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Expeditionary Strike Group 2 Prepares For Overseas Missions

By Lieutenant John Fage – Expeditionary Strike Group 2 Public Affairs Officer

NORFOLK – Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 2 is preparing for a yearlong deployment to the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR).

Sailors and Marines assigned to ESG 2 have been participating in contingency exercises and training in preparations to relieve ESG 3 in the Persian Gulf next month.

“The biggest key to our success as a command element is our Navy-Marine Corps team,” said Rear Adm. Terry McKnight, commander, ESG 2. “We’ve spent the last couple months making sure that we’re all on the same page and speaking the same language. Working hand-in-hand will allow us to go overseas and be successful.”

In addition to holding several contingency exercises, ESG 2 personnel have participated in multiple training sessions, ranging from weapons familiarization and qualification to learning rules of engagement and practicing daily battle rhythm.

“We want to make sure that our Sailors and Marines have all the tools and training they need to be successful in the missions and situations they’ll face while deployed,” said Lt. Cmdr. Pat Valent, ESG 2’s pre-deployment training and readiness

officer. “Since receiving our deployment order, we’ve focused on the missions we’ll be performing overseas.”

ESG 2 will be responsible for two key missions, Combined Task Forces (CTF) 51 and 58. CTF 51 commands all the amphibious assets deployed to the CENTCOM AOR while CTF 58 focuses on contingency and crisis response.

“One of our major goals while we’re deployed will be to build and strengthen partnerships with our coalition members,” said Col. Jack McElroy, deputy commander, ESG 2. “Our Blue-Green team of Sailors and Marines will work to improve those ties while executing missions that are crucial to the success of the Chief of Naval Operations’ (CNO) National Maritime Strategy.”