

OPNAV Report Symbol 5750-1  
Command Serial Number:  
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Classification (when filled in): UNCLASSIFIED

## Command Operations Report

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This report is **required** by commands listed in **SNDL Parts 1 & 2** and all operational **Task Forces, Groups and Units** temporarily established to meet operational requirements.

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The report format is divided into six sections: Command Data, Commander's Assessment, Chronology and Narrative, Supporting Reports, Published Documents, and Photographs. Required information is identified in specific sections of the form. See instructions appendices for assistance in compiling and on submitting this form and any attachments.

Electronic documents should be in a Microsoft Office format (Word, Excel, Power Point, or Access), HTML, PDF, JPG, GIF or plain text. Documents in electronic format are to be submitted via e-mail or on CD-ROM as explained at the end of this form. It is unnecessary to convert non-electronic documents to electronic format. List any enclosures that are not electronic and submit in hardcopy in the same manner as a CD-ROM. Photographs submitted electronically should be in JPG, TIFF or GIF format.

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### 1. Command Data (Boxes will expand as information is typed)

Name of your Command or Organization: USS LASSEN (DDG 82)

Unit Identification Code (UIC), per the SNDL: 21956

Name and Rank of Commander/Commanding Officer/Officer in Charge:

Last: CHEKOURAS First: THOMAS M.I.: G Rank: CDR

Date Assumed Command: 2016-09-13

Mission/Command Employment/Area of Operations: LASSEN is home ported in Mayport, Florida. Under tasking from Commander, Task Force 80, she operates in support of security and stability in the Western-Atlantic, Caribbean, and Central American regions. The mission of LASSEN is to operate in a high-density multi-threat environment as an integral member of a strike or surface action group to include striking targets along hostile shorelines and well inland. In addition, LASSEN provides its own air warfare, surface warfare and anti-submarine warfare and can effectively provide local area protection to underway replenishment groups, amphibious ready groups, and other military units.

Permanent Location (Home Port for deployable units): Yokosuka, Japan until JAN 06. Homeport shifted and conducted a 5-month deployment enroute to new homeport station JUN 06 in Mayport, FL.

Immediate Superior in Command:

Operational:

Commander, Destroyer Squadron FIFTEEN

- JAN 01 – JAN 17

Commander, THIRD Fleet

- JAN 17 – MAR 02

Commander, FOURTH Fleet

- MAR 02 – JUN 03

Commander, TASK FORCE 80

- JUN 04 – DEC 31

Administrative:

Commander, Destroyer Squadron FIFTEEN

- JAN 01 – FEB 23

Commander, Naval Surface Forces FOURTEEN

- FEB 24 – DEC 31

Identify your assigned Task Force/Group/Unit name(s) and mission(s). Include OPLAN(s) and or named operations you participated in during Task Force assignment (if applicable):

Commander, Task Force SEVENTY (CTF 70), Carrier Strike Group FIVE (CSG 5), mission in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region (JAN 01 – JAN 17)

Commander, THIRD Fleet, mission in support of strengthening relations with Mexico and the Central American regions. (JAN 17 – MAR 02)

Commander, Task Force EIGHTY (CTF 80), Commander Naval Surface Forces FOURTEEN (COMNAVSURFOR 14), mission in support of security and stability in the Western Atlantic, Caribbean, and Central American regions. (MAR 02 – DEC 31)

Name(s) of Forces, Commands, Ships, Squadrons or Units assigned or under your operational control (if applicable): N/A

Type and number of Aircraft Assigned and Tail Codes, if applicable:

MH-60R, HSM-75, DET 1 (JAN16-FEB16)

MH-60R, HSM-60, DET 1 (FEB16-JUN16)

MH-60R, HSM-60, DET 3 (JUN16-DEC31)

Commands, Detachments or Units deployed on board or stationed aboard as tenant activities (as applicable):

Helicopter Squadron Marine (HSM) 75 Detachment 1 (JAN16-FEB16)

Helicopter Squadron Marine (HSM) 60 Detachment 1 (FEB16-JUN16)

LEDET 102, 104 (MAR03-JUN03)

Helicopter Squadron Marine (HSM) 60 Detachment 3 (JUN16-DEC31)

Number of Personnel Assigned:

Officers: 35 Enlisted: 270 Civilian: 0

Command Point of Contact:

Name: ENS [REDACTED]

Job Title/Office Code: Electrical Officer (ELECTRO), Engineering Training Officer (ETO),  
Command Historian

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Phone number(s): COMM: [REDACTED] | DSN 443-

Command Mailing Address: Unit 100190 Box 1 FPO AA 34091

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## 2. Commander's Assessment

In 2016, LASSEN participated in numerous multinational exercises, port visits, essential certifications, maintaining a high level of efficiency and professionalism. LASSEN is a proven, combat-ready ship who continues to demonstrate all her might during both strike group and independent operations. At the same time, LASSEN's crew maintained high morale and spirit that catapulted her through a dynamic and challenging year. With the execution of multiple exercises and highly successful inspections while simultaneously completing a home port shift across three major AORs, LASSEN has proven her versatility and sustainability.

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## 3. Chronology

### MISSION

Inpt Yokosuka, Japan – Leave/Upkeep  
U/W Enroute to Mayport, FL via C4F

### SEA DATES

01JAN-06JAN  
06JAN

### DAYS UNDERWAY

06JAN-11JAN (5 days)

Inpt Saipan	11JAN-13JAN	
COMREL – Saipan	10 JAN	
U/W Enroute to Hawaii	14JAN	14JAN-22JAN (8 days)
RAS with AMELIA EARHART	15JAN	
Chopped C7F to C3F	17JAN	
Inpt Hawaii	22JAN-25JAN	
COMREL – Hawaii	23JAN	
U/W Enroute to San Diego, CA	26JAN	26JAN-01FEB (7 days)
Inpt San Diego, CA – Leave/Upkeep	01FEB-12FEB	
U/W IVO SoCal OPAREA	13FEB	13FEB-22FEB (10 days)
RAS with GUADALUPE	12FEB	
RAS with GUADALUPE	22FEB	
U/W Enroute to Cabo San Lucas, MX	22FEB	22FEB-24FEB (3 days)
Anchored at Cabo San Lucas, MX	24FEB-27FEB	
Change of Squadrons from CDS 15 to CNSF 14	24FEB	
COMREL – Cabo San Lucas, MX	25FEB	
U/W Enroute to C4F AOR	28FEB	28FEB-02MAR (4 days)
Inchopped C4F AOR	02MAR	
C4F – Panga #1 Captured	02MAR (700kilos \$25M and 3 detainees)	
BSF Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala	04MAR	
U/W Enroute C4F AOR	04MAR	04MAR-12MAR (8 days)
C4F – Panga #2 Captured	05MAR (625kilos, \$25M and 6 detainees)	
C4F – Disruption	07MAR (700kilos)	
C4F – Interdiction	10MAR (684kilos, 3 detainees)	
BSF El Salvador	12MAR	
U/W Enroute C4F AOR	12Mar	12MAR-23MAR (11 days)
C4F- Interdiction	14MAR (1080kilos, 3 detainees)	
C4F – Interdiction	18MAR(299kilos, 3 detainees)	
C4F – Interdiction	19MAR(1 detainee)	
C4F – Interdiction	22MAR(1014kilos)	
BSF Acajutla, El Salvador	23MAR	
U/W Enroute to C4F AOR	23MAR	23MAR-31MAR (8 days)
Detainee Transfer		
C4F – Interdiction	24MAR(600kilos)	
C4F – Interdiction	28MAR(535kilos)	
Inpt VNB, Panama	31MAR-04APR	
COMREL Panama City, Panama	02APR	
U/W Enroute to C4F AOR	04APR	04APR-13APR (9 day)
At Sea Transfer W/ USCG Vigilant	05APR (700kilos, \$25M, 3 detainees)	
At Sea Transfer W/ ECU PC Isla Marchena	08APR (700kilos, \$25M, 3 detainees)	
C4F – Disruption	10APR(633kilos)	
C4F – Disruption	10APR(12 large cans destroyed)	
BSF Acajutla, El Salvador	13APR	
U/W Enroute C4F AOR	13APR	13APR-23APR (10 days)
BSF Acajutla, El Salvador	23APR	
U/W Enroute C4F AOR	23APR	23APR-30APR (7 days)
C4F – Interdiction	27APR(708kilos, 3 detainees)	
C4F – Interdiction	27APR(901kilos, 3 detainees)	
Inpt VNB, Panama	30APR-4MAY	

COMREL Panama City, Panama	31APR	
U/W Enroute to C4F AOR	04MAY	04MAY-11MAY (7 days)
C4F – Interdiction	04MAY(1090kilos, 4 detainees)	
C4F – Interdiction	08MAY(420kilos, 66lbs Marijuana, 3 detainees)	
Inpt VNB, Panama	11MAY-15MAY	
C4F – Interdiction	11MAY(516kilos, 3 detainees)	
C4F – Interdiction	13MAY(480kilos, 3 detainees)	
U/W Enroute Cartagena, Colombia	15MAY	15MAY-18MAY (3 days)
Panama Canal Transit	15MAY-16MAY	
Inpt Cartagena, Colombia	18MAY-22MAY	
COMREL Cartagena, Colombia		
U/W Enroute Guantanamo Bay, Cuba	22May	
Inpt Guantanamo Bay, Cuba	23MAY-24MAY	
U/W Enroute Jamaica	24MAY	24MAY-27MAY (3 days)
Inpt Ocho Rios, Jamaica	27MAY-31MAY	
COMREL Jamaica		
U/W Enroute Ft. Lauderdale, FL	31MAY	31MAY-3JUN (4 days)
Inpt Ft. Lauderdale, FL	3JUN-4JUN	
U/W Enroute Mayport, FL	4JUN	4JUN – 6JUN (3 days)
Tiger Cruise	4JUN-6JUN	
Inpt Mayport FL	6JUN-22AUG	
POM Leave	6JUN-8JUL	
CMAV	20JUN-19AUG	
TSRA	25JUL-12AUG	
U/W Enroute Nassau, Bahamas	23AUG	23AUG-2SEP (10 days)
Inpt Naussau, Bahamas	2SEP-6SEP	
COMREL Bahamas		
U/W Enroute Mayport, FL	6SEP	6SEP-10SEP (4 days)
Inpt Mayport, FL	10SEP-13SEP	
Change of Command	13SEP	
U/W Enroute to Black Dart Op Area	14SEP	14SEP-22SEP (11 days)
Black Dart		
Inpt Mayport, FL	22SEP-27SEP	
U/W Enroute to TFEX OP Area	27SEP	27SEP-29SEP (2 days)
TFEX 16-2 OPFOR	29SEP-3OCT	
U/W Enroute to IDR (HUR Matthew Relief) OP Area	3OCT	3OCT-6OCT (3 days)
RAS w/ USNS SUPPLY	3OCT	
IDR OP Area	6OCT	6OCT-9OCT (3 days)
U/W Enroute Mayport, FL	9OCT	9OCT-11OCT (2 days)
RAS w/ USNS SUPPLY	9OCT	
Inpt Mayport, FL	11OCT-7NOV	
CMAV	17OCT-04NOV	
U/W Enroute New Orleans, LA	7NOV	7NOV-10NOV (3 days)
Inport New Orleans, LA	10NOV-13NOV	
COMREL New Orleans		
U/W Enroute to Mayport (TORPEX)	13NOV	13NOV-19NOV (6 days)
Inport Mayport, FL	19NOV	
U/W DLQs	19NOV	19NOV-23NOV (4 days)
Inport Mayport, FL	23NOV-30NOV	

U/W 17-1 OPFOR  
 Inport Mayport, FL  
 U/W GHWBSCG OPFOR  
 Inport Mayport, FL  
 Cumulative Days Away from Homeport: 231

30NOV	30NOV-7DEC (8 days)
7DEC-DEC9	
9DEC-19DEC	9DEC-19DEC (10 days)
19DEC-JAN1	

## Acronyms

ACU - Aircraft Control Unit  
 AIS – Automated Information System  
 ATFP – Anti-Terrorism Force Protection  
 ATG – Afloat Training Group  
 AVCERT – Aviation Facilities Certification  
 AW/SW/EW – Air Warfare Surface Warfare  
 Electronic Warfare  
 BSH – Basic Ship Handling  
 CIWS – Close-In Weapons System  
 CMAV – Continuous Maintenance Availability  
 COMREL – Community Relations  
 CRY/INT – Cryptology Intelligence  
 CSICP – Cyber Security Inspection and  
 Certification Program  
 DTE – Detect to Engage  
 E – Engineering  
 ECS – East China Sea  
 EKMS – Electronic Key Management System  
 ERAT – Engineering Readiness Assessment Team  
 EXPsaf – Explosive Safety  
 FDNF – Forward Deployed Naval Forces  
 FST-J – Fleet Synthetic Training - Joint  
 HSM – Helicopter Squadron Maritime  
 INPT – Inport

IRAT – INSURV Readiness Assessment Team  
 INSURV – Inspection and Survey  
 ISATT – Integrated Ship Air Team Trainer  
 LTT – Learning Training Team  
 MASOC – Maritime Air Support Operations  
 Center’s  
 MOB – Mobility  
 N – Navigation  
 NSFS – Naval Surface Fire Support  
 PAC – Pre-Action Calibration  
 PVST – Port Visit  
 RAP – Recognized Air Picture  
 RAS – Replenishment at Sea  
 READ-E – Readiness Evaluation  
 S – Seamanship  
 SAG – Surface Action Group  
 SAR – Search and Rescue  
 SAU – Search and Attack Unit  
 SCAT - Small Caliber Action Team  
 SCS – South China Sea  
 TYCOM – Type Commander  
 ULT – Unit Level Training  
 U/W – Underway  
 USW – Undersea Warfare

## Narrative

1. Operational Effectiveness. LASSEN demonstrated her capability and readiness to perform every mission, the first time every time. Whether it was conducting multi-national exercises or executing material inspections, LASSEN set the highest standard of excellence:

a. LASSEN executed Homeport Shift orders from SEVENTH Fleet January 2016, including safely transferring over 330 personnel, and 65 families from Yokosuka, JP to Mayport, FL over a 6 month deployment.

b. After Chopping into THIRD Fleet, she seamlessly integrated with Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 102 during integration training, Foxhunt 2016. After passing with flying colors she chopped into FOURTH Fleet AOR to conduct EASTPAC Counter narcotics missions during Operation MARTILLO, successfully apprehending 39 alleged drug smugglers and 11,000 Kilograms of controlled substances worth over \$376 million dollars.

c. After transitioning to her new homeport LASSEN participated in Black Dart 2016 in the Gulf of Mexico, in support of CTF 80 tasking including implementing proof of concept for five variants of UAVs in eight different real world scenarios, pre Despite of the complicated LINK/C4I architecture for the event, LASSEN performed duties as ADU linking with over seven units integrated flawlessly with, USAF, and USA Units during the dynamic and tactically challenging scenarios.

d. LASSEN consistently excelled in all FOURTH Fleet and CTF 80 taskings, training exercises and patrols. On short notice, LASSEN went from an underway training environment where, she excelled as OPFOR ship to around and steaming south through Hurricane Matthew in support of possible Haiti and Bahamas HA/DR Operations for 2-week real world tasking in support of CTF 80 priorities.

2. Exercises. LASSEN demonstrated her capability and readiness to perform every mission, the first time every time. Whether it was conducting multi-national exercises or executing material inspections, LASSEN set the highest standard of excellence:

a. LASSEN consistently excelled in all FOURTH Fleet tasking, training exercises and patrols throughout the C4F operating area.

b. LASSEN participated in Black Dart 2016 with Carrier Strike Group 12 in the Gulf of Mexico.

c. LASSEN Participated in TFEX 16-2.

d. LASSEN provided NAVSEA with torpedo data after 10 evasion runs during TORPEX.

e. LASSEN participated in OPFOR exercises with GHWBCSG during C2X.

f. LASSEN participated in OPFOR exercises during TFEX 17-1.

3. Warfare Readiness. LASSEN showcased her warfare readiness during Black Dart 2016, TFEX 2016, and while operating with FOURTH FLEET in part of counter drug operations with the Coast Guard.

4. Real-world operations. As the most mission-ready destroyer in U.S. Fleet Forces, LASSEN has met every commitment and maintained continuous readiness while excelling in real-world operations.

a. FOURTH Fleet Presence. During transit in theater or exercises LASSEN continuously remained combat ready and performed at the highest levels. LASSEN conducted routine patrols of the OP MARTILLO area, covering the Eastern and Western shores of Central America and much of the South Western Caribbean and Northern South American region.

b. MH-60R Integration. LASSEN completed Integrated Ship Air Team Trainer (ISATT), successfully qualifying primary and secondary air crews for 3 squadrons. With the combined

efforts of LASSEN and HSM-60 Detachment Three, and HSM-75, LASSEN utilized COMSEC, EKMS, LINK, and HAWKLINK to become qualified to conduct real-world integrated operations. Throughout ASW exercises in 2016 the teamwork of LASSEN and all three detachments proved the capabilities and enhanced the tactics the Romeo helicopter brings to the Navy.

c. Port Visits: LASSEN conducted Port Visits to Saipan; Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; San Diego, California; Cabo San Lucas, Mexico; Panama; Cartagena, Columbia; Jamaica; Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; the Bahamas; and New Orleans, Louisiana. During all port visits, LASSEN conducted various community relations events to aid and assist the local population. LASSEN sailors upheld “Liberty is a Mission” standards to mitigate any possible incidents.

## 5. Community Relations Projects.

### a. Saipan:

10 JAN – LASSEN Sailors conducted a meet and greet with representatives from the Mayor’s Office. Sailors were interviewed by local newspaper on trash removal and the impact of community service on the local area. Sailors worked with local workers to remove and separate trash from one home decimated by a typhoon. The COMREL resulted in a positive impact on community relations with Saipan locals and strengthened the relationship between Saipan and the Navy.

### b. Honolulu, Hawaii:

23 JAN – LASSEN Sailors were invited to help break down Food Bank promotional items. They joined with local workers to separate and set up future food bank promotional campaign to raise awareness and collect food for the thousands of homeless on the island.

### c. Cabo San Lucas, MX:

25 FEB – Sailors worked with the Mexican Navy and the Mexican Agency for Child Welfare to provide 21 wheel chairs donated by USNORTHCOM to personnel in need. Also, hygiene items were donated through Project Handclasp for families in need. The COMREL resulted in a positive impact on community relations with Cabo San Lucas locals and strengthened the outlook towards the U.S. and Mexican Navies.

### d. Panama City, Panama:

02 APR - Sailors worked with Presidential Protective Service (SPI) to remove and replace 200ft of hurricane fencing around Cosecha de Amistad School. Project Handclasp items such as school supplies, hygiene products, and gym gear were distributed to local families. The COMREL resulted in a positive impact on community relations with Panama locals and strengthened the relationship with the U.S. Navy and Panamanian Department of Education.

### e. Panama City, Panama:

31 APR - Sailors used rakes, shovels, and machetes to remove weeds and debris from a back area that was overrun. Project Handclasp items such as school supplies, hygiene products, and gym gear were distributed to local families. COMREL resulted in a positive impact on community



relations with Panama locals and strengthened outlook towards the U.S. Navy and Panamanian Department of Education.

f. Cartagena, Colombia:

19 MAY – Sailors set up a tent and hosted a reception on the flight deck with Cartagena’s Mayor, as well as Colombian Navy personnel. CMC along with crew members were in attendance.

g. Ocho Rios, Jamaica

28 MAY-Sailors used rakes, shovels, and machetes to remove weeds, small trees and debris from a back area that was overrun. Project Handclasp items were donated to the Home Director. The COMREL resulted in a positive impact on community relations with Jamaican locals and strengthened the outlook towards the U.S. Navy.

h. Nassau, Bahamas:

3 SEP - During a Nassau, Bahamas port visit, 26 LASSEN Sailors conducted a community relations project at the Bahamas National Council for Disability. Chargè d’Affaires to Bahamas Lisa Johnson appreciated LASSEN for partaking in a community relations project, fostering relationships and strengthening ties with the local community. Sailors worked with locals to clear debris, remove trees and limbs, and paint the facility. The COMREL resulted in a positive impact on community relations with Bahamian locals and strengthened outlook towards the U.S. Navy. After the clearing the grounds, LASSEN Sailors donated Project handclasp items such as school supplies, 2 bicycles, gym clothes and various hygiene products to The Nazareth Centre.

i. New Orleans, Louisiana

12 NOV – During a port visit to New Orleans, Louisiana, 30 officers and crew took part in the Veterans Day Ceremony at the WWII museum, representing the ship during the holiday. LASSEN also took part in the Victory Ball celebration. In addition to her off ship public affairs, LASSEN also hosted hundreds of civilians onboard in tours lead by Junior Officers and the Chief’s Mess. Tour satisfaction and turnout was high, and LASSEN was thanked continuously for sharing some of Navy Life with the locals of New Orleans.

6. Change of Command. LASSEN held a change of command ceremony SEP 13, while moored in home port Mayport, Florida. As the ship's company and invited guests looked on, CDR. Robert Francis was relieved by CDR. Thomas Chekouras during the traditional ceremony held pier-side at Mayport, FL.

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#### **4. Supporting Reports (Refer to specific guide for Ship/Shore/Aviation or Fleet Command)**

N/A

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## 5. Published Documents

- (1) USS Lassen Departs Seventh Fleet for Homeport Change
- (2) USS Lassen Enters Fourth Fleet Area of Operation
- (3) USS Lassen Shakes Up Fitness
- (4) USS Lassen Celebrates Women's History Month
- (5) Lassen Sailors Lend Wheels to Mexican Citizens
- (6) Lassen Arrives in New Homeport
- (7) USS Lassen Awarded Prestigious Spokane Trophy
- (8) USS Lassen Carries Out Change of Command
- (9) USS Lassen Visits New Orleans

Welcome Aboard Materials:

- (10) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
- (11) Commanding Officer's Command Philosophy

Command Websites:

- (1) <https://www.facebook.com/ussslassen>
  - (2) <http://www.navy.mil/local/ddg82/>
  - (3) <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ussslassen>
- 

## 6. Photographs

- (1) Commanding Officer – CDR Thomas Chekouras
  - (2) Executive Officer – CDR Ryan Ventresca
  - (3) Command Master Chief – CMC Robert Beachy
  - (4) Air Officer – LCDR [REDACTED]
  - (5) Combat Systems Officer – LT [REDACTED]
  - (6) Weapons Officer – LT [REDACTED]
  - (7) Chief Engineer – LT [REDACTED]
  - (8) Supply Officer – LT [REDACTED]
  - (9) Operations Officer – LT [REDACTED]
  - (10) Navigator – LTJG [REDACTED]
  - (11) Public Affairs Officer – ENS [REDACTED]
- 

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\* The attention line should read **Ships History** for all ships, **Aviation History** for all air/aviation commands, and **Operational Archives** for all other commands.

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- Aviation: [aviationhistory@navy.mil](mailto:aviationhistory@navy.mil) COM 202-433-3224; DSN 94-288-3224
- Fleet and Shore Commands: [archives@navy.mil](mailto:archives@navy.mil) COM 202-433-3224; DSN 94-288-3224

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## USS LASSEN DEPARTS YOKOSUKA ON FINAL 7TH FLEET PATROL

From Task Force 70 Public Affairs

Posted January 5, 2016

**YOKOSUKA, Japan** - The Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) departed Yokosuka, Japan, after nearly 10 years in the Forward Deployed Naval Forces, Jan. 6.

She will conduct her last patrol in the western Pacific before heading to her new homeport of Mayport, Fla.

“Lassen’s performance in the 7th Fleet was beyond expectations,” said Capt. Christopher Sweeney, commander Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. “Her ability to support the mission improved our relationships with key allies and became an integral part of DESRON’s presence in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.”

Lassen is one of the destroyers assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 and Carrier Strike Group 5. Her time forward deployed was highlighted by several significant accomplishments in the Indo-Asia Pacific.

“Lassen has provided support for DESRON and Carrier Strike Group 5 for a long time,” said Cmdr. Robert Francis, commanding officer of Lassen. “I’m proud of the accomplishments of our Sailors that have served in 7th Fleet on such a great ship and I’m looking forward to what is to come after the homeport change.”

In March of 2010, Lassen aided in the salvage and recovery of the Republic of Korea Ship (ROKS) Cheonan after it sank off the coast of the Republic of Korea. Later that year Lassen participated in the Invincible Spirit exercise conducted with the Republic of Korea Navy.

Lassen was the first ship to arrive in the Leyte Gulf, Republic of the Philippines, in the fall of 2013 to aid in Operation Damayan after Typhoon Haiyan caused damage to the area. Lassen acted as a fueling station for the helicopter squadrons that aided the remote villages affected.

Lassen has played a role in several different exercises during her deployments.

“Our forward-deployed ships, like Lassen, play an important role in fostering relations with our allies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific,” said Rear Adm. John D. Alexander, Battle Force 7th Fleet. “It’s the mission of our ships to strengthen stability and security of this region.”

In 2006, Lassen participated in her first Annual Exercise (AnnualEx) the largest bilateral exercise conducted in 7th Fleet, and continued the participation throughout her time in

Japan. She has also participated Multi-Sail, a DESRON 15-led exercise designed to test interoperability and combat capabilities.

In 2010 Lassen participated in a number of exercises including, Foal Eagle, a bilateral Field Training Exercise with the ROKN, Malabar, a trilateral exercise conducted with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Indian Navy, Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), a bilateral exercise, Invincible Spirit, and Keen Sword, bilateral exercises with the ROKN.

During her last deployment in 2015, Lassen continued her participation in Foal Eagle, CARAT, Multi-Sail and AnnualEx 16. She also hosted a group of midshipmen from the Naval Academy during their summer program.

“I’m honored to take charge of this outstanding crew,” said Francis. “This upcoming tour before the homeport change will provide new opportunities for Lassen and her Sailors.”

Along with continued participation in exercises, Lassen fosters relationships that demonstrate the commitment the United States has to the region through port visits to Donghae, Republic of Korea, Bali, Indonesia and Nagasaki, Japan, Melbourne, Australia, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia and a number of others during her time in Seventh Fleet.

Often, the Sailors aboard Lassen had the opportunity to participate in community relations (COMREL) projects such as during the multiple visits to Vladivostok, Russia, to foster relations with the Russian Navy, Sailors participated in celebration events and visits to a children’s medical ward and a center for at-risk youth.

During her port visit in 2010 to Goa, India, Sailors renovated a primary school. The Sailors painted a number of classrooms and interacted with the staff and students.

Lassen has visited Busan, Republic of Korea, many times during her deployments, but one particular port visit in 2010 gathered some attention when the Lassen Sailors participated in basketball and soccer games with members from the Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy. The Lassen Sailors were also treated to Korean barbeque by the ROK Sailors.

Replacing Lassen in the spring is the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Barry (DDG 52). Barry will join 7th Fleet as a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) capable destroyer. She brings the newest Aegis combat system, Baseline 9.C, to 7th Fleet and the capability to fire all Vertical Launch System (VLS) ordnance, including the newest missiles, RIM-161 Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) and RIM-161 Standard Missile 6 (SM-6). Barry brings more advanced Link capabilities including Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC) to aid interoperability and security in the Indo-Asia-Pacific.

Lassen departs Yokosuka for Mayport with years of experience to use in her new homeport.

## USS Lassen Enters 4th Fleet Area of Operations

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Story Number: NNS160303-02Release Date: 3/3/2016 8:50:00 AM

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Huey D. Younger Jr., U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command & U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN (NNS) -- Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) arrived in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations to begin conducting counter illicit trafficking operations in support of Operation Martillo, March 2.

Operation Martillo (Spanish for "hammer") is a U.S., European and Western Hemisphere partner-nation effort launched in January 2012 targeting illicit trafficking routes in coastal waters along the Central American isthmus.

U.S. military participation is led by Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South), in support of U.S. Southern Command.

Operation Martillo demonstrates a clear commitment of the Western Hemisphere and European nations to work as partners to counter the spread of transnational criminal organizations, and to protect citizens in Central America from the violence, harm and exploitation created by these criminal networks.

Operation Martillo is an international, interagency operation that includes the participation of 14 countries committed to a regional approach against transnational criminal organizations moving illicit cargo. To date, partner nation efforts have contributed to 57 percent of all disruptions to illicit trafficking and 60 percent of the metric tons captured as part of the Operation Martillo initiative.

"We have been planning and training for this deployment for well over the past year," said Cmdr. Robert Francis, commanding officer, USS Lassen. "The entire crew is thrilled to be a key asset in counter illicit trafficking."

Lassen departed Yokosuka, Japan, Jan. 6, for her new homeport of Mayport, Florida, after serving nearly 10 years as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command's joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations in order to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American regions.

For more news from U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command & U.S. 4th Fleet, visit [www.navy.mil/local/cusns/](http://www.navy.mil/local/cusns/).

## USS Lassen Shakes Up Fitness

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Story Number: NNS160325-20Release Date: 3/25/2016 1:00:00 PM

By Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Michelle Schuh, USS Lassen (DDG 82) Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN (NNS) -- It's another hot day aboard Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82). The sun shines bright over clear eastern Pacific waters as motivated Sailors prepare for the day's Squid Fit challenge organized and hosted by Command Master Chief Robert Beachy.

For many Sailors, this is an opportunity to get outside the skin of the ship to enjoy the ocean view and fresh air, but this quiet moment will not last long. Beachy is pulling out his white board and dry erase marker to write down the day's Squid Fit routine.

When he finishes, he demonstrates each exercise in detail and explains the number of repetitions. Once acquainted with the routine, everyone claims their workout space and prepares for the challenging workout of the day.

Squid Fit is not a small class, usually consisting of 60-70 Sailors. Turnouts have been through the roof so space can become a little scare sometimes. Nonetheless, Lassen Sailors continue to participate, doing their best to maximize the limited space.

Once everyone has found their spot, Beachy turns on his large outdoor speaker. He plays a custom playlist of pumped up rock music. He then turns to the crowd and asks, "Who's ready to rock?"

"We are Master Chief!" is the resounding response as everyone moves to the ready position.

Though many of the routines are designed to only last approximately 11-25 minutes, everyone is able to feel the burn as they push themselves through the exercises. Sweat usually starts to hit the non-skid of the flight deck mere minutes after starting.

Each routine is prepared by Beachy and includes his style of cross fit and functional body movements. Many of the movements are common Navy physical readiness exercises, with just a tad of Beachy flare.

"Quality is key with each movement," said Beachy. "That is why I have modified some of the exercises. These are not your typical push-ups and sit-ups."

Beachy uses Frog ups as his modified sit-up, with emphasis on making sure the shoulders come over the hips. The mountain climbers are also modified by bringing the foot all the way to one's hands.

His favorite go-to for push-ups are hand release push-ups. They emphasize bringing one's chest and hips to the deck, then lifting the hands off the deck in between each push-up.



No routine is the same. Although many of the movements are similar, Beachy makes sure he switches it up.

"The goal is to keep the body guessing," said Beachy. "That is how you're going to get the maximum benefit from these routines."

Once finished with the workout, everyone eagerly rushes to the white board to mark their completed time. Each class brings an opportunity for improvement of each individual and Beachy makes sure to incorporate benchmarks to track that progress.

Even though Beachy provides time to measure individual improvements, his main concern is that each repetition is executed correctly. The goal is to receive maximum benefit.

"It's not about time with these routines," said Beachy. "I don't care if you finish last or if you finish first, as long as you complete the exercises."

Beachy also uses the time as a way to monitor everyone's improvements. This gives him a way to determine the most improved Sailor, appropriately naming them the Squid Fit Warrior of the Week.

Gunners Mate 2nd Class Lucas Weiss was selected as the ship's first Squid Fit Warrior of the Week. He was recognized for shaving approximately four minutes off one of his benchmark workouts. He accomplished this in less than one month of Squid Fit attendance.

"This is a great program that our command has put together for us," said Weiss. "I'm glad that we have this opportunity to work on our fitness with fellow shipmates as added support and motivation."

Squid Fit is offered to the crew every Monday, Wednesday and Friday before dinner.

To bolster fitness awareness even further, Lassen has started its Biggest Loser Challenge, using the Squid Fit program as a baseline for growth. Nutritional classes have been also been incorporated to promote healthier lifestyle choices.

"We started a fitness program that has taken off with more than 20% of the crew participating. That is more than we ever expected," said Cmdr. Robert Francis, commanding officer. "We are taking health and fitness to new heights on board and the results are visible."

Francis is a regular participant of Squid fit and is not afraid to sweat along with the crew.

Lassen is currently underway in support of Operation Martillo, a joint operation with the U.S. Coast Guard and partner nations within the 4th Fleet area of responsibility. Operation Martillo is being led by Joint Interagency Task Force South, in support of U.S.

Southern Command.

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## USS Lassen Celebrates Women's History Month

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Story Number: NNS160325-09Release Date: 3/25/2016 11:04:00 AM

By Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Michelle Schuh, USS Lassen (DDG 82) Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN (NNS) -- Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) celebrated Women's History Month, March 19.

Lassen's Multicultural Committee sponsored the celebration.

Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Electrical) 2nd Class Laura Samano, the first speaker for the event, presented the history of Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), a unit of the U.S. Navy Reserves during World War II.

"By the time World War II ended, more than 8,000 female officers and 75,000 enlisted WAVES had served their country," said Samano. "Their contributions earned the respect of society and laid part of the foundation for the women's movement."

She finished by saying they proved themselves not only to be a vital asset to winning the war, but also proved that a mixed-gender force could be successful.

Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Shanita Syphore spoke next about how Adm. Michelle Howard, the first female to become a four-star admiral and to command a U.S. Navy ship, has inspired her.

"She is a beacon of inspiration for females like me and many others," said Syphore. "She is a driving force that shows us what can be accomplished."

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tonye Golston, the keynote speaker for the celebration, spoke of how women have not only made history, but continue to make history today.

Golston listed females aboard Lassen as examples. Although they may not be in history books yet, they are making history happen every day, she said.

"I have seen many positive changes for women over the years while serving," said Golston. "Women are now in key leadership positions and are shining light on the path for the rest of us. My father always said that obstacles are things you jump over, not live under. I keep that in mind when I think of the obstacles that women have faced and have overcome."

Cmdr. Robert Francis, Lassen's commanding officer, gave the final remarks. He began by giving a brief account of his time in the Navy.

Enlisting in 1988, he was stationed aboard the Spruance-class destroyer USS Paul F. Foster (DD 964), whose crewmembers were all male. He recounted that, while deployed, Foster was to rendezvous with a submarine tender that had women on board.

"You'd think we were going to Mars with all the training on sensitivity that we went through," said Francis. "We were spoken to about how to appropriately behave around a woman. We have come such a long way from that time."

Francis continued to explain how the integration of women into the armed forces and in particular the U.S. Navy has made us a much stronger and professional force.

He went on to state that by opening all professions to women, including combat positions, the Navy has increased the pool of qualified applicants and raised its professionalism.

"My first deployment was 27 years ago, and where are we today?" asked Francis. "Women Sailors now represent 20 percent of the Navy, and I am proud to say that aboard Lassen, that percentage is around 30 percent. One day I hope to see that percentage grow to 50 percent."

Francis and Damage Controlman Fireman Alyssa Marchok closed the event by cutting a cake during a cake-cutting ceremony.

Lassen is currently underway in support of Operation Martillo, a joint operation with the U.S. Coast Guard and partner nations within the 4th Fleet area of responsibility. Operation Martillo is being led by Joint Interagency Task Force South, in support of U.S. Southern Command.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and U.S. 4th Fleet support U.S. Southern Command's joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American regions.

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## **Lassen Sailors Lend Wheels to Mexican Citizens**

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Story Number: NNS160315-25Release Date: 3/15/2016 2:28:00 PM

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Huey D. Younger Jr., USS Lassen Public Affairs

CABO SAN LUCAS, Mexico (NNS) -- Sailors from Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) participated in a community service event in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, Feb. 23.

Twelve Lassen Sailors assembled and distributed 21 wheelchairs donated by the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) during the port visit.

"It was amazing to see the smiles on the faces of those who received the wheelchairs," said Fire Controlman 1st Class Demetrius Allen, Lassen's community relations (COMREL) coordinator. "Those smiles help reinforce part of what we strive to accomplish; to be a force for good and give back to the communities that accept us."

The wheelchairs were donated to 21 locals as selected by the Mexican agency for child welfare, Desarrollo Intergral de la Familia (DIF).

In addition to the wheelchairs, Project Handclasp items were also distributed to the families in attendance, to include school supplies, hygiene products, soccer balls and washcloths.

Project Handclasp is a U.S. Navy program that accepts and transports educational, humanitarian and goodwill material donated by America's private sector on a space-available basis aboard U.S. Navy ships for distribution to foreign nation recipients.

"Many of us got to where we were because someone gave us a helping hand," said Cmdr. Robert Francis, commanding officer of Lassen. "Events like this are our way of giving back to the local community while building enduring friendships."

Lassen departed Yokosuka, Japan, Jan. 6, for her new homeport of Mayport, Florida, after serving nearly 10 years as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces.

She is currently deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of responsibility supporting law enforcement operations.

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## LASSEN ARRIVES IN NEW HOMEPORT

Posted:

Wed, 06/08/2016 - 2:41pm

A decade ago, Lassen participated in her first 7th Fleet Annual Exercise, in 2006; she completed her most recent deployment there late last year. Upon completion of her decade-long assignment with the Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF), the crew and their ship was lauded by Capt. Christopher J. Sweeney, commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15.

“Her ability to support the mission improved our relationships with key allies and became an integral part of the DESRON’s presence in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region,” Sweeney said. “Lassen’s performance in the 7th Fleet was beyond expectations.”

“It was a bitter-sweet moment leaving Yokosuka after being forward deployed there for the past 10 years,” said Cmdr. Robert Francis, Lassen’s commanding officer. “It was an honor to serve as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces during such a pivotal time in our history.”

The guided-missile destroyer’s arrival in Florida completed a 5-month homeport shift which saw her transit the U.S. 7th, 3rd, and 4th Fleet areas of responsibility. In doing so, the Lassen crew traveled more than 27,000 nautical miles in support of theater security operations and responded to emergency and distress calls during international search and rescue events.

En route to Mayport, the ship made port visits to Saipan, Pearl Harbor, San Diego, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, and Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The crew participated in numerous Operation Handclasp community relations projects, establishing or enhancing friendships along the way. They proved to be true ambassadors by consistently displaying professionalism while on liberty or working side-by-side with their hosts.

They also supported joint, counter-illicit trafficking interdiction in both the 3rd and 4th Fleets under “Operation Martillo,” Spanish for “hammer.” The endeavor is a U.S., European and Western Hemisphere partner-nation effort launched in January 2012 targeting illicit trafficking routes in coastal waters along the Central American isthmus. U.S. military participation in Operation Martillo is led by Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South), in support of U.S. Southern Command.

In just three months of operations not routinely supported by an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, Lassen and the embarked U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) law enforcement detachment (LEDET) leveraged the capabilities of partner nations and JIATF-South to complete 18 interdictions, confiscating a total of 11,333kg cocaine and 66 pounds of marijuana. The estimated street value of the seizures is approximately \$226 million. Lassen was also credited with detaining 49 suspected smugglers.

“The counter-illicit trafficking mission was new to all of us, but our collaboration with JIATF-S, USCG District 11, and all the other U.S. Coast Guard, allied and partner nation assets proved critical to our success,” said Francis. “It validated the true capability of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer in executing the counter illicit trafficking mission.”

Lassen was commissioned in 2001 in Tampa, Fla., and is named in honor of the late Cmdr. Clyde Everett Lassen, a Fort Myers, Florida native and UH-2 Sea Sprite helicopter search and rescue pilot who served in the Vietnam War. Lassen was the first naval aviator to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic efforts to rescue two aviators shot down behind enemy lines in North Vietnam, June 19, 1968.

Being homeported in Florida also allows the crew to easily reconnect with the family of the ship’s namesake. Nieces, nephews, and other extended family members of Cmdr. Lassen were on the pier to greet the ship and welcome the Sailors and their families to their new homeport.

## **Spokane Trophy Presented To USS Lassen**

Posted:

Wed, 08/24/2016 - 2:59pm

By Lt.j.g. Adam C. Johnson

USS Lassen Public Affairs Officer

The crew of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) assembled on the flight deck to receive the distinguished Spokane Trophy during a ceremony on Aug. 15.

The Spokane Trophy is an annual award sponsored by the Navy League of the United States Spokane Council and is presented to the U.S. Pacific Fleet's surface ship with the highest level of operational readiness in areas ranging from coordinated air warfare, surface warfare, and undersea warfare operations.

"I must say that I am humbled, honored, and at the same time excited that our ship's name will forever be engraved on the same award as USS Arizona, USS West Virginia, and the many other amazing ships that were recognized for their excellence in surface ship combat systems readiness and warfare operations," said Cmdr Robert Francis, commanding officer of USS Lassen.

During the ceremony, Francis spoke of USS Lassen's remarkable year forward deployed in the Seventh Fleet area of operation, specifically noting the impact the of the crew.

"What made Lassen different and the reason we are standing here today receiving this award is because of the indomitable spirit you displayed in face of adversity; a spirit that fostered team work built on a burning desire to be your best, not only when it mattered, but every single day, for every single task, and for every single mission."

Following his address to the crew, Francis cheerfully introduced Mr. Ivan Urnovitz, Senior Vice President of the Navy League Spokane Council.



“Lassen’s reception of the Spokane Trophy is the equivalent of an Olympic gold medal” said Urnovitz as he reported to the crew the origin and significance of the award.

The Spokane Trophy was established in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt to recognize naval warfighting proficiency. It was originally presented to represent the ship’s in the Atlantic Fleet exclusively. President Roosevelt recognized the rapidly growing presence in the Pacific Fleet and therefore had the award introduced as a competition open to both areas of operation.

The actual trophy, created from 400 ounces of silver, was created by veterans of the Spanish-American War and cost \$1,500. Due to the level of esteem the trophy has gained from the ships who have won the award, it was appraised in excess of \$4 million. The trophy was donated by the Navy League and is kept on permanent display at the Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters building in San Diego.

Urnovitz assured the crew that their service is wholly recognized, not just by the reception of the Spokane Trophy, but by every single member of the Spokane, Washington Council of the Navy League and especially the civilian patrons whose freedom they defend. Urnovitz ended by noting the specific sacrifice each sailor’s family makes every day to support them on the home front.

Commissioned April 21, 2001, USS Lassen is named after the late Cmdr. Clyde Everett Lassen, who was awarded the medal of honor for his rescue of two downed Naval Aviators while piloting a search and rescue helicopter in Vietnam.

Lassen arrived in her new homeport of Mayport, Florida on June 6 after serving nearly 10 years as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces in Yokosuka, Japan. She is now assigned to Commander, Naval Surface Squadron Fourteen.

## USS Lassen Carries Out Change of Command

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Story Number: NNS150514-09Release Date: 5/14/2015 1:00:00 PM

By Lt JG Lauren Chatmas USS Lassen Public Affairs Officer and Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Peter Burghart, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan (NNS) -- The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) held a change of command ceremony May 13, while moored at its forward-deployed home port in Yokosuka, Japan.

As the ship's company and invited guests looked on Cmdr. Michael Smith was relieved by Cmdr. Robert Francis during the traditional ceremony held pier-side at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY). The ceremony was nearly moved inside due to a typhoon brushing near CFAY the day prior, but the weather cleared allowing for the ceremony to go forward as planned.

Reflecting on his experiences on Lassen, Cmdr. Smith remarked, "Here in FDNF we are provided with the best people, the most underway evolutions, the best base support and, the most opportunities to fire our guns and missiles."

Smith was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) from the ceremony's guest speaker Capt. Shan M. Byrne, Commander Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 for his time as Lassen's commanding officer. Smith had commanded the Lassen since December 2013.

According to the MSM award presentation, the Lassen while under Smith's command, proved herself through the most demanding and intensive inspection a ship goes through, Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV). Additionally, during the past 17 months, Lassen has made port calls to several countries in the Western Pacific, including Guam, Donghae, Republic of Korea Okinawa, and Pyongtaek, Republic of Korea.

Cmdr. Smith's next assignment will be at the Joint Staff (JS) Ballistic Missile Defense Asia Pacific Cell in the Pentagon.

During the ceremony, Francis commended Smith on his successful tour and thanked him for turning over a great warship and remarkable crew. "I look forward to guiding the Lassen and her crew as we continue to execute the missions of the Navy and build alliances in the Western Pacific."

Lassen will change homeports from Yokosuka to Mayport, Fla. Following the ship's next patrol this spring.

## Lassen Visits New Orleans for Veterans Day Weekend

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Story Number: NNS161117-15Release Date: 11/17/2016 12:57:00 PM

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy Schumaker, Navy Public Affairs Support Element  
East Det. Southeast

NEW ORLEANS (NNS) -- Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) visited New Orleans Nov. 10 to celebrate Veterans Day weekend in the city.

The crew of nearly 300 Sailors participated in various formal engagements, community relations events, and took in the sights while in port. They took part in a Veterans Day ceremony at the National World War II Museum in which Cmdr. Thomas Chekouras, Lassen commanding officer, was a featured speaker. After the ceremony, he expressed appreciation and pride in being part of the event.

"I felt honored to speak on behalf of the Lassen crew at the World War II museum on Veterans Day," said Chekouras. "This is an incredible crew, and I look forward to going to work every day because of them. I'm truly honored and humbled to be their commanding officer."

Chekouras also expressed admiration for the host city.

"New Orleans is such a fantastic city; it has so much culture that is indicative of its interesting and eclectic history, and there's beautiful architecture and people from all walks of life," said Chekouras. "The stories I've heard about the wonderful people and music of New Orleans are true."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Hannah Connors, a native of the New Orleans area, was excited to have her ship homeported in Mayport, Florida, as it is fairly close to home, and was glad the ship was able to visit her hometown so her whole family could come aboard and see what she does in the Navy.

"I grew up here, but had to move out of the area after Hurricane Katrina," said Connors. "Since then, I've joined the Navy and my parents returned to the area. It's truly awesome to have been able to invite them onto my ship and show them what I do. It was also cool to come up the Mississippi River and show all of my shipmates where I'm from."

Later in the weekend, Lassen Sailors were also given an opportunity to volunteer at the City Park of New Orleans, where they planted more than 20 bald cypress trees and cleared a sizable riverside area of trash, brush, and downed trees.

Chief Petty Officer Llordvhon Bianco, a Lassen Sailor, participated in the project and shared his thoughts after the experience.

"I feel great after seeing these crew members come together like this," said Bianco. "They came in here ready to work, not for how it looks or recognition. You get to see them in a

different light when we're away from the ship, and we get to enjoy each other while we get work done for a good cause."

"This is the Navy's way of reaching out to the community and showing what today's military brings to the table," added Chekouras. "It's just a good way for the public to see what we are actually doing, and why we are doing it."

While in port, Lassen hosted daily tours open to the public. Chekouras was also proud of the opportunity to host the visitors, and show off the crew and the work they do.

"You'd be surprised how many people do not know or understand the Navy, so we wanted to show them that this is where we live, work, eat, and rest," he said. "I think the public will then have a greater understanding as to what we are doing when we go out to sea and spend months and months away from home, and that there is indeed a sacrifice."

In all, the Lassen was in port four days, departing Nov. 14 to head back to her homeport to refuel and then return to sea. The captain expressed gratitude for having been able to take part in the experience.

"We're excited and proud to have been able to celebrate Veterans Day with the city of New Orleans," he said. "Thankfully, we had a lot on our plate in terms of being able to celebrate and interact with the city."

For more information, visit <http://www.navy.mil>, <http://www.facebook.com/usnavy>, or <http://www.twitter.com/usnavy>.

For more news from Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/surflant/>.