



This scene aboard USS Honolulu (SSN 718) is a dedication to MS3 Nicholas Weinstein, a crew member who died while on liberty in San Diego. The volcano represents his life, the wave represents his life being taken and the Hokulea on the right is taking him to paradise.

Local artist leaves his mark on Navy ships, subs

Ron Artis uses his "God-given talent" to help lift Sailors' morale, spirits

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Sailors stationed here may not know his name, but many know his work. Across Oahu, on over a dozen ships and submarines, gracing commissaries, bowling alleys and buildings, the handiwork of Ron Artis is clearly visible.

Born on Nov. 20, 1949, Artis, a self-described "military brat," spent much of his youth moving from place to place with his Air Force father. Currently, Artis' father works at the Pentagon.

Artis received one of the early e-mails after the Sept. 11 attack on the Pentagon from his father. The elder Artis has worked there for more than 20 years. Artis includes his father on his website because "he put so much in me and I want to re-pay him in an honorable way." That is also one of the reasons Artis began painting murals aboard ships and sub-

marines more than seven years ago. "Submarines came first, then surface ships," said Artis, a native of Wichita Falls, Texas. "There's no better tune up than being around hard-core submariners. They, more than anyone I've met, work like one hand, one unit. As the father of 12 children, there's no better example than our military machine of how people can work together to accomplish a common goal."

He said he was standing in front of his gallery in Kailua with his daughter when he was approached by a man and his daughter. The man turned out to be an officer aboard a Pearl Harbor-based submarine. The officer was impressed with Artis' work and asked if he would be interested in painting a mural on a submarine. Intrigued, Artis accompanied the officer to Pearl Harbor where he met with a master chief aboard one of the submarines. He painted his first mural aboard a submarine, the name of which he admittedly can't remember, and has been going strong ever since.

"Just about everybody [on the ships and subs] had soft ideas about what they wanted," Artis said. "They always wanted to lift morale and remove the drab atmosphere. The submarine commanders wanted to try and help the crew forget they were on a submarine for a little while."

Fourteen ships and submarines homeported in Pearl Harbor have received the "Artis touch" over the last seven years. His latest

project was aboard USS Honolulu (SSN 718). Artis painted two murals in the chiefs' lounge - an American bald eagle with a fouled anchor in one eye and an American flag in the other, and an image of Hawaii on another wall. He also painted several images in the crew's mess, called "Café Tsunami." The most dominant scene is dedicated to a Honolulu Sailor who was killed while on leave in San Diego.

"It's a dedication to MS3 Nicholas Weinstein who passed away on Feb. 2," said Chief Mess Specialist (SS) Christopher Gardner, supply Leading Chief Petty Officer. "The volcano erupting represents his last day. The wave rushing towards the volcano represents the water that will put out his flame and the Hokulea [sail boat] rushing on the other side of the wave with him in whites represents his trip to paradise."

According to Senior Chief Machinist's Mate (SS) M.A. Keck, Honolulu's Chief of the Boat, the crew really likes Artis' work on their mess deck.

"I think it meets the whole Café Tsunami theme," said Keck. "The theme is a giant wave that comes out of nowhere, causes destruction and then goes away - like the Honolulu. The crew likes the way it brightens the mess deck and gives it more depth."

Honolulu's commanding officer, Cmdr. Charles Harris, is pleased with the work both in the chief's lounge and in Café Tsunami.

"It's definitely going to liven things up for us," said Harris. "The imagery is very much in the spirit of USS Honolulu and of the entire Hawaii area."

On his website, www.ronartis.com, Artis displays the work he has done for the Oahu-area military. Artis remains humble, but determined, when he discusses his impetus for his art.

"It's a God-given talent and I have to take care of it and use it," he said. "Artists are natural historians and peacemakers. Right now, our country needs good artists to bring it back to its center, and it's my responsibility as an American artist to answer that call."

Artis waxes philosophical when he discusses his need to paint his murals. He does have definite reasons and goals in mind when he goes into a painting project.

"At the end of the day, I'm very critical of myself," he said. "If I didn't make a difference, then I cheated God and my family. My patriotic call to duty is to show young people that you can be extremely talented, patriotic and not buy into the hype that you need external stimulants. You must first have wisdom to express yourself. Wisdom and talent inside a righteous man is the most powerful combination of all."

If a unit commanding officer is interested in contacting Artis to paint a mural, they can go to Artis' website or call him directly at 261-8118.



An American bald eagle keeps watch over the chiefs' lounge aboard USS Honolulu (SSN 718).



Another Ron Artis-created Hawaiian beach scene adorns the "Let's Roll Café" aboard USS Salvor (ARS 52).



Artis applies minor touches to his work aboard USS Honolulu (SSN 718).



In Café Tsunami aboard USS Honolulu (SSN 718), Artis' mural watches over the crew.

Peacocks thrive in NCTAMS' '...tranquility and pastoral ambiance'



Lt. Damien Oliver photo

One of the NCTAMS base mascots poses for a photograph near a field.

Lt. Damien Oliver
NCTAMS PAC Supply and Public Affairs Officer

Naval Computer Telecommunications Area Master Station Pacific (NCTAMS PAC) has sometimes been known for its tranquility and pastoral ambiance. Its peacefulness comes, in part, from its location among the pineapple fields and rainforests of central Oahu. Another factor, that people might not be quite as aware of, is its mascot... or should I say mascots.

For many years, NCTAMS PAC had been home to a pair of peacocks. The peacocks seemed so enamored of the base, and the base of them, that they were adopted as the base mascots. The male, Peter, and the female, Gertrude, had free reign to roam wherever they wished. It was not uncommon to see Peter strutting his stuff down Center

Street, holding up traffic all the while. Even on days that one did not catch a glimpse of the peacocks, they could certainly be heard across the base with their distinctive "cawing."

Sadly, last fall, Peter disappeared from the base without a trace. Gertrude was still around, but seemed truly forlorn and lost without her mate. The future of NCTAMS PAC's mascots seemed precarious and bleak.

Recently however, the outlook has brightened considerably. NCTAMS PAC retiree, Chief Annette Keanu and her husband Billy, donated four India Blue peacocks to the command. After a short acclimatization period (during which the peacocks will be kept in large cages), the birds will be set free to roam the base. Until that time comes, however, care of the birds will fall to an unlikely trio.

NCTAMS PAC power plant employ-

ees Victor Floirendo, Gary Hughes and Vince Cordero are a gruff group of men. Yet when it comes to caring for their new brood, their demeanor seems to change and they practically gush on about the birds... as any proud parent would. Looking out for the birds' safety and wellbeing is a paramount concern for the men. Their biggest concern is for residents and employees of NCTAMS PAC to slow down when driving on base. The peacocks do not have a well-developed concept of the danger of a car.

With this recent infusion of peacocks, the hills and hollows of the base will again resound with their calls. The lucky passerby may even be treated to a royal display of feathers. Best of all, however, the future of the NCTAMS PAC mascot seems assured as we are up to our ears in peacocks - and loving it.