

Hickam aircrew takes on Nevada desert

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Meares

15th Wing Public Affairs

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. -- Flares popped from the side of C-17 Globemaster IIIs and C-130 Hercules aircraft and fell to the desert floor, filling the skies with smoke. Pilots weaved their way through mountainous terrain to avoid threats along an airdrop route, trying not to get blown out of the sky.

Fortunately for the 535th Airlift Squadron (AS) C-17 crew from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii and the host of other units participating, it was the U.S. Air Force Weapons School Mobility Air Forces Exercise (MAFEX) where more than 40 C-17 and C-130 cargo aircraft assembled in aerial formations over the Nevada Test and Training Range to conduct air and ground operations during the bi-annual exercise on Nov. 17.

Cargo aircraft from Air Force installations across



Capt. Rob Greeson and Capt. Nate Padgett, 535th Airlift Squadron (AS) pilots, fly a C-17 toward a drop zone during the Mobility Air Forces Exercise on Nov. 17. The 535th AS aircrew trained in unrestricted descent assault landings, air drop, combat offloads, air refueling, night vision goggle training, combat offloads, low levels, mountainous terrain, assault landings, threat responses and multiple ship formation training during a five-day training trip to Washington on Nov 12-17 in preparation for the Mobility Air Forces Exercise at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

the country departed their home bases and joined in formation over Nevada's

military training ranges to participate in the exercise - a culminating event for the

U.S. Air Force Weapons School.

"MAFEX provides realis-

tic training for CAF (combat air force) and MAF (mobility air force) in order

to prepare our weapons school students for both ongoing operations and future contingencies," said Lt. Col. Kevin Oliver, the MAFEX air mission commander. "The tactical lessons learned, provided by this air mobility exercise, drive Air Force and joint warfighting expertise to the highest level."

The mobility exercise is part of the weapons school's rigorous curriculum, which is aimed at teaching cargo aircrews how to integrate with fighter aircraft, sensor, intelligence and space platforms to conduct successful troop and cargo airdrop and air land operations in combat zones.

"It was great to participate in the MAFEX, and it gave me a better perspective of what the weapons school undergraduates go through while they are there for the six-month school," said Capt. Rob Greeson, 535th AS pilot. "It also showed me how small a community we

See AIRCREW, A-9

USS Paul Hamilton deploys to the Middle East and western Pacific

Story and photo by MC2 (SW) Mark Logico

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

Families and friends said goodbye as the Arleigh Burke-class, guided-missile destroyer USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) departed from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Nov. 30 for an independent deployment to the Middle East and Western Pacific.

"We should be okay," said Naomi Pawelczyk, a spouse of one of the Sailors aboard the ship who was at the pier with their two-year-old son as the ship sailed away. "I'm just worried about my husband. We will continue to stay in contact with each other. I know he's going to be worried about our son. I'm sure he is going to have a hard time being apart from him. We will wait for his safe return."

Georgia Pahl, another spouse at the pier, said that it was her first time seeing her husband deploying aboard Paul Hamilton.

"I'm going to hold on to positive thoughts and hope that they'll be back soon," Pahl said. "We're newlywed.



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) departs on an independent deployment to the Middle East and western Pacific. Commanded by Cmdr. Edward J. Eder, Paul Hamilton has a crew of about 30 officers and 223 enlisted Sailors.

It's tough, but we have so much to look forward to when he comes back."

Commanded by Cmdr. Edward J. Eder, Paul Hamilton has a crew of about 253 Sailors. Paul Hamilton is deploying under the middle Pacific surface combatant (MPSC) deployment concept, in which Hawaii-based ships

deploy in support of operations in the U.S. 5th and U.S. 7th Fleet operating areas.

Guided-missile destroyers are multi-mission surface combatants, capable of anti-air warfare (AAW), anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and anti-surface warfare (ASUW) missions.



U.S. Navy photo by IT2 (SW/AW) Rhodessa Copenheaver

Hula dancers perform at the 21st Operation Aloha event, held Nov. 25 at the Waiialua Community Center on the North Shore. Sailors from Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station, Pacific joined the Waiialua Community Association, families and friends to help make Thanksgiving a little better for the less fortunate.

NCTAMS hosts Operation Aloha

ITC (IDW/SW/AW) Dave Watkins

Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station, Pacific, Public Affairs

Sailors from Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station, Pacific (NCTAMS PAC) joined family and volunteers on Nov. 25 to help make Thanksgiving a little better for neighbors on Hawaii's North Shore.

NCTAMS PAC Sailors, along with the Waiialua Community Association, served a hot holiday meal to the less fortunate and their families, sharing the Thanksgiving holiday and some aloha spirit with the community. The event featured entertainment, including singers, hula dancers and a violinist. The Waiialua Community Center hosts the Thanksgiving dinner every year, with children from St. Michael's School transforming the gymnasium

into a festive hall with their many hand-made decorations.

This year, NCTAMS PAC celebrated its 21st anniversary of Operation Aloha. What started in 1989 as a simple Thanksgiving meal by the Waiialua Community Association with a few Sailors from NCTAMS PAC, Operation Aloha has now grown into an annual event with entertainment and food for

See NCTAMS, A-9

National Park Service and U.S. Navy will commemorate 69th anniversary of Pearl Harbor attack and dedicate new Pearl Harbor Visitor Center on Dec. 7

National Park Service

The National Park Service and the U.S. Navy will host a joint memorial ceremony commemorating the 69th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7 on the back lawn of the new Pearl Harbor Visitor Center.

The ceremony, which will be held from 7:40 to 9:30 a.m., will include the dedication of the new \$56 million Pearl

Harbor Visitor Center at the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument (formerly known as the USS Arizona Memorial Visitor Center). The National Park Service will also host two days of special events, Dec. 5 and 6, leading up to the grand opening and dedication.

The theme of the Dec. 7 ceremony is "A Promise Fulfilled 1941 - 2010." The ceremony returns to the back lawn of the

new visitor center which looks directly out to the USS Arizona Memorial situated in Pearl Harbor. For the past five years, the ceremony has been held at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam's Kilo Pier while planning and construction of the new visitor center took place.

More than 2,500 distinguished guests and the general public are expected to join current and former military

personnel, including Pearl Harbor survivors and other WWII veterans, for the annual observance of the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and the dedication of the new visitor center. Pearl Harbor Survivors Association members from across the country are holding their annual meeting in Honolulu on Dec. 4 - 8 to coincide with the anniversary and

See PROMISE, A-8

Air Force plans Dec. 7 Attack on Hickam Field Remembrance Ceremony

The Air Force will hold a Dec. 7 Remembrance Day Ceremony beginning at 7:55 a.m. on Dec. 7 at Atterbury Circle at Hickam. An alternate location will be the Courtyard of Heroes.



Navy Region Hawaii announces 2010 Navy Community Service Awards See page A-2



Vietnamese-American returns to birthplace — aboard USS Tarawa See page A-6



Dec. 7 commemoration events See page B-1



PACAF specialized medical team conducts a first for peacetime missions See page A-2



15th Wing leaders visit Hickam Elementary See page A-4



Logistics Readiness Squadron unravels Security See page B-2

PACAF specialized medical team conducts a first for peacetime missions

Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Kerry
Jackson

13th Air Force Public
Affairs

Pacific Air Forces at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) deployed its first peacetime critical care air transport team (CCATT) to transfer a critically-ill patient from Naval Hospital, Guam to Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii, on Nov. 17.

The CCATT is a specialized, three-person medical team whose primary mission is to provide critical care management for critically ill or injured patients who require transport to advanced medical treatment facilities. The team was alerted and, within three hours, boarded a commercial airliner to meet the aeromedical evacuation crew and KC-135 Stratotanker in Guam, to successfully transport the patient to Tripler within 24 hours.

"This was a very successful mission for our team and a great way to start our first peacetime mission here in Hawaii," said Maj. (Dr.) Aaron Fields, PACAF's CCATT East element chief, who is an anesthesiologist and an intensivist. "Transporting the patient to Tripler safely and expeditiously was our primary concern. The patient is now receiving more advanced medical treatment," he explained.

The 13th Air Force Surgeon General's Theater Patient Movement Requirements Center-Pacific at JBPHH, which oversees PACAF's two CCATTs, received the urgent request for a cardiac patient from the Naval Hospital, Guam through the Transportation Command Regulating and Command and Control



Staff Sgt. Michael Reyes (left), Maj. (Dr.) Aaron Fields, and Capt. John Michael Fowler, aeromedical evacuation and Critical Care Air Transport Team (CCATT) East members, transport a critically ill patient from a KC-135 Stratotanker to Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii, on Nov. 17. This is the first time CCATT East element has transported a critically ill patient during peacetime. The CCATT is a specialized, three-person medical team whose primary mission is to provide critical care management for critically ill or injured patients who require transport to advanced medical treatment facilities. Reyes is an aeromedical evacuation technician from 18th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Japan; Fields is chief of CCATT East element at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, and Fowler is a flight nurse assigned to CCATT East element.

System on Nov. 16.

The PACAF CCAT is a limited, rapidly deployable resource with a CCATT East element positioned at Tripler Army Medical Center and a CCATT West element positioned at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Camp Lester, Okinawa, Japan, to maintain clinical sustainment skills. Together, the teams support, on average, more than 30 high-acuity missions per year in the Pacific Theater. CCATT East element will routinely support missions east of the international dateline, while CCATT West ele-

ment will routinely support missions west of the international dateline.

However, these operating locations are not static for the two CCATT elements. On Nov. 22, CCATT West element supported a patient movement request from Naval Hospital, Guam, for a brain hemorrhage patient who required urgent transport for neurosurgical intervention at Tripler. CCATT West element was alerted and within three hours joined the 18th Aeromedical Squadron crew at Kadena Air Base, Japan to travel via KC-135 to Guam to pre-

pare the patient for transport to Hawaii.

CCATTs were designed around a war-time model and have traditionally supported contingencies like Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. What is special about CCATT East and West is they are designed around a peacetime mission. During peacetime movements, CCATTs transport critically ill beneficiaries of the military health care system, as well as support humanitarian assistance missions such as airplane crashes and natural disasters.

"Deploying the CCATT in support of peacetime missions is a tremendous step forward in transporting critically ill patients to more advanced care facilities," Fields said. "This reduces the burden on other operational assets that are supporting the mission in other ways."

The team can provide care to critically ill or injured patients with multi-system trauma, shock, burns, respiratory failure, multiple organ failure, or other life-threatening complications. Each team can care for a maximum patient load of three

critically injured, monitored patients, or six lower acuity stabilized patients during a realistic duty day of 16 hours of patient care. CCATTs are equipped to provide sustaining medical care until the patient is transported to an advanced treatment center. The team can create and operate a portable intensive care unit on board any commercial or military transport aircraft during flight, including the KC-135 Stratotanker and the C-17 Globemaster III.

The CCATT is normally an additional duty for medical personnel; however, for PACAF East and West elements, the CCATT is their primary job.

"With the CCATT being our primary job, we greatly increase our chances of a successful mission because we get to consciously focus on this mission alone as well as training and working with the same personnel for pretty much every mission," Fields said.

The CCATT members receive 10 days of training at the U.S. Air Force School of Aeromedicine, Brooks City-Base, Texas and two weeks of at the Air Force's Center for Sustainment of Trauma and Readiness Skills for the CCATT Advanced Course at University Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, where they receive more advanced medical training using human and aircraft simulators, clinical immersion, and practice new skills on a live aeromedical evacuation mission.

The PACAF CCATT is on 24-hour stand-by and prepared to respond to any medical mission in the Asia-Pacific region within three hours and is augmented by the 13th Air Force Surgeon General's Joint Medical Attendant Transport Team at JBPHH.

Navy Region Hawaii announces 2010 Navy Community Service Awards

Brister Thomas

Contributing Writer

Navy Region Hawaii has announced the recipients of the 2010 Community Service Awards. The awards honored eight commands. They were presented in five flagship sponsored categories in the following areas: personal excellence, health, safety and fitness, project good neighbor, campaign drug free and environmental stewardship.

In evaluating the commands' community service involvement, consideration is given to how effective their community service programs are, who benefited from the command effort, measurable results, and if multiple organizations were incorporated.

Rear Adm. Dixon R. Smith, commander, Navy Region Hawaii, offered his kudos to the awardees. "Congratulations to all who participated in these noteworthy efforts. My sincere appreciation for celebrating the American spirit by volunteering in the community to make a difference in the lives of others. They are truly ambassadors of the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment," Smith said.

Capt. Rick Polk, commanding officer of Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific (ATG MIDPAC), spoke about how they work community service into their command strategic plan because they consider the community as their family. "We have to prioritize in order to be able to react in a larger capacity. We are serving our family and our community for the greater good," Polk said. ATG MIDPAC swept the awards by earning recognition in all flagship categories for a small shore command.

"We have a great group of volunteers here. Everyone is involved and our command works together to implement a variety of projects and



opportunities to volunteer so that everyone can find their niche," Polk explained.

He also described his own involvement. "I got a chance to share what it's like to be in the Navy with some students during one of our projects and it energizes you because they are all so young and vibrant," he said.

ATG MIDPAC earned the award in the personal excellence and health, safety and fitness categories through their efforts in promoting youth health by providing leadership in a variety of

community events that highlight physical activity, teamwork and self-worth. They support activities such as Special Olympics, Honolulu Triathlon, Naval Station's Fitness and Wellness Fair, Honolulu Marathon Aid Station, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Race for the Cure. ATG MIDPAC personnel regularly serve as coaches for soccer, softball, volleyball and swimming.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW) Tedrick Horton, who sponsored the partner-

ship with Iroquois Elementary school and assisted with Aiea Elementary School while the USS Reuben James (FFG 57) was deployed, spoke about why every service member should get involved in volunteering.

"There is a lot of negative influence in the world. I like to help out because I can put [something] positive in the kids' lives that is filled with so much bad stuff," Horton said.

Horton works with Special Olympics and other events,

and said that he gets involved because he feels that he is "just here to do my part."

Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) earned the Project Good Neighbor for medium shore commands through its partnership with Navy Hale Keiki School.

FISC has sponsored events for the 200-plus students while also participating in physical property improvement efforts and supporting projects such as Fisher House, recycling and

more.

"FISC Pearl Harbor and Navy Hale Keiki School have joined in a rewarding educational partnership that is highlighted by weekly visits to the school by military and civilian volunteers," stated Cmdr. Luis Trevino from FISC.

"During these visits, FISC personnel can be found reading to students, tutoring, leading the youngsters in physical education classes, conducting drug-free assemblies, doing yard work, painting, and generally serving as models of citizenship and patriotism," Trevino stated.

Shari Gullledge, director of Navy Hale Keiki School, discussed the positive influence of the partnership.

"FISC has made a substantial impact upon the school, its staff and students. The service members from FISC graciously donate their time and talents to the school and community. They have truly become part of our 'ohana,'" Gullledge explained.

The following nine commands earned 13 awards this year. Personal Excellence went to ATG MIDPAC, Naval Computer & Telecommunications Area Master Station (NCTAMS), Pacific and Mobile Diving and Salvage Team One (MDSU-1). ATG MIDPAC and MDSU-1 also earned award for Health, Safety and Fitness. Campaign Drug Free was awarded to ATG MIDPAC and U.S. Pacific Command, Navy and Marine Corps Element (USPACOM NMCE). Project Good Neighbor went to ATG MICPAC, Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) and USPACOM JIOC and HSL-37. The final flagship for environmental stewardship went to ATG MIDPAC and Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH).

Ho'okele will feature the additional award winning commands in the next issue of the Ho'okele.

USS Arizona's Last Band and A Promise Fulfilled

Book Review by Bill Doughty

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

Seventy years ago last week, Molly Williams and her family sat down to Thanksgiving dinner in Okmulgee, Okla. Her brother, Clyde "Proke" Williams, would leave soon after, to duty as a member of the U.S. Navy Band Number 22. Within months, his band would be serving aboard the battleship USS Arizona.

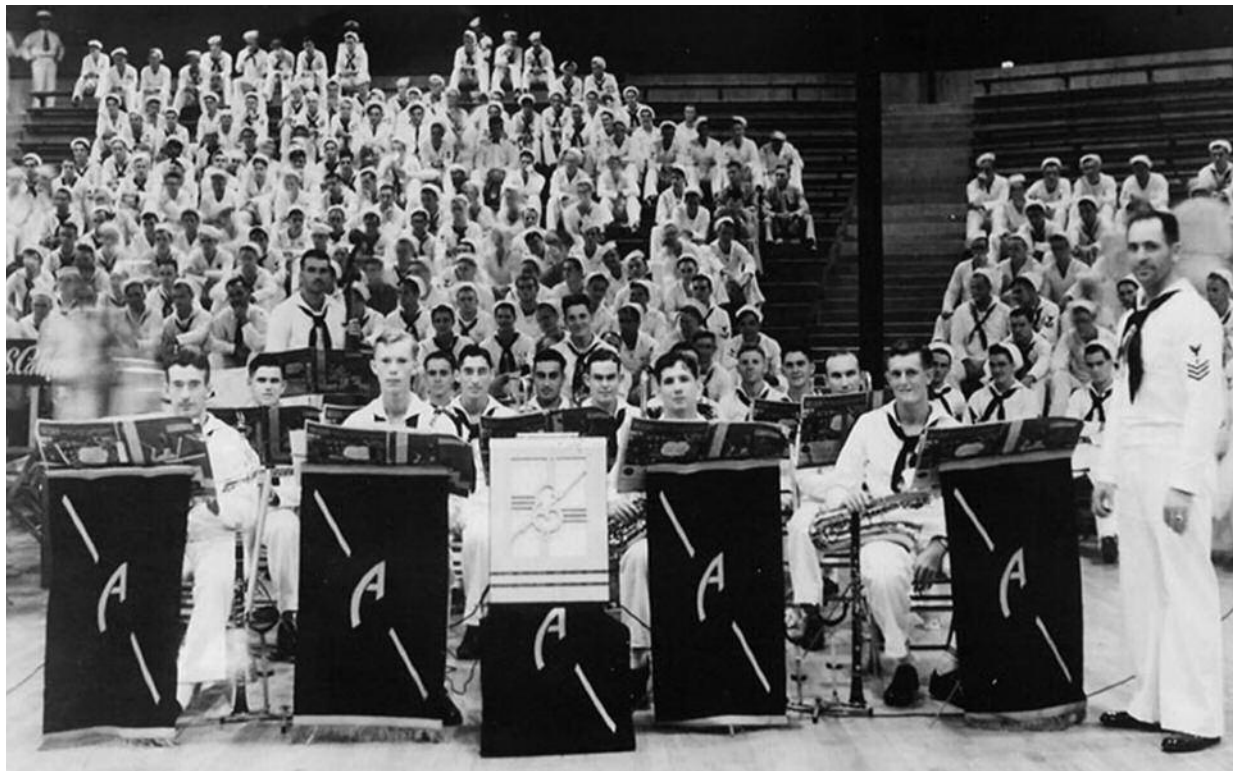
Molly (Williams) Kent pays tribute to Clyde and all the other members of the band – young men killed in Imperial Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

"USS Arizona's Last Band" chronicles the history of the band through hundreds of interviews, letters, citations, news clippings and other sources. Kent's comprehensive research and commitment to the 21 members of Band 22 document their short journey to immortality.

"As far as the United States Navy can ascertain, it was the only U.S. Navy band which was formed together, trained together, transferred together, reported aboard a ship together, fought together, and died together," she writes.

Kent shows how relatively simple life was before WWII, before television, before air conditioning. Music and dancing were important pastimes, as was listening to radio programs like Jack Benny, The Shadow, Amos 'n Andy and Fibber McGee and Molly, where Kent got her nickname.

"We lived in the middle of the Bible Belt," she writes.



"Our churches taught very strict morals. They also taught us bigotry and prejudice, and it would be many years before we overcame their teachings."

The Class of 1940 had limited options: Dark clouds of war formed in Europe because of Hitler's imperialism; "warfare" in Washington between Congress and President Roosevelt pointed toward a mandatory military draft; and a lack of jobs throughout the country was a legacy of the Depression.

In "USS Arizona's Last Band," the author tries to answer the question on behalf of all the families who asked, "How long did they live, how did they die, and did they suffer?"

Kent acknowledges, "Caution must be used in writing about the Pearl Harbor attack, since so

many books offer so many opposing opinions."

Nearly half of the 2,403 people recorded killed on the island of Oahu, Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941 were from the Arizona. Arizona lost 1,177 of her reported 1,511 men. (Of the 334 Arizona Sailors who survived, fewer than 20 remain alive today.)

Introductions of each band member near the beginning of the book, listing hometowns, nicknames, instruments and other personal insights, contrast starkly with obituaries at the end of the book.

In between, Kent takes us to the Navy's music school in Washington, to the ammunition ship USS Lassen (AE-3), which carried the band to Panama and then to Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii.

Kent describes the band's role in playing ceremonies, concerts, marches,

dances and daily performances at colors. And, she tells us what life was like back on the homefront.

"Thanksgiving Day 1941 was difficult for the families of Arizona's band members. For most of us, it was our first Thanksgiving without our boys," she writes.

Through Clyde's and the other musicians' letters home, Kent shows a surprising view of Hawaii. She takes us into the weeks-long "Battle of Music" and describes how the USS Arizona Band competed. They would not be able to compete in the Dec. 20 finals.

Read Molly Kent's loving, but sometimes bitter, tribute to the USS Arizona Band to learn the depth of confusion, grief, resentment and anger that she and others experienced nearly seven decades ago.

Some of the strongest

resentment is toward the treachery of Imperial Japan in 1941. But, anger is also directed toward those who don't try to sort truth from myth. There is no evidence, for example, despite some reports in recent decades that the band was asleep on the morning of the attack; rather, Kent shows how they were most likely at their battle stations.

One "gossipmonger" was the minister of the church in Okmulgee, who reportedly "arose in his pulpit on Sunday, Dec. 14, just a week after the attack, and thundered that all our servicemen were taken by surprise by the Japanese because they were all lying around on the beach drunk, after carousing all night in Honolulu. Just how that minister could possibly know that, living as he did in Oklahoma and having never

been to Hawaii, is one of the mysteries we often encountered."

This is just one of the fascinating insights in Kent's heartfelt accounting, written "in loving memory" for "the best band in the Pacific" and dedicated to her family and the families of Arizona's musicians.

The depth of the loss, she shows, must be matched with a commitment to remembering the sacrifice and loss of so many brave young Americans, our reflection for this Thanksgiving Day and the weeks ahead.

On Dec. 5 at 4:30 p.m., the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band will perform U.S. Navy Band Number 22's set, with 1941 period music. On Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Day will be honored at the WWII Valor in the Pacific Monument's Pearl Harbor Visitor Center. The theme is, "A Promise Fulfilled."

(The review above is posted at <http://bit.ly/NavyReads>, a blog devoted to the Navy Professional Reading Program and related books.)

Here are the songs to be performed by the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band on Dec. 5:

Woodchoppers Ball
Two O'Clock Jump
Stardust
Jingle Bells (ala Glenn Miller)
Pennsylvania 6-5000
Chattanooga Choo-choo
American Patrol
South Rampart Street Parade
Little Brown Jug
Laura
Lady is a Tramp
In the Mood
Intermission Riff
Moonlight Serenade

Diverse Views



What are you most proud about when it comes to your tradition as a Sailor?



CWO3 Kevin Hicks
USS Chosin (CG 65)

I'm proud of the fact that I can support freedom for our country.

Lt Cmdr. Paul Joyce,
VPU-2

The way the Navy continues to uphold its time-honored traditions, and the support that we provide in places other than just coastal areas, such as Afghanistan.



Al Ontiveros
Polynesian Voyaging Society

I'm most proud about the teamwork that everyone shows during our sails, because just like in the military, everyone has a job to do in order to have a successful voyage.

(Interviews and photos provided by MC2 Robert Stirrup from the 2010 Koa Kai golf tournament honoring the Polynesian Voyaging Society.)

Want to see your command featured in Diverse Views? Got opinions to share?

Drop us a line at editor@hookelenews.com or karen.spangler@navy.mil

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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.

Letters and articles that are submitted to Hookele News may be published and/or distributed in print and electronic form.

E-mail letters to: editor@hookelenews.com.

Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii



Official U.S. Navy Photograph, National Archives Collection

Aerial view of the Naval Operating Base, Pearl Harbor, looking southwest on 30 October 1941. Ford Island Naval Air Station is in the center, with the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard just beyond it, across the channel. The airfield in the upper left-center is the Army's Hickam Field.

HO'OKELE

PEARL HARBOR - HICKAM NEWS

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Military commanders work together to reduce solid waste, enhance recycling

Story and photo by Stefanie Gardin

U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS — Commanders from Oahu's military installations formalized their unified commitment to reduce solid waste and increase recycling with a memorandum of understanding or MOU signing, at Schofield Barracks on Nov. 16.

Col. Douglas Mulbury, commander, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii; Col. Robert Rice, commanding officer, Marine Corps Base Hawaii; Capt. Richard Kitchens, commander, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam; and Cmdr. Erich Klein, commanding officer, Coast Guard Base Honolulu, signed the Collaborative Qualified Recycling Programs Partnership, or CQRPP MOU, to promote collaboration, leverage resources and maximize sustainability benefits and economic returns in the solid waste management and recycling arena.

The CQRPP MOU is the brainchild of the Joint Sustainability Working Group, or JSWG, which was chartered in 2008 to



Capt. Richard Kitchens, commander of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, signs a Collaborative Qualified Recycling Program memorandum of understanding as a commitment to reduce solid waste and enhance recycling in military communities.

coordinate joint military sustainability initiatives. The group is composed of

representatives from each of the local services. During JSWG meetings

and discussions, it became apparent that the services shared many of the same

challenges, one of which was solid waste.

Solid waste is a huge problem, according to David Zuckerman, JSWG chair and sustainability program manager for the Installation Management Command-Pacific Region.

"If we can't reduce or eliminate solid wastes, only three options currently exist: put it in a landfill, convert it to energy or recycle it," Zuckerman said. "We can't afford to put waste in a landfill because these 'wastes' have value. Also, landfill disposal is costly and limited."

Landfill space is at a premium on Oahu, with only one primary garbage disposal site, the Waimanalo Gulch landfill. Raising the refuse repository stakes even higher, this landfill was supposed to close in 2008, but Hawaii's Land Use Commission approved delaying the closure until July 2012 because no viable solution for the island's wastes existed.

Waste collection and dis-

posal is an expensive business. In 2010, the Army in Hawaii paid approximately \$1.5 million to have its waste removed.

"From the Army's perspective, the concept of not having waste means not having to pay for waste disposal," Zuckerman said, but he added that for him and his JSWG counterparts, it's getting harder and harder to use the term 'waste.'

"Our disposables are not wastes; they are commodities," he said. "They have dollar values, and if not a dollar value per se, they have sustainability benefits like environmental stewardship."

Turning so-called trash into treasure is one of the goals CQRPP partners hope to achieve with the CQRPP MOU, at the same time saving taxpayer dollars and freeing up military funding for more important uses.

Their first two trash-to-treasure initiatives are expanding cooking oil recycling from dining facilities and exploring waste gasification, which converts solid waste to energy.

In the past, the island's military services each paid to have their used cooking oil hauled away, but things are changing and the Army is leading the change.

USAG-HI now has a contract to have its oil collected for free and with the CQRPP MOU in place, the Army can be the executive agent for a joint services agreement that will enable all the local service branches to get in on the free oil pickup.

But that's only the first step.

Next, CQRPP partners will work on arrangements for getting the used oil back — in the form of biodiesel — at a fixed cost, as opposed to buying biodiesel off the open market.

Essentially, the cooking oil used in chow halls will power military vehicles, saving money and contributing to energy security in the process.

Future CQRPP plans include exploring collaborative partnerships with the City and County of Honolulu, as solid waste management and recycling continue to challenge military and local agencies.

15th Wing leaders visit Hickam Elementary



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan Allen

Col. Joe Dague, 15th Wing vice commander, greets a student of Hickam Elementary as she and her mother exit their car Nov. 24 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam. Leaders from 15th Wing wished students and parents a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

STORY IDEAS?

Contact the Ho'okele editor for guidelines and story/photo submission requirements

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Pearl Harbor-Hickam Highlights

(Below) Electronics Technician 2nd Class Shiloh Stieber shows students how to operate a remote controlled target used at the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF).

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jay C. Pugh.



(Above and below) USS Lake Erie (CG 70) Sailors volunteered to help at a homeless shelter in Honolulu during the Thanksgiving holiday on Nov. 24. They prepared plates for Thanksgiving dinner and organized clothes, toys and other donations.

U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Kelly Waller



(Left) Engineman 2nd Class Juan Rodriguez shows students how to operate a remote controlled target used at the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF).

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jay C. Pugh.



(Right) Lt. Gen. Hawk J. Carlisle, 13th Air Force commander, is hosed down by his wife, Gillian, after his final C-17 flight on Nov. 30 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

U.S. Navy photo by David D. Underwood Jr.

Vietnamese-American returns to birthplace — aboard USS Tarawa

MC2 (SW) Mark Logico

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

A 31-year-old Vietnamese-American woman returned to her place of birth aboard the decommissioned amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), presently moored at the Naval Inactive Ships Maintenance Facility at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, on Nov. 29.

"This is wonderful," said Grace Tarawa Tran, who was born aboard Tarawa on May 10, 1979, two days after 442 other Vietnamese refugees were rescued in the South China Sea. Born on U.S. property, Tran immediately became a U.S. citizen.

"I never thought this day would come. Meeting all the Marines, coming to see the ship I was born on, my parents told me a lot of stories. I just never really imagined that this would happen," Tran said.

Tran was later taken by surprise when the corpsman who delivered her joined her

on the flight deck of the ship. Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Richard Reed, "Doc Reed" as he was referred to back then, was assigned to the Marine Corps' Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/3, which was then attached to Tarawa, when the ship was performing the humanitarian rescue effort that rescued the Vietnamese refugees.

"It's wonderful," said Reed who hasn't seen Tran since he delivered her aboard the ship. "She has grown to be a pretty lady. It's amazing that one day you're holding her in your arms, and then the next day she's fully grown."

When Tran's mother gave birth, Reed wrapped Tran up and attended to the infant's needs.

"She seemed like my own child, a daughter from a different country," he recalled.

Tran cried as Reed introduced himself to her and presented her with flowers and copies of pictures and news clippings of the eventful day. Reed showed Tran old pictures of the day of the

rescue, the birth and the days that followed, most of which she has never seen before.

"The events, my experiences with the BLT and seeing the suffering the Vietnamese went through, it changed my life," Reed said. "That's why I'm a pastor today. I've been a pastor now for the past 26 years, and it was all because of this young lady right here. It was a change in my life," he said.

"It was an unexpected surprise, especially for me as a corpsman. I was used to taking care of Marines, sewing them up, giving them shots, taking them to sick call, but delivering a baby - that was a brand new experience. It was a once in a lifetime experience. She was my first and my last," he explained.

Tran said she was also overwhelmed meeting Reed as the two went through the photo album that showed photos of other Vietnamese refugees and the wooden motor boat that they were on.

"There are no words that can express how grateful we are for the aid and comfort that all of you provided us while aboard the USS Tarawa," Tran said.

"My family, along with 400 other Vietnamese citizens, fled Vietnam in search for a better life. They fled on a 20-foot wooden motor boat, which later malfunctioned. While adrift, they were robbed by Thai pirates 11 separate times over the course of a week. Conditions on the boat were horrible, and they had very little food and water to consume. Exhaustion and hunger took over them that they no longer feared for their lives. So, you can only imagine the joy they felt when the U.S. military came to their rescue," Tran shared.

Despite the end of the Vietnam War with the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, waves of South Vietnamese refugees escaped the war-torn



US Navy photo by MC2 Brett Morton

Grace Tarawa Tran, who was born aboard the decommissioned USS Tarawa (LHA 1) after her family had been rescued at sea in 1979, revisits her birthplace for the first time. Tran's family, along with more than 400 other Vietnamese refugees, were rescued and cared for aboard USS Tarawa by the Marine Corps' Battalion Landing Team 2/3 along with the ship's crew.

country in search of a better life. More than two million people fled Vietnam in small, unsafe crowded boats and ended up in countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines.

"My parents wanted to get away from the war and the communism," Tran said. "So they, along with 400 others, fled Vietnam. They did not know which nation they were going to, they just wanted to escape Vietnam. My mother said

she was really scared, but this was the opportunity to leave Vietnam and find freedom. They took a really big risk," she explained.

After the rescue at sea, Tarawa delivered Tran and the refugees to an asylum camp in Thailand where they began the process of immigrating to the U.S. Tran said that in three months the refugees were divided up and distributed to several states. Tran's family eventually immi-

grated to Philadelphia, Pa.

Today, Tran works as a financial analyst for an insurance company in Philadelphia.

Decommissioned in March 2009, Tarawa was the lead amphibious assault ship and the second ship to be named after Tarawa Atoll, a site of a Marine landing during World War II. Tarawa is currently moored in Middle Loch, Pearl Harbor, and is considered a retention asset for the U.S. Navy.

Survey addresses quality-of-life needs

Erin Tindell

Air Force Personnel, Services and Manpower Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO (AFNS) -- The 2010 Caring for People Survey gives total force Airmen, civilians, retirees and dependents an opportunity to voice their concerns on how the Air Force can better address their quality-of-life needs.

With Airmen deploying in support of global contingency operations for two decades, developing and caring for Airmen and their families continues to be a high priority for Air Force leaders.

"We need to provide for the physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual well-being of our Airmen and their families," said Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley during remarks at an Air Force Sergeants Association convention in August. "The needs of Airmen and their families, however changing they may be, are enduring, and we must continue to understand their needs and support."

The last survey was administered in 2008 and helped leaders identify four broad categories of services important to Airmen and their families: health and wellness, Airmen and family support, education and development, and housing and communities.

Insights from the survey and subsequent focus groups spurred the development of several initiatives for each category:

- Six bases are currently

testing a new dining concept as part of the Food Transformation Initiative, which improves the quality and availability of food for Airmen.

- \$140 million has been allocated to improve fitness facilities.

Officials have programmed more than \$250 million for dormitory improvements, and 23,000 privatized homes have been built or renovated.

- More than \$10 million has been allocated to create an Air Force Single Airmen program.

The 2010 Caring for People Survey will continue to build upon the relevance of the 2008 survey so Air Force officials can capture trended data to allow for more robust analysis, said Curt Cornelissen, the chief of future operations for Air Force Services at the Pentagon.

"In this climate of tighter budget constraints, it is imperative that we develop the best picture of what our Air Force community wants and needs, so we can prudently focus our resources," he said. "The last survey only had a 21-percent response rate, so we're hoping to far surpass that this year."

For the first time, this year's survey includes civilians, spouses and retirees to ensure the needs of the total Air Force community are captured, officials said.

The survey will be sent via e-mail in stages beginning Dec. 1, and will work with major command and base officials to reach out to families and retirees.

Register for WAAN today

Navy Region Hawaii Emergency Management Office

NMCI users are urged to register for the shore Wide Area Alert Network (WAAN) to enable a critical emergency alert notification capability at their workstation, home and cell phones. WAAN provides Navy installations with an effective and reliable mass notification system that can be used during a crisis to warn affected personnel.

The WAAN system includes a computer desktop notification system (CDNS) and an automated telephone notification system. All NMCI users who log on to their computers via a common access card are automatically registered for CDNS messages. However, to receive notifications via e-mail and

telephone, NMCI users must manually register their emergency contact information.

It is strongly recommended that users register work, home and cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses in WAAN. This will allow the region commander and joint base commander to notify them of an emergent event ongoing at an installation, or emergency instructions on the required actions to take during an island wide emergency.

According to Dennis Siler of Navy Region Hawaii's emergency management office, of the more than 20,000 NMCI computers in the Hawaii region, only about 5,000 are currently registered. "Help us help you and register today," Siler said.

Registration is easy and takes only a few minutes:

- Right-click on the AtHoc Self Service client (purple globe) icon in the user's system tray which is in the bottom right corner of most NMCI screens.
- Select "access self service" from the pop-up menu.
- The AtHoc Self Service client will open. Select the "my info" tab and update your last name, first name and display name and select "save." Do not enter PIN information.
- Select the "devices" tab and enter your emergency contact information in the appropriate fields and select "Save."

For information or assistance on WAAN, contact Carlos Mercado, Navy Region Hawaii regional operations center manager, at 473-1897 or email carlos.mercado1.ctr@navy.mil.



Photo by MC1 (AW) Jason Swink

Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Monica Rodriguez (right), stationed aboard the guided missile cruiser USS Port Royal (CG 73), explains the theme of her cake decoration, "The Sea of Dreams," to judges during the Iron CS cooking competition held recently at Ward Field at Pearl Harbor. The competition was held between the surface ships on the Pearl Harbor waterfront and featured categories for best barbecue, cake decorating and garnishments.

Culinary specialists compete in 2010 Surface Line Competition

HMC Angela Hanzlik

Afloat Training Group
Middle Pacific Public
Affairs

Naval surface forces in the middle Pacific recently completed the 26th annual Surface Line Competition (SLC) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

SLC is a year-long Olympic-style event open to all surface Navy commands in Hawaii. It consists of 10 professional events with one opportunity each quarter for ships to participate and earn first, second and third place points. The event is designed to bring Sailors together to motivate each other, show their talents, and learn new skills.

One day out of every quarter is set aside for Sailors to take a break from their daily routines and express themselves outside of their work environment. It provides the opportunity to have a good time, and it builds camaraderie through healthy competition.

"In the past, this was a

week-long event," said Capt. Ricks Polk, commanding officer of Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific, who organizes the event. "This year we decided to pare down the number of events, but increase the opportunity for ships to participate by stretching it (SLC) throughout the year," Polk explained.

Teams competed in events covering professional talents, such as shiphandling, seamanship, damage control and maneuvering boards, to name a few. The competition closed with an awards ceremony and picnic at Ward Field where culinary specialists from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam surface warships showed off their talents and skills in a barbecue cook-off, cake decorating and garnishment displays.

This year the first-place winner was USS Chung-Hoon (DDG-93) who recently returned from deployment. USS Chafee (DDG-90) and USS Russell (DDG-59) finished second and third, respectively.

JPAC seeks volunteers for missions

Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command Public Affairs

Volunteers are needed for Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command missions. The mission of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans who are missing as a result of the nation's past conflicts. The highest priority of the organization is the return of any living Americans who remain prisoners of war.

Below are the locations and guidelines necessary

to participate in this opportunity:

Location: Laos

Timeframe: Feb. 21 to April 11, 2011
Requirements: Any Air Force specialty code/rate/MOS (1); Linguist (1)

Location: Vietnam

Timeframe: Feb. 25 to April 14, 2011
Requirements: Any AFSC (1)

All volunteers must:

- Be approved by their commander via signed memorandum to proceed on a 45-day TDY.

- Have a fitness score of 75 or greater.
- Possess a tourist or official passport that does not expire within six months of mission completion.
- Be in the grade of E-5 through E-8. (E4s may apply; however, CC must include statement in memo to attest to the selected service member's professionalism.)

This mission is unit funded, with possible reimbursement from FY11 fall-out funds (TDY estimated cost \$15,000).

For more information, visit: <https://13af.ops.hickam.a>

f.mil/sites/index.cfm?event=index&page_id=581&tab_id=782

The CC approval letter, augmentee guidance, and JPAC location listing are located under JPAC deployment opportunities.

Air Force volunteers should contact Staff Sgt. Jamar Selvy at (808) 449-9721 or jamar.selvy@hickam.af.mil

The following personnel are the POCs at PACFLT regarding augmentees:

PSC Edward Wisner, (808) 474-9357, email: Edward.wisner@navy.mil
PS1 Leah Arboleda, (808) 474-4702, email: leah.arboleda@navy.mil

NIOC Hawaii helps people in need during holidays

Navy Information Operations Command Hawaii Public Affairs

Every year, Navy Information Operations Command (NIOC) Hawaii provides Thanksgiving dinner baskets and commissary gift certificates for its Sailors in need. For the second year in a row, however, they're going service-blind and will also be assisting Department of Defense (DoD) civilians assigned to the Hawaii Security Operations Center who might be experiencing a financially stressful holiday season.

Spearheading the effort this year again is the NIOC Hawaii Joint Ministry Team, Chaplain Robert Nelson and Religious Programs Specialist 2nd Class Richard Figueroa, and PV2 Caroline Fleming of the 715th Military Intelligence Battalion.

"Every year we ask leadership to identify deserving candidates from

all services in need of assistance. We average about 35 to 45 families each year. The Pearl Harbor YMCA conducts the commissary runs and food drive. We in the joint ministry staff coordinate the logistics of getting the items back here and to the families who need them. Once the items are gathered and we have included a commissary gift certificate for turkey and some other perishables, the members are notified and they can pick up their Thanksgiving baskets at a discreet venue," Figueroa explained.

When asked what could be done to accommodate more families, Figueroa said that they could handle many more families, but their main obstacle is a perceived negative stigma attached to receiving donated items. "We'd love to see many more families on the list, but it's difficult getting around the issue of how some Sailors and service

members feel about being identified to receive the baskets," he said.

Nelson stressed that the evolution is open to all service members, regardless of which service they belong, including DoD civilians. "It's not just Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Marines who may be just starting out their careers here and already have a full family. When you consider that DoD civilians are not entitled to all the allowances and benefits the military service members are, along with how high the cost of living is in Hawaii, even some of them would benefit from receiving some financial stress relief this season," Nelson explained.

Figueroa added, "With any program we do, particularly this one, when you see service members grateful and thankful, it really makes it worthwhile. This is one of those programs where we immediately get to see the positive results."

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PRLH-CNRHIG@NAVY.MIL

Middle Pacific-based Koa Kai Exercise saves money, time

MC2 Robert Stirrup

Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

Training exercise Koa Kai 11-1 concluded Nov. 17, saving the Navy both time and money by keeping participating surface combatants in the middle Pacific area of responsibility instead of training off the coast of San Diego.

"There are significant savings associated with ships homeported in Hawaii accomplishing their integrated training locally, instead of off the west coast of the United

States," said Capt. Richard Clemmons, commander of Destroyer Squadron 31. "Although we have not determined the exact dollar amount, it is fairly significant, as ships homeported in Hawaii previously had to sail to San Diego for approximately four to six weeks to obtain this level of integrated training."

Koa Kai is the primary integrated training event for the middle Pacific surface combatant units, with the goal of achieving deployment certificates and training.

The guided-missile destroyers USS Chung-

Hoon (DDG 93), USS Russell (DDG 59), USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60), the guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG 70), and the guided-missile frigate USS Reuben James (FFG 57) took part in the biannual exercise.

"Since there isn't any need to go to and from the west coast of the United States to train, those transit days can now be used for more in-depth local ship training," Clemmons said. "The fact that the ships can now conduct this training right here in the local Hawaii operating area provides a significant

savings."

Clemmons also said Koa Kai allows Sailors more time to spend with their families without sacrificing any required training evolutions.

Koa Kai supports the Pacific Fleet's mid-Pacific surface combatant operational employment program, which calls for all of the Hawaii-based surface combatants to use the strategic location in the middle Pacific to conduct intermediate and advanced training.

For more news from Commander, Navy Region Hawaii, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnrh/.

A Promise Fulfilled 1941 - 2010

Continued from A-1

the dedication of the new Pearl Harbor Visitor Center. More than 200 Pearl Harbor survivors and WW2 vets are expected registered to attend along with their family and friends.

The theme of this year's historic commemoration, "A Promise Fulfilled 1941-2010," is dedicated to the Pearl Harbor survivors. Those who survived the attack formed the organization in 1958 to commemorate that tragic day and call out to the nation to "keep America alert and to remember Pearl Harbor."

The Pearl Harbor survivors have played an integral role in volunteering and supporting the National Park Service administration of the USS Arizona Memorial since 1980. In 1987, the survivors donated their collection of memorabilia to the National Park Service. Later in 2007, they moved forward to help raise money for the new visitor center and museum, supporting the efforts of the Pearl Harbor Memorial Fund and the Arizona Memorial Museum Association (now known as Pacific Historic Parks) national fundraising efforts.

With the grand opening of the visitor center complex, the nation's promise

to remember their sacrifice at Pearl Harbor and during World War II will be fulfilled. The ceremony and dedication will honor the veterans and civilian eyewitnesses of that tragic day, but in a larger sense, humbly thank all of those who fundraised, donated, planned, designed and constructed the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center.

Thomas Strickland, assistant secretary of fish, wildlife and the parks, will serve as the keynote speaker for the commemoration and dedication. Other guest speakers will include Jon Jarvis, National Park Service director; Adm. Patrick M. Walsh, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; retired Navy Adm. Thomas B. Fargo and newly-elected Hawaii Governor Neil Abercrombie.

Highlights of the ceremony will include music by the Navy's U.S. Pacific Fleet Band, morning colors, a Hawaiian blessing, a rifle salute by members of the U.S. Marine Corps, wreath presentations, echo Taps, and recognition of the men and women who survived the attack of Dec. 7, 1941, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

At 7:55 a.m., the exact moment the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began 69 years ago, a

moment of silence will be observed. The USS Chafee (DDG 90) will render honors to the USS Arizona. Military aircraft will fly over the memorial in a "missing man" formation.

A Hawaiian blessing and dedication of the new Pearl Harbor Visitor Center will follow. The ceremony will conclude with a "walk of honor" by more than 200 Pearl Harbor survivors and other World War II veterans through an honor cordon of armed services and National Park Service men and women to officially open the new visitor center museum.

Public access to the anniversary commemoration

The commemoration is free of charge and the public is invited to attend. Seats for the general public to the commemoration are limited, and available on a first-come, first-served basis. The visitor center will open early at 6:30 a.m. Seating for the public will begin at 7:15 a.m.

No public parking for the ceremony at the visitor center

Ceremony parking for the public will only be available at the Aloha Stadium lower Halawa parking lot. Entry will be at gates three and four. A free shuttle bus service

before the ceremony will run between the Aloha Stadium and the visitor center from 6 to 7 a.m. After the ceremony, the free shuttle will run from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The public is encouraged to arrive early to allow time for parking, taking the shuttle and going through security at the visitor center.

Security

Cameras are permitted; however, due to strict security measures, camera bags, purses, handbags and/or other items that offer concealment are not allowed. Bag storage is available at the USS Bowfin Submarine Museum & Park.

Dress code

Military dress is summer whites or service equivalent. The civilian dress code for the commemoration is aloha attire, long pants and collared shirts.

Information

For more information about the Pearl Harbor Day 69th Anniversary Commemoration and Dedication Ceremony and special events, call the National Park Service at (808) 422-3300 or visit www.nps.gov/valr/ or www.pacifichistoricparks.org.

(Please see B1 for a listing of Dec. 7 remembrance events.)

Diamond Tips

Thinking about becoming a first sergeant?

(Diamond Tips are provided by Air Force first sergeants to address concerns in the Air Force community and provide guidance to Airmen)

Master Sgt. John L. Dempsey

First Sergeant, U.S. Pacific Command/Joint Intelligence Operations Center, Air Force Element

Everyone wants to become a first sergeant (aka "shirt") for the front row parking spot, a cool office, and even a free blackberry. You can also do three years, go back to your career field, and pretty much be guaranteed E-8. Sounds like a vacation, doesn't it? It's not—it's a vocation, and the difference between the two means far more than the placement of a single vowel. It's a commitment toward caring for Airmen.

Taking care of Airmen is the responsibility of every level of leadership in the Air Force, but for a select group of SNCOs, this is their primary mission. All Airmen, enlisted and officers, have to know you care about them, their families and their careers.

Airmen are smart and can tell from a mile away if you are really passionate about their problems or just going through the motions. First sergeants must live a 'vocation of care' and must be all things to all people while emulating our core values.

First sergeants come from varied backgrounds and are administrators, mechanics, logisticians, analysts, fliers and health care professionals, and they bring their functional expertise into the fight.

First sergeants must exercise fair judgment and employ sound leadership when dealing with sensitive matters. They are often perceived as mediators, mentors, magistrates or medics. They make house calls, good calls, bad calls, cop calls and tough calls. They are the first to work emergency family issues like death or serious illness, to assisting Airmen with financial or medical referrals, to work STEP promotion, or quarterly award packages.

How many times have you heard a first sergeant or temp shirt brag that they "kicked" an Airman out today? Don't get me wrong. Our Air Force is not cut out for everyone, but this is nothing to brag about. I always ask, "What did you do in the past to help this Airman and prevent this day from taking place?" This doesn't mean that the responsibility for someone's failure or success rests solely upon individual or organizational leadership, but it does imply that leadership has the responsibility to assess, to refer and to do what they can for Airmen.

Bottom line! If you want to become a first sergeant for power or prestige, then you probably need a vacation in order to re-evaluate your priorities. If you want to become a first sergeant because it is a vocation, to care for and serve Airmen, then you are doing it for the right reasons. Although an individual may have a number of reasons for applying, their passion for wanting to help others and take care of Airmen must be their number one priority. If these are your reasons, please think about applying today.

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Hickam aircrew takes on Nevada desert

Continued from A-1

really are a part of, being in the C-17s.”

Sitting in the co-pilot's chair during the training mission, Greeson didn't have much time to soak in the moment as he busied himself reading charts, running checklists and watching terrain contours while assisting the pilot as they navigated at low levels through the mountains.

“It does make me feel safer from the missiles being close to the ground and fast like we were,” he said.

According to Capt. Dave Morales, 535th AS pilot, the air crew, or Thug 50, did an “outstanding” job rendezvousing on time despite a few issues. Flying into the test and training zone was no easy task either as it was a foreign operating area for the crew with an entirely different set of rules, guidelines and threats.

“We flew perfect rendezvous, on time, and got our jet safely in and out of the Nellis test and training range and successfully airdropped our cargo,” Morales said. “The pilot

that was flying had never seen a MAFEX before and flew a solid jet. The most critical part about flying in the MAFEX is being on time and understanding the contracts between you and other aircraft,” he explained.

Pilots across the nation spent a couple of days planning the rendezvous over the Nevada training range to simulate the combat scenario. When 18 aircraft from around the country plan to meet in one spot, it takes a certain level of coordination.

“The procedures were flown to a ‘T’ which is a testament to the clarity of the products put out by the weapons undergraduates,” Morales said.

“When various other elements overran the preceding elements, Thug 50 flight maintained composure and flew a solid jet without getting in the airspace of the preceding aircraft. We were able to effectively get the airdrop off, all the while utilizing effective threat management and (counter response measures),” he continued.

According to Morales, a weapons school graduate, the training at the MAFEX

gets more and more accurate. With the possibility for GPS jamming this year, the realism of the training took on another dimension of realism. The 535th aircrew was targeted and “shot down” by a large mobile tactical surface-to-air missile.

“This missile system was hiding out about seven miles from the drop zone and since we were unaware that it was out there or firing shots, it was an easy kill for the adversaries,” Morales said.

“Due to the fact that the (missile) did not surface until after the initial CAF push, there was little chance that anyone was going to know it was out there.”

As a graduate of the weapons school, Morales was able to take on a different view of the MAFEX, teach his crew while things were happening, and provide some guidance based on his experiences. He said the course ranks up there as one of the hardest things he has ever done.

“The U.S. Air Force Weapons School is one of the most demanding schools that exists,” Morales said. “Graduates

become experts in not only their own major weapons systems, but in the capabilities and limitations of all others.”

Graduates of the program can speak joint military languages using the knowledge base they get at the course. If there is information they don't know, the course teaches them to know exactly where they can find it, or who they can turn to for the answer.

“For me, the (weapons school) was hands down the hardest thing I've ever done,” Morales said. “It required 100 percent steadfast devotion to the course for a full six months.”

He explained it involves a fire hose of demanding academic instruction and exams, time-compressed planning sessions with huge due-outs in the form of products and game plans, time constrained briefings, a doctoral-level paper on an issue affecting the Soldiers currently downrange, and the need to internalize and filter vast amounts of information to determine the ultimate threat—all the while flying the aircraft at hundreds of miles an hour, 500 feet off

the ground in some cases.

“It is not a gentleman's program,” Morales said. “And someone who is not fully committed will not make it through. It taught me a ton about personal strengths and weaknesses, but gave me the confidence to tackle any problem that comes my way,” he noted.

At the end of the day, Morales is one who is completely sold on the exercise and its realistic training for pilots.

“It is one of the largest exercises that the MAF

participates in, and it provides invaluable and extremely realistic training to everyone involved,” he explained.

“This realistic training includes actual threats, tactical communication and command and control, realistic Army involvement, CAF involvement, and planning opportunities on a scale that is rarely seen.”

He said he is already looking forward to six months from now when he can take another crew and get them involved in the training over the Nevada desert.

KHON (FOX) TV 2 Hawaii Navy News upcoming segments

Dec. 9 – Marines Toys for Tots
Dec. 16 – Koa Kai and CARAT
Dec. 23 – PACFLT Band

(The segments currently air between 6:15 and 6:45 a.m. each Thursday. Previous segments can be viewed at <http://www.bit.ly/KHONNavy>)

Got a story for KHON Hawaii Navy News?
Email editor@hookelenews.com or call Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs at 473-2875. Stories must have a Navy tie and be of interest to the general public.

NCTAMS hosts Operation Aloha: Making Thanksgiving better

Continued from A-1

more than 450 people.

In addition, NCTAMS PAC volunteers now collect non-perishable food and clothing throughout the year and donate it to the Waiialua Community Center to distribute on Thanksgiving.

Capt. Patricia Cole, commanding officer of NCTAMS PAC, U.S. Congresswoman Maize K. Hirono and Hawaii State Representative Gil Riviere were among the attendees.

“It was a privilege for us at NCTAMS PAC to share

Thanksgiving with our neighbors and surrounding community,” Cole said. “Home is where the Navy sends you. And we are proud and gracious to be able to call Hawaii home.”

According to Lt. Jacob Galbreath, NCTAMS PAC public affairs officer, “We raised 20,000 pounds of non-perishable food items, 1,000 pounds of clothing and almost \$3,000 in cash, all worth approximately \$52,500. It is our way to give back to the community.”

During the festivities,

Cole presented an honorary check to Pastor Ron Valenciana and Kathleen Pahinui, president of the Waiialua Community Association.

In reflecting on the year's efforts, Galbreath said, “Operation Aloha provides our Sailors and family members with a great opportunity to get out there and be involved with the community, to work hand-in-hand together and support each other, resulting in building on a relationship between the Navy and the local community.”

And with 21 years of practice, that relationship is now stronger than ever.

Ford Island Bridge closure for Dec. 7

The Ford Island Bridge will be closed from 7 to 10:00 a.m. on Dec. 7 for the Dec. 7 commemoration ceremony.

Those who need access to and from Ford Island should plan accordingly.