

USS Oscar Austin Completes Patrol with Newly Awarded Combat Action Ribbon



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NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain - The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79) returned to Naval Station Rota, Spain on Jun. 10, 2025 with a Unit Combat Action Ribbon following completion of her first Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) patrol in the U.S. Sixth Fleet and Fifth Fleet areas of operations.

Oscar Austin departed for Patrol One on Dec. 11, 2024, during which she sailed over 37,900 nautical miles supporting U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa. She operated as an independently deployed destroyer in the Mediterranean and in the Red Sea conducting combat operations with the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group.

“I’m honored to have assumed command of Oscar Austin during her first patrol as a forward deployed warship,” said Cmdr. David Nicolas, who took Command in May. “Having served previously as the ship’s executive officer, I feel immense pride in witnessing the growth and development of the crew in their preparation for and completion of Patrol One.”

Oscar Austin welcomed the New Year in the East Mediterranean by sailing alongside the Republic of Cyprus National Guard. Oscar Austin and the Republic of Cyprus offshore patrol vessel Commodore Andreas Ioannides (P61) completed events involving advanced signaling and maneuvering. The exercises reinforced partnerships with regional partners, highlighting the strategic importance in fostering multinational cooperation.

In April, Oscar Austin transited the Suez Canal into the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of operations with the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group. The ship provided air and missile defense, joining fellow Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109) and USS Stout (DDG 55), and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64).

In the Red Sea, Oscar Austin and the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group came under fire from various airborne threats. Sailors onboard Oscar Austin acted swiftly and professionally to defend the strike group, upholding freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

Capt. Alexander Mamikonian, Commodore of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 60, presented Nicolas and the Oscar Austin crew the distinguished award when they returned home.

“This was Oscar Austin’s maiden patrol as a Rota-based FDNF-E destroyer and her team performed exceptionally,” Mamikonian said. “As their Commodore, I was impressed by their professionalism, proficiency and self-sufficiency on a daily

basis. It was a pleasure watching them perform on patrol, but we're glad they're back home in Rota reunited with their loved ones."

Sailors wear the ribbon proudly around the ship: exclusive to units in the Department of the Navy demonstrating satisfactory performance under enemy fire.

Nicolas praised the crew for their skilled and courageous efforts during the patrol.

"Executing multiple missions across two theaters, Oscar Austin displayed the immense versatility of the Arleigh Burke class destroyer: from conducting ballistic missile defense in the eastern Mediterranean Sea to seamlessly integrating with the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group in the Red Sea. But overall, it was the crew's grit and resiliency that fueled the ship's success throughout the patrol."

After her time in the Red Sea, in May, Oscar Austin returned to the Eastern Mediterranean, postured to support America's commitment to NATO, defending Allies and working together to deter malign actors from escalating the war in Israel.

Beyond crew-wide accomplishments, the Sailors onboard Oscar Austin also fulfilled numerous individual milestones, including six naval officers who earned their Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) pins, 78 enlisted personnel who acquired their Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) pins, and 54 promotions of rank. While underway, Oscar Austin also saw 17 Sailors raise their right hands to reenlist in the Navy, reaffirming the command's commitment to a culture of excellence.

"This crew has demonstrated remarkable resilience and unwavering dedication throughout a period of significant change and demanding operations," said Cmdr. Gerald Sellars, the ship's Executive Officer. "From navigating the complexities of a homeport shift to successfully executing

deployments in both Fifth and Sixth Fleets, their teamwork and commitment have been instrumental in overcoming every challenge. The crew's ability to adapt and persevere ensures mission success and, most importantly, a safe return home to their families. It is an honor to serve alongside this team."

Upon their return home, Sailors manned the rails in their dress whites and newly-earned ribbons as the ship pulled into Pier 1 in Rota, Spain, marking the completion of its first FDNF-E patrol.

Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allies, international partners, and other U.S. government departments and agencies to advance U.S. national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa.