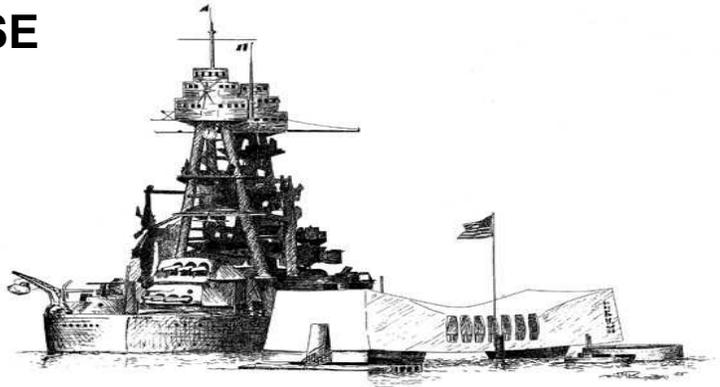


# NAVY NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Pearl Harbor Destroyers Depart for Western Pacific**

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Michael A. Lantron, Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i  
Public Affairs

**(PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII)** – The waterfront of Naval Station Pearl Harbor became quieter on Jan. 20 as more than 1,000 Sailors aboard three Pearl Harbor-based ships departed their friends and family for a Western Pacific deployment.

Guided-missile destroyers USS Hopper (DDG 70) and USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) departed as part of the Mid-Pacific Surface Combatant Operational Employment program while USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93) departed as part of the USS Boxer (LHD 4) Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG).

As the new year has just begun, the Sailors look forward to their deployment and hope for continued excellence on the open seas at the sacrifice of leaving their loved ones.

“The crew’s excited, focused and ready to do the mission that we’ve trained for a long time to do,” said Cmdr. Michael McCartney, commanding officer of Chung-Hoon. “It’s hard to leave friends and family behind, but that’s why we’re in the navy and we go out and stand up for our country overseas.” “I’m actually a little nervous about leaving,” said Information Systems Technician Seaman Devon McNew, assigned to Hopper. “It’s the first time I’ve left the homeport, but I’m looking forward to the new ports and ready to see what’s there for us when we get out there.”

While Chung-Hoon’s involvement in the Boxer ESG is common in today’s Navy, the deployments of Hopper and Paul Hamilton continue the fairly new trend of the Mid-Pacific Surface Combatant Operational Employment program.

“This is a relatively new concept for the Pacific Fleet. During 2008, USS O’Kane (DDG 77) and USS Reuben James (FFG 57) were out in the Western Pacific a great deal without first going to Southern California so we’re already seeing the benefits,” said Capt. William A. Kearns, commodore of Destroyer Squadron 31.

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## **DEPLOYMENT 2-2-2**

“It’s more efficient use of time. It ends up being less time away from home for training purposes. They can do training and do deployment missions and operate with allied navies, and do port visits out in the Western Pacific during the time they would have in the past operated in Southern California.”

Paul Hamilton returned to Pearl Harbor from their most recent deployment on June 7 while Hopper returned from theirs on May 2. Chung-Hoon recently completed a major maintenance period and the Sailors are eager to see the new improvements of the ship on the deployment.

The ships’ time between major deployments have allowed them to concentrate on training so that the crews can be ready for anything the deployment might bring.

“A year ago we were in the Persian Gulf and we’ve been working towards this day since we came back. We’re ready to take advantage of the training well get in the Seventh Fleet and it’s a great way to start the year,” said Cmdr. Timothy Kott, commanding officer of Hopper.

Even though three separate crews departed Pearl Harbor on the same day, the feelings of those left behind were in sync.

“It’s always hard seeing them leave,” said the wife of a Hopper Sailor. “This is something we never get used to it, but we just stick together as a family until they come home.”

“You never want to see them leave, but it’s their job and we support them in what they do. Now it’s just counting down the days until they come back home,” added the wife of a Paul Hamilton Sailor.

Guided-missile destroyers operate in support of carrier strike groups, surface action groups, amphibious groups and replenishment groups and are multi-mission (Anti-Air Warfare (AAW), Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Anti-Surface Warfare (AUSW)) surface combatants.