

LIBERTY CALL

We're 'Number One'



E. A. Barinque photo

Some of the 1,050 NEX Hawaii associates whose combined efforts made NEX Pearl Harbor the number one Navy Exchange in the world in 1998. The top status translates into better community service to all servicemembers stationed in the area, retirees, their dependents and those just passing through.

NEX, NAVREG Hawaii receive Bingham Award

by Milissa Kleinfelder
NEX MARKETING

Capt. Lonnie Mitchell, Vice Commander, Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) presented the 1998 Bingham Award for Excellence in Exchange Performance to Rear Adm. John W. Townes III, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii and Mike Cottrell, Director, NEX Hawaii on July 19.

The award recognizes NEX Pearl Harbor as the winner of the 1998 Bingham Award in the superstore category (stores with sales from \$60.9 to \$125.2 million).

"It is a great honor to be a part of today's ceremony, a ceremony commemorating the dedicated efforts of 1,050 super associates at a "superstore" — Navy Exchange Pearl Harbor. Each day you make a difference in the lives of Sailors, both active duty and retired, and their Navy Families," said Mitchell as he addressed a group of NEX Hawaii Associates gathered to witness the ceremony.

"You represent a non-cash benefit," continued Mitchell, "a right and a privilege to good prices, quality merchandise, a great shopping environment and superior customer service. I thank each of you for delivering on this commitment."

The award measures sales growth, customer comment card responses, operating costs and net profit, among other things. The performance of the Pearl Harbor Navy Exchange was compared to other exchanges of similar sales volume.

Mitchell told the audience that the award is well deserved and the accomplishments of Team Hawaii associates are many, including: An impressive operating profit of \$16,625,000 which exceeded plan by almost 23 percent and exceeded last year's profit by 6.8 percent.

For fiscal year 1998, sales increased from plan by 5.3 percent and last year by 6.9 percent. Sales for direct operating departments were \$120,051,000.

Customer relations programs reinforce a commitment to quality customer service and expanding interaction with the community both ashore and afloat. Customers are encouraged to participate in various focus groups, advisory boards, community meetings, etc.

NEX Hawaii displayed genuine concern for people and continued support of programs such as the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society and the Combined Federal Campaign as well as participation in the prevention of domestic violence and child abuse.

The NEX acquired a fleet of buses to support Sailors during last year's Rim of the Pacific exercise. The NEX also implemented new associate recognition programs and product training programs to better equip associates to serve Sailors and reward them for doing their jobs well.

In closing, Mitchell addressed NEX customers in the audience, "I thank you for your continuing support. You are the reason we are continually striving to provide the best quality merchandise at the best price." NEX profits support MWR quality of life programs for Sailors and their families.

NEX Hawaii's commitment to excellence is further exemplified by the selection of NEX Lualualei as a runner up in its category (sales from \$239,000 to \$762,000). NEX Lualualei won the Bingham Award in 1997.

Named for World War II Reserve Capt. W.H. Bingham, this award program was established in 1979 to recognize excellence in customer service, operations and management at Navy Exchange activities.

Bingham was chairman of the committee established by the Secretary of the Navy in 1945 to study NEX facilities. The study resulted in a recommendation to establish a worldwide network of Navy Exchanges.



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Capt. Lonnie Mitchell, Vice Commander, Navy Exchange Service Command presents the 1998 Bingham Award for excellence to Rear Adm. John W. Townes III, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii as Mike Cottrell, Director, NEX Hawaii looks on.



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A group of NEX Hawaii associates and customers assembled to take part in the awards ceremony.



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Capt. Lonnie Mitchell addresses a group of NEX Hawaii associates and customers as Rear Adm. John W. Townes III looks on.