



Media ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bataan Amphibious Ready Group Returns from Deployment

From U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. - Nearly 2,000 Sailors aboard the ships of the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (BATARG) are scheduled to return to their homeports Tuesday, Feb. 7 following a 10 1/2-month deployment supporting operations in the U.S. Navy's 5th and 6th Fleets areas of responsibility.

Commanded by Capt. Erik Ross, USS Bataan (LHD 5), the flagship for the Bataan ARG, returns from the longest U.S. Navy ship deployment in nearly 40 years. The ARG surged more than three months ahead of schedule and deployed in support of NATO-led operations in Libya March 23, 2011.

Also returning to Norfolk is amphibious transport dock ship USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19). The dock landing ship USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41) will be returning to home port at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story.

Sailors and Marines assigned to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), commanded by Col. Eric Steidl, offloaded in Morehead City, N.C., Feb. 5.

The ARG, commanded by Capt. Steven Yoder, supported Operations *Enduring Freedom*, *Odyssey Dawn*, and the NATO-led Operation *Unified Protector* along with theater and maritime security cooperation efforts in the Mediterranean and Arabian Seas.

"I could not be prouder of our servicemen and women," said Yoder. "Their performance, commitment to excellence, and flexibility during this deployment has truly been exceptional."

For news regarding BATARG's deployment, log onto <https://www.public.portal.navy.mil/surflant/lhd5> or visit the ship's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ussbataan.

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NOTES: The homecoming of USS Bataan (LHD 5) will be streamed live on-line. Media wishing to link to the live stream can do so at <http://www.livestream.com/usnavy>.

Media wishing to attend the homecoming of USS Bataan (LHD 5) Feb. 7 should contact the USFF Public Affairs Office at (757) 836-4421, and media wishing to attend the homecoming of USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19) and USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41) should contact CNSL Public Affairs Office at (757) 836- 31440 no later than Monday Feb. 6 at 3 p.m. Advance notification is required for access to Naval Station Norfolk and Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story.