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Third MCPON holds senior enlisted leader forum

Story and photo by MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

The third Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON), Master Chief Operations Specialist (Ret.) Robert Walker, spoke to Hawai'i-based chief petty officers (CPO) during forums onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor and Marine Corps Base Hawai'i - Kaneohe on April 21-22.

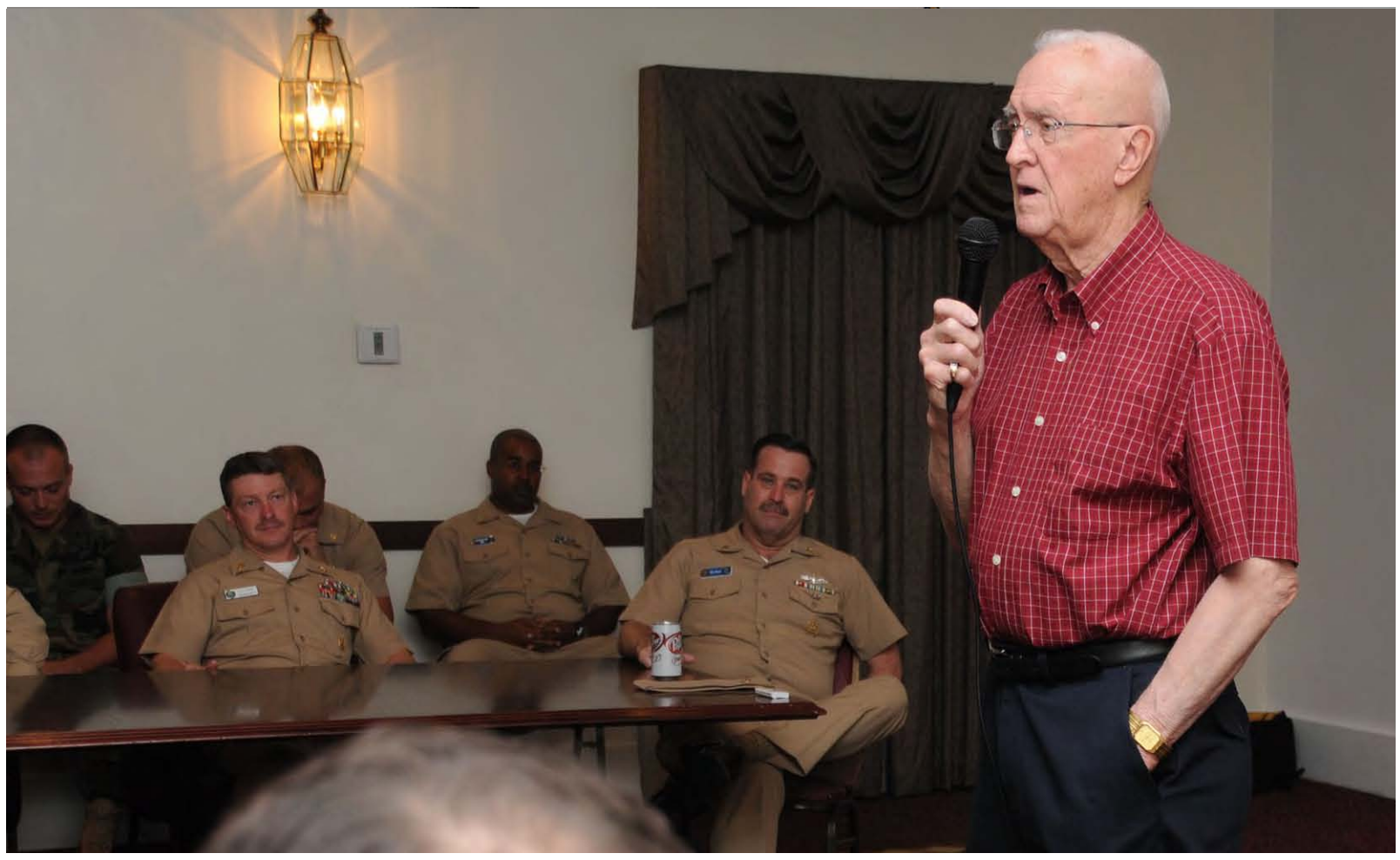
During the forums, Walker fielded questions from CPOs and spoke to the enlisted leaders on topics such as uniforms, the importance of spouses, and his views on today's Navy.

Although he is not a fan of the new service uniform for Sailors E-1 to E-6, Walker was proud of the progress junior Sailors have made since he served as the top enlisted member of the Navy.

"I am very impressed with the younger Sailors. They are far superior today than the junior Sailors while I was serving," said Walker.

Walker also stressed that chiefs should not be afraid of the new enlisted continuation board.

"We had something like this when I was MCPON. It concerned me at first, but when I took an in-depth look, it resulted in the Navy getting rid of a lot of dead weight," said Walker. "It also passes the word to individuals who are on the borderline to start working as they should have all along."



The third Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON), Master Chief Operations Specialist (Ret.) Robert Walker, speaks to Hawaii-based chief petty officers (CPO) during a forum at Lockwood Hall onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor on April 21. During the forums, Walker fielded questions from CPOs and spoke to the enlisted leaders on topics such as uniforms, the importance of spouses, the Senior Enlisted Continuation Board and his views on today's Navy. During his career as MCPON, Walker created the Navy's Senior Enlisted Academy and the enlisted surface warfare specialist program.

Chief petty officers at the event were proud to be in attendance for an opportunity to meet one of only 12 people in history to hold the title of MCPON.

"It was an incredible experience. When I saw this meeting come up, I knew I had to take the opportunity to see and meet him," said Senior Chief Construction Electrician (SCW) Clint Rainey, assigned to Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 303. "He gave us a lot of inspiration coming out here and we felt we showed him we're still doing the right thing."

"What I feel he delivered to us today was truth and honesty," said CMDCM (SW/AW) Herbert Ellis, USS Lake Erie's (CG 70) command master chief. "CPOs represent a code of integrity, and that's exactly what we heard with everything he said today."

As the forum wrapped, Walker received a traditional "Navy Chief, Navy Pride" chant from the CPOs that was loud enough to be heard throughout the harbor.

Walker was on the island of Oahu to serve as guest speaker for the U.S. Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year ceremony in Honolulu on April 23. During his career as MCPON, Walker created the Navy's senior enlisted academy and the enlisted surface warfare specialist program. He retired from the Navy on Sept. 28, 1979 after serving for 30 years.

Pacific Fleet commander reaches out on Facebook

Story and photo by Lt. j.g. Theresa Donnelly

U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

In his first podcast and blog posting on Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet's new Facebook page April 15, Adm. Robert F. Willard, commander U.S. Pacific Fleet, spoke about community outreach.

Willard called on Navy leadership as well as deckplate Sailors to educate and inform the civilian community about their Navy.

"Our engagement with Navy League, our engagement with chambers of commerce, the opportunities that we have to embark distinguished visitors onto our ships, are all important outreach methods that I would ask all of you to support and to support personally whenever you have the opportunity," Willard said.

Launched in conjunction with Willard's Rat-Pac Report podcast on community outreach, U.S. Pacific Fleet's Facebook page is designed to give users an opportunity to learn more about the various missions of Pacific Fleet and is aligned with the command's emphasis on the promotion of new media.

Willard's podcast and blog posting on new media March 25 emphasized the importance of engaging in non-traditional ways of communicating.

"I think the Navy and we in leadership positions have an obligation to use the communication media that work," said Willard.

Wife of a Sailor, assigned to Pearl Harbor-based guided missile Frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57), logs onto Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet's Facebook page.

Facebook, which has 200 million active users, is expected to greatly increase the Navy's outreach efforts.

According to iStrategyLabs, a digital marketing agency, between June 2008 and January 2009, the number of Facebook users ages 35-54 almost quadrupled, and the number of members older than 55 tripled.

Other commands are already taking advantage of this emerging technology. For example, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Southern Command all have Facebook pages.

The U.S. Navy SEAL and Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman (SWCC) Facebook page features videos regarding the rescue of motor vessel Maersk-Alabama Capt. Richard Phillips by U.S. naval forces off the coast of Somalia.

The Pacific Fleet Facebook page is linked to videos, photos, blogs and podcasts of interest to followers and friends of Pacific Fleet.

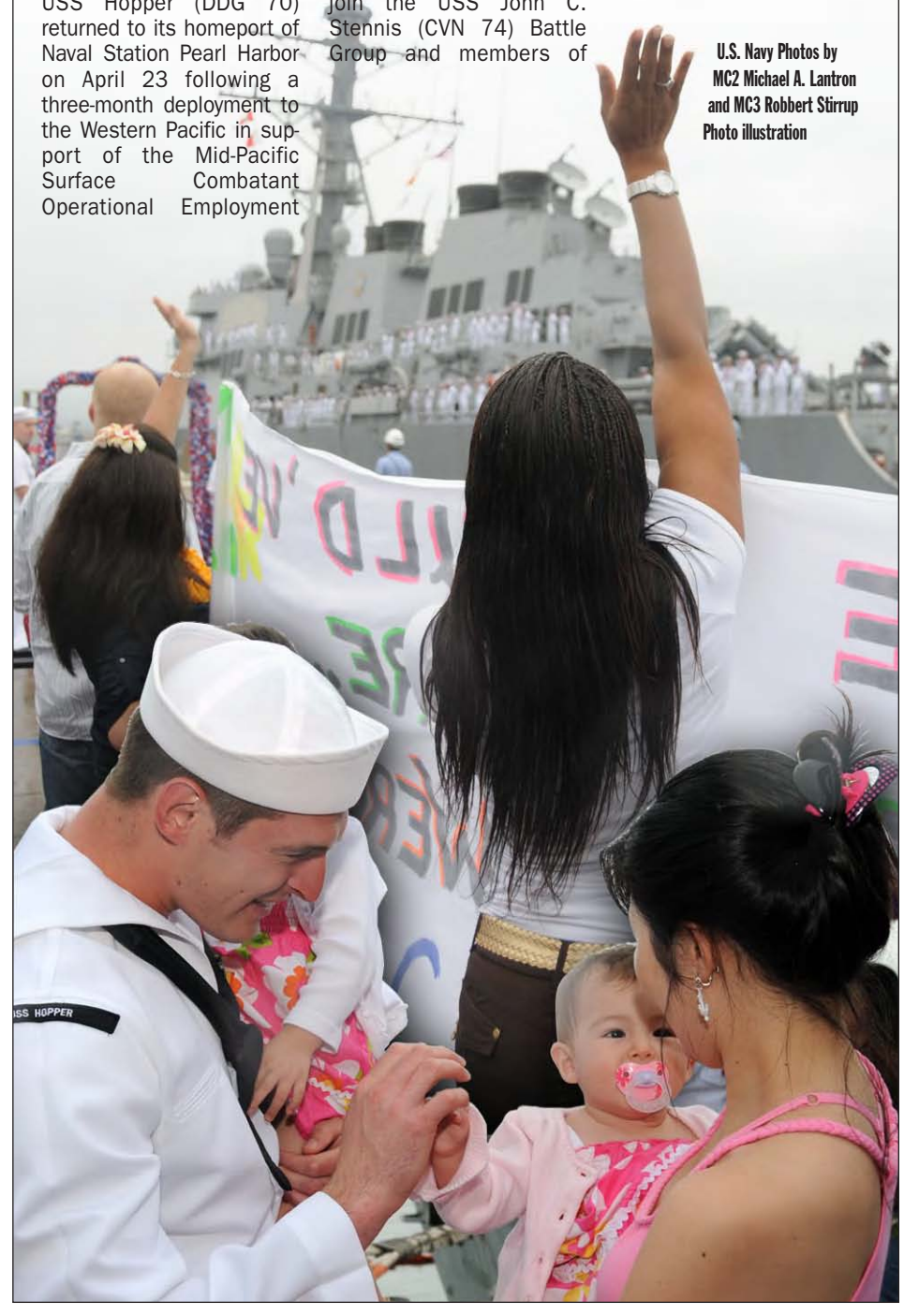
"It's ever-increasingly important that the civilian community not only recognizes that it has a Navy, but that it recognizes and understands what its Navy does and that it's proud of its Navy and feels ownership of its Navy and we enable that, I think, through our outreach efforts," said Willard.

A link to the Facebook page can be accessed through Pacific Fleet's Web site, www.cpf.navy.mil, or by using the search tab on Facebook and typing Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Hopper comes home

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG 70) returned to its homeport of Naval Station Pearl Harbor on April 23 following a three-month deployment to the Western Pacific in support of the Mid-Pacific Surface Combatant Operational Employment program. Hopper departed Pearl Harbor on Jan. 20 to join the USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) Battle Group and members of Destroyer Squadron 15. (More photos on page A-5.)

U.S. Navy Photos by MC2 Michael A. Lantron and MC3 Robbert Stirrup Photo illustration



SALT simulators educate Sailors, families about risks of drunk driving See page A-2

FISC Sailors conduct Earth Day clean-up See page A-8

Panthers claw their way to football title See page B-3

Sailors participate in historic Pearl Harbor bike path clean-up See page B-1

SALT simulators educate Sailors and families about risks of drunk driving

Story and photo by
Blair Martin

Contributing Writer

Pearl Harbor Navy Exchange (NEX) welcomed Kramer Edutainment's Save-a-Life Tour (SALT) on April 20-23. The high impact alcohol awareness program features a fully interactive DUI [driving under the influence] simulator as well as graphic emotional footage to educate on the risks of drunk driving.

"Unfortunately, in our country we've glorified alcohol," said Brian Beldyga, SALT senior manager. "Young Sailors and young men [now] use it as a rite of passage [because] they see their [parents] or [supervisors] do it which only sets an unfortunate precedent for them."

The program, sponsored by Commander Pacific Fleet (COMPACTFLT), will appear at multiple military installations during the month of April, also known as Alcohol Awareness Month.

"The purpose of the tour is to create awareness about driving under the influence," said Stephanie Lau, NEX marketing and customer relations manager.

The SALT demonstration, held April 20 - 23 at the NEX rotunda, included a short video and a 20-minute statistical brief by Beldyga, followed by a chance for participants to drive the simulator.

Machinist's Mate 2nd Class (SS) Jerry Keller, from the Seal Delivery Vehicle Team One (SDVT1), interacts with a drunk driving simulator on April 20 at the Navy Exchange (NEX) rotunda. The simulator was part of the Save-a-Life Tour (SALT), a high impact alcohol awareness program that features a fully interactive DUI simulator as well as graphic emotional footage to educate on the risks of drunk driving.

Machinist's Mate 2nd Class (SS) Jerry Keller, from the Seal Delivery Vehicle Team One (SDVT1), said he and his command enjoyed the "enlightening" demonstration.

"This [demonstration] really taught me a lot," said Keller, who was also invited to drive the simulator during portions of the event. "You don't realize certain things you do [when driving the simulator]. I found myself concentrating on one thing and then something else would slip. I really didn't have much control, which shocked me."

According to Beldyga, the drunk driving simulator has a reaction-time delay feature, providing the driver with a realistic, interactive experience as well as a way to fully understand the effects of drinking and driving.

"The simulator shows people how alcohol affects reaction time, motor skills and tunnel vision, as well as how your brain chooses to solve these problems from a sober perspective," he said.

Keller said he hopes having this SALT demonstration will help other young Sailors who are new and on their own.

"Here, we have a lot of young Sailors who are new to being on their own, and drinking and driving can be a [serious] temptation," he said. "I hope this will give them a clue into the [repercussions] of their actions and hopefully [discourage] them from not drinking and driving."

The SALT program will be held from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. April 27 to 29 at Club Pearl Paradise Lounge. From April 30 to May 1, SALT will be at Marine Corps Base Hawai'i - Kaneohe Bay.

For more information on the SALT program, visit www.savealifetour.com. Commands interested in booking an appointment should contact Linda Boswell at 471-9235, ext. 225.

Mobile Dive and Salvage Unit One deploys

Navy Expeditionary Combat Command

Thirty seven Sailors from Mobile Dive and Salvage Unit One (MDSU) deployed April 18 to the Middle East to provide command and control of diving, salvage and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) operations throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

This will be MDSU One's second deployment to Bahrain. They previously deployed to Bahrain in 2008 performing these same functions.

"From participating in exercises with India, conducting harbor clearance operations in Saipan, to de-beaching USS Port Royal, MDSU One has once again proven we are trained and ready to go," said Cmdr. John Moulton, MDSU One's commanding officer. "We have incorporated several EOD technicians into our team, so we now have the ability to also command and control EOD missions in addition to our mainstays of diving and salvage."

MDSU One's headquarters element and MDSU One Company 1-3 will be based in Bahrain to conduct theater wide diving, salvage and EOD operations, including anti-terrorism/force protection operations and exercises with partner nations. While the headquarters will maintain operational oversight of all subordinate task groups operating in theater, the company will be conducting operations and responding to events as directed.

MDSU One provides combat ready, expeditionary, rapidly deployable mobile diving and salvage companies to conduct harbor clearance, salvage, underwater search and recovery, and underwater emergency repairs in any environment.

MDSU One, as one of only two such units in the U.S. Navy, provides fleet commanders with the ability to gain or maintain physical access to ports and begin the process of returning vessels damaged or stranded back to sea.

Shipyard selects honorees for Excellence in Federal Government Awards

Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard Public Affairs

Six civilians, a Sailor and a waterfront project team have been selected as Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard's winners of Excellence in Federal Government awards.

The winners and their award categories are Michael J. Carreiro, Federal Manager /Supervisor of the Year; Paul Y. K. Ching, Federal Employee of the Year – Trades and Crafts; Electronics Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Jamie A. Edwards, Federal Employee of the Year – Professional, Administrative, Technical; Liane L. Nakahara, Federal Employee of the Year – Clerical and Assistant; Renny C. Akina, Outstanding Leader; Bradley G. Mayural, Outstanding Mentor; Ashlee M. Snodgrass, Exceptional Community Service; and Fleet Maintenance Submarine Project (FMB), Team Excellence.

Capt. Gregory Thomas presented award certificates to the selectees at a shipyard expanded staff meeting April 7. Cmdr. Timothy Sparks accepted the Team Excellence Award on behalf of the FMB.

The selectees will represent the shipyard at the Honolulu-Pacific Federal Executive Board's annual statewide awards luncheon May 6 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel.

The awards recognize the achievements and contributions of outstanding employees from federal organizations and members of the community during the past year. Each organization selects its own winners for the awards.

Federal Supervisor Manager of the Year

As the assistant project superintendent for the USS Columbia (SSN 771) overhaul, Michael Carreiro helped lead the project team to a successful 15-and-a-half-month availability. This was the best among overhauls of over 221,000 man-days performed at Pearl Harbor and the shortest of its kind in naval shipyards in two years.

Federal Employee of the Year – Professional, Administrative, Technical

Electronics Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Jamie A. Edwards established the highest standards for safety of ship planning and execution at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. Her commitment to safety of ship issues supported the completion of 55 high-risk evolutions, 14 dockings and undockings, and one double docking and undocking with first-time accuracy.

Federal Employee of the Year – Clerical and Assistant

Public Affairs Specialist Liane Nakahara made extraordinary contributions to the Shipyard Centennial celebration. She volunteered to write and edit the 36-page Honolulu Advertiser Shipyard Tribute tabloid delivered to 170,000 homes and produced the 16-page Centennial Shipyard Log.

Federal Employee of the Year – Trades and Crafts

In the last four years, Paul Ching has been the only electronic industrial controls mechanic in shop 06. He took on a leadership role to train apprentices while performing his normal duties.

Team Excellence

Fleet Maintenance Submarine Project (FMB) successfully planned and executed more than 100,000 submarine industrial repair man-days, totaling 5,450 jobs, with a material budget exceeding $14 million.

Outstanding Leader

Plastic Fabricator Supervisor II Renny Akina spearheaded the shipyard waterfront transformation effort to Lean and reorganize the dry dock crew areas, leading to increased efficiency, safety and worker morale.

Outstanding Mentor

Supervisory Assistant Project Superintendent Bradley Mayural skillfully implemented the project management qualification program. He took the number one initiative in the Operations Department and personally mentored and coached 140 personnel from classroom theory to real-life application of planning and execution practices.

Exceptional Community Service

General Engineer Ashlee Snodgrass empowered junior high and high school students to apply their math and science skills in robotics programs and competitions. Over the course of six months, she dedicated more than 300 hours of her own time, impacting 2,000-plus students at seven schools and two events.

Hawai'i Navy News Editorial

Navy leads, invests in marine mammal science

Lt. Cmdr. Philip Rosi

U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs

The Navy has spent $100 million on marine mammal research over the past five years, including $26 million this year. No organization in the world does more to fund marine mammal research.

The Navy's marine mammal program in San Diego is one center for marine mammal research. The sea mammals there are working animals - dolphins are trained to find mines, and sea lions mark and retrieve objects from the ocean depths. The skills of these marine mammals protect the Navy. In turn, the Navy's scientific work protects them.

Clinical research is being done there on the detection, diagnoses and treatment of diseases that can affect marine mammals. Three years into the effort, 11 marine mammal viruses have been identified, including nine that are new.

Some of that science benefits humans, too. Navy-funded research has led to an increased understanding of similarities between dolphins and people that may lead to new ways to treat debilitating human illnesses, such as diabetes.

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Mark Rankin

Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Shawn McDonald, a marine mammal handler assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 1, uses tactile re-enforcement to bond with his Atlantic bottlenose dolphin.

Elsewhere, much of the Navy's research has focused on marine mammals' detection, behavior, hearing and response to sound – facets of the ongoing debate over the Navy's use of active sonar, in which sound is introduced into the water to detect underwater objects.

Science informs steps taken by commanders to avoid harming marine mammals during training events that involve sonar. The data also is used in environmental compliance documents the Navy develops for areas in which it trains.

"The most important thing we as a Navy have to do is determine the effects of our sound sources on living marine resources," said Dr. V. Frank Stone, marine resources project manager for the Chief of Naval Operations, environmental readiness division. "We know this will be a long-term program because, fundamentally, very little is known about marine mammals."

Steadily, that's changing. Studying the effects of sound involves several elements, but a big part of gathering information is tagging. In 1996, after a stranding in Greece was linked to a sonar exercise, the Navy supported scientist's efforts to tag sperm whales and Cuvier's beaked whales. They collected the first known evidence that toothed whales use echolocation while they dive by recording data from two Cuvier's beaked whales and two Blainville's beaked whales. This success led to a study of beaked and pilot whales in the Bahamas. Using underwater microphones, scientists gathered information on what is believed to be a behavioral response to simulated sonar and other control sounds, though they were careful not to draw conclusions from a relatively small sample size of animals. The program will influence future approaches to experiment-based research involving the whales.

This past year, researchers placed acoustic listening tags on six whales from four species and played simulated mid-frequency sonar sounds and natural sounds.

"We're trying to study what's going on with animal responses to these signals and what we can do to try and minimize the impact of active sonar on marine mammals, generally, and beaked whales, specifically," said Dr. Brandon Southall, director of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's ocean acoustics program.

To learn more about the Navy's program to advance marine science including additional information about a new advisory group formed to review the way the Navy invests in marine mammal research, visit http://www.environavair.navy.mil/currents/winter2009/Win09_Marine_Mammal_Science.pdf.

For more news from ocean stewardship, visit www.navy.mil/local/oceans/.

Retired Navy admiral, formerly assigned to Hawai'i commands, dies

(Excerpted from The Enterprise, White Salmon, Wash.)

Rear Adm. John Michael "Jack" Barrett (Navy ret.), a former commander assigned to U.S. Pacific Fleet, died April 18 at his home in White Salmon, Wash. He was 89 years old.

His last two commands were as commander, Service Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet and commander, Naval Logistics Force, Pacific, both at Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i.

After graduation from the Naval Academy, Barrett served during World War II on the USS Halibut and the USS Trepang in the Pacific Theatre. During his nine submarine war patrols, 17 Japanese combatant and merchant ships were sunk and eight others damaged. For these actions, he was awarded the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for the rescue of a shipmate washed overboard in heavy seas off Okinawa.

After World War II, Barrett became a carrier aviator. He served in the Korean War, followed by a stint as a naval test pilot. In 1952, he returned to the submarine service aboard the USS Sea Owl and then commanded the USS Tirante.

Other naval assignments included commissioning commanding officer of the Polaris/Poseidon submarine tender USS Canopus and commander, Submarine Flotilla One at San Diego, Calif.

In addition to his positions at the Hawai'i commands, his shore assignments included head, programs branch, submarine warfare division, Office of Chief of Naval Operations, and head of the Navy section of the Joint U.S. Military Mission for Aid to Turkey in Ankara.

Adm. Barrett and his wife, the former Eda Joan Odem, were married for 61 years. After retiring from the Navy in 1977, Barrett and his wife lived in Honolulu where he was a founding director of the Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association and was instrumental in the development of Bowfin Park, the Submarine Museum and the Submarine Memorial across from the Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor.

In 1990, the Barretts moved from Hawai'i to the Columbia River Gorge area. In addition to his widow, Barrett is survived by five children, 14 grandchildren, a brother and numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorial services were held April 22 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in White Salmon. A Catholic burial and memorial service with military honors and interment will be held today at the Naval Academy Chapel.

Apollo 11 astronauts chat with commander in chief

Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives

President Nixon with Apollo 11 astronauts aboard USS Hornet on July 1969.

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Hawai'i Navy News welcomes letters to the editor for the editorial page on any subject as long as they are in good taste.

All letters must be accompanied by the writer's name, E-mail address and daytime telephone number. Letters are subject to editing to meet space constraints.

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E-mail letters to: hnn@honoluluadvertiser.com.

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USS Lake Erie readies for surface fire support

Ensign John Briggs

USS Lake Erie (CG 70)

For five days in April, the Naval Surface Fire Support (NSFS) team onboard USS Lake Erie (CG 70) has been the ship's central focus for warfare readiness. Given Lake Erie's current status in the availability period, it is essential the ship's crew maintains its tactical mentality and high level of combat readiness.

Training for the NSFS team began around 7:30 a.m. They worked through the day and into the evening, sometimes finishing as late as 10:30 p.m. The scenarios were meant to simulate situations where Marines on the ground require support from naval warships with long range artillery. "Training's good. We're all doing really well. It's intense," said Fire Controlman 2nd Class (FC2) Michael Holzer, who manned weapons control console two.

U.S. Navy photo by STG2 Eric Ocampo

Ensign Mark Rittenhouse, gunnery liaison officer (right), conducts training in the command information center at the control officer console aboard USS Lake Erie (CG 70) with Operations Specialist 2nd Class (OS2) (SW) Justin Franck (center) and Fire Controlman 2nd Class (SW) Wayne Badstuebner on April 17.

After several brief interviews with crew members directly involved in the week-long training, it is clear that hopes are high they will succeed when evaluation day arrives. "It's been a lot of long hours to put in…a lot of hard work. I think we'll do really well when it comes to the graded range shoot," commented FC2 Wayne Badstuebner who manned the control officer console during the scenarios and coordinated the efforts of the shooters.

The team consisted of a mixed group of operations specialists (OS) and fire controlmen (FC) led by the gunnery liaison officer (GLO), Ensign Mark Rittenhouse. "CSCS was extremely impressed with the dedication and professionalism of not only the NSFS team, but the entire ship's company," said Chief Fire Controlman William Benton during the start of yet another training scenario. Benton is one of several evaluators who spent the past week helping the ship's NSFS team prepare for their upcoming evaluation. "Despite a few stumbling blocks, they came together as a team to show drastic improvements."

Lake Erie celebrates galley grand re-opening

Lt. j.g. Gina Slaby

USS Lake Erie (CG 70)
Food Service Officer

USS Lake Erie (CG 70) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony April 8 in celebration of the galley's grand re-opening.

The opening meal included steak and crab legs to mark almost four months of closure during the 2009 SRA period. "It was a lot of hard work; we were up at 0400 doing the final touches on the mess decks and getting the food prepared for the opening," said Culinary Specialist Seaman Mark Nuestro.

The food service division, along with personnel from engineering to operations departments, worked on the project and renovating what was formerly a single use space into a huge multi-purpose room. "Our re-designed mess decks will continue to remind us of our beloved Hawai'i environs no matter where we ever sail around the world and, at the same time, provide a higher-tech outlet for our hard-working shipmates to rest and relax off duty," said Capt. Ronald A. Boxall, Lake Erie commanding officer.

The complete renovation included six HD flat screen TVs with networking, gaming, cable and site TV capabilities, Internet access, surround sound, new wallpaper and the painting of an island mural. "It was a real group effort," said Senior Chief Culinary Specialist (SW) Bradford Lemieur, leading petty officer. "Without the coordinated efforts of the ship, we would have never opened on time."

"We came together in the beginning of the renovation phase and agreed to stick together through success, by dedicating ourselves to unselfish trust and combined boldness and effort to accomplish our goal. Through all of this, we outgrew individual performance and learned that through team confidence, excellence became a reality," said Command Master Chief (SW/AW) H. Mac Ellis.

Despite the commuted ration allotments (COMRATS) received in their paychecks, the Sailors see the resumption of food services as a positive change. "It's better to be able to eat on the ship because it's cheaper and more convenient in the long run," said Storekeeper Seaman Michael Long. "The mess decks bring out the aloha spirit of Hawai'i."

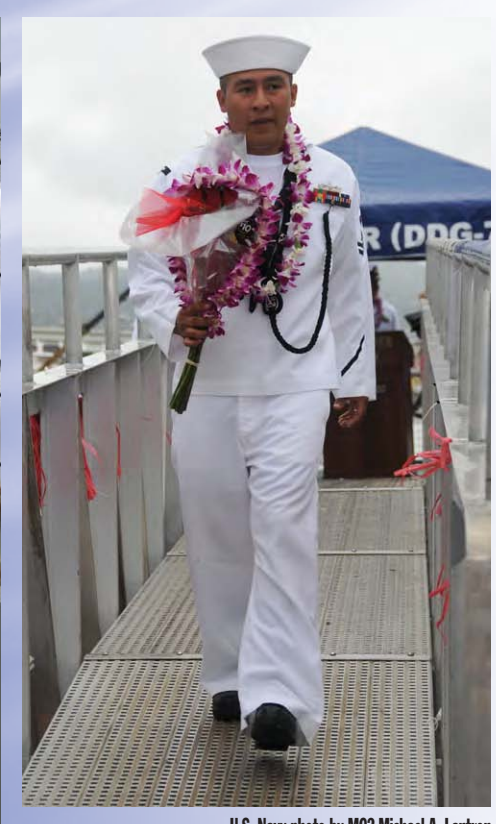
U.S. Navy photo by STG2 Eric Ocampo

Operations Specialist 3rd Class Marcos Lucero and Operations Specialist Seaman Maurice Walker make final preparations for the ribbon-cutting ceremony on board USS Lake Erie (CG 70) on April 8.

Welcome Home USS Hopper Sailors

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

Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG 70) man the rails as the ship makes her way pier side to Naval Station Pearl Harbor on April 23 after a three-month deployment to the Western Pacific in support of the Mid-Pacific Surface Combatant Operational Employment program. Hopper departed Pearl Harbor on Jan. 20 to join the USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) Battle Group and members of Destroyer Squadron 15. While on deployment, Hopper participated in numerous advanced phase training events and exercises in addition to acting as a ballistic missile defense asset by providing an increased presence of naval ships in the Seventh Fleet area of operations.



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

Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class (SW) Roberto Bonilla, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG 70), walks off the brow to greet his wife and son after returning April 23 from a three-month deployment to the Western Pacific in support of the Mid-Pacific Surface Combatant Operational Employment program.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Robert Stirrup

A Sailor assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG 70) holds his newborn child after returning from a three-month deployment to the Western Pacific.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Robert Stirrup

Information Systems Technician (SW) 2nd Class Philip Nones, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG 70), is greeted by his children at Naval Station Pearl Harbor after returning from a three-month deployment to the Western Pacific.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Robert Stirrup

Friends and families hold signs and wave to Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG 70) as the ship makes her way pier side to Naval Station Pearl Harbor after a three month deployment to the Western Pacific in support of the Mid-Pacific Surface Combatant Operational Employment program.

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Hopper (DDG 70) makes her way pier side to Naval Station Pearl Harbor on April 23 after a three-month deployment to the Western Pacific.

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

REUBEN JAMES FFG 57 UNDERWAY

USS Reuben James (FFG 57) conducted routine training exercises on April 16 in support of the Pacific Fleet's mid Pacific surface combatant Operational Employment program. The program calls for all 11 Hawai'i-based surface combatants to focus on the Western Pacific by conducting intermediate/advanced training and regular deployments in the Western Pacific, and is designed to improve the U.S. Pacific Fleet's war-fighting readiness and effectiveness.

U.S. Navy photos by MC3 Robert Stirrup/Photoillustration

Sailors assigned to Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) participate in a command Earth Day awareness clean-up on April 20. The FISC Sailors volunteered to help pick up trash and debris around the Hotel and Kilo piers at Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

FISC Sailors conduct Earth Day clean-up

Story and photo by MC3 (AW) Eric J. Cutright

Naval Public Affairs Support Element West Det. Hawai'i

Fleet Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Sailors observed Earth Day early this year by conducting a clean-up of areas around their command on April 20.

Earth Day is celebrated officially April 22, and is designed to invoke environmental awareness and appreciation.

"We're holding an Earth Day clean-up kind of like a FOD (foreign object damage) walkdown," said Cmdr. Kurt Chivers, executive officer at FISC. "We're cleaning up the areas around our piers and DDPH (Defense Distribution Pearl Harbor) spaces. This is a thing we do at FISC once a year if not more. We get all of our Sailors together and conduct about two and a half hours of FOD walkdown."

This year more than 30 Sailors volunteered from FISC to help out with the clean-up.

"I think this is a great venue for all the Sailors to get out and experience and understand what it is that we do to the environment while we do our day-to-day operations," said Chivers. "It serves to make sure that we remain cognizant to protect the environment."

FISC Pearl Harbor's day-to-day operations involves supplying all armed forces along the Pacific Rim with logistics and support services, meaning that FISC deals with a lot of material that could end up as waste in the environment.

"It goes with being environmentally responsible," said Chivers. "We work so close with materials like tri-walls, paper products and things like that, so close to ships as they pull in. You want to make sure that the environment around us is as clean as possible and not filtering out into our waterways."

Sailors that took part in the project carried around clear plastic garbage bags to collect garbage or debris they found. Other FISC Sailors in government trucks picked up the garbage and disposed of it properly.

"All of my personnel are having fun doing this and it's for a good cause," said Master Chief Ship's Serviceman (SW) Jesus Garcia, senior enlisted advisor to FISC. "It's not only for the environment; it's for them as well. Now they take ownership.

"Things are changing now and we need to save our environment," added Garcia. "Recycling and conservation we need to do this because it's very important."

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Jennifer A. Villalovos

Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, chief of Naval Personnel meets with Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Heather Strow, 2008 Chief of Naval Operation Shore Sailor of the Year; Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuel) 1st Class Justin Melton, 2008 Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Sea Sailor of the Year; and Explosive Ordnance Disposal 1st Class Tyrone Logan, 2008 U.S. Fleet Forces Command Sea Sailor of the Year. Strow, Melton and Logan are in Washington for Sailor of the Year Recognition week and will be meritoriously promoted to chief petty officers.

Chief of Naval Personnel releases Year-in-Review Podcast

Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

During his first podcast released April 21, Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson takes a look back at his first year as Chief of Naval Personnel.

"It's been a very, very successful year and individuals are choosing to stay Navy," said Ferguson. "We have made 100 percent of our recruiting goals and we are seeing retention across the force anywhere between three to five percent above our goals."

Several programs and initiatives highlighted in the podcast help explain the Navy's ability to recruit and retain quality personnel including its dedication to support Sailors and their families and programs that focus on mental and physical health and readiness such as Safe Harbor.

"We are on the path to success," said Ferguson. "We monitor a myriad of metrics and surveys of the force [concerning] their quality of life, compensation, access to health care, morale and support of their leadership.

"In all those areas, Sailors are indicating great satisfaction with the quality of the service and their gratitude in being able to serve their nation," said Ferguson.

Looking to the future, Ferguson emphasizes becoming a Top 50 employer as ranked by Fortune 500 magazine. Efforts designed to achieve this goal include strengthening diversity programs and life-work integration initiatives.

Ferguson believes strengthening the support of Sailors and families by tailoring programs to meet the demand allows the Navy to retain its very best talent.

"I am in awe of their performance, their enthusiasm and sacrifice they and their families make in service to their nation," said Ferguson.

STORY IDEAS?

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