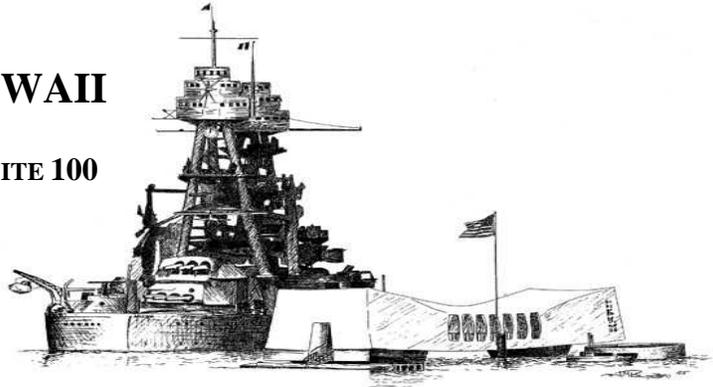


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USS O'Kane Returns to Pearl Harbor

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Robert Stirrup, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

(Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI) – More than 300 Sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS O'Kane (DDG 77) returned to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Feb. 8, following a scheduled seven-month deployment to the Middle East and western Pacific.

O'Kane was deployed as a part of Commander, Task Force-Iraqi Maritime supporting maritime security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

“The deployment was wonderful. The crew did an outstanding job in every mission, ranging from the 5th Fleet to the 7th Fleet,” said Cmdr. Derek Trinique, commanding officer of O'Kane. “It feels great to be back in Hawaii and to be in command of this ship and this crew is a real honor for me.”

Trinique also spoke about some of O'Kane's operational activities while on deployment.

“We spent five of our seven months in the Persian Gulf, and while there, we helped protect Iraqi oil infrastructure, provided maritime security for coalition efforts and partnered with our allies to further enhance maritime security,” Trinique said.

Friends and families of O'Kane Sailors lined the pier as they waited for the ship to arrive.

“Today is really great because my husband is finally coming home after seven long months,” said the wife of an O'Kane Sailor. “I'm just really excited to see him and have him here.”

As the ship moored at Bravo Pier, Sailors were happy to be home as they were greeted by their families.

“It's great to be home. This homecoming experience almost feels surreal for me,” said Yeoman 3rd Class Jorge Cuellar-Lopez. “Overall I think we did a great job on deployment. We went to some good ports, and now it's capped off with our return home.”

Guided-missile destroyers like O'Kane provide multi-mission offensive and defensive capabilities and can operate independently or as part of carrier battle groups, surface action groups, amphibious ready groups and underway replenishment groups.

O'Kane is a part of Destroyer Squadron 31 and Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific.

For more information visit the ship's website:

<http://www.public.navy.mil/surfor/ddg77/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Navy-Region-Hawaii/167560113041>

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