

USS RAMAGE RETURNS TO HOMEPORT FOLLOWING 6TH FLEET DEPLOYMENT



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NORFOLK, Va. – The Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS Ramage (DDG 61) – part of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12, Gerald R. Ford CSG returns to Norfolk, VA after a 7-month deployment to the US Naval Forces Europe area of operations, Dec. 03, 2023.

The Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group remains on deployment in the Eastern Mediterranean as part of the Pentagon's response to the Oct. 7th Hamas attacks on the Gaza strip. While abroad, the USS Ramage served as an air defense unit for the strike group off the coast of Israel, and closely monitored Russian Federation Navy units for signs of aggression.

A recent contract for the maintenance of Ramage was awarded to BAE systems in Jacksonville. The crew's early return to Norfolk provides an opportunity to prepare for an imminent homeport change to Mayport, Florida.

"I'm looking forward to Florida. It feels closer to home than any place I could be stationed," says Fire Controlman Third Class Tyler Allen Wade Dickey from Refugio, Texas. "This crew is the best team I've ever been a part of. There's isn't anything we can't accomplish together."

In 214 days, the crew of the Ramage accomplished 40 replenishments at sea, logged over 400 helicopter landings, sailed over 50,000 miles, and prepared over 190,000 meals.

While deployed with Carrier Strike Group 12, the Ramage crew conducted maritime security operations and engaged with allied and partner nations. In May, the crew of the Ramage was able to quickly replace critical acoustic equipment and celebrate the Battle of the Atlantic 80th Anniversary in Liverpool, UK. In June, members of the Ramage crew volunteered to clear debris from a public park and planted 100 decorative plants around the municipality of Bar, Montenegro. The July visit to Durres, Albania allowed Ramage leadership to meet with local senior security officials. During the August port visit to Limassol, Cyprus the support of local contractors allowed the crew to complete an intensive week of scheduled upkeep.

The Gerald R. Ford CSG remains flexible to conduct operations wherever needed. In September, Arleigh-Burke class guided-

missile destroyer USS Ramage (DDG 61) and Ford-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) shared a port visit in Trieste, Italy prior to conducting dual-carrier operations with ITS Cavour (CVH 550) and Italy's 2nd Naval Division.

"Throughout our deployment, we've conducted joint operations with the British, Spanish, Italian, French, Hellenic, and Turkish Navies." says Cmdr. Tim Yuhas, commanding officer of the USS Ramage. "These strong strategic relationships between the U.S. and our allies maintains our superior readiness and are critical to our ability to respond to any contingency in the Mediterranean."

Strengthening partnerships during the deployment to the Naval Forces Europe area of operations builds enduring relationships and emphasizes our shared commitment to promoting safety and stability within the region, while seeking opportunities to enhance our interoperability as NATO allies.

CSG-12, Gerald R. Ford CSG, is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa area of operations, employed by U.S. Sixth Fleet to defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.

The Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group is comprised of its flagship and namesake, the Ford-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78), Carrier Air Wing Eight (CVW-8), Destroyer Squadron Two (DESRON-2), the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG-60), and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Ramage (DDG 61), USS McFaul (DDG 74), and USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116).

The squadrons of CVW-8 embarked aboard Gerald R. Ford are the "Tridents" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9, the "Spartans" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 70, the "Bear Aces" of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 124, the "Ragin' Bulls" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 37, the "Blacklions" of VFA-213, the "Golden Warriors" of VFA-87,

the "Tomcatters" of VFA-31, the "Gray Wolves" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 142, and the "Rawhides" of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF 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.