NAVFAC Far East team supports exercise Citadel Shield

NAVFAC Far East Contingency Engineer Response Team members Keishi Sugimoto and Atsuyuki Akimoto prepare to post a damage assessment placard on an inspected CFAY facility March 1 to alert other first responders of structural safety concerns as part of the CNIC worldwide force protection exercise Citadel Shield held Feb. 28 - March 4.

Photo by Yasuko Nakamura

From NAVFAC Far East Public Affairs

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Far East (NAVFAC FE) Contingency Engineer Response Team (CERT) participated in the annual Commander Navy Installations Command (CNIC)-directed U.S. Navy worldwide installation force protection field training exercise 'Citadel Shield 11' held Feb. 28 – March 4 throughout Commander Navy Region Japan (CNRJ).

During the exercise, NAVFAC FE CERT augmented the resources of Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), performing damage assessments in response to a simulated small aircraft attack on board CFAY utilities infrastructure and enabling other response and recovery capabilities organic to the installation.

"Participating in a CNIC exercise like this is a particularly good opportunity for the team to work with and learn from the wealth of expertise that CNIC maintains at both the installation and region level," said Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Gunderson, CERT officer in charge.

NAVFAC FE CERT is a flexible and scalable team of damage assessment and contingency contracting experts maintained by NAVFAC to support the facilities contingency response needs of CNIC, combatant commands and other Navy and Marine Corps supported commanders throughout the CNRJ area of responsibility.

Disasters can occur at any time or place with little or no warning, but even when sufficient warning is provided and very few casualties occur, the shore infrastructure may suffer a level of destruction approaching that of major war damage.

Installations affected by disasters must be able to return to a minimum mission-capable status as soon as possible. To this end, the NAVFAC FE CERT is on standby to deploy to any area where the normal missions and operations of an installation have been adversely affected, by either natural or man-made disaster, to the point where the ability of the local operations and maintenance resources are completely overwhelmed.

CERT augments and supplements the affected installation's resources and provides expertise in the assessment and repairs of damaged facilities, utilities and support systems.

"The exercise was a great opportunity for the team to both practice executing our core mission and hone our ability to quickly integrate into the response and recovery organization already in place when we arrive on scene," said Gunderson.

Distractions: a message from Fleet Master Chief John Minyard

Hello again shipmates,

There are so many important things happening in our Navy right now, I spent more than a little time deciding what subject to address this month. Should I talk about force restructuring, continuing resolution, the implementation of "Don't Ask-Don't Tell" repeal or any other of a dozen challenges we currently face?

In the end, I decided to talk about distractions. Obviously, the topics I mentioned are of great importance and will impact all of our lives in one way or another, but these matters will be decided by our military and civilian leaders, just as they have been in the past, and will be in the future. That being the case, are we really accomplishing anything by feeding the rumor mill and guessing about what might happen and when, or are we allowing ourselves to be distracted by speculation and wasting valuable time that would be better spent making sure we are trained, focused and prepared to fight, regardless of the circumstances?

I believe speculation on any of the topics I mentioned at the beginning takes away from our ability to do this effectively. So here is my challenge to you - rise above the distractions and focus on the things you can control like job performance, rating knowledge, qualifications and personal conduct. Concentrate on becoming a model Sailor who is ready and able to contribute to the mission at hand, and who enjoys the full support of family and friends. Their understanding and strength will help keep us focused through difficult times.

It is human nature to ponder what the future holds and to worry about how changes will affect us, but there is a fine line between wondering and spending so much time worrying that it becomes an impediment to our every day responsibilities. Stay the course shipmates, and keep in mind that distractions come in many different forms and from multiple directions, and they aren't always easy to recognize.

Take for example the recent change to Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders. On the surface it doesn't seem like a distraction, but many Sailors were concerned when they found out they wouldn't receive their orders until two months before their rotation date. PCSing is never easy - between filling out transfer paperwork, setting up household goods shipments, completing necessary screenings and reenlisting, you've got a lot to get done. It's even more challenging if you have a spouse who works, children enrolled in school and you're a homeowner who needs to sell or rent the place out. It's a lot to accomplish in so little time.

When you look at it that way, it's easy to see how that situation could result in a great deal of worry and easily become a distraction. The bad news is that you can't control when you'll get your orders, but the good news is you do know they are coming and can help minimize the disruption by focusing on the things you can control. Make sure your family members know and understand the situation. Begin making preparations now by talking to schools and realtors, take a walk through your house and start thinking about what you'll be shipping or storing. Bottom line is any actions you take now are less likely to become distractions in the future.

Now I know this is just one example of the many challenges we face, but you can apply the same principles to almost any situation. Just keep focused on the important things and rise above the distractions, or they will surely control you.

Thanks for your time shipmates, and thanks for all you do! - Fleet Minyard