

U.S. Navy Expands Maintenance Provider Base in Africa



The Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary sea base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) sails in the Gulf of Aden, July 26. Hershel "Woody" Williams is rotationally deployed to the U.S. Naval Forces Africa area of operations, employed by U.S. 6th Fleet, to defend U.S., allied and partner interests. *U.S. AIR FORCE / Staff Sgt. Dylan Murakami*

WALVIS BAY, Namibia – Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary sea base ship USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) and Forward Deployed Regional Maintenance Center (FDRMC) ship repair experts hosted a ship check event attended by commercial maintenance providers during a recent port visit to Walvis Bay, Namibia, Sept. 5, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa Public Affairs said Sept. 27.

Ship checks provide opportunities to meet regional maintenance

providers in person and allow representatives to visit the ship ahead of potentially bidding on a maintenance contract. During the first-ever ship check for Hershel "Woody" Williams in Namibia, FDRMC representatives led the attendees around the vessel to identify areas and equipment in need of maintenance ahead of an upcoming voyage repair availability.

Following the ship check event, Naval Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Center Sigonella (NAVSUP FLCSI) contracting officers and FDRMC ship repair experts and U.S. Transportation Command's Military Sealift Command hosted a virtual industry engagement. This event educated maintenance provider representatives about the U.S. government contract solicitation process, contracting regulations and how to submit competitive solicitations to the government to perform any of the ship's needed maintenance.

"The U.S. Navy cannot operate effectively and execute its mission overseas without the labor and expertise of commercial ship repair vendors," said Capt. Paul Haslam, NAVSUP FLCSI chief of contracts. "Ship checks and virtual industry engagement events like those we conducted aboard HWW serve to strengthen relations with key partners like Namibia and, in general, help pave the way for future maintenance and logistics capability overseas. These events also broaden mutual understanding and improve cooperation between NAVSUP and our mission partners."

Having the maintenance provider tour the ship at the same time as the ship check exposed them to needed work aboard Hershel "Woody" Williams. Similarly, during the virtual industry engagement, they had the opportunity to learn about the U.S. government contract solicitation process, contracting regulations and how to submit competitive solicitations to the government to perform any of the ship's needed maintenance.

"Building relationships with regional maintenance providers is critical to ensure U.S. Navy ships receive quality and on-time

maintenance during future availabilities,” said Marie Hahn, NAVSUP FLCSI Ship Repair Division director. “We haven’t done work in Namibia yet; so it was expected that commercial vendors in attendance benefited from the virtual industry engagement.”

Hershel “Woody” Williams is the first U.S. Navy vessel to be assigned to the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility whose presence is to promote maritime security through a persistent presence in African waters in close cooperation with African partners.