USS Laboon Returns Home from Combat Deployment



Photo By Chief Petty Officer Matthew Jackson | 240901-N-MJ491-1023 NORFOLK, Va. (September 1, 2024) Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Laboon (DDG 58), is guided by a tugboat during it's return to homeport. Laboon, assigned to Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (IKE CSG), returned to its homeport on Naval Station Norfolk on September 1 following a deployment to the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operations. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Matthew N. Jackson)
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NORFOLK, Virginia – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Laboon (DDG 58) returned to Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, from an independent deployment to the U.S. 2nd, 5th, and 6th fleet areas of operation, Sept. 1.

Laboon deployed for 279 days to the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea,

Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea providing deterrence and defense to U.S. partners.

Rear Adm. Kavon Hakimzadeh, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 2, was on the pier to welcome home the crew of Laboon.

“We are honored to welcome back the men and women of USS Laboon who have proven their proficiency and resolve throughout a demanding deployment,” said Hakimzadeh. “From safeguarding critical maritime routes to deterring threats in volatile regions, Laboon’s crew has exemplified the very best of our Navy’s tradition of excellence. We are deeply proud of what they have accomplished, and we thank each Sailor and their families for their unwavering dedication to our nation’s security.”

While independently deployed, Laboon participated in the multi-national Operation Prosperity Guardian to protect international shipping lanes in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb, and Gulf of Aden. In support of freedom of navigation, Laboon and her crew countered multiple attacks carried out by Iranian-backed Houthi terrorists in the Red Sea.

“It has been a challenging nine month deployment to hostile waters, but this team demonstrated time and again just how capable our warships are and that we have the best trained most professional warfighters in the world ready to bring the fight to any enemy,” said Cmdr. Eric Blomberg, Laboon’s commanding officer.

Chief Petty Officer Rickey Gisclair attributes Laboon’s success to training and teamwork.

“This deployment really embodied why we train so hard and every Sailor stepping up to fulfill their role in a challenging environment,” said Gisclair.

While on deployment, a refrain heard frequently onboard was: “If we have to fight; we fight and we win!” Laboon is named for Pittsburgh, Pa. native John Francis Laboon who left to serve his country as a U.S. Naval officer. After attending Carnegie Technical Institute (now Carnegie Mellon University), he was commissioned at the Naval Academy and served as the communications officer, gunnery and torpedo officer and executive officer on USS Peto (SS 265), a Gato-class submarine in World War II. During a Western Pacific patrol, while under intense enemy fire, he rescued a downed pilot from heavily-mined waters and was awarded the Silver Star. Shortly after the war, he left the Navy only to be called back to duty as a Chaplain to become Father John Francis Laboon or “Father Jake.”

During their 5th Fleet operations, Laboon upheld the tradition of Father Jake, rescuing three mariners in distress in the Gulf of Aden who had been stranded adrift at sea for ten days.

U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse comprises of 20 countries and includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Bab al-Mandeb.

NAVEUR-NAVAF, headquartered in Naples, Italy, operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs

maritime forces ready to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic to ensure access, deter aggression, and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.

U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFFC) is responsible for manning, training, equipping and employing more than 125 ships, 1,000 aircraft, and 103,000 active duty service members and government employees, and providing combat-ready forces forward to numbered fleets and combatant commanders around the globe in support of U.S. national interests. USFFC also serves as the Navy's Service Component Commander to both U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Strategic Command, and providing naval forces in support of joint missions as Commander, Naval Forces Northern Command (NAVNORTH) and Commander, Naval Forces Strategic Command (NAVSTRAT). USFFC is the Strategic Command Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC STRAT), and executes Task Force Atlantic in coordination with U.S. Naval Forces Europe.

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