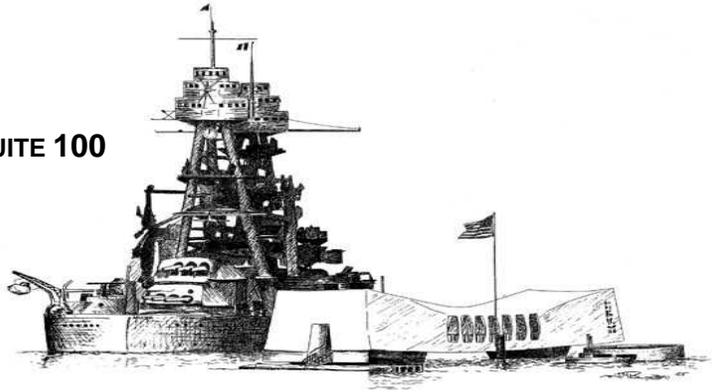


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USS Hopper to visit Hilo for Merrie Monarch Festival

(PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII) -- The Pearl Harbor-based guided missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG- 70) will visit Hilo on April 12 for a one-day port visit to celebrate the Merrie Monarch Festival. Rear Admiral Tim Alexander, Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, will also attend the festivities.

During their short stay, USS Hopper will participate in the pierside welcome ceremony with the Merrie Monarch Royal Court on April 12 at 11 a.m., and provide tours and training for Waiakea High School Naval JROTC cadets from the Big Island. On Saturday, April 14, Rear Adm. Alexander and the Navy's Pacific Fleet Band Dixie Express ensemble will participate in the Merrie Monarch grand parade in Hilo.

USS Hopper is a 505-foot long Arleigh Burke class destroyer and one of the Navy's most advanced warships, capable of carrying out air, undersea and surface warfare operations. Hopper, under the command of Cmdr. Jeffrey W. James, has a crew of approximately 300 men and women.

Media representatives interested in covering the pierside welcome ceremony or the Navy's participation should contact the Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office by 9 a.m., Thursday, April 12, by calling (808) 473-3958 or 781-4617.

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