

FLEET FOCUS

'Make-a-Wish' youth tour USS Fletcher

Ens. Malia Spofford
USS Fletcher Public Affairs

USS Fletcher welcomed aboard two honorary crewmembers recently, when Dustin Gordon, age nine, of Winston-Salem, N.C., and Brian Elsea, age 14, of Amarillo, Texas, chose to visit "Fightin' Jack" as part of their Make-a-Wish Foundation Hawaii tour.

The Make-a-Wish Foundation is the largest not-for-profit wish granting organization in the world, with 80 U.S. chapters and 23 international affiliates on five continents.

Since their inception in 1980, the volunteers of Make-A-Wish worldwide have helped make more than 80,000 wishes come true for children with life-threatening illnesses.

"Brian has been building lego models of battleships- gosh since he was three," said Brian's mother, Stephanie Elsea.

Both Brian and Dustin's love

and knowledge of the Navy shined through in their astute questions and unflagging enthusiasm, as they toured every major space on Fletcher. Lt. Chris Bodine, Fletcher's Combat Systems Officer, explained, in detail, the ship's missions and capabilities.

The tour, which lasted more than two hours, first took the boys and their families to the forecastle, where they learned about the different guns and missiles the ship can fire, as well as all the radars which provide essential information to the ship while underway. They learned how much Fletcher weighs - more than 9,000 tons - and how fast the ship can go.

"Ten miles an hour?" someone guessed.

"Close," smiled Lt. Bodine. "Try 30 plus knot - just about 35 mile an hour—I bet that's probably faster than most of you can ride your bicycles!"

The tour continued to Combat

Information Center and Sonar Control where crewmembers had fully manned their consoles to mimic an underway environment.

The children got the chance to see how the various fire control and navigation systems work, as well as listen to simulated sonar contacts, as demonstrated by Sonar Technician 2nd Class Antonio J. Spence.

Wandering through the dim, blue lit room, sitting in console after console, and pretending to fire the five-inch guns provided quite a thrill, especially for Brian's youngest brother, David, age six.

"The control center is the best part of the ship!" David exclaimed, as Fire Controlman 2nd Class (SW) Matthew Salmon let him "take aim."

On the bridge, the honored guests were granted the rarest of privileges: to sit in the captain's chair a right that usually takes a naval officer two decades to earn. One at a time, the boys clam-

bered up into the elevated and cushioned chair, and gazed out over the Pearl Harbor waterfront, with huge grins on their faces. Dustin later counted this as his favorite part of the tour. "The captain's chair, definitely," he nodded from beneath his ballcap decorated with 'scrambled eggs', a symbol of high rank. "That was the best!"

The tour also visited engineering, where Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) 2nd Class Marcus J. Lopez and GSM2 Paul J. Todd led the group on a tour of Main Engine Room 2.

Dustin and Brian even entered a Gas Turbine Engine module to see what makes the ship go 30 plus knots through the water.

They also visited Central Control Station, where Lt. j.g. Frank E. Sanchez explained the consoles that remotely monitor and control propulsion, auxiliaries and electrical equipment.

A meal of lasagna, spaghetti, fresh bread and ice cream served

in Fletcher's wardroom provided a fulfilling finale to an in-depth and much enjoyed tour.

Lt. Bodine and Ens. Richard Portillo, Fletcher's OI Division Officer, presented Dustin and Brian with several mementos of their visit to USS Fletcher, including Honorary Crewmember certificates, signed photographs, "dixie cup" covers worn by junior enlisted, and Surface Warfare Officer(SWO) pins.

Each also received a National Ensign flown while the ship was on its recent WESTPAC deployment, from which she returned in February.

"Thank you so much-the tour was great, and the food was excellent. Everyone did such a good job," said Brian, as the wardroom applauded this brave young man and his new friend and shipmate, Dustin.

The crew of USS Fletcher will long remember these extraordinary young Americans-may all their wishes come true.

Lake Erie takes part in missile tests

Ens. Edward Yandoc
USS Lake Erie Public Affairs

USS Lake Erie (CG 70) sailed to the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) off Kauai for two days of military exercises March 6, highlighted by the firing of the Navy's most advanced air defense missile.

Lake Erie, which is the CNO-designated test ship for Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (TBMD), had an opportunity to test the SM-2 BLOCK IV missile against a live, threat-representative target launched from PMRF.

On the first day of exercises Lake Erie successfully acquired, tracked and fired on low altitude, supersonic targets with SM-2 BLOCK III missiles. All three engagements were evaluated as mission kills.

Later that day Lake Erie successfully fired the SM-2 BLOCK IV test missile. The target it intercepted was a much more challenging, as it followed a real world, threat representative flight profile. Lake Erie successfully engaged the target, validating the performance of the SM-2 BLOCK IV.

Lake Erie returned to the range March 8 and conducted a successful two-salvo engagement against an incoming two target missile raid. The guided missile cruiser also took part in Naval Surface Fire Support gunnery exercises at PMRF's virtual range.

After a brief return to Pearl Harbor last week, Lake Erie set sail for the Gulf of Alaska, where it is slated to participate in the Theater Ballistic Missile Defense portion of the joint exercise Northern Edge 2001, conducted by Alaskan Command.



USS Lake Erie (CG 70) fires one of the Navy's most advanced air defense missile, SM-2 BLOCK IV, March 6 near the Pacific Missile Range Facility Kauai during two days of exercises.

Hickam/Pearl Harbor Red Cross honors volunteers

Janet H. Dent
American Red Cross

There was a sense of excitement in the air under the gazebo at Foster's Point recently. Approximately 80 Hickam Service Center staff and volunteers along with their guests came out to honor the "fortune" of the Hickam/Pearl Harbor American Red Cross Service Center-it's Volunteers.

In the year 2000, the Hickam Service Center had 110 active volunteers who recorded 25,082 hours of service to the local military communities. While all volunteers were recognized, special honor was given to Kim Primavera, named Volunteer of the Year. Kristen Boring was awarded the Youth Volunteer of the Year in the High School Category. Andrea Vono was recognized as the Youth Volunteer of the Year in the above High School Category. Jonathan Tower was awarded the Clara Barton Volunteer Leadership Honor Award.

There were three Special Citation for Exceptional Volunteer Service awards given out to John Brandon, Eve Binder, and Cindy Corrigan. All of these volunteers demonstrated exceptional performance and commitment for the Red Cross mission.

Russell holds 'first class' food service night



IT1(SW/PJ) Todd Belcher assists in preparing dinner in Russell's galley. Russell's First Class Association held a First Class Petty Officer Food Service Attendant (FSA) night while underway recently.

By Ens. Jason Troupe
USS RUSSELL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Sailors onboard USS Russell were recently treated to a unique opportunity for their evening meal while underway. Russell's First Class Petty Officer Association (FCPOA) sold tickets for their First Class Petty Officer Food Service Attendant (FSA) night.

The crew purchased "votes" for which first class petty officer they wanted to fill each FSA position. Crewmembers could vote as often as they liked, making a donation for each vote.

The results were followed closely by everyone onboard, with an updated list posted daily on the messdecks. When the polls were closed, FCPOA President Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW) David Carona announced the final tally over the ship's general announcing system.

Serving the crew on the messline were Navy Counselor 1st Class (SW) Fred Rapier,

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW) Stephen Lyons, and Gunner's Mate 1st Class (SW) Phillip Pipher. Information Systems Technician 1st Class(SW/PJ) Todd Belcher, Damage Controlman 1st Class (SW) Trent Bennett, and IT1(SW) Carona helped prepare the meal back in the galley, while Interior Communications Electrician 1st Class(SW) Darryl Jones and DC1(SW) Alan Pedtke cleaned up in the deep sink.

Operations Specialist 1st Class(SW) Shanon Fallon, OS1(SW) William Mackey, and Fire Controlman 1st(SW) Eric Cave kept things running smooth out on the messdecks, OS1(SW) Bernie Fick and Gas Turbine System Technician (Mechanical) 1st Class (SW) Curtis Evans tried to keep pace in the scullery.

The Chief Petty Officers Mess was well served by FC1 (SW) Daniel Shields, Sonar Technician 1st Class (SW) Tim Wicke, and FC1(SW) George Baldwin. Master-at-Arms 1st Class (SW) Daniel Brindley, Yeoman 1st

Class (SW) Jeffrey Somers, and Intelligence Specialist 1st Class (SW) Todd Kunzweiler relished their opportunity to serve the Wardroom.

"It was a good reminder for them of the rigorous duties of an FSA," replied Electronics Warfare Technician 2nd Class (SW) Eric Lawson, of Tampa Bay, Fla. Seamen Derrick Close, of Sandusky, Ohio, had similar sentiments saying, "It was interesting to see the first classes doing physical work instead of paper work."

From the other perspective, IT1(SW/PJ) Todd Belcher, who hails from Johnson City, Tenn., said, "I really enjoyed it. It was good for morale and the money raised will let us do something good for the crew."

The First Class Petty Officers involved performed their assigned tasks superbly, and all hands thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. The money raised during the event will be given to a charitable cause by the First Class Petty Officers Association.