



# PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **USS Wasp, USS Kearsarge and USS Oak Hill support relief mission in Virgin Islands**

The amphibious assault ships USS Wasp (LHD 1), USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) and dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51) along with the Marines of the 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit are supporting the lead federal agency in providing humanitarian relief efforts for Hurricane Irma.

Wasp, the first Navy platform to arrive in the vicinity of the U.S. Virgin Islands, is providing medium and heavy lift helicopters to transport people and supplies. Wasp's helicopters are conducting medical evacuations for intensive care patients from St. Thomas to St. Croix and conducting site assessments on the initial damage in St. Thomas.

Wasp departed for Sasebo, Japan, Aug. 30, to assume duties as the forward-deployed flagship of the amphibious force of the U.S. 7th Fleet. The ship was conducting its transit and was redirected to assist with relief efforts.

Kearsarge and Oak Hill departed Norfolk, Va. Aug. 31, to support relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. They were redirected to be in a position to support efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

The combined aircraft on all three ships include three UH-1Y Marine Utility Helicopters, three CH-53E Marine Heavy Lift Helicopters, five MV-22 Marine Tiltrotor aircraft and nine MH-60S Navy Medium Lift Helicopters.

These ships are capable of providing medical support, maritime civil affairs, maritime security, expeditionary logistic support, medium and heavy lift air support, and bring a diverse capability including assessment and security.

The top priority of the federal government, as we work together to support civil authorities, is to minimize suffering and protecting the lives and safety of those affected by Hurricane Irma.

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