

# Bataan ARG, 26th MEU(SOC) to Return to Homeport



MEDITERRANEAN SEA (Feb. 25, 2024) The Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), Harpers Ferry-class dock landing ship USS Carter Hall (LSD 50), San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19), and guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) transit in formation with the United Kingdom primary casualty receiving ship RFA Argus (A135) in the Mediterranean Sea, Feb. 25, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Matthew F. Brown)

By Amphibious Squadron 8 Public Affairs

STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR – The ships of the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), along with the embarked 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)) exited the Mediterranean Sea after conducting operations in the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations, March 6, 2024. In the coming weeks, Sailors and Marines will sail across the Atlantic Ocean and return home to Norfolk, Virginia and Camp LeJeune, North Carolina.

Since December, the Bataan ARG and the 26th MEU(SOC) have conducted training, exercises, and operations in the U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility in support of maritime stability and security in defense of U.S., allied, and partner interests.

“Throughout our time in the U.S. Fifth and U.S. Sixth Fleet regions, the Sailors and Marines of the Bataan ARG and 26th MEU(SOC) showcased the unique capabilities that we bring as a response force to our allies and partners,” said Amphibious Squadron 8 Commodore, Capt. Martin Robertson. “Our presence in the Eastern Mediterranean was exactly what our nation needed: an integrated Navy and Marine Corps force ready to respond

when called upon.”

Completing this transit and entering the Atlantic Ocean is a major milestone and one of the last scheduled operations of the Bataan ARG and the 26th MEU(SOC)'s nearly 8-month deployment.

The Bataan ARG is comprised of the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), Harpers Ferry-class dock landing ship USS Carter Hall (LSD 50), and San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19). The ships deployed from Norfolk, Virginia, July 10, and have conducted training, exercises, and operations to support maritime stability and security in defense of U.S., allied, and partner interests.

The 26th MEU(SOC) serves as one of the Nation's premier crisis response forces capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response, and limited contingency operations, to include enabling the introduction of follow-on forces and designated special operations, in support of theater requirements of the Geographic Combatant Commander. Coupled with the BAT ARG, the 26th MEU(SOC) serves as a premier stand-in force with a full complement of all-domain capabilities to operate persistently within the littorals or weapons engagement zones of an adversary.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility. U.S. 6th Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.