

USS Donald Cook Returns to Mayport after Surge Deployment



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) arrives at Naval Station Norfolk, April 13. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jacob Milham*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) returned to Naval Station Mayport following a three-month deployment, April 24, the U.S. 2nd Fleet said in an April 25 release.

Donald Cook departed Naval Station Mayport in January on a short-notice deployment to operate with NATO Allies and partners in the Eastern Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic Sea.

The crew spent more than 70 days at sea and conducted three port visits in support of maritime security partnerships in Copenhagen, Denmark; Rostock, Germany; and the Isle of Portland, England.

“Visiting other countries as a representative of the United States is surreal,” said Fire Controlman (Aegis) 2nd Class Brady Itkin. “People told us how nice Americans are everywhere we went, and we were shown amazing hospitality by the civilians of other NATO countries. There’s no better feeling than making a positive impact on other people’s perspective of America.”

The ship received warfare excellence awards in communications, engineering and ship safety while underway.

“The crew put in a lot of hard work over the past year,” said

Ensign Benjamin Steen, electronic warfare officer aboard Donald Cook. "This recognition is definitely a testament to all of our efforts."

While deployed, Donald Cook participated in NATO Exercise Dynamic Guard 2022 in the North Sea. Dynamic Guard, hosted by Norway, is a biannual, multinational electronic warfare exercise series designed to provide tactical training for the NATO Response Force and NATO national units. For the first time in three years, two U.S. vessels participated to further enhance the ongoing cooperation, strength and interoperability between NATO Allies.

"The crew demonstrated their tenacity by executing multinational exercises and national tasking on short notice during this surge deployment," said Cmdr. Matt Curnen, commanding officer of Donald Cook. "Our operations over the past few months have demonstrated our proficiency and capability as well as reaffirming our commitment to the NATO Alliance. I could not be more proud of the resiliency and professionalism the crew displayed during this deployment."

Donald Cook is scheduled to start a major maintenance availability, its first since returning from their former homeport of Rota, Spain, in June.