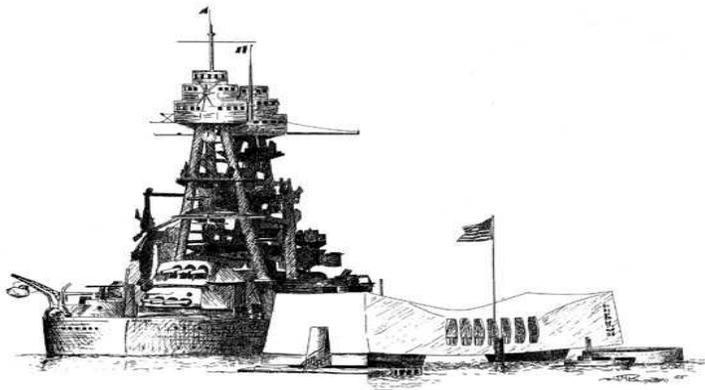


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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**POC: Grace Hew Len, 473-3958**

**April 2, 2008**  
**RELEASE #009-08**

## **USS Reuben James to visit Hilo for Merrie Monarch Festival**

(PEARL HARBOR)—The Pearl Harbor-based guided missile frigate USS Reuben James (FFG-57) will visit Hilo April 3 - 6 to participate in the Merrie Monarch Festival. Capt. Donald Hodge, Chief of Staff, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, will also attend the festivities.

USS Reuben James will greet the Merrie Monarch Royal Court during a pierside welcome ceremony at Hilo Harbor Pier 3 on Friday, April 4 at 11 a.m. Other activities include a community relations project to clean up the Mo`oheau bandstand and bus terminal facilities on Thursday, April 3. In addition, Sailors will attend the hula competitions and march in the Merrie Monarch Royal Parade on Saturday, April 5. The Navy's Pacific Fleet Band will also march in the parade.

Several groups of JROTC cadets and scouts from the Big Island will go on pre-arranged tours of the ship and have the opportunity to interact with Sailors. A select group of Waiiaka High School Navy JROTC cadets will have the unique opportunity to embark the ship on its return trip from the Big Island to Pearl Harbor.

USS Reuben James is a 450-foot long Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigate with a mission to escort and protect carrier battle groups, amphibious landing groups, underway replenishment groups and convoys. Commanded by Cmdr. Joseph Naman, the ship has a crew of 221 Sailors.

*Media representatives interested in covering the pierside welcome ceremony on Friday, April 4 should contact the Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office by noon, Thursday, April 3, by calling (808) 473-3958 or 781-4617.*

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