

## USS Charlotte returns to Pearl Harbor

MC1 (SW) Cynthia Clark  
Commander, Submarine  
Force Pacific Fleet Public  
Affairs

USS Charlotte (SSN 766) returned to Naval Station Pearl Harbor on Oct. 24 after spending almost two years at Norfolk Naval Shipyard at Portsmouth, Va.

Charlotte departed Naval Station Pearl Harbor on Oct. 27, 2005 for Naval Station Norfolk, Va. before arriving at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Va. for a depot modernization period.

"The crew did great," said Cmdr. Bobby Pannell, Charlotte commanding officer. "After spending all that time in the shipyard, then

30 days underway and transiting the Panama Canal, they made it look a lot easier than it is which made my job a lot easier."

Many family members were waiting anxiously on the pier for their Sailors to return to paradise including one submariner's wife, who surprised her husband and flew from Norfolk to say aloha and surprise him

with some "exciting" news.

"Aside from not knowing I'm here, he also doesn't know he's going to be a daddy again," she said. "We're transferring to New York in December so my son and I weren't planning on making the trip. It wasn't until I found out what they had planned (for the homecoming) [that] I said, 'I have to be here.'"

As for her husband, Electrician's Mate 1st Class (SS) Joel Lohrmann admitted he was a bit "overwhelmed" with the surprise visit as well as the news, but, "seeing my family on the pier when I wasn't expecting it was awesome."

Not all Charlotte families were able to make the move to Virginia with their loved ones, including Pannell's

fiancée, so she was "very happy" to welcome them home. "Charlotte was a Pacific boat; it's always been a Pacific boat," she said. "Now she's back home where she belongs."

Pannell agreed. "It's been a two-year deployment for some of them, myself included, so everyone's been anxious the past week. It's great to be back home."



The USS Charlotte (SSN 766) comes home to Pearl Harbor on Oct. 24, after completing a two-year depot modernization period at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Va.

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Luciano Marano

## Successful missile defense intercept test takes place near Kauai, Hawai'i

Missile Defense Agency

Lt. General Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director, announced Oct. 26 that an important test of the terminal high altitude area defense (THAAD) element of the ballistic missile defense system was successfully completed at approximately 3:15 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (approximately 9:15 p.m. Hawai'i Standard Time). The test resulted in the intercept of a ballistic missile target at the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) off the island of Kauai in Hawai'i.

Preliminary indications are that planned flight test objectives were achieved. The intercept involved the "exo-atmospheric" (outside earth's atmosphere) "hit to kill" destruction of a unitary (non-separating) target representing a "SCUD"-type ballistic missile launched from a mobile platform positioned off Kauai in the Pacific Ocean. The interceptor was launched from the THAAD launch complex at the Pacific Missile Range Facility.

This was the 31st successful "hit to kill" intercept in 39 tests since 2001 by ground and sea-based interceptors against short, medium and long-range ballistic missile targets.

The primary objective of the test was to demonstrate integrated operations of the system, including radar, launcher, fire control equipment and procedures, and the interceptor to detect, track and destroy the target missile, using only the force of a direct collision between the interceptor and the target missile - "hit to kill" technology.

Other objectives included



Photo courtesy of Missile Defense Agency

A THAAD interceptor launches during a successful test of the THAAD element of the ballistic missile defense system, conducted at 9:15 p.m. Hawai'i Standard Time on Oct. 26.

demonstrating performance of an interceptor that had been "hot conditioned" or heated to a certain temperature before launching and demonstrating the ability of the interceptor to perform correctly in the "end game," or final seconds before target intercept. The ability of Soldiers from the U.S. Army to conduct launcher, fire control and radar operations was also observed.

This was the fourth successful intercept for the current THAAD program in four tests and the third test of the THAAD system at Pacific Missile Range Facility. The first test at the Pacific Missile Range Facility was a successful high-endoatmospheric (just inside earth's atmosphere) intercept of a SCUD-type unitary target in January of this year.

## Pearl Harbor welcomes British Sailors

A sailor on board British Royal Navy Ship, HMS Monmouth (F235), raises the British flag as she moors pierside Naval Station Pearl Harbor. Monmouth visited Pearl Harbor as part of her ongoing nine-month global deployment. Additional photos on page A-5

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 (AW/SW) James E. Foehl



 USS Russell Sailors help victims in need  
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 USS Russell, USS Port Royal conduct burials at sea  
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 Career Day shows Sailors opportunities  
See page A-2

 Hawai'i Sailors participate in defense training class  
See page B-1

## Career Day shows Sailors opportunities

Story and photo by  
MC3 Michael A. Lantron

Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

Navy career counselors from the Navy Counselor Association, Hawai'i Chapter, hosted a Career Day on Oct. 18 at Ward Field onboard Naval Station (NAVSTA) Pearl Harbor.

The event gave Hawai'i Sailors an opportunity to view various special programs and career possibilities available to them during their naval career.

"It's important to take advantage of what's here while we can," said Fireman Anthony Chavez, assigned to Pearl Harbor-based USS Lake Erie (CG 70). "Right now, I plan on a [Naval] career, but in case something happens, it's important to know the other options I have."

Operational Specialist Seaman Christopher Tucker, also assigned to Lake Erie, enjoyed the various booths at Career Day and the amount of possibilities available to him.

"It was great to see all the different career options," said Tucker. "This showed me the various directions I can take in my Navy career and it's hard to make a choice."

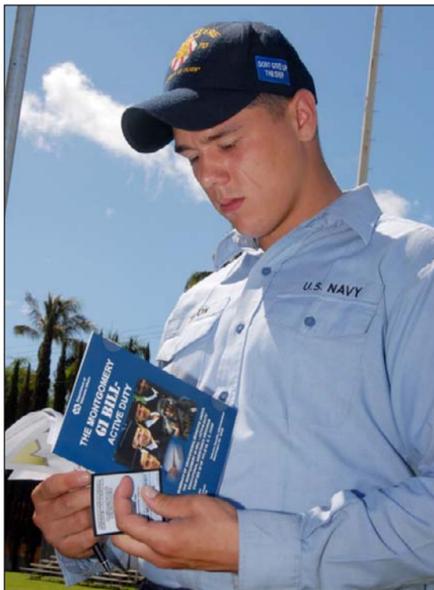
While all Sailors were invited to attend, a key focus for the day's events were junior Sailors who are unsure about the direction they plan to take in their careers.

"Events like this are a great retention tool for the younger Sailors," said Navy Counselor 1st Class (SW/AW) Khafre Quintall, treasurer for the Navy Counselor Association Hawai'i, assigned to Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific. "The whole day was made to have Sailors come away saying I didn't know anything about this and ask their career counselors for information on that program."

By having a variety of programs in one place, Career Day allowed Sailors to compare the various programs and make choices based on what they learned throughout the day.

"We were able to shed some light on some of the lesser-known programs the Navy has to offer," said Quintall. "Sailors may love the rate they're in, but this may allow them to make some better career decisions."

Some of the fields represented at the event were Navy divers, medical, dental, master-at-arms and explosive ordnance disposal. Various Hawai'i colleges from the Navy College office on board NAVSTA Pearl



Seaman Recruit James Tipton, assigned to USS Lake Erie (CG 70), reviews a pamphlet on the Montgomery G.I. Bill during Career Day on Oct. 18 at Ward Field onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor. The event allowed Hawai'i Sailors a chance to view various special programs and career possibilities available to them during their naval careers.

Harbor were also available to provide information.

"By having a variety of programs, it allows the Sailors to choose from a wide aspect of career choices rather than only changing their rate," said Quintall.

According to Navy Diver 2nd Class (SW/DV) Nathan Kraleman, assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One (MDSU) 1 and a representative for Navy divers at the event, the event was not about converting people to a certain job, but to help Sailors grasp a better idea of all the options available to them.

"Today was a day where we could show everything the Navy has to offer," said Kraleman. "It is important to get the information out there so Sailors don't put a limit on their career."

For more information on Navy special programs and other career advice, contact the NAVSTA career counselor officer at 573-2269.

## USS Russell Sailors help victims in need

Story and photo by  
Ensign Theresa Donnelly

USS Russell (DDG 59)  
Public Affairs

More than 60 USS Russell (DDG 59) Sailors donated their time Oct. 23-24 to help with relief efforts directed toward the victims of the California wildfires that raged throughout southern California.

The Aegis guided-missile destroyer has been in port at Naval Base San Diego since Oct. 15 and is making preparations to participate in Composite Training Unit Exercise, a large-scale series of training scenarios with the Abraham Lincoln Strike Group.

Many military members were forced to evacuate their homes as a precautionary measure should the fires spread to their neighborhood. Both the Naval Station San Diego base and Naval Station North Island set up evacuation centers designed to help those that fled their homes.

Russell, along with several other naval vessels moored in the area, sent volunteers to help Naval Station San Diego set up the evacuation efforts and assist with getting the military members checked in. Families arrived on Oct. 22, carrying what little belongings they could quickly pack as well as their pets.

The Sailors arrived just as things were getting hectic and when the base needed personnel to perform a variety of different tasks. The gym, fitness center and racquetball courts were all converted into evacuation centers with more than 300 cots. The centers afforded a place for military members

and their family members to sleep. Donations of food, water and toiletries lined the gymnasium as other Sailors and family members dropped off supplies for the evacuees.

Russell crew members assembled the cots, helped carry donations to the centers, and assisted with general duties such as general cleanliness and sorting relief goods. Many Sailors worked more than 12 hours of off duty time making sure that operations within the center functioned smoothly.

When asked, most of Russell's Sailors said they volunteered in large numbers due to the fact that they felt a civic responsibility to help those in need.

"I just wanted to do my part to help," said Seaman Zachary Frith. "I know that if I were in that position, I would want that help, too."

While at the center, Lt. j.g. Tim Letts, Russell's aux-

iliary officer, "established a system to track all volunteers and equally distributed them to shift rotation," said Senior Chief Electrician's Mate Bienvenido Go from Naval Station San Diego Port Operations. "He made a huge turn around on the order of the operation," he added.

Throughout the night and well into the following day, Sailors from several ships moored in San Diego joined in the relief efforts.

"I thought it was great to go out and be a part of the community, helping those in need," said Fire Controlman 3rd Class Steven Johndrow.

"Russell's assistance helped us to effectively perform our mission," said Go.

"Without the volunteers, there's no way we could have expeditiously provided temporary refuge and comfort to the 550 evacuees during the peak time of the disaster."



More than 300,000 acres have been destroyed by the wildfires.

# Hawai'i Navy News Editorial

## Eliminate the 'buy now, pay later' mindset



**FLTCM (SW/SS) Rick West**

*Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command*

The holiday season is quickly approaching and many of you will just now start making financial choices with repercussions that could last long after the holiday decorations come down...and for some, a lifetime. If you spend money like there is no tomorrow, I hate to tell you, but

tomorrow will be here before you know it! Tomorrow comes in the form of large credit card bills, bigger monthly payments on existing debt, and the potential abandonment of savings plans because you miscalculated to plan for the added bills.

I spend a lot of time advising you on financial health. One of my many professional aspirations is to improve the financial health of every Sailor in the fleet.

Here's what I urge you to ask yourself: If you don't have enough money saved up for the holidays this year and know you will dig yourself further in debt because of it, what makes you think you'll be in better financial shape 10 months from now when the next holiday season is upon us?

Honestly, the odds are you'll be worse off than last year because statistics indicate most of us spend more than we make. Thus, the slippery slope to financial trouble gets steeper and steeper. Fortunately, there is potential hope...but it takes a plan and some discipline.

Let's start with a question.

What is financial health? The question, while simple, is not easily answered. It's not just a measure of how much money you have in your wallet or your savings account. Moreover, it's a measure of your entire financial world, a financial world that began as soon as you entered the workforce (which could be as early as 16 years old for some of you).

Financial institutions gauge your financial health by consulting your credit report and then assigning you a score. Your credit report is like a lifetime record of your spending and payment history. It also determines your borrowing power. When lenders review your credit report, there are four areas of focus: credit, net worth, assets and economy.

Obviously, your credit is the primary focal point. It represents your ability to keep your promise to make payments on time. If you have not reviewed your credit report, you should. It is not just available to lenders; you have a right to review it. There are companies that offer reports from one or all

three of the major credit reporting bureaus. Contact your command financial advisor, talk with your division/department leading chief petty officer (LCPO), your financial advisor, or your bank or credit union for more information on obtaining your report.

Here are a few common sense credit tips that might help you pare down your debt this year and put you in a better position to enjoy this year's holiday season:

- Make bill payments as early as possible. Try to never make a late payment.
- Close any accounts that you do not use. Having too many revolving credit lines open actually hurts your credit score. Also, dormant accounts are susceptible to identity theft, particularly by someone using an account that you don't routinely monitor.
- Obtain more credit only if you spend less each month than your take home pay.
- Only borrow within your means.
- Try to pay more than just the interest on your credit accounts. Paying down the

principle is the only way to get to the finish line.

The above is not an all-inclusive list. If you live payday to payday, without saving any of your money, I'm betting there are other ways you can help yourself. First, work up a budget and then live by it. Every budget analyst suggests you pay yourself first and then work up the rest. Unfortunately, I think many of you think that means pay your bills and then spend all the rest. That's not the point. The goal of a budget is to illustrate your spending habits and then help you develop a plan to save, pay your bills, and still have some money to enjoy life.

Shipmates, keep in mind that in all of your formal schooling and training, most of you have never had any formal schooling on financial health. For most of us, we learn as we go, making lots of mistakes. Let me tell you, the older you get and the more senior you become, the penalties for not paying attention to your financial health become more painful. Now is the time for you to devote time and energy to

making sure you are fully in control of your financial future.

The holiday season can lose its luster if you can't afford to purchase nice gifts, go on leave, or treat yourself or family to something special. Preparing for the holidays starts early, not in November. If you set a reasonable savings goal today, you just might smile a little more in the months to come. Good luck and if you have questions about your financial health, contact your chief, your command financial specialist and/or the Navy Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC). FFSC has trained professionals and the resources to help you get back on the road to financial success.

**Did you know:** Debt is the number one reason personnel lose their security clearance and thereby lose their job.

**Fleet tip:** If you have never been to FFSC to see what they offer, I recommend you do. They are there to help. Keep charging and keep up the great work. Stay healthy. Stay fit. Stay Navy.

Commentary

### For Your Security and Safety

Karen S. Spangler, Editor

karen.spangler@navy.mil



## Defensive driving... drive to survive

**Karen S. Spangler**

*Editor*

Hardly a day goes by that Hawai'i's highways aren't littered with fender benders and minor mishaps. Frequently, drivers and their passengers are seriously injured or killed in motor vehicle accidents.

In order to drive to survive, defensive driving is vital.

The cardinal rule for all drivers is: "Don't drink and drive." But despite the cautions that have been issued and the grim statistics, this important rule is frequently ignored. To protect yourself from such drivers, you need to practice defensive driving.

Drivers who drive defensively can greatly increase their potential for avoiding accidents. As drivers navigate the roads and highways, defensive driving offers some protection against drivers who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or drivers who are operating their vehicles recklessly or carelessly.

The Naval Safety Center offers the following guidelines for defensive driving:

- Know how to get where you're going. This will help you avoid being distracted by having to look for street names or hard-to-see landmarks.

- Don't tailgate, and if someone is tailgating you, stay calm and let them pass.

- Under good conditions, the two-second rule provides enough distance between cars. Increase this distance to three or four seconds when it is raining, snowing or foggy.

- Many things can distract you while you drive. Pull over if you have to eat, talk on a cell phone, or write notes.

- Watch out for other drivers who are weaving, going too fast or too slow, and ignoring signals. If someone like this is behind you, turn off as soon as you can and let them move on.

- If you have to turn, get in the correct lane well in advance; don't wait until the last minute.

- Always use your turn signals in traffic and when getting on or off a highway.

- When passing, check your mirrors but don't trust them entirely - look over your shoulder, too.

- Be patient. Leave a little early so you aren't in a hurry.

- Don't get emotional. Driving somewhere is a neutral task like anything else. The goal is to arrive safely. Idiot drivers are a hazard, but don't take them personally.

Honolulu Police Department officials stress the important of "driving with aloha" for motor vehicle operators in Hawai'i. They advise drivers to "cage the rage" and show the "aloha spirit" when driving by being courteous and kind and obeying all traffic laws.

## Heritage: defining our past, guiding our future



Chief petty officers assigned to Naval Station Pearl Harbor pose in front of gun turret number one onboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial while wearing World War II-era khaki uniforms, which are the basis for the upcoming prototype service dress khaki uniform.

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

### Hawai'i Navy News

**Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i**

Rear Adm. T. G. Alexander

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Capt. Donald D. Hodge

**Director, Public Affairs - Agnes Tauyan**

**Deputy Public Affairs officer - Terri Kojima**

**Managing Editor - MCC (SW/AW) David Rush**

**Leading Petty Officer -**

MC1 (AW/SW) James Foehl

**Editor - Karen Spangler**

**Staff Writer - MC3 Michael A. Lantron**

**Technical Adviser - Joe Novotny**

**Layout/Design - Tony Verceluz**

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# USS Russell, USS Port Royal conduct burials at sea

**Ensign Theresa Donnelly**  
*USS Russell (DDG 59)*  
 Public Affairs and  
**Ensign Rachael Pitchford**  
*USS Port Royal (CG 73)*  
 Public Affairs

The Sailors from two Pearl Harbor-based ships, USS Russell (DDG 59) and USS Port Royal (CG 73), recently performed burials at sea for military veterans.

On Oct. 26-27, the crew of Russell performed several burials at sea, honoring the service of six deceased service members.

The time-honored ceremony took place on the ship's flight deck off the coast of southern California and gave crew members the opportunity to evoke a naval tradition that spans centuries.

According to the Naval Historical Center, the ceremonial practice dates back as long as people have gone to sea. Since World War II, burials at sea have been a common practice not only for service members and veterans, but also for family members.

Chaplain Lt. Donald Twist facilitated the solemn occasion as the ceremony was divided into a religious and military portion. The military tailors the religious portion to the particulars of the deceased member's faith. Five of the burials were Protestant services and the remaining service was a Catholic at sea disposition.

"I have been involved in several of these ceremonies before," Twist said. "But Russell's ceremony was by far one of the most well executed burials at sea that I have had the privilege to be a part of."

This was their first time participating in the at sea tribute for many of the ship's crew. "It's the first time in my four years onboard that we have conduct-



Photo illustration

Sailors from USS Russell (DDG 59) (top two photos) and USS Port Royal (CG 73) held burials at sea ceremonies to honor military veterans.

ed the ceremony," said Gunner's Mate 1st Class Timothy Richoway. "I really wanted to be part of this once in a lifetime experience," he added.

The ceremonies were conducted in the early afternoon hours over a two-day period. On both days, the sun peeked

through the clouds, shining off the fantail and providing a stunning backdrop.

The ceremony included military honors with the seven-member Russell rifle guard firing three volleys and "Taps" was played at the end of each committal.

Boatswain's Mate 3rd

Class Bryan Caffiero carried the commemorative flag, which will later be given to the families to mark the occasion. During the ceremony, he presented the flag to Russell's commanding officer, Cmdr. Brad Cooper.

"I was honored to have that role in the event," Caffiero

remarked. "I had so much pride in what I was doing."

Electronics Technician 3rd Class Tyler Kirkland taped the event and edited the DVD, which was underscored to music and will be given to each of the families. Along with the DVD and flag, each family will receive a photo CD,

a chart annotating the latitude and longitude of the burial position, shells from the rifle salute, and a letter of condolence from the commanding officer.

"I was really happy to be a part of something so meaningful and give back to Sailors that have gone before me," said Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Scott McCormick.

Russell is currently underway operating with the USS Abraham Lincoln StrikeGroup for Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) and will join the carrier on its deployment early next year.

On Oct. 4, the steaming Ensign flying over Port Royal was lowered to half mast as the boatswain's mate of the watch piped, "All hands, bury the dead." Sailors stood at attention in crisp, white uniforms on the fantail as Port Royal's rifle squad simultaneously presented arms and Chaplain Lt. Mark Haley commenced a burial at sea ceremony for 10 veterans.

During the ceremony, the veterans' remains were scattered into the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean. Capt. David Adler, Port Royal's commanding officer, saluted as the melody of "Eternal Father" filled the air above the crests of the Pacific waves and Master-at-Arms Chief Dexter Carr committed their ashes to the deep.

"The sea was calm with a beautiful sun shining day," said Haley. "Under these conditions, the religious and military ceremony was conducted with great dignity." At the conclusion of the ceremony, Port Royal's seven-man rifle squad fired three volleys each for a 21-gun salute in honor of the departed veterans.

## STORY IDEAS?

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

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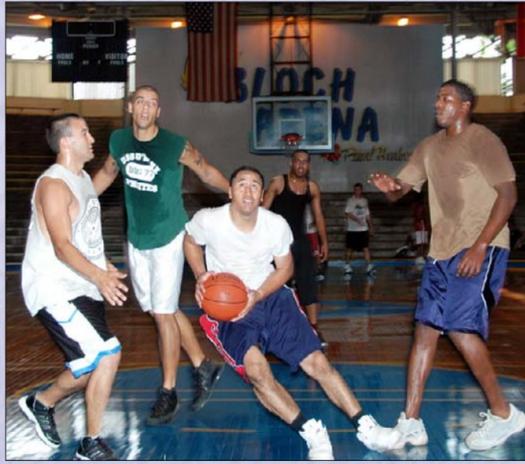
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# Pearl Harbor Highlights

Operations Specialist 3rd Class Solomon Pulu, assigned to USS Chafee (DDG 90), goes for a shot against Sailors assigned to USS O'Kane (DDG 77). Chafee, O'Kane, and other surface ships homeported at Pearl Harbor participated in the 3-on-3 basketball tournament as part of Surface Line Week (SLW) 2007. SLW runs from Oct. 26 - Nov. 2 and promotes teamwork, camaraderie and various rating skills.

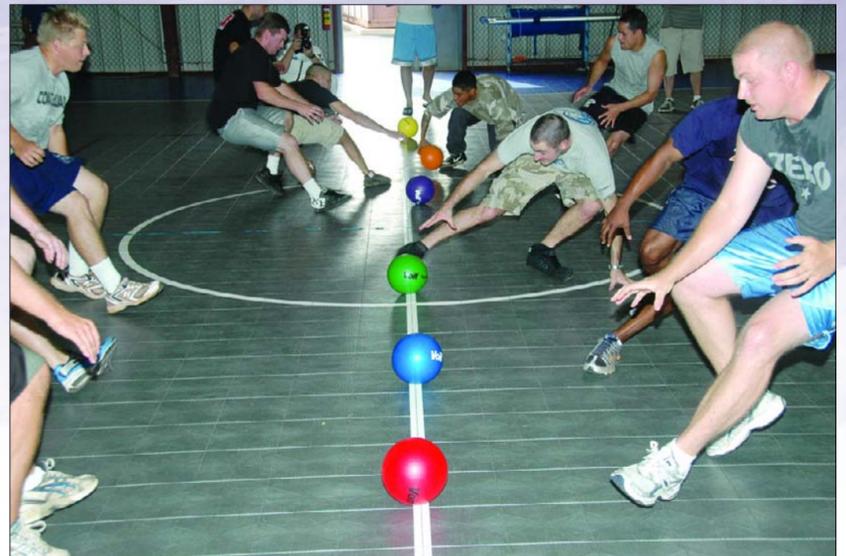
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 David N. Dexter



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 David N. Dexter  
Operations Specialist 3rd Class Solomon Pulu, assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based USS Chafee (DDG 90), goes for a shot against Sailors assigned to the Pearl-Harbor-based USS O'Kane (DDG 77).



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 David N. Dexter  
Fire Controlman 2nd Class Kenny Harvell, assigned to USS O'Kane (DDG 77), attempts to hit an opponent during a double-elimination dodge ball tournament at Bloch Arena Annex Gym onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor as part of Surface Line Week (SLW) 2007. SLW, taking place from Oct. 26 to Nov. 2, puts Sailors assigned to surface ships homeported in Pearl Harbor against each other in friendly competition to promote camaraderie, rating skill development and teamwork.



U.S. Navy Photo by MC3 David N. Dexter  
U.S. Coast Guard Sailors, assigned to the Honolulu-based, Hamilton-class high-endurance cutter USCGC Jarvis (WHEC 725), race for dodge balls against Sailors assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60), during a double-elimination dodge ball tournament on board Naval Station Pearl Harbor as part of Surface Line Week (SLW) 2007.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael A. Lantron  
Operational Specialist 2nd Class John Dahlgren, a search and rescue (SAR) swimmer assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based USS Hopper (DDG 70), pulls simulated victim Quartermaster 2nd Class David George, also a SAR swimmer assigned to Hopper, to safety during the SAR swimmer event at Richardson Pool as part of Surface Line Week (SLW) 2007. SLW, being held from Oct. 26 to Nov. 2, puts Sailors assigned to surface ships home-ported at Pearl Harbor against each other in friendly competition to promote camaraderie, rating skill development and team work.



British Royal Navy sailors on board HMS Monmouth (F235) perform line handlers as the ship moors pier-side Naval Station Pearl Harbor. Monmouth visited Pearl Harbor as part of her ongoing nine-month global deployment.

(Below) The Pearl Harbor-based guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG 70) sits moored as British Royal Navy Ship, HMS Monmouth (F235), makes her way pierside to Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

U.S. Navy photos by M1 (AW/SW) James E. Foehl



# Reuben James visits Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

Story and photo by  
Ensign Fallon Rossi

USS Reuben James (FFG 57) Public Affairs

The Pearl Harbor-based frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57) arrived in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia on Oct. 9 for a scheduled port visit.

Cmdr. Rich Haidvogel, Reuben James commanding officer, said the visit while deployed to the Seventh Fleet area of responsibility helped strengthen the relationship between the U.S. Navy and Malaysia and gave his crew some much deserved time off.

"We really enjoyed spending some time in Kota Kinabalu," he said. "This port visit presented a golden opportunity for us to enjoy some of the customs and traditions of Malaysia while enhancing our growing relationship of peace and prosperity."

A reception onboard Reuben James was held for guests from the embassy, mayor's office and



Sailors from USS Reuben James (FFG 57) pose with students from Batik Harapan in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, a special education school for boys, on Oct. 9 after delivering several Project Handclasp items needed by the school.

Rotary Club.

Sailors had the opportunity to see the sights and interact with Malaysian citizens. The ship's morale, welfare and recreation divi-

sion organized tours and community relations projects.

While in port, Reuben James Sailors participated in a variety of activities

such as rafting, hiking, snorkeling and scuba diving.

"I was really excited to pull in [to the port of Kinabalu]," said Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Sean Cruz. "We went white water rafting and it was a lot of fun."

Community relations projects included visits to the Don Bosco, a teen girls school near Mt. Kinabalu, and Batik Harapan, an all boys special education school, to deliver Project Handclasp items. The Sailors also participated in a clean-up of the Likas River.

"Our purpose was not to clean the entire river, but to show that we care about it," said Gunner's Mate 3rd Class James Smith. "Picking up trash heightened the environmental awareness of the local people and many of them came out of their houses to help us."

Reuben James is currently deployed in the Western Pacific.



U.S. Navy photo by ETC (SS) William R. Purdell

Cmdr. Gene P Sievers is piped ashore after being relieved as commanding officer of USS Columbia (SSN 771) at a change of command ceremony at Naval Station Pearl Harbor on Oct. 26.

## Blakely relieves Sievers as USS Columbia CO

MC1 (SW) Cynthia Clark

Commander, Submarine Force Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

Cmdr. Craig Blakely relieved Cmdr. Gene Sievers as commanding officer of the submarine USS Columbia (SSN 771) in a ceremony Oct. 26 at Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

Capt. David Marquet, former Commander, Submarine Squadron Three and guest speaker at the event, attributed Columbia's successes during Sievers' tenure as commanding officer to his "tremendous energy, renewed dedication, high standards and his willingness to get the work done."

"As a result of Cmdr. Sievers and his crew, Columbia was ready when called," said Marquet. "The work that Cmdr. Sievers and the Columbia crew have accomplished has been extraordinary. With a reflection of the record of what Columbia has accomplished these past few years ... I personally, and your nation, owe you a profound debt of gratitude."

Prior to the guest speaker's

remarks, Capt. Jeffrey Powers, Commander, Submarine Squadron Seven, presented Sievers with the Meritorious Service Medal.

After assuming command in November 2004, Sievers brought Columbia from the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard to operational status when Columbia participated in Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2006 and an unscheduled surge deployment as well as departing for its scheduled deployment 45 days early.

Columbia also received the Arleigh Burke award for the most improved operational unit in the Pacific Fleet and the Submarine Squadron Three Battle Efficiency Award in 2005.

Sievers thanked his crew for their abilities and dedication, as well as his fellow commanding officers in the submarine community.

"Even the best submarine we sail ... takes a talented crew of men skilled in the art of submarine warfare," he said. "I have been blessed with such talent throughout my tour. I am deeply proud to serve in a warfare com-

munity that serves, even as we speak, in forward areas alone and unafraid. I have a sense of safety in the fact I know if it goes bump in the night, one of the men I serve in command with is out there watching it, recording it, and figuring out how to defeat it."

While assuming command of Columbia, Blakely gave his new crew the task to honor the cities in Illinois, Missouri and South Carolina for which the submarine is named.

"I am proud to take over this dedicated and well-trained crew," he said. "I will challenge you every day to improve yourself in the operation of Columbia and honor these great cities. There will be good days and not so good days, but I will always be behind you."

Sievers' next tour is as senior member of the training and evaluation team on the staff of Commander, Submarine Force in Norfolk, Va. His sea tours include USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720), USS Rhode Island (SSBN 740) (Blue) and USS George Bancroft (SSBN 643) (Gold.) He is a 1987 graduate of West Virginia University.



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Luciano Marano

Cmdr. Nelson P Hildreth is piped ashore after being relieved as commanding officer of USS La Jolla (SSN 701) during a change of command ceremony on Oct. 25 at Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

## Sampson takes La Jolla helm

MC1 (SW) Cynthia Clark

Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

Cmdr. Douglas Sampson relieved Cmdr. Nelson Hildreth as commanding officer of the submarine USS La Jolla (SSN 701) during a ceremony Oct. 25 at Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

Capt. James Ransom, director of operations, Commander, Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet, guest speaker at the event, made everyone in attendance aware of the caliber of the crew on board La Jolla, a direct reflection of a commanding officer.

"(Hildreth) makes submarining fun and rewarding for the whole crew," said Ransom. "Operational excellence and a motivating, positive command climate is a great combination. Team La Jolla gets the job done and they get it done right."

After Ransom's comments, he presented Hildreth with his third Meritorious Service Medal.

After assuming command in October 2005, Hildreth led La Jolla through two successful Western Pacific deployments as well as two submarine command course operations, training

future Pacific Fleet submarine commanding and executive officers. La Jolla also received the Battle Efficiency Award in 2005 and 2006.

Hildreth thanked his crew for giving him the opportunity to experience what most naval officers dream of their entire career. He also thanked Shirley Wilson, USS La Jolla's sponsor, for her support of the submarine.

"La Jolla's crew is the finest group of hard working, dedicated Sailors a commanding officer could hope to have," he said. "They respond to any challenge and just keep getting the job done."

While assuming command of La Jolla, Sampson told his new crew he is looking forward to spending the next two years with them.

"We are here by choice," he said. "To have been chosen to lead you humbles me."

Hildreth's next tour is as deputy commander for training on the staff of Commander, Submarine Squadron Three, also at Pearl Harbor. His sea tours include USS Miami (SSN 755), USS Honolulu (SSN 718) and USS Puffer (SSN 652). He is a 1987 graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y.