



Lessons in life

Sailor learns how to cope with loss of his family. See story on page A-8.



Return to readiness

Sailors get back into fitness with MWR program. See story on page B-2

Hawai'i Navy News Briefs

Sailor dies supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom

The Department of Defense announced April 25 the death of a Sailor who was supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Hospitalman Aaron A. Kent, 28, of Portland, Ore., died April 23 from an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations near Fallujah, Iraq. Kent was assigned to 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (forward), Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Blood pressure screenings Fridays in May

Blood pressure screenings will be held from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. every Friday in May at the following locations:

- May 6 - Fort Shafter PX
- May 13 - Tripler Army Medical Center Dining Facility
- May 20 - Navy Exchange Rotunda
- May 27 - Schofield Barracks Commissary

Japanese naval Training Squadron visiting Hawai'i

The Japanese Training Squadron will be visiting Pearl Harbor from May 3 to May 6. The purpose of their visit is to train their officer candidates (about 180) about their navy as well as other country's navies and cultures.

While visiting Pearl Harbor, they would like to have 10 of their officer candidates be hosted by families in the area. Families are allowed to take more than one candidate.

The pickup for the officer candidates will be in the afternoon of May 4 and be dropped off the following day no later than 11 p.m. All volunteers can submit their names to Lt. Brian Donohue at (808) 473-3330.

Pearl Harbor ships claim sea of green

JO3 Ryan C. McGinley
Staff Writer

Naval Station Pearl Harbor claimed a clean sweep as all 12 of its surface ships and Mobile Diving Salvage Unit One (MDSU-1) received the Force Commander Annual Health Promotion Unit Award (Green "H") from Commander Naval Surface Force Pacific Fleet (COMNAVSURFPAC) for

calendar year 2004.

According to COMNAVSURFPAC instruction, the purpose of the award is to enhance battle readiness by promoting the health, fitness and mental well being of the active duty Sailors of the U.S. Pacific and Atlantic fleets; to encourage participation in health promotion initiatives and to provide formal recognition to units that have excelled in establishing and promoting a command conducive to

health promotion.

"The health of our Sailors is the starting point of overall ship readiness," said Cmdr. Donald Hodge, commanding officer of USS Crommelin (FFG 37). "Unless we are healthy, we are not able to accomplish our mission."

This is the eighth consecutive year that Crommelin has won the award and Hodge said they were honored to be joined by the rest of the Pearl Harbor-based

ships in winning the award.

"It is a testament to how seriously each of our ships takes our commitment to readiness," he said.

According to COMNAVSURFPAC, 50 to 80 percent of all premature deaths and illnesses in the United States are the result of unhealthy lifestyle habits, including poor diet, lack of exercise, tobacco abuse, alcohol use, and unmanaged stress.

Avoidable injuries, espe-

cially to the lower back, and uncontrolled hypertension (high blood pressure) also adversely affect health. Positive changes in lifestyle and behavior can result in better health, enhanced quality of life and improved military readiness.

"Rule number one aboard Chung-Hoon is physical, mental and spiritual health," said Cmdr. Kenneth L.

▼ See AWARD, A-2

SNA hosts force master chief

JOC(SW) Joe Kane
Managing Editor

The Pearl Harbor Surface Navy Association sponsored a lunch at The Banyans on April 20 with guest speaker, Karen O'Connor, the Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Force Master Chief. After a presentation focusing on some of the changes taking place in the Navy, O'Connor answered questions from the crowd of more than 100 officer and enlisted Sailors.

Questions ranged from the future of education and tuition assistance to manning for the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS 1) due to be launched next year.

O'Connor serves as the senior enlisted member of the surface force and provides input on matters affecting our Sailors to Vice Adm. Terrance Etnyre, Commander Naval Surface Force. She is also part of the Chief of Naval Operations and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy's senior enlisted panel, which includes all fleet, force and CNO-directed master chiefs around the world. She is a member of the enlisted board of advisors for Recruit Training Center, Great Lakes, and on the Ombudsman Quality Management Board for the Navy.

In her COMNAVSURFPAC role, she acts as senior enlisted for surface Sailors assigned in Yokosuka and Sasebo, Japan, Hawaii, the Pacific Northwest and San Diego. She is the first female to hold this position and was the first female command master chief of a big deck ship (LHA/LHD or carrier) when she reported to USS Bonhomme Richard in 2001.

▼ See SNA, A-7

O'Connor said big changes can cause anxiety for Sailors of today's Navy and, therefore, it's important that everyone understand how change will affect them.

"As tasked by our Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Vern Clark, we have, and will continue, to challenge the assumptions on how we do business in order to improve our processes," O'Connor said. "I had a first class petty officer ask me recently if all of the change in the Navy is good and it struck me that many Sailors may ask the same question. We shouldn't be thinking of change in terms of 'good' or 'bad.' Instead we need to focus on why we are changing."

"When I assumed this role as the senior enlisted of the surface force (particularly in the Pacific Fleet) two years ago, I established communication as my top priority. My trip to Hawai'i is a part of that communications plan and I have been speaking to our Sailors, not just at the Surface Navy Association, but on our ships and commands around the waterfront," O'Connor said.

Topics of discussion quoted from Master Chief O'Connor:

- **On changing the way we man ships:** Over the past two years, the surface force ran experiments on three ship classes - DDG, CG and LHD - in an effort to reduce manning on our ships. By assessing the way we do business, i.e., watch standing, we were able to reduce the number of Sailors onboard. Optimal manning was successful and we are now implementing these changes fleetwide. These changes

Earth Day at The Mall at Pearl Harbor



U.S. Navy photo by JO1 Daniel J. Calderon

Military members, civilians and their families had the chance learn from 16 presenters, such as the Navy Region Hawai'i environmental team, at the Earth Day Celebration held April 23 at The Mall at Pearl Harbor. Presenters informed attendees on how to help preserve and protect the environment. For the full story and more photos, turn to page B-1.



U.S. Navy photo by JO2 Devin Wright

ET3 Brandon Baswell of FACS FAC Pearl Harbor picks up trash after emptying a wheelbarrow April 22 on Ford Island. Servicemembers from FACS FAC volunteered to clean up the island for Earth Day.

FACS FAC holds Earth Day cleanup on Ford Island

JO2 Devin Wright
Staff Writer

Fleet Area Control Surveillance Facility (FACS FAC) held a cleanup project on Ford Island on April 22 in celebration of Earth Day.

More than 20 volunteers from FACS FAC participated in the annual project to help clean up areas around the island.

"I think sometimes we all take it for granted that we're in paradise and sometimes paradise gets dirty," said Senior Chief Operations Specialist (SW) Jimmy Fallon, assigned to FACS FAC. "So we come out here once a year to clean up for our shipmates, the Navy and Hawai'i. When we do a community project like this, you can tell that everyone really gets into it and feels good about helping the environment," he added.

Due to Ford Island's history, visitors and tourists from all over the world come to see Battleship Missouri, Utah Memorial and other historical sights. Many of the volunteers said they feel it is important to continue the preservation of the island.

"Pearl Harbor and Ford Island in particular is a place people come to see the past and the present," said Air Traffic Controller 1st Class Milford Whitson. "We want to make sure that they leave here with a good impression of this historic island as well as help keep mother earth clean, one piece of trash at a time. Every little bit helps," he added.

Milford said his appreciation for nature stems from his upbringing, something he has brought with him to the Navy.

"I grew up in the South, so I was always an outdoor type of person," Milford said. "It was instilled in me a long time ago to keep our planet clean. So it makes me feel good to help clean up a place with so much history with my shipmates."

Earth Day was established March 21, 1970.

According to the Earth Day Network, Earth Day is to remind each person of their right to the use of this global home and, at the same time, the equal responsibility of each person to preserve and improve the earth and the quality of life for everyone living here.

Battleship Missouri hosts HMAM kickoff

JO1 Daniel J. Calderón
Editor

On April 21, the Honolulu Advertiser, Bank of Hawai'i, Iroquois Point Island Club, Hawai'i Pacific University and the Hawai'i Chamber of Commerce Foundation presented the 20th anniversary Hawai'i Military Appreciation Month (HMAM) opening ceremony at the Battleship Missouri Memorial.

"I wanted to be here to make sure you know how much I appreciate you," said Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann after being introduced to the assembled crowd of several hundred military members and their families by Danny Kaleikini, Hawai'i's "ambassador of aloha."

Speakers from each organization that presented the event took the stage and expressed their appreciation for the efforts military members made across the world every day.

"My associates and I want to express our unending gratitude to those who served in the past and to those who continue to serve today," said Michael J. Fisch, president and publisher of the Honolulu Advertiser. "I know how much you give and we all offer our unending mahalo."

Hawai'i Governor Linda Lingle echoed the sentiments of speakers before her as she spoke to the audience.

"It's a great honor to stand before so many members of the military and tell them how the lieutenant governor [Duke Aiona] and I are proud of them," Lingle said. "What you do and how much you sacrifice every day is noted and it is appreciated by everyone in this state."

Lingle cited examples of how the military acted as first responders in a crisis that stunned the rest of the world.

"When the tsunami hit," she began, "and the greatest powers in the world just sat back and wondered what to do, Pacific Command was already in action and 15,000 men and women went in with only one question: 'How can we help you?'"

Adm. William J. Fallon, commander



U.S. Navy photo by JO1 Daniel J. Calderón

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann welcomes members of the military and their families to the Battleship Missouri at the opening ceremony for Hawai'i Military Appreciation Month. Throughout May, businesses across Hawai'i will be honoring military members.

U.S. Pacific Command, was on hand to thank everyone who participated in organizing the celebration.

"On behalf of the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen here and around the world, I want to thank you all very much for your continuing dedication to looking out for every man and woman in uniform," he said.

After the speakers had their turn at the podium, the assembled servicemen and women and their families were able to enjoy a buffet from an assortment of local restaurants.

"This is absolutely wonderful," said Yeoman 1st Class (SW) Kevin Valdez from USS Crommelin (FFG 37). "It makes me really feel wanted by the community here."

The 10-year Navy veteran said he's been assigned here for 18 months, but has spent one-third of that deployed so being able to enjoy the opening ceremony was a treat.

HMAM officially begins Sunday and will run throughout the month. Businesses across Hawai'i will have special offers for members of the military services.



U.S. Navy photo by JO1 Daniel J. Calderón

Lt. Gov. Duke Aiona talks with Adm. William J. Fallon, commander U.S. Pacific Command, at the opening ceremony for Hawai'i Military Appreciation Month.

Award: Health equals quality work

Continued from A-1

Williams Jr., commanding officer of USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93). "I feel these things are essential to good quality of life and work. If we are not focused on these things, like we are with maintenance, safety and training, we are doing a disservice to our shipmates."

Chung-Hoon was commissioned into the fleet in September 2004 and this is their first Green "H" award.

"This award is an affirmation that we are taking care of our shipmates," said Williams.

Units receiving the Force Commander Annual Health Promotion Unit Award are authorized, upon receipt of the award in March, to paint a green "H" on their bridge wing. Green hash marks below the "H" indicate additional awards received.

Hodge said although they

won the award for the eighth time, there is still room for improvement and growth.

"The toughest issue we have dealt with is physical readiness," said Hodge. "With the new instruction about to be implemented, all of us have to renew our dedication to working out and staying fit. Though we have always dedicated some time each week to physical training, we need to be more focused in that area."

Ships and commands winning the award from Pearl Harbor include USS Chafee (DDG 90), USS Chosin (CG 65), USS Chung-Hoon, USS Crommelin, USS Hopper (DDG 70), USS Lake Erie (CG 70), USS O'Kane (DDG 77), USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60), USS Port Royal (CG 73), USS Reuben James (FFG 57), USS Russell (DDG 59), USS Salvor (ARS 52) and MDSU-1.

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Hawai'i Navy News

Hawaii Navy News Editorial

Opportunities abound across Pacific

Commentary
FLTCM(SW/SS) Rick D. West

U.S. Pacific Fleet

Command Master Chief



Shipmates, I can't tell you how exciting it is for me to be serving as the Pacific Fleet Master Chief. It is a dream job for me where I get to do what every chief lives for – taking care of deck plate Sailors. No other job provides me the opportunity to reach so many Sailors at once.

That said, I'd like to discuss an issue that not only affects the readiness of our Navy, but also provides some very interesting opportunities for you all.

One of my big concerns is that some of our forward-deployed Pacific Fleet billets are getting a bad rep, mostly because of a lack of good information. And because we are having a hard time filling those billets there, the mission and readiness could eventually start to suffer.

First let's talk about what's close to everyone's heart – money.

As some of you may not be aware, our Navy has started a cash-incentive program called assignment incentive pay (AIP) to help fill critical overseas billets that traditionally have been hard to fill. For some ratings, that can amount to almost \$1,500 a month extra.

Through the AIP program and

the detailers, Sailors bid on a job, keeping the max in mind, and the most qualified Sailor with the lowest bid gets the nod.

But as we all know, there's no free lunch. AIP is scaled to meet rating and location requirements. Critical-skill ratings get more than others and some locations that are harder to fill than others will have higher AIP ceilings.

And let's also not forget about other financial incentives to forward-deployed duty like overseas COLA, housing allowances, sea pay for sea commands, and for those looking to extend there, overseas tour extension incentive pay.

So the Navy understands your financial concerns when it comes to this kind of duty and is ready to pay for the right people to do these tougher jobs.

Now let's talk Japan for a minute.

Professionally, Sailors in Japan are finding themselves in a fast-paced, high op-tempo environment that constantly offers them a fresh supply of challenges and opportunities. Some of the challenges in Japan include:

- 17 ships
- 43 shore facilities forward-deployed in Japan
- Three fleet activities at Yokosuka, Okinawa and Sasebo
- Two naval air facilities at Atsugi and Misawa.
- Approximately 19,829 active

duty Sailors and 18,842 family members.

That's a lot of jobs to fill.

Speaking as someone who has sat many a selection board, I can tell you flat out that Sailors who seek out the hard jobs, the jobs no one else will take, they get noticed and have an advancement advantage over others.

Whether at sea or on shore, surface, air or submarine, working with the Japanese Self Defense Forces or serving the Seventh Fleet, Sailors forward-deployed to Japan have an extra advantage to develop professionally.

Now let's take a look at Guam.

Our Navy and Marine Corps forces in the Marinas are a highly critical and significant presence. The islands serve as a springboard for forward-deployed forces and provide some of the best operational support and training environments in the Western Pacific. Guam's opportunities and challenges include:

- Duty in one of more than 40 different commands including, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Marinas, Submarine Squadron 15; U.S. Naval Hospital Guam; Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station Guam; Space and Naval Warfare Systems, just to name a few.
- Duty at a strategic support hub, providing the "beans, bullets, and black oil," and the training opportunities, that place transiting units where

they need to be and ready for action.

- Navy presence on Guam - 3,903
- Forward deployed ships in Guam include the USS Frank Cable (one of two submarine tenders in the Navy), USS San Francisco, and USS City of Corpus Christi.

The word is also slowly spreading that Guam is a great home and a great liberty port for our Sailors. Guam is one of the few military overseas bases where service members can find all the amenities of home for singles and families.

Year-round tropical weather, beautiful beaches and world class diving and the latest movies and periodicals are all available in this U.S. territory. Along with space A travel throughout the Pacific Rim as well as DoDEA schools that provide a top-notch education, Guam offers just about everything to ensure an enjoyable and rewarding overseas family tour.

And then there is Korea. Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea presents a challenging tour providing leadership and expertise in naval matters to area military commanders, and functions as a liaison to the Republic of Korea navy, U.S. Combined Forces Command and Commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet.

While there are no ships home ported in Korea, there are still approximately 300 Navy billets. Sailors serving here find spacious housing and great MWR services and support.

Finally there is Singapore. While there is not even a Navy base in Singapore, there is still a Navy presence. There are approximately 60 Sailors, alongside 50 personnel from the other services, who serve here.

Singapore is one of the world's safest and cleanest countries, and Sailors stationed here have phenomenal quality of life with spacious homes for families and Navy-funded private education for their children. Single Sailors live in spacious apartments and have all the support of traditional MWR services.

Being stationed in any of these exciting billets will also give you the opportunity to travel to parts of Asia not seen by most Sailors on port visits. You can take a trip to the ancient Cambodian temples of Angkor, the Great Wall of China or the architectural accomplishment of India's Taj Mahal. While the old axiom, "Join the Navy, see the world!" may be a bit cliché, travel is one of the main reasons people joined, and continue to join, the Navy and there is no better way to explore the nuances of Asia than by being stationed there.

Taking on one of these challenging and rewarding billets may offer you and your family some extra money and a foot up in the advancement process, but you'll also be rewarded with one of the most satisfying experiences of your life – experiencing a new culture.

Make the most of mid-term counseling

Commentary
FLTCM(AW/SW) Jon Thompson

U.S. Fleet Forces

Command Command Master Chief



Think back to your last mid-term counseling. Do you remember your last mid-term counseling? How much time did your supervisor take with you to help identify exactly where you are in your career and what you still need to accomplish before you can advance to the next pay grade? A couple hours? An hour? A half hour?

Did you walk away from the counseling knowing for sure your boss and chain of command cared about you and your career?

Mid-term counseling is a manda-

tory part of our performance appraisal system, but I often wonder if it's being done effectively across the fleet. Mid-term counseling can only help you if both you and your counselor put some time and effort into making sure the counseling is meaningful, factual and accurate.

Considering you work for the Navy 365 days of the year, I don't think it's too much to ask that you and your supervisor put forth some sincere effort to ensuring your personal growth and performance are discussed in a manner that yields progress.

Mid-term counseling objectives are clear. There are only five objectives, but achieving them isn't as easy as you may think. The five objectives are:

- Identify your important

strengths and shortcomings. A fair, accurate and realistic assessment of your performance is crucial to the counseling process.

- Address specific performance problems, concentrating on ways to develop growth in these areas. Also address your strengths and encourage your future development. Point out ways to improve, but don't dwell on unimportant faults in the belief that criticism is essential to counseling.
- Present a performance growth plan, if appropriate. Be sure that goals are challenging, but realistic and attainable for the Sailor.
- Ensure the Sailor has a clear understanding and acknowledges her/his performance during the review period.
- Review what is expected of the

Sailor before the next counseling session or evaluation report. Ensure the Sailor understands the supervisor's expectations.

Shipmates, the counseling objectives are clear, but somewhat difficult to perform effectively. Each of the objectives calls for you to communicate in an open and meaningful manner.

Mid-term counseling is not a paperwork drill. It's not a time to tell your better Sailors, "You're doing everything right...just don't change a thing and your eval will be fine." Every one of our Sailors, in every pay grade, is entitled to constructive feedback on a semi-annual basis.

For counseling to be truly productive, there are things that must be done by the counselor and the counselee.

Counselors should make time in

their schedule so they are not rushed or interrupted. Additionally, they should gather as much information on the Sailor as possible so they have what he or she needs to highlight both strong points and weaknesses.

It's probably also a good idea to think about what you plan to say at the opening of the counseling session and how you plan to close it.

Each Sailor is different. Each Sailor responds to counseling a little different. If you truly know your people, you'll know how to alter your approach to ensure they feel comfortable talking to you.

The counselee should complete a personal self-appraisal (available from your counselor or in the evaluation instruction). The counselee should also do his or her best to write down what they have done since the last evaluation. The more specific, the better the feedback.

Letter to the Editor

Responsibility not limited to men

PH3 Victoria Tullock

I agree 100 percent with the article (*in the April 22 issue of Hawai'i Navy News*) about fathers of a child needing to step up.

On the flipside, however, I think women are getting off way too easy. There are a number of women out there who do not display good judgment or character, when it comes to having and taking care of children.

Ladies, if you think that by having a child you will keep your boyfriend or husband, you are wrong. The

decision in having a child should be mutual, not used in efforts to keep a relationship from ending.

I am also disgusted by women who every payday go on shopping sprees for the newest outfit, shoes, etc. and not put their child first. This act is very disturbing when I see a child who is always running around in a diaper with a one piece body suit and no socks or shoes, but the mother is dressed out in the newest fashions; it makes me sick to see.

Your child should always come before yourself, always!

Men, please be careful when deciding to bring a woman home with you. You never know what is on someone else's agenda.

Believe it or not, I have known and actually overheard other women who have talked about deceiving men [in order] to get pregnant by doing horrible things, such as poking a hole in a condom, lying about taking birth control and even getting a guy so drunk he didn't know whether or not he used a condom.

And let's not forget girls who are already pregnant when you meet them and try

forcing an unknowing guy into marriage, using guilt and the "what kind of man are you" phrase.

Remember - it goes both ways. Children are not pawns to get what you want. They are actual living, breathing human beings, a gift from God, that shouldn't be taken advantage of.

If you couldn't see yourself changing your whole lifestyle around for your child, such as giving up the club every weekend, dressing and feeding your child before yourself, then maybe you should think twice before having one!

Commentary

Chapel Pennant

Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel invites kids to enjoy Serengeti Trek

Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel

"This year our chapel is crawling with excitement as we go on a Serengeti Trek," said Sandy Logston, Protestant director of religious education. "Our Serengeti Trek program will provide fun, memorable Bible-learning activities for kids of all ages."

"Each day kids will sing catchy songs, play team-work-building games, nibble watering hole snacks, take on a daily challenge to let God's love grow into their homes, experience electrifying Bible adventures, collect Bible memory buddies to remind them of God's word, and create Bible point crafts they'll take home and play with all summer long," she said.

"Serengeti Trek is an exciting way for kids to learn more about God's love," said Logston. "We'll be studying stories about

Bible characters who were wild about God. Plus, kids will join nearly a million children in North America and take part in a hands-on mission project that will reach needy children here in Hawai'i and also in Africa.

"Each day concludes at the main event - a celebration that gets everyone involved in living what they've learned. Family members and friends are encouraged to join us daily for this special time at 11:55 a.m. We hope Serengeti Trek will leave a little bit of God's love in our community." Logston continued.

Serengeti Trek begins June 13 and continues through June 17. Participants will meet at Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel each day from 9 a.m. until 12:15 p.m. Registration begins May 1 and ends May 29. For more information, call the chapel at 473-3971.

Hawaii Navy News

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U.S. Navy photo by JO3 Ryan C. McGinley

MA1(SW) Ritchetta Sanders talks with Sailors at the First Class Petty Officer Association's first junior enlisted seminar.

FCPOA holds first junior enlisted seminar

JO3 Ryan C. McGinley

Staff Writer

The Navy Region Hawai'i First Class Petty Officer Association sponsored the first junior enlisted seminar for E-4s and below April 21 at The Banyans, with the goal of enhancing career and personal growth.

More than 30 junior Sailors from the Region attended the seminar, which included discussions on a variety of topics such as drinking and driving, security issues, uniform regulations, sexual abuse, advancement and mentorship.

"We are the leaders who set an example," said Cryptologic Technician-Administration 1st Class (SW) Wilmarie Alomar, a member of the FCPOA who helped coordinate the event. "And what better way than a seminar to show young Sailors that we care and we really want to help them and inform them and make them aware."

The day-long event featured discussions from first class petty officers and

members of the community, including a Honolulu Police Department officer, a Naval Criminal Investigative Services agent and a Mothers Against Drunk Driving representative.

Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Terry Moller talked to the junior Sailors about the importance of mentorship in the Navy and in life.

"A mentor is someone you look up to," he said. "It can be anyone in this room, whether they are looking up to you or you are going to be looking up to them," Moller continued.

"So you have to look at yourself and say, 'Where am I going to go, who am I going to guide?' Someone is always going to look up to you and you are always going to have people you look up to," he said.

Moller said it was important that first class petty officers take initiative in being mentors so that junior Sailors can succeed in the Navy.

"Life didn't come with instructions," he continued. "So a lot of people who come into the Navy don't realize how to succeed. But if we guide them and give them a sense of direction, they will be

able to prosper."

Junior Sailors who attended the event said it's important that first class petty officers train junior enlisted personnel because they can relate to them.

"It's important first class petty officers talk to junior Sailors because they're higher than us and we look up to them," said Aerographer's Mate Airman Robert Moore, assigned to Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. "First class petty officers are more on our level so there's a better chance for us to learn from them, and they have been in the Navy a lot longer than we have so we can learn a lot from them."

Alomar said she hopes junior Sailors take the information they learned at the seminar and apply it to the real world and their jobs.

"Anything the Sailors get, any kind of information they retain, anything that they didn't know before they walked in here and know after they leave, is our goal," she said. "If you're out at your command or out in town and anything happens and you think about something you learned here today, then we have accomplished our goal."

Frank Cable hosts aloha reception during port visit

JO1 Johnie Hickmon

USS Frank Cable Public Affairs

More than 150 luminaries gathered aboard USS Frank Cable (AS 40) April 18 to attend an "icebreaker" reception. The reception was held for the guests, their spouses and friends to become acquainted with each other before attending the Commander, Submarine Pacific Fleet Major Commander's Conference.

Special guests included master chiefs, commanders, captains, admirals and retirees from throughout the U.S. Navy fleet. Other invited guests included officers from the Republic of Korea, the Royal Australian Navy and the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force.

Although the party started in the wardroom, guests trickled outside to the ship's "front porch" to enjoy each other's company and watch the Hawaiian sun set over the ship's bow.

During his opening remarks, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Rear Admiral Paul F. Sullivan took time to thank Frank Cable's commanding officer, Capt. P. J. Bushong, for hosting the reception before delivering a few good-natured roasts to each of the guests.

"I want to thank (Capt.) Bushong and his crew on the wonderful job they've done

preparing for this event," he said. "I want everyone to enjoy yourselves tonight. We're glad you're here."

Bushong followed up by thanking Sullivan for the opportunity for the ship to come to Hawai'i and thanking the ship's Sailors for the preparation and care they took in setting up the event, while alluding to future trips to Hawai'i for the ship.

"The crew is thrilled to be here in Pearl Harbor for the first time," he said. "The ship is looking forward to coming here once a year," he added, slyly looking away from Sullivan, which brought out a round of laughs and applause.

"It's not the executive officer or commanding officer kicking them (the crew) to get the ship together. It's the crew doing this outstanding work," said Bushong. "Make yourselves at home and enjoy yourselves."

Afterward, Frank Cable Command Master Chief (SW) Charles Kramer presented Sullivan with a framed photo of the ship pulling into the harbor, courtesy of the chief's mess.

Frank Cable is the Pacific Fleet's only submarine tender and deploys throughout the Western Pacific to such ports as Australia, South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan to provide services to both submarines and surface ships in the Seventh Fleet area of responsibility.

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Pacific Fleet announces top Sailors

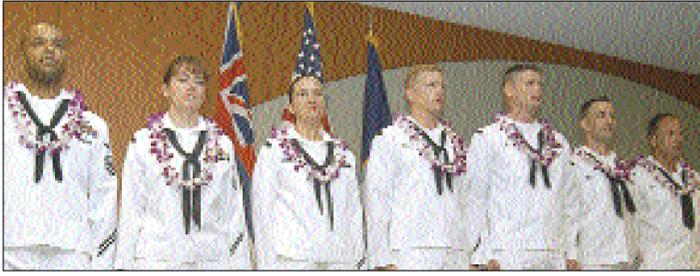
U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Adm. Walter F. Doran announced the Pacific Fleet Sailors of the Year at a recognition luncheon in the Radisson Prince Kuhio Ballroom April 22.

Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class(AW/SS/NAC) Matthew James Waxenfelter of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Four was selected as the Pacific Fleet Sea Sailor of the Year and Hospital Corpsmen 1st Class (FMF) Shannon R. Dittlinger of Naval Hospital Okinawa was selected as the Pacific Fleet Shore Sailor of the Year.

Waxenfelter was born in Ojai, Calif. and raised in Russellville, Ark. He enlisted in the Navy on June 8, 1992 and during recruit training, was selected by his peers as Company 127 honor recruit.

His commands include: Naval Submarine School, New London, Conn.; USS Houston (SSN 713); NAVCOMTELSTRATCOMMU (NCTSCU) Detachment Patuxent River, Md.; NCTSCU, Naval



U.S. Navy photo by PH2 Justin Nesbitt

The nominees for Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year stand at attention. AT1(AW/SS/NAC) Matthew J. Waxenfelter was named Pacific Fleet Sea Sailor of the Year and HM1(FMF) Shannon R. Dittlinger was named Pacific Fleet Shore Sailor of the Year. (From left: AT1(AW) Kevin G. Duncan, Dittlinger, YN1(SW) Jessica R. Christiansen, MM1(SW/DV) James E. Boswell, Waxenfelter, GSM1(SW) Robert S. Whynot and QM1(SEAL) Andy W. Rieckhoff)

Aircrewman Candidate School; and Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 7.

Aboard Houston, he demonstrated his leadership skills as assistant section leader for his duty section and leading petty officer for communications division. While attached to NCTSCU Detachment Patuxent River, he was selected as Sailor of the Quarter and as NCTSCU

Detachment 1999 Senior Sailor of the Year. He has also been selected as NCTSCU Oklahoma City and NCTS San Diego Sailor of the Year and Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 7 Sea Sailor of the Quarter, Aircrewman of the Quarter and COMSTRSTCOMMWING One Sailor of the Quarter.

Dittlinger currently serves as command career counselor and the

leading petty officer of the command color guard for Naval Hospital Okinawa.

Dittlinger joined the Navy in October 1993 and has had tours at Naval Hospital Orlando, Fla., Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune and Field Medical Service School Camp, Geiger, N.C.

Dittlinger has also served with 2nd Force Service Support Group, Medical Battalion, Bravo Company, where she served as squad leader. She has also held the position of leading chief petty officer for the manpower and administrative support department where she filled in as department head on several prolonged occasions.

Other Sailors nominated were: Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class(AW/SW) Kevin G. Duncan of Commander, Fleet Air Western Pacific Detachment Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD), Misawa, Japan; Machinist Mate 1st Class(SS/DV) James E. Boswell of USS Bremerton (SSN 698); Gas Turbine System Technician (Mechanical) 1st Class (SW) Robert S. Whynot of USS Benfold (DDG

65); Quarter Master 1st Class (SEAL) Andy Rieckhoff of Seal Team One; and Yeoman 1st Class (SW) Jessica R. Christiansen of Commander, Naval Surface Force U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Gov. Linda Lingle attended the luncheon as an honored guest along with senior enlisted and commissioned Navy representatives.

Sailor of the Year is a competition that began in 1972 to seek out the Navy's best and brightest.

Sailors compete with hundreds of their peers, beginning at their command and working up through higher-echelon commands until culminating in one of four Sailor of the Year boards: Naval Reserve Force SOY, Chief of Naval Operations Shore SOY, Fleet Forces Command Sea SOY and Pacific Fleet SOY.

The Chief of Naval Operations will meritoriously promote Waxenfelter to chief petty officer, while Dittlinger will continue to the Chief of Naval Operations Shore SOY competition. If she is selected as the Chief of Naval Operations Shore SOY, she will also be meritoriously promoted by the Chief of Naval Operations.

Local chief lauded for volunteering

JO1 Daniel J. Calderón

Editor

Chief Electrician's Mate (SW/AW) Noriel Tapay, of Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific (ATG MIDPAC), received the 2005 Hawai'i military recognition award for his volunteer efforts in the Oahu community.

"I started doing volunteer work [while stationed] in San Diego, but not as much as I do here," Tapay said.

Tapay arrived on Oahu in 2002. Outside his work as Maintenance and Material Management (3M) instructor and assessor for ATG MIDPAC, Tapay volunteers for an array of additional activities.

Among his extracurricular activities, Tapay has volunteered since 2002 with the Hawai'i Special Olympics. He has provided security at the airport for child and adult athletes participating in annual summer and winter games.

Tapay has also volunteered with Hawai'i Meals on Wheels program. He helped set up a staging area for emergency food boxes. Additionally, he delivered boxes of food to homebound individuals across the island to ensure they had food on hand in case there was an emergency that would have otherwise disrupted their ability to acquire food for themselves.

"That's just an amazing experience," Tapay recalled. "When I volunteer for Meals on Wheels and I deliver meals to the elderly, sometimes I take all day with just a few deliveries. Sometimes the people just want someone to talk to and I enjoy sitting with them."

Tapay has been involved with an assortment of partnership in education programs with local schools. At the Navy



U.S. Navy photo by JO1 Daniel J. Calderón

CS3(SW) LaToya Chisolm, of R-division ERO9 department aboard USS Hopper (DDG 70), explains her procedures during a spot check for baseline 3M assessment conducted by EMC(SW/AW) Noriel Tapay of Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific.

Hale Keiki school, he helped trim trees and helped students pick books for their wish list before the school's book fair. At Iroquois Point Elementary School, Tapay helped paint the school's "Yellow Brick Road" and provided after school tutoring to students.

Tapay also participates with events within his own command. He has volunteered with the chief petty officer association's car wash fundraisers, family nights and other ATG MIDPAC events. The 16-year Navy veteran said he would not be able to accomplish everything without a lot of help at home.

"My wife, Noime, is very supportive," he said. "We have two kids at home and

she still takes time to get my clothes ready for me when I'm going out for my volunteer work."

Tapay said he finds the volunteer opportunities in the newspaper and encourages Sailors to follow suit.

"I tell the guys at my command to get out and get involved," he said. "While they're on shore duty, they need to go out and do something, whether it is school or volunteer."

Tapay said the award was not a factor in his volunteer effort.

"For me, it's about the personal satisfaction of taking the time to give to the community," he said. "This award is a great honor for me."

Lake Erie earns award for top ship's store

PH2 (AW) John F.

Looney

Staff Writer

The USS Lake Erie (CG 70) Retail and Services Division earned the Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMNAVSURFPAC) Ship's Store Retail and Service Excellence Award for 2004 and received the 2005 Capt. Edward F. Ney award for Food Service Excellence in the medium afloat category Navy-wide.

The ship's store and excellence award is given to ships that have a proven track record of sustained superior performance in professionalism and commitment to crew service. The Lake Erie supply department was recognized, after scoring 97.8 percent in the retail operation area of their supply management assessment (SMA).

"The award is a tribute to the hard work and dedication from the ship's servicemen (SH) on board as well as the Sailors from engineering department who maintain our equipment," said Lt. Cmdr. Ivan Stamegna, Lake Erie supply officer. "We continuously operated our retail and services division at a high standard throughout the year to maintain customer satisfaction."

To maintain their high standard of customer satisfaction, the SHs wash and press dozens of uniforms a day and process up to 1,000 pounds of clothes weekly in the ship's laundry. They generate nearly \$7,000 a month in sales from the ship's store, in addition to performing countless haircuts in the ship's barber shops.

"We put 100 percent into customer service," said Ship's Serviceman 3rd Class Chad Peterson, a ship's store operator. "We're more than willing to serve our customers on our off time, as well as our on time. There are times where I'll sacrifice sleep so a fellow Sailor can have a treat from the ship's store."

During the three-day SMA, staff members from Afloat Training Group (ATG) Pacific evaluated the supply department's ship's store, barbershop and laundry facility spaces on security and sanitation, as well as the accuracy of their accountability logs. Additionally, ATG administered a questionnaire to the ship's crew on availability of items in the ship's store and overall customer service.

"Every time I visit the ship's store to buy something, the clerks are always friendly," said Personnelman 3rd Class

Stephen Jackson of Lake Erie's admin department. "They do a fantastic job with stocking quality snacks that everyone enjoys."

The Lake Erie Supply Department also won the annual "best of class" award among all cruisers that qualify within the Pacific Fleet. Rear Adm. (sel) Mark Heinrich (COMNAVSURFPAC supply officer) promptly sent his "bravo zulu" to the captain and crew of the Lake Erie.

"Congratulations for winning the 2005 Capt. Edward F. Ney Award," Heinrich said. "Morale is not about liberty; it's about being well-trained, clearly all of you are well-trained. This is why the USS Lake Erie earned this award."

International Food Service Association (IFSEA) and Naval Supply Systems Command inspectors determined which command had the best food preparation and service, as well as cleanliness. IFSEA visited Lake Erie to judge how the ship ran its culinary services.

"My Sailors always remained focused on sight of the ultimate goal and tried their best and really wanted to win this award," said Senior Chief Culinary Specialist Able Dizon, supply leading chief. "It means a lot to them and says a lot for the work they do, but the award was not just for them, it was for the whole ship."

From the electricians and engineers who help to maintain all the equipment in the galleys and mess decks to the culinary specialists, many people were involved in bringing this award to Lake Erie.

"It shows how a team effort and hard work will eventually pay off," commented Ships Serviceman 1st Class Eric McReynolds, ship's store supervisor. "We as supervisors could never accomplish this goal without the commitment of our dedicated young Sailors. They put the rubber to the mat, gettin' it done!"

The Secretary of the Navy and the International Food Service Executives Association established the Capt. Edward F. Ney Memorial Awards Program in 1958. The award is designed to improve food service operations and recognize the best general messes in the Navy. Ney served as head of the subsistence division of the bureau of supplies and accounts between 1940 and 1945.

For more information on the USS Lake Erie (CG 70), visit www.lake-erie.navy.mil. For more news from around the fleet, visit www.navy.mil.

Navy looking for future RDCs

JOC Bruce Moody

Naval Service Training

Command Public Affairs

The Navy's only boot camp is looking for motivated, career-minded Sailors to shape the future of the fleet by serving as recruit division commanders, or RDCs.

RDCs are also known around the fleet as "red ropes" and are entrusted with the job of encouraging, training, molding and teaching civilian men and women – and, most importantly, transforming them into Sailors.

"We prepare Sailors for service in the fleet," said RDC Cryptologic Technician (Technical) 1st Class (SW/AW) Thomas Dahlinghaus. "The job gives us the rare opportunity to have responsibility for and authority over 88 Sailors. We manage their training, their lives. By the time we go back to the fleet, we're ready for anything. It's a broadening experience, a time of real personal growth for RDCs."

To be an RDC, a Sailor must be a warfare-qualified E-5 or above (E-5s must meet time-in-rate requirements) and be interviewed by a panel of one command master chief and two senior enlisted personnel.

The training of RDCs is extensive. RDCs in training take a second trip through boot camp during a demanding 13-week training program that includes indoctrination, drilling, administration, physical training and leadership training. During this time, prospective RDCs wear "blue ropes" which they will later exchange for the more familiar red aiguillette of a fully-trained RDC.

"For the blue ropes, the training is critical," said RDC Chief Hospital Corpsman Marsha Burmeister. "Those 13 weeks are giving them the tools they'll need on that first push."

Before donning the red rope, there is an important period when a blue rope shadows a red rope, watching what they do and gradually increasing their interaction with recruits. A red rope is always with a blue rope during this phase and there is a weekly performance and progress review.

Even after RDCs earn their red rope and the recruit division commander badge, the training is not done. New RDCs are paired up with veteran RDCs, allowing time to fully learn what is expected before taking control of their first recruit division.

It's a job that comes with

high standards and high rewards. One of the best rewards is the increased promotion opportunity. Last year, the Navy-wide average for eligible candidates being selected for chief was 20.4 percent. The average for eligible candidates serving as RDCs was 32.8 percent.

"These individuals are shaping our future force and their demanding jobs are recognized by selection boards as developing senior enlisted leaders [who] can serve in the most challenging jobs in the fleet," said CNO-directed Command Master Chief (SW/AW) Tony Driver, command master chief for Naval Service Training Command.

Storekeeper 1st Class (AW) Jose Rodriguez said the job is extremely rewarding because RDCs get to see the result of their efforts.

"[Recruits] see the self respect they have gained," Rodriguez said. "When they finish battle stations, they're considered one of us. You see the tears and you know how much it means to them. After all the hours that you put in, it all comes together."

Because "Sailorization" is a critical task and one that requires extensive preparation, RDCs can earn the master training specialist (MTS) designator. This Naval Education Training Center-

USS Chafee hosts Make-A-Wish tour

Ensign Sonia Honda
USS Chafee Public Affairs

Adam Christmas and his family visited USS Chafee (DDG 90) as part of a Make-A-Wish tour April 22.

Members of the Chafee crew who were looking forward to meeting the young man greeted the 14-year old.

"It was an honor for Chafee to host such a wonderful guest," said Lt. Derick Armstrong, Chafee's combat systems officer. "I know that the crew couldn't wait to give him a warm welcome aboard our destroyer."

Christmas' visit started off on the forecandle where he was given an overview of deck evolutions by Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Brenda M. Bryant.

"I am proud to say that Chafee had a positive impact on a wonderful young man," Bryant said. "I am grateful to have this unique experience."

Next, Christmas was given a quick overview of the forward gun mount and the vertical launching system by Fire Controlman 3rd Class Michael J. Abbott before making the trek up to the bridge.

On the bridge, Lt. j.g. Dean Sadek showed him all the tools at the disposal of an officer of the deck before allowing him to sit in the captain's chair and take in the view of the harbor.

Christmas and his family visited the Combat Information Center (CIC) with Operations Specialist 1st Class (SW) Michael R. Munoz as the guide.

Bryant, as Chafee's primary landing signal enlisted (LSE), stepped in again to show off Chafee's helicopter hangars and the flight deck. The last part of the tour consisted of a visit to central control station (CCS), the hub of the engineers aboard Chafee.

Damage Controlman 2nd Class (SW) Michael Evans showed Adam all of the impor-

tant consoles and explained the role of the engineers in helping to run Chafee.

There was a final surprise awaiting Christmas on the mess decks where his sister, Nicole, and he were participants in a surprise pinning ceremony.

They were presented with a variety of gifts and were made honorary enlisted surface warfare specialists (ESWS), which authorized them to wear the ESWS pin as proof of their tour aboard Chafee. This was a special honor due to the fact that the ESWS pin is the pinnacle of enlisted surface warfare qualification and proof of a Sailor's hard work and intricate knowledge of all aspects of the ship.

During his tour, both Christmas and his sister showed they possessed the knowledge and drive needed to take their place among the Sailors and wear their honorary ESWS pins.

At the end of the ceremony, Christmas and his family were asked to speak and share their thoughts about their Chafee experience.

"It was really cool," Christmas said. "Everyone was really nice."

Christmas' mother, Ann, echoed the sentiment and said, "It was just an overwhelming experience...what you've done for him," she said. "It's really unbelievable."

The Chafee crew waved Christmas off that afternoon and said a fond farewell to their new shipmate.

"I think the entire crew was proud to present their ship to the Christmas family," said Master Chief Fire Controlman (SW) Christopher A. Dietrich. "We saw the smiles on their faces and the happiness it brought to them. I was looking in the eyes of the crew involved with this and they were smiling just as brightly and were as proud as anything I've ever seen."



U.S. Navy photo by JO2 Jessica B. Davis

AG2 David Sherratt shows AGAN Gary Gvey and AGAN Daniel Parkerson how to read weather conditions on a satellite map. Sailors at the Joint Typhoon Warning Center and Naval Pacific Oceanography and Meteorology Center monitor typhoons, weather and anti-submarine warfare, and their effects on Department of Defense assets 24 hours a day.

Navy forecasters improve efficiency

JO2 Jessica B. Davis
U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

In one year's time, the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC), and Naval Pacific Meteorology and Oceanography Center (NPMOC) in Hawai'i increased their monitoring area to 110 million square miles and doubled their personnel.

In this age of growing technology, the Navy saved money and manpower by consolidating three Pacific forecast centers into one. The former centers were located in Guam and San Diego.

Sailors at the centers monitor typhoons, weather and anti-submarine warfare, and their effects on Department of Defense assets 24 hours a day.

"It's one-stop shopping for our customers," said Chief Aerographer's Mate Mark Mageary, ship routing officer. "They can go to one place and get all their answers for safety of navigation."

To handle the extra workload, the JTWC/NPMOC also went to 24-hour operations.

"In this transition, all the Sailors and officers at this command rose up to the challenge," said Master Chief Aerographer's Mate (AW) Mark Burton,

NPMOC/JTWC command master chief. "They took on the mission and stepped up to the plate and did everything that was asked of them."

"Our mission before was just the Hawai'i operating area," said Mageary, a Rochester, N.Y., native, who has been at NPMOC for three years. "Now we are responsible to provide an accurate forecast for safety of navigation to Seventh Fleet assets, Third Fleet assets, Military Sealift Command, foreign navies and other DoD assets. Now our focus is the entire Pacific Command theater."

The increase in area of responsibility enabled JWTC/NPMOC to increase

their personnel 50 percent. The center now has about 100 personnel.

"I think the transition has gone pretty well," said Aerographer's Mate 2nd Class Garrett Gusman from San Diego. "At the beginning, it was a challenge with manning, but we did what we had to do."

The commands took over forecasting and typhoon warnings for the eastern Pacific in May 2004, then the western Pacific in November 2004.

"We're still going through this transition; it's not final yet," Mageary said. "The transition is still going on because we're learning every day."

SNA: O'Connor shares thoughts for Sailors

Continued from A-1

serve two purposes: They will reduce manpower costs (our biggest area of expense in the Navy) and these experiments were a bridge for how we will man our new class of ships, the littoral combat ship.

LCS 1 is scheduled to be commissioned in December 2006 and will have a core crew of approximately 46 Sailors. (not a final number/ballpark figure).

Leveraging technology: New systems, better sensors and a different way of conducting maintenance is enabling us to man this ship with a much smaller crew than we have had historically.

We have also had to adapt the way we train those Sailors prior to reporting. The systems the IT2 will run onboard, for example, under our current training system, would require that Sailor to go to NEC producing schools for over two years.

We don't have two years, so instead this hybrid IT2 will be sent to selected portions of schools and report onboard with only the training he/she needs to meet the mission of LCS.

This is part of our revolution in training - changing the way we train to deliver only the training required for where the Sailor is going. Last year we implemented a new way to train our junior engineers. The basic engi-

neering common core (BECC) course replaced the traditional engineering "A" schools in Great Lakes.

This was done after receiving fleet input on what tasks a junior engineer was actually required to do when reporting to their first command and then balanced against operational requirements. Now each rated Sailor receives the level of training they need for the types of watches they will stand when they reach their first ship.

As a secondary benefit to this, we have eliminated undesignated firemen with this change and given every engineer a viable career path from the day they become a Sailor.

Gendets (non-rate billets) have historically had a higher attrition rate than other Sailors and we hope to combat that with this new policy. Of note, we are about to do this with undesignated airmen as well and are exploring options for undesignated seamen.

On education: CNO has established a goal that all chief petty officers will have an associates degree to be eligible for senior chief petty officer by fiscal year 2010. Our shipmates at the Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) are working hard to streamline options for our Sailors to reach this goal.

Many Sailors may not even be aware of how many ACE

(American Council on Education) credits they have just based on their military experience: Some examples: an HMC has 41 recommended credits, an OSC has 37, a BMC has 28 and an SKC has 43 credit hours. If applied to one of the colleges or universities that have agreements with the Navy, these chiefs are well on their way to meeting the 60 required hours for an associates degree.

We must make it our goal to sit every Sailor down at the Navy College office to determine what educational path fits their desires and career goals as soon as possible. The Navy currently has 17 partner colleges in a distance learning program where Sailors can earn their degrees entirely on line. Additionally, NETC is looking at the ability to do college level testing (DANTES/CLEP) on board our ships, as well as considering changes to the tuition assistance program.

I feel that bringing this information to our Sailors is a key responsibility. Being able to discuss this on the deck plates allows me to not only update Sailors, but to address their concerns and answer their questions about topics that not only affect them now, but will affect the way they are trained, professionally educated and detailed in the future.

Speaking at the Surface Navy Association was a great

privilege. I feel a bit dual-hatted in this case, not only as the surface force master chief, but also as a member of National Board of Directors for the Surface Navy Association. I am a strong believer in the value of SNA. As the profile of our fleet changes and our business principles change, I believe it is incumbent on every surface warrior (enlisted and officer) to stay abreast of the vision for our future.

The Surface Navy Association delivers on that concept through guest speakers, networking and educational opportunities. They also are very actively involved in supporting our fleet Sailors, as well as in base and community events. I am particularly proud of the Pearl Harbor SNA Chapter as they have won the Chapter Excellence Award for two years in a row (2003 and 2004).

Also during this week, I had the great opportunity to spend some time with our seven Pacific Fleet Sea and Shore Sailor of the Year finalists. It is incredibly clear to me why we remain the strongest Navy in the world after meeting and speaking to this group of professionals who are the top Sailors in our fleet. Each of the seven served with distinction in their commands and clearly epitomize our core values of "honor, courage and commitment."

This has been an outstand-



U.S. Navy photo by JOC(SW) Joe Kane
U.S. Pacific Fleet Force Master Chief Karen O'Connor speaks to Sailors at The Banyans on April 20. O'Connor discussed a variety of topics such as education and fleet training.

ing visit to Pearl Harbor and I am very proud of the men and women who serve in Hawai'i. The commitment of our Sailors to service with

honor was evident everywhere I went and it is clear to me that the ohana spirit I remember from my five years of duty here continues.

Life after tragedy: One Sailor learns to cope with his children's death

Dan Steber

Naval Safety Center

Damage Controlman 1st Class (SW) Neal Beard and his family strapped into his rented 2003 Mitsubishi Diamante for the drive from Corpus Christi to Houston, Texas. He was excited about a new assignment and was on his way to put a down payment on an apartment. They left Corpus Christi at 9:40 a.m., arrived in Houston around noon, looked at the apartment and made the payment. Before leaving Houston for home, the family stopped for lunch. At around 2 p.m., they headed for home — and tragedy.

This was Neal's first trip to the Houston area. It was Oct. 25, 2003. He had been stationed on USS Blackhawk (MHC-58) and was transferring to Naval Reserve Center, Houston. It was a chance to become a school-trained instructor.

"I always have wanted to teach," Neal said. "I spent most of my career training and teaching aboard various ships and while ashore. I also had worked with and mentored kids in elementary schools since 1997."

Beard had been awarded sole guardianship of his children: 11-year-old son Jesse, nine-year-old daughter Breana and 10-year-old son Brandon. They were the focus of his life, but he was anxious to move on to a new challenge. The orders to Houston would offer him and his family a new adventure. After three ships in four years, he was ready for a change.

As the Beard family headed home from Houston, Neal was driving and Jesse was in the front seat. Breana and Brandon settled comfortably into the rear seats. They all buckled up for the drive back to Corpus Christi. The roads were dry, but clouds occasionally shadowed the road.

"I always had been very emphatic about seatbelt use," Neal said. "I would not move the car unless everyone was buckled up so my children never questioned it. They were taught from birth to buckle up or to use a child-safety seat."



U.S. Navy photo

DC1(SW) Neal Beard recovers in a hospital after the car crash that killed two of his children. He had fallen asleep at the wheel while driving.

Neal had been busy during the previous few months. After completing his third training cycle in three years, the final one as the engineering department LPO, he was ready for shore duty. He had left the ship and was Temporary Additional Duty to MWR while waiting to transfer. Working on the Navy Ball kept him busy during the day and taking care of his kids filled his nights. He didn't get much sleep in the days, weeks and months before the trip to Houston. For him, a "good night's sleep" was five or six hours. Getting ready for the upcoming move, fretting over marital problems, dealing with work-related issues and being the father of three had taxed his body and mind. A hundred thoughts raced through his head as he turned the vehicle south on US-77, a divided road, for the long drive home. He was more tired than he realized.

At 4:20 p.m. on that Saturday afternoon, about 13 miles north of Refugio, Texas (54 miles from Corpus Christi), fatigue finally took control. Neal nodded off. His car left the road, crossed the median, struck a tractor-

trailer rig and rolled over, coming to rest upright in a side ditch.

Pat and Kim Moya of Bay City, Texas, were two of the first people on scene and they were a godsend. Kim was a licensed vocational nurse (LVN). They parked near the wreckage and ran to the site. She had her husband keep Neal's airway open while she gave Brandon CPR, hoping to revive him. They kept Neal alive until paramedics arrived. Their efforts with Brandon were unsuccessful. Breana also was dead. Neal and Jesse survived.

Beard was in a coma. A medical helo took him to Corpus Christi's Spohn Memorial Hospital at 5:20 p.m. Jesse was transported to Citizens Hospital in Victoria, Texas, about 20 minutes earlier. Jesse had one cut to the back of his head that required a single staple. He also had a small cut and a chemical burn on his arm. Neal's injuries were much more severe.

Texas State troopers tried to find information about Jesse and his family, but they were stumped. An emergency contact list, part of a family care plan, had been inside the vehicle, but it was tossed out of the vehicle during the mishap. Jesse mentioned a family member from Oklahoma. With only that information, an officer called the Oklahoma State Police. Trooper Duane Miller got the call and wondered what to do next with such little data. Trooper Nick Green had just left a church event and decided to call the office to see what was happening. He was told about the accident in Texas and a search for the Coast family that lived in Oklahoma. Nick knew an Eddie Coast—he was the father-in-law of Neal Beard's sister. Once notified, Neal's extended family left immediately to get Jesse and to see their son, brother, nephew and cousin.

Beard lay in the hospital with several pelvic fractures, a collapsed lung, pneumonia, severe burns on his upper body and a fractured neck. He had some brain damage - seven contusions and five hemorrhages. His

body was hurting, but he still didn't know about the deaths of his beloved son and daughter. That pain would come later.

Doctors at Spohn Memorial Hospital patched up Neal and sent him to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, where he spent 10 weeks. The doctors kept him in an induced coma to evaluate his condition, operate and let him heal.

"I have no memory of the accident itself," Neal said when asked to recall the moments before the mishap. "In fact, I don't remember much about the two hours before the crash." Doctors didn't think he would be able to walk or talk again.

Neal was kept in a drug-induced coma until Nov. 10 and he didn't find out that his children had died until Nov. 26. At that point, his two brothers-in-law already had buried Breana and Brandon. They took pictures and videos for Neal.

Neal's medical ordeal continued. He had three skin grafts, months of physical and mental therapy, and dental work. He spent another month on convalescent leave and missed a total of 355 workdays. The hospital bills and other costs totaled \$763,600. But the lost time and money paled in comparison to the loss of his children.

Jesse spent just one night in the hospital and recovered quickly, but he occasionally talks about his brother and sister. He was closest to his brother and often tells his dad that Brandon would have liked this toy or that game. He also remembered a small detail about that trip. "Dad, you know it was Breana's turn to sit up front," Jesse said. "But when you were going to pull over and let us switch, I said we could wait because she was asleep so that's why I wasn't in the back."

Neal was cleared of any negligence or wrongdoing; however, he lives with the fact that he was the one responsible for the death of his two children. The physical wounds have healed, except for a nagging problem with his elbow and a few other issues. "I

improve a little every day," Neal said. "However, I can't write very well because it's painful. I also can't run because of dexterity and heart-rate problems and have a slight loss of hand-eye coordination."

The emotional scars will last a lifetime and it's hard for him to talk about that part. Neal has had to move on because Jesse needs him. In fact, they need each other. "If you lose a parent, they call you an orphan," Neal said, pausing slightly. "If you lose a spouse, they call you a widow. But there's no name for the loss of a child."

This incident, like so many other traffic mishaps, was preventable. In fiscal year '04, the Navy and Marine Corps lost 119 people in traffic crashes. At least 10 of them were lost because of fatigue, but that number could be higher. Neal wants to share some research information on fatigued driving because he doesn't want any other Sailor or Marine to face the same pain and suffering. He urged people to take six common-sense steps before you get on the highway:

- Plan enough time for a trip.
- Don't speed to get there or return.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Beware of fatigue.
- Notify someone about your plans — where you're going, when you're leaving and when you'll return.
- Have emergency contact information in the vehicle.
- Wear your seatbelts.

It was tough for Beard to share this story and to relive such a horrific mishap. He bared his heart and soul to make us all think before we get in our cars or on our motorcycles. His story reminds us that a traffic wreck reaches beyond the victim, affecting family, friends and survivors.

On his Web site, which is dedicated to his family and the mishap, he leaves a simple message: "It's not what happens to you that matters; it's what you do with it that matters."

STORY IDEAS? Phone: (808) 473-2888 Email: hnn@honoluluadvertiser.com

Contact the HNN editor for guidelines and story/photo submission requirements

Hawaii
Navy News

Hawai'i Navy News Sports

PacFleet Sailor takes triathlon

JO2 Jessica B. Davis
Commander U.S. Pacific
Fleet Public Affairs

Swimming at lunch, spinning classes in the evening, and running four to five times a week paid off for the muscular 5-foot-11-inch Lt. John W. McHenry III, who placed first in the male military 40-and-over division of the Honolulu Triathlon on April 17.

"I was very surprised when I found out because the preliminary results showed another military person finished before me, but he got a two-minute penalty," McHenry said. "Last year I was 39 and there was a little more competition."

McHenry, a Chula Vista, Calif. native, is the assistant fleet judge advocate general and also the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard judge advocate. He has been training and participating in triathlons since 1989 and has been a participant in the Honolulu Triathlon since its inception two years ago.

"For me, the swim and the bike are my better events," McHenry said. "I'm not very good at the run. The run is the last event so I tried to go as fast as I could at the swim and the bike and just did my best in the run."

The Olympic distance triathlon incorporates a one-mile swim, a 25-mile bike ride and a six-mile run. The triathlon started at Queen's Beach for the swim, the bike ride was over Diamond Head into Hawai'i Kai and back. The triathlon ended at Kapiolani Park with the run.



Photo by Brian Clarke
Lt. John W. McHenry III finishes the first leg of the 2005 Honolulu Triathlon.

"I think I trained adequately," McHenry said. "There's a lot of training programs around Hawai'i that are pretty good. I started seriously training for this the last six weeks."

McHenry has also participated in the last three Honolulu Marathons and in Iron Man Florida in November 2004. The Iron Man competition is a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and a 26.2-mile run.

"I finished," McHenry laughed modestly when asked about his Iron Man accomplishment.

Overall, McHenry placed 11th in the 2005 Honolulu Triathlon with a finishing time of 2:28:33 for the entire male age group 40-and-over.

"It just takes dedication," McHenry said. "If you keep at it, you'll finish your triathlon."

CTM2 Selena Current
Contributing Writer

One would think that it is a rare type of person who would voluntarily get out of bed at 5 a.m. on a Saturday morning to run through mud and marsh.

On April 23, more than 1,200 men, women and children joined together to take on the challenge of the 11th annual Swamp Romp held at Marine Corps Base Hawai'i, Kaneohe Bay.

Known as "O'ahu's dirtiest footrace," the Swamp Romp is a five-mile long race combined with an obstacle course. The layout is made up of a section on the road, a beach run, swampy areas and an abundance of mud.

Throughout the race, challengers encountered obstacles such as climbing walls, hurdles, low crawls and water holes, along with other surprises that were hidden for them by Combat Service Support Group 3.

Enthusiasm ran high as more than 190 six-member teams competed. Team names and costumes added to the excitement of the race.

Vikings and clowns were seen running the course, along with what appeared to be members of the IRS. The "Incredibles" also managed to fit an appearance into their busy super-hero schedules.

The meaning of teamwork was physically defined as team members helped each other along the grueling course. Teams were required to cross the finish line together with arms interlocked, with no member finishing first or last.

"One of the main ideas behind the Swamp Romp is



U.S. Navy photo by CTM2 Selena Current
Swamp Romp participants battle their way through one of the many obstacles included in the five-mile course. The challenge was held April 23 at Marine Corps Base Hawai'i Kaneohe Bay.

teamwork. Everyone has to work together to cross the finish line," explained Regina Reiche, assistant manager of Semper Fit Gym.

The camaraderie between the contestants showed through their words of encouragement despite the fact that all teams were competing against one another.

Words of encouragement were plentiful during the race and cadence calls could be heard echoing through the woods and swamp.

Spectators joined together to excitedly cheer the teams toward the finish line. As the teams crossed the line one by one, they stepped to the sidelines and joined with the spectators to cheer on the rest of the participants.

After the race, many of the

challengers eagerly told stories of their adventure with their families and friends who came to support them.

"There was one part of the race where you run on the beach and then you have to run in the ocean. It was awesome," shared one participant.

The overall winner of Swamp Romp 2005 was the Third Marine NOKADI team stationed at Kaneohe Bay.

The annual CSSG-3 Swamp Romp is open to challengers of all ages, military or civilian. Next year's race will be held March 25, 2006. For more information, visit www.mccshawaii.com or call the Semper Fit coordinator at 254-7597 or 254-7363.



U.S. Navy photo by CTM2 Selena Current
The log hurdle was the last challenge competitors faced at the April 23 Swamp Romp.



SNA Pearl Harbor Memorials Relay



Sponsored by Pearl Harbor Visitor's Center

Memorial Day - May 30, beginning at 7 a.m. for a five-hour relay to benefit the many local memorials honoring our fallen heroes. This year all proceeds will benefit USS Oklahoma Memorial.

Course is approximately 3.2 miles around historic Ford Island, passing memorials to USS Arizona, USS Utah, USS Missouri and several others. A mostly paved route, there are also areas of sea plane ramps and grassy fields. Running type baby strollers are welcome. Water and sports drinks will be provided. A course map is available at www.usmissouri.org/relay.

CREWS (teams) will be permitted to have as few or as many members as they desire (to run or to walk). A timing chip system will be used. All team participants will receive a T-shirt and a commemorative "PLANK OWNER" certificate. Crews can be made up of any age or sex combination. The fee is \$25 per crew (team) member. A signed entry form is required for each crew member. Submit crew together. Please indicate if all crew members are military.

Entries: Only advance entries will be permitted (no race day entry) due to base security requirements. Vehicles will be permitted onto Ford Island beginning at 5 a.m. with a valid race number and photo ID for all adults in the vehicle. Carpooling is encouraged. Vehicles that leave the island will not be permitted re-entry.

Packet Pick Up: Runners HI on Kam Highway in Aiea 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on May 28 and May 29. No packets will be available on race day.

Awards: An awards ceremony will be held on the pier alongside USS Missouri following the relay. Crew "manned and ready" entries received before May 14 will receive certificates at the awards ceremony. Several different categories will receive awards.

Tailgate: Picnics and barbecue grills are permitted in the designated area next to the course. No alcohol is permitted at any time. Food and non-alcoholic beverages will also be available for purchase.

Crew Manning Levels:
 Destroyer - teams of 4 or fewer
 Cruiser - teams of 5 to 8
 Battleship - teams of 9 or more.



SNA Pearl Harbor Memorials Relay

Please use ink and print legibly. Fill out form completely

Fee Enclosed _____
 x\$25 Per Team Member
 Donation _____ Total _____
 ___ Destroyer (4 or fewer)
 ___ Cruiser (5 to 8)
 ___ Battleship (9 or more)
 No Race Day Entries or packet pick up
 Mail completed applications to:
 SNA Pearl Harbor Memorials Relay
 226 Lexington Blvd
 Pearl Harbor, HI 96860 /A300
 Additional information: (808) 488 1391

Crew Name: _____ Military Crew Y _____ N _____
 Last Name: _____ First Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

WAIVER: I know that walking/running in a road race is a potentially hazardous activity. I will not enter and run unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decisions of a race official relative to my ability to complete the race safely. I assume all risks associated with running this event including but not limited to, falls, contact with other participants, the effects of weather, including high

heat and humidity, traffic and the conditions of the road, all such risks being known appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts and in consideration of your accepting my entry, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release any and all rights and claims for injuries and damages I may have against and agree to hold harmless the Surface Navy Association, US Navy, US

Government, event organizers, volunteers and all sponsors, their representatives and successors, from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising from my participation in this event, including pre- and post race activities. I grant permission to all the of the foregoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, recordings, or any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose.

Signature / Signature of parent or guardian if entrant is under 18 _____ Date _____

