

USS Ohio visits Pearl Harbor

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USS Ohio (SSGN 726), the first operational Trident guided-missile submarine, pulled into Naval Station Pearl Harbor on Dec. 8, before returning to its homeport of Bangor, Wash. from its maiden deployment.

"It's a great opportunity to be in Hawai'i," said Capt. Dennis Carpenter, USS Ohio commanding officer. "Our ship has been deployed for 15 months and for a lot of our guys it's their first time here. We're also excited some of the families were able to come out and welcome their guys home in paradise, before we actually have to go home to winter."

The submarine departed Naval Base Kitsap on Oct. 14, 2007 for its maiden deployment, which began a month ahead of schedule. Claiming many firsts, Ohio was the first Trident guided-missile submarine to complete an equator and prime meridian crossing, the first to achieve SEAL (sea, air, land)/diver dry deck shelter certification, the first to complete three highly-successful national tasking missions, and the first to earn two Navy Expeditionary Medals.

"It's unprecedented," Carpenter continued. "To get out there and conduct mission after mission and demonstrate to our allies our capabilities, it's extraordinary."

Ohio visited Busan, Republic of Korea; Subic Bay, Philippines; Yokosuka, Japan and Guam, where the submarine conducted crew exchanges between the blue and gold crews, which allowed the submarine to remain on station in support of national tasking.

During the visit to Busan, Ohio accomplished another submarine first: the ship hosted a joint special operations task force during Exercise Key Resolve/Foal Eagle to demonstrate the joint command and control capability of the new SSGN platform.

"That's the great thing about USS Ohio. We can go anywhere in the world in a relatively short period of time," Carpenter said. "We've put a lot of miles on our submarine."

Another memorable event during Ohio's maiden deployment was the burial at sea of a veteran of World War II. Ohio crew member, Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SS) Jason Witty, spread the ashes of his grandfather, Eugene Stanley Morgan, in the Philippine Sea, honoring Morgan's request to be buried with his shipmates of the World War II cruiser USS Indianapolis (CA-35). Morgan was one of 316 survivors of the sinking of the cruiser on July 30, 1945.

Ohio, the first Trident submarine ever built, returned to the fleet February 2006 after a \$250 million, one-year refueling and a \$750 million, two-year conversion from a ballistic missile submarine. With this conversion, Ohio and the subsequent convert submarines provide the fleet with the ability to quickly embark and deploy to provide command and control functions for special operations forces and a large volume strike platform in its operating theater.