Message from Fleet Minyard

Aloha Shipmates, and welcome back to another edition of Fleet's Quarters!

If it seems like a long time since we've had a chance to chat, that's because it has been. I apologize for that, but April was a pretty busy month for us here in the Pacific, and I decided to forego last month's newsletter in order to focus on the important tasks at hand.

I don't mean to imply that our discussions here in Fleet's Quarters aren't important, quite the opposite, but sometimes events happen that demand our immediate and full attention. In this case I'm referring to the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) efforts we undertook in support of our friends and allies in Japan following the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

I have been proud to call myself a Sailor for many years now, but perhaps never more so than during the months of March and April when I witnessed the monumental effort you put forth to help the Japanese people in their time of need. Many of you were directly involved in the recovery and assistance operations, and I'm sure the rest of you know at least some of the details of what these shipmates accomplished, but let me summarize it for you.

During Operation Tomodachi, U.S. forces delivered HADR aid from March 13 through April 7 to survivors of the tsunami and earthquake in support of Japan Self-Defense Force efforts. A total of 22 ships, 140 aircraft and nearly 20,000 personnel participated in Operation Tomodachi. U.S. 7th Fleet forces delivered more than 260 tons of relief supplies and flew more than 160 aerial reconnaissance and search sorties. This was one of the largest humanitarian assistance efforts ever undertaken by the United States and you all performed superbly.

Although this was a tragic and terrible event, it gave us an opportunity to review and improve our processes for contingency situations and will help us be better prepared for future events. It also provided a powerful reminder as to why sustained combat readiness is critical to mission accomplishment, regardless of what that mission is. In this case, the location and readiness of our forward-deployed forces allowed them to respond quickly and effectively when the call for assistance was received.

It is this "warrior mentality" that has enabled us to become the professional service that we are today - an ethos that demands the strongest level of commitment, the strictest level of discipline and the highest ideals. Our Navy motto declares us to be a "Global Force for Good" and you certainly proved that in this case. Job well done shipmates!

Thanks for your time shipmates and thanks for all that you do! - Fleet Master Chief John Minyard

Stethem namesake's brother distinguished guest at change of command ceremony

By MC1 Geronimo C. Aquino,
Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Cmdr. Michael "Brent" DeVore assumed command of the guided-missile destroyer *USS Stethem* (DDG 63) in a ceremony held at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) May 19.

Following his duty as *Stethem* executive officer (XO), Devore relieved Cmdr. Henry C. Adams, who served as commanding officer (CO) since December 2009.

In his farewell remarks, Adams, whose next assignment is at Naval War College in Newport, R.I., praised the leadership of his senior officials and acknowledged the hard work and dedication of all under his command.

Retired Chief Boatswains Mate (SEAL) Kenneth Stethem gives a speech to guests and *USS Stethem* (DDG 63) Sailors during a change of command ceremony May 19, where Cmdr. Michael B. DeVore relieved Cmdr. Henry C. Adams as commanding officer.
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Mikey Mulcare

During his speech, Adams also sent a message of confidence to his former executive officer. "You're a great XO and will make even better CO. You are absolutely ready for the challenge," said Adams.

"I could not pick a better XO and relief; he has been at the heart of our success. He's been a great friend, confidant, and the sounding board of the second in command for this ship and crew. It is only just and fitting that you get your turn at the wheel of command at sea," said Adams.

Among other distinguish military leaders present during the ceremony was the ship's namesake Honorary Master Chief (SW/DV) Robert Dean Stethem's brother, retired Chief Boatswain's Mate (SEAL) Kenneth J. Stethem.

"I am very honored to be here today for this change of command, I am certain my brother is very proud of the continued success of our fine Navy, this ship and its crew," Stethem said to the audience. "My family and I are confident that you will continue to practice the Navy ideals throughout your missions on this great ship that my brother carried with him throughout his life."

During the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in June 1985, Kenneth's brother Robert, whom the ship is named for, was singled out by Lebanese hijackers because of his military status and was badly beaten and ultimately murdered after their demands were not met. Throughout his ordeal Stethem did not yield; instead, he acted with fortitude and courage and helped his fellow passengers endure by his example.

Stethem's new CO, Cmdr. DeVore earned his commission and a B.S. in Chemistry Education from Purdue University in 1995. He earned a Masters degree from Georgetown University in 2002 and the Marine Corps Command and Staff College in 2006.

DeVore's operational experience includes deployments in the 5th, 6th and 7th Fleet areas of operations including Carrier Strike Group, NATO surface force, independent deployment and Northern Arabian Gulf Maritime Security operations.

His at-sea assignments include anti-submarine warfare officer in *USS Taylor* (FFG 50), fire control officer in *USS Carney* (DDG 64), operations officer in *USS Mahan* (DDG 72), and commanding officer in Patrol Coastal Crew FOXTROT while embarked in *USS Typhoon* (PC 5) and *USS Hurricane* (PC 3).

Cowpens earns Project Good Neighbor Award

By Ensign Christopher Lowe,
***USS Cowpens* Public Affairs**

Sailors of *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) were happy to hear that through their hard work in the community, they had received the Project Good Neighbor Award for Medium Sea Command for 2010.

The Project Good Neighbor Award recognizes the best year-round volunteer-supported program or special project that promotes outreach activities throughout the year to establish and restore hope to the community.

"I like volunteering and am really glad that we got recognized for this award," said Ensign Demarkus Brown, an officer aboard *Cowpens*. "It gives you a good feeling when you help people out and when something like this comes around, you definitely feel like you're doing a lot of good."

***USS Cowpens* (CG 63) Sailors interact with children from the Manila Zamora School. This Manila school event was one of many projects that contributed to *Cowpens* receiving the Project Good Neighbor Award.**
U.S. Navy photo by LS1 Robert Gonzales

Cowpens is a Ticonderoga-Class guided-missile cruiser forward-deployed to Yokosuka, Japan and assigned to the *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Strike Group.