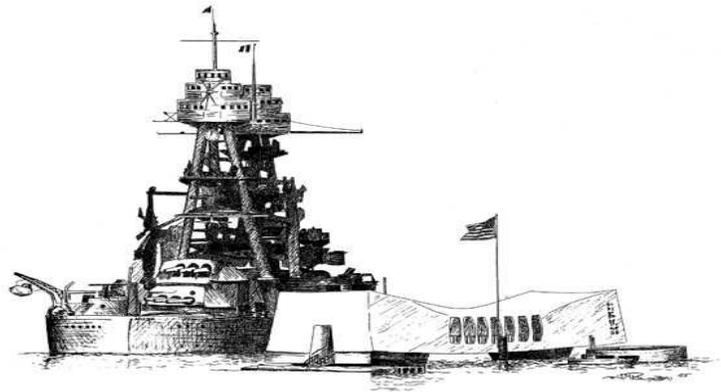


NEWS RELEASE

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USS Port Royal defies third extraction attempt

PEARL HARBOR – A third attempt to refloat USS Port Royal (CG 73) proved unsuccessful this morning, leaving the guided missile cruiser aground about a half-mile south of Honolulu Airport.

This morning's attempt was made with the concerted effort of the salvage ship USNS Salvor (T-ARS-52), M/V Dove and four Navy and three commercial tugboats.

The Port Royal's hull is structurally sound and there has been no fuel leakage or spillage.

Port Royal ran aground approximately 8:30 p.m. Thursday while off-loading some personnel into a small boat. An Incident Management Command Center was activated, with the Navy, Coast Guard and state Department of Health coordinating information and actions.

“Our priorities have been and remain the safety of the crew, the safety of the ship, and the safety of the environment,” said Rear Adm. Joe Walsh, deputy commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. “There have been no injuries associated with the grounding or our recovery efforts.

“We are working closely with both the U.S. Coast Guard and the State of Hawaii to ensure all precautions are being taken should a release of fuel occur, including having the Clean Islands Council response vessel standing by and an incident management command center activated to coordinate the actions of the Navy, the Coast Guard and the state,” Walsh said.

Previous efforts to refloat the ship on the high tide Friday and Saturday morning were unsuccessful.

Larger tug boats and tow vessels provided more pulling power than was mustered the two previous mornings. Today's effort again coincided with the high tide, which occurred about 3 a.m. The ship, however, remained aground after four hours of towing, which began at 1:30 a.m.

The Navy is assessing its options on how to proceed.

Homeported at Pearl Harbor, USS Port Royal was commissioned on July 9, 1994.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: There will be a media availability this afternoon with Rear Adm. Joe Walsh, deputy commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Interested media need to call the Region Public Affairs Office at the above numbers to arrange base access. Please plan to meet at Nimitz Gate Pass & ID parking lot at 12:30 p.m.