FISC Yokosuka logistics team supports exercise Cobra Gold

By H. Sam Samuelson, FISC Yokosuka Office of Corporate Communications

An elite logistics response team (LRT) returned to U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka March 1, after orchestrating the on-scene load-out of more than 110 tons of cargo, repair parts and mail during Exercise Cobra Gold 2011 in Thailand.

LRTs, essentially highly mobile "micro-FISCs," are dispatched from their headquarters in Yokosuka to assume the role as ships' logistics representatives ashore during major exercises or contingency operations.

"No matter where they were in the exercise, everything from a single bolt to a flight deck tractor – when the ships needed it, we got it to them," said Logistics Specialist Second Class Kevin Goleman, who served as the lead for the Cobra Gold LRT. "We were on the move daily from Utphao to Sattahip and points all over the region for three weeks."

The LRT concept is relatively new, replacing the older and more manpower-intensive logistics beach detachments, or "beach dets."

LRT teams leverage a mix of technology and operational efficiencies to reduce manpower while more efficiently serving the ships.

One burgeoning technology FISC Yokosuka has been testing is the use of an Automated Manifest System – Tactical, or AMS-TAC, a suitcase-sized portable unit housing a computer, satellite phone and hand held scanner.

"One of the uses of AMS-TAC is to scan cargo right on the flight line – or wherever it arrives – and transmit the cargo manifest directly to the ship," Goleman said. "Once the ship receives the data, if it needs to, it can send a request to single out any of the cargo for priority delivery.

"It's still a work in progress for us, but it's just another concept that can help us do our jobs more effectively," Goleman said.

Cobra Gold was supported by the locally forward-deployed *USS Essex* (LHD 2), *USS Denver* (LPD 9) and *USS Germantown* (LSD 42), as well as the San Diego-based *USS Stockdale* (DDG 106).

An SA-330J Puma helicopter places supplies on the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship *USS Essex* (LHD 2) during a vertical replenishment with the Military Sealift Command dry cargo and ammunition ship *USNS Richard E. Byrd* (T-AKE 4) while participating in Exerise Cobra Gold 2011 in Thailand. FISC Yokosuka Logistics Response Team orchestrated the on-scene load-out of more than 110 tons of cargo, repair parts and mail during the exercise.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Casey H. Kyhl

The logistics day for the LRT starts as early as 3 a.m. when the day's scheduled flights are received and reviewed. The list details mission flights by ships' aircraft and elements that include aircraft availability to stop by the flight line on the way back to the ship to pick up cargo or mail.

"The priority for the flights, obviously, are mission," Goleman explained, "but, when possible, they drop in to pick up cargo and mail, so they become part of the logistics effort.

"I'll tell you something else, too: those pilots aren't just sitting there idling their engines while we load the aircraft. They're right out there doing the same heavy lifting we're doing; they know how important moving cargo and mail is," Goleman said.

Goleman was joined by Logistics Specialist Second Class Larry Cybulski and U.S. Marine Sergeant Ato Waithe, who represents a small contingent of Marines assigned to FISC Yokosuka, the only FISC among seven around the world with a formal Marine Liaison Office.

"We work very closely with the Marines," Goleman said.

In fact, while FISC Yokosuka was represented by an LRT, there were many more Marine logistics elements ashore as well.

"We all helped each other," Goleman said. "In a nod to Naval Logistics Integration, we were one team out there. The Marines stepped up for us and, where we could, we stepped up for them."

The multinational exercise Cobra Gold was conducted ashore and in the Gulf of Thailand. More than 7,200 U.S. service members at multiple locations throughout Thailand joined the militaries of the Kingdom of Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Malaysia to improve interoperability among the nations.

A component of the Naval Supply Systems Command, headquartered in Mechanicsburg, Pa., FISC Yokosuka is one among seven FISC commands under COMFISCS headquartered in San Diego, a worldwide network of more than 22,500 military and civilian personnel providing combat capability through logistics.

FISC "soft-skills" training crucial to new ERP software kick-off

By H. Sam Samuelson, FISC Yokosuka Office of Corporate Communications

Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka Organization Development Division and Regional Services Department, completed their first "Soft Skills" training curriculum Feb 18, in preparation for the adoption of Enterprise Resource Planning's (ERP) next phase: "ERP 1.1."

"As we move into the next phase of ERP – ERP 1.1 – we're anticipating a ramp up in training," said Cmdr. Karen Little, ERP lead and Regional Services Department director. "New software systems translate to new training needs. No one will lie; ERP technology is unlike anything we've used in the past, so training will be extremely important to those who will have new roles in ERP 1.1."

Little said the first step is to identify local employees to be trainers, and the first step for those future ERP trainers is to introduce them to the overall training environment.

"That's where 'Soft Skills' comes in," said Sylvia Gonzales, FISC Yokosuka ERP lead coordinator. "'Soft Skills' training is a prerequisite for anyone who will eventually be providing ERP training."

Gonzales said "Soft Skills" is a crucial and necessary first step.

"Absolutely, before you can train others, you have to learn the basics of classroom training first: coordinating class scheduling, building a curriculum, developing and using training tools, books and lectures, and building proper student-trainer relationships," said Gonzales. "'Soft Skills' even includes confidence training. All the common elements associated with teaching future trainers how to hold a successful training class."

Gonzales was one of three teachers of the training. Other teachers included Christie Turner, special ERP coordinator, and Koei Sugawara administrative management officer.

Graduating students of the "Soft Skills" classes will move on to either one of two directions: some will next attend "Train the Trainer" classes, while others will add to or replace those who support sustainment for the first phase of ERP, known as ERP 1.0.

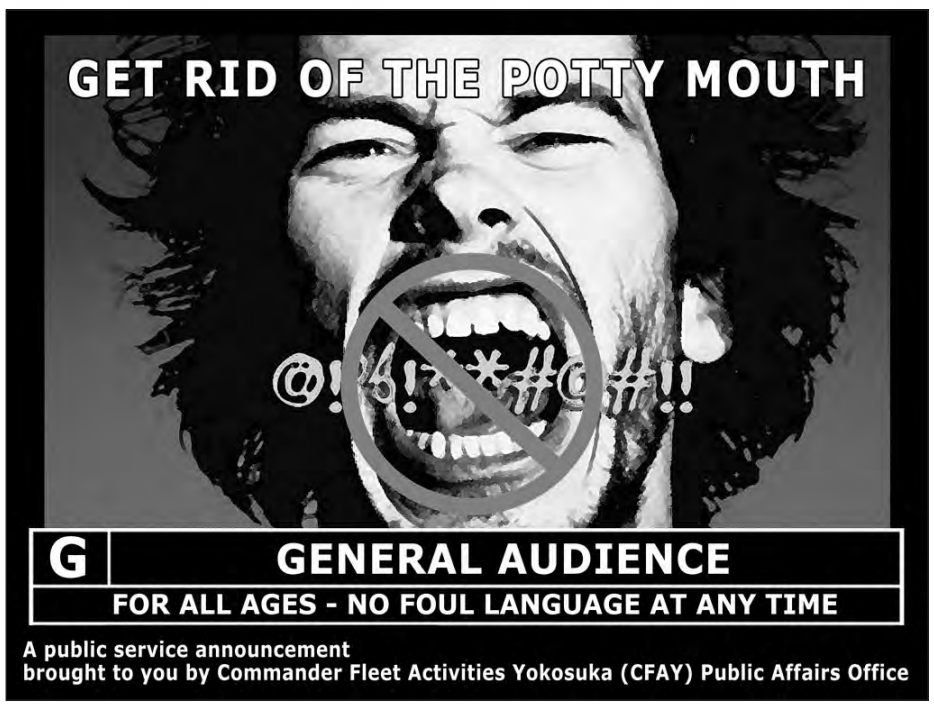
FISC Yokosuka adopted internal ERP controls more than a year-and-a-half ago. That iteration was labeled ERP 1.0. The next step, ERP 1.1, shifts more processes associated with supplying the fleet via SAP technology. SAP is a German-engineered internet-based, all-in-one total business software solution. ERP is being custom designed from SAP to serve the Navy's needs and logistics management requirements.

"The 'Soft Skills' class was very interesting," said Nelia Clemente, program coordinator for purchase card and travel cards. "This class really helped alleviate my fears speaking in front of groups. It was a quality class: good, fun and informative. I'll be a better trainer."

The editor asks:

"***Did you know***, although the exact history of April Fool's Day or All Fool's Day is uncertain, the current thinking is that it began around 1582 in France with the reform of the calendar under Charles IX? The Gregorian Calendar was introduced, and New Year's Week, March 25 - April 1, was moved to New Years's Day, Jan. 1.

Communication traveled slowly in those days and some people were only informed of the change several years later. Still others, who were more rebellious refused to acknowledge the change and continued to celebrate on the last day of the former celebration, April 1.

These people, labeled "fools" by the general populace, were subject to ridicule and sent on "fool errands," or had other practical jokes played upon them. The butts of these pranks became known as a "poisson d'avril" or "April fish" because a young naive fish is easily caught.

This harassment evolved over time and a custom of prank-playing continue on the first day of April. This tradition eventually spread elsewhere and was introduced to the American colonies by the English and the French. Because of this spread to other countries, April Fool's Day has taken on an international flavor with each country celebrating the holiday in its own way."