HO'OKELE

PEARL HARBOR - HICKAM NEWS

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Airmen from the 15th Wing, 154th Wing and 647th Air Base group stand in formation at the consolidated unit inspection (CUI) outbrief Feb. 17 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan Allen

Team Hickam celebrates success

Maj. Alysia Harvey

15th Wing Public Affairs

Airmen from the 15th Wing, 154th Wing and 647th Air Base Group (ABG) gathered Feb. 17 on the lawn in front of the Sea Breeze restaurant at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam to celebrate the successful completion of several inspections that were held Feb. 4-10.

More than 180 major command evaluators selected from across the Air Force, under the direction of the Pacific Air Forces Inspector General, conducted five major inspections: a consolidated unit inspection (CUI), logistics compliance assessment program (LCAP), standardization and evaluation program for weather operations, airfield operations compliance inspection, and aircrew standardization/evaluation visit.

"This has been a very dynamic and interesting year, and we have had our fair share of opportunities and challenges, but I could not be more pleased with the inspection results. This was an absolute homerun," said Col. Sam Barrett, 15th Wing commander. "As you all likely know by now, the 15th Wing and 154th Wing earned ratings of satisfactory, but that doesn't begin to describe the excellence that we represent as a whole."

Col. Dann Carlson, 647th ABG commander, then took the stage and shared the results of his group's inspections.

"Our Logistics Readiness Squadron scored 'excellent' on their LCAP inspection, and the 647th Security Forces, Force Support and Civil Engineer Squadrons also scored 'excellent' in the CUI," he said. The Communications Squadron scored an overall 'outstanding.' This is quite an accomplishment, and I could not be more proud standing here in front of this group."

He said that in addition to celebrating that success, he and the Team Hickam leadership had called the group together to recognize some Airmen who were identified as top and outstanding performers by the inspectors.

Approximately 50 personnel were presented with coins from the 15th Wing

See Team Hickam, A-4

NOAA opens new world-class marine science facility on Ford Island

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) opened a new state-of-the-art marine science and storage facility (building 130) during a facility blessing ceremony Feb. 21 on Ford Island near the USS Utah Memorial.

Senator Daniel Inouye, Hawaii Rep. Mazie K. Hirono, Hawaii Rep. Colleen Hanabusa, Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie, Dr. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA administrator, and Rear Adm. Kate Gregory, commander of Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific, participated in the ceremony to commemorate the opening of the 37,000-square-foot marine science and storage facility, which is the second phase of the NOAA Pacific Regional Center.

Photo by Dennis Oda, Honolulu Star Advertiser

A blessing ceremony was held on the state of the art Marine Science and Storage Facility. The ceremony took place near the USS Utah Memorial, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Ford Island. The facility will enable NOAA and scientific partners to conduct critical marine research and provide a site to rehabilitate endangered Hawaiian monk seals and various green sea turtles.

The new facility includes a 1,500 foot deep salt water well for cooling needs as well as support of 15 marine tanks. It will enable NOAA and its scientific partners to conduct critical marine research, study and monitor data gathered throughout the Pacific region, and provide a site to rehabilitate endangered Hawaiian monk seals and various green sea turtles.

The Pacific Regional Center consolidates 15 NOAA offices from around Oahu and is designed to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Standard.

At the blessing of the new marine science and storage facility, Lubchenco announced the establishment of a new partnership with the Hawaii Visitors Bureau and the Waikiki Aquarium to integrate the Pacific Regional Center into an ocean education experience program.

JBPHH Airmen selected for Tops in Blue

Senior Airman Lauren Main

15th Wing Public Affairs

Two Airmen from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam were selected for the Air Force's premier performing arts group, Tops in Blue.

Airmen 1st Class Briana Hofreiter, a financial services journeyman with the 15th Comptroller Squadron, and Jonathan Leak, a knowledge operations manager with the 692nd Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing, were selected as vocalists during the January auditions.

Airman 1st Class Briana Hofreiter

Jonathan Leak Knowledge operations manager

U.S. Air Force photo by Chris Burch

Hofreiter, who considers herself a dancer at her core, initially sent in her choreography DVD in November 2011. It wasn't until a few weeks later that she learned from her commander that she would be heading to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas for the all call.

"Even though I'm a dancer, I had to sing as part of my audition," Hofreiter said. "I was nervous but hopeful. I didn't entirely expect to make it because I'd never really sang before."

Leak, on the other hand, submitted his DVD as a vocalist and sung Chris Brown's "She Ain't You."

Neither Airman knew what to expect when they, along with more than 80 other Airmen from throughout the Air Force, began their auditions at Lackland AFB.

"When you first get there, they put you through a few different audition processes," Leak said. "They take you to this big auditorium, and you have to sing the same song that you submitted on your DVD initially. It's a total of 10 days' worth of auditions where they have you dance, sing, harmonize, and they basically test your musical abilities."

The competition is judged on six main categories: female vocalists, male vocalists, instrumentalists, musical variety, dance and non-musical variety.

The applicants are rated by a panel of judges consisting of the outgoing Tops in Blue members. Of the more than 80 Airmen selected to attend the live audition, 35 Airmen were chosen to perform with the new group.

Starting March 18, Hofreiter and Leak, along with the rest of the cast, will begin to learn the process known as "staging."

"Staging is basically where you learn the procedures of how to set up and tear down the stage for every show," Hofreiter said. "We also have to learn the routine in that time, too. It's going to be a lot of long days."

Regardless of the challenges that lie ahead, they are excited for the opportunity presented to them to travel the world and raise the morale of the troops for whom they perform.

"I can't believe it," Leak said. "It's like living in a movie."

Hawaii Navy activities earn four CNO Environmental Awards

Navy Region Hawaii

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Out of 30 fiscal year 2011 Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Environmental Awards, four have been earned by Navy activities in Hawaii.

Two have been awarded to Pacific Missile Range Facility, one to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, and one to the Naval Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Center Pearl Harbor.

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam won an award for Cultural Resources Management, Installation.

Naval Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Center Pearl Harbor Environmental Quality Team, Hawaii, won an Environmental Quality, Individual or Team Award.

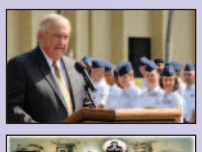
Pacific Missile Range Facility, Barking Sands, Hawaii won a Natural Resources Conservation, Small Installation award.

Pacific Missile Range Facility Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) Implementation Team, Hawaii Cultural, won a Natural Resources Conservation, Individual or Team honor.

The CNO Environmental Awards recognize Navy ships, installations and people for outstanding performance in promoting environmental stewardship. Environmental subject matter experts reviewed the nominations and selected winners for each of the award categories.

All CNO winners advance to the Secretary of the Navy level of competition. A ceremony honoring the winners will be held June 5 at the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.

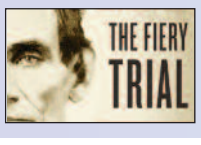
(See next week's Ho'okele for complete coverage.)



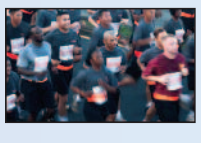
Air Force dedicates JBPHH PME Center to CMSAF James C. Binnicker **See page A-2**

African American History Month: 'Championing the Strength of Diversity' **See page A-3**

Davis relieves Schappert as USS Houston commanding officer **See page A-6**



'Fiery Trial - Lincoln and Slavery' Part 2 **See page A-8**



Military members join Great Aloha Run on President's Day **See page B-1**

Naval clinic health promotion now offers 'Wellness on Wheels' **See page B-3**

African Americans in the armed services at JBPHH profiled

Story and photos by Jazzmin Williams

Contributing Writer

In 2007, the percentage of African Americans in the Navy and Air Force were 19 percent and 14.7 percent, respectively.

Staff Sgt. Lateesha Maris, Senior Airman Charles Lejeune and Chief Builder (SCW) Howard Robinson are three service members at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam who have managed to thrive in their respective branch of service. They reflected on February as African American History Month.

"I like that it gives the world a chance to highlight and spotlight what we do, because a lot of things that we do go unnoticed." said Maris, a medic in the allergy/immunization clinic for the 15th Medical Operations Squadron.

Maris, who grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, already had some military members in her family. She says her first goal was to help people.

"When I was eight, my brother was born premature," Maris said. "The doctors ended up saving his life, and I said I want to be that person to bring that joy to a family."

Senior Airman Charles Lejeune

Staff Sgt. Lateesha Maris

Chief Builder (SCW) Howard Robinson

After spending almost 10 years in the Air Force, Maris has had the opportunity to work in labor and delivery in Japan, gain a bachelor's degree in social psychology and even meet her fiancée.

"Enlisted people, we're doing great things," Maris said. "So when I see a young Airman, I always encourage them to do as much as they can."

Robinson, a Navy Seabee and senior enlisted advisor for Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC Hawaii), grew up on the south side of Chicago in a single parent home. He is also the first person in his family to join the military.

"It all started from when I saw the movie "Top Gun," Robinson said. "I saw Tom Cruise in the white suit and I was like 'Man, I want to go into the Navy.'"

During boot camp, Robinson was chosen for the presidential ceremonial guard. For two years, he attended funerals at Arlington National Cemetery and did pass-and-review at the Pentagon for visiting dignitaries, among other duties.

His list of goals includes becoming a master chief before he retires, and to become either an FBI agent or U.S. marshal. With a Navy chief wife, two teenage sons and more than 15 years in the Navy under his belt, there is no one to hold him back, he says military or otherwise.

"I'm pretty proud of where I'm at as an African American," Robinson said. "I think African American History Month is just a time to look back, to not forget how we struggled and the things that we contributed to what a lot of people have now."

Robinson believes in utilizing mentors. His include Command Master Chief Anthony Teart and his own wife.

"She motivates me and mentors me," Robinson said. "I look up to her because she goes through the same thing I go through."

Lejeune, a dental technician with the 15th Aerospace Medicine Squadron (AMDS), was offered a basketball scholarship to San Jose State, but chose to serve in the military instead.

"When we have males in the family, we like them to join the military," said Lejeune, a native of Stockton, Calif. "It wasn't forced on me to go into the military, but he [my father] left it in my head and gave me the idea."

The dental field was not his first choice of jobs, but once he stepped into the field, it was clear that it was what he wanted to do. After four years of service, Lejeune's long-term goal is to finish school and become a dentist in the Air Force.

"What I'm doing now, [outside the military] I would probably not get hired," Lejeune said. "Everybody is treated equally in the military. You don't feel like they're looking at you for your color. They're looking at you as a person."

Being able to transform someone with no teeth and make them look like they have an absolutely perfect mouth is part of what Lejeune listed as most satisfying about his profession. The attention to detail that is required suits him perfectly.

With a younger sister going to school to be a dental hygienist, it's possible that Lejeune's relationship with dentistry may soon become a family affair.

'Pilot for a Day': Brandon Whedbee soars

Story and photo by SrA Lauren Main

15th Wing Public Affairs

Brandon Whedbee, an 11-year-old leukemia patient, piloted the KC-135 simulator with a calculating sense of purpose. As the plane took off and headed for blue skies, his eyes widened as he marveled at the graphic screen in front of him. He banked a hard left and looked down at the moving ground beneath him as he flew over the island of Oahu. For someone who has been through so much, flying a plane must have seemed like child's play.

Brandon was nominated by the Kapiolani Medical Center to be a part of the 15th Wing's "Pilot for a Day" program. The program nominates a child each quarter to visit Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and take a break from their treatment.

Brandon Whedbee, an 11-year-old leukemia patient plays with the controls of the KC-135 Stratotanker simulator Feb. 17 on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

"We found out the day after Thanksgiving that Brandon had leukemia," said Ann Masang, Brandon's mother. "We initially took him into the doctor because he kept throwing up. By week three, when he was still sick, so the doctor sent us to the emergency room. I thought, 'Well this can't be good.' I was scared."

Brandon, who is still receiving treatment for leukemia, has been counting down for the past three weeks, from when he initially found out he was going to be a "Pilot for a Day."

"He was so excited to be here," Masang said. "On Monday, he ran up to me and told me, 'Only four more days!' He even downloaded an application on his phone so he could learn Air Force ranks and know what rank everyone was."

Following the simulator, Brandon was able to witness first-hand the power and skill of the military working dogs of the 647th Security Forces Squadron (SFS).

Staff Sgt. Larry Harris, a dog handler with the 647th SFS, gave Brandon a tour of the kennels. Harris explained the training the dogs receive and the different tasks that each of them has to perform to ensure mission success.

During the demonstration, Brandon remained cautiously along the fence and watched in awe as a dog named Aron chased down a simulated perpetrator and "made an arrest."

Today, the only dilemma Brandon had to face was deciding which part of it was his favorite.

"I liked the simulator," Brandon said. "It's like a video game. My favorite part was flying over the other islands."

Despite a tough year filled with doctors and hospitals, the Whedbee family is thankful for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunities Brandon has been offered -- opportunities like the "Pilot for a Day" program.

"I think he had a great time today," Masang said. "We really appreciate what everyone is doing."

Capt. Chris Nini, a C-17 Globemaster III pilot with the 535th Airlift Squadron, enjoys giving kids like Brandon a chance to get away, if only for a short while.

"I think my favorite part of this is getting to show them what we do and see how they react to everything," Nini said. "It's nice to be able to give them a break from the things going on in their lives."

Air Force dedicates education center to CMSAF James C. Binnicker

2nd Lt. Jessica Rowe

15th Wing Public Affairs

The Pacific Air Forces and 15th Wing leadership dedicated the Hickam Professional Military Education (PME) Center in honor of the ninth Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force, James C. Binnicker.

The Binnicker PME Center was unveiled Feb. 15 at the center's flagpole, in conjunction with the final retreat ceremony for Non-Commissioned Officer Academy Class 12-1.

"We learned about Chief Binnicker in our class, and we use his lessons in real life," said Tech. Sgt. Les Garon Ueda, NCOA 12-1 class commander. "To be part of the class that gets to dedicate this building in his honor is just an absolute privilege."

U.S. Navy photo by David D. Underwood Jr.

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force (retired) James C. Binnicker speaks at the Binnicker PME Center dedication ceremony Feb. 15 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Binnicker had a successful active duty career that spanned more than 33 years, giving the PACAF command chief, Chief Master Sgt Brooke McLean, much to choose from as he prepared his comments as the presiding official of the ceremony.

McLean described Binnicker as a champion of the enlisted development arena and an Airman who continues to make a difference today.

"Chief Binnicker is man of many talents, having held many key positions and been recognized with numerous awards and decorations," McLean said. "He never failed to make time to guide, mentor, direct and push when needed. He's still making a difference by running our Air Force Enlisted Village in Florida. We're so blessed to have Chief Binnicker as a leader in our Air Force, and it's so fitting that we rename this PME Center after him today."

In response to the honor of having the PME Center dedicated to him, Binnicker said he was almost speechless.

"I cannot express how I feel. My name may be on that sign, and it is truly a high honor," the chief said. "But if you look really close, you will see thousands of names on that sign, as well, that have brought us here today."

The PME process was a key platform in Binnicker's CMSAF interview process, and he continues to dedicate his time to Airmen.

In 1978, Binnicker reported a 17 percent attendance for NCO development classes in PACAF, the lowest in the Air Force at that time. Today, due to his initiatives, all eligible Airmen attend PME programs at schoolhouses, like the Binnicker PME Center, across the command.

Friends, families, colleagues and Airmen—from the most junior to most senior in rank—gathered for this special event. One member of the audience was particularly recognized.

"A young man somewhere in the audience, Eddie Chung ... I've known Eddie since 1965 when I was here as a staff sergeant," Binnicker said. "It is only appropriate that he be here today."

(Visit www.15wing.af.mil to read interview with Binnicker.)

Commentary

African American History Month: 'Championing the Strength of Diversity'

Rear Adm. F. L. Ponds

Commander, Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific

This month our nation celebrates African American History Month, paying tribute to generations who were willing to take a stand in the struggle to see the promises of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution come true.

The national theme this year is "Black Women in American Culture and History." The theme honors the role women played in achieving equality – women like abolitionist Sojourner Truth and civil rights leader Rosa Parks.

Women joined men in the fight to end slavery and achieve equal rights under our democracy. Today, African American women lead in boardrooms, courtrooms and classrooms. They hold leadership positions in communities, commercial industry and in our military. As First Lady Michelle Obama points out, they are mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters and our best friends.

We honor those women and men, in and out of uniform, who stood on the side of "right" and not "might," those who took a stand and demonstrated tremendous courage in order to champion the strength of diversity on which our great nation was founded and flourishes.

We pay honor and tribute to the eight African Americans related to the Navy who received the Medal of Honor during the Civil War; to Edna Young, the first black enlisted female to serve in the regular Navy; to Annie Neal Graham, the first black female to enlist in the United States Marine Corps; to Thomas Parham, the first black chaplain in the Navy and the first African American naval officer promoted to the rank of captain; and to Samuel L. Gravely Jr., the first black to serve on a battleship, command a combat ship and a fleet, and the first black officer promoted to flag rank.

There are many others considered trail blazers and pioneers of their time. This month, we honor the commitment and sacrifice of those and many others, but most of all, we honor the courage of a nation and a Navy who championed the cause when the cause was not particularly popular.

We are a proud nation, and our pride continues to be put on display by our willingness to embrace not only diversity of race, creed, gender and ethnicity, but also the diversity of thought and ideas that it brings. God bless America, one and all.

USS Crommelin earns energy conservation award

Ensign Tyler Sharp

USS Crommmelin (FFG 37) Public Affairs

USS Crommelin (FFG 37) and her crew were awarded the first ever Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific Quarterly Energy Conservation Award for the first quarter of fiscal year 2012.

During that time, Crommelin led the Pearl Harbor waterfront by using seven percent less energy than the class average for Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigates. Additionally, her crew assisted in troubleshooting efforts on pier energy meters, provided broad command support during the launching of the MIDPAC energy conservation program, and invented innovative ideas for future energy conservation measures.

While all hands contributed to energy awareness, the engineers of auxiliaries division led the charge by troubleshooting and correcting many high-energy-consuming systems. Their dedicated efforts and hard work were integral in reducing Crommelin's energy consumption. This maintenance, combined with a ship-wide culture of energy conservation, ultimately paved the way toward energy savings.

"I am happy that the hard work of my division helped the ship earn this award," said Engineman 3rd Class (SW) Tomas Barnes. "We will continue to work toward greater conservation so we can win this award again."

U.S. Navy photo

Cmdr. Michael Johns accepts the first quarterly energy conservation award on Feb. 14 from Command Master Chief (SW) Patty Roebuck, commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific (CNSG MIDPAC), during a ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Diverse Views

February is "Heart (health) Month." What are you doing to keep your heart healthy?

Tech. Sgt. Malik Skeete
Defense Information Systems Agency Pacific (DISA PAC)

"I eat healthy and work out five times a week. I also do not stress over the little things."

Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Brian Natzke
Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam

"I do paintball every week, and that's a lot of running."

Tech. Sgt. Michael Whisnant
HQ PACAF/A7S

"I enjoy working out at least five days a week, and I use the 'not so fit' people as extra motivation."

Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) George Steen
Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam

"I did the Great Aloha Run last week. I started exercising more, eating healthier and staying away from fried foods. I want to be healthy and live longer."

Staff Sgt. Aubrey Pabon-Miller
15th Aeromedical Dental Squadron

"I find fun ways to move. I like to mix up my cardio. I enjoy boxing, Tahitian dance, biking, and my flight runs regularly."

(Provided by David Underwood Jr. and Jazzmin Williams)

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

James family has impressive record of service

U.S. Air Force photo

Air Force Lt. Daniel James III receives the first of his two Distinguished Flying Crosses from his father, Brig. Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. The younger James served two combat tours in Southeast Asia in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and reached the rank of lieutenant general before retirement in 2006. The younger James was the first African American to hold the post of director of the Air National Guard. His father was the U.S Air Force's first African American four-star general.

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Seven CH-53Es join 'Pegasus' squadron at MCBH

Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay Public Affairs

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. James Sauter

Seven CH-53E Super Stallions of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 "Pegasus" arrive at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, after flying from the USS Bonhomme Richard on Feb. 21. The Super Stallions flew over Kaneohe Bay in formation before permanently joining the squadron.

Seven CH-53E helicopters arrived in formation to join their new unit at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay on Feb. 21.

The seven Super Stallions will become part of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 who, in September 2012, received their first four CH-53Es. They expect to receive their final Super Stallion at the end of this year, bringing their aircraft complement to a full squadron of 12.

Pegasus is the only squadron on base to transition to the CH-53Es, and they are the last heavy helicopter squadron in the Marine Corps to receive them.

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 previously flew the CH-53D Sea Stallion, which was ceremonially retired from service Feb. 10.

The CH-53E helicopter can transport up to 55 troops or 30,000 pounds of cargo and can carry external loads of up to 36,000 pounds. The Super Stallion has a cruise speed of 173 mph and a range of more than 600 miles.

The helicopter is fitted with a forward extendable in-flight refueling probe, and it can also refuel from a surface ship through a hoisted hose while hovering. It can carry three machine guns operated by the air crew and mounted on the left and right sides as well as the rear tail ramp.

(See related photo on page A-5)

U.S. and Indian Navies conduct SALVEX in Hawaii

MC3 Sean Furey

Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, Detachment Hawaii

Navy Diver 1st Class John Scalise discusses diving safety precautions with Indian navy Petty Officer Clearance Diver 1st Class Mukesh Singh aboard the Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux (T-ATF 171) during Salvage Exercise (SALVEX) 2012.

U.S. and Indian Navy dive teams conducted a bilateral salvage exercise (SALVEX) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam from Feb. 7 to 13.

Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One (MDSU-1), based in Hawaii, and the USNS Sioux (T-ATF-171) from the Military Sealift Command participated in the exercises.

The purpose of SALVEX12 was to enhance U.S. and Indian bilateral diving and salvage capability in the littoral environment, to improve maritime security and humanitarian assistance/disaster response capability.

"The main purpose is to conduct a diving salvage engagement with the Indian navy," said Cmdr. Thomas Murphy, commanding officer of MDSU-1. "We want to build our interoperability with the Indian navy in support of our national security strategy and the Pacific Fleet theater security cooperation."

During the SALVEX, MDSU-1 divers gave the Indian divers classroom instruction on how they handle salvage situations, demonstrated various tools and techniques that they utilize, and participated in group dives.

"We're finding out the nuances and figuring out the differences so when we do come together and work, there not any hiccups," said Lt. Cmdr Jonathan Puglia, the operations officer of MDSU-1.

"When a real world operation goes down, it's not the first time we've met. It's not the first time that we're getting to know how we conduct ourselves."

SALVEX12 allowed divers from both navies to interact and share experiences and knowledge about their trade.

"They actually dive [with] a lot of the same equipment we do," said Navy Diver 1st Class Jason Eppley. "They learn something from us, we learn something from them."

The SALVEXs with the Indian navy began in 2005. The exercise is held periodically with each nation taking turns hosting. SALVEX 2009 was hosted at MDSU-1, while SALVEX 2011 was hosted by the Indian navy in Port Blair, India.

Joint interagency and international relationships strengthen U.S. Third Fleet's ability to respond to crises and protect the collective maritime interest of the U.S. and its allies and partners.

Team Hickam earns top ranks

Continued from A-1

and 647 ABG commanders and were cheered on by their unit personnel as they stepped forward under the palm trees and Hawaii sun to the makeshift stage.

"It was really great to be recognized in this way," said Tech. Sgt. Quintell Lewis, 15th Wing command post. "I have been very fortunate to have awesome mentors along the way, and I know it was their guidance that helped me achieve this honor."

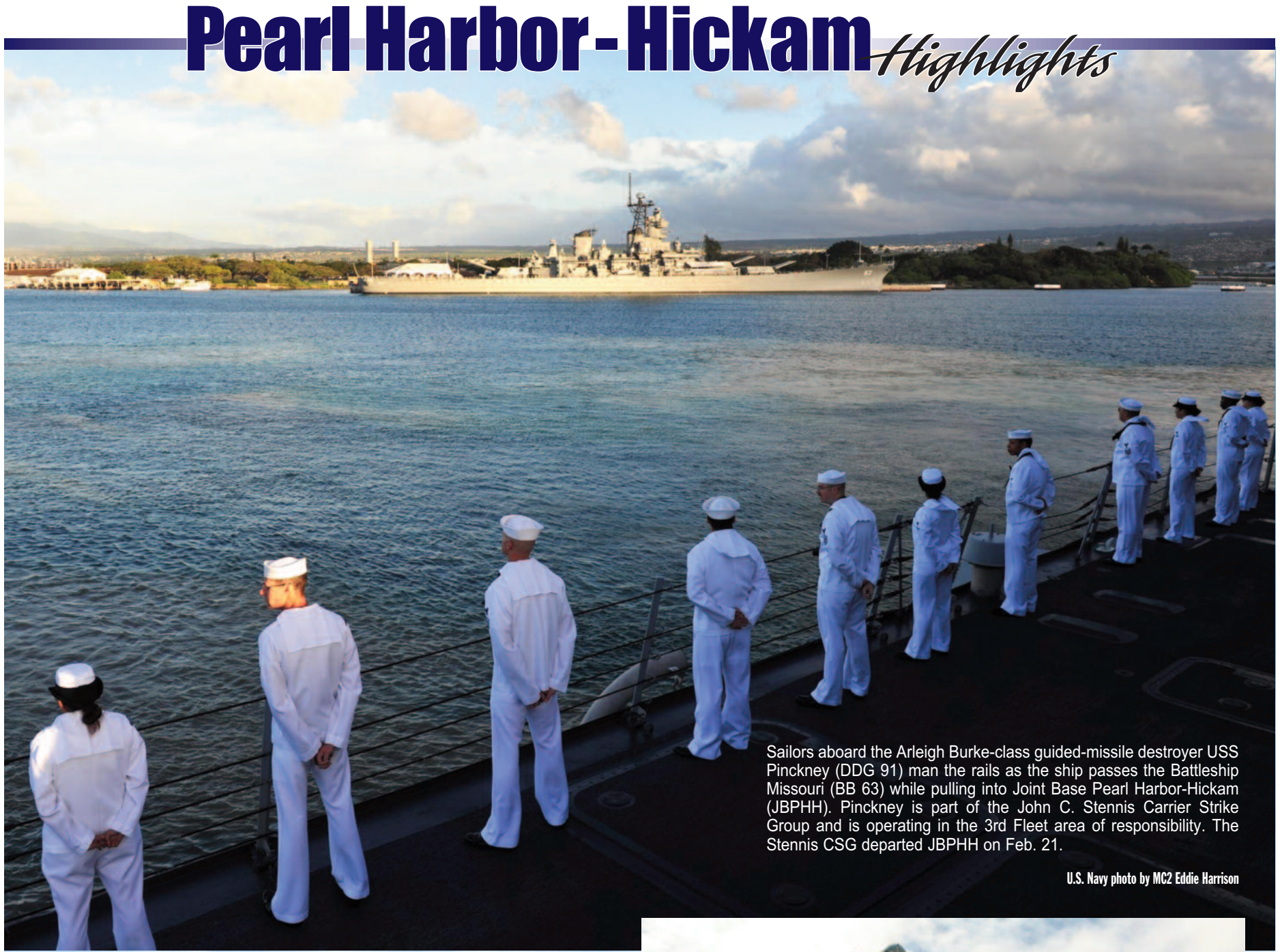
Additionally, approximately 20 teams were recognized for their performance.

An information assurance assessment and assistance program inspection was conducted during the same time, but concluded Feb. 17. According to Carlson, the final results are still to be determined, but leadership is expecting a positive outcome based on the initial outbrief.

Taking note of the Airmen's skyward eyes, Barrett encouraged the formations to take a moment to watch the "airshow," F-22 Raptors taking off on the runway in the distance and then invited commanders to allow their personnel to "pau hana" before giving his parting remarks and recognizing one other person.

"I want to take a moment to recognize Col. [Robert] Dague [15th Wing vice commander] - the best 'CV' in the Air Force," he said, inviting the crowd to give Dague a round of applause. "Thank you for your leadership and, to all of you, please know that we are so proud of you all and consider it a privilege to be your leadership team here."

Pearl Harbor - Hickam *Highlights*



Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Pinckney (DDG 91) man the rails as the ship passes the Battleship Missouri (BB 63) while pulling into Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH). Pinckney is part of the John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group and is operating in the 3rd Fleet area of responsibility. The Stennis CSG departed JBPHH on Feb. 21.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Eddie Harrison

U.S. Navy photo by MCCS Joe Kane

A CH-53E Sea Stallion from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 463 lands aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) while the ship is pierside at Naval Base San Diego. The ship is preparing to replace the amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) as the forward deployed amphibious assault ship in Sasebo, Japan and delivered the squadron of CH-53Es to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe along the way.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Joshua Keim

Sailors aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) man the rails as the ship pulls out of joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Feb. 21. USS Stennis is currently operating in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of responsibility on a seven-month deployment.

(Below) Sailors from the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) lead seniors in the "electric slide" during the County of Kauai's annual Senior Valentine's Dance Party on Feb. 10. The county's network of senior centers holds the annual dance and luncheon in support of about 250 *kupuna* (seniors). Seven PMRF Sailors danced and shared stories at the event, emphasizing the Navy's commitment to the community. This was the fourth year PMRF has participated. The event has been conducted annually for at least 10 years.

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Jay C. Pugh

A U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III from the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Demonstration Team performs an aerial display during the 2012 Singapore Airshow on Feb. 15. The PACAF C-17 demo team is part of the 535th Airlift Squadron and is based at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

Department of Defense photo by
U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael R. Holzworth

(Right) A blessing ceremony for a new state-of-the-art marine science and storage facility at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric 's Pacific Regional Center was held Feb. 21 on Ford Island. (Left to right): Dr. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA administrator; Senator Daniel Inouye; U.S. Rep. Mazie Hirono; Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie; U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa; and Rear Adm. Katherine Gregory, commander of Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific; were among the dignitaries who attended the ceremony. (See story and additional photo on page A-1.)

Photo by Dennis Oda, Star Advertiser

Davis relieves Schappert as USS Houston commanding officer

Story and photo by MC2 Ronald Gutridge

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

Cmdr. David Schappert is piped ashore after being relieved as commanding officer of the Los Angeles-class submarine USS Houston (SSN 713) by Cmdr. Paul Davis at a change of command ceremony Feb. 17.

Cmdr. Paul Davis relieved Cmdr. David Schappert as commanding officer of Los Angeles-class submarine USS Houston (SSN 713) during a change of command ceremony Feb. 17.

The event was held aboard the former U.S. Navy Iowa-class battleship USS Missouri (BB 63) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam

The guest speaker was Capt. John Russ, commodore, Commander Submarine Squadron (COMSUBRON) 15. He praised Schappert for his exceptional performance while commanding Houston, as well as the crew on their accomplishments under Schappert's leadership.

"Cmdr. Schappert and his crew have carried on their namesake's proud tradition of unwavering devotion and fighting spirit," Russ said.

"Over the past two and a half years, under Dave Schappert's brilliant leadership, his fine crew has truly demonstrated what it means for a member of our modern-day silent service to put warfighting first, operate forward and be ready."

Schappert acknowledged that the majority of the submarine's success during his time as commanding officer could be attributed to the crew and their hard work.

"For those who have never been to sea, please understand that submarining is a team sport. Teamwork was the central reason for Houston's success during my time on board," he said. "For it is the Sailors that make Houston great, not the steel and technology. These men trained where others deploy, operated where others do not go, and to have been called captain by such men has been my honor," Schappert said.

Following his remarks, Schappert was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his exceptional performance as commanding officer from August 2008 to February 2012.

As Davis assumed command of Houston, he addressed the crew about the future.

"Houston is an impressive fighting machine. Forged from steel, equipped with the latest technological improvements, she is capable of taking the fight to the enemy," Davis said.

"The crew of Houston is what gives the ship its fighting spirit and what has forged her success. Shipmates, I consider it the highest privilege to be given the opportunity to lead you and eagerly look forward to sailing beneath the waves with you."

Schappert graduated from the University of Missouri with a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering in December 1991 and was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps. His sea tours include USS Baltimore (SSN 704), USS William H. Bates (SSN 680) and USS Honolulu (SSN 718). He assumed command of Houston Aug. 28, 2009.

Schappert's personal awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (six awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (three awards), Navy Unit Citation and various unit and service awards.

He will report for duty to Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet, Nuclear Propulsion Examination Board.

John Finn honored as Navy names five new ships

Department of the Navy

John Finn

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced the next five Navy ships: three Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers, USS John Finn, USS Ralph Johnson, and USS Rafael Peralta, and two littoral combat ships (LCS), USS Sioux City and USS Omaha.

Mabus named the three destroyers after Navy and Marine Corps heroes whose actions occurred during different conflicts which spanned several decades, but were united in their uncommon valor. The littoral combat ships were named after two American communities.

John Finn, who retired as a lieutenant, received the Medal of Honor from Adm. Chester Nimitz for displaying "magnificent courage in the face of almost certain death" during the Japanese attack on military installations in Hawaii.

Marine Corps Pfc. Ralph Henry Johnson was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for shouting a warning to his fellow Marines and hurling himself on an explosive device, saving the life of one Marine and preventing the enemy from penetrating his sector of the patrol's perimeter during the Vietnam War.

Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Rafael Peralta was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for selflessly covering a grenade with his body to save his fellow Marines from the blast during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Finn, Johnson and Peralta have all been recognized with some of our nation's highest awards," Mabus said. "I want to ensure their service and sacrifice will be known by today's Sailors and Marines and honored for several decades to come by a new generation of Americans and people from around the world who will come in contact with these ships."

The Arleigh Burke-class destroyers will be able to conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence and crisis management to sea control and power projection. All three ships will be capable of fighting air, surface and subsurface battles simultaneously. They will contain myriad offensive and defensive weapons designed to support maritime warfare in keeping with the Navy's ability to execute the Department of Defense' strategy.

"The littoral combat ship is a major part of the future of our Navy," Mabus said, pointing out LCS is fast, agile and operates with a smaller crew and can perform operations in both shallow and deep waters.

"I chose the name for our two new littoral combat ships after midwestern cities from America's heartland, to honor the patriotic, hard-working citizens of Sioux City, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska, for their support of and contributions to the military," Mabus said.

Sioux City and Omaha will be outfitted with reconfigurable payloads, called mission packages, which can be changed out quickly as combat needs demand. These mission packages are supported by special detachments that will deploy manned and unmanned vehicles and sensors in support of mine, undersea and surface warfare missions.

Marinette Marine in Marinette, Wisc. will build the Freedom variant, USS Sioux City, which will be 378 feet in length, have a waterline beam of 57 feet, displace approximately 3,000 tons, and make speed in excess of 40 knots. Austal USA in Mobile, Ala. will build the Independence variant, USS Omaha, which will be 419 feet in length, have a waterline beam of 103 feet, displace approximately 3,000 tons, and make speed in excess of 40 knots.

U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Caitlin Smith

Ensign Christopher Veenhuis shares a photo of his daughter with local children at a ceremony remembering those lost in the bombing of Darwin. Chafee is in Darwin participating in the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin in World War II.

USS Chafee arrives in Darwin, Australia

USS Chafee Public Affairs

DARWIN, Australia – Guided-missile Destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90) arrived in Darwin, Australia on Feb. 17 for a port visit as part of the commemoration ceremonies remembering the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin during World War II.

The visit to Darwin is an opportunity for Chafee Sailors to engage with their Australian navy counterparts and to interact with the local community. The crew is grateful to be in Darwin during this time to help honor and remember those who sacrificed their lives and for those who continue to serve today.

"It's an honor and pleasure to be here in Darwin," said Cmdr. Justin Kubu, Chafee's commanding officer. "The officers and crew of Chafee are thrilled to be able to show our continued support to our brothers and sisters of the Australian Defense Forces during this time of remembrance."

Chafee Sailors engaged in two community service events, visiting the Darwin Royal Hospital and participating in Aussie Rules Football with the Clontarf Federation. They also participated in ceremonies around the city, such as the USS Peary commemoration and the bombing of Darwin commemoration ceremony.

Chafee is on an independent deployment from its homeport of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and is currently operating in the western Pacific Ocean.

Hawaii training credited with honing strike group readiness

Pacific Missile Range Facility Public Affairs

PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE FACILITY, Barking Sands, Kauai - The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) and the John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group (JCSSG) arrived at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Feb. 17 for a planned port visit. They returned home from a seven-month deployment from the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operation which includes the western Pacific and Persian Gulf.

Ron Sakoda, Sen. Daniel Inouye's Kauai field representative, and Clyde Kodani, Sen. Daniel Akaka's Kauai field representative, had the opportunity to visit with Sailors aboard Stennis on Feb. 16-17 to see first-hand, the benefits of training.

"It was an experience second to none," said Sakoda, who observed flight operations as Stennis approached Hawaii. "The Sailors were very dedicated to their work, and they bring our Navy to a higher level."

On their way to conduct their missions in the Middle East, the strike group conducted more than 200 hours training in Hawaii waters last summer, demonstrating the value of the range complex to the Navy.

"The Hawaii Range Complex provided realistic and challenging training opportunities for our air wing," said Capt. Dale Horan, commander of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9, embarked aboard Stennis.

"It allowed us to further hone our strike and close-air support skills and procedures, helping us to operate at a high level of effectiveness throughout deployment as we provided support to forces on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq."

The Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai, an element of the Hawaii Range Complex, continues to be an asset for the Department of the Navy due to the range's ability to provide integrated range services in a modern, multi-threat, multi-dimensional environment, from space to the ocean floor that ensures the safe conduct and evaluation of training and test and evaluation missions.

PMRF has been the primary location for Missile Defense Agency testing since the 1990s and while these test and evaluation missions gather much of the spotlight, the critical training value of PMRF to U.S. and allied military forces is often overlooked. Last year alone, PMRF supported 22,337 training hours which included 788 unit training events and 640 aircraft.

The largest training exercise held in the Hawaii waters is the biennial Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) multi-national event, which has been conducted since 1971. RIMPAC 2010 exercise involved approximately 20,000 Sailors, Soldiers, and Airmen from the joint services of 14 allied and partner countries. PMRF provided the opportunity to conduct live-fire events. This opportunity is cited as a high priority reason for many of the participating allied forces because they do not have such capability at home.

"The Stennis and the Navy provides a high level of security and protection in the Pacific Area and the U.S. no matter where they go. They are looking forward to the next RIMPAC training event because it brings their proficiency up as a real test of their capabilities," Sakoda said.

Training opportunities benefit not only the U.S. Pacific Fleet, but also allies and friends of the United States.

"PMRF's location in Hawaii is ideally situated to support training for U.S. naval forces transiting to the western Pacific and Indian Ocean for deployment, as well as readiness requirements for Navy and joint forces based in Hawaii. The range has capabilities to support training in all Navy primary mission and warfare areas," said Bob Kay, PMRF's deputy range operations officer. "PMRF not only furthers the Navy's ability to protect and serve our nation and our allies to this intent, but also strengthens PMRF's status as a diverse and important training and test and evaluation resource for our country."

Hickam Communities announces pest control plan

Hickam Communities LLC

Hickam Communities announced that it has retained Ecolab to conduct regularly-scheduled perimeter treatment for pests and rodents around its homes throughout all its neighborhoods, effective March 1. "We want to proactively address pest control, rather than having residents call when an issue or concern arises," said Steve Quinn, director of property management at Hickam Communities. "By creating a preventive program, we can address issues that come up at an early stage.

"Getting Ecolab on board was a decision based on resident feedback and on our desire to have a long-term solution to pest control issues that come up throughout the year. The program will provide our residents with a consistent and uniform process," Quinn stated. Residents will see the distinctive Ecolab trucks in their neighborhoods, and if they have any questions, concerns or specific issues related to pest control, they can contact their Hickam Communities resident services team at 423-2300.

U.S. Pacific Fleet hosts CFMCC Flag Officer Course

MC2 David Kolme

U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

The Naval War College conducted a Combined Force Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) Flag Officer Course at U.S. Pacific Fleet's headquarters at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on Feb. 9-15.

With 15 nations in attendance, this year marked one of the most diverse CFMCCs in recent years. Admirals and senior captains from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the United States met in Hawaii to discuss topics such as command and control, multinational operations, information-sharing, piracy and maritime security.

"The CFMCC course provides a great opportunity for partner navies to network and gain a better understanding of one another's security challenges and concerns," said Col. Timothy Lo, head of naval planning for the Republic of Singapore navy. "In turn, forging such an understanding builds trust and confidence, which is an indispensable commodity as we work together to address common security challenges."

Twenty-four executive-level attendees received a series of presentations and participated in discussions with senior admirals and subject matter experts to develop perspectives for the effective employment of maritime forces in a joint, coalition or interagency environment.

Among the U.S, speakers were the commanders of U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet, U.S. 7th Fleet, 14th Coast Guard District, and deputy commander of Pacific Air Forces.

Previous CFMCC participants from several countries, including retired Adm. Arun Prakash of India, retired Vice Adm. Yoji Koda of Japan and retired Rear Adm. Bernard Miranda of Singapore, returned to Hawaii to share their knowledge on the practical use and implementation of lessons learned from past conferences.

CFMCC gives flag-level officers the chance to foster a network of international military leaders who can work together in support of theater and regional cooperation agreements.

Adm. Cecil Haney, who took over as commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet on Jan. 20, spoke to the students about the importance and value of the course.

"CFMCC gives senior naval officers from around the Asia/Pacific region a chance to strengthen existing or develop new relationships that help create enduring partnerships throughout the region," Haney said. "It also helps these countries develop effective strategies for working together and enhancing stability, trade and prosperity across the Pacific."

The value of these relations has been proven in recent years when the U.S. Navy and other countries have participated in exercises and humanitarian missions such as Pacific Partnership and during natural disasters such as the tsunami and earthquake that struck Japan last year.

"Time and time again, we have seen how these partnerships benefit one another during times of crisis, and forums such as the CFMCC help improve our ability to effectively overcome these challenges through a cooperative approach," Haney said.

The course helps improve international cooperation through open communication and mutual respect for each other. It also helps creates a comfortable forum for gaining a better understanding and appreciation of differing perspectives.

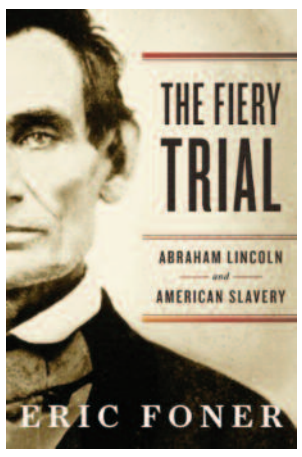
The first CFMCC Course, which focused on U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, was held in September 2006 at Newport, R.I. Since then, CFMCC has expanded to include three courses held annually in the European, Middle East and Pacific regions. The U.S. Pacific Fleet has hosted CFMCC courses each year since 2007.

'Fiery Trial - Lincoln and Slavery'

Book review by Bill Doughty

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

(This is the second part of the book review of "Fiery Trial – Lincoln and Slavery." The first part was published in the Feb. 17 edition of Ho`okele, page A-3.)



Foner writes about an incident in May 1862: "After opening fire on the Confederate forces and dispersing them, the naval commander took more than 70 slaves on board. He settled them in a safe location near the coast. That same month, in one of the war's most celebrated acts of individual daring, Robert Smalls, the slave pilot of the Confederate naval vessel 'Planter,' brought on board his wife, child and a dozen other slaves, guided the ship out of the Charleston harbor, and surrendered it to the Union navy."

On July 17, 1862, President Lincoln signed the Militia Act to recruit black Soldiers, though black service members had served with George Washington in the Revolutionary War and later at the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812.

His Second Confiscation Act, which allowed for confiscation of Confederates' property, including slaves, was a precursor to the Emancipation Proclamation. How could a nation committed to the Constitution, democratic principles and liberty tolerate the idea of people as "property"? Lincoln's draft order reads: "All persons held as slaves with any state or states shall then, henceforth, and forever, be free."

The 'Fiery Trial' describes the institutional racism of the Dred Scott decision and colonization (a proposal to deport blacks to Central America). Emancipation, itself, is revealed as being for strategic military advantage, rather than for social or ethical reasons of equality.

Foner shows how our 16th president "grew into greatness" with "a willingness to listen to criticism, to seek out new ideas." Through careful research, Foner explains how Lincoln's antipathy toward slavery deepened as the institution grew, poised to expand westward.

Foner writes: "By the eve of the Civil War, the slave population in the United States had reached nearly four million. The economic value of these men, women and children who were considered as property exceeded the combined worth of all the banks, railroads and factories in the United States. In geographic extent, population and the institution's economic importance, the South was home to the most powerful slave system the modern world has known."

Lincoln's conviction evolved from expediency to passion. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong," Lincoln wrote.

Lincoln considered the views of thinkers and activists, supporters and rivals, like Frederick Douglass, John Stuart Mill, Salmon P. Chase, Susan B. Anthony, Charles Sumner and many others. We see the intense pressures and strong statesmanship of Lincoln and his affinity for Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson and Henry Clay. Like Paine, Madison and Jefferson, Lincoln penned some of the greatest passages in American history.

It was President Lincoln who said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." "(Let us) unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal ... I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosom until there shall be no doubt that all men are created free and equal."

At this moment, Sailors aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) are promoting those ideals in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

(In a separate post on Navy Reads, author Eric Foner offers his suggestions for Navy readers:

Richard N. Current, "The Lincoln Nobody Knows"

David Donald, "Lincoln"

James Oakes, "The Radical and the Republican"

James M. McPherson, "Tried By War"

Craig Symonds, "Lincoln and His Admirals")

(Doughty writes the Navy Reads blog – http://navyreads.blogspot.com/ – on weekends in support of the Navy Professional Reading Program.)