USS PORTER RETURNS FROM DEPLOYMENT



NORFOLK, Va. – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) returns to Naval Station Norfolk following a four-month deployment, June 16, 2023. Porter deployed to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) area of operations. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Anderson W. Branch)
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NORFOLK, Va. – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) returned to its homeport of Naval Station Norfolk, June 16, 2023, following a four-month deployment to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) area of operations.

Porter spent two months of its patrol in the Baltic Sea, participating in passing exercises and joint operations with NATO-Allied and partner navies from Lithuania, Poland,

Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Estonia.

“Over the last four months, Porter lived up to its nickname of ‘Freedom’s Champion’,” said Cmdr. Joe Hamilton, Porter’s commanding officer. “The crew was outstanding in every warfare area and truly set the standard. From presence operations in the Baltic Sea, to port visits in allied nations, to large-scale exercises with our Allied and partner nations, Porter demonstrated we’re ready to execute any mission, any time.”

Following its time in the Baltic Sea, Porter steamed to the North Atlantic Ocean to participate in exercise Formidable Shield 2023, a biennial integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) exercise, which included more than 20 ships and 35 aircraft; eight ground units consisting of radars, National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS), and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS); and nearly 4,000 personnel from across the Alliance.

During Formidable Shield 2023, Porter conducted two live-fire missile events from the UK Ministry of Defence’s Hebrides Range, successfully firing three Standard Missile-2 (SM-2) interceptor missiles and destroying all targets.

“The amount of preparation poured into an exercise like this is incredible, and the Porter crew performed superbly from laying the groundwork to executing missiles on target,” Hamilton said about Formidable Shield. “The opportunity to conduct live-fire missile exercises like this isn’t one we get every day, and we made the most of the opportunity.”

Throughout the deployment, the crew conducted scheduled port visits to Rostock, Germany; Funchal, Portugal; Klaipeda, Lithuania; Tallinn, Estonia; Kalundborg, Denmark; Gdynia, Poland; Kiel, Germany; Rota, Spain; and Faslane, Scotland. During these port visits, Porter Sailors were able to experience local cultures and forge bonds with their hosts. Porter also hosted a number of distinguished visitors during

its time in ports, including President of Estonia Alar Karis; U.S. Consul General Jason Chue, U.S. Consulate General in Hamburg, Germany; German Navy Rear Adm. Jürgen zur Mühlen, Commander, German Maritime Forces Staff, Director of Operations, and Deputy Fleet Commander, German Navy Headquarters; and U.S. Ambassador to Estonia George P. Kent.

“We’re always grateful for an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with NATO-Allied and partner nations,” said Hamilton. “Visits like these give the crew the opportunity to experience cultures, customs, and traditions that they may not have been able to otherwise.”

After arriving at Naval Station Norfolk, the crew was greeted by Rear Adm. Sean Bailey, commander of Carrier Strike Group 8 and Capt. Edward Pledger, deputy commander of Destroyer Squadron 22. Pledger presented a plaque recognizing Porter as the 2022 Destroyer Squadron 22 Battle Effectiveness award winner. The Battle “E” is presented to units whose crews consistently exhibit excellence in wartime capabilities and optimal mission readiness. Porter’s Battle ‘E’ is a result of a clean sweep of all CEAs for maritime warfare (Black ‘E’), engineering/survivability (Red ‘E’), command and control (Green ‘E’), safety (Yellow ‘E’), and health and wellness (Green ‘H’).

Porter’s deployment to the NAVEUR-NAVAF area of operations came months after a homeport shift from Naval Station Rota, Spain to Naval Station Norfolk in October 2022. Porter spent seven years in Spain as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe force, conducting eleven patrols in that time period. The patrols took Porter throughout the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations, including the Baltic, North, Norwegian, and Mediterranean Seas, as well as the Eastern Atlantic Ocean.

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 in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.