Ike Carrier Strike Group Returns From Deployment



The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and its carrier strike group returned home to Norfolk Naval Station on Aug. 9 after seven months operating in 5th and 6th Fleets. U.S. NAVY

NORFOLK, Va. – The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower carrier strike group returned home to Norfolk Naval Station on Aug. 9 after seven months operating in 5th and 6th Fleet, commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet, said in a release.

Returning ships include the Nimitz-class carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS San Jacinto. More than 1,800 Navy aviators from nine squadrons from Carrier Air Wing Three 3 returned Aug. 6-7 to their home bases in Naval Air Station Oceana, Norfolk Naval Station, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, and Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida.

Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf, Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS James E. Williams and USS Truxtun are scheduled to return to Norfolk on Aug. 10. USS Stout remains on deployment and will return to Norfolk at a future date.

Dwight D. Eisenhower carrier strike group ships left Norfolk on Jan. 17 for the strike group's composite training unit exercise and follow-on deployment.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe, the Ike strike group continued operations to maintain maritime stability and security and ensure access, deter aggression, and defend U.S., allied and partner interests.

"Words cannot express the admiration I have for each and every

Sailor onboard. These young men and women were thrust into a situation no one could have predicted and they responded as only Navy Sailors can – they adapted and overcame the adversity. I witnessed their excellence day in and day out as they accomplished repairs never before attempted at sea," said Capt. Kyle Higgins, Ike's commanding officer.

Sailors assigned to the Eisenhower and San Jacinto transited to the equator and participated in a crossing-the-line ceremony, becoming the Navy's first "Iron Shellbacks," with more than 100 days at sea, on May 14. Ike petitioned Naval History and Heritage Command to commemorate this feat in conjunction with crossing the equator as a new title: "Iron Shellback."

While in U.S. 5th Fleet, Vella Gulf, James E. Williams, Stout and Truxtun participated in Operation Sentinel, providing freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce in and out of the heavily transited Strait of Hormuz and Strait of Bab el Mandeb.

Carrier Air Wing 3 supported U.S. Central Command with 166 sorties and 1,135 flight hours in support Operation Freedom's Sentinel and 112 sorties and 492 flight hours in support of Strait of Hormuz transits and deliberate presence patrols. During deployment, CVW-3 completed 10,466 rotary and fixed wing sorties, 7,751 traps with more than 21,995 mishap-free flight hours.