

Tripoli ARG, 31st MEU return from U.S. 5th, 7th Fleet deployment



OKINAWA, Japan – The Navy-Marine Corps team of the Tripoli Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit concluded a dynamic six-month deployment to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operations, as the 31st MEU offloaded in Okinawa, July 22, 2026.

The forward-deployed Tripoli ARG is composed of America-class amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli (LHA 7), San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (LPD 18), and Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47). Together with the embarked Marines of the 31st MEU, this Blue-Green team provides a flexible and responsive force ready to conduct missions across the full range of military operations at sea, on land, or in the air.

The deployment began in the Pacific, where the ARG-MEU team supported routine operations and participated in Exercise Iron Fist 26. This annual bilateral exercise with the Japan Self-Defense Forces included field training; close-air support; urban operations; and simulated air, ground, and amphibious assaults designed to strengthen the alliance and enhance combined capabilities.

Following Exercise Iron Fist, the Tripoli ARG and 31st MEU transited to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility. Arriving in the Middle East in March, the naval force enforced maritime blockade security in the northern Arabian Sea, stabilizing key waterways and enabling critical follow-on Joint Force operations.

“The MEU is designed for crisis response. This team proved the unmatched capability of a forward-deployed Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) by seamlessly transitioning into combat operations mid-deployment,” added U.S. Marine Corps Col. Chris Niedziocha, commanding officer of the 31st MEU. “The team adapted, never lost sight of the mission, and performed flawlessly under the most dynamic circumstances.”

Throughout the deployment, the Tripoli ARG and 31st MEU successfully conducted over 1,600 mishap-free flight hours of combat aviation missions, including precision strikes, transporting 800,000 pounds of cargo, and moving 5,000 personnel. The units also provided sustained combat support to joint force operations by delivering critical intelligence, refueling over 300 aircraft ashore and underway.

“I’m incredibly proud of our integrated team across the ARG, who have demonstrated extreme resilience and commitment to the mission during the dynamic and demanding deployment,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Timothy R. Carter, Commodore of Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 11. “They answered our nation’s call, executed every mission with unwavering professionalism, and represented our country with honor.”

The Tripoli ARG is commanded by PHIBRON-11, the newest and only forward-deployed amphibious squadron in the U.S. Navy. Assigned to Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 7 / Commander, Task Force (CTF) 76, PHIBRON-11 provides centralized planning and integration of all aspects of amphibious warfare. Forward deployed to Okinawa, the 31st MEU serves as a flexible, sea-based MAGTF. Together, they routinely operate with allies and partners to preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific, remaining a global force ready to respond to crises anywhere in the world.

Within the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, ESG7 / CTF-76 is responsible for conducting expeditionary warfare operations with Navy and Marine Corps capabilities to support theater contingencies that range from crisis response to full combat operations. U.S. 7th Fleet, the Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific.