Inauguration of 44th president continues proud U.S. tradition

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

The inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States of America Jan. 20 captivated the attention of the world and was attended by an estimated two million people.

The presidential inauguration, essentially the American version of a royal coronation, is an event like no other in the workings of the U.S. government. The ceremony, along with its corresponding parades, balls and celebrations, gives the citizens of the U.S. and, indeed, the world, the sense of a fresh start for one of the world's oldest and most prominent constitutional republics.

Barack Obama takes the oath of office to become the 44th president of the United States as his wife Michelle Obama looks on. Chief Justice of the United States John G. Roberts Jr., administered the oath on the steps of the U.S. Capitol Jan. 20. Photo by Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo

In President Ronald Reagan's first inaugural address he spoke about the truly remarkable aspect of the United States government. "The orderly transfer of authority as called for in the constitution routinely takes place, as it has for almost two centuries, and few of us stop to think how unique we really are," said Reagan. "In the eyes of many in the world, this every-four-year ceremony we accept as normal is nothing less than a miracle."

The country, the office of the president and even the inauguration has changed considerably since George Washington was inaugurated as the first president in New York City in 1789; but, what hasn't changed is the significance that every four years the nation swears in its chief executive to seamlessly take charge of the government, uphold the laws of the constitution and lead the country to the best of their ability.

Although the differences between the ideologies and viewpoints of Americans and their political parties leading up to and immediately following the inauguration may take center stage in newspapers and water-cooler arguments, the true solidarity and strength of the American people goes on full display during the inauguration.

During his inaugural address, Obama was mindful of his place in American history and the responsibilities of the office he had sworn to execute. "Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace," said Obama. "Yet, every so often the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because we, the people, have remained faithful to the ideals of our forbearers and true to our founding documents."

The inauguration infuses the citizenry with pride to be part of a nation of laws, constructed on the ideals of freedom and personal responsibility, with the ability to bring in new visions and leadership to ensure that we are always moving forward and constantly aiming to improve our society and the world we live in.

Service members learn latest version of evacuation tracking

Story and photo by MC3 Bryan Reckard, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Service members and civilians stationed throughout Japan learned how to use the latest version of the Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) Tracking System (NTS) during a training session held at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Jan. 29.

CFAY, Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Fleet Activities Sasebo, and Yokota Air Base all sent representatives to the training, which taught the latest version of NTS. The universal system identifies and tracks noncombatant evacuees during an evacuation process and is used by all branches of the U.S. military.

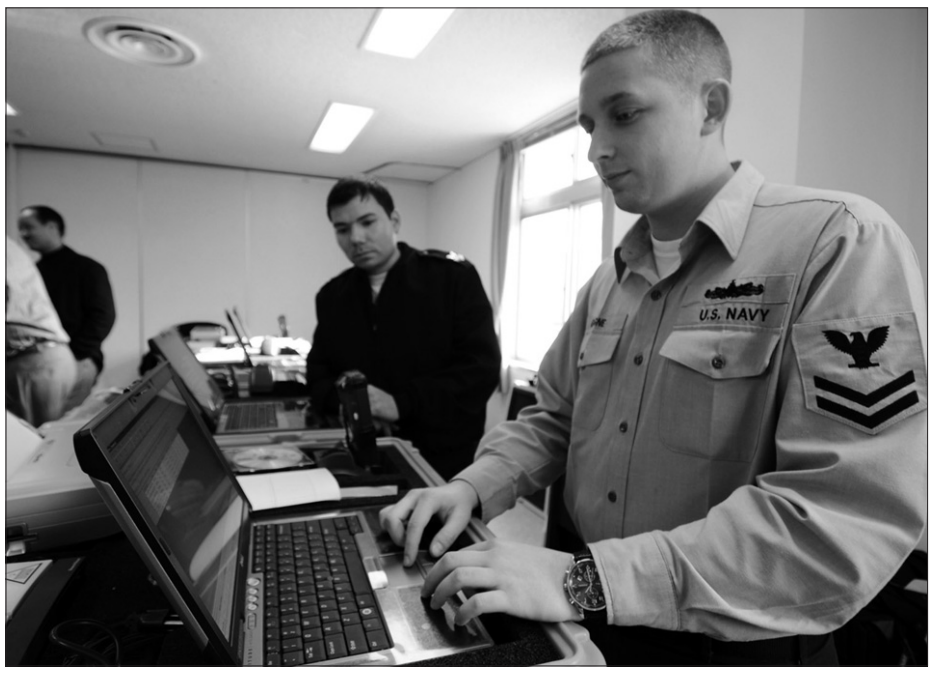
"The benefit of this system is that it makes it very easy to keep track of where people are in real-time," said Lt. Cmdr. Brett Sandman, Naval Forces Japan logistics officer. "If we had any type of a situation - such as a natural disaster where we had to maintain personnel accountability, while providing support to people and having to move people from point 'A' to point 'B,' this system makes it very easy to know where those people are."

Sandman said that while this is the first NTS training session in Yokosuka, the plan is to organize training on the system once a year, to account for people changing jobs and moving in and out of the area.

While going through the evacuation process, evacuees will need to provide some form of identification to be entered into the tracking system, which will monitor their movements throughout the entire process.

Operations Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Sean Gagne from Orlando, Fla., a student learning the system for the first time, said that once an operator has some time to work with the system, it's very simple and easy to use.

"It takes some time and some hands-on work, but it's pretty easy," said Gagne. "The instructors have done a good job of helping out."



OS2 Sean Gagne learns how to properly operate the NEO Tracking System (NTS) during a training session held at CFAY Jan. 29. The NTS provides a means of identifying and tracking noncombatant evacuees in the case of a mass departure of personnel from the area.

A NEO provides evacuation of noncombatants, nonessential military personnel, selected host-nation citizens and third country nationals in the event of war, civil unrest or natural disasters in areas all over the world.

Yokosuka's Environmental Management System officially kicks off

By Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Far East held an Environmental Management System (EMS) symposium at Afloat Training Group's training room Jan. 23. The purpose of the symposium was to officially implement the EMS onboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY).

EMS is an organizational management system in which specific proficiencies, manners, procedures and requirements for the implementation of an operational environmental policy are defined.

"It's a system to improve environmental performance," said NAVFAC Far East Environmental Engineer and CFAY Public Works Department Environmental Division EMS Manager Yoko Echizen. "It will be a continual improvement involving environmental compliance, such as protecting cultural and natural resources here on base."

The EMS is basewide, but it needs the cooperation of individual commands to make it work.

"It's an installation program, but it's up to the process owners to implement it within their work centers," said CFAY Public Works Department Environmental Director Ronald M. Rossetti. "It's a proactive system as opposed to a reactive system."

By using EMS, NAVFAC Far East and CFAY Public Works can manage situations by evaluating them and analyzing the measures being taken to prevent, or respond to mishaps or discrepancies within each work center.

A "significant aspect" is the potential for spill mishaps (e.g. oil, fuel or HAZMAT), according to Rosetti.

"The immediate correction would be to fix [the problem] as quickly as possible," he said. "But then they would have to see what was the root cause."

With EMS, NAVFAC Far East and CFAY Public Works can do compliance checks to inspect for spill containment/ clean up kits and potential spill discrepancies.

Another tool to help prevent potential spills is requiring personnel to take spill prevention training and spill response training, which could be either formal training or on-the-job-training, according to Echizen.

Continual training and awareness are important as well as ensuring standardization within the EMS.

"When someone [changes duty stations] or changes jobs the system will still be in place because there is a lot of documentation involved," said Rosetti.

Though the symposium was the official implementation of the EMS, the system has been in the works for quite some time.

"CFAY has an environmental management system policy already, which was signed by [CFAY Commanding Officer] Capt. [Daniel] Weed in December 2007," said Echizen. "In the policy, we commit to accepting the EMS guidelines which are: continual improvement, pollution prevention and environmental compliance.

Though EMS is geared toward organizations, everyone on board CFAY can get involved in helping the environment by saving resources, according to Echizen.

"If you reduce the use of natural resources you are contributing to environmental protection," she said.