

# A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER



Families and Friends of USS AMERICA,

As I write this letter, with much anticipation and emotion, we are now watching Sasebo disappear over the horizon. Over the course of six-years from AMERICA's arrival to her departure, its crew and our families developed strong bonds throughout the ship's 12 patrols and rigorous operational tempo. For a handful of Sailors, Sasebo became a home-away-from-home and we were able to find them a billet on another ship to remain part of the Forward-Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) in Japan. For the rest of the crew, we're departing with many fond memories of our time in Sasebo and service as a key 7th Fleet asset in the Indo-Pacific region.

As we look ahead, I want to provide insight on how the next phase in the ship's lifecycle will look for the crew. Once we arrive in San Diego, the ship and crew will transition from high-tempo operations to a full-on maintenance cycle. The daily work tasks will shift as AMERICA enters a nearly two-year maintenance and dry-dock period to include a series of upgrades, preservation projects and systems modernization, as part of the ship's regularly scheduled upkeep. Every Sailor on the ship has worked through an incredible number of professional qualifications, with the goal of ensuring we have skilled firefighters, first responders and watchstanders throughout the maintenance cycle and on the backside of the prolonged maintenance period. The crew's focus on maintenance, preservation and training are a critical foundation to keeping AMERICA in the fight and ready for our Nation's Tasking. Even though our setting will bring us home at the end of each day, the workload will bring its own challenges—and just as you have supported us in the past, we will lean on your enduring support to get us through the maintenance phase and back to the operational fleet, as soon as possible.

I can say firsthand from talking to Sailors, that the crew is collectively excited about our new home of San Diego and what being back in the U.S. will offer. Though we have become accustomed to cultural aspects of Japan, many are looking forward to the amazing food, scenery, and climate that San Diego offers. Most importantly, Sailors are looking forward to reuniting with families and friends, and being within similar time zones as their loved ones.

Throughout our latest patrol with the 31st MEU, the crew enjoyed many accomplishments. AMERICA continued to celebrate a high promotion rate through standard merit-based advancement, the new advance-to-promote process, and Chief/Officer promotion-board results. We are extremely proud of our Chief Selectees—AMERICA is pushing eight future Chiefs through the coveted "Forged in Steel" initiation process! This Chiefs' season also includes our Master Sergeant Marine which is an amazing display of how strong our blue-green team is on AMERICA.

AMERICA left for Patrol on May 17th and has been running hard every day. We served as the flagship for two large exercises, including Talisman Sabre, which was held off the east coast of Australia, and the 31st MEU's Amphibious Integrated Training and Certification Exercise where the blue-green teams were put through their paces exercising a full scope of Navy-Marine Corps expeditionary and amphibious capabilities.

While underway, we operated at new highs consisting of 1,085 aircraft launches which involved aircraft from 16 different countries, to include partner nation F-35B Lightning fighter jets which embarked AMERICA for a period. We also were the centerpiece of two large photo evolutions where warships from the world's leading navies come together to display the impressive naval power of the United States and our allies in 7th Fleet. We also exercised our ability to provide fuel at sea to a destroyer as well as receive fuel from a fleet tanker. Among all the operational accomplishments, the crew had the opportunity to experience some much needed liberty in Sydney, Brisbane, Okinawa, Sasebo, and Pearl Harbor.

Another area that I like to highlight which is a true testament to the might of our Navy is the ability to be self-sufficient by repairing our own systems at sea. Sailors in the engineering department completed complex repairs across to include work on our big diesel generators, main propulsion gas turbines, control systems, piping repairs, compressor repairs, elevator repairs and the list goes on. The combat systems team did an excellent job of keeping our massive communications suite in peak condition as well as our weapons systems ready for any eventuality. Our Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD) team was extremely busy ensuring we maintained the highest aviation readiness I have ever seen, but also in repairing and manufacturing parts for other departments and other ships. All these accomplishments highlight the team-of-teams effort to make the work of the ship happen.

Throughout it all, the crew's dedication, professionalism, and sacrifice has been remarkable. I am incredibly proud of all that team AMERICA achieved and of their resilience amidst challenges presented by a compressed operational FDNF schedule, on top of all the preparations that have gone into our homeport shift to San Diego. Every service-member aboard and our families and friends sacrificed so much to enable a successful forward-deployment, homeport shift and entry into the maintenance period. I am deeply grateful for you—our families and friends that keep supporting our mission day in and day out. Behind every awesome Sailor or Marine is an amazing support structure. Thank you for what you do to support your service-member in keeping AMERICA as a premier warfighting asset.

Homecoming is an unforgettable experience and I encourage everyone to enjoy much needed time off to reconnect with your loved ones and get established in our new home of San Diego.

Godspeed,



**CAPT Ethan Rule**  
**Commanding Officer, USS AMERICA (LHA 6)**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely of CAPT Ethan Rule.

September 1, 2025