

USS Fort Lauderdale Completes first Deployment with Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group



NORFOLK, Va. (July 16, 2026) – San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) returns to Naval Station Norfolk following an 11-month deployment with the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group, July 16, 2026. Fort Lauderdale deployed to the Caribbean in support of the U.S. Southern Command mission, Department of War-directed operations, and

the President's priorities to disrupt illicit drug trafficking and protect the homeland. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Derek Cole)

NORFOLK, Va. – USS Fort Lauderdale departed Naval Station Norfolk alongside Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group (IWO ARG) ships; comprising of the flagship Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) and USS San Antonio (LPD 17); August 14, 2025, in support of the U.S. Southern Command missions, Department of War-directed operations, and the President's priorities to disrupt illicit drug trafficking and protect the homeland.

"I could not be prouder of Fort Lauderdale's Sailors and their relentless drive to execute our nation's tasking," said Capt. Jiwan Mack, Fort Lauderdale commanding officer. "Their commitment to the mission was essential to the safeguarding of America's national security interests close and abroad while maintaining the U.S. Navy's maritime dominance in the Caribbean Sea."

During its 334-day deployment, Sailors and Marines aboard Fort Lauderdale operated seamlessly with joint services and naval assets in the region to accomplish 3,194 sorties, 792 hours of flight operations, and transiting more than 51,093 nautical miles.

"Defending 'The Fort' throughout this maiden deployment has been one of the greatest honors of my career," said Command Master Chief Steven "Junior" Roberts. "Our Sailors integrated seamlessly with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, Littoral Combat Force-24 and joint entities, demonstrating the strength and adaptability of our combined forces."

While in the Caribbean Sea, Fort Lauderdale and its embarked 22nd MEU (SOC) partnered with Joint Task Force (JTF) Bravo to provide foreign humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts in Jamaica in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa. Fort Lauderdale's team delivered packages from Mayport, Florida to

Puerto Rico for follow-on movement to Jamaica. In tandem with IWO ARG's whole-of-force efforts, these care packages and supplies were airlifted to some of the most highly affected areas of Jamaica.

In response to a catastrophic 7.5-magnitude earthquake in Venezuela, USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) supported Department of State-led U.S. government relief operations in Venezuela. Arriving pierside in La Guaira on June 28, 2026, at the request of the Venezuelan government, Fort Lauderdale served as a primary coordination hub for relief operations. Beyond delivering life-saving supplies, the ship leveraged its advanced medical facilities, heavy-lift capabilities, and robust command-and-control infrastructure to seamlessly integrate efforts between U.S. Southern Command, the Department of State, and local Venezuelan authorities to direct aid across the most affected areas.

"As we return to homeport, we carry immense pride in representing the city of Fort Lauderdale and honoring the ship that bears its name," said Roberts. "Most importantly, we come home to our families in Norfolk whose unwavering support made every mile of this deployment possible. Our warfighting team executed their duties with pride and professionalism; our team did it for Dale!"