

## Pearl Harbor Sailors bring "Christmas in July"

Story and photo by  
MC1 James E. Foehl

Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

Sailors from the Naval Station Pearl Harbor (NAVSTA PH) First Class Petty Officer's Association (FCPOA) volunteered their time to participate in a community service fund raising project July 25 in Pearl City, Hawai'i for the River of Life Mission's third annual "Christmas in July" program.

Donning Santa hats and festive clothing, the FCPOA Sailors took to the busy roadways and intersections of the Pearl City area, spreading Christmas cheer to motorists and raising money for community members in need.

"It gives us a chance to give back to the community that we're guests of and shows them that the Navy is willing to support good causes," said Master-at-Arms 1st Class Jinine Green, vice president, NAVSTA PH FCPOA and kennel master assigned to the NAVSTA PH Security K-9 Unit.

According to Green, Sailor involvement in volunteer projects which give back to the less fortunate helps to show our appreciation and reaffirms our commitment to having a positive impact on the community.

"It's also an opportunity for the community to give back [to the less fortunate] in



Master-at-Arms 1st Class Jinine Green, vice president of the Naval Station Pearl Harbor (NAVSTA PH) First Class Petty Officer's Association and kennel master assigned to NAVSTA PH Security K-9 Unit, collects money from motorists at an intersection of Pearl City, Hawai'i as part of a volunteer project and fundraiser for the River of Life Mission's third annual "Christmas in July" program.

a manner that they know their money is going straight to the cause of helping somebody. I think that [donating money] this way, people are more willing to give because

they know that it's going to provide the basic necessities and not be misused," said Green.

The River of Life Mission and volunteer fund raising

programs, such as "Christmas in July," help to provide food, clothing, shelter and basic necessities to homeless and indigent members of the Hawai'i communi-

ty by utilizing the generosity and compassion of individuals, churches, schools, the military, businesses, private foundations and other human service providers.

"This is the second time [NAVSTA PH FCPOA] has participated in this program. Last year, we went out and did the money collection and doing it again this year is just something really good for us to continue," said Green.

In 2006, more than 300 volunteers including the FCPOA Sailors participated in the River of Life Mission's "Christmas in July" program, raising more than \$29,000. The money directly contributed to providing meals, clothing, showers, shaves, haircuts, shelter and social services to less fortunate members of the Hawai'i community.

"It's definitely good to be involved in these projects because the FCPOA represents the Navy and it's a good way to give back and increase our awareness within the community," said Personnel Specialist 1st Class Robert Whittle, member of the NAVSTA PH FCPOA and administration officer assigned to the NAVSTA PH Brig.

According to Whittle, being involved with these types of volunteer projects is a critical piece to developing as a Sailor.

"It enhances you as a Sailor. You want to grow as a person, be well rounded - not just do your own job. Volunteer in the community, give back and have a sense of pride in knowing you're helping other people," said Whittle.



A volunteer gives a backpack to a child of a Navy Sailor during a distribution of more than 100 backpacks to children of military personnel organized by the Hawai'i Chapter of Operation Homefront for the upcoming school year at the base chapel on Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

## Operation Homefront helps kids start school year off right

Story and photo by  
MC3 Michael A. Lantron

Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

Children of military personnel stationed on the island of Oahu received more than 100 backpacks filled with paper, pencils and other necessary school supplies, July 28, from volunteers of the Hawai'i chapter of Operation Homefront at the Naval Station Pearl Harbor Chapel.

The backpacks and supplies served as starter kits for the students while alleviating some of the financial burden that the purchase of school supplies brings to families.

"This is a very big help," said Postal Clerk 2nd Class George Baltazar, assigned to Fleet Industrial Supply Center, Pearl Harbor and father of five children. "Some of the families here are new to the island or cannot afford to buy school supplies and are very grateful for this."

The Hawai'i chapter of Operation Homefront provides services to more than 60,000 military families throughout the islands, using such events as the backpack giveaway to help families with the extra cost of living in Hawai'i.

"When families come to the island, it's a huge shock to see how expensive things are here compared to the

mainland," said Vickie Cariello, chapter president of Operation Homefront Hawai'i. "Doing this helps families know that some things are taken care of for them. People should not see this as charity, but as a thank you for everything they do for the country."

According to Cariello, gift cards, donations and support from retail stores throughout the community played a key role in providing supplies for the families.

Operation Homefront, Hawai'i chapter, is one of 31 chapters located nationwide, giving a total of more than 8,000 backpacks to military children since its inception in 2001.

## U.S. Pacific Fleet receives Meritorious Unit Commendation

MC1 Shane Tuck

Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Adm. Robert F. Willard presented a Meritorious Unit Commendation to his staff during a morning colors ceremony held July 27 at the Makalapa compound at Pearl Harbor.

On behalf of the Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Mullen, the commendation was presented to all personnel permanently assigned to the Pacific Fleet headquarters staff and detachments from July 8, 2005 to May 7, 2007.

"This award is a testimony of the outstanding work by my predecessor Adm. Gary Roughead and everyone here on the Pacific Fleet staff," Willard said. "I have been in the job now for two-and-a-half months and I have an even deeper appreciation for the exceptionally good team we have here at Pacific Fleet headquarters. The work you do is having a profound, positive influence far and wide throughout our area of responsibility."

Following the ceremony, U.S. Pacific Fleet Command Master Chief James Teutsch acknowledged some of the accomplishments leading to the staff's award.



U.S. Navy photo by MC Michael Hight

Sailors and Marines from U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters unveil a Meritorious Unit Commendation pennant July 27 during morning colors held at the Pacific Fleet Makalapa Compound at Pearl Harbor. Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Adm. Bob Willard presented the commendation, recognizing the staff's accomplishments during the period from July 8, 2005, to May 7, 2007.

staff planned prepared and executed, this staff's accomplishments have been unprecedented," Teutsch said. "As with all Sailors, they need to know the great job

they're doing is paramount. A meritorious unit commendation lets our Sailors know their pride, professionalism and hard work has not gone unnoticed."



'No smoking' policy in effect for Mall at Pearl Harbor/Commissary See page A-2



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USS Port Royal Sailors ready to work out with new gym equipment See page A-2



Pearl Harbor motorcyclists ride for safety See page B-1

## USS Port Royal Sailors ready to work out with new gym equipment

Story and photo by  
MC3 Michael A. Lantron

Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

The crew of the Pearl Harbor-based, Ticonderoga-class guided cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73) received and assembled a new set of modern gym equipment from July 23-July 30 during a brief import period at Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

The equipment, including three elliptical machines, two treadmills and stationary weight equipment, was given to Port Royal by the regional Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) office at Pearl Harbor. The new equipment will allow the crew to work out during deployment, helping to increase the fitness of the crew along with boosting morale.

"With the new gym equipment, it will feel great to work out and get rid of some of the stress," said Electrician's Mate 3rd Class Isaac Velasquez.

Port Royal has not had a standard gym in over a year, due to a combination of old equipment and a lack of space on the 567-foot ship.

"Originally, the gym equipment was outside on the weather decks where it easily rusted out and we were forced to remove it," said Ensign Reagan Balsamo, MWR officer on board Port Royal.

"On our last deployment, we only had one treadmill and now with this new equipment, we have enough to suffice the whole crew and give them a good morale boost."

Along with being a morale booster, the new equipment will improve the health of the crew, allowing them to improve on their semi-annual physical readiness test (PRT).

"Instead of people coming back from deployment not in very good shape, this allows them to take advantage of the situation and improve their PRT score," said Ensign Jeremiah Slack, assistant command fitness leader.

To find room for the equipment, senior leaders of Port Royal had to use spaces that normally would not be expected to be home to gym equipment on board a Navy vessel.

"The commanding officer [Capt. David B. Adler] said look for spaces and we chose fan rooms around the ship which he approved," said Balsamo.

"By moving it into fan rooms instead of keeping it outside, it will help its appearance and will allow personnel to work out at all possible times," said Slack.

For a week straight, the crew worked together to assemble the equipment and secured it for sea prior to getting underway. Those who worked on the project were happy to help out their shipmates.

"I feel pride by being able to say that I put together the equipment to help out the rest of my shipmates," said Velasquez.

Port Royal's senior leadership is hoping that the new equipment will bring a better environment to the ship and result in happier crew members throughout the chain of command.

"When you have this type of quality in your gym equipment, it's a great, relaxing way to improve the way you feel about yourself and those around you," said Slack.



Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Brandon Bell, assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based, Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73), tightens a bolt on a multi-chest exercise machine as part of the on load and assembly of a new set of gym equipment.

## 'No smoking' policy in effect for Mall at Pearl Harbor/Commissary

Scheherezade Roundtree

Navy Exchange Pearl Harbor Marketing

In an effort to improve customers' shopping experience, the Mall at Pearl Harbor and Defense Commissary (DECA) have partnered in implementing a new "no smoking" policy that will affect patrons and their guests, as well as Navy Exchange (NEX) (including Pacific Missile Range Facility) and Defense Commissary Agency employees. Sanctioned by Capt. Taylor Skardon, chief of staff, Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i and commanding officer, Naval Station Pearl Harbor, the policy prohibits visitors from smoking anywhere other than the NEX and commissary parking lots. According to Skardon's instruction, "Smoking is not allowed from the moss wall planters that run parallel to the Navy Exchange and commissary to the side of the building." (COMNAVREGHINST 1330.21d). Consequently, visitors who fail to conform to the new policy risk having shopping privileges terminated indefinitely. Skardon explained, "The



parameters are, once you've come to the sidewalk outside of the Navy Exchange and commissary, you are now in a no smoking zone. So if you're smoking, you can do it in the parking lot or in your car, but once you come up on the curb, it's time to put the cigarettes out."

He added, "Through the Navy Exchange/commissary comment system, our shoppers have made it loud and clear that they do not enjoy people smoking right outside the exchange and commissary. Hopefully, this will make it a more enjoyable shopping experience for all and be complementary to the state's recently enacted smoking law."

Beverly Hudgins, NEX Pearl Harbor general manager, also became aware of the issue through store comment cards as well as direct feed-

back from visitors. Hudgins, along with the Navy Exchange's strategic planning committee, collaborated with Skardon in composing the policy. In compliance with the new standard, Hudgins authorized the placement of new "no smoking" signage and additional cigarette disposal units around the perimeter of the NEX as well as at each entrance of the store parking lot.

Although there are smoking policies in effect for all military installations, there were none specific to the Mall at Pearl Harbor/commissary complex until recently. Skardon is confident that the policy will be well received in the community and encourages smokers to exhibit courtesy and adhere to the policy. "I would hope that all military members would conduct themselves in a proper manner as well as their guests and dependents. If they are unaware of the smoking policy, hopefully they will comply should a Navy Exchange or commissary employee point it out. Our goal is to make the Navy Exchange Mall an enjoyable place to shop for all authorized patrons."

# Hawaii Navy News Editorial

## Understanding and valuing diversity

**Pacific Fleet Master Chief Tom Howard**

Aloha, shipmates! Pacific Fleet Master Chief Tom Howard here with the first in a series of articles addressing Sailor pride and professionalism.

Chief of Naval Operations Mike Mullen and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Joe Campa are taking us back to the basics and, at the same time, are helping us look to a future that, I believe, will ensure our place in history as the world's finest Navy.

My first few months as fleet master chief have enhanced my impressions of the Sailors we have serving in our Navy today, as you are all extremely talented in your fields of expertise. I thank you all for your hard work and dedication. I also want to challenge each and every one of you to never stop learning and to open your minds to the great journey ahead of us.

Let's start this journey by talking about diversity. You may have heard about diversity throughout the fleet these days, but what does it mean? Why is it important for us to learn and to understand diversity? Why does the Navy need to ensure the presence of diversity in our ranks? Is it the same as equal opportunity?

These are all good questions and I hope with this short article I can begin to address them. Remember, though, anytime you have questions, ask the chief.



PACFLTMC Tom Howard

I think the following quote taken from the NKO [Navy Knowledge Online] training module for diversity says it all:

"The very core of our American democracy is a country, founded on the promise of opportunity for all. The strength of country, and our Navy, comes from embracing the individual uniqueness of our people - race, gender, ethnicity, cultural heritage, talents, skills, ideas, creativity, age, and much more." That's the opening passage of the training found in the general military training portion of NKO's e-learning site. This training offers a closer look at the importance of diversity in the Navy and I encourage everyone to take some time and walk through this training.

In simpler terms, diversity is all the different characteristics and attributes individual Sailors and civilians possess that enhance the mission readiness of our Navy.

"We derive great strength from our diversity," the CNO said in an all-hands call at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Va. "To the degree we are not diverse, we are weak."

Diversity is more than just equal opportunity, race, gender

and religion, shipmates. It is more than just understanding the different skills, talents and experiences each of us brings to the fight. For us to truly embrace diversity, we must go beyond understanding our differences and value them. This will bring about an environment of excellence as it allows us to value one another.

To many, this may seem similar to equal opportunity and affirmative action. Such is not the case, really. EEO and affirmative action are focused on changing demographic profiles and are often imposed and unwelcome. Diversity, on the other hand, is strategic. It's focused on environmental readiness and should be internally driven. Diversity goes beyond removing barriers for some; it's about creating opportunity for everyone.

Our nation was built on the promise of opportunity for all. We as a Navy must build from this and see the diversity of our people as a strength, not a weakness. We must value our differences and recognize that this diversity of culture, heritage, skills, language and experience will only makes us stronger.

Remember, diversity is our strength. Let's keep it strong.

Until next time, shipmates, keep up the great work. If you have any questions or comments about this topic, drop me a line at cpffleet-feedback@navy.mil.

## Learn about energy efficient air conditioning technologies

**Krista Stehn**

Energy Awareness Manager, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Hawaii Energy Team

Here in Hawaii, we are fortunate to have an abundance of sunshine throughout the year. However, the warm weather also brings with it high energy costs. To help trim those costs, the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Hawaii Energy Team is providing energy-related educational opportunities to Navy military and civilian personnel.

Designed for facility managers, building energy monitors, engineers, designers, planners and maintenance shop personnel, the energy team's energy efficiency seminars provide information on the latest technology from field experts. This quarter's seminar will provide participants with information on energy efficient air conditioning systems.

For most office spaces in Hawaii, approximately 34 percent of the energy costs are

related to cooling. These expenditures can increase drastically with inefficient air conditioning systems. Finding ways to improve air conditioning efficiency is critical in reducing Navy Region Hawaii's energy consumption and related costs.

The next energy efficiency seminar will be from 8:30-9:30 a.m. Aug. 16 at building 166 (second floor conference room) at Naval Station Pearl Harbor. The presenter, Marites Calad, is the vice president and branch manager of Norman S. Wright-Pacific, a HVACR (heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration) manufacturers' representative company. Calad will discuss the best energy efficient air conditioning technologies currently available and will provide seminar participants with information on the design, application and delivery of quality air conditioning systems.

For more information or to register for the upcoming seminar contact Krista Stehn, energy awareness manager, at 474-7666 or krista.stehn.ctr@navy.mil.

Commentary

## Fireside Chat

Navy Region Hawaii Fire Dept.

### Be careful with candles

**Victor Flint**

Prevention Division, Federal Fire Department

Anything with an open flame or a glowing tip should be treated with care and caution. Candles and burning incense have been the cause of numerous fires in military housing and billets.

I recall a situation where an Army home was lost and its occupants were sent to the hospital with injuries because of a child playing with a burning candle in his bedroom. There were many other indications that candles were left burning in this home because there was plenty of scorching on table tops and other furniture throughout the home.

Navy homes have also been lost because the occupants were burning candles. In one of the incidents, the occupant was not home at the time that the candle started the fire. There were no injuries. However, all of the family's possessions were lost.

Another home was lost, but more than the furniture and clothing were lost - this family lost a pet in the fire.

There have been past incidents in the barracks where the occupants were burning incense that caused com-

bustibles to ignite when the burning incense dropped out of its holder. The fires that evolved not only gutted the occupants' rooms, but also affected the whole complex, disrupting hundreds of lives and causing injuries to its occupants.

The individual's intentions of burning candles and incense are usually to create a mood, but the mood could rapidly change if the following precautions are not practiced:

- Nothing combustible/flammable should be left near the candle and/or incense.
- Have a secure, non-combustible base for the candle and/or incense.
- Avoid tipping from pets, children, wind blown curtains.
- Do not allow children to light candles and/or incense. These are not toys.
- As with matches and lighters, keep candles out of the reach of children.
- Never, ever leave the burning candle and/or incense unattended.
- Call 911 if you discover that there is a fire.

For more information, call Inspector Victor M. Flint of the Federal Fire Department's prevention division at 471-3303, ext. 633.

## Operation Sea Orbit



Official U.S. Navy photograph, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center

USS Enterprise (CVAN-65) underway in formation with USS Long Beach (CGN 9), center, and USS Bainbridge (DLGN 25), at top, probably in the Mediterranean Sea in June-July 1964. Members of Enterprise's crew are in a flight deck formation spelling out Albert Einstein's equation for nuclear energy. Planes on her flight deck include 9 A-5, 22 A-4, 10 F-4, 14 F-8 and 2 E-1 types. Those aft are parked in an arrowhead arrangement. The photograph was released for publication on July 30, 1964, upon the commencement of Operation "Sea Orbit," the circumnavigation of the world by Task Force One, made up of the Navy's first three nuclear-powered surface ships.



## Hawaii Navy News

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## Senior Justice visits former command



U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Byung K. Cho  
Associate Justice John Paul Stevens, senior justice on the U.S. Supreme Court and a former Sailor, signs the distinguished visitor log at Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet on July 17. It is his first visit since serving at Pearl Harbor as an intelligence officer in World War II. Stevens served in the Navy from 1942 to 1945 and was awarded the Bronze Star. His return visit to Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet was "a very moving experience. It brought back many memories." Stevens spoke at the 2007 U.S. 9th Circuit Judicial Conference and at a Hawai'i State Bar Association luncheon in Honolulu on July 19.

## Industrial waste treatment facility important to commands at Pearl Harbor

Denise Emsley

Naval Facilities Engineering Command  
Hawaii

The Navy's industrial waste treatment facility (IWTF) at Pearl Harbor is owned and operated by Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC), Hawai'i's public works department, Pearl Harbor environmental services branch.

Located near the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard's dry dock 4, this facility treats industrial wastes that are contaminated with organics, such as oily wastewater, metals and other materials, that make it unsuitable to be discharged into the Navy's wastewater system. Without the IWTF,

industrial waste could not be treated locally and would have to be shipped to the mainland for treatment or disposed of as a hazardous waste. Shipping, treatment and/or disposal would be very costly. The facility receives wastes from ships, submarines and shore facilities.

An example of wastes treated by IWTF:

- Oily wastes are processed by an oil water separator, resulting in removal of sludge and separating oil and water. The oil can be recycled and the water further treated, if necessary, so it can be discharged to the wastewater system.
- Metals can be removed by precipitation and settling.
- Organics can be removed by ultraviolet/peroxide treatment.

## USS Port Royal rises to INSURV challenge

Lt j.g. Rachael Pitchford

USS Port Royal Public  
Affairs (CG 73)

From painting and preserving to fixing equipment casualties, to ensuring every nut and bolt was properly in place, the crew of USS Port Royal (CG 73) worked tirelessly for the last nine months in preparation for the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV).

Preparations for Port Royal's INSURV began last fall as the chain of command established and enacted a plan to get the ship ready. The preparation time often overlapped with other events, such as a busy training cycle and a ballistic missile defense exercise, which resulted in many Sailors working well after sunset to ensure their equipment would be ready for inspection.

During the early morning of July 16, Port Royal Sailors waited in anticipation to show off their efforts to the inspectors. After a morning of looking at weapons, engines and radars, the ship met minimum equipment to take the ship to sea for further assessment.

Port Royal engineers demonstrated that the ship was capable of running her engines at full power and then conducted a full reversal "crash back." The Sailors in combat systems and operations departments showed off their ability to detect, track and (simulate) engage an inbound enemy air contact.

Between these demonstrations, inspectors walked through every space aboard Port Royal, including engine rooms, magazines and fan rooms.

Upon Port Royal's return to Pearl Harbor, the inspection continued. For two



U.S. Navy photo  
Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class (BM3) Jennifer Burton and BM2 Jesus Hernandez help prepare USS Port Royal in preparation for the ship's INSURV.

more days, programs were assessed, gear was inventoried, and equipment was scrutinized.

Capt. Michael Brannon, Board of Inspection and Survey chief of staff, briefed Port Royal's commanding officer, Capt. David Adler, and Rear Adm. T.G. Alexander, Commander Navy Region Hawai'i and Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, on the inspectors' findings.

"Port Royal did this [inspection] really well and did it with class," Brannon stated. "Getting ready for INSURV is a major effort, but we could tell that things just run well here...the junior Sailors, the folks doing the maintenance and the preservation, have really made a difference," said Brannon.

Due to Port Royal's compressed schedule, it was recommended that INSURV be delayed several months; however, Adler had faith that his Sailors would rise to the challenge of getting the ship ready. "The ship is in much better

shape than it was a few months ago," remarked Adler to the inspectors. Alexander applauded Port Royal, "I'd like to congratulate you. You've had a very tough schedule. The entire crew of Port Royal should be very proud of the success you have here."

Since weapon systems, engines and auxiliaries are at their peak condition, Port Royal's preparations for INSURV have also allowed her to maintain a high state of mission readiness so that she will be ready when called. The ship will depart Pearl Harbor for integration training with Expeditionary Strike Group Three prior to deployment later this fall.

Established by Congress in 1868, INSURV was designed to ensure that every ship of the U.S. fleet is properly equipped and maintained for prompt, reliable, sustained mission readiness at sea. Ships undergo INSURV once every five years in order to provide Congress this snapshot.

# Pearl Harbor Highlights



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 John W. Ciccarelli Jr.

The Sea Based X-band Radar (SBX) sits docked after returning to Naval Station Pearl Harbor for scheduled maintenance and planned system upgrades. Since departing Pearl Harbor last January, the SBX successfully demonstrated its ability to operate in the harsh winter weather conditions of the northern Pacific and participated in two tests of the ballistic missile defense system.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael A. Lantron

A child of a Navy Sailor puts on a backpack during a distribution of more than 100 backpacks to children of military personnel organized by the Hawaii chapter of Operation Homefront for the upcoming school year at the base chapel on Naval Station Pearl Harbor. The mission of Operation Homefront is to provide emergency assistance and morale to troops, the families they leave behind, and wounded warriors when they return home.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael A. Lantron

Sailors of the Pearl Harbor Motorcycle Association ride on Fa'rington Highway on Oahu. The association was created to promote motorcycle safety and improve the riding ability of Sailors to decrease the number of Sailor accidents due to improper safety and lack of knowledge on how to properly ride a motorcycle.

Cryptological Technician (collections) 1st Class (AW) Puni Alefaio (left) and Operational Specialist Seaman Apprentice Cornelius Donaldson, assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73), carry a stair stepper to the gyms on board as part of the on load and assembly of a new set of gym equipment.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael A. Lantron



Fire Controlman 2nd Class John Smedstad, assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73), puts a screw in a knee raise exercise machine as part of the on load and assembly of a new set of gym equipment. The equipment, provided by the regional Morale, Welfare and Recreation office at Pearl Harbor, is designed to improve the morale and fitness of the crew while on deployment.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael A. Lantron



# Marines, Sailors cope with combat stress

Marine Corps Base  
Hawai'i - Kaneohe Bay  
Public Affairs

Recent reporting has highlighted combat stress and how the military treats it, but there is much more to the story.

"As our Marines and Sailors return home from combat, our support programs must be on a wartime footing to meet their needs as they transition back to life here at home. These returning warriors have proven their dedication to corps and country and deserve our level best. We will take care of our own—that's what Marines do, period," said James T. Conway, Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps.

Marines and Sailors go through a myriad of training and counseling sessions before, during and after their deployments to cope with experiences related to combat. This also includes counseling opportunities for their spouse. Combat stress varies from person to person with varying degrees of symptoms.

"It is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have witnessed or been involved in highly stressful and life threatening situations. Sometimes the stress reactions appear immediately. Sometimes they appear hours, days, weeks, or even months later. They may last a few days, a few weeks, or a few months and occasionally longer," according to Marine Corps Community Services.

Hawai'i Marines and Sailors have sources of mental health access and counseling through medical providers,



U.S. Army photo by PFC Timothy J. Villareal  
BM John Christofferson with the Navy EOD Detachment 11 from Whidbey Island, Wash. shoots the 50 caliber sniper rifle at range ASP4 in Ad Diwaniyah, Iraq on Jan. 5, 2006.

mental health providers, chaplains and corpsmen. Before Marines and Sailors deploy to combat zones, medical specialists evaluate and identify patients at risk with pre-deployment screening. Unit chaplains are also used as a spiritual source for Marines and Sailors to turn to for help. Civilian counselors are available on base in the event that a Marine, Sailor, spouse or child needs support and guidance.

Operational stress control and readiness teams deploy to evaluate Marines and Sailors in their combat environment to continue the evaluation process. These teams not only deploy with the units, but they also return with the unit in order to continue their assessments.

Marine expeditionary units and regimental combat teams in the area of operations of a combat unit perform site training as well. This allows

for the screening of every Marine and Sailor to detect the potential of developing post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). If it is diagnosed soon, the Marine or Sailor suffering from PTSD will be able to receive medical and psychological treatment within a matter of hours to no more than a week depending on the issue.

Fellow Marines and Sailors who have had the mental health training can help iden-

tify the signs of combat stress or PTSD. Leaders at the small unit level continually observe their troops for signs of stress. There are four triggers for a mental health referral: self referral, family requests through medical personnel or the chain of command, coworkers and friends, and deployment reassessments. Medical providers, OSCAR teams and mental health providers provide post deployment assessments and

follow-up assessments.

U.S. Marine units in Hawai'i have been aware of the growing number of combat stress related cases nationwide and have been working to assess and evaluate patients efficiently and effectively. Hawai'i units have been evaluating Marines and Sailors since deployments to Iraq began in 2004. When 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment left Kuwait after their first deployment, Marines were treated and evaluated on ship during their transport back to Japan.

Currently, when Marines and Sailors return to Hawai'i, all service members are screened and evaluated for potential PTSD prior to arrival. After their homecoming, each Marine and Sailor may go on leave for 30 days. Marines and Sailors are assessed initially prior to arrival and again between 90 and 100 days after their return from a combat zone.

Third Marine Regiment consistently counsels, trains and offers help and support to all members of their unit and their families. This summer, they are eagerly awaiting the arrival of a dedicated Navy regimental psychiatrist in addition to their civilian and mental health specialists.

This command takes mental and physical health very seriously and works hard to foster an environment where it is okay to seek health for a stress-related injury. Through education, training, support, evaluations and treatment, Marine Corps Base Hawai'i and its units take positive action to provide for the needs of their Marines and Sailors.