

Sideboys render honors to retired Lt. John Finn at the dedication ceremony on Tuesday. Finn, a former chief petty officer, earned the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions on Dec. 7, 1941 while stationed at NAS Kaneohe.



J03 Brenda Diggs photo



J03 Brenda Diggs photo

Col. Michael Olson, Deputy Commander, Marine Corps Base Hawaii presents a plaque to Rear Adm. Michael Holmes, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet, officially welcoming the Navy to Kaneohe Bay.

## Finn: New headquarters building for Navy at Kaneohe honors WWII hero

Continued from A-1

port and intermediate maintenance for all Navy and Marine Corps aviation units at MCBH Kaneohe Bay.

Finn, who held the rank of Chief Aviation Ordnanceman at the time of his award, manned a 50-caliber machine gun mounted on an instruction stand in a completely exposed section of the parking ramp. The ramp was under heavy enemy fire. Although wounded, Finn continued to man his gun and to return the enemy's fire vigorously and with complete disregard for his own personal

safety.

Even after the wounded chief was ordered to leave his post and seek medical attention, he returned to the squadron after treatment and supervised the rearming and returning of planes.

"In my heart, this building is dedicated to all of us that were around here on December 7th," said Finn. "I give them much more credit for what happened here that day."

"Although I was singled out and given the Medal of Honor, this is for all my shipmates and the 19 people who died here that day."

## Navy begins new chapter in Kaneohe, integrates with Marines

By J01 David Nagle

HNN EDITOR

The dedication ceremony of the John W. Finn Building on Tuesday not only paid tribute to a Navy hero, but also marked the beginning of a new chapter for the Navy in Hawaii.

During the ceremony, the Navy was officially welcomed to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, where the Navy's aviation squadrons will continue to operate following their relocation from Naval Air Station Barbers Point, which closed yesterday.

Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet (formerly Patrol Wings, U.S. Pacific Fleet), Patrol Squadrons Four (VP-4) and Nine (VP-9), Patrol Squadron Special Projects Unit Two (VPU-2), Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron (Light) Thirty Seven (HSL-37), and aviation support units from NAS Barbers Point began relocating to K-Bay in February. Patrol Squadron Forty Seven (VP-47), which left for a six-month deployment on June 6 from NAS Barbers Point, will return to Kaneohe at the completion of its deployment.

The move from the Ewa Plain to Windward Oahu involved nearly 2,200 military and civilian personnel and 38 aircraft, which includes 27 P-3C Orion maritime patrol planes, and nine SH-60 Seahawk helicopters.

The relocation to Kaneohe Bay allows the Navy to meet its operational requirements and conduct training with Hawaii-based ships and submarines, while eliminating administrative, maintenance and support redundancy and improving efficiencies.

The relocation will save the Navy an estimated \$12 million in operating and maintenance costs annually. In addition, the move eliminates a potential loss to the local economy of about \$84 million in annual revenue, which would have occurred had the units been assigned to off-island locations.

Preparing the Marine base for their additional tenants involved \$80 million in Base Realignment and Closure construction for Hawaii-based businesses. According to Glenn Higuchi, Deputy Resident Officer in Charge of Construction at Kaneohe, this work included building 23 acres of aircraft parking apron to accommodate 20 P-3C aircraft and alterations to aircraft hangers such as renovating approximately 200,000 square feet of office space and notching two hangers to accommodate the tail of the P-3C Orion. Other construction included the new John W. Finn op-

erations and training building, a tactical support facility and a hazardous material/hazardous waste storage facility.

In addition, the Navy spent more than \$110 million to build an additional 300 housing units and two bachelor quarters, which will accommodate about 1,000 people at Kaneohe, said Higuchi.

More aircraft means more flight operations. Lt. Col. Timothy Kolb, commanding officer of the Marine Corps Air Facility at Kaneohe estimate about a 150 percent increase, since the facility will operate seven days a week.

But, despite the increased air traffic, residents won't experience much of an increase in noise levels. Brig. Gen. Arnold Fields, Commanding General, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, said there will be a "slight increase" in noise levels, because of the additional aircraft, "but it will be nothing near what it was in 1994, when the F/A-18's were here." The noise levels of P-3C aircraft are lower than the Hornets, and primary approach and departure lanes for the aircraft are over water.

The relocation also marks a first for the Navy and Marine Corps, as it is the first base to be integrated. Sailors and Marines are now working side by side at Marine Corps Air Facility (MCAF), a combined air traffic control operation. Kolb commands the air facility with a Navy lieutenant commander as his executive officer.

Sailors and Marines are fully integrating into the Marine Aviation Logistics Support Element, which provides maintenance support to both Navy and Marine aircraft.

Working side by side with Marines presented some challenges for the Sailors relocating from Barbers Point, but according to Rear Adm. Michael Holmes, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CPRF), both services took steps to minimize the challenges before the move began.

"The Marines visited Barbers Point to explain their way of doing things, and the Navy did the same for the Marines," said Holmes.

Although integrated, the Navy element at Kaneohe will report to a new "N9" department within the CPRF organization. Cmdr. John Alexander, NAS Barbers Point's former executive officer, will head up this new department.

As the Navy closes the chapter on NAS Barbers Point, it begins a new chapter of continued support to maritime patrol aviation from its new home with the Marines in Kaneohe.



J01 David Nagle photos



A bird's-eye view (top) from Kansas Tower at Marine Corps Base Hawaii of the air facility, where the relocated units from NAS Barbers Point now operate. The Navy spent \$80 million in construction to prepare the Marine facilities for the additional squadrons, including renovating and altering aircraft hangers (above), to include notching two hangers for the tails of P-3C aircraft.

With the Koolau Mountains in the background, an SH-60 helicopter from Pacific Missile Range Facility, Barking Sands approaches the Marine Corps Air Facility. Although flight operations will increase by about 150 percent, local residents will only experience a slight increase in noise levels.