

PMRF Kaua'i

E Pane Mai Ka Nonoi O Nohili
Answering the Requests of Nohili



Hau'oli Makahiki Hou and Happy New Year!

We're excited to ring in the New Year with a fresh quarterly newsletter for the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) Barking Sands! We hope 2026 is off to a great start for you. PMRF has a full calendar of community events and engagements coming up, and we're looking forward to connecting with our friends and partners in the community.

While the funding lapse slowed us down a bit, we closed out 2025 with a packed schedule, starting with the Navy Ball on Oct. 11 and ending with the Waimea parade on Dec. 20. The first quarter of this year should be no different, including VIP briefings, community events, and school visits.

Please visit PMRFKauai.com to see updates on community news and environmental and cultural resources projects. You can also subscribe to the newsletter [here](#).

PMRFKauai.com



Admiral's Visit Showcases the PMRF Team

On Dec. 10-11, Rear Adm. Brad Collins, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii, visited PMRF for the first time as part of his tour of installations under his command. The admiral made a point of asking Sailors of all ranks how Navy Region Hawaii could better support the team at Barking Sands.

His touch points with leadership involved briefings on the base's unique multi-domain (land, sea, air, space) testing capabilities, PMRF's involvement with the local community (career days, STEM events, and emergency response), and infrastructure (such as the Mānā Well).

He also spoke with enlisted Sailors about their needs and met with the PMRF housing team and Master-at-Arms Seaman Emily Turner to check first-hand on the quality of living quarters for junior enlisted at PMRF.

Lastly, Rear Adm. Collins heard from civilian staff on natural resource preservation efforts and the cultural importance of parts of the base, such as the Lua Kupapa'u O Nohili (crypt). PMRF Cultural Resources Manager and Archaeologist Tara Del Fierro and Deputy Public Works Officer Thomas Nizo explained the history of the crypt and memorial site and how the Navy works to preserve PMRF's cultural resources. These connections reinforce PMRF's commitment to its community, promote mutual understanding, and strengthen relationships between the military and local officials and organizations.



Rear Adm. Collins talks with Deputy Public Works Officer Thomas Nizo about PMRF's cultural preservation efforts.



Rear Adm. Collins discusses enlisted housing conditions with Master-at-Arms Seaman Emily Turner and PMRF staff.

Rear Adm. Collins, who assumed command of the region in August, started his Navy career in 1992 and most recently served as Commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central (EURAFCENT), where he led shore operations to support more than 18,000 Sailors, Marines, family members, and retirees across nine regional military installations.

Protecting Wildlife at PMRF

PMRF's primary focus is conducting and measuring cutting-edge missile tests, but that's not all the base does. We are also part of Kaua'i's West Side community. Being a responsible environmental steward is a year-round priority, which includes protection of endangered and threatened species. This winter, several types of birds will nest or migrate through or near Barking Sands, heightening the importance of our stewardship efforts.

Nēnē Nesting Season

September through April is a busy time for Hawai'i's state bird as young nēnē learn to walk, forage, and eventually fly. PMRF is home to one of the largest populations of nēnē, a type of goose endemic to Hawai'i that is currently designated by the state as "endangered" and by the federal government as "threatened." The population reached an extreme low of roughly 30 individual nēnē in the 1950s, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but conservation efforts spurred a significant comeback. Now, more than 2,400 individual nēnē are documented on Kaua'i with as many as 637 on PMRF.

Adult nēnē typically don't fly during nesting season. Their feathers begin to molt, and they stay grounded while they watch over their young. They will be slow-moving and will keep a close eye on their goslings while they introduce them to their new home.

Nēnē families are often seen near the main highway in Mānā and along roadways because open areas near bushes or trees are their ideal nesting grounds, so please drive with extra care.

See the guidelines below for more detail on what to do if you see a nēnē.

Safety tips:

- Slow down in areas where nēnē are common, especially near nēnē crossing signs
- Watch for crossing families — goslings move slowly and adults will be protective
- Don't honk or rev your engine
- Give them plenty of space

How you can help:

- Never feed nēnē
- Keep pets leashed near possible nesting areas
- Report injured nēnē or lost goslings in Mānā to the **PMRF Natural Resources Hotline: 808-208-4416**



Both photos: Nēnē families on PMRF.
(PMRF Natural Resources, Yessica Carnley)

Protecting Wildlife at PMRF

Dark Skies Program

PMRF recently completed another successful year of the Dark Skies program, an initiative to help young birds safely navigate in their first migration. Newell's shearwater, Hawaiian petrel, and band-rumped storm-petrel – all listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered – as well as the wedge-tailed shearwater migrate from the mountains to the sea after they hatch in the fall (a process called “fledging”), using the light from the moon and stars to navigate their way to sea.

While this process is remarkable, it also means the fledglings are attracted to artificial light sources. These lights, such as streetlights or even much smaller sources, can disorient young birds, who may end up circling in confusion until they “fall out” from exhaustion and become vulnerable to predators and dehydration.

Dark Skies, which ran from Sept. 15 to Dec. 15, 2025, minimized artificial light sources that can interfere with the birds' flight paths. Protective measures implemented by PMRF staff included shielded lighting, reduced non-essential lights during peak fledging season, community outreach to raise awareness about light pollution, and increased partnerships with environmental organizations and agencies committed to seabird recovery.

“Protecting Hawai‘i’s native species is a shared responsibility,” said PMRF Commanding Officer Capt. Robert Prince. “Through this program, we can continue to make a positive difference in our conservation efforts for future generations.”

Dark Skies has contributed extensively to the recovery and survival of fledgling shearwaters and other native seabirds by providing a safe passage for potentially hundreds of fledglings that may have otherwise died.

In preparation for this year's program, PMRF's environmental team, members from Save Our Shearwaters, and volunteers gathered at Waiapua'a to band wedge-tailed shearwaters. These bands help to identify and track individual birds and long-term populations.



Both photos: Avian technicians from Save Our Shearwaters band wedge-tailed shearwaters on PMRF.

PMRF thanks residents, businesses, and the public for doing their part to protect native seabirds.

For more information about nēnē, the Dark Skies initiative, volunteer opportunities, or PMRF's environmental program, please visit the [PMRF Barking Sands website](#).

Real Estate EIS Update: Public Involvement Summary Released

On behalf of the Department of the Navy and NASA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project team for the PMRF and Kōke'e Park Geophysical Observatory (KPGO) Real Estate Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), **mahalo nui loa for your engagement and participation in the EIS process!**

Proactive communication with the public and agencies throughout the EIS process was a high priority for the Navy and NASA. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public comment period started on June 20, 2025, with the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. The Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) public comment period started on June 23, 2025, with notice of the release of the Draft EIS in The Environmental Notice. The public comment period ended Aug. 7, 2025.

The purpose of public involvement and outreach during the comment period was to invite the public, elected officials, government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, Native Hawaiian Organizations, and all interested stakeholders to review and comment on the Draft EIS in accordance with NEPA and HEPA. These comments are valuable in shaping and refining the approach to analysis and assessing the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action.

During the public comment period, the Navy and NASA received 177 comments, which are being reviewed and will be carefully considered in the development of the Final EIS, currently scheduled for release in summer 2026. The Final EIS will include detailed responses to public comments.

The Navy and NASA have posted a [summary of public comments](#) received during the public review and comment period.

The Navy and NASA are committed to maintaining transparency throughout this process and will continue to meet regularly with federal, state, and local agencies as well as Native Hawaiian Organizations and Kāua'i community groups throughout development of the Final EIS.

For more information, please visit the [PMRF and KPGO project](#) website.



Mākaha Ridge, a key instrumented location on leased lands.



Easement land near PMRF used for farming.

The Navy and NASA's Proposed Action

In the Draft EIS, the Navy proposes to retain the use of 8,172 acres of state lands (684 acres of leaseholds; 7,488 acres of easement lands) on Kāua'i in support of continued and ongoing military training, testing, and facility operations at PMRF. NASA proposes to retain the use of 23 acres of state lands (16 acres of leaseholds; 7 acres of easement lands) on Kāua'i in support of maintaining data collection efforts of global significance at KPGO. Navy training and testing operations do not occur on these state lands; their use is required to maintain technological and safety capabilities supporting PMRF training and testing.



Sailors assigned to PMRF's Seaborne Powered Target unit use a High-Speed Maneuvering Surface Target vessel to transit waters off the coast of Kaua'i.

Navy Recognizes PMRF with Battle Efficiency Award

On Jan. 6, 2026, the Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) announced that PMRF Barking Sands earned the inaugural 2025 Shore Battle Efficiency (Battle "E") Award in the category of small installations outside the continental U.S. The award recognizes installations as vital battle forces, specifically for their excellence in generating and supporting combat capabilities.

"Our core mission at PMRF is to enhance warfighter readiness through fleet training and support of test and evaluation events," said PMRF Commanding Officer Capt. Robert Prince. "Excellent leadership at all levels and steadfast support from our civilian staff is critical to this mission."

PMRF earned its award for excellence as the leading multi-domain integrated test and training range, providing vital support in the Indo-Pacific. The installation enhanced fleet readiness by modernizing its infrastructure, improving quality-of-life offerings, and ensuring mission continuity through a landmark energy resilience partnership.

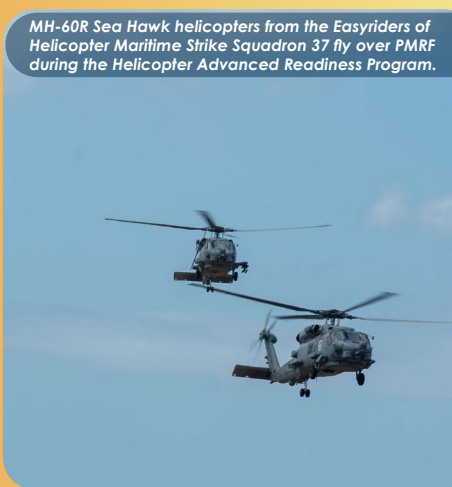
The installation delivered uninterrupted test and training support while pursuing modernization projects that increased resiliency and reduced operational risk. PMRF introduced two new playgrounds and a 24/7 fitness center, significantly improving the morale and family readiness for Sailors and their families. The Morale, Welfare, and Recreation team led over 100 events, ranging from exploring the local community to life skills programming. By expanding recreational access and strengthening community ties, PMRF has made it a priority to enhance the quality of life of both service members and civilian employees.

Sailors permanently assigned to a unit which receives the Shore Battle "E" Award are authorized to wear the Battle Efficiency ribbon, following tradition from when the award was introduced in 1976 for sea-based units.

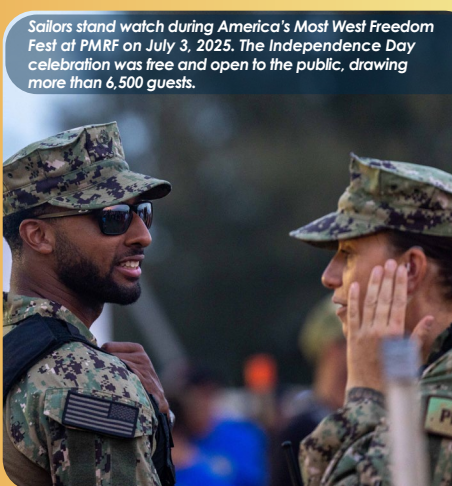
"Receiving the Battle 'E' is a reflection of the hard work and dedication to duty that every member of our team displays day in and day out," said Capt. Prince. "I am proud of what we have accomplished together and look forward to continued future success."



Capt. Robert Prince, Commanding Officer of PMRF, addresses Sailors at an all-hands call.



MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopters from the Easyriders of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 37 fly over PMRF during the Helicopter Advanced Readiness Program.



Sailors stand watch during America's Most West Freedom Fest at PMRF on July 3, 2025. The Independence Day celebration was free and open to the public, drawing more than 6,500 guests.



Navy Sailors cut the cake at the Navy Ball on Oct. 11.

Having a Ball on the Navy's 250th

On Oct. 11, PMRF celebrated the U.S. Navy's 250th birthday during the annual Navy Ball held at the Grand Hyatt Kaua'i. The event honored the service's proud history, traditions, and achievements, while recognizing the dedication and service of all Sailors past and present.

Command leadership, Sailors, civilian staff, Kaua'i Mayor Derek Kawakami, and many community leaders came together for an evening of camaraderie, reflection, and celebration – in addition to dancing and cake!

PMRF thanks everyone who helped make the ball possible. Happy 250th birthday to the Navy!

Laulima Navy Campaign Exceeds Goals

In October, the Navy concluded its year-long Laulima Navy 250 initiative, an effort to reinforce the service's longstanding and unwavering commitment to Hawai'i. Laulima is a Hawaiian value that means "many hands working together." With 292 acts of volunteerism by Sailors and civilians on O'ahu and Kaua'i — often working alongside community members — the Laulima Navy campaign more than lived up to its name.

Some notable efforts included:

- PMRF volunteers joined Mālama Hulē'ia at the 600-year-old Alakoko Fishpond near Līhu'e for a community workday to re-establish native wetland ecosystems.
- PMRF personnel helped with highway and beach cleanups near/on the base.
- Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam personnel and family members helped the Salt Lake community make 1,000 microbial Genki mud balls to help remove bacteria and pollutants from the Salt Lake waterway.
- A small team of Navy personnel joined community volunteers at Haiku Valley on O'ahu for cultural and ecological service work, including removing invasive species, planting native plants, and learning about Native Hawaiian culture and practices.



PMRF volunteers joined the monthly community workday at the Alakoko Fishpond on Jan. 18, 2025.

We are excited to announce that Laulima Navy will continue beyond 2025. Visit the [program's website](#) to learn more.



PMRF leaders pay tribute to the 100th Battalion on Sept. 28.

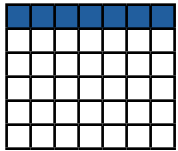
Honoring the 100th Battalion

On Sept. 28, PMRF leadership had the great honor of joining descendants and extended family at Kaua'i Veterans Cemetery for a ceremony honoring the men who served in the 100th Army Infantry Battalion during the Second World War.

Young men from Kaua'i volunteered for the battalion, which was the first Japanese-American formation to fight on the Western Front in 1943 and eventually became part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

The unit is recognized as being among the most awarded group of soldiers in U.S. history, with three Presidential Unit Citations, one Medal of Honor, 24 Distinguished Service Crosses, and 147 Silver Stars, among other awards. Their unwavering fighting spirit and great losses led to them being referred to as the "Purple Heart Battalion" (1,703 awarded).

The PMRF team thanks them for their service and honors their sacrifice.



Upcoming Events

As we roll into 2026, below you will find the events PMRF will host or participate in over the coming months. Check our website for updates!

January 30

Kalaheo Elementary School Career Day

Location: Kalaheo Elementary School

February 6

Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup – PMRF all-hands invited

Location: Two-mile stretch along Kaumuali'i Highway in Mānā, near PMRF

February 28

Waimea Canyon Middle School Career Fair

Location: Waimea Canyon Middle School

March 6

Waimea Canyon Middle School Workforce Awareness Field Trip – 6th grade

Location: PMRF

April 24

Annual Natural Resources Field Trip – PMRF invites 4th graders from public and private schools

Location: PMRF

PMRF Over the Holidays

In December, Sailors and civilian employees took part in the Lights on Rice and Waimea Light parades. They worked hard decorating trucks and boats to add a special PMRF flavor to the proceedings. Mahalo to everyone in the community who helped make these events possible!

Lights on Rice Parade



Sailors display a festively decorated High-Speed Maneuvering Surface Target vessel at Līhu'e's Lights on Rice on Dec. 5, 2025.

Waimea Light Parade



PMRF personnel, including Commanding Officer Capt. Robert Prince (standing in street on left), interact with attendees at the Waimea Light Parade on Dec. 20, 2025.