

USS Higgins Conducts Operations with Royal Canadian Navy in South China Sea



The Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate HMCS Vancouver (FFH 331) cruises behind U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins (DDG 76) while conducting integrated operations in the South China Sea, Sept. 19. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Donovan K. Patubo*

SOUTH CHINA SEA – Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate HMCS Vancouver (FFH 331) concluded exercises in the South China Sea with Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins (DDG 76) Sept. 18, Commander, Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron 15 Public Affairs announced Sept. 21.

Vancouver and Higgins conducted bilateral surface action group

operations demonstrating interoperability in the execution of joint exercises in the South China Sea and highlighted the U.S. Navy's support to Canada's Indo-Pacific deployment and their presence and role in the Western Pacific.

"Working with USS Higgins in the South China Sea has been an incredible opportunity for HMCS Vancouver," said Cmdr. Kevin Whiteside, HMCS Vancouver commanding officer. "The two teams seamlessly integrated, conducting a variety of training exercises together. As part of our deployment on Operation PROJECTION, Team Vancouver has been delivering robust capabilities, working with our partner navies since we departed home in June. It was awesome working with the Higgins team, demonstrating our commitment to promoting stability in the Indo-Pacific region."

The bilateral training between U.S and Canadian maritime forces served to strengthen skills in maritime operations, anti-submarine warfare operations, air warfare operations and maneuvering.

"It has been an honor to sail alongside HMCS Vancouver for the past few weeks," said Cmdr. Joseph McGettigan, Higgins commanding officer. "Operating with our closest allies and partners in the South China Sea provides us an opportunity to deepen our relationships as well as improve our capabilities as a combined force. Gaining familiarity with these waters and each other, provides us a greater ability to assure the stability of the region and demonstrates our shared commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

Higgins is assigned to Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron 15, the Navy's largest forward-deployed DESRON and the U.S. 7th fleet's principal surface force.