

FLEET Focus

Tucson celebrates change of command with '770 Club'



JO2 Cori Rhea photo

Cmdr. William Traub relieved Cmdr. Dennis Murphy of his position as commanding officer at a change of command onboard USS Tucson (SSN 770) March 30.

By JO2 Cori Rhea
COMSUBPAC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In a show of strong support, more than 70 members of the USS Tucson's (SSN-770) "770 Club" flew to Oahu last week to participate in several ship events, including the tradition-laden change of command ceremony. Heading the group was Tucson mayor, Bob Walkup, and his wife Beth.

"He was elected to office in November 1999 and has been a friend of USS Tucson ever since. Having him here today is a significant moment in the ship's history - with another 25 years of operating life remaining, the

Mayor's presence shows the level of commitment that the city has to its submarine," said Cmdr. Dennis Murphy, the outgoing commanding officer of USS Tucson.

Murphy expressed his appreciation to the Tucson citizens as he relinquished command to Cmdr. William Traub.

"I cannot thank you enough for your support," said Murphy.

"We wanted to let not only the Sailors, but the people of Tucson know just how important USS Tucson is to us," said the mayor. "Those of us who have been in the military understand the importance of showing support and letting them (the Sailors) know how

proud we are of their service."

A number of activities were held while the 770 Club was on the island, including a luau and an embark onboard the namesake submarine.

The luau was held at Bellows Air Force Station and allowed the crew and the Tucson guests to get to know each other personally.

While most of the crew and their families were there, some had to remain onboard to man the duty section. The mayor and his wife left the luau early and decided to watch the University of Arizona Wildcats square off against the Michigan State Spartans in the NCAA's final four.

Enjoying the game with the

submarine's duty section in the crew's mess, "The El Charro", the fans rooted for the 'home' team. The mess is actually named after a famous eating establishment in Tucson, Ariz.

"This will be a memorable experience. I've never met a mayor before," said ET1 (SS) Marc Goulart, a native from West Haven, Conn. "Showing us that he can be the mayor of a huge city and actually sit down in our mess, watch our crew's television and eat some food with us means so much to the crew."

After having a chance to meet with the crew, the mayor and his wife felt a great sense of pride and responsibility.

"We were so fortunate to meet these young Sailors who have taken on such a great responsibility and their families who are so supportive. It is unbelievable to see a group of such responsible, intelligent and happy people," said Beth Walkup. "They know the risks involved and they take the time out of their lives to protect our nation's freedom," she said.

"I feel such a solid sense of the word 'team'," said the mayor. "We've had a chance to achieve faith in the officers and crew. They really care for each other and help out one another. It is a community like none other."

After the game, some of the crew sat and talked with the mayor concerning the complexity of the attack submarine. Walkup, an engineer, was impressed.

The highlight of the club's visit was an opportunity to embark to see how the crew and the submarine functioned underway.

Visit programs are important to maintain a bond between the armed services and the citizens they protect. Today, less than six percent of the American popula-

tion under 60 has served in the military.

"In Tucson, we don't really think about the ocean or water or submarines too often. I hope there will be an outcome of recommitment of support from our city. I want more people to become members of the support group and become more involved with the crew on a personal level," said Mrs. Walkup. "The crew needs our support."

The relationship developed between the crew members and the mayor signified a growing tie for the Sailors to their supporters in Tucson.

"It is great that they came all the way out here for us. That means so much to know the city is supportive," said TM2(SS) Timothy Metzger of Lexington, Neb.

"I think what the Tucson (the submarine) and the Navy does is so important, especially after having seen the crew in action. I really hope we can broaden the diversity and size of the 770 Club in Tucson because it serves such an important function," said Jennie Tucker of Tucson.

The visitors rode on one of two embarks which were conducted as the crew practiced basic piloting, navigation and submarine evolutions with their new commanding officer, Cmdr. Bill Traub.

"I have been on four submarines and I have never seen the level of support extended by the 770 Club. It has been fantastic. I think it is especially important so citizens can see where their tax dollars are going and they can understand the capabilities of their submarine," said Traub.

Anyone interested in learning more about the 770 Club should contact Norm Richmond of Tucson at (520) 624-4262.

USS O'Kane takes active role in Hawaii's schools, students

Sailors clean up while school's out

By FC3 Dustin S. Parker
USS O'KANE

What did you do on your spring break? This is not a question you hear very often when you are in the military, unless you are part of O'Kane's tireless volunteering crew.

On March 30, the USS O'Kane (DDG 77) sent out several volunteers to Aliamanu Elementary School to assist in the school's revitalization project. The idea was initiated by the ship's Fire Controlman Chief (SW) Michael Manning and was coordinated by the Strike Warfare Officer, Lt. j.g. Jennifer Herron.

Twenty-two Sailors volunteered to assist and headed back to school while the students were on spring break to clear out a path for a new walkway onto school grounds and repaint two older portables. In less than one day, the volunteers made a difference that will be felt for many months to come.

Early on the morning of March 30, O'Kane crewmembers began arriving at Aliamanu Elementary School eager for the challenges that would lie ahead. It didn't take long to begin the first large task, clearing out overgrown weeds and brush that had been there for more than two years.

With only four weed-whackers and 18

pairs of hands, the cleanup process began in full force. In less than two hours, a hillside of land more than an acre in size had been cleaned and thinned out. With only a few minutes to rest and take a water break, it was time to start with the even harder job of outdoor painting.

With teams set up to work on both portables at one time, the task moved along very quickly. It took less than three hours to chip away the old peeling paint and fully repaint the two portables back to their original color. It was truly a sight to be seen as everyone, including some volunteers, gathered the materials and painted the buildings.

"My son goes to Aliamanu so it's nice to know that we helped to make his school a little better," Fire Controlman 2nd Class Mitts said after he looked back at all the hard work that had been done that day.

The day turned out to be a success and a great chance for Sailors from the O'Kane to meet many of the people who make up our wonderful community on Oahu. Sonar Technician (Surface) 2nd Class Gary summed it up this way, "I really had a great time. It was refreshing to see that the community was willing to take the time to make sure those kids had a better school and to see so many O'Kane Sailors contribute their time was awesome. We should definitely do this again."

O'Kane's abundance of volunteers will ensure that we take part in activities like this in the future and keep the motto "a tradition of honor" alive and well in everything we do.



Lt. j.g. Jennifer L. Herron photo

USS O'Kane Sailors volunteer their cleanup services at Aliamanu Elementary School March 30 while students are on spring break.



OS3 Kent Floyd photo

USS O'Kane Sailor, GM2 Adam Dubose, explains to a group of 26 students from the Castle High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC the intrigues of the ship from the foc'sle to the fantail.

Castle High School cadets visit O'Kane

By Ens. Jacquelyn Duquette
USS O'KANE

Twenty-six students from the Castle High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC now know the proper way to board a United States Navy warship.

They didn't learn this lesson in the classroom. Instead, thanks to the USS O'Kane (DDG 77), these Hawaii youngsters had the opportunity for a salty, firsthand experience.

An avid supporter of community outreach, the O'Kane frequently opens her hatches to Hawaii students. In fact, as these JROTC cadets marched up the brow, saluted the national ensign and requested permission to come aboard, they joined the ranks of the more than 50 high school students who have toured the O'Kane in recent weeks. Groups have hailed from as near as Castle High and as far as Seabury Hall on Maui.

All student groups were treated to a full top-side tour that be-

gan on the foc'sle. Here, the tour guide explained the forward Vertical Launch System (VLS) and the Close-In Weapons System (CIWS). Gunnersmate 2nd Class Adam Dubose showed the students the five-inch, 54-caliber gunmount.

This display elicited 'oos' and 'ahs' from Seabury Hall and Castle students alike, none of whom had seen a weapon like O'Kane's gun from any closer than a movie screen.

From the foc'sle tour, guides led the students across the boat deck to show them O'Kane's Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBS) - Wahoo and Tang.

Named after the two submarines on which Adm. O'Kane served during WWII, Wahoo and Tang provided a perfect opportunity for tour guides to explore a brief history of the destroyer's namesake.

When the tales of heroism at sea were complete, the students walked to the aft VLS decks where they saw the Harpoon missile launcher and the SVTT over-the-side torpedo tubes.

They continued on to the flight deck where a few Seabury Hall students were disappointed to discover that DDGs cannot land F-14s. This disappointment was short-lived, however,

because at this point in the tour the guides led the high school students into the inside of the ship. Here they learned about the Combat Information Center (CIC), Central Control Station (CCS) and pilot house.

Brightly glowing consoles and a chance to turn the ship's helm more than made up for the absence of Tomcats and Tom Cruise.

Along the tour route, the students asked a number of questions about Navy life and Navy opportunities. The day-to-day activities of shipboard life interested them almost as much as the high tech equipment and weapons.

The mix of junior officer and enlisted tour guides made it possible to answer these questions from a number of different perspectives and to provide the students with a range of reasons why someone might choose to join the Navy.

As the Hawaii students left, they were now familiar with the Navy as a possible future career option, a way to see the world and a way to pay for college.

When asked if they would consider joining the Navy, a number of hands were raised. For the crew of the O'Kane, those hands meant a job well done.