



“Navigator”
WHO'OKELE
FOR THE NAVY AND AIR FORCE TEAM IN HAWAII

JULY/AUGUST 2023



FAMILIES, FRIENDS WELCOME
USS Vermont
TO NEW HOMEPORT AT JBPHH



Director of Public Affairs, Navy Region Hawaii
Lydia Robertson

Deputy Director of Public Affairs, Navy Region Hawaii
Mike Andrews

Director of Public Affairs, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam
Chuck Anthony

Director of Public Affairs, Pacific Missile Range Facility
Lisa Ferdinando

Managing Editor / Writer / Layout
Anna Gonzales

Video Editor / Photographer
Melvin Gonzalvo

Military Editor / Media Operations
MCC Christopher Blachly

July/August Story Contributors
Joanne Hayag
MCC Amy Biller
MC2 Bodie Estep

July/August Layout Contributors
Elaine Phillips
MC1 Chris Williamson
MC2 Bodie Estep



Ho'okele is a free publication. All editorial content is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the staff of the Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Office: 850 Ticonderoga, Suite 110, JBPHH, Hawaii, 96860-4884. Telephone: (808) 473-2888; fax (808) 473-2876. This is an authorized publication primarily for members of the uniformed military services and their families in Hawaii. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, and the military branch of services and do not imply endorsement thereof. A Hui Hou!

Ho'okele Magazine
- CNRH website: <https://cnrh.cnic.navy.mil/hookele>
Ho'okele Video
- CNRH Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NavyRegionHawaii/videos>

ON THE COVER:

Sailors assigned to the Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Vermont (SSN 792) reunite with their loved ones as Vermont arrives at its new homeport of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, July 27. (Photo by MC1 Christopher Williamson)



Welcome USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120)

The Navy's newest Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120), and its crew arrived at the ship's new home port of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Aug. 7. (Lt. Autumn Estrada)

Your Navy Team in Hawaii

Commander, Navy Region Hawaii oversees two installations: Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) on Oahu and Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF), Barking Sands, on Kauai. We provide oversight for the ten surface ships homeported at JBPHH. Navy aircraft squadrons are also co-located at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe, Oahu, and training is sometimes also conducted on other islands, but most Navy assets are located at JBPHH and PMRF. These two installations serve fleet, fighter and family under the direction of Commander, Navy Installations Command.

The Navy, including your Navy team in Hawaii, builds partnerships and strengthens interoperability in the Pacific. Each year, Navy ships, submarines and aircraft from Hawaii participate in various training exercises with allies and friends in the Pacific and Indian Oceans to strengthen interoperability. Navy service members and civilians conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster response missions in the South Pacific and in Asia. Working with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Navy in Hawaii provides drug interdiction and fisheries enforcement operations for Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. In even-numbered years, Hawaii hosts the biennial summer Rim of the Pacific Exercise, the world's largest military maritime exercise, featuring more than two dozen nations and 25,000 personnel.

The Navy family in Hawaii comprises around 50,000 people, most of whom are active duty service members and their families, and includes nearly 15,000 civilians and contractors as part of our workforce.

JBPHH includes the Pearl Harbor waterfront, Hickam flight line, Wahiawa annex and several other areas in West Oahu and provides a major logistics and other support hub for the military and military families. Supporting the nation's ballistic missile defense initiative, the Pacific Missile Range Facility on the western coast of "The Garden Island," is the world's largest instrumented multidimensional testing and training missile range.

We provide services to the U.S. Pacific Command, one of the Department of Defense's six geographic combatant commands, with an area of responsibility covering half the globe. We directly support two component commands whose headquarters are on JBPHH: Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Commander, U.S. Pacific Air Force. Close to our own Region headquarters command is Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. With 18 forward-deployable combat-ready U.S. Navy submarines, Pearl Harbor is home to the largest submarine presence in the Pacific. The Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, on JBPHH, is the largest ship repair facility between the West Coast and the Far East. Within our region, we support more than 100 tenant commands.

CONTENTS

04-07

AROUND NAVY REGION HAWAII
- Hurricane Season: Are you Ready?
- Preventing Wildfires
- FFD trains recruits, partners with HFD

08-11

COVER STORY
- Families and Friends welcome USS Vermont to its new homeport

12-15

AROUND JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM
- Navy identifies Invasive Species, partners with authorities to stop spread
- Lifeguards on duty

16-17

AROUND PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE FACILITY
- Protecting the Hawaiian Hoary Bat

18

BACK PAGE
- Observing Women's Equality Day



connect with us

@NavRegHawaii
 @JointBasePHH
 @NavyRegionHawaii
 @JBPHH
 @PacificMissileRangeFacility



Commander
Navy Region Hawaii
REAR ADM. STEPHEN BARNETT



Commander
Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam
CAPT. MARK SOHANEY



Commanding Officer
Pacific Missile Range Facility
CAPT. BRETT STEVENSON

Wildfire & Drought LOOKOUT!



In the central pacific region, the first of June marks the beginning of hurricane season. This period spans from June 1 through Nov. 30 and brings with it an increased threat of hurricanes and the damage they inevitably cause. While we cannot change the weather, we can partake in several best practices in order to mitigate its associated risks.

ARE YOU READY? HURRICANE SEASON

Story by Lt. Jessica Narr, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs
Courtesy photo by NOAA

Hurricanes produce innumerable threats, including storm surge, wind damage, rip currents, and flooding. They typically happen along the coast, and can affect areas more than 100 miles inland—meaning, on an island like Oahu, the entire island is at risk, not just the coastline. A direct hit on Honolulu Harbor, for example, has disastrous ramifications.

“Historically we have less than two weeks of food in the islands so a direct hit [on Honolulu Harbor] is the danger that we have,” Gov. Josh Green said, in a recent interview with Honolulu Star-Advertiser’s Spotlight Hawaii.

Because of this, it is recommended to have two weeks’ worth of food, water, medication, and emergency preparedness items. Smaller kits should be made for your workplace, vehicle, children, and pets, in addition to your main kit at home. For a comprehensive list of what to pack in your kit, visit ready.gov/kit.

Once you’ve packed your kit, your next step should be developing an emergency plan for your household. To make it easy, use the fillable emergency plan form at ready.gov/plan-form.

“Besides getting a kit, having a plan, staying informed and getting involved, it’s really important to do a little research,” said Will Luna, CNRH emergency management manager. “If you have children, have some games in your emergency kit that they can play that don’t require power like cards or board games that are

easy to carry.”

“Also, think about medicine. If you have prescriptions that you need, the pharmacy may not be available right away. So talk to your doctor about getting an extra stash of medicine that you can put in your emergency kit,” Luna added.

Discuss as a household where you will shelter, how you will communicate, and where you will evacuate to, if possible. It is important to also consider specific needs within your household, especially if you live with keiki (children), kupuna (grandparents), or pets.

Finally, to stay informed prior to, during, and in the aftermath of a hurricane, download the FEMA app and sign up for community alerts in your area. This will allow you to receive real-time weather alerts from the National Weather Service to allow you to best react to weather as it unfolds.

We can’t change the weather, but we can change how we prepare for it. Make a plan, pack your kit, and stay informed. Are you two weeks ready?

For more information on how to be ready for a hurricane in Hawaii, visit the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency website at dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/what-supplies-do-i-need-to-be-ready-for-a-hurricane/

**Make a plan, pack your kit, and stay informed.
Are you two weeks ready?**

DROUGHT MEANS MORE WILDFIRE --BE ALERT AND PREPARED--

- **Dry conditions** significantly increase wildfire risk in Hawaii.
- Wildfires are a **frequent, year-round hazard** across Hawaii.
- Nearly all wildfires **are started by people**.
- Drought during past El Niños led to some of Hawaii’s largest wildfires on **both windward and leeward** sides.



The rainforest can burn when there is no rain.

HELP DO YOUR PART BY PREVENTING WILDFIRE



Clear vegetation 10 feet around campfires and BBQs, keep a shovel and water nearby, and put them out COLD before walking away.



Be sure machinery (chainsaws, weed trimmers) and recreational vehicles have operating spark arrestors and are maintained regularly.



Heat from vehicle exhaust systems can ignite dry grass - park cars on areas that are paved or where vegetation is trimmed and cleared.



Fireworks are a common cause of brushfires in dry, grassy areas - attend and enjoy public fireworks displays to maximize safety and fire protection.

Avoid these activities when it’s windy or grass and brush are dry!

This message brought to you by:

- Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization
- University of Hawaii CTAHR Cooperative Extension
- Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources
- DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- NOAA National Weather Service
- Hawaii Community College
- U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii
- Honolulu Fire Department
- Hawaii Fire Department
- Maui Fire Department
- Kauai Fire Department
- Federal Fire Department
- National Park Service
- Pacific Fire Exchange
- USDA Forest Service



Created by Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization on behalf of Oahu Wildfire Information Exchange and Big Island Wildfire Coordinating Group.



RECRUITING PARTNERSHIP TRAINING

Federal Fire Department trains firefighter recruits, partners with Honolulu



Story by Anna Gonzales / Photos by Melvin Gonzalvo
Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

Camaraderie and partnership are some of the key tools that bring firefighters to train together and work as a team.

The Navy Region Hawaii Federal Fire Department (FFD) trained 33 firefighter recruits, during a 26-week firefighter recruit drill training that continues to take place until September at the Hickam fire training facility on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, which include 29 FFD, including four women and five paramedics, and four state airport firefighters.

During the first week of training in July, firefighter recruits worked hand-in-hand performing several drills in a simulated setting that included a two-story building housefire, a makeshift ship, aircraft, doorways and garages. It was a playground of firefighting props.

From speckles of flame flying from rotary saw drilling to the breaking down of metal and wooden doors, firefighter drill leaders also guided recruits on how to properly wear their gear.

“Upon completion, recruits will receive professional Department of Defense (DoD) certification as firefighter I, firefighter II, hazmat awareness, hazmat operations, airport firefighter,

and national certification as emergency medical technicians,” said Gregg Moriguchi, regional fire chief for Navy Region Hawaii Federal Fire Department.

Once FFD recruits graduate in September, they will be assigned to fire stations on military installations on Oahu.

In collaboration with the state airport firefighters, the FFD hosts and trains through a cooperative arrangement and sharing of resources.

In addition to FFD hosting training drills for firefighter recruits, they also partnered with the Honolulu Fire Department during a fire drill demonstration on July 7.

“The partnership between our Federal Fire Department and Honolulu Fire Department gives both departments an opportunity to create allies in problem solving, innovation and recruitment,” said Neil Fujioka, deputy fire chief for Navy Region Hawaii. “Lastly, it also reassures our communities of our resources that all firefighters are trained and certified.”

Whether out on a rescue mission risking their lives, firefighters are one team, one fight, as first

responders.

Capt. Mark Sohaney, commander, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam said FFD and HFD had this partnership for a very long time and everybody knows it because it’s part of living on an island. It is one team, one fight, and taking care of the people in our community. Fire response is a part of that.

“We have the Honolulu Fire Department and the Federal Fire Department working together on how to do some basic fire maneuvers,” said Sohaney. “We’d like to do this more often so that we are on the same page. We are one team, one fight.”



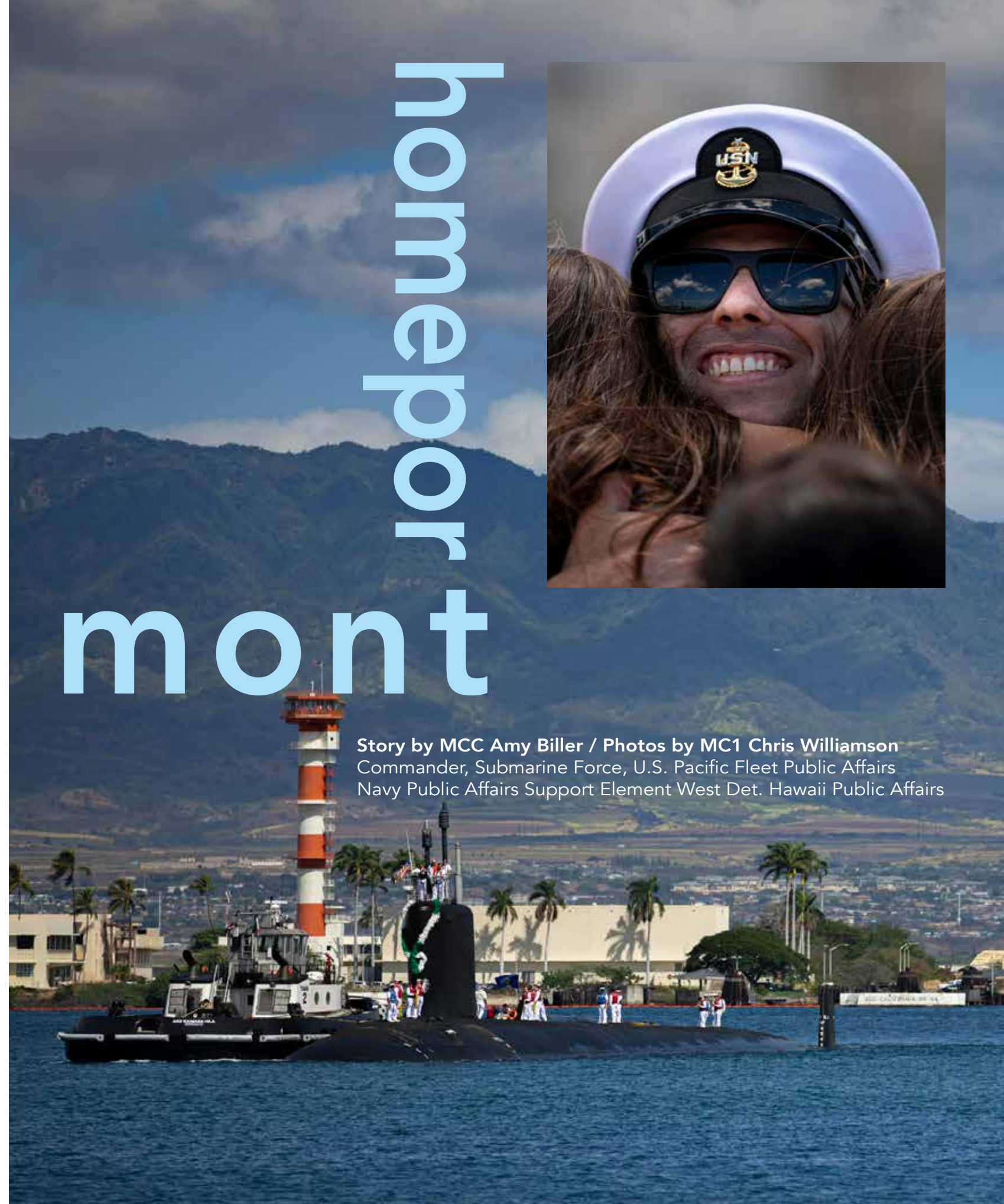


er mont

homepor



Story by MCC Amy Biller / Photos by MC1 Chris Williamson
Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs
Navy Public Affairs Support Element West Det. Hawaii Public Affairs



The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Vermont (SSN 792) and its crew of approximately 130 Sailors arrived at its new homeport at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, July 27, 2023.

Vermont, the first Block IV Virginia-class submarine to enter service, is a new construction submarine that is joining the six Virginia-class submarines already assigned to Commander, Submarine Squadron (CSS) 1. More than half of the U.S. Navy's submarine force is based in the Indo-Pacific region due to the area's strategic importance.

"We are excited to add a seventh Virginia-class submarine to our 'Squadron Wolfpack,' and for Vermont's crew and families to join the Pearl Harbor Ohana," said Capt. Aaron Peterson, commodore of CSS-1.

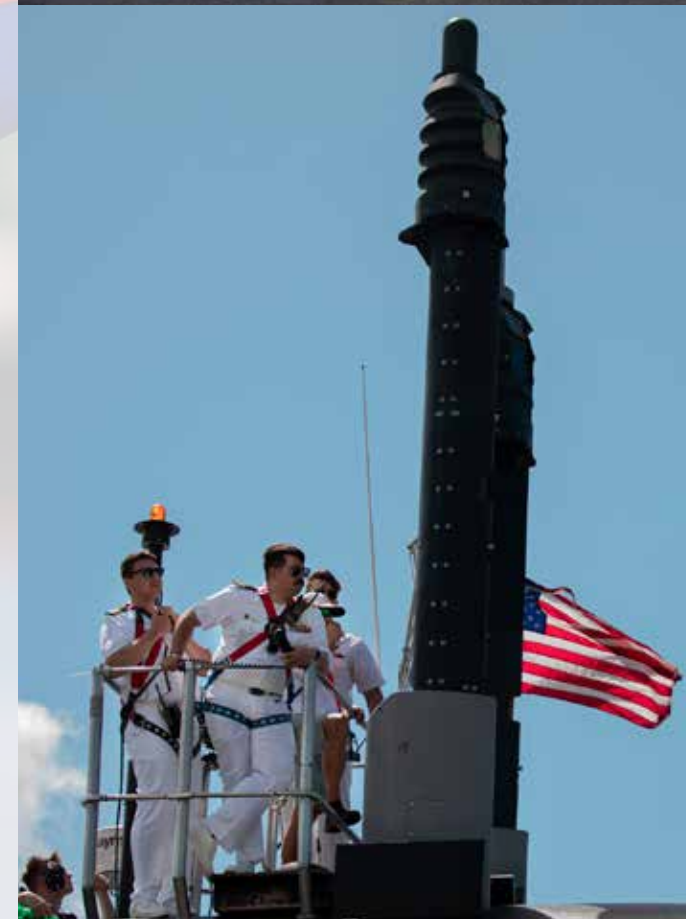
"Vermont will be the newest submarine in the Pacific and certainly enhances our warfighting posture and ability to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region."

Vermont was commissioned administratively April 18, 2020, in Groton, Connecticut, and conducted its post-shakedown availability until the transit to Pearl Harbor. The submarine operated in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations that same year, where it conducted anti-submarine warfare exercises with a Brazilian Navy submarine and maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft.

Vermont is the third U.S. Navy ship to be named after the Green Mountain State. The first was one of nine 74-gun warships authorized by Congress in 1816. The second, Battleship No. 20, was commissioned in 1907 and first deployed in December of that year as part of the "Great White Fleet."

Vermont is assigned to U.S. 3rd Fleet. An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute the Navy's role across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security in the Indo-Pacific.

"Vermont will be the newest submarine in the Pacific and certainly enhances our warfighting posture and ability to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region."



NAVY IDENTIFIES INVASIVE SPECIES

partners with authorities to

STOP SPREAD

Story by Joanne Hayag
Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Public Affairs
Photo courtesy of NAVFAC Hawaii

In February 2023, while conducting survey work, a non-Navy biologist identified several sea anemone floating on driftwood along the shoreline of Ford Island, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH). The species, identified as *Anemonia manjano*, is an invasive species with the potential to negatively impact Hawaii coral reefs. The biologist reported the presence of the species immediately to local, state, and federal authorities.

Invasive species have historically been an issue in Hawaii due to heavy harbor and air traffic. Due to the isolation of the Hawaiian Archipelago and the number of native species, Hawaii is particularly sensitive to the introduction of new species. From insects like the coconut rhinoceros beetle that damage palm trees, to the recently identified octocoral, known to rapidly overtake local reefs - all invasive species have the potential to catastrophically impact and upset the natural balance of the Hawaiian ecosystem.

Biosecurity is a major concern for the state and the U.S. Navy. The state implements strict agricultural regulations, and Navy vessels follow strict operational requirements and biosecurity policies prior to entering United States waters - making it unlikely that this species arrived on the hulls of U.S. Navy ships.

No one knows for certain how the *Anemonia manjano* arrived in Hawaii.

Christina Copenrath, a Marine Resources management specialist with Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Hawaii, provided insight about the sea anemone, native to the Indo-West Pacific.

"It is popular among inexperienced aquarists due to its resilient nature but can become a pest in aquariums, as it can easily overgrow tanks. This species can also overtake areas currently occupied by our native corals," Copenrath also highlighted the sea anemone's trait as a "hitchhiker," with its ability to survive in new environments hidden in the nooks and crannies of rocks or woody marine debris.

Aquarium dumps have occurred previously in Hawaii and can result in catastrophic impacts to our local coral reef communities. This makes education and outreach critical for

prevention, both by educating residents which species are not legal to own in aquariums in Hawaii, as well as educating aquarium owners on the importance of not disposing of tank articles into the ocean.

"Whatever becomes a problem in your aquarium is going to also become a problem in the marine environment," said Copenrath. "So whatever nuisance that's posing to you within your small aquarium, will just become magnified once it's released into the marine environment, because there's more space to grow."

"We really just want to make sure people aren't releasing their pets when they feel like they have no other options. There are people who are out there - able and willing to help you."

Resources available to residents include the JBPHH Natural Resources Department, local aquarium shops, humane societies, and various online support groups.

The state of Hawaii also has an amnesty program that allows for the anonymous surrender of illegal species and exemption from penalty, provided the surrender is done prior to the state beginning an investigation.

The Navy continues to be committed to collaborating with partnering agencies to educate the public, effectively ensure the eradication and long-term adaptive management of invasive species, to protect the delicate Hawaiian ecosystem.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DLNR website
dlnr.hawaii.gov/ais/report-an-aquatic-invasive-species

CNRH website
cnrh.cnmc.navy.mil/Operations-and-Management/Environmental/

“What is your biggest summer swimming safety tip?”

LIFEGUARDS ON DUTY



Story by Anna Gonzales / Photos by Melvin Gonzalvo
Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

Surrounded by its tropical year-round weather and blue crystal-clear ocean, Hawaii is a natural playground for swimmers, surfers, boaters and divers alike.

Many people look for ways to cool down and have fun in the sun. But it is always important to remember swimming safety before you go in for a splash.

“Whether sitting on the sand and getting a nice tan, lifeguards also need to be aware of their surroundings,” said Johnnie Murray-Scheidt, aquatics director for Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam’s Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR). “The importance of a lifeguard is to make sure our patrons, our families and our keiki (children) are safe.”

Growing up around the water, surfing and playing water polo, Zoe Spencer, an MWR lifeguard at Hickam family pool, describes her typical day as an MWR lifeguard.

“When we get out there to the pool, we watch the kids and everybody else that comes in and make sure that they are safe,” said Spencer. “The best part about being a lifeguard is being out in the sun and in the water, educating people and making sure they are aware of what’s going on around them.”

While ensuring swimming safety, another MWR lifeguard shares his day-to-day experience on the job around the pool.

“I spend my day as a lifeguard ensuring facility cleanliness and making sure the deck is clear of all hazards, and making sure the bathrooms are nice and clean,” said Chiristian King, another MWR lifeguard. “We set up for the day and sign eligible patrons in, making sure kids who have a swim card have a wristband. We also conduct swim tests and enforce Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) policies throughout the day.”

Being a lifeguard teaches valuable skills and keeps one in good physical condition, and the opportunity to support military and their families.

To become a certified lifeguard, contact Scott Pool at (808) 473-0394 or visit www.greatlifehawaii.com.



Zoe

“My biggest summer swimming safety tip is just to be attentive to your kids around the water and know their abilities.”



Chiristian

“My biggest summer safety tip is to drink plenty of water.”



Maddie

“My biggest summer safety tip is to always wear sunscreen so we don’t get sunburned and we can have fun in the sun.”



Protecting the Hawaiian Hoary Bat Pups

Story and graphic by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Bodie Estep
Courtesy of Pacific Missile Range Facility, Barking Sands

Generally speaking, no one wants to be bitten and bothered by pests such as mosquitos. More than just the general annoyance mosquitoes cause, they are actually an invasive species that play a hand in population declines of native forest birds due to the diseases the insects carry. Luckily, there are a variety of animals that help with controlling insect numbers. Microbats are one such animal, eating about 40% of their body weight in insects every night.

“One of Kaua‘i’s lesser known cute critters is the endangered Hawaiian Hoary Bat - Hawai‘i’s only native land mammal,” said Capt. Brett Stevenson, commanding officer, Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF), Barking Sands. **“The bats are highly beneficial in keeping the mosquito population in check here on base.”**

There are over 900 species of microbats throughout the world and they can weigh as little as three grams. The Hawaiian Hoary Bat, or ‘Ōpe‘ape‘a in Hawaiian, is considered large for a microbat, weighing in at up to 14 grams. However, comparably speaking that is still not very big when considering 14 grams is only about the weight of three quarters.

The ‘Ōpe‘ape‘a is solitary and tree-roosting, so they do not nest in caves like other bats. The Hawaiian name means “half-leaf.” This name stems from the fact that their wings resemble the bottom of a taro leaf. Hoary, which means grayish white, is a reference to the frosty color on its back.

The ‘Ōpe‘ape‘a differs from other bats for other reasons as well. They are one of the very few species of bat that use

calls at a frequency low enough that humans can hear it. Also, thanks to Hawai‘i being rabies-free, these bats do not carry rabies, even though they are susceptible to it.

Despite these fun facts, there is actually very little known about the ‘Ōpe‘ape‘a. They are very difficult to find, making it a challenge to learn much about them. This means that there isn’t even an accurate number for the population.

Adding to the already difficult process of protecting this species, the babies, or pups, are unable to fly. Due to this, they hang in the tops of trees until they are old enough to learn. Brooke McFarland, Natural Resources Manager for PMRF, stresses that in order to protect the pups hanging in the trees, it is crucial to avoid cutting or trimming trees that are over 15 feet tall during pupping season, which is June 1 to September 15. It is very difficult to see these tiny bats and the best way to avoid knocking them out of the trees or injuring them is to not cut the trees. If a pup is knocked from the tree, there is likely nothing that can be done to help it. Once it is down, it can reasonably be considered a loss.

“The bats are rare, so one is unlikely to be in a random single tree,” said Stephen Rossiter, a field biology coordinator with PMRF. **“However, because they are rare, if there were one in that tree, it is important to protect it.”**

To protect this endangered species, which has the benefit of minimizing invasive mosquitos and other pests on base, PMRF will continue to regulate tree trimming during pupping season, June 1-September 15.

For any questions regarding tree trimming on base during this period, contact the PMRF environmental hotline at (808) 208-4416 or PMRFEnvironmental@us.navy.mil.

‘Ōpe‘ape‘a the Hawaiian Hoary Bat



They can be found in
lowlands and the mountains
and are sometimes even seen foraging over saltwater!

Hawaiian Hoary Bats only eat
insects such as **termites**
and **mosquitoes.**



Because they are solitary, these bats are difficult to find. This means **very little is known about them,** including accurate population numbers.

Unlike most bats on the mainland, **Hawaiian hoary bats do not congregate in caves but are solitary and roost in trees.** They are very difficult to see in their tree roosts, but you may see them flying at night while hunting.

Where does the name come from?

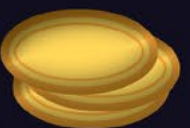
The Hawaiian name for the Hawaiian hoary bat, ‘Ōpe‘ape‘a, means “half-leaf” and is due to its wings resembling the bottom of a taro leaf. The name “hoary bat” refers to the frost-like coloring of its back.

Microbats around the world use echolocation to fly around obstacles, such as trees and buildings, in the dark, and to hunt for insects. **The hoary bats are one of very few bats that use lower frequency calls, including some that overlap with human hearing.** This means that if you listen carefully, you may be able to hear these bats “clicking” at night.

These bats birth twins, once a year in the summer. Bat pups cannot fly for several months after they are born, and typically occupy trees 15 feet and taller. **To protect this endangered species, don’t trim trees ≥15 feet tall** during the Hawaiian hoary bat pupping season from **01 June – 15 September.**

Hawaii is rabies-free and Hawaiian hoary bats do not carry rabies, but they are susceptible to it like humans.

They weigh as much **three quarters (about half an ounce)** and are considered large for a (micro) bat.



The Hawaiian hoary bat is the **only native land mammal in the Hawaiian Islands.**



CULTURAL
AWARENESS

OBSERVANCE



AUGUST 26

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

CONTINUING TO MAKE HISTORY



On Women's Equality Day, we honor the movement for universal suffrage that led to the 19th Amendment. We celebrate the progress of women over the years and renew our commitment to advancing gender equity.

The amendment changed federal law and the face of the American electorate forever.

The determination to win the vote was an expansive and diverse effort. While the Alaska Territory granted Alaskan women full voting rights in 1913, seven years before the 19th Amendment, many women still did not have the right to vote after the amendment's ratification.

American Indian women fought for their right to vote until 1924, Chinese American women until 1943, and Japanese and other Asian American women until 1952.

A strong suffrage movement existed in many Black communities. However, the laws, particularly in the South, barred Black women from voting for decades after 1920. It wasn't until the passing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 that these women obtained suffrage as well.

Female firsts still occur to this day. Seven women from the U.S. Navy recently made history when they conducted the first all-female pregame flyover at Super Bowl 2023. The Navy flyover honored "50 years of women flying" for the maritime service branch, which began teaching women to fly in 1973.

In November 2022, Captain Rhea McFarland became the first Black female C-17 pilot to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross for her leadership in Afghanistan. The Distinguished Flying Cross is the Air Force's highest honor awarded for acts of heroism or extraordinary achievement during aerial operations.

McFarland was on one of the last aircraft to depart Kabul, marking the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Her crew made three harrowing trips to the Afghan capital.

Today as we celebrate the passage of the 19th Amendment, we are reminded we all have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to create a society that gives both men and women an equal voice.