



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

Essex ARG/13th MEU with Embarked F-35B Enters Central Command



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From 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit Public Affairs

5TH FLEET AREA OF OPERATIONS (NNS) -- Earlier this month, the Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II entered the Central Command area of operations for the first time.



The 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and the **Essex Amphibious Ready Group (ARG)** with the attached Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211 is the first continental U.S. based Navy and Marine Corps force to deploy with the Lightning II. The Essex ARG/MEU team is currently conducting a regularly scheduled deployment.

GULF OF ADEN (Sept. 7, 2018)

While in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, the amphibious force is trained and equipped to conduct maritime security operations, crisis response operations, theater security cooperation and forward naval presence operations to reinforce to the U.S.'s commitment to partner nations in the region.

Following a six-month comprehensive, pre-deployment training period, the Essex ARG/MEU was certified for deployment. The training consisted of three integrated at-sea periods which collectively ensured the Navy/Marine Corps team is at its highest level of readiness to accomplish missions across the range of military operations. VMFA-211 was certified for deployment across all mission essential tasks to include deep air support, close air support, offensive air support and electronic warfare.



The Essex ARG is comprised of amphibious assault ship **USS Essex (LHD 2)**, amphibious transport dock **USS Anchorage (LPD 23)** and amphibious dock landing ship **USS Rushmore (LSD 47)**. During deployment they will operate with embarked forces of the 13th MEU, PHIBRON 1, the "Blackjacks" of Helicopter Sea Combat

Squadron (HSC) 21, and detachments from Assault Craft Unit 5, Naval Beach Group 1, Beachmaster Unit 1, Fleet Surgical Team 3 and Tactical Air Control Squadron 11. The 13th MEU consists of the command element; the aviation combat element comprised of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 166 Reinforced and VMFA 211.

For more news from Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, visit www.navy.mil/local/npasewest/.

Webmaster's Note:

<https://www.facebook.com/sandra.tacker/videos/1976694355698430/>

USS Essex departing Naval Station San Diego, Calif. on July 10, 2018.

The equipment which enables USS Essex to carry and support the F-35B Lightning II was a major installation effort conducted during the ship's last major repair/install availability which was packaged and overseen by U.S. Navy Port Engineer Ryan Benoit.