



**COMMANDER, NAVY REGION HAWAII &
NAVAL SURFACE GROUP
MIDDLE PACIFIC**
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
850 TICONDEROGA STREET, SUITE 110
PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII 96860
PHONE: 808-473-2888 FAX: 808-473-2876
www.cnic.navy.mil/hawaii



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POC: MC1 D. Wayne Randall, 808-590-8363

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Hawaii Welcomes John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM — The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) and the John C. Stennis Carrier Strike (JCSSG) arrive at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Feb. 17 for a planned port visit as they return home from a seven month deployment to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operation (AOO).

While deployed in the 5th Fleet AOO, JCSSG played a pivotal role in the drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq and provided aviation support to Coalition ground troops in Afghanistan, as well as conducted counter-piracy and maritime security operations, and participated in several cooperative engagements with military partners in the region.

In January, after transitioning from Operation New Dawn to supporting operations in Afghanistan, JCSSG forces thwarted an attempted pirate attack on a Bahamian-flagged cargo vessel, and freed a group of Iranian mariners held captive by the suspected pirates.

“This was a well-executed display of the multi-mission capability of the carrier strike group and a testament to the professionalism of our Sailors,” said Master Chief Petty Officer Stanley Jewett, Stennis’ command master chief.

In the 7th Fleet AOR, the strike group conducted several readiness exercises with partner countries in the region as well as visits to Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines before preparing to head back to the United States.

“Exercising together as partners is key to our cooperative strategy and builds our collective capacity to meet common maritime challenges like ensuring freedom of the sea,” said the JCSSG commander, Rear Adm. Craig Faller, referring to the Passing

Exercise (PASSEX) the strike group conducted with the Republic of Singapore Navy in January.

During port visits, Sailors volunteered more than 2,000 man hours working in Community Service projects in ten countries.

The air wing conducted more than 13,000 (13389) sorties during deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation New Dawn (OND) and on Dec. 18, an E-2C Hawkeye from the "Golden Hawks," of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 112 embarked aboard Stennis flew the last Navy aviation mission over Iraq.

On their way to conduct their mission, the strike group conducted more than 200 hours training in Hawaiian waters.

"The Hawaii Training Range Complex provided realistic and challenging training opportunities for our air wing," said Capt. Dale Horan, commander of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9, embarked aboard Stennis. "It allowed us to further hone our strike and close-air support skills and procedures, helping us to operate at a high level of effectiveness throughout deployment as we provided support to forces on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Media are invited to see the arrival of USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) at Pearl Harbor and meet JCSSG commander, Rear Adm. Craig Faller, as well as Sailors with ties to Hawaii who are stationed aboard the carrier.

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Media interested in covering the ship's arrival are requested to contact MC1 D. Wayne Randall, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office, at 473-3788 or 590-8363. Media will be met at the Pass and ID parking lot adjacent to the Nimitz Gate at 9:30 a.m. Feb. 17, to be escorted onto the pier