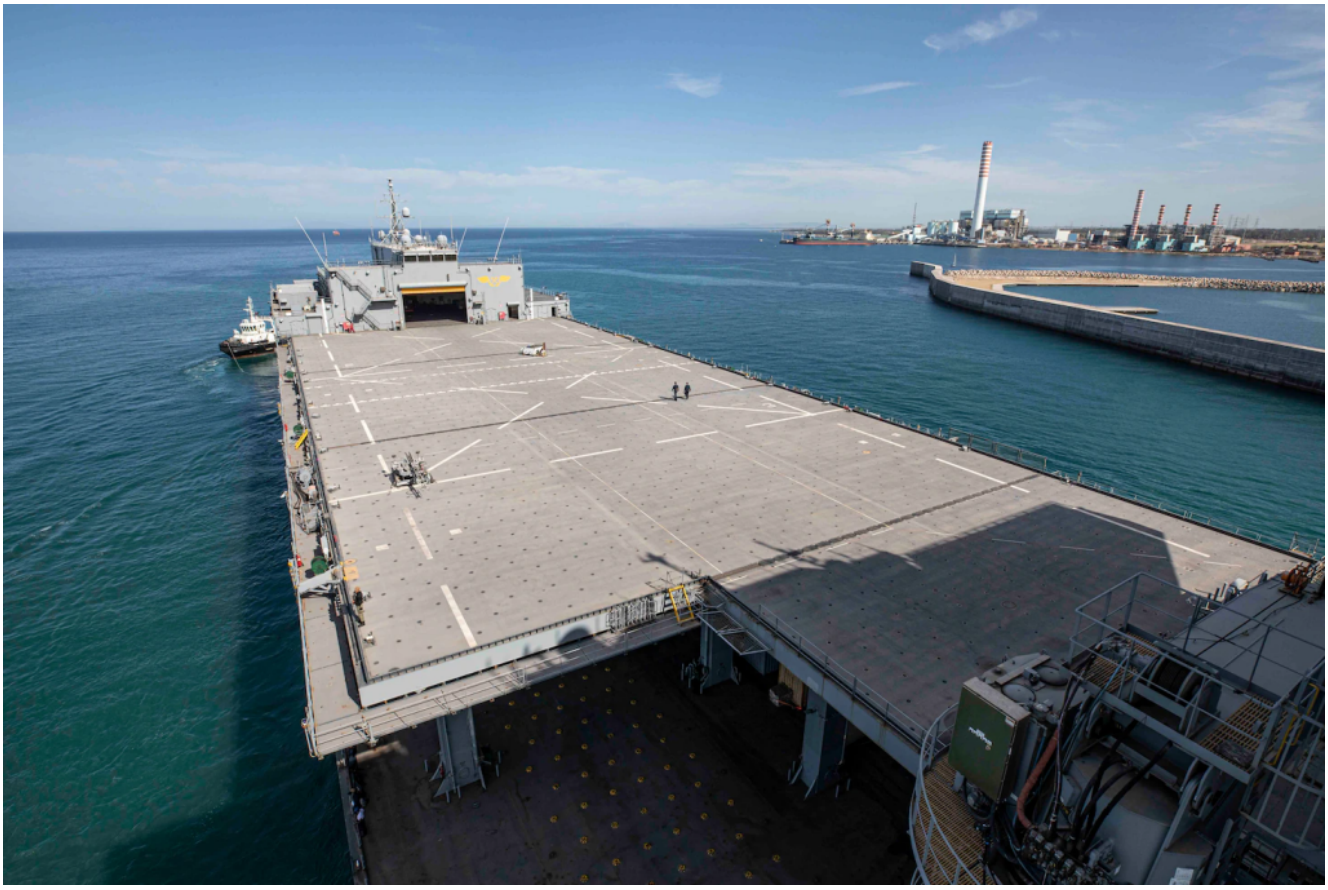
USS Hershel ‘Woody’ Williams Blue MILCREW Begins Deployment



The Expeditionary Sea Base USS Hershel “Woody” Williams (ESB 4) departs Civitavecchia, Italy, to begin a deployment May 14, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Fred Gray*

CIVITAVECCHIA, Italy – The Blue military crew of the USS Hershel “Woody” Williams (ESB 4) and the ship’s Military Sealift Command Civilian Mariners departed Civitavecchia, Italy, to begin a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations, May 14, 2022, said Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Fred Gray IV of the U.S. 6th Fleet in a May 16 release.

The Blue Crew took over for the Gold Crew while in Civitavecchia May 9. This crew swap follows Gold Crew’s five-

month deployment, which included participation in exercise Obangame Express and security operation patrols with African partners along the west coast of Africa.

“We are rested and ready to get back on the open seas to execute our mission requirements,” said Capt. Chad W. Graham, commanding officer of Hershel “Woody” Williams Blue MILCREW. “The Hershel ‘Woody’ Williams is a unique platform that enables us to integrate and operate with internal and international partners improving interoperability, maritime domain awareness and building upon our existing relationships.”

During the deployment, the ship and crew will complete a mobility air qualification. They will also participate in a variety of exercises and operations with partner nations.

USS Hershel “Woody” Williams is the first warship permanently assigned to the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility. The U.S. shares a common interest with African partner nations in ensuring security, safety and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the continent, because these waters are critical for Africa’s prosperity and access to global markets.

The ESB ship class is a highly flexible platform that operates across a broad range of military operations. Acting as a mobile sea base, they are part of the critical access infrastructure that supports the deployment of forces and supplies to support missions assigned.