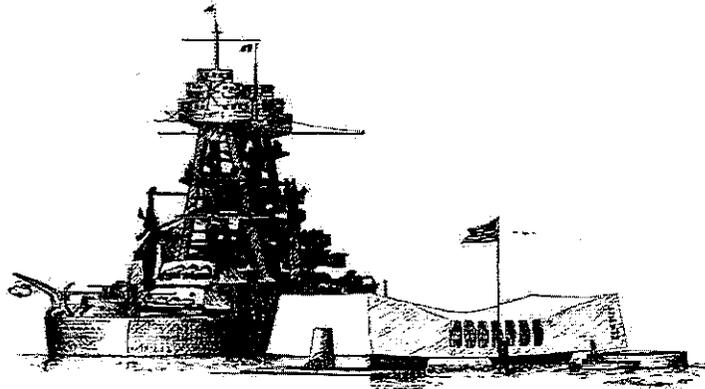


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POC: LCDR Jane Campbell

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Pearl Harbor ships deploying as part of Lincoln Battle Group

More than 800 Hawaii Sailors aboard USS Fletcher (DD 992), USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) and USS Reuben James (FFG 57) will depart Pearl Harbor on Friday, August 2, as part of the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) Carrier Battle Group for an overseas deployment.

In addition, Commodore "Buz" Buzby, Commander, Destroyer Squadron 31, and his Pearl Harbor-based staff of 16, departed late last month and are already embarked aboard Abraham Lincoln.

USS Reuben James and USS Fletcher will each have two SH-60B LAMPS Mark III Seahawk helicopters on board. Detachments 2 and 4, with approximately 22 personnel from Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron (Light) 37 (HSL 37), based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay will be embarked on Fletcher and Reuben James respectively. Lt. Cmdr. Bryan Hoyt is the officer in charge (OIC) of Detachment 2, and Lt. Cmdr. Andy Quiett is the OIC of Detachment 4.

Commanded by Cmdr. Frederick Pfirman, Paul Hamilton is an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer with a multi-mission platform designed to conduct simultaneous operations against land, air, surface and sub-surface targets.

Reuben James, commanded by Cmdr. Edward Lester is an Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate designed to escort and protect carrier battle groups, amphibious landing groups, underway replenishment groups and convoys.

Fletcher, commanded by Cmdr. Thomas Neal, is a Spruance-class destroyer designed primarily for anti-submarine warfare and is equipped with the Harpoon anti-ship cruise missile system and Tomahawk land attack cruise missiles.

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With the deployment of the Lincoln Battle Group, the Naval Surface Force will begin an initiative to test the effectiveness of deploying a single ship for 18-months while swapping out crews at six-month intervals. USS Fletcher is leading this two-phased initiative called "Sea Swap."

During a time when the Navy's force structure is stretched increasingly thin by operational requirements around the globe, swapping crews will provide theater commanders with an additional 96 days of forward presence and on-station time. It will also give the Navy the flexibility to accelerate the decommissioning of the other destroyers affected by the experiment, saving the Navy an estimated \$86 million.

While the project is complex, it can be pared down to the most basic details. USS Fletcher will deploy, but only her crew will return in six months. The ship will remain on station, and be successively manned by the crews of USS Kincaid and USS Oldendorf. Prior to manning USS Fletcher, these crews will decommission their own destroyers and fly out to meet the USS Fletcher.

Additional information on Fletcher, Paul Hamilton, Reuben James and HSL 37 are available via links available online at the Navy Region Hawaii website at <www.hawaii.navy.mil>.

Media representatives who would like to cover the ships departures must contact the Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office at 473-2888 by 4 p.m. Aug. 1 to arrange transportation. For planning purposes only and not for public release, the ships are currently expected to get underway Friday morning between 8 and 11 a.m.

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