

Liberty Call



Members of the Harlem Ambassadors pose with the Pearl Harbor Navy All-Star team after a show at Bloch Arena. The event was sponsored by MWR Pearl Harbor as part of their continuing effort to provide enhanced quality of life programs for Sailors and their family members.

Harlem Ambassadors

Story and photos by JO3 Erin Carlson

High-flying slam dunks, dazzling ball-handling artistry and hilarious comedy routines graced Bloch Arena on April 28 as the internationally acclaimed Harlem Ambassadors took on the Pearl Harbor Navy All-Stars in a two-hour show that offered fun and great family entertainment.

Starring in the show was Ladé Majic, the queen of show basketball, the team's coach and the first woman in pro sports history to lead a team of male professional players.

"When we come out here to Hawaii, we never want to leave," said Majic. "The weather is great and the people are beautiful. The people receive us warmly and we love it here. We came here last year for the first time and it is an honor for us to be invited back and play against the Navy."

Prior to the show, Navy basketball player Senior Chief Radioman Jeff Garrison of USS La Jolla (SSN 701) expressed his excitement over meeting the Ambassadors.

"This is the first time I

have seen the Ambassadors play, and the first time we have played against them," said Garrison. "We are very excited about it, we are ready to play and we are ready to have a lot of fun."

Based out of Fort Collins, Colo., the Harlem Ambassadors team members stem from all over the country. "We have a great core unit," said Majic. "Although, every player doesn't make every tour. Some players have families, some are married, some have children and some are single. Everybody gets a chance to tour the world and have fun depending on his or her schedule."

The Ambassadors take their show to many different countries and military bases around the world.

The team's season started in August. They went to England, Germany, Hungary and Iceland.

According to Majic, the team went to the Balkans and expressed some joy to the people in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Kosovo.

"Many military members are deployed out

there, so they are without their families," said Majic. "They were very happy to see us. We were happy to be able to have them and to see them have a little fun, because conditions there are not like in the states or in Hawaii."

"So when we got there it was a challenge for us. It was defiantly a humbling experience for the entire team. I think we should go back every couple of years to keep us grounded, because it definitely puts things in perspective."

Majic herself has a master's degree in counseling, and boasts that most of the Ambassador players have a degree or are currently working on completing their degree.

"Everyone comes with something to the table," said Majic. "So when we go to different schools and organizations we tell these people to stay in school and pursue their dreams. We use ourselves as examples that it can be done," she said. "We are not being hypocrites because we continue to do what we tell them to do. That is something that we are very

proud of."

Majic stresses the fact that the entire Harlem Ambassadors organization is drug-free. "I do drug tests - as well as my players - and the company as a whole. We are drug-free and we are proud to say that," stated Majic. "We put that out front because we go to a lot of different schools, youth centers and churches to talk to young people. We are living proof that if you stay positive you can succeed in life."

The show was put on by the Naval Station Pearl Harbor Morale, Welfare

and Recreation Center and is part of MWR's continuing effort to provide enhanced quality of life programs to Sailors and their family members.

"We are always looking for great family entertainment and this show is one of the best you will find," said Mick McAndrews, director of operations for MWR. "We support the families and the kids. Our youth program is growing quite large and there is always a need for family entertainment."

On a final note, Majic adds, "To all the military

members, I would like to say, if you missed this year's game, you will definitely have to come out next year.

"It is exciting, there is music, there is dancing and there are prizes to be won. It is my job to make sure everyone in the audience has fun. Sometimes I may get out of hand - I'm the mischief-maker on the team - but I have fun doing my job."

For more information on the Harlem Ambassadors, visit their web site at www.harlemambassadors.com.



Audience members participate in the half-time show by learning a line dance from members of the team.



Ladé Majic, coach of the Harlem Ambassadors and queen of show basketball, shows off her ball-handling skills to the crowd. Majic is the first woman in pro sports history to lead a team of male professional players.