for the service-retained Marine Expeditionary Force, 2nd MAW continues to balance modernization efforts with providing combat-ready aviation forces to the Marine Corps and joint force.

MSPF Conducts Maritime Interception Operations During ARMEUEX

Photo by Sgt. Tanner Bernat, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, May 18, 2025

ATLANTIC OCEAN – U.S. Marines with Maritime Special Purpose Force, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, board a vessel in rigid-hull inflatable boats while conducting maritime interception operations aboard U.S. Navy training support vessel USNS Vindicator (TSV 5) in support of Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise (ARGMEUEX) while underway in the Atlantic Ocean, May 18, 2025. During ARGMEUEX, the 22nd MEU, aboard IWO ARG shipping, conducts various mission essential tasks that enhance operational readiness and lethality as a unified IWOARG/22 MEU team. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Tanner Bernat)

USS Gravely and U.S. Coast Guard Conduct Drug Interdiction in Caribbean Sea



CARIBBEAN SEA (May 25, 2025) Coast Guardsmen assigned to U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 401, and Sailors assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gravely (DDG 107), prepare to transfer bails of cocaine seized during a maritime interdiction operation (MIO) while underway in the Caribbean Sea. U.S. Navy assets are deployed under U.S. Northern Command's maritime homeland defense authorities with a U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment embarked to enable maritime interdiction missions to prevent the flow of illegal drugs and other illegal activity. U.S. Northern Command is working together with the Department of Homeland Security to provide additional military forces and capabilities at the southern border. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan Williams)

by U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs, May 29, 2025

CARIBBEAN SEA – The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Gravely (DDG 107) seized an estimated 860 pounds of illegal drugs from a vessel in the Caribbean Sea, May 25.

The interdiction by Gravely was conducted by the ship's Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) team alongside a U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) assigned to the ship.

"I am incredibly impressed by the professionalism and prompt action executed by the Sailors and Coast Guardsmen aboard Gravely! Seamless integration of U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard maritime assets is integral to border protection – this is an excellent example of that teamwork," said Vice Adm. Doug Perry, Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet. "Border security is national security. Gravely's deployment highlights our dedication – and the Nation's dedication – to maritime homeland defense priorities."

Gravely's VBSS team boarded a vessel of interest. The team discovered and seized 19 bales of cocaine, with an approximate weight of 860 pounds and an estimated value of $13,650,000.

U.S. Navy forces are deployed under U.S. Northern Command's maritime homeland defense authorities with a LEDET embarked to enable maritime interdiction missions to prevent the flow of illegal drugs and other illegal activity.

Since entering the Gulf of America March 15, Gravely has received support from P-8 aircraft assigned to Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla., allowing for enhanced and increased identification of illicit activity for the embarked Coast Guard LEDET in the Gulf of America and the U.S. 2nd Fleet and U.S. 4th Fleet areas of operation.

Utilizing the Coast Guard's jurisdiction, Gravely employs LEDET personnel to perform vessel boardings, searches, and seizures in U.S. and international waters, targeting drug trafficking, illegal immigration, and transnational crime with a nexus at the U.S. southern border. With the LEDET's tactical expertise guiding interdiction efforts, Gravely harnesses its advanced surveillance systems and mobility to locate and intercept suspect vessels, effectively extending Coast Guard authority through naval power to enhance maritime security operations. This collaboration ensures a robust, legally empowered response to maritime threats, strengthening U.S. border protection efforts.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs maritime forces ready to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.

USNAVSOUTH and Salvadoran Navy integrate Robotic and Autonomous Systems during FLEX 2025

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (May 27, 2025) – Captain of the Salvadoran Navy, Capt. Omar Hernandez, left, and U.S. Naval

Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet Commander Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, right, receive a Tsunami unmanned surface vessel (USV) capabilities overview during the Hybrid Fleet Campaign (HFC) Fleet Experiment (FLEX)’s showcase event at CSL Comalapa near San Salvador, El Salvador, May 27, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MCC John R. Fischer)

By USNAVSOUTH/4TH FLEET PUBLIC AFFAIRS, May 29, 2025

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador – SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (May 27, 2025) – Cooperative Security Location (CSL) Comalapa, in coordination with the Salvadoran Navy, hosted the annual U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet Hybrid Fleet Campaign (HFC) Fleet Experimentation (FLEX) Event demonstrating combined/joint integration potential for unmanned systems during a showcase event in San Salvador, El Salvador, May 27.

In its 25th year of operation and as one of only two forward operating locations in the United States Southern Command area of responsibility, CSL Comalapa’s mission to assist in the joint/combined regional mission of combatting transnational organized crime created the perfect opportunity to transition FLEX from partner nation observation to partner nation participation.

“The intent of FLEX is twofold,” said USNAVSOUTH Commander Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, “To accelerate technological advancements through cooperation with industry and international partners, and to operationalize those advancements to increase maritime domain awareness to counter illicit traffic flow. As a cornerstone of the efforts to combat transnational organized crime, it is only fitting that CSL Comalapa be the first location to host FOURTH Fleet’s Hybrid Fleet Campaign FLEX Event outside the United States.”

HFC is a learning campaign to retain and improve advantages using next-generation manned and unmanned systems. In 2025 the

FLEX series is enabling scaled hybrid fleet operations from robotic and autonomous systems (RAS) experiments into months-long deployments integrated with partner nations. In turn, these deployments feed vast amounts of data to the 4th Fleet Maritime Operations Center (MOC).

“Surface, aerial, and undersea autonomous systems stack together to give us highly effective maritime domain awareness,” said Cmdr. Jon Williams, the USNAVSOUTH technology and Innovation director. “But all of these systems are inherently independent. Part of what we’ve done here at Comalapa is an advanced data fusion. Each of these independent systems communicate together and provide an integrated feed that we monitor from the MOC in Mayport.”

King Air manned aircraft teamed with Resolute Eagle unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), Tsunami unmanned surface vessel (USV), Minotaur data fusion, and Lema expeditionary solar power to operate with Salvadoran navy Task Force (TF) Tridente in various combinations from April 1 to May 23.

Synchronization now happens in real time, connecting RAS, tactical teams, and operations centers enabling a common operating picture for highly effective operations. During FLEX, TF Tridente accomplished the interdiction and apprehension of narcotics smugglers with the assistance of this synchronized system. Practical tests showed the capability of single or combined systems to find, fix, track, assess, disrupt and pursue training targets from longer ranges and less exhaustion to manned interdiction crews.

“El Salvador is a capable and willing partner,” said Dr. Christopher Heagney, the NAVAIR Fleet/Force Advisor to USNAVSOUTH, “accelerating new manned and unmanned technologies from Navy Laboratories and the acquisition community into the hands of Sailors will deliver more capability at lower cost and risk. Operating those systems in El Salvador helps us

disrupt illicit traffic flows into the homeland while also providing a testbed to innovate with our partners.”

USNAVSOUTH is working with the Creative Defense Foundation to better connect Congressional appropriators with Industry, operational, and acquisition communities. As Congress funds new pathways for rapid capability development and employment, the United States Southern Command area of responsibility is a perfect environment to innovate.

First Augmented Reality Maintenance Systems Operational on Five Ships

Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division (NSWC PHD) Fire Controlman Petty Officer 1st Class Donald Tran demonstrates the Augmented Reality Maintenance System aboard USS Spruance (DDG 111) during a recent Combat Systems Assessment Team event at NSWC PHD. The technology could reduce the number of onboard technical assistance visits by connecting sailors and subject matter experts through augmented reality and audio.
By Brian Varela, May 14, 2025

Sailors are a ship's first line of defense against system failures. But when the issue requires a subject matter expert (SME), repairs have often had to wait until a technician could travel to the ship.

Enter ARMS, short for the Augmented Reality Maintenance System. ARMS enables sailors and Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division (NSWC PHD) SMEs to instantly address system failures and eliminate the need for costly travel – and it's now installed aboard five Navy ships.

NSWC PHD's Augmented Reality Maintenance System (ARMS) team recently outfitted five ships in less than a week with the unique and fully operational remote viewing instruments.

The group installed the technology on USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123), USS Gridley (DDG 101), USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and USS Nimitz (CVN 68) with support from Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) and Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR). NSWC PHD electronics engineer Matthew Cole and computer scientist Nick Bernstein led the effort between March 22 and 26.

"Sailors are by trade operators and maintainers of their warships," NSWC PHD Commanding Officer Capt. Tony Holmes said. "It's never a matter of if, but when, systems aboard a ship will require some sort of troubleshooting and/or corrective maintenance to keep them operating. If outside help is

required to resolve an issue, and that issue can be resolved by over-the-shoulder assistance via ARMS, that is a good thing."

This remote assistance not only empowers sailors to fix problems quickly and keep their systems operating, he explained, it also saves time and money by averting the need for an SME to fly out to the ship for onboard technical assistance.

"The biggest win in this case is that the sailor fixed the problem, not the external SME," Holmes added. "ARMS capability goes to the heart of enabling sailor self-sufficiency, and keeping our warships in the fight."

Prior to the recent installations, Bernstein – who is also the ARMS engineering lead – led a small NSWC PHD ARMS team to conduct short technical demonstration installations aboard three ships. The group used AR hardware with the same NAVAIR-developed ARMS software, Bernstein said.

For the March installations, Bernstein and Cole worked with the internal and external ARMS team to equip the aircraft carrier and four guided-missile destroyers with the latest hardware and software to be used on their deployments.

"These are the first operational, useable ARMS installs," Bernstein said.

Augmented reality

ARMS is a remote viewing capability used to connect deployed sailors with subject matter experts (SMEs) at warfare centers, in Regional Maintenance Centers and other shoreside locations. Sailors wear a simplified AR headset that allows the SMEs to observe and troubleshoot any shipboard systems in real time by seeing and hearing from the sailor's point of view. While

wearing the headgear, the sailors can pull up technical manual excerpts, maintenance requirement cards, 3D images, design models or schematics to restore a system while the remote SMEs talk them through the process.

The team aims to use the technology to reduce the number of visits command personnel make to ships to provide them with technical assistance. ARMS can also reduce the length of time NSWC PHD personnel spend aboard by diagnosing issues in advance.

As a result, the fleet will receive faster support without waiting for technicians to arrive aboard.

“Now, we can send the right expert with the right tools out to the ship, thereby saving time and money,” Cole said.

Installation and test

The five-day installation in March marked the end of one Interim Authority to Test (IATT) and the beginning of another. The Navy conducts IATTs as a first step to check within a specified time period that a new system works and to gather feedback for upgrades.

The first IATT was scheduled to expire in March. However, NAVWAR Commander Rear Adm. Seiko Okano requested the original seven-month time frame to perform an operational ARMS capability be narrowed down to one month so the AR equipment could be installed aboard the five ships before they deployed from Naval Base San Diego, Bernstein said.

The vessels were ported simultaneously for a one-week period in San Diego, so the group had to work fast. The ARMS installation team – which included NSWC PHD and Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific SMEs – installed each system in less than a day while also training sailors.

During the current IATT, the team will monitor ARMS usage and solicit feedback to improve its capabilities and handling ahead of the full Authority to Operate.

Gear changes

Throughout the first IATT, ARMS utilized an AR/mixed reality headset that had been used commercially for remote collaboration and training. After the product was discontinued in October, the ARMS system switched to AR smart glasses to retain the hands-free goal of ARMS.

The ARMS team is also looking at other potential headsets, including a 3D-printed alternative the command's Engineering Development Lab is developing, Cole said.

Since he first got involved with the program in fiscal year 2022, Bernstein has watched ARMS grow as it reached numerous milestones. He said he's excited to see ARMS maturing as it's fielded for operation aboard future ships.

"It's incredibly rewarding seeing this project transition to the fleet and stand on its own to support sailors and SMEs," Bernstein said.

Coast Guard offloads more than $211 million in illicit

drug interdictions in the Eastern Pacific

The crew of USCGC Thetis (WMEC 910) poses for a group photo behind more than 28,500 pounds of seized drugs worth more than $211 million at Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, May 29, 2025. The crew seized the illicit drugs in four separate interdictions during a patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Diana Sherbs)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, May 29, 2025

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis' crew offloaded more than 28,500 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated $211.3 million, Thursday, at Port Everglades.

The seized contraband was the result of four interdictions in the Eastern Pacific by the crew of Coast Guard Cutter Thetis and an embarked MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew from Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron based out of Jacksonville,

Florida.

“I could not be more proud of this crew and what they accomplished this patrol,” said Cmdr. Ryan Kelley, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Thetis. “The Coast Guard is in the business of saving lives, and every kilogram of these drugs kept off our streets represents lives saved. The more than 33,000 pounds of drugs seized by Thetis this patrol also represents the determination of a crew who continues to find a way to improvise, adapt, and overcome to keep an aging cutter in the fight and accomplish this mission.”

On May 3, a maritime patrol aircraft located two suspicious vessels approximately 170 miles west of Mexico. Thetis’ crew interdicted the vessels and seized 4,630 pounds of cocaine. The Coast Guard transferred 4,608 pounds of cocaine from this case to Ecuadorian government officials to aid them in their prosecution efforts.

On May 5, an embarked helicopter crew aboard the Thetis observed a bale field approximately 475 miles southwest of Colima, Mexico. Thetis’ crew recovered 9,993 pounds of cocaine from the bale field.

On May 6, a crew on an embarked helicopter aboard the Thetis detected two suspicious vessels throwing bales overboard approximately 575 miles southwest of Acapulco, Mexico. Due to an incoming storm, the air crew lost sight of the vessels but led the Thetis crew to three bale fields where 14,559 pounds of cocaine bales were recovered.

On May 10, the Thetis crew spotted a bale field approximately 660 miles south of Acapulco, Mexico. Thetis’ crew recovered 3,984 pounds of cocaine from the bale field.

The following crews also assisted with interdiction operations:

- Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S)

- Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) Jacksonville

- Eleventh Coast Guard District watchstanders

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. Joint Interagency Task Force-South, in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once an interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard for the interdiction and apprehension phases. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces' Strike Force initiatives and designated investigations. 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**.

USCGC Thetis is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Key West under **U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command**.

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