USNS Comfort Returns Home After Continuing Promise 2025



NORFOLK, Va. – Sailors assigned to the Mercy-class hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) man the rails during Comfort's homecoming to Naval Station Norfolk after completing Continuing Promise 2025 (CP25) Aug. 17, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Deven Fernandez)
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NORFOLK, Va. – The Mercy-class hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) returned to Naval Station Norfolk (NSN), Aug. 17, 2025, marking the successful completion of Continuing Promise 2025 (CP25). Comfort returned to NSN after a 79-day deployment, providing medical care, humanitarian assistance and strengthening relationships with partner nations in the Caribbean and South and Central America.

During CP25, Comfort conducted port visits in Grenada, Panama, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Trinidad and

Tobago.

“We departed with a clear plan to execute the Continuing Promise mission. The environment demanded adaptability, but our commitment to that promise never wavered,” said Capt. Ryan Kendall, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 40 (DESRON 40) and CP25 mission commander. “The Comfort team and our partners exceeded all expectations, delivering exceptional care and expertise at every mission stop. We forged stronger bonds and honed our collective capabilities, ensuring we are better prepared to support our allies in the face of natural disasters, medical crises, or regional conflict.”

CP25 highlights the U.S. Navy’s dedication to global health and humanitarian aid. Through collaboration, Comfort addressed critical healthcare needs, improved community well-being, and fostered lasting relationships. From surgeries to veterinary care, construction, and music, the mission’s diverse approach achieved sustainable development and strengthened regional security.

During CP25, Comfort’s medical team provided care to 12,616 patients across six countries. Aboard the ship, surgeons performed 242 surgeries, including cataract removals, hernia repairs, cleft lip surgeries, and a variety of other plastic and general surgeries. At shore-based medical sites, the team encountered 1,919 dental patients, filled 17,166 prescriptions, and distributed 7,429 pairs of glasses and sunglasses. Furthermore, the biomedical crew restored more than $2,235,000 worth of medical equipment, including sterilizers, defibrillators, microscopes, X-ray, and anesthesia units.

“Doing this type of work has been incredibly gratifying for me,” said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Malachi Gregory, assigned to the central sterilization room aboard Comfort. “Having the opportunity to come down here and help people who

otherwise wouldn’t be helped, and seeing them afterwards with their families is what makes this mission worth it.”

The CP25 team extended its reach beyond medical care by actively supporting local communities. Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 dedicated 2,571 man-hours to improving eight local schools throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America. These repairs enhanced the learning environment for students and staff and provided valuable opportunities for the Seabees to engage with the community.

“It touched my heart to hear the stories of people from the countries we’ve visited,” said Construction Electrician 3rd Class Fransisco EspinozaJuarez, assigned to NMCB 11. “I feel that the work is better out here, because it’s to help a group of people in need and improving the way of their life.”

Beyond human patients and school repairs, U.S. Army veterinarians from the 248th Medical Detachment Veterinary Service Support significantly improved animal welfare during the mission, delivering 2,267 treatments, including spays and neuters, and training 512 animal handlers in best practices from cattle farming to food safety.

“I was on Continuing Promise 2024, so I came here with an idea of what the mission would look like,” said Spc. Shahhawaz Peer, a veterinarian assigned to the 248th Medical Detachment. “We were able to make a larger impact than before because of the capabilities of Comfort and the team, especially in Costa Rica with 1,700 animals treated.”

Beyond providing direct animal care, CP25’s veterinary team empowered local dog handlers with essential skills for independent animal treatment.

“We also trained different militaries, including police forces

and dog handlers, in K-9 tactical combat casualty care (TCCC) so they can be prepared for whatever happens to their dogs," explained Spc. Shahhawaz Peer, a veterinarian assigned to the 248th Medical Detachment.

K-9 TCCC was one of 113 subject matter expert exchanges conducted during CP25. The Comfort team hosted other medical expertise exchanges – covering topics such as TCCC, preventative medicine, and "Stop the Bleed" – for 4,022 participants across all mission stops.

"I was meeting experts from the countries that we were visiting and exchanging knowledge with them," said Lt. Cmdr. Laurie Tantlier, a preventative medicine doctor aboard Comfort. "I am also responsible for the force health protection of the ship, which means I'm responsible for ensuring the crew is healthy and prepared. It is rewarding, especially because it means my team and I are able to help so many people, both my fellow service members and partner nations."

Community relations (COMREL) events and U.S. Fleet Forces Band "Uncharted Waters" performances were instrumental in forging connections that transcended languages with the communities in all six locations. The mission included 33 band performances and 24 COMREL events, reaching a 10,545 people and 2,358 man-hours, respectively.

"It was great to see familiar faces and to see that what we're doing has a lasting impact," said Ensign Christopher McGann, "Uncharted Waters" band director. "Trinidad and Tobago was the best example because their band recognized us from 2023 and immediately jumped at the opportunity to work with us. It's a unique opportunity to see new places, meet new people, and have a commonality of sharing music together."

These COMREL events included painting projects, beach

cleanups, and sports days with the community.

“I got the opportunity to participate in a COMREL in Grenada,” said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Bryce Rowley, assigned to surgical services aboard Comfort. “We expected a friendly soccer match with the local school team, but we ended up facing their national squad. The unexpected challenge proved to be incredibly rewarding. I built lasting friendships that day, and now I watch familiar faces dominate the national stage, cheering them on with the warmth of a true supporter.”

A testament to enduring commitment, CP25 is the 16th mission to the region since 2007 and the eighth aboard Comfort. These missions have been instrumental in cultivating goodwill, strengthening critical partnerships with allied nations, and catalyzing collaborative initiatives among countries, non-federal entities, and international stakeholders.

Comfort’s return to Naval Station Norfolk marks the culmination of CP25, a mission forging strengthened alliances and revitalized communities. The true impact transcends statistics, visible instead in the gratitude of those served and the transformative experience of the crew, returning as U.S. ambassadors of goodwill. The enduring legacy of Continuing Promise: a testament to the power of compassion and collaboration.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command’s joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American region.

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