

USS Porter Completes Service with Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) departs Naval Station Rota, Spain, to begin its homeport shift to Norfolk, Virginia, Sept. 28, 2022. *U.S. NAVY NAVAL STATION ROTA*, Spain – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) departed Naval Station Rota, Spain, on Sept. 28, 2022, marking the end of its time as a Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) destroyer, said Lt. j.g. Anna M. Kukelhan of Commander, Naval Forces Europe/Africa, in an Oct. 5 release.

Porter has been stationed in Rota, Spain for seven years, initially joining USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) and USS Ross (DDG 71) on April 30, 2015 as the third FDNF-E destroyer assigned to Destroyer Squadron 60 and Commander, Task Force (CTF) 65, which operates under command and control of U.S. Sixth Fleet in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa area of operations.

“Porter’s time in Sixth Fleet was an invaluable experience for all. The crew and I depart Rota, Spain at the highest state of readiness thanks to the many operations and exercises conducted with our NATO allies and partners,” said Cmdr. Christopher Petro, Porter’s commanding officer. “We are extremely grateful for personal and professional development provided by the opportunities and challenges encountered as a member of Forward Deployed Naval Forces Europe.”

Porter conducted 11 patrols in the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations, finishing her most recent patrol in July 2022. Throughout these patrols, Porter sailed through the Mediterranean Sea, Baltic Sea, Black Sea and High North. The ship has also crossed the Atlantic three times, building

interoperability with NATO allies and partners throughout the region.

Porter worked with the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) and the French Charles de Gaulle Carrier Strike Groups, although most of its time underway was independently deployed. Porter's patrols focused on a wide variety of mission areas, including surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, anti-air warfare and strike warfare, dedicated to ensuring interoperability with U.S. allies and offering a stable presence in the region.

During its seven years with the FDNF-E force, Porter participated in many joint operations with allies and other branches of service. Some of the notable exercises the ship participated in include FOST, BALTOPS, Atlas Handshake, Joint Warrior, Sea Breeze, Polaris and Atlantic Resolve.

In April 2017, Porter launched 59 Tomahawk missiles into Al-Shayrat Air Base, Syria, in coordination with USS Ross (DDG 71), in response to the Syrian government's chemical attacks on civilians during the Syrian civil war.

Porter will be replaced on the FDNF-E force by USS Bulkeley (DDG 84), the latest destroyer to arrive to Rota, Spain. USS Bulkeley was commissioned in December of 2001, and is named for Vice Admiral John D. Bulkeley.

With Porter's departure, all four ships originally assigned to CTF 65 have been replaced. With all homeport shifts now completed, the new FDNF-E ships are the USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51), USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117) and the USS Bulkeley (DDG 84). The new members of the FDNF-E force will continue the exemplary work accomplished by the first assigned destroyers, including Porter.

"Throughout her seven years patrolling Sixth Fleet, Porter Sailors consistently demonstrated our capabilities and integration with joint and combined forces. I am extremely

proud of the work USS Porter accomplished here and how we have furthered our alliances and partnerships," said Cmdr. Joseph Hamilton, Porter's executive officer, "It has been a privilege to serve at the forefront of critical operations in the FDNF-E environment, and I am humbled to have served with the best crew in the Navy."

Porter is named for Commodore David Porter, and his son, Adm. David Dixon Porter, and is the fifth ship to bear his name. Commodore David Porter served in the Quasi War, First Barbary War, War of 1812 and in the West Indies. He took command of numerous ships, including the USS Constitution. He is known for first originating the saying, "Free Trade and Sailors Rights."

Adm. David Dixon Porter was the second U.S. Navy Officer to achieve the rank of Admiral, largely due to his service during the Civil War, where he played a vital role in the Battle of New Orleans and the Battle of Vicksburg. He also led the assault on Fort Fisher, the final significant naval contribution of the war. His service began with his time in the Mexican-American War and ended with his tenure as Superintendent of the Naval Academy, where he enacted a significant series of reforms, laying the groundwork for their current mission.

USS Porter is scheduled to return to its former homeport of Norfolk, Virginia, and will now continue to serve through an assignment to Destroyer Squadron 22.

Four U.S. Navy destroyers are based in Rota, Spain and are assigned to Commander, Task Force 65 in support of NATO's Integrated Air Missile Defense architecture. These FDNF-E ships have the flexibility to operate throughout the waters of Europe and Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Arctic Circle, demonstrating their mastery of the maritime domain.