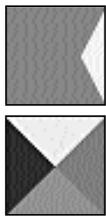


FLEET FOCUS



Bravo Zulu

Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific

Good Conduct Medal
 OSC(SW) Trail Reeves
 GMC(SW) William Smith
 STG1(SW) James Brewer

Letter of Commendation
 SKCM(SW) Luisito Delon
 YN1(SW/AW) Steven Chavez
 STG1(SW) Timothy McBride

Naval Pacific Meteorology and
 Oceanography Center

Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal
 AGC James Hobbs
 ET1(SW) Frank Cherry
 DS2 David Gonzales

Naval Reserve Center Honolulu

Commander, Naval Reserve Force
 1998 Shore Sailor of the Year
 SK1(SW/AW) Kent Brown

Joint Service Commendation Medal
 Lt. Cmdr. Walter Benavitz, Jr.

Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal
 Capt. Kriston Woolley
 Cmdr. John Bell
 HTC(SW) Thomas Husler

Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal
 Lt. Cmdr. Anthony Smith
 ETC(SS) Wayne Waffrid
 HM2 Arthur Domingo
 HM2 Darren Ishii

USS Crommelin (FFG 37)

Letter of Commendation
 ET2(SW) Christopher Hudson
 GSE3(SW) Adrian Lucina
 TM3(SW) Joe Maki
 DC3 Jesse Brodmerkle
 QMSA Justin Tripp

HSL-37: Team effort made move to K-Bay 'real smooth'

Continued from A-1

consisting of personnel from E6 - O4, designed the whole move plan.

"Our major milestone was to plan the move without impacting our support to the ships," said Smith. "The BRAC team did a great job of planning the move time, making the move and closing down the hangar at Barbers Point. They really took a good look at all the little things associated with the move, things you wouldn't normally think of. And the move went real smooth."

A 10-person advance team, led by Chief Warrant Officer Veronica McCarthy began preparing the squadron's new home in January. This phase included preparing and painting the new spaces, installing phone lines and the squadron's maintenance data system.

"We started packing up about two weeks before the move date," said Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate (AW) Shawn McMahon, leading chief for the squadron's aircraft division. "Everyone put in a lot of extra effort and overtime to pack and take care of the housecleaning issues at the old hangar, on top of maintaining the flight schedule." "Even though we were 100 percent involved in the move, we still had to give 100 percent to safe maintenance practices, and pilots still had to get their flight time in," added Aviation Electrician's Mate 1st Class (NAC) Edward Akiona, assigned to HSL-37's quality assurance shop.

The level of effort HSL-37's crew put in was evident on February 12, during what Smith calls the squadron's "grand finale" at Barbers Point. "Our maintenance department launched seven out of ten planes from Barbers Point. Four went to sea on det, and three went to K-Bay. Many of those planes were in major maintenance phase weeks before."

Smith also cited "great coordination" with the NAS Barbers Point, Patrol Wings Pacific and the MCBH staffs in making the move as smooth as possible. Akiona added the Marines were "very helpful" in helping the squadron integrate into the K-Bay team.

While many squadronmembers are commuting to Kaneohe from the Barbers Point or Pearl Harbor areas, some, like McMahon



J01 David Nagle photo

AT3 Jason Noland of HSL-37 gets at a tight spot with a power drill while performing maintenance last Thursday.

moved into available family housing on the Marine base. Many of the squadron's single junior Sailors live on base, as well. Recreational facilities on the Marine base are centralized, making them convenient for single Sailors in the barracks to use them.

"The [Marine] base is nice, and has a lot to offer," said Aviation Electronics Technician Airman Apprentice Jeffrey Chastain, assigned to HSL-37's First Lieutenant division. "The bowling alley is right behind our barracks, the enlisted club is just up the street, and the exchange is really nice. Plus, everything is within walking distance."

Squadronmembers are pleased with their new facility, base facilities, and especially, the view of the Ko'olau Mountains. "The view is great, and it's a lot cooler over here than at Barbers Point," said McMahon.

According to Bill Erwin, public affairs officer for NAS Barbers Point, a small contingent from the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department has also moved to MCBH Kaneohe Bay to support aircraft maintenance requirements for HSL-37 and the squadrons which will move in the coming months.

Fisher House: Seabees volunteer skills to build lanai

Continued from A-1

volunteers and donations to enhance daily operations here. For the Seabees to contribute such a valuable service to Fisher House is a remarkable statement indeed. With them in our corner, we can now complete this project for funding between \$14,000 and \$15,000; far from the contractors' estimate.

Several Seabees were on hand to catch a glimpse of their future work area. While awaiting Colonel Swinney's arrival they enjoyed hamburgers and Korean-style barbecue prepared by Fisher House guests and volunteers.

Not far from where the proposed lanai will rest, retired Army Sergeant Bill Murphy from Guam took great pleasure in manning the grill. Bill knows, firsthand, of the essential services provided by Mr. and Mrs. Fisher's generosity. Bill and son Jason Murphy are Fisher House guests while Jason receives treatment for cancer at TAMC.

"This is a very special place for me because they've provided a loving and caring environment for my son to heal," Bill explained. "Among other things, they've given us hope. I think what the Seabees are doing is fine example of the wonderful people that come together to make this all possible."

Linda Walt, also a guest undergoing treatment for cancer, expressed her thanks to the Seabees by baking cupcakes and beans for the occasion. "This is wonderful," said Mrs. Walt. "I think the more we can get people out to learn about Fisher House, the greater understanding they'll have of just how important this organization is for all service members."

Once their forks were at parade rest, the Seabees wasted no time getting down to the business at hand. Builder 1st Class Eric Tucker from Construction Battalion Unit 413 (CBU-413) gave a brief synopsis of the lanai blueprint. Swinney and Kelley watched attentively. Tucker answered questions about some of the projects finer points.

"Our first job is to locate any existing utility lines in the project area and make sure we don't cut into them," explained Jensen. "We will then dig down between eight to twelve inches to put in a subgraded crushed rock before we can pour the concrete pad. We'll then put up columns and place the roof. The lanai will include electrical lighting, outlets and a ceiling fan. The finished product will be handicapped accessible."

Approximately 14 of Oahu's Seabees have agreed to make this project a success. Swinney spoke candidly with those attending and thanked them for their generosity. Swinney received the blueprint and will present it to the Army for final approval. For Oahu Seabees, their work has just begun.

The Tripler Fisher House is one of 25 such "home away from homes" for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and Veterans Administration medical centers. The house, donated by Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher, is a comfortably furnished home designed to provide up to seven families with a room and bath each.

All 25 locations help retired and active duty personnel from all services that are stationed off-island. For more information, contact Kathy Gregory at (808) 433-6028 (ext. 28).

Fifth Fleet commander lauds VP-4's accomplishments on deployment

By Lt. j.g. Luke Hofacker
 VP-4

In an effort to stay in touch with his assigned forces, Vice Adm. Charles Moore, Jr., Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command and Commander, Fifth Fleet visited the VP-4 Skinny Dragons' Detachment in Bahrain on Feb. 22.

"You should be proud of what you are doing here in the Middle East region," Moore told the detachment. He commented that VP-4's impeccable mission accomplishment record during the first half of their deployment has been instrumental

in enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq. By flying missions in the Gulf region, the Skinny Dragons play a key role in imposing these sanctions, and maintaining pressure on Saddam Hussein. "If we can preserve peace and stability in this region of the world, then we can prevent a much larger conflict from developing which would put many of America's young men and women in harm's way."

At the end of his comments, Moore opened the floor to questions, one of which addressed the current discussions on military pay. "The military must become more competitive with the civilian sector, or we

will be forced out of business," he cited. Congress has responded to the requests of the military's senior leadership with legislation that if approved, would increase pay next year. This, he said, will help greatly in the Navy's efforts to become more competitive.

The reactions from the admiral's visit were all positive. "I liked how up front he was with us all," said Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator 1st Class Alan Lawless. The Skinny Dragons appreciated Admiral Moore's visit and look forward to a return visit in the future.

USS Columbus visits Singapore

By Lt. Gary Ermish
 USS COLUMBUS

The Pearl Harbor-based attack submarine USS Columbus (SSN 762) recently visited exotic Singapore. While the crew enjoyed the sights and sounds of the "Lion City," it was a number of professional and social events that made visit truly memorable.

Columbus hosted a number of professional engagements with the Singaporeans. The ship provided a tour and towing demonstration for pilots of the Singapore Maritime Port Authority to familiarize them with submarine towing operations. A submariner to submariner professional engagement was held with officers of the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). They toured the ship and participated in a seminar with Columbus personnel. Topics included work controls, quality control, damage control, battery control and monitoring, atmospheric control systems, and hydraulic systems.

Later in the week, Columbus was the site of a luncheon hosted by the U.S. Ambassador to Singapore, the Honorable Steven J. Green. The guests included Ambassadors from China, Chile, and Brazil, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Singapore, the Singaporean Secretary of Defense, and U.S. and Singaporean business leaders. They toured the ship and ate lunch with members of the crew. The highlight of the afternoon came when Ambassador Green assisted Cmdr. T.A. Fischer, Columbus' commanding officer, in reenlisting Machinist Mate 1st Class (SS) Jerry Mixon for four years. The week wrapped up with tours of the ship for



USS Columbus photo

The Honorable Steven Green, U.S. Ambassador to Singapore, assists Cmdr. T.A. Fischer, commanding officer of USS Columbus (SSN 762) in reenlisting MM1 (SS) Jerry Mixon.

the Mexican Ambassador to Singapore, the Navy League, and the Boy Scouts.

For many of Columbus' Sailors, the highlight of the week was a community relations project with the Singapore Children Society. They fixed broken lights, repaired floors, and performed yardwork for the society.

During the ship's visit, crewmembers were given the opportunity to attend a number of social events. Fischer attended a dinner hosted by Ambassador Green. The Navy League hosted several dinners, barbecues, and swim parties for the officers and crew. The hospitality of the League members was phenomenal.

The visit to Singapore was a great experience for everyone involved. It has been one of the highlights of Columbus' western Pacific deployment, and the crew looks forward to visiting again.

Armed Forces

Coalition aircraft respond to no-fly zone violations

U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet, F-14 Tomcat and Air Force F-16CG Fighting Falcon aircraft enforcing the Southern No-Fly Zone on Monday struck an Iraqi radar relay site 200 miles southeast of Baghdad near As Salman, and a radar site 290 miles southeast of Baghdad in the vicinity of As Shuaybah.

The strikes were in response to Iraqi aircraft violations of the Southern No-Fly Zone. These hostile acts were the latest of more than 135 Iraqi provocations in the Southern No-Fly Zone since Operation Desert Fox.

There were no coalition aircraft damaged during the incident and battle damage assessment is ongoing.

Navy's Panama Canal Base closes

After 56 years as an operational base, America's only Latin American port was given back to Panama March 11, making the Navy the first component to fulfill the Panama Canal Treaty that mandates the U.S. military's full departure by the end of 1999.

Completed in 1914 at a cost of over \$400 million, nearly a million commercial and military ships have used the Panama Canal during this century. Rodman carried out many vital missions over the years, including defense of the Panama Canal and refueling during World War II, and round-the-clock logistical support during 1962's Cuban Missile Crisis. From the late '60s until recently, Rodman continued its prima-

ry tasks of Canal defense, logistical support of U.S. and foreign navy ships, regional operations and defense fuel management.

DFAS resolves Social Security withholding issue

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service Center in Cleveland, Ohio, was recently notified that in 1994, a Social Security withholding tape was not processed for active duty Navy members whose social security numbers fall within 001-36-6000 through 194-62-4343.

The tape contained withholding and salary information and was provided to the Social Security Administration (SSA) at year's end in 1994 for inclusion in Navy members' records. Navy members whose social security numbers do not fall within this numeric series were not affected.

As a result, the SSA is now correcting Navy member records that did not receive credit for the 1994 withholding period. When notified, the DFAS Cleveland Center reproduced the tape and provided it to the SSA on Feb. 17, 1999, so that the SSA could post the data.

The SSA has determined it will take approximately one month to process the file and update the individual Navy members' accounts that were affected by this omission.

Service members should allow sufficient time for the SSA to process and properly credit all accounts missing the 1994 data. If you have questions about a specific account, please contact your local SSA office.