

# Opportunities abound for a happy, healthy, fit and ready New Year!

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Ho'okele Staff

## Rear Adm. Rick Williams

Commander, Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific

As the New Year begins, let's take a moment to think about all the important events we are privileged to have on our doorstep, all happening now and in coming weeks here in Hawaii:

\* the Wounded Warrior Pacific Invitational has brought dozens of heroes to Hawaii to compete in seated sports events around Oahu;

\* the Sony Pro-Am Golf Tournament is being held with eight military participants, a Pro Clinic at Joint Base, and numerous service members volunteering in their off duty time;

\* warfighters will be training for operational readiness in the Koa Kai exercise, getting ready for RIMPAC 2014.

\* military service members will be able to rub shoulders with all-stars of the NFL when the Pro Bowl comes to town at the end of the month.

We wouldn't have these opportunities if we weren't regarded as a world-class force in Hawaii. As Commander, Navy Region and Navy Surface Group Middle Pacific, it's a special privilege to be involved in these events and training opportunities that tie to fitness and readiness.

To maintain a combat-ready force to defend maritime interests in the heart of the Pacific, we need to be physically and mentally fit and ready – and we must take care of our shipmates as well as our families. As we welcome in the New Year and consider our resolutions let's commit to promoting a healthy culture of fitness and readiness with a focus on good leadership through honor, courage and commitment.

The Navy joins our Marine Corps, Air Force, Army and Coast Guard teammates in safeguarding and fostering this healthy force and our healthy families. Fitness centers, pools, MWR activities, and nutrition programs are available for physical fitness. Mental health programs and services help address issues like PTSD and suicide prevention.

According to the Naval Safety Center, our Navy has seen a nearly 50 percent reduction in motor vehicle



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and recreation fatalities related to alcohol abuse over the past ten years. In fact, there are numerous Navy safety and quality of life programs contributing to this improvement, and one of the newest additions is CSADD. The Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions (CSADD) is making a difference by offering alternatives, leading by example and innovatively promoting healthy and safe behavior.

Unfortunately, we still see a disproportionate number of motorcycle accidents and fatalities. Navy-wide, there were 244 deaths in two-wheel motor vehicle accidents from fiscal years 2002 through 2013.

Now, as we make New Year resolutions based on fitness and readiness, let's slow down, make good choices, and avoid motor vehicle accidents as well as the negative impact of bad behavior on and off duty, particularly with regard to alcohol and sexual assault.

Sexual assault is a major crime that tears apart commands wherever it occurs. Ending sexual assaults will increase our readiness and resilience as we become a more fit team.

As SECNAV says, when it comes to sexual assaults, we must honor our shipmates by looking out for one another. We must have the courage to act, intervene and report. And we must have the commitment to support those who have been assaulted.

Let's commit to a safer, healthier, increased fitness and more ready 2014 and enjoy the many opportunities we have here throughout the year.

We can achieve great things when we work together.