



Capt. Phillip Ulmer

More than 30 crewmembers from the USS *Hopper* help clean, landscape, paint and repair plumbing at the Eritrean public library in Massawa, Ethiopia, during a port visit Oct. 8. The *Hopper* deployed July 28 and is operating in support of the global war on terrorism.

## USS *Hopper* pulls into Eritrean port

CAPT. PHILLIP ULMER  
THE HORN COURIER

In a symbol of African and American cooperation and commitment to the global war on terrorism, Eritrea hosted a port visit for a U.S. Navy ship Oct. 7. The USS *Hopper*, an Arleigh-Burke Class Guided Missile Destroyer, made its first port call in Eritrea at the port of Massawa.

"The purpose of our visit was to build on relationships and expand contacts with the Eritrean military. At the same time, it gave the Eritrean people and our sailors a chance to meet and get to know one another," said Cmdr. Mike Selby, commanding officer, USS *Hopper*. "Our visit was important as a tangible symbol of our relationship with Eritrea and our continuing efforts to work together to build peace and stability in this important region."

This is the first port visit by an American ship in the region since the USS *Cole* was attacked Oct. 12, 2000 in Yemen by a small boat filled with explosives. Seventeen American sailors were killed and 39 more were injured when the blast ripped a 40-foot hole in the hull of the ship. Two terrorists were recently sentenced to death while four others were jailed by a Yemeni court for their part in the terrorist act.

While in the Massawa port, the crew of the *Hopper* hosted a luncheon and provided a ship

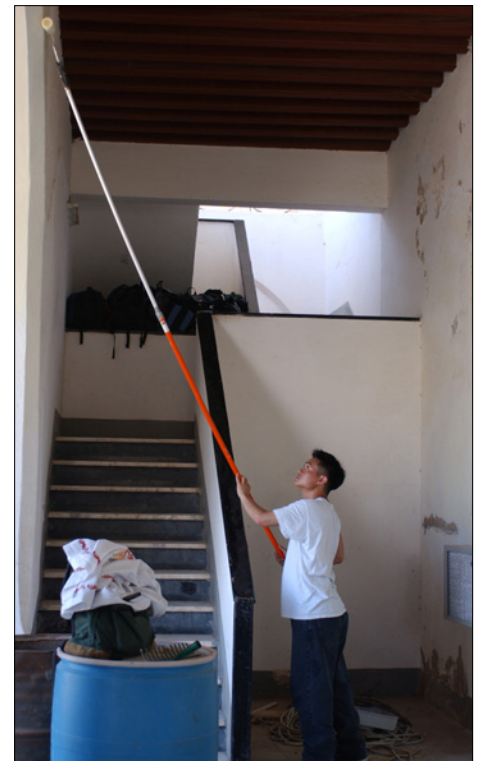
tour for General Sebhat Ephrem, the Eritrean Minister of Defense, Scott DeLisi, U.S. Ambassador to Eritrea, and Major General Samuel Helland, Commander Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, as well as other Eritrean military officials and U.S. Embassy personnel.

Eritrea is located in northeastern Africa bordering Ethiopia in the south, Sudan in north, Djibouti in the southeast and the Red Sea to the east. The country of nearly 4.5 million people gained independence in 1993, and quickly established good relations with the United States.

"Eritrea continues to be an important ally in the ongoing global war on terrorism," said Ambassador DeLisi. "The country was among the first to step forward after the tragic events of 9-11 and take a stand with the United States and the coalition against trans-national terrorists."

Sailors from the *Hopper* also participated in public service projects while in port at Massawa. Nearly 30 Sailors volunteered at the city's public library, working hand in hand with the local Eritreans to paint, landscape and work on plumbing projects.

"There was a lot for us to do. We laid bricks, painted the interior walls, and cleaned up in the yard," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronnie Peralta.



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Petty Officer 2nd Class Rhoneil Peralta, USS *Hopper*, helps paint the Eritrea public library Oct. 8.

See **PORT**, page 6