Ney: Hawaiian galleys set record in food service

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"Because of this recognition, everyone here ends up being a winner – our cooks and staff, the patrons and Hawaii as a whole," said CWO4 Gerry Condon, Hawaii's Region Food Service Officer.

Condon proudly explained, "This is the first time in the United States Navy that six galleys in the same region received a five-star accreditation."

There is also another first-time achievement. "Our Navy Brig at Pearl Harbor is the first brig in the Navy to ever receive five-star accreditation," he added.

There are 82 shore facility galleys in the Navy, including the six under Navy Region Hawaii. According to Condon, "Hawaii is the first region ever to have a 'clean sweep' – when all galleys received the five-star accreditation."

MSCS (SW) Connell Crooms, leading chief petty officer for the Navy Region Food Service Division, emphasized the leadership and team effort that made the award possible. "It was total teamwork," he said. "I'm proud of each and every one of our staff members at the galleys. We worked toward it from a daily standpoint."

The Navy galleys undergo a series of evaluations leading up to a final evaluation. The evaluations are performed by a team comprised of senior Navy mess managements specialists from Navy Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) in Mechanicsburg, Pa. and representatives from International Food Service Executives Association (IFSEA).

IFSEA is a food service industry association that consists of executive chefs, operators, dieticians, consultants, managers and professional catering firms, restaurants, hotels and clubs. The organization annually awards three-, four- or five-star ratings to Navy galleys according to a point system.

Condon explained that the evaluation is very detailed and the galleys must always be ready for a surprise inspection. The evaluation team observes each galley's ability to cook and break down the recipe cards. Also included in the 33-page evaluation checklist are such items as housekeeping, safety, equipment operation, hygiene, inventory control and cash handling procedures.

Opportunities to further enhance their cooking skills will come later this year when 10 mess management specialists from Navy Region will attend a comprehensive chefs' course at the Culinary Arts Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y.

"The Ney accreditation award program is a program in which many reap benefits. This is truly a program where awards are given to the enlisted,"said Condon. He continued, "They are reaping the harvest of their hard work. This is the 'gift that keeps on giving.'"

But with a note of modesty, when asked how the Navy Region Hawaii Food Service accomplished such an unprecedented feat, Condon commented, "It doesn't take much to polish a diamond. The place was pretty good anyway – we just fine-tuned it."

The Ney Awards, which were originally established in 1958 by the Secretary of the Navy and the IFSEA, were implemented to improve and recognize the quality of food service in the Navy.

Offering a variety of food selections – all at affordable prices – the food service personnel at Pearl Harbor's galleys strive to provide that quality dining experience for patrons. Family members with valid ID can utilize the galleys and service members may also bring guests.

"We want everything to be excellent so that our customers are always coming back for more," explained MS1 Stanford Rideb, leading petty officer for the Diosdado Rome Galley.

Some of the more popular food items served at the local galleys include a Hawaiian meal consisting of kalua pork, teriyaki chicken, rice and fried cabbage. Italian Day – offering assorted pizzas and dishes such as lasagna and spaghetti with meat sauce – and Asian-Pacific cuisine are also a favorite with Sailors. Other days, such as Mexican Day and Country Cookin' Day, also feature dishes which emphasize specific cuisines. A speed line - where customers can find such items as hot dogs and hamburgers, a salad bar and a healthy menu line are readily available.

Occasionally, galley patrons are treated to "surf and turf"entrees of steak and shrimp with baked potatoes and prime rib with steamed crab legs.

The galleys also serve an array of items for breakfast. Diners can choose from hot or cold cereals, steamed rice, grilled meats, French toast, pancakes, hash browns and eggs cooked just about any way you like them as well as an assortment of omelettes.

The cost for a meal is low - averaging $3-$4 - and provides a nutritious meal at a very affordable cost.

"It's something you want to achieve," said Rideb as he discussed the five-star accreditation. "This is my second time and I know the process, but I wanted the junior people to see what it's like."

"It's good for them because they worked hard to achieve it," he added.

Describing it as a cohesive effort among the food service personnel at all of the galleys, Rideb explained, "It takes hard work and a lot of teamwork – coming together and finding out where the mistakes are."

"You work with the other galleys and help each other out," he said.

About 1,400 customers a day are served at the Navy's award-winning galleys – Diosdado Rome Galley and Silver Dolphin Bistro at Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Naval Magazine (NAVMAG) Galley at Ewa Beach, Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Pacific (NCTAMS) Galley at Wahiawa, the Navy Brig Galley on Ford Island and PMRF Barking Sands Galley on Kauai.

Afloat galley winners were the USS Key West (SSN 722) in the submarine division and the USS Salvor (ARS 52) in the small afloat division, both first place recipients. USS Reuben James (FFG 57) in the small afloat category and USS Santa Fe (SSN 763) in the submarine division both received honorable mention.

When it's time to eat, Sailors assigned to Pearl Harbor can find some of the best dining in the Navy - at the best homeport in the Navy.

Repaired, upgraded USS Cole rejoins the fleet

JOC David Nagle
Naval Sea Systems Command

After 14 months of upgrades and repairs, the Navy's "Determined Warrior" - USS Cole (DDG 67), returned to the fleet and full active duty.

Cole, an Arleigh Burke-class AEGIS destroyer, departed Pascagoula, Miss., on April 19 and headed for its homeport in Norfolk, Va.

Cole arrived in Pascagoula for repairs on Dec. 13, 2000, following a terrorist attack in Yemen two months prior, which left 17 Sailors dead and 39 wounded.

"Today, we look forward," said Cmdr. Kevin Sweeney, Cole's commanding officer. "We look forward to heading home, returning to the fleet and getting back into the fight."

Family members of Cole Sailors joined Northrop Grumman Ship Systems' Ingalls Operations employees to send Cole back to the fleet at a pierside ceremony in Pascagoula.

Workers at Ingalls Operations conducted the repairs, which were overseen by the Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair (SUPSHIP) Pascagoula.

The repair process, which cost about $250 million, included removing and replacing more than 550 tons of steel, replacing two, 27-ton main engines and modules, installing a new stern flap, which will increase the ship's speed and fuel efficiency, replacing three gas turbines generators, and installing new galley equipment.

"This was a challenging repair process, due to the complexity of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer and the pace of the repair effort," said Capt. Phil Johnson, SUPSHIP Pascagoula. "The Navy/industry team set new benchmarks with this repair since certain portions of the repair, such as the removal and reinstallation of the starboard propulsion train, were conducted for the first time outside of new construction."

"It was a lot of hard work, but it paid off in the end," said IC3 Jeff Curan of Sewell, N.J., who volunteered for a transfer to Cole from USS Stout (DDG 55). "Getting Cole back to the fleet sends a message that we won't be defeated."

"We got Cole better than it was when it got here," said Ingalls Operations worker Tim Andrews. "There was a sense of urgency to get Cole back to service to show those who [attacked Cole] they couldn't put it down."

The repair effort concluded April 13, following a successful sea trial in the Gulf of Mexico, the ship's first underway period since October 2000.

Once Cole returns to Norfolk, the ship will enter a training cycle in preparation for its next deployment.

PH1 Tina M. Ackerman photo

The U.S. Navy guided missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) gets underway after completing extensive repairs to the ship's hull and interior spaces. Visible as she pulls away from the pier is her newly restored portside hull and superstructure. The Cole has been in Pascagoula for the past 14 months undergoing repairs after a terrorist bomb blew a hole in her port side while refueling in the port city of Aden, Yemen. Seventeen Sailors were killed.