

Lessons Learned From Teddy Roosevelt Outbreak Help Ease COVID-19 Impact on USS Kidd



A Sailor salutes the national ensign as he disembarks the USS Kidd at Naval Base San Diego on April 28 as part of the Navy's response to the COVID-19 outbreak on board the guided-missile destroyer. While in San Diego, the Navy will provide medical care for the crew and clean and disinfect the Kidd. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alex Corona

ARLINGTON, Va. – The safe return to port of the guided-missile destroyer USS Kidd – with none of its crew needing hospitalization after a COVID-19 outbreak at sea – is due largely to lessons learned from the spread of the virus more than a month ago aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt that turned deadly, according to a Defense Department spokesman.

The Arleigh-Burke class destroyer Kidd was participating in counter-narcotics operations in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility in the Pacific Ocean when several of its Sailors began exhibiting flu-like symptoms in late April.

[See: Navy Opens Deeper Inquiry Into Theodore Roosevelt; Move Delays Decision on Captain's Reinstatement](#)

[See: A Timeline From the First Month of the Outbreak in the Sea Services](#)

[See: Hospital Ship Comfort Departs NYC, Prepared for Future COVID-19 Response](#)

One Sailor aboard the Kidd was evacuated to the U.S. mainland for testing on April 22 after experiencing shortness of breath. The commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet redirected the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island – which is equipped

with an intensive care unit, ventilators and additional testing capability – to rendezvous with the Kidd. Even before that, an eight-member medical team flew out to the Kidd on a helicopter and began testing the crew for symptoms of the virus. As of April 25, 33 Sailors aboard the Kidd had tested positive for it.

“The effort by the captain and the crew of the Kidd, the Makin Island and the rest of the medical team should be lauded for what they did and how they were able to get that ship back to port and how they were able to get the crew off,” Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman told a press briefing on May 1. “Right now, there’s a large number of sick but, fortunately, none are hospitalized, and we’re going to continue to hope that everybody recovers quickly.”



The USS Kidd arrives in San Diego on April 28. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alex Millar

The Kidd reached San Diego, not its homeport, on April 28. After testing 100% of the more than 300 crew members, the U.S. Navy said 78 active COVID-19 cases were detected. None of the Kidd’s crew is hospitalized, according to the Navy.

All crew members will complete at least 14 days in quarantine or isolation and must achieve two negative tests for the virus before returning to the ship. Medical professionals, chaplains, a resiliency counselor and a psychologist are supporting the Sailors in isolation and quarantine.

While in San Diego, the USS Kidd will undergo a deep cleaning that balances decontamination with preventing damage to the ship’s systems. It is not known how COVID-19 made its way onto the destroyer.

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Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman

“Fortunately, we are able to take many of the lessons learned from the Theodore Roosevelt and apply them to the Kidd so that we were able to address the outbreak – obviously, a very different ship, a different size – but was able to address it rapidly in a way that we were able to get the ship to port,” Hoffman said.

The Theodore Roosevelt, which also was at sea when COVID-19 broke out, is still sidelined in Guam, more than a month after the first Sailors there were diagnosed.

As case numbers spiked, the carrier’s captain sent a lengthy e-mail, which was leaked to a newspaper, complaining that the evacuation of the 4,000-plus Sailors of the Roosevelt was occurring too slowly, endangering the crew. This led then-acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly to relieve the skipper, Capt. Brett Crozier, of his command. The ensuing controversy and a speech highly critical of Crozier that Modly delivered a few days later to the Roosevelt’s crew sparked Modly’s resignation on April 7.

The Roosevelt’s entire crew has been tested for COVID-19, the Navy said in its May 1 update. There are 1,102 active cases left from the carrier – an increase due to exit testing of Sailors who are asymptomatic, the Navy said, adding that 53 Sailors have recovered after completing at least 14 days in isolation and clearing two successive tests with negative results.

Three Sailors are being treated in U.S. Naval Hospital Guam for COVID-19 symptoms. None of those crew members are in the intensive care unit. A Roosevelt Sailor did die in mid-April from COVID-19 complications.



Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Shane Miller (left) and Hospital

Corpsman 2nd Class Austin Kelly draw blood for COVID-19 testing from a Sailor assigned to the USS Kidd after its arrival in San Diego on April 28. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alex Corona