

# USS Leyte Gulf Returns From Final Deployment



The guided-missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55) returns to Naval Station Norfolk, May 17, 2024, marking their final deployment. Leyte Gulf deployed to the 4th Fleet area of responsibility, seizing 6,470 kilograms of illicit-drugs, a semi-submersible, and conducted theater security cooperation visits. Constructed in 1985 and commissioned in 1987, Leyte Gulf is named after the decisive World War II battle in the Philippine Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Manvir Gill)

By MC2 Porsha Thompson, 17 May 2024

NORFOLK, Va. – The guided-missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55) returned to Naval Station Norfolk, May 10, 2024, marking their final deployment.

Leyte Gulf departed Norfolk, Jan. 28, 2024, to conduct maritime interdiction and theater security operations in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations.

“The crew of Leyte Gulf is a model for maritime teamwork,” said Vice Adm. Doug Perry, Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet. “They partnered with Navy air assets and Coast Guard interdiction teams, showcasing 2nd Fleet’s ability to extend our presence and maintain homeland defense in other fleets. This is a profound final chapter for one of the Navy’s finest ships, and their crew should be proud of all they accomplished.”

During their final deployment, Leyte Gulf embarked the “Valkyries” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50 and partnered with U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 404.

The Leyte Gulf team performed maritime interdiction operations and disrupted 4,100 kilograms of cocaine. They detected and

seized a self-propelled semi-submersible containing 2,370 kilograms of illicit drugs, which was later destroyed during a sinking exercise. The LEDET boarded and took positive control of three vessels during interdiction operations and removed 15 narcotics traffickers from the narcotics trade.

“I admire the resiliency of the crew aboard Leyte Gulf,” said Perry. “Their commitment to the mission in the South Atlantic enhances maritime security through sustained naval presence.”

Leyte Gulf operated with regional partners in the 4th Fleet area and conducted theater security cooperation visits. These combined efforts aimed to strengthen maritime partnerships, enhance U.S. maritime posture, and deter threats of illicit drug trafficking.

Named after one of World War II’s largest naval battles, “The Battle of Leyte Gulf” was fought in 1944 in the Philippine Sea. It was a decisive battle that pushed back Japanese naval forces. The ship, which would be forever known as Leyte Gulf, was constructed in 1985 and commissioned in 1987.

“This ship is full of history. Each period brings its own far-off journeys, along with generations of Sailors who have manned the helm,” said Capt. Nathan Diaz, the commanding officer of Leyte Gulf. “Our last deployment was full of Sailors who made their own mark on the story of this great warship. Though our namesake comes from a battle long ago, the U.S. is still performing with a level of combat expertise and professionalism that we’ve always had as we protect the homeland.”

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs maritime forces ready to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.