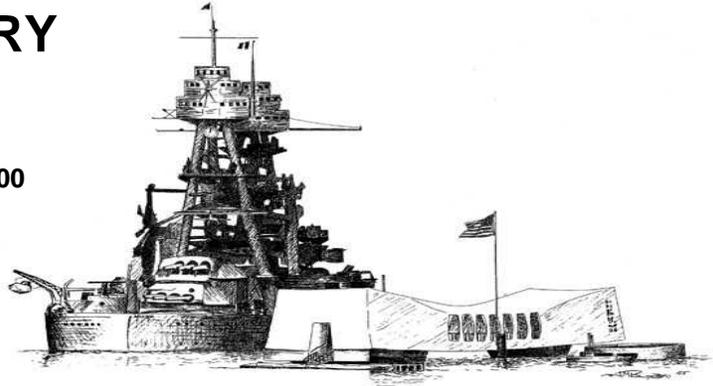


MEDIA ADVISORY

NAVY REGION HAWAII
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
850 TICONDEROGA STREET SUITE 100
PEARL HARBOR, HI 96860

Tel: (808) 473-2888
Fax: (808) 473-2876
www.hawaii.navy.mil



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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POC: Chief David Rush

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USS Boxer conducts change of command in Pearl Harbor

(PEARL HARBOR, HI) -- USS Boxer (LHD 4), flagship for Boxer Expeditionary Group (BOXESG), will hold a change of command ceremony at Naval Station Pearl Harbor where Capt. Matthew J. McCloskey will relieve Capt. Bruce W. Nichols at 9:30a.m., Wednesday, May 23.

The ships of BOXESG will also embark family and friends of crewmembers for the last leg of the deployment, commonly referred to as a "Tiger Cruise."

BOXESG's mission during deployment was to transport the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) (Special Operations Capable) to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and to support Maritime Security Operations (MSO) while operating in the Arabian Gulf.

During their twice-extended, nine-month deployment, BOXESG spent five months conducting MSO with coalition partners, operating under international maritime conventions to provide security and safety in international waters, which helped ensure commercial shipping could operate freely while transiting the Arabian Gulf. The strike group also participated in Malabar '06, a multinational exercise which focused on numerous naval missions used to enhance the cooperative security relationship between the United States., Canada and India.

When it deployed Sept 13, 2006 BOXESG was comprised of USS Boxer (LHD 4), USS Dubuque (LPD 8), USS Comstock (LSD 45), USS Benfold (DDG 65), USS Howard (DDG 83) and USS Bunker Hill (CG 52). BOXESG also included PHIBRON 5, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WHEC 726) and Canadian Frigate HMCS Ottawa (FFH 341).

Media interested in covering the event please contact Chief David Rush, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs, at 590-8363 by 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 22, to arrange escort to the ship. Media will be met at the Pass & I.D. parking lot next to Nimitz Gate at 9 a.m. Wednesday, May 23.

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