

LIBERTY CALL



Riding tandem is a great way to enjoy kayaking and do some snorkeling. One of the biggest attractions to kayaking is that the sport provides an opportunity to experience a part of Hawaii that few people see. Although MWR's outdoor recreation staff offers kayaking adventures to other islands, kayaking enthusiasts can enjoy a number of spectacular kayaking spots surrounding Oahu. Each area of the island has its own unique characteristics.



Kayakers enjoy a leisurely paddle near Chinaman's Hat on the windward side of Oahu. MWR's outdoor recreation staff offers kayaking lessons from "how to kayak" to advanced lessons.



Above: Riding the swell of a wave on a surf kayak can be an exciting adventure. The outdoor recreation department of Pearl Harbor MWR has recently added surf kayaks to its inventory and offers day trips around Oahu for the enjoyment of the sport's enthusiasts.

Right: Taking a break on the beach gives kayakers a chance to enjoy the surrounding scenery on the windward side of Oahu. Kaneohe Bay provides sheltered water so you don't have to worry about ocean swells and is also a good fishing area. If you want to explore wonderful reefs, try kayaking in the vicinity of Chinaman's Hat.

By Karen S. Spangler
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Looking for a kayaking adventure? Visit the outdoor recreation specialists at Pearl Harbor Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) and sign up to experience kayaking at its best.

Whether you are interested in a day trip around Oahu or an extreme adventure to one of the outer islands, you can find it here.

According to Dan Gray, Liberty Program Manager for single and unaccompanied service members, "We're driven by demand. If more people want to do high adventure kayaking experiences, outdoor recreation is here to provide that service."

MWR's outdoor recreation staff recently hosted a weekend kayaking trip to the Na Pali Coast on the north shore of Kauai. The adventure combined kayaking with hiking and snorkeling.

Other extreme adventure trips are planned for the upcoming months, including a Millennium Big Island Adventure slated for Dec. 30-Jan. 1, 2001.

Gray encouraged newcomers to the sport of kayaking. "Technically speaking, it's very easy to master kayaking. There is some technique, but anyone can master it," he explained.

Gray advised, as with any sport, there are safety tips and precautions that need to be followed.

Kayaking can be a relaxing paddle or you can push yourself as hard as you want. "It's a great vehicle for fitness," Gray said. "The more you put into it, the more you get out of it."

One of the biggest attractions to kayaking is that the sport provides an opportunity to experience a part of Hawaii that few people see.

Gray commented, "What attracts many people to kayaking is that it enables people to get to places they couldn't otherwise get to and in a tranquil, pristine environment." Kayakers can also take advantage of other activities, such as snorkeling and trolling for fish, while kayaking.

Although MWR's outdoor recreation staff offers kayaking adventures to other islands, kayaking enthusiasts can enjoy a number of spectacular kayaking spots surrounding Oahu.

"You can decide where you want to go on Oahu and you can always find someplace to paddle," Gray explained.

Each area of the island has its own unique characteristics. The leeward side on the Waianae coast is a year-round favorite.

Kayaking on the North Shore affords the

chance to explore the coast and to see numerous turtles.

However, Gray cautioned that kayaking should not be done there during the winter months (November-May). Surf is high and can be especially dangerous at this time of year.

Kaneohe Bay provides sheltered water so you don't have to worry about ocean swells and is also a good fishing area.

If you want to explore wonderful reefs, try kayaking in the vicinity of Chinaman's Hat.

Waikiki can be a fun area to kayak, but it is more crowded and kayakers need to exercise caution and watch out for other people in the water.

For more accomplished kayakers, Rabbit Island is a challenging spot with more ocean swells and a strong current.

The outdoor recreation staff has an inventory of single-person and tandem (two-person) kayaks as well as surf kayaks.

The newest kayaks in the MWR inventory, the surf kayaks are smaller, single person boats that are designed for surf conditions. They are more buoyant and maneuverable.

Single-person and tandem kayaks can be rented for a nominal cost and accessories, such as personal flotation devices, are also included.

The staff offers kayaking lessons - from "how to kayak" for the beginner to advanced lessons for the more seasoned kayaker.

Basic kayaking safety tips should be followed for a safe and enjoyable ocean kayaking experience:

- Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) when kayaking.
- Always wear shoes when kayaking. If the boat turns over, you may have to stand on a reef to right it.
- Before venturing far from shore, check the kayak for leaks with a short, 5-to-10-minute test run.
- Pay close attention to marine conditions, such as winds and ocean currents. Do not go kayaking if there is a high surf advisory or small craft warning.
- Practice kayak surfing on sandy beaches. Reefs can endanger your life and damage the boat.
- Do not approach whales, dolphins or sea turtles. View marine life from a distance.

Whatever you are looking for in a kayaking adventure, the staff at MWR's outdoor recreation office can accommodate you. Call 473-5443 for more information.



Photos by Dan Gray and Ken Cornia