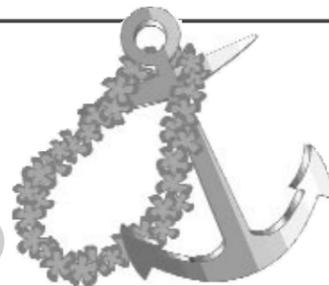


Hawaii Navy News



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IN BRIEF

Barbers Point BMC transfers ambulance service

Effective Nov. 1, Barbers Point Branch Medical Clinic will transfer ambulance services to the City and County.

Personnel working or residing in the following areas will be affected by this change:

Kalaeloa Community Development District (formerly Barbers Point Naval Air Station), Iroquois Point, Puuloa, West Loch, and Lualualei.

Personnel needing ambulance services in the affected areas should call 911 for emergencies. This change will provide fast, state-of-the-art emergency care. Personnel will be transported to St. Francis West or Tripler Army Medical Center depending on the urgency of their condition.

TRICARE beneficiaries are subject to cost-sharing and co-payments for emergency ambulance services depending on their enrollment status. Ambulance services for non-emergent care will be billed directly to the patient for payment. This charge is not reimbursable and payment will be the responsibility of the patient. For more information call the Barber's Point TRICARE representative at 684-1210.

Look for your PWC water quality report

Navy Public Works Center, Pearl Harbor (PWC Pearl) owns and operates five water distribution systems on Oahu.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires public water systems providers to prepare an annual report on the drinking water quality being piped to their customers. As the Navy's water purveyor, PWC Pearl will be distributing five 1998 Water Quality Reports, one for each of its five water systems.

Activities and civilian business customers who pay for PWC Pearl supplied water will receive a water report on the system from which they receive their water in the mail. Customers should post this information in prominent locations for employee access.

For Navy housing residents, copies of all five water reports are available at the Navy Family Housing Office/Navy Aloha Center.

Housing residents can also call the Housing Public Affairs Office at 474-1821 for assistance.

Additional copies of the report are available from the Navy Public Works Center, Public Affairs Office at 471-7300.

Fishing club's Ahi trophy missing

The Wainae Boat Fishing Club's prized fiberglass replica of a 200-pound ahi disappeared from the main display tent during Hydrofest '99. The trophy represents the Ahi Fever Tournament which raised more than \$21,000 for many non-profit keiki groups around Oahu.

Anyone with information about the trophy is asked to call 696-3399.

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O'Kane arrives in Pearl Harbor



PH2 Chad McNealey photo

O'Kane (DDG 77), the Navy's newest destroyer, pulls into Pearl Harbor last Friday in a festive atmosphere complete with a traditional Hawaiian welcome performed by Halau Hula Olana. O'Kane, brings 318 new Sailors and 110 families to the Navy Hawaii Ohana. O'Kane is scheduled for her commissioning ceremony tomorrow. See A-4 and A-5 for arrival photos.

By J01 David Nagle

NAVY REGION HAWAII

The Navy's newest and most advanced ship, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, O'Kane (DDG 77), arrived to its new home in Pearl Harbor last Friday.

After completing a 50-day journey from Bath, Maine to Hawaii, the ship's 318 crewmembers were greeted by 100 keiki hula dancers with the traditional aloha spirit.

Approximately 110 families relocated to Hawaii and are settling into homes in the Pearl Harbor area.

Rear Adm. John W. Townes, III, Commander Navy Region Hawaii and Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific welcomed O'Kane and its crew, commanded by Cmdr. David C. Hulse, during a brief ceremony at Naval Station Pearl Harbor. He said Hawaii has much to offer Sailors and their families, and encouraged them to make the most of their tour.

"Sailors and their families have long enjoyed living in Hawaii, mostly because of the warm hospitality and the aloha spirit shown by every-

▼ See O'KANE, A-3

Rear Admiral Richard H. O'Kane



Richard H. O'Kane was born in Dover, N.H., February 2, 1911. He attended Phillips Academy, Andover, and the University of New Hampshire before entering the United States Naval Academy in 1930.

Upon graduation in 1934, O'Kane was commissioned as an Ensign and served on USS Chester and USS Pruitt before reporting for instruction in submarines at the Submarine Base, New London, Conn., in January 1938. After completing his training, O'Kane served on the submarine USS Argonaut until 1942, when he reported for duty as executive officer of USS Wahoo. For outstanding service on Wahoo, O'Kane was awarded the Silver Star Medal with two gold stars, and a Letter of Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy.

In August 1943, O'Kane returned to the Mare Island Navy Yard where he assumed command of USS Tang upon her commissioning on Oct. 15, 1943. After intensive training exercises in the San Diego area, Tang left for the Pacific, arriving in Pearl Harbor on Jan. 8, 1944. Under Cmdr. O'Kane, Tang went on five war patrols, sinking a total of 31 ships, totaling more than 227,000 tons, and damaging two other ships, a record unsurpassed by any American submarine.

During its fifth and final war patrol, from Sept. 24 and ended on Oct. 25, 1944, Tang sank 13 enemy ships.

In what was to be her final battle, the Tang encountered a heavily escorted enemy convoy. Engaged in a fierce surface battle, Cmdr. O'Kane directed Tang to fire her last

two torpedoes at a crippled transport ship. The first torpedo went straight and true and struck its target. The second torpedo was faulty and turned around almost immediately, heading directly for Tang. Ordering emergency speed, Tang tried to pull out of its path, but it struck the submarine in the stern, causing a violent explosion. Of the entire crew, only nine were able to escape the sinking submarine. They swam through the night until they were picked up by a Japanese destroyer escort eight hours later.

Cmdr. O'Kane and the others from Tang were imprisoned on Formosa. He was later transferred to a secret prison camp near Tokyo where he was not registered and was therefore listed as "missing in action" until the camp's liberation two weeks after V-J Day.

During his imprisonment, he and the other prisoners survived on a diet of less than 300 calories a day, eating mostly rice or barley, without fruit, vegetables or protein. Upon his release, O'Kane was suffering from scurvy and beriberi. He was evacuated by air to Pearl Harbor and, after a short hospitalization there, was transferred to the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, N.H.

After his recovery, O'Kane's commands included USS Pelias and USS Sperry, as well as the submarine school in New London, Conn., Submarine Division Thirty-Two and Submarine Squadron Seven. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his exemplary service on Tang on Mar. 27, 1947. Rear Admiral O'Kane's other military decorations include the Navy Cross with two Gold Stars, the Legion of Merit with Combat "V", the Purple Heart and the Prisoner of War Medal. He also wrote two books based on his experiences in World War II, "Clear the Bridge" and "Wahoo."

Rear Admiral O'Kane passed away in February 1994. His wife, Ernestine, two children, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren survive him.

SGLI improvements assist surviving family members

American Forces Press Service

Recent changes to the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program should ease the burden on beneficiaries immediately following a service member's death.

Since June 1999, benefits are immediately placed into interest-bearing checking accounts rather than lump-sum checks mailed to beneficiaries, which was the previous practice.

Now, beneficiaries receive a checkbook for an Alliance Account set up by Prudential Insurance Co., that runs the program.

"This is important because it relieves the immediacy on the part of the beneficiary to find something to do with that money," Navy Capt. Elliott Bloxom said.

"It gives the beneficiary, during their time of grief, the opportunity to have that money available, but if they don't use it right away, it

▼ See SGLI, A-3

NEX/Commissary ready in spite of possible strike

By J01 David Nagle

NAVY REGION HAWAII

As the State of Hawaii braces for a possible longshoreman strike that could impact shipment of consumer goods, Navy families can rest assured that the Navy Exchange and commissary are working hard to keep their shelves stocked and minimize the impact a strike may have on quality of life.

News of a potential strike from Hawaii's dockworkers union seeking a new contract that offers pay and benefits parity with their mainland counterparts, has prompted families throughout the state to stock up on consumable goods this week.

Navy Exchange stores on Oahu were no exception.

"This has already had an impact on us," said Navy Exchange Hawaii Director Mike Cottrell. "Over the past week, people have been stocking up on certain items,

especially paper goods."

Cottrell said the NEX is reviewing its stock levels and is coordinating with NEX headquarters to find alternative ways to bring merchandise in from the mainland. NEX Hawaii developed a plan to have necessity items flown in via Air Mobility Command flights from Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

"We're going to do everything possible to take care of the needs of our Sailors and their families," Cottrell emphasized.

Alan Esperas, commissary officer for the Pearl Harbor Commissary, agrees. "This is a quality of life issue and we're going to support the community to the fullest extent possible."

Esperas noted that commissary customers were making larger purchases in anticipation of a possible strike, especially rice and paper products. He said that al-

▼ See COMMISSARY, A-3

USS San Francisco visits namesake



USS San Francisco photo

USS San Francisco (SSN 771), a fast-attack submarine based in Pearl Harbor, is guided toward Alameda Harbor in San Francisco Bay Oct. 9 for Fleet Week 99. USS San Francisco, namesake of the California city, visited San Francisco along with several other U.S. Navy vessels.