USS Mason Returns to Mayport From Combat Deployment



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By ENS Emily Moore, USS Mason Public Affairs, July 2, 2024

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mason (DDG 87) returned to Naval Station Mayport, July 2, 2024, after being deployed for more than eight months in the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command area of operations.

Mason was deployed for 263 days in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Mediterranean Sea, supporting freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce.

While deployed, Mason faced unprecedented attacks from the Houthi terrorist group based out of Yemen.

“I am extremely proud of this battle tested and battle proven crew who achieved unparalleled accomplishments while

deployed," said Cmdr. Justin B. Smith, Mason's commanding officer. "No matter the threat or challenge, they demonstrated an innate ability to sustain a high level of readiness for eight months by thinking on their feet and quickly reacting. As result of their abilities, they protected Mason's crew and exceeded all mission tasking throughout deployment."

While deployed, Mason intercepted multiple unmanned aerial vessels and anti-ship ballistic missiles targeting merchant vessels and coalition warships. In support of the freedom of navigation and worldwide commerce, Mason escorted and saved 26 merchant vessels as they transited through the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait.

On Nov. 26, 2023, Mason responded to a distress call in the Gulf of Aden where five suspected pirates overtook M/V Central Park. Once Mason arrived, the suspected pirates fled, and Mason's Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure team took custody of the suspected pirates and freed the crew stuck in the ship's citadel.

Continuing the global support of the free flow of commerce, the crew displayed proficient interoperability between coalition partners through Liaison Naval Officers, helicopter cross deck operations, ship maneuvering exercises, and coordinated engagements.

Mason was deployed as part of the Dwight D. Eisenhower (IKE) Carrier Strike Group (CSG). IKECSG operated in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operations to deepen strategic relationships with allies and partners, and to support maritime security and stability.

The strike group is commanded by CSG-2 and comprised of flagship Dwight D. Eisenhower, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 3 with its nine squadrons, USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 22 with its guided missile destroyers.