

# USS Arleigh Burke Prepares for Homeport Shift to Rota



Sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) man the rails as they get underway from Naval Station Norfolk Mar. 26. Arleigh Burke will replace USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) as one of four forward deployed naval forces (FDFN) located in Spain. Arleigh Burke will join USS Ross (DDG 71), USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), and USS Porter (DDG 78) as the newest member of FDFN Rota. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kris R. Lindstrom*

NORFOLK, Va. – The guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) departed from Naval Station Norfolk, Mar. 26, commencing the ship's homeport shift to Rota, Spain, the U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs said in a March 27 release.

Arleigh Burke will replace USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) as one of four forward-deployed naval forces (FDFN) located in Spain. The ship is named after U.S. Navy Admiral Arleigh Burke

(1901-1996) who distinguished himself during World War II and the Korean War, and served as chief of naval operations during the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. Arleigh Burke, the lead ship of its class of Aegis-equipped guided-missile destroyers, was commissioned in Burke's honor in 1991. The honor of naming a vessel after a living figure had only been bestowed four times since 1861.

"As one of the most technologically advanced destroyers in the entire United States Navy, we are excited to provide additional capability to 6th Fleet operations," said Cmdr. Patrick Chapman, commanding officer, USS Arleigh Burke. "However, even stronger than the technology we have been outfitted with is the strength of our crew. Every day we train to be the most effective crew possible, one that is ready for sustained forward presence in the 6th Fleet Area of Operations."

Arleigh Burke was the first U.S. Navy destroyer in the world equipped with the Aegis Weapons Systems and departs for 6th Fleet with the latest Aegis baseline nine upgrades. This higher capability ship is effective in high-threat areas conducting anti-air, antisubmarine, anti-surface, and strike operations.

To prepare for the homeport shift, Arleigh Burke took part in the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group's Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX). COMPTUEX is designed to fully integrate a strike group as a cohesive, multi-mission fighting force, and test the group's ability to carry out sustained combat operations from the sea. Upon completion of COMPTUEX, Arleigh Burke is certified and ready to execute the full spectrum of maritime operations in any theater.

"I am immensely proud of the perseverance of our crew, and of our families who have supported us through our arduous training cycle," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Jason

Waters. "Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the crew was able to remain healthy and continue with one of the most rigorous schedules I have experienced in my career. Arleigh Burke's crew and families have performed beyond all expectations. There is no doubt in my mind that we are ready for 6th Fleet."

In addition to certifying in support of naval operations worldwide, Arleigh Burke Sailors and their families have been focused on preparing for the move to Spain. Arleigh Burke's leadership team traveled from Norfolk to Naval Station Rota to participate in educational briefings and question-and-answer sessions concerning the homeport shift process and life in Spain. Naval Station Rota also supported virtual meetings for Norfolk crewmembers and their families to learn about the complicated homeport shift process.

The U.S. Navy will continue to meet combatant commander requirements around the world, but in order to do so, protective steps must be taken to ensure the health and safety of Sailors and their families from exposure to COVID-19.

Arleigh Burke will join USS Ross (DDG 71), USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), and USS Porter (DDG 78) as the newest member of FDNF Rota, replacing USS Donald Cook (DDG 75). Donald Cook will return to her new home at Naval Station Mayport, whereas she was previously homeported at Naval Station Norfolk.