

Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces Enable Distributed Maritime Operations During LSE 2023



ATLANTIC OCEAN (Aug. 12,2023) Navy Expeditionary Combat Command Sailors assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 2 fast-rope onto the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) for a simulated expeditionary battle damage assessment and repair during a general quarters drill, August 12, 2023. Porter is participating in U.S. Fleet Forces Command's Large Scale Exercise 2023, which provides a venue to test and refine current and new technologies and platforms to reinforce our current position as a supreme maritime force and provide feedback used to inform future innovation. (U.S. Navy photo by Interior Communications

Electrician 3rd Class Hailey A. Servedio)

[Release from U.S. Fleet Forces Command](#)

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VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – Sailors and Marines assigned to Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) refined their warfighting concepts and tactics in live, virtual, and constructive training events throughout the month of August during Large Scale Exercise (LSE) 2023.

NECC's operations center provided command and control of NECC's forces throughout the exercise, working closely to support Fleet commanders in 2nd, 6th and 7th Fleets.

NECC forces operating in the continental U.S. demonstrated their ability to provide expeditionary re-arming, refueling, port damage repair, airfield damage repair, mine countermeasures and battle damage assessments ashore in Virginia, North Carolina and Florida and at sea in the U.S. 2nd Fleet operational area.

Expeditionary Re-Arming

The training events kicked off with Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group (NAVELSG) further refining their ability to reload a destroyer's missile tubes using a crane from an auxiliary ship, August 3. NAVELSG Sailors assigned to Navy Cargo Handling Battalion's expeditionary reload team assisted the crews of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) and Military Sealift Command's (MSC) dry cargo ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12) in performing a MK 41 Vertical Launch System (VLS) re-arm using simulated ordnance, pier-side, at Naval Station Norfolk. The expeditionary ordnance reload teams also conducted re-arming efforts in Mayport, Florida, during the exercise.

“Expeditionary logistics allow the Navy to quickly return to maintaining maritime dominance,” said Rear Adm. Brad Andros, commander, NECC. “Operating in support of Military Sealift Command during Large Scale Exercise 2023 provides our expeditionary reload teams the opportunity to train to different platforms so that they can continue to sustain capacity and increase the persistent combat power of naval forces.”

Expeditionary Port Damage Repair

Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces leveraged an aging pier on Naval Station Norfolk August as a training site to not only practice their ability to conduct expeditionary port damage repair operations (ExpDRO) but also improve real-world infrastructure for future fleet use.

Prior to beginning the repair, Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 2 conducted harbor clearance and a pier survey with remotely operated vehicles to ensure a safe working environment, and the Maritime Expeditionary Security Force conducted patrol boat operations, providing security of the entry and exit points for our forces.

Sailors conducting ExpDRO revive sea ports of debarkation through diving, salvage, expeditionary dredging and expedient construction operations to remove impediments to shipping, repair piers, quay walls and other waterfront infrastructure in contested environments to support maneuverability and resupply of forces. The 22nd Naval Construction Regiment oversaw the successful ExpDRO event, commanding and controlling Underwater Construction Team (UCT) 2, who provided underwater construction capabilities, and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11, who used a task-tailored waterfront construction company who specializes in maritime construction to provide topside construction capabilities.

Improvements for the pier included constructing new reinforcements with trussing, restoring and painting cleats, wrapping piles, and underwater pier bracing.

“Repairing sea ports of debarkation is incredibly important for enabling distributed maritime operations,” said Andros. “Our forces were able to demonstrate their ability to repair piers quickly and effectively so that the Fleet can return to the fight. This capability enables expeditionary logistics and resupply of expeditionary advanced base forces.”

Expeditionary Airfield Damage Repair and Expeditionary Refueling

Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces also conducted airfield damage repair efforts onboard Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina. To exercise integration with the amphibious surface fleet and U.S. Marine Corps, Seabees from NMCB 11 embarked the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21) with construction vehicles and supplies and conducted a beach landing onto Onslow Beach at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune with the support of landing craft, air cushions.

Once they landed, they refueled and convoyed to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base where they met Navy explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technicians from EOD Mobile Unit (EODMU) 6 and began airfield damage repair efforts which included surveying the airfield, identifying explosive hazards, clearing the area of simulated ordnance and repairing craters and spalls to return the airfield back to full functionality.

Sailors from Navy Cargo Handling Battalion’s expeditionary refueling team also integrated with Marines from Marine Wing Support Squadron 272 to establish a forward arming and refueling point for fixed wing aircraft at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base that enabled sea-to-shore and shore-to-sea

expeditionary logistics capabilities, a critical node in ensuring distributed maritime operations.

Expeditionary Mine Countermeasures and Battle Damage Repair

An expeditionary mine countermeasures company from EODMU 12 comprised of a command and control element, an unmanned systems platoon and an explosive ordnance disposal mine countermeasures platoon, embarked aboard the amphibious dock landing ship USS Gunston Hall (LSD-44) to provide expeditionary mine countermeasures "q-route" clearance in the 2nd Fleet operational area. They used a combination of unmanned systems and EOD technicians to locate, identify and eliminate simulated explosive threats with underwater detonations so that the ship could safely operate in a simulated contested environment.

Sailors from MDSU 2 demonstrated their ability to rapidly deploy, conduct damage assessments, and "fight the ship" alongside Sailors from the USS Porter (DDG 78) during a simulated emergency response scenario on the ship. This capability, known as expeditionary battle damage assessment and repair, is designed to increase surface combatant resiliency and get the Navy's ships back in the fight to continue their missions. The initial entry team from MDSU 2 conducted a fast rope insertion onto the Porter from a helicopter where they integrated into shipboard damage control and engineering efforts while also establishing communication back to their higher headquarters ashore. They then dispersed throughout the ship to check repair efforts, identify water intrusion points, and conduct clearance and explosive hazard mitigation.

Andros said he was incredibly proud of his Sailors and the warfighting concepts that were refined during LSE 2023 so that the Navy Expeditionary Combat Force can continue to support the Navy in fighting, winning, and deterring potential

aggressors.

“Our Sailors are trained to operate globally and thrive in littoral environments to reinforce America’s maritime dominance,” said Andros. “The capabilities of the Navy Expeditionary Combat Force were on full display during Large Scale Exercise 2023, and I look forward to future iterations as we build upon our ability to rearm, refuel, resupply, repair and revive naval forces to stay in the fight.”

Navy Expeditionary Combat Command mans, trains, equips, organizes, and sustains warfighting readiness for the Navy’s explosive ordnance disposal, construction, maritime expeditionary security, expeditionary logistics support, and expeditionary intelligence forces so that Navy and Joint Force commanders can apply our unique capabilities to their missions.

LSE 2023 demonstrates the Navy’s and Marine Corps’ ability to employ precise, lethal, and overwhelming force globally across six maritime component commands, seven numbered fleets, and 22 time zones. LSE 2023 merges real-world operations with virtually constructed scenarios to create a realistic training environment that allows Sailors and Marines to train how they will fight, regardless of geographic boundaries.

For more information about NECC and our units, visit our website: <https://www.necc.usff.navy.mil/>