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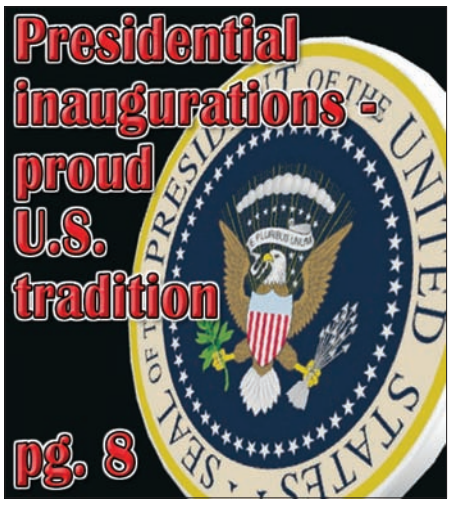
U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

Vol. LX, No. 5 www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka Feb. 6, 2009



Sailors weigh career choices at CFAY hosted symposium

Story and photo by MC2 Barry R. Hirayama, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) hosted a career management symposium Jan. 25-29 for Sailors serving in the forward-deployed naval forces.

Members of the Center for Career Development (CCD) team, based in Millington, Tenn., talked to Sailors of all pay grades about issues regarding their careers.

Chief petty officers (CPO) from area afloat and shore commands were the focus group of one brief, which talked about opportunities not only for senior Sailors like themselves, but opportunities that can affect the careers and family life of junior Sailors.

"They (chiefs) are the ones on the deckplates," said Command Master Chief CMDCM(SW/AW) Troy Cox, a CCD team member. "The chief is the guy Sailors come and talk to first when they are making career decisions. We just want to make sure the chiefs are informed as they guide their junior Sailors."

CCD and detailers are touring fleet concentration areas to get the most current and correct career information to the Sailors and their families, so they can make informed decision about their naval careers.

"Center for Career Development came to speak to us about upcoming programs and things that effect Sailors," said Chief Navy Counselor (SW/AW) Harold F. Gibbs III, Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan regional career counselor.

"We had the chiefs' brief, so the senior leadership understands, not only for us but for our junior Sailors, the importance of the programs coming down the pipe," Gibbs said. "So our Sailors - junior and senior - can make informed decisions."

A master chief fire controlman from *USS Shiloh* (CG 67) talks with the fire controlman detailer about manning levels on his ship. Detailers from Millington, Tenn., and members of the Center for Career Development team toured the forward-deployed naval forces, talking to Sailors face-to-face and guiding them on career decisions.

Fire Controlman 2nd Class (SW) Andrew F. Wozniak, who serves aboard *USS Shiloh* (CG 67), a Yokosuka-based cruiser, attended a career management brief at the urging of his CPO leadership.

"It is an opportunity to talk about my future and my desires with the guy who can make it happen," Wozniak said of meeting with his detailer. "I'm trying to go to shore duty and want to talk to the detailer and get a face to face conversation about my future."

"The face to face interaction is crucial for Sailors," said Gibbs. "Even if you're not up for orders and are just looking for career advice, they are here for you."

The CCD team talks with officers, junior Sailors, second and first class petty officers and the CPO mess about what will be affecting their careers in the future.

"We're here to make sure the message and what is happing on the deckplates is clear and the chiefs are informed with what is going on," Cox said.

USS Lassen concludes goodwill port visit to Dili, Timor-Leste

Story and photo by MCSN Charles Oki, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

USS Lassen (DDG 82) departed Dili, Timor-Leste Jan. 29 after a scheduled port visit that brought Sailors into contact with the local culture through various community relations (COMREL) projects Jan. 26-29.

The crew of *Lassen* hit the ground running with a COMREL within hours of dropping anchor off the coast of the island country. The first COMREL was at the Missionary Dominican Sisters of the Rosary orphanage, where Sailors delivered toys and sweets to the children.

“Everybody was running around and having a good time,” said Storekeeper 2nd Class (SW) Nakeia Golden, from Savannah, Ga. “Being out there having fun and supporting [the citizens] made it a great experience.”

“The interactions also helped overcome the language barrier,” she added.

The crew of *Lassen* was also invited to celebrate Australia Day, the Australian equivalent to American Independence Day. The highlight was a tug-of-war competition among members and contractors of the Australian Army, *Lassen* Sailors and members of various regional forces of the International Stabilization Force (ISF) and United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). American service members interacted with their counterparts from the defense forces of both Australia and Timor-Leste throughout the port visit, conducting training on damage control and Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) techniques.

“It was an honor to be invited to attend Australia Day,” said Aviation Warfare Systems Operator 2nd Class (NAC) Hadley Dykes. “It was a great opportunity to meet and greet some of the people from the other services and countries we work with.”

The major COMREL was at the Comoro Intermediate School, where *Lassen* Sailors spent three days repairing equipment and beautifying classrooms. The Sailors painted the interior and exterior of the classroom buildings and cleaned windows, desks and other areas of the school grounds.

Damage Controlman Fireman Gabriel Alcaine, from San Jose, Calif., made a particularly lasting impact on the school, fixing a water pump that had been broken for more than a year, providing running water to the students. Alcaine was originally born and raised in El Salvador and said he understands what it’s like to live in poor conditions.

“I know what it’s like to grow up in the conditions that these kids have to live with everyday,” said Alcaine. “So, if providing running water to the school will bring even a little bit of happiness, then that makes me feel like I’m making a difference.”

The crew also distributed Project Handclasp pallets of medical supplies, infant care supplies and sports equipment to a local charity to help the citizens of Dili.

Lt. j.g. Kristina Rohlin, assigned to *USS Lassen* (DDG 82), checks the size of a shirt before giving it to a girl at the Missionary Dominican Sisters of the Rosary orphanage in Dili, Timor-Leste. *Lassen* arrived in Dili Jan. 26 for a scheduled port visit and engaged in goodwill activities with the people of Timor-Leste.

During the last evening, *Lassen* hosted José Manuel Ramos-Horta, the president of Timor-Leste, for an onboard reception.

“I feel proud that *Lassen* is representing the United States to the people of Timor-Leste,” said Lt. j.g. Thomas Brewer, of Aiken, S.C. “It’s not everyday that you host a head of state aboard a U.S. warship. I was honored.”

“The crew has left a huge and lasting footprint, accomplishing great feats throughout the city, and I take pride in being able to say that. They worked hard to make the city a better place for the citizens of Timor-Leste,” said Cmdr. Anthony Simmons, commanding officer of *Lassen*.

“In America, we know that a good education is critical to realizing your dreams. Success starts at the schoolhouse door, so we feel that we’ve directly contributed to a prosperous future for the kids in Timor-Leste,” he said.