

U.S., U.K., Dutch Naval Forces Conduct Joint Exercise in Gulf of Aden



The combined, bilateral surface, air and sub-surface exercise was designed to enhance U.K., Dutch and U.S. maritime interoperability and demonstrate naval integration through a series of training scenarios. *U.S. NAVY*

GULF OF ADEN – The Queen Elizabeth (U.K.) and Ronald Reagan carrier strike groups (CSG), alongside the Iwo Jima amphibious ready group (ARG), conducted a large-scale joint interoperability exercise in the Gulf of Aden, July 12, Task Force 50 Public Affairs said in a release.

The combined, bilateral surface, air and sub-surface exercise was designed to enhance UK, Dutch and U.S. maritime interoperability and demonstrate naval integration through a series of training scenarios.

“Our team was proud to operate alongside the U.K. Carrier Strike Group during this unique opportunity to hone the full scope of our mutual capabilities,” said Rear Adm. Will Pennington, commander, Ronald Reagan CSG and Task Force 50.

“By operating together at sea, we deepen our coalition partnerships and extend our global reach throughout the region’s critical waterways.”

Participating forces focused on the full spectrum of maritime warfare operations, practicing anti-air warfare, anti-surface warfare, and anti-submarine warfare tactics and procedures.

The crews exercised their abilities to conduct precision maneuvering, hunt simulated enemy submarines, provide layered defense against simulated air and surface threats, and conduct long range maritime strikes against simulated adversarial forces.

“The aircraft carrier is the ultimate expression of global maritime power,” said Commodore Steve Moorhouse, commander, United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group. “Queen Elizabeth, Ronald Reagan and Iwo Jima symbolize the might of the U.S. and UK partnership, and the ease with which our naval and air forces can combine here in the Gulf of Aden, or anywhere else in the world.”

This also marks the second time this year the Iwo Jima ARG has operated alongside the U.K. carrier strike group, following an exercise off the coast of Scotland in May.

“The Iwo Jima ARG remains in a high state of readiness to support our partners and allies as an effective amphibious force,” said Capt. Darren Nelson, commodore, Amphibious Squadron Four. “Operating with the Ronald Reagan and UK carrier strike groups allows us to better address common threats to regional security.”

Participating units included aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth (R 08) with embarked F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters from Royal Air Force 617 Squadron and U.S. Marine Corps Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211; aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) with embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5

and Destroyer Squadron 15; amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) and embarked 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, anti-submarine frigate HMS Richmond (F 239); Dutch frigate HNLMS Evertsen (F 805); guided-missile destroyers USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) and USS Halsey (DDG 97); and guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh (CG 67).

The Ronald Reagan CSG and Iwo Jima ARG are deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and the Pacific through the western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points.