Soldiers assist Sailors by providing care to animals

Story and photo by MC3 Mikey Mulcare, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

On a base dominated by Navy personnel, Army veterinarians and veterinarian technicians spend countless hours a week providing care to Navy working dogs, civilian pets and stray animals.

The mission-essential care the Soldiers provide to the animals of Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka ranges from annual check-ups and physicals to disease control and vaccinations.

"Our primary responsibility and mission is to care for military working dogs, they take priority over everything else," said Pfc. Vickie Espinoza, a veterinary technician at Yokosuka Army Veterinary Clinic. "We give care to the military working dogs that are on security patrol teams at the gates and drug sniffing dogs that are used to keep drugs off the base."

Army Pfc. Vickie Espinoza, a veterinary technician assigned to Yokosuka Army Veterinary Clinic, monitors the breathing of Carly, a 5-month-old pug March 11. The Yokosuka Army Veterinary Clinic provides services and care to military working dogs and the pets of residents of Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka.

The Soldiers frequently do a lot of work behind the scenes to ensure the readiness of military working dogs.

"We do more than just veterinarian care for these dogs. Next week, I have two working dogs coming in, but we also spend a lot of time inspecting their food and kennels," said Espinoza. "These dogs are extremely valuable to the military and they are an important part of the lives of the service members they work and live with. They are family."

Currently, the veterinarians give care and treatment to six military working dogs, including a dog named Nick who recently returned from a deployment to Afghanistan with his handler.

A large percent of the veterinary care however is given to service member's pets.

While providing the vital care to a service member's pet may not seem like the most mission essential task, many of Yokosuka's veterinarians and technicians would have to disagree.

"I know that the work I do puts a lot of owners at ease," said Army Capt. Terra Dawes, veterinarian and officer in charge, Yokosuka Army Veterinarian Clinic. "I like to think that when a pet is healthy, the owner has one less thing to worry about."

Annual NMCRS active duty fund drive continues through April 30

By MC2(SW/AW) John Smolinski, CFAY Public Affairs

Navy-Marine Corp Relief Society (NMCRS) kicked off the 2011 active duty fund drive here at the Fleet Theater March 7.

NMCRS is a private, non-profit, volunteer and charitable organization whose mission is to provide financial, educational and other assistance to U.S. Navy service members, their eligible family members and survivors when in need. The main source of funds for NMCRS is from active duty and retiree solicitations.

"The Society itself is here to help Sailors and Marines, and since it is run mostly by volunteers who dedicate their time to help us, it's only right that we give back and make sure that it will be around to help us in the future," said Ship's Serviceman 1st Class Thomjames Pecson, CFAY command coordinator and assistant area coordinator.

The kick-off event educated the 84 tenant command representatives on how to get their fellow Sailors and Marines involved in the fund drive.

"Our goal is 100 percent contact with each Sailor and Marine here by March 31 and to meet or exceed last year's donations of $287,000 in Yokosuka," said Chief Warrant Officer Tina Broome, the 2011 NMCRS Yokosuka area fund drive coordinator.

In 2010, the demand for financial assistance was greater than amount of money received in donations.

"Last year we gave $474,451 in funds and unfortunately only brought in $287,000," said Amy Lacaria, NMCRS Yokosuka director. "If every Sailor and Marine stationed here in Yokosuka gave just $5 a month or $60 for the year, we would raise more than $1 million."

NMCRS provided financial assistance to more than 600 cases in 2010, more than half of them in quick assist loans.

"The society actually helped me with their quick loan program when I was a young Sailor," said Broome. "I am glad to have been given this opportunity to do something good for the Society in return."

In 2010, NMCRS Yokosuka provided more than $450,000 in emergency aid for Sailors and Marines.

NMCRS also offers grants in special cases that the service member does not have to pay back.

"I have a junior Sailor that works for me whose mother had just past away," said Pecson. "He didn't have the money to fly home to the funeral, so I sent him over to the relief society, and they were able to give him a grant to buy a ticket back home."

"You might not have had that emergency in your life to use NMCRS, but you will be helping out someone you know," said Lacaria.

The 2011 active duty fund drive for Yokosuka will continue through April 30.

Navy performance evaluations, fitness reports must conform to new polices

From Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

Effective immediately, Navy performance evaluations and fitness reports must conform to new policies announced in Naval Administrative Message NAVADMIN 286/10.

The evaluation form "NAVPERS 1616/27 (Revision Aug. 2010) Evaluation and Counseling Record for E7 through E9," also known as the "CHIEFEVAL," is not affected by the new requirements and its use will continue as usual.

To more clearly define top-performing Sailors, NAVADMIN 286/10 changed the promotion recommendation rules for E-5 Sailors and aligns them with E-6 Sailors under the same recommendation requirements. For reports dated March 15 and beyond, "Early Promote" and "Must Promote" recommendations combined cannot exceed 60 percent of the ranking group. In addition, "Must Promote" recommendations may increase by one for each "Early Promote" quota not used.

An update to NAVFIT98A — known as "Version 29" — was rolled out to the fleet incorporating the new rules. Work stations on the unclassified Navy/Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) automatically received this new version. For non-NMCI users, the "Version 29" upgrade is available for download from the Navy Personnel Command (NPC) website.

Service members should verify they are using "Version 29" by checking "About NAVFIT98A" under the help tab in NAVFIT98A, which will display "Version 2.2.0.29."

"Validating reports with the new NAVFIT98A version will help ensure commands comply with the new promotion recommendation rule and help eliminate common errors in preparing reports," said Jim Price, director of NPC's Performance Evaluation Division.

Those with questions or concerns about performance evaluations or fitness reports can contact NPC customer service by calling toll-free (866) 827-5672, DSN 882-5672 or by e-mailing to cscmailbox@navy.mil.

Pet of the Week

The Pet of the Week this week is Dee Dee. She looks like an American Curl, with a lovely gray and white coat. Dee Dee is currently living with a dog, a cat and young children in a foster home. She is doing great and would probably flourish in a similar home as long as she has space to be by herself sometimes. Dee Dee has been with us for a long time, waiting for just the right family. Contact Pets Are Worth Saving (P.A.W.S.) at 243-9996, by e-mail to usskittytalk.yokosuka@gmail.com or visit the P.A.W.S. website at www.pawsyokosukajapan.com.

Due to the current situation in Japan, all P.A.W.S. pet adoptions are free if you are departing the country. Contact P.A.W.S. to find out more.

Photo courtesy of P.A.W.S.