



J03 Brenda Diggs photo

USS Fletcher (DD 992) returns to Bravo 25 at Naval Station Pearl Harbor and is welcomed by local hula-dancers Saturday. The ship was returning from a six-month deployment to the Indian ocean/Persain Gulf.

# Homecoming: Paul Hamilton, Crommelin, Fletcher come home after six-month deployment

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the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) Carrier Battle Group.

Fletcher and Crommelin were joined in the deployment by two SH-60B Seahawk helicopters each, and 44 personnel from Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron (Light) 37 (HSL 37), Detachments Three and Seven, based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

During Paul Hamilton's homecoming, Sailors screamed out to family and friends, many with roses and candy in hand. The ship pulled in just in time for Valentine's Day to welcome its more than excited families.

"I feel great, happy, excited!" said Eva Edwards, wife of Chief Warrant Officer Percy Edwards of USS Crommelin. "He has been away for six-months and everyday we e-mailed - sometimes twice a day," added Edwards. "It's Valentines Day, so with our daughter, the three of us are going to have dinner at home tonight and spend some time [together]."

Jacqueline Cox and her daughter, seven month old Imogenne, anxiously awaited the ship's arrival. Jacqueline's husband, Quartermaster 3rd Class Michael Cox, also a Crommelin Sailor had left on the deployment when Imogenne was only six weeks old.

"It was hard. I have been through so much, said Jacqueline. "Imogenne was hospitalized twice - it was hard. I am so glad he is home."

Blushing brand new dad, Michael was overjoyed to be back and managed to cover his top most feelings during his emotional reunion with his family.

"It's good to be home. It has been so long. I have a brand new baby - it feels good!"

Sonar Technician Surface 2nd Class David Delano has been on Crommelin since January 1996. He has completed three WESTPACs,

a Southern Pacific (SOUTH-PAC) cruise and two Joint Task Force Exercises (JTFX) and is headed next to an Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) base in San Diego.

"The deployment was a lot of fun. I was on the Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) team so we stayed pretty busy in the gulf," said Delano.

Sara Delano, David's wife of six and a half years, is overjoyed that her husband is through with shipboard life.

"You never get use to it and it gets harder every time," said Sara. "But [for this deployment] I was home in California with family, so time went by quickly."

Many Crommelin families rushed to the brow of the ship as anxious Sailors disembarked.

Several women with young children stressed how hard it was without their husband's support for the last six months.

Michelle Taylor, wife of Yeoman 2nd Class Dean Taylor, expressed the frustration of her husband missing major events in her daughter Katie's life, such as her first steps and first birthday.

"When your having a stressful day, you can't go and get a hug or cry on their shoulder," said Michelle. "It's one of those things where you can't shut the door and be alone, but you have to keep going."

"The e-mail and letters really help to do that," added Michelle. "The first week Katie cried all of the time, she didn't know where daddy was - and he played with her all of the time - she knew that mommy was upset."

The stress of deployment was a little different for some Fletcher family members.

Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Keith Stevens, from Naval Station Pearl Harbor's Ceremonial Guard detachment, had been used to being the one to go to sea, but not this time. Stevens' wife, Ens. Teresa Stevens took the role of deployed Sailor.

Keith took the role of 'Mr. Mom' when he was left to take care of his two daughters Kala, 10 years old

and Kiara, 1 years old.

"I think every man should experience this at least once," said Keith. "You really start the bonding with your children, especially two girls. It was difficult and scary - it was confusing, but I loved every minute of it," added Keith.

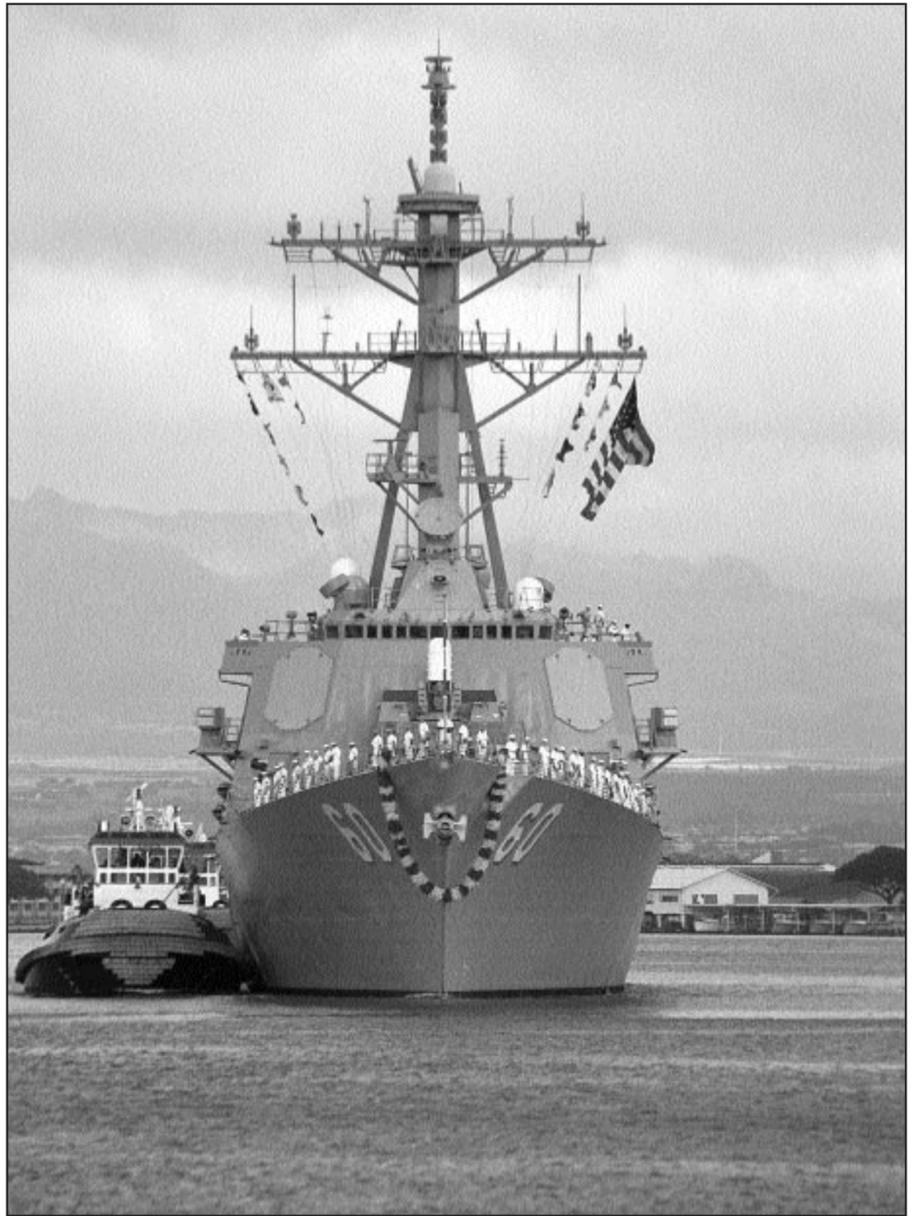
USS Paul Hamilton, an "Arleigh Burke-class" guided missile destroyer, commanded by Cmdr. Dennis O'Meara, is a multi-mission platform designed to conduct simultaneous operations against land, air, surface and submarine targets. The ship can operate independently, or in support of carrier battle groups, surface action groups, amphibious groups and replenishment groups. Paul Hamilton's combat systems center around the Aegis combat system and the SPY-ID, multi-function phased array radar.

USS Crommelin, an "Oliver Hazard Perry-class" frigate is a multi mission platform designed to escort and protect carrier battle groups, amphibious landing groups, underway replenishment groups and convoys. Commanded by Cmdr. Alan C. Westphal, Crommelin is capable of conducting independent operations in support of counter-drug surveillance, maritime interception operations, and bilateral exercises with other nations.

USS Fletcher, a "Spruance-class" destroyer is a versatile, multi-mission ship, fully capable of operating independently and as a unit of carrier battle groups. Cmdr. Dell W. Epperson commands USS Fletcher. The ship is designed primarily for anti-submarine warfare, and has the most advanced underwater detection and fire control systems for surface ships.

USS Fletcher is equipped with the Harpoon anti-ship cruise missile system and Tomahawk land attack cruise missiles.

Over the next month, the three ships will be in a stand down period and will have two separate leave periods. Sailors that do not take leave will help in the basic upkeep of the ships.



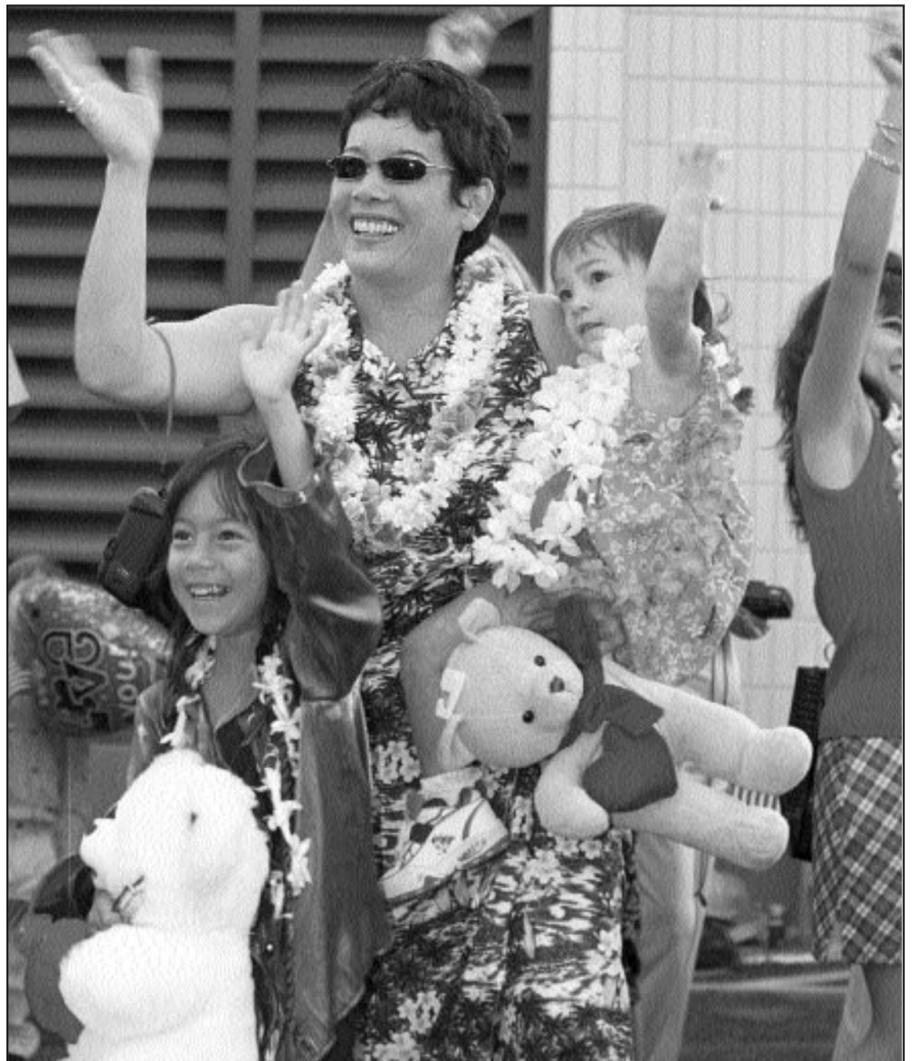
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USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) makes a triumphant return home to Pearl Harbor with its crew members manning the rails, proudly last Wednesday. The ship was returning from a six-month deployment to the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf where they found themselves on station defending themselves against possible terrorist attacks after the USS Cole (DDG 67) incident in Yemen.



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(Above) The Pacific Fleet Band plays tunes pier-side for the homecoming of USS Fletcher (DD 992) and USS Crommelin (FFG 37) Saturday. The ships returned to Pearl Harbor after a six-month deployment to the Indian ocean and Persain Gulf.



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(Above) Teri Rusinski with her daughters Sierra-Dee (right) and Brittany-Jo (left) waves to her husband, Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Frank Rusinski as he arrives home on the USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) last Wednesday after a six-month deployment to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.



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(above) Six-year old Nathan Munson shows off his homemade sign to the arriving Sailors on the USS Paul Hamilton.