

FLEET FOCUS

LaFleur visits, speaks with Reuben James Sailors

Lt. j.g. Scott Kozink
USS Reuben James

Commander Naval Surface Forces Pacific, Vice Admiral Tim LaFleur, took time from his busy schedule while in Hawaii to visit USS Reuben James (FFG 57) July 24. Vice Adm. LaFleur's visit included a working breakfast in the wardroom and brief meetings with the chief petty officer mess and crew.

Vice Adm. LaFleur spoke positively about the future of the surface warfare community and took the time to highlight many of the key issues of today.

Specifically, he talked about the impact of DD-21 and the great opportunities in the surface Navy for leadership and advanced education. Recent changes to the

junior officer sequencing plan were identified and the benefits shared. He also spoke on the initiatives to gain optimal manning on our surface ships and to reduce the redundancy found in inspections.

"I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet with and hear about the new initiatives in the surface Navy and the direction the Navy is headed. It was truly a privilege to hear these things directly from Vice Adm. LaFleur and have the opportunity to ask him questions," said Lt. j.g. Mike Daves, training officer.

The crew of Reuben James was very enthusiastic about Vice Adm. LaFleur's visit and listened as the admiral addressed many of the issues of major importance today. He focused on areas surrounding his three top priorities: "people, readiness and

communication."

The Navy is making great strides in its effort to provide all junior Sailors with barracks similar to those our Sailors in Hawaii enjoy. With respect to increased force protection measures, he stated these initiatives are being taken to ensure the safety of all Sailors and their families. We can expect an increase in shipboard training and advanced training for master-at-arms rated personnel.

"Having a three-star admiral aboard was great. The opportunity to hear him speak and then ask him questions was outstanding. I was really happy to see someone of Vice Adm. LaFleur's position out on the waterfront listening to what the Sailors out in the fleet had to say," said Operations Specialist 1st Class Chana Young.

Immediately following the admiral's visit, Reuben James set the sea and anchor detail and was underway. While underway, Reuben James continued its inter-deployment training cycle requirements. Vice Adm. LaFleur noted that it was extremely important that our surface warriors know and are capable of conducting damage control when necessary.

Citing the Cole incident, Vice Adm. LaFleur stated that damage control is one of our core competencies and we must be ready at all times to flex and take whatever action is necessary to save our ships under the most stressful of circumstances.

The Sailors of Reuben James took the admiral's words to heart as they continued to train and prepare for their impending deployment.

Fletcher hosts senior Philippine admiral



Ens. Christa Neill photo

ENCS(SW) Tom Shaulis explains the Planned Maintenance System (PMS) to Vice Adm. Hingco of the Philippine Navy during his tour of USS Fletcher (DD 992).

Ens. Christa Neill
USS Fletcher

The top admiral in the Philippine Navy recently toured USS Fletcher (DD 992), crawling through a gas turbine module and discussing maintenance with Sailors on the deckplates.

Vice Adm. Victorino Hingco flew to Hawaii specifically to review how U.S. Navy crews maintain their warships and what lessons might be applied to maintain the Philippine navy in the highest state of readiness.

"Vice Adm. Hingco was extremely interested in how American Sailors maintained their equipment," said Cmdr. Dell Epperson, USS Fletcher commanding officer after the visit. "The Philippine Navy is faced with many challenges right now, from an aging fleet to dwindling resources. His visit gave us an opportunity to showcase the talents of our young Sailors and discuss

the U.S. Navy approach to planned maintenance."

Vice Adm. Hingco's visit to Fletcher included a thorough tour of main spaces, weapons systems and living quarters.

Enlisted Sailors stood by their equipment as Hingco passed through, answering many questions ranging from how the area or weapon is maintained, to the day to day problems faced on a warship commissioned over two decades ago.

In Main Engine Room Two, the tour included crawling through a gas turbine module, led by Gas Turbine System (Mechanical) 2nd Class Marcus Lopez and Gas Turbine System (Mechanical) 1st Class (SW) Ariel Padua. The two technicians demonstrated the proper method for conducting an inspection of the engine, leading the admiral, decked out in summer whites, around the close confines of the pristine module without the slightest contact with oil

or grease.

During Hingco's tour of Central Control Station, Engineman Senior Chief (SW) Tom Shaulis explained the Navy's Planned Maintenance System (PMS).

He elaborated how, by following step by step scheduled procedures, the men and women onboard Fletcher are able to keep systems and equipment in peak working order and on a par with warships half her age.

"It was an honor and privilege to demonstrate the Engineering Department PMS and explain how the program has been effectively implemented," said Shaulis.

Fletcher Sailors took a great deal of pride in being chosen to stand in the spotlight for such a distinguished visitor. With a better understanding of the U.S.

Navy's approach to PMS and the emphasis on the work of junior Sailors, Hingco returned to the Philippines better equipped to apply the lessons of PMS to his fleet.

USS Port Royal re-opens galley with 'surf theme'

Lt. j.g. Sarah O' Hare
USS Port Royal

When Hawaii is mentioned in conversation, a multitude of scenic images undoubtedly come to mind. One image in particular stands apart from the rest - the glorious waves with which Hawaii has been blessed.

From the breathtaking shores of infamous Waikiki to the daring bonsai pipeline, these waves have long inspired the favorite Hawaii pastime of surfing.

One man responsible for the immense popularity of surfing today is Duke Kahanamoku, who traveled around the world hosting surfing exhibits to promote the sport.

Another is Hawaii state Senator and "Father of Professional Surfing," Fred Hemmings, who admired Duke Kahanamoku growing up.

Hemmings won numerous surfing championships and was the first world champion in the rising sport of surfing. Along the way, Senator Hemmings has created The World Cup of Surfing and the Triple Crown of Surfing, promoting each through his own media business. In addition, he is the founder of the World of Professional Surfing Circuit.

USS Port Royal (CG 73), therefore, could not have asked a more appropriate person to participate in the re-opening of their "surfing theme" oriented crew's mess decks. Having recently performed a com-

plete makeover of her mess decks, Port Royal brilliantly captures Hawaii's surfing legacy.

With the help of local artist Ron Artis, a majestic Hawaiian mural transforms the beverage line into a sandy beach, and numerous surfboards adorn the passageway and mess decks.

"Our intention was to create a relaxing and fun atmosphere where sailors can unwind and enjoy excellent food," said Lt. Kris Doran, Port Royal's Food Service Officer. "I believe we have achieved this goal."

Senator Hemmings honored Port Royal with his presence at a "Cutting of the Ribbon" ceremony July 18. The messdecks were filled with Sailors anxious to eat their first meal in the newly renovated space.

Before commencing the ceremony, Senator Hemmings addressed the crew, expressing his gratitude for their service to country, as well as his great pleasure in their adoption of his favorite pastime as their theme of choice.

Senator Hemmings then joined Capt. Lee Geanuleas and Fire Controlman 3rd Class Shane Jones, Port Royal's Junior Sailor of the Quarter, in parting the ribbon, presenting Port Royal's own surfing haven to the crew.

Once the ribbon was parted, all Sailors were invited onto the mess decks to partake in the celebratory event. There was an overall feeling of excitement in the air. "The transformation is phenomenal," ex-



PHAN Adan Fabela photo

Hawaii state Senator Fred Hemmings displays a poster with Capt. Lee Geanuleas during the re-opening ceremony of USS Port Royal's galley.

claimed Ship's Serviceman 3rd Class Randy Batchelor. "This is definitely a place where I can feel at home."

"This renovation will undoubtedly benefit both the Sailor and the ship," said Chaplain (Lt.) Bob Vance. "Being able to enjoy each meal in a comfortable environ-

ment is essential to crew morale. And high morale is key to quality performance and mission accomplishment," added Vance.

In summary, whether moored quietly in port or sailing the world's oceans, protecting the interests of the United States, Port Royal maintains the highest crew morale.

Kamehameha to inactivate



Lt. Cmdr. Dave Warner photo

Sailors heave lines to the linehandlers to moor USS Kamehameha (SSN 642) the Pearl Harbor, Hawaii-based submarine is scheduled to be inactivated Aug. 8 at Naval Station Pearl Harbor. Senator Daniel Inouye (D - Hawaii), who delivered a speech at the ship's launching in 1965, will speak at the upcoming inactivation ceremony. The ship is the 30th of America's "41 for Freedom" Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines.

Quartermaster aboard USS O'Kane becomes officer of the deck

By Lt. j.g. Kevin J. Hoffman
USS O'Kane

Quartermaster 1st Class John H. Charles joined the ranks of USS O'Kane (DDG 77) officers of the deck (OOD) (underway) on June 18.

This is no typical achievement for a first class petty officer. OOD is a watchstation traditionally filled by experienced officers. Being appointed to this position means both that the individual has demonstrated his shiphandling ability and that the commanding officer trusts his judgement.

For a junior officer, attaining this qualification is a major landmark in his or her pursuit of the surface warfare officer qualification; for a first class petty officer, attaining OOD is above and beyond the call of duty and an accomplishment that few enlisted personnel have ever achieved.

QM1 Charles decided to pursue this lofty goal as a second class petty officer on shore duty. "When I found out that other enlisted personnel qualified as OOD," QM1 Charles explained, "I set that goal for myself when I returned to the fleet."

After working on his qualification for nearly nine months, standing watch as

conning officer and officer of the deck under-instruction, QM1 Charles gained the experience necessary to become an officer of the deck on O'Kane.

QM1 Charles' readiness to assume the responsibilities of OOD was evident when he stood officer of the deck during the recent Carl Vinson Battle Group Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX). He deftly managed a nighttime "plane guard" - one of the most stressful bridge evolutions. O'Kane took station only one nautical mile astern of the Carl Vinson and was instructed to maintain that position as the carrier sporadically altered course and speed.

Unfazed, Charles maintained his composure and skillfully instructed the conning officer on how best to maintain station. The commanding officer, Cmdr. Taylor W. Skardon, remained on the bridge for the duration of the evolution, but never had to say a word.

"Qualifying as OOD is one of the greatest accomplishments of my naval career," said Charles. "With today's ships being manned by less people, it is important for junior personnel to step up and take on greater responsibility," he added.