

BAE works to keep fleet fit for sea

By Brandon Bosworth

It takes quite a bit of work to keep America's Pacific fleet ship-shape. While there are plenty of active duty sailors working at the shipyards to keep the U.S. Navy's vessels seaworthy, many local civilians work there as well.

One of the main civilian employers at the shipyard is BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyards. They are part of the larger BAE Systems, an international company with more than 100,000 employees around the globe. Here in Hawaii, BAE Systems employs 852 people, with 287 of them working at shipyard operations.

BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyards is the largest private ship repair company in Hawaii. It provides emergency repairs, routine maintenance and modernization upgrades to U.S. Navy surface ships. While there is plenty of scheduled work to be done, emergencies can send them into high gear. Consider, for example, when the USS Port Royal ran aground off of Oahu back in 2009.

"We totally saturated the skilled workforce in Hawaii,"



Charles "Chuck" Baker

says Bill Ryzewic, vice president for Strategic Development. "We ended up having to bring people in from all over the country."

While in dry dock, technicians from BAE Systems worked with the Navy to replace the ship's sonar dome, reinstalled rudders, and made structural repairs to the ship's tanks, superstructure and underwater hull.

Though there is never a shortage of work, last year proved to be one of the busiest ever for BAE's Pearl Harbor shipyard operations. This was in part because the six-month, \$50-million upgrade of the USS Chosin, a Navy cruiser. It was one of the biggest surface ship projects in Hawaii in years, and BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyards did a heavy share of the work. In total, BAE worked on 15 different ships for the U.S. Navy in 2011.

Ryzewic sees business returning to regular levels in 2012, though that doesn't mean the company is not on the lookout for qualified employees. After all, as the incident with the USS Port Royal showed, BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyards must always be prepared for the unexpected.

"We are constantly hiring," says general manager Charles "Chuck" Baker, himself a 30-year U.S. Navy veteran. "We always have to be ready to respond to the Navy's needs."

Though BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyard has brought in outside workers in outstanding circumstances, Baker is pleased with the high quality of Hawaii's workforce.

"Local employees are dedicated and willing to learn," he says. "I am very impressed by the skills possessed by Hawaii's workers."

Contact Patrick Klein at pklein@staradvertiser.com if you wish to have your company featured in this section.



Photos courtesy of BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyards

BAE employees are always eager to provide emergency repairs and routine maintenance on U.S. Navy surface ships.

Better safe than sorry at shipyard

Shipyards work can be dangerous, but BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyards prides itself in dedication to safety.

"We have always met safety and environmental safety regulations," says Charles "Chuck" Baker, general manager. "Our standards are above regulation. We want to protect our employees and sailors."

Daily safety walks are a standard part of the BAE routine. This has paid off in BAE's safety record.

"Our record is above industry standards," says Bill Ryzewic, vice president for Strategic Development. "Safety is a big issue with us. That can't be stressed enough. At meetings, the first and last topic is always safety."

BAE SYSTEMS

The 411

Name: BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyards

Address: Cushing Street, Dry Dock Number 4, Pearl Harbor, HI 96810

Phone: 423-8888

Website: www.baesystems.com/shiprepair

General Manager: Charles "Chuck" Baker

Employees: 287

Founded: 2005

Benefits: Full healthcare coverage for employees and their families; optional dental, vision, and 401k programs; paid time off and holidays; life insurance; short-

and long-term disability benefits

Noteworthy: BAE Systems Hawaii Shipyards is heavily involved in local charities. For example, last year's major celebration of the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team was paid for entirely by BAE. BAE also worked with the U.S. Navy Pearl Harbor Shipyard and several other businesses to dry dock, maintain and preserve the historic battleship the USS Missouri.