

America ARG Completes Westpac Patrol



12 March 2025

SASEBO, Japan – The America Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) completed their first patrol of 2025, March 6.

This routine patrol, coordinated between the U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) and U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC), served to maintain a consistent presence in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

“Throughout our time at sea, we have remained on plan and on target conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area to enhance interoperability with our allies and partners,” said Commander, Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 11, Capt. Patrick German. “Together, we continued to serve cohesively as a ready-response force to defend peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.”

During the winter patrol, the America ARG consisted of PHIBRON

11, the America-class amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS San Diego (LPD 22), and the Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47). Additionally, the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (LPD 18) briefly joined the team of ships at sea, while conducting routine operations.

“It has been great to have all our assets underway,” said German, who previously served as New Orleans commanding officer. “I am extremely proud to have all four amphibious ships underway simultaneously. Having all ships underway simultaneously goes a long way in ensuring our allies and partners that we are a ready force here to assist when and where it’s necessary.”

From an amphibious assault ship, to an amphibious transport dock ship, to a dock landing ship, each vessel brought its own capabilities to form one, united ARG, operating at sea.

“Each ship has a specific role and while there’s some overlap, some of those roles are specific to that particular ship,” said German. “For instance, LSDs have the largest well decks in the Navy’s amphibious fleet. Then you have the LHA, which is a floating airport. Even though we have aviation capabilities on the LPDs and the LSDs, they can’t assume the same role as the LHA or LHD. So, the aggregate of a three to four ship ARG increases strength and enhances the multi-role capability of an amphibious outfit.”

Additionally, the 31st MEU integrated into the ARG to form a powerful and cohesive blue-green team. Its aviation combat element comprised of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262 (Reinforced) and a detachment from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242; the ground combat element comprised of Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4); and the logistics combat element comprised of Combat Logistics

Battalion 31.

“Working alongside the Marines was critical for us,” said San Diego Commanding Officer Capt. Timothy Carter. “As we continued to learn from each other, we also built on the foundations of our partnerships within our own organization, so that when the time comes to provide support to our allies and partners, we are ready, welded, and prepared to execute our mission.”

Carter added having Marines and Sailors working together is the name of the game in an ARG; having a Blue-Green team is vital to the strength of amphibious operations and capabilities.

During 25.1, America and Rushmore also participated in Iron Fist 2025, while San Diego became the third U.S. ship to visit Ishigaki, Japan in three years, underscoring the strength and commitment of the U.S.-Japan alliance as a cornerstone to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Throughout 25.1, the ARG worked as one team in response to operational tasking, from start to end.

“It has been phenomenal watching our teams come together,” said Carter. “We all bring different types of capabilities to the fight. Everyone has a unique art and everyone plays a valuable role in what we have accomplished here. Throughout our interoperability and certifying exercises, we truly came together as a unit, both sea force and landing force while operating as one.”

Based in Sasebo, Japan, and consisting of the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), transport dock ships USS San Diego (LPD 22) and USS New Orleans (LPD 18), and the dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47); PHIBRON 11 provides centralized planning, embarkation, movement control, coordination and integration of all aspects of amphibious

warfare.

Navy Intends to Ramp Up Shipbuilding Through Collaborative Efforts



March 11, 2025 | By David Vergun, DoD News

U.S. shipbuilders continue to produce the highest quality, safest and most advanced warships on the planet, said Brett A. Seidle, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development, and acquisition, who testified today at a House Armed Services Committee's seapower and projection forces subcommittee hearing on the state of U.S. shipbuilding.

"We have the finest Navy ever assembled in the history of the world," Seidle said. "They're coming to a theater near you, bringing their A game."

However, at a time when adversaries around the globe challenge the maritime commons, the U.S. shipbuilding industry is challenged to produce the quantity of ships at the rate required, he said.

Cost and schedule performance remain challenging with deliveries approximately one to three years late and cost rising faster than overall inflation. These issues are prevalent across the nuclear and conventional shipbuilding communities with both the Navy and industry sharing responsibility, Seidle said.

Some things brought this about, he said, including reduced competition and capacity at tier-one shipyards. Additionally, suppliers have experienced atrophy of the manufacturing sector, shifting Navy requirements, burdensome acquisition processes, depressed investment, workforce shortages, diminished proficiency, supply chain disruptions, historic underinvestment and industry consolidation following the end of the Cold War.

"I was not raised in the shipbuilding environment and therefore am not saddled with preconceived notions of 'this is how we've always done it.' I certainly welcome informed perspectives from those who are passionate about strengthening our fleet," Seidle said.

He believes these collective challenges can be overcome, he said.

"This committee has my passionate commitment to collaborate with Congress, industry, academia, training organizations, trade associations, as well as all levels of government in pursuit of improved cost and schedule performance," Seidle testified.

“Our nation and the world need the strength of our Navy, and my intent is do everything in my power to deliver on that promise,” he said.

Mass Timber, 3D Printing May be Future of Military Construction for Army, Navy

March 11, 2025 | By C. Todd Lopez, DoD News

Army and Navy barracks may one day be 3D printed or built using mass timber construction that involves large wooden structural beams manufactured from smaller lumber.

Today on Capitol Hill, Dave Morrow, director of military programs for Army Corps of Engineers, and Keith Hamilton, chief engineer for Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, met with lawmakers from the House appropriations committee, subcommittee on defense, to discuss the current and potential future uses of innovative construction techniques and technologies by the armed forces.

Additive construction – 3D printing buildings – high performance cement and concrete mixes, geosynthetics, mass timber, composite materials, industrialized construction, tension fabric structures, and carbon fiber reinforced polymers were all part of the discussion with lawmakers about how the Army and Navy can develop the most cost efficient and resilient military construction projects.

“In an increasingly complex global security environment, our commitment to innovation in military construction is not just

about building structures, it's about building the resilience and readiness our forces need to prevail," Morrow said. "By working with industry to leverage these advancements, we can deliver more durable, sustainable and cost-effective infrastructure for our military, ensuring taxpayer dollars are used efficiently, while equipping our troops with the best facilities in the world."

The Army Corps of Engineers, Morrow said, has already piloted 3D printed construction at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, and Fort Bliss, Texas. At Fort Bliss, three new projects, involving barracks, were constructed using 3D printing technology.

Morrow said this technology can be used in garrison or in expeditionary environments.

"Additive construction has [the] potential to reduce costs, manpower, logistics and time, while opening the door for improved and new applications, such as unconventional countermeasures," he told lawmakers.

The USACE's Engineer Research and Development Center, has played a part in the development of unified facilities criteria, to allow additive construction in 80% of the United States, Morrow said. The criteria, developed jointly, sets basic technical requirements that must be followed to deliver code-compliant, complete and usable military facilities.

In Hampton Roads, Virginia, the Navy is now piloting the use of mass timber, also called cross-laminated timber for construction of a child development center, Hamilton said.

In testimony submitted to the committee, Hamilton said the new facility will use a hybrid mass timber exterior envelope consisting of cross-laminated walls and diaphragms.

"DOD has expressly acknowledged the applicability of CLT with the creation of a guide specification," Hamilton said. "As the

CLT construction industry matures, CLT may prove more competitive and could be utilized more broadly in DOD construction.”

The USACE is also working with mass timber projects, Morrow said.

“We recently designed the Army’s first barracks made primarily with mass timber structural elements and are soliciting interest in construction of a project at Mountain Home Air Force Base, calling for the incorporations of mass timber design,” he said, adding that mass timber construction in those projects may reduce construction timelines.

Hamilton told lawmakers, at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, NAVFAC was involved in piloting the use of high-performance concrete to build a new F-35 Lightning II hanger.

Advancements within HPC include durability, strength, and resistance to extreme environmental conditions, as well as improved thermal and acoustic properties.

“HPC has been used extensively for our piers, runways and other critical infrastructure; and we are broadening its application,” Hamilton wrote in submitted testimony.

Like USACE, Hamilton said, NAVFAC is looking to newer technologies to provide better facilities and better capabilities to warfighters.

“NAVFAC is actively testing and employing innovative technologies, materials and methods for design and construction today, and we are leaning forward to increase collaboration with industry, academia and other government partners to identify and leverage future opportunities,” Hamilton said.

Within the Navy, he told lawmakers, new guidance requires

NAVFAC planners and engineers to evaluate if new military construction projects can use alternative construction methods to meet warfighting requirements, lower costs and accelerate project delivery.

Curtiss-Wright Awarded \$50 Million IDIQ Contract by Naval Air Systems Command for High-Speed Data Acquisition Systems

ASHBURN, Va. – March 11, 2025 – Curtiss-Wright’s [Defense Solutions Division](#) today announced it has been awarded an approximately \$50 million firm-fixed-price Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract by Naval Air Systems Command to provide its high-speed data acquisition systems hardware and associated repair services in support of the Naval Air Systems Command Special Flight Test Instrumentation Pool. The contract, which is scheduled to run through January 2030, covers Curtiss-Wright’s full line of flight test instrumentation products, including data acquisition units, network switches, data recorders, network gateways, Ethernet radios, RF transmitters, C-Band transponders, and high-speed cameras supporting fixed-wing and rotary military aircraft. This contract will support numerous platforms including the F-35, F-18, CH-53K, E-2D, EA-18, C-130, and future U.S. Navy development programs.

“We are honored that our high-speed data acquisition

technology and services have been selected by Naval Air Systems Command,” said Brian Perry, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Curtiss-Wright Defense Solutions Division. “This IDIQ contract, which is the renewal of an existing contract that has been in use for over 15 years, represents Naval Air Systems Command’s continued endorsement of the reliability and performance of our flight test instrumentation technology to support critical naval air deployments and future U.S. Navy development programs.”

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.

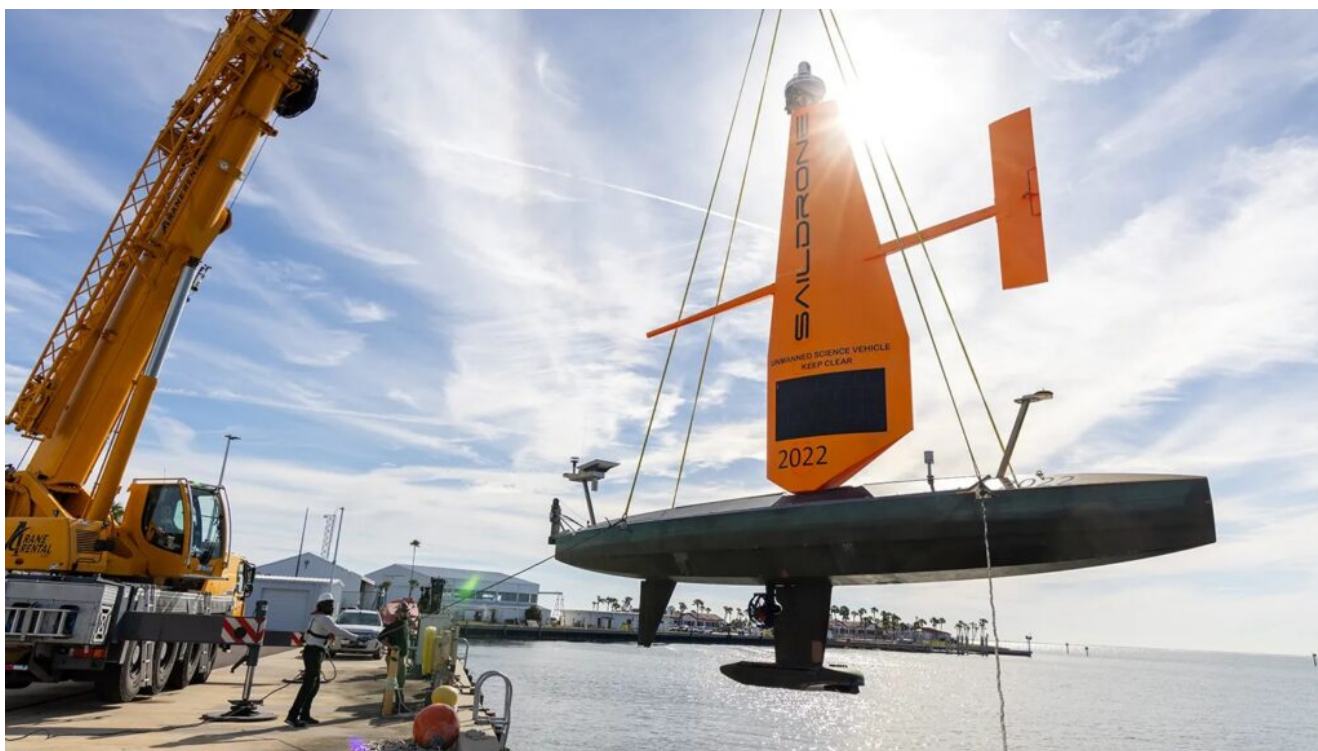
Blocks I-III Virginia-class submarines are planned to undergo four depot maintenance availabilities and conduct 14 deployments. Block IV design changes are intended to reduce planned availabilities by one to three, and increase deployments to 15.

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.

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.

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 communication 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.