Submarine USS Chicago Returns Home from Final Deployment



Chief Electronics Technician (Navigation) Antonio Vasquez,

assigned to the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Chicago (SSN 721) reunites with his family after the boat returns to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam from deployment in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. *U.S. NAVY / Electronics Technician 2nd Class Leland T. Hasty II*

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Chicago (SSN 721) returned to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam following a seven-month deployment, Nov. 2, 2022, commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in a Nov. 4 release.

It was the submarine's final deployment before decommissioning, which is scheduled to begin in 2023 following 37 years of service.

Chicago departed Pearl Harbor March 28, 2022, for a regularly scheduled deployment, during which the submarine and its crew performed a full spectrum of operations, to include anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare in the Indo-Pacific region.

"I'm extremely proud of not only the Chicago Sailors but the Chicago families and supporters," said Chicago's commanding officer, Cmdr. Andrew Kopacz, from Hartford, Wisconsin. "Being gone from home is a challenge for the crew and we could not have remained focused on the mission without knowing our families were strong back at home. This crew demonstrated the fortitude, resiliency, and enthusiasm that make this country great. We are eager to reunite with our families and enjoy some down time in their company."

Chicago's crew trained to be combat-ready prior to departure and maintained those high standards throughout the deployment.

"The toughness and positive attitude displayed by the entire Chicago crew has been extraordinary," said Master Chief Information Systems Technician (Submarines) Christopher Kyser,

from Warner Robins, Georgia, Chicago's Chief of the Boat. "The work put in by Chicago Sailors to maintain a presence at sea has been impressive. I couldn't be more proud of the work our Sailors have put in over the last seven months to keep the oldest submarine in the force in top shape during her last deployment. Special thanks to all the families for keeping the home front secure and enabling us to accomplish our primary mission. None of this would be possible without your sacrifice."

During the deployment, more than 50 Chicago Sailors became fully qualified in submarines, earning their submarine warfare specialist designation dolphins.

"The most memorable part of deployment has been seeing my junior Sailors qualify for their dolphins," said Torpedoman's Mate 1st Class Devon Schilling, from Sacramento, Calif. "I have been on board Chicago for five years, and I have never been more proud than I am now, seeing the boys I trained turn into men. I am always proud to gain a new brother or sister of the 'fin."

Chicago was commissioned Sept. 27, 1986. Chicago is the thirty-fourth Los Angeles-class submarine and the fourth U.S. Navy ship to be named for the city of Chicago, Illinois. It is 360 feet long with a beam of 33 feet.