


Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group Returns from Combat Deployment

 NORFOLK, Va. (July 14, 2024) The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) returns to Naval Station Norfolk, July 14, 2024, concluding a nine-month deployment to the Atlantic. (U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 Hunter Day)

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NORFOLK, Va. – The Dwight D. Eisenhower (IKE) Carrier Strike Group (CSG) returned to Norfolk, after a historic nine-month combat deployment to U.S. 5th Fleet, July 14, 2024.

The strike group – comprised of the nine squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 3, Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS

Philippine Sea (CG 58), and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Gravely (DDG 107) and USS Mason (DDG 87) of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 22 – engaged in combat operations in the Middle East region from Nov. 2023 to June 2024.

“We provide options to our nation’s decision makers. Our job is to preserve the peace, respond in crisis, and if necessary, fight and win decisively, and you delivered on all of those objectives,” said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti. “You had a mission and you did it every day with purpose and perseverance.”

When Houthi capabilities threatened innocent merchant traffic in critical waterways, CVW-3 collaborated with U.S. Air Force assets and coalition partners to launch seven pre-planned, dedicated strikes into Iranian-backed, Houthi-controlled territories in Yemen. The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Laboon (DDG 58) and USS Carney (DDG 64) augmented the strike group in the U.S. 5th Fleet operating area, launching Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAMs) into Yemen from the Red Sea to support the strikes.

“When called upon, the force brought the fight to the Houthis in their front yard, linking airpower and dynamic and self-defense strikes. These acts reduced the risk to shipping and also reinforced our nation’s commitment to maritime security,” said Vice Adm. George Wikoff, commander, U.S. 5th Fleet. “The currency used to fund this important mission was incredible focus, resiliency and professionalism of the sailors of the IKE Carrier Strike Group over eight months...this is the Navy’s finest moments since World War II.”

Beyond self-defensive strikes into Yemen, IKECSG units engaged dozens of one-way attack uncrewed aerial vehicles, uncrewed surface vehicles (USVs), and uncrewed underwater vehicles, earning awards including the Combat Action Ribbon and Navy Unit Commendation award. Several aviators were also awarded

personal medals for their exemplary actions against the December 31, January 9, and subsequent Houthi attacks on IKECSG units. At sea, Philippine Sea and Gravelly successfully escorted over 28 high-value, vulnerable units conducting innocent passage through the Strait of Hormuz, Gulfs of Oman and Aden, Bab al-Mandeb Strait, and through the Red Sea.

In total, IKECSG warships launched 155 standard missiles, and 135 TLAMs from their vertical launch system across self-defense and pre-planned strikes. IKECSG aircraft expended nearly 60 air-to-air missiles and released 420 air-to-surface weapons.

The Houthi targets in Yemen posed an immediate threat to U.S., coalition, and merchant shipping, and these strikes were designed to degrade Houthi offensive capabilities across more than 460 pre-planned, dynamic, and self-defense targets.

These threats damaged many civilian vessels, and IKECSG warships answered their distress calls. Laboon rescued stranded civilians in the Red Sea and returned them to the regional coast guard. Philippine Sea and its embarked detachment of MH-60R helicopters from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 74 rescued 24 civilian mariners in distress after a USV struck the M/V Tutor in the southern Red Sea.

For nine months, the units within IKECSG sustained operations with minimal port calls thanks to their seamless integration with Military Sealift Command (MSC). The Supply-class fast combat ship USNS Supply (T-AOE 6) deployed as a part of the IKECSG. Also supporting logistics in the Red Sea were the Henry J. Kaiser class USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196), and the Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship USNS Alan Shepard (T-AKE 3). Together with the carrier, they enabled all strike group operations, logistics support, command and control structure, and essential medical resources.

The Sailors of IKECSG demonstrated unparalleled resiliency, supported by the embarked Deployment Resiliency Team who worked tirelessly to build connections between Sailors, families, and friends. The team included a Deployed Resiliency Counselor, two psychologists, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, an Embedded Integrated Prevention Coordinator, seven Chaplains, and a command facility dog named Demo. As IKECSG returns home, Return and Reunion teams are embarked to offer Sailors workshops and one-on-one counseling designed to help them ease back into reuniting with loved ones at home.

“What a wonderful day,” said Rear Adm. Kavon Hakimzadeh, Commander, CSG-2, IKECSG, speaking on the return of IKECSG. “These Sailors are surrounded by their loved ones after a long deployment. Every single one of them demonstrated a level of courage and resiliency that we can all be proud of. I am so proud to be part of this Navy team, and I am grateful to everyone who put in the time and effort to make this a great homecoming!”

The units departed their homeports of Norfolk and Oceana, Virginia, Mayport, Florida, and Whidbey Island, Washington, on Oct. 13 & 14 for the scheduled deployment. Now back home, IKECSG Sailors will get opportunities for downtime to rest and recuperate.

Squadrons of Carrier Air Wing 3 include the “Gunslingers” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 105, the “Fighting Swordsmen” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 32, the “Rampagers” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 83, the “Wildcats” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 131, the “Screwtops” of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 123, the “Zappers” of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 130, the “Dusty Dogs” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 7, the “Swamp Foxes” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 74 and the “Rawhides” of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40.

For more information about the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group, head to Facebook (/CSGTwo & /TheCVN69); Instagram (@CarrierStrikeGroupTwo & @TheCVN69); LinkedIn (Carrier-Strike-Group-TWO). For inquiries, email pao@cvn69.navy.mil.