

USS Laboon Returns Home from Combat Deployment



Photo By [Chief Petty Officer Matthew Jackson](#) | 240901-N-MJ491-1023 NORFOLK, Va. (September 1, 2024) Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Laboon (DDG 58), is guided by a tugboat during its return to homeport. Laboon, assigned to Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (IKE CSG), returned to its homeport on Naval Station Norfolk on September 1 following a deployment to the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operations. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Matthew N. Jackson)

From U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Sept. 1, 2024

NORFOLK, Virginia – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Laboon (DDG 58) returned to Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, from an independent deployment to the U.S. 2nd, 5th, and 6th fleet areas of operation, Sept. 1.

Laboon deployed for 279 days to the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea,

Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea providing deterrence and defense to U.S. partners.

Rear Adm. Kavon Hakimzadeh, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 2, was on the pier to welcome home the crew of Laboon.

“We are honored to welcome back the men and women of USS Laboon who have proven their proficiency and resolve throughout a demanding deployment,” said Hakimzadeh. “From safeguarding critical maritime routes to deterring threats in volatile regions, Laboon’s crew has exemplified the very best of our Navy’s tradition of excellence. We are deeply proud of what they have accomplished, and we thank each Sailor and their families for their unwavering dedication to our nation’s security.”

While independently deployed, Laboon participated in the multi-national Operation Prosperity Guardian to protect international shipping lanes in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb, and Gulf of Aden. In support of freedom of navigation, Laboon and her crew countered multiple attacks carried out by Iranian-backed Houthi terrorists in the Red Sea.

“It has been a challenging nine month deployment to hostile waters, but this team demonstrated time and again just how capable our warships are and that we have the best trained most professional warfighters in the world ready to bring the fight to any enemy,” said Cmdr. Eric Blomberg, Laboon’s commanding officer.

Chief Petty Officer Rickey Gisclair attributes Laboon’s success to training and teamwork.

“This deployment really embodied why we train so hard and every Sailor stepping up to fulfill their role in a challenging environment,” said Gisclair.

While on deployment, a refrain heard frequently onboard was: "If we have to fight; we fight and we win!" Laboon is named for Pittsburgh, Pa. native John Francis Laboon who left to serve his country as a U.S. Naval officer. After attending Carnegie Technical Institute (now Carnegie Mellon University), he was commissioned at the Naval Academy and served as the communications officer, gunnery and torpedo officer and executive officer on USS Peto (SS 265), a Gato-class submarine in World War II. During a Western Pacific patrol, while under intense enemy fire, he rescued a downed pilot from heavily-mined waters and was awarded the Silver Star. Shortly after the war, he left the Navy only to be called back to duty as a Chaplain to become Father John Francis Laboon or "Father Jake."

During their 5th Fleet operations, Laboon upheld the tradition of Father Jake, rescuing three mariners in distress in the Gulf of Aden who had been stranded adrift at sea for ten days.

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 comprises of 20 countries and includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Bab al-Mandeb.

NAVEUR-NAVAF, headquartered in Naples, Italy, operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.

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 to ensure access, deter aggression, and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.

U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFFC) is responsible for manning, training, equipping and employing more than 125 ships, 1,000 aircraft, and 103,000 active duty service members and government employees, and providing combat-ready forces forward to numbered fleets and combatant commanders around the globe in support of U.S. national interests. USFFC also serves as the Navy's Service Component Commander to both U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Strategic Command, and providing naval forces in support of joint missions as Commander, Naval Forces Northern Command (NAVNORTH) and Commander, Naval Forces Strategic Command (NAVSTRAT). USFFC is the Strategic Command Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC STRAT), and executes Task Force Atlantic in coordination with U.S. Naval Forces Europe.

For any inquiries, contact usffc_nflt_pa@us.navy.mil. For more news from USFFC, visit www.usff.navy.mil and for more information visit www.facebook.com/usfleetforces or www.twitter.com/usfleetforces.

Hughes and Boost Mobile Demonstrate Automated, Multi-Transport Network Management

for Resiliency at the Tactical Edge

From Hughes Network Systems, Aug. 27, 2024

Standalone 5G Network with enterprise management and control ensure Primary Alternate Contingency Emergency (PACE) planning for warfighter communications

GERMANTOWN, Md., Aug. 27, 2024 – [Hughes Network Systems](#) and [Boost Mobile](#), EchoStar (Nasdaq: SATS) companies, successfully demonstrated optimized, multi-transport network management for the U.S. Navy. The demonstration, which took place earlier this year, tested remote network orchestration, wide area network (WAN) resiliency, and secure Radio Access Network (RAN) sharing between standalone Private 5G networks operating at the U.S. Navy Air Station, Whidbey Island, Washington, and a base in Hawaii.

Hughes collaborated with Boost Mobile, both of which are part of the EchoStar family of companies. Boost Mobile's innovative Open-RAN-based 5G networking technologies for US-wide public network deployment experience provided a rich heritage for the standalone, secure 5G networks on each base. In addition, Hughes implemented its intelligent network orchestration capabilities, Smart Network Edge (SNE) mission-planning technology, and Network Management System (NMS). Together, these technologies maintained communications in contested and congested environments.

"The combined team successfully demonstrated a flexible and resilient mission network that dynamically switched communications paths to ensure uninterrupted situational awareness," said Dr. Rajeev Gopal, vice president of Advanced Programs for the Defense Division at Hughes. "We are ready to implement smart network orchestration and secure Private 5G

networks, for the U.S. Department of Defense to ensure that users have critical command and control information when they need it most, even in disrupted, occasionally disconnected, and low-bandwidth conditions.”

The network supported Automated PACE planning, leveraging the powerful Hughes NMS and SNE technologies that dynamically utilize multiple transport paths to deliver situational awareness. These advanced automation techniques optimize capacity, QoS, and various time/space-based resource commitments to speed up changes and access to SATCOM resources. With command-in-the-loop, the Hughes technology can process new service requests in less than 5 seconds to accommodate new threats in the theatre and automatically distribute information across paths orchestrated by Hughes SNE. The NMS and SNE are critical enablers for state-of-the-art resilient communications utilizing multiple diverse transports, including GEO, MEO, LEO, and 5G systems.

The demonstration confirmed that the EchoStar Private 5G ORAN network can maintain secure connectivity for devices and applications when users travel outside the naval base. This capability supports a concept of operations where a device running on the Whidbey Island NAS 5G network can travel to another location and still securely access applications that reside at Whidbey Island. The Navy can use this secure internet access for missions requiring a user to relocate from one base to another.

Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba

Completes 46-day Counter-Drug Patrol in Eastern Pacific Ocean



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba poses for a group photo on the cutter's flight deck during a contraband offload, Aug. 23, 2024, alongside select personnel from Coast Guard Cutters Spencer (WMEC 905), Legare (WMEC 912), Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, Pacific Area Tactical Law Enforcement Team, and Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command while moored to the pier in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Escanaba conducted a 46-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Hillard)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Aug. 29, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba (WMEC 907) returned home to Portsmouth, Wednesday, following a 46-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

While deployed, crew members supported the Coast Guard Eleventh District, headquartered in Alameda, California, and Joint Interagency Task Force – South, headquartered in Key West, Florida.

During the patrol, Escanaba's crew disrupted illegal narcotics smuggling, interdicting 3,408 pounds of cocaine and 4,418 pounds of marijuana valued at nearly \$50 million during two separate interdictions. The drugs were offloaded in Port Everglades, Florida on Aug. 23. Additional information about Escanaba's drug offload, including photos and video, can be found [here](#).

Escanaba's drug seizures contributed directly to furthering Coast Guard objectives to combat transnational criminal organizations and enhance regional stability and security.

While at sea, Escanaba's crew was assisted by members of Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON), based in Jacksonville, Florida and members of Tactical Law Enforcement Team (TACLET) Pacific – Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 107, based in San Diego, California.

HITRON crew members delivered air support for the use of force and enhanced long-range detection capabilities while deployed aboard Escanaba. The TACLET Pacific LEDET supplied skilled boarding personnel critical for mission execution and served as a force multiplier for other law enforcement activities.

"The crew of Escanaba and our shipmates from HITRON and TACLET are to be commended for executing a demanding mission with professionalism and precision," said Cmdr. Jared Silverman, commanding officer of Escanaba. "In concert with the Coast Guard's partner agencies and with support from Joint Interagency Task Force – South, the accomplishments of Escanaba serve as a reminder of how vital this mission is."

Escanaba is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The cutter's primary

duties are counter-narcotics operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.goCoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer, and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

Aug. 30 - Sept. 2 U.S. Central Command Update

From U.S. Central Command

Sept. 2, 2024

Houthis attack two crude oil tankers

TAMPA, Fla. – On the morning of Sep. 2, the Iranian-backed Houthis attacked two crude oil tankers, the Panama flagged/owned, Greek operated MV BLUE LAGOON I and the Saudi flagged, owned, and operated MV AMJAD, with two ballistic missiles and a one-way attack uncrewed aerial system, hitting both vessels. Both vessels are laden with crude oil. The MV AMJAD is carrying approximately two million barrels of oil, almost twice the amount onboard the Greek-owned MV DELTA SOUNION, which the Houthis attacked on Aug. 21. Currently, salvage efforts are underway in the Southern Red Sea for the disabled MV DELTA SOUNION, which is still on fire and threatens the possibility of a major environmental disaster.

These reckless acts of terrorism by the Houthis continue to

destabilize regional and global commerce, as well as put the lives of civilian mariners and maritime ecosystems at risk.

U.S. Central Command will continue to work with international partners and allies to protect commerce and mitigate potential impacts to the environment despite the irresponsible and careless actions of the Iranian-backed Houthis.

Sept. 2, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – In the past 24 hours, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed two missile systems in a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen.

It was determined these systems presented an imminent threat to U.S. and coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region. These actions were taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

Aug. 31, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – In the past 24 hours, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed one Iranian-backed Houthi uncrewed aerial vehicle (UAV) and one uncrewed surface vessel (USV) in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

It was determined these systems presented a clear and imminent threat to U.S. and coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region. This action was taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

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Acting Sec. Su, Navy Sec. Del Toro Highlight Workforce Development, National Security at Newport News' Apprentice School

Toured site of PCU John F. Kennedy's construction, world's most capable, adaptable carrier

From the U.S. Department of Labor, Aug. 29, 2025

WASHINGTON – Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su and Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro visited Virginia today to see how the Apprentice School in Newport News – one of the nation's critical apprenticeship programs – is making construction of one of the world's most capable and adaptable aircraft carriers, the PCU John F. Kennedy, possible.

During their visit, Secretaries Su and Del Toro highlighted their shared commitment to strengthening the Department of Defense's organic and industrial base workforce.

“Our partnership with the U.S. Navy will enhance the quality of jobs for workers who play an essential role in protecting our nation,” said Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su. “The Department of Labor is committed to making sure our Navy has the strongest, most diverse and skilled workforce needed to ensure military readiness and modernization.”

The U.S. Navy and the Department of Labor have partnered to help advance Secretary Del Toro’s Maritime Statecraft Initiative and to create high-quality, good-paying jobs critical to national security, using practices included in the departments of Labor and Commerce’s Good Jobs Principles to fill the estimated 10,000 jobs needed per year over the next 10 years in the growing maritime industry.

“The U.S. Navy’s investments in the highest possible job quality for its workforce will help to reinvigorate America’s comprehensive maritime power,” said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. “With skilled workers who represent the best of America, the defense industrial base and maritime ecosystem will continue to thrive with an ingenuity and dedication recognized around the world.”

Good Jobs Principles seek to create broad, equitable access to good jobs and attract the most diverse pool of talent possible, by reaching into traditionally underserved populations and communities. By doing so, the departments of Labor and Defense intend to build the skilled, diverse and ready workforce needed to strengthen the U.S. Navy in an era of intense strategic competition.

As part of his Maritime Statecraft strategy, Secretary Del Toro is rallying organized labor as an essential stakeholder in ensuring America’s maritime power. Currently, the Navy is piloting a program to train experienced union welders to join a rotational expeditionary workforce that deploys to shipyards nationwide to support naval objectives. In October, the first class of 169 union welders will begin work on PCU John F.

Kennedy at Newport News.

In this joint effort, the departments will pursue the following key outcomes:

- Expanded equitable workforce development pathways to good jobs through pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs.

- Broader active partnership with the Department of Labor's Job Corps program.

- Developed and expanded partnerships with agencies, including the department's Employment and Training Administration, Veterans Employment and Training Service, and Women's Bureau to advance to advance workforce development initiatives aligned with the Good Jobs Principles.

Founded in 1919, the Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding offers eight advanced programs of study and apprenticeships in 19 shipbuilding disciplines for terms from four to eight years. Offering apprentices the opportunity to earn college credit, receive competitive pay and benefits and learn a trade, the institution is accredited by the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education and registered with the Virginia Apprenticeship Council. The Apprentice School is a Department of Labor Apprenticeship Ambassador.

68th Annual Tailhook Symposium Concludes



Rear Adm. Doug Verissimo, commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic, speaks during the 2024 Tailhook Symposium in Reno, Nevada. The symposium brought together Navy and Marine Corps aviators and industry partners to discuss significant issues impacting the Naval Aviation Enterprise. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan J. Batchelder)
By [Petty Officer 1st Class Aron Montan](#), [Commander, Naval Air Forces](#)

RENO, Nev. – U.S. Navy and Marine Corps aviators, veterans, industry partners and supporters attended the 2024 Tailhook Association symposium, Aug. 22-24, at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada. The symposium consisted of various speaking panels, junior officer engagements, an awards luncheon, winging ceremony and a banquet.

Guest speakers included Adm. Sam Paparo, commander U.S. Indo-Pacific Command; Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command; Vice Adm. Dan Cheever, commander Naval Air Forces; Rear Adm. Michael Donnelly, director, Air Warfare Division; Rear Adm. Daniel P. Martin, commander, Naval Safety Command; and Rear Adm. Marc Miguez, commander, Carrier Strike Group Two.

The 68th Tailhook Symposium focused on today's warfighters and topics relevant to the modern landscape of the Naval Aviation Enterprise (NAE). This year's theme of "Be Ready" emphasized the importance of alignment and teamwork between warfighters and industry partners to ensure mission readiness.

"Naval aviation is essential to our maritime nation," said Cheever. "Sea control requires air superiority, and air superiority is what naval aviation provides. The U.S. Navy's indispensable aircraft carriers, carrier air wings and the Tailhookers who operate on them are key to our ability to win."

The three-day event kicked off with an integrated air dominance panel and NAE update to industry partners, emphasizing their contributions to naval aviation. On the second day of the event, Cheever moderated a flag officer panel facilitated discussion between flag officers and Navy and Marine Corps attendees.

"The Navy, enabled by naval aviation, provides credible capability for deterrence, sea control, preservation of peace, response in crisis and power projection to win decisively in combat," said Cheever. "When coupled with our expeditionary forces, USMC, joint forces, allies and partners and industry partners, we are a formidable and key part of distributed maritime operations."

Additionally, a panel of junior officers from Carrier Air Wing

Three, embarked on the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), shared their experiences of operating in a combat zone, emphasizing the intense coordination required during missions and the personal growth they gained facing unprecedented challenges. They highlighted the camaraderie among the crew and the critical role their training played in ensuring successful operations under high-pressure conditions.

Tailhook 2024 concluded with a winging ceremony where student naval aviators received their "Wings of Gold," marking their transition to fully qualified naval aviators.

The Tailhook Association is an independent, nonprofit organization supporting aircraft carrier and other sea-based aviation.

The NAE benefits national security by improving the operational readiness of Naval Aviation. The NAE provides a collaborative forum for leaders to deliberate and resolve interdependent issues affecting multiple stakeholders across the whole of naval aviation.

As the type commander for naval aviation, Commander, Naval Air Forces' mission is to "man, train and equip deployable, combat-ready Naval Aviation forces that win in combat."

Coast Guard Cutter Campbell Returns Home Following 73-day

Patrol in Windward Passage



Coast Guard Cutter Campbell is moored to the pier, June 26, 2024, during a port-of-call in Miami, Florida. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Cmdr. Jonathan R. Harris)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Aug. 29, 2024

NEWPORT, R.I. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909) returned to their home port in Newport, Wednesday, following a 73-day migrant interdiction patrol in the Windward Passage.

Campbell deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility. During patrol, Campbell's crew conducted maritime safety and security missions while working to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal maritime migration

ventures bound for the United States.

While deployed, Campbell served in the lead role as commander, task unit for multiple assets operating in the Windward Passage and coordinated the employment of Coast Guard Cutters Venturous (WMEC 625), Isaac Mayo (WPC 1112), Joseph Napier (WPC 1115) and Robert Yered (WPC 1104).

During the patrol, Campbell's crew cared for and repatriated 11 Haitian migrants. In addition, the combined presence of U.S. Coast Guard assets in the Windward Passage supported the interdiction and deterrence of 643 migrants throughout Campbell's deployment.

"I am continuously impressed by the professionalism and work ethic demonstrated by the many other U.S. Coast Guard crews on cutters and aircraft that are constantly operating in the Windward Passage," said Cmdr. Jonathan Harris, commanding officer of Campbell. "Teamwork is one of our greatest strengths on Campbell, and that was a key factor in preventing unsafe migrant ventures on board overcrowded vessels in these waters."

To ensure operational readiness for this mission, the crew of Campbell trained extensively while underway with Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater and Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod. Campbell conducted bow hoisting, flight deck hoisting, helicopter launches and landings. These exercises were aimed at preparing for medical emergencies and improving response times when working with aviation assets.

HSTF-SE serves as the Department of Homeland Security lead for operational and tactical planning, command and control, and acts as a standing organization to interdict unlawful maritime migration attempts with federal, state and local partners. HSTF-SE continues to enhance enforcement efforts in support of OVS, which is the 2004 DHS plan to respond to mass maritime migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Florida Straits.

Campbell is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-narcotics operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For more information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.goCoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer, and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

For more, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).

Coast Guard Heavy Icebreaker Returns to Seattle Following Antarctic Deployment



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) transits Elliott Bay near the Seattle waterfront as the cutter approaches its homeport of Coast Guard Base Seattle, Aug. 25, 2024. At a length of 399-feet, the Polar Star is one of the largest cutters in the Coast Guard's fleet. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Capt. Holly Harrison)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, Aug. 28, 2024

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew returned to Seattle, Sunday, after 285 days away from the cutter's home port.

Following a 138-day deployment to Antarctica [supporting Operation Deep Freeze 2024](#), the Polar Star reported directly to Mare Island Dry Dock (MIDD) LLC. in Vallejo, California, to commence the fourth phase of a five-year Service Life Extension Project (SLEP).

The work completed at MIDD is part of the [in-service vessel sustainment program](#) with the goal of recapitalizing targeted systems, including propulsion, communication, and machinery

control systems, as well as effecting significant maintenance to extend the cutter's service life.

Polar Star's SLEP work is completed in phases to coordinate operational commitments such as the cutter's annual Antarctic deployment. Phase four began on April 1, 2024, targeting three systems:

Boiler support systems were recapitalized, including the electrical control station that operates them.

The heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system was refurbished through the overhaul of ventilation trunks, fans and heaters that supply the cutter's berthing areas.

The flooding alarm system was redesigned, providing the ability to monitor machinery spaces for flooding from bow to stern.

Additional work not typically completed every dry dock included removing and installing the starboard propulsion shaft, servicing and inspecting both anchor windlasses, inspecting and repairing anchor chains and ground tackle, cleaning and inspecting all main propulsion motors and generators, installation of an isolation valve to prevent seawater intrusion into the sanitary system, and overhauling the fuel oil purifier.

Phase four of Polar Star's SLEP took place over approximately 140 days and represented a total investment of \$16.8 million. By replacing outdated and maintenance-intensive equipment, the Coast Guard will mitigate lost mission days caused by system failures and unplanned repairs. The contracted SLEP work items and recurring maintenance is taking place within a five-year, annually phased production schedule running from 2021 through 2025.

The Coast Guard is investing in a new fleet of [polar security](#)

[cutters](#) (PSC) that will sustain the service's capabilities to meet mission needs in both the Arctic and Antarctic regions. The SLEP allows Polar Star to continue providing access to the Polar regions until the PSCs are operational and assume the high latitude missions. Polar security cutters will enable the U.S. to maintain defense readiness in the Polar regions; enforce treaties and other laws needed to safeguard both industry and the environment; provide ports, waterways and coastal security; and provide logistical support – including vessel escort – to facilitate the movement of goods and personnel necessary to support scientific research, commerce, national security activities and maritime safety.

“Completing a dry dock availability is a positive milestone, and despite challenges due to being away from home port, our crew's energy and resilience inspires me every day,” said Capt. Jeff Rasnake, Polar Star's commanding officer. “The amount of time and effort put into Polar Star and its mission is truly remarkable. The dedication and teamwork displayed across all stakeholders exemplifies the Coast Guard's flexibility and commitment to ensuring the continued success of Operation Deep Freeze as well as strengthened partnerships among nations invested in the Antarctic latitudes. I look forward to observing how this crew will continue to grow as a team and to discovering what we can accomplish together.”


Along with the rigorous maintenance schedule, Polar Star [held a change of command ceremony](#) on July 8, 2024, in Vallejo, where Rasnake relieved Capt. Keith Ropella as the cutter's commanding officer. Rasnake served as the deputy director for financial management procurement services modernization and previously served as Polar Star's executive officer. Ropella transferred to the office of cutter forces where he will oversee the management of the operational requirements for the cutter fleet and develop solutions for emerging challenges facing the afloat community.

Polar Star is the Coast Guard's only active heavy polar icebreaker and is the United States' only asset capable of providing year-round access to both polar regions.

Commissioned in 1976, the cutter is 399 feet, weighing 13,500 tons with a 34-foot draft. Despite reaching nearly 50 years of age, Polar Star remains the world's most powerful non-nuclear icebreaker with the ability to produce up to 75,000 horsepower. Polar Star's SLEP is important to the survival of the Antarctic mission and crucial to the well-being and success of Polar Star and crew during these long missions.

SECNAV Del Toro and Mayor Adams Announce International Naval Review 250

From SECNAV Public Affairs, 29 August 2024

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro and New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced on August 29th that the Navy and the City of New York will host International Naval Review 250 (INR 250) from July 3rd through July 8th in 2026. 

Washington, D.C., New York City, NY – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro and New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced on August 29th that the Navy and the City of New York will host International Naval Review 250 (INR 250) from July 3rd through July 8th in 2026,

“There’s no better place to celebrate 250 years of American history than in New York City’s harbor,” said New York City

Mayor Eric Adams. "From the early days of our country to the present day, New York City has been an unmatched international port, welcoming every corner of the globe to our shores and remaining a leading economic hub. In 2026, our city looks forward to hosting the globe to celebrate and commemorate our nation's past, present, and future."

As part of the Semiquincentennial (250th) celebration of the United States, INR 250 will showcase America's unwavering support to maritime security, economic prosperity, and freedom of the seas for all nations. It will connect Americans with the Navy's longstanding role, as set forth in the U.S. Constitution, to protect American shores from foreign predation and preserve access to international trade. This extraordinary gathering will also pay tribute to countless generations of Americans who have served, sacrificed and continue to serve in defense of our nation and national maritime interests.

"New York City has always been and remains a historic maritime powerhouse," said NYC Department of Veterans' Services' Commissioner James W. Hendon. "From the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where iconic ships like the USS Arizona were built, to its ongoing significance in fostering international naval partnerships, New York City has been and will always remain a gateway to global trade and maritime innovation. Hosting the International Naval Review on the nation's 250th birthday, yet again proves that New York City is the most Veteran and military friendly city in the world."

From the early days of exploration and independence to the present era of global maritime commerce and strategic competition, the United States has always recognized its vital connection to the sea. INR 250 will offer a unique opportunity to reflect on the proud heritage, achievements and sacrifices that have shaped our nation's maritime legacy.

“For 250 years, our Navy and Marine Corps Team – composed of our Sailors, Marines, Navy Civilians, Merchant Mariners, and supported by America’s shipyard workforce – have built, crewed and sailed across the globe, defending liberty, promoting freedom and advancing maritime statecraft on behalf of our nation,” said Secretary Del Toro. “Our naval heritage is intertwined with the earliest days of American independence, and INR 250 speaks to our longstanding connection with New York City and its harbor.”

The U.S. Navy is inviting international navies, maritime forces and coast guards from over 130 Allied and partner nations to join INR250 and celebrations throughout the week from July 3-8. Scores of foreign warships, aircraft, and delegations will join the U.S. Fleet in the Port of New York and New Jersey. Like previous reviews, warships and vessels from federal, state, City of New York, and other partners will anchor as far south as the Verrazano Bridge and as far north as the George Washington Bridge.

An aerial review and flyover for INR250 will include all types of military, historic, and other aircraft and will likely be among the largest gathering of aircraft for a review in decades. The U.S. Navy and the City of New York will showcase one of the largest gatherings of Tall Sailing ships from around the world for the International Parade of Tall Ships coinciding with INR250.

In addition to INR 250, Sail4th 250, working alongside the U.S. Navy, will oversee what promises to be the greatest gathering of international tall ships in celebration of America’s 250th birthday on July 4, 2026 in the Port of New York and New Jersey. The International Parade of Tall Ships will feature 30 international Tall Ships accompanied by hundreds of other historic, leisure, and sailing vessels. The “Parade of Sail” will span from the Verrazzano Bridge to the George Washington Bridge.

“Sail4th 250 is proud to be working with the U.S. Navy, the City of New York, the US Coast Guard, and countless others to continue the long tradition of bringing the international Tall Ships to the world’s most famous harbor for this historic milestone event – America’s Semiquincentennial,” added Sail4th 250 President Chris O’Brien.

The International Parade of Tall Ships started with the 1964 World’s Fair led by Operation Sail. For America’s 250th celebration, Sail4th 250 will build on this maritime spectacle, not seen since July 4, 2000 during the millennium celebration.

Mayor Adams and Secretary Del Toro also announced the shift of the annual Fleet Week New York to coincide with INR 250. It will include events featuring the Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, large-scale outreach events, public engagements for U.S. and international Sailors, static displays, and other engagements throughout the Tri-State area. These events will be open to the public and international visitors.

INR 250 will display the strength and capabilities of the modern U.S. Navy, which continues to play a critical role in ensuring our nation’s security as well as global maritime security alongside Allies and partners. By gathering like-minded navies and maritime forces from around the globe, INR 250 will demonstrate the United States’ commitment to international cooperation and maritime security.

INR 250 will be the 7th international naval review hosted in the United States and the 4th held in the Port of New York and New Jersey, following 1976, 1986, and 2000 reviews. With New York as its centerpiece, INR 250 will commence a series of events with U.S. Navy and international Tall Sailing ship participation, to include Fleet Weeks, and port visits in East

Coast and Gulf port cities of New Orleans, Norfolk, Baltimore, and Boston.

Secretary Del Toro and Mayor Adams look forward to collaboration with the federal partners, the States of New York and New Jersey, and City of New York leadership, and the American people as we countdown to America's Semiquincentennial and the International Naval Review 250.

USS Cowpens Decommissioned After 33 Years of Service



NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (Aug. 27, 2024) – Retired Vice Adm. Edward Moore delivers remarks at the decommissioning ceremony for the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Cowpens (CG 63) at Naval Base San Diego Aug. 27, 2024. Cowpens was

commissioned in 1991, marking 33 years as a United States Ship. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Claire M. DuBois)

From Chief Petty Officer Mark Faram, 28 August 2024

SAN DIEGO – Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Cowpens (CG 63) was recognized for more than 33 years of naval service during the decommissioning ceremony at Naval Base San Diego on August 27.

Hundreds gathered to celebrate the ship's distinguished history of naval service. Cowpens's Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Jac O. Ullman III spoke of the ship's legacy and its crew.

"A guiding principle in the last chapter onboard, has been to honor the legacy of Cowpens", said Ullman. "To honor the grit, determination, and creativity of the Continental Army and Militiamen from that cold battlefield. To honor the service of those on the first USS Cowpens – CVL 25 – and to honor the legacy of those who served before us during Mighty Moo's 33 year career... We have done just that."

USS Cowpens participated in many operations and exercises, contributing significantly to U.S. naval power projection and security. From enforcing no-fly zones to conducting maritime security operations, the ship demonstrated versatility and capability across a range of mission profiles.

One of the notable milestones in Cowpens's history was its participation in Operation Enduring Freedom. Tasked with providing air defense and maritime security. The ship played a vital role in the early stages of the global war on terror, showcasing the Navy's ability to respond swiftly to emerging threats.

The ship's prowess was further demonstrated during Operation Iraqi Freedom, providing crucial support for coalition forces in the Persian Gulf region. From conducting surveillance to

launching precision strikes, USS Cowpens contributed to the success of coalition efforts to stabilize Iraq.

“From 1983 onward, these ships [Cowpens] defended our nation’s interests, supported critical combat operations, and ensured freedom of the seas; more than that, they brought AEGIS and VLS, revolutionary technologies into the hands of our warfighters”, said Rear Adm. Ted LeClair, Deputy Commander of Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

“Cowpens, the seventeenth AEGIS ship built, provided the value of these advancements. As AEGIS and VLS have evolved in both the Cruiser and Destroyer variants, Cowpens continuously demonstrated their effectiveness and lethality.”

Also in attendance was Cowpens sponsor, Mrs. Lucy Mustin and the first commanding officer of Cowpens, Vice Adm. Edward Moore (Ret.).

“At the end of this day, no matter when we were crewmembers, we can all agree we served on the best ship, the most formidable warship, in the best Navy, and in the best country in the world”, said Moore. “I know in my heart that long after we leave this pier today, we will, from time to time, continue to reflect on our service to country, ship, and each other.”

Additionally, the ship played a key role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, providing aid to regions devastated by natural disasters such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. These operations underscored the Navy’s commitment to global stability and humanitarian values.

The second ship to bear the name, Cowpens was built in Bath, Maine, and commissioned March 9, 1991, in Charleston, South Carolina. Named after the pivotal Battle of Cowpens during the American Revolutionary War, the ship has faithfully served the

nation for more than three decades, embodying the valor and resilience of its namesake.

After the decommissioning and inactivation, the ship will be towed to the Navy's Inactive Ship facility in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where it will be in a Logistic Support Asset (LSA) status.

The mission of CNSP 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.