



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS COLE (DDG 67)  
UNIT 100303 BOX 1  
FPO AE 09566

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From: Commanding Officer, USS COLE (DDG 67)  
To: Naval History and Heritage Command

Subj: ANNUAL COMMAND OPERATIONS REPORT CALENDAR YEAR 2017

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12k

Encl: (1) Operational Report  
(2) USS COLE 2017 Photographs  
(3) USS COLE 2017 Welcome Aboard

1. Purpose: To publish the annual command operations report per reference (a) and via enclosures (1) through (3). This report will be maintained by Naval History and Heritage Command. The report contains command data, chronological narratives, media, and a commander's assessment covering the entire calendar year of 2017.



J. J. VON ST PAUL

## OPERATIONAL REPORT

### COMMAND DATA

This report will detail all general data for the command to include administrative and operational information.

1. USS COLE (DDG 67)
2. UIC 21941
3. Commanding Officer
  - a. David P. Wroe  
Commander, United States Navy  
Assumed command 2016-04-29
  - b. James J. Von St Paul  
Commander, United States Navy  
Assumed command 2017-10-13
4. Mission
  - a. Ballistic Missile Defense platform
  - b. FIFTH and SIXTH FLEET areas of operation
5. Homeport: Naval Station Norfolk, Norfolk, Virginia
6. Immediate superior in command: Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY TWO.
7. Operational superior in command
  - a. Commander, Task Force EIGHT ZERO (CTF 80)
  - b. Commander, Task Force SIX FIVE (CTF 65)
  - c. Commander, Task Force FIFTY FIVE (CTF 55)
  - d. Commander, Task Force FIFTY (CTF 50)
8. Administrative superior in command: Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY TWO.
9. Assigned Task Force
  - a. Task Force EIGHT ZERO (CTF 80)

- b . Task Force SIX FIVE (CTF 65)
- c. Task Force FIFTY FIVE (CTF 55)
- d. Task Force FIFTY (CTF 50)

10. Operations: N/A

11. Units deployed on board

- a. DSE Element, NIOC Norfolk
- b. DSE Team, NIOC Georgia

12. Number of personnel assigned: 327

13. Officers, enlisted, or civilian

- a. Officers: 36
- b. Enlisted: 287

14. Command point of contact

a. E-mail

(1) [REDACTED]

(2) [REDACTED]

b. Phone number: [REDACTED]

c. Command mailing address

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## COMMANDER'S ASSESSMENT

An *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer enhanced for Ballistic Missile Defense, USS COLE (DDG 67) is capable of conducting missions in a wide number of warfare areas in support of U.S. national interests. During calendar year 2017, COLE conducted a 2016-2017 Deployment to the Middle East and executed operations under Commander, Fifth Fleet. COLE's Deployment was a marked shift from her 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 independent deployments to the Mediterranean. Instead, COLE trained as part of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY TWO and Carrier Strike Group TWO/GEORGE H. W. BUSH Carrier Strike Group before deploying to the Fifth Fleet area of operations.

Through deployment and beyond, COLE stressed excellence as the standard. Team COLE completed every evolution well and on time during the build up to her INSURV inspection, while also conducting port calls in support of crew morale local community outreach. Additional priority one tasking from Fleet Forces Command included operational training exercises with U.S. Special Forces units. Notable events included a visit to New London, CT, for the annual Connecticut Maritime Heritage Festival where COLE hosted a reception on the flight deck for over 200 local dignitaries and guests. COLE then sailed to Newport, RI where she served as the Surface Warfare Officers' School Visit Ship. During this visit, she was host to special training tours for the local school houses on Newport Naval Station. On the training and assessment side, COLE earned high scores during RE-6, MI-7, and INSURV, all attributed to the crew's hard work and devotion to the ship.

COLE crew successfully completed their 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet deployment and returned home safely to their families. With deployment came wide array of hurdles and lessons learned. For example, during deployment COLE took on a warfare commander role and quickly recognized their need for more Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) training. Leadership recognized the challenges inherent in balancing specific warfare area training with continuous training requirements and was able to craft a plan that achieved desired objectives. Additionally, Supply Department learned how to order the proper amount of stores while accounting for the ever-changing operational schedule. COLE's deployment ended up being one with many schedule changes, few liberty ports and much operational tasking, but COLE crew remained flexible and professional in a highly dynamic situation. Ship-wide communication, "top to bottom" and "bottom to top" remained a top priority during deployment. Casualties, both minor and major, seemed unavoidable at times, but COLE crew learned to use their resources by contacting foreign port authorities early to get the help needed to carry out the mission.

Shortly after deployment, COLE completed INSURV with above average scores. The crew found this evolution to be challenging, but identified numerous areas of concern. Being able to identify these areas of concern gave the crew a better understanding of their equipment and what

repairs needed to be made in order to make the ship mission ready and keep the crew safe in the event of war.

COLE Sailors make up a phenomenal team; they aggressively meet the mission and maintain their gear, are proud of their ship and the lasting COLE legacy we all honor, and are compassionate and caring for their fellow shipmates.

### CHRONOLOGY AND NARRATIVE

The chronology and narrative are imperative reports for historical research and verification. The chronology includes specific and important dates of operations, port visits, training exercises, mishaps, and administrative functions. The narrative further amplifies the chronology and discusses important events in detail.

#### DEPLOYMENT 2017

##### 1JAN – 16JUL

- SERVED AS BMDC, AMDC, AND SADC FOR 5<sup>TH</sup> FLEET
- PROVIDED SUPPORT TO CSG2 ISO INHERENT RESOLVE
- 20 STRAIT OF HORMUZ TRANSITS (ESCORTING U.S. AND COALITION VESSELS)
- 4 BAB'AL MANDEB TRANSITS (ESCORTING U.S. AND COALITION VESSELS)
- 2 SUEZ CANAL TRANSITS
- 3 PORTS VISITED:
  - SPLIT, CROATIA
  - MANAMA, BAHRAIN
  - JEBEL-ALI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
- 49 RE-ENLISTMENTS
- 90 ADVANCEMENTS/PROMOTIONS
- 83 ESWS QUALIFICATIONS 2017
- 9 SWO QUALIFICATIONS 2017

|               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 17JUL – 30JUL | 1 <sup>ST</sup> POM |
| 24JUL – 1SEP  | CMAV                |
| 24JUL – 4AUG  | GMAT                |
| 24JUL – 28JUL | SURFACE LINE WEEK   |
| 31JUL – 4AUG  | TSRA2               |
| 2AUG – 16AUG  | 2 <sup>ND</sup> POM |
| 7AUG – 18AUG  | GLMAT               |
| 14AUG – 25AUG | CSRAT               |
| 21AUG – 25AUG | RHIBMAT             |
| 21AUG – 1SEP  | GTMAT               |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 28AUG – 31AUG | ERAT   |
| 28AUG – 1SEP  | DMAT   |
| 31AUG         | FAST CRUISE  |
| 5SEP – 8SEP   | IRAT   |
| 6SEP – 17SEP  | UNDERWAY/PVST NEW LONDON/PVST NEWPORT  |
|               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CT MARITIME HERITAGE FESTIVAL</li> <li>• SWOS SCHOOL SHIP NEWPORT RI</li> </ul> |
| 18SEP – 22SEP | AMMO OFFLOAD   |
| 25SEP – 6OCT  | SOCOM PRI-1  |
| 9OCT – 13OCT  | AVCERT   |
| 9OCT – 20OCT  | WTDMAT   |
| 10OCT – 24NOV | CCAT   |
| 10OCT – 13OCT | CSRAT  |
| 11OCT – 12OCT | 1.2/1.3B SARCERT   |
| 12OCT         | COLE REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY  |
| 13OCT         | CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY   |
| 17OCT – 18OCT | UNDERWAY RE-6  |
| 20OCT         | 1.3A SARCERT   |
| 20OCT – 21OCT | NORFOLK FLEET FEST TOUR SHIP   |
| 25OCT – 3NOV  | ELMAT  |
| 30OCT – 24NOV | CMAV/RE-2  |
| 2NOV          | 1.4B SARCERT   |
| 6NOV – 9NOV   | PFA  |
| 28NOV – 29NOV | UNDERWAY MI-7  |
| 4DEC – 8DEC   | UNDERWAY INSURV  |
| 11DEC – 12JAN | CMAV   |
| 14DEC         | COMMAND HOLIDAY PARTY  |
| 16DEC – 7JAN  | HOLIDAY LEAVE  |

COLE began her deployment in the Sixth Fleet area of operations before transiting the Suez Canal and the Red Sea on her way into the Fifth Fleet area of operations. COLE sailed past the Port of Aden for only the second time since the 2000 terrorist bombing. The crew marked the occasion with a ceremony in which a wreath was laid to sea in remembrance of the 17 Sailors lost to the attack.

While in the Fifth Fleet area of operations, COLE conducted numerous transits through the Strait of Hormuz, escorting American and other allied ships near Iranian waters. COLE was also chosen as a tertiary launch platform for real-world tomahawk strikes. During the time in the Arabian Gulf, the crew had an opportunity to visit several Gulf States, including Bahrain and the

United Arab Emirates. The crew used these opportunities to experience local culture and take part in exciting events such as dinner cruises, camel rides in the dunes, and visiting cities such as Dubai to take in the architecture and marvel at the sights.

COLE returned to the Mediterranean Sea where she operated with Carrier Strike Group 2 serving as a picket during carrier operations. COLE spent much of her time with the carrier in close proximity preventing foreign warships from gaining easy access to the carrier's vital area. Before departing the Mediterranean Sea, the crew also enjoyed a beer day with a swim call to celebrate the nearing conclusion of deployment.

Upon return to homeport, the crew received a well-earned leave period before returning to work in order to prepare for the upcoming INSURV inspection scheduled to take place in December. They worked tirelessly to ensure the material conditions and all demonstrations were ready through multiple pre-INSURV inspections. In between all of these inspections and presentations, COLE also sailed to New London, CT for the annual Connecticut Maritime Heritage Festival. The crew provided tours of the ship to the public, while also hosting a well-attended reception on the flight deck for local military and civilian officials. The COLE Wardroom also attended a parade and reception at the Coast Guard Academy. Following the visit to New London, COLE called on Newport, RI, providing special training and tours to students at the various naval schools on Newport Naval Station. The crew was given opportunities to enjoy liberty in Newport and Boston while also taking in a day at Battleship Cove in Fall River, MA.

On October 12<sup>th</sup>, the 17<sup>th</sup> annual remembrance ceremony of the COLE bombing was held at the COLE memorial on Naval Station Norfolk. Several family members of the Sailors lost, crew members (past and present), and media were in attendance. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, Commander David P. Wroe was relieved as Commanding Officer by Commander James J Von St Paul in a ceremony to mark the event. Command Edward Pledger had recently assumed the position as Executive Officer in advance of the change of command.

The end of the year concluded with a very successful INSURV inspection, where the crew earned an overall IFOM score of .86, consistent with a high class average mark. With the ship in top shape and having passed evaluation, COLE was ready for the New Year.

#### ACRONYM LIST

Aviation Certification (AVCERT)  
Combat Systems Readiness Assessment Team (CRAT)  
Continuous Maintenance Availability (CMAV)  
Corrosion Control Assessment Team (CCAT)  
Electrical Material Assessment Team (EMAT)  
Engineering Readiness Assessment Team (ERAT)

Galley Material Assessment Team (GMAT)  
Gas Turbine Material Assessment Team (GTMAT)  
Inspection and Survey (INSURV)  
INSURV Readiness Assessment Team (IRAT)  
Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA)  
Post Operational Movement (POM)  
Rigid Inflatable Boat Material Assessment Team (RIBMAT)  
Search and Rescue Certification (SARCERT)

## COMMAND MISSION STATEMENT



**We Are Dedicated Professionals, Determined Warriors!**

### **What We Must Do:**

**Accomplish the Mission:** We must always be ready to successfully answer ALL tasking. Our nation expects us to FIGHT, MANEUVER, COMMUNICATE, and LOOK PROFESSIONAL at ALL TIMES. We will not disappoint!!

**Maintain Material Readiness:** We are entrusted with a state-of-the-art weapons and engineering platform. It is our responsibility to properly maintain COLE at the HIGHEST LEVELS OF READINESS; not only during our time onboard, but also for those Determined Warriors who come after us.

**Emphasize Dignity and Respect:** We SHALL ALWAYS conduct ourselves with the highest levels of dignity and respect. We are a TEAM and must work together to accomplish the mission.

### **How We Will Succeed:**

Without each and every one of us, COLE is nothing. Therefore we must be equipped with the capabilities and means to execute our assigned tasks. To that end, we will succeed by emphasizing the following principles:

**Communication:** Open communication must always exist UP and DOWN the chain of command. Bad news does not get better with time so DON'T DELAY in keeping the chain of command informed. Likewise, the chain of command must clearly communicate expectations and tasking to our Sailors.

**Procedural Compliance:** What we do is difficult work. It is more difficult when we don't FOLLOW ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES. If procedures cannot be followed or do not exist, STOP and inform the Chain of Command.

**A Learning Organization:** We must strive to constantly improve as a command. Never miss an opportunity to LEARN from mistakes, IMPROVE practices, and TRAIN those around us as we continually seek to achieve excellence.

**J.J. VON ST. PAUL**

## PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

### 1. Press Releases

- a. [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=102831](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=102831)
- b. [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=102858](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=102858)
- c. [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=99557](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=99557)
- d. [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=98330](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=98330)
- e. [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=98327](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=98327)
- f. [http://www.navy.mil/ah\\_online/ftrStory.asp?issue=3&id=102798](http://www.navy.mil/ah_online/ftrStory.asp?issue=3&id=102798)

### 2. Websites

- a. <http://www.facebook.com/ddg67>
- b. <http://www.public.navy.mil/surflant/ddg67>

### 3. Videos

- a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQIEva6A5PI>