

# Exercise PANAMAX 2022 Kicks Off in Mayport, Florida



Argentine Navy Rear Adm. Marcelo Fernandez, PANAMAX 2022 Combined Force Maritime Component Commander, throws the ceremonial first pitch at a Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp minor league baseball game for the start of PANAMAX 2022, in Jacksonville, Florida, Aug. 2. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jahlena Royer*

MAYPORT, Fla. – U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet is hosting the Combined Force Maritime Component Command Staff participating in exercise PANAMAX 2022, in Mayport, Florida, Aug. 1-12.

Exercise PANAMAX 2022 is a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored exercise that provides important training opportunities for nations to work together and build upon the capability to plan and conduct complex multinational operations. The exercise scenario involves security and stability operations to ensure free flow of commerce through the Panama Canal.

U.S. forces participating in this year's exercise include staff elements from Southern Command, U.S. Army South, U.S. Marine Forces South, Special Operations Command South, 12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern), and U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet, along with participants from 23 partner nations.

Approximately 300 Sailors, Marines and public security forces will serve on the CFMCC staff under the leadership of Argentine Rear Adm. Marcelo Fernandez, who serves as Commander, Atlantic Naval Area for the Argentine Navy.

"PANAMAX demonstrates our ability to ensure regional security and stability through multi-national maritime operations in support of the Panama Canal," said Fernandez. "I look forward to the opportunity to work together with the U.S. and our other partner nations during this important exercise."

Under the exercise scenario, a multinational force has formed to execute a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for defense of the Panama Canal. The force includes air, land and special-forces components, in addition to the maritime component, which will plan and conduct simulated operations in and around the canal and its surrounding waters in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

There are no live forces in this year's PANAMAX. Instead, component staffs will work through a computer-aided scenario in support of the Multinational Forces South Commander, Maj. Gen. William Thigpen, Commanding General, U.S. Army South.

Forces will participate in the training at various U.S. locations including Joint Staff Exercise Directorate at Suffolk, Virginia; U.S. Southern Command, Doral, Florida; Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas; Homestead Air Reserve Base, Homestead, Florida; Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Tucson, Arizona; and Naval Station Mayport, Florida.

For the fifth straight PANAMAX, the air, land and maritime component commanders for the exercise are partner nation flag or general officers.