USS Nimitz Concludes Southern Seas 2026 Deployment

Navy Quartermaster Senior Chief Benjamin Richards shifts colors on the mast of Nimitz-class aircraft USS Nimitz (CVN 68) after pulling pierside at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida, June 16, 2026. Nimitz is underway in the U.S. 2nd Fleet area of operations as part of a scheduled homeport shift to Norfolk, Virginia. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jaron Wills)
From NAVSOUTH/FOURHTFLT Public Affairs, June 17, 2026

The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) and its strike group successfully completed their highly anticipated deployment to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility as part of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet's Southern Seas 2026.

This year's deployment marked the 11th iteration of the Southern Seas exercise since 2007, demonstrating the United

States’ enduring commitment to the Western Hemisphere. Southern Seas 2026 highlighted unprecedented diplomatic and military integration, recording the highest number of Latin American leadership visits in the exercise’s history, with approximately 339 distinguished visitors embarking and 3,100 guests hosted during port visits.

As the USS *Nimitz* and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS *Gridley* (DDG 101) circumnavigated the South American continent, they executed complex passing exercises and operations at sea alongside partner nation maritime forces. The historic volume of high-level DV embarkations provided heads of state, top military officials, and regional dignitaries a firsthand look at the unmatched capabilities of a U.S. aircraft carrier operating at peak proficiency.

Throughout the deployment, the strike group conducted vital engagements with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Uruguay, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The fleet also successfully executed high-visibility port visits in Brazil, Chile, Jamaica, and Panama, further cementing enduring ties with host nations.

“The USS Nimitz’s Southern Seas 2026 deployment provided a unique opportunity to enhance interoperability and build proficiency with our partner nations across the maritime domain,” said Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet. “Deployments of this magnitude demonstrate our unwavering commitment to a secure and stable Western Hemisphere. This historic mission is a shining example of our dedication to strengthening regional partnerships, building mutual trust, and countering shared threats together.”

Another cornerstone of Southern Seas 2026’s success was the integration of an embarked international staff. Approximately a dozen officers from 6 partner nations—including Argentina,

Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico –served aboard the *Nimitz*. These officers received advanced instruction from U.S. Naval War College professors and worked seamlessly alongside embarked Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 9 personnel to conduct detailed, real-world operational planning at sea.

“From presidents and ministers to admirals and generals to sailors and marines, Southern Seas 2026 gave us the opportunity to display not only the unmatched capability of a United States carrier strike group, but also the friendship, trust, and partnership that have long unified the nations of the Americas,” said Rear Adm. Cassidy Norman, commander of Carrier Strike Group 11. “The most enduring outcome of this deployment will be the relationships we built. Whether conducting complex operations at sea, welcoming distinguished visitors aboard USS Nimitz, or training side-by-side with our partners, we demonstrated that American leadership is measured not only by strength, but also by trust. We leave this region with stronger relationships, deeper interoperability, and a shared commitment to ensuring our hemisphere remains secure, prosperous, and free.”

Nimitz-class aircraft carriers remain the pinnacle of mobile projection of naval air power and forward operational presence. The successful conclusion of Southern Seas 2026 reinforces that no other weapons system possesses the responsiveness, endurance, multi-dimensional might, inherent battlespace awareness, and command-and-control capabilities of a U.S. carrier strike group.

NIMCSG consists of the USS Nimitz, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 9, and Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Gridley (DDG 101). USNAVSOUTH/FOURTHFLT is the trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South America maritime forces improving regional unity and security.

Coast Guard Helicopter Crashes in Sitka, Alaska

U.S. Coast Guard MH-60T Jayhawk (Alaska National Guard photo by Alejandro Peña)

From Coast Guard Arctic District Public Affairs, June 22, 2026

JUNEAU, Alaska — A Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Sitka crashed during a training flight with four people aboard near Harbor Mountain in Sitka, Alaska, Monday.

Rescue crews from Sitka Fire and Rescue arrived on scene at approximately 11:00 a.m. and transported all four crew members to Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center.

No deaths have been reported.

Watch standers at the Arctic District command center received the report of the crash at approximately 10:07 a.m.

The cause of the crash is currently under investigation.

UPDATE: Coast Guard responds to Coast Guard helicopter crash in Sitka, Alaska

JUNEAU, Alaska – The four Coast Guard crew members involved in a **helicopter crash** in Sitka, Alaska, Monday, are reported safe with non-serious injuries.

Watch standers at the Arctic District command center received the initial report of the crash through the activation of the aircrew's personal locator beacon at approximately 10:07 a.m.

Sitka Fire and Rescue arrived on scene at approximately 11:00 a.m. and transported the crew members to Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center.

"We are incredibly relieved our crew members survived with only minor injuries," said Rear Adm. Bob Little, commander of the Coast Guard's Arctic District. "We are grateful for the swift response by the Sitka Fire and Rescue who assisted us during this critical time."

Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak is repositioning a helicopter and crews to Coast Guard Air Station Sitka to augment and maintain operational readiness in the Southeast Alaska region.

The cause of the crash is currently under investigation.

Helix Defense Announces STING Counter-UAS Munition Ready for Deployment

From Helix Defense

SAN MARCOS, Texas, June 22, 2026 – Helix Defense™ today announced that its patented STING® counter-small unmanned aircraft system (UAS) munition is available for deployment as military, law enforcement and homeland security organizations confront an accelerating drone threat.

The announcement comes amid growing public awareness of unauthorized drone activity near military installations, public events and critical infrastructure across the United States.

STING, the Small UAS Tactical Intercept Neutralizing Grenade, is designed to defeat drone threats in the last 100 meters, where time is limited and traditional options become increasingly constrained.

“Small drones have fundamentally changed the economics of security and warfare,” said Jon Mrkonich, Chief Financial Officer at Helix Defense. “The question is no longer whether a threat can be defeated. The question is whether it can be defeated quickly, safely and at a cost that makes operational sense. STING was developed to solve that problem.”

Unlike fixed-site systems that require power and infrastructure, STING is fired from existing 40mm launchers already fielded by military and law enforcement organizations.

Operators can set engagement distance in real time and deploy a physical defeat mechanism effective against autonomous, GPS-guided and fiber-optic-guided drone threats.

STING has completed testing of more than 10,000 prototype rounds, demonstrated compatibility with most 40mm grenade launchers and participated in evaluations with U.S. Army and U.S. Special Operations organizations. The company maintains a fully domestic manufacturing supply chain and currently has production capacity that can scale to meet customer demand.

As drone threats continue to evolve, effective protection requires layered defenses that combine detection, electronic warfare and physical defeat options.

“Defense in depth only works if every layer has an answer,” said Mrkonich. “STING is the answer for the last 100 meters.”

USS Fitzgerald returns to San Diego following three months underway

From USS Fitzgerald, June 22, 2026

SAN DIEGO (June 19, 2026) – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) returned to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following a three-month underway to the U.S. 3rd Fleet and 7th Fleet areas of operations, June 19.

While underway, Fitzgerald conducted a wide range of maritime security, logistical, and multinational missions, demonstrating the U.S. Navy's long-term commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The ship participated in several major multinational exercises, enhancing interoperability and strengthening partnerships with key regional allies. Fitzgerald participated in the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) International Fleet Review in Sydney Harbour alongside 20 partner nations to celebrate the service's 125th Birthday. Immediately following the review, the destroyer took part in Exercise Kakadu 2026, executing integrated air and surface warfare serials, divisional tactics, and formation steaming across Darwin Bayand Jervis Bay.

Fitzgerald provided escort support to the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group from Guam to the South China Sea. During these escort operations, the crew advanced naval aviation readiness, conducting deck landing qualifications with Marine and Navy aviation squadrons. As a lethal and agile force, the Sailors aboard Fitzgerald exemplified fleet readiness, which was further highlighted by leadership visits from the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Daryl Caudle, and Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, Vice Adm. Pat Hannifin.

“The grit and dedication demonstrated by this crew were on full display every single day,” said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Paul F. Richardson III, commanding officer of Fitzgerald. “Whether working with our regional allies or executing critical support missions, our Sailors performed above and beyond. We are thrilled to be back home with our families and are grateful to those whose love and support kept us strong while we were away.”

The professionalism and resilience displayed by the crew throughout their operations directly honored the legacy of their ship’s namesake.

Fitzgerald is named in honor of Lt. William Charles Fitzgerald, a U.S. Navy officer who was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his extraordinary heroism in the Vietnam War. The ship’s motto, “Protect Your People,” is a direct tribute to his sacrifice, when he was mortally wounded while providing covering fire for his evacuating men during an attack by Viet Cong forces.

As a multi-mission surface combatant, Fitzgerald is capable of conducting Anti-Air Warfare (AAW), Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), and Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW) operations.

An integral part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute our Navy’s

role across the full spectrum of military operations – from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster response. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation and overflight, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. Coast Guard Clarifies Industry Engagement Opportunities for TRACEN Birmingham-Southern Contractors

From U.S. Coast Guard Heartland District, June 22, 2026

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The U.S. Coast Guard is providing additional information regarding contractor engagement opportunities associated with the new TRACEN Birmingham-Southern training center.

The Industry Open House scheduled for June 24-25, 2026, is intended for businesses that are already registered and validated in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). While creating a SAM.gov account can often be completed in a few hours with the appropriate documentation, the federal validation process may take up to 30 days before a business is eligible to submit information through the system.

The Coast Guard recognizes that many local businesses may not

yet be registered in SAM.gov and remains committed to ensuring they have an opportunity to compete for future contract opportunities.

To support those vendors, the Coast Guard plans to disseminate information focused on the federal contracting process, including SAM.gov registration for any vendors not already enrolled in SAM.gov.

Businesses that are unable to attend the June Industry Open House will not be disadvantaged. Participation in the open house is voluntary, and all future proposals will be evaluated equally in accordance with federal acquisition regulations.

To ensure transparency, all questions asked during the June Industry Open House, along with the Coast Guard's responses, will be posted publicly on SAM.gov. This will provide businesses that are not yet registered or validated with access to the same information shared during the event.

U.S. Marine Corps Announces Full Transition to ODIN Reporting System

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Marine Corps announced in MARADMIN 281/26 that it will fully transition its operational reporting to the Operational Data Integration Nexus (ODIN) on July 7, 2026. The move, authorized by Lt. Gen. Jay M. Bargeron, Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations, formally designates ODIN as the official and authoritative platform for operational reporting, marking a

pivotal achievement in the Corps' Force Design modernization efforts.

ODIN, a digital application within the Maven Smart System (MSS), is a next-generation, data-centric decision support tool designed to replace legacy, manual processes and achieve decision superiority. Historically, Marine Corps operational reporting has relied on a document-centric process where units at each echelon manually create and consolidate narrative Situation Reports (SITREPs). This method consumed valuable operational time, created information silos, and hindered operational tempo.

ODIN fundamentally transforms this workflow. By utilizing structured data inputs rather than narrative text, ODIN leverages Artificial Intelligence to automatically aggregate critical information such as personnel status, equipment readiness, and logistics posture into a centralized dashboard. This provides commanders with a single, continuously updated operational picture, moving the Marine Corps from being data-rich but information-poor to a state of information superiority.

"ODIN is more than a reporting tool; it is a strategic asset that returns valuable time to our commanders," said Lt. Gen. Bargeron. "By automating the flow of data from the tactical edge to strategic decision makers, we are equipping our Marines with the near real-time information required to outpace our adversaries and fight effectively in a distributed environment."

ODIN dramatically reduces administrative workloads by automating data entry through integration with authoritative databases, allowing leaders to focus entirely on warfighting and operational intent. The system contextualizes disparate data into actionable insights, enabling commanders to manage risk dynamically and operate inside the adversary's decision cycle. Furthermore, ODIN establishes a state of collective

consciousness across the force, enabling lateral data sharing between adjacent units and vertical transparency, keeping the Marine Corps fully aligned with Joint Staff data-centricity requirements for seamless integration with combatant commands.

Once fully adopted, ODIN will serve as the Marine Corps' single source of truth for operational data, marking a definitive end to manual, document-centric reporting.

MARTAC and Intrepid Powerboats Announce Manufacturing Partnership to Scale Autonomous Surface Vessel Production

Collaboration positions MARTAC to build 200–300 unmanned surface vessels per year by leveraging Florida's world-class boatbuilding base

MELBOURNE, Fla., June 17, 2026 – Maritime Tactical Systems, Inc. (MARTAC), a leading provider of high-performance autonomous unmanned surface vessels (USVs), today announced a manufacturing partnership with Intrepid Powerboats, a Florida-based premium boatbuilder. The collaboration gives MARTAC the ability to scale production of its Devil Ray USV platforms to between 200 and 300 vessels per year, meeting accelerating demand from U.S. government, allied-nation, and commercial customers.

Under the partnership, Intrepid Powerboats will apply its established production capacity, skilled marine workforce, and decades of high-performance hull manufacturing expertise to the construction of MARTAC USV platforms. The arrangement allows MARTAC to expand output rapidly without the heavy capital investment and lead time that building dedicated new production facilities would require.

The partnership is the latest demonstration of MARTAC's scaling strategy: meeting surging demand by leveraging the depth of Florida's established boatbuilding industry rather than building production capacity from the ground up. By partnering with experienced regional manufacturers, MARTAC converts proven commercial boatbuilding capacity into mission-ready autonomous vessel production, preserving speed, controlling cost, and reinforcing a domestic, Florida-anchored industrial base.

"This partnership shows how quickly we can scale when we tap into the talent and capacity that already exists in Florida's marine manufacturing sector," said Tony Smeraglinolo, Chief Executive Officer of MARTAC. "Working with a builder of Intrepid's caliber enables us to rapidly accelerate quality production, without the lengthy process of standing up new plants. It is the right model for a moment when demand for autonomous maritime systems is growing faster than the traditional defense industrial base can respond."

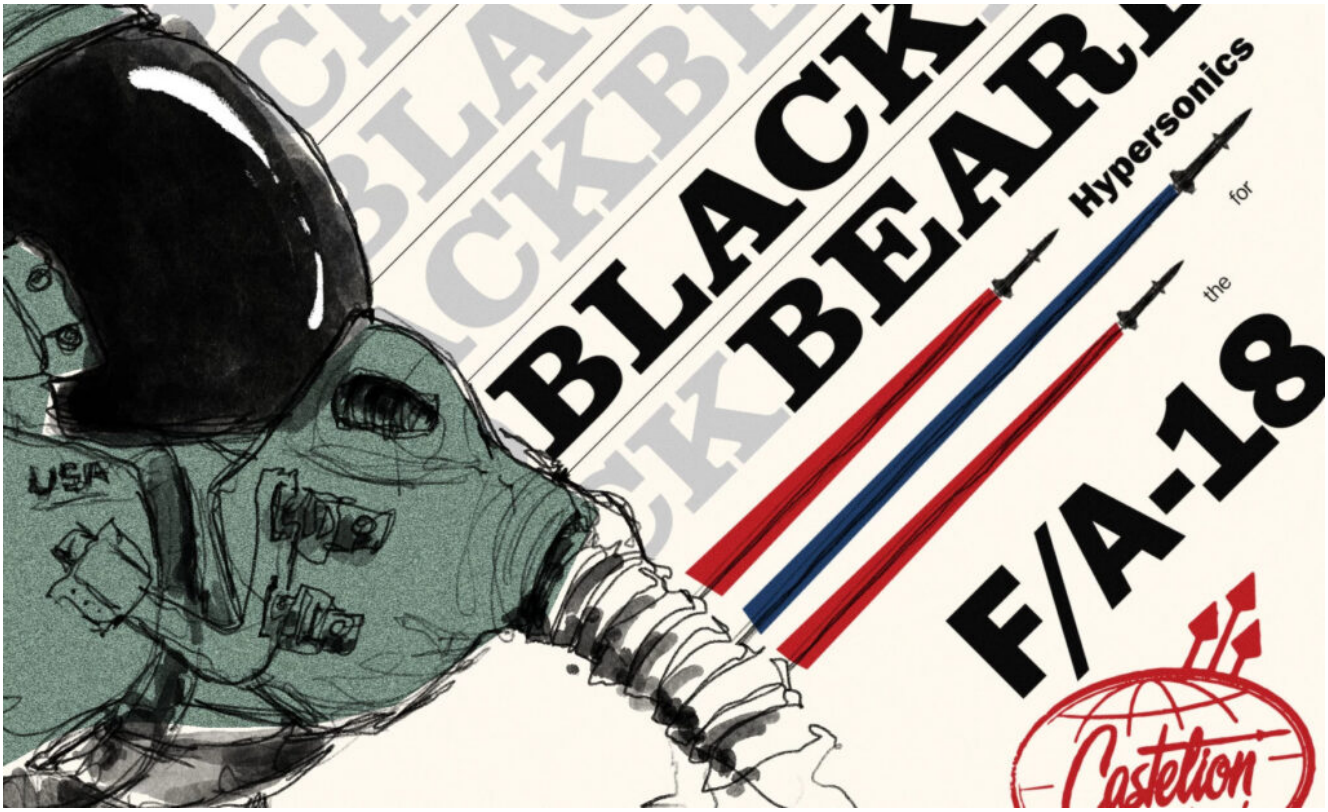
"Intrepid has spent more than four decades building some of the most capable boats on the water, right here in Florida," said Terry McNew, President of Intrepid Powerboats. "Partnering with MARTAC lets us put that craftsmanship and capacity to work supporting national security and the broader unmanned maritime mission. It's a natural extension of what our team does best."

MARTAC's MANTAS and Devil Ray families have been fielded across multiple theaters and customer programs, and the company continues to expand to meet growing operational and procurement demand.

"Our customers don't just need a capable platform, they need confidence that we can deliver at scale, on schedule," said Seamus Flatley, MARTAC's Chief Growth Officer. "This partnership is how we answer that. We're turning Florida's boatbuilding strength into a strategic advantage for customers

at home and abroad.”

U.S. Navy Awards Castelion First Delivery Order for Blackbeard Hypersonic Weapon



Award marks first delivery of low-cost hypersonic strike weapons to the Navy. Photo: Castelion

Award marks first delivery of low-cost hypersonic strike weapons to the Navy

From Castelion

TORRANCE, Calif., June 16, 2026 /PRNewswire/ — Castelion has been awarded a $23.4M firm-fixed-price order from the U.S.

Navy for the production and delivery of 50 Blackbeard early operational capability pre-production prototypes and 50 associated storage and shipping containers.

The award marks an important step in Blackbeard’s transition from development and flight testing toward operationally relevant production. The order supports continued maturation of Castelion’s low-cost, highly manufacturable long-range hypersonic strike weapons and will exercise the company’s expanding production capacity at its Project Ranger manufacturing campus in Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

Work under the award will be performed primarily in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, with supporting work in Torrance, California, and is expected to be completed in 2027.

“Blackbeard was designed from the beginning to support our nation’s conventional deterrence,” said Bryon Hargis, Co-Founder and CEO of Castelion. “This award reflects the Navy’s continued commitment to and leadership in rapidly advancing affordable, manufacturable long-range strike capability, and moving Blackbeard toward early operational use.”

This award builds on a series of Army and Navy platform integration contracts and follows Castelion’s $250M+ investment in Project Ranger, a 1,000-acre manufacturing campus in New Mexico built for hypersonic production at scale.

Honeywell Launches Compact

Navigation System for Uncrewed Aerial Systems

Kestrel navigation system delivers high-accuracy positioning for small platforms operating in GPS-jammed and spoofed environments

From Honeywell

PHOENIX, June 17, 2026 – Honeywell (NASDAQ: HON) today announced the launch of Kestrel, a compact navigation solution designed to help uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) operate reliably in contested environments where GPS signals may be degraded, jammed or spoofed.

Built to support the growing demand for smaller, more affordable and highly efficient platforms, Kestrel

combines Honeywell Aerospace's HG3900 MEMS Inertial Measurement Unit with an M-code receiver and a multi-GNSS receiver. The platform is intended to meet the specific needs of Group 2 and 3 collaborative combat aircraft (CCAs) and loitering munitions platforms. It is also suitable for crewed aircraft where size, weight, power and cost are important considerations.

"Kestrel reflects the evolving needs of today's uncrewed operations, where operators are looking for resilient navigation technology that is smaller, lighter and more cost-effective," said Matt Picchetti, vice president and general manager of Navigation & Sensors at Honeywell Aerospace. "This system helps operators maintain mission objectives in environments where legacy GPS systems are lagging behind."

Kestrel is an Embedded GNSS/INS (EGI) system for global defense and commercial operators in need of advanced inertial navigation technology with secure positioning capabilities in a smaller footprint. The system is 40 percent smaller and lighter than similar navigation products available today, while still delivering up to an 80 percent improvement in navigation accuracy for uncrewed platforms. It also reduces costs by as much as 50 percent, helping operators efficiently scale deployment across high-volume drone operations. Kestrel's resiliency reduces UAS attrition by 60 percent, while more than doubling the capacity for mission distances.

The ability to operate without assured GNSS access is a distinct advantage for any military aircraft operating in contested or GNSS-denied environments because it provides continuous, self-contained position, velocity and attitude estimates independent of external signals.

Kestrel is designed to support a broad range of defense and commercial applications and will be available in configurations that support international and non-ITAR deployments.

Honeywell pioneered EGI technology and has produced more than 60,000 units since the mid-1990s to meet customers' most challenging navigation, pointing, stabilization and flight-control applications. To learn more, visit: New Kestrel Small EGI Navigation for Tactical Drones

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U.S., Philippine Coast Guards Complete Guam Engagements Ahead of RIMPAC

Members of the Philippine Coast Guard's BRP Gabriela Silang conduct a passenger exchange with the USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) crew during a joint sail offshore of Guam on June 12, 2026, during a mutual exchange. The U.S. Coast Guard and the Philippine Coast Guard completed a series of joint pre-exercise engagements in and around Guam from June 8–13, 2026, as the Philippine Coast Guard offshore patrol vessel BRP

Gabriela Silang transited toward Hawai’i for its first-ever participation in the Rim of the Pacific exercise. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Seaman Anson Burgdorf)
From U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia, June 16, 2026

SANTA RITA, Guam – The U.S. Coast Guard and the Philippine Coast Guard completed a series of joint pre-exercise engagements in and around Guam from June 9–13 as the Philippine Coast Guard offshore patrol vessel BRP Gabriela Silang transited toward Hawai’i for its first-ever participation in the Rim of the Pacific exercise.

“Hosting the crew of BRP Gabriela Silang here in Guam was a privilege,” said Cmdr. Grant Johnson, response department head, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. “Whether we were training side by side on the water or sharing a basketball court and a karaoke mic, our crews built the kind of trust and friendship that lasts long after the lines are cast off. That human connection is the heart of partnership, and it’s what makes our cooperation at sea so strong.”

BRP Gabriela Silang and crew arrived at Apra Harbor on June 9 and departed on June 12, conducting a pre-exercise joint sail with USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) through the U.S. exclusive economic zone on June 13. The port call marked the end of the first leg of the Philippine Coast Guard’s journey to RIMPAC 2026, the world’s largest international naval exercise, hosted every two years by the U.S. Navy in and around the main Hawaiian Islands.

During the visit, crews from both services trained side by side. Engagements included tours of the fast-response cutter USCGC Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139), a law-enforcement static display and a mock security boarding aboard USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140), and a small-boat demonstration in Outer Apra Harbor by Station Apra Harbor. Crews also competed in a basketball game and shared an evening of karaoke aboard Gabriela Silang, building the personal relationships that

underpin operations at sea.

The engagements reflect a deepening partnership between two longtime allies. The United States and the Philippines are bound by a Mutual Defense Treaty, a relationship forged through decades of shared service, including fighting side by side in World War II. The cooperation also advances shared interests in maritime domain awareness and security through frameworks such as the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

“The pre-exercise engagements in Guam were invaluable in preparing our crew for RIMPAC 2026. Training alongside our U.S. Coast Guard partners — on the water, on the deck, and in the field — sharpened our readiness and deepened the interoperability that defines a true alliance. We are proud to carry the Philippine flag into the world’s largest maritime exercise, and we carry with us the spirit of partnership that began long before we reached Pearl Harbor,” said Capt. Jomark Angue, commanding officer, BRP Gabriela Silang.

BRP Gabriela Silang is a 274-foot offshore patrol vessel scheduled to take part in RIMPAC activities near Pearl Harbor from June 22 to Aug. 2 before returning to the Philippines.