

Task Force Ashland's Navy-Marine Corps team returns to San Diego after four months of operations in the Indo-Pacific



NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (Jun 1, 2026) Sailors assigned to Whidbey Island-class amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) man the rails as the ship returns to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego, June 1, 2026. USS Ashland returns to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Aja Bleu Campbell)

From U.S. Third Fleet, June 1, 2026

SAN DIEGO – Marines and Sailors of Task Force (TF) Ashland returned to San Diego aboard Whidbey Island-class dock landing

ship USS Ashland (LSD 48), following four months of operations in the Indo-Pacific region, June 1, 2026.

TF Ashland is composed of Ashland's crew and a command element from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU); a ground combat element from 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1st Marine Division; and a logistics combat element from Combat Logistics Regiment 17, I Marine Logistics Group. Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 5 also deployed a detachment with two landing craft, air cushion to support amphibious operations. The task force departed San Diego aboard Ashland Jan. 24, 2026, demonstrating a flexible and scalable model of naval integration.

"I couldn't be prouder of the team's work over these past four months at sea," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Adam Peeples, commanding officer of Ashland. "As our Sailors and Marines look back at their accomplishments, I hope they feel the same pride and satisfaction I do leading this team."

Throughout their underway, the Navy-Marine Corps team was a visible and engaged presence across the Indo-Pacific. The task force participated in a multitude of demanding exercises, including the 45th iteration of Exercise Cobra Gold in February, the largest joint military exercise in mainland Asia, and the 40th iteration of Exercise Balikatan in April, an annual exercise focused on the long-standing alliance between the Philippines and the United States. These exercises involved complex scenarios, such as combined-arms live-fire events, amphibious operations, and disaster response training, conducted alongside the Royal Thai Armed Forces, the Republic of Korea Marine Corps, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"Combining the 15th MEU, ACU-5 craft team, and Sailors of Beachmasters Unit (BMU) 1, the Grizzly Gators of Ashland built something truly greater than the sum of its parts – TF Ashland," said Peeples. "Together, we tackled the challenges

with flawless results and worked with our regional partners, building cooperation within the region and demonstrating our commitment to the most consequential theater.”

While in port at Cebu, Philippines, Ashland completed a three-week ship repair and maintenance (SRMX) exercise, as part of its scheduled port visit. SRMX is designed to rehearse coordination and execution of ship damage repair from forward locations within the Indo-Pacific region, strengthening ties with the skilled workforce within allied and partner countries.

Further showcasing its commitment to regional stability, TF Ashland participated in a multilateral exercise alongside Australian and Canadian forces, a multi-phase exercise focused on surface action group operations and interoperability with allied navies. By executing key components of distributed maritime operations, TF Ashland provided combatant commanders with a flexible force for credible deterrence and crisis response, which significantly enhanced regional capabilities and bolstered maritime security alongside our allies.

“The 15th MEU executed as TF Ashland proved that a task-organized, scalable force can deliver credible combat power while continuing to strengthen relationships with our allies,” said U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Matt Bride, the commander of troops for TF Ashland and the 15th MEU executive officer. “Whether executing complex, multinational exercises or demonstrating the forward-thinking principles of distributed maritime operations, our Navy-Marine Corps team consistently met every challenge with the professionalism and effectiveness that underpins the legacy of our respective organizations.”

TF Ashland’s return marks the completion of operations that reinforced the United States’ commitment to peace through strength.

Task Force Ashland is a flexible, purpose-built force designed

to integrate with allies and partners or respond to crisis, in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.