



Bravo Zulu

USS Honolulu (SSN 718)

Promotions/Advancements

- Lt. Cmdr. William Stevenson
- Lt. Mitch Tatum
- Lt. Johnny Hilliard
- Lt. Carlos Galan
- Lt. Brian Davison
- Lt. Sean Muth
- ET1(SS) Thomas Wilson
- MM1(SS) Jimmie Moreno
- EM2(SS) Frank Arnold
- MM2(SS) Lee Blomgren
- ET2(SS) Jesse Lohrke
- STS2(SS) Thomas Thompson
- ET2(SS) Seth Springer
- MM2(SS) Justin Ritter
- MM2(SS) David Navarro
- MM3(SS) Matthew Purdy
- MM3(SS) Joel Immel
- ET3(SS) Bryan Rosendale
- STS3(SS) Michael Birkenhauer
- SK3(SS) Matthew Thomas
- MM3(SS) Anthony Gado
- FT3 Chad Bright
- ET3 Whisler
- STS3 Vance Walbaum
- ET3 Justin Sechrest

USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60)

Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal

- Lt. Cmdr. Vincent Quidachay
- Lt. Phillip Branch
- Lt. Theodore Prince
- IS1 Frank Rusinski

Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal

- GMC(SW) Camillo Escobar
- FC1(SW) Timothy Talbot
- GM2(SW) Zachary Eubank
- IC2 Todd Buckhardt
- OS3 Anthony Bassetti
- OS3 Kyle Jackson

Good Conduct Medal

- ET2 Joe Simmons
- GSM3 James Abron
- ET3 Juan Espinoza
- STG3 James Hurlburt
- GSE3 Christopher Lepre
- TM3 Shea Pesz
- EN3 Lester Silva
- EN3 Andrew Thacker
- STG3 Jeffrey Wiggins
- SN Damon Zeibig

Letter of Commendation

- GM2 Keith Craig
- FC2(SW) Lance Mayhugh
- IC2 Michael West
- GSM3 Luke Nielsen
- GM3 Christopher Clausen
- GM3 Brian Evanoff
- GM3 Daniel Kirkbride

COLA: Reduction to living allowance means smaller paychecks

Continued from A-1

hoping we can do something to get the [COLA] index up again."

COLA indexes are determined by two surveys: the Living Pattern Survey (LPS) and the Retail Price Survey (RPS). The LPS collects information from individual service members about where they shop and the percentage they purchase from each source. The LPS is conducted every three years. The next LPS is scheduled for January 2000.

The RPS, conducted every March, collects prices for approximately 160 goods and services from the outlets identified in the LPS, as well as from commissary and exchange facilities. RPS items are selected from items normally purchased by CONUS-based families that also are available in most overseas areas. RPS items include basic foods such as milk, cereal, fruits/vegetables, fish, meat, canned goods, and soda, etc. It also includes gas prices, car insurance, entertainment, and big purchase items such as washers and dryers. Overseas price data is then compared with CONUS data (from daily surveys, Bureau of Labor and Statistics data, the Consumer Price Index, and other economic sources) to determine COLA indexes.

Oahu's COLA was lowered because survey results indicated lower local prices for fresh milk, flour, pasta and cereal and lower commissary prices for milk, bread, flour, cereal and soda. These price decreases were compounded by higher CONUS prices for milk, flour, pasta, cereal, tea and sugar.

"My short term concern is for Sailors to understand how their August 13 paychecks will be affected, so they can be prepared for the shortages they will encounter," said Master Chief Machinist's Mate (SS/SW/AW) James Russell, Navy Region Hawaii's Command Master Chief. "They should learn as much as they can about COLA and the reduction. If Sailors don't understand how their paycheck will be affected, they are doing themselves and their families a great disservice."

"My long term concern is to ensure Sailors and their families understand their role is in the survey process and how the results affect COLA," Russell continued. "We cannot afford to let in-

New COLA rates for Hawaii (effective August 13, 1999)

Visit <http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/rates>

F	a	m	i	y
P	r	e	s	e
n	e	t	s	e
R	e	v	i	s
P	a	v	e	s
r	a	v	e	s
M	e	a	m	b
C	e	r	e	s
A	e	r	e	s
C	e	r	e	s
A	e	r	e	s
D	i	f	f	e
n	c	e	r	e
O			6	
2				5
3	6	8	0	0
(	1	2	2	0
				6
				6
O				5
	2			
				400
3			0	0
3			0	0
(	1		0	0
				1
O				4
2				
	4	1	6	0
3	1	0	2	0
(	1	0	2	0
				0
O				3
				2

accurate information or a lack of understanding of the process affect our quality of life. This change in COLA will impact quality of life for our Sailors in Hawaii."

Sailors and family members will have an opportunity to voice their concerns about the COLA reduction at two town hall meetings on August 13 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Hickam Air Force Base Memorial Theater.

Additional information about COLA,

including how to compute your COLA is available at www.dtic.mil/perdiem/allowcol.html. This website contains a link allowing Sailors to compute their COLA. The data for Oahu will reflect the current COLA index of 116 until August 1. The location code for Oahu is HI009. Until the data is updated, to determine what your COLA will be at the revised 112 index, use the location code CA013, which has a 112 COLA index.

Q&A: Facts about COLA

Continued from A-1

Q. How does the Department of Defense know whether it costs more to live at my overseas duty station than in the States?

A. The Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee uses two surveys to determine the relative cost of living: a living-pattern survey and a market basket survey.

The living-pattern survey shows which local stores typical service members shop in and how much they buy from the commissary and exchange.

For example, the living-pattern survey may show that service members typically buy half their clothing in local stores (with foreign currency) and half at the exchange (with U.S. dollars).

Of course, if you're not the "typical" service member—if you haunt discount outlets or shop only in the "best" stores—the living-pattern survey will not represent your particular spending habits.

Using information from the living-pattern survey, shoppers conduct a market basket survey each year, pricing some 160 goods and services, from auto repair to potatoes, in many overseas locations.

The prices from the overseas survey are compared with prices in the United States for equivalent goods and services at the same point in time. If the overseas market basket cost is greater than the U.S. cost, a COLA equal to the difference is paid.

The survey might show, for example, that in September the market basket cost \$100 in the United States and \$130 at your overseas duty station. The cost of living is 30 percent higher in your area, and you would receive COLA to help pay the extra costs associated with living overseas.

Q. So if the cost of living is 30 percent higher at my duty station, will my paycheck be 30 percent larger?

A. No, because COLA is figured on spendable income, not total income. Spendable

income is total income minus housing expenses, taxes, savings, life insurance, and gifts and contributions.

Q. How do they know what my spendable income really is?

A. Again, the spendable income used to calculate COLA is based on averages. The Per Diem Committee uses spendable-income tables computed for different family sizes and income levels.

These tables are based on consumer expenditure surveys from the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics that show how people typically spend their income.

Q. Does the type of housing I occupy affect my COLA?

A. Yes. If you live in the barracks or aboard ship, you will receive less COLA to reflect your lower living expenses.

Q. How often is COLA adjusted?

A. The committee can adjust COLA as often as every payday. Of course, just as it

takes time to process an allotment change, it takes a while for the change in COLA to show up in your pay.

Q. I know that the value of the dollar has dropped a lot over the past several months, but my COLA hasn't gone up an equal amount to compensate for the drop. Why not?

A. Because COLA is adjusted only for the portion of income that the typical member spends on the local economy (in foreign currency).

If the living-pattern survey for your area shows that typical members spend 50 percent of their income on the local economy and the value of the dollar against the local currency falls four percent, your COLA would be increased two percent.

Q. What if spending patterns have changed because of changes in the exchange rate?

A. If such changes occur, the living-pattern survey will be updated. An event such as the opening of a new commissary or exchange may also prompt a survey update.

Armed Forces

Navy salvage ship assists in search for JFK Jr.'s missing plane

USS Grasp (ARS 51) got underway July 18 to assist in the search and recovery of the missing aircraft flown by John F. Kennedy Jr., with his wife and her sister aboard.

The salvage and rescue ship departed its homeport at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va. around noon, after a remotely operated vehicle was loaded aboard.

Grasp, with a crew of approximately 100 Sailors, also participated in the recovery effort of TWA Flight 800.

UNITAS ships set sail

Starting the annual UNITAS deployment, USS O'Bannon (DD 987) and USS McInerney (FFG 8) along with Pascagoula, Miss.-based Destroyer Squadron Six departed July 14 for operations with South American navies.

In addition to the O'Bannon and McInerney, the UNITAS 40-99 U.S. Task Group will also include USS Carter Hall (LSD 50), homeported in Little Creek, Va.; USS City of Corpus Christi (SSN 709), homeported in Groton, Conn.; and USCG Forward (WMEC 911), homeported in Portsmouth, Va.

The purpose of UNITAS, held since 1959, is to conduct bilateral and multilateral naval operations including traditional at-sea, amphibious and riverine operations and inport exercises with participating naval forces in support of the U.S. policy of engagement in South America.

Red Cross opens new Military Emergency Messaging Center

The new Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Service Center at Fort Sill, Okla., is now open. It is the largest of two centers that will process emergency messages for members of the military and their families.

The opening of this facility is the centerpiece of a three-year modernization effort for Red Cross Emergency Messaging Service. The Red Cross has established a nationwide toll-free number (1-877-272-7337) that military members and their families can use for faster, more efficient delivery of emergency messages and verification.

The Armed Forces Emergency Service Centers anticipate processing 150,000 emergency cases annually and transmitting one emergency message every 22 seconds.



MDSU divers participate in community service projects

MDSU-1 divers, seen here, work on a home-bound man's home in Aela as part of their community outreach program. About twenty personnel from MDSU-1 formed a first class mess in April with many projects in mind for their command. They voted to serve the community, called themselves the "Comfort, Security and Independence" (CSI) and assisted home-bound, elderly and disabled persons.

MDSU-1 photo