

America ARG Completes Westpac Patrol



12 March 2025

SASEBO, Japan – The America Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) completed their first patrol of 2025, March 6.

This routine patrol, coordinated between the U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) and U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC), served to maintain a consistent presence in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

“Throughout our time at sea, we have remained on plan and on target conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area to enhance interoperability with our allies and partners,” said Commander, Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 11, Capt. Patrick German. “Together, we continued to serve cohesively as a ready-response force to defend peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.”

During the winter patrol, the America ARG consisted of PHIBRON

11, the America-class amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS San Diego (LPD 22), and the Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47). Additionally, the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (LPD 18) briefly joined the team of ships at sea, while conducting routine operations.

“It has been great to have all our assets underway,” said German, who previously served as New Orleans commanding officer. “I am extremely proud to have all four amphibious ships underway simultaneously. Having all ships underway simultaneously goes a long way in ensuring our allies and partners that we are a ready force here to assist when and where it’s necessary.”

From an amphibious assault ship, to an amphibious transport dock ship, to a dock landing ship, each vessel brought its own capabilities to form one, united ARG, operating at sea.

“Each ship has a specific role and while there’s some overlap, some of those roles are specific to that particular ship,” said German. “For instance, LSDs have the largest well decks in the Navy’s amphibious fleet. Then you have the LHA, which is a floating airport. Even though we have aviation capabilities on the LPDs and the LSDs, they can’t assume the same role as the LHA or LHD. So, the aggregate of a three to four ship ARG increases strength and enhances the multi-role capability of an amphibious outfit.”

Additionally, the 31st MEU integrated into the ARG to form a powerful and cohesive blue-green team. Its aviation combat element comprised of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262 (Reinforced) and a detachment from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242; the ground combat element comprised of Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4); and the logistics combat element comprised of Combat Logistics

Battalion 31.

“Working alongside the Marines was critical for us,” said San Diego Commanding Officer Capt. Timothy Carter. “As we continued to learn from each other, we also built on the foundations of our partnerships within our own organization, so that when the time comes to provide support to our allies and partners, we are ready, welded, and prepared to execute our mission.”

Carter added having Marines and Sailors working together is the name of the game in an ARG; having a Blue-Green team is vital to the strength of amphibious operations and capabilities.

During 25.1, America and Rushmore also participated in Iron Fist 2025, while San Diego became the third U.S. ship to visit Ishigaki, Japan in three years, underscoring the strength and commitment of the U.S.-Japan alliance as a cornerstone to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Throughout 25.1, the ARG worked as one team in response to operational tasking, from start to end.

“It has been phenomenal watching our teams come together,” said Carter. “We all bring different types of capabilities to the fight. Everyone has a unique art and everyone plays a valuable role in what we have accomplished here. Throughout our interoperability and certifying exercises, we truly came together as a unit, both sea force and landing force while operating as one.”

Based in Sasebo, Japan, and consisting of the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), transport dock ships USS San Diego (LPD 22) and USS New Orleans (LPD 18), and the dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47); PHIBRON 11 provides centralized planning, embarkation, movement control, coordination and integration of all aspects of amphibious

warfare.