Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Pacific Fleet surgeon speaks at CFAY town hall meeting

By Paul Long, CFAY Public Affairs

U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), Command Surgeon Rear Adm. Michael H. Mittelman, brought a team of experts to speak the Yokosuka base community at the Benny Decker Theater July 21. The purpose was to allay community concerns and provide updates on environmental conditions and actions following Operation Tomodachi.

March 11, the 9.0 Tohoku earthquake triggered a tsunami which flooded and damaged all the nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, approximately 225 miles north of Yokosuka.,

Mittleman's team included Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) Director U.S. Army Col. Mark A. Melanson; U.S Army Lt. Col. Margery Hanfelt, from Commander Japan District Veterinary Command; AFRRI Scientific Research Department Head Cmdr. John Gilstad; AFRRI Chief of Medical Radiobiology Advisory Team Health Physicist Bob Woodruff, and Capt. Reid Tanaka, PACOM special assistant on nuclear matters.

"The one message I wanted to bring to you is that it is safe here," said Mittelman. "The background radiation here is less than many areas in the United States."

According to Mittelman, it's his responsibility to ensure the health safety of everyone in the region. He said that before, during, and after Operation Tomodachi, the Navy is monitoring the air, food, soil and water to make sure that all are within acceptable standards.

Hanfelt assured the community that the food purchased for consumption on Yokosuka base is safe. "We were in the back of the food trucks, in the distribution warehouses," she said. "I go out and eat on the economy and I'm confident in telling you that the food safety level is the same level, before and after the event."

Food served at Navy Exchange and Morale, Welfare and Recreation eateries, and sold at the exchange and commissary, comes from various Department of Defense contracted vendors, both from the United States and Japan. No food, procured locally, comes from the disaster affected areas of Japan, Hanfelt said.

According to Hanfelt, the U.S. embassy puts out information, via their website, on food products sold on the economy. She expressed confidence in the reports from the Japanese government stating that the food is safe to buy and eat.

Rear Adm. Michael H. Mittelman, command surgeon for U.S. Pacific Command, speaks to members of the Yokosuka base community July 21 to provide updates on environmental conditions.

Photo by Yuji Kawabe

Tanaka, liaison officer between the Navy, the Government of Japan, and the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), said the Japanese government, TEPCO, and the United States have done extensive testing for radioactive heavy metals in the wake of the incident at Fukushima.

"In general, we are not finding any of the heavy metals, any where except very locally at that site and there's a lot of work being done right now to contain everything at the Fukushima site," Tanaka said.

The atendees were assured that the local environment is not contaminated and safe for the community.

"The air is safe, the water is safe, both here and out in town," said, Commander Fleet Activities Commanding Officer Capt. David Owen.

see related ***Q&A,*** *Pg. 10*

USS Cowpens launches new Chiefs in Training program

By MC1 (SW/AW) N. Ross Taylor, *USS Cowpens* Public Affairs

TIMOR SEA – Sixteen board eligible first class petty officers aboard the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) are getting a unique opportunity for advanced leadership training and team-building exercises.

The training began shortly after the list of eligible candidates came out and concluded July 7.

They attended weekly classroom training, participated in group physical training (PT) sessions three times a week, and gained useful knowledge on how to become better leaders at sea.

All this was accomplished underway and made possible by *Cowpens*' Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Mess. They are 'Chiefs in Training.'

"It was a great opportunity to learn more of what will be expected of me as a chief, and also how I can perform at a higher level and be more effective as a first class," said Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Joseph Hand, a native of Florence, N.J. "Now, I better understand what 'deckplate leadership' really means and how to acquire the tools needed to perform the job of a chief."

The Chiefs in Training program was implemented on *Cowpens* by Command Master Chief (SW/AW) Bryan Hawkins, a native of Oakland, Calif.

Hawkins said the program is voluntary and designed to better prepare those first class petty officers who are board eligible in the event they are selected to advance to the rank of chief petty officer.

"The Navy is changing the way it develops leaders in the 21st century," said Hawkins. "This training strengthens the foundation and improves the readiness of Sailors preparing to transition from a first class petty officer to a chief."

The eager first classes met three times a week in the chiefs' mess and had an opportunity to discuss a wide range of topics with their peers.

Each classroom session was facilitated by a chief petty officer. The training topics covered numerous topics, from basic administration tips and uniform regulations to the more advanced leadership and mentorship subjects, such as 'Sailorization,' conflict resolution and division officer training.

"The topics were valid and all revolved around leadership," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Nicholas Young. "The discussions helped me see how I might be able to handle a certain situation more than one way from hearing other leading petty officers (LPO) give their inputs."

Sailors conduct physical fitness training on the flight deck of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) as part of the Chiefs in Training program June 13. The 10-week training cycle is voluntary and focuses on leadership and team building techniques to better prepare board eligible first class petty officers if they are selected for the rank of chief petty officer.

Cryptologic Technician (Technical) 1st Class (SW) Vincent Wenzel, from Boise, Idaho, really enjoyed the motivation and team-building aspect of the group physical training sessions.

"The camaraderie during the 'Chief's in Training' PT sessions was great," said Wenzel. "It brought us together as fellow first classes and possibly chief selects and gave us the motivation and support we all need. I know that we gained from that experience."

According to Hawkins, although the program is optional, the participants were required to attend every session and conduct themselves in accordance with the Navy's core values at all times.

"The overall objective was to make more capable leading petty officers while improving their chances for selection by making them stronger CPO candidates," said Hawkins. "The program here aboard *Cowpens* has been an overwhelming success."

INSIDE

RAAF chaplain visits *George Washington*

Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Chaplain Flight Lt. Mark Kleemann visited Sailors aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) July 25.

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Yokosuka Officer Spouses Club donates to charities

The Yokosuka Officer Spouses Club awarded charity money to different organizations from Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) community July 11.

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