

Hawai'i Navy News

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Hawai'i celebrates Military Appreciation Month

MC3 (AW) Eric J. Cutright

Fleet Public Affairs Center
Detachment Hawai'i

The 23rd annual Hawai'i Military Appreciation Month kicked off April 24 with an opening ceremony at the Battleship Missouri (BB 63) Memorial on Ford Island.

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i, led by the Military Affairs Council, has planned a month-long celebration to show appreciation and express "mahalo" to Hawai'i's service members.

"I think Hawai'i has a great tradition of support for the military," said Adm. Robert F. Willard, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet. "Hawai'i, in fact, is one of our states [whose citizens] volunteer into our military in great numbers, a very high percentage, so they have a strong relationship with our military simply because many of them have served or are continuing to serve and we think that's a wonderful tribute to this state."

Presently, Pearl Harbor-based submarines and ships are on six-month deployments with aircraft carrier groups as far away as the Persian Gulf to the waters off North Korea. The Air Force continues to rotate combat crews to air expeditionary units on overseas bases and deploys Airmen to augment Soldiers and Marines. There are 4,000 Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division and its 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team deployed to Iraq. There are about 1,000 Marines from the 3rd Marine Regiment at Marine Corps Base Hawai'i - Kaneohe deploying in



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Paul D. Homnick

The Battleship Missouri Memorial on Ford Island is illuminated in red, white and blue for the 23rd annual Hawai'i Military Appreciation Month opening ceremony on April 24. The ceremony kicked off a month-long celebration to express appreciation and "mahalo" to Hawai'i's service members for their every day sacrifices here and abroad.

seven-month cycles.

Thousands of Hawai'i's service members are scheduled to deploy to combat zones throughout the year in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as other parts of the world in the ongoing war against global terrorism.

"Tens of thousands of Soldiers and Marines have gone forward to support our country's aims in Operation Iraqi Freedom and in Operation Enduring Freedom; too many have not come home," said Adm. Timothy Keating, commander

of U.S. Pacific Command. "We have had hundreds of airplanes and thousands of Airman go forward; carrier strike groups and expeditionary strike groups pass through Oahu to points west." U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet Band

and the Air Force's "Hana Hou Combo" band performed music for the service members following the ceremony. Free food and drinks were also provided for those in attendance by some of Hawai'i's restaurants and caterers.

"It was a really nice ceremony that the state chamber of commerce, governor, mayor and everybody put on for all the military serving here in Hawai'i right now. It's nice to be recognized for what we do," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Stanley Miller, assigned to Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

"Tonight was an honor for all the military personnel in Hawai'i. The governor and Adm. Keating really gave great speeches on how grateful they are for all the military personnel around here," said Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Demetrius Farrie, assigned to Naval Computer and Telecommunications Master Station Pacific. "I felt very honored to be here and it just motivates me every day to do the things I do every day and it's just a great honor to be here."

A few of the events that have been planned throughout May and early June to honor military personnel include:

A combined military band concert is scheduled for May 16 at the Blaisdell Concert Hall. "Living History Day" will be May 17 at the Hawai'i Army Museum at Fort DeRussy. Other activities will include a military recognition luncheon at the Hilton Hawaiian Village on May 22 and USO Military Day at the Honolulu Zoo on June 28.



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

Denny Watts, president and chief executive officer for Watts Construction; Capt. Janet Stewart, commanding officer of U.S. Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Pacific (NCTAMSPAC); Rear Adm. T.G. Alexander, commander of Navy Region Hawai'i and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific; and Linda Newton, deputy chief of staff for command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C4I) and command information officer for U.S. Pacific Fleet, break ground during a ceremony for the new communications center at NCTAMSPAC.

Navy holds groundbreaking for new NCTAMS PAC communications center

Denise Emsley

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Hawai'i Public Affairs

The Navy held a groundbreaking ceremony on April 25 at Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Pacific (NCTAMS PAC) in Wahiawa for a new, technologically advanced communications center.

The 63,560 square foot communications center building will be located on the north-eastern end of NCTAMS PAC. Currently, the area is an open,

grassy field which had hosted several radio antennas prior to their relocation to facilitate the start of construction. The new structure will replace building 294, erected in 1959, which can no longer meet today's modern communication equipment and operational needs.

"Our customers, who span 17 times zones across the globe, from Patuxent River, Md. to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, will reap the benefits of our new facility," said Capt. Janet Stewart, commanding officer, NCTAMS PAC. "It will not only provide them with state-of-the-art communications equipment, it

will also serve to minimize outages and reduce the time required to restore services when outages do occur. Ultimately, our new operations building will allow the men and women of NCTAMS PAC to continue to do what we do best - to provide the best customer service to our customers - the warfighter," she explained.

When completed, the project will provide NCTAMS PAC with a modern, safe, secure, efficient and adaptable facility, enhancing mission operations. It will also consolidate opera-

See NCTAMS PAC, A-2

Senior leaders 'jump-start' joint-basing process

Story and photo by
Jeff Nicolay

Editor, Hickam Kukini

Acknowledging a challenging road ahead, the senior leaders of both installations held a Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam jump-start meeting at Hickam Memorial Theater on April 29.

Welcoming more than 100 military and civilian members of both bases, event emcee Glen B. Bailey, plans and programs support agreements chief at 15th Airlift Wing, (AW) introduced Col. J.J. Torres, 15 AW commander. Torres opened the hour-long meeting by reminding the attendees, many of whom have and will continue to chart Pearl Harbor and Hickam's joint-base future, of the importance of their efforts.

"(The joint-basing decisions) we make will set the stage for how Pacific warfighters do their business," he said. "We have one chance to do this; after that, it's written."

Pointing out that "no one was hired (specifically) to handle joint-basing issues and decisions," the colonel noted that at the same time that many Team Hickam members are busy with this task over the next year, they also face an additional challenge.

"Beyond the decisions we have to make and submit to the (Office of the Secretary of Defense) (OSD) by next summer, we also have an (operational readiness inspection)



Ben Borth, 15th Mission Support Group deputy commander, goes over key issues facing Pearl Harbor-Hickam joint-basing work groups over the next year during a joint base jump-start meeting at Hickam Memorial Theater on April 29.

scheduled for February '09," he said. "So the pressure's on and failure is not an option in either endeavor."

Taking the stage after Torres, his Pearl Harbor counterpart, Capt. Taylor Skardon, Pearl Harbor Naval Station commander, put the joint-basing effort into perspective by recalling the inter-service rivalries surrounding the creation of a separate Air Force in 1947. He discussed the actions of two officers as an example of how military members can rise above service rivalries to do what is best for the people they serve.

"In 1947, the Navy fought (President) Truman when he wanted to integrate separate commands under the Department of Defense (the Department of the Navy had been cabinet-level at that time)," he said. "Adm. Forrest

Sherman and Gen. Lauris Norstad had to give up their own service issues and think about the security of the nation. Today, more than 60 years later, we're in the same boat. This is a very important day for our base, our partners and our nation. If we don't do joint basing right, our nation will suffer."

Following the broad-strokes comments of their respective commanders, Ryan Ide, Navy Region Hawai'i N5, and Ben Borth, 15th Mission Support Group deputy commander, got into specifics with the help of a PowerPoint presentation.

Ide led off, noting that members of both bases needed to arrive at a "common understanding of where we are and where we need to be."

From there, he discussed

See JOINT BASING, A-2



Coughlin takes helm of USS Olympia
See page A-2



USS Port Royal achieves Retention Excellence Award See page A-4



Pacific Fleet Band prepares for Pacific Partnership 2008 See page A-3



MWR Summer Camps 2008
See page B-1

Coughlin takes helm of USS Olympia

MC1 (SW) Cynthia Clark

Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs Office

Cmdr. Michael Coughlin relieved Cmdr. James Horten as commanding officer of USS Olympia (SSN 717) in a ceremony at the Battleship Missouri Memorial on April 25.

Capt. (Navy retired) John Cohoon Jr., guest speaker at the event, served with Horten on two different occasions and mentioned it was the crew's hard work and vision that were the reason for his success.

"Cmdr. Horten practices what I like to call 'radical leadership,'" said Cohoon. "His vision is evident in the way the crew carries themselves. They stand up, hold their head up, they're professional, they meet and conquer all obstacles in their way. You have a great reputation and I'm glad I had a chance to get to know you."

Following the guest speaker's remarks, Cohoon presented Horten with his second Meritorious Service Medal.

Since assuming command in August 2005, Horten led Olympia through the start of



Photo illustration

Cmdr. Michael Coughlin relieved Cmdr. James Horten as commanding officer of USS Olympia (SSN 717) in a ceremony at the Battleship Missouri Memorial on April 25.

"the most arduous of shipyard periods," as well as coming out of dry dock one week earlier than scheduled. During his command tenure, his crew completed six individual augmentations in support of the global war on terrorism as well as provided assistance to deploying submarines on the waterfront. Olympia also received the Pacific Fleet Retention Excellence Award.

In his closing remarks, Horten thanked his crew for their dedication and hard work and gave them one last "direct order." "For the past 32 months, my name and professional reputation have been attached to the actions and accomplishments of these fine gentlemen on my left," he said. "My absolute last direct order to the entire crew is 'go and make our ship better.'"

While assuming command, Coughlin told his crew, "It is a high privilege to be back on a team of submarine professionals. I'm excited to be your new captain and look forward to serving with each of you."

Horten's sea commands include USS Maine (SSBN 741) Blue, USS Buffalo (SSN 715) and USS Houston (SSN 713). He is a 1988 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy.

Joint basing plans will 'set the stage'

Continued from A-1

"big-picture milestones" and, referring to slides on screen, mapped out target working group schedules and specific due dates.

Ide also encouraged working group members to refer to the Commander, Naval Installation Command (CNIC) portal, which maintains a SharePoint Web site with all necessary information relating to Pearl Harbor-Hickam joint basing.

As part of his presentation, Borth stressed that these working groups should give thought to contingency planning with respect to their recommendations.

"We cannot take it as an assumption that a variance (from published OSD guidelines) is going to be approved," he said. "Consider how you can submit a variance with a plan to (accomplish a similar outcome) without a variance."

In his conclusion, which was punctuated by a cleverly "photoshopped" image of a C-17 Globemaster landing on a carrier, Borth echoed Ide's comments on the importance of the CNIC portal, adding

that service members should notify tech support personnel if they are unable to log on to the site.

Following Borth's presentation, Bailey opened a brief question-and-answer session during which attendees sought clarification on specific issues including the impact to the installation support services provided to the shipyard, post-joint base civilian cuts and a smattering of rumors.

On the latter subject, Borth stressed the importance of communication. "We'd be fooling ourselves if we didn't recognize (the joint basing process) is causing anxiety," he said, adding, "If you hear anything that doesn't sound right, ask someone. Use us to dispel rumors. Rumors can only poison the water."

Near the end of the meeting, Bailey noted that the most common joint-basing question on everyone's mind is, "what's going to happen to me?"

His words put the meeting's agenda into perspective: "The people who will decide the answer to that are in this room."

NCTAMS PAC groundbreaking

Continued from A-1

tional support facilities and personnel which are presently dispersed throughout the base.

"It is indeed time we move into the 21st century and work smarter, not harder," said Stewart. "NCTAMS PAC has the most dedicated and technically proficient workforce the Navy has ever seen and it is time they are rewarded with a building that is designed to maximize their already noteworthy capabilities."

Construction efforts include building a one-story, steel-framed communications structure with work spaces that will be equipped with raised floors, moveable interior walls, under-floor fire suppression system, storage spaces, conference rooms, showers, restrooms, access control system, climate control system, and emergency electrical power.

In addition to the communications center, new supporting facilities such as a 135-parking lot, site improvements, sidewalks, landscaping, pavement, electrical and communication ducts, fencing and security lighting will be completed. The final piece of the project is to construct a new single-story, power switching station, which will be built adjacent to the electrical substation located on base.

The new, secured communications facility will provide space for approximately 200 personnel and will be manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Pacific, the project's program manager, awarded the \$46.9 million contract to Watts Constructors, LLC, of Honolulu on March 5. NAVFAC Hawai'i's Resident Officer in Charge of Construction (ROICC) Wahiawa is the Navy's administrative contracting office for the project.

Construction began in April and the project's scheduled completion date is March 2010.

Hawaii Navy News Editorial

Pacific Fleet Band prepares for Pacific Partnership 2008

MU2 Terrence Byrne
U.S. Pacific Fleet Band

Sixteen members of the U.S. Pacific Fleet band will embark hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) in May to support the Pacific Partnership 2008 mission to Southeast Asia. Pacific Partnership 2008 seeks to build collaborative relationships by providing medical, dental, engineering and civic assistance to the region.

During this mission, the band will perform community-relations concerts in the Republic of Philippines, Vietnam, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia in support of the host nations.

This will be the second time the Navy music program has supported "Pacific Partnership." The first, in 2006, was staffed by members of the Fleet Forces Band, stationed on board Naval Station Norfolk.

For many months, band members have been preparing for this deployment by creating the most effective variety of performing units possible, able to adapt to virtually any environment at a moment's notice. The group will be able to support many genres of music from marching band and ceremonial music to rock and roll, big band, jazz and Dixieland.

Musician 1st Class Dave Gentkowski, a 17-year veteran of the Navy music pro-



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Hight

Lt. Bruce McDonald, center, the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band bandmaster, showcases the ensemble set to embark aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) for the upcoming Pacific Partnership 2008 mission to Southeast Asia. During this mission, the band will perform community-relations concerts in the Republic of Philippines, Vietnam, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia in support of the host nations.

gram, who will be leading the big band and Dixieland units, spoke of the rare opportunity the Pacific Partnership mission offers him and his fellow band members.

"It's like one of those once-in-a-lifetime events that you can contribute to and that will definitely be making a difference in people's lives - tangibly," Gentkowski said. Especially for the younger [folks] out there, it's really

going to open up their eyes as far as what we do."

Musician 2nd Class Melinda Gaines, a nine-year Navy veteran who plays saxophone and clarinet, is also enthusiastic about being a part of the 2008 humanitarian mission. She participated in the 2007 Kuala Lumpur International Tattoo in Malaysia, during which the Pacific Fleet band performed.

"I'm excited! I'm actually getting to see the world," she

said. "I love Asia. And it's also a great opportunity to see what the other parts of the Navy do, the Seabees, the doctors and the dentists."

Humanitarian assistance missions are among the core competencies of the Navy as outlined in the maritime strategy.

To learn more about Pacific Partnership 2008 and follow the band as they participate in the mission, visit www.cpf.navy.mil.



HPD caution service members about increase in speeding violations

Honolulu Police Department

You're tooling down the road, keeping sync with your latest CD purchase, one eye ahead of you, the other in the rearview mirror. Nobody can accuse you of a lack of vigilance. You're making good time and all is well in the universe.

But suddenly there it is, behind you. A small fleck of light on the horizon...getting bigger. It picks up speed, coming into view, gaining clarity. Suddenly, it's right on top of you, a nightmare of sensory overload, blue lights filling your rearview mirror telling you to pull to the side of the road.

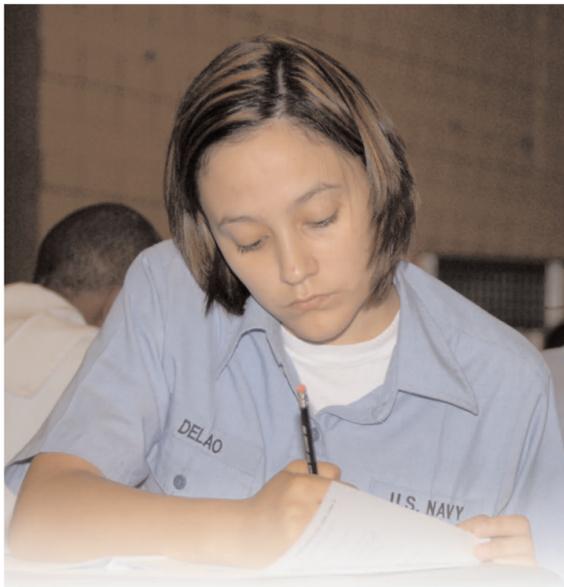
Yep, it's "COPS --- LIVE!" And you're the star.

A hefty fine may be only the beginning if you get stopped for speeding. Your insurer can slap a costly surcharge on your policy that could run for years. And if you get too many tick-

ets, you may find your license suspended — or, worse, revoked.

At a recent Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board meeting, Honolulu Police Major Kurt Kendro, Kalihi district commander for the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), informed the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force provost marshals that HPD traffic officers have noticed a significant increase in speeding violations being issued to members of all the services traveling north and southbound on the H2 Freeway.

Kendro requested that the services emphasize to service personnel the importance of driving safely. He also advised that HPD is conducting an aggressive traffic campaign to address the speeding issue. No one wants to see any of our service members ending up as a statistic - slow down and arrive at your destination safe.



National Testing Centers to resume ACT, GED and SAT exams

Sharon Anderson
Chief of Naval Personnel
Pubic Affairs

Sailors can again take ACT, General Educational Development (GED) and SAT exams beginning May 1 at their local Navy College Center after Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Support (DANTES) officials gave the authorization to restart the testing.

Other Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Support (DANTES) paper-based testing for the Navy, both ashore and afloat, has not resumed. Sailors may take these tests electronically at National Testing Centers (NTC) located worldwide on numerous military installations.

ACT, GED and SAT tests are available only on paper.

"It was very important to start administrating these tests again so our Sailors can continue their education plans. We will continue work-

ing closely with DANTES to re-establish these testing privileges on shore and on ships," said Ann Hunter, voluntary education service chief.

Sailors applying for the Seaman-to-Admiral (STA-21) program should contact their local Navy College Office immediately to schedule the appropriate exam, she added.

All paper-based DANTES testing was halted in late February after tests were lost at some Navy installations and ships.

"The Navy is aggressively pursuing electronic testing through on-base NTCs," said Hunter. "The advantages of on-base NTCs are numerous, but the most significant to our Sailors is that they are able to deliver the results of the test immediately."

For more information call toll free the Navy College call center at 1-877-253-7122 or go to <https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/>.

USS Princeton during Korean War operations



Official U.S. Navy photograph, from the "All Hands" collection at the Naval Historical Center. Two Grumman F9F-2 "Panther" fighters dump fuel as they fly past USS Princeton (CV-37) during Korean War operations circa May 1951. Photographed from a VC-61 plane piloted by Lt. j.g. George Elmies. This photograph was released by Commander, Naval Forces Far East under date of May 23, 1951.

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Hawaii Navy News

USS Port Royal achieves Retention Excellence Award

Lt. Jason Fox

USS Port Royal (CG 73)

USS Port Royal (CG 73), currently deployed in the Western Pacific, recently received the Fiscal Year '07 Commander, Pacific Fleet's Retention Excellence Award and Commander and Pacific Fleet's Retention Honor Roll for Fiscal Year '08 first quarter.

The annual award recognizes commands that meet or exceed retention goals for the year. For 2007, the goals were as follows: 50 percent retention for personnel with up to six years of active service (zone A), 60 percent for personnel between six and 10 years active service (zone B), and 80 percent for personnel with more than 10 years of active service (zone C).

Port Royal exceeded all goals, achieving 85 percent retention in zone A and 100 percent retention in all other zones. So far in 2008, Port Royal has conducted re-enlistments for 38 Sailors, who have received \$800,000 in selective re-enlistment bonuses.

"Our successful retention is a reflection of the success of various key programs within the command," said Navy Counselor 1st Class (SW/AW/NAC) Rex Parmelee, Port Royal's Navy career counselor. "The sponsorship, mentorship and career development board programs provide valuable information, giving Port Royal Sailors the best opportunities," he explained.

Aboard Port Royal, seven departmental and 18 divisional career counselors are involved in providing career advice to a crew of 351 Sailors on a daily basis. Their purpose is to use their "deckplate" knowledge to understand



U.S. Navy photo by STG2 (SW) Tara Kerrin

Damage Controlman 2nd Class Caleb Myrttil re-enlists while donning his full fire-fighting ensemble in a ceremony in March. Myrttil is one of 38 Port Royal Sailors who have re-enlisted since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2008. Port Royal recently received Fiscal Year '07 Commander, Pacific Fleet's Retention Excellence Award and Commander and Pacific Fleet's Retention Honor Roll for Fiscal Year '08 first quarter, having exceeded all Pacific Fleet unit-level retention goals.

their Sailors' intentions and mentor them at key career milestones. Formal counseling at career development boards and regular, personal interaction help Sailors to be well-appraised of Navy programs and opportunities. "When a Sailor is well informed, then the chances are really high that he or she will stay Navy," explained Parmelee.

Port Royal is on a scheduled

deployment in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility. Operating in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean, the U.S. 7th Fleet is the largest of forward-deployed U.S. fleets, with approximately 50 ships, 120 aircraft and 20,000 Sailors and Marines assigned at any given time. For more information, visit the U.S. 7th Fleet web site at www.c7f.navy.mil



U.S. Navy photo

Capt. Jim Ransom pins Navy dolphins on the newest submariner in the family, his son Lt. j.g. Jefferey Ransom.

Family continues submarine service tradition

MCSA Luciano Marano

Commander Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs Office

A distinguished moment in every submariner's career is the day he receives his "dolphins." The Navy submarine warfare pin is a symbol to all. The Sailor wearing them has completed the demanding training required to be a qualified Navy submariner, a member of an elite brotherhood.

In a ceremony at Naval Station Pearl Harbor submarine piers on April 18, Lt. j.g. Jeffrey Ransom of USS Bremerton (SSN 698) became the third generation of his family to wear the dolphins.

These particular dolphins have a more personal legacy than most. They are the same ones that were worn by his father and grandfather, both career naval submariners.

The dolphins were originally awarded in 1958 to his grandfather, Jay Ransom, who retired at the rank of captain, and subsequently passed to his father, Capt. Jim Ransom.

The newest Ransom submariner remained humble and soft spoken at the ceremony where his father presented him the family dolphins. Jeffrey Ransom addressed his shipmates and was quick to thank all of them for their support. "This isn't the end of my learning," he said. "I'd like to thank all the seniors who have helped me out. I'm very grateful."

Not only was it a special day for Jeffrey Ransom, it was also special for Capt. Jim Ransom, director of operations on the staff of Submarine Force, U.S., Pacific Fleet and Anne Ransom, the newly-qualified submariner's mother.

"I'm just speechless," Anne Ransom said after watching

her husband hand down the family dolphins to her son. "I feel honored and privileged to have been here for this."

We're a very lucky family. Not everybody is fortunate enough to have their family stationed in Hawai'i together. It's nice to be so close as a family," she said.

The Navy has a long tradition of multi-generational family service and truly this family is no exception. The submarine force is unique among other service communities for not only its obvious pride and heritage, but also its emphasis on traditions and camaraderie. Those traditions remain evident even today and that camaraderie shapes the legacies of Navy families.

"We're very proud of him," said Capt. Ransom of his son's achievement. "He's qualified on submarines and he's really become a fine young man."

Pearl Harbor Highlights

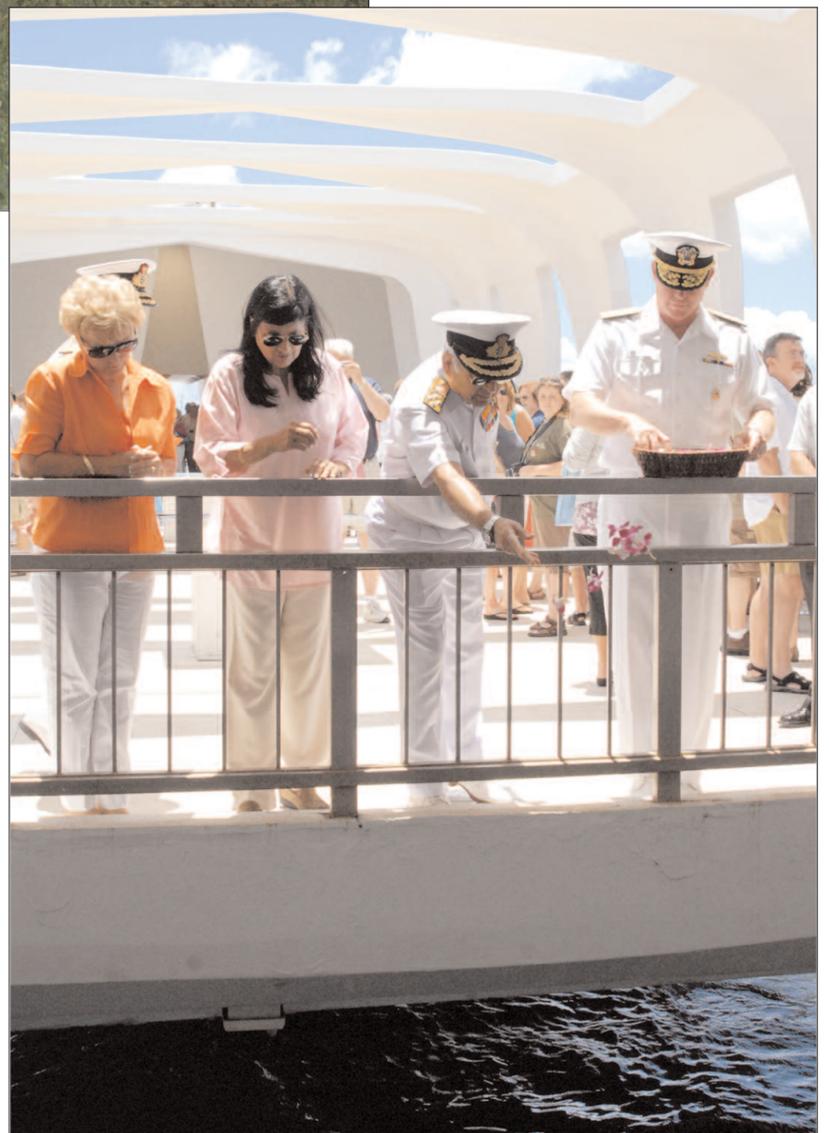


A hula dancer from Paradise Cove Luau performs for sailors assigned to Japanese Training Squadron (JTS) ships JS Kashima (TV 3508), JS Umigiri (DD 158) and JS Asagiri (TV 3516) during a reception held on board Naval Station Pearl Harbor. The JTS ships visited Pearl Harbor on April 27-30.

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

Adm. Sureesh Mehta, India Chief of Naval Staff, pays respects at the battleship USS Arizona Memorial during a historic tour of Pearl Harbor. Mehta was on a two-day visit to Hawaii to enhance the mutual interest in maritime security and the stability of the maritime domain between the United States and India.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Hight



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

Rev. William Kaina provides the Hawaiian blessing during a ground breaking ceremony for the new communications center at the U.S. Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Pacific (NCTAMS PAC). The \$46.8 million center will support NCTAMS PAC mission growth, mandated organizational restructuring and other operational requirements and is scheduled for completion by March 2010.



U.S. Navy photo by MC1 (SW) Cynthia Clark

Commander, Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet Rear Adm. Joe Walsh and retired Vice Adm. Al Konetzni join in as the longest submarine qualified Sailor in attendance, Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet Force Master Chief (SS) Morris Pollard; and the most recent submarine qualified Sailor in attendance, Machinist Mate 2nd Class (SS) Kevin Pallagi from the USS Key West (SSN 722), cut the birthday cake at the 108th Enlisted Submarine Ball on April 18, held in the Coral Ballroom at Hilton Hawaiian Village. More than 1,000 submariners and their guests in the Hawai'i area joined together to celebrate the 108th birthday of the Submarine Force.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Sarah K. Murphy

Newly frocked Master Chief Cryptologic Technician (Technical) Neil Buscher receives his master chief petty officer anchors from his wife, Emiko, during a frocking ceremony held at the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters.

Navy re-establishes U.S. 4th Fleet

MC3 Alan Gragg

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command Public Affairs

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Gary Roughead announced April 24 the re-establishment of U.S. 4th Fleet and assigned Rear Adm. Joseph D. Kernan, currently serving as Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, as its first commander.

U.S. 4th Fleet will be responsible for U.S. Navy ships, aircraft and submarines operating in the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) area of focus, which encompasses the Caribbean and Central and South America and the surrounding waters.

Located in Mayport, Fla., and dual-hatted with Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (COMUSNAVSO), U.S. 4th Fleet re-establishment addresses the increased role of maritime forces in the SOUTHCOM area of focus and demonstrates U.S. com-

mitment to regional partners.

"Reconstituting the [U.S.] 4th Fleet recognizes the immense importance of maritime security in the southern part of the western hemisphere and sends a strong signal to all the civil and military maritime services in Central and Latin America," said Roughead. "Aligning the [U.S.] 4th Fleet along with our other numbered fleets and providing the capabilities and personnel are a logical execution of our new maritime strategy."

U.S. 4th Fleet was originally established in 1943 as one of the original numbered fleets and was given a specific mission. During World War II, the U.S. needed a command in charge of protecting against raiders, blockade runners and enemy submarines in the south Atlantic. U.S. 4th Fleet was disestablished in 1950 when U.S. 2nd Fleet took over its responsibilities.

Initially, the new 4th Fleet will be headquartered with COMUSNAVSO and take advantage of the existing infra-

structure, communications support and personnel already in place in Mayport. As a result, U.S. 4th Fleet will not involve an increase in forces assigned in Mayport.

"This is a significant change and presents us the opportunity to garner the right resources for the missions we run for Southern Command," said Rear Adm. James W. Stevenson Jr., Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (NAVSO). "As a numbered fleet, we will be in a better position to ensure the combatant commander has the right assets available when needed."

U.S. 4th Fleet will retain responsibility as COMUSNAVSO, the Navy component command for SOUTHCOM. Its mission is to direct U.S. naval forces operating in the Caribbean, Central and South American regions and interact with partner nation navies within the maritime environment. Various operations include counter-illicit trafficking, theater security cooperation, military-to-military interaction and bilateral and multi-national training.



U.S. Navy photo By MC3 Damien Horvath

Sailors attached to the Peruvian frigate Palacios (FM-56) approach the stern gate of dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) during multi-national passenger transfers for the closing conferences of UNITAS 48-07. Pacific phase held aboard Pearl Harbor during Partnership of the Americas (POA) 2007. POA focus is to enhance relationships with partner nations through a variety of exercises and events at sea and on shore throughout South America, Latin America and the Caribbean.

CSG 9 ships participate in Singapore PASSEX

Story and photo by
MC2 James R. Evans

USS Abraham Lincoln
(CVN 72) Public Affairs

Ships and aircraft from Carrier Strike Group 9 (CSG 9) and the Republic of Singapore Navy conducted a passing exercise (PASSEX) while underway near Singapore April 15.

CCSG 9 ships, Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers, USS Russell (DDG 59), homeported at Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i and USS Shoup (DDG 86), homeported at Everett, Wash., conducted bilateral training as part of the Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) Strike Group.

Republic of Singapore Formidable-class guided missile frigate RSS Steadfast (FFG 70) conducted flight deck training with an SH-60B Seahawk assigned to Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Light (HSL) 47 "Saberhawk," which is based at San Diego, Calif. and currently part of the Lincoln Strike Group.

The helicopter, flown by HSL-47's commanding officer, Cmdr. Shawn Malone, and Lt. Christopher Moore, co-pilot, made several landings on the ship's flight deck, giving the crew of Steadfast the opportunity to practice helicopter recovery procedures, including chocking and chaining (referred to as "lashing" by the Singapore Navy) and refueling evolutions.

"The Singapore Navy is increasing its capabilities and acquiring H-60 type helicopters and their pilots are training at NAS North Island (San Diego, Calif.) so this is an opportunity to work together and for us to train with them for helicopter shipboard operations," Malone said. "It was a wonderful way to build those partnerships with the Singapore Navy."

Following the flight opera-



Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Russell (DDG 59) underway near Singapore. Shoup and other ships assigned to Carrier Strike Group Nine are currently underway on a scheduled seven-month deployment to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

tions, Steadfast practiced coming alongside the fast combat support ship USNS Rainier (T-AOE 7) and conducted a simulated refueling-at-sea.

The evolution was observed from the air in an HSL-47 helicopter by Singapore Navy Capt. Kelvin Lim, a communications officer assigned to the RSS Formidable, the first of Singapore's Formidable-class frigates. Lim also spent time aboard Shoup during the PASSEX and observed that there are many similarities and differences between the two ships.

"Our primary mission is air defense, like your ship, but we do things differently because we only have 70 people onboard," said Lim. He added that the most striking difference between the Shoup and Steadfast was the makeup of the crews. "You can see the

whole of America on your ship; there is so much diversity."

One major similarity participants noted during the PASSEX was that Steadfast's design in many ways reflected the direction the U.S. Navy is moving in with its own ship designs, Malone said.

"That ship to me represents something very similar to where we're moving with the littoral combat ship and some of the stealth technology that is being incorporated into our surface forces," Malone said. "That was the benefit for us - to be able to operate with that type of modern warship."

The Abraham Lincoln Strike Group is currently on a seven-month deployment to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility to support maritime security operations.

NAVFAC Pacific planner wins national award

Don Rochon

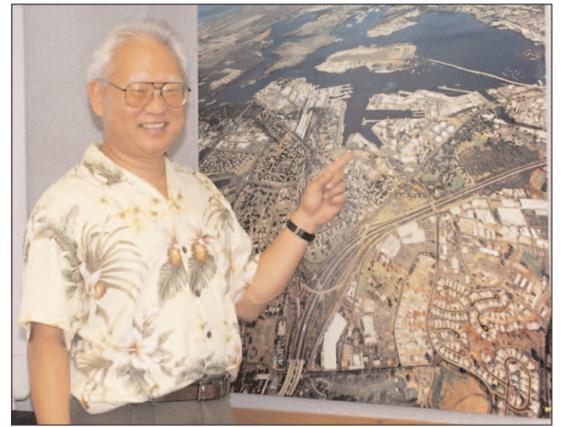
Naval Facilities
Engineering Command
Pacific Public Affairs

Byrnes Yamashita, a planner for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Pacific, was recognized April 25 as co-winner of the Rik Wiant Distinguished Service and Leadership Award by the Federal Planning Division of the American Planning Association (APA) at its annual conference in Las Vegas.

Yamashita, Far East division planning director for NAVFAC Pacific's asset management business line, is known within the military community as a leading innovator in joint and strategic planning and was recognized for his unique understanding of how shore installations support military operations. He has contributed significantly to the U.S. military posture in the Pacific and Indian Oceans over his extensive 25-year career and was a key player in pioneering global and regional shore infrastructure planning for the Navy throughout the Pacific theater in areas such as Guam, Japan, Hawai'i, Korea, Diego Garcia and Singapore.

"It is truly a great honor to receive this recognition from the Federal Planning Division of the American Planning Association," said Yamashita. "Rik Wiant, as one of the founders of the division, devoted a lot of energy towards expanding the community of professionals involved in federal planning, and to be recognized for my contributions with an award in his name is really icing on the cake."

While working at NAVFAC Pacific, Yamashita has demonstrated significant leadership in promoting and encouraging planning at the



U.S. Navy photo

Byrnes Yamashita, a planner for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Pacific, was recognized April 25 as co-winner of the Rik Wiant Distinguished Service and Leadership Award.

federal level. His extensive experience and willingness to share his knowledge has led him to train and mentor scores of engineers, architects and planners at NAVFAC Pacific and other organizations.

"In 2006, Byrnes became the first Navy planner recognized as a member of the College of Fellows, American Institute of Certified Planners," said Clyde Kamimoto, asset management business line manager. "This says a lot about his professionalism and his commitment to our country as a lead planner for Navy and Marine Corps installations throughout the Pacific. His value and contributions are certainly being justly recognized with receipt of the prestigious Rik Wiant Award."

In addition to his duties as one of the Navy's premier planners in the Pacific, Yamashita contributed significantly to planning efforts in Hawai'i and Washington by volunteering to facilitate a community reuse workshop for closing military bases and conducting a planning charette

(consultative workshop) for a "green" space and recreation vision.

He has served as a judge for the annual APA Hawai'i chapter planning awards competition and is on the professional certification committee for APA Hawai'i. Yamashita has been a member of APA Hawai'i and the Federal Planning Division since its inception.

The Rik Wiant award is given to individuals who demonstrate sustained and significant contributions to the federal planning profession and who have demonstrated significant leadership in promoting and encouraging planning at the federal level. This award recognizes effective contributions and leadership within the profession through distinguished practice, management, consulting and promotion of sound planning within the federal sector.

The award is named after Fredrik (Rik) Wiant, a planner for the installation support division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who was tragically killed in a car accident on Dec. 28, 2002.

Defense Department works to improve absentee-voting procedures, boost participation

Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

The Defense Department (DoD) has made great strides over the past four years to ensure service members, particularly those stationed and deployed overseas, have greater opportunity to vote, a senior defense official told Congress on April 15. Michael L. Dominguez, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told the House Administration Committee the department is working closely with the U.S. and military postal services and other entities to ensure no service member wishing to vote misses out on the opportunity.

The Defense Department's Federal Voting Assistance Program works cooperatively with state and local elections to carry out provisions of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). This 1986 law safeguards absent service members' and their families' right to vote for federal offices and also protects voting rights of other U.S. citizens overseas.

In 2005, the department simplified two forms used for absentee voting: the federal post card application, a registration and ballot request form, and the federal write-in absentee ballot, a back-up federal ballot used when a state ballot doesn't arrive on time.

Dominguez said the revisions not only make the ballots easier to use, but also safeguard the voter's private information.

Meanwhile, the Defense Department continues to reach out to citizens covered by the UOCAVA law and to federal, state and local officials and



to advocate the greatest use of existing or emerging technologies into the voting process, he told the panel.

"We have made progress, but more remains to be done," he said. "The Internet holds promise."

The department also encourages states to adopt Federal Voting Assistance Program legislative initiatives, he said.

Its top priorities are to get states and territories to mail ballots at least 40 to 45 days before their due date and to allow election officials to send out state write-in absentee ballots three to six months before elections.

The program's other initiatives include expanding the distribution of voting materials through electronic transmissions and to give state chief election officials emergency authority to alter election procedures in limited circumstances - from extending ballot return deadlines to allowing blank or voted ballots to be transmitted electronically.

"The department takes extraordinary steps to ensure

that members of the uniformed services, their family members and overseas citizens have an opportunity to vote," Dominguez said in prepared testimony submitted to the panel. "Expediting ballots through any and all media accepted by state and local officials is a very important aspect of the absentee process."

One initiative introduced in 2004 allows eligible absentee voters to request and receive absentee ballots via the Internet. To take advantage of this system, voters must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, be covered

under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee

Voting Act, and be registered to vote in a state and county participating in the DoD program.

Meanwhile, the Defense Department continues working to educate service members and other citizens covered under the absentee-voting law about the absentee-voting process, Dominguez told the committee.

Meanwhile, the Federal Voting Assistance Program maintains a Web site of voting information.

While conceding that it's impossible to know exactly how many citizens covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act actually vote, Dominguez said survey results showed more

voted in 2004 than in 2000. Among uniformed service members both overseas and statewide who responded to the survey, 73 percent voted in 2004, compared to 57 percent in 2000, he said. In addition, 77 percent of federal civilian employees overseas voted in 2004, up from 55 percent in 2000.

Dominguez expressed confidence that these rates will continue to climb. "Through our collective efforts to improve ballot transit time and promote and implement expanded electronic transmission alternatives, voters will continue to reap the benefits of these improvements and in this and future elections," he said.

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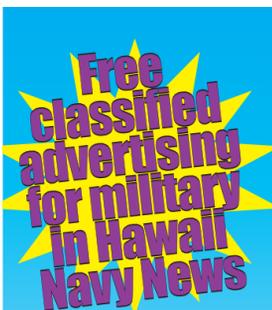
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