USS The Sullivans Returns Home After Back-to-Back Deployments



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) pulls into port in Copenhagen, Denmark, March 21, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Mark Klimenko*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) returned to Naval Station Mayport after a three-month deployment to the European theater of operations on April 18, said U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs.

This surge deployment follows a 2021 deployment with the Royal Navy's HMS Queen Elizabeth Strike Group (CSG-21), from which The Sullivans returned home just before Thanksgiving.

The Sullivans was in sustainment when it departed Naval

Station Mayport in January 2022. Ships in the sustainment phase of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan remain ready for contingency tasking before entering a maintenance phase.

“Despite the dynamic schedule and demanding operational tasking, The Sullivans crew displayed resiliency, grit and determined self-sufficiency to accomplish all missions,” said Cmdr. James Diefenderfer, Jr., commanding officer of The Sullivans. “We are incredibly proud of our team’s accomplishments.”

The crew navigated over 20,000 nautical miles, operating in the Irish, North and Baltic Seas, and conducted 12 sea and anchor details, 11 underway replenishments, and port visits to Copenhagen, Denmark; Rotterdam, The Netherlands; Ponta Delgada, Portugal; and Rota, Spain.

While deployed, The Sullivans participated in NATO Exercise Dynamic Guard 2022 in the North Sea. Dynamic Guard, hosted by Norway, is a biannual, multinational electronic warfare exercise series designed to provide tactical training for the NATO Response Force and NATO national units. For the first time in three years, two U.S. vessels participated to further enhance the ongoing cooperation, strength and interoperability between NATO Allies.

The Sullivans continued operations with three NATO countries within Standing NATO Maritime Group (SNMG) 1, which was comprised of the German navy Type 702 Berlin-class replenishment ship FGS Berlin (A1411), the Royal Netherlands Navy Karel Doorman-class multi-purpose frigate HNLMS Van Amstel (F831) and the Royal Danish Navy Iver Huitfeldt-class frigate HDMS Peter Willemoes (F362).

During the ship’s 2021 deployment, the crew operated with the Royal Danish Navy Absalon-class frigate HDMS Esbern Snare (F342) in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations. Almost a year later, Esbern Snare escorted The Sullivans through the Danish

Strait, demonstrating expert seamanship, navigation and cooperation through one of the busiest waterways in the world.

“While we take time to recover and spend well deserved time at home, we are focusing our efforts on ensuring The Sullivans can continue to operate at peak performance for years to come,” said Diefenderfer. “Our immediate mission is the expert execution of our maintenance availability and continued training to prepare the ship and crew for future tasking. I know this crew will be ready for whatever comes next – we stick together.”