

USS Arleigh Burke Completes Fourth FDNF-E Patrol



NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain (May 29, 2024) Sailors man the rail as the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) returns to Naval Station Rota, May 29, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Courtney Pollock)

By Ensign Susanna Gaither, June 14, 2024

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) returned to Naval Station Rota, Spain from its fourth Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) patrol, May 29, 2024.

The ship departed Rota for its fourth patrol in November 2023, after completing a comprehensive Surface Incremental Availability (SIA). During the SIA, \$17.5 million worth of repairs, alterations, and installations were performed to the ship's engineering, weapons and combat systems.

Arleigh Burke kicked off Patrol Four by completing her Mobility-Engineering (MOB-E) certification in the Bay of Cadiz. During MOB-E, the ship was a key participant in 2023 European Air-Missile Defense Exercise (EAMDEX), a joint Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) exercise incorporating the United States Air Force, Army, and Space Force together with Aegis Ashore Poland and Romania and NATO allies.

After EAMDEX, in late November, the ship transited east through the Strait of Gibraltar from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Arleigh Burke joined the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (CSG), which consisted of USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 2, Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60), and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Ramage (DDG 61), USS McFaul (DDG 74), and USS

Thomas Hudner (DDG 116). While part of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (GRFCSG), Arleigh Burke served as horizon reference unit and air defense picket, participated in flight operations, and conducted fleet level tactical exercises.

After completing its integration with the GRFCSG, Arleigh Burke arrived back in Rota Dec. 21, 2023 for an inter-patrol Training and Maintenance Availability (TRAV). Once complete with the TRAV work, the ship's crew departed Rota, Spain a final time, Jan. 5, 2024, operating in the eastern Mediterranean Sea for the remainder of the patrol.

On arrival to the eastern Mediterranean Sea, Arleigh Burke joined the Bataan Amphibious Readiness Group (BATARG). BATARG consisted of the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19), and the Harpers Ferry-class dock landing ship USS Carter Hall (LSD 50). Embarked commands include the Marines of 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Amphibious Squadron 8, Fleet Surgical Team 8, Tactical Air Control Squadron 21, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 26, Assault Craft Unit 4, and Beach Master Unit 2.

While attached to the BATARG, Arleigh Burke hosted reporters from major media outlets including ABC, CBS, and BBC, Jan. 19, 2024, demonstrating the capability and flexibility of the U.S. Navy and the FDNF-E force.

Following her duties with the ARG, Arleigh Burke participated in NATO exercise Dynamic Manta. Dynamic Manta is an annual anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare exercise designed

to enhance interoperability and proficiency between Allied nations. Ships, submarines, and aircraft from Canada, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and the U.K. joined forces over two weeks to enhance partnerships while in an ASW environment.

Following Dynamic Manta, Arleigh Burke again bolstered U.S.,

Allied and partner interests in the Mediterranean Sea. In the early morning hours of April 14, Arleigh Burke and USS Carney (DDG 64) supported U.S. Central Command in destroying multiple one-way attack UAVs and ballistic missiles launched toward Israel from Iran and Iranian proxy groups.

Following operations in defense of Israel, the ship conducted multiple escort operations in support of humanitarian efforts in Gaza.

Throughout their fourth patrol, the ship's crew made six port visits to Souda Bay, Greece. The ship also made one port call each to the Cypriot ports of Limassol and Larnaca. In Larnaca, the ship hosted U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Julie Fisher and Vice Adm. Thomas Ishee, Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet, in addition to local dignitaries and senior military officials.

After extending on patrol to support mission requirements, Arleigh Burke returned to port May 29, 2024. Throughout the patrol, Arleigh Burke Sailors earned 30 Enlisted Warfare Specialist pins, 11 Surface Warfare Officer pins, and one Surface Warfare Supply Corps pin.

Arleigh Burke is one of four Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDFNF-E) destroyers assigned to Commander Task Force 65 as part of the U.S. Navy's support to NATO's Integrated Air Missile Defense (IAMD) architecture. These FDFNF-E ships demonstrates the U.S. Navy's flexibility to operate throughout Europe and Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Arctic Circle, supporting security and stability in the maritime domain.

For over 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-U.S. Naval Forces Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S.

Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.