

USS Stockdale Returns Home After Seven-Month Deployment To 5th Fleet And 7th Fleet



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stockdale (DDG 106) pulls into their homeport of Naval base San Diego, Feb. 21, 2022. (U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Kristine Joy Nool)
From MC1 Storm Henry, Feb. 22, 2025

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NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stockdale (DDG 106) returned to their homeport, Naval Base San Diego, after a seven-month deployment to U.S.

3rd, 5th Fleet and 7th Fleet areas of operations, Feb. 21.

Stockdale departed San Diego on an independent deployment to U.S. 5th Fleet to conduct operations in support of regional stability, July 24, 2024. They joined the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group (ABECSG) August to November 2024 and remained in 5th Fleet following the departure of the ABECSG.

“The crew of Stockdale displayed immeasurable courage and unwavering dedication while serving in some of the most complex naval combat operations since World War II,” said Cmdr. Lauren Johnson, commanding officer, Stockdale. “This has been a historical deployment, and the crew answered every challenge with strength and resilience. Driven by their determination, professionalism, and training, Team 007 demonstrated that we remain the most lethal destroyer in the Navy. I could not be more proud of every crew member and our families at home who supported us along the way.”

While in 5th Fleet, Stockdale successfully repelled multiple Iranian-backed Houthi attacks during transits of the Bab el-Mandeb strait and escort operations of U.S.-flagged vessels in the Gulf of Aden. During these engagements, Stockdale successfully engaged and defeated one-way attack uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), anti-ship ballistic missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles. Stockdale received no damage and no personnel were hurt. Stockdale and her crew were well prepared, trained, and supported, to defend the ship.

Stockdale deployed to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility to bolster U.S. military force posture in the Middle East and deter regional escalation to promote security, stability and prosperity throughout the region. While in 5th Fleet, Stockdale worked alongside the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and CENTCOM joint forces to support global maritime security operations.

Stockdale held bilateral partnership meetings to reinforce regional stability and capability. Stockdale made a port call in Safaga, Egypt, where Johnson met with Egyptian Red Sea Naval Base leadership, and subsequently participated in an at-sea sailing exercise with Egyptian Navy corvette ENS Abu Qir (F941) to increase interoperability. In the Republic of Maldives, Stockdale hosted the Chief of Defense Force for the Maldives National Defense Force and other leadership during an onboard reception and dinner. Both events reinforced U.S. commitment to its international network of partners to further enhance free and open seas.

Throughout deployment, Stockdale, with an air wing detachment from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 71, traveled over 44,000 nautical miles, conducted 12 replenishments-at-sea, 28 sea and anchor details, and HSM 71 conducted over 650 hours of rotary air wing hours and achieved an air-to-air kill of an Iranian-backed Houthi one-way attack UAS. Stockdale was recognized as Destroyer Squadron 21's recipient of the 2024 Battle Effectiveness Award, and the Sailors were awarded the Combat Action Ribbon for their actions in 5th Fleet.

Stockdale was led by their commanding officer, Cmdr. Lauren Johnson, executive officers Cmdr. Jacob Beckelhymer and Cmdr. Carissa Moore, and Command Master Chief Gomer Turiano.

As an integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic and relevant training to ensure the readiness necessary to execute the U.S. Navy's timeless role across the full spectrum of military operations. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

General Atomics Awarded Contract from General Dynamics Electric Boat

From General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems, Feb. 24, 2025

SAN DIEGO – Feb. 24, 2025 – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced today that it has been awarded a contract from General Dynamics Electric Boat to fabricate and deliver three shipsets of Virginia Payload Tubes (VPT) to be utilized on Block VI Virginia-class submarines. Each shipset includes two payload tubes. Under the terms of the contract, GA-EMS will complete delivery of the VPTs by the end of 2030.

“This contract follows a 2023 contract award for a single VPT shipset that qualified GA-EMS as a viable supplier with proven manufacturing capability to fabricate and deliver complex, safety-critical components for use on Navy submarines,” stated Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS. “We are excited to continue working with Electric Boat to apply our world-class fabrication and precision machining capabilities, experienced program management, and engineering and quality assurance expertise to help ensure the VPTs are available on time to support an aggressive Virginia-class build schedule.”

“As the submarine industrial base continues to expand amid supply chain and workforce retention challenges, we look forward to providing the critical capacity necessary to support multi-year procurement and sustainment programs such as this,” stated Rolf Ziesing, vice president of GA-EMS Maritime Programs. “Under multiple contract awards and over

several decades, we've been recognized for our expertise in developing and delivering components and systems for the Navy's surface warships, including the first of kind Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch and Advanced Arresting Gear systems for *Ford*-class carriers. We have undertaken continuous expansion of our manufacturing capabilities and footprint, while developing a highly skilled workforce at our Tupelo and Iuka, Mississippi manufacturing facilities. GA-EMS is well positioned to be a valued, stable resource for the development and production of complex components like the VPTs in support of the Navy's subsurface and surface shipbuilding enterprise."

Northrop Grumman to Collaborate with Hanwha on the Republic of Korea's Mine Countermeasures Program



Northrop Grumman and Hanwha signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on the Republic of Korea's Mine Countermeasures Program. (Photo Credit: Northrop Grumman)
From Northrop Grumman

MELBOURNE, Fla. – Feb. 20, 2025 – Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC) and Hanwha have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in connection with the Republic of Korea's Mine Countermeasures Helicopter (KMCH) program. The agreement supports Northrop Grumman's longstanding industrial cooperation with the Republic of Korea's Defense Acquisition Program Administration and defines the work that Hanwha will perform as a supplier.

This MOU follows Korea Aerospace Industries' (KAI) 2023 contract for [Northrop Grumman](#) to provide [Airborne Laser Mine Detection System \(ALMDS\)](#) solutions and technical support for the Engineering, Manufacturing and Design phase of the Republic of Korea's KMCH program.

Under the agreement, Hanwha will support the manufacturing of ALMDS hardware components.

To date, Northrop Grumman has delivered ALMDS units to the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF).

Expert:

Janice Zilch, vice president, multi-domain command and control programs, Northrop Grumman: “Industry collaborations with companies such as Hanwha and KAI are key to Northrop Grumman’s approach to technology development across the globe. Our team is committed to delivering advanced solutions to meet the security needs of the Republic of Korea’s Ministry of National Defense.”

Details:

Northrop Grumman’s AN/AES-1 ALMDS detects, classifies and locates floating and near-surface moored mines. Mounted onto a variety of helicopter platforms, the system is capable of untethered day or night operations, which allow it to attain high area search rates. ALMDS also provides accurate target geo-location to support follow-on neutralization of the detected mines. Northrop Grumman’s support of the KMCH program leverages the company’s extensive systems integration and digital engineering expertise.

Hanwha Systems is a company that manufactures, develops, and mass-produces defense systems for the defense and civil sectors based on the synergy capabilities of the defense and ICT industries. After its establishment in 1977, it took its first steps into the defense industry by producing night vision goggles, an electro-optical product, in 1978. Currently, it is solidifying its status as Korea’s leading defense company by continuously expanding its scope and capabilities beyond land and marine to aerospace and cyber fields.

U.S. Navy Celebrates Second Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony in Nutekpor, Ghana



U.S. Navy Seabees with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1 and leadership from the U.S. Embassy in Accra, the Ghana Armed Forces, and South Tongu District Executive Leadership held a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Nutekpor District Assembly Basic School in Nutekpor, Ghana. 22nd Naval Construction Regiment commands naval construction forces for Navy Expeditionary Force 68 across the 6th Fleet area of operations to defend U.S., allied, and partner interests. (U.S. Navy)

By MCC Justin Stumberg, U.S. 6th Fleet, Feb. 20, 2025

NUTEKPOR, Ghana – Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1, in collaboration with U.S. Naval Forces Africa, and the U.S. Embassy, Accra hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Jan. 22, 2025, to commemorate the construction of a new classroom facility at the Galtose district assembly school in Nutekpor, South Tongu Region, Ghana.

This project was constructed by both U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine engineers, and highlights the U.S. commitment to fostering stability by supporting local communities through its security cooperation and humanitarian and civic assistance efforts.

Building upon the success of the first schoolhouse completed in the South Tongu Region, Ghana in 2023, this new facility represents a significant milestone in building a durable relationship in this rural, but important, maritime region along the lower Volta river while enhancing educational opportunities for rural youth. The construction of these two facilities by NMCB 1, deployed under 22nd Naval Construction Regiment (NCR), and the U.S. Marine Corps' Eighth Engineer Support Battalion (8th ESB) provided real-world training that cannot be simulated in homeport. The new classrooms significantly reduce the student-to-teacher ratio and create a much safer, modern learning environment for the children of this underserved region.

“While the Seabees are leaving Ghana today, it is important to note that this is not a final goodbye,” said Lt. j.g. Joseph G. Beasley, Officer in Charge of Detachment Ghana. “We leave with the knowledge that our work here has strengthened the bond between the United States and Ghana. There are intentions for future engineering projects in Ghana, and when the time comes, we look forward to returning and continuing our partnership. The relationships we have built here, with the people of Ghana and the Ghana Navy, will remain a source of pride and inspiration for us.”

Beasley emphasized that the Seabees' mission goes beyond building physical structures.

"Through projects like these, we aim not only to enhance infrastructure but also to build bridges of friendship and understanding between our nations," added Beasley. "These schools are a testament to what we can achieve when we work together towards a shared goal."

These projects were part of a broader U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) rotational team of engineers deployed to Ghana from 2022 to 2025 to assist with the Ghana Navy's development of a new special boat squadron on the Ghana Navy Training Command (NAVTRAC) base. In addition to building new facilities and making numerous enhancements on the NAVTRAC base, the team of U.S. Naval engineers helped bolster the local community through the AFRICOM humanitarian civic action (HCA) program. The HCA program allows for conducting operations that supports the mutual security interests of the U.S and host nation, while increasing the operational readiness skills of the service members who participate in the activities.

"The U.S. Navy is extremely proud to have contributed here in the South Tongu region, even if only in very small ways," said Capt. Christopher Kim, Force Engineer, U.S. Naval Forces Africa. "The time our engineers have spent here in Ghana has provided us with a truly incredible return on investment"

Kim said that this project has forged veterans of the operational environment by enhancing construction skills, improving interoperability between Seabees and Marines, testing the logistics network in the Gulf of Guinea, and working through challenging environmental conditions.

"The real benefit of our time here in Ghana is the honest and meaningful relationships our Sailors and Marines have built, shoulder to shoulder, with the proud people of Ghana," said

Kim. "This has been priceless, and we cannot thank you enough for the time here in your wonderful country."

The ceremony was attended by local dignitaries, educators, and community members, who expressed their gratitude for the enduring impact of these projects. Among those in attendance was Mr. Rolf Olson, guest of honor and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana.

"This handover is a symbol of our relationship that goes back many years," said Olson. "We take immense pride in this long standing partnership with Ghana and this donation symbolizes our joint efforts to ensure Ghana's Navy and Ghana's citizens have the necessary resources to continue to grow and prosper."

Olson spoke in front of the new three-unit classroom facility and emphasized the U.S. commitment to partnership.

"As a country and as a diplomatic mission, the U.S. is committed to being a reliable partner that shows up when necessary," said Olson. "The U.S. is Ghana's largest development partner and has been supporting Ghanaian education for more than 50 years. Therefore, it is a tremendous honor to hand over this educational facility to the Nutekpor community, a gesture which symbolizes our shared commitment to building a stronger foundation for the future of our youth."

The schools are scheduled to be fully operational for students in February 2025.

NMCB 1 and 8th ESB's efforts in Nutekpor are a testament to the Navy's enduring commitment to fostering positive relationships and delivering meaningful change across the globe.

22nd NCR commands naval construction forces for Navy

Expeditionary Combat Forces Europe-Africa/Task Force 68 across the 6th Fleet area of operations to defend U.S., Allied, and partner interests.

CTF 68 is a part of the U.S. 6th Fleet and commands all Naval Expeditionary Combat Forces in U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility. Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces bridge the gap from sea to shore and provides expeditionary capabilities in remote, complex and austere environments.

USS Thomas Hudner Deploys to Fourth Fleet



NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. (February 18, 2025) Arleigh-Burke

class guided missile destroyer USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) gets underway from Naval Station Mayport, Fla., beginning its transit to relieve USS St. Louis (LCS 19) as the ready ship in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations February 18, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MCC John R. Fischer)
From U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Feb. 19, 2025

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA – The Arleigh-Burke class guided missile destroyer USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) departs Naval Station Mayport, Florida to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, Feb. 18.

Thomas Hudner will deploy to the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility (USSOUTHCOM AOR) to support bilateral and multinational maritime operations with partners in the region and conduct Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) port visits.

“The crew of the USS Thomas Hudner is proud to answer the call for presence in USSOUTHCOM AOR,” said Cmdr. Cameron Ingram, USS Thomas Hudner Commanding Officer. “Our Team is ready to ensure maritime freedom of action in the Caribbean, protect our interests throughout the region and strengthen maritime partnerships.”

Thomas Hudner returned to Mayport, Florida after an eight-month deployment to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe – Africa area of operations, Jan. 4, 2024. Thomas Hudner was assigned to the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (CSG). During the deployment, Thomas Hudner served as an air defense unit for the strike group off the coast of Israel, and worked closely with Allies and Partners on a variety of missions. Additionally, Thomas Hudner led a Surface Action Group comprised of Allied and Partner nations in the English Channel, designed to flex advanced Surface Warfare and Subsurface Warfare tactics.

U.S. 4th Fleet employs maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations in order to maintain access, enhance

interoperability, and build enduring partnerships that foster regional security in the USSOUTHCOM AOR.

USSOUTHCOM AOR encompasses 31 countries and 16 dependencies and areas of special sovereignty, including the land mass of Latin America south of Mexico, waters adjacent to Central and South America, and the Caribbean Sea. The region represents about one-sixth of the landmass of the world assigned to regional unified commands.

U.S. Fleet Forces Command is responsible for manning, training, equipping, and providing combat-ready forces forward to numbered fleets and combatant commanders around the globe.

PteroDynamics Awarded U.S. Navy Contract to Develop Next-Gen Autonomous Transwing VTOL UAS

Expansion to 2021 Blue Water Logistics UAS Contract Calls for Development and Demonstration of Fleet-Deployable, 330-pound P5 Transwing for Critical Repair Cargo

From Pterodynamics Inc.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - February 18, 2025 - [PteroDynamics](#) Inc., an innovator in autonomous vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft systems, today announced an expansion of its contract with the U.S. Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) to design, develop, and demonstrate in a maritime environment the next generation of

its Transwing® VTOL unmanned aerial system (UAS). The additional \$4.65 million award is the sixth and most important expansion of the company's 2021 Blue Water Logistics UAS (BWUAS) prototype contract and calls for a larger aircraft with more robust capabilities than the company's P4 Transwing VTOL UAS that [successfully demonstrated sea trials](#) during last summer's RIMPAC 2024 Exercise. The new autonomous P5 Transwing UAS aircraft will have a maximum takeoff weight of 330 pounds and a minimum range of 400 nautical miles carrying a 50-pound payload. It is designed to execute long-range tactical ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore, and shore-to-ship deliveries of critical repair cargo in contested maritime environments, currently performed by crewed aircraft. The new award raises the total contract value to over \$7 million, nearly triple the original contract.

“Working with NAWCAD since 2019 has enabled PteroDynamics to identify and achieve key performance parameters that make the Transwing a uniquely capable VTOL UAS. This sixth contract expansion is so significant because it calls for the clean-sheet design, build, and demonstration of the next-generation P5 Transwing aircraft that will give the U.S. Navy an effective solution for automated just-in-time delivery of critical repair parts and supplies at sea,” said PteroDynamics CEO Matthew Graczyk. “The size and capabilities of the P5 also hit a sweet spot in what we see in broader market demand, not only for other military branches like the Air Force, but also for commercial, governmental, and public safety operators around the world eager to leverage the key advantages of the Transwing platform.”

Historical data from Navy casualty reports show that warships that move to non-mission capable or partially mission capable status often do so due to logistics-related issues like electronics parts or assemblies – 90% of which are logistical deliveries weighing less than 50 pounds. Today, the Navy's fleet of MH-60 helicopters, V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft, and

commercial helicopters fly these missions. Recognizing the cost and inefficiency of using manned aircraft in missions that could be completed by UAS, Military Sealift Command tapped NAWCAD to demonstrate how autonomous vehicles can optimize logistics in contested environments and beyond through the BWUAS program.

“Maritime resupply missions are the lifeblood of naval operations, and for the U.S. Navy and our allies, there is a critical need to automate expensive, resource-intensive deliveries of critical payloads in strategic maritime environments like the Indo-Pacific region,” commented Graczyk.

PteroDynamics’ Transwing is a revolutionary VTOL aircraft system that folds its wings to transition seamlessly between configurations optimized for vertical and winged horizontal flight. It requires no launch and recovery infrastructure and occupies one-third or less ground footprint than other VTOL aircraft with a comparable wingspan.

NAWCAD awarded PteroDynamics the \$4.65 million contract expansion, funded by the U.S. Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) via an Other Transaction Authority (OTA) agreement to the company’s existing 2021 BWUAS Innovative Wing Design contract, raising the current contract to over \$7 million. Upon completion of this phase of the contract, the company will qualify for \$5 million in supplemental program funding, bringing the total future contract value to \$12 million.

PteroDynamics will design, build, test, and demonstrate two P5 Transwing UAS prototypes in a maritime environment to meet the following specifications:

- 330-pound maximum gross takeoff weight
- Ability to carry a 50-pound payload at least 400 nautical miles

- Hybrid electric/internal combustion engine powertrain that can burn JP-5 fuel
 - Autonomous multi-aircraft operations
 - Satellite communications for beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operation
 - Detect and avoid (DAA) capability
 - Operations in a broader range of environmental conditions
 - Transportable via C-130 and C-17 fixed-wing and CH-53 and CH-47 rotor aircraft
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Insitu Awarded \$102 Million for ScanEagle, Blackjack UAS



ScanEagle UAV. (Insitu)

BINGEN, Wash., Feb. 18, 2025 – Insitu Inc., Bingen, Washington, is awarded a \$102,353,293 modification (P00007) to a previously awarded firm-fixed-price, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract (N0001922D0038).

This modification increases the contract ceiling to procure 21 RQ-21A Blackjack air vehicles and 47 ScanEagle air vehicles, as well as associated payloads, turrets, support equipment, spares, tools, and training for both Unmanned Aircraft Systems in support of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance for the Navy, Foreign Military Sales customers, and other international business partnership capacity efforts.

Work will be performed in Bingen, Washington (88%); and various locations outside the continental U.S. (12%), and is expected to be completed in June 2026. No funds will be obligated at the time of award; funds will be obligated on individual orders as they are issued. This modification was not competed. Naval Air Systems Command, Patuxent River, Maryland, is the contracting activity.

Commanding Officer of USS Harry S. Truman Relieved

U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs, Feb. 20, 2025

SOUDA BAY, Greece – Capt. Dave Snowden, commanding officer of USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), was relieved Feb. 20 due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command.

Snowden was relieved by Rear Adm. Sean Bailey, commander of Carrier Strike Group 8, after serving as the aircraft

carrier's commanding officer since December 2023. Snowden will be temporarily assigned to Naval Air Forces Atlantic.

The relief occurred after Truman was involved in a collision with the merchant vessel Besiktas-M on Feb. 12, while operating in the Mediterranean Sea in the vicinity of Port Said, Egypt.

The U.S. Navy holds commanding officers to the highest standard and takes action to hold them accountable when those standards are not met. Naval leaders are entrusted with significant responsibilities to their Sailors and their ships.

Capt. Christopher Hill, commanding officer of USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), will temporarily serve as Harry S. Truman's interim commanding officer.

Dwight D. Eisenhower is currently undergoing scheduled maintenance at Norfolk Naval Shipyard after completing a nine-month deployment to U.S. Central Command and U.S. European Command in July 2024.

There is no impact to Harry S. Truman's mission or schedule due to the relief. The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier is currently deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations.

Readout of Navy Leadership's Meeting with the Governor of Guam



Performing the Duties of Under Secretary of the Navy Victor Minella meets with Guam Governor Lou Leon Guerrero during a visit to the Pentagon, February 19. Minella emphasized the importance of working together while improving lethality, warfighting, and readiness. (U.S. Navy photo by Capt. Courtney Hillson).

From SECNAV Public Affairs, Feb.19, 2025

Under Secretary of the Navy Spokesperson Capt. Courtney Hillson provided the following readout:

Victor Minella, who is Performing the Duties of Under Secretary of the Navy, met with Guam's Governor Lou Leon Guerrero at the Pentagon to discuss shared security concerns in the Indo-Pacific region. They both committed to working together on shared goals. Minella emphasized the importance of working together while improving lethality, warfighting, and readiness. He noted the recent live intercept of a ballistic missile target from Guam as an example of how the Department is focused on deterrence and defending Guam. This was the first in-person meeting with the Governor and

Minella.

USCGC Clarence Sutphin Jr. Rescues Seven Mariners in Arabian Gulf



CENTRAL ARABIAN GULF – A U.S. Coast Guard team from the fast-response cutter USCGC Clarence Sutphin, Jr. (WPC 1147) rescue seven mariners as their vessel slowly sinks in the Central Arabian Gulf, Feb. 18. The mine countermeasures ship USS Devastator (MCM 6) watches over the scene as backup during the rescue operation. (Photo by U.S. Coast Guard)

By U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs | February 19, 2025

U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY – Crewmembers of the U.S. Coast Guard fast-response cutter USCGC Clarence Sutphin, Jr. (WPC-1147) and the mine countermeasures ship USS

Devastator (MCM 6) rescued seven mariners from a disabled vessel in the international waters of the Central Arabian Gulf, Feb. 18.

Following a distress signal from the mariners, the Coastguardsmen embarked a rigid-hull inflatable boat to offer assistance. After determining the vessel was no longer sea worthy, the Coastguardsmen brought the mariners back to their ship. Devastator provided back-up support during the operation.

None of the mariners appeared to be injured.

“Providing assistance at sea to mariners in distress is a core Coast Guard mission,” said Coast Guard Lt. Michael O’Dell, Clarence Sutphin, Jr.’s commanding officer. “It is inherently dangerous, but the team executed without hesitation – without fear – to extend their compassion to people in a dire situation. I’m incredibly proud of to be a part of this team.”

Clarence Sutphin, Jr. is forward deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations as part of Patrol Forces Southwest Asia. Devastator is an Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship also forward deployed to U.S. 5th Fleet. Both ships help ensure maritime security and stability in the Middle East region.

The U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian 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.