



**1st Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs**

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## **Return of two U.S. Army logistics support vessels to U.S. marks end of more than 20 year mission in the Middle East**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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FORT KNOX, Ky. -- Two U.S. Army General Frank S. Besson-Class Logistics Support Vessels and their crews arrived at Third Port at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, Oct. 8, marking the completion of more than 20 years of support to U.S. Central Command and U.S. Army Central.

The Maj. Gen. Charles P. Gross (LSV 5) and the SP4 James A. Loux (LSV 6), manned by the 411th and 335th Transportation Detachments, were the last of the LSVs to redeploy from Kuwait back to the U.S. in support of the Army's watercraft modernization strategy.

"These two U.S. Army watercraft units provide a significant capability for supporting Army and Joint Forces in achieving operational reach, freedom of action, and prolonged endurance," said Maj. Gen. John Sullivan, deputy commanding general - support, USARCENT. "Over the past two decades, the 411th and 335th Transportation Detachments have significantly enhanced U.S. Army Central's expeditionary capabilities by deploying forces, distributing personnel and materiel, sustaining forces for extended durations, and retrograding materiel for CENTCOM. We are all extremely proud of the tremendous dedication and superb accomplishments of our professional Army Mariners!"

Since 1998, multiple LSVs and crews have served in the CENTCOM area of operations, providing sustainment support within the Persian Gulf. During that time, the manning and direction of the vessels has been a combined effort with various Army commands and components.



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The 7th Transportation Brigade (Expeditionary) continuously provided rotational crews for the LSVs with the assistance of the U.S. Army Reserve and U.S. Army Pacific. The vast majority of Army Mariners have deployed to the CENTCOM area, many of whom have multiple deployments to the Persian Gulf.

The 1st Theater Sustainment Command, which provides mission command and operational-level sustainment support to Army, Joint, Interagency and Multinational Forces in the CENTCOM theater, provided oversight and direction for the LSVs' support to sustainment operations since assuming the mission in 2006.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mike Tolsma, sea mobility officer in charge, 1st TSC, the Army watercraft have played an integral role in sustainment operations in theater. They provided a critical capability to commanders during training exercises and operations throughout the Persian Gulf.

“The flexibility and versatility of these strategic assets have helped build the great relationships we have with our joint and strategic partners supporting operations and training,” Tolsma said. “The unique capabilities of organic platforms such as these gave commanders a flexibility not normally seen in the logistics field.”

In the past nine years alone, the LSVs 5 and 6 sailed more than 150,000 nautical miles and moved over 200,000 short tons of rolling stock and containerized cargo. They provided support to Operations Native Fury 12', 14', and 16', and Eager Lion. As well as, provided support to USARCENT and CENTCOM throughout almost every Coalition and theater security cooperation operation, including Operations Inherent Resolve and Spartan Shield.

Their most recent support includes: Operation Native Fury in March 2020, participating in the Joint Logistics-Over-the-Shore exercise in the United Arab Emirates; and the repositioning of critical hospital equipment to support COVID-19 contingency operations.



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The LSVs began their return to the U.S. July 10. The return voyage was also a joint effort. The U.S. Navy provided escorts from the 5th, 6th, and 2nd Fleets as the vessels traversed the 10k nautical miles from Kuwait to Joint Base Langley-Eustis; and the 7th TB(X) provided technical expertise to the 1st TSC on watercraft operations, as well as multiple crew members for the sail back to the U.S.

“We have closely monitored the voyage providing support whenever possible,” said Col. Timothy Zetterwall, commander, 7th TB(X). “We look forward to welcoming the crews and their vessels back home.”

The LSVs and their crews will go through post-deployment activities and begin preparation for follow-on missions as the Army transforms watercraft operations across the force to ensure greater readiness and a more strategically available force.

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*(The 1st Theater Sustainment Command is an Army two-star command based at Fort Knox, Ky. with a forward headquarters at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The 1<sup>st</sup> TSC provides command and control of Army deployment and sustainment operations conducted in support of joint and multinational operations across the range of military operations. Since 2006, The 1<sup>st</sup> TSC has been perpetually deployed to the U.S. Army Central Command's (USARCENT) and provides and manages sustainment operations at bases in Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, and Afghanistan. For more information, contact the 1st TSC Public Affairs Office at 502-626-8665 and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#))*