

Commemoration ceremonies honor veterans

Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, Detachment Hawaii

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

HONOLULU – Veterans, along with friends and family members, gathered with service members Nov. 11 to commemorate Veterans Day at four distinct and historic locations throughout Oahu, Hawaii.

Veterans Day, which originally began as Armistice Day in November 1919, is a day of remembrance and gratitude to the men and women who have paid the ultimate price in defense of their country, as well as commemorating those who served, currently serve and will be serving the nation.

The day opened with a morning ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl), which served as a way to reflect and commemorate the sacrifices of veterans.

“For 239 years, the men and women of our nation have stepped forward to serve in our armed forces and to defend our freedoms,” said keynote speaker Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet.

“They have risked their lives for the land, for the people, and for the ideals that we all cherish. Our battles, our victories, indeed our very way of life, are owed not to great moments or important dates. They are owed to the actions and sacrifices of these men and women, who were willing to step into the breach for their country and for the cause of freedom,” Harris said.

“Our nation draws her strength from these brave warriors who willingly give of themselves, as it has been for 239 years,” said Harris. “And our nation will continue to draw her strength from those brave Americans who will serve in the future, an unbroken chain, linking Americans, generation to generation.”

The ceremony included a wreath-laying presentation, offered by various veteran service organizations, and a ceremonious gun salute by the 25th Infantry Division Honor Guard.

“No words can repay the debt of gratitude we owe to our veterans, who stood up for freedom,” said retired Brig. Gen. Irwin K. Cockett Jr. “But we can honor the memory of our veterans best by remaining the best kind of Americans we can be and keeping our nation strong and secure.”

Another ceremony was held for the submarine veterans, active-duty military and families and friends of the Pacific Submarine Force, who came together to honor all Americans who have served. The ceremony was held at the USS Parche Submarine Park and Memorial at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

With an emphasis on submarine veterans, the ceremony's guest speaker, Capt. John Russ, chief of staff of Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, spoke about honoring American veterans past and present, including Sailors aboard deployed submarines, and those aboard submarine tenders, maintaining, repairing, re-



Photo illustration

supplying and supporting the fleet, to the families that are always sacrificing in their own way in service to the nation.

“Today, American veterans on active duty serve our country across the globe, on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, in the western hemisphere, in Europe, and in Asia on and under the sea and ocean,” said Russ. “American veterans are on duty, standing the watch because being there matters.”

The ceremony included a posting of the 50 state flags by the Radford High School Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps, post-

ings of colors by the National Sojourners, a tolling of the bells for the 52 submarines and their crew that were lost in World War II and a series of wreath presentations.

Later in the afternoon, the National Park Service World War II Valor in the Pacific Monument held a USS Arizona Memorial dedication wall ceremony. Over the years, weather and salt-water have affected the Shrine Room wall, causing stains and erosion, but donations and assistance from non-profit organizations have made the new wall possible.

American Veterans (AMVETS), a veterans service organization, raised more than \$450,000 to replace the inscribed marble panels and refurbish the memorial.

Located inside the Shrine Room of the memorial, the dedication wall serves as a headstone for the 1,177 men who died aboard the USS Arizona during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

At the ceremony, guest speaker Rear Adm. Rick Williams, commander of Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, remarked to those in attendance on the

unique opportunity to be surrounded by the historic memorials present at Pearl Harbor.

“I really love coming to the Arizona because every time I come here, it feels like Veterans Day every day,” said Williams.

“It is very special where you have a base that is operational and you have historic societies, our living monuments and our memorials, working and living and operating all together—there is no other place like it in the whole world,” he said.

Williams thanked veterans; Capt. Stanley Keeve Jr., commander of Joint

Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam; and service members in attendance for their dedication to their duty, as well as touched on the importance of remembering those who laid down their lives so future generations can make their mark.

“As our shipmates rest silently below, a day doesn't go by where their spirit doesn't ring very loudly in all of our hearts, especially our Sailors here in Pearl Harbor,” Williams said. “And we do march to their drumbeat, we do get inspired by this very impor-

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Fabrication begins for future USS Daniel Inouye

Team Ships Public Affairs

BATH, Maine (NNS)—Bath Iron Works (BIW) celebrated the start of fabrication of the future USS Daniel Inouye (DDG 118) during a ceremony Oct. 31 at BIW shipyard.

This first major ship milestone symbolizes that the first 100 tons of steel for the ship have been cut.

"Construction on Arleigh Burke-class (DDG 51) destroyers is in full swing on the east and gulf coasts," said Capt. Mark Vandroff, DDG 51-class program man-



Daniel Inouye

ager, Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships.

"The restart DDG 51s benefit from a mature and stable design with increased air and missile defense capabilities. These build on a legacy of success, providing outstanding combat capability and survivability characteristics," Vandroff said.

The ceremony came just a day after BIW ceremoniously laid the keel for the future USS Rafael Peralta (DDG 115) and a month following the start of fabrication on the future USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117) at the Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) ship-

yard in Pascagoula, Miss.

USS Daniel Inouye will be equipped with the Navy's Aegis combat system, the world's foremost integrated naval weapon system. This system delivers quick reaction time, high firepower and increased electronic countermeasures capability for anti-air warfare.

The ship is part of the Navy's latest flight of destroyer, Flight IIA, which enables power projection, forward presence and escort operations at sea in support of low intensity conflict/coastal and littoral offshore warfare as well as

open-ocean conflict.

First-in-class ship, USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51), was laid down at the BIW shipyard in 1988. Since, BIW and HII have laid keels for an additional 67 Arleigh Burke-class destroyers including Daniel Inouye.

Destroyers have been a mainstay of the Navy's surface fleet since the first U.S. Navy destroyer, USS Bainbridge, was commissioned in 1902. Able to operate independently or as part of carrier strike groups, surface action groups, amphibious ready groups, and underway replenishment groups, to-

day's destroyers provide the fleet with multimission offensive and defensive capabilities.

As one of the Defense Department's largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships, special mission and support ships, and special warfare craft. Currently, the majority of shipbuilding programs managed by PEO Ships are benefiting from serial production efficiencies, which are critical to delivering ships on cost and schedule

Pearl Harbor survivor laid to rest among shipmates

Story and photo by MC3 Johans Chavarro

Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, Detachment Hawaii

HONOLULU — A burial ceremony in honor of Pearl Harbor survivor Signalman 1st Class Paul Goodyear was held Nov. 10 at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl).

The event at the historic Punchbowl Cemetery was attended by Sailors, friends and family members of Goodyear, who passed away May 23 at the age of 96.

Presiding over the ceremony was Jim Taylor, Pearl Harbor survivors liaison, who gave an overview of Goodyear's life and spoke about Goodyear's experiences the morning of Dec. 7, 1941.

Born May 6, 1918 in Belleville, Mich., Goodyear joined the Naval Reserve at the age of 21 in September 1940. After attending signalman school, Goodyear reported to his first command, the battleship USS

Oklahoma (BB 37), on March 1941.

Working on the signal bridge aboard USS Oklahoma the morning of Dec. 7, Goodyear was one of the first Sailors aboard ship to realize an attack was occurring when he witnessed a Japanese bomb strike a hangar at Ford Island about a half-mile away.

After the call to abandon the ship was made, Goodyear went on to aid in the defense of the battleship USS Maryland (BB 46).

"He would not want to be called a hero," said Taylor. "He would tell you the real heroes are buried over there, the ones who didn't make it through the war, the ones who didn't make it home to live a long life. He would not say he was a hero. He would say he was just doing his job."

Goodyear was reassigned to the battleship USS Indiana (BB 58) following USS Oklahoma's capsizing. He served aboard USS Indiana until 1943 when he was assigned to the staff of battleship division eight aboard battleship USS Mas-



A Sailor from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Honors and Ceremonies presents Gloria Smith with the flag during the burial honors ceremony for close friend and Pearl Harbor survivor Signalman 1st Class Paul Goodyear at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl). USS Oklahoma survivor Ed Vezey is seated next to Smith.

sachusetts (BB 59), where he served until the end of World War II.

Goodyear went on to become a driving force in the creation of the USS Oklahoma Memorial on

Ford Island.

Ed Vezey, Pearl Harbor survivor and shipmate of Goodyear, also attended the ceremony and said Goodyear never stopped being a shipmate to the crew

of USS Oklahoma.

"There are two words that characterize Paul [Goodyear], 'shipmate' and 'caring,'" said Vezey. "Paul cared. He cared not only for his friends, but he

cared for the rest of us. He was our nominal leader to those of us who called ourselves USS Oklahoma survivors. He knew all of [us] by first name, knew most of [our] parents, family and kept in touch with [us]. He got [us] all together from time to time and we had some wonderful times in those reunions. He just couldn't stop caring about the USS Oklahoma and all its crew," Vezey said.

At the end of the ceremony, Goodyear received full military honors for his dedication and service, including a rifle salute by the Joint Base Honors and Ceremonial Guard and the playing of Taps by a Navy bugler. His close friend, Gloria Smith, was presented with the national ensign during a flag presentation.

More than 13,000 Soldiers and Sailors who died during World War II are laid to rest in the Punchbowl Cemetery, whose Hawaiian name, "Puowaina," means "hill of sacrifice."

Commentary

Lessons on working together from the past, present and into the future

Rear Adm. Rick Williams

Commander, Navy Region Hawaii and Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific

Laulima is a word that represents "many hands working together for a common goal" in the Hawaiian culture.

This past Saturday, I attended the *makahiki* festival on Hickam Beach at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and observed *laulima* in action. It was great to see so many people from diverse cultures gathering together in an informal setting and enjoying the warm sun, good food, friendly competition and spirited conversation.

Members of our local Navy and Air Force community had the opportunity to meet local Hawaiian civic and cultural leaders to learn more about each other and discover common goals and values sometimes hidden by perceived cultural differences.

Hawaiian cultural practitioner Shad Kane, the coordinator of the event and a Navy vet himself, described the *makahiki* as a traditional Hawaiian festival that provided an opportunity for the Hawaiian community to come together in the interest of building new relationships and nurturing old ones.

In ancient Hawaiian histo-



Rear Adm. Rick Williams

ry the Hawaiian people would come together in their various regions during the harvest season and celebrate the bounty of the year. It was a time to build relationships with games, food and interaction between nobility and the people. It was the only time the fisherman, farmer and artisan could safely interact on a one-on-one basis with their chief.

Everyone recognized that the whole community survived because of the role that each individual played in providing the necessary means of sustenance in their agrarian society. These relationships would prove beneficial in times of peace, when the whole community would rely on the product that each member provided, and in times of war when the chiefs and their military lieutenants would lead these same people into battle.

One of the benefits of a cultural immersion event like the *makahiki* is the opportunity it affords for learning new lessons and gaining a new perspective on experiences common to every culture.

This week marks the 72nd anniversary of the decisive naval Battle of Guadalcanal, when Imperial Japan's nearly successful attempt to bombard the American Marines off of Henderson field and off of Guadalcanal from the sea was soundly defeated by American naval forces.

In the months leading up to November of 1942, the U.S. Navy suffered repeated defeats in the waters around Guadalcanal as the Japanese forces exhibited superior capability in many

aspects of equipment, tactics and night fighting doctrine to establish sea-control in the opening days of the campaign.

Our naval forbearers would soon apply lessons learned from those defeats and seize the day.

Though the battle that had begun in August of 1942 would not end until February of 1943, the U.S. Navy's persistence despite heavy losses ultimately won the day, and we know now that following the naval Battle of Guadalcanal, the Japanese began formulating plans for retreat from the Solomon Islands.

As Adm. Halsey wrote: "We seized the offensive from the enemy. Until then he had been advancing at his will. From then on he retreated at ours."

I can't help but reflect on the *laulima* exhibited by our nation's armed forces in that critical season of our history.

The struggle for Guadalcanal would prove to be a watershed moment in the Pacific theater when America's diverse military forces would be forced in the heat of battle to work together to develop the necessary joint objectives, techniques and tactics that would defeat their common enemy.

The lessons learned from Guadalcanal and the joint spirit that it engendered, though imperfect, would be tailored and molded throughout the remainder of the war and lead to an eventual overwhelming victory against a tough and determined enemy.

That same spirit also tran-

sends international lines today.

At a recent maritime security challenge conference in Victoria, British Columbia, Adm. Harris reflected on the importance of multi-national exercises like RIMPAC that establish dialogue and cooperation between the military forces of the nations of the Pacific Rim where so much of the world's maritime trade occurs—in other words, nations where peaceful interchange and maritime security represents a common goal.

As Harris stated, "There are three great ships that sail the high seas—friendship, partnership and leadership." Each year the *makahiki* helps us discover new friendships, re-establish old ones and learn the benefits of *laulima* from a new perspective.

Veterans Day teaches lessons of history

Continued from A-1

tant memorial and living monuments that help us stay the course."

In the evening, a special sunset ceremony aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial brought the Veterans and Armistice Day observances to a close.

"This special day—this Veterans Day aboard the Battleship Missouri, we understand the common thread of humanity, love and devotion that runs through our families and all families, including the entire family of veterans to whom we owe so much," said Williams, who was also the guest speaker at the Missouri event.

"You veterans teach us the lessons of history so we don't repeat the mistakes of the past. You remind us of the importance of service and sacrifice. You embody the words written 200 years ago this year, in defense of the nation: "Land of the free; home of the brave," Williams said.

Retired Vice Adm. Robert K.U. Kihune recounted the story of Mike Christian, a naval flight officer who was shot down and captured during the Vietnam War.

Using a contrived bamboo needle and some red and white collected cloth, Christian sewed together an American flag on the inside of his shirt to avoid its detection by the Vietnamese guards. But when the coast was clear, Christian would take off his shirt, turn it inside out and hang it on the wall of the cell so all the prisoners could see the American flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kihune explained that Christian's handmade flag was more than just pieces of cloth sewn together. To Christian and the other prisoners of war it represented the ideals of patriotism, liberty and commitment to country.

"To most of us today, the Pledge of Allegiance is not an important part of our day," said Kihune. "But to these prisoners of war, to these American veterans, it was the most important

and meaningful event of their day. It was their beacon of hope to stay alive because of their love for their families and their countries."

Following the playing of "America the Beautiful," a flag was presented to Navy veteran John O'Neill for his contributions to the USS Missouri Memorial Association. The historic flag and plaque were previously displayed on the destroyer USS Nicholas (DD 449), famous for its role in transporting dignitaries to the battleship USS Missouri during the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender.

Sailors stationed throughout Pearl Harbor then performed a special Hawaii Medal of Honor tribute.

More than 300 flowers were released into the waters of Pearl Harbor, each signifying a Hawaii Medal of Honor recipient who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The ceremony concluded with a fly-over by a vintage World War II plane, courtesy of Pacific Warbirds.

Diverse Views



How can we best support wounded warriors?



CS2 Alejandro Dominguez
Executive Transport Detachment Pacific

"I think the best way is by participating in events that provide face-to-face contact. Other people donate money. I think the most important thing is face-to-face medical treatments."

Airman 1st Class Alex Gargani
392nd Intelligence Squadron



"I think the best thing we can do is be there for them and show them our support."



CTM1 Shane Smith
NIOC Hawaii

"I think the best way is to find better equipment to deal with traumatic brain injuries and to not use outdated equipment."

Tech. Sgt. Andrew Nichols
8th Intelligence Squadron



"We need to always remember their sacrifices, ensure they are receiving the best quality of care, and make sure they know we will always be there for them."



AC1 Stephanie Breault
Marine Corps Base Hawaii

"I would say by ensuring they have a really strong rehabilitation program when they get back so they don't feel left behind and by making them feel like a part of the command and keeping them involved."

Kayla Jacoby
Retired Air Force member and military spouse



"Show compassion. Don't assume that you know exactly what they might be struggling with. Actually talk with them and ask, then listen to their answer. If you want to show support, volunteer with an organization that works directly with our wounded warriors."



Airman 1st Class Kyle Wyatt
561st Network Operations Squadron

"I believe it is our duty as current service members to honor and respect wounded warriors. We should show strong support for all wounded warrior events and help fund these events more in the future."

Provided by Lt. j.g. Eric Galassi 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

Cargo ship sunk during Battle of Guadalcanal



Official U.S. Navy photograph

Kinugawa Maru (an Imperial Japanese cargo ship) is shown beached and sunk on the Guadalcanal shore in November 1943. It had been sunk by U.S. aircraft Nov. 15, 1942, while attempting to deliver men and supplies to Japanese forces holding the northern part of the island. Savo Island is in the distance.

HO'OKELE

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Former Sailor Tim Guard keeps the course in supporting the Navy

Story and photo by
Brandon Bosworth

Assistant Editor, Ho'okele

This summer, local businessman and Navy veteran Tim Guard was named chairman of the board of directors of the USS Missouri Memorial Association. He is the third chairman in the association's 20-year history.

Guard's new position is just one more facet of his long involvement with the U.S. Navy, dating back to his 1966 commissioning as a naval officer. Commanding a swift boat during the Vietnam War, he earned combat citations such as the Bronze Star, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal and RVN Legion of Merit.

Upon completion of his active naval service, Guard joined the Navy Reserve forces, serving in a variety of command billets including Reserve commanding officer of the USS Esteem (MSO-432), a minesweeper.

"It was a really difficult assignment," he recalled. "It was practically a full-time job to fulfill the responsibilities of CO of the Esteem. I did it for three years."

Guard said he had "quite a time in the Navy" and added that he is "ever thankful to the Navy... It forces you to grow up."

Choosing the Navy for his time in the military was a natural option. Born and raised in Hawaii, Guard has a lifelong love of the ocean and calls himself *keiki kai*, or "child of the sea." This passion carried on to his civilian life. In 1984, Guard was named president of McCabe, Hamilton & Renny Co., the



Tim Guard

state's oldest and largest stevedoring company. He has since become the company's chairman and CEO.

Though it has been many years since Tim Guard was in the Navy, he still remains very involved in Navy issues. He is a longstanding member of the Navy League of the United States and has previously served as president for the Honolulu Council.

In 1992, Guard played a role in the installation of the Pearl Harbor Memorial Fountain, located in front of building 150 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. He credits the idea for the memorial to 20-year Navy veteran Harold Estes.

"Harold Estes came to me and said it bothered him that there was no group memorial to the eight battleships and three cruisers that were sunk on Dec. 7, 1941," said Guard. "He thought there should be a memorial to them."

The Honolulu Council of the Navy League raised funds, and in 1992 the fountain was officially dedicated. It features 12 eight-foot



Tim Guard gazes at the Pearl Harbor Memorial Fountain. Guard played a major role in the installation of the memorial in 1992.

metal and glass markers that rise from a shallow pool surrounding a fountain. Eleven of the markers represent ships and the 12th reads a dedication to all those that risked and sacrificed so much the day of the attack.

The Navy League formed an organization called "The Friends of Pearl Harbor" to handle the many contributions and other paperwork the project generated. Architect Jack J. McGarrity designed the fountain and its plaza at no cost. Guard calls his work on the Pearl Harbor Memorial Fountain "one of the highlights of my life."

Guard was also involved in the efforts to bring the USS Missouri to Pearl Harbor.

"In the early '90s, there was a rumor that the Navy was looking to deed the ship to an organization," he said. "Three or four cities wanted it. The ship was in mothballs at the time, and it was in pretty bad shape."

Guard said that the late Sen. Daniel Inouye was instrumental in getting the Missouri to Hawaii.

"Sen. Inouye's help was of inestimable value," he said. "There's no question he was the deciding factor in the Navy bringing the ship here."

In May 1998, Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton signed the donation contract transferring the battleship to the nonprofit USS Missouri Memorial Association. A month later, the USS Mis-

souri arrived at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor. On Jan. 29, 1999, the Battleship Missouri Memorial museum opened.

Guard is a longtime board member of the USS Missouri Memorial Association and previously served as vice chairman. As the organization's new chairman of the board of directors, he is prepared to take on new challenges.

"There is a great deal to be done to maintain the Missouri," he said. "The ship underwent a major dry-docking at Pearl Harbor in 2010, and another one is coming up in 2030."

Keeping the museum current is also an ongoing challenge.

"We want to offer a visitor

experience that is both historical and contemporary," he said. "Overseas visitors are increasing, so we have to ask, 'How do we make it relevant for them?'"

Guard added that the memorial's "very good stable of tour guides" helps to convey to visitors "not just the history of the Missouri, but what it represents."

Despite the hard work that lies ahead, Guard is enthusiastic about his expanded role with the USS Missouri Memorial Association.

"There's a feeling of pride I get when I go over the bridge to Ford Island and see the Missouri, especially at twilight when everything glows," he said. "I get chicken skin!"

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Pearl Harbor-Hickam *Highlights*



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Johans Chavarro
 (Above) Sailors attend a Veterans Day sunset service aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH). Veterans, along with friends and family members, gathered with service members from all branches of the military to honor those who have served.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Johans Chavarro
 (Right) Sailors stationed throughout JBPHH toss flowers into Pearl Harbor during a Veterans Day sunset service aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial at JBPHH. More than 300 flowers were released into the Pearl Harbor waters, each signifying a Hawaii Medal of Honor recipient who made the ultimate sacrifice.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Johans Chavarro
 (Above) Pearl Harbor survivor Ed Vezey is recognized by guests for his service during a Veterans Day sunset service aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial at JBPHH. Veterans, along with friends and family members, gathered with service members from all branches of the military to honor those who have served.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Brennan D. Knaesboro
 (Above) Robert Thompson, center, a Cooks from the Valley volunteer, helps prepare steaks for service members and their families. The organization of 57 cooks made more than 6,900, 12-ounce New York center-cut steaks to show their appreciation and support for America's service members and their families.



(Left) Cooks from the Valley members prepare and serve steaks to Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Halsey (DDG 97) during a steel beach barbecue.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Bradley J. Gee

(Below) Gloria Smith looks on as the ashes of close friend and Pearl Harbor survivor Signalman 1st Class Paul Goodyear are placed in the columbarium at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific during the burial honors ceremony for Goodyear.

Navy photo by MC3 Johans Chavarro



U.S. Navy photo by Don Robbins
 Veterans march in the Wahiawa Lions Club's annual Veterans Day Parade held Nov. 11 along California Avenue in Wahiawa.



15th Wing leadership shadows 15th OSS Airmen

Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Terri Paden

15th Wing Public Affairs

Airmen from the 15th Operations Support Squadron (15th OSS) aircrew flight equipment (AFE) had some help recently, completing their daily work of maintaining the life-saving equipment they issue to aircrew members. The day's mission was accomplished with the help of the 15th Wing commander and command chief.

Col. Randy Huiss, 15th Wing commander, said the point of the reverse shadow program is to see where and how the wing's mission is being accomplished and to meet the Airmen who are getting it done.

"It's fantastic to get out and about and to see how everything works and just what goes on behind the scenes," he said.

During their visit with



Col. Randy Huiss, 15th Wing commander, left, and Chief Master Sgt. James Smith, 15th Wing command chief, right, perform a functional test on an LPU-10/P life preserver during their visit to the 15th Operations Support Squadron Aircrew Flight Equipment Flight at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Airmen from the AFE flight, Huiss and Chief Master Sgt. James Smith, 15th Wing command chief, not only learned what it takes to maintain aircrew survival equipment but also how to inspect and package large

parachutes and life rafts.

The two had hands-on helping to fold and stow a parachute canopy and suspension lines into a deployment bag.

"I prefer to actually get hands on and get dirty," said

Huiss. "I think it gives you a better appreciation and understanding for what our Airmen are doing on a daily basis. Also, if I understand what it takes to do a mission, then I understand how I can better support that mission."

Staff Sgt. Juilo Torres, 15th Operations Support Squadron AFE main shop assistant NCO in charge and one of the day's trainers, said it was nice having wing leadership take the less traditional approach to learning about the wing's mission.

"I think it's common for wing leadership to do walk arounds and meet and greets, but I don't think it's common for them to come and get their hands dirty and allow lower-ranking individuals to give them guidance on things they are unfamiliar with," he said.

"I think it was pretty cool to have them come through like that. Since we work in the back shops, no one knows what goes on behind the scenes for our career field."

Torres, who worked with Huiss and Smith on packing the parachute canopy, said having wing leadership recognize the importance of what he does on a daily basis

was the best part of the day. "Showing the commander and chief how to pack a parachute was nice," he said.

"It felt pretty good, knowing that they take interest in something that we do. Our job can be tough at times, like many jobs in the Air Force, but leadership taking note that our equipment can one day save an aircrew member's life is the part that felt the best."

Huiss said interacting with Airmen does make his job a lot more fun though it's also a reminder of how proficient they are in their skill sets.

"Today I learned I definitely need more training before I pack a parachute," he said. "It really highlighted the attention to detail these guys have also. I mean, this equipment has to work. They can't fail; lives depend on it. It speaks to the level of responsibility they have and they do a fantastic job," he said.

Airmen, Sailors, Soldiers recognized for their commitment to education

Story and photo by
MC2 Diana Quinlan

Navy Public Affairs
Support Element West,
Detachment Hawaii

The 2014 Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) military college graduation recognition ceremony took place Nov. 7 at the Hickam Enlisted Club.

More than 60 service members, their families, friends, mentors and commands attended the ceremony, which honored and recognized Airmen, Sailors and Soldiers based in Hawaii who have graduated from colleges and universities this year.

Navy Command Master Chief Jack Johnson, command master chief of JBPHH, and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. James Smith, the 15th Wing command chief, were masters of ceremonies.

"All recipients have earned their degrees while simultaneously balancing their academic responsibilities with their demanding military duties," said Smith.

"Many have sacrificed years of little personal time to pursue this personal and professional enrichment. We have all gathered here today to recognize them for their commitment to education while persevering through these challenges."

Air Force Col. David Kirkendall, deputy commander of JBPHH, provided opening remarks; Navy Capt. Stanley Keeve Jr., commander of JBPHH, addressed graduates as a guest speaker; and Air Force Col. Randall Huiss, commander of 15th Wing, provided closing remarks.

"Graduates, today is the culmination of what you have been working for. Congratulations," said Kirkendall in his address.

"It's an incredible accomplishment, an amazing signal of your dedication to your own betterment, being consistent with what is going on with the outside world or with your particular job that you have in the military," Kirkendall said.

Kirkendall touched on the ever-growing importance of education in today's military and society.

"Education keeps us relevant and in tune with what is going on. And even if this is the last time you ever wanted to see the academic pursuit again in your life, or this is maybe the first step on the path to further education, I will offer this to you. That whether or not you continue your education, having that aperture open can change the world around you, can benefit you in your pursuits in the military and in your transition," he said.

Keeve thanked families and friends for their support to the service members in their pursuit for higher education. Additionally, he praised graduates' commands and mentors for dedication to their Airmen, Sailors and Soldiers.

Keeve encouraged graduates to always move forward, to evolve and continue the learning process to benefit oneself and the world around them.

"Serving in the military, taking college courses, deploying, work schedule, home life – it is challenging. Earning a degree is never easy. But today you have completed the first step of reaching your true potential," said Keeve.

"Remember, your true lessons acquired is that the education truly never stops. I implore you, go further, find your passion, use your education to reach your potential, and finally, keep moving."

Each graduate in attendance was recognized and presented with the certificate of recognition awarded by Huiss and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Charles Orf.



U.S. Air Force Col. David Kirkendall, deputy commander of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, congratulates service members during the 2014 JBPHH Military College Graduation recognition ceremony held at the Hickam Enlisted Club.

"It was really important to have the support of my command, and it is great that I work at the place that allows us to better ourselves, be better for the Navy, and it feels fantastic to be able to accomplish this," said Builder 2nd

Class Anna Figueroa, assigned to the Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 303.

"I would advise [service members] to just try one class, get your foot in the door. It is not going to hurt

you – only help. Get through [the] first class and see where it will take you," she said.

Figueroa received her degree in associate of art in supervision and management.

Tech. Sgt. Raphael Torres Jr., assigned to headquarters Pacific Air Forces A6, received his certificate for completing dual bachelor degrees in organizational management and project management with summa cum laude honors.

"It is an amazing feeling to walk across this stage, and the base leadership and support staff did an outstanding job in coordinating this event and overall made it a well-feeling day for completing a multi-year 'plan of attack'," he said as he offered suggestions to those who consider pursuing future education.

"At the beginning, if you are hesitant, start out slowly, one or two classes, and once you get your feet on the solid ground, do it more consistently. Push yourself; it's worth it."