

# USS Hershel 'Woody' Williams Completes Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Patrol



The Expeditionary Sea Base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) sails the Adriatic Sea, Feb. 19. Hershel "Woody" Williams is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national interests and security in Europe and Africa. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Fred Gray IV*

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain – The Expeditionary Sea Base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) arrived at Naval Station Rota, Spain, following a successful maritime security patrol in the Gulf of Guinea on April 18, 2022, said U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs.

From March to April, Hershel "Woody" Williams completed maritime security operations with African partners from Sierra Leone, Cabo Verde and Senegal as well as members of the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps.

"The men and women that made this possible are a testament to our shared values and commitment to ensuring the safety, security, and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the African continent," said Capt. Michael Concannon, commanding officer, USS Hershel "Woody" Williams.

In March, the joint U.S. and African maritime team interdicted an illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing vessel operating in Sierra Leone's economic exclusive zone.

In April, as part of the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership, the joint team, led by Cabo Verde, worked in coordination with the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics, INTERPOL and Cabo Verde's national Maritime

Operations Center to conduct a compliant boarding of a Brazilian-flagged fishing vessel, which led to the seizure of approximately 6,000 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated street value of more than \$350 million.

“I couldn’t be more proud of the professionalism and integration of the U.S. tri-maritime services, partner nations and other supporting organizations during our maritime security operations,” Concannon said. “These maritime security events show the world that our African partners are poised and ready to strike against illicit activity.”

Hershel “Woody” Williams is the first warship permanently assigned to the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility. The U.S. shares a common interest with African partner nations in ensuring security, safety and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the continent, because these waters are critical for Africa’s prosperity and access to global markets.

The ESB ship class is a highly flexible platform that may be used across a broad range of military operations. Acting as a mobile sea base, they are part of the critical access infrastructure that supports the deployment of forces and supplies to support missions assigned.

For over 70 years, U.S. 6th Fleet forces have forged strategic relationships with our allies and partners and solidified a foundation of shared values, experiences and vision aimed at preserving security and stability.