

Chief of Naval Air Training Awarded Meritorious Unit Commendation for Training Excellence



(U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Alan Wang)
By CNATRA Public Affairs

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – The Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) has been awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation (MUC) by the Chief of Naval Operations in recognition of its exceptional performance in training student naval aviators. This honor highlights CNATRA's commitment to excellence in naval aviation training from October 2022 to March 2024.

During this period, CNATRA achieved unprecedented success in preparing the next generation of naval aviators. CNATRA stayed committed to providing top-notch aviation training, using the latest technology and embracing new, innovative methods, which resulted in two consecutive years of exceeding Naval Aviation production requirements.

“The men and women of CNATRA have demonstrated an extraordinary level of commitment to the mission,” said Rear Admiral Rich Brophy, Chief of Naval Air Training. “This commendation is a testament to their hard work meeting our North Star requirement of producing high quality Naval Aviators.”

CNATRA oversees all primary, intermediate, and advanced flight training for student naval aviators. This commendation is awarded to the five training air wings and 17 training squadrons under the CNATRA. The command plays a vital role in the Navy’s operational readiness, producing highly capable pilots who will go on to serve in fleet squadrons around the globe.

The MUC is awarded to units that distinguish themselves through outstanding meritorious achievement or service in combat or non-combat situations. CNATRA’s recognition underscores its critical role in maintaining the Navy’s warfighting edge through superior training and tactical effectiveness.

USS Oregon Completes Homeport Shift to Norfolk



From Petty Officer 1st Class Justin Yarborough, March 10, 2025

NORFOLK – The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Oregon (SSN 793) arrived at Naval Station Norfolk, following a change of homeport from Naval Submarine Base New London, March 7, 2024.

Oregon's arrival marks the sixth Virginia-class fast-attack submarine currently homeported at Norfolk's waterfront, and the submarine will be assigned to Submarine Squadron Six.

Cmdr. John H. Ross, commanding officer of Oregon, took time to express his excitement and gratitude to his crew for their support and hard work in anticipation of the homeport shift.

“Speaking on behalf of the Oregon crew, we are excited to be here,” said Ross. “After finishing sea trials and building our tactical warfighting edge, we’re looking forward to working with our Squadron Six teammates and bringing the fight to the enemy.”

Before completing the homeport shift from Groton, Connecticut, Oregon completed a post-shakedown availability.

Commissioned in May 2022, Oregon is the third U.S. naval vessel to be named for the 33rd state, the 20th Virginia-class fast attack submarine built, and the second Block IV Virginia-class submarine.

Block IV Virginia-class submarines incorporate design changes focused on reduced total ownership cost. By making these smaller-scale design changes to increase the component-level life cycle of the submarine, the Navy will increase the periodicity between depot maintenance availabilities and increase the number of deployments.

Blocks I-III Virginia-class submarines are planned to undergo four depot maintenance availabilities and conduct 14 deployments. Block IV design changes are intended to reduce planned availabilities by one to three, and increase deployments to 15.

Fast-attack submarines are multi-mission platforms enabling five of the six Navy maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security, and deterrence. They are designed to excel in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare. Fast-attack submarines project power ashore with special operations forces and Tomahawk cruise missiles in the prevention or preparation of

regional crises.

The Virginia-class submarine is 377 feet long and 34 feet wide, and weighs about 7,900 tons when submerged. Underwater, it can reach speeds in excess of 25 knots.

Saildrone Launches in St. Pete for First Ocean Mapping Mission of Florida's Coastal Waters



Saildrone Launches in St. Pete for First Ocean Mapping Mission of Florida's Coastal Waters

Two Saildrone Voyager USVs have been deployed from St.

Petersburg for the first time to map Florida's coastal waters within the continental shelf.

From Saildrone, March 10, 2025

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida: Saildrone is launching two 10-meter Saildrone Voyager uncrewed surface vehicles (USVs) from its facility in St. Petersburg, FL, to begin a mapping mission as part of the [Florida Seafloor Mapping Initiative \(FSMI\)](#), a multiyear effort to provide statewide stakeholders with accessible, high-quality, and high-resolution seafloor data of Florida's coastal waters within the continental shelf.

At 2,170 kilometers long, Florida's coastline is second only to Alaska among US states. Many parts of the Florida coast remain unsurveyed, with existing nautical charts relying on outdated and low-resolution data. The goal of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) initiative is to provide updated mapping data of coastal systems, which is critical for protecting offshore infrastructure, habitat mapping, restoration projects, emergency response, coastal resilience, and hazard studies for the state's citizens.

"Saildrone is proud to support the Florida Seafloor Mapping Initiative with our unique and innovative Voyager USVs. As a member of the St. Petersburg community, we are excited to contribute to a project that seeks to improve our coastal resilience and enhance our ability to predict storm surge impacts by providing high-resolution bathymetry," said Brian Cannon, Saildrone VP Ocean Mapping. "Saildrone USVs efficiently and safely collect high-resolution bathymetric data while minimizing environmental impact."

Saildrone has been tasked with collecting high-resolution multibeam data in a region known as Middle Grounds. The mission, valued at \$1.66M, Saildrone will map 2,817 square kilometers of seafloor, approximately 130 kilometers northwest of St. Petersburg.

This is the first time that Saildrone has deployed Voyager USVs, equipped with NORBIT WINGHEAD i80s echo sounders for high-resolution mapping, and radar, AIS, and cameras for maritime domain awareness, out of Tampa Bay. In 2024, Saildrone Voyagers were used to map a portion of the Gulf of Maine to identify deep-water coral habitat. In Florida, Saildrone has previously deployed Voyager USVs for the US 4th Fleet out of Key West and currently has a fleet of Voyager USVs operating in the Caribbean in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) and US Naval Forces Southern Command/US Navy Fourth Fleet (NAVSOUTH/FOURTHFLT).

FSMI builds on the efforts of the [Florida Coastal Mapping Program \(FCMaP\)](#), an initiative led by federal and Florida state agencies and other community stakeholders to promote the need for a comprehensive high-resolution seafloor data set of Florida's coastal waters by 2028. The data will be available to update navigational charts and identify navigation hazards, provide fundamental baseline data for scientific research, and provide information for use by emergency managers and responders.

The data Saildrone collects will help better understand Florida's coastal vulnerability and hurricane impact, evaluate the performance of restoration projects, and support ongoing coastal resilience efforts and flood risk mapping.

**USCGC Polar Star Crew
Concludes Operation Deep**

Freeze 2025, Departs Antarctica



The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) stand for a photo while the cutter is hove-to in McMurdo Sound during Operation Deep Freeze, Jan. 7, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Briana Carter)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, March 6, 2025

SOUTHERN OCEAN – Accomplishing its missions, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew departed the Antarctic region Tuesday, after 65 days south of the Antarctic Circle in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2025.

Operation Deep Freeze is an annual event, led by the U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) in conjunction with the Department of Defense, to support the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). The USAP advances the nation's goals to support the Antarctic Treaty, fosters cooperative research with other nations, protects Antarctic resources, and develops measures

to ensure the wise use of those resources.

Operation Deep Freeze showcases a complex symphony of strategic inter-theater airlift, tactical intra-theater airlift and airdrop, aeromedical evacuation support, search and rescue response, sealift, seaport access, bulk fuel supply, port cargo handling, and transportation requirements. Polar Star's crew performed icebreaking duties in McMurdo Sound, clearing routes to ensure safe passage for cargo vessels for McMurdo Station and New Zealand's Scott Base.

"The surface ice conditions in McMurdo Sound were abnormally light this year, a welcome change of pace from the extreme conditions experienced last year," said Capt Jeff Rasnake, Polar Star's commanding officer. "Operation Deep Freeze presented a number of challenges, beyond those inherent in maintaining and operating a 49-year-old ship to complete this arduous mission. We benefitted tremendously from a great deployment plan which allowed us to take advantage of favorable conditions and use the elements to stay ahead of events without pressing the cutter or crew excessively. That up-front planning made a big difference."

Polar Star also conducted a crew exchange with the New Zealand Defense Force ship Aotearoa.

"Operation Deep Freeze works closely with other Antarctic programs to include those of New Zealand and Australia, as well as their respective defense forces," said Lt. Cmdr. Rachel Rand, Polar Star's operations officer. "The ability to collaborate with others to achieve mission success and ensure the United States' vital interests in the Polar regions makes this assignment so unique."

Polar Star also worked with the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) to support a secure and sustainable Southern Ocean. Polar Star was the first United States surface asset to support CCAMLR.

The crew's efforts to observe and monitor fishing and other activity on the high seas safeguarded resources and U.S. national interests in the Antarctic region.

"Each trip to Antarctica for Operation Deep Freeze requires careful planning and coordination due to the extreme weather and inhospitable environment," said Rasnake. "The joint-agency teamwork within Joint Task Force – Support Forces Antarctica this year was outstanding and certainly lived up to the proud tradition of U.S. military support to the U.S. Antarctic Program in promoting security and stability across the region."

The crew has transited nearly 16,000 miles since departing its Seattle homeport in November with stops in Honolulu, Sydney, and McMurdo Station. Polar Star celebrated its 49th year of Service to the Nation and visited Cape Polar Star in the northern part of the Ross Sea. Cape Polar Star was named after Polar Star for the scientific support provided by the cutter in the area during Operation Deep Freeze 86.

The Polar Star is the United States' only asset capable of providing access to both Polar Regions. The Seattle-based cutter is a 399-foot heavy polar icebreaker commissioned in 1976, weighing 13,500 tons and is 84-feet wide with a 34-foot draft. The cutter's six diesel and three gas turbine engines produce up to 75,000 horsepower.

Transcom Asks Lawmakers for More Used Vessels



March 6, 2025 | By C. Todd Lopez, DoD News

To bolster America's Ready Reserve Force fleet, U.S. Transportation Command wants to buy as many as 10 used shipping vessels.

"We need to both build it here, and we actually need to buy used," Air Force Gen. Randall Reed, Transcom's commander, told the Senate Armed Services Committee yesterday while testifying on Capitol Hill.

The Ready Reserve Force fleet of ships is part of the U.S. military's strategic sealift capability that provides the

ability to rapidly conduct initial resupply missions and to transport Army and Marine Corps equipment during critical surge periods.

The government-owned RRF fleet is made up of commercial vessels crewed by civilian mariners and it is ageing. The median age of the 46 roll-on/roll-off ships in the fleet is 47 years.

“These ships are really, really old,” Reed said. “The reliability of them sometimes in question because of that. I take my hat off to the crews that are actually on them to keep them warm. But to give an idea of the state of the ships, some of these ships are still run by steam.”

Reed said it is vital to recapitalize and modernize the RRF fleet to ensure continued credible global deterrence.

“In the short term, we would need maximum flexibility to buy used foreign ships on the commercial market, obtain those ships, then here in the states, and then put those ships to sea,” Reed told lawmakers.

Already, Transcom has received permission from Congress to buy as many as 10 used ships. It’s already bought seven and wants to buy two more this year, Reed said.

The most immediate need is to secure two ships on the open market, get them into a shipyard, and then reflag them within nine to 14 months, he said.

The last of the ships will be bought in fiscal year 2026, closing out the command’s ability to procure used vessels. Reed told senators he’d like permission to get as many as 10 more used ships to fill out the ageing fleet.

“I am asking for the limit to be raised beyond 10 to allow us to actually shop the market,” he said. “Currently, there are 10 ships available for us to pursue.”

Permission for Transcom to recapitalize the fleet though the purchase of additional used ships needs to be written into the National Defense Authorization Act, Reed told lawmakers.

“If we can get that change, ideally, what we would need to the fleet four ships a year, and if they’re available on the market, we would pursue that,” he said. “At a minimum, we would need two a year.”

Buying used ships to recapitalize the fleet is one option. Reed said buying new is also a possibility. During an address before a joint session of Congress, March 4, 2025, President Donald J. Trump promised an expansion of American shipbuilding.

“We are also going to resurrect the American shipbuilding industry, including commercial shipbuilding and military shipbuilding,” Trump said during his address.

The president announced the creation of a new Office of Shipbuilding and made plans to create tax incentives to enhance and grow America’s domestic shipbuilding industry.

“We used to make so many ships,” Trump said. “We don’t make them anymore, very much. But we’re going to make them very fast, very soon.”

Coast Guard Offloads Over \$141M in Illicit Drugs Interdicted in Caribbean Sea



Crew members from USCGC Valiant (WMEC 621) stand at parade rest in front of interdicted narcotics at Base Miami Beach, Florida, Mar. 6, 2025. The Valiant's crew secured the illegal drugs from six interdictions in the international waters of the Caribbean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicholas Strasburg)

From U.S. Coast Guard District 7, March 6, 2025

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant's crew offloaded approximately 12,470 pounds of cocaine, Thursday, worth an estimated \$141.4 million at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach.

The seized contraband was the result of six interdictions in the Caribbean Sea, and 17 suspected smugglers were transferred ashore to face federal prosecution in U.S. courts.

"These seizures are a testament to the Coast Guard's continued dedication to safeguard America by securing our maritime borders," said Lt. j.g. Jesus Martinez Borges, a Seventh Coast Guard District enforcement officer. "The Coast Guard and our partners work tirelessly to deny drug trafficking organizations access to smuggling routes bound for the United

States. Our efforts contribute to federal investigations and prosecutions that further seek to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal activity abroad, which threaten Americans here at home.”

On Feb. 2, a Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 30 miles north of Venezuela. The Netherlands Royal Navy ship HNLMS Groningen crew, with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment 105 crew, interdicted a go-fast vessel, apprehending five suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 6,220 pounds of cocaine.

That same day, a forward-deployed HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Miami detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 35 miles southwest of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The aircrew vectored in U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle’s crew who interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehending three suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 2,200 pounds of cocaine.

“I am proud of the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by the crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle in securing our maritime border,” said Lt. Cmdr. David Radin, commanding officer of Joseph Doyle. “It was a smooth operation working with Air Station Miami’s forward-deployed aircraft to detect these traffickers, which enabled our crew to interdict and prevent these deadly narcotics from reaching our nation’s borders.”

On Feb. 14, a Dutch maritime patrol aircrew located a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 18 miles north of Venezuela. The Groningen crew deployed two small boats with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 105 crew to interdict the vessel. The go-fast vessel jettisoned bales of contraband during the pursuit and fled into Venezuelan territorial waters. The Groningen crew recovered the approximate 571 pounds of cocaine.

On Feb. 17, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 50 miles northeast of the Dominican Republic. The aircrew vectored in the Valiant crew who interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehending five suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 1,280 pounds of cocaine.

“The Valiant crew’s interdiction is one of many law enforcement actions highlighting the time-tested partnership and outstanding coordination of the Seventh Coast Guard District, Coast Guard Sector San Juan, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air and Marine Branch,” said Cmdr. Matthew Press, commanding officer of Valiant.

“AMO continues to predict, detect, identify, classify, track, deter and interdict threats through the coordinated application of aviation and maritime law enforcement resources within the air and sea,” said Christopher Hunter, director of CBP Air and Marine Operations in the Caribbean.

Tuesday, a Dutch maritime patrol aircrew notified the HNLMS Groningen crew of a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 120 miles northwest of Aruba. The Groningen crew launched a helicopter aircrew who signaled the non-compliant go-fast vessel and employed warning shots to compel the suspected smugglers to stop with no injuries reported. The Groningen crew apprehended two suspected smugglers and seized approximately 545 pounds of cocaine.

Saturday, a Caribbean maritime patrol aircrew notified the Royal Canadian Navy ship HMCS Harry DeWolf’s crew of a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 176 miles north of Cabo De La Vela, Colombia. The Harry DeWolf crew and an embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 402 crew intercepted the go-fast vessel, apprehending three suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 1,650 pounds of cocaine.

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdiction operations:

- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant \(WMEC 621\)](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle \(WPC 1133\)](#)
- [Royal Netherlands Navy HNLMS Groningen \(P 843\)](#)
- [Royal Canadian Navy HMCS Harry DeWolf \(430\)](#)
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team South
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific
- [U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations \(CBP-AMO\)](#)
- [Joint Interagency Task Force-South \(JIATF-South\)](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Juan](#)
- [Seventh Coast Guard District](#)

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 Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Seventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami.

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces' (OCDETF) 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 Valiant is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported at U.S. Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville under [U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command](#).

Leonardo DRS Announces Delivery of Voice Communication Systems for Navy Destroyers



ARLINGTON, Va. MARCH 6, 2025 –Leonardo DRS, Inc. (NASDAQ: DRS) announced today the delivery of its first next-generation Integrated Voice Communication Systems (IVCS) in support of the U.S. Navy's Arleigh Burke DDG51-class destroyers. The state-of-the-art systems provide mission-critical ship-wide communications vital for ensuring effective operations across all surface navy missions.

IVCS is the latest generation shipboard communications technology that provides reliable, tactical communications for Navy operators. The computer-controlled telephone system connects to a ship's announcing system, shore telephone lines,

radio communications and battle sound-powered telephone circuits.

The advanced IVCS was designed, built, tested, and delivered as an upgrade to its long line of voice communication systems, including the company's Shipboard Integrated Communications Systems and Secure Voice Switching systems. These systems are in use on destroyers and frigates of the US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Japanese, and South Korean navies underscoring the company's leadership in delivering cutting-edge secure naval communications solutions.

"This delivery marks a significant milestone in the ongoing partnership between Leonardo DRS and the U.S. Navy, reaffirming the company's commitment to supporting global naval operations with advanced, reliable and secure communication technologies," said Cari Ossenfort, senior vice president and general manager of the Leonardo DRS Naval Electronics business unit. "We are proud to continue to answer the call by fielding modern network communications supporting our warfighters today and into the future."

Leonardo DRS has been a key supplier for the U.S. Navy Cruiser and Destroyer Aegis Modernization program providing mission-critical, tactical communications systems supporting command and control operations on the ships. It is another example of the company's deep experience as a leader in complex design and manufacturing supporting a wide range of missions and capabilities. Leonardo DRS's abilities extend across all domains to support naval, ground, air, space, and cyber missions in areas of sensing, force protection, computer networking, as well as naval power and propulsion systems.

NAVAIR Awards Kratos Additional \$59.3M for BQM-177A Subsonic Aerial Target Systems



BQM-177A Subsonic Aerial Target Systems

From Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, March 6, 2025

SAN DIEGO, March 06, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc. (NASDAQ: KTOS), a Technology Company in the Defense, National Security and Global Markets, and industry-leading provider of high-performance, jet-powered unmanned aerial systems, announced today that Kratos has received \$59,338,010 for an additional 70 BQM-177A Subsonic Aerial Target (SSAT) aircraft through the exercise of the contract option for Full Rate Production (FRP) Lot 6. When combined with the base award and exercise of FRP Lot 5, the resulting overall value of FRP Lots 4 through 6

totals \$177,702,962. Total contract value if the remaining option for Lot 7 is exercised at the maximum production quantity will be \$227,647,890.

Steve Fendley, President of Kratos Unmanned Systems Division, said, "Since the first Full Rate Production contract award in October 2020, the world has undergone impactful economic and political shifts creating significant production challenges across our industry and increased need for development, test, and training associated with our country's current and upcoming weapons systems. On behalf of all the dedicated men and women at Kratos, we will collectively continue to do our utmost to support our warfighters with this high-fidelity threat surrogate."

The majority of the work under this contract will be conducted in Kratos facilities in Sacramento, CA, and Fort Walton Beach, FL.

Blue Angels Certified Airshow Ready for 2025 Season



After rigorous training and evaluations, Rear Admiral Rich Brophy, Chief of Naval Air Training, officially certified the team “airshow ready”.

From Chief of Naval Air Training, March 3, 2025

EL CENTRO, California – The United States Navy Blue Angels have successfully completed their annual certification in El Centro, California, for the 2025 air show season. After rigorous training and evaluations, Rear Admiral Rich Brophy, Chief of Naval Air Training, officially certified the team “airshow ready”. Since 1946, the Blue Angels have showcased the teamwork and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps through flight demonstrations and community outreach.

“As we head into the 2025 airshow season, this team has once again met the Navy’s high standards for safety, precision, and professionalism,” said Rear Adm. Brophy. “After the success of 2024, these men and women have proven they are more than ready

to perform as the Navy's premier flight demonstration team. They continue to inspire and connect with the next generation of Americans. It's my pleasure to certify them for the 2025 season."

Every year, Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) travels to El Centro to ensure the readiness of the Blue Angels for the upcoming airshow season. This is a crucial milestone for the Blue Angels, ensuring that the team's pilots, aircraft, and support personnel are fully prepared to execute their performances to the highest standard. The Blue Angels commanding officer, Commander Adam Bryan, hosts CNATRA to observe the final days of the team's winter training.

"It's always a privilege to welcome Rear Adm. Brophy and highlight the dedication and training that go into preparing our squadron for the upcoming air show season," said Cmdr. Adam Bryan, commanding officer and flight leader of the Blue Angels. "This certification marks a key milestone, allowing our team to perform for the American public and showcase the exceptional teamwork and professionalism that distinguish the United States Navy and Marine Corps."

This year marks Cmdr. Bryan's first season as the commanding officer of the Blue Angels. He assumed command in November 2024 and is ready to showcase the team's exceptional skills and precision during their first performance on March 15. After each winter training, the Blues perform their first show of the year in El Centro for the community who hosts them during training.

The Blue Angels are renowned for their high-energy performances, showcasing the precision and teamwork of the Navy's top aviators. Throughout the season, the team will perform at various air shows, community events, and military ceremonies, continuing their mission to inspire a culture of excellence and service to country while promoting naval

aviation.

The Blue Angels team consists of 158 active-duty Sailors and Marines including pilots, aircrew, maintainers, and many other support personnel. The last show of the season will be the Blue Angels Homecoming Airshow at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola on November 7. Pensacola, Florida is where the Blue Angels call home during the show season and conduct practices in preparation for events across the country.

Trilateral Maritime Exercise Supports Allied Interoperability



By U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs

March 6, 2025

CARIBBEAN SEA – Showing the benefits of maritime presence in the Caribbean, three warships and one aircraft from three allies conducted a passing exercise (PASSEX) on Mar. 3 designed to increase interoperability and enhance capability.

The U.S. Navy Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG-60) and Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Thomas Hudner (DDG-116) joined the United Kingdom (U.K.) Royal Navy River-class offshore patrol vessel HMS Medway (P223) and a NH90 Neptune helicopter assigned to the Royal Netherlands Navy Holland-class offshore patrol vessel HNLMS Groningen (P843) for the PASSEX.

The trilateral maritime PASSEX is part of U.S. and allied collaboration in the Western Hemisphere. Adopted in 2023, allies and partners from the U.K., Canada, France, the Netherlands, and the United States committed to more frequently share information and work more closely together on aligned strategic interests, specifically in the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility (AOR). The collaboration includes maritime operations and exercises at sea and Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) port visits designed to meet that commitment.

“One of the best ways to address today’s security challenges is with shared maritime presence in our region, operating at sea with our allies and partners,” said Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet, the operational commander of the trilateral maritime exercise. “We know that through operations and exercises like this one in coordination with committed allies, we strengthen U.S. and regional security.”

A PASSEX is an exercise conducted between two or more navies to ensure best practices for communicate and cooperation and

normally include communication and maneuvering drills. This trilateral maritime PASSEX also included an air defense event, a low-slow flyer event, and Sailor crossdecks among the four warships.

“We always look forward to any opportunity to operate alongside partners and allies like the Royal Navy and the Royal Netherlands Navy,” said Capt. Nathan Diaz, USS Normandy Commanding Officer. “Maritime exercises such as these provide a great opportunity for Normandy Sailors to improve their skills and work closely with their counterparts from partnered and allied naval forces.”

“We relish at sea exercises as they allow us to build our team as we operate with allies and partners,” said Cmdr. Cameron Ingram, USS Thomas Hudner Commanding Officer. “It was an honor to meet, operate and collaborate with the other commands’ leadership and teams, and a reassurance of our collaborative capabilities and resolve.”

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet serves as a trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South American maritime forces, promoting unity, security, and stability in the region.