

SEPT/OCT 2023

*Remembering*  
Pg. 8 **OUR HEROES**





# BLESSING CEREMONY COMMENCES DEFUELING

Kahu Kordell Kekoa sounds the Pu (conch shell) Oct. 14, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, to begin the blessing ceremony hosted by Joint Task Force – Red Hill for the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility defueling process. (DoD photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Kyler Chatman)



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**ON THE COVER:**

A woman pays her respects to fallen service members at the Boot Memorial Hero & Remembrance Run on Ford Island, Sept. 10. The Boot Memorial Hero & Remembrance Run honors the more than 8,000 service members who lost their lives in combat since September 11, 2001. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Chris Williamson)



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!

**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.

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Navy Region Hawaii  
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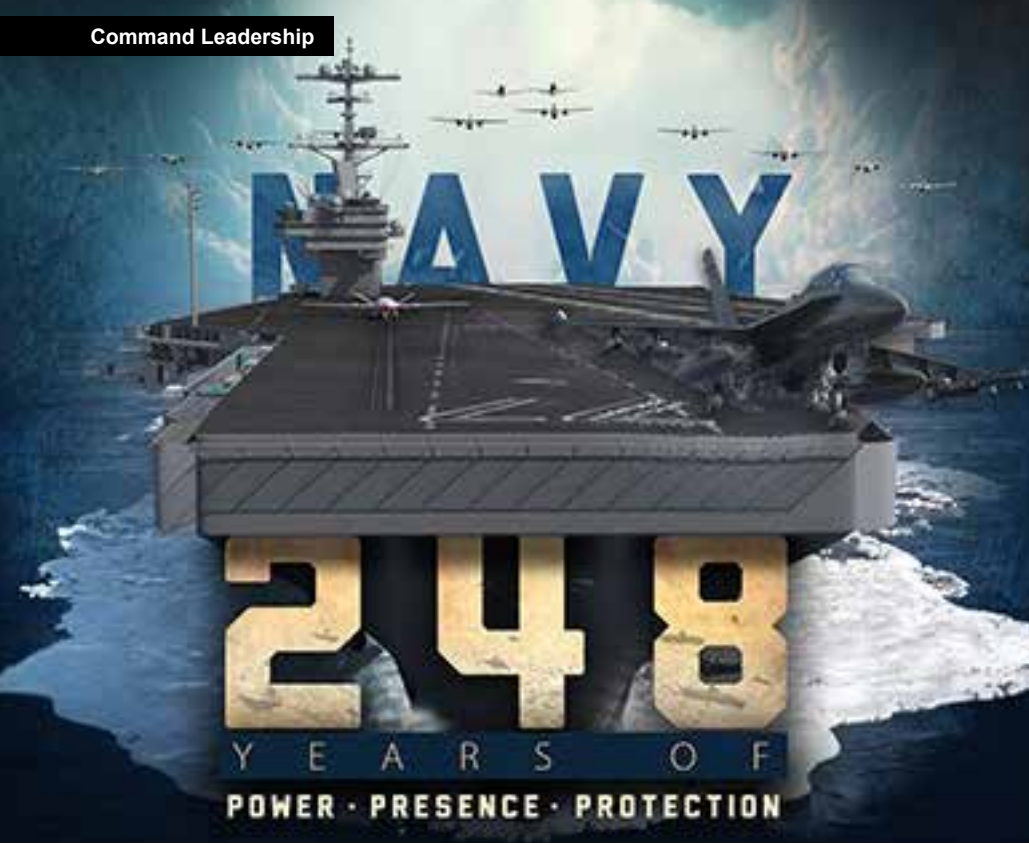


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# Commands take Energy Action

October 2023 commences National Clean Energy Action Month, a celebratory time in which the federal government is “Taking Action” by providing leadership in energy management and federal facility optimization, energy resilience and security, and the use of distributed energy and energy procurement.

This year, the theme is “Achieve, Lead, Innovate.” The federal government is taking action - and so can you!

For the Navy, Energy Action Month is a program that promotes sustainability and energy efficiency, while encouraging the smart use of energy, water, and transportation resources.

In observance of Energy Action Month, here at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH), social media platforms and daily newsletters will be used to promote energy and water conservation.

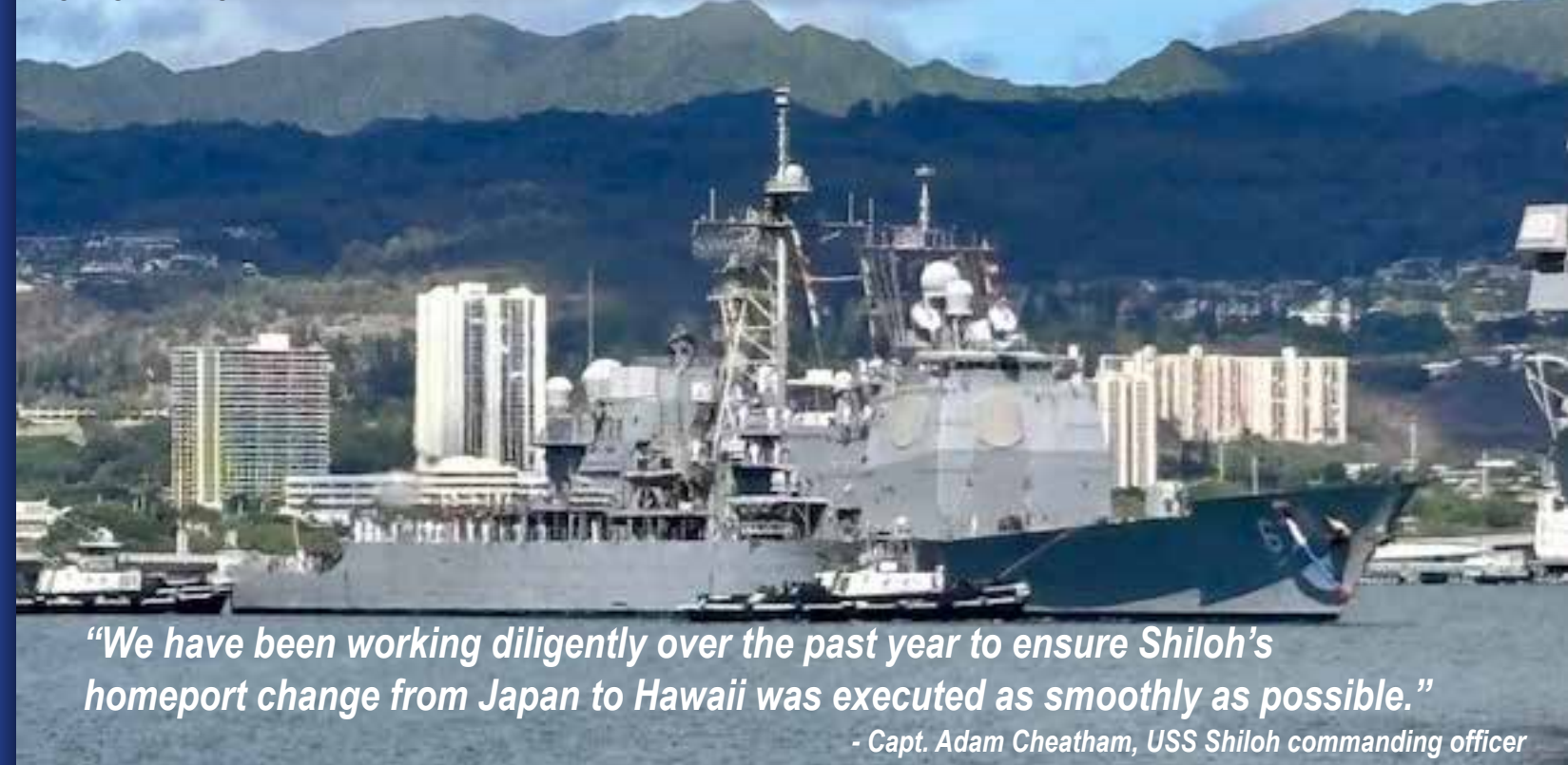
Moreover, military and civilian personnel will be asked to participate in “Watts for Lunch?” energy conservation campaign to turn off one electric device (or more), on Wednesdays, during lunch time.

The JBPHH energy team will also be conducting Building Energy Monitor (BEM) training sessions (time and date to be determined).

With these activities, we hope to increase attention to energy and water use, and to develop energy and water efficient behaviors that will continue throughout the year.

# USS Shiloh homeport shifts to Hawaii

Story and photo by Lt. j.g. Autumn Estrada  
CNSG MIDPAC Public Affairs

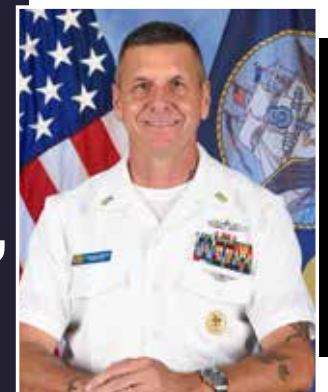


*“We have been working diligently over the past year to ensure Shiloh’s homeport change from Japan to Hawaii was executed as smoothly as possible.”*

*- Capt. Adam Cheatham, USS Shiloh commanding officer*



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, U.S. NAVY



Rear Adm. Stephen Barnett, CNRH Commander

CMDM Derek Mullenhour, CNRH Command Master Chief

Our U.S. Navy is 248 years old - one year older than the nation we protect!

I think I can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, ‘I served in the United States Navy.’”

Our origins trace back to the Continental Navy, which was established by the Continental Congress on Oct. 13, 1775, by authorizing two armed vessels to cruise in search of munitions ships supplying the British army in America.

As we celebrate the Navy’s birthday - 248 years of excellence, honor, and service to the world - that same pride and satisfaction are evident in every Sailor, civilian, and family member of Navy Region Hawaii and our bases. You are manifestation of our core values of honor, courage, and commitment.

Today, the U.S. Navy is always ready to defend our shores, maintain sea control, and protect our national security and economic interests. Navy bases allow the fleet to maintain readiness and respond at a moment’s notice during peacetime and war. As the primary platform for a lethal naval force, Navy Region Hawaii and our installations are the critical link to our Navy’s ability to generate power, presence, and protection.

Team members of Navy Region Hawaii, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, and Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands can stand with pride knowing we are serving our nation and fulfilling a promise we have made to the people of Hawaii.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy stood in front of U.S. Naval Academy graduates and said, “Any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile,

You inspire and motivate us, and we are grateful for our dedication to our mission. It is an honor to serve our great Navy and nation with you.

Happy birthday, shipmates and teammates!

POWER · PRESENCE · PROTECTION

The Ticonderoga-class guided missile-cruiser USS Shiloh (CG 67) arrived to its new homeport of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Oct. 14, as part of a planned rotation of forces in the Pacific.

Shiloh is now assigned to Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific (CNSG MIDPAC) and U.S. 3rd Fleet.

Shiloh departed Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 5 to transit to Hawaii and assist in enforcing international fisheries laws during their Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) mission. OMSI is a Secretary of Defense program leveraging Department of Defense assets transiting the region to increase the Coast Guard’s maritime domain awareness, ultimately supporting its maritime law enforcement operations in Oceania.

Recently, as part of the Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group, Shiloh entered the South China Sea in June to conduct maritime security

operations, including strike exercises and coordinated tactical training between surface and air units. The training operations marked the first time the carrier had entered the South China Sea since its 2021 deployment. Shiloh also participated in Exercise Pacific Griffin 2023 in the Philippine Sea in June, which aimed to facilitate maritime proficiency between the U.S. and the Republic of Singapore.

“We have been working diligently over the past year to ensure Shiloh’s homeport change from Japan to Hawaii was executed as smoothly as possible,” said Capt. Adam Cheatham, commanding officer of Shiloh. “This would have not been possible without the excellent coordination we had with CNSG MIDPAC and the Navy Housing Service Center. Together they ensured we were able to smoothly transition to our new homeport and made it easy for our crew and their families to quickly acquire housing. We are excited to continue serving our country with our new shipmates in Hawaii.”

During Shiloh’s transit to Hawaii, the ship made port calls in major naval ports including Suva,

Fiji; Subic Bay, Philippines; and Apra Harbor, Guam.

Aloha to Shiloh and welcome to Hawaii!

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute our 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 our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

The mission of Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific is to manage the overall warfighting capability of the Surface Combatant Force homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; to coordinate through the Fleet Response Plan cycle the manning, operations, combat systems, engineering, maintenance, training, logistics, administration, and support of assigned units to achieve the highest levels of combat readiness.

**“Our first responders and our staff here at operation centers are putting their lives on the line when they respond to these disasters.”**

**- Will Luna**

“We’re very fortunate here in Hawaii and we get to partner with a lot of different organizations, including the other services,” said Will Luna, emergency management manager for Navy Region Hawaii. “This partnership began when my predecessor and subject matter experts in the field of emergency management came together several years ago under the Indo-Pacific (PACOM) and U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) to create a team of trained professionals to be able to be certified by FEMA to provide these trainings.”

Luna also mentioned that these trainings enabled them to work closely together to provide the knowledge and information across the services.

“Typically, a class is composed of Marines, Coast Guard, Army, Air Force and Navy participants, both civilians and active duty,” added Luna. “We also partner with HI-EMA [Hawaii Emergency Management Agency], and the City and County of Honolulu.

# MILITARY, STATE AGENCIES PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES

As one of the instructors, Luna talks about how this course benefits first responders and operation centers.

“Our first responders and our staff here at operation centers are putting their lives on the line when they respond to these disasters,” Luna said. “They’re doing that to save lives of our population and to protect property to sustain mission assurance, and to get that incident under control so that it doesn’t get worse.”

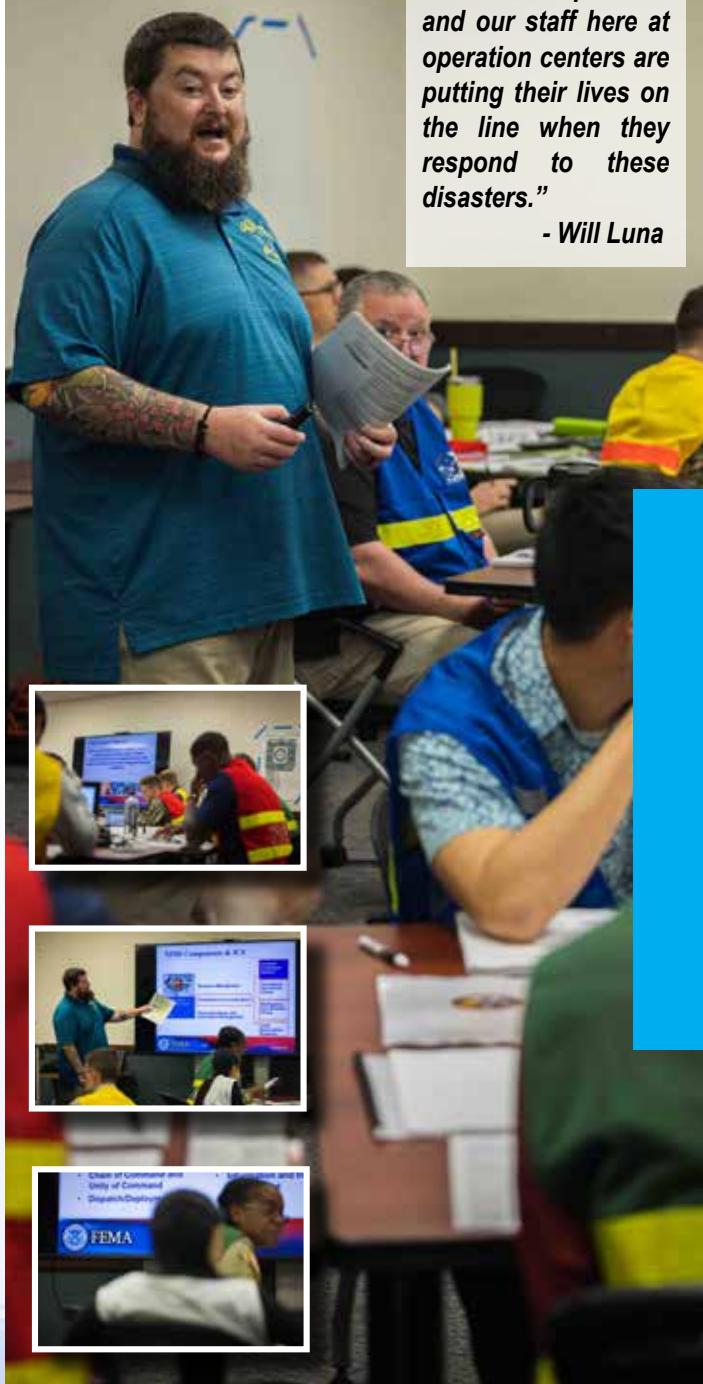
“Those first responders deserve to be safe and have a good plan and have that infrastructure around them to protect them and support them while they do this important mission and that’s what these courses ultimately build,” Luna added.

In partnership with the Navy, Peter Hirai, emergency management program coordinator for USARPAC talks about how often these courses are available.

“These courses are usually scheduled several months out but we try to offer these courses three to four times here locally, and we also offer them overseas in all locations throughout the Pacific,” Hirai said. “We have these courses in Korea, Guam, Japan, and wherever we have a Department of Defense presence.”

“In this class, we are teaching the US 300 course which is a continuation course that basically qualifies somebody to work in the incident command system,” Hirai added. “It is a nationwide approach for people managing incidents, disasters, or planned events.”

As part of the National Incident Management System, this course is required for many first responders. When they respond to an incident, they will be better prepared to organize and respond to the incident more effectively.



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

**In an effort to prepare for a natural disaster, Hawaii Emergency Management managers from the U.S. Navy work in partnership with various military branches and state agencies to teach Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) courses to other organizations to help them prepare for future incidents.**



## Congratulations to our new chiefs!

(Above) Thirty-three new chief petty officers (CPO)s from various active and reserve units were promoted during the CPO pinning ceremony onboard Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Sept. 29. (U.S. Navy photos by MC1 Chris Williamson)

(Below) Participants in the CPO Legacy Academy march away from the Battleship Missouri Memorial, Sept. 12. The CPO Legacy Academy is an immersive, six-day, five-night, training experience hosted by the Battleship Missouri Memorial for senior non-commissioned officers from all services. (U.S. Navy photo by MCC Joseph Buliavac)



# Remembering 9/11

Story by MCSA Gavin Arnold-Hendershot

Photos by MC1 Chris Williamson, MC1 Andre Richard, and Staff Sgt. Jacob Thompson

NPASE West Det. Hawaii Public Affairs / Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Public Affairs

*Photo by MCC Travis Simmons (2018)*

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) held a 9/11 remembrance ceremony on Sept. 11 in commemoration of the lives lost during the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The remembrance was coordinated by Command Master Chief (CMDM) Jaye Bell, CMDM of Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific (MIDPAC). Bell, a well-known figure on the Hawaii waterfront, who had deep ties with a number of service members who gave their lives in the conflicts that took place after 9/11.

“I’m part of a generation that watched the twin towers fall,” said Bell. “I personally know those who gave their lives in support of the war on terrorism, so it’s important we honor their sacrifice. It was America’s longest war and we shouldn’t let it be lost to time.”

On Sept. 10, the day before the remembrance ceremony, eight flags were flown that represented a tragic moment of 9/11. The flags flew overnight until the ceremony on the 11th and then were ceremoniously taken down during the national anthem. A bell was rung to signify each fold of the flags, which were then presented to the families of service members who gave their lives protecting freedom.

“These flags flew all day to symbolize the lives that were here before the attacks,” said Bell. “The highest flag on center mast is in honor of United Airlines Flight 93. Port side in honor of the south tower. Starboard side in honor of the north tower. Five flags on each side representing the Pentagon. Each flag is attached to a name; the name of a warrior we lost to this conflict, this war on terrorism.”

Bell, along with CMDM Nick Smith, initially started the remembrance aboard the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110) in 2016. Since then, it has grown to be observed by several units, including the William P. Lawrence, USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108), USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112), USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121), Destroyer Squadron 31, the USS Missouri Legacy Academy, Joint Task Force Red Hill, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 37, JBPHH Federal Fire Department, JBPHH Security Department, the Marines of 3d Littoral Anti-Air Battalion, the Airmen of the 15th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and the 324th Intelligence Squadron. These units, as well as numerous civilian volunteers, all came together this year to support the largest 9/11 tribute in the history of the island of Oahu.

Guest speaker of the remembrance, Capt. Kevin Bosse, deputy commander of MIDPAC, explained that 9/11 should never be forgotten, and that everyone should remember those who gave their lives for freedom.

“This tradition of remembrance honors the lives lost and sacrifices made,” said Bosse. “This cements their dedication and love for our country and its people with the flags flown both above ground and below.”

Bosse went on to say that on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, exactly 2,977 Americans lost their lives. Since the events of 9/11, approximately 8,000 service members gave the ultimate sacrifice, with nearly 54,000 service members wounded.

“While there may be no guarantees in peace, there are guarantees in life for those that serve in our all-volunteer force,” said Bosse. “We know – with certainty – that when we leave this world, we will be buried under this flag and that the flag will be given to our families. That is a guarantee, and it has been proven over 8,000 times since 9/11 without fail.”

Days before the remembrance began, on Sept. 7, 2023, another remembrance was already taking place

on Ford Island. The Boots Memorial Hero and Remembrance Run, set up by Teresa Johnson, ran until Sept. 13, honoring the service members who lost their lives in combat since 9/11 by placing service members’ photos on the boots they wore.

“Mrs. Johnson is an Army spouse, who for the past 12 years, has led the Boot Memorial Hero and Remembrance Run,” Capt. Kevin Bosse said. “Formerly known as the Fisher House Hero & Remembrance Run, Mrs. Johnson has made it a point to continuously honor the names and faces of all who lost their lives through combat of service to our country since Sept. 11, 2001.”

The Boots Memorial Hero and Remembrance Run, commonly referred to as “Boots for Troops,” has been an important event on the island, with over 8,000 boots on display to ensure that fallen heroes and their sacrifices are never forgotten.

Thanks to the culmination of these remembrances honoring the brave, it serves as a reminder that fallen service members will always be remembered; their actions and beliefs guaranteed to echo throughout eternity.



# 30 Recruits graduate Firefighter Training

The Navy Region Hawaii (CNRH) Federal Fire Department (FFD) celebrated the accomplishments of 30 firefighter recruits during a graduation ceremony held at the Hickam Tradewinds ballroom on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Sept. 8.

Story and photos by Anna Gonzales  
Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs



## Congratulations!

The new graduates of recruit class 2023 are as follows:

- Frank Abreu (State)
- Kameron Aceret
- Jonathan Akaka
- Kalakekoa Carnate-Albert
- Francis Aurellano
- Kahai Bustillos (State)
- Bree Chang
- Tyson Creekmur
- Noah Feato
- Colin Ferguson
- Kaipo Hayashida
- Henry Kahula
- Elijah Kainoa
- Tex Kang
- Justin Kanoho (State)
- Noah Leong
- Michael NacNac
- Jensine Nahoopii
- Kevin Nguyen
- Micah Ohlen
- Brian Polzien
- Kiai Thomas Ramos
- Jacob Romero (State)
- Keanu Rosales
- Laura Ruszecki
- Jarett Takahashi
- Eric Watanabe
- Elias Wong
- Tanner Wright

The recruits successfully completed 26 weeks of extensive and vigorous drill training in fire response and emergency medical services from March through September at the Hickam Fire Training Facility.

“For the past 26 weeks, these recruits have completed a rigorous training regimen to bring them to where they are today,” said Rear Adm. Stephen Barnett, commander, Navy Region Hawaii, during his opening remarks.

“This is a celebration of the commitment and dedication that firefighter recruits have made, and of the great things we can expect from them in the future,” said Barnett. “Today, as we graduate 26 federal firefighters and four state airports division firefighters, we celebrate the accomplishments of these 30 recruits.”

As recruits transition to firefighters, Gregg Moriguchi, regional fire chief for CNRH FFD, shared some advice to the graduating class.

“Members of the firefighter recruit class will no longer be referred to as recruits, they will be known as firefighters,” said Moriguchi.

“Firefighters who choose to dedicate their lives to public service, stand ready to face uncertainty on every call for help and to be the first on scene. These are firefighters who come to the aid of those in need.”

“You must always be prepared to respond and act with courage, professionalism, dignity, and respect no matter what the circumstances may be,” he added. “Your training has prepared you for that and I congratulate you on reaching this milestone.”

Micah Ohlen, one of the recruits, shared his personal journey as a recruit class leader and delivered a message to his fellow graduating class.

“We’ve learned the importance of knowing our tools and knowing the job well,” said Ohlen. “Everything that we have learned can be put down into one basic principle - work hard and don’t give up. It is our responsibility to be prepared for an emergency no matter what day it is, no matter the holiday or special occasion.”

“As a class we found pride in our ability to come together as one and have proven ourselves every day,” Ohlen added. “Throughout this journey, I have seen a transformation in my classmates, and I consider our class a family now.”

Each of these new firefighters will be reporting for duty at one of 13 fire stations located on military installations across Oahu.

# Dark Skies

Story by MC2 Bodie Estep  
Pacific Missile Range Facility Public Affairs

Kauai is home to a wide variety of bird species. Of these species there are a few that rely on natural light to guide them to sea.

Newell's shearwater, Hawaiian petrel and band-rumped storm-petrel, listed under the Endangered Species Act, plus the wedge-tailed shearwater, which is protected by the Migratory Bird Species Act of 1918, are all drawn to bright sources of light, man-made or otherwise. In an effort to protect these birds, the Dark Skies program runs every year from Sept. 15 to Dec. 15 to limit the amount of man-made light shining after dark.

Brooke McFarland, the natural resources manager for Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF), explained more about the program and its importance.

"This program is beyond turning off many lights," said McFarland. "Events are planned around high-risk times (related to moon phase), surveys are conducted to ensure any birds that have fallen out on base are found, and there is a Save Our Shearwaters (SOS) aid station at Pass and ID to provide a safe place for birds that are found on base and need to be rehabilitated."

It is important that everyone plays a part for this program to be successful in protecting these birds. The Newell's shearwater, which is of particular concern, decreased 94% between 1993 and 2013. There are many simple ways to support the program. Keep outdoor lights turned off and use a flashlight or phone if a light is needed outside after dark.



Being cognizant of any light possibly escaping from indoor lights through blinds or skylights can prevent birds from circling a light until they fall out from exhaustion. Also make sure to keep any pets on leashes and always keep an eye out for any fallen fledglings.

"If you see an awkward-looking dark bird with a white belly sitting on the ground, please stop nearby (where safe) and call the Natural Resources Hotline at (808) 208-4416 or (regional) dispatch at (808) 474-2222," said McFarland. "If it is one of these seabirds, we will catch the bird for rehabilitation at SOS, where it will stay until it can be released. Please note the precise location (the bird may hide) and whether it is injured."

If for any reason a light must be kept on, a valid waiver is required. This is the same for any scheduled event. To start the process of receiving a waiver, please contact [brooke.a.mcfarland.civ@us.navy.mil](mailto:brooke.a.mcfarland.civ@us.navy.mil).

"Everyone on base is critical to the success of the Dark Skies program, and to ensuring the mission of PMRF continues through these fall months," McFarland said. "Each light turned off and eye-on-the-sky is a step towards a season without fallout."



Dark skies has the added benefit of limiting light pollution, making stars more visible!



PMRF's environmental team, volunteers, and members from Save Our Shearwaters (SOS) band wedge-tailed shearwaters to help track their movements on Sept. 14. They also collected additional scientific data because there is not much known about these birds due to their low population. There are SOS teams at every firehouse on Kauai to track the birds across the island.





**BELLOWS**  
AIR FORCE STATION

24TH ANNUAL

# Boofest

**FREE ADMISSION**

**SAT, OCT 21**

**4 - 9 PM**

**COSTUME CONTEST**

**Crafts & Activities**

**TRUNK-OR-TREAT**

**FOOD TRUCKS**

**Movie Under the Stars:** Haunted Mansion (2023)

*Haunted Forest*

Pre-registration online for the Costume Contest is **HIGHLY ENCOURAGED**. LIMITED sign-ups available at the event. **For full schedule:** [bellowsafs.com/boofest](http://bellowsafs.com/boofest).

For more info, call (808) 864-0144.



Bellows Air Force Station special events and programs are open to all Bellows AFS guests and eligible patrons: active duty military, military retirees, reservists, National Guard, current/retired DoD civilian employees with an authorized ID card, and their dependents and guests. Those without base access will not be permitted on Bellows AFS. Events and info subject to change.

**FREE EVENT**

# TRUNK OR TREAT

**CONTEST FOR BEST**

- Kid Costume
- Group/Family Costume
- Pet Costume
- Trunk/Decorated Vehicle



**Saturday, OCT 28, 2023**

Rain Date OCT 29, 2023

**4PM - 7PM**

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Honolulu, HI 96818**

For more info contact us at 808.473.1203

**SCAN HERE  
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10

1 Biologists with Pacific Missile Range Facility and partners with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration excavate a green sea turtle nest and discover 76 hatched eggs and four nonviable eggs, at PMRF Barking Sands, Sept. 22. (Photo by Lisa Ferdinando)

2 The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Soryu-class submarine JS Sekiryu (SS 508) arrives at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Oct. 10. (Photo by MC1 Scott Barnes)

3 The 25th Combat Aviation Brigade's 3-25 GSAB and Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam's 545th Harbor Masters conducted a joint training at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Oct. 5. (Photo by Joanne Hayag)

4 Members of Pacific Missile Range Facility's Barking Sands Fire and Emergency Services department visit children on base to teach fire safety, Oct. 12. October is National Fire Prevention Month. (Photo by MC2 Louis Lea)

5 The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93) gets underway from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Oct. 13 to participate in exercise Black Widow 2023. (Photo by Lt. j. g. Jesse Merriman)

6 The commanding officer of Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF), Capt. Brett Stevenson, visits PMRF Barking Sands Fire and Emergency Services, Oct. 5. (Photo by Lisa Ferdinando)

7 Members of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Firing Team perform a rifle salute during the National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony hosted by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) at National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Sept. 15. (Photo by Sgt. Tyrae Straw)

8 Personnel in support of Joint Task Force-Red Hill (JTF-RH) connect a fuel line to merchant tanker Empire State to enable gravity defueling Oct. 16, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. (Photo by Sgt. John Linzmeier)

9 Dozens of people showed up to support the "Heroes for Zero" - Prostate Cancer Awareness Walk held on Ford Island, Sept. 30. The number of participants grew over the course of the walk, held along the island's historic trail. (Photo by Joanne Hayag)

10 Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93) strike down mooring lines while getting underway to participate in exercise Black Widow 2023, Oct. 13. (Photo by Lt. j. g. Jesse Merriman)

CULTURAL  
AWARENESS

# OBSERVANCE



OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH



Led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) recognizes the contributions America's workers with disabilities make each day across our Nation.

In recognizing NDEAM, the Department of Defense's reaffirms its commitment to recruit, retain, and advance these individuals throughout the workforce.

This important national observance dates to the end of World War II. In 1945, with the return of thousands of injured Service members, the U.S. government pushed to educate the public about issues relating to disabilities and employment and made specific efforts to assist these individuals in a variety of ways.

Congress enacted Public Law 176, declaring the first week of October each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.

In 1962, the word 'physically' was removed to include contributions of people with other disabilities.

The federal legislature expanded the week-long observance to a month and changed the name to NDEAM in 1988.

In 2012, Alaska Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Maddamma, a pararescueman, sustained an injury that shattered the bones in his lower left leg.

He spent years in the hospital, undergoing multiple surgeries, and physical therapy to regain the full use of his leg. Eventually, he chose to have his leg surgically amputated, enabling his return to military service.

When asked how NDEAM unites the community, he spoke about how people can be an "iceberg" and what a person knows about their own coworkers they see every day is just the tip of their life experience.

*"These awareness months bring people together, opens doors, and draw attention to things,"* said Maddamma.

Each person brings distinctive skills and capabilities to their employment. Ensuring equity, dignity, respect, and cooperation among all individuals are essential values in the DoD work environment. The Defense Department recognizes past achievements as it strives to build an inclusive future workforce to achieve total force readiness.

