

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Massive U.S. Warship Anchors Off St. Croix for Rest and Recuperation Visit

The USS Iwo Jima, part of the U.S. Southern Command's fleet, returned to the territory for its second stop in just over a month, bringing thousands of personnel to Frederiksted and providing a short-term economic lift to local businesses.

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The USS Iwo Jima, part of the U.S. Southern Command's fleet. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

FREDERIKSTED — The U.S. Navy's amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima arrived at the Ann E. Abramson Marine Facility in Frederiksted on Thursday, marking its second

visit to the territory in just over a month. The ship, which first moored at the Austin “Babe” Monsanto Marine Terminal in Crown Bay on October 3, is now anchored off St. Croix for several days of Rest and Recuperation (R&R).

Carrying roughly 3,700 sailors, Marines, and contractors, according to officials, the Iwo Jima’s presence is once again turning heads along the waterfront. Visitors gathered early Thursday to watch as the 844-foot vessel, accompanied by tugboats, eased alongside the Frederiksted Pier—a striking sight against the backdrop of the town’s historic waterfront.

The Iwo Jima is part of a broader U.S. military buildup in the Caribbean Sea off the coast of Venezuela, a deployment that includes other major naval assets under U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). While officials describe the St. Croix stop as a routine R&R visit, the warship’s size and mission profile underscore the increased tempo of U.S. operations across the region.

With the Iwo Jima’s crew expected to remain through Monday, November 10, Frederiksted is already buzzing with anticipation of a weekend of activity that will extend from the pier to the west end beaches, bringing additional commerce into the town.