

# USS Wasp Transits Through the Strait of Gibraltar



STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR (June, 26, 2024) An AH-1Z Viper, left, assigned to the “Blue Knights” of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 365 (Reinforced), and an MH-60S Sea Hawk, assigned to the “Dragon Whales” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28, flies patrol as the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) transits the Strait of Gibraltar, June 26, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Sydney Milligan)

By Lt. Mckensey Cobb, June 27, 2024

STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR – The amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1), flagship of the Wasp Amphibious Ready Group (WSP ARG) and embarked 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Special Operations Capable (SOC) transited the Strait of Gibraltar and entered the Mediterranean Sea, June 26.

Upon arrival in the Mediterranean Sea, Wasp will reunite with the Harpers Ferry-class amphibious landing dock ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), one of two other ships in the WSP ARG. Oak Hill conducted a Strait of Gibraltar transit, June 18, after participating in D-Day 80 commemoration celebrations in Cherbourg, France.

“There is an inherent flexibility to the type of missions an ARG-MEU can support,” said Capt. Nakia Cooper, commodore of Amphibious Squadron 4, embarked aboard Wasp. “Our ability to operate effectively as distributed force gives the ARG-MEU that flexibility. Each of our ships is capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response, and limited contingency operations on their own, but there is no substitute for the type of combat power we bring to the fight when we constitute as an Amphibious Ready Group.”

While in the NAVEUR-NAVAF area of operations, Wasp will work alongside allied and partner maritime forces, focusing on theater security cooperation efforts to further regional stability and demonstrate the strong maritime partnership between the U.S. and allies and partners.

This marks the first time that Wasp has operated in the Mediterranean region since its homeport shift from Sasebo, Japan to Norfolk, Virginia in 2019, after which the crew completed an extensive maintenance availability followed by a robust pre-deployment training program culminating in Composite Training Unit Exercise, which certified the ship, and all embarked commands, to deploy.

“Wasp is truly the number one ship in the fleet,” said Capt. Chris “Chewie” Purcell, Wasp’s commanding officer. “We’ve all worked tirelessly to reach this point. I am grateful for the energy our Sailors and Marines bring to the fight each day and confident they will meet every challenge head on over the coming months.”

Wasp has been underway conducting operations in the Atlantic Ocean since early April and recently departed the Baltic Sea after participating in Baltic Operations 2024 (BALTOPS 24).

The Wasp Amphibious Readiness Group consists of the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1), San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), Harpers Ferry class dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), and embarked 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU).

The 24th MEU (SOC) is a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) providing strategic speed and agility, ensuring our Marines are prepared to respond and protect U.S. national security interests around the globe. The MEU can respond rapidly from longer ranges with greater capabilities across the spectrum of military conflict.

You can follow USS Wasp's adventures on Facebook and Instagram (@usswasp\_lhd1).

To learn more about WSP ARG and 24th MEU (SOC) "Team of Teams," visit their DVIDS feature page at <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/wasparg24thmeu>.