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## **USS Chafee to Return Home from Independent Deployment**

**By Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific Public Affairs**

**JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM** - The guided-missile destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90) is scheduled to return home from an independent deployment to the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet areas of operations Dec. 17.

Deployed since May, the crew of more than 350 Sailors conducted presence operations and goodwill activities with partner nations while steaming a total of 42,000 nautical miles and visiting 10 different ports across the Pacific and around South America.

“I couldn’t be more proud of this crew,” said Chafee’s Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Shea Thompson. “They have spent the last seven months performing at a level that has come to define this ship and the ‘Chafee Standard’ -- disciplined, fearless and lethal. This crew can be justifiably proud to have furthered our nation’s strategic goals.”

The "Honey Dippers" of Detachment 6 of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 37 was embarked aboard Chafee throughout the deployment and is scheduled to return home to Marine Corps Base Hawaii Dec 16. Detachment 6 embarked two MH-60R Seahawk helicopters that supported Chafee’s role in multi-national exercises and added extended search and communications capability to her security operations.

In a joint effort with the U. S. Coast Guard and partner nation law enforcement officials, Chafee supported the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) and provided a strong security presence throughout Oceania. Chafee conducted 19 boardings of U.S. and foreign fishing vessels to ensure compliance with U.S., partner nation, and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission laws and regulations. This effort involved Chafee patrolling the high seas and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ’s) of the Republic of Marshal Islands and Federated States of Micronesia.

Chafee also took part in exercises Talisman Sabre 2015, UNITAS PAC and LANT 2015, as well as other bilateral exercises with the Chilean, Brazilian, Japanese, Mexican and Peruvian navies, while serving as part of the George Washington Carrier Strike Group. Chafee also escorted USS George Washington (CVN 73) during her Southern Sea deployment around South America and through the Straits of Magellan before the carrier’s return to Norfolk, Va. this month.

UNITAS is the U.S. Navy's longest running annual multinational maritime exercise. UNITAS, which means "unity" in Latin, is a demonstration of the U.S. commitment to the region and to the value of the strong relationships forged between our partner militaries.

Chafee Sailors engaged local communities through community relations events in Australia, Peru, Chile and Brazil. Projects included spending time with children in special care hospitals, refurbishing schools and building playgrounds.

The Officers and crew achieved numerous new career milestones to include the following: 22 reenlistments, 11 Surface Warfare Officer and 95 Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist qualifications, and 17 new Officer of the Deck letters achieved.

Along the way, Chafee also set a new world record for refueling at sea as she received 205,292 gallons of fuel from USS George Washington during a four hour alongside in August. Chafee would go on to conduct four more refueling operations with the carrier for a total time of 12 hours alongside.

Chafee also executed a variety of diplomatic tasking where she hosted several foreign naval VIPs, dignitaries, and a U.S. Congressional delegation. The highlight of the engagements was the special visit by U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands, Timothy Broas, and Prime Minister of Curacao, Ben Whiteman while the ship was on a brief stop in Curacao. Ambassador Broas was treated to a luncheon by the Ney Award finalist galley staff before touring Chafee and getting the chance to learn about the ship's capabilities from crewmembers.

Ultimately, the ship transited through the Straits of Magellan and navigated home via the 50 nautical mile stretch through the lakes and locks of the Panama Canal.

USS Chafee is named for Gov. John L. H. Chafee, who served in both the Enlisted and Officer ranks in the United States Marine Corps during WWII and Korea before serving as Secretary of the Navy, Senator and two-term Governor of the state of Rhode Island.

Homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Chafee is a multi-mission ship with strike warfare, anti-air warfare, anti-submarine warfare and anti-surface warfare capabilities designed to operate independently or with an associated strike group. This is the ship's first operational deployment since 2012.

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***Credentialed media interested in covering the ships' arrival are requested to contact the Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office at [john.hageman@navy.mil](mailto:john.hageman@navy.mil); 473-3788 or c590-8363 no later than 2 p.m. Dec. 16. Media will be met at the Pass and ID parking lot adjacent to the Nimitz Gate at 8:00 a.m., to be escorted onto the base.***