Hawai'i Navy News
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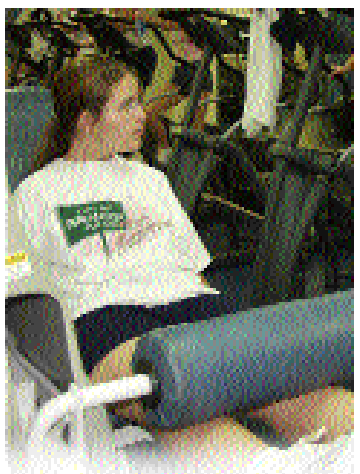
Merrie Monarch
Reuben James Sailors participate in annual Big Island celebration.
See story on page A-5.



Young and strong
Bloch Arena offers youth fitness programs.
See story on page B-1.

On the front lines

Region security members deploy for war on terror

JO1(SW) Alyssa Batarla
Staff Writer

Doing their part in the war on terror, 35 Sailors and one dog from Navy Region Hawai'i security have deployed to Iraq, Bahrain and Cuba in recent months while another Sailor is currently being selected to deploy to Afghanistan.

"We have two in Iraq and we have eight in Bahrain," said Master Chief Master-At-Arms (SW/AW) Jeffrey Elkins, Navy Region Hawai'i security force master chief. "The guys in Bahrain are deployed all over the world onboard vessels. What their job is, is to go aboard the ships and when the ship anchors, they set up a clear zone around the vessel. They inspect and search the vessel and supplies or whatever the ship picks up. They're like a harbor security.

"The other 24 Sailors we have (temporary additional duty) from here are down in Gitmo, Cuba," Elkins said. "They're part of a 600-person force that they're compiling worldwide of Navy Sailors to go down there and help assist the Army control the detainees."

"I think that it's a good test for the Navy to see if we can take over from the Army and do that job," said MA1 Fred Roach, regional security deployment coordinator. "I think we can do that just as effectively as they did and I think it's a good opportunity for the Navy. If we go out there and do a good job, we may end up doing those kind of things more often."

"I believe the admirals are saying that the Navy is beefed up in the force protection world so why can't we broaden our assets a little better and help in some of these things?" Elkins said. "The Navy is not just confined to vessels any-

▼ See MA, A-6

U.S. Navy photo by JO1 Daniel J. Calderon
MA1 (SW) Allan Tetreault holds his canine partner, Blero, after taking the dog out of their vehicle.

Waiakea High School NJROTC visits Reuben James

JO2 Devin Wright
Staff Writer

USS Reuben James (FFG 57) hosted 17 Waiakea High School Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) students for an orientation tour of the guided missile frigate March 31 in Hilo on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

The tour gave some of the future Navy enlisted members and officers a chance to see first hand what life on the ship may be like.

"The commander called me up and asked if we would like a tour of the ship," said retired Navy Capt. Charlie Schlegelmilch, Waiakea NJROTC acting officer in charge. "We jumped at the opportunity to have these kids see what it means to actually live on a ship. It really brings into focus all of the teaching that we have given them about Navy vessels. We can tell them what a bridge looks like or an engine room or the mess decks. This is a chance for them to see what exactly we've been teaching them. This tour is what it is all about for these cadets, to see first hand a Navy vessel rather [than] read about it in some textbook," he added.

The opportunity for Reuben James to be the first Navy ship most of the students have ever been on is not something the officers and crew took lightly.

"This is a big deal," said Ensign John Derges, communications officer aboard Reuben James. " We had a big responsibility to show these kids how they will be living when they join the Navy. I think this tour really got these kids even more excited about joining the world's greatest Navy," Derges said.

Throughout the tour, the NJROTC cadets saw for themselves jobs that they might consider taking in their future. For many of the students, USS Reuben James served as a recruiting tool.

"I was thinking about joining the Air Force," said one NJROTC cadet. " After visiting the ship, I think I might want to join the Navy. My favorite part was the bridge. It seems like the place to be while out to sea. It all seems really exciting honestly, traveling around the world on a warship. That's impressive," he said.

NJROTC is a nationwide high school organization that teaches students about naval stations and trains them for a possible future in the Navy and other armed services.

U.S. Navy photo by JO2 Devin Wright
Waiakea High School NJROTC students stand by the CIWS aboard USS Reuben James (FFG 57) during their tour aboard the frigate. The students toured Reuben James while the ship was visiting Hilo.

Child abuse prevention proclamation signed

U.S. Navy photo by JO3 Ryan C. McGinley
Rear Adm. Michael C. Vitale, Commander Navy Region Hawai'i and Commander Naval Surface Forces Middle Pacific, signs the 2005 Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation April 1 at the Fleet and Family Support Center. This year's theme is "Safe Children and Healthy Families are a Shared responsibility." The signing, witnessed by children and senior members of Navy Region Hawai'i, is to reaffirm the Region's mission to protect children.

Hawai'i Navy News Briefs

Tax Center still open

April 15 is the last day to file tax returns for this year. The Tax Center here will be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

This year, the center has saved Sailors more than $412,550 in filing fees. Center personnel have filed more than 4,250 returns and netted more than $5,009,258 in returns for Sailors.

The center is located in building 679 on the first floor. To schedule an appointment at the Tax Center, call 473-4112.

Junior Enlisted Awareness Seminar coming soon

The seminar, given by the First Class Petty Officer Association, will be held for personnel E-4 and below at The Banyans April 21 from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.. The seminar will cover topics to help enhance Sailors' careers and personal growth. For more information or to reserve a seat, call CTA1(SW) Alomar at 471-9733, ext. 216 or CTA1 Walker at 471-9733, ext. 217.

SECNAV announces review on Capt. Speicher

Upon review of an intelligence community report regarding the case of Capt. Michael S. Speicher, Secretary of the Navy Gordon England directed the Chief of Naval Personnel to convene a board to review the classification of Speicher's status as Missing/Captured.

Speicher's aircraft was shot down Jan. 17, 1991, the first day of the Gulf War. In October, 2002, England changed Speicher's status from Missing in Action to Missing/Captured.

The report provides an update for the Offices of the secretaries of Defense and Navy concerning intelligence community actions between November 2002 and March 2005 to determine Speicher's fate.

Blended Learning Initiative blazes trail in instruction, cost savings

JO1(SW/AW) John Osborne
Naval Personnel Development Command, Public Affairs

The Navy's Video Teletraining (VTT) program will get a shot in the arm in the coming months when the program upgrades and integrates with the Blended Learning Initiative (BLI), a $2.8 million upgrade granted by Congress to incorporate a networked classroom into the VTT network.

Blended learning seeks to maximize the available resources that support learning, training, and business activities by identifying how the learning audience can best achieve mastery of the content being learned. It is a balance between business and performance objectives, the way groups of learners learn best, and the various ways that the material can best be individualized, presented and learned.

According to Bruce Walker, Program Manger for BLI, this integration of two of the Navy's most productive training tools is not only a win in cost avoidance, but it will also allow Sailors access to the best instruction without the stress of travel or personnel-loss to their parent command.

"The Revolution in Training (RIT) requires us to use the resources we have in the best possible manner," Walker said. "It calls for us to train in non-traditional formats, utilizing tools we have never used before. I see this as the next step in training more efficiently and effectively. When we can get Sailors in the classroom without sending them away from the commands and their families, it is a good thing."

Since 1989, VTT has provided training to over 97,000 students and saved the Navy approximately $30 million, operating out of hubs in Training Support Center (TSC) San Diego and TSC Hampton Roads. There are 39 Navy and Marine Corps VTT classrooms that broadcast to 27 nationwide shore sites, nine aircraft carriers and 14 large deck amphibious assault ships. BLI will make it even better by combining VTT and web-based learning into one classroom.

Currently, there are plans to build four BLI classrooms and refurbish 10 existing VTT classrooms (five on each coast) that don't currently have network capabilities. Each classroom will have 16 workstations networked with the instructor station. The first will be installed in Port Hueneme, Calif., for the Construction Battalion Center at the end of April with the second later this summer at Naval Hospital Balboa in San Diego. The other two will be operational by the end of this fiscal year at Center for Personal Development in Norfolk and Submarine Learning Center in Groton, Conn.

To put the potential savings in perspective, per-student cost avoidance for five days of temporary assigned duty (TAD) can range anywhere from $715 (TAD from Mayport, Fla., to Norfolk) to as much as $1,696 (Guam to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii). For a one-day course for 14 students traveling from Whidbey Island to San Diego, the command will save $10,031.84 by keeping them in Washington State and having their class taught via VTT. This doesn't even take into account the intangible factors such as fatigue, stress and Sailors having to possibly make arrangements to have their personal affairs handled while they are gone.

"We are going to be able to teach any course that is taught in the Automated Electronic Classroom (AEC) in one of the BLI classrooms," said West Coast VTT Hub Manager, Jim Isaac. "The instructor can be located in Athens, Ga., and simultaneously be teaching students in Florida, California and Washington. From the Fleet point of view, it's a big plus because they don't lose them for as long. If it's a three-day course, their command only loses them for three days instead of five because there is no travel time."

Walker said that ultimately BLI would tie into the Naval Education and Training Command's (NETC) Training, Resource, Advocacy and Information Network Community of Interest (COI).

New homes nearly ready for Sailors, families to move in

Karen S. Spangler
Assistant Editor

The first of 910 new homes constructed by Hawai'i Military Communities (HMC) are nearing completion and will be ready for Navy families by July.

According to Thad Bond, senior vice-president for HMC, Navy families will begin incrementally relocating into the homes as they are completed.

Currently, Navy families are being contacted to update their files in an effort to determine eligibility and housing requirements for relocating from older homes. Hundreds of other families will be brought into the process as more homes are completed and are ready for occupancy.

"We think the families of the brave men and women who are defending America deserve to live in the best housing available," said Bond. "Our team has worked hard to complete the first homes built for this massive project and we will be doing everything in our power to make the relocation process as smooth as possible."

HMC's partnership with the Navy as part of phase one of public-private venture (PPV) includes the construction of new homes within Radford Terrace, Halsey Terrace and McGrew Point.

According to Bond, determining who will move into the completed homes – and when – is a complex process. He explained that the process will last for many months and will require some patience and understanding by families who are waiting to move.

"One of our most important jobs is to make sure the relocation process is as fair as possible with the least disruption to the families," Bond explained.

Each family will be contacted individually by Forest City Residential Management (FCRM) to discuss the criteria established and explain their options to them when the time comes for them to relocate.

Bond said FCRM has worked closely with the Navy to develop the rules that will govern the relocation process.

Capt Norman Ho, assistant chief of staff for housing for Navy Region Hawai'i, discussed the relocation process.

"We know that most Navy families are eager to move into a better home," he said. "But we also trust that families will understand that there are sound reasons why some of them will not be allowed to move into the newer homes and why some families might move ahead of others on the priority list, based on the types of homes that are available," Ho added.

Bond and Ho emphasized that the relocation process will go much more smoothly and it will be helpful to everyone if families respond as quickly as possible once they receive relocation information.

Residents who have questions or want more information should call Forest City at 423-7711 or the Navy family housing military liaison office at 474-1804.

Transition (due to construction) move-out procedures:

- Residents are notified by housing transition manager requesting update of resident file, i.e., current page 2, orders, etc.
- Appointment will be made with housing transition manager at neighborhood management office, 2500 Radford Drive, to discuss housing options.
- Relocation assignments will be completed at relocation office at Navy Aloha Center: Schedule move-out inspection in current home, new move-in paperwork and transition packet including change of address forms, telephone/cable info etc to ensure smooth transition.
- Resident information is forwarded to Navy Family Housing Office for move chit processing.
- Move-out inspection of demo home includes general cleaning, trash removal and cleaning of appliances only. Keys surrendered on that date.

Outbound move-out procedures (PPV residents only):

Guidelines:

- Notice needs to be given in person at the neighborhood management office (NMO) located at 2500 Radford Drive. Office hours are 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday.
- A minimum of 28 days written notice must be provided to landlord by tenant.

Service member may provide more than 28 days notice.

In the case of short orders, 28-day notice will be waived, but the NMO must be notified immediately if this is the situation.

- Must provide a copy of orders or other supporting documentation (i.e., ERD, retirement orders, separation paperwork or command endorsement).
- General or specific power of attorney (POA) must be provided if spouse of service member is completing paperwork.

Move-out procedures:

- Service member or spouse brings appropriate documentation to the NMO and is prepared to complete paperwork. Completion of paperwork takes an average of 15-30 minutes.
- Service member will complete "notice of intent to vacate."
- Pre-term and final inspection dates will be scheduled at the time notice is provided.
- Service member will receive a copy of the following:
- Cleaning checklist/preparation for final inspection checklist.
- Disposing of garbage properly.
- Copy of convenience checklist that will have the following information:

Final day in unit.
Last month's rent.
Date and time of pre-term and final inspection.

Request to allow dependents to remain:

- Request must be submitted in writing.
- Requests are normally approved for the purpose of allowing dependent's to finish school year. All other situations are looked at on a case by case basis.
- If request is approved, rent will remain at the Hawai'i BAH at dependent rate and spouse needs to have a current specific or general POA.

Call the neighborhood management office at 423-7711 if you have any questions regarding providing notice of intent to vacate.

USS Reuben James chief commissioned

JO2 Devin Wright
Staff Writer

USS Reuben James (FFG-57) held a commissioning ceremony for Chief Engineman (SW) Robert Caldwell March 31 in Hilo on the big island of Hawai'i.

Caldwell was commissioned as an ensign.

While many celebrated at the ceremony, some were also distressed knowing Caldwell would soon be leaving the ship.

"We are proud and lucky to have Ensign Caldwell as part of our wardroom," said Cmdr. Logan Jones, commanding officer USS Reuben James. "We are also saddened, selfishly, to a degree because we know we will be losing him shortly. It's our loss. We are losing a great shipmate and outstanding Sailor, but it is certainly the Navy's gain to have his expertise in the officer's community. We need a man like Ensign Caldwell in the Navy to continue on to bigger and better things and that's what he is doing," he said.

The chief's community is anxious to have one of their own bring his 12 years of naval experience to junior officers.

"We are not losing a chief," said USS Reuben James Command Master Chief (SW/AW) Jeffery Clark. "He will still have that chief mentality embedded in him. He will still seek out the chiefs' community for technical expertise. He understands how to integrate with the chiefs' mess. So this is not a loss, but a tremendous gain for the Navy. The limited duty officer program is great because you have an enlisted person that has already had that hands-on experience vice an officer who comes right out of college," he said.

Caldwell attributed his successes in the Navy to the men and women he has served with throughout his 12 years in the Navy.

"I certainly didn't get here by myself," said Caldwell. "It was alongside of many great men and women that worked extremely hard and made me look good. In the future, when I have to make important decisions as an officer I believe I will have the interests of the enlisted men and women in my thoughts and at the end of the day, I believe that type of thinking makes a better and stronger Navy," Caldwell said.

Upon completion of mustang training, Caldwell will report to USS Kitty Hawk (CV63) in Yokosuka, Japan where he will serve as repair officer.

U.S. Navy photo by JO2 Devin Wright

Cmdr. Logan Jones, commander USS Reuben James commissions former ENC(SW) Robert Caldwell during a March 31 commissioning ceremony aboard USS Reuben James (FFG 57).

Hawai'i Navy News Editorial

Don't forget: All of us are Sailors first

Editorial Commentary
JO1 Daniel J. Calderón
Editor

I'm not sure how many of you saw last week's Navy Times. The cover story was about how some naval officers are upset about being called Sailors and having to recite the Sailors Creed.

Some said reciting the creed made them feel like children in school. The order to recite the creed is for Sailors in a training environment.

I can see how, as grown ups, the tendency to view doing something like that might lead to a sense of being demeaned or lessened. I mean, how often we stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance? How often do we see Sailors running into a building as the "five minute warning" sounds before colors or sitting in their car for a longer time while the national anthem is playing?

I saw it this week. I saw a Sailor running into a building more than 10 seconds after the music had started. I was too far to see who it was or call out and by the time the music was over, he had disappeared into whatever office he was rushing to enter.

I don't recite the Sailor's Creed every day. I did earlier this year when I was in leadership training. Every morning, my classmates and I stood and recited the creed affirming our place as United States Navy Sailors. We alternated between the Sailors Creed and the Coast Guard Creed because we had a member of our fellow sea service in the class.

Did we feel childish? Did we feel like we were being demeaned? Not at all. In fact, one morning, our instructor seemed on the verge of skipping it and one of my classmates asked if we were going to recite the creed. No one grumbled and groaned. We accepted it because it was part of the curriculum and we were proud to do it.

Reciting the creed in a training environment is an excellent way to reinforce the reasons we all put on the uniform and take on the responsibilities of a Sailor for another day.

As far as the officers who complained about having to recite the creed in a training environment, I think they have forgotten what it means to be Sailors. I think they have lost touch with the heritage we all carry with us every day.

They said they were naval officers and should not be referred to as Sailors, as if the one was more important than the other. I think they were right in principle, but wrong in practice.

Naval officers, chiefs, petty officers, fireman, seaman, or airmen and the myriad other rates and titles in the Navy are important. But, each of them is a lesser title than Sailor.

Sailor applies to all of us who have sworn an oath and have agreed to be a part of the Navy Team. We are all Sailors first and anything else second. I'm insulted that anyone, especially an officer, would consider being a naval officer a loftier or more important title than United States Sailor.

Maybe they have forgotten what it means to be a Sailor. Maybe some officers who have gone through college and then donned the uniform are unaware of what it means to be a Sailor. Maybe they should spend some time in an enlisted uniform and get a better handle on the people they lead. Maybe. Maybe not. I don't know.

What I do know is that I am a United States Sailor. I say that with pride. I can't imagine an officer in the Marine Corps saying, "I'm not a Marine." I can't imagine an Army officer saying," I'm not a Soldier." Why should naval officers say, "I'm not a Sailor?" The answer - they should not.

Our officers should be proud to lead us. They should be proud to wear the title of Sailor. Otherwise, what does that tell us? How can they lead what they do not want to be a part of?

Blue lights through red lights – A misuse of authority?

Editorial Commentary
Karen S. Spangler
Assistant Editor

Traffic crawled to a stop – backed up at a red light on one of the island's busy thoroughfares. A few cars ahead, a police car waited briefly, then turned on his "blue lights" and navigated through the traffic and through the light as motorists pulled off to the side to let him pass.

He was barely through the intersection when he turned off his blue lights and cruised on his way.

Another day, another intersection with slow moving traffic – and another police car made its escape with flashing blue lights.

More recently, I sat in traffic on Kam Highway near Leeward Community College. From my vantage point, I had no idea what the problem was that was causing the traffic jam.

In the column of cars ahead, a police car turned on his blue lights and began to proceed through the lanes of cars. This was encouraging – evidently this dedicated officer was going to move to the head of the traffic problem and try to resolve it.

As I progressed through the traffic, I discovered that the problem was caused by a bottleneck as highway construction crews worked on the road and drivers were forced to merge into one lane. But there was no sign of the "dedicated" police officer so I surmise that he used his blue lights to extricate himself from a traffic nightmare.

I have witnessed this use of the "flashing blue lights" at traffic intersections or in heavy traffic on many occasions – enough times that it has caused me to be suspicious.

I was still willing to give the benefit of the doubt and I called one of the local police stations to see if they could offer me an explanation.

I was told that the officer who had turned on his blue light to get through the intersection had probably been called to an emergency and wasn't using his/her siren because he/she didn't want to alert anyone that they were coming, but still needed to get there quickly.

But there seem to be an awful lot of those types of "emergencies." And if they are in a hurry, and indeed are on their way to an emergency, that doesn't explain why they only leave the "blue lights" flashing until they have cleared the heavy traffic or cruised through the red light.

It has happened enough times that it has elevated my suspicions. This occurrence isn't limited to HPD - I have also witnessed the same actions by our Navy security officers. One specific site was at the traffic light near building 150. One day, base security personnel used this action to clear the light at Kam Highway and Radford Drive before turning off the blue lights and continuing down the road.

Are these officers always on their way to a call or an emergency when they use their "flashing blue lights" to cut through traffic?

Or is it – at least sometimes – a convenient little maneuver to use if they don't want to wait for a red light or don't want to have to sit in traffic? Is it – at least sometimes – a misuse of the authority they have been given, using the "flashing blue light" for their own personal gain?

I realize that no one is going to admit that they are guilty of using the "flashing blue light" for the wrong reasons. I can see where it would be tempting, we're all human. We hate to sit in traffic, we find ourselves impatiently waiting for the red light to turn green. So I can see where it might be tempting to turn on that "flashing blue light" and use it to their own advantage.

Not only is that a misuse of authority, but it diminishes the trust and confidence that we as citizens place in our police officials, those whom we respect and expect to uphold the law, not break – or bend – the rules. We have been taught to get out of the way when emergency vehicles, including police cars, need to get through.

But witnessing the misuse of such authority could raise the question in the minds of motorists – "is it an emergency or a police officer who is impatient and doesn't want to wait?"

It isn't my place to second guess the matter and since I have always been taught to get out of the way of emergency vehicles, and it's the law, that's what I'll do.

But as upstanding, law-abiding citizens, we have a right to expect that our police officers will exercise what is their duty and responsibility and only use those "flashing blue lights" for the purpose for which they were intended.

Payday lending can be a costly way to make ends meet

Commentary
FLTCM(AW/SW)
Jon Thompson
U.S. Fleet Forces Command Command Master Chief

Do you ever need more cash than you make in a month? Sure you do…we all do. The difference, however, lies in how we acquire that extra cash to make ends meet or pay for the things we need.

Financially savvy Sailors obtain low-interest loans and strive to have their interest rates lowered. Those of you who are a little more impetuous sometimes turn to payday-lending services to get you from payday to payday.

While legal, these quick loans can do more harm than good. In my opinion, these businesses take full advantage of your financial situation and prey on our most vulnerable Sailors.

Since January 2004, it's estimated that 90 percent of the Sailors who turn to payday lending services are second class and below. That speaks volumes. I'm guessing we, as a Navy, need to do more to help educate our junior Sailors about financial management and the options they have.

Those of us who have learned lessons the hard way need to share that information with our junior Sailors and help them avoid some of the mistakes we made when we were junior and struggling to make ends meet.

What's more, we need to cultivate an environment in our commands where our Sailors feel comfortable asking for assistance long before they are desperate.

According to information provided by the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, on average, Sailors who request NMCRS assistance have three ongoing payday loans. Almost half of those needing assistance have two or more dependents.

It's not a surprise that making ends meet when you have a family is often more difficult than if you're single.

So what's a payday loan? Payday loans are, as they suggest, loans tied to your paycheck. Companies offer cash up front for a promise to repay the loan (and a fee - typically $15 for every $100 borrowed) the following payday.

On the surface, that might not sound too bad. But, consider this: If you can't afford to pay your bills this payday and next payday you have to repay that loan and still pay your other bills, what makes you think you'll be better off?

Sadly, the trend is to roll over these loans payday to payday and the $15 fee doubles and triples quickly. As a matter of fact, paying $15 for $100 over a two-week period constitutes a 391 percent annual percentage rate. Ouch! If you borrow $100 and then roll the loan over three times, you would pay a $60 fee for that original $100.

Shipmates, you can do better than that, much better.

Payday loan businesses seem to be popping up everywhere. The most common names for these businesses are: payday loans, cash advance loans, check advance loans, post-dated check loans and deferred deposit check loans.

No matter what you call them, they all charge exorbitant fees and turning to these types of businesses for cash is not in your best interest.

Here are a few alternatives you should consider before you ever contemplate using a payday lending business:

- Ask for a small, personal loan from your bank or credit union.
- Ask for an overdraft protection line-of-credit for your checking account.
- Ask creditors for time to pay your bills.
- Ask Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society for help.
- Ask your Fleet and Family Support Center for help.

Shipmates, asking for help should not be a source of embarrassment. On the contrary, those of you who recognize you need help and ask for it are brilliant.

The Navy expends a large amount of time and talent on training command financial specialists, but this time and talent mean nothing to you if you are too proud or stubborn to raise your hand and ask for some help. Solutions to financial problems and challenges are not one-size-fits-all. The smart plans are tailored to fit your individual needs.

Of course, it's probably worth saying that the best financial plan is the one that keeps you from needing the occasional quick loan to make it payday to payday. No matter your paygrade, or how much you make, if you spend more than you make you are going down a dangerous road.

Developing a budget is the first step in any financial plan. I'm often amazed how few Sailors actually have a plan for their money. The "spend until it's gone" mentality is, unfortunately, the norm rather than the rule.

Here are a couple tips to consider before you make a purchase:

- Decide if the item you are about to buy is a need or a want. I'll bet if you take a day or two to think about the purchase, some of your apparent needs will slide to wants.
- Also, compare prices. Few things are unique in our world. Competition is good because it means you have choices.
- Do your homework - don't just buy the first thing you see.
- Finally, take some time to analyze what your repayment plan will be if you are purchasing something using a loan or on credit. If you don't ask these tough questions before you make the purchase, you'll be forced to live with the financial ramifications when the bill comes due.

Although we all wish we made more money, the fact is we are all limited to what we make depending on our paygrade and time in the Navy. Learning to live within our means is a mark of financial maturity and the earlier you learn how to do that, the brighter your financial future will be. Good luck shipmates, you work hard for your money - do your best to protect it!

Rumsfeld honors Sgt. Paul Smith

Excerpt of remarks by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

America has had the great good fortune to be blessed by volunteers, who have stepped forward to defend the American people and to defend our free way of life. They're soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines. They're paramedics and nurses, firefighters and policemen. And they're family members, who often struggle with quiet dignity while those loved ones serve so far away.

A few of them have famous names. Some undertake crucial missions in secret. Others live in gracious anonymity. But each is driven, I believe, by love of country, certainly a devotion to duty, and -- I would guess -- the hope of leaving their loved ones and future generations a safer and a better world.

One of the bravest among them we honor here today. A decade after Sergeant First Class Paul Ray Smith first saw combat in Operation Desert Storm, he returned to duty in Iraq -- a proud sergeant, a tested soldier, and certainly an inspired leader. We stand in awe of the heroism described in Sergeant Smith's citation, and which was so eloquently recounted at the White House ceremony.

Standing here today, one need not look far to understand what motivated his bravery. Certainly we see in the shared pride and the grief of those he loved, in his children, David and Jessica, who daily brought him joy; his wife, Birgit, who -- I'm told -- Paul in his final words compared to the brightest star in the sky; and his family, who saw the boy from Tampa become a man who crossed deserts to topple a tyrant, to help liberate some 25 million people and to defend our nation. Paul R. Smith now belongs to that singular pantheon of brave patriots who fought for something more sacred than their own lives.

And now Paul joins America's truly most admired fraternity: those awarded the Medal of Honor. It's a fraternity so revered that President Harry S. Truman once confided to a soldier he decorated -- he said, "I'd rather have this medal than be president."

And today we include Sergeant Paul Smith in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes, established as a mark of appreciation to those who have received this highest of distinctions. Including -- here are people you may have heard of, some of them: General Jimmy Doolittle, Sergeant York, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

It was Theodore Roosevelt who said, "The one thing I want to leave my children is an honorable name." And Paul Smith has done that, and a great deal more. He has left his family and his country a life of great meaning and entrusted us with his faith in America and its mission. And for that faith, he laid down his life. And for that sacrifice, we are forever in his debt. And in his name, we're called upon to ensure that his trust was well-placed and made to endure.

May God grant his dear family comfort, and may God continue to watch over our great country. Thank you.

Full text of Rumsfeld's remarks can be found at http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050405-secdef2441.html.

Hawai'i Navy News

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PMRF rescue swimmers aid Kipu Falls visitor

Tom Clements
PMRF Public Affairs

Two Sailors from the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kaua'i were able to use their rescue swimmer training to aid an injured visitor at Kipu Falls March 27.

Autumn Lawler and her sister, Amber Drew, accompanied by Amber's husband Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Justin Drew and other Sailors from PMRF, arrived for a relaxing day of swimming at Kipu Falls near the southern side of Kaua'i.

After about an hour of swimming, jumping from a rope swing and diving from the ledge, Lawler attempted to make one last jump from the ledge.

On this attempt, she slipped and fell headfirst into the water where she struck her head on a submerged rock. Amazingly, she did not lose consciousness, but she suffered a broken arm, six-inch and three-inch lacerations to her forehead, two small broken bones in her neck and "whiplash."

"Stan," officially known as AT3 Grzegorz Dlugolecki, saw her fall and decided to check on her as she surfaced. Seeing she was having difficulty swimming, Dlugolecki decided to assist and placed Lawler in a "safe hold" and swam with her to the side of the falls. Recognizing the possibility of a spinal injury, Dlugolecki knew that keeping her still was extremely important. Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class Erik Potter, also a PMRF rescue swimmer, joined him shortly after.

This event was Dlugolecki's first opportunity to utilize his Navy rescue training, or as he put it, "[It was] my first time without dummies. Everything was step by step – I wasn't thinking – just reacting," he said. "Her 'ABCs' were fine so I concentrated on keeping her still in case of spinal injury."

To become a rescue swimmer, Sailors attend the search and rescue course in Pensacola, Fla. The course is four weeks long and PMRF swimmers train three times a week to maintain proficiency. At least once a week, that training involves a scenario and Dlugolecki said there was a training session similar to this one.

PMRF rescue swimmers have been involved in a number of real-life rescues recently, including the at-sea airlifts of injured local dive instructor Matthew Isham and a Sailor aboard the Pearl Harbor-based USS Chosin suffering from appendicitis.

Similar to training, where an instructor is always present to guide and critique, Dlugolecki's work was eventually evaluated by a doctor who was also visiting the falls. The tourist – only known as "Chad," an emergency room doctor visiting from Washington state - approached Dlugolecki from the water, but at first Stan would have nothing of it.

Dlugolecki is a Polish immigrant with a more-than six-foot and 200-pound solid frame. With many people present and an equal number of opinions on how to help, Dlugolecki found himself defending his training.

When the doctor offered to help, Dlugolecki was quite forceful in his refusal - until the man identified himself as a physician. "Well then you know more than me, how can we help you?" was Dlugolecki's next response.

The doctor asked what the rescue swimmers had done so far and then remarked they had correctly done all that should have been done. Other than checking for response in her limbs, the doctor and the Sailors knew it was just a matter of waiting for paramedics to show up to transport her.

According to Lawler, it was about 20 minutes later when the paramedics arrived – Dlugolecki still holding her in position. Using their expertise, the Kaua'i firefighters built a floating gurney and slowly removed her from the water.

"I want to especially thank Stan for coming to my rescue, but also everyone who contributed to my rescue, the Kauai Fire Department rescue three and engine three and the staff at Wilcox Hospital. If not for them, I would not be here today," Lawler said in an appreciative e-mail.

Lawler's sister Amber Drew said, "I watched the whole thing from the top. I am scared of heights and could not jump to be with Autumn in the water. If it wasn't for Stan, I don't think my sister would be with us today. Stan is my hero!"

Brother-in-law Justin Drew said it was a good thing for training in this case, "Both Stan and Potter did a great job." Justin also noted that for Dlugolecki, it went beyond training. "About an hour and a half later, Stan showed up at the hospital with Burger King for my wife and I, stating that we were busy and shouldn't forget to eat. When he asked if I needed anything else, I told him my socks were still wet. He said, 'you don't need socks,' and gave me his flip-flops." Stan's logic was, "I can go home barefoot, you need flip-flops more than me."

Justin said, "I was seriously impressed by Stan's genuine concern and coolness when things became critical."

Lawler was released from the hospital a few days later and is recuperating at home.

Hopper changes command

U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Jamie Lynn De Coster

Cmdr. Michael W. Selby (left) and Cmdr. Peter M. Driscoll cut the cake after the March 31 change of command aboard USS Hopper (DDG 70). Selby passed command of the guided missile destoyer to Driscoll at the ceremony.

USS Reuben James

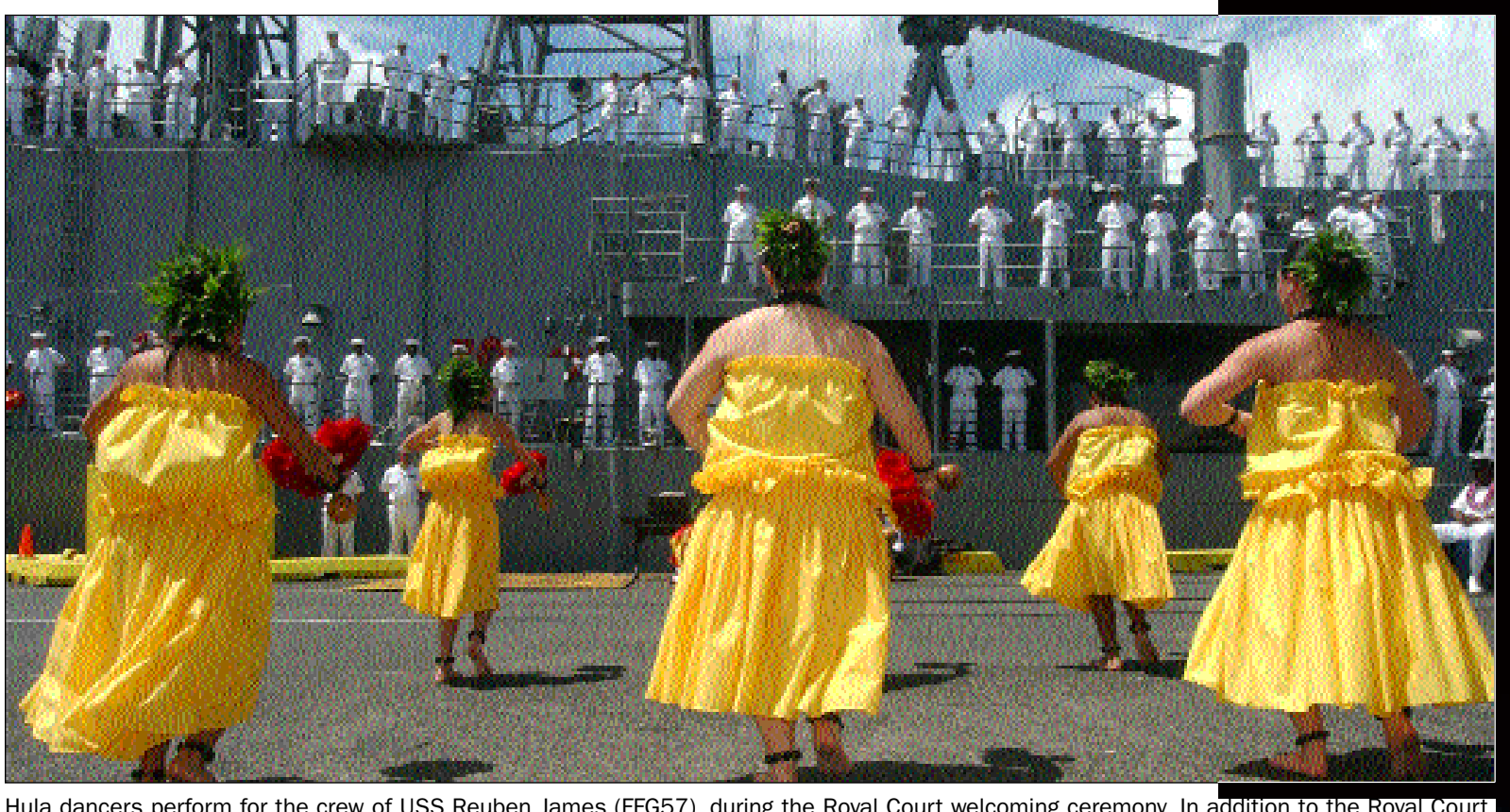
Sailors attend the 42nd annual

A member of the Royal Court sounds the conch to announce the presence of the king and queen at the 42nd Merrie Monarch Festival.

A hula contestant performs at the Merrie Monarch Festival held in Hilo on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

Sailors stationed aboard USS Reuben James (FFG 57) march in the Merrie Monarch Festival parade. The Merrie Monarch Festival was established in 1964 to help preserve the Hawaiian culture of hula dancing.

Cmdr. Logan Jones, commander USS Reuben James (FFG 57), waves to the crowd during the 42nd annual Merrie Monarch Festival parade. Reuben James is the 42nd ship to be invited to the festivities.



Hula dancers perform for the crew of USS Reuben James (FFG57), during the Royal Court welcoming ceremony. In addition to the Royal Court, representatives from Merrie Monarch Festival and members of the Navy League of Hawai'i were on hand to greet the ship. After the welcoming ceremony, the Royal Court was given a tour of the ship by Cmdr. Logan Jones, commanding officer of USS Reuben James.

Story and photos by
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[illegible]nual Merrie [illegible] Royal court [illegible]elcomed [illegible]mdr. Logan [illegible]nes, com[illegible]anding offi[illegible] of USS [illegible]uben James [illegible]FG-57), and [illegible] ship's crew [illegible] March 31, [illegible] to this [illegible] year's festival in [illegible] Hilo on the [illegible] Big Island [illegible] of Hawai'i.

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[illegible]coming cere[illegible]mony, crew members were treated to a hula display by a variety of hula dancers on the pier.

Following the welcoming ceremony Jones gave the royal court a tour of the guided missile frigate.

The arrival of USS Reuben James to Hilo was especially significant for one Sailor.

Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Kawika Lumperreira of USS Reuben James was born and raised in Hilo.

"I feel privileged to be back in my home town in uniform," Lumperreira said. " I can tell people look at me different like I've really done something with my life. I feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment. People here in Hilo don't really see Sailors like they do on Oahu, so this is a great opportunity to show my people what the Navy is all about. Hula is a long lasting Hawaiian tradition and it's great to integrate the Navy into that," he said.

The Merrie Monarch Festival is a week-long hula festival that takes place annually in Hilo, Hawai'i. It honors King David Kalakaua, who was nicknamed the "Merrie Monarch" [illegible]tion of the arts. [illegible] with restoring [illegible]ai'ian cultural [illegible]ions during his [illegible]ign, including [illegible]he hula. Hula competitors from all over the world attend the festival each year to participate in the competition.

The Navy built a relationship with the Hawai'ian people more than 120 years ago. In celebration of that relationship, the Navy attends the annual festivities.

"We are here to support the Merrie Monarch Festival," said Jones. "When the festival was established in 1964, the initial Merrie Monarch founders had the foresight to involve the Navy. Since King David Kalakaua had a strong relationship with the Navy, founders of the festival and Navy leaders found it fitting that the Navy participate in the festivities," Jones said. "Frankly, it's an honor anytime you are asked to represent your country and your service. When it comes to the Merrie Monarch Festival, it's a great opportunity for Reuben James Sailors to learn and be a part of the Hawai'ian culture and vice versa," he added.

The Navy's presence at the festival is equally as important to the Hawaiian community.

"Hawai'i and the Navy's ties go back for many years," said Andy Smith, Governor Linda Lingle's liaison for East Hawai'i. " Just as it is important for Hawai'i to preserve its culture and tradition, it is also important that we sustain our relationship with the Navy. The Navy has become a big part of Hawai'i and the Navy's presence at the Merrie Monarch is just another example of what an intricate part the Navy plays in the Hawai'i community," he added.

Sailors aboard Reuben James attended the hula competitions at the Edith Kanaka'ole Tennis Stadium and used the opportunity to learn more about the art of hula.

"I thought it was a great experience," said Gas Turbine System Technician Mechanical Seaman Apprentice Brandon Jasikiewicz. "This is my first time at Merrie Monarch Festival. I was told it was a hula competition but, I wasn't aware of how serious it is. There were television cameras and just a ton of people so there was a lot of electricity in the arena. The dances were great. I learn that they are actually telling a story rather than just creative expressions," said Jasikiewicz.

The Navy has attended the Merrie Monarch Festival since it was established in 1964.

West Loch survivor returns to Hawai'i

JO1(SW) Alyssa Batarla
Staff Writer

The last time John Stavola was in Hawai'i, 163 of his shipmates ended up dead or missing and 396 were injured. His ship, along with five others, was destroyed and fires burned for days. He watched his friends die and one of the few things he has wanted since then was to come back.

On March 30, after 61 years and two failed attempts at the trip, he once again stood at the site of the West Loch disaster at Naval Magazine Pearl Harbor.

He looked across the water to the rusty remnants of Tank Landing Ship (LST) 480, its bow awkwardly stuck above the waterline as the only evidence of the tragedy that took place, and talked amiably about his time in the Navy.

He recounted what happened May 21, 1944 when several violent explosions and fires suddenly occurred among ships loaded with ammunition, gasoline and fuel in what has been called the second Pearl Harbor disaster.

"All hell broke loose," said Stavola. "The ships were trying to get out, but they were all chained together. My [executive officer] came out and he was shell shocked, and I just wanted to get out of there."

Stavola's ship, LST 43, had survived through the first two major explosions and was trying to get underway, but couldn't get the bow lines off.

"They sent three guys up on the bow – one of them was this 17-year-old kid. I'll never forget him; he was a great kid. They never came back."

While trying to get underway, the third and the most violent explosion occurred, rendering the ship useless and causing LST 43 to be abandoned.

"It was a chain reaction and gasoline was spewing all over," Stavola said. "My commanding officer was up on the bridge when our ship went and it blew all his clothes off. All he had left on was his belt."

The 84-year-old veteran spoke candidly and casually until he was asked how he was feeling about being back at the site of the disaster.

"I'm surprised I'm talking so much and not standing here bawling," he said, before immediately choking up. He was silent for several minutes before continuing, "I just keep thinking about that 17-year-old. He was a good kid."

Stavola said he has been involved with several naval alumni organizations and had been trying to come back to West Loch with his wife for nearly 20 years, but due to a medical condition, she was never able to accompany him. His son and grandson brought him to Oahu from Montauk, N.Y. to fulfill his long-standing wish.

"He didn't talk about this too much at all," said his son, Daniel Stavola. "It wasn't until his later years when he started going back and meeting all of his alumni. They get together every year now. He's been all over the United States. They get together every year and that's when he started talking about it."

When the disaster at West Loch occurred, only a few bare facts were released to the public in order to keep an imminent attack on Saipan a secret. The catastrophe remained a classified incident until 1960, resulting in it being a little-known fact of World War II history.

U.S. Navy photo by JO1(SW) Alyssa Batarla
Navy veteran John Stavola and Lt. Fred Strain, waterfront operations officer for Naval Magazine Pearl Harbor, discuss the disaster at West Loch during Stavola's March 30 visit. Stavola's ship, LST 43, was among the six destroyed when several explosions left 163 men dead or missing and injured 396 May 21, 1944.

U.S. Navy photo by JO1 Daniel J. Calderó
MA1 Eric Wynn (center) and MA2 (SW) Art Stoddard practice tak ing a suspect into custody and placing him in their patrol ca Both are field training officers for Navy Region Hawai'i Security.

MA: Forces supporting commands worldwide

Continued from A-1

more. Now that there are more people, we can go different places and we can do different things. I still have 300 guys that are just waiting to go. It's a great opportunity for them and they're jumping at the bit to get going."

One of those Sailors was given the opportunity to deploy to Iraq in February with his four-legged friend – MA2 Timothy Skaggs and his canine partner Appie, a five-year old Belgian Malinois. As members of the Navy Region Hawai'i police K9 section, they are one of the first teams of canine handler and canine to deploy from the unit in recent years and will be deployed until the summer.

According to Kennelmaster MAC James Walker, Appie is trained to detect explosives and is using his abilities to support U.S. Central Command.

With the recent turnover of the base's fixed-post watches to the Hui O Ka Koa Security Company, Elkins said more than half the current 330 billets for security have been cut.

Elkins said that because of Hui O Ka Koa, his Sailors have been freed up to concentrate on many other aspects of their jobs and he does expect an increase in the demand for deployment from his department.

"They spent a lot of hours on fixed-post which means they had very few hours to ride around in the vehicles and answer calls for service and get qualifications completed," Elkins said. "They're able to achieve their short-term goals and long-term goals, like off-duty education, so they're really getting involved in all that now. The opportunities are endless."

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Advancement opportunity to master chief remains constant

Lt. Kyle Raines
Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

U.S. Navy photo by PH2 Rob Rubio
Chief of Naval Personnel, Vice Adm. Gerry L. Hoewing, speaks to attendees at the 2004 Human Resource Summit in Leesburg, Va. The Summit gathered both military and civilian personnel from different areas of the Navy.

Sailors eligible to advance to the grade of master chief petty officer will have nearly the same opportunity this year, 13.37 percent, as was available last year, 13.57 percent, a difference of 0.20 percentage points.

The number of Sailors competing for paygrade E-9 decreased by 10 this year, while quotas fell only by eight from 465 to 457.

Advancement opportunity improved or stayed the same in 42 ratings. Thirty-two ratings saw declining advancement opportunity, but 12 of those will still enjoy advancement opportunity above the Navy average.

"Holding advancement opportunity essentially steady, while the size of the total force is reduced, represents our commitment to the growth and development of our top enlisted leaders, a key component of the Navy's Human Capital Strategy," said Vice Adm. Gerry Hoewing, Chief of Naval Personnel. "Given the incredible talent at our more senior enlisted ranks, I am very pleased to be able to offer them the same opportunity for promotion as last year."

Hospital corpsmen (HM) and dental technicians (DT) will face a combined selection board this year for advancement to E-9. Eligible DTs will compete with eligible HMs for selection to HMCM (master chief hospital corpsman).

This will allow the board to select the best executive leadership for the enlisted medical community. Their ratings have an 11.30 percent opportunity for advancement this cycle.

Postal clerks showed the best overall advancement opportunity at 100 percent. Other ratings with improved advancement opportunity include fire control technician, which grew from 16 percent in the previous cycle to 34.62 percent this cycle, and quartermaster, which experienced a jump of 13 points from 16.67 percent to 29.63.

Ratings that saw some decline in advancement opportunity include hull technician (HT), down 23.05 points to 9.09 percent this cycle from 34.14 percent last year, and information systems technician (IT), which fell to 19.19 percent from 31.37 percent last year.

A full list of E9 advancement quotas will soon be available online at www.npc.navy.mil/Boards/ActiveDutyEnlisted/MCPO+Selection+Boards.htm.

STORY IDEAS?

Contact the HNN editor for guidelines and story/photo submission requirements:
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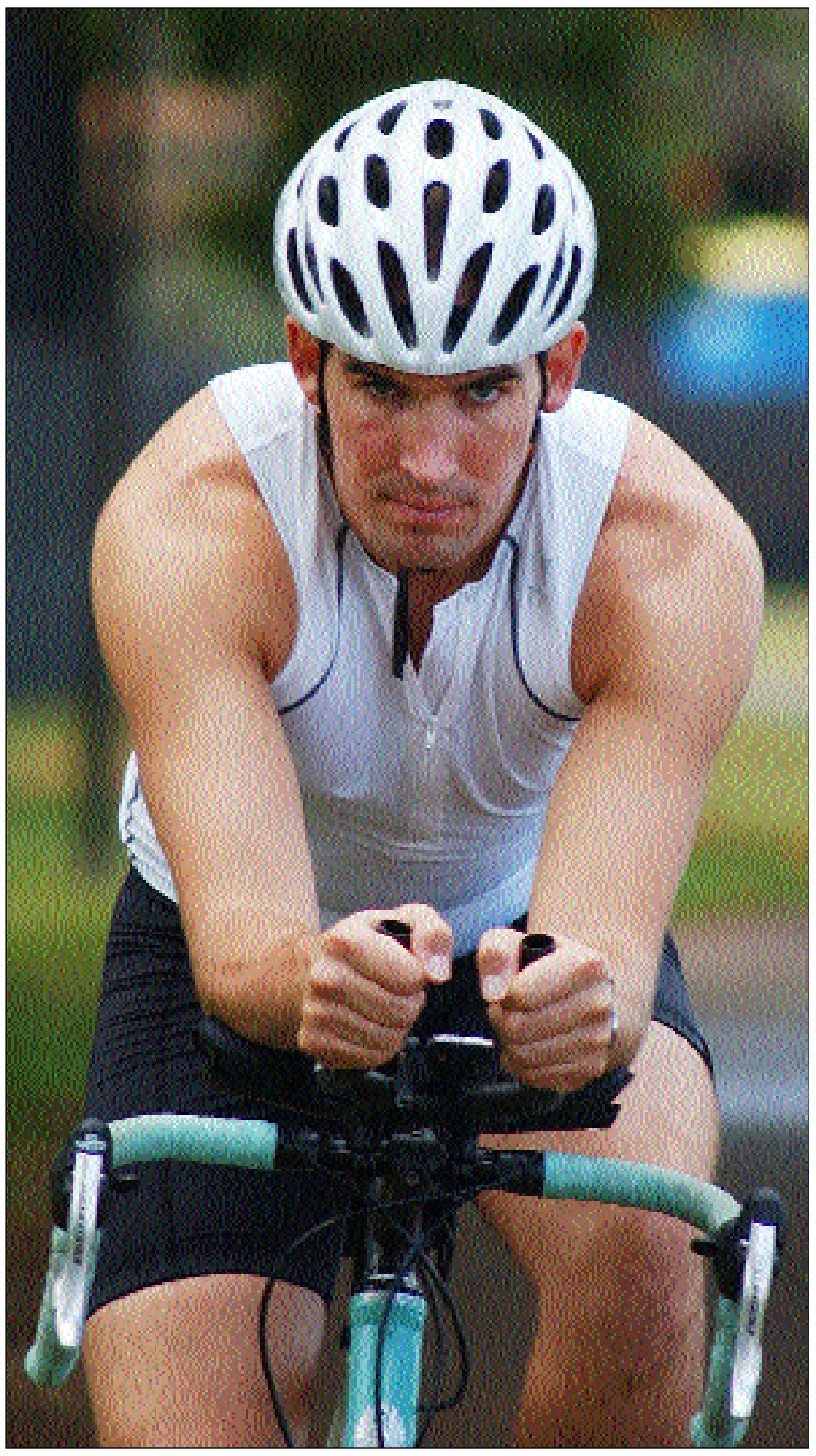
Email: hnn@honoluluadvertiser.com

Remembering crash in Pearl City

U.S. Navy Photo by JO1 Daniel J. Calderón
Cecilia Takaki talks to a Japanese documentary film crew about her husband's experiences on Dec. 7, 1941 during a visit to the site of the former Pan Am Clipper plane landing April 3. Takaki's husband was a civilian worker on the day of the Japanese attack. He saw the plane with a Japanese pilot in it crash not far from the dock area. He told her he saw the pilot commit suicide before he could be captured by U.S. military members.

Hawai'i Navy News Sports

Brandon Kirby pushes out one last lap during his morning swim at Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Scott's Pool.



Brandon Kirby hits the road on his triathlon bike for a quick ride during his lunch break.

Pearl Harbor Sailor prepares for upcoming Honolulu Triathlon

Story and photos by
PH2 (AW) John F. Looney
Staff Writer

Honolulu is hosting the only World Cup triathlon race in the U.S. this year during the Japan Airlines International Triathlon Union (ITU) World Cup April 16.

Approximately 150 elite male and female American and international triathletes will compete in Honolulu for a chance to earn points toward their international ranking. The World Cup is one of 12 events leading up to the 2005 World Championships. The JAL Honolulu Triathlon for age group (amateur) participants will follow Sunday.

One of the triathlon competitors will be Quartermaster 2nd Class Brandon Kirby of Naval Station Pearl Harbor Transient Personnel Unit.

Kirby never envisioned being a triathlon competitor let alone competing for the JAL World Cup Triathlon in Honolulu. He has competed in the Kailua Triathlon and placed ninth in his age group.

Kirby's competitive training began in 2004 for the Honolulu Marathon. After completing the Marathon, he looked for new challenges. Kirby has also completed several biathlons and foot races.

"My life has changed dramatically," Kirby said. "I remember watching the Iron Man competition on television when I was younger, thinking this would be impossible for me to complete. I never thought I could be competitive," said Kirby. "I'm glad I chose a healthy lifestyle. I love it. It helps me to keep my stress level low and have fun."

One of the unique things about triathlons is that all races differ. In each part of the event, speed, strength and endurance play vital roles, but strategy becomes an all-important factor with so many variables in play.

Once the initial gun sounds, the clock continually ticks with no time-outs and no delay. In the 1,500-meter swim, the best swimmers usually take the front quickly, trying to avoid flailing arms and legs.

"I remember my last triathlon. Halfway through the swim, I was kicked in the head and clawed in the feet."

Since the clock never stops, triathletes not only have to be fast swimmers, bikers and runners, but also quick-change artists. From the water, swimmers must quickly transition into bicyclists and complete a 27.9-mile bike ride. Cyclists then dismount their bikes to end the race with a 6.2-mile run.

Kirby trains for events like these by biking from Waikiki to Makapu'u three to four times a week. He also rides on weekends, logging up to 120 miles a week. In addition, he runs more than 25 miles a week and swims up to four miles a week.

Kirby admits that the intense training can take its toll.

"It can be tough at times to stay motivated, but the drive to be better is what gets me up into the ocean every morning," he said. "And once I'm in the water and get that fluid stroke, I know I made the right choice," he added with a chuckle.

His physical fitness awareness began in 2003 when he decided to quite smoking cigarettes and give up drinking alcohol.

"I was always a runner, but in order to reach my goals, I had to start small and then I just got myself to a competitive level," said Kirby. "It improves my self-concept, which in return helps with my job performance and also helps me keep my weight down."

After joining the Navy almost six years ago, becoming a triathlon competitor was not what Kirby aspired to. However, his enthusiasm and pleasure in training has helped take him to the next level.

"I just hope that I can make my family proud and do my best having fun," said Kirby. "I think this is an experience that I will never forget."

For more information on the 2005 JAL Honolulu Triathlon, go to www.honolulutriathlon.com.