



Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Admiral Scott H. Swift
Pacific Surface Action Group All Hands Call
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
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As delivered

First let me add my welcome to the many welcomes that you've already had arriving here in Pearl Harbor. I've been following with interest news reports about your deployment, about the PAC SAG [Pacific Surface Action Group] joining up and then getting underway and heading out here to Pearl Harbor.

It's really an important event. A lot of times as Sailors, and I call myself a Sailor, you may be wondering what the purpose is behind what you're doing while on cruise. I think this is really a unique activity. Being an aviator, I spent all my time at sea in a carrier strike group and the first 10 years of it was here in the Pacific. The next 10 years was in the Middle East and ever since then I've been lucky enough to be a Pacific Sailor. Each cruise was pretty much like the last cruise and I expected the next cruise would go pretty much like that as well.

What is really unique here with the PAC SAG is that instead of sending independent deployers out, which is what you would normally do with Spruance, Momsen and Decatur, you're deployed together as a PAC SAG. It's part of that effort that you've been reading about called distributed lethality, meaning the combined lethality of a three-ship SAG is much greater than an individual DDG, as impressive as an individual DDG is.

Most of our operations are responding to HADR situations, whether it is past cyclone relief or the earthquake in Japan that we're supporting now. In those cases, we're much more effective and efficient operating as a three ship SAG as well.

Late next year in 2017 we'll have the first operational deployment of JSF F35Bs. We will have a large-deck amphib that will be forward deployed in the Pacific and she will embark Marine JSFs. I think this is going to revolutionize where we are with expeditionary strike groups [ESG]. The three-ship PAC SAG that Decatur, Momsen and Spruance are part of will pave the way for another SAG, just like this one, attached to the large-deck amphib so that it will become what I'm calling an "Up Gunned ESG."

Looking at Decatur's unique BMD capability in comparison to Spruance and Momsen – we will leave this up to the commodore – but I have asked of the commodore to deploy as if you were part of an ESG and think in terms of those CWC [composite warfare command] warfighting concepts and apply them as you are steaming around. So Decatur may very well be the air defense commander, if you will, of the PAC SAG and be responsible for the air defense of the SAG. There may be a Zulu or a Whiskey or all the other CWC warfare areas that would normally be spread between the Momsen and Spruance. The commodore has already been talking with the PACAF [Pacific Air Force] about the ability to expand to the concept of JAMGC, joint access and maneuver in the global commons. So, this SAG will interact with Air Force assets that are already operating in theater.

I'm excited about the potential options you will explore as part of this three ship SAG. Now, one of the great benefits the Navy brings to the nation is flexibility and part of that flexibility is going to be demonstrated as soon as you all get underway from Hawaii. Spruance will take off down south to do an OMSI [Oceania Maritime Security Patrol] patrol and pull into Tonga for engagements there while the rest of the SAG heads west, and then eventually, Spruance will rejoin them; another example of the flexibility that we have as a naval force.

Also keep in mind that while it may be transparent to most of you, for the COs and the commodore, this SAG will be commanded by 3rd Fleet at the operational level throughout the deployment. From the whole time I've been in the Pacific, I never understood why we were so allegiant to the international date line as the separation between 3rd Fleet and 7th Fleet. Having been 7th Fleet commander, when I became PACFLT commander people looked to me when they talked about the power of the Pacific Fleet, and when I pulled that string invariably it came down to this: 3rd Fleet was the forgotten fleet in the Pacific. In fact Bull Halsey, one of our most famous admirals in World War II, commanded 3rd Fleet throughout WWII and the vast majority of 3rd Fleet was forward deployed in the Pacific Islands fighting the island campaign all the way up to Japan. This is a little bit about returning to your roots -- our roots -- of having 3rd Fleet deploying forward throughout your entire cruise.

I talked about the unique capability that we've got within the SAG with Decatur, Spruance and Momsen but in particular from a BMD [ballistic missile defense] perspective, we've got a lot of challenges going on in the theater, the least of which is North Korea. A recent missile launch has been in the news and there may be a requirement to take advantage of the mobility and flexibility that we have with a three ship SAG – in defense of Japan, or defense of the homeland here – and that underscores the flexibility that we have as a naval force.