



Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 2

2600 Tarawa Ct.
Bldg. 1062, Ste. 260
Norfolk, VA 23521

For Immediate Release

Oct. 1, 2008

Great White Fleet 100th Anniversary To Be Commemorated Onboard USS Nassau

NORFOLK, Va. -- USS Nassau (LHA 4) will arrive in New York, N.Y. Oct. 11 and together with Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) Two, will host a reception as well as conduct ship tours to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Great White Fleet.

One hundred years ago, the Great White Fleet departed Hampton Roads, Va., becoming the first and only global naval voyage in history. In 1907, Theodore Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States, sent a portion of the Atlantic fleet on a world tour to test naval readiness, establish global presence and generate international goodwill. Sixteen battleships, plus auxiliary support ships and 14,000 Sailors and Marines, embarked on the 14-month journey that covered some 43,000 miles and made twenty port calls on six continents. The participating ships, painted white except for gilded scrollwork on their bows, later became known as the "Great White Fleet." This deployment demonstrated to the world that the United States had arrived as a significant, outward-looking world power with peaceful intent toward every nation.

“Theodore Roosevelt’s idea to send a fleet of 16 U.S. battleships on a world tour, was a dramatic gesture aimed at audiences both at home and abroad,” said the Honorable Donald Winter, Secretary of the Navy. “To the world, the message was that the United States had arrived as a significant world power, outward-looking, and filled with goodwill towards every nation. To the public of this great country, the message was that you have a Navy to be proud of, and that the strength of the U.S. Navy is a primary source of our status as a nation of influence and power.”

Honoring the 100th anniversary of Theodore Roosevelt’s Great White Fleet deployment underscores the Navy’s commitment to sustaining a Navy and Marine Corps responsive to the challenges of the 21st century. Today, informed by its diplomatic tradition, the U.S. Navy continues to work with partners to deter aggressors, protect the right to operate freely at sea, and provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief around the world. The Navy’s Maritime Strategy – “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower” – emphasizes the need for increased global cooperation to promote global peace and prosperity.

Similar to the mission of the Great White Fleet 100 years ago, ESG Two strives to continue to contribute to the security and stability of the maritime domain by building and maintaining lasting partnerships through extensive training and joint operations with coalition partners.

“This is a great opportunity not only to recognize the accomplishments of the Great White Fleet, but to also highlight our continuing Navy and Marine Corps mission to help keep international waterways safe and to reach out to those in need,” said Rear Admiral Terence McKnight, ESG Two’s commander. “Just as four ships from the Great White Fleet provided humanitarian assistance following an earthquake in Sicily a hundred years ago, our amphibious ships continue that important mission today. The Nassau returned recently from relief efforts following Hurricane Ike and the USS Kearsarge spent a great deal of time rendering aid to Haiti following tropical storms and hurricanes that affected that nation.”

ESG Two is a flexible, scalable, adaptable and deployable Navy and Marine Corps staff designed to function as the core staff element for Navy component commands (NCC), numbered fleet commanders and the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC).

USS Nassau will be open for public visitation October 13, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.