

SECDEF speaks here: 'You are the rebalance'



U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter speaks during a "troop talk" event held Nov. 6 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Stoltz

15th Wing Public Affairs

In his last stop before leaving Hawaii, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter held a "troop talk" with the Air Force, Navy, Army, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard on Nov. 6 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH).

The event, which was held at hangar 19 at JBPHH, allowed service members from all five branches of the military to learn more about the evolving balance of forces

in the Indo-Asian Pacific region. Carter also fielded questions from Airmen, Sailors, Marines, Soldiers and Coast Guardsmen that ranged from tensions in the South China Sea to sequestration and budget cuts.

How is China's military going to affect our military budget in the future?

"There is no question we have some points of contention, some objections, especially regarding action in the South China Sea," said Carter.

"These are things that should be resolved diplomatically. However, we reflect in our budget all po-

tential military operations and take specific actions to make sure that we stay ahead when it comes to capabilities."

Is maintaining freedom of navigation in the South China Sea the responsibility of the U.S. or its regional partners?

"It is certainly the responsibility of the United States," he said. "However, the regional partners should take responsibility as well. It is a global thing, it's not just a South China thing. Freedom of navigation is critical to global commerce."

Currently, most of the cuts made to the Penta-

gon have been non-strategic. What cuts would be made to the military as a whole on the strategic side?

"With respect to the general sequestration, as the Secretary of Defense I would always like to have more, I'll admit," he said.

"But we balance all of the cuts to each service and try to eliminate things that are least important to warfighting capability. Sometimes this is difficult. There are times when we are not permitted to make adjustments that we have recommended to POTUS, and Congress denies it because they're worried

about the impacts to their individual regions."

Is there going to be a rebalancing of military efforts due to the amount of 'fires' we are working with in Europe, as far as border control, Ukraine, etc.? Will there be a realignment of our military forces?

"There will be a rebalance," he said. "We have to be prepared at all times because change can happen at any moment. The capability to 'fight tonight' is important. You cannot take for granted what we have out here."

Beyond questions from

the audience, Carter stated his, and the United States', goal throughout the Indo-Asian Pacific region is working toward peace and security where people can rise and prosper.

Carter also thanked the service members in attendance for their service and sacrifice.

"You are the rebalance," he said to the audience. "Thank you all for your service, and do not forget to remember those who came before you. Most of you are not veterans yet, but you will be one day. And I would like to personally thank you all for what you do."

SECDEF Carter visits USS Theodore Roosevelt

MCSN Chad M. Trudeau

USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Public Affairs

SOUTH CHINA SEA (NNS) —Secretary of Defense Ash Carter visited the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), Nov. 5, and met with Sailors and Marines to thank them for their service following more than eight months at sea.

During the visit, Carter received a brief covering the operations of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group; held a brief press conference; met with Cmdr. Robert Francis, commanding officer of the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG-82); and spoke with a group of 200 Sailors and Marines.

During his press conference, Carter discussed the U.S. role in security operations in the region.

"The American approach to the security structure for Asia is an inclusive one. I believe that discussions with China, military-to-military contact with China, and making sure that nobody does anything or has any misunderstandings is all a critical part of the job of keeping peace and stability out here," said Carter. "We're not trying to make divisions. We want China to be part of the



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. Adrian Cadiz

The USS Theodore Roosevelt can be seen in the background as Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Ash Carter flies in a V-22 Osprey after visiting the aircraft carrier with Malaysian Minister of Defense Hishammuddin Hussein Nov. 5.

security system of Asia, not to stand apart from it."

Speaking to the crew, Car-

ter thanked them for their service and noted the impact they have had on

events around the world.

"I am so proud to be your secretary of defense. You have

been at the hinge of everything happening in the strategic history of this era," said Carter.

"First off, you were part of the ISIL fight. That was when you were in the Middle East. Now you are in a completely different part of the world. If you look around this region, there is no NATO. There is no structure that keeps the peace in Asia, and yet half of humanity lives here. Half of the world's economy is here.

"So it is a place of great consequence for America's future and security. We are what creates reassurance, brings people together, and stops the animosity that is very real among these countries," he said.

Carter presented coins to the crew in attendance as more than 200 Sailors and Marines lined up to shake the defense secretary's hand.

"He was very knowledgeable on the region. It was definitely interesting to have him put it in perspective for us," said Aviation Electronics Technician 3rd Class Joseph Evans. "It was nice hearing that someone actually knows and cares about what's going on with our military."

Theodore Roosevelt is operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations as part of a worldwide deployment en route to its new homeport in San Diego to complete a three-carrier homeport shift.

USS Theodore Roosevelt to arrive Sunday

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Public Affairs

The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) will have a brief stop in Pearl Harbor on the way to its new homeport of San Diego. The

Roosevelt arrives the morning of Nov. 15 and departs Nov. 17. During the visit, the crew will be able to enjoy liberty in Hawaii.

Theodore Roosevelt (TR) departed Norfolk on March 11 for an around-the-world deploy-

ment. TR and its Sailors conducted operations in the U.S. 5th and U.S. 7th Fleets during the deployment. The TR Carrier Strike Group supported Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), the U.S. coalition conducting airstrikes against ISIS.

Salute warriors Nov. 19

The monthly Pearl Harbor Colors honors and heritage ceremony will begin at 7:30 a.m. Nov. 19 at Pearl Harbor Visitor Center.

The theme will be Warrior Care Month and the U.S. Marine Corps Birthday.

Pearl Harbor Colors is an opportunity for local

residents and international visitors to witness a U.S. military ceremony and meet veterans, service members and their families.

Attendees can learn about various aspects of military history.

For more information, visit www.cnic.navy.mil/pearlharborcolors.



JBPHH graduation ceremony honors service members **See page A-2**



USS North Carolina 'Tarheels' visit Yokosuka **See page A-4**



Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride kicks off in Hawaii **See page B-2**



'Young enough to not die from smoking' **See page A-3**



Makahiki **See page B-1**



Ho-ho-hosting 'Snacks with Santa' **See page B-4**

JBPHH graduation ceremony honors service members

Story by Blair Martin Gradel and Ensign Dorothy Wright

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Public Affairs

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) hosted a military college graduation recognition ceremony on Nov. 6 at the Historic Hickam Officer's Club.

Col. Charles Velino, commander for 15th Operations Group at JBPHH and the keynote speaker for the event, encouraged graduates to continue to strive for future education opportunities.

"Try your best to learn something new each and every day," he told graduates and family members during his speech.

"One of my favorite quotes is from Thomas Dewar, 'Minds are like parachutes. They only function when open.' What you have accomplished today shows



U.S. Navy photo by Blair M. Gradel

Senior Master Sgt. Donna Mottley, Hawaii top three military ceremonies committee lead, congratulates recent graduates during the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) military college graduation recognition ceremony held Nov. 6 at the Historic Hickam Officer's Club.

both the desire and ability to open your minds, to continue to learn, to continue to increase your knowledge base, and strive for better understanding of the

world around you," he added.

More than 60 Navy and Air Force service members were honored who earned an associate, bachelor, master or doctoral

degree between September 2014 and December 2015.

Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Noel Ramirez from the 766th Specialized Contracting Squadron (SCONS) unit, said one of the biggest reasons he chose to pursue a master's degree in the first place was to show his children that "anything was possible."

"At the rank that I'm at right now, it's difficult to pull away from work and go to school," Ramirez said.

"But my leadership made it possible for me to be able to attend classes and to be able to aggressively attack the coursework in order to get it done within a year and a half," he said.

Aside from the graduates, family members were also in attendance to cheer on their spouses and family members as their accomplishments were recognized.

Mayra Salazar, military

spouse, was there in support of her husband, Air Force Master Sgt. Joe Salazar Jr. as he received his master's degree in acquisition management from American Graduation University.

"It's been long, but it's been good," he said of the couple's journey. "I would encourage all military spouses to be patient and supportive during this time."

Navy Chief Master-at-Arms (EXW/SW) Jasper Johnson also echoed similar sentiments when he recounted his journey in pursuing an associate's degree in business from Excelsior College.

"My encouragement to my colleagues and [their] spouses would be to continue to pursue your dreams and never stop," Johnson advised.

"Continue to pursue your education because [keep in mind] whatever you learn, you take it with you after you retire," he said.

Pacific Fleet commander, fleet master chief visit shipyard

Story and photo by Sean Hughes

Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard Public Affairs

Adm. Scott Swift, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, and Pacific Fleet Master Chief Susan Whitman visited Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PHNSY&IMF), Nov. 2, to learn details of the command's mission, workload and innovation initiatives.

"Between Pearl Harbor maintenance of homeported ships, Guam sup-



Andy Llanos explains the benefits of electronic work tablets to Adm. Scott Swift, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, during a tour of Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Nov. 2.

port and AOR voyage repairs and emergency response, the visit really drove the point of the command's importance home," said Swift. The command's submarine and surface fleet-maintenance mission is centered at Pearl Harbor and extends across the Asia-Pacific region.

Swift and Whitman toured drydocks and industrial facilities to learn from shipyard leaders and workers about how they keep up with increased fleet nuclear and non-nuclear workload, improve Virginia-class submarine

maintenance, train new apprentices, partner with the private-sector repair industry and academia, and maintain stewardship responsibilities in facilities and historic preservation.

"It's all so amazing, from the historic and heritage perspective to the education connections, along with the nature of the work itself in routine and emergent repairs," Swift said.

While visiting a submarine project in drydock, Swift, Whitman and the project team discussed new waterfront technol-

ogy initiatives, such as waterfront wireless connectivity and implementation of electronic tablets, the need for accelerated development of new maintenance personnel to manage fleet workload, and in caring for the submarine crew's quality of life.

"All the levels of maintenance you're responsible for, and what you're doing in finding—and making—opportunities to innovate is remarkable," Swift told Capt. Jamie Kalowsky, shipyard commander.

"It's good to see the command taking these opportunities," Swift said.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy releases 2015 Veterans Day message

Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy

WASHINGTON (NNS)—Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Mike D. Stevens and Theresa Stevens released the following Veterans Day message to the fleet, this week.

Veterans, shipmates and Navy families,

President John. F. Kennedy once said, "I can imagine no more rewarding a career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride

and satisfaction: 'I served in the United States Navy.'"

That timeless statement rings true to this day. Taking the oath to protect our nation and fellow citizens through military service is one of the most rewarding experiences anyone can have.

Theresa and I are apprecia-

tive of the sacrifices and achievements made by our veterans, and we are grateful for the continued efforts and commitment that Sailors and their families make every day in order to preserve the liberties we hold so dear.

We encourage you to thank

those who have worn the uniform, as they have been instrumental in the development of today's Sailors through their legacy and commitment to excellence. May God bless you and may God bless the United States of America. All the best, MCPON and Theresa

Diverse VIEWS



Today is Friday the 13th. What are you most superstitious about or most afraid of?



2nd Lt. Jennifer Beierle
766th Specialized Contracting Squadron

"Sharks are my greatest fear. While they're my greatest fear, they're also my greatest fascination. I both dread and look forward to the day I finally see one in the water."

CTM2 Patrick Cepeda
NIOC



"I do not believe in superstitions. I just try to live my life without having to worry about more things. Nothing bad has happened from bad luck stuff like Friday the 13th yet, so I don't think anything is going to happen."



Senior Airman Amori Colbert
37th Intelligence Squadron

"There was a time I was superstitious about black cats crossing me and overall bad things happening to me throughout the day. And because I thought those things, they usually happened. Now, Friday the 13th is just Friday the 13th, the last of the work week and the start of a great weekend! It's usually an awesome day!"

Lt. j.g. Curran Meek
USS Charlotte (SSN-766)



"I still hold my breath when I go through a graveyard. My mother told me about the superstition as a kid and it stuck with me."



Tech. Sgt. Brandon Gaines
15th Wing

"I used to be superstitious about opening umbrellas indoors, but how do you know if you like an umbrella before buying it? You gotta try it before you buy. I open them all to see if I like the coverage, and nothing happens. Friday the 13th is only as unlucky of a day as you make it."

YN2 Chris Pelkey
USS Asheville (SSN-758)



"I don't believe in things like superstitions."



Master Sgt. Alan Gawronski
369th Recruiting Squadron

"I am most afraid of failure. Throughout life, everyone will experience some type of failure, but we must learn from our mistakes, correct them, and press on."

Provided by Lt. Paul Fylstra and David D. Underwood Jr.

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

Commentary

Suicide prevention: We have power and responsibility to help

Vice Adm. Bill Moran

Chief of Naval Personnel



Vice Adm. Bill Moran

Suicide is a tragedy that the Navy works to address every single day. While we have strengthened prevention and intervention strategies, we can't stop there.

Over the past year, we've aggressively informed Sailors and commands of warning signs, provided prevention tips, and set command climates that support open dialogue and encourage Sailors to seek help.

Last month during Suicide Prevention Month, we launched "1 Small ACT." Preventing

suicide, however, is not a momentary action, or something we think about one month out of the year; it's 24 / 7 / 365. It is about breaking barriers and encourag-

ing Sailors to seek help. It's about taking time to care and asking tough questions.

Right now in your division, your office, your department, your ship or your command, there is someone who may need your help, struggling with stress or having thoughts of suicide. Be aware of the following trends and signs:

- Most of our suicides occur among enlisted 20-24 year old Caucasian males.

- Relationship problems and transitions are significant contributors with more than 50 percent of the Sailors who died by suicide in the past three years expe-

riencing relationship problems.

- Fall from glory (legal, disciplinary, personal failure, loss of status) continues to be a factor in many suicides.

- Death by firearm is the most common method of suicide.

Progress will be made one Sailor at a time, one act at a time. Talk to your shipmates; look for these signs. Ask them how they're doing. Open the dialogue. Help those in distress.

Assistance is always available. Call the military crisis line at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), www.militarycrisisline.net or text 838255 for free confidential support 24/7.

Commentary

'Young enough to not die from smoking'

Rear Adm. John Fuller

Commander, Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific



Rear Adm. John Fuller

Hawaii is making it easier for smokers to quit.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2016, it will be against the law in this state for anyone under 21 to buy or use tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery devices.

Quitting tobacco is one of the best things we can do to improve fitness and readiness.

I've heard this argument by some shipmates against cracking down on tobacco: "If someone is young enough to die for their country, they should be free to be allowed to smoke."

But, turning that argument on its head: "If someone is young enough to fight for their country, they should be free from addiction to a deadly drug." Tobacco harms people's physical wellbeing, leads to illness and costs them money.

Some Sailors spend 10 dollars a day on their nicotine habit. That leads to nearly \$4,000 a year and close to \$40,000

ing loss is increased, and acute medical conditions are more likely. Wounded warriors who smoke suffer from increased risk of surgical complications and delayed wound healing.

"Additional threats to smokers include higher risk of stroke, cancer and, for males, impotency. Smokeless tobacco brings similarly high risks of oral cancers and dental disease. Tobacco use costs DoD an estimated \$1.6 billion annually in medical costs and lost work time.

"Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death; one-half of smokers will die from a smoking-related complication. For DoD, this equates to an estimated 175,000 current active duty service members who will die from smoking unless we can help them quit."

From Dr. Woodson's memorandum:

"Tobacco use undercuts military readiness and harms individual performance. Lung function is reduced, physical capabilities are diminished, hear-

ing loss is increased, and acute medical conditions are more likely. Wounded warriors who smoke suffer from increased risk of surgical complications and delayed wound healing.

ing loss is increased, and acute medical conditions are more likely. Wounded warriors who smoke suffer from increased risk of surgical complications and delayed wound healing.

Navy Medicine has long been a leader in helping men and women quit their addiction to nicotine. Medical practitioners and pharmacies provide resources and advice in clinics, aboard ship and online: <http://go.usa.gov/cYtUJ>.

Healthcare providers know the dangers to warfighters—increased injuries and decreased stamina and lung capacity—so they provide nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products such as NRT gum and patches.

My advice to smokers: Take advantage of these therapies. My advice to nonsmokers: Don't start. My advice to leaders in our ranks: Lead by example.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said, "Today, tobacco use is the most avoidable public health hazard in the Navy and Marine Corps."

With the new state law beginning Jan. 1, the state of Hawaii is helping us make it easier to quit tobacco—or, better yet, prevent our youngest shipmates from ever getting hooked.

The new smoking age law makes good sense and supports the good health of our service members and their families. It's really hard to make a logical argument against improved health and readiness and cost savings to both individuals and the government—I'm just saying....

Ships, planes line up at Pearl Harbor



Official U.S. Navy photograph

Seen here is an aerial photograph of Ford Island, taken Nov. 10, 1941, (74 years ago this week) with five battleships tied up along Battleship Row at the top of the image. USS Lexington (CV-2), a seaplane tender and a light cruiser are moored on the island's other (northwestern) side. Approximately 21 patrol planes are parked at the former Naval Air Station's seaplane base, in the upper right. The bright diagonal line, at the lower left end of Ford Island, points to the north.

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USS North Carolina 'Tarheels' visit Yokosuka

Lt. Tyler Vaughan

USS North Carolina (SSN 777)
Public Affairs

FLEET ACTIVITIES YOKOSUKA, Japan (NNS)—The Virginia-class, fast-attack submarine USS North Carolina (SSN 777), homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, arrived Nov. 5 at Fleet Activities Yokosuka for a routine visit as a part of its 2015 deployment to the western Pacific.

With a crew of 135, North Carolina will conduct a multitude of missions and employ the latest capabilities of the submarine force.

"The Tarheel Boat is proud to be here in the western Pacific and is honored to be guests in Japan and of the JMSDF (Kaijoutai)," said Cmdr. Gary Montalvo, commanding officer of North Carolina.

"The Tarheel crew has shown exemplary resilience in getting our ship to peak readiness for this deployment. I am extremely proud of the effort and am simply amazed every day by their attitude and suc-



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Brian G. Reynolds

The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS North Carolina (SSN 777) transits Tokyo Bay before arriving at Fleet Activities Yokosuka.

cess. They truly represent the strength of the ship and exemplify the Tarheel spirit," Montalvo said.

North Carolina is the fourth submarine in the Virginia-class, the Navy's newest class of submarine and the first ship designed for the post-Cold War environment. It is designed to operate with stealth, agility and endurance in the world's littoral regions, as well as the deep oceans.

Designed to accomplish a

wide variety of missions as required by its operational commanders, North Carolina's crew recently completed a rigorous training and evaluation cycle to prepare for the full range of possible tasking in the region.

"The crew has put in a lot of long days throughout 2015 preparing to bring the Tarheel boat from Pearl Harbor to the western Pacific and do the work our nation requires of us," said Master Chief Sonar Technician (submarines)

JR O'Donnell, the chief of the boat aboard North Carolina.

"All the training and preparations have already paid off during our time in theater and it is all because of the Tarheel crew. Now we're all looking forward to some well-deserved time during North Carolina's return visit to Japan," O'Donnell said.

For many of the crew members, this is not only their first deployment but also their first time visiting Japan.

There are some personnel, however, who have spent time in Japan prior to this deployment and are enthusiastic to return.

"I am very excited to be seeing Japan again and look forward to spending time immersed in the culture," said Information Technician (Submarines) 2nd Class Khalid Kei Kozawa Alkazak. "I spent three years here when I was younger and look forward to speaking my first language again."

Others are looking forward to visiting with fellow submariners from the JMSDF.

"Japan is one of our closest allies in this region, and the relationship of the United States and Japan cannot be overstated," said Lt. j. g. John A. Chisvette.

"I'm excited about this port visit because it affords the Tarheel boat an opportunity to both build personal relationships and strengthen international ones."

North Carolina was commissioned in 2008. This is North Carolina's third deployment.

Warrior Care Month spotlights resilient service members

DoD Office of Warrior Care Policy, Wounded Warriors

Many professionals working in the Department of Defense (DoD) make it their year-round mission to ensure exceptional care is provided to wounded, ill and injured service members. However, November is an especially important time for those working in the field of warrior care.

In 2008, November was officially designated as Warrior Care Month, a month dedicated to honoring the courage, resilience and accomplishments of wounded, ill and injured service members, their



**BUILDING A
READY AND
RESILIENT
FORCE**

#WarriorCare #ReadyandResilient

families and their caregivers.

This year's Warrior Care Month theme, "Show of Strength," is about recognizing the mental and physical resilience consistently demonstrated by our wounded, ill and injured service members, as well as acknowledging the critical support provided by families and caregivers," said James Rodri-

guez, the deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Warrior Care Policy.

"Show of Strength' also underscores DoD's ongoing commitment to policy, programs and resources that enable wounded, ill and injured service members to thrive as they embrace a new normal," he said.

Throughout November, DoD and the military ser-

vices will sponsor events and activities to increase awareness of the significant achievements and milestones that often occur during the recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration or transition process.

These events and activities include a sitting volleyball tournament, a wheelchair rugby exhibition, a healing arts recognition event, a Facebook town hall and a blog series focused on military caregivers.

According to Rodriguez, highlighting adaptive sports—sitting volleyball and wheelchair rugby—demonstrates DoD's broad focus on identifying and

enhancing abilities after a wound, injury or illness occurs.

"Adaptive sports and reconditioning activities, such as healing arts which includes painting, ceramics, music therapy and expressive writing therapy, are an essential way of understanding what each wounded, ill and injured service member is able to achieve—focusing on ability rather than disability," Rodriguez said.

Although DoD has seen a steady decrease in the total population of wounded, ill and injured service members since 2007, prompting some questions about the fu-

ture of warrior care, Rodriguez stated warrior care remains a top DoD priority.

"While the case management needs of the wounded, ill and injured population are changing, policy, process and baseline capability will not," Rodriguez said.

"DoD continuously evaluates the needs of the wounded warrior programs to ensure an exceptional level of care is provided to the current and future population of wounded, ill and injured service members," he said.

(For more information about Warrior Care Month, visit www.defense.gov/warriorcaremonth.)

Pearl Harbor-Hickam *Highlights*



Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Adm. Scott Swift, second from left, and Fleet Master Chief Susan Whitman, third from left, listen as Project Superintendent Mike Carreira talks about shipyard innovation and personnel training during a tour of Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Nov. 2.

U.S. Navy photo by Sean Hughes

Chief Fire Controlman (SW/AW) Dustin Coons from Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific receives a lei from his wife, Jennifer, after being recognized during the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) military college graduation recognition ceremony Nov. 6 at the Historic Hickam Officer's Club.

U.S. Navy photo by Blair M. Gradel



Wounded Warriors from around the country and Australia participated in Hawaii's Soldier Ride on Nov. 7 at JBPHH.

Photo by Nick Kraus

Wounded Warriors toured JBPHH as part of the Wounded Warrior Project's Soldier Ride in Hawaii.

Photo by Nick Kraus



Veteran honors parents as NMCP caretaker

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt.
Christopher Hubenthal

Defense Media Activity Hawaii

NATIONAL MEMORIAL CEMETERY OF THE PACIFIC, Hawaii —Veterans Day serves as a time to celebrate and honor American veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the preservation and protection of the nation. For some veterans, taking time to honor and remember those who served is a way of life.

Chris Farley, a Navy veteran and National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP) caretaker, helps commemorate the memory of the fallen that are interred or memorialized at the NMCP. He is responsible for the maintenance of the 112.5 acres of land that make up the cemetery, the 56,971 gravesites of those who are interred in-ground or in-columbarium, and the 28,788 fallen who are memorialized in the courts of the missing.

While performing his daily tasks at the cemetery, Farley said that he keeps in mind the significance of the responsibility to honor and preserve the memories of those who served before him.

“As a duty to our veterans that served our country and paid the ultimate sacrifice, it’s an honor to do it for us as a nation,” Farley said. “Our country appreciates that we remember our fallen in this way. It’s an honor to take care of the veterans.”

Farley’s responsibilities at the NMCP include ensuring the upkeep of the cemetery and supporting events such as burials, disinterment and interment ceremonies. Another inherent



Chris Farley, U.S. Navy veteran and National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP) caretaker, visits the resting place of his parents at the NMCP, Nov. 28, in Honolulu.

part of his job is representing what the cemetery stands for on a daily basis when interacting with visitors.

“I get a lot of satisfaction when I see the response of the visitors and the families of those that we are doing this service for,” Farley said.

“I’ve done a little bit of cemetery rep work where we bring the family up to the ceremony and then bring them down to the gravesite. It’s a very personal moment, of course, for them and to be involved with that, I want to make sure that

we’re doing the best job that we can do and honor their memory for their loved ones,” he said.

James Horton, director of the NMCP and an Air Force retired colonel, said that the work Farley and other veteran employees do day-to-day is essential for the success of the cemetery.

“They are responsible for mowing smaller areas, the trimming of the markers and trees, and they are the ones who make sure that everything is looking as beautiful as it can,” Horton said. “They’re actually face to face with folks who are here vis-

iting, so they become the faces of the cemetery themselves and they are very proud of that.”

Horton said that Farley has a personal investment when working at the cemetery. For Farley, working on the grounds brings him closer to family.

Farley’s late father, Bob Farley, served in the U.S. Marine Corps as an aviator and reached the rank of colonel. He was a major influence in Chris’s life, and it was because of his father’s character that Chris decided to join the U.S. Navy in 1982 as an air traffic controller.

“My parents are both buried here, and a lot of my father’s friends and my friend’s parents are buried here,” Farley said.

“I’ve always enjoyed aviation, and he was a pilot so I looked into joining the service. I enjoyed being in the Navy. It teaches you discipline, how to take care of yourself, and I learned a trade, one that brought me closer to my father in particular because he was a pilot. That was good for our relationship.”

Farley often finds himself visiting his parent’s gravesite as he fulfills his daily duties.

“I do it almost every day. I look it over and read it again and again. It brings back memories for me and pride in my family,” he said.

“On holidays and birthdays, Father’s Day and Mother’s Day, I try to be the regular average visitor who comes up here to pay respects to their family. I miss them a lot.”

Horton said that Farley has distinguished himself at the cemetery due to his hard work and compassion toward the NMCP’s goals.

“He is a great success story,” Horton said. “He was hired on as a temporary lower wage grade and made it through that period and competed and won a higher grade position. He has worked his way very quickly in just over a year and a half up to a very high level caretaker position here at the cemetery because of his work ethic and because of his dedication to the mission.”

Twenty veteran staff members at the NMCP work as cemetery caretakers, and five veterans work as part of the administrative staff to help ensure the memory of the nation’s fallen heroes are preserved and honored.

Pearl Harbor survivor lives his happily ever after

Karen S. Spangler

Managing Editor, Ho'okele

On Nov. 8, just before Veterans Day, William "Bill" Hughes married his childhood sweetheart. The 90-plus-year-old USS Utah survivor of the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor was thrilled to walk down the aisle with his bride and say his "I do's."

Back in 1941, Bill was a radioman assigned to the USS Utah at Pearl Harbor when the attack on the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor began.

"At 07:55 a.m., Sunday morning, Dec. 7, 1941, our lives would be changed forever. On that lazy Sunday morning, the tumultuous explosion that rocked the ship almost threw us out of our bunks," Hughes recounted.

"Within 20 or so seconds, a second jarring explosion again rocked the ship and within minutes, the USS Utah was taking on a pronounced list to port. It was obvious to all of us that we needed to reach the top side immediately," he said.

As the Japanese Zeroes made strafing runs on the ship, Hughes and his fellow Sailors jumped into the waters of the harbor and swam to shore. "The only scratch I received during World War II occurred when wading up the beach onto Ford Island. I cut my bare foot on a piece of coral," he said.

Hughes noted all of his personal belongings, including a prized photo of movie actress Rita Hayworth, remained on the ship in his locker.

On the night of Dec. 7, the Sailors were transported from Ford Island on the USS Argonne. "We observed the terrible



Photo courtesy of Bill Hughes

Bill Hughes and his former childhood sweetheart, Lu.

sight of the mangled superstructure of the USS Arizona, the capsized Oklahoma, the sunken California, Nevada, Maryland and three other ships, such as the destroyers, Downs and Cassin and Shaw. These sights gave us a knot in the pit of our stomachs and very heavy hearts," Hughes said.

He was later assigned to the USS Saratoga, an aircraft carrier, and was in Tokyo Bay when the Instrument of Surrender was signed.

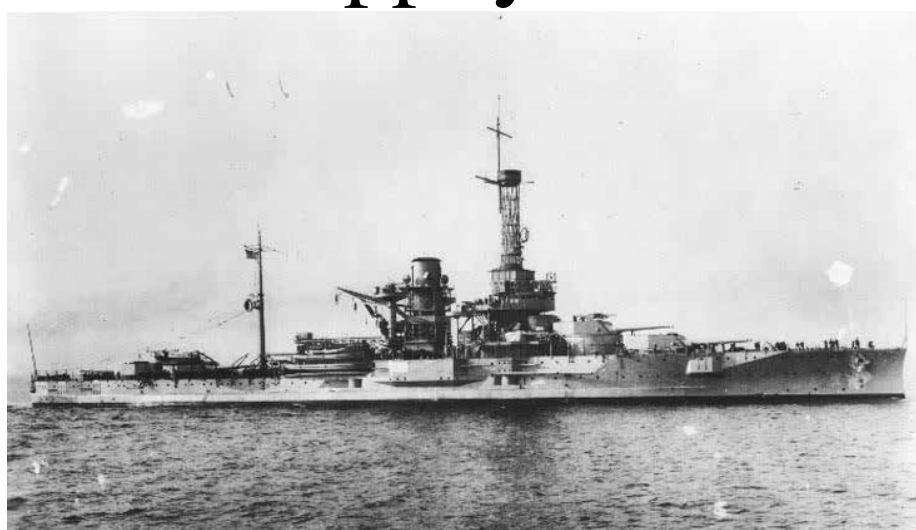
Bill remembers his time on the USS Utah as one of his greatest—but also saddest—experiences.

"On my first birthday in the Navy, Nov. 8, 1940, I boarded the USS Utah in Hawaiian waters. It was a grand old ship, the best sea duty I ever had. Meanwhile, WW2 hap-

pened. I survived the sinking of said USS Utah at a place etched in history as Pearl Harbor. Despite the odds, I survived the Pacific war. I was in Tokyo Bay when the surrender was signed," he said.

His love for the Utah continued long after the war. As a USS Utah and Pearl Harbor survivor, Bill has been an active member of the USS Utah Survivors Association.

"Bill kept up with modern technology and created a website for the USS Utah Survivors Association. It was a brilliant piece of work that included all Sailors killed that day, the survivors with their stories, news of reunions, and myriad other subjects," said Jim Taylor, volunteer Pearl Harbor survivor liaison for Navy Region Hawaii.



U.S. Navy file photo

USS Utah after its modernization in 1925 which replaced its coal-fired boilers with new oil-fired models.

"He has been an active member of the association which still thrives today. There are many survivors and family members who are planning to be here in Hawaii for a final USS Utah survivors' reunion in December of next year in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor," Taylor said.

But Bill's story begins much earlier, when he met his childhood sweetheart, Lu. In the 1930s, he was living in a rural area of Louisiana. "There she was, the first female person on Planet Earth I ever loved (never mind I was only nine years old and the most I could offer her was half of my peanut butter and jelly sandwich.)," he said.

But the "romance" was short-lived. Bill moved away and later enlisted in the Navy where he served for six years. "I thought I had lost Lu through the years. But I never forgot her; I even told my children about her," he said.

He was a Navy recruiter in his early '20s and assigned to Hot Springs, Ark. when he

met his soon-to-be wife, Reeca. "Having lost Lu, my gorgeous blond dream girl, I was not letting Reeca get away. I hit on her with everything my Navy experiences had taught me. I confess that I was looking for a one-night stand. But to her credit, she was looking for a husband and was not going to facilitate anyone's one-night stand," Bill joked.

"I was dressed in my CPO uniform, brass buttons, hard hat and all. Guess who won? I became her husband and the proud father of our three terrific children that included twin gorgeous blonds. We were blessed with 65 years of marriage," he said.

When he lost Reeca, Bill was devastated and it took him quite awhile to recover from his grief.

When he later went to live at an assisted living facility, Bill made an amazing discovery as he was surfing family trees on Ancestry.com and found a familiar name.

"I immediately zapped an e-mail to the tree owner whose mother just happened to be Lu's

youngest sister, and many years ago married one of my first cousins (now deceased). It was a popper of coincidences when I found myself talking to my first cousin, once removed, who sent a photo of her aunt," Hughes explained.

As it turned out, Bill's childhood sweetheart was living only about 30 miles away from where he resided. "Well, not being one to let a golden opportunity pass, I visited her - and as they say, 'the rest is history,'" Bill said.

"Not only have we been surpassing 'teenagers' burning up phone lines, we have spent every minute possible together. Cupid's arrow fired at me, met its hit, its target - me!" Bill said.

"My last life adventure begins with my first love. A lesson here, i.e., we seasoned citizens (aka old people) need TLC also and just perhaps we enjoy it more," Hughes advised.

He and his brand new wife plan to attend the Pearl Harbor Day ceremony in 2016.

Bill Hughes is now living his happily ever after.