

U.S., Iceland Wrap Up Exercise Northern Viking 2022



From left to right, the Norwegian Fritdjof Nansen-class frigate HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl (F314), French F70 type frigate FS Latouche-Tréville (D646) and German Sachsen-class air-defense frigate FGS Sachsen (F219) sail in formation in the North Atlantic Ocean in support of exercise Northern Viking 22. *FRENCH NAVY*

ICELAND – At sea, French, German and Norwegian surface combatants were joined by American and German maritime patrol aircraft in a hunt for adversary submarines while small boats conducted visit, board, search and seizure missions on suspect vessels.

On land, near Keflavík Air Base, an Icelandic coast guard rescue helicopter transported trapped and injured citizens to a temporary medical facility staffed by members of 22nd Marine

Expeditionary Unit's Shock Trauma Platoon and host nation medical personnel for triage and treatment.

For the last two weeks, allied nations have exercised these capabilities and more, coming together to hone their skills and enhance cooperation during the Iceland-hosted, U.S. 6th Fleet-executed exercise Northern Viking 22, U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs said April 16.

"Northern Viking 22 has been incredibly successful for us and for the participating Allies," said Cmdr. Marvin Ingólfsson, Deputy Commander of Keflavík Air Base. "We have learned from each other these last two weeks and we have shared tactics and procedures, improving our ability to operate together in the defense of Iceland and of the lines of communication that run through this area."

The exercise, which began April 2 and concluded April 14, initially focused on protecting the critical infrastructure of Keflavík Air Base. Exercise participants established temporary secondary refueling positions for Allied aircraft while working to neutralize security threats to the base and its personnel.

"Northern Viking is really important for our cooperation in the high north seas and to our country in defense of law enforcement scenarios," said Lt. Ásgeir R. Gudjonsson, the Icelandic coast guard improvised explosive device disposal specialist. "It's good to have a go at actual events and the training is vital for us. We learned that [different EOD teams] differ a bit, but they're close – so we can work really well together."

The first week of the exercise also included air defense scenarios, coordinated shiphandling evolutions and hydrographic and airfield surveys. Throughout the exercise, allied maritime forces practiced a variety of evolutions to enhance their cooperation and coordination in defending

Iceland and the sea lines of communication in the Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom (GIUK) gap.

Participants shifted their focus during the latter half of the exercise to the Marines of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit and Royal Marine Commandos as they conducted multiple ship-to-shore operations, a natural progression in complexity of the overall exercise. Marines and Sailors from the USS Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and 22nd MEU participated in a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, simulated raids on illicit compounds and visit, board, search and seizure operations.

Northern Viking 22, led by the U.S. 6th Fleet as a maritime-focused event for the first time in decades, established a framework for future iterations of the Northern Viking exercise. As units and personnel depart Iceland for their own national taskings and future missions, the planning cycle for Northern Viking 24 is right around the corner. With lessons learned and invaluable training experiences and opportunities to look back on, exercise planners look forward to building on the successes of Northern Viking 22.