WELCOME RIMPAC

HO'OKELE

"Navigator"

PEARL HARBOR - HICKAM NEWS

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Photo illustration

RIMPAC goes green

MC3 Jonathan A. Colon

USS Nimitz Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN (NNS) -- Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert visited the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) for the Navy's Great Green Fleet demonstration July 18 during Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2012.

The Great Green Fleet demonstration is a step toward the Department of the Navy's goal to reduce consumption of energy, decrease reliance on fossil fuels, and significantly increase the use of alternative energy.

Greenert emphasized the importance of the Navy's biofuel initiative and its importance for the Navy's future energy plan.

"Biofuel is made with algae, plants and animal fat. We'll be using a 50-50 mixture of that to show that in fact there is an alternative to petroleum products," said Greenert. "We've got to look for alternative fuels, we've got to look for alternative opportunities, and we've got to be efficient in energy."

U.S. Navy photo by MCC Sam Shavers

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert, (left) and Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Ray Mabus observe as the Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO 187), (background) transfers biofuels to the guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59) during a replenishment at sea. The fueling is part of the U.S. Navy's Great Green Fleet demonstration portion of the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2012 exercise.

Nimitz took on more than 180,000 gallons of 50-50 biofuel, a new blend of hydro processed renewable jet (HRJ-5) and aviation (JP-5) fuel July 17, in preparation for the Navy's Great Green Fleet demonstration.

Mabus spoke about how biofuels are a "drop-in" fuel and will not change operations at all.

"We don't have to change the operations, and we don't have to change anything that we are doing," said Mabus. "The fuel is used in exactly the same way, by the same platforms and by the same engines."

During an all hands call, Greenert took time to thank the crew of Nimitz and encouraged the crew to continue what they are doing.

"To the crew of the Nimitz I'd like to say thank you very much, you guys are awesome," said Greenert. "Every time I come aboard a great ship like Nimitz and talk to a great crew, it helps me understand what we've got to do and that's go back to Washington, make sure you are organized, trained and equipped to do the job you need to do."

For the demonstration, Mabus and Greenert also visited USS Chafee (DDG 90), homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, and USS Princeton (CG 59) to see the biofuel on load and to observe how they will use the fuel on board.

For more information, visit www.navy.mil, www.facebook.com/usnavy, or www.twitter.com/usnavy.

USS Chafee takes on biofuel

MC3 Dustin W. Sisco

USS Nimitz Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN (NNS) -- The guided-missile destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90), homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, took on 250,000 gallons of alternative fuel, a 50/50 blend of advanced biofuel and traditional petroleum-based fuel, from the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO 187) as part of the Great Green Fleet demonstration during Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2012.

The demonstration serves as another milestone in the Navy's pursuit to improve combat capability through improved energy efficiency measures.

Lt. j.g. Karen Smith, Chafee's fuels officer, said the use of biofuels on Navy ships further enhances the overall readiness of the fleet.

"Anything that takes away our need to use foreign fossil fuel is, I think, a step in the right direction," said Smith.

"It gives the Navy a little bit more flexibility, and they know where it's coming from. Thinking about it economically, yes, it's a little bit pricier on the front end, but everything new is. I think that, as time goes on, that cost will drive down. The added benefit of having that operational capability is a plus, and now it's not left in foreign hands to decide what our fuel costs are," she said.

The installation of an energy dashboard marks one more step in Chafee's move toward energy efficiency. The energy dashboard uses the integrated condition assessment system (ICAS) to collect data from shipboard equipment.

"The energy dashboard has been a big help," Smith said. "It gives us instantaneous data of what we're doing, so we've been utilizing that tool to make sure that we're burning as little fuel as possible."

The dashboard includes the fuel management system (FMS), which assists pre-underway planning by recommending efficient equipment lineups. Along with energy dashboard, a series of light emitting diodes (LED) have been installed on board Chafee to replace incandescent and fluorescent lighting fixtures. This will improve lamp lifespan and drive down maintenance and sparing costs, as well as a stern flap, which will increase propulsion exhaust emissions to foster fuel cost savings while increasing both ship speed and range.

USS Chafee is one of the five ships included in the Great Green Fleet demonstration.

Arson investigation continues

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

The Honolulu Police Department, in cooperation with NCIS, JBPHH, Forest City and Honolulu Fire Department, continues to investigate several arson fires that occurred July 15 at Pearl City Peninsula.

At approximately 3:30 a.m. on July 15, the Honolulu Fire Department responded to a house fire at Navy family housing on Pearl City Peninsula. The first floor and garage of one unit was heavily damaged; three adjoining units received smoke and water damage. No injuries were reported.

The fire began in a carport. The fire was extinguished at approximately 4:15 a.m.

"The Federal Fire Department is asking for support from the public by being vigilant at all times. We encourage the public to report any suspicious activity by calling 911 immediately," said Angela Sanders, fire inspector for Federal Fire Department Hawaii.

Sanders also offered some fire prevention tips. "Be safe; clean it up. Clean it up before it burns. The Federal Fire Department says that trash and clutter are responsible for causing a large number of home fires," she said.

"Take some precautions at your home. Clean out storage area like garages, sheds and closets. Get rid of old magazines, newspapers and items you aren't using anymore. Store combustibles like gasoline, kerosene, paint and cleaners in approved containers outside of the house. Get rid of leaves and debris around the yard. Remember, trash and clutter give a fire a place to start. Clean it up today so you will be safe tomorrow," Sanders recommended.

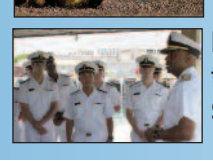
Residents are advised to use VEST—Vigilance, Engagement, Speed, Together—if they notice anything suspicious. Be vigilant in watching out for your own family and your neighbors. Call 911 if you see any suspicious activity in your neighborhood. Make an immediate response in a crisis, emergency or suspected criminal activity. Work together to prevent incidents and respond appropriately when they occur.

Anonymous tips may be submitted to HPD at http:// www.crimestoppers-honolulu.org/ or by calling 955-8300 and to the NCIS Web and Text Tip Hotline at http://www.ncis.navy.mil/ContactUs/Pages/ReportaCrime.aspx.

Navy, Forest City leaders reach out to housing community **See page A-2**

Ships participate in sea phase of RIMPAC 2012 exercises **See page A-2**

More for RIMPAC **See page A-4**



Midshipmen receive guidance from Rear Adm. Ponds **See page A-6**

Sam Choy arrives at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam **See page B-1**

Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel holds vacation Bible school **See page B-6**

Navy, Forest City leaders reach out to housing community

Story and photo by Karen S. Spangler

Managing Editor

Tom Carter (center), vice president of military housing for Forest City Military Communities, and Rear Adm. Frank Ponds (right), Commander of Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, speak to military housing residents during a community meeting July 12 at Hokulani Community Center at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. Residents had an opportunity to ask questions and share concerns with Navy leadership and Forest City representatives.

Approximately 25 housing residents attended a community meeting hosted by Navy leaders and Forest City representatives July 12 at Hokulani Community Center. Another community meeting last week was held July 10 at Moanalua Community Center.

The venue provided an opportunity for residents to ask questions and express concerns about housing issues. Rear Adm. Frank Ponds, commander of Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific; Tom Carter, vice president of military housing for Forest City Residential Management; and Capt. Jeffrey James, commander of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam; were available to present information about future changes in the Resident Energy Conservation Program.

They also addressed resident questions.

"We are here for you. We can help each other more than anyone else can help us," Ponds said as he opened the meeting.

"We are committed here. What is the issue? Where did it come from? Who has responsibility for that action? When can we get it done?" Ponds told those in attendance.

Using a slide presentation about the Resident Energy Conservation Program (RECP), encouraged residents to use the Forest City Residential Management website as a tool to determine their electric usage and how they are trending in relation to the buffer.

Under the current RECP program, PPV residents must pay for any electric use that exceeds 20 percent of an established average for their like-type group of homes. Residents who do not exceed this buffer are not billed for electricity. A rebate is given to residents whose monthly electrical use is more than 20 percent below the average.

Carter explained that beginning Oct. 1, the current 20 percent buffer will change to a 10 percent buffer as the Navy implements RECP at other installations.

"If you don't think something is operating correctly and your energy usage is still high, contact Forest City and request an energy audit," Carter shared with residents. He also informed them that as Forest City does meter readings, they will be looking for anomalies, such as sudden spikes or drops in electric usage.

He noted that the largest users of electricity in the home are: (1) air conditioning, (2) hot water heater and (3) "plug loads" (televisions, phone chargers, etc.).

Part of the energy initiative is to ask people who are successful in their energy reduction efforts how they accomplished that result, he said.

Bridget Harman, a Navy spouse whose family moved to Hawaii in February, explained that she was eager to attend Thursday's community meeting because she is new to the area and to military housing. "Most helpful was being able to hear and ask questions about RECP. Many people had suggestions on how they keep their usage down, which I found beneficial," she said.

One of Harman's concerns was focused on the lack of a crossing guard at Aliamanu Elementary School for the upcoming school year.

Carter explained that due to a lack of funding, Forest City is not able to provide crossing guards.

Maj. William Chur from Kalihi District 5 of Honolulu Police Department, which serves many of the military housing communities, was on hand to discuss security in military neighborhoods and how residents can help make their communities safer. "We need cooperation and the support and partnership of the community to make the community safe. People in the community know what's going on," Chur said.

"We encourage security watches and will work with anyone who wants to form one," he added.

Carter also encouraged residents to form neighborhood watch groups. "The best way to protect yourself is yourself. HPD will set it up and get it organized and work with you. All you have to do is get the volunteers," he said.

He recommended that residents check out HPD's Facebook page to become aware of what is happening in their neighborhoods.

As the meeting progressed, residents posed a variety of questions – ranging from energy savings and security to barking dogs and playgrounds.

In response to a question from one woman about playground and fitness equipment, Carter explained that Forest City plans to spend a substantial amount of money this year to install new playgrounds. He said that they are looking at providing and/or updating playground equipment for all ages of children.

Navy and Forest City representatives asked for resident feedback and were receptive to suggestions for solutions. Carter encouraged residents to participate in housing surveys, which he said provide another vehicle for people to voice their concerns. "We need your feedback. It does help us," he said.

Housing residents seemed to be pleased that Ponds, James and Carter were in attendance to field their questions and hear their concerns.

"It's so wonderful to see you come out here and be so concerned," one woman told the admiral.

"We need to see what your concerns are and operate 'out of the box' to see what we can do," Ponds said.

"Nothing is more important in your community than what is important to you," Ponds told the residents.

Information about RECP is available on the Forest City Residential Management website at https://forestcitymgmt.propertysolutions.com/media_library/2197/4fea5ad506463972.pdf.

Upcoming community meetings have been scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Sept. 6 and Sept. 13, both at Moanalua Community Center.

(Watch future issues of Ho`okele for articles about issues of concern to housing residents.)

Ships participate in sea phase of RIMPAC 2012 exercises

MC2 Tiffany Sivels

RIMPAC CIB

More than 40 ships and submarines are currently participating in the sea phase of this year's Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise.

"RIMPAC is currently in its second phase, also known as the 'operational phase.' It concentrates on a structured schedule of events, which is essentially the beginning of the period where we will be working at sea," said Cmdr. Charlie Brown, RIMPAC spokesman.

The events in this phase include live fire and missile exercises, maritime interdiction and vessel boarding, undersea warfare, naval maneuvers, air defense, explosive ordnance disposal, diving and salvage operations, mine clearance operations, an amphibious landing and anti-surface warfare.

For the first time, a humanitarian assistance disaster relief (HA/DR) component is part of RIMPAC.

"The scenario provides a realistic, relevant challenge that will facilitate training and certification for expeditionary forces to respond to foreign disasters," Brown said. "The event will aid Hawaii-based medical facilities in their statewide mass casualty drills and certifications."

The biennial exercise, with the theme, "Capable, Adaptive Partners," is focused on enhancing the interoperability of participating forces and improving their ability to work together in missions ranging from maritime security operations to disaster relief.

"Roughly 70 percent of the world is covered by water," said Adm. Cecil Haney, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet. "Eighty percent of the world's population lives on or near the coast, and 90 percent of our international commerce moves by sea. So it requires capable maritime forces to help ensure that stability and economic prosperity around the world. RIMPAC helps partnering nations prove that capability."

Deadline for Community Service Award nominees is July 31

MC2 Heidi McCormick

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

The deadline to submit nominees for the 2012 Navy Community Service Program (NCSP) is July 31.

The NCSP is a program that encourages service members to volunteer their time to help make a difference in the community. Volunteers donate their skills as well as their time by providing humanitarian assistance and promoting anti-drug and healthy lifestyles for the local communities.

All Navy commands are eligible to compete. The rating period for the award is from June 2011 to July 2012.

Sailors and Marines are encouraged to work together with community organizations such as businesses, colleges or health care centers, striving to improve quality of life and education in the area.

"Community service is a vital part in our partnerships around the world. Positive interaction goes a long way in maintaining those relationships with the communities," said Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Command Master Chief Brian Ortega as he explained the importance of the program.

According to the evaluation criteria, nominees should show hard work and dedication in five main categories, including personal excellence partnership. The youth partnership focuses on developing the community youth's potential in learning civic responsibility. Volunteers serve as role models, tutors and mentors, helping to improve social and life skills.

Other "flagship" categories include environmental stewardship, Project Good Neighbor, Campaign Drug Free, and health, safety and fitness.

"These awards exist to recognize not only the Sailors' and Marines' hard work, but also the time and effort the commands exhibit in their commitment to assist neighboring communities," Ortega said.

For more information, call Ensign Michelle Downs at 473-2920. The nomination form can be found at Navy Region Hawaii's website: www.cnic.navy.mil\hawaii.

Airfield management is on overdrive during RIMPAC 2012

Capt. Joe Blubaugh

190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Parking normally isn't an issue for aircraft visiting Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH), but that isn't the case during the Rim of the Pacific exercise now being conducted at JBPHH. Throughout the month of July—RIMPAC officially ends on Aug. 3—the 15th Wing will average an extra 55 sorties per day. That's on top of the approximately 30 sorties that fly from JBPHH on an average weekday.

The extra aircraft on the ramp, as well as the personnel that support them, has brought several unique challenges to the 15th Wing Airfield Operations Flight, according to Master Sgt. Jon Green, airfield manager. One of the first challenges was finding enough parking spaces for the influx of aircraft participating in the exercise.

"We also had to make sure that we parked the aircraft in a manner that would make it efficient for the maintainers," said Green.

The increased number of aircraft has also added to the number of flight plans the aviators file with the airfield management operations section. The flight plans must then be checked for accuracy and filed with the Honolulu air traffic control center.

With the added personnel and aircraft also comes an additional focus on safety. Green said his staff spent extra time training each visiting driver on flightline procedures. They also do extra checks to make sure safety is the top priority during the exercise. "We perform random inspections to make sure maintainers are abiding by airfield rules," Green said.

Working through the challenges took maximum coordination between airfield management and three local partners – the Federal Aviation Administration, the Honolulu Airport Authority and the Hawaii Air National Guard.

"Having all the extra fighter aircraft has been a large challenge for the civilian authorities," he said. "We have been in continuous communications with them, both leading up to and during the exercise. We have worked as a team to make sure the exercise is a success."

Green said a strong partnership with the various airfield support agencies has also been crucial, not only for the exercise, but also to sustain the existing JBPHH missions. "They are doing an excellent job supporting the missions and the exercise. We haven't had any large issues and no significant negative impacts."

Green said all the extra challenges and extra hours does have a payoff for the airfield operations team. "RIMPAC is an excellent opportunity to work with several different countries as well as the Navy. It's a great opportunity to learn their systems," he explained.

Another benefit for Green's team is the experience they are gaining from working with the fighter community and helicopter operations. Although the team is normally focused on large aircraft, Green said they had to establish arming and dearming areas on the airfield for forward firing ordnance as well as a helicopter landing point and parking location. Both were non-standard operations for the 15th Wing.

He said he also expects the exercise to pay off long term for his younger Airmen. "They have gained invaluable experience working with other organizations and foreign nations," said Green. "My expectation is that they will be able to take this experience on to their next duty station and be leaders in those organizations."

RIMPAC ships sink ex-USS Niagara Falls, ex-USS Concord

RIMPAC CIB

A live-fire exercise, part of Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2012, sank the ex-USS Niagara Falls (T-AFS-3) in waters 15,480 feet deep, 63 miles northwest of Kauai about 11:31 a.m. July 14.

A second live-fire exercise sank the ex-USS Concord (T-AFS-5) in waters 15,390 feet deep, 61 miles off the coast of Kauai at 4:12 p.m. July 18.

A sink exercise (SINKEX) benefits the U.S. Navy and participating allies and partners by providing crews the opportunity to gain proficiency in tactics, targeting and live firing against surface targets, which enhances combat readiness of deployable units.

"These exercises provide important opportunities for realistic at-sea training with live ordnance, conditions that cannot be duplicated otherwise," said Vice Adm. Gerald R. Beaman, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet.

Canadian Forces photo by 407 Long Range Patrol Squadron

EX-USNS Concord (T-AFS-5) is used as a target vessel for Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Victoria (SSK 876) during a sink exercise (SINKEX) July 17 at the Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands, Kauai.

Former Navy vessels used in SINKEXs are prepared in strict compliance with regulations prescribed and enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Strict environmental compliance is observed during all SINKEXs. Each SINKEX is required to sink the hulk in at least 1,000 fathoms (6,000 feet) and at least 50 nautical miles from land.

Surveys are conducted to ensure that humans and marine mammals are not in an area where they could be harmed during the event.

Ex-USS Niagara Falls was a Mars-class combat stores ship commissioned in April 1967, decommissioned and transferred to Military Sealift Command in September 1994, and deactivated in September 2008.

Ex-USS Concord was a Mars-class combat stores commissioned in November 1968, decommissioned and transferred to Military Sealift Command in October 1992, and deactivated in August 2009.

Twenty-two nations, more than 40 ships and submarines, more than 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC exercise from June 29 to Aug. 3, in and around the Hawaiian Islands.

Screaming Eagles fly with new RIMPAC birds

Tech. Sgt. Angela Brees

190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

The "Screaming Eagles" of the 96th Air Refueling Squadron (ARS) are really good at refueling C-17 Globemaster IIIs and F-22 Raptors – it's what they do every day. Based at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, the 96th performs most refueling missions with aircraft from the 15th Wing and 154th Wing of the Hawaii Air National Guard.

"Day-in, day-out, we refuel F-22s and C-17s, with some rare random refueling of other airframes," said Lt. Col. J. Wes Thompson, 96th ARS operations officer. However, that has changed with the start of the Rim of the Pacific exercise now being conducted at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and in the waters around the Hawaiian Islands

Although it is still early in the exercise, the 96th has already refueled A-10 Thunderbolts and Canadian F-18 Hornets – the latter requiring the use of a boom drogue adapter.

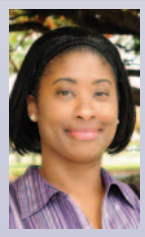
As a new squadron, which was commissioned late last year and serves as an associate unit to the HIANG 203rd ARS, opportunities to deploy are limited for 96th ARS members.

The squadron does not have its own maintenance personnel to date; it relies on the 203rd for maintenance support, which owns the aircraft as well. It expects to receive its first assigned maintainers late summer of this year. RIMPAC is helping to prepare Airman for the operational tempo of their next duty station, Thompson said.

"Without a deployed mission, we are limited on how many airframes we see. RIMPAC is providing us with an opportunity to see new airframes and experience longer missions that are more typical of a deployed environment," he said.

Diverse Views

In recognition of the Great Green Fleet demonstration and new modes of energy and transportation: What is the most interesting mode of transportation you have ever been on?



Tech. Sgt. Levette Jimerson
15th Operational Support Squadron

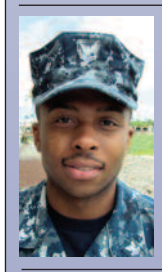
"The most interesting mode of transportation I have ever been on was a horse. As a child, I enjoyed riding a horse at Girl Scout camp, but as an adult, I was scared, but still have a good time when I do get a chance to ride."

Logistics Specialist Jacob Snodderley
USS Oklahoma

"A submarine. It's a pretty decent experience. Everyone has to work together and be at the top of their game."

Master Sgt. Steven Brettler
HQ PACAF

"I rode a camel and donkey when I was deployed to Kuwait and Jordan. The best thing about it, it was a smooth ride with no expensive gas fees."



Cryptologic Technician (Collection) Seaman Warren Maddox
NIOC Hawaii

"It would probably have to be a unicycle. It was really hard."

Tech. Sgt. Andre Christian
56th Air Communications Squadron

"Riding scooters with my children to the exchange food court for Tuesday night $1.50 scoops of ice cream."

Master Chief Machinist's Mate Craig Cook
Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard

"I was on a jeepney in the Philippines back in the '80s. It was like being in a cab in New York City."

(Provided by Brandon Bosworth and David Underwood Jr.)

Want to see your command featured in Diverse Views? Got opinions to share?
Drop us a line at editor@hookelenews.com or karen.spangler@navy.mil

Epperson shown off coast of Oahu

Official U.S. Navy photograph, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center

The USS Epperson (DD-719) is shown here operating off the coast of Oahu on Aug. 29, 1968. The ship was photographed by PHCM/AC Louis P. Bodine of squadron VC-1. Epperson was a U.S. Navy destroyer named for Marine Corps private Harold G. Epperson, who was posthumously awarded a Medal of Honor for heroism in the Battle of Saipan, which took place June 15 to July 9, 1944.

HO'OKELE
Pearl Harbor - Hickam News

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U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Tyler L. Main

Australian Army soldiers from Alpha Company, 1st Royal Australian Regiment, conduct a raid from Amphibious Assault Vehicles driven by U.S. Marines from Combat Assault Company, 3rd Marine Regiment, as part of Rim of the Pacific 2012, July 9.

Visit RIMPAC Central to sign up for activities

Don Robbins

Assistant Editor

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Morale, Welfare and Recreation has scheduled many activities during the first week of August for all RIMPAC commands in Hawaii.

For complete and updated information on all of the activities, visit the website www.greatlifehawaii.com.

A few of the upcoming events include:

Aug. 2

• Snorkeling at Ko 'Olina in West Oahu will take place departing RIMPAC Central at 9 a.m. and returning at 1 p.m. The cost is $20 per person and a minimum of six people is required.

Aug. 3

• Free "movies on Liberty" will take place with transportation to the theater and participants will be able to pick the movie. A maximum of 40 people may participate. The activity departs RIMPAC Central at 4:45 p.m. and returns at 9:30 p.m. This is a Single Sailor program event.

Aug. 4

• Take a historical tour of the Arizona Memorial and visit the Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor. The cost is $29 and a minimum of six people is required. The tour departs RIMPAC Central at 8 a.m. and returns at 3 p.m.

Aug. 5

• Hike the windswept cliffs of Makapuu Lighthouse at the easternmost point of Oahu. The cost is $10 per person and a minimum of six people is required. The activity departs RIMPAC Central at 2 p.m. and returns at 6 p.m.

Aug. 6

• Hike the Waimano Pools including a view of a three-tiered waterfall. A minimum of six people is required. The cost is $10 per person. The activity departs RIMPAC Central at 10 a.m. and returns at 2 p.m.

Aug. 7

• Participate in a Bellows Beach day and barbecue at a cost of $25 per person. A minimum of six people is required. The activity departs RIMPAC Central at 9 a.m. and returns at 1 p.m.

RIMPAC sports T-shirts can be purchased at the Information, Tickets and Travel Fleet Store NEX Mall and Hickam offices. These shirts bear the flags of all participating countries. Get a 2008 or 2010 RIMPAC coin free as a souvenir while supplies last. For more information, call 473-0792.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Daniel Barker

Sailors and Marines man the rails aboard amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam during the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise 2012.

Pearl Harbor-Hickam *Highlights*

(Above) Marines of amphibious assault vehicle platoon, Combat Assault Company, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii Kaneohe Bay, make their way to amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) during Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2012 to meet the USS Essex (LHD-2) off shore.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Meares

(Left) Soldiers from multiple countries participating in the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise play rugby July 14 on amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) hangar bay.

Canadian Forces photo by MCpl Marc-Andre Gaudreault

USS Essex (LHD 2) flight deck personnel proceed with the morning foreign object debris (FOD) walk down.

Canadian Forces photo by MCpl Marc-Andre Gaudreault

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force photo by PO1 Takahiro Ito

The dinghy used during dive training is offloaded from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force minesweeper tender JS Bungo (MST-464).

A Mexican sailor aboard the ARM Usumacinta (A-412) guides a MI-17 helicopter to a deck landing during Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2012.

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Paul Seeber

USS Frank Cable (AS 40) arrives at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam

The submarine tender USS Frank Cable (AS 40) arrives at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam for a port visit July 15, after completing a six-month dedicated maintenance period from February to July at Vigor Marine, Portland, Ore. The mission of the shipyard availability was to perform repairs to hull, engineering and propulsion systems which will improve the ability of the tender to provide continuous support to deployed surface and submarine units in the Pacific Fleet operating area. Frank Cable is currently homeported in Apra Harbor, Guam.

U.S. Navy photos by MCC Josh Thompson

Midshipmen receive guidance from Rear Adm. Ponds

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Stephanie Menzen

Rear Adm. Frank Ponds, commander of Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, meets with Midshipmen on July 5 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Midshipmen from various commands and locations had an opportunity July 5 to meet with Rear Adm. Frank Ponds, commander of Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific. The Midshipmen offered comments on the guidance and inspiration they received from the meeting with the admiral.

What was Rear Adm. Ponds' message to you? What was your biggest take-away from the encounter?"

MIDN Charmaine Tomlinson, Mobile, Ala.:

"Rear Adm. Ponds gave a speech about what to expect when we get to the fleet and the future in general."

"He mentioned establishing credibility, trust and confidence -- Credibility so that your superiors and subordinates know that you understand what you are doing, what you are talking about, and the reasons for doing what you are doing. The trust is for everyone else trusting that you were placed in your position for a good reason. And the confidence was the knowledge that your shipmates could see that you were competent in your ability to do your job."

MIDN Conor Wilkes, San Francisco, Calif.:

"He had a lot of confidence in our abilities even though he knew none of us personally."

MIDN Dianna Shafer, Bremerton, Wash.:

"His message to me was that the diversity of ideas was important to the success of the Navy."

"My biggest take away from the encounter was that every part of the Navy is important, no matter what rank or job, and whether I continue on in the service to make it a career or I get out early, it is always important that I build credibility amongst my subordinates, peers and superiors. The time I spend becoming a good leader will always be valuable to me and will serve me well my whole life."

MIDN John Dunne, Southold, N.Y.:

"Rear Adm. Ponds' message to me was to always be credible for my actions. Also, I took away that the Navy has entrusted us as future officers that we will complete the mission and in order to do so, one must be credible for his actions and responsible in the position given."

MIDN 1/C Jared Taylor, Judsonia, Ark.:

"There is no such thing as luck. 'Luck' is when preparation and timing meet. You have to show initiative and be ready when the opportunity presents itself. One has to build credibility and be prepared when the moment presents itself."

Munitions teams 'check their guns at the door'

Tech. Sgt. Angela Brees

190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

"Check your guns at the door." More than a philosophy in a Wild West saloon, it is the mission of the 15th Wing's munitions team for this year's Rim of the Pacific exercise. More than 50 aircraft to date have checked in their munitions at the flightline door of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Since the exercise began July 2, the 15th Wing's munitions team has seen its inventory increase by 20 percent. With a small team of 11, the team has broken into two shifts to tackle the workload.

"We typically only support the C-17s (Globemasters), so the operational tempo is much greater than normal," said Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Rico, non-commissioned officer in charge of the munitions flight. "But we're using this as a training opportunity for our team, an opportunity to grow our knowledge."

The team is housing GBU-38s, 500-pound joint direct attack munitions used by the F-16 Fighting Falcon; GBU-10s, a 2,000-pound bomb used by the A-10 Thunderbolt; chaff and flare used by various aircraft; and 50 caliber rounds used by the HS-60 as well as all of their associated components.

To ensure smooth operations, the team is working closely with its 32 aviation ordnance counterparts from the U.S. and Canadian Air Force, U.S. Navy and the Marines. Safety is the highest priority in working with the various service branches, all with different policies and procedures, said Rico.

"Whichever policy is the more stringent, that's the one we want to follow," he said.

For the exercise, Senior Airman Angelica Dealmeida has overseen the inventory of incoming and outgoing munitions. As the accountability representative, she is responsible for the storage, movement, build up and tear down of about 65 munitions on any given day during the exercise.

"This is my first RIMPAC, and it has been a great learning experience. Learning the new bombs, working with the various branches, it's been a blessing as I prepare to change duty stations and is helping me prepare for how a larger base operates," she said.

"It's a big responsibility, especially for a Senior Airman," Rico said.

"She has spearheaded each aspect of munitions accountability and has shown leadership aspects you don't typically see in a Senior Airman," he said. "(Her efforts) allow the flight to have up-to-date visibility on our assets. In turn, we are able to provide the status of allocated munitions for all units involved."

That workload is likely to increase. Another four units are expected to arrive over the next few days. But Rico and team are ready for it.

"We are integrating and working together now with the personnel who have already arrived. And while we maintain overall accountability and facility support, we are all using this time to gain training on how we complete the mission in the coming days," he said.

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15th Wing Airman steps up for RIMPAC exercise 2012

Capt. Joe Blubaugh

190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

During a large-scale military exercise, there are always individuals that step up and perform at a level that is way above their pay grade. That's no different for the Rim of the Pacific exercise being conducted at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

One of those individuals is Staff Sgt. Daniel Baker, 15th Wing plans non-commissioned officer in charge. Normally a C-17 loadmaster, Baker was tasked during the early planning stages of this year's RIMPAC as one of the personnel that would see the exercise through, from concept to execution.

Baker was the original planner for the 15th Wing and was tasked to provide input on behalf of the wing and gauge the impact the exercise was going to have on flightline operations. He has attended all the planning conferences leading up to the exercise and has been a consistent voice for the wing at those events.

The work Baker is doing hasn't gone unnoticed by wing leadership. Maj. Lloyd Richardson, 15th Wing executive officer, has also been involved with RIMPAC since the early planning stages.

"Staff Sgt. Baker has been an integral part of the team as wing plans has been very heavily involved with the exercise," said Richardson. "It was natural for him to be in this job, but this is not a natural job just from the sheer magnitude of it. He has gone above and beyond with the work that he has done."

Now that the exercise is here, Baker's role has transitioned from a planner to a liaison. With 15 different units—including three from foreign nations—utilizing the ramp at Hickam, there are bound to be issues that arise every day.

"He is stretched so thin dealing with international units, and frankly he is doing an amazing job—better than my expectations," added Richardson. "He is doing all this while maintaining his currency as an aviator."

"It adds a unique dynamic working with the foreign militaries," said Baker. "There hasn't been a language barrier, but it has been very interesting working with the different cultures they bring to the exercise."

Baker said the most difficult part of his job has been coordinating with the 15 units utilizing the airfield – and finding the time to give them the attention they need. "I've helped the visiting units work with airfield management, the motor pool, logistics and maintenance," he said. "I try to give them whatever they need to get their issues resolved in a timely manner."

While Baker is now focusing on the minutiae of the day-to-day operations of the exercise, he is excited about the knowledge he gained during the planning stage. "I was able to see the exercise from a different perspective and see the impact of the various agencies involved. As a C-17 loadmaster, we sometimes have tunnel vision and don't have the opportunity to see the big picture."

Baker said RIMPAC has given the 15th Wing an opportunity to test the effectiveness of the joint base concept and provide a chance to work with their sister service. "There have been a few hiccups as we worked through the different cultures we bring to the table, but we have been able to work through the issues and make the exercise a success," he said.

Baker, who is from Lynn, Ind., has been in the Air Force for more than seven years, all as a loadmaster. He has more than 2,800 flying hours in the C-17. Baker will graduate with a bachelor of science degree in management in May 2013 and is pursuing a commission with the hope of becoming a C-17 pilot.

Panetta accelerates Stennis Carrier Strike Group deployment

Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Nolan Kahn

An F/A-18F Super Hornet from the Black Aces of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 41 is directed onto the catapult on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74).

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Navy will deploy the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis and its strike group four months early and shift its destination to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, Department of Defense officials said July 16 at the Pentagon.

The deployment late this summer is in response to Central Command's requirement for an extended carrier presence, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said. The move affects 5,500 Sailors aboard the Stennis and the Aegis cruiser USS Mobile Bay.

Last week, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta approved a request from Central Command commander Marine Corps Gen. James N. Mattis to accelerate Stennis' deployment. "The decision will help support existing naval force requirements in the Middle East and reduce the gap caused by the upcoming departure of the USS Enterprise Strike Group," Little said. "It is in keeping with our long-standing commitments to the region."

Aircraft carrier strike groups provide commanders with ample and flexible air assets to enhance interoperability with partner nations and maintain strong military-to-military relations as well as respond to a wide variety of contingencies, Little said.

The Bremerton, Wash.-based Stennis strike group was due to deploy at the end of the year to U.S. Pacific Command. The group returned from duty in the Middle East in March.

The accelerated deployment to the Central Command area of responsibility is not aimed at any specific threat. "In keeping with CENTCOM requirements, this is a very important region for our defense strategy," Little said. "We've had a presence in the region for decades, and we have a range of interests that this extension of our capabilities will support."

Nor, he said, is the deployment a direct response to tensions with Iran. The U.S. military is "always mindful of the challenges posed by Iran, but ... this is not a decision based solely on the challenges posed by Iran," Little said.

Currently the USS Enterprise and USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike groups are deployed to U.S. Central Command. The USS Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group is due to relieve the Lincoln group shortly. The Stennis group will relieve Enterprise.

The Navy continues to operate at a high operational tempo in order to meet U.S. security needs around the world. "Our deployment strain is as great as or greater today than it has been at any time in the past 10 years," a Navy official said.

Sailors and their families have been informed of the change, Little said. Navy officials looked at a wide range of options to ensure Navy commitments and combatant commander mission requirements are met and to lessen the impact of schedule changes.

The carrier strike group will be ready to deploy even given the accelerated timeline, Little said. "The U.S. Navy is well-equipped to ensure our Sailors are trained and ready for this deployment," he said.

Navy leaders understand the operational and personnel impacts this accelerated deployment will have. These include training cycle adjustments, crew and family uncertainty and reductions to quality of life port visits.

As more information becomes available, the Navy will release it, officials said, noting defense leaders are "committed to keeping Sailors and their families informed about current and future deployments to the best of our ability."