USS Detroit Departs on Maiden Deployment



The USS Detroit departs Naval Station Mayport on Oct. 31 for a scheduled deployment. Detroit is deployed in support of Campaign Martillo, a joint operation with the U.S. Coast Guard and partner nations. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Nathan T. Beard

MAYPORT, Fla. – The Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS Detroit (LCS 7) departed its homeport of Mayport, Florida, for the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility on its maiden deployment on Oct. 31.

Detroit will conduct operations in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South's Campaign Martillo, a multinational effort launched in January 2012 targeting illicit trafficking routes in coastal waters along Central America.

Detroit's operations will involve practical exercises and exchanges with partner nations, supporting U.S. 4th Fleet interoperability and reinforce the U.S. position as the regional partner of choice.

"I expect this deployment to offer a great opportunity to work together with regional partners throughout Southern Command area of responsibility," said Capt. Cory Applebee, commander of Surface Warfare Division 21.

The deployment of Detroit is the first by an LCS in support of Martillo and the second deployment of the Freedom variant to the region. The first deployment was USS Freedom (LCS 1) in 2010.

Martillo includes 20 partner nations committed to a regional approach against targeting illicit trafficking routes. The

deployment of an LCS to the region demonstrates the U.S. commitment to regional cooperation and security. Detroit's shallow draft provides unparalleled opportunities for port access, making Freedom variant an ideal vessel for these types of engagements.

"We hope Detroit will build relationships with that region and show that LCS is a capable warfighting platform that is ready to safeguard access to international waterways and demonstrate operating capabilities," Applebee said.

Detroit also will demonstrate its operational capabilities and allow the U.S. Navy to evaluate crew rotation and maintenance plans. Detroit is manned by her Gold crew of more than 90 Sailors, which will include surface warfare mission package personnel, U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment and an aviation detachment to operate an embarked MH-60S Seahawk helicopter and two MQ-8B Fire Scout Vertical Takeoff Unmanned Vehicles.

Homeported in Mayport, Detroit will have Blue and Gold crew rotations during the deployment. The two crews will rotate on the same hull every four to five months, creating a "cycle of virtue" between the crews who consistently turn the same ship over to each other, which will allow continuous presence in the region.