

Around the Island!



MKI Public Affairs::

2009 Thompson-Ravitz Unit Award Winners

Gung Ho! GAZETTE



May 28, 2010

Vol. 2, Issue 3

Makin Island leaves drydock!

50% Complete, Makin Island Blazes Through PSA



By MC2 Alec Noe, Contributor

USS Makin Island (LHD 8) recently reached the halfway point in its Post-Shakedown Availability (PSA).

PSA is a process all new Navy ships go through to ensure they are properly equipped. In the amount of time it takes to construct a ship,

various types of changes can occur, and PSA is the Navy's opportunity to make certain its ships are ready to go before joining the fleet.

Ship's Maintenance and Material Officer Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Morrow explained PSA also saves the Navy money in the long run.

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www.makin-island.navy.mil

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MKI

Sailors of the Quarter



Electrician's Mate 2nd Class (SW) Moises Avila

EM2(SW) Moises Avila, from the Engineering Department E-Division, joined the Navy more than 10 years ago and has been stationed aboard Makin Island for two years.
Hometown: Calexico, Calif.

What made him decide to join the Navy...
"I joined to better myself and to travel."

What he likes best about his job...
"The challenge, troubleshooting electrical equipment, and learning to be a better leader."

How he feels about being selected as Junior Sailor of the Quarter...
"It feels great that all my hard work is paying off!"

His future aspirations...
"To make Junior Sailor of the Year and First Class Petty Officer."

His advice for other Sailors...
"Always keep charging. All your hard work will some day pay off. If you need any help, ask. There will always be somebody to give you a hand."

What he does in his spare time ...
"I love business and the stock market. I bought my first stock when I was 14 years old and since then I've been actively buying and selling stocks."



Electrician's Mate 1st Class (SW) Patrick David

EM1 (SW/AW) Patrick David, the Safety Department Leading Petty Officer, joined the Navy 10 years ago and has been stationed aboard Makin Island for two years.
Hometown: Manila, Philippines and Los Angeles.

What made him decide to join the Navy...
"I joined for the travel

opportunities, money for college and the job stability. I also joined for the streamlined citizenship process so I can pursue plans to be in law enforcement. I loved my first command on the USS Oscar Austin so I re-enlisted to go on recruiting duty in Los Angeles. I figured with all those successful tours I did, maybe I should stick around a little longer."

What he likes best about his job...
"Working in Safety, it feels good to know that every single thing that I do, every effort that I exhaust towards my duties, greatly, if not directly, contributes to a safer, healthier Makin Island. As an EM, the technical nature of being an electrician is something I always had lots of fun with. I think it's pretty cool to know how to break down electrical equipment, troubleshoot and fix it, and then put it back together for people to use."

How he feels about being selected as Sailor of the Quarter...
"I feel very honored. I wouldn't have been selected if it wasn't for all the hard work that every single Sailor put in, every day on the Makin Island. It's always a team effort. Every award that gets presented to anyone is because of a team that supported a common goal."

His future aspirations...
"Every First Class' goal is to make Chief. I take it one step at a time. In this case, one paygrade at a time."

His advice for other Sailors...
"Do everything you can to make anything and everything count. Pursue everything that will make you a better person and a better Sailor. And if an opportunity arrives for you to become that better person or better Sailor, don't let it pass you by. Find your motivation and use it because no matter how hard the work is, no matter what the work is, it's all going to be worth it in the end. And, be safe!"

What he does in his spare time ...
"I've been playing guitar since I was 10. I play and 'try' to sing for the ship's band, Mod Z, and I'm in another band based in Los Angeles called Next Exit. I've been playing music since I was six, when I learned how to play the piano."



Gunner's Mate Seaman Heather Stuchlik

GMSN Heather Stuchlik, from the Weapons Department G-2 Division, joined the Navy in 2008 and has been stationed aboard Makin Island for almost two years.
Hometown: Chickasha, Okla.

What made her decide to join the Navy...
"I wanted to see more than Oklahoma and take advantage of the college benefits."

What she likes best about her job...
"I like training people on the weapons we have onboard, and getting to shoot them."

How she feels about being selected as Blue Jacket of the Quarter...
"It feels great to represent my department and to set an example for the other E-3 and below sailors."

Her future aspirations...
"I would like to make second class, get a little more training in my rate, and then go into the STA-21 program."

Her advice for other Sailors...
"Take initiative; don't always wait to be told what to do."

What she does in her spare time ...
"Usually in my spare time I like to go roller skating or play with my two kittens. I also enjoy cooking and baking."

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"I was adopted as a kid, so this particular project was a perfect fit for me," he said. "It kind of hit me in the heart, and I wanted to come out here and help."

Makin Island Chaplain, Cmdr. Dwight Horn, said the project was a great opportunity for Sailors to get out into the community and help an organization that provides support for kids and young adults.

"There are so many things that the community does for the Navy. They provide for us in so many ways, so for us to come out and give back to them is great," he said.

Additionally, Horn said he hopes the project helps motivate Sailors to use their gifts and talents to help those who are less fortunate.

"When we get our Sailors into projects like this, especially organizations that work with children in great need, it awakens them to a world bigger than their own," Horn explained. "So these community relations projects are a great thing for us as well." ‡

March 23rd Lake Hodge COMREL ::



Chaplain Rean Enriquez briefs local reporters on Makin Island's volunteering efforts during a local community relations (COMREL) project at Lake Hodges March 23. A group of 40 Makin Island Sailors took part in performing landscape beautification at Lake Hodges in honor of 17-year-old Chelsea King, who was murdered in February. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Douglas Bedford/Released)

MKI Choir performs at SeaWorld



MKI Preps for PFA



By MC2 Kellie Arakawa, Contributor

USS Makin Island's (LHD 8) fitness leaders are preparing crew members for the upcoming PFA by promoting a command-wide culture of fitness.

"We want to make PT standardized for everybody," said Chief Logistics Specialist (SW/AW) Andrea Ligon, Makin Island's command fitness leader. "We're very busy doing a lot of maintenance, certifications and preparations for the PSA, so we really want to promote physical fitness for all hands and make sure everyone has time for some physical activities."

Personnel Specialist 3rd Class Robert Lopez said he's encouraged by the command PT program and believes it will benefit Sailors by giving them the extra push they need to stay physically fit.

"Working out is not just to prepare for the PFA, but for our own benefit," Lopez said. "It's also a good outlet for stress, and I think people tend to work better when they're more active."

The crew's physical fitness is crucial to the ship's readiness because Sailors must be physically capable to perform their duties when called upon.

"If we have a fire, our Sailors have to be capable of fighting it, which is a physically exhausting job," Ligon explained. "So it's important for us to be physically fit and ready for anything that comes up."

The crew's fitness not only affects Makin Island's readiness, but can impact careers, Ligon added. Sailors must meet certain physical standards if they want to re-enlist, apply for special programs, officer programs or serve on individual augmentee (IA) duty. Also, Sailors will face administrative separation if they fail three PFAs within four years.

Crew members who are interested in improving their fitness levels can enroll in the command's fitness enhancement program (FEP), which meets every Monday and Thursday at 1 p.m., while the ship is in port, and 5 a.m. while underway. Ligon said FEP is open to everyone, not just those who are required to attend.

Additionally, Sailors can request to enroll in ShipShape, a weight management program approved by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), which advises Sailors on individual exercise, nutrition and weight loss goals.

Jeremy Deiter, Makin Island's Fun Boss, said Sailors also have access to free fitness programs through the base Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program.

"If anyone has any fitness or gym needs, they can come to me and I can refer them to an MWR program," he said. "The gym here is available for everyone to use, but MWR on shore has an extensive array of fitness capabilities that we don't have onboard, and we can send people to those gyms for personal training and classes."

Sailors who prefer to exercise outdoors can sign up for running events, organized sports and athletic classes through MWR.

"Physical fitness is very important, and the program only works with the support from all hands," Ligon said. "It's important that we continue to support physical fitness if we want to promote a healthy lifestyle to all hands." ‡

Makin Island Aids Nonprofit Horse Ranch



By MC2 Kellie Arakawa, Contributor

More than 50 Sailors and Marines from USS Makin Island (LHD 8) cleaned and moved equipment for Bethany's Gait, a nonprofit horse ranch, in the Ortega Mountains April 28.

Bethany's Gait, a ranch dedicated to rescuing abused and neglected horses, provides unique therapy programs for at-risk and foster children by pairing them with rescued horses.

To help the organization move to its new location, Sailors spent the day cleaning stables and moving sheds, corral panels and ranch equipment.

"It's invaluable and absolutely amazing to have Sailors here helping us," said Christi Rose, the

founder and executive director of Bethany's Gait. "We feel so honored that those who are already serving our country would come and help serve us as well."

Rose said the organization typically consists of 10 core volunteers, and it would have taken them two days to complete the move. With the help of Makin Island crew members, the process took just a few hours.

"To go from 10 people to 64 is just amazing," Rose added. "It's a huge blessing."

Airman Justin Joyner said he volunteered for the clean-up because he wanted to support a program that provides for less fortunate kids.

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50%

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"There's modernization, there's ship and machinery alterations, all kinds of stuff. Our contracts and drawings, you can look at them and they're LHD 1 based," said Morrow. "So, it's actually cheaper for the government to have a slot of time set aside to conduct all of these modernizations [PSA] than it is to go back and try to change the original contract."

At this point in the shakedown Makin Island has already achieved many accomplishments, including modernizations to the ship's chill water systems and the corrections of many ship-wide discrepancies.

"As far as corrective maintenance we've been able to get done, number six SSDG [ship service diesel generator] was completely out of commission, and by the time we get out of PSA it will be back online," said Morrow. "Northrop Grumman was able to take care of a lot of the outstanding AT [Acceptance Trials] and BT [Builder's Trials] discrepancies that typically would've been revisited during our Final Contract Trials (FCT). Now we are able to get those off of the books so that we can spend more time during FCT looking at the current material condition of the ship, and not rehashing some of the discrepancies that would've been there had we gone to FCT prior to PSA."

Although much has been accomplished, Makin Island has experienced challenges along the way, including the earthquake that centered in Baja, Calif., April 4. The quake, which registered more than 7.0 on the Richter scale, prevented the ship from entering dry dock on time.

"The shifting schedule because of the earthquake damage to the dry dock was a big challenge," said Morrow. "We were able to work through it, but it was a lot of coordination amongst



every department on board. Then, undocking, we expected to be in dry dock a week longer than we were."

As Makin Island prepares to finish PSA there are still plenty of other projects to wrap up including getting the shower and air conditioning systems back online, and completing work in the mess decks.

"Habitability is our biggest challenge right in front of us. C5 still needs to finish up their AITs, Engineering will go through Light Off Assessment (LOA) and all of these things will wrap up the PSA and bring us to FCTs in August," said Morrow.

Maintenance, Materials Management Coordinator (3MC) Assistant Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Matthew Lynn added that a big part of PSA is also coordinating with the civilian contractors and keeping up with paper work.

"Aside from getting the work done, we need to be documenting what work is done, documenting what we've found since, and basically making sure this place is ready to go so we can get underway," said Lynn.

"Even though we don't hold half of the work that's going on, that doesn't mean that we can't help out with that," added Morrow. "Because the more we ask questions and the more we push towards a certain level of expectations, the more the contractors and the surrounding activities are going to have to meet that level of expectation." ‡

Selection Boards back on track

(MILLINGTON, TENN.)

Naval Support Activity Mid-South in Millington, Tenn., has fully restored their selection board systems that were damaged in the flood early this month.

According to NAVADMIN 159/10, the revised board schedule is provided and was created to make adjustments for any delays caused by the flooding. The following boards will convene as listed:

BOARD	CONVENE DATE
Active 04 Staff	20 May 2010
Reserve and Full-Time Support	24 May 2010
Submarine Commanding/Executive Officer	24 May 2010
Reserve and Full-Time Support 04 Staff	10 June 2010
Active Duty E8	14 June 2010
Active Duty Chief Warrant Officer 3, 4 and 5	17 June 2010
Reserve Chief Warrant Officer 3 and 4	24 June 2010
Transfer redesignation	28 June 2010
Active Duty E7	06 July 2010
Supply Corps Commander Sea Screening	12 August 2010
Flying Chief Warrant Officer	12 August 2010
Permanent Military Professor	12 August 2010
Reserve Command and Non-Command	16 August 2010
Test Pilot	18 August 2010
Transfer Redesignation	08 November 2010

If there are any boards not listed above they were not affected and will convene on their previously scheduled date. Board packages that were forwarded prior to the flooding were not affected. Package submission guidelines remain unchanged. For changes and any updated information please refer to Naval Personnel Command's website, www.npc.navy.mil.

New OSA Program to Replace Enlisted GSA Program

The Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson announced the establishment of a new enlisted overseas contingency operation (OCO) support assignment (OSA) program May 10.

NAVADMIN 171/10 details the new OSA program, which will replace the current Global War on Terrorism Support Assignment (GSA) program beginning fall 2010.

According to the message, the need for Sailors to serve in nontraditional OCO assignments will continue for several more years, and most Sailors should expect to serve in support of OCO at some point in their careers. The new OSA program intends to provide Sailors more stability and predictability by allowing them to actively participate in the process of choosing their OCO orders.

While officers will continue to provide IA support through the GSA process, beginning this fall, enlisted members who are 10-12 months away from their projected rotation dates (PRD) will have the ability to log onto CMS/ID and choose to participate in OSA assignments via Special Programs.

OSA orders will be executed at the end of tours as temporary additional duty (TEMADD), which will allow Sailors and their families to maintain relationships with their current commands. Sailors who select OSA tours will be administratively extended at their present duty stations for the period of their assignments plus an additional 60 days.

The planned rollout for the program is October 2010, and a comprehensive business rules NAVADMIN is expected in July.

MKI Sailor Looks to Future After Earning Citizenship

By MC2 Kellie Arakawa, Contributor

For Ship's Serviceman 3rd Class Ifeanyi Ojuka, becoming both a Sailor and an American citizen was a dream he always knew he'd fulfill.

In late March, Ojuka took his oath of citizenship, completing a two-year-long process that began when he first enlisted in the Navy.

"It's been a long journey coming from Africa, where people are poor and there is war, crime and little opportunity. So when I finally became a citizen of this great country, I felt overwhelmed, like it was my birthday," he said.

Ojuka, a former high school government teacher, moved to the U.S. from Nigeria in 2004 and joined the Navy in 2008.

"I was always interested in the U.S. Navy, so the day I received my green card was the same day I visited my recruiter," he said.

Ojuka originally planned to apply for an officer program, but was deemed ineligible due to his citizenship status.

"It was really hard because I had all the qualifications and experience to be an officer, and the only thing blocking my future was my citizenship," Ojuka explained.

After reporting to Makin Island, Ojuka began working hard to advance his career goals, which included earning his citizenship.

He credited his successful path to citizenship to the support he received from his chain of command.

"Without Makin Island, I wouldn't have had this opportunity," Ojuka said. "This process would have taken me five years, but instead it took only two. I have a wonderful chain of command and they helped guide me, so I am very thankful for them."

Ship's Serviceman 1st Class (SW) Carlos Baray, the acting LCPO of S-3 division, said he was not surprised to see Ojuka accomplish his goals so quickly.

"When I first met Ojuka, I could tell he was squared-away, motivated and sharp. He wasted no time getting his paperwork and exams done to



get his citizenship, and we're all so proud of him," Baray added. "The route he's going now, I definitely see him becoming an officer ... if he keeps applying himself, he has unlimited potential."

Ojuka is currently enrolled in a graduate program to earn his master of business administration degree and plans to apply for an officer program in the near future.

"I always say that no great runner wins a race by looking back," Ojuka stated. "I love the United States, and I hope to be more productive to the Navy and beneficial to my country." ‡

April 2009

Sailors assigned to Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) Makin Island (LHD 8) spend countless hours onloading more than 2,000 tri-walls in preparation for the ship's delivery.



May 2009

Sailors assigned to Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) Makin Island (LHD 8) watch students at College Park Elementary play on a \$35,000 calisthenics playground. The renovation was Makin Island's first community service project since the ship was delivered to the Navy.



July 2009

USS Makin Island (LHD 8) completes nearly 250 "touch and go's" with four different types of aircraft. During this underway, Air Department achieved its Aviation Readiness Qualification Underway for flight deck certifications.



August 2009

USS Makin Island (LHD 8) arrives in Chile Aug. 20. During its four-day port visit, Makin Island crew members participated in community relations projects, provided tours to Chilean military personnel and dignitaries and hosted a reception for Chilean naval officers.



September 2009

USS Makin Island (LHD 8) arrives at its new homeport in San Diego. Chief Gas Turbine System Technician (Mechanical) (Sel.) William Toten holds his new baby for the first time after a two-month deployment.



December 2009

An AV-8B Harrier assigned to Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 311 takes off from the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8). Harriers from VMA-311 became the first AV-8B aircraft to operate off the ship during combined combat system ship qualifications trials.



2009 + + + + + Makin Island, how far we've come in one year + + + + + 2010



April 2009

Sailors assigned to Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) Makin Island (LHD 8) participate in the ceremony delivering the ship from Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding, Gulf Coast to the U.S. Navy. Commanding Officer Capt. Robert Kopas signed the DD 250, the official document giving the Navy and ship's company custody of Makin Island.



July 2009

Sailors from In-Commission Special USS Makin Island (LHD 8) Weapons department man the rails as the ship begins her homeport shift from Pascagoula, Miss. to San Diego.



August 2009

USS Makin Island (LHD 8) is escorted by two Chilean Navy missile craft, Casma (LM 30) and Chipana (LM 31), as it enters the Strait of Magellan.



August 2009

USS Makin Island (LHD 8) arrives in Lima, Peru Aug. 29 for its third and final port visit. The stop afforded Sailors the chance to participate in community relations projects, take tours of the city and host a reception for Peruvian military and civilian authorities.



October 2009

Sailors and Marines assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8) prepare for the ship's commissioning. Makin Island was officially commissioned Oct. 24 during a ceremony at Naval Air Station North Island.



April 2010

USS Makin Island (LHD 8) transits to NASSCO drydock for maintenance during its four-month PSA period.