

HSM-79 Establishes New Detachment in Rota, Spain

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain – Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 79 established a new detachment stationed at Naval Station Rota, Spain, June 16, 2022, Petty Officer 3rd Class Devin Randol said in a release.

Rear Adm. John F. Meier, Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic, attended the ceremony along with Cmdr. Brett Elko, the commanding officer of HSM-79, and Cmdr. Nikolas Rongers, HSM-79's executive officer.

“The establishment of HSM-79's European presence exemplifies our commitment to our allies and partners and provides ready naval helicopter forces to support our collective defense in a vital region of the world,” Meier said. “My charge to all of you is to sustain and strengthen deterrence, while being prepared to prevail in conflict if necessary. I have the utmost confidence in this detachment's success.”

This new detachment marks the first time an HSM squadron has been stationed at Naval Station Rota. The “Griffins” operate the MH-60R helicopter, capable of conducting various missions including antisubmarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, vertical replenishment, search and rescue, humanitarian relief and medical evacuation operations.

The HSM squadron will augment Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe, providing support to FDNF-E guided-missile destroyers stationed in Rota. The helicopter enhances the ships' capabilities by increasing range and mobility for anti-submarine warfare and search and rescue, while providing increased logistics and medivac capability, enabling allied ships to maintain at-sea operations.

The FDNF-E destroyer force, commanded by Commander, Task Force 65 and Destroyer Squadron 60, includes USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51), USS Porter (DDG 78), USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), USS Ross (DDG 71) and USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117).

The squadron adopted its name from two decommissioned squadrons that focused on aircraft carrier-based anti-submarine warfare: Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) 9 "Sea Griffins" and the Sea Control Squadron (VS) 38 "Red Griffins."

The "Griffins" have continued their legacy since 2016.