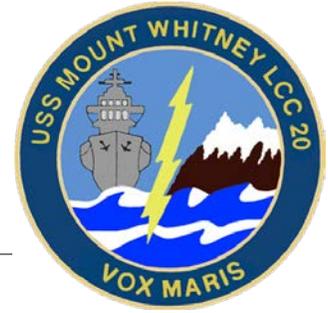




## Another example of a mission ready ship because of a U.S. Navy Port Engineer

# USS Mount Whitney Finishes BALTOPS 2018



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By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Justin Stumberg

KIEL, Germany (NNS) -- The Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) concluded the 46th iteration of exercise Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) in Kiel, Germany, June 15.

During the two-week BALTOPS exercise, over 100 drills in surface, subsurface, air defense, mine countermeasures, maritime interdictions and joint personnel recovery were completed among the 43 maritime units, 60 aircraft, and approximate 5,000 maritime, ground and air force.



"The Mount Whitney performed as the flagship and communications platform for Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO," said Capt. Robert Aguilar, Mount Whitney's commanding officer. "Our motto, 'Vox Marxis' - voice of the sea - was never truer as we ensured that the commander's voice was heard timely and accurately."

The 46-year-old ship has been undergoing an extensive service life extension program, which will extend its active service life to 2039.

"It is my belief that for the next 21 years the Mount Whitney and BALTOPS will be inextricably intertwined," said Aguilar.

The annual joint maritime exercise is designed to improve flexibility and interoperability among the participants.

Although the exercise was large and complex, Vice Adm. Lisa Franchetti, commander, U.S. 6th Fleet and commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKEFORNATO), said that the exercise demonstrates the three key "C"s: commitment, capability and cohesion.



"By training together on a regular basis in this strategically important part of the world we enhance the interoperability and demonstrate the capability of NATO allies and partners to operate across the spectrum of maritime operations," said Franchetti.

This BALTOPS exercise also featured a particular focus on mission command and information sharing.

"The BALTOPS exercise is perfectly timed with the upcoming NATO Summit in Brussels in July," said Grenell. "It highlights the U.S. commitment to defend all NATO territory and underscores the critical importance of interoperable forces from the alliance working across all services - land, air and sea - to ensure peace and freedom." U.S. ambassador to Germany, Richard Grenell.

Grenell said that the U.S. forces' presence in Europe is of enormous strategic importance.

The 17 participating nations included: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France,



Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey, the U.K., the U.S., Finland and Sweden. The Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group embarks the 26th MEU and includes the amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7), the transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), Oak Hill (LSD 51).

[http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=106032](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=106032)

## Webmaster's Note:

**USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC/JCC 20)** is a *Blue Ridge*-class command ship of the United States Navy under the Military Sealift Command; it is the flagship of the United States Sixth Fleet. She is also the command and control ship for the Commander Joint Command Lisbon and the Commander Striking Force NATO. The ship is named for Mount Whitney, a peak in the Sierra Nevada mountain range of California. Mount Whitney is the highest summit in the contiguous United States with an elevation of 14,505 feet (4,421 m).