

FLEET FOCUS

Key West partners with Lanakila Elementary

By MM2(SS) Michael Dillard
USS KEY WEST

Twenty-four volunteers from the fast-attack submarine USS Key West (SSN-722) embarked upon a journey to Lanakila Elementary School. Key West officially adopted Lanakila Elementary as part of the Partnership for Excellence Adopt-a-School Program. The focus of this program is to develop the math and reading abilities of students by using bright, well-trained, professional Sailors as tutors.

"We're just so excited! I see a real commitment from Cmdr. William Hilarides, Key West commanding officer, and his crew to make this an effective and ongoing partnership. It's limitless what we can do," said Randy Higa, Principal, Lanakila Elementary School.

Lanakila, which means "victory" in Hawaiian, is celebrating their 75th anniversary this year. As a token of the students' appreciation, the traditional Lanakila chant was performed which symbolized the students following their leaders. "I'm very excited that the Key West is at our school," said March Comabig, Student Council President. Comabig also had the distinct honor of signing an official declaration of adoption along with Principal Higa and Hilarides.

"I feel really good about this union. I was an executive officer when I first became involved with the Adopt-a-School program. I saw the kids and Sailors get a lot out of it. Hopefully, this commitment will help to fill part of the void that sailors' experience when they are so far away from home," said Hilarides.

Following an aloha-filled assembly that introduced the crew to the school, the Sailors were immediately integrated into the classrooms. Key West Sailors, making themselves at home, quickly became involved: Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SS) Carl Blankenship used a special computer to help teach a visually impaired student reading.

Higa rejoiced over how well a student with exceptional needs was behaving since getting paired up with Mess Management Specialist Seaman Kyle Kupiszewski. MM1(SS) Jonathan Neutgens pointed out his home of record in Florida on a map of the United States; and finally, a classroom of fourth graders shout-



FTI(SS) Glen Kemmerer photo

USS Key West (SSN 722) Sailors stand at parade rest as Lanakila Elementary School students perform their traditional Lanakila chant, which symbolizes the students following their leaders. Key West adopted the Lanakila as part of the Partnership Adopt-a-School Program. The program focuses on the development of the students' math and reading abilities.

ed to Torpedoman's Mate 3rd Class (SS) Christian Davis. "We want your job!" "We can't believe our good fortune at being helped by the U.S. Navy," said Dawn Waiwaiole, Fourth grade teacher and former Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard employee. More than 23 Key West Sailors volunteered

their off duty time to help Lanakila students.

"I was pleasantly surprised by the number of volunteers; it's a testament to the fundamental goodness of our sailors. Today marks the first real joining between Key West and the island of Oahu; we now truly feel a part of the community," said Hilarides.

What the far-reaching impact of this experience will be on the Sailors and students involved one can only guess. We do know, however, that Key West is helping to forge the submarine force of tomorrow, as a positive, influencing presence for the youths of today.

VPU-2 awards SOY's at holiday party

By Lt. Cmdr. Michael Biddle
VPU-2

With the Wizards of VPU-2 gathered at the Hale Koa for their holiday party, Cmdr. Osborne, the Wizards' Commanding Officer, took the occasion to recognize the command's Sailors of the Year. Aviation Structural Mechanic (Safety Equipment) 1st Class (AW/NAC) Richard Pearson is VPU-2's Senior Sailor of the Year, Aviation Storekeeper 2nd Class (AW) Hortencia Barela is the squadron's Junior Sailor of the Year, and Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class (NAC) Randy Roethler is the squadron's Naval Aircrewman of the Year.

These individuals distinguished themselves as consummate professionals in their individual rates and in their leadership of juniors and peers alike. They were selected from a tight field of top-notch fellow Sailors who over the last year have sus-

tained near continuous operations around the globe.

Despite such operational commitments the squadron still completed a homeport change from Naval Air Station Barbers Point to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, and hastened to complete the move ahead of schedule so it could deploy a week later to support the NATO air campaign in Kosovo. After such a tumultuous year, it was fitting that the squadrons relaxes and enjoy a night of good cheer and camaraderie as they welcomed the Christmas season and applauded the achievements of VPU-2's new Sailors of the Year.

As the Quality Assurance Leading Petty Officer, Pearson helped ensure the safe and proper correction of numerous aircraft discrepancies as well as conducted monthly procedural audits that directly contributed to VPU-2's successful Survey by the Naval Safety Center this year. As a Flight Engineer, he deployed four times over the course of the

year, amassing 600 hours and keeping the squadron at the point of our country's spear.

Barela, as the squadron's material control supervisor, aggressively pursued critically needed spare parts through the Navy supply system. Her tracking of parts status and conscientious management of squadron budgets won her division laurels as one of the best Material Control Centers reviewed by COMNAVAIRPAC during this year's Aircraft Material Evaluation.

Roethler, as a sensor operator on the squadron's mission aircraft, provided top notch instruction for seniors as well as junior aircrew, and helped to assure a 100% pass rate within the squadron during the Fleet NATOPS Evaluation Team inspection. His expertise and technical proficiency made him the operator of choice on many of the squadron's deployed missions.

Naval Magazine Lualualei new headquarters officially opens

By Lt. Edward Gawaran
NAVMAG LUALUALEI

NAVAL Magazine Lualualei held its official ribbon-cutting ceremony recently for the grand opening of the new headquarters building, located in the West Loch Branch, Ewa Beach.

The Commanding Officer, Capt. Shawn Morrissey, kicked off the ceremony with an introductory speech. Following his speech, Lt. Leila Havadtov provided a blessing for the new headquarters building. After the ribbon was officially cut, all attendees gathered together for a potluck "barn-warming" celebration, which was held right next to the waterfront and the headquarters.

The headquarters move was a strategic plan to consolidate five departments and the executive staff to a single building. As a result of the consolidation, telephone lines, electricity/water usage, transportation and janitorial service expenses for the command reduced significantly.

The Storefront Facilities Director,

Norman Glenn, engineered the renovation of Building 562, the new headquarters. His storefront team ensured the renovation would create a habitable work environment for the command personnel.

In addition, the Facilities Storefront initiated the installment of the new key system telephone lines. The AIS Director, Ron Schiemer, led his team during the successful implementation of the RITC-OBAN system for, not only the headquarters building but also, the entire command.

Lt. Edmond Gawaran was the appointed OIC for the headquarters move and was responsible for ensuring the building was ready for operation NLT October 1999 and the physical move was coordinated in a timely and effective manner. All departments and divisions that were involved in the move contributed greatly in making the evolution a smooth transition.

A current plan still in work for the command is the construction of the new headquarters park, which is headed by the Base Security Officer, Lt.j.g. Charles Cowart, and his team of Seabees.

Historic Submarine Memorial Chapel dedicates windows

By J03 McClain Shewman
SUBPAC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Submarine Memorial Chapel held a stained-glass window dedication recently at the Subase Memorial Chapel in honor of the Submarine Centennial.

The ceremony included the Naval Station Color Guard parading of the colors. Rear Adm. Al Konetzni Jr., Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet was the guest speaker.

"Whether is was facing a tenacious, deadly adversary in the waters of the Pacific or in constructing a house of worship against all odds and without support, it's the spirit of service and sacrifice which I hold in the highest regard. And that's why I think today is so important," said Konetzni.

The chapel was constructed when Chaplain Thomas H. Reilly noticed that submarine Sailors in Pearl Harbor were in dire need of a more accommodating space for worship. With no funding or construction equipment, Reilly recruited volunteers and finished construction of the chapel in September of 1944 after eight months of labor.

The submarine chapel will dedicate 13

historic stained-glass windows, and will dedicate one window to every submarine lost in that month throughout the year 2000. They dedicated the one window located in the choir during this ceremony to all submarines past and present in honor of the submarine centennial.

"Equally as important is the notion of having today's younger Sailors - many of who have served in the post-Cold War era, to understand our heritage."

The president of the Electric Boat Company donated the windows in 1959. They had been fashioned from templates that Reilly has provided 14 years earlier.

Fifty-two submarines, which were almost one of every five submarines, 3,131 men and 374 officers were lost during World War II alone. This seemingly invisible multitude of Sailors conducted over 1,600 war patrols in a little more than two years and sank over 1,000 Japanese merchant ships and a significant portion of the Japanese Navy. At the time of the war, U.S. submariners composed less than two percent of the Navy's personnel, yet accounted for over five million tons of shipping or 55% of all Japanese ship losses in the entire war.

Key West wins 'Plane Puller' title



FTI(SS) Glen Kemmerer photo

Jenna Yancey, Special Olympics Hawaii Special Events Manager, presents the Fastest Military Team Trophy to "Key West Team" captain, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SS/SW) Fred Patterson after USS Key West (SSN 722) won 1st Place in the Military Division, and 2nd Place Overall, during annual Hawaiian Plane Pull recently. The object of the event is to determine which team, limited to 20, can pull the Aloha Airlines DC-9 twelve feet with the fastest time. Key West completed the task in 6.06 seconds, only two-tenths of a second behind the overall winner, 24-Hour Fitness. In the fastest pull, Key West placed second overall, and fastest of the 15 military teams.