

# USS Cole Returns from Deployment to 5th and 6th Fleets



NORFOLK, Va. (December 23, 2024) Chief Gunner's Mate Tyler Kaltenberg, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67), greets family on the pier after returning from deployment. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Nathan T. Beard)

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NORFOLK, Va. - The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) returned to Naval Station Norfolk, Dec. 23, after being deployed for more than seven months to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe – Africa and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command areas of operation.

Cole deployed for 224 days to the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea,

Gulf of Aden and Arabian Gulf, providing deterrence and defense to U.S. Allies and partners.

The ship served as an air defense unit for strike group forces in the Red Sea and worked closely with Allies and partners during a variety of missions, contributing to stability in the region.

“I am proud of the determined warriors of Cole for continuing this ship’s legacy of outstanding service during a challenging combat deployment,” said Cmdr. Matt Faulkenberry, Commanding Officer of USS Cole. “Cole demonstrated professionalism and lethality across all domains.”

Cole supported ballistic missile operations in the Levant region, firing interceptors alongside USS Bulkeley on Oct. 1. Additionally, Cole was engaged in combat operations in the Red Sea, earning a star on the ship’s Combat Action Ribbon.

U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse comprises 20 countries and includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb at the southern tip of Yemen.

NAVEUR-NAVAF, headquartered in Naples, Italy, 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.