

Alexander says 'aloha' to Navy Region Hawai'i

MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

Rear Adm. Townsend G. Alexander was relieved by Rear Adm. Dixon R. Smith as Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i (CNRH) and Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific (CNSG MIDPAC) during a change of command ceremony held on board Naval Station Pearl Harbor Oct. 24.

"I am thankful for spending the last two years in the beautiful state of Hawai'i," said Alexander. "The spirit of 'aloha' is truly magical and I've never served in a state where so many have been so friendly and supportive."

Alexander assumed the title of CNRH and CNSG MIDPAC on August 8, 2006. During his 26-month tour, Alexander executed phases of the Navy's first public-private venture housing project, achieved 5-star accreditation for bachelor housing and galley services and oversaw the redevelopment of the Moanalua Shopping Center among many other notable achievements.

While talking to the crowd packed with distinguished guests and local military officials, Alexander spoke about his fondest memory while stationed in Hawai'i.

"What was most memo-



Rear Adm. Townsend G. Alexander salutes the sideboys during a change of command ceremony where he was relieved by Rear Adm. Dixon R. Smith as Commander, Navy Region Hawaii; and Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific at Naval Station Pearl Harbor on Oct. 24. As Commander, Navy Region Hawaii, Alexander served as the regional coordinator for all shore-based naval personnel and shore activities in Hawaii. As Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, Alexander was responsible for the maintenance and training of the 11 surface ships homeported in Pearl Harbor, to prepare these ships for forward deployed fleet operations.

orable about my tour were the people of Oahu and Kauai who have treated me with so much 'aloha' and welcomed me into their communities. I will truly miss the people of Hawai'i," said Alexander.

Alexander also thanked the hundreds of personnel he has worked with throughout his Hawai'i tour.

"I'm extremely thankful for the members of the CNRH/CNSG MIDPAC team," said Alexander. "I have never worked with such a talented group of military, civilian and contractor personnel and I will never forget the dedication to excellence you have given me."

As a Sailor who worked closely with Alexander, Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Conrad Mathis, assigned to CNRH, will take from Alexander the kindness and steadfastness he brought as the region commander.

"The biggest thing I can take from Rear Adm. Alexander is that no matter who you were, he always treated you with dignity and respect," said Mathis. "He always did everything that was correct and by the book in every case he had."

Vice Adm. Robert T. Conway, Jr., commander, Navy Installations Command was the guest speaker for the ceremony.

See CNRH, A-2

Aloha Jewish Chapel gets new Torah

Story and photo by MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

A Sefer Torah dedication ceremony was held at the Aloha Jewish Chapel onboard Naval Station (NAVSTA) Pearl Harbor Oct. 26.

During the dedication, members of the synagogue and local military command-

ers completed the tradition of complete the writing of the last letters of the new Torah with the help of a 'sofer,' or scribe. For most people, the dedication of a new Torah is a once in a lifetime event.

"This is an absolutely fantastic and exciting time," said Daniel Bender, master of ceremonies for the dedication. "Most congregations do not get brand-new torah; they usually get a torah from

somewhere else. And very few congregations actually dedicate a torah in their sanctuary for the purpose of that group."

The new Torah was created for military families stationed in Hawaii and will be used for future services at the chapel. Since its opening 32 years ago, the chapel was previously using an 80-year-old Torah

See TORAH, A-2



Susan Hodge, Cmdr. Timothy Koester, Naval Station (NAVSTA) Pearl Harbor Chaplain, Capt. Donald Hodge, chief of staff for commander, Navy Region Hawaii and commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific and Rabbi Moshe Drum write one of the last letters in a new Sefer Torah during a Torah dedication ceremony at the Aloha Jewish Chapel onboard NAVSTA Pearl Harbor on Oct. 26. The new Torah, created for military families stationed in Hawaii, will be used for future services at the chapel. The \$45,000 cost was paid for by donations from Jewish and non-Jewish military personnel and civilians.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Eric J. Cutright

A Chief Petty Officer stands with Sailors at parade rest during a change of command ceremony for the guided-missile cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73) at the USS Nevada Memorial onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor on Oct 23. Capt. John Carroll relieved Capt. David Adler as commanding officer.

Carroll relieves Adler as USS Port Royal's commanding officer

MC2 Michael A. Lantron

Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i Public Affairs

Captain David Adler was relieved by Capt. John Carroll as commanding officer of the Pearl Harbor-based Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73) during a change of command ceremony Oct. 23 held at the USS Nevada Memorial onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

"I will always be attached to Port Royal," said Adler.

"As I depart, I wish you all fair winds and following seas as it has been an honor to serve as your commanding officer."

Adler assumed command of Port Royal on August 5, 2006. Under his command, Port Royal accomplished a major maintenance period, unit-level and strike group training and certifications, a Board of Inspection and Survey, a 6-month deployment to the Arabian Gulf, and Rim of the Pacific 2008.

Showing great emotion as he spoke to his Sailors and

distinguished guests, Adler thanked the crew for the efforts throughout his tour.

"When I first checked onboard I asked you to never let me down and never stand me wrong and you never have," said Adler. "I want to thank you for all the dedication and hard work you've provided me over the years."

Rear Adm. Charles Martoglio, director of operations for U.S. Pacific Command and friend to Capt. Adler since serving

See PORT ROYAL, A-6



Behind the scenes of anti-submarine warfare See page A-2



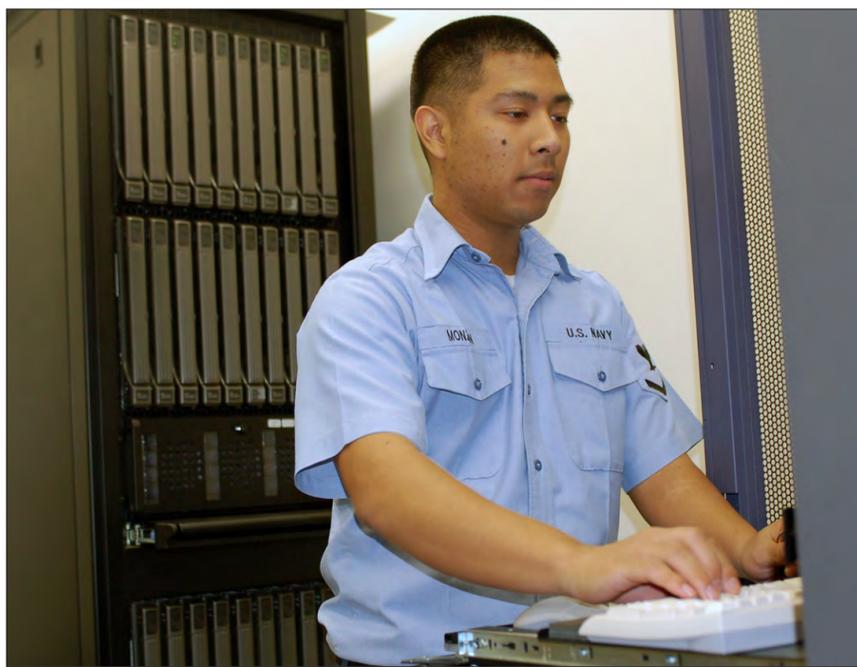
Patrol Squadron Celebrates 30 Years of Mishap-Free Flying See page A-4



Medical professionals build on maritime strategy core capability See page A-7



USS Paul Hamilton transforms into a ghost ship See page B-1



Systems Information Technician 3rd Class Kevin Monzon, Commander Anti-submarine Warfare Force 3rd Fleet (CTF-34) system administrator, performs routine system checks to ensure that all the computer systems in the department continue to operate at peak performance. CTF-34 is responsible for conducting Theater Antisubmarine Warfare (TASW) operations in and around the eastern and northern Pacific Ocean including Alaska, the Aleutian Islands and even a sector of the Arctic.

Behind the scenes of anti-submarine warfare

Story and photo by
MCSN Luciano Marano

Commander Submarine
Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

In the high-stakes game of blind man's bluff that is modern anti-submarine warfare (ASW), communication and teamwork are the keys to success. To that end, the Navy relies on highly trained and elite departments such as the Pearl Harbor-based, Commander, Anti-submarine Warfare Force U.S. Third Fleet (CTF-34).

"Our mission is to conduct Theater Anti-submarine Warfare (TASW) in the Third Fleet area of responsibility," said CTF-34 Chief of Staff Capt. Robert Racoosin. "In addition to maintaining a state of readiness, the command is actively involved in both carrier and expeditionary strike group work-ups as part of the Fleet Response Training Plan."

Naval fleets of today combine numerous assets, such as aircraft, submarines and surface ships, under one command.

The U.S. Navy's Third Fleet, headquartered in San Diego, Calif. includes units based along the Pacific coast and Hawaii, and is responsible for the water area in and around the Eastern and Northern Pacific Ocean including Alaska, the Aleutian Islands and even a sector of the Arctic territory.

A strike group is the prime expeditionary unit attached to a fleet and consists of an aircraft carrier or a large-deck amphibious ship and all of its various escort vessels commanded by one admiral. There are 11 carrier strike groups in the navy, 10 based in the United States and one forward-deployed to Japan.

"Our Sailors work closely with U.S. Third Fleet, Commander Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet;

Commander, Strike Force Training Pacific; Naval Mine and ASW Command and Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing Two staffs to ensure deploying strike groups are well-trained and able to integrate into U.S. Seventh Fleet TASW operations," said Racoosin.

Every member of the CTF-34 staff understands the importance of their work, and goes about their tasks with enthusiasm and the extreme attention to detail that the mission requires.

"As a strike group transits though the Pacific they are responsible for the area immediately surrounding its group of ships," said Operations Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Rory Carnes, CTF-34 staff member. "We are responsible for the rest of the theater area, and watching for submarine activity around them. The strike group's goal is to find and defend against the enemy submarines."

"It's a little stressful, but you train all the time" said Aviation Warfare Systems Operator 1st Class (AW/SWAC) Aaron Norton, another CTF-34 staff member. "I really like what I do."

According to Racoosin, an exercise conducted with a strike group is important. It gives the mobile command a chance to practice Navy-wide techniques and established procedures for successful TASW, something the staff of CTF-34 must remain fluent.

"There are a lot of collateral duties that come with an exercise, and a lot of planning and organization," said Operations Specialist 2nd Class (AW/SW) Kalani Dailey, CTF-34 staff member. "Nine times out of 10, when we are conducting an exercise, all our ships and submarines are real and not simulated."

With such a large operational scope involving so

many personnel, a Joint Forces exercise can seem a daunting task.

"TASW is by nature a multi-platform evolution," said Racoosin. "While the staff does have considerable expertise, we routinely work closely with subject matter experts from a variety of commands to ensure optimal tactical employment of all available assets."

"These exercises are done to assess the strike group's capabilities," said Lt. Cmdr. Mike Speiser, Canadian Exchange Officer and CTF-34 Executive Planning Officer. "There are a lot of participants, but everybody works together and has a common goal to accomplish the mission."

It may seem to some that America easily has the upper hand in the cutting-edge field of modern submarine warfare; the CTF-34 staff against guards against such dangerous complacency.

"While ASW may appear to have been dormant for some time since the end of the Cold War, there are many potential adversaries throughout the world that not only operate submarines, but continue to procure even more advanced and capable boats," said Racoosin.

It is the continued dedication and hard work of Sailors like the CTF-34 staff which is so essential to keeping our anti-submarine forces technically proficient and well-prepared to accomplish any mission they are called to, especially in hostile or forward-deployed areas.

"Each exercise has its own goals and missions," said Lt. Cmdr. Al Lima, CTF-34 Planning and Training Officer. "The most important thing we are doing is ironing out the communication between the strike groups and the shore forces so as to continue to streamline the process to better accomplish the mission."

NAVFAC employee receives National Acquisition Award

Don Rochon

Naval Facilities Engineering Command
Pacific Public Affairs

A contracting officer for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Marianas received the General Services Administration's (GSA) prestigious 2008 Ida Ustad Award for Excellence in Acquisition in a ceremony at the Washington Navy Yard Oct. 27.

Eugene Diaz received the \$5,000 award. The annual award is sponsored by the GSA and recognizes an individual government employee whose actions demonstrate or embody the concept of a contract specialist as business leader-advisor and have a major impact on improving the acquisition process.

"This comes as a surprise, but it is truly an honor to receive this recognition," said Diaz, who joined NAVFAC Marianas as an intern in 2002. "More so, it's an honor to have been surrounded by such a professional acquisition workforce in the different assignments that I supported. I extend this recognition to all of them."

Diaz is an acquisition professional working for NAVFAC Marianas in Guam. While forward-deployed to the Philippines, he served as the administrative contracting officer (ACO) providing oversight of the operations support contract for Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P). This major contract, an annual value of approximately \$30 million, encom-

passes 15 functional areas, ranging from air operations; morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR); facilities management; utilities; and galley services.

Bob Griffin, NAVFAC assistant commander for acquisition, praised Diaz for his commitment to NAVFAC and his dedication to the principles embodied in the award.

"His oversight and attention to detail are directly responsible for this award. He truly embodies excellence in acquisition for NAVFAC."

As the ACO, Diaz was the on-site agent for NAVFAC and served as an advisor to the JSOTF-P, ensuring the contractor understood the command's multi-service requirements.

Diaz was the liaison between the different military services in Hawaii and the Philippines involved in the contract. He was the driving force in facilitating communications between all stakeholders and in resolving any contract interpretation issues. In addition, he was the main influence in promoting the best practices of NAVFAC operations support contracting to this remote and challenging location.

Diaz joined NAVFAC Marianas after graduating from the University of Guam with a degree in accounting. He was selected as the NAVFAC Marianas Employee of the Year in 2005 and in 2007 was assigned to temporary duty with the Marine Corps at Quantico, Va., to support the high-profile Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Systems program.

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CNRH changes command

Continued from A-1

During his speech, Conway discussed the importance of Alexander's accomplishments as CNRH and CNSG MIDPAC.

"Alexander was no stranger to taking on complex challenges and making things happen," said Conway. "Commanding a complex region, he superbly led teams in supporting the Navy's mission. In short - he executed brilliantly."

Immediately after assuming command, Smith spoke to the audience and expressed his delight for being in Hawai'i and looking forward to continued excellence in the region.

"I've had the privilege of serving in many great locations throughout the world during my career, but my family and I have never had the privilege to live here in Hawai'i," said Smith. "I am excited to continue to build upon the relationship Rear Adm. Alexander and his predecessors have developed, and I look forward to being a

good and engaged neighbor."

Smith is a native of Greens Farms, Conn. During the ceremony, Conway presented Alexander with the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services.

Alexander's next assignment will be as Commander, Navy Region Southeast, which encompasses Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, as well as the Caribbean, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Alexander is a native of Newport, R.I.

Smith previously served as commanding officer of Naval Base San Diego. As CNRH, Smith will serve as the regional coordinator for all shore-based naval personnel and shore activities in Hawai'i. As CNSG MIDPAC, he will be responsible for the maintenance and training of the 11 surface ships homeported in Pearl Harbor, to prepare these ships for forward deployed fleet operations.

Hawaii Navy News Editorial

Fitness, appearance...it reflects who you are



FLTCM (SW/SS) Rick West

Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command

personal responsibility. If you are overweight, the person most accountable for your situation is you. The Navy is going to continue to offer opportunities and equipment to help you lose weight and get in shape, but ultimately it's you who needs to commit to the program.

If you haven't figured it out yet, the Navy takes your health seriously, and so should you. As each of us aspires to leadership, I challenge each of you to help your shipmates around you who may need some motivational help. If you are going to the gym, take someone with you.

Working hard days and weeks on end will wear you down both physically and mentally. If you are not in good physical shape, you won't be able to keep your body and mind sharp. The same can be said of uniform appearance - your appearance is a direct reflection of your attention to detail and discipline. If you don't take the time to do the small things right (uniforms), you may not give the same level of attention to your work. Additionally, others may not give you the chance to get involved in important projects that could positively affect your career if they feel you don't present an acceptable appearance. If you cut corners in your job and don't

think appearance matters, you lower your operational readiness.

Whether or not the Navy truly becomes a more fit service depends on each of us to realize our role, both personally and as leaders. Command support is paramount. We need to promote physical fitness and healthy lifestyles. We need to ensure each Sailor has the opportunity to participate in physical fitness activities. We need to ensure those Sailors who are outside our standard are provided motivation and assistance to bring them back into standards. And that means you! I am

counting on each and every one of you to do your best to get in shape, stay in shape, and help your shipmates around you to improve their health as well.

You are all doing some great things in our Navy. Every day I am amazed at the talent and work ethic that keeps our Navy at the forefront. Stay safe and look out for your shipmates. Hoo-yah.

Fleet tip: Did you know that Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation has trained professionals that will assist you with a fitness regimen? All you have to do is ask.



Smoke alarms are your best defense

Navy Region Hawaii Safety Office

Fire is one of the leading causes of accidental deaths. It's important for everyone to take every preventative measure and precaution possible to be ready to deal with a fire emergency.

More than half of all fatal household fires occur between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. when everyone in the home is usually asleep. A smoke alarm is necessary to alert you to fires when you are asleep. Smoke alarms detect the earliest stages of combustion to allow enough time to evacuate the home safely.

For minimum protection, detectors must be placed between the living areas and the sleeping areas to intercept smoke before it reaches the bedrooms. In multi-storied homes, detectors should be located on the ceilings of stairwells to separate the floor levels. However, the location of the smoke alarm in the vicinity of sleeping areas does not provide protection for the occupants from a fire starting in their bedroom with the door closed. It

may be wise to have additional alarms within each bedroom itself, especially if you smoke. A closed door can delay the movement of smoke preventing it from reaching a smoke detector, so place smoke alarms in hallways.

Fire confined to a large room often develops great intensity before it breaks out. The basement is one area that can be large, removed from the alarm, and isolated by some type of door closure at the top of the stairs. Because basements do account for a significant number of fires, it is recommended a smoke alarm be placed at the head of the stairs from the basement.

Smoke detectors should be located on or near the ceiling, away from doors and other obstructions. Avoid air currents from doors, windows, fans and vents because turbulent air may prevent combustion particles from reaching the alarm. Before installing, read the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Smoke detectors are a small price to pay for a good and safe night's sleep for you and your family.

Destruction of USS Philadelphia in Tripoli harbor



Photo Illustration / photo courtesy of Naval Historical Center

On Feb. 16, 1804, USS Philadelphia boarded and set on fire by a party led by Lieutenant Stephen Decatur. In the left foreground is the ketch Intrepid, which Decatur used during this mission.



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

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



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Hawaii Navy News

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Patrol Squadron Celebrates 30 Years of Mishap-Free Flying

Lt. j.g. Frank Verducci

VP-9 Public Affairs

Patrol Squadron 9 (VP-9) executed a major safety milestone for maritime patrol aviation Oct. 26 when Combat Aircrew 11 safely completed an eight-hour mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom surpassing 30 years and 180,000 hours of mishap-free flying.

From Cold War anti-submarine warfare in the 1970s out of Adak, Alaska, to present-day expeditionary missions during an Iraqi summer desert deployment, this accomplishment uniquely attests to the squadron's past and present leadership and keen focus in all matters concerning aviation safety in any environment.

Cmdr. Curtis K. Phillips, commanding officer, Patrol Squadron 9, praised the squadron for its professionalism and dedication to this daily effort.

"Our concern for safety is a constant companion. This milestone represents the efforts of VP-9 aviators and maintenance professionals spanning the last thirty years."

"This mission was flown by a junior aircrew, a testament to the standardization and leadership, at the low-



U.S. Navy photo by MCI Daniella Cossio

Task Group 57.18 comprised of PATROL SQUADRON 9 (VP-9) and CMO-2B, home based at Marine Corp Base, Hawaii, has completed 180,000 hours of mishap-free flying in the past 30 years.

est levels, that is required to safely and effectively operate an aging airframe while bridging the gap to the P-8 Poseidon. We are

proud to have the opportunity to reflect on this squadron's legacy of safety."

VP-9 is finishing up a seven-month deployment to

the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and will return to their home base of Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

USS Port Royal changes command

Continued from A-1

together on USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) in 1997, praised Adler's work ethic as Port Royal's commanding officer.

"You have established and led Port Royal to be the ship that routinely does the exceptional," said Martoglio. "I congratulate you on a tremendous-

ly successful command tour. You have contributed so immeasurably to our nation at a time when it has really counted."

Rear Adm. T.G. Alexander, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii and Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific (MIDPAC), was also on hand to show gratitude to Capt. Adler

for his support to the region.

"The time I've been here has been a wonderful experience and a big part of that goes to Capt. Adler," said Alexander. "His leadership on the waterfront and counseled advice support for me has been absolutely critical to the success that MIDPAC has received over the last two years."



Jewish synagogue members of the Aloha Jewish Chapel review a new Sefer Torah prior to a dedication ceremony at the chapel onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor Oct. 26.

New Torah dedicated to Pearl Harbor Jewish Chapel

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which survived the Holocaust but is worn and no longer kosher due to fading letters.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hanneman was on hand to comment on the day's importance and the knowledge that future generations will be able to use the new Torah.

"I came here today to share my best wishes with the Jewish community on this special opportunity with this sacred Torah," said Hanneman. "It's a major message that we recognize the Jewish people and embrace them. I am happy that the children here will be able to embrace what their parents and grandparents have worked very hard for."

To pay for the new Torah, Jewish and non-Jewish military personnel and civilians provided donations totaling \$45,000 to the Aloha Jewish Chapel Torah Project.

Truth has sprung up from the people who have recognized the need for a new Torah and the opportunity to make that happen," said

Cmdr. Timothy Koester, NAVSTA Pearl Harbor Chaplain. "I want to thank everyone who helped make this happen, especially the Torah Project committee members. What a great blessing it is to have this Torah here today."

During the dedication ceremony, a proclamation from Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle announcing the day as Aloha Jewish Chapel Day in Hawaii was read to the crowd. A portion of the proclamation read:

"In offering a place of solace to those serving in Hawaii, Aloha Jewish Chapel helps service members accomplish their mission. I hereby proclaim Oct. 26, 2008 as Aloha Jewish Chapel Day in Hawaii and thank its members for all they have contributed to the community."

The Torah is the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) and is always written by hand on a kosher scroll. Active duty members of all military branches attend Friday and Saturday Sabbath services at the chapel.

Pearl Harbor Highlights



A musician from the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band plays a piccolo during a change of command ceremony where Rear Adm. Townsend G. Alexander was relieved by Rear Adm. Dixon R. Smith as commander, Navy Region Hawaii and commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific at Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

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

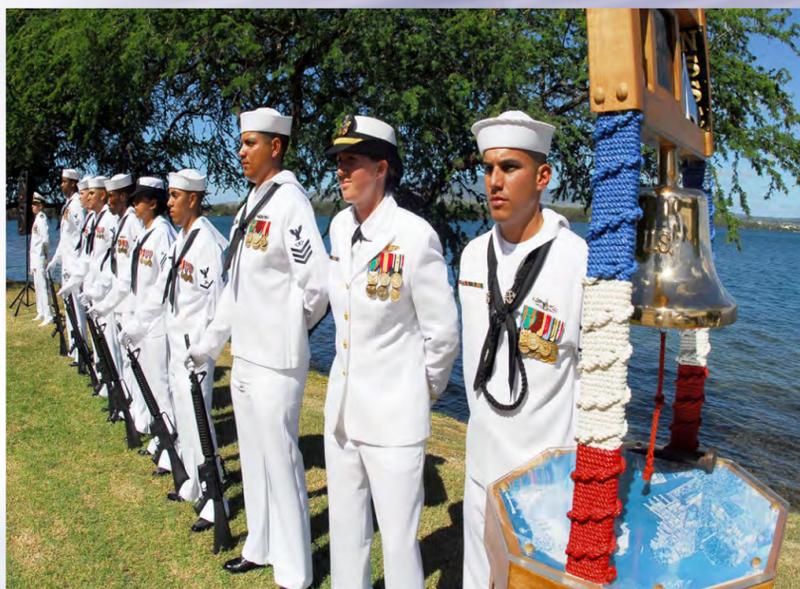
Rear Adm. T.G. Alexander, Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i and Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific (left), Rear Adm. Joseph Walsh, deputy commander and chief of staff of U.S. Pacific Fleet (right) and Rear Adm. Dixon Smith honor colors during a change of command ceremony onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor Oct. 24. Alexander was relieved by Smith following after a 26-month tour.

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



Sailors and Marines aboard the Tarawa-class amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) man the rails as the ship passes the USS Arizona Memorial while making her way pier side to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Pearl Harbor. The Peleliu Expeditionary Strike Group and the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit arrived in NAVSTA Pearl Harbor after a six-month deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

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



A ceremonial rifle team assigned to the Pearl Harbor-based Ticonderoga-class guided cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73) render honors for the benediction at the end of a change of command ceremony at the USS Nevada Memorial onboard Naval Station Pearl Harbor Oct. 23. During the ceremony, Captain David Adler relinquished command of Port Royal to Carroll after a 26-month tour as commanding officer.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Eric Curtright

(Below) Two helicopters from the "Easy Riders" of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light (HSL) 37, perform a fly-over between Kilo pier and the USS Missouri and USS Arizona Memorials at the beginning of a change of command ceremony in which Rear Adm. Townsend G. Alexander was relieved by Rear Adm. Dixon R. Smith as commander, Navy Region Hawaii and commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific at Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

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



Navy triathlete returns from Ironman Competition

Story and photo by
MC2 Paul D. Honnick

Fleet Public Affairs
Detachment Hawaii

The officer in charge of Afloat Planning System, Pacific (APSPAC), returned to life as normal and reflected on her performance after completing the 30th Ford Ironman World Championship triathlon Oct. 11.

Cmdr. Kristin Barnes joined 1,800 elite athletes in Kailua-Kona on the "Big" Island of Hawaii where she completed 2.4 miles of swimming through rough ocean currents, 112 miles of biking and a 26.2 mile marathon over volcanic rock-covered terrain.

"I felt like a winner in that I never quit," said Barnes. "I wanted to do the race with integrity and for me that meant not ever quitting, and when I crossed the finish line that definitely was something I felt that I did right."

On race day, Barnes entered Kailua Bay at 7 a.m. and began an ordeal that would not end for almost 12 hours.

Barnes finished the swim portion in less than one hour and twenty minutes and transitioned to the 112 mile bicycle race.

"I had a really good bike portion. I was really strong on the bike, and I hit all the goals that I wanted to hit there," she said.

Barnes conquered the bike portion in roughly six hours and began the triathlon's final and most notorious portion - the 26.2 mile marathon run.

Barnes said this was the most challenging part of the triathlon for her.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Paul D. Honnick
Cmdr. Kristin Barnes, officer-in-charge of Afloat Planning System, Pacific, is welcomed with a Hawaiian lei as she crosses the finish line at the 30th Ford Ironman World Championship.

"The last six miles can be really, really challenging, even when the race is going your way," she explained.

Barnes also discussed how fatigue affected her judgment later on in the race.

"I managed my nutrition poorly, which based on experience, I knew better. Sometimes you know how to do things better but you just don't. You're seven or eight hours into a twelve-hour race, and your mind just stops working, and you make silly, common-sense errors."

Barnes discussed when she "hit the wall" during the run and how she found the

strength to break through and finish.

"Probably about three miles left to go, I ended up running with a woman for a little while. I was feeling pretty down at that point, and she kind of put things into perspective about how good it would be to finish and 'hey, we're almost there.' I acknowledged that she was absolutely right, and when I finally hit that turn going down the hill for that last mile, then it was all over but the crying at this point," she said.

Despite the many roadblocks she faced along the

way, Barnes overcame every obstacle and crossed the finish line with an overall time of 11:47:01.

Barnes said the race itself was lonely, but she wasn't alone at the finish line.

"I did have some very good friends there supporting me, and it was critical because I wrote in my race report that there's nothing lonelier than a finish line without friends," she explained. "Having a couple of friends there really, really made it worthwhile. They helped me get my bike, and they gathered me and got me home without hurting myself or falling apart on the

way."

Barnes described how her 20-25 hours of weekly physical conditioning in the months leading up to the race paid off in the end.

"I think some of my strong points were my preparation beforehand. My coach and I mapped out a plan, and I followed it pretty much to the 'T'. I did every single workout except for one in the 12 to 16 weeks prior so I felt really good physically coming in."

Throughout the race, Barnes said one of her biggest motivations to finish was the fact that she was representing the Navy.

"It was really neat to be able to represent something bigger than yourself, to have a motivation from something outside of yourself so that when the chips were down and you're struggling you have a motivation to keep going."

Barnes also spent some time under the Navy's expo tent in the days leading up to the race where she got the opportunity to speak with fellow athletes and race fans.

"The discussions we had were more Navy-centered rather than triathlon, so it was really good to be able to go and talk about the Navy as an officer and what that could offer peoples' sons and daughters," she said. "It was really neat to be able to share my experiences and be able to let them know that just because their son or daughter joins the Navy doesn't mean that they lose who they are and they have to stop doing what they want to do."

When she returned home to the island of Oahu, Barnes said she got a lot of positive feedback from her family, her friends and the Sailors she

works with.

"I got a lot of 'congratulations,' and I got a lot of people expressing that they didn't think they would be able to [an Ironman], which I found interesting because I'm no different from everybody else. All I did was put in the time and eat right and rest right, and I was able to accomplish that. I know that with time and training they would be able to do the same thing."

Now that Barnes is back on her feet, she said she plans to pick up where she left off and start training for the next event that comes her way.

"I've already gotten back into it. I have a triathlon over at Marine Corps Base Kaneohe on November 2; I'm planning on doing a Maui marathon in early January, and when I go to Kuwait for a year I plan on taking my bike with me," she said. "I'm too happy with how I feel and with my fitness level, and I enjoy the experience too much."

Barnes concluded by explaining how completing an Ironman is possible for anybody.

"There's always more in the tank. It's amazing how deep I've had to dig sometimes to get the energy to do it," she said. "It's not necessarily learning how to do an Ironman; it's learning how to deal with the physical pain associated with the training and with the race itself, and that's what the challenge is. If you can absorb that and still be able to put out an athletic performance, that's the catch for me. Everybody can do that; it's just a matter of how much pain are you willing to endure to do it."

Boxer Sailors train to expand ESG capability via refueling evolution

MC2 (SW/AW) Jon Rasmussen

USS Boxer (LHD 4) Public Affairs

USS Boxer's (LHD 4) Deck Department Sailors carried out a rare evolution Oct. 15, as USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93) pulled alongside Boxer to receive fuel in an underway replenishment (UNREP) as part of Boxer Expeditionary Strike Group's (BOXESG) integration exercise.

The UNREP provided a training opportunity for Sailors on both ships, but was the first time most of Boxer's Deck Department Sailors have been on the delivery side of a refueling rig.

Typically, the job of refueling ships in an ESG falls to a Military Sealift Command supply ship, but having

that capability within the strike group extends the range and capabilities of the strike group as a whole.

"Sometimes, the smaller ships in our ESG need fuel when an oiler isn't in the area. When that happens, Boxer has the capability to send fuel from the flight deck refueling station, allowing that ship to carry on with its mission," said Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate (SW/AW/SCW) Deondra Quarles, Boxer's deck department leading petty officer. "The last time we sent this rig was back in May of 2007, so this was a really good experience for all the Sailors who have never seen it."

Lacking real-world training opportunities, Boxer's deck department coordinated with Naval Base San

Diego to produce realistic training at the pier for their Sailors. The training utilized two barges moored side-by-side to simulate a ship receiving the refueling rig.

"In addition to being a good hands-on opportunity for a lot of our Sailors to see an evolution like this in action, it was a chance for us to make sure none of the rig components were kinked or tangled," explained Quarles.

Another link in the chain of success according to several members of the deck department's senior leadership was Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Nicholas Broders who was the rig captain for the evolution. As rig captain, Broders was in charge of directing the teams of Sailors handling the lines, directing the winch

operator who controls the fuel rig and acting as the first line of safety for everyone on the refueling station.

"This is great training because it's a rig we don't typically fly very often, just being on the delivery side of an UNREP is good for training," said Broders. "Experienced or not, there always has to be people who step up to meet the challenge, and everyone who was out there on the rig with me definitely did step up, and that's why we were successful."

With some realistic training and successful real-world replenishment under their belts, Broders and the rest of his department are confident that they will be ready to answer the call if any of the BOXESG ships need to top off to carry out their mission.

BOXESG is scheduled for more

training exercises this fall prior to a deployment scheduled for early next year.

BOXESG is comprised of Amphibious Squadron 5, the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), USS Boxer (LHD 4), USS New Orleans (LPD 18), USS Comstock (LSD 45), USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93), USCGC Boutwell (WHEC 719), USS Milius (DDG 69), USS Lake Champlain (CG 57), Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 21, Naval Beach Group 1, Assault Craft Unit 5, Assault Craft Unit 1, Beach Master Unit 1 and Fleet Surgical Team 5.

The 13th MEU is comprised of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 (Reinforced), Combat Logistics Battalion 13 and Battalion Landing Team 1/1.

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Medical professionals build on maritime strategy core capability

Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

More than 100 military and civilian healthcare professionals and planners from across the Pacific Fleet gathered for the 14th biennial Pacific Fleet/Marine Forces Medical Symposium in Pearl Harbor Oct. 22-24 to discuss the future of humanitarian and civic assistance (HCA) missions.

The theme of this year's symposium was "Humanitarian Civic Assistance Into the 21st Century."

As the sixth pillar of the Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower, humanitarian assistance builds on "relationships forged in times of calm" and mitigates "human suffering as the vanguard of interagency and multinational efforts, both in a deliberate, proactive fashion and in response to crises."

The three-day conference combined a unique blend of military and civilian speakers and breakout sessions, challenging the participants to recognize the increasingly complex inter-relationships of military, economic, healthcare, infrastructure, political and diplomatic policies relevant to security issues throughout the Pacific region.

Rear Adm. Joseph Mulloy, the U.S. Pacific Fleet deputy chief of staff for plans, policies and requirements, welcomed the participants to the symposium and kicked off the discussion of HCA missions.

Mulloy compared past humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, which often had to ramp up quickly, with today's missions such as Pacific Partnership that involve longer, more detailed planning for sustained success.

"Missions like Pacific Partnership make us better prepared, enhance our Navy/Marine Corps team and make us a better Navy," he said. "Pacific Partnership represents the best of our military planning capability."

Mulloy spoke of the medical community's role in HCA missions, focusing much of

his remarks on the recent Pacific Partnership missions aboard USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) in 2008 and USS Peleliu (LHA 5) in 2007 that helped build collaborative relationships in Southeast Asia and Oceania by providing engineering, civic, medical and dental assistance.

To these missions, "you bring resources, you bring

"you bring resources, you bring heart and you bring respect, Pacific Partnership personifies planning, compassion, respect and understanding for the local populations."

heart and you bring respect," he said. "Pacific Partnership personifies planning, compassion, respect and understanding for the local populations."

Mulloy challenged those in attendance to ask the hard questions throughout the symposium about past missions and to look toward continuously improving future missions.

Capt. Scott Flinn, medical commander for Pacific Partnership 2007 (PP07), followed Mulloy, reviewing the lessons learned and best practices from that mission, thus preparing for panel discussions about experiences and strategies. Flinn concluded that PP07 met the mission of a "by, with, through" operation highlighted by Mulloy in his opening remarks.

"What that means is that we were there 'by' invitation of the host nation, working 'with' them side-by-side, 'through' their help and assistance," Flinn said.

Echoing Flinn, Capt. James

Rice, medical commander for the 148-day PP08 deployment, emphasized that the HCA missions are "not about us." But instead, "we are there to support our host nations, our partners."

Rice stressed that the U.S. focus must be on furthering host-nation capabilities to move forward with skills, equipment and expertise to further treat their own people. However, the Mercy medical commander also cited specific examples of how treating individuals affected entire villages.

"This mission and the spirit of Pacific Partnership changed people's lives," he said. "We have a picture of a woman with a smile on her face after receiving a pair of glasses. That picture really captures the meaning of Pacific Partnership."

Flinn closed his presentation with a poem by Maya Angelou that he said highlights the essence of Navy/Marine Corps HCA missions: "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel."

Capt. Gail Hathway, U.S. Pacific Fleet deputy fleet surgeon and coordinator of the symposium, said that attendees took advantage of the lessons learned, best practices and challenges set forth by the opening speakers. And, for the remainder of the event, the participants actively contributed to panel discussions, breakout sessions and social-networking events.

"It was time we sat down to talk about how to work better and smarter on HCA missions," she said. "We invited Army, Air Force and many others who have done HCAs but do them differently. We shared the best of the best."

Hathway reiterated that the time to plan for HCA missions is now as the days of pick-up operations are gone.

"We are planning sooner, engaging with partners sooner and putting together a planning cycle that isn't rushed," she said. "The time to exchange business cards is now, not during an emergency."



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Bryan M. Ilyankoff

U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, the Honorable Michael W. Marine speaks with Capt. Scott Flinn, Pacific Partnership medical commander, about how local patients are being helped at the Nai Hiem Dong Medical Station. The Ambassador went to the site to survey how Pacific Partnership was making an impact in the local community. The Vietnamese government is working with Pacific Partnership to facilitate medical, dental, and engineering assistance programs in the Da Nang area. Along with regional partners and non-governmental organizations, the Pacific Partnership team is providing the local community with a wide range of assistance.

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