Wasp Completes Shift of Homeport From Japan to Norfolk



The amphibious assault ship USS Wasp transits the Coral Sea in August. The Wasp arrived at Naval Station Norfolk on Nov. 18 after spending nearly two years forward deployed to Sasebo, Japan, and operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Daniel Barker

NORFOLK, Va. – The amphibious assault ship USS Wasp arrived at Naval Station Norfolk on Nov. 18, completing its homeport shift after spending nearly two years forward deployed to Sasebo, Japan, and operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

The ship departed Sasebo on Aug. 26 and began its transit to Norfolk. It will be replaced in Sasebo by the amphibious assault ship USS America later this year.

“I’m honored to be on the pier for USS Wasp’s return to Naval Station Norfolk, and to fold this awesome warship and its crew back into ESG-2, our Navy’s forward-leaning blue/green warfighting team,” said Rear Adm. John Mustin, commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 2.

“This ship and her amazing crew spent nearly two years performing groundbreaking work in U.S. 7th Fleet, honing their skills as professional mariners, reinforcing naval integration and building maritime capabilities with our Indo-Pacific partners. I look forward to meeting with the crew and learning from their time abroad, particularly their lessons learned from deploying with the F-35B Lightning II – a critical high-end capability that I’m eager to incorporate into our east coast amphibious task forces. On behalf of Navy-Marine Corps

warfighters at all echelons, I’m thrilled to welcome them back to the Virginia waterfront.”

Wasp arrived in the 7th Fleet in January 2018 to replace the USS Bonhomme Richard and had been operating with Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). While working together, the Blue-Green team worked to expand on the relationships that U.S. forces maintain with regional allies and partners.

“I could not be prouder to call myself a ‘Stinger’ as we make our return to Norfolk after two years forward deployed to Japan,” said Capt. Greg Baker, Wasp’s commanding officer.

“This crew has shown their mettle consistently through humanitarian assistance operations, large-scale multinational exercises and real-world operations with strategic implications in the 7th Fleet. The crew has taken Wasp through four different fleets, and their resiliency has been demonstrated, as many have not been with their families for more than two years while doing some of the hardest operations the Navy does. We are all happy to be home for some well-earned rest and to enable the ship to get into a maintenance period.”

While based in Japan, Wasp participated in exercises Balikatan with the Philippine military and exercise Talisman Sabre with the Australian Defence Force as well as additional forces from Canada, Japan, New Zealand and United Kingdom. The ship also assisted the Federal Emergency Management Agency and local civilian authorities with relief operations in the Northern Mariana Islands following typhoon Manghut in 2018.

Wasp arrived in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations Oct. 1. The ship enjoyed the sights during a visited Valparaiso, Chile, and embarked 20 multinational naval officers assigned to a maritime Combined Task Force (CTF) that was based aboard the Wasp. The Naval War College hosted a classroom education

course for the CTF that focused on humanitarian and disaster relief planning.

The ship then conducted a 26-hour transit of the Strait of Magellan, bringing the ship from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic, and visited Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, where the crew explored the city and participated in community relations events.