

*"Hula is the language of the heart,
therefore the heartbeat
of the Hawaiian people"*

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Reuben James supports Merrie Monarch

Story and photos by
MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Navy Region Hawai'i Public
Affairs

Sailors assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based, Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57) visited Hilo, Hawai'i on April 3-5 during the 45th annual Merrie Monarch Festival.

The annual festival, which is centered on a series of hula dancing competitions, promotes the art of hula and the Hawaiian culture.

The ship's three-day port visit served as a unique opportunity for Reuben James Sailors to learn more about Hawaiian culture, the art of hula and interact with the local community during the celebration.

Shortly after their arrival in Hilo, Reuben James Sailors went to Mooheau Park and participated in a community relations clean-up project. The Sailors spent the morning power-spraying the walls of the bus terminal and bandstand to help beautify the park and restore the Mooheau Bus Terminal, one of the city's major bus stops.

The hula competition at Edith Kanaka'ole Tennis Stadium was the centerpiece of the week's fes-



A "gracious lady" hula dancer performs for Sailors assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57) during a pier side ceremony officially welcoming the ship and its crew to Hilo, Hawaii. Reuben James visited Hilo to participate in festivities for the 45th annual Merrie Monarch Festival April 3-5. The annual festival, which is centered on a series of hula dancing competitions, promotes the art of hula and the Hawaiian culture.

tivities and during the visit to Hilo, Reuben James Sailors were given the opportunity to watch the competition, which is recognized worldwide for its historic and cultural significance to Hawai'i.

Hula dancers and local members of the community officially welcomed the Pearl Harbor-based Sailors to the celebration on April 4 during a pierside ceremony.

Following the welcome ceremony, the Reuben James Sailors

presented the Merrie Monarch Festival participants with a ship plaque and received a plaque from the Hilo Council Navy League and the office of the mayor of Hilo for their involvement during the festival.

Committee members and the royal court then joined the crew onboard Reuben James for a luncheon and a tour of the ship.

"The Navy has been part of the festival since it started and the aloha has always been there," said George De Mello, office committee chairman for the Merrie Monarch Festival. "We truly appreciate having the Navy come in and participate in the festival."

The Merrie Monarch Royal Parade through downtown Hilo on April 5 was the final event for the Sailors of Reuben James. The parade featured the many cultures of Hawai'i with more than 100 various local organizations participating. Reuben James Sailors represented the Navy as they marched through downtown Hilo, waving and shaking hands with the thousands of people in the streets.

Cmdr. Joseph Naman, commanding officer of Reuben James, thanked the people of Hilo for the hospitality they showed to Sailors throughout the week.

"The support we received from the Hilo community was incredible. They made us feel like part of their family," said Naman. "The festival and all its events were an excellent experience that gave the crew a chance to get in touch with the Hawaiian culture."

Alexander signs Month of the Military Child Proclamation



U.S. Navy photo by MCC (SW/AW) David Rush

Rear Adm. T. G. Alexander, commander Navy Region Hawai'i, along with some help from new friends, gets ready to sign as Navy Region Hawai'i and the Pearl Harbor Fleet and Family Support Center conducted a Child Abuse Prevention Month and Month of the Military Child Proclamation signing ceremony on April 3 at the Moanalua Navy Services Center. The Navy participates in the annual event which recommits its partnership to work with local community agencies to create nurturing and healthy environments for its families. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and Month of the Military Child. The Defense Department has long understood the value of caring for and celebrating children of service members. April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community. The Month of the Military Child is a time to applaud military families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and challenges they overcome. The Month of the Military Child is part of the legacy left by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger.



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Luciano Marano

Families and friends gathered to say goodbye as USS La Jolla (SSN 701) departed April 3 on a scheduled six-month deployment to the Western Pacific. This is the submarine's first deployment under the command of Cmdr. Douglas Sampson, who became La Jolla's commanding officer in November 2007.

USS La Jolla departs for Western Pacific

MC1 (SW) Cynthia Clark

Commander Submarine
Force U.S. Pacific Fleet
Public Affairs Office

USS La Jolla (SSN 701) departed from Naval Station Pearl Harbor for a scheduled Western Pacific deployment on April 3.

Cmdr. Doug Sampson, USS La Jolla's commanding officer, said his crew is "very excited" about heading out on deployment. "This is what we get paid

to do," he said. "Everybody's been looking forward to it for months."

La Jolla is heading to the Western Pacific where, according to Sampson, they will be conducting many exercises with foreign navies as well as being available for any tasking which comes down from the Commander, Seventh Fleet operational commander.

"The opportunity to interact with other navies and other armed forces is always very interesting,"

he said. "The guys enjoy talking to their foreign counterparts not only on the shore, but on the radios, too. The exercises also come with the traditional port calls the Sailors are very excited about as well."

Commissioned in 1981, La Jolla is 360 feet long and displaces 6,900 tons. The submarine can be armed with both Mark-48 ADCAP anti-submarine torpedoes and Tomahawk guided cruise missiles.



Navy announces Earth Day Fair and events See page A-4



USS Lake Erie grants teen's wish See page A-4



USS Reuben James conducts burial-at-sea ceremonies See page A-8



Merrie Monarch Festival See page B-1

Bush confers highest military decoration on fallen Navy SEAL

John J. Kruzal

American Forces Press Service

President Bush posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on April 8 to Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor, a Navy SEAL whose mortal sacrifice in Iraq saved the lives of two fellow SEALs and several Iraqi soldiers.

The fallen SEAL's parents, George and Sally Monsoor, accepted the honor on their son's behalf during a White House ceremony. The Medal of Honor, awarded for gallantry in combat exceeding the call of duty, is the nation's highest military decoration.

"In September 2006, Michael laid down his life for his brothers in arms," Bush said. "Today, we remember the life of this faithful Navy SEAL, and on behalf of a grateful nation, we will present Michael Mansoor's family with the Medal of Honor that he earned."

Monsoor, a 25-year-old machine gunner with SEAL Team Three, was providing security at a sniper lookout post on Sept. 29, 2006, in Ramadi, Iraq, when a fragmentation grenade hit his chest and bounced to the floor. Positioned next to the single exit, only Monsoor could have escaped harm.

Instead, he threw himself onto the grenade. Monsoor used his body to absorb the blast and shield two nearby SEALs. The SEALs and eight Iraqi soldiers survived, some with wounds, others unscathed. Monsoor died a half hour later.

"One of the survivors puts it this way: 'Mikey looked death in the face that day and said, 'You cannot take my brothers. I will go in their stead,'" said Bush, quoting one of the SEALs saved by Monsoor.

In remarks at the ceremony,



U.S. Navy photo by MCI Brian Aho

George and Sally Monsoor speak with President George W. Bush during a Medal of Honor presentation ceremony in honor of their son in the East Room of the White House on April 8 Master-at-Arms 2nd Class (Seal) Michael A. Monsoor was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for diving onto a grenade to save his teammates in Ar Ramadi, Iraq on Sept. 29, 2006.

the president characterized the petty officer as an unlikely candidate for the SEALs. As a child, he suffered from asthma attacks and coughing fits that routinely landed him in the hospital, Bush said.

But the asthmatic child resolved to wean himself off his inhaler, strengthening his lungs by challenging his siblings in swimming races. The determined child grew into a young man who eventually completed SEAL training, which Bush called the "ultimate test of physical endurance."

"Less than a third of those who begin this training become SEALs," he said. "But Mike would not be denied a spot."

The maritime component of U.S. Special Operations Command, Navy SEALs are expert reconnoiters and stealth warriors, often performing clandestine operations that larger forces cannot conduct undetected. Today Monsoor became the first SEAL to earn the Medal of Honor for actions in Iraq and the second SEAL to receive the award since

Sept. 11, 2001.

Monsoor was inducted into the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes, where his name will be engraved alongside some 3,445 recipients of the nation's highest honor.

The petty officer previously was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with combat "V" device, and a Purple Heart before becoming the fourth service member to receive the Medal of Honor since the beginning of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Awarded by the president in the name of Congress, the Medal of Honor was created in 1861 as a personal award of valor for members of the Navy. Today, every service branch confers the rare honor upon those who distinguish themselves "conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life."

"The Medal of Honor is awarded for an act of such courage that no one could rightly be expected to undertake it," the president said. "Yet those who knew Michael Monsoor were not surprised when he did."

Gate closings on Naval Station Pearl Harbor

A single outbound lane of Nimitz Gate will be closed from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. April 12 and April 19 to allow masons to repair a moss rock column damaged by a vehicle.

The Nimitz Gate inbound lane will be closed at 7 p.m. on April 25 until 5 a.m. on April 26 for work to replace the safety loops and detectors. The Nimitz Gate outbound lane will be closed from 7 p.m. May 9 to 5 a.m. on May 10 to accomplish work on safety loops and detectors. Access during these times will be through Makalapa Gate.

Makalapa Gate will be closed from 7 p.m. May 23 to 5 a.m. May 24 for work to replace the safety loops and detectors. Access to the base during this time will be through Nimitz Gate. Makalapa Gate will reopen by 5:30 a.m. on May 24.

If work needs to be extended past the times listed, signs will be posted to direct traffic.

Navy Tax Center introduces new program

Blair Martin

Contributing Writer

With IRS tax deadline just around the corner, the Navy Tax Center is attempting a new approach when it comes to Sailors and their taxes.

This year, the tax center is introducing a new tax preparation software that allows active-duty Sailors to file taxes online for free.

"We are doing things a little different this year," said Lt. j.g. Matthew Negrete with the Navy Legal Service Office (NLSO). "We are encouraging Sailors to go online and take advantage of these services."

Negrete said the new software program should help teach Sailors and their family members to become

self-sufficient in tax preparation. To access the free service online, active-duty service members must register and log into www.militaryonesource.com. The service is free to all active-duty service members and their family members.

"We want to teach Sailors how to do their own taxes," he said. "That way they will be far more equipped if they should ever get out of the Navy and have to do their taxes on their own."

Negrete said the full services of the tax center lawyers and volunteers are available by appointment. Assistance will be provided on a walk-in basis, he added.

Whether taxes will be filed online or by a professional, Negrete suggested Sailors have the following forms: Military identifica-

tion card, banking information for direct deposit, copies of W2, 1098, 1099 forms and any other tax receipts from other sources of income.

"I always advise Sailors to bring in their tax return statement from last year," he said. "There is a lot of information you will need off of that form plus it makes E-filing so much easier."

Deadline for filing taxes is April 15, according to the IRS Web site. The Navy Tax Center is located at room 11, building 679 at the Navy College. The hours of operation are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday. For more information or to make an appointment, call 473-1771.

Hawaii Navy News Editorial

Look sharp, be sharp, show your Navy pride!



FORCM (SS/AW/SW) Charles Dassance

Network Warfare Command

Good day, shipmates. I'd like to talk with you about a topic that many Sailors unfortunately take for granted - the need for everyone, from the highest ranking officers to the newest seamen

recruits, to always present a professional, squared away appearance when they come to work each day. In many ways, your appearance is just as important as the quality of the work that you do.

What is the first thing that you notice whenever you see another Sailor walking around? Do you look at her uniform to see if it is clean, pressed and has sharp creases? Do you notice whether or not he has shaved or has a proper haircut? If so, then you are doing your job of watching out for your shipmates. And what is the first thought that comes to your mind if you see a fellow Sailor who has a sloppy, careless appearance? You probably think that, just as he doesn't care too much about how he looks at work each day, he is probably equally lackadaisical about the job he does.

This is why it is important for you to take the time every day before you come to work to properly prepare every part of your uniform. Whether you are wearing utilities or working blues or whites, make sure you iron your

shirt and pants or skirt thoroughly and put sharp creases into them. Also, you should always keep on hand a clean and pressed pair of dress blues or whites in case you need to wear them.

Your shoes should always be freshly polished and, if you are male, shave every morning unless a waiver is authorized by the commanding officer. Mustaches are authorized, but must be kept neatly and closely trimmed. No portion of the mustache should extend below the lip line of the upper lip.

Both male and female Sailors must also ensure that their haircuts conform to Navy standards. For men, hair above the ears and around the neck should be tapered from the lower natural hairline upwards at least three-fourths of an inch and outward not greater than three-fourths of an inch to blend with your hair-style. Hair on the back of the neck must not touch the collar. Hair should be no longer than four inches and may not touch the ears or collar, extend below eyebrows when headgear is removed, and not show under the

front edge of headgear or interfere with you properly wearing military headgear. The bulk of the hair must not exceed two inches in length.

For women, hairstyles must not be outrageously multi-colored or faddish, to include shaved portions of the scalp (other than the neckline), or have designs cut or braided into the hair. Hair coloring should look natural and complement the individual. Haircuts and styles should present a balanced appearance. Lopsided and extremely asymmetrical styles are not authorized. Ponytails, pigtailed, widely spaced individual hanging locks and braids which protrude from the head are not authorized. Multiple braids are authorized.

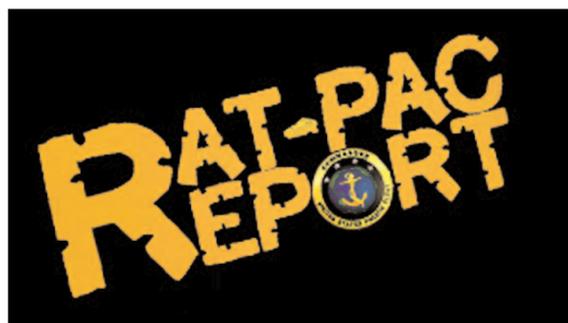
These are the basic steps you should follow to present a professional appearance at work each day. However, the need to look sharp doesn't end when you're off duty. You must remember that although you don't have to work 24 hours a day, you are still a part of the military during your off-duty hours. This means that you must also dress and look pro-

fessional when you are on liberty.

For men, earrings are prohibited when you are in civilian clothes in a duty status, just as they are prohibited while you are in uniform. For both men and women, tattoos, body art and brands on the head, face, neck or scalp are banned. Individual tattoos, body art and brands exposed by wearing a short sleeved uniform shirt should be no larger in size than the wearer's hand with fingers extended and joined with the thumb touching the base of the index finger. Follow all of these instructions and you should look professional while on liberty.

Being a Sailor carries with it a responsibility to reflect positively on the Navy and the nation you represent. This is something you shouldn't forsake just because you are not in uniform.

In the civilian world, it will matter just as much how you look wearing a suit and tie as how you now look wearing your Navy uniform. In both cases, care and attention to detail are what will allow you to always look your best. And if you look your best every day,



Podcast discusses maritime strategy

U.S. Pacific Fleet

Adm. Robert F. Willard, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, talked about the strategic importance of the Pacific Fleet and maritime strategy in his latest podcast:

"I don't think there's any question in anyone's mind that the Pacific region of the world is important to our globe when you consider this is the largest maritime area of responsibility in our Navy. It handles a majority of our world's commerce (and) contains a large segment of the world's highest income and economic powers.

"The Pacific region has a lot of history, has a lot of challenges, (and) has extremes in economic development from the very high end countries like South Korea and Japan to the challenged regions in Southeast Asia, two greatly emerging countries in India and China and equally emerging militaries. I think there is consensus among many that the importance of this region, and the future of the global economy and as such it will be a critical region in which to maintain security.

"Our responsibility to the tax payers of this great nation is to provide maritime security on the approaches to this country, the strategic lines of communication on the maritime domain, and in strategic straits and there are many of those, frankly, in this region as well. So the Pacific fleet is here to do just that.

"The Pacific Fleet continues to have operational control of all of our west coast navy forces. In addition, we have forces laid down here in Hawaii. We have submarine and submarine tender forces and a base in Guam. We have forward-deployed naval forces in Yokosuka, Japan and we have an amphibious ready group of ships in Sasebo, Japan. We have commanders laid down in Japan and Guam, Singapore and various other locations to constitute a Navy force that tents forward with our

Marine partnership, in particular, our expeditionary strike group in Okinawa that plays a very important role for us both in partner building and attempting to influence this area of responsibility (AOR), as well as in war fighting.

"I think for us to execute the maritime strategy, we need credible leaders everywhere and that's not just in senior Navy leadership, but rather credible leadership down to our lowest enlisted ranks within our workshops. The Navy strategy calls for a Navy that we traditionally know is forward and present and very strong and capable of going to war. That requires credible leadership, that we are that ready, that prepared for what our core competencies in warfare involve. But the new maritime strategy also calls for new advances in maritime security and partnering with other nations and I think that to be able to accomplish both of those, and especially the partnering piece, our ability to be effective in our engagement with other navies throughout the world - some of which have lesser capability than the United States Navy, some of them are near peers - requires a degree of leadership to be exerted up and down our command chain in order to achieve those engagements, understand and relate to the foreign leaders that we're partnering with and to be able to delve into those cultures and be really effective with what we leave behind between these partnering events.

"So between implementing a cooperative strategy and the many tasks that that calls for by the Pacific Fleet and this opportunity to continue to prevail in this long war, I think we should all look at one another, roll our sleeves up and be prepared to go back to work in 2008 to make this world a better place. We're about the security and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region here and we want it to be more secure and more prosperous at the end of 2008 than it is today."

Memorial for General MacArthur aboard Missouri



U.S. Naval Historical Center photograph

A memorial service honoring the late General of the Army Douglas MacArthur is held on the after deck of the decommissioned USS Missouri (BB 63) at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Wash. on April 10, 1964.



Hawaii Navy News

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USS Lake Erie grants teen's wish

Story and photo by Blair Martin

Contributing Writer

With the help of the Make-a-Wish Foundation and the Sailors of the USS Lake Erie (CG 70), one teen's wish to see a real, working naval ship at Pearl Harbor was finally granted this past week.

Jacob Barrett, a 16-year-old from Shelbyville, Ind., received a special behind-the-scenes tour of Lake Erie on April 3 personally led by Sailor of the Year recipients, Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) George Lite and Damage Controlman 1st Class (SW) Sheldon Kapua.

"It is such an honor to be able to grant this wish," said Command Master Chief (SW/AW) Mack Ellis of Lake Erie. "This [opportunity] is special to us because you not only see the happiness and excitement on the child, but also on our Sailors."

Barrett, who was diagnosed with mitochondrial disease in 2006, is legally blind and profoundly deaf, wearing two cochlear implants. His mother, Michelle, said she was prompted to contact the Make-a-Wish Foundation after doctors discovered Jacob's eyesight was rapidly deteriorating.

"After Jacob's vision was tested, I finally came to terms with the fact that he had a life-threatening disease," she said. "I knew he was interested in history and particularly Pearl Harbor and World War II history and just wanted him to see it before his vision goes."

Founded in 1980, the Make-a-Wish Foundation has granted thousands of wishes every year to children with life-threatening medical conditions so their lives could be enriched with "once-in-a-lifetime" memories and experiences. Barrett's Pearl Harbor trip included a full tour and lunch with Sailors onboard



Make-A-Wish recipient Jacob Barrett is given a memento from Junior Sailor of the Year winner, Damage Controlman 1st Class (SW) Sheldon Kapua, aboard USS Lake Erie (CG 70). Barrett and his family received a tour on the ship as well as the Missouri, USS Arizona and Ford Island as part of his wish package from the Make A Wish Foundation.

Lake Erie as well as tours to Battleship Missouri Memorial, USS Arizona Memorial and Ford Island.

At the end of his Lake Erie tour, Sailors showered Barrett with mementos from the ship, including pictures, a personalized firefighter's helmet and a flag flown earlier onboard the ship.

Barrett, excited to be in Hawai'i for the first time, said he had been looking forward to the trip for over a year. "The trip has been really great," he said. "I really wanted to see submarines, planes and ships so it was fun finally seeing them [in person]. I am really having a good time."

Barrett said he was glad to receive a tour on the Lake Erie because he wanted to see the "ship that shot down the satellite." In February, the Lake Erie received national media attention for shooting down a non-functioning satellite in the north Pacific.

Ensign Brittany Lynn, the ship's public affairs officer,

said she was touched after learning about Barrett's wish to tour Lake Erie.

"I think it is such an honor he would choose to come tour our naval ship," she said. "Anytime people recognize what we do [for a living] or they are thankful and want to learn more about [what we do] just means the world to all of us."

Bryan Barrett, Jacob's father, said he would like to thank Sailors at Naval Station Pearl Harbor for their generosity and support during his son's tour. "Words can't describe how great this trip has been," he said. "The experience of being on this ship [with Jacob] has just been incredible. Everyone on the ship has done a tremendous job and has been so wonderful to my son. We will always be grateful to the Navy for this experience."

For more information on the Make-a-Wish Foundation, visit www.wish.org.

Navy announces Earth Day Fair and events

Grace Hew Len

Environmental PAO,
Navy Region Hawai'i
Public Affairs

Test your recycling knowledge, learn about xeriscape landscaping, and visit the "House of Environmental Hazards" at the 2008 Navy Earth Day Fair from 10 a.m.-2

p.m. April 19 at The Mall at Pearl Harbor. The event is free and open to the public.

The 5th Annual Navy Region Hawai'i Earth Day Fair returns to The Mall at Pearl Harbor, outside the Navy Exchange, where children and adults may browse interactive displays, engage in educational activities, enter contests, and take home free giveaways. The Federal Fire Department band, Hui Mele Na Kina'i Ahi, will kick off the event with live music on stage.

Exhibitors will include: City and County of Honolulu Department of Environmental Services, Hawaiian Electric Company, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Hawaiian Island Humpback Whale Sanctuary, State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation Highways Division, U. S. Coast Guard Sea Partners, Naval Maritime Forecast Center & Joint Typhoon Warning, Federal Fire Department, Navy Recycling Center, Navy Hawai'i Energy Team, Navy Restoration Program, Navy Regin Hawai'I Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Information, Tours and Travel, MWR Outdoor Recreation, Auto Sound Tinting, and Navy Exchange Outdoor Living.

The Navy Recycling Center will unload a large bale of recycled paper for a guessing contest and prizes for the top two winners. The City and County of Honolulu Department of Environmental Services will show how you can "Be an Everyday Environmental Hero." Learn ways to protect humpback whales and other marine species.

The ever-popular Federal Fire Department will wow the crowd with their House of Environmental Hazards, special operations trailer, red engine com-

pany truck, HazMat truck, and other interactive displays.

The department will also offer free blood pressure screening. Test your physical stamina by climbing the MWR rock wall and learn about the MWR outdoor recreation program at their booth nearby.

Matt Flach, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Hawai'i landscape architect, will take the stage for a presentation on xeriscape landscaping. In addition, NEX Outdoor

Living will feature a xeriscape plant tent, composting and keiki potting demo.

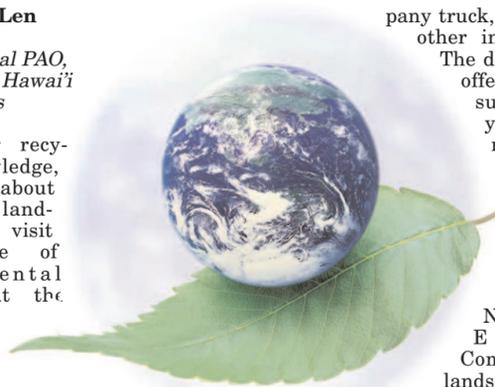
The annual Navy Earth Day fair will be one of many events around the state to celebrate Earth Day on April 22. Through the combined efforts of the U. S. government, grassroots organizations, and citizens like you, what started as a day of national environmental recognition has evolved into a worldwide campaign to protect our global environment.

The following events are open to volunteers:

- April 12, 8:30 to 11 a.m. – Hawai'i Nature Center Pouhala Marsh Cleanup. Bring water and change of clothes. Work will be wet and muddy. Contact: Pauline Kawamata, 955-0100, ext. 18 or www.hawaiinaturecenter.org.

- April 19, 8 a.m. to noon – Pearl Harbor Bike Path Cleanup. Meet at Neal S. Blaisdell Park, park on site and look for Earth Day banner. Volunteers will receive T-shirts, bottled water and light snacks. Wear old clothes, covered shoes, and hats. All supplies will be provided by the Adopt-a-Block program sponsored by the City and County of Honolulu Department of Environmental Services with support from Navy Region Hawai'i, Lions Club and other agencies. Volunteers will remove litter and debris from the Pearl Harbor bike path, from the Aiea Bay State Recreational Park to Waipahu Depot Road, including Kapakahi Stream. A minimum of 100 Navy volunteers are needed. Please register with volunteer coordinator Lt. Maria Navarro, maria.v.navarro@navy.mil, 473-5752.

(See page B-1 for Navy Region Hawai'i Earth Month projects schedule.)



Pearl Harbor Highlights

Sailors assigned to Pearl Harbor-based, Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57) march in the Merrie Monarch Royal Parade in Hilo, Hawai'i. Reuben James visited Hilo to participate in festivities for the 45th annual Merrie Monarch Festival on April 3-5. The annual festival, which is centered on hula competitions, promotes the art of hula dancing and the Hawaiian culture.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael A. Lantron



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Sailors aboard the Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57) perform line handlers as they depart their homeport of Naval Station Pearl Harbor enroute to Hilo, Hawai'i. Reuben James visited Hilo to participate in festivities for the 45th annual Merrie Monarch Festival on April 3-5.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Sailors assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based, Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57) participate in a community relations project to clean the bandstand at Mooheau Park during a port visit to Hilo, Hawai'i.



U.S. Navy photo by Blair Martin

Make-a-Wish recipient Jacob Barrett and his family received a full tour of the naval ship as well as tours on the Battleship Missouri Memorial, USS Arizona and Ford Island as part of his wish package from the Make-a-Wish Foundation.



Rear Adm. T.G. Alexander, commander of Navy Region Hawai'i and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, presents Engineman 1st Class (SW) Jerry Milton, assigned to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Pearl Harbor, with a certificate for being selected as a recipient of the Navy Region Hawai'i Energy Award of the Quarter, First Quarter 2008 (individual). Milton received the award for being a driving force behind the NAVSTA Pearl Harbor Building Energy Monitor Program, assisting in the identification and training of NAVSTA Pearl Harbor building energy monitors to improve energy conservation efforts with the region.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Keating praises Micronesia's partnership in promoting stability

Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

Navy Adm. Timothy J. Keating's visit to Palikir, Micronesia on April 8 turned personal when, after praising Micronesia as a partner in promoting regional security, he was able to personally thank a local Soldier severely wounded while serving in the U.S. military in Iraq.

Keating, commander of U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), noted the close, longstanding security ties the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia share during a news conference with Micronesian President Emanuel Mori.

The strength of the two countries' friendship is important to U.S. Pacific Command, Keating told Mori. "It is this sort of relationship, which woven together, forms a very, very tight fabric of peace and stability all throughout this vast part of the world for which we are responsible," he said.

Mori emphasized to reporters the "very strong, very unique, very friendly relationship" between the two countries. This relationship enables the Micronesian people to sleep comfortably at night, recognizing the peace and security this relationship brings, he said.

Following "fruitful discussions" with Mori and representatives of the Foreign



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Elisia Gonzales

Navy Adm. Timothy J. Keating, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, shares a laugh with Micronesian Speaker of the Congress Isaac Figir during the admiral's first visit to Micronesia to reaffirm the two countries' shared interests and commitment to peace in the region.

Affairs and Justice ministries, Keating also called on Speaker of the Congress Isaac Figir and other Congressional leaders.

The admiral noted the contributions young Micronesians make to the U.S. armed forces, serving at about twice the per capita rate as their American counterparts. Keating noted that Mori's daughter serves in the

Air Force and Vice President Alik Alik's son is in the Army, and that their parents are "justifiably proud" of their children's service.

"We are immensely grateful for their commitment to those things that some folks take for granted," Keating told Mori, adding, "You, sir, obviously do not."

PACOM is proud of its military members who stand

"ready to do what needs to be done to ensure our peace and stability and security," providing a source of a comfort to the region, Keating said.

But that service isn't without a price, he recognized. "We know firsthand the sacrifice required of our young men and women in uniform," he said.

Keating had an opportunity to personally thank

Hilario Bermanis II, a Micronesian who exemplifies the cost of military service. Bermanis and a fellow 82nd Airborne Division paratrooper were guarding a weapons cache in Baghdad in June 2003 they were attacked by rocket-propelled grenades. Bermanis lost both legs and his left arm. His comrade was killed instantly.

After being treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, Bermanis, now a U.S. citizen, is finishing his rehabilitation on his home island of Pohnpei.

Bermanis told Keating he joined the U.S. military because he wanted to play a part in promoting peace in the world, knowing its effect on his own Pacific region.

Emotionally moved by his meeting with Bermanis, his father and brother, Keating said he felt honored to look them in the eye and thank them for their family's contributions.

"They've paid a catastrophic price, but they're proud of their service and what they've contributed," he said. "What we have isn't a coalition of the willing. It's a coalition of the committed."

Keating assured Mori of the United States' unwavering commitment to Micronesia.

He noted the upcoming USNS Mercy hospital ship visit to Micronesia as part of Pacific Partnership 2008. Hundreds of medical and dental professionals, some in

the military and some civilian volunteers, will provide medical care for those either too far away from the care they need or unable to afford it, he said.

An upcoming joint committee meeting between PACOM and senior Micronesian officials will address other issues of mutual interest and build on Keating's discussions here. Among topics on the agenda will be plans to stand up a transnational crime unit here later this month. PACOM's Joint Interagency Task Force West is joining Australia in lending support toward that effort, aimed at stemming the flow of drugs, particularly methamphetamine, in the region.

Keating reassured Mori that Micronesia can depend on its longstanding friendship with the United States. "Should you need help, regardless of the size, regardless of the time, regardless of the technical nature, if the United States Pacific Command can assist, we will," he said.

"We will be here as soon as you ask for the assistance, whether it's day or night, humanitarian assistance or something requiring even higher military capability," he said. "It will be our distinct privilege to provide that service when we can."

The visit was Keating's first to Micronesia, a nation of 607 islands stretching across an 1,800-mile-long archipelago, since he took command in March 2007.

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USS Santa Fe returns



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Luciano Marano

Families and friends gathered to greet USS Santa Fe (SSN 763) upon the submarine's return to Naval Station Pearl Harbor on April 5. Santa Fe returned home after spending more than a year at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine for a depot modernization period.

USS Hopper arrives in Thailand

Ensign Katie Burkhart

USS Hopper (DDG 70)
Public Affairs

The Hawai'i-based, guided-missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG 70), Hawai'i-based, guided-missile cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73) and Washington-based, guided-missile frigate USS Ingraham (FFG 61) arrived April 3 for a regularly scheduled port visit to Phuket Island.

During the visit, Sailors will have a chance to meet local citizens, experience local customs and traditions, and enjoy the many recreational activities offered in Phuket.

Many Sailors planned to participate in Morale, Welfare and Recreation tours, which allow them the opportunity to golf, dive or enjoy elephant rides.

Hopper will also participate in a community relations event with Life Home Project and will distribute Project Handclasp materials to needy women and children. Life Home Project provides a home and a supportive community for HIV-positive mothers and their children.

The center also has an art workshop where mothers can learn different skills to aid in their search for employment. Sailors plan to garden with the women and children in the morning and make crafts with them in the afternoon.

"This port visit is a great opportunity for our Sailors to rest and relax as well as experience the wonderful Thai culture," said Cmdr. Jeffrey W. James, Hopper commanding officer. "This is a favorite port for many of our Sailors and

everyone is excited to experience all that Phuket has to offer."

Routine port visits such as this one are an important element to building and sustaining relationships with regional partners. Working together with partner nations demonstrates the U.S. desire to interact with countries in the Asia-Pacific Region to create peace and stability.

Port Royal, Hopper and Ingraham are on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

Operating in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean, the U.S. 7th Fleet is the largest of the forward-deployed U.S. fleets, covering 52 million square miles, with approximately 50 ships, 120 aircraft and 20,000 Sailors and Marines assigned at any given time.

USS George Washington departs for Yokosuka, Japan

USS George Washington
Public Affairs

The aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) with its crew of approximately 3,200 Sailors departed Norfolk on April 7. The carrier began its journey to Yokosuka, Japan to replace USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) as the United States' only permanently forward-deployed aircraft carrier.

Commanded by Capt. Dave Dykhoff, the carrier will be the flagship for the George Washington Strike Group, commanded by Rear Adm. Phil Cullom and comprised of: Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17, guided-missile frigate USS Kauffman (FFG 59) homeported at Norfolk, Va., Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 40 and the guided-missile destroyer USS



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Clifford L. H. Davis

A NATO E-3A Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft flies over the aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) in the Atlantic Ocean on March 3. George Washington was participating in tailored ships training availability and final evaluation problem before a permanent homeport change in Yokosuka, Japan. The AWACS is used to provide airborne battle management, surveillance and weapons control.

Farragut (DDG 99), homeported at Mayport, Fla.

"Our Sailors, our families and the Navy have put together a tremendous effort to prepare GW for all aspects of this transition and while it is difficult to leave the Hampton Roads community, which has been so supportive of GW, we are excited about the vital importance of this new mission and the warm welcome we expect from the people of Yokosuka," said Dykhoff.

The George Washington Strike Group will head to the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) area of focus (AOF) to participate in Partnership of the Americas. After approximately two months, the ship will continue on its transit while Carrier Strike Group 8 and CVW-17 return to Norfolk. DESRON

40, Kauffman and Farragut will remain in the SOUTHCOM AOF to continue their participation in Partnership of the Americas for a six-month deployment.

George Washington is scheduled to reach its destination in Japan in August.

George Washington's replacement of Kitty Hawk is part of the Navy's long-range effort to routinely replace older ships assigned to the Navy's forward-deployed naval forces with newer or more capable platforms. Is part of an ongoing effort to consider the nature of all forward-deployed forces when looking at the unpredictable security environment in the Western Pacific. The Kitty Hawk is scheduled to be decommissioned later this year.

USS Reuben James conducts burial-at-sea ceremonies

Story and photo by
MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

Ten former service members and one spouse were laid to rest in the waters of the Pacific Ocean during burial-at-sea ceremonies April 2 aboard the Pearl Harbor-based, Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57).

The ceremonies continued the solemn and sacred Navy tradition of burial-at-sea by honoring those who have served in the armed forces.

"The people we do the ceremonies for made similar sacrifices to what we do in the Navy," said Cmdr. Joseph Naman, commanding officer of Reuben James. "This was one of their last wishes and I think we owe that to honor them here today."

The ceremonies began at approximately 4:30 p.m. on the ship's flight deck with the burial detail in dress white uniforms.

The ceremonies were held according to religious preference and type of burial, with one service member laid to rest in a coffin the rest had their remains

committed to the sea.

Lt. Cmdr. Travis Sisk, executive officer of Reuben James, sent each box of cremated ashes to the sea as Ensign Gregory Milki led the prayers and committals.

Prior to the end of each ceremony, a rifle squad of Reuben James Sailors held a 21-gun salute in honor of the perished souls and the lead flag bearer presented Naman with a U.S. flag.

"It was great because we're fulfilling someone's wish to be buried at sea and it's an honor to be a part of that," said Fireman (SW) Michael Baker, a member of the rifle team for the ceremonies.

All current and former service members who receive an honorable discharge are eligible to be buried at sea. Ceremonies are coordinated with embarked ships through local naval hospitals.

Following the ceremony, the families of the buried service members are sent a message informing them of the date, time and exact location their loved one was buried at sea, and are usually provided with photos and a video of the burial-at-sea ceremony.

Lt. Cmdr. Travis Sisk, executive officer of the Pearl Harbor-based Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57), spreads the cremated ashes of Army Sgt. John D. Gunther and his wife Margaret into the Pacific Ocean during a burial-at-sea ceremony April 2.



Terminal Fury prepares PACOM to confront crisis, threats

Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

The top U.S. officer in the Pacific declared a command post exercise that wrapped up at Camp Smith, Hawai'i on April 6 as a big success in ensuring U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) is ready to respond to the broad challenges it faces in the region.

Navy Adm. Timothy J. Keating, commander, U.S. Pacific Command, praised the weeklong Terminal Fury exercise for putting him and his staff through demanding 24-7 operations that tested their ability to work as a team to respond quickly to threats and crises.

"It was a fantastic week of learning," said Air Force Col. Mike Duvall, the command's exercises and training director, of the largest and highest-priority of more than a dozen major joint exercises the PACOM headquarters conducts each year.

More than 3,000 members of the PACOM headquarters and its sea, air and land forces components participated in this year's Terminal Fury, the fifth of its kind.

Throughout the exercise, the staffs confronted one challenge after another as they received and acted on information drummed up by 400 "white cell" members who designed the exercise and kept the momentum building.

These "exercise injects" reflected real-world scenarios and potential crises the command could face, Duvall explained. An aircraft went down in the theater, requiring a full battle assessment and personnel recovery operations. A disease outbreak erupted, with food and medical-supply shortages creating a humanitarian crisis. An enemy attack on a ship operating in the theater put the command's combat contingency plans into action.

Activity surrounding these events, to the point of deploying actual forces, was

conducted just as it would be in real life, Duvall explained. The headquarters of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Army Pacific, Pacific Air Forces and Marine Forces Pacific responded to information and taskings handed down from PACOM. Subordinate elements, including the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force and 3rd and 7th U.S. Fleets, also participated.

All force movements, whether by the United States and its partner nations or by opposing forces, was replicated using one of the world's most advanced systems of computer models and simulations.

Navy Capt Mark Donahue, PACOM's current operations chief, praised the realism the planners created in building the exercise. "It takes a lot of work and a lot of expertise to give you a high-fidelity scenario like we had in a way that it doesn't feel like you're just playing a game," he said. "And they put a lot of work into it ahead of time, to make it as realistic for us as possible."

These capabilities brought breath to the exercise, without the need for mass deployments of troops and equipment, Duvall said.

"It's amazing to me that we are able to, in one exercise, play and practice and become ready to fight in all spectrums. This involves almost every imaginable type of warfighting capability that's out there," he said. "It is literally underwater, on water, over water, airspace, land, cyber."

"They faithfully replicated conversations I would be having telephonically in a real-world situation," Keating said.

Keating offered high praise for the planners, who spent a full year building the exercise and are already at work on next year's Terminal Fury. "It took lots of work by many different agencies, not just Pacific Command, to prepare for the exercise and to construct an exercise scenario that would be challenging, realistic and beneficial," he said.

"The span of operations – intel, strate-

gy, plans, policy, equipment, international and interagency involvement – is broader for this exercise than in any other exercise we do," said Keating. "It reflects the possibility, if not the probability ... that any plan we would execute in the real world would be similarly broad and comprehensive and challenging."

Terminal Fury helped PACOM refocus on "what it takes to operate as a staff" during real, complex operations, Duvall said. "It refocuses our mindset on what we could be asked to do and it gives us the confidence that we are ready, willing and more than able to do it," he said.

Two deployable training teams sent by U.S. Joint Forces Command are helping PACOM maximize the exercise's training value. The teams, one focused on the PACOM headquarters staff and the other on a joint task force it established, gave Keating and his senior staff their after-action review and will develop a detailed report in the weeks ahead.

PACOM staff will act on these recommendations quickly, Donahue said. "One thing we do in exercises and training is take all those lessons learned and put them into a system that forces the staff to address all those lessons," he said. "We work to improve all those places we found we can improve."

One thing Keating said he's already learned through Terminal Fury is that his staff is up to the challenges they could be called on to face at a minute's notice.

"This is as near-real world as we can simulate and folks get caught up in it," Keating said. "They pitch into this thing and for seven days, this is what they have been doing, eating, sleeping and breathing...This captured their attention to a reassuring level."

Keating expressed appreciation to some 140 "indispensable" reservists who supported the exercise. "We simply could not do this level of operation or exercise without the contributions of the reserves," he said.