

USS O’Kane Returns Home from Deployment



The guided-missile destroyer USS O’Kane (DDG 77) arrives returns to its homeport in San Diego. O’Kane, a part of the Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group, returned to Naval Base San Diego Feb. 6, following an independent deployment to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleets in support of national tasking and to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kevin C. Leitner*

SAN DIEGO – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS O’Kane (DDG 77) returned home to Naval Base San Diego on Feb. 6, completing an eight-month independent deployment to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operation, said U.S. 3rd Fleet public affairs.

O’Kane deployed in June 2021 in support of national tasking, serving as the ballistic missile defense commander for Carrier Strike Group 1 while operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet and the primary ballistic missile defense asset while in the U.S. 5th Fleet.

The Sailors aboard USS O’Kane lead the way in demonstrating resiliency and dedication to support the mission and each other,” said Cmdr. Michelle R. Fontenot, O’Kane’s commanding officer. “As an independent deployer serving in both the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleets, O’Kane met each mission with success.”

While operating in U.S. 5th Fleet, O’Kane escorted multiple high-value units through 30 strait transits, including the Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal. O’Kane participated in several high-end exercises such as maritime security operations in support of the International Maritime Security Coalition, collaborating with seven partner nations for security and the free flow of commerce.

O'Kane also participated in Indigo Defender, a bilateral maritime exercise between Saudi naval forces and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. In addition, O'Kane conducted maritime interdiction operations; board, search, and seizure operations; and operated alongside international navies, including the Egyptian naval force, Royal Saudi navy and the Indian navy.

Following Israel's transition from the U.S. European Command theater to U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in September, O'Kane Sailors were able to enjoy a visit to Haifa, further strengthening the U.S. partnership with Israel.

O'Kane served as a key facilitator in a highly successful seizure of illicit cargo from a stateless fishing vessel during a flag verification boarding in accordance with customary international law in the North Arabian Sea on Dec. 20. O'Kane worked alongside the Cyclone-class coastal patrol ships USS Tempest (PC 2), USS Typhoon (PC 5), and the U.S. Coast Guard Advanced Interdiction Team to seize 1,400 AK-47s and 226,000 rounds of ammunition.

Upon completion of the missions in U.S. 5th Fleet, O'Kane entered U.S. 7th Fleet and took part in expeditionary strike force operations with the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) and the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70). The U.S. force of more than nine ships conducted underway replenishments, including vertical and connected replenishments. O'Kane executed anti-submarine warfare operations while escorting high-value assets through the South China Sea.

"O'Kane's tireless commitment and unparalleled performance are above reproach. I am very proud of every O'Kane Sailor and what we have accomplished as a team," said Fontenot. "O'Kane Sailors represent the Navy's fighting spirit and it is an honor to serve them as their commanding officer."