Pearl Harbor offers many holiday activities for single Sailors or the whole ohana... B 1

HAWAI'I NAVY NEWS

Adm. Thomas Fargo discusses the Pacific Fleet's readiness in light of current world conditions... A 5

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Serving the 'Best Homeport in the Navy'

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MIDPAC names Shiphandler of the Year

JO3 Tim Walsh photo

The winner of MIDPAC's Shiphandler of the year stands on the bridge of USS Salvor (ARS 52) before the Commander Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific Junior Officer Shiphandler of the

JO3 Tim Walsh
Staff Writer

Being named the best is a gratifying experience; such was the case for Lt. j.g. Alex Leanos when he was named the Comander Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific's (MIDPAC) Junior Officer Ship Handler of the Year after stiff competition Nov. 1.

Leanos, from USS Salvor (ARS 52), competed aboard Salvor against three other junior officers from ships under command of MIDPAC. Leanos and Lt. j.g. Paul Shoning represented USS Salvor while Lt. j.g. Jules Sherwood and Ens. Salvador Suarez represented USS Frederick (LST 1184) during the competition.

Although Leanos may have had a degree of 'home court advantage', Suarez could not discern any distinct advantages or disadvantage for any of the competitors.

"Sure, the Frederick and Salvor will handle differently, but I think there is a lot more to know than how a particular ship drives," argued Suarez.

The competition itself involved several evolutions. The competitors had to get the ship underway from a mooring at Ford Island, steer along a designated track, turn USS Salvor 180 degrees, approach an anchorage and then moor again at a pier at Ford Island. An added difficulty was a constant 25-knot wind that compounded the complexity of each evolution.

Although Leanos was named shiphandler of the year, Capt. Pat Allen, chief of staff at MIDPAC, noted that all of the competitors displayed exceptional skill and resourcefulness, and that the final results were very close.

"Friendly competition between those involved really made the day enjoyable as well as a great training opportunity. Regardless of who won or lost, everybody can walk away from the day with more experience than they started it with," commented Lt. Cmdr. John Carter, commanding officer of USS Salvor.

Navy League Sea Service Awards given to servicemembers

Agnes Tauyan
Navy Region Public Affairs

Sixty-three proud men and women from the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard received the 2001 Navy League Sea Service Awards during an awards luncheon at the Ala Moana Hotel Wednesday.

The Honolulu Council of the Navy League of the United States sponsors this program that recognizes superior role models that serve as an inspiration for other young men and women to pursue a career in the Sea Services.

Adm. Thomas B. Fargo, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and Glenn K. Y. Hong, president of the Honolulu Council of the Navy League, presented the Sea Service Awards to the recipients who personify excellence and professionalism in their respective services. Selection boards at nine senior commands faced the difficult challenge to select the winners from a field of outstanding nominees who competed in the categories of performance of duty, individual achievement, excellence in leadership, and participation in community activities.

Adm. Fargo was the guest speaker at the event, which was attended by over 330 members of the Navy League, sea services and their families. The highlight of the ceremony was the announcement of the Junior Officer of the Year and NCO/Petty Officer of the Year, selected by the Navy League Board of Judges from among the 63 Sea Service Award Recipients. CWO3 Lynn L. Stewart, of Defense Courier Service Station, Honolulu, and MS1(SW) Adel O. Hernandez, of USS Russell, received the honors.

In addition, the Navy League award-

▼ See NAVY LEAGUE, A-2

Veteran's Day commemorations

JO2 Jim Williams photo

Light rainfall didn't stop hundreds of people from attending the Veteran's Day ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl Nov. 11. See additional Veteran's Day photos on A-5.

Plans unveiled for National Veterans Museum

Veterans Affairs Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Plans for a museum dedicated to America's veterans and their accomplishments were unveiled Nov. 8 at a reception in the nation's capital hosted by the museum's chief proponent, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"Our nation's veterans have made tremendous contributions to our country and its history," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "This new museum will tell that story to generations of Americans, both born and not yet born."

The National Veterans Museum, to be located in the District of Columbia at VA's headquarters building at 810 Vermont Ave. NW, will tell a story of homecoming: the universal experience shared by every soldier returning from war and the challenges they face as they return to family, friends and community.

Exhibits will discuss the impact on American society of such seminal events as the Bonus Army of 1932 and the GI Bill of 1944. Other exhibits will explain the role of the Department of Veterans Affairs and its missions and the many innovations for which VA employees are responsible.

In remarks at the reception, attended by members of Congress and leaders of America's veterans' service organizations, Principi expressed his hope that the new museum will be "world-class" in scope and design. He vowed to create an institution where veterans and their families can feel at home while in the nation's capital and where they can reconnect with

▼ See VETERAN, A-9

Iroquois Point Teen Center opens

Christa Black Thomas
QOL Promotions Specialist

The eagerly awaited Teen Center at Iroquois Point opened its doors last Friday to the delight of area housing residents.

"This facility is long overdue," said Genia Wessels, chief executive professional of The Boys and Girls Clubs of Navy Hawaii (BGCNH). "The opening of this facility is the direct result of last year's Navy Teen Summit," Wessels said.

Previously, teens from Iroquois Point and Puuloa housing had to share the School Aged Care facility, thus limiting the hours and activities geared to the 10-18 age group. With the opening of the new Teen Center, more hours and more programs can be put into place to stimulate, entertain and educate the 160+ registered participants.

According to 15-year-old Deanna Toups, president of the leadership council, all the members had primary input for the decorating and furnishing of the 1,100 square-feet facility. Toups said, "We waited on this {center} a long time and spent a lot of time working on {decorating} it."

The teen center activities include an eight-foot pool table painted in day-glo green, ping-pong table, computers, a big screen television, two smaller televisions, Sony Playstation and a stereo. Strobe lights, black lights and a spinning kaleidoscopic light fixture accent the main room. Coming soon is an air hockey table, internet access and cable television.

The facility's main focus is the four core programs of the BGCNH: character development, education and career development, sports fitness and recreation and health life skills and the arts.

The teen center will be open from 3 to 9 p.m., Monday through Saturday. For more information, call Boys & Girls Clubs of Navy Hawaii teen coordinator at 474-3071.

Christa Black Thomas photo

Mike Okert gives Christopher Cavallo some tips on holding the pool cue. The ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the opening of the Iroquois Point Teen Center Nov. 9.