USS Benfold Departs U.S. 7th Fleet after 10 years of Forward-Deployed Service



YOKOSUKA, Japan (Sept. 29, 2025) – Sailors assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold (DDG 65) man the rails as the ship departs Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 29, following 10 consecutive years of forward-deployed service in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. Benfold is forward deployed and assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's Largest DESRON and U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force. (U.S. Navy Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Taylor DiMartino)

By Lt. Victor Murkowski, Destroyer Squadron 15 Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold (DDG 65) departed Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 29, following 10 years of forward-deployed service to U.S. 7th Fleet.

Benfold's decade of service was recognized by senior leadership at a farewell ceremony with Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. "Benfold successfully stood the watch in the Western Pacific for 10 years," said Capt. Dave Huljack, commodore, DESRON 15. "This ship leaves with an amazing legacy as a workhorse for the fleet and a stalwart friend to our allies and partners. Over the last decade, Benfold and her crew have executed our nation's tasking with strength and excellence. We will miss Benfold's grit and determination but look forward to her crew's continued success in DESRON 31."

Benfold is scheduled to relocate to Everett, Washington, to support U.S. 3rd Fleet operations. Benfold will also shift from DESRON 15 to the "Ke Koa O Ke Kai" (The Warriors of the Sea) of DESRON 31 after its transit across the international date line.

Benfold arrived in Yokosuka and joined Forward-Deployed Naval Forces – Japan (FDNF-J) in October 2015. During the ship's decade-long tenure, it participated in numerous multilateral maritime exercises, such as: Malabar, Maritime Counter Special Operations Forces Exercise, Pacific Griffin, Valiant Shield, Keen Sword, Annual Exercise, and Resolute Dragon, working alongside allies and partners to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"Through tenacity and teamwork, Benfold's decade assigned to the Western Pacific has allowed our crew to build on the ship's great accomplishments," said Cmdr. Rich Mayer, commanding officer of Benfold. "Benfold is leaving the 7th Fleet family on a high note. Our families will miss Japan, and we will miss sailing alongside one of our nation's strongest allies."

Throughout the tenure, Benfold maintained uncompromised combat readiness, conducting numerous patrols and demonstrating U.S.

commitment to the region.

While assigned to FDNF-J, Benfold earned three Battle Efficiency "Battle E" Awards, the Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Fund Award, the Arleigh Burke Fleet Trophy, the CNO Afloat Safety Award, multiple Retention Excellence Awards, and 10 consecutive Fleet Health Promotion and Wellness, or Green "H," awards. While assigned to DESRON 15, Benfold sailed more than 4 million miles across the Indo-Pacific.

"Operating alongside partners and allies in 7th Fleet has been a highlight for Benfold crewmembers over the past decade," said Mayer. "Our Sailors have made lasting memories, and Benfold's successes are a testament to the U.S. Navy's long-term commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

U.S. 7th Fleet, the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.