

HOMECOMING 2025 MEDIA KIT



USS AMERICA (LHA 6) | U.S. NAVY AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT SHIP

BELLO VEL PACE PARATUS - PREPARED IN WAR OR IN PEACE

USS AMERICA (LHA 6) RETURNS TO SAN DIEGO FOLLOWING SIX YEARS OF FORWARD-DEPLOYED OPERATIONS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Sept. 25, 2025

SAN DIEGO – The amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) arrived at its new homeport of Naval Base San Diego, Sept. 25, marking the end of its six-year forward deployment to Sasebo, Japan and the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. With a crew of over 1,200 Sailors and capable of deploying over 1,600 Marines, the America delivers a self-contained, mobile crisis response force, ranging from combat operations to humanitarian aid and disaster response.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2019-2025

- **Six Years of Indo-Pacific Service:** USS America served as the Navy's only forward-deployed amphibious assault ship, from 2019-2025 in Sasebo, Japan, assigned to patrol the Indo-Pacific region under U.S. 7th Fleet. Functioned as the flagship for Expeditionary Strike Group 7, leading the America Amphibious Ready Group.
- **Multinational Exercises and Operations:** Participated in multiple iterations of major exercises such as Talisman Sabre, Iron Fist, Ssang Yong, Noble Fusion, Large Scale Global Exercise, Noble Union, Cobra Gold, Noble Fury, Valiant Shield and numerous combined operations, force integration training and maneuvering exercises with our allies, partner nations and U.S. Carrier Strike Groups such as, George Washington, Ronald Reagan and Carl Vinson.
- **Crisis Response:** Provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, including responding to the eruption of Mt. Bagana in Bougainville.
- **Presence Matters:** USS America and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit maintained a persistent presence in the South China Sea, equipped and ready to respond to the full spectrum of conflict and natural disasters.
- **Building Alliances:** USS America operated in conjunction with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force sister ship, JS Ise, to build a stronger alliance. Successful completion of a six-year forward-deployed mission in the 7th Fleet area of operations reinforces the U.S. Navy's commitments to our allies and partners.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE 2

FORWARD-DEPLOYED HIGHLIGHTS 3

USS AMERICA FACT SHEET 4

COMMAND FRAMEWORK 5

MULTI-NATIONAL EXERCISES AND PORT VISITS 6

HOMECOMING INFORMATION 7

HOMECOMING PRESS RELEASE 8

POINT OF CONTACT 9

LEADERSHIP BIOGRAPHIES 10-12

This press kit provides media with comprehensive information about USS America's mission and key accomplishments.

DESIGNED BY U.S. NAVY
MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SEAMAN
NICHOLAS DOUGLASS

COMMAND FRAMEWORK

Mission

Amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) delivers superior combat capability across all domains to compete with, deter, and defeat our adversaries. With a crew of over 1,200 Sailors and capable of deploying over 1,600 Marines, America delivers a self-contained, mobile crisis response force, ranging from combat operations to humanitarian aid and disaster response.

Vision

The America TEAM will set the standard of warfighting excellence for a first in its class amphibious warship. We build a fully informed, tactically-minded, and integrated crew by reinforcing a culture based on faith, family, and fun, and forge ready and resilient Sailors and families.



COMMAND LEADERSHIP



Capt. Ethan M. Rule
Commanding Officer



Capt. M. Trevor Plageman
Executive Officer



CMDCM (SW) Stephen McQueen
Command Master Chief

USS AMERICA FACT SHEET

The America-class amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) is a versatile asset, capable of projecting U.S. naval power across the globe. As a first-in-class amphibious warship, USS America delivers superior combat capability across all domains to compete with, deter, and defeat adversaries. With a crew of over 1,200 Sailors and the capacity to deploy over 1,600 Marines, America is a self-contained, mobile crisis response force, equipped for combat operations, humanitarian aid, and disaster response.

During the America's time in the U.S. 7th Fleet, the ship maintained a high operational tempo, conducting successful joint and combined exercises and operations. These activities enhanced interoperability with allies and partners and emphasized the U.S. Navy's and U.S. Marine Corps' commitment to achieving peace through strength and maintaining a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Navy-Marine Corps amphibious forces provide unparalleled options for special operations and expeditionary capabilities, and are prepositioned to conduct sustained operations as a sea base anywhere in the world. The ability to operate seamlessly and simultaneously on the sea, ashore, and in the air represents the unique value of the amphibious fleet, providing the capability to quickly deploy sea-based strikes, humanitarian aid, and participate in allied exercises, in support of U.S. interests, treaties and alliances.

EXERCISE HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Exercise Talisman Sabre (Multiple Iterations):** A biennial exercise with Australia, designed to enhance interoperability and combat readiness.
- **Exercise Iron Fist:** A bilateral exercise with the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, focusing on amphibious operations.
- **Exercise Ssang Yong:** A large-scale amphibious exercise with South Korea.

KEY STATS

Oct. 11, 2014
Commissioning Date

2019-2025
Forward-Deployed

Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan
Former Forward Stationing

Naval Base San Diego
New Homeport

U.S. 7th Fleet
Former Area of Operations

U.S. 3rd Fleet
Current Area of Operations

3,000
Sailor and Marine Capacity

900
Current Assigned Sailors

20+
Aircraft Capacity (fixed wing and rotor wing aircraft)

90,274 sq. ft.
Flight Deck

USS AMERICA'S PATROL HIGHLIGHTS:

May - August 2025

- During four months of operations in the South Pacific, USS America and 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit successfully conducted amphibious and surface warfare operations, including during exercise [Talisman Sabre](#), where the America embarked over 200 multinational participants. The America's participation advanced a free and open Indo-Pacific by strengthening relationships and interoperability among key allies and partners.
- The USS America team conducted [anti-submarine warfare operations](#) in the Indo-Pacific. A 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit MV-22 Osprey embarked aboard the America was the first of its kind to deliver sonobuoys, validating additional operational capabilities while demonstrating the aircraft's versatility in the maritime environment. This capability enables stronger Navy and Marine Corps integration to better find, fix, track and engage subsurface threats.
- America operated as the flagship of a [14-ship formation](#), sailing alongside warships from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, showcasing relationships and interoperability among key allies and partners.
- In Brisbane, the America served as the venue for the signing of the [Trilateral Naval Logistics Arrangement for Further Cooperation](#) between the U.S., Australia, and Japan, facilitating deeper maritime cooperation and bolstering regional security through enhanced logistics support.
- In support of naval and atmospheric research, the America deployed four weather and [oceanographic data collection](#) devices, collecting critical information for developing short and long-term weather forecasts, further improving timely warnings and protective measures for operations.
- America demonstrated its capabilities to refuel and provide fuel at sea, extending the endurance of the fleet through replenishment-at-sea with the fleet replenishment oiler [USNS Rappahannock \(T-AO 204\)](#), vertical replenishment utilizing embarked HSC-25 MH-60 Seahawks, and delivery of fuel at sea with the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser [USS Robert Smalls \(CG-62\)](#).
- The America conducted port visits to [Sydney](#) and [Brisbane](#), hosting more than 300 distinguished visitors, dignitaries and partner militaries for tours and two [high-impact community engagements](#), fostering positive relationships and promoting U.S. interests in the region.



MULTINATIONAL EXERCISES AND PORT VISITS 2019-2025

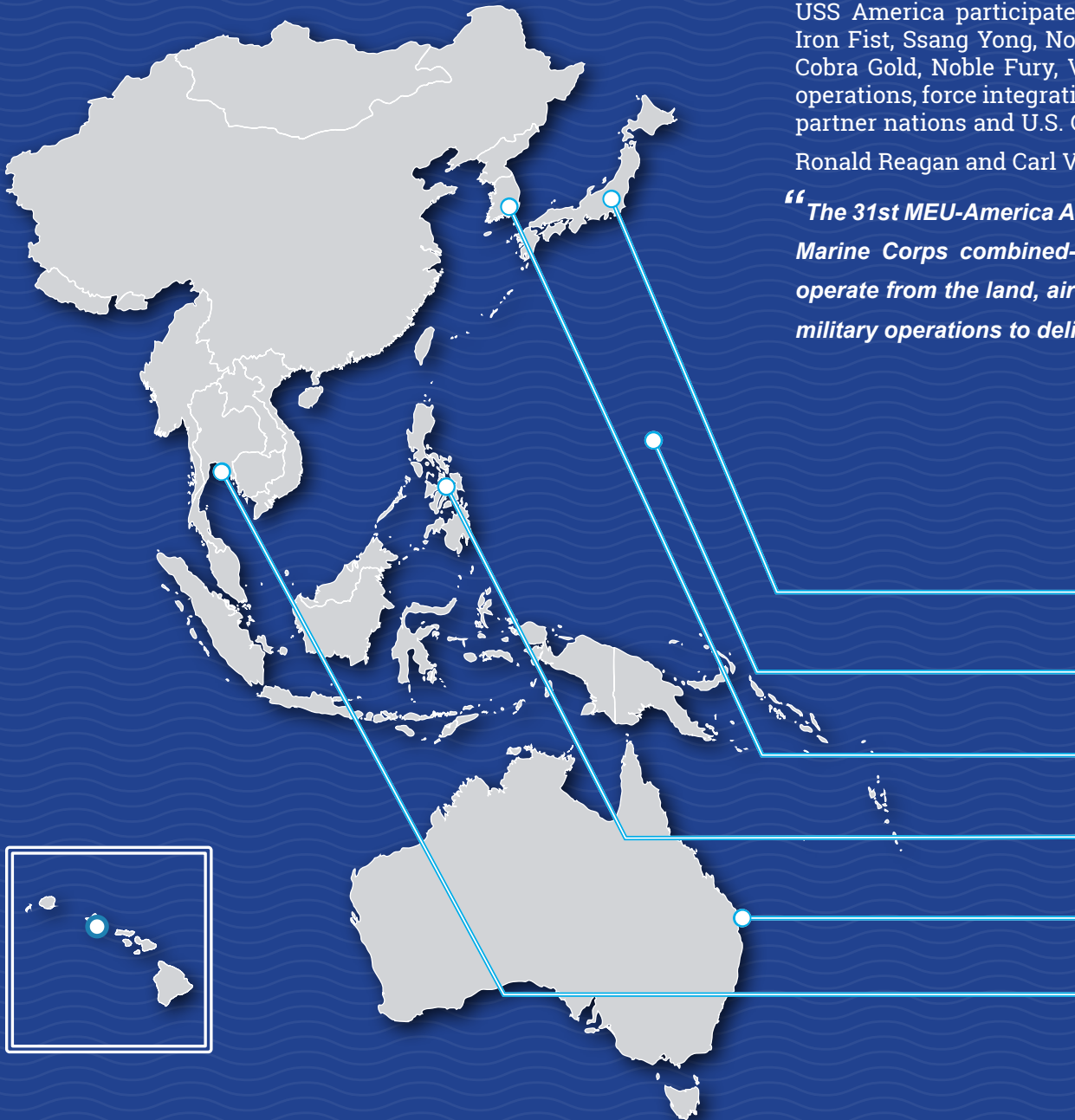
USS America participated in multiple iterations of exercise Talisman Sabre, Iron Fist, Ssang Yong, Noble Fusion, Large Scale Global Exercise, Noble Union, Cobra Gold, Noble Fury, Valiant Shield, Transportex, and numerous combined operations, force integration training and maneuvering exercises with our allies, partner nations and U.S. Carrier Strike Groups such as, George Washington and Ronald Reagan and Carl Vinson.

“The 31st MEU-America Amphibious Ready Group team brings a cohesive Navy-Marine Corps combined-arms presence to the region, where they’re able to operate from the land, air or at sea. They’re ready to respond across a range of military operations to deliver decisive, integrated American naval power.”

Rear Admiral Tom Shultz, ESG-7 commander.

PORT VISITS INCLUDE:

Japan	Iwakuni, Okinawa, Osaka, Sasebo
Mariana Islands	Guam
South Korea	Busan
Philippines	Manila
Australia	Brisbane, Sydney, Townsville
Thailand	Laem Chabang
Hawaii	Pearl Harbor



HOMECOMING INFORMATION

- Homecoming is both a celebration and a recognition of service and sacrifice. The USS America's crew is thrilled to reunite with their families. While many of the families were stationed in Japan with their service member, returning to the U.S. will give Sailors the opportunity to reconnect with extended family members and friends.
- The warfighters of the USS America are proud to represent our country's namesake. We are grateful for the close support systems provided through family, friends and shipmates and Navy support programs.
- We appreciate the warm welcome we have already received from Naval Base San Diego, fleet and family support groups, the USO and the greater San Diego community.
- We look forward to building upon the Navy's strong relationship with the San Diego community as neighbors.



"The dedication, professionalism, and sacrifice of America's crew is remarkable. From strengthening our partnerships during exercises like Talisman Sabre and Iron Fist, to providing crisis response capabilities this team has upheld the highest standards of excellence, I'm incredibly proud of this ship and the hard work and resilience of the entire crew. This year has been packed with operations amidst moving families from Japan to San Diego. The demands placed on an FDNF warship are rigorous, and team America has proven time and time again that we are up to the challenge. I couldn't be more proud of what we've accomplished together."

Capt. Ethan Rule, commanding officer, USS America

HOMEcoming PRESS RELEASE

USS America Completes Homeport Change to San Diego | September 25, 2025

SAN DIEGO – The amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) arrived at its new homeport of Naval Base San Diego, Sept. 25th, marking the end of a six-year forward deployment to Sasebo, Japan, and the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. The America's successful operations in the Indo-Pacific underscore the Navy's commitment to achieving peace through strength and a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Since arriving in Japan in 2019, the America operated as a key asset within the Forward-Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF), leading the America Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) of ships, serving as the flagship for Expeditionary Strike Group 7 and embarking the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The ship's strategic placement enabled the Navy and Marine Corps team to respond rapidly to contingencies and train as a unified force across air, land and sea-based warfighting capabilities.

The America was a persistent presence in the South and East China seas, participating in numerous joint and combined exercises and operations with partners including Japan, Australia, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, New Zealand, and Thailand. These operations enhanced maritime interoperability, strengthened regional security, and reinforced international law. The ship also provided crisis response capabilities, including humanitarian assistance and disaster response following the eruption of Mt. Bagana in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

"The dedication, professionalism, and sacrifice of America's crew is remarkable. From strengthening our partnerships during exercises like Talisman Sabre and Iron Fist, to providing crisis response capabilities, this team has upheld the highest standards of excellence," said Capt. Ethan Rule, commanding officer of the America. "I'm incredibly proud of this ship and the hard work and resilience of the entire crew. This year has been packed with operations amidst moving families from Japan to San Diego. The demands placed on an FDNF warship are rigorous, and team America has proven time and time again that we are up to the challenge. I couldn't be more proud of what we've accomplished together."

Most recently, the America and the 31st MEU successfully completed four months of operations in the Western Pacific, where the Navy-Marine Corps team conducted amphibious and surface warfare operations alongside 13 other ships and expeditionary forces from six partner nations during exercise Talisman Sabre. The America embarked over 200 multinational participants as part of the exercise, significantly advancing combined readiness and demonstrating U.S. commitment to allies and partners in the region.

The America team also successfully conducted novel anti-submarine warfare operations in the Indo-Pacific. A 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit MV-22 Osprey embarked aboard the America was the first of its kind to deliver sonobuoys, validating additional operational capabilities while demonstrating the aircraft's versatility in the maritime environment. This new capability enables the Navy and Marine Corps team to better find, fix, track and engage subsurface threats.

"Serving forward deployed is an incredible challenge and honor," said. Capt. Michael Plageman, executive officer, USS America. "Our Sailors and Marines rose to that challenge every single day—demonstrating grit, professionalism and teamwork in some of the most dynamic waters in the world. As we return to San Diego, we bring with us not only experience but a legacy of operational excellence."

The America's crew earned five consecutive Battle Effectiveness awards while forward deployed to U.S. Naval Forces Japan, each recognizing sustained superior performance in warfighting readiness, mission accomplishment, innovation and resiliency.

The America is the lead ship of its class, optimized for aviation operations and capable of embarking more than 1,600 Marines in support of combat operations and humanitarian missions. The ship is currently assigned to the U.S. 3rd Fleet and homeported in San Diego.

Press release will be available on DVIDS, Sept. 25: <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/USSA>

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Lt. Carolina M. Fernandez

Email

PAO@lha6.navy.mil

Phone Number

(808)-653-7631

CONNECT WITH US

Website

<https://www.surfpac.navy.mil/lha6/>

Media Site

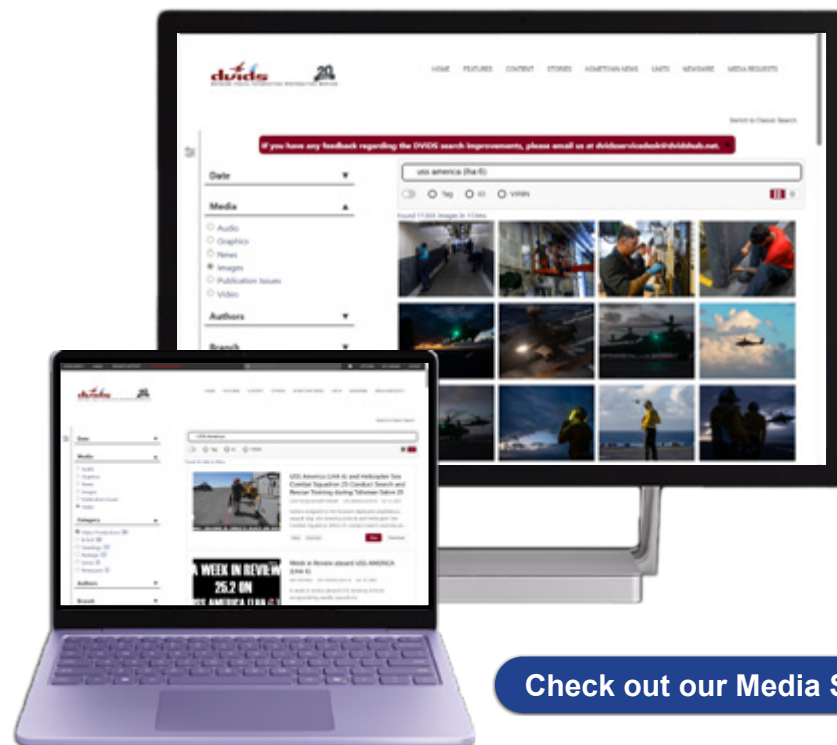
<https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/USSA>

Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/ussamerica_lha6/?hl=en

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/USSAmerica/>



Check out our Media Site!



Read Times of America

LEADERSHIP BIOGRAPHIES



CAPTAIN ETHAN M. RULE

Commanding Officer, USS AMERICA (LHA 6)

Capt. Rule, a native of Rhode Island, graduated from Seton Hall University in 1999 and earned his commission as a Surface Warfare Officer through Officer Candidate School in 2000. He earned his Master's Degree in Policy and Strategy from the U.S. Naval War College in 2013.

Rule assumed command of USS America (LHA 6) on January 9, 2025.

Rule's operational assignments include commanding officer, USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41), USS Tortuga (LSD 46) and USS New Orleans (LPD 18); and Executive Officer aboard USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19), and the forward-deployed USS America (LHA 6). He also served aboard USS Bataan (LHD 5), USS Seattle (AOE 3), USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44), USS San Antonio (LPD 17), and USS Anchorage (LSD 36).

Rule served ashore at Carrier Strike Group Four as the Flag Secretary/N1 and then at Expeditionary Strike Group Two as the Chief of Operations. He served at the Joint Staff J7 Deployable Training Division as the Team Chief. He deployed to Afghanistan as an Electronic Warfare Officer.

His personal awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (3), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (6), and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (2), and various campaign and unit awards.

[Read Online](#)

LEADERSHIP BIOGRAPHIES



CAPTAIN MICHAEL T. PLAGEMAN

Executive Officer, USS AMERICA (LHA 6)

Capt. Plageman, a native of Richmond, Virginia, enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1994 but later received his commission as a Naval Officer through OCS in 2002. He graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2000 with a B.S. in Urban Studies. Capt. Plageman is a fully Joint Qualified Officer and earned a M.A. in Defense and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College in 2021 and a M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies with Influence Warfare and Financial Management concentrations from The Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy in June 2024. Plageman's operational assignments include a division officer tour aboard Patrol Squadron TEN (VP-10) serving as Readiness, Powerplants, and NFO Training; USS Harry S. Truman as Assistant Navigator; a department head tour aboard Patrol Squadron One (VP-1) as Administrative, Assistant Training, Future Operations, and Operations Officers; and Patrol Squadron Four Seven (VP-47) as Executive and Commanding Officer.

Ashore Plageman served as Commander Task Force Six Seven (CTF-67) staff Analysis Officer, Weapons and Tactics Instructor, Battle Watch Captain, LNOs to CTF-69, C6F, Joint Task Force-HOA; LNO to CTF-72 as CTG 72.1 Operations Officer; Officer in Charge of multiple international detachments; Lead Exercise Planner in the Maritime and Combined Exercises Branch (J37), and

Executive Officer to the Operations Director, J3 at U.S. Africa Command; Aviation Branch Head (N801K) and Special Access Programs Coordinator for Director, Programming Division (OPNAV N80).

After transitioning to the P-8A Poseidon, Plageman commanded VP-47. During his Command tour the Golden Swordsmen deployed during COVID-19 to U.S. 4th and 6th Fleets and earned the 2020 Commander Naval Air Forces Battle "E" Award.

He reported as Executive Officer of USS America in December 2024.

[Read Online](#)

LEADERSHIP BIOGRAPHIES



CMDCM (SW) STEPHEN MCQUEEN

Command Master Chief, USS AMERICA (LHA 6)

Command Master Chief McQueen, a native of Houston, Texas, and enlisted in the United States Navy in August 1996. He completed basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Illinois.

Upon graduation he proceeded to Naval Station Ingleside, Texas where he reported to the USS CHAMPION (MCM 4). As a Seaman Recruit, he instantly became familiar with the Mineman community which allowed him to progress up the ranks to become a Boatswainmate Petty Officer Third Class. At the end of his tour onboard the USS CHAMPION, he converted from Boatswainmate to the Mineman rate and reported to Mobile Mine Assembly 3 (MOMAU 3) in Colts Neck, New Jersey. After his tour at MOMAU 3, he reported to MOMAU 15 in Kingsville, Texas. Upon transferring from MOMAU 15, he reported to the USS PIONEER (MCM-9) as the Deck Department LPO. During this four-year tour, he was advanced to the rank of Chief Petty Officer. His next duty assignment was at Afloat Training Group San Diego (ATGSD) as the Leading Chief Petty Officer (LCPO) for Mine Countermeasures training and certifications. At his next duty assignment, he served as the Senior Enlisted Leader for the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), Mine Countermeasures Detachment 2 in San Diego, California. Following his highly successful tour at LCS, he received orders back to

ATGSD as the LCPO and Mission Area Functional Lead for Mine Countermeasures training and certifications. It was during his three-year tour at ATGSD that he was selected as a Command Senior Chief and subsequently transferred to report for duty as Command Senior Chief onboard the USS DEXTROUS (MCM-13) in Manama, Bahrain.

While serving onboard USS DEXTROUS, he promoted to Command Master Chief (CMDCM) and was transferred to USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD-49) in San Diego, CA. Upon completing three years aboard USS HARPERS FERRY, his highly successful tour aboard USS HARPERS FERRY, he transferred to ASSAULT CRAFT UNIT ONE (ACU-1) in Coronado, CA.

In May 2024, he reported aboard the USS AMERICA (LHA 6) in Sasebo, Japan, where he served as the Command Master Chief.

He is a graduate of the U.S. Navy Senior Enlisted Academy Class 161 Purple Group, Command Master Chief/Chief of the Boat Course, Advanced Command Master Chief Course, and has earned his Enlisted Surface Warfare, Master Training Specialist, and Afloat Training Specialist designations. His decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Meritorious Service Medal (3 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (5 awards), and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (5 awards), and various unit and campaign awards.

[Read Online](#)