USS San Antonio Returns to Norfolk from U.S. 4th Fleet Deployment



NORFOLK, Va. (April 28, 2026) – Sailors assigned to the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS San Antonio (LPD 17) man the rails upon the ship's arrival to Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, April 28, 2026, following an eight-and-a-half-month deployment supporting the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group (IWO ARG) and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)-Special Operations Capable (SOC) mission in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations. During the deployment the San Antonio supported Operation Southern Spear, conducted counter-narcotics and embassy reinforcement operations, and provided foreign humanitarian assistance to Jamaica following Hurricane Melissa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Derek Cole)

From U.S Fleet Forces Command, April 29, 2026

NORFOLK, Va. – First-in-class San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS San Antonio (LPD 17) returned to its homeport in Norfolk, Virginia, April 28, 2026, after eight and a half months at sea supporting the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group (IWO ARG) and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)-Special Operations Capable (SOC) mission in the U.S. 4th Fleet

area of operations.

San Antonio, alongside USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) and USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), departed on Aug. 14, 2025. The three ships make up the IWO ARG and were among the first expeditionary naval assets called to support Operation Southern Spear.

While on mission in the Caribbean, San Antonio's Sailors and Marines worked seamlessly to support national-level tasking with joint services and naval assets in the region to accomplish Department of War-directed operations and the President's priorities, which included Enhanced Counter Narcotics Operations designed to protect the homeland.

"The performance of our Navy-Marine Corps team during Operation Southern Spear was nothing short of exceptional," said Capt. Tom Uhl, San Antonio's commanding officer.

"Our deployment to the 4th Fleet area of responsibility required immense focus, and I stand continually impressed by this crew's dedication to the mission," said Uhl. "From the moment we left the pier, they leveraged their rigorous pre-deployment training to flawlessly execute enhanced counter-narcotics operations and seamlessly adapt to every contingency they faced in the region."

While in theater, San Antonio's Sailors and Marines supported 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. The ship's integrated team of Sailors and Marines stood ready as the backbone of support for Marines conducting embassy reinforcement in the region. The ship also executed contingency operations in the region, including disaster response efforts in Jamaica from Oct. 31 to Nov. 13, 2025, in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa. San Antonio's Sailors and Marines partnered with Joint Task Force (JTF) Bravo to provide

foreign humanitarian assistance to those greatly affected by the hurricane.

“The destruction wrought by Hurricane Melissa was devastating to see,” said Uhl. “Having just pulled into St. Croix for a resupply opportunity, we quickly got back underway in less than 24 hours and made best speed toward Jamaica.” ` A whole-of-force effort, San Antonio’s Sailors and Marines took the lead in the mission to provide – by sea, air, and land – water, food, supplies, and assistance into highly affected areas where damage prevented the logistical flow of aid. The careful mission planning aboard San Antonio, in concert with JTF Bravo and the 22nd MEU (SOC), enabled mission success. Using organic ARG-MEU air assets, San Antonio’s crew enabled its embarked Marines from the 22nd MEU (SOC) to airlift aid and personnel directly into Jamaica to augment JTF-Bravo’s ongoing efforts.

“By quickly surging to respond to this mission, our Sailors and Marines provided a beacon of hope for the people whose lives were upturned by the storm,” Uhl said. “I am extremely proud of this integrated team for meeting our tasking head on to provide aid to our neighbors in need.”

Central to most deployments, San Antonio also made several port calls, among them St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Ponce, Puerto Rico. Sailors and Marines participated in several outreach projects across the community while in port.

Community service projects are a cornerstone of every deployment and allow Sailors and Marines to connect with and give back to the community, while fostering vital relationships with partners and allies across the world as ambassadors of the United States.

While in St. Kitts and Nevis, San Antonio’s Sailors and Marines had a unique opportunity to meet with leaders from the

Caribbean Community and engage with the Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, Dr. Terrance Drew. The visit highlighted the strong diplomatic ties between St. Kitts and Nevis and the United States of America.

During the deployment, San Antonio traveled nearly 49,000 nautical miles and conducted roughly 453 hours of flight operations. This deployment proved the wide range of capabilities and flexibility that the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps team provides the Nation’s leaders.

“For more than 20 years, USS San Antonio has deployed across the globe in support of U.S. strategic interests, serving as a symbol of freedom and 250 years of American sea power,” Uhl said.

While in port in Norfolk, the warship will perform previously planned maintenance and preservation work to prepare for follow-on tasking. San Antonio’s Sailors and Marines will also have the chance to reunite with family during this in-port period.

“The most important, key enabler in the resilience and efficacy of our force is without a doubt the Navy and Marine Corps families who support us on the homefront,” said Uhl. “They are our strongest motivation to get through the hardest days, and our greatest source of excitement to return home.”