

Blue Ridge Returns to Yokosuka, Concludes Summer Patrol



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From Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Matt Hall, USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan – U.S. 7th Fleet flagship, USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) returned to Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Aug. 17, after a patrol in the Indo-Pacific region.

The patrol, which began July 8, saw Blue Ridge make port visits to Singapore; Jakarta, Indonesia; Muara, Brunei; and Puerto Princesa, Philippines, enabling dialogue and relationship building among allies and partners.

“I am extremely proud of the hard work and flexibility that the crew showed during this patrol,” said Blue Ridge Commanding Officer, Capt. Dale M. Gregory. “Their professionalism and teamwork led to a successful patrol and allowed us engage with partners across the Indo-Pacific. It is in creating these people-to-people ties with our partners that we are able further our shared interests in preserving peace and prosperity and a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

At the beginning of patrol, Blue Ridge visited Jakarta, Indonesia July 27-29; the ship’s first visit to the country since 2019. Thomas conducted talks with Chief of the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) Vice Adm. Aan Kurnia; U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia, Ambassador Sung Y. Kim; Chief of Staff the Republic of

Indonesia Fleet Command, Rear Adm. Didong Rio Duta; and other key-leaders. Additionally, members of the Seventh Fleet staff conducted staff-talks with their Indonesian Navy counterparts, aimed at improving interoperability and addressing shared maritime security challenges.

The visit to Jakarta included a by the U.S. 7th Fleet Band for local members of the Indonesian military at the @America cultural center. The band also spent time with a local school band, sharing their expertise and knowledge, later ending with a joint concert for friends and family members. Additionally, Blue Ridge and U.S. 7th Fleet staff Sailors took part in community outreach activities such as a beach clean-up, a sports day with the Indonesian Navy, and volunteering at local community programs for children.

Second, Blue Ridge conducted a post visit in Muara, Brunei Darussalam Aug. 3 – 5, the first visit to the country since 2002. There, Thomas conducted talks with U.S. Ambassador to Brunei, Her Excellency Caryn McClelland; the Minister of Defence II, The Honorable Pehin Datu Lailaraja; Major General (Retired) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd Yussof; the Commander of Royal Brunei Armed Forces, Major General Dato Paduka Seri Haji Muhammad Haszaimi bin Bol Hassan; and other key-leaders from Brunei.

While in Brunei, Muslim Sailors had the opportunity to visit a local mosque for Friday prayers. Additionally, Blue Ridge and U.S. 7th Fleet Sailors took part in a sports day with members of the Royal Brunei Navy, strengthening the bond between service members.

Finally, Blue Ridge conducted a port visit in Puerto Princesa, Philippines, Aug. 7 – 10, the ship's first visit there since 2019. In Puerto Princesa, Thomas and U.S. 7th Fleet leadership met with Vice Admiral Alberto Carlos, Commander, Western Command (WESCOM) and WESCOM leaders, where they discussed enhancing interoperability between the two militaries and

finding ways to increase cooperation in the maritime domain. Additionally, the U.S. 7th Fleet Deputy Commander Captain Amy Bauernschmidt met with Captain Dennis Labay, the commander of Philippine Coast Guard District Palawan. Thomas and U.S. 7th Fleet staff also met with Puerto Princesa leadership including Atty. Jethro M. Palayon and Mayor Lucilo Bayron.

During the port call, the U.S. 7th Fleet Band performed in front of a live audience at SM City Mall with counterparts from the Philippine Air Force Western Command Band. Additionally, Blue Ridge hosted a tour of the ship to members of the Philippine Air Force Western Command.

Between port visits, Blue Ridge sailed 8,840 nautical miles through the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, conducted three anchorages, 18 sea-and-anchor details, and four straight transits. 9,100 rounds of ammunition were fired in multiple live-fire exercises, and the "Golden Falcons" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 12 logged 21 hours of flight time in nine helicopter operations.

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Blue Ridge is the oldest operational ship in the Navy, and as U.S. 7th Fleet command ship, is responsible for patrolling and fostering relationships within the Indo-Pacific Region.

For more news from USS Blue Ridge, visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/lcc19/>.