

LIBERTY CALL

Liberty Program offers exploration of Hawaiian Islands

Senior Airmen Jason Bach, from Joint Intelligence Command Pacific, enjoys whale watching with wife, Amber, on Oahu. Whale watching is one of many Liberty Program activities offered by Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center, Pearl Harbor.



HM2(DV) Shawn Carey, from Seal Delivery Team One, jumps off a cliff at Halawa on Molokai. Molokai is one of the many islands the Liberty Program visits.

MWR Liberty Program offers single, unaccompanied Sailors special activities

By Suzan Holl
MWR

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation program offers single and unaccompanied Sailors the opportunity to explore the natural beauty of the Hawaiian Islands without breaking their bank accounts. The program has been in existence at Naval Station, Pearl Harbor for many years and offers more than 40 special activities.

One particularly successful activity was the Outer Island Trips. In 1999, more than 90 adventurers traveled to the outer islands on seven different trips.

The Liberty Program schedules activities primarily on weekends, federal holidays or any time by special request.

Liberty is a non-profit activity in which the price of a particular program covers the expense to MWR. The program also solicits special monetary grants to subsidize programs for single and unaccompanied Sailors who are under the age of 25.

Unique and exciting activities such as hiking, mountain biking trips on Maui, weekend getaways to Kiluea Military Camp on the Big Island, ocean and river kayaking on Kauai, luaus, paintball, concerts on Oahu and much more are available at a significant discount.

"The liberty program offers an incredible opportunity to the young Sailors," said Dan Gray, liberty program manager. "For example, if a Sailor wants to go to one of our scheduled luaus, their cost through the program is about \$15. If they were to buy a ticket at the regular military discount, they pay about \$34. Dan plays as host for the trips.

"When I take people on a trip I make sure it's an adventure," he said.

He's been known to get his customers up at well before dawn so they can be at a certain spot just in time to see the sun rise.

"I've worked in military recreation for 15 years in Europe, Korea, Alaska and on the mainland," Gray said. "I have to say that although Hawaii is not as diverse, what it does have is world class."

For the upcoming new year Dan applied for and was awarded a millennium grant from the Naval Personnel Command that he'll use for millennium related activities like a planned millennium paintball tournament.

"The Millennium Grant is for everyone," Gray said. "Singles, unaccompanied as well as married Sailors and their families."

Gray has developed an extensive list of activities for the program's "Hawaiian Millennium Celebration." That program began Dec. 20, and continues through July 2000.

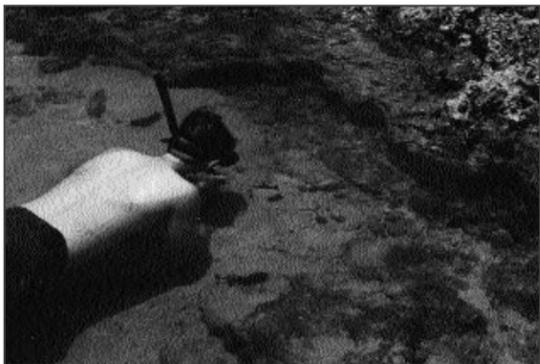
"Once the word is out, these activities will fill up quickly," Gray informed.

He went on to say most of his events fill up within a few days and that space is limited depending on the program offered.

A list of events is published quarterly in the MWR Liberty Call newsletter or you can pick one up at the liberty office or recreation center in building 654, Paquet Hall, on SUBASE.

Some of the upcoming events include a weekend trip to Kauai for the President's Day holiday, a military paintball tournament Mar. 18 free sailing lessons, whale watching, deep sea fishing, luaus, hiking, camping and mountain biking trips.

For more information, call 473-5443 or, after 5 p.m., call the Liberty Recreation Center at 473-0523.



A Sailor (above) explores the ocean floor while snorkeling at Sharks Cove on the North Shore of Oahu. Snorkeling is one of many water activities offered by the MWR Liberty Program.



OS2(SW) Evan Kamis (right), a USS Chosin (CG 65) Sailor, enjoys a day of horseback riding at Volcano National Park on Hilo, Hawaii.

Local Sailors (far right) compete against each other in a game of paint ball at Bellows Beach. Paint Ball is one of the great activities offered to single and unaccompanied Sailors through the Liberty Program.



Photos by Dan Gray