

U.S. Navy ships sail by Waikiki in honor of the Great White Fleet Centennial



U.S. Navy photo by MCC (SW/AW) David Rush

Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

U.S. Navy ships sailed by Waikiki in honor of the Great White Fleet Centennial on July 28. The guided missile destroyers, USS Pinckney (DDG 91), USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93) and USS O'Kane (DDG 77); guided missile cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG 70); and guided missile frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57), participated in the sail-by 1.5 miles off Waikiki beach. All five ships have been participating in the Rim of the Pacific 2008

exercise. Pinckney is based at San Diego; the other four ships are based at Pearl Harbor.

In December 1907, Theodore Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States, sent a portion of the Atlantic Fleet on a world tour to test naval readiness, establish global presence, generate international goodwill, and garner enthusiasm for the U.S. Navy. Sixteen battleships and 14,000 men embarked on a historic voyage that steamed 43,000 miles and made 20 port calls on six continents. Painted white with gilded scrollwork on their

bows, the participating ships became known as the "Great White Fleet."

As a participant in the Great White Fleet, USS Missouri (BB-11) sailed from Hampton Roads on Dec. 16, 1907, passing in review before President Roosevelt at the beginning of the world cruise. On July 1908, the Missouri and the rest of the fleet paid honors offshore the Hansen's disease colony at Kalaupapa, Molokai, a tradition continued by USS Missouri (BB-63) in 1986, and again during its final journey to Hawai'i in 1998.

The tradition was started in response to a request by Brother Joseph Dutton, a Civil War veteran and successor to Father Damien.

Calling at ports in the Caribbean and along the east coast of South America, the fleet rounded Cape Horn to call on Peru and Mexico before arriving at San Francisco, Calif. on May 6, 1908 for a gala visit. In July the fleet turned west for Honolulu, then to New Zealand and Australia, arriving in Manila on Oct. 2.

The most tumultuous welcome

yet came in Yokohama, Japan and with a call in Amoy, China, the fleet began the passage home by way of Ceylon, Suez and ports in the eastern Mediterranean.

Departing Gibraltar on Feb. 6, 1909, the fleet was again reviewed by President Roosevelt upon its triumphant return to Hampton Roads, Va. on Feb. 22. An important diplomatic mission had been carried out with great success.

For more information on the Great White Fleet, visit www.navy.mil/gwf.

USS Bremerton departs for Western Pacific, stays 'United Through Reading'

MC1 (SW) Cynthia Clark

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

USS Bremerton (SSN 698) departed Naval Station Pearl Harbor for its first Western Pacific deployment on July 29 following an extensive rehabilitation period.

Cmdr. Howard Warner, Bremerton commanding officer, said his crew is ready and eager to deploy.

"Most of the guys are extremely excited," said Warner. "In fact we've even had a handful of Sailors who've extended their enlistments to make this deployment. Morale is good. I think the guys are happy with how they've prepared the ship."

Not only has the Bremerton crew been preparing their ship, they've also been preparing videos of crew members reading stories to their children to keep that important visual connection with their children while they spend six months on deployment.

"The United Through Reading program is a great way to keep our submariners and their families connected during deployments," said Rear Adm. Joe Walsh, Commander, Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet. "I'm glad Bremerton is taking such an active interest in this program, and I know it will make the deployment easier



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Michael Hight

USS Bremerton (SSN 698) departed Naval Station Pearl Harbor for its first Western Pacific deployment on July 29 following an extensive rehabilitation period. The Bremerton crew has been preparing videos of crew members reading stories to their children to keep that important visual connection with their children while they spend six months on deployment.

on their families and children at home."

Warner agreed, "I thought it was a great idea; I have a 20-month old daughter. While deployed on a submarine, it's just one way communication. We're receiving e-mail and that's it. I think having the visual recognition of the 'United Through Reading' program with books that are familiar to the children is, in my opinion, critical of maintaining that relationship when we're gone."

After completing the filming for United Through Reading, Bremerton Sailors were ready to leave for the Western Pacific.

"I'm excited about going on my first deployment," said Machinist Mate Fireman Xavier Orozco. "Aside from

putting all my training to use, I'm looking forward to visiting foreign ports and meeting new people."

According to Warner, Bremerton finished all of its pre-deployment work ahead of schedule and he said he couldn't be more proud of his crew as they take Bremerton to the Western Pacific.

"The guys did very well," he said. "They rose to the challenge and performed solidly across the board. They're ready to go."

Bremerton, the 10th ship of the Los Angeles-class of submarines, was commissioned March 28, 1981. With a crew of more than 120 enlisted and 10 officers, she is 360 feet long and has the capability to carry Tomahawk missiles and MK-48 torpedoes.

Aloha RIMPAC 2008



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Brian Hudson

Sailors aboard the fast-attack submarine USS Los Angeles (SSN 688) watch from the bridge as ships from multiple nations gather in a 26-ship formation for a photo exercise during Rim of the Pacific 2008.



Hopper Sailor returns from Iraq

See page A-2



NOMWC tests new mine detection unit

See page A-2



Kaiser relieves Powers as Commander, Submarine Squadron Seven

See page A-4



Australian students interact with survivors

through "Witness to History" program See page B-1

Hopper Sailor returns from Iraq

Story and photo by
Ensign Katie E. Burkhart

USS Hopper (DDG 70)
Public Affairs

The Sailors of USS Hopper (DDG-70) welcomed home their shipmate, Information Technician 2nd Class (SW) Jeffrey S. Davis, on July 18 from an individual augment (IA) tour to Iraq. Davis left Hopper in December 2007 to serve as the lead information management officer (IMO) at Camp Victory.

The Navy has deployed more than 46,000 individual augmentees (IAs) to joint and coalition commands since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom. In fact, there are approximately 10,000 IAs deployed globally right now and more than half of the augmentees come from the reserve force. More than 8,000 augmentees are in CENTCOM [Central Command] with others in Guantanamo, Europe, Africa and South America. While the overall number of IAs fluctuates month to month, only a very small percentage of the Navy's manpower is actually committed at any one time to IA orders (approximately two percent of the total force).

During the first month of Hopper's six-month deployment, Davis volunteered to fill a needed billet. "I wanted to do it for the experience, plus everyone else in the IT shack had family and wives," said Davis.

Davis left the ship in Singapore and traveled to San Diego, Fort Jackson and then to Kuwait to receive training. This training pipeline lasted for six weeks and prepared him for the combat environment he would encounter in Iraq.

Once in Iraq, Davis reported to Multi-National Corps Iraq (MNCI), an Army command at Camp Victory. He worked as the lead information management officer (IMO) at the IMO help desk located in Al Faw Palace. Serving in a role equivalent to a leading petty officer, his duties included providing technical assistance to 535 IMOs at Camp Victory, as well as providing support at three other base compounds throughout Iraq.

His other accomplishments included creating and approving classified accounts



Information Technician 2nd Class (SW) Jeffrey S. Davis smiles as the crew of USS Hopper offers a warm welcome. The entire crew lined the flight deck to offer cheers, handshakes and high fives to their shipmate who just completed a six-month tour of duty in Iraq from November 2007 to July 2008.

for allied workers. By working with the coalition help desk, he was able to make communication and information flow better between allied forces.

His technical experience with computers was employed and expanded during his service. "The work was a lot like what I was trained to do on the ship," said Davis.

One of the biggest adjustments was working with non-Navy personnel. Interacting closely with Army and Air Force personnel, Davis made many friends with whom he still keeps in touch.

Sailors on IA also remain in contact with their Hopper shipmates via emails, postcards and phone calls. Since Davis left at the beginning of the Hopper's deployment, he was especially interested in the events and port calls his shipmates were experiencing. "It was nice to be able to talk

to them and figure out what was going on during deployment," said Davis about the emails he received from his shipmates.

After six months in country, Davis returned home to Hawai'i. He was first greeted at the airport with cheers by a group of Sailors, including his entire chain of command. "He was surprised and very pleased to see the crowd awaiting him," said Command Master Chief Earl Gray about Davis' response to the welcome party.

In preparation for Davis to report back onboard the ship, the entire crew formed a tunnel snaking around the flight deck. As Davis requested permission to come aboard, he was greeted with cheers and applause. A smile shone on his face as walked through the tunnel of shipmates shaking hands, giving high fives, and smiling in response to the applause.

This warm welcome became a Hopper tradition when the crew welcomed home their first shipmate sent on IA, Yeoman 3rd Class John J. Tetreau. "Every time a Sailor leaves or returns from an IA assignment, the whole crew gathers on the flight deck to let them know they're like family and we welcome them back with open arms," explained Gray.

The entire crew is happy to have Davis back, but also takes time to remember their other shipmates currently serving as IAs: Seaman Luke Luchini, Iraq; Sonar Technician 3rd Class Brian Wallauer, Iraq; and Engineman Fireman Taquitta Hinton, Afghanistan.

As for Davis, he is currently enjoying some rest and relaxation with his family in Portland, Ore. — a much-needed vacation after his courageous service on IA.



Aerographer's Mate Airman Ryan Thuecks, assigned to the Naval Oceanography Mine Warfare Center, and Australian Navy 1st Class Sean Huron carry a remote environmental measuring unit (REMUS) during the Honolulu Harbor experiment in Hawai'i on July 23. The REMUS 100 is a compact, light-weight, autonomous underwater vehicle designed for operation in coastal environments up to 100 meters in depth.

NOMWC tests new mine detection unit

Story and photo by
MC2 John W. Ciccarelli Jr.

Fleet Public Affairs Center
Detachment Hawai'i

Sailors assigned to Naval Oceanography Mine Warfare Center (NOMWC) and the Royal Australian Navy conducted a mock underwater surveying experiment in Honolulu Harbor on July 23.

The experiment is part of Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2008 to test mine detection capabilities with a remote environmental measuring unit (REMUS) 100.

"The REMUS 100 is considered paramount to the Navy's goal of finding mines while keeping the military member within a safe distance of those mine fields," said Capt. Jim Berdeguez, director of oceanography operations at NOMWC. "This technology is truly revolutionary and will help save many lives."

REMUS 100, a compact autonomous underwater vehicle, is the U.S. Navy's robotic tool of choice for shallow water mine countermeasure operations. It is designed for operations

in coastal environments up to 100 meters in depth and is currently undergoing testing and evaluation.

"This is the future of mine warfare," said Aerographer's Mate Airman Lisa Fox, assigned to NOMWC. "The REMUS can run for hours at optimal speed without being recharged and with the right training is easy to use."

REMUS is small and light enough (80 pounds) for two people to handle and can travel up to 60 miles at speeds between three to five knots at depths up to 328 feet. It is programmed using a laptop computer and can employ sound-emitting transponders as navigational reference beacons. Its onboard computer can autonomously select another more appropriate navigation method to use.

RIMPAC is the world's largest multi-national exercise held biennially by the U. S. Pacific Fleet. Participants include the United States, Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, the Netherlands, Peru, Republic of Korea, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

Hawaii Navy News Editorial

Pacific Partnership departs Timor-Leste, treats nearly 10,000

MC1 (SW/AW) Danny Hayes

USNS Mercy (T-AH 19)

DILI, Timor-Leste – The Pacific Partnership 2008 team said farewell to the people of Timor-Leste as the hospital ship, USNS Mercy (T-AH 19), departed the new nation July 25.

Timor-Leste was the third partner nation Pacific Partnership 2008 visited on its humanitarian civic assistance mission. Medical, dental and engineering experts from the U.S. military, Australia, Canada, India, Indonesia, Portugal, the Republic of Korea and numerous non-governmental organizations worked with the local Timorese government, providing assistance both ashore and afloat. The Pacific Partnership mission brought these professionals to help the people of Timor-Leste at the request of the host nation.

According to Lt. Arwen Chisholm, the Pacific Partnership 2008 public affairs officer, members traveling aboard the ship, as well as the people who were treated during this 13-day mission, benefited from this visit.

“Not only did we treat more than 9,800 patients both ashore and afloat, to include 270 surgeries, we also had the opportunity to interact with the Timorese one-on-one. The personal interaction and friendship will stay with the people in Timor long after Mercy sails,” said Chisholm.

In addition, Seabees from the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 and Amphibious Construction Battalion 1 performed repair and construction projects at Metinaro



Royal Australian Navy leading seaman Tanya Boge from Sydney, Australia gives local children toothbrushes at a Pacific Partnership medical civic action program in Gleno, East Timor on July 20. Pacific Partnership is a four-month deployment by USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) to assist the governments of participating nations with medical, dental and construction civic assistance programs.

Community Center and Bario Pite Elementary School.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet Band also performed concerts at Bario Pite Elementary, Palacio Do Governo, Caritas, and Nurlan 1 Primary School during the visit.

The world has had an interest in Timor-Leste during the past nine years with the United Nations supervising the people's vote for independence from Indonesia in 1999.

“The United States maintains a keen interest in ensuring the success of Timor-Leste as a new nation, as well as working together with our allies and friends, such as Australia, Portugal and Indonesia, who have undertaken leading roles in the development of Timor-Leste,” said Chisholm.

The Pacific Partnership mission was made possible through the support of the government of Timor-Leste, partnerships with local medical care professionals, and by the support of a number of non-governmental organizations including Timor Red Cross, Australian Aid International, Bario Pite clinic, Caritas, Klibur Domin volunteers and Health Alliance International, among others. The San Diego-based ship supported a variety of medical, dental, veterinarian, educational and preventive medicine services.

USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) is uniquely capable of supporting medical and humanitarian assistance needs and can rapidly respond to a range of situations on short notice.

Commentary

Fireside Chat

Navy Region Federal Fire Dept.

Cookouts are fun if done safely

Victor Flint

Battalion Chief, Federal Fire Department

Hot dogs and burgers cooked on the grill are tastes that are hard to beat. The Federal Fire Department reminds you that outdoor cooking can also lead to tragedy when carelessness causes serious burns. Use common sense and remember to cook safely. Here are some tips:

- Use charcoal lighter fluid safely. Never use gasoline to start or freshen a fire. Gasoline is explosive and much too dangerous to use on grills. Be cautious with charcoal lighter fluid. Use on coals only before the fire is lit. If you try to make a fire bigger by adding more fluid, the heat of the coals can ignite the stream of liquid and burn back into the can, causing it to explode in your hand.
- Try using electric starters in place of lighter fluids.
- Place grills where they will not tip over or ignite objects above them.

Do not use on balconies or under awnings.

- Never bring a grill into the home. The carbon monoxide produced by burning charcoal can be dangerous in an enclosed space.
- Have a container of water or garden hose ready to extinguish a fire.
- Keep children away from fires and grills. They may try to climb on the grill to see what is cooking.
- If outdoor cooking burns anyone, cool the burn with water immediately. Cover the burn with a clean cloth and seek emergency help. Call 911 for emergency medical help.
- Although coals may appear cold, always soak them after cooking. Unsoaked coals can re-light a day later.
- Keep grills outside of tents and recreational vehicles.
- Keep damp or wet coals in a well-ventilated area. During the drying process, spontaneous combustion can occur in confined areas. If a bag of charcoal gets wet, leave it outside, away from the house.

For more information, call Victor Flint at 471-3303, ext. 633.

World cruise of the 'Great White Fleet,' 1907-1909



U.S. Naval Historical Center photograph
Lt. John E. Lewis, USN, with a mascot kangaroo on board USS Connecticut (BB 18). The kangaroo was presented to the ship by the citizens of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, when the U.S. Atlantic Fleet visited the city in late August 1908.

Hawaii Navy News

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U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Luciano Marano

Navy Capt. Jeffrey T. Powers is piped ashore after being relieved as commander of Submarine Squadron Seven (CSS-7) by Capt. Christopher J. Kaiser following a change of command ceremony held at the submarine piers at Naval Station Pearl Harbor on July 25. Powers, a native of Delaware, is among the last nuclear submariners interviewed by Adm. Hyman Rickover before being commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps.

Kaiser relieves Powers as Commander, Submarine Squadron Seven

MC1 (SW) Cynthia Clark

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

Capt. Christopher Kaiser relieved Capt. Jeffrey Powers as commander, Submarine Squadron Seven, in a ceremony at Pearl Harbor Naval Station's submarine piers on July 25.

Rear Adm. Joe Walsh, commander, Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet, guest speaker at the event, spoke on Powers' exceptional performance with his responsibilities as commodore of the submarine squadron.

"He must ensure that when his ships pass the breakwater and sail west for deployment, they are properly manned, trained and maintained so they can be successful in their incredibly challenging missions," said Walsh. "Jeff has done admirably in preparing Cheyenne, Pasadena and Columbus for deployments

that included some of the most challenging submarine operations that our ships conduct."

Following the guest speaker's remarks, Walsh presented Powers with his third Legion of Merit for preparing to deploy three successful submarines to the Western Pacific, where Squadron Seven submarines conducted missions "vital to national security," in addition to overseeing the inter-fleet transfers of two submarines.

In his closing remarks, Powers expressed his satisfaction and appreciation for the crew on his squadron staff as well as the crews of the six submarines that fell under his leadership and their performance during evolutions with surface forces, maritime control aircraft and allied nations.

"Submarines are in high demand for all sorts of coordinated training," said Powers. "My staff must juggle these requirements ... it's a complex puzzle. Squadron Seven, you've done an exceptional job

at making all the pieces fit and always to the satisfaction of our commanding officers."

As Kaiser assumed command of Submarine Squadron Seven, he assured Powers that he was going to maintain Squadron Seven's outstanding reputation on the water-front.

"You have my solemn promise and commitment that my staff and I, and the submarines of Squadron Seven, will continue to train, live and work together with you to accomplish our mission," Kaiser said. "As a team, we will continue to make a formidable force."

Powers' next tour is at the U.S. Pacific Fleet, as deputy chief of staff for Joint Task Force 519. His sea tours include commanding officer of USS Florida (SSBN 728) Blue, executive officer of USS Pogy (SSN 647) and engineer officer on USS Michigan (SSBN 727) Blue. Powers is a 1982 graduate of the University of Rochester in New York.

U.S., Australian divers train together during RIMPAC

Story and photo by MCCS (SW/AW) Dave Nagle

Navy Expeditionary Combat Command Public Affairs

U.S. Navy and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) divers are training together as part of the biennial Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2008 exercise.

Divers from U.S. Navy Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1 (MDSU-1) and the Australian Defense Forces Clearance Diving Team 4 (AUSCDT-4) have trained side-by-side at Pearl Harbor since July 17, exercising their diving and salvage capabilities in a variety of scenarios.

The U.S. and Australian divers worked together to salvage simulated downed airplane parts using side-scan sonar on small boats. They also conducted underwater cutting and welding and surface-supplied dives from the USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52).

The training scenarios were opportunities for the U.S. and Australian divers to observe each other's techniques and procedures.

"We compared notes on how we dive compared with how [the Australians] do it," said Navy Diver 1st Class (DSW/SW) Daniel Cherwin of MDSU-1. "It was interesting to see how another nation runs their dive ops."

"It's not so much as we're learning from each other, since we're running the same equipment and similar procedures that we have in our navy," said RAN Chief Petty Officer Eugene Maxwell of AUSCDT-4. "It's just really good to actually dive and work side-by-side on the dive sites to see each other's procedures and set-ups and how we do things."

It is the working side-by-side that is making this training exchange during RIMPAC



Royal Australian Navy Able Seaman Clearance Diver Hugh Aitken, left, assigned to Clearance Diving Team 4 and Navy Diver 1st Class Robert Cherek, assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1, assist Navy Diver 1st Class Dan Cherwin with his MK-21 dive helmet before a training dive on July 24 at Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i. Navy and Royal Australian Navy divers are training together during the biennial Rim of the Pacific 2008 exercise.

valuable for both MDSU-1 and AUSCDT-4.

"In every training evolution we've done, we've paired a U.S. and an Australian diver together, whether it's been on a dive, tending lines or manning the dive console," explained Chief Navy Diver (DSW/SW) Russ Ciardiello, a MDSU-1 diving supervisor. "We've run dive operations with one of the Australians supervising the dive station and vice versa. Because of this, we've learned each other's styles, and we can go from one style to another smoothly and operate comfortably."

The ability to operate together seamlessly is important for both sides, as the maritime strategy emphasizes the need to strengthen partnerships and work with other nations.

"This joint training is very important for us because if we go into a true operational area and come across familiar faces you've exercised with in the past, it cuts through the red tape and you just get together

and get on with the job," said Maxwell. "You know each other's achievements and standards and you can rely on each other."

MDSU-1 is part of a Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) adaptive force package participating in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2008.

RIMPAC is the world's largest multi-national exercise and is scheduled biennially by the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Participants include the United States, Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, the Netherlands, Peru, Republic of Korea, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

NECC is a global force provider of adaptive force packages of expeditionary capabilities to joint warfighting commanders. NECC serves as a single functional command to centrally manage the current and future readiness, resources, manning, training and equipping of the Navy Expeditionary Force.

Pearl Harbor Highlights



Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Shawn McDonald, a marine mammal handler assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 1, uses tactile reinforcement to bond with his Atlantic bottlenose dolphin. The mammals are participating in extreme shallow water operations during Rim of the Pacific 2008.

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Mark Rankin

(Right) Four small patrol craft assigned to Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron Nine (MESRON 9) render honors to the USS Arizona Memorial during Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2008. RIMPAC is the world's largest multi-national exercise and is scheduled biennially by the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Participants include the United States, Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Netherlands, Peru, Republic of Korea, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

U.S. Navy photo by MCC Michael A. Strand



(Below) With the re-enlistment of Cryptologic Technician Technical 2nd Class Isaac Mitchell, USS Lake Erie (CG 70) reached \$1,005,560 in re-enlistment bonuses for 2008 with more than two months still left in the fiscal year. The Secretary of the Navy, Donald C. Winter, recognized Lake Erie's achievement by re-enlisting Mitchell.

U.S. Navy photo



(Below) The Navy's 20-member Pacific Fleet Band, led by Chief Musician Sterling Strickler, marches in the 24th annual Koloa Plantation Days Parade on the island of Kauai on July 26. The parade also featured a Navy color guard and rigid inflatable retriever float from Pacific Missile Range Facility. According to event organizers, the parade went without a band for many years, so the Navy band's participation was a welcome addition. The band also gave a 30-minute concert at the end of the parade route. Held in the area where Hawai'i's first sugar plantation was founded in 1835, Koloa Plantation Days offered a lively, family-oriented slate of events that honors the area's social history, its natural history, and its diverse cultural traditions.

U.S. Navy photo by Tom Clements



(Above) The guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG 70) visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team returns after a successful boarding and inspection evolution with the guided-missile cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73) as part of the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) maritime exercise 2008. The exercise emphasized teamwork, tactical communications and planning, intelligence collection, and weapons handling. U.S. Navy VBSS teams have become a vital component in the global war on terrorism.

U.S. Navy photo by IS1 Jason Snellings

International RIMPAC observers embark Bonhomme Richard

MC1 (SW/AW) Ryan Tabios

USS Bonhomme Richard Public Affairs Office

USS BONHOMME RICHARD, At Sea – Naval officers from Russia, Mexico and Colombia visited the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) (BHR) on July 25 as part of the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2008 Foreign Observer Program.

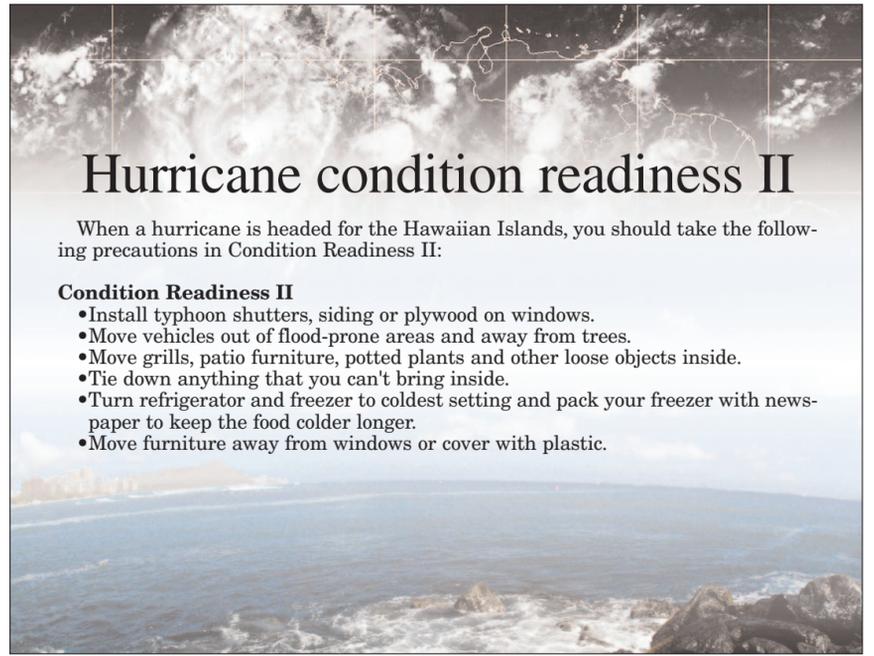
“The intent of the visit was to provide them with information concerning RIMPAC as it pertains to coalition interaction,” said Capt. Rodney Clark, commodore, Amphibious Squadron 7 “Hopefully, this will give them confidence to participate in future coalition operations and future RIMPAC exercises.”

The visitors toured BHR's bridge, medical facilities, aviation electronics shop,

well deck and observed flight operations from vulture's row.

“The visit is a testament to the continuing international appeal that the RIMPAC exercise has to countries and their respective navies around the Pacific theater,” said Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Petersen, visit coordinator. “RIMPAC provides an excellent opportunity for coalition partners to exercise and improve upon interoperability while operating in a multinational environment.”

BHR is currently in the Hawai'i operating region for the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise. RIMPAC is the world's largest multi-national exercise and is scheduled biennially by the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Participants include the United States, Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, the Netherlands, Peru, Republic of Korea, Singapore and the United Kingdom.



Hurricane condition readiness II

When a hurricane is headed for the Hawaiian Islands, you should take the following precautions in Condition Readiness II:

Condition Readiness II

- Install typhoon shutters, siding or plywood on windows.
- Move vehicles out of flood-prone areas and away from trees.
- Move grills, patio furniture, potted plants and other loose objects inside.
- Tie down anything that you can't bring inside.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest setting and pack your freezer with newspaper to keep the food colder longer.
- Move furniture away from windows or cover with plastic.

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Hawaii Navy News

U.S. Pacific Command sends first enlisted delegation to China

Story and photo by
Gunnery Sgt. Demetrio J. Espinosa

Marine Corps Base Hawai'i

BEIJING – In August, China will welcome the world to its country as it hosts this year's summer Olympics. Amid Beijing's last-minute preparations, the country's military took a big step and welcomed a first of its kind visit from a delegation of American military members.

The delegation, composed entirely of enlisted service members from the U.S. Pacific Command and component commands, visited China on June 14-21. The visit was the first enlisted delegation to be hosted by China and a large step toward greater transparency between the two countries and increased understanding of their militaries.

The trip began with a visit to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing where the delegation met the defense attaché, Army Brig. Gen. Charles Hooper. Hooper spoke to the delegation about the significance of their visit and his hopes for its success.

"This is historic, what you are doing here," Hooper said. "To have a senior [noncommissioned officer] delegation here is unprecedented," Hooper said. "This is historic."

The visit was coordinated by Air Force Chief Master Sgt. James Roy, senior enlisted leader, PACOM, who served as the delegation leader and echoed Hooper's sentiments. "This is the first [enlisted] delegation and let me say I am proud to be a part of it," he said. The delegation's first stop was a visit to one of China's most recognizable symbols - The Great Wall.

The delegates drove from downtown Beijing to the Great Wall. As they neared their destination, they were able to see small portions of the wall emerge, delicately clinging to the rolling mountains like a spider web stretched along a bush. It followed sharp contours as far as the eye could see.

This was the first visit for many delegation members. Most of them looked forward to visiting the wall and experiencing a part of world history. Walking up the steep



Master Chief Petty Officer Tom Howard, Fleet Master Chief for the U. S. Pacific Fleet, speaks with NCOs of the 179th Infantry, People's Liberation Army, in Nanjing, China on June 18. Howard, of Toledo, Ohio, was a member of the first all-enlisted delegation to China. The purpose of the delegation was to gain a better understanding of the People's Liberation Army's enlisted forces and military in general.

stairs, sometimes at a severe angle, provided the delegation an appreciation for those soldiers who walked their post along the wall to defend China against the Mongol invasion.

"To actually be able to walk along the footsteps of those hundreds of years before you is awe inspiring," said Navy Master Chief Petty Officer Tom Howard, Pacific Fleet master chief.

The visit to the wall ended their first day of activity, but was just the beginning of their trip and their immersion in Chinese culture. From Beijing, the group traveled to Nanjing, China, to visit both cultural sites and military facilities.

Their first stop was a visit to the Nanjing Military Region headquarters for a brief about NCO development in the People's Liberation Army (PLA). There the group learned from PLA leaders the PLA NCO system started in 1978.

According to the delegation's senior escort, PLA Senior Col. Lu Bai, Department of NCO Administration and Discipline of the General Staff, Beijing, the PLA NCO system has evolved over time

and has developed rules and regulations to administer the NCO program.

"The established system works well for China and the PLA," Bai said.

The PLA NCO system is similar to the U.S. NCO corps in that it has more members at the lower ranks and fewer at the higher enlisted ranks. However, the PLA NCO grades only go to level six for soldiers who serve between seven and 30 years. The PLA NCOs are also broken into two categories, technical and non-technical. Non technical NCOs, primarily small-unit infantry leaders, can only attain up to NCO level four. Technical jobs relating to maintenance and operation machinery or vehicles can go all the way to level six.

Another big difference the delegation noted was that PLA NCOs serve their entire military career with the same unit and to become NCOs, they have to volunteer for further service after their two-year conscript is complete.

Once the delegation received information about the PLA NCO system and how it's administered, they were ready to meet a few NCOs the next day.

After visiting the tomb of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, who most Chinese consider the father of modern China, they traveled to the home of the 179th Brigade of the PLA. The artillery brigade is home to 4,600 soldiers, 1,500 of which are NCOs.

The delegation was able to speak with level one through four NCOs from the brigade with jobs in infantry, reconnaissance, artillery and communications. Most serve in the capacity of a squad leader.

They learned that most PLA NCOs volunteer to stay beyond their conscript for the opportunity for advanced training and the benefits of serving in the military.

"The military is like a big school," said one NCO through an interpreter. "If I stay in the PLA, I can learn more and improve myself."

After touring the base, the delegation attended a dinner hosted by the Nanjing deputy political commissar, PLA Navy Rear Adm. Jianzong Xu. The admiral thanked the delegation for their visit and commented on the professionalism of the American NCOs.

"This delegation has left a deep impression because it was the first for enlisted," Xu said. "Although you had a short visit in Nanjing, you left a very deep impression. The NCOs you brought are outstanding."

During the dinner, Roy summed up the purpose for their visit to China in a way that soldiers of any military can understand. "Many people would ask why we would do this, and you can feel it in the room - it is called camaraderie," said Roy. "This is my second time in Nanjing and I look forward to coming again, as do the other delegates."

Following their full day in Nanjing, the delegates woke early the next morning for their trip to the city of Wuhan. The stop was coordinated at the last minute to allow the delegation the opportunity to visit an NCO academy and meet NCO candidates.

The question most delegation members wanted to know the answer to was why PLA conscripts would want to be an NCO. The answer came enthusiastically from a young NCO candidate attending

the school. "I admire the military life," said Jisong Feng, a fourth-year soldier. "After I finish my assignment here, I can go to a new assignment to use my skills."

Feng went on to explain that the role of a PLA NCO was similar to that of an American NCO. "NCOs mainly help us in our daily life," he said. "They help develop our skills."

Later that night, delegation members attended a dinner hosted by the deputy commander of the Wuhan Military Region and were able to speak to the NCOs and NCO candidates in a less formal setting. Many members hoped the interactions they had with the PLA would foster positive relations between the two countries.

"Our candor and friendliness hopefully dispelled thoughts and beliefs," said Howard.

Chief Master Sgt. John T. Salzman, command Chief Master Sgt., 13th Air Force, Pacific Air Force, pointed out our basic similarities made it easy to relate to them.

"Even when I began getting to know them, I realized they [NCOs] are just like us - just doing their jobs," he said. "They were perfect hosts. I wanted to have the opportunity to show that we are not that different in what we do. We are all driven to accomplish the mission."

As the delegation headed back to Beijing, amid the construction and preparations for next month's Olympics, they all reflected on the trip and how successful they thought it was.

According to Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Evans McBride, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, the most important goal for the trip was to build mutual understanding.

"The highlight of my trip was the dialogue between the PLA and us," he said. "That is priceless. I can't overstate how important that was."

Howard agreed and said greater communication could help each military understand the other.

"The most important aspect of this trip was to begin bridging the gap of understanding," Howard said. "I think militaries throughout the world are similar in many things. The challenge is to fully understand the culture that