

# U.S., Philippine Navies conduct bilateral sail to enhance interoperability



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SOUTH CHINA SEA – U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided missile-destroyer USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114) and Philippine Navy guided-missile frigate BRP Jose Rizal (FF-150) conducted a bilateral sail in the South China Sea Sept. 4, to enhance the interoperability between the two navies.

During the sail, the ships completed division tactics

(DIVTACS), which is at-sea training designed for ship handlers to practice maneuvering within close proximity to other vessels and improve the confidence of the bridge teams to manage more challenging sailing conditions.

“This was a great opportunity to continue improving our ability to operate alongside our allies from the Philippines,” said USS Ralph Johnson Officer Of The Deck (OOD) Lt.j.g. Vince Smetona, from San Clemente, California. “The relationship between our navies has been incredibly strong for a long time, and evolutions like this allow us to keep strengthening those bonds at a ship-level.”

U.S. 7th Fleet routinely sails with allies and partners to build interoperability and address shared maritime security challenges.

“U.S. 7th Fleet will continue to find opportunities to sail alongside our allies and partners and reinforce the importance of professional maritime operations at sea anywhere international law allows. Our U.S.-Philippines alliance remains vital to Indo-Pacific security and stability in the region,” said Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet.

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