

**BE-43**

**ESMERALDA**

**Chilean ship visits Pearl Harbor during sail around the world**

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*Staff Writer*

On early morning Sept. 7, a 21-gun salute sounded off as the Chilean training ship Esmeralda (BE 43), sailed through the Pearl Harbor channel on its way to a four-day port visit to the naval station.

The 371-foot steel-hulled four-masted barquentine, with a 165-foot mast and a total of 31 sails, is the world's second-tallest sailing ship. She is one of the largest sailing vessels afloat, and carries a crew of 271 sailors and 80 cadets.

Hailed as a training ship and commanded by Capt. Gonzalo Lopez Perez, Esmeralda's purpose is to train midshipmen who have just finished a four-year naval academy training program. The midshipmen's fifth year consists of a sail around the world.

In the midst of a 12 port, 10-country voyage, Honolulu served as the sailing ship's fourth visited port.

"This is a seven month trip throughout the South Pacific," said Esmeralda's Public Affairs Officer Lt. Francisco Loyola. "So far since leaving our home

port of Valparaiso, Chile, we have stopped off in Callao, Peru; Acapulco, Mexico and Lahaina, Maui. We arrived at Pearl [Harbor] to do a little fraternity with the Navy. The purpose of this trip is for the crew to practice so they can learn the conditions at sea and be good officers on a ship that is actually powered by sail."

The vessel's name, Spanish for "emerald," honors a warship of the same name captured from Spain in 1818 during Chile's struggle for independence. In 1946, the Spanish Navy ordered the construction of the sailing ship in Cadiz, Spain. However, the ship was badly damaged by fire and abandoned for years before it was completed. Chile acquired the ship in 1952 and completed its construction in 1954.

Esmeralda sailed in Operation Sail (OpSail) events in 1976 and 1986, when it was met with protesters who accused then-President Augusto Pinochet of using it to interrogate dissidents.

Today, the Chilean Navy uses the ship for training. The ship has sailed around the world a number of times, often by way of Cape Horn or the

Magellan Straits. The ship participated in last year's OpSail 2000 and the International Naval Review in New York City. Esmeralda's last visit to Hawaii was in 1993. She has participated in many maritime events around the world and is regarded as a national symbol for Chile.

Esmeralda was open for tours Sept. 7 - 8, allowing service members and their families the chance to see a unique and different kind of foreign ship.

"It's just a fantastic ship," said Lt. Michael Masica of VFA-27, USS Kittyhawk in Japan. "I went to the Naval Academy and didn't have the opportunity to experience anything like this. Our Navy doesn't really have a program like this. In my perspective, just being able to see a nation like Chile that does this is pretty stylish."

Events while the ship was in port included a VIP luncheon, a reception for people of the community, and a wreath laying on the Arizona Memorial.

From Pearl Harbor, Esmeralda will sail on to Japan, South Korea, China, Australia, Easter Island, New Zealand and France.



Lt. Cmdr. Jane Campbell photo

Chilean ship Esmeralda lights up Pearl Harbor at night. The ship and her crew visited Pearl Harbor for four days before sailing on to Tokyo, Japan.



PH2 Kelton Washington photo

Members of Naval Station Security prepare render honors to the Chilean ship with the saluting battery at the north end of Ford Island.



JO2 Erin Tholen photo

A Chilean Navy officer greets guests onboard Esmeralda while open for tours Sept. 9 and 10. Tours were open to all active duty military and Department of Defense employees and gave them a chance to see a unique and different type of foreign ship.

BE-43 Esmeralda (right) sailed into Pearl Harbor Sept. 8 as part of their training cruise. The 371 foot, four masted sailing ship is the second tallest Navy ship in the world.



Lt. Cmdr. Jane Campbell photo



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A midshipman performs maintenance on onboard the the deck of the Chilean training ship Esmeralda. The purpose of the cruise is to train midshipmen who have just finished a four year Naval Academy, their fifth year consisting of a sail around the world.