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Seminar teaches lessons of empowerment

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Lecturer and best-selling author Joe Casuro's wit and homespun style of storytelling captivated a near-capacity audience as he delivered a timely message of hope and empowerment to civilians and Navy personnel at Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH), on Feb. 9.

Earlier in the week, Caruso spoke to a board of directors at Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific (NAVFAC-PAC) as an invited guest of Rear Adm. Michael Giorgione, before working with Rear Adm. Dixon Smith, commander of Navy Region Hawaii, to hold three additional talks at Pearl Harbor.

"Adm. Giorgione asked if we could use him for our leadership and Adm. Smith said yes," noted Nadine Bayne, who is the CNRH Total Force Manpower director. "We had a senior leadership session in the morning, this one for all hands, and a third session on Friday for spouses. We thought this would be a good opportunity to talk about change as it relates to joint basing."

In his introduction of Caru-



Lecturer and best-selling author Joe Caruso outlines ideas from his book, "The Power of Losing Control," to a near-capacity audience at Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH), on Feb. 9. Caruso spoke for more than three hours to an audience that was comprised of civilians and Navy personnel.

so, Capt. Richard Kitchens, commander of JBPHH, pointed out that the Navy was extremely fortunate to have the author take time out of his

busy schedule to speak to the base's Sailors and Department of Defense employees.

Caruso, who has spoken to audiences around the world

through his Caruso Leadership Institute and has reached millions of readers through his best-selling book, "The Power of Losing Control," vol-

unteered his services for the seminars free of charge.

"He's been an adviser, personally, to a number of admirals, generals and chief executives to private companies in managing change within their organizations," said Kitchens. "He's doing this for us because that's the way he contributes and serves his country."

While the topics of change and empowerment can be a daunting challenge for any speaker to present in an engaging manner, Caruso's neighborly style and folksy storytelling kept audience members tuned in for the full duration of the three-and-a-half hour presentation.

Although change, said Caruso, is never easy, his tales, many of which were drawn out of his own life experience, accentuated techniques that could help people change their way of thinking to conquer the challenges of life.

Caruso related that an about-face in attitude was directly responsible for his full recovery from testicular cancer. Doctors told Caruso, who was only 18 years old at the time, that the illness was incurable.

"Our job is to learn how to process what's happening in a way that we can find power in

it, rather than be a victim to it," said Caruso, who added that he just tries to teach things about life. "How you define specifics can change the outcome."

As he draws the audience in with his life stories, Caruso said that he hopes people will be able to make their own connections about how they can empower their lives both in and out of the workplace.

"Here the issue of joint basing is a little politically charged, and if I had gone there, people might not have heard my message," said Caruso. "But if I talk about their kids and home life, every once in awhile I can say, 'you guys are doing a joint-basing thing. Do you think this could apply?'"

If people are battling fear about an uncertain future, then Caruso explains that the problem might be better understood by taking a closer look within.

"We have to find the courage to find ourselves in our problems," said Caruso. "Then we need the playfulness to say, 'is it necessarily this way or am I one of the people that's keeping it this way?' That's a difficult thing for people to do, and that's what I try to teach in my book."