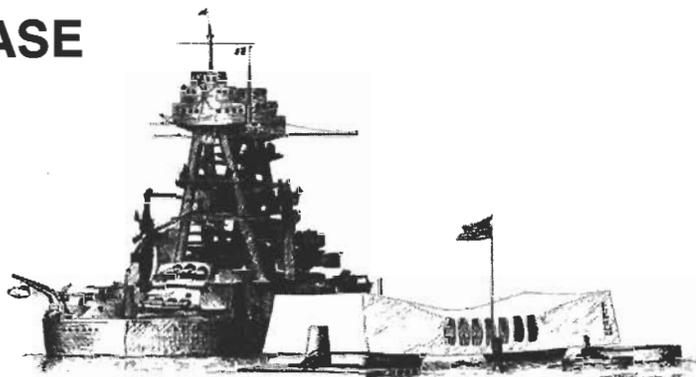


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USS Pearl Harbor and Tarawa strike group to arrive Friday

PEARL HARBOR- Three ships from USS Tarawa (LHA 1) Expeditionary Strike Group One (ESG 1) along with more than 2,100 Marines from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) will arrive Friday morning in Pearl Harbor for a planned port visit. En route to their homeport of San Diego, Tarawa, USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) and USS Cleveland (LPD 7) are wrapping up a six-month deployment that included support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, humanitarian operations in Pakistan and the Philippines as well as maritime security operations in the Persian Gulf.

The Marines of the 13th MEU conducted combat operations inside Iraq to support stability and security and participated in Operation Steel Curtain, fighting insurgents in Western Iraq along the Syrian border. The operation was designed to ensure security for the recent Iraqi elections. The MEU also participated in Exercise Bright Star in Egypt, the largest multinational exercise in the world, which included training with more than a dozen coalition partners. Also while deployed the MEU performed a two-day medical and dental humanitarian assistance operation in the Philippines.

USS Pearl Harbor, named in honor of those who served honorably during the attack on Pearl Harbor is the last ship of the Harper's Ferry class and the last of its class to serve in the Pacific Fleet. Pearl Harbor's mission is to transport Marines with their combat equipment, then launch and support landing craft and helicopters during amphibious operations against hostile or threatened shores.

Media representatives who would like to cover the ESG 1's arrival should contact the Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office by noon Thursday, Feb. 9. A media escort will be at the Nimitz Gate Pass and ID office parking area at 7 a.m. Friday.