

April 28 Red Sea Update

From U.S. Central Command, April 28, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – Between 1:48 and 2:27 a.m. (Sanaa time), April 28, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) successfully engaged five airborne unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) over the Red Sea.

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

USS George Washington Deploys to U.S. Southern Command, Eventually Headed to Japan



NORFOLK (April 25, 2024) The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) departs Naval Station Norfolk, April 25, 2024, for a deployment to the U.S. Southern Command area of operations as part of Southern Seas 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Maxwell Orlosky)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – A major homeport shift involving two Nimitz-class aircraft carriers is underway with the April 25, 2024, departure of USS George Washington (CVN 73) from Norfolk, Virginia, to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility. The voyage will take the carrier to NAS North Island, California, where it will embark Carrier Air Wing Five (CVW-5) from USS Ronald Reagan and replace that carrier as the one forward-deployed to the U.S. Seventh Fleet in Yokosuka, Japan.

Embarked in the George Washington are the Carrier Strike Group 10 staff and aircraft and personnel of Carrier Air Wing Seven (CVW-7).

“USS George Washington (CVN 73), along with USS Porter (DDG 78) and USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189), are scheduled to conduct passing exercises and operations at sea with partner nation maritime forces as the ships circumnavigate South America,” Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic said in an April 24 Facebook post. “Engagements are planned with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay, with port visits planned for Brazil, Chile, and Peru.”

The George Washington was the forward-deployed carrier based in Japan from 2008 until 2015, when it was replaced in Japan by the Ronald Reagan. In 2017, the George Washington entered a Refueling and Complex Overhaul at the Huntington Ingalls Industries’ Newport News Shipbuilding yard in Virginia, an evolution that took six years, including the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. The George Washington’s nuclear propulsion plant is fueled to run another 25 years.

Red Sea Update



U.S. Central Command, 26 April, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. — At 9:52 a.m. (Sanaa time) on April 25, one anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) was launched from Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist-controlled areas of Yemen into the Gulf of Aden. There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition, or commercial ships.

Separately, between 12:19 p.m. and 4:17 p.m. (Sanaa time), U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) successfully engaged and destroyed one unmanned surface vessel (USV) and one unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

It was determined that the ASBM, USV, and UAV presented an imminent threat to U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels in the region. These actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

U.S. Central Command, April 24, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. — At [11:51](#) a.m. (Sanaa time) on April 24, a coalition vessel successfully engaged one anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) launched from Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist-controlled areas in Yemen over the Gulf of Aden. The ASBM was likely targeting the MV Yorktown, a U.S.-flagged, owned, and operated vessel with 18 U.S. and four Greek crew members. There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition, or commercial ships.

Separately, between [12:07](#) pm and [1:26](#) pm, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) successfully engaged and destroyed four airborne unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) over Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

It was determined that the ASBM and UAVs presented an imminent threat to U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels in the region. These actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and

make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

U.S. Begins Construction on Temporary Pier to Deliver Humanitarian Aid to Gaza

Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (JLOTS)

- What is JLOTS:

U.S. Army and U.S. Navy forces organized and equipped to conduct joint ship-to-shore operations where fixed port facilities are inadequate or unavailable.

- What JLOTS can do:

Offload equipment and cargo in-stream (offshore) and deliver cargo to a restricted port, an expeditionary floating pier, or a bare beach employing shallow draft transport watercraft.



The Defense Department announced it would implement a Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore capability from the Mediterranean Sea to provide logistics access to Gaza. The capability will allow for the distribution of humanitarian supplies in Gaza, including as many as two million meals a day.

April 25, 2024 | By Joseph Clark, DOD News

U.S. military personnel have begun construction of a temporary pier off the coast of Gaza to deliver critical humanitarian assistance, senior defense and Biden administration officials said today.

Construction of the pier is expected to be completed in early May. Once completed, it will initially facilitate the delivery of an estimated 90 truckloads of international aid into Gaza and scale to up to 150 truckloads once fully operational.

The beginning of construction marks a significant milestone following President Joe Biden's call for the military to conduct the emergency operation during his State of the Union Address last month.

Soldiers from the Army's 7th Transportation Brigade at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, and sailors from Naval Beach Group 1 at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, California, were tapped to deploy the Defense Department's Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore capability, or JLOTS.

The first of several watercraft used to construct the pier began the weeklong transit to the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility less than two days after Biden's address.

Officials underscored today that no U.S. boots will be on the ground in Gaza as part of the operation.

The U.S. has coordinated with the Israeli Defense Force to provide force protection for U.S. personnel operating at sea. The U.S. has also coordinated with an IDF engineering unit to receive the pier on the shore in Gaza once the construction at sea is complete.

"The effort to deliver humanitarian assistance from the sea is fully supported by the Israeli Defense Force with whom we have been and will continue to work very closely – from fixing the JLOTS pier to the shore to providing force protection," a senior defense official said. "This effort is fully integrated with the IDF."

The official added that the U.S. is also bringing "significant force protection as a prudent measure" and will continue to closely monitor the security environment to ensure the safety

of U.S. forces.

“We assess that the security environment around the area of Gaza that we’ve chosen to establish the JLOTS site is sufficient to support execution of the mission,” the official said. “But importantly, we reassess security every single day. And as he would do in any mission, the commander of U.S. Central Command will make a final determination on moving forward with JLOTS placement based on the security situation at the time.”

Delivering the capability involves the complex choreography of logistics support and landing craft vessels that carry the equipment used to construct an approximately 1,800-foot causeway comprised of modular sections linked together, which is known as a Trident Pier.

The units are also constructing a 72-foot wide by 270-foot long roll-on, roll-off discharge facility, which will remain about three miles off Gaza’s shore and enable cargo ships to offload aid shipments at sea prior to being transported to shore.

About 1,000 soldiers and sailors are involved in the operation.

DOD is working closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development, which has begun coordinating international assistance. Aid providers have begun staging cargo in Cyprus for delivery via the maritime corridor once the pier is in place.

“Work on the maritime corridor is progressing along the expected timeline,” a senior administration official said. “This is a complex operation which requires close coordination with many partners, and we’re grateful for the work of our partners in this effort.”

IKE Carrier Strike Group Arrives in the Eastern Mediterranean



From U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, 26 April 2024

ARABIAN SEA — The Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (IKECSG) arrived in the Eastern Mediterranean while on a pre-announced Department of Defense deployment, April 26.

The Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gravelly (DDG 107) entered the Eastern Mediterranean after transiting through the Suez Canal, April

26.

CSGs bring to the region additional aviation and surface assets, providing greater flexibility and maritime capability to the U.S. 6th Fleet.

“The Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group has delivered exceptional naval power in the U.S. 5th Fleet for the last five months,” said Rear Adm. Marc Miguez, commander, CSG-2, IKECSG. “Reentry into the U.S. 6th Fleet is only a small gesture of our ability to project combat superiority to any part of the globe.”

While operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet, the IKECSG conducted operations in the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden and Arabian Gulf including Operation Prosperity Guardian and self-defensive strikes into Iranian-backed Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

The strike group is commanded by Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 2 and comprised of flagship Dwight D. Eisenhower, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 3 with its nine squadrons, USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 22, with the guided-missile destroyers USS Gravelly (DDG 107) and USS Mason (DDG 87).

Squadrons of CVW-3 include the “Gunslingers” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 105, the “Fighting Swordsmen” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 32, the “Rampagers” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 83, the “Wildcats” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 131, the “Screwtops” of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 123, the “Zappers” of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 130, the “Dusty Dogs” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 7, the “Swamp Foxes” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 74 and the “Rawhides” of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40.

IKECSG units departed their homeports of Norfolk, Virginia, and Mayport, Florida, on Oct. 13 & 14 for a scheduled deployment.

For over 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF 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.

**Keel Authenticated for Future
USNS Hector A. Cafferata Jr.**



From Team Ships Public Affairs, 25 April 2024

SAN DIEGO – The keel for the future USNS Hector A. Cafferata Jr. (ESB 8), a Lewis B. Puller-class Expeditionary Sea Base, was laid at GD NASSCO shipyard April 25.

The ship will be named for U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Private Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who served with distinction during the Korean War. Surviving the Battle of Chosin Reservoir among those who would be called, “the Chosin Few,” Cafferata received the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman for his life-saving heroism during that battle.

The contemporary keel laying ceremony represents the joining together of a ship’s modular components at the land level. As part of the ceremony, the keel is authenticated when the sponsors etch their initials into a ceremonial keel plate. The namesake’s daughter, Heather Cafferata, and granddaughter, Jessica Cafferata, attended the keel laying ceremony as the

ship sponsors. The ceremony represents the connection between a ship and its sponsors, throughout the ship's life.

"We are honored that the late Hector A. Cafferata's Jr.'s legacy will live on through this ship, and the keel laying is a first step of many milestones to come for this ship," said Tim Roberts, Strategic and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive Office Ships. "ESBs provide a critical capability to the fleet and provide increased flexibility to our Sailors and Marines."

Expeditionary Sea Base ships are highly flexible platforms used across a broad range of military operations, supporting multiple operational phases. Acting as a mobile sea base, they are a part of the critical access infrastructure that supports deploying forces and supplies to provide prepositioned equipment and sustainment with adaptable distribution capability.

These ships support Aviation Mine Countermeasure and Special Operations Force missions. In addition to the flight deck, the ESB features four aviation operating spots and a hangar capable of supporting MH-53E-equivalent helicopters; accommodations, workspaces, and ordnance storage for embarked forces; and enhanced command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I). These ships support embarked force mission planning and execution and have a reconfigurable mission deck area to store embarked force equipment, including mine sleds and Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs).

GD NASSCO is also currently constructing the future USNS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7) and John Lewis-class Fleet Replenishment Oilers Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208), Lucy Stone (T-AO 209), Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210) and Thurgood Marshall (T-AO 211).

As one of the Defense Department's largest acquisition

organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships and craft, auxiliary ships, special mission ships, sealift ships and support ships.

First Mine Countermeasures Mission Package Embarked on USS Canberra



A mine countermeasures unmanned surface vehicle is craned aboard the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Canberra (LCS 30), as a part of the first embarkation of the Mine Countermeasures (MCM) mission package, April 23. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Vance Hand)

[By Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants \(PEO](#)

USC) Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy embarked the first Mine Countermeasures Mission Package (MCM MP) aboard USS Canberra (LCS 30), April 18, service officials announced. With the MCM mission package now onboard LCS 30, the Navy is looking forward to the first MCM Mission Package deployment in Fiscal Year 2025.

As part of the embark process, the Navy installed sensors, unmanned vehicles, support containers and the software that enables Sailors to execute MCM operations from an Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship. The embarkation marks the formal turnover of the MCM mission package to the ship, signifying the crew is ready to commence onboard training and maintenance of the mission package in preparation for its first deployment.

“Today, the LCS Mission Modules program delivers to the Fleet a modernized and integrated MCM mission package that removes Sailors from the minefield and allows for the future retirement of legacy MCM ships,” said Capt. Matthew Lehmann, program manager of the LCS Mission Modules (PMS 420) program office.

An integrated suite of unmanned maritime systems and sensors, the MCM mission package locates, identifies, and destroys mines in the littorals while increasing the ship’s standoff distance from the threat area. Embarked with the MCM mission package, an LCS or a vessel of opportunity can conduct the full spectrum of detect-to-engage operations (hunt, neutralize and sweep) against mine threats using sensors and weapons deployed from the MCM Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV), an MH-60S multi-mission helicopter and associated support equipment.

The MCM mission package achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC) on March 31, 2023, following rigorous initial

operational testing and evaluation (IOT&E) of the full mission package, including the AN/AQS-20 system, during the fall of 2022 aboard USS Cincinnati (LCS 20). With the deployment of the first MCM mission packages in Fiscal Year 2025, the Navy will commence the process of divesting from aging MH-53 helicopters and Avenger Class MCM ships.

PEO Unmanned and Small Combatants leads the Navy's efforts to provide littoral combat ships with mission-tailored capability to Combatant Commanders to provide assured access against littoral threats, leveraging unmanned naval capabilities for enhanced operational effectiveness.

HII Delivers Virginia-Class Submarine New Jersey to U.S. Navy



NEWPORT NEWS, Va., April 25, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) announced today that its Newport News Shipbuilding division has delivered *Virginia*-class fast-attack submarine *New Jersey* (SSN 796) to the U.S. Navy.

New Jersey is the 11th *Virginia*-class submarine delivered by NNS, and the 23rd built as part of the teaming agreement with General Dynamics Electric Boat.

“It is a proud day for our entire team when we deliver a high-quality submarine like *New Jersey* to the fleet,” said Jason Ward, NNS vice president of *Virginia*-class submarine construction. “The mission ahead for *New Jersey* and her crew is clear, and we applaud our shipbuilders for delivering this critical capability to the fleet, while maintaining our highest standards of safety and quality.”

More than 10,000 shipbuilders from NNS and Electric Boat participated in the construction of *New Jersey*, alongside thousands of suppliers across the country, including more than 100 in New Jersey who support submarine construction. It is the first *Virginia*-class submarine designed and built with crew gender integration.

New Jersey was christened in November 2021 at NNS by ship’s sponsor Susan DiMarco, a New Jersey resident, retired dentist and wife of former Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson. The submarine is expected to be commissioned later this year.

A photo accompanying this release is available at: <https://hii.com/news/hii-delivers-virginia-class-submarine-new-jersey-ssn-796-to-us-navy/>.

Coast Guard Cutter Orcas Decommissioned After 35 Years of Service in Coos Bay, Oregon



[U.S. Coast Guard 13th District, April 23, 2024](#)

COOS BAY, Ore. – The Coast Guard decommissioned the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Orcas (WPB1327) during a ceremony, Tuesday.

Rear Adm. Charles Fosse, the commander of the Thirteenth Coast Guard District, presided over the ceremony honoring the 35 years of service Orcas and its crews provided to the nation.

Commissioned on April 14, 1989, Orcas was the twenty-seventh Island-Class cutter to join the fleet.

Orcas has been stationed in Coos Bay, Oregon, since 1989 and is the sixth Coast Guard cutter to be stationed in Coos Bay since 1935.

The Orcas was a multi-mission platform that conducted operations to support search and rescue response, marine environmental protection, and national defense.

“From training allied nation maritime forces, conducting the largest-ever cocaine seizure in the history of the Pacific Northwest, and saving countless lives and hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of property on the Pacific Ocean – Orcas has done it all,” said Lt. Brendan O’Farrell, the commanding officer of the Orcas. “This ship, one of the last of its kind, is an old American-made workhorse built to endure the harsh Pacific waves. I’m extremely proud and blessed to have served with the finest crew in the fleet.”

RTX awarded \$344M Contract to Modernize Electronics Unit for Standard Missile Development Program



The SM-2 missile is primarily used by U.S. and allied navies for fleet air defense and ship defense.

Updates will allow for continued, rapid deliveries of Standard Missile variants to the U.S. and international fleets

TUCSON, Arizona (April 25, 2024) – Raytheon, an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business, has been awarded a \$344 million contract for the development of two missile variants – the SM-2 Block IIICU and SM-6 Block IU – which will be based on a common guidance section, where the electronics and software that guide a missile to its target are housed.

The updated variants will share a newly designed guidance section, target detection device, independent flight termination system and electronics unit. This commonality will allow Raytheon to manufacture both missiles on a common production line, providing flexibility, scalability, and cost reductions.

“Upgrades under this contract will allow us to increase speed and efficiency in production of these weapon systems that are integral to the defense of the U.S. Navy and our allies,” said Kim Ernzen, president of Naval Power, Raytheon. “It’s also a very important step forward for our international customers,

as this will be the first time that Standard Missile active radar technology will be fielded by the U.S.'s international allies."

The development program is largely funded by Foreign Military Sales. The first users of these updated missiles will be the U.S., Australia, Canada, Japan, and Korea.

Work on this contract is being conducted in Tucson, Arizona. While the common sub-sections will be developed for both missile configurations under this award, there is a follow-on contract expected later this year which will complete the missile level qualification events as well as At-Sea flight tests specific to the SM-2 Block IIICU configuration.