USS Higgins, USS Howard Arrive in New Homeport, Yokosuka, Japan



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Howard (DDG 83) arrives at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), Japan Aug. 16 as one of the newest additions to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 71/Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. Howard is assigned to CTF 71/DESRON 15, the Navy's largest forward deployed DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principle surface force. *U.S. NAVY / Ryo Isobe*

YOKOSUKA, Japan – The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers, USS Higgins (DDG 76) and USS Howard (DDG 83) arrived Aug. 16, to their new forward-deployed location in Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, commander, Task Force 71 said in a release.

The forward presence of Higgins and Howard directly supports enduring national security strategic guidance initiatives to posture the most capable units forward in the Indo-Pacific Region. Their addition to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 continues support toward the security of the United States and its allies and partners, including shared strategic interests.

The United States values Japan's contributions to the Indo-Pacific and its long-term commitment and hospitality in hosting U.S. forces forward-deployed there. These forces, along with their counterparts in the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, frequently operate together allowing a rapid response with maritime and joint forces to uphold a rules-based international order that promotes security and well-being.

Higgins and Howard's arrival brings striking power and

operational readiness to maintain a presence in the region, preserve peace and security, and further our maritime partnerships.

“We are excited to have Higgins and Howard join our forward-deployed team,” said Capt. Chase Sargeant, commander, Task Force (CTF) 71. “These two ships will be an integral part of the 7th Fleet team for years to come.”

Higgins is a Flight II destroyer with ballistic missile defense capabilities and Howard is a Flight IIA destroyer capable of embarking two MH-60 variant helicopters with improved ballistic-missile defense, anti-air, and surface warfare capabilities.

“These destroyers are some of the most capable ships our Navy has to offer,” added Sargeant. “Adding them to our forward deployed forces is a clear signal of our continuing commitment to our partners and allies, and our mutual commitment to maintaining stable regional maritime security.”

Sailors and their family members received relocation briefings and support, to include the current Commander Naval Forces Japan COVID-19 mitigation measures all service members and their families are expected to adhere to. These measures ensure the United States Navy is doing its part to stop the spread of the corona virus and protect Sailors, their families and the local community.

As the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet employs 50 to 70 ships and submarines across the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans. U.S. 7th Fleet routinely operates and interacts with 35 maritime nations while conducting missions to preserve and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific region.