



USS Russell

returns from deployment

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JO3 Tim Walsh image
Germaine's Luau dancers welcome home to Pearl Harbor USS Russell from deployment.



JO3 Tim Walsh photo

Above: Families gather at the USS Nevada Memorial to offer an early welcome.

Right: After a six-month deployment, returning Sailors embrace loved ones.

JO2 Jim Williams photo



When USS Russell - a ship of heroes homeported at Pearl Harbor - returned home April 19 after a six-month Western Pacific (WESTPAC) deployment, friends and family members greeted the ship's 330 Sailors at the pier.

For some families, the return of Russell's crew was the first meeting between father and child. This was the case for Gunnersmate 1st Class Marcos Daniels who came home to his wife Mary and his brand new baby boy Jalen. Yeoman Seaman Terence Phillips rushed into the arms of his wife Chisa and, for the first time, greeted his new daughter Aaliyah.

"I was fine at first because I went home to be with our family. That made things better until I had to go into the hospital, but I was in the hospital alone. No one could be there with me and that is when I lost it because I was missing Terence so much," said Phillips.

"I had a c-section and I had to do everything myself. Seeing him in her really hurt; it was hard because I was scared that they wouldn't bond and I was upset that he might miss so much," she continued.

Phillips also stated that seeing her husband hold their new little girl was overwhelming and she said the next pregnancy will be "planned to the day" so that he will be home for it.

June Harting waited anxiously on the pier to greet not only her son, Ens. William Harting, but also her husband Ralph.

"My son is coming home from his first voyage at sea and my husband is on board as well. He met the ship at Pago Pago, Samoa for a Tiger cruise. We are just so proud of Will - that he is in the Navy. We salute them all," stated Harting.

The homecoming was a joyful and well-earned return from deployment for the Sailors of USS

Russell. Commanded by Cmdr. Hank Miranda, USS Russell was the first Pearl Harbor ship to deploy after the attacks of Sept. 11. The ship deployed Oct. 25 to enforce United Nations sanctions against Iraq in the Arabian Sea.

That's not all - Russell Sailors had an opportunity to learn firsthand about true heroism. On the night of Dec. 12 (local time), USS Russell rescued four crewmen of a U.S. Air Force B-1B bomber aircraft that crashed in the Indian Ocean, 60 miles north of Diego Garcia.

"I was on the bridge on watch when the B-1B bomber went down. We heard the distress call and we were there in about 45 minutes and pulled the crew out of the water and brought them home. It was really exciting," explained, Operations Specialist 3rd Class (OS3) Stephen Paulsen.

USS Russell Executive Officer (XO) Robert N. Hein Jr. explained that the rescue was just one of a few where all four crew members ejected and all four were rescued.

Hein also stated that the rescue of the B-1B bomber was "very interesting and very difficult".

"They were inside of shoal water (too shallow for the ship to enter without running aground) so we had to send in our RHIB's (Rigged Haul Inflatable Boats) over the horizon so that we couldn't see them because this is the dead of night, not to mention anyone that is familiar with that area knows that it is know shark infested waters," said Hein.

Hein also said that "with all of the fuel in the water and not knowing what kind of explosives were in the water" it made things even more dangerous.

Hein emphasized that despite all of the dangers Russell came through.

"Our teams were ready, they were trained and they did an outstanding job. We couldn't be prouder of them."



JO2 Jim Williams photo

Sailors on the ship wave to loved ones on the pier as USS Russell pulls into Pearl Harbor.



JO3 Tim Walsh photo

Numerous lei were offered up to returning Sailors of USS Russell.



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A father and son reunite after being separated during the Russell's deployment.



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Morale, Welfare and Recreation representatives welcome home Sailors as they depart the ship.