

FLEET NEWS

U.S., British, French fire on decommissioned oiler

By Lt.j.g. Jennifer Herron
USS O'KANE

Three hundred miles off the coast of southern California, USS O'Kane (DDG 77), and an international task force of U.S., British and French ships, unleashed a torrent of fire against the decommissioned Navy oiler Ashtabula (AO 51).

Early on the morning of Oct. 14, O'Kane led the task group within firing range of Ashtabula's known position. As air defense coordinator for the task group, O'Kane was responsible for tracking the near simultaneous launchings of six harpoons, defending the force should a missile go awry and ensuring safety of flight

for numerous aircraft, including helicopters, E-2C Hawkeye, P-3 Orion and S-3 Viking aircraft.

In the six phases of live-fire, eight harpoons, two standard missiles, three "Sea Skua" missiles, four air-dropped bombs and more than 100 rounds of gunnery fire rained down on the oiler, smashing the vessel's bulkheads.

An explosive ordnance disposal team delivered the coup de grace the next day, sending the hulk down to Davy Jones' locker. Three U.S. ships took part, USS Thach (FFG 43), USS Curts (FFG 38) and USS O'Kane (DDG 77).

As the sun peeked above the horizon, seven ships from three countries moved in a precise line prepar-

ing to wreak havoc on the target well over the horizon. The first wave of missiles shattered the morning calm. Six minutes later, Ashtabula was rocked with violent explosions that were heard by O'Kane's sonar team 40 miles away. While the task group closed on the target, British Lynx helicopters unleashed their own torrent of missiles.

O'Kane's turn came and it began its own blistering attack by launching the first two SM-2 block III missiles ever fired tactically in the surface mode. A crowd of cheering spectators crowded O'Kane's flight deck, watching in awe as the missiles streaked up out of view into the clouds and then came smashing down on Ashtabula, throwing debris

high in the air and leaving a smoking pit of destruction in its former deckhouse.

After bombing runs by an S-3 Viking, additional blows came from the guns of USS Curts and the French ship Aconit. Well after the sun had set and the moon dimly lit the clouded sky, the thunderous roar of O'Kane's five-inch gun pounded away, firing dozens of high explosive rounds into the port side of the old oiler. Each round was a veritable display of fireworks, reflected by the ever-growing plume of smoke. Ashtabula rolled to one side with an indisputable list to starboard as it began to take on more water.

After the smoke had cleared, O'Kane maneuvered close aboard for

its battle damage assessment. Eerily illuminated by spotlights, the damage was stunning. Yet, despite a 30-degree list and extensive damage that had ripped the oiler's topside completely apart and breached the hull in dozens of places, the ship still floated — a true testament to American engineering and design.

But Ashtabula did not have long left to live. With the assistance of explosives brought to the scene aboard Thach, Ashtabula succumbed to the flooding sea and slipped below the waves.

More information about ships of the Pacific Fleet can be found at <http://www.surfpac.navy.mil>. For information about decommissioned ships, go to <http://www.nvr.navy.mil>.

USS Port Royal undocks from Dry Dock One

By Lt.j.g. Janel E. Timoney
USS PORT ROYAL

USS Port Royal (CG 73) undocked from Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard Dry Dock One on the evening of Oct. 24. Port Royal had entered dry dock on Aug. 18 following a six-month Western Pacific/Arabian Gulf deployment. This dry dock marked Port Royal's first dry-docking since new construction in 1994.

Repair of voyage casualties to the port hub and sonar dome were the hottest items for the dry dock period. Engineering department and the sonar technicians worked around the clock to accomplish the repairs and meet the undocking date. Also accomplished during the dry-docking were numerous combat systems and quality of life upgrades. Capt. Roger C. Easton, Jr., Port Royal commanding officer, recognized 20 stand-out Sailors of the 350-person crew with a commanding officer's letter of commendation for their efforts during dry dock. The awardees were Gas Turbine System Technician - Mechanical 2nd Class David Delgado, Gas Turbine System Technician - Mechanical 2nd Class Elton Wallace, Gas Turbine System Technician - Mechanical 3rd Class Benjamin Cooper, Gas Turbine System Technician - Mechanical 3rd Class Kyle Fine, Fireman John Wood, Gas Turbine System Technician Fireman Yomin Kim, Engineman 2nd Class



USS Port Royal (CG 73) undocked from Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard Dry Dock One recently. Port Royal entered the dry docks after returning from a six-month deployment in August. This was the first dry docking for Port Royal since her commissioning in 1994.

David Johnson, Engineman 3rd Class Ty Canday, Engineman 3rd Class Frederick Valle, Damage Controlman 3rd Class Scott Lockhart, Hull Technician Fireman Adam Hunter, Chief Sonar Technician - Surface (SW) Phillip Palmer, Sonar Technician - Surface 1st Class (SW) Jeffrey

Harvey, Sonar Technician - Surface 3rd Class Paul Sexton, Sonar Technician - Surface 3rd Class Allen Guevarra, Sonar Technician - Surface 3rd Class Scott Davis, Sonar Technician - Surface Seaman Fumio Kyota, Operations Specialist 2nd Class Joshua King, Fire Controlman 3rd Class Jim

Reyes and Seaman John French.

Port Royal conducted sea trials during a two-day underway at the end of October. The underway included a full power run, high speed crash backs, streaming of the Towed Array Sonar, anchoring, and various damage control drills. "It feels great

to be underway again," remarked Chief Signalman (SW/AW) Bill Mecum.

Port Royal is scheduled to make a shakedown cruise to Tahiti, French Polynesia in November.

To learn more about USS Port Royal (CG 73), visit their web site at www.port-royal.navy.mil.

2000 a good year for surface Navy

By SURFPAC Public Affairs

Accessions are up, promotion rates are up and a full-court press is underway to keep quality people in the surface Navy. Those were some of the key messages coming out of the recent Surface Warfare Commanders Conference in Norfolk, Va.

"2000 has been a good year for the surface Navy on several fronts," said Vice Adm. Edward Moore Jr., commander, Naval Surface Forces Pacific. "For the first time in 10 years, more than 1,000 new officers entered the community. That's great news for us. It's an indicator that midshipmen at the Naval Academy and NROTC (Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps) units, as well as officer candidates at Officer Candidate School, are taking a hard look at surface warfare and like what they see."

Moore said the increase in accessions is a result of the community's push to recruit and retain quality people.

"On the recruiting side, our surface warfare officers at the academy and NROTC universities have done a great job in serving as very positive examples for midshipmen," Moore said. "Their presence has helped midshipmen better understand what being a professional surface warfare officer is all about."

Regarding retention, Moore said initiatives such as surface warfare officer continuation pay and greater opportunity to attend graduate school have also begun to pay off. During the commander's conference, surface leaders approved a proposal to change the requirement that officers complete their minimum service obligation before becoming eligible for the bonus.

"It evens the playing field," said Moore. "Now, no matter what your commissioning source, you're eligible for the bonus when you are selected for department head school."

A proposal was also approved that will allow three surface warfare officers a year to pursue master's degrees at top business schools such as Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business and the University of Chicago.

"It's one program among many, with the bottom line being we push our junior officers toward graduate education early in their careers," said Moore.

Higher than expected promotion rates for O-4s and O-5s, as well as new opportunities for lieutenant commander command, were also highlighted at the two-day conference.

"In our community, the focus is on three core competencies: combat readiness, taking care of our people and maintaining our ships at a high material readiness," said Moore. "We're pushing forward with initiatives designed to reinforce those competencies."

Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association opens Bowfin scholarships to submariners, families

By Heather Hesslink
PACFLT SUBMARINE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Applications for the 2001-2002 Bowfin Memorial scholarships are now available for Hawaii submariners and their families. The Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association awards these scholarships in honor of the 3,505 submariners and 52 submariners lost during World War II. This year \$20,000 will be distributed into awards ranging from \$500 to \$2500 in form of academic or continuing education scholarships. The scholarships must be used by June 2002 and are intended for full-

part-time study for people entering college, returning to college or training for entry into the work force including vocational education.

The criteria are described below. All applications must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2001.

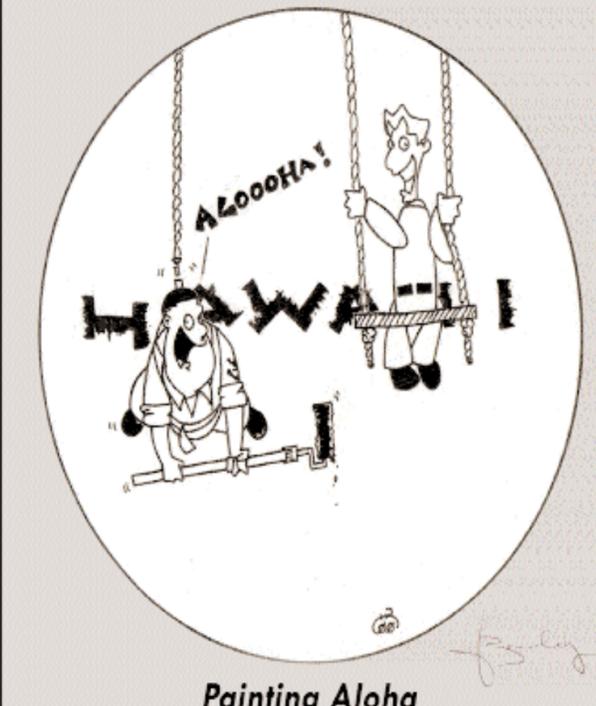
Academic scholarships are available to children of submarine force personnel (active duty, retired and deceased) who are under 23 at the time of application. These students may attend school anywhere in the United States; however, the Submarine sponsor or surviving parent must live in Hawaii at the time of application. Awards will be based on scholastic proficiency demonstrated potential, extracurricu-

lar activities and financial need.

Continuing education scholarships are available to active duty and retired submarine force personnel, their spouses and the spouses of deceased submarine force personnel. Applicants must live in Hawaii at the time of application and attend school in Hawaii. Awards will be based on academic performance, community involvement, motivation, goal, and financial need.

For more information and/or a scholarship application, please email hesslink001@hawaii.rr.com or call (808) 836-6897.

First Call SN Heath H. Beasley



Painting Aloha

USS Chicago mets play actors



J02 Cori Rhea photo

The crewmembers of USS Chicago (SSN-721), and the cast of the play Chicago, met recently in Pearl Harbor during a tour of the fast-attack submarine. The actors appreciated the opportunity to meet the submariners and see what submarine life was like. Stewart Brown, a Chicago cast member said, "As an actor I love to see different realities for different people. If I ever get a role as a submariner, maybe I'll be able to play it off thanks to these people." As a token of appreciation for the tour, the Chicago Sailors were given discounted tickets to view the play.