# U.S. forces strengthen Pacific security partnerships at CARAT Thailand 2026




SATTAHIP, Thailand – Heads of delegation representing the United States, Thailand, and Canada pose for a photo during the opening ceremony of exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Thailand 2026, July 6, 2026, at Laem Tian Pier. This year marks the 32nd iteration of CARAT, a multinational exercise series designed to enhance U.S. and partner navies' abilities to operate together in response to shared maritime security challenges in the region. Photo credit: U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Nicholas Rodriguez.

SATTAHIP, Thailand – The United States deepened its commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific this week as U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Marine Corps forces joined maritime partners from Thailand and Canada in Sattahip to open the 32nd iteration of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT)

Thailand 2026, July 6.

The exercise advances U.S. national security interests by sharpening combined combat readiness and reinforcing our decades-long alliance with Thailand. CARAT directly supports U.S. strategic objectives in the region by building the interoperable, capable partner networks the United States needs to respond to shared maritime challenges. This year's exercise introduces two firsts that expand U.S. reach and capability. CARAT will host shore-based, peer-to-peer subject matter exchanges in Songkhla for the first time. Another first will be the addition of U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutters USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) and USCGC Charles Moulthrope (WPC 1141). They will join a multi-domain force including a U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft from Commander, Task Force (CTF) 72 and U.S. Marines from the Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Pacific (FASTPAC).

They will operate alongside Royal Thai Navy (RTN) assets, including the Naresuan-class frigate HTMS Taksin (FFG 422) and Chao Phraya-class frigate HTMS Saiburi (FFG 458).

"Operating with Thailand through CARAT and regular exercises keeps the alliance strong," said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Kyle Gantt, deputy commander, U.S. 7th Fleet. "For over seven decades, the U.S. and Thailand alliance has reinforced regional maritime security through an unwavering partnership between the Royal Thai Navy and U.S. Navy. Together we ensure regional stability."

The tactical, at-sea phase in Sattahip and the Gulf of Thailand will emphasize combat readiness through complex evolutions. Planned sea-phase serials include high-end anti-submarine warfare exercises, air defense exercises, and command and control coordination. Units will also conduct combined mine countermeasures and search and rescue training events. Enhancing the multilateral nature of the exercise, the

Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) will participate by integrating members of a specialized visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) team into combined VBSS evolutions alongside U.S. and Thai forces.

“Every year, we expand our interoperability across commands, platforms and services,” said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Doug Ivey, chief staff officer of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 7. “With the participation of fast response cutters from Expeditionary Cutter Squadron joining CARAT 2026 and some of our subject matter experts conducting exchanges in Songkhla, we’re looking forward to pushing the boundaries and seeing what the team is capable of.”

Ashore in Sattahip and Songkhla, CARAT Thailand will foster relationships through a comprehensive series of engagements. The shore phase serials will consist of relationship-building events, including a multilateral sports day, community service projects, and a series of public performances and cultural exchanges between the U.S. and Thai navy bands. Additionally, service members will hold subject matter expert exchanges in classroom settings as well as practical education serials, focusing on critical capabilities such as maritime domain awareness, tactical combat casualty care, and at-sea explosive ordnance disposal.

CARAT Thailand is a long-standing exercise series designed to enhance U.S. and partner navies’ abilities to operate together in response to shared maritime challenges in the region.

As the U.S. Navy’s forward-deployed DESRON in Southeast Asia, DESRON-7 serves as the primary tactical and operational commander of littoral combat ships deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

U.S. 7th Fleet, the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific.