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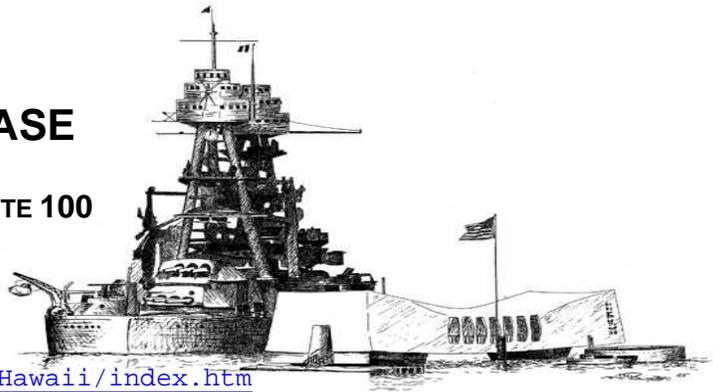
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Navy Region Hawaii Proclaims April Child Abuse Prevention Month; Month of Military Child

Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Michael Lantron, Navy
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(PEARL HARBOR, HI) -- Rear Adm. Dixon Smith, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii (CNRH) and Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, signed a Month of the Military Child and Child Abuse Prevention Proclamation March 30 during a ceremony at the Pearl Harbor Fleet and Family Services Center (FFSC).

The proclamation signing officially marked April as Child Abuse Prevention Month and The Month of The Military Child for Navy Region Hawaii. This year's theme for the Hawaii area is "Celebrating Our Future Heroes," and the national theme is "Promoting Healthy Families in the Community."

"I consider this issue to be very important," said Smith. "I realize that all of our children deserve the same upbringing as I had. Through our education process, skills and resources for our kids, we will help drive this out and do away with child abuse."

The Month of the Military Child and Child Abuse Prevention Month is a time set aside each April since 1986 to recognize the special sacrifices children make as part of a military family and to take action in preventing child abuse.

The first clause of the proclamation states preventing child abuse and neglect is a community-wide issue that depends on involvement among people throughout the community. Smith thanked the members of community child programs in the area for their efforts in supporting the military families in Hawaii.

"I applaud all of you for your efforts and the importance you place upon removing child abuse from our society," said Smith. "All you do on a daily basis helps these kids and I am truly appreciative for what you provide them."

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PROCLAMATION 2-2-2

According to the Child Abuse Prevention Proclamation, the Navy community has an obligation to become actively involved in prevention by supporting parents to raise children in a safe, healthy and nurturing environment. Also, the community must join together in the quest to stop child abuse and neglect because getting involved holds the possibility of saving a child's life.

Accompanying Smith for the signing were Hawaii State Legislative Sen. Will Espero (D-Hawaii) and more than a dozen children from throughout the community.

"My father served in the Navy for 21 years, so I fully understand what these families go through," said Espero. "We need to continue to provide support and look at this subject at a very young age so these children do not end up in bad situations as they get older in life."

Espero and Hawaii State Legislative Rep. Lynn Finnegan (R-Hawaii), each gave their thanks and presented Smith with a certificate on behalf of the State of Hawaii, commending the Pearl Harbor FFSC for its awareness and prevention efforts regarding child abuse.

Also acknowledged was Navy Capt. Tamara Grigsby, staff pediatrician and medical consultant for child abuse and neglect at Tripler Army Medical Center who was presented with the 2009 'Pueo' Award by Pearl Harbor FFSC for her work as one of the Navy's leading child abuse and neglect diagnosticians.

As the ceremony concluded, blue ribbons signifying child abuse prevention were distributed to those in attendance. Following the presentation of the ribbons, the attendees watched as Smith and a four-year-old child tied a single blue ribbon to the antenna of his vehicle.

Events scheduled throughout the month include the second annual Father Daughter Dance at Catlin Clubhouse on April 4 and SpringFest & Child Safety Seat Checkup at Ward Field onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor April 25.

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