

**USS HOPPER (DDG 70)
COMMAND HISTORY 2002**

1. COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION:

- a. **Command Short Title: USS HOPPER (DDG 70)**
- b. **Unit Identification Code: 21944**
- c. **Mission: Multi-mission AEGIS destroyer. Operate offensively or defensively in a high-density, multi-threat environment, independently or as a member of a battle group, surface action group, amphibious task group, or underway replenishment group. Primary missions include Air Warfare, Surface Warfare, Undersea Warfare, Strike Warfare.**
- d. **Organizational Command: Commander, Destroyer Squadron Thirty One**
- e. **Commanding Officer: Commander J. J. Sorce, (JAN-MAR), Commander K. W. Auten, (MAR-DEC).**

2. CHRONOLOGY

a. **Overview:**

01-31 JAN 02: **COMPTUEX WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP**

01-28 FEB 02: **COMPTUEX / PCOSS / FMAV**

01-31 MAR 02: **PRE-DEPLOYMENT LEAVE AND UPKEEP**

01-02 APR 02: **PRE-DEPLOYMENT LEAVE AND UPKEEP**

02-30 APR 02: **DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

01-31 MAY 02: **DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

01-30 JUN 02: **DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

01-31 JUL 02: **DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

01-31 AUG 02: **DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

01-30 SEP 02: **DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

01-02 OCT 02: **POST-DEPLOYMENT LEAVE AND UPKEEP**

03-30 OCT 02: **POST-DEPLOYMENT LEAVE AND UPKEEP**

01-30 NOV 02: **FMAV / INSURV PREPARATIONS**

01-31 DEC 02: **INSURV PREPARATIONS / INSURV / HOLIDAY LEAVE AND STAND DOWN**

b. Detailed chronology:

01-31 JAN 02: COMPTUEX WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP

01 JAN 02 SCBA install continues. Holiday routine for New Year's Day.
02 JAN 02 SCBA training commences. United States Naval Academy Class of 1970 Leadership Award presented to LTjg [REDACTED] and OS1(SW) [REDACTED].
03 JAN 02 Stores onload. Ohana and OMBUDSMAN luncheon is held in the wardroom. Visit by Commander, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.
04 JAN 02 Fast Cruise.
07 JAN 02 Underway enroute San Diego.
08 JAN 02 5" Gun/CIWS firing exercises. AEGIS combat training scenarios, VBSS training, administrative General Quarters.
09 JAN 02 Leapfrogs, flashing light, and deceptive lighting exercises with USS FLETCHER. CIWS firing exercises. AEGIS combat training scenarios continue.
10 JAN 02 DIVTACS with USS FLETCHER.
11 JAN 02 Small boat operations for personnel transfer with USS FLETCHER. 5" Gun/CIWS PACFIRE.
12 JAN 02 Flashing light exercise with USS FLETCHER. Pizza night.
13 JAN 02 Arrive San Diego, California.
14-17 JAN 02 Inport San Diego, California. Tactical Training Group Pacific/Office of Naval Intelligence conference briefs. Shiphandling trainer for junior officers.
18-20 JAN 02 Inport Force Protection exercise.
21 JAN 02 Underway for Southern California operating area. Detect-to-engage and electronic warfare exercises. Replenishment at sea with USS CAMDEN.
22 JAN 02 Electronic warfare, Tomahawk, and undersea warfare exercises.
23 JAN 02 Command and control, air warfare and surface gunnery exercises. Plane guard operations with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN.
24 JAN 02 Command and control, Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure, and undersea warfare exercises.
25 JAN 02 Surface and air warfare exercises.
26 JAN 02 Replenishment at sea with USS CAMDEN.
27 JAN 02 High-speed maneuvering target gunnery exercise. Flight quarters for Deck Landing Qualifications. Communications and electronic warfare exercises. Ice cream social.
28 JAN 02 CIWS gunnery exercise, plane guard operations with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Flight quarters for personnel transfer. Visit by RADM Kelly
29-30 JAN 02 Air, surface, undersea and electronic warfare exercises.
31 JAN 02 Plane guard operations with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

01-28 FEB 02: COMPTUEX / PCOSS / FMAV

01 FEB 02 Replenishment at sea with USS CAMDEN. Air, surface, undersea and electronic warfare exercises.
02 FEB 02 Naval Surface Fire Support exercises at San Clemente Island range.
03 FEB 02 DIVTACS with ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group. Final Battle

Problem.

04 FEB 02 Final Battle Problem. Detach battle group formation enroute Pearl Harbor.

05-07 FEB 02 Enroute Pearl Harbor. AEGIS combat training scenarios.

08 FEB 02 Enroute Pearl Harbor. 5" gunnery exercise. Continue AEGIS combat training scenarios.

09-10 FEB 02 Inport Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

11 FEB 02 Berth shift to Hotel Piers for refueling. Stores onload. Embark Commander Kenneth Auten, Prospective Commanding Officer. Underway for Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) to conduct Prospective Commanding Officer Submarine Operations (PCOSS).

12-15 FEB 02 Underway Hawaiian Operating Area. PCOSS evolutions.

15 FEB 02 Replenishment at sea with USS YUKON. Moor Pearl Harbor Naval Station.

18 FEB 02 President's Day. Full dress ship. Holiday routine.

19-22 FEB 02 Inport Pearl Harbor. Hull inspection. Combat systems/engineering alterations and installations. Harpoon Weapons System upgrade. JP-5 fuel onload.

24-26 FEB 02 Prospective Commanding Officer turnover with Department Heads. Combat systems/engineering alterations and installations.

27 FEB 02 Captain's call and Awards Ceremony.

28 FEB 02 Prospective Commanding Officer turnover continues. Full dress rehearsal for Change of Command.

01-31 MAR 02: PRE-DEPLOYMENT LEAVE AND UPKEEP

01 MAR 02 Change of Command in which Commander John J. Sorce was relieved by Commander Kenneth W. Auten.

04 MAR 02 Republic of Korea Naval Officers visit and AEGIS briefing.

05 MAR 02 E6 advancement exam.

06-07 MAR 02 Ammunition onload, Naval Magazine Lua Lua Lei.

07-08 MAR 02 Underway for routine operations, Hawaiian Operating Area.

09-13 MAR 02 Inport Pearl Harbor. First pre-overseas movement leave period commences. 9MM qualification shoot at Halawa Range.

14-15 MAR 02 Spring Physical Fitness Assessment.

18 MAR 02 Turnover day. Second pre-overseas movement leave period commences.

18-22 MAR 02 9MM qualification shoot at Halawa Range. CMS inspection.

25 MAR 02 Conducted Executive Officer's Inquiry. Hull cleaning.

27-28 MAR 02 Continued hull cleaning. Commenced scullery equipment groom. Spring Physical Fitness Assessment.

29 MAR 02 Underway for routine operations, Hawaiian Operating Area. Return to Pearl Harbor.

01-30 APR 02: DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

01 APR 02 Captain's call and awards ceremony. Stores onload. Berth shift.

02 APR 02 First day of deployment, underway for Apra Harbor, Guam. Conducted General Quarters and loss of steering drills.

03 APR 02 Conducted 5" gun/CIWS Pre-action calibration fire. Tested AFFF and

counter-measure washdown systems. Transitioned through and verified weapons postures. Conducted Executive Officer's Inquiry.

04 APR 02 Conducted Captain's Mast. Small Craft Action Team familiarization fire. AEGIS combat training scenario.

05 APR 02 Cross the International Date Line. Enter Seventh Fleet.

07 APR 02 Holiday routine. Freshwater washdown.

08 APR 02 AEGIS combat training scenarios, Engineering Training Team drills.

09 APR 02 Safety standdown. Manned flight quarters for training. Conducted Executive Officer's Inquiry. Conducted 5" gun/CIWS pre-action calibration fire.

10 APR 02 Integrated Training Team scenario. 9MM qualification shoot.

11 APR 02 Swim call. Small boat operations for Search and Rescue training. AEGIS combat training scenarios. Freshwater washdown.

12 APR 02 Moor Apra Harbor, Guam. Fuel and stores onload.

13 APR 02 Inport Guam. Missile onload.

15 APR 02 Underway enroute Singapore.

17 APR 02 Main Space Fire Drill.

19 APR 02 Rendezvous with USS CUSHING, USS JOHN S. McCAIN, and USNS NIAGRA FALLS. Replenishment at sea/vertical replenishment with USNS NIAGRA FALLS.

20 APR 02 5" gun/Small Craft Action Team firing exercises.

22 APR 02 Tactical Maneuvering Exercises with USS JOHN S. McCAIN.

23 APR 02 Moor Changhi Naval Base, Singapore. Fuel and stores onload.

23-25 APR 02 Inport Singapore.

26 APR 02 Underway enroute Sri Lanka. Strait of Malacca transit.

28 APR 02 Steel Beach Picnic.

30 APR 02 Brief stop for fuel, Colombo, Sri Lanka. VIP tours and luncheon. Underway enroute Bahrain.

01-31 MAY 02: DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

02 MAY 02 Entered Fifth Fleet.

03 MAY 02 Small boat operations for personnel transfer with USS JOHN S. McCAIN. Replenishment at sea with JDS TOKIWA.

04 MAY 02 Set flight quarters for ammunition transfer with USS SEATTLE. Straits of Hormuz transit.

05 MAY 02 Moor Manama, Bahrain.

06 MAY 02 Underway enroute North Arabian Gulf.

07 MAY 02 Embark US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Team. Maritime interdiction operations. Freshwater washdown.

08 MAY 02 Maritime interdiction operations. Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL.

09 MAY 02 Maritime interdiction operations. Conducted Captain's Mast.

10-14 MAY 02 Maritime interdiction operations.

14 MAY 02 Set flight quarters for personnel transfer with HMAS MANOORA.

15 MAY 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL. 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises.

16-17 MAY 02 Small boat operations for crew crossdeck with HMAS MANOORA.

19 MAY 02 Replenishment at sea with USS SEATTLE.
 20 MAY 02 Embarked Maritime Interdiction Operations Commander. Photo exercise.
 22 MAY 02 Set flight quarters and conducted small boat operations for personnel transfer. Visit by Commodore Fanshawe, British Royal Navy.
 23 MAY 02 Commander, Australian Theater visit.
 24 MAY 02 Set flight quarters and conducted small boat operations for personnel transfer with HMAS CANBERRA.
 25 MAY 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL.
 27 MAY 02 Memorial Day Steel Beach picnic.
 30 MAY 02 Moor Manama, Bahrain.

01-30 JUN 02: DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

03 JUN 02 Underway enroute North Arabian Gulf. Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL.
 04-06 JUN 02 Maritime interdiction operations.
 07 JUN 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL.
 08 JUN 02 Freshwater washdown. Set flight quarters for nighttime Deck Landing Qualifications.
 12 JUN 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL. 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises.
 14 JUN 02 Straits of Hormuz transit.
 16-29 JUN 02 Leadership Interdiction Operations, Indian Ocean.
 19 JUN 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL and USNS SIRIUS.
 21 JUN 02 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises.
 23 JUN 02 Commenced operations with USS JOHN F. KENNEDY. Set flight quarters for Deck Landing Qualifications.
 25 JUN 02 Replenishment at sea with USS SEATTLE. Visit by RADM Tomaszewski (CTF-50).
 26 JUN 02 Set flight quarters for personnel transfer.
 29 JUN 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL and USNS SIRIUS.

01-31 JUL 02: DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

02 JUL 02 Straits of Hormuz transit.
 04 JUL 02 Moor Manama, Bahrain.
 06 JUL 02 Underway enroute Northern Arabian Gulf.
 07 JUL 02 Steel Beach Picnic. Maritime interdiction operations.
 09 JUL 02 Set flight quarters to receive Commodore Sinclair, Australian Maritime Interdiction Operations Commander. Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL.
 10 JUL 02 Embarked SEAL Command Element. Set flight quarters for personnel transfer.
 10-13 JUL 02 Maritime interdiction operations. Set flight quarters for refueling and personnel transfer.
 17 JUL 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL.
 18 JUL 02 Australian Press Corps visit.
 19 JUL 02 Conducted Captain's Mast.

20 JUL 02 Moor Manama, Bahrain.
 21 JUL 02 General Franks, US Central Forces Commander visit.
 22 JUL 02 Underway enroute Northern Arabian Gulf. Set flight quarters for refueling.
 23 JUL 02 Set flight quarters for personnel transfer and refueling.
 24 JUL 02 Australian Parliament Visit.
 25 JUL 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL. 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises.
 26-30 JUL 02 Maritime interdiction operations.
 31 JUL 02 Replenishment at sea with HMCS PROTECTEUR. 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises.

01-31 AUG 02: DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

01 AUG 02 Debark SEAL Command Element.
 02-04 AUG 02 Maritime interdiction operations.
 04 AUG 02 Small boat operations to debark Maritime Interdiction Operations Commander Staff.
 05-09 AUG 02 Maritime interdiction operations.
 09 AUG 02 Replenishment at sea with HMCS PROTECTEUR.
 10-13 AUG 02 Inport Manama, Bahrain.
 13 AUG 02 Underway enroute Northern Arabian Gulf. Small boat operations for transfer of Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Team.
 14-17 AUG 02 Maritime interdiction operations.
 18 AUG 02 Embark SEAL Command Element. Gulf Sentry mission controller.
 19 AUG 02 Replenishment at sea with HMCS PROTECTEUR. 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises.
 20-22 AUG 02 Maritime interdiction operations.
 22 AUG 02 Small boat operations for personnel transfer.
 23-25 AUG 02 Maritime interdiction operations.
 25 AUG 02 Replenishment at sea with HMCS PROTECTEUR. 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises.
 26-29 AUG 02 Maritime interdiction operations.
 30 AUG 02 Straits of Hormuz transit.

01-30 SEP 02: DEPLOYMENT / OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

02 SEP 02 Depart Fifth Fleet enroute Darwin, Australia.
 03 SEP 02 Combat Systems and Engineering Training Team evolutions.
 04 SEP 02 Crossing the line ceremony.
 05 SEP 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK. 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises. 9MM qualification shoot.
 06 SEP 02 HOPPER Birthday Party. M79 qualification shoot.
 07 SEP 02 Integrated Training Team scenarios. M60 familiarization fire.
 08 SEP 02 Seventh Fleet Force Protection stand down. Steel beach picnic.
 09 SEP 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK. 5"/CIWS gunnery exercises.
 10 SEP 02 Engineering Training Team evolutions, Main Space Fire Drill and Abandon Ship drill. Freshwater washdown.

11 SEP 02 Moor Darwin, Australia. HOPPER crew members attend City of Darwin September 11 Remembrance Ceremony.

14 SEP 02 Underway enroute Townsville, Australia. Awards ceremony.

16 SEP 02 Torres Strait transit.

17 SEP 02 Main Space Fire Drill.

18 SEP 02 Moor Townsville, Australia. Onboard reception for American survivors of attacks in Papua, New Guinea.

22 SEP 02 Underway for Noumea, New Caledonia. Undersea warfare scenario.

23-24 SEP 02 Engineering Mid-Cycle Assessment drills and evolutions. 9MM/shotgun qualification shoot.

25 SEP 02 Brief stop for fuel in Noumea, New Caledonia. Underway enroute Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

26 SEP 02 5" gunnery exercises. Combat Systems Training Team evolutions.

27 SEP 02 5" illumination display. Integrated Training Team evolutions. Sonar self-noise check. Stream TACTAS and Nixie.

28 SEP 02 Cross the International Date Line. Retard clocks 24 hours.

29 SEP 02 Steel beach picnic. Safety stand down.

30 SEP 02 Combat Systems Training Team scenarios. Returning home briefs. Small Craft Action Team familiarization fire.

01-31 OCT 02: DEPLOYMENT / POST-DEPLOYMENT LEAVE AND UPKEEP

01 OCT 02 Replenishment at sea with USNS YUKON. Freshwater washdown.

02 OCT 02 Moor Naval Magazine Station Lua Lua Lei for missile offload. Moor Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

03-16 OCT 02 Post-overseas movement leave period. Equipment inventories in preparation for Board of Inspection and Survey Assessment.

17 OCT 02 Turnover day. Start of second post-overseas movement leave period.

18-19 OCT 02 Hull cleaning.

18-31 OCT 02 Post-overseas movement leave period. Equipment inventories in preparation for Board of Inspection and Survey Assessment.

01-30 NOV 02: FMAV / INSURV PREPARATIONS

01 NOV 02 Captain's call with all hands.

04-08 NOV 02 Maintenance and Material Management Assessment. Gas turbine engine and gas turbine generator inspection. SPY radar array face inspection. Galley and laundry equipment install.

06 NOV 02 Nighttime Search and Rescue training.

07 NOV 02 Communications exercises.

08 NOV 02 Captain's Mast. Fall Physical Fitness Assessment. Ship tour for cast of HBO's "Band of Brothers."

11 NOV 02 Veterans' Day. Holiday routine.

12 NOV 02 Fall Physical Fitness Assessment. Link 4A testing.

13 NOV 02 Underway to Naval Magazine Station Lua Lua Lei for ammunition offload.

14 NOV 02 Continue ammunition offload. Underway for Pearl Harbor.

19 NOV 02 Underway for Hawaiian Operating Area to conduct rehearsal for Board of Inspection and Survey Assessment.

20 NOV 02 Full power run, high-speed steering checks, anchoring evolutions. Stream Nixie and TACTAS.

21 NOV 02 SESEF Antenna Range run. 9MM/shotgun familiarization fire. Undersea warfare scenario.

22 NOV 02 Moor Hotel piers for refueling. Moor Pearl Harbor.

25-27 NOV 02 Shipwide zone inspections in preparation for Board of Inspection and Survey Assessment.

28 NOV 02 Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving Dinner served onboard.

29 NOV 02 Ship's Christmas Party, Hale Koa, Waikiki.

01-31 DEC 02: INSURV PREPARATIONS / INSURV / HOLIDAY LEAVE AND STAND DOWN

02 DEC 02 Safety survey.

04 DEC 02 Executives at Sea arrival. Underway for local operations. Debark Executives at Sea, return to sea for local operations.

05 DEC 02 Air warfare detect to engage. REXTORP shoot and recovery exercise. Set flight quarters for deck landing qualifications with HSL-37.

06 DEC 02 Moor Pearl Harbor. Generator checks. Hazardous material turn-in.

07-13 DEC 02 Pearl Harbor Day. Preparations for Board of Inspection and Survey Assessment.

16 DEC 02 Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) Team arrives. Commence Day 1 INSURV checks.

17 DEC 02 Continue inport INSURV checks. Cleared to get underway.

18 DEC 02 Underway for INSURV checks. Conduct anchorage, full power run, air and undersea warfare detect to engage, and countermeasure washdown test. Stream Nixie and TACTAS. Return to Pearl Harbor.

19 DEC 02 INSURV outbrief. INSURV inspectors depart.

20 DEC 02 Commence first holiday leave period.

23 DEC 02 Defueling.

25 DEC 02 Christmas Dinner served onboard.

26 DEC 02 Turnover day for second holiday leave period.

27-30 DEC 02 Defueling.

31 DEC 02 Hull cleaning.

3. NARRATIVE:

USS HOPPER began 2002 with a transit across the Pacific Ocean to San Diego for participation in COMPTUEX with the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP. Departing Pearl Harbor on 6 January, HOPPER arrived in San Diego on 13 January and immediately commenced an inport Force Protection exercise. Underway for operations in the Southern California operating area on 21 January, HOPPER completed numerous exercises in every mission area, conducted carrier plane guard operations, multiple replenishments at sea, Naval Surface Fire Support exercises, and the coordinated battle group Final Battle Problem. Detaching from the battle group on 4 February, she returned home to Pearl Harbor on 9 February. On 11 February HOPPER was underway again, first for a berth shift to refuel, then to conduct Prospective Commanding Officer Submarine operations (PCOSS) offshore of the Pacific Missile Range Facility, island of Kauai. On 15 February, the ship conducted a replenishment at sea and

returned to Pearl Harbor. HOPPER spent rest of the month of February in a maintenance availability, and in preparations for the upcoming change of command. On March 1, 2002, Commander Kenneth W. Auten relieved Commander John J. Sorce as Commanding Officer, USS HOPPER. On 4 March, HOPPER hosted a tour of high-ranking Republic of Korea naval officials, onboard to learn about the capabilities and potential of the AEGIS warfare system. On 6 March, the ship set sail for Lua Lua Lei, where she conducted a pre-deployment ammunition onload, and got underway for operations in the local Hawaiian operating area. Upon returning from underway on 9 March, HOPPER commenced her pre-deployment stand down and leave period, lasting until a one-day underway on 29 March.

On 1 April, HOPPER conducted a berth shift to B-23, and on 2 April 2002 she bid goodbye to family and friends and set sail for her six-month deployment. Enroute to her first port visit in Apra Harbor, Guam, HOPPER's crew stayed busy, conducting gunnery exercises and training in combat scenarios and damage control. On 5 April, the ship crossed the International Date Line, advancing clocks 24 hours, and on 11 April, the crew conducted a swim call over the Marianas Trench. HOPPER arrived in Guam on 12 April to conduct a short-notice missile onload, and set sail for Singapore three days later on 15 April. On 19 April, she rendezvoused with USS CUSHING, USS JOHN S. MCCAIN, and USNS NIAGRA FALLS, forming a Surface Action Group. She continued her transit with the ships from Destroyer Squadron 15, homeported in Yokosuka, Japan, and conducted numerous tactical maneuvering exercises and several underway replenishments before arriving at Changhi Naval Base, Singapore, on 23 April. On 26 April, HOPPER passed through the Strait of Malacca on her way for Colombo, Sri Lanka, where she conducted a brief stop for fuel on 30 April. The first American naval asset to moor in Sri Lanka in over 8 years, HOPPER hosted a number of tours for Sri Lanka officials and American Embassy representatives. Entering the Fifth Fleet Operating Area on 2 May, HOPPER passed through the Straits of Hormuz on 4 May and moored in Manama, Bahrain one day later.

Underway on 6 May for the Northern Arabian Gulf, HOPPER began the first of four months of Maritime Interdiction Operations, querying, boarding, and searching vessels bound into and out of Iraq in search of illegal oil and sanctions violators. Embarking a United States Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Team, HOPPER conducted daily boardings of suspect vessels, set flight quarters for mail, personnel, and cargo transfers, participated in small boat operations, and completed weekly underway replenishments. On 23 May, HOPPER hosted a visit by the Commander, Australian Theater, onboard to examine and discuss Maritime Interdiction Operations in support of the ongoing Operation Enduring Freedom. The ship celebrated Memorial Day with a steel beach picnic on 27 May, and moored Bahrain on 30 May. On 3 June, HOPPER was underway once again for the Northern Arabian Gulf. Her stay was short, for on 14 June the ship headed south and transited the Straits of Hormuz enroute the Indian Ocean to conduct Leadership Interdiction Operations in search of Al Qaeda terrorists. From 23 to 29 June, HOPPER conducted carrier plane guard operations with USS JOHN F. KENNEDY, and on 25 June she hosted a visit by RADM Tomaszeski, Commander Task Force 50. On 2 July, HOPPER transited north through the Straits of Hormuz, and on 4 July she moored Bahrain.

On 6 July, HOPPER was once again underway to conduct maritime interdiction operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf, and the ship embarked the Australian Maritime Interdiction Operations Commander and his staff on 9 July, as well as a Navy SEAL command element on 10 July. HOPPER continued her patrols, queries, and visits throughout the month of July, integrating seamlessly with the Australian staff, and hosting a major visit by the Australian press corps on

18 July. On 20 July HOPPER returned to Bahrain, where she was visited by General Tommy Franks, United States Central Forces Commander. The ship was underway again on 21 July, conducted replenishments at sea with both American and Canadian refueling assets, and hosted a visit by members of the Australian Parliament on 24 July. HOPPER remained on station in the Northern Arabian Gulf until 10 August, when she transited back to Bahrain for a final three-day inport period. In her last few weeks in the Northern Arabian Gulf, HOPPER returned to her station on 13 August, remaining there until she transited the Straits of Hormuz on 30 August. HOPPER departed the Fifth Fleet Operating Area on 2 September. In total, the ship and her crew conducted over 100 boardings of smuggling vessels, diverting nearly 8000 metric tons of oil in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. HOPPER played host to two Australian operational staffs, conducted passenger exchanges and crew "cross-decks" with Australian naval ships, embarked a Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment and a SEAL command element, and numerous high-ranking military and public officials. Living up to her namesake, the ship had done an amazing job, and her crew was ready to head for home.

Sailing for the liberty port of Darwin, Australia, HOPPER crossed the equator and conducted her "crossing the line" ceremony on 4 September. The crew stayed busy on the transit home, conducting training and drills to maintain readiness and prepare for major inspections upon the ship's return to homeport. After celebrating her birthday on September 6, HOPPER arrived in Darwin on September 11, 2002, where she had the opportunity to take part in a September 11 remembrance ceremony held by the City of Darwin. HOPPER departed Darwin on 14 September, passed through the Torres Strait on 16 September, and arrived at her next liberty port of Townsville, Australia, on 18 September. While inport Townsville, HOPPER hosted a high-profile reception for local dignitaries, American embassy personnel, and American victims of recent terrorist attacks in Papua, New Guinea. The ship was underway for Noumea, New Caledonia, on 22 September, when she commenced her Mid-Cycle Assessment for engineering and continued to train in combat systems and damage control warfare areas. On 25 September, HOPPER arrived in Noumea for a brief stop for fuel, departing the tropical island later that afternoon. The ship transited back across the International Date Line on 28 September, and spent the next four days preparing for a triumphant return home. Early on the morning of 2 October, HOPPER arrived in Pearl Harbor, but the ship was required to make a brief stop before reaching her final destination. Mooring at the ammunition piers at Lua Lua Lei, HOPPER conducted a partial weapons offload in support of another destroyer who would soon take HOPPER's place in the Arabian Gulf. With her tasking complete, HOPPER returned to B-23 late in the morning of 2 October to the cheers and welcome of hundreds of friends, family members, and supporters. Her six-month journey had come to an end.

HOPPER's crew spent the rest of the month of October in port, enjoying post-deployment leave and conducting routine maintenance and upkeep. The crew returned to normal routine on November 1, when the ship began full-fledged preparations for her upcoming Board of Inspection and Survey Assessment (INSURV). Conducting massive equipment inventories and daily space inspections, the crew was their own toughest critic in ensuring that all of HOPPER's equipment and spaces were fully operational and completely battle-ready. Underway on 13 November to complete her post-deployment ammunition offload, the ship set sail from Lua Lua Lei on 14 November and returned to Pearl Harbor for a brief respite before heading to sea on 19 November to conduct operations in the Hawaiian operating area. HOPPER returned to port on 22 November, making a brief stop at the Hotel piers to refuel before mooring Pearl Harbor. The ship celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday on 28 November, and hosted the annual ship's

Christmas party at the Hale Koa hotel, Waikiki on 29 November. On 4 December HOPPER was underway again to host civilian "Executives at Sea." She returned to port later that afternoon, debarked her visiting guests, and headed back to sea to conduct a full rehearsal for the approaching INSURV inspection. Mooring Pearl Harbor on 6 December, she spent the next 10 days in intense preparations for the five-year inspection, one of the most demanding and intensive inspections in the life of a surface ship. On 16 December, the Board of Inspection and Survey Assessors arrived, and HOPPER's crew once again earned the ship its reputation as "Amazing Grace." Cleared to proceed to sea early on the second day of INSURV checks, HOPPER was underway on 18 December to show the inspectors what the ship could really do. Conducting an anchorage, full power runs, high-speed steering checks, and a variety of engineering and combat systems demonstrations, the ship passed the inspection with flying colors, receiving one of the highest scores in the Pacific Fleet. She returned to port on the evening of 18 December, and on 20 December settled in for a well-deserved rest. The remainder of the month of December was spent in a holiday stand down period, while those crew members not on holiday leave prepared the ship for her upcoming drydocking in the first weeks of January.

New Year's Eve passed quietly onboard USS HOPPER, moored smartly in her homeport, content with her many accomplishments in 2002, and ever looking forward to the challenges and successes of 2003.