USS George Washington hosts reception in Thailand

From *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

LAEM CHABANG, Thailand – With giant United States and Thai flags serving as a patriotic backdrop, more than 350 distinguished guests attended a reception aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN73) as the ship spent its first evening in Laem Chabang, Thailand.

The American delegations were lead by the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, Kristie Kenney Aug. 6.

In a speech to those in attendance, Ambassador Kenney praised the service of the *George Washington* crew and reflected upon the friendship between Thailand and the United States.

"Tonight is a great chance to celebrate our friendship," Kenney said, "You're here on a little piece of America surrounded by a great deal of Thailand, I can't think of anything nicer."

George Washington was in Thailand for a five day port visit after completing 56 days at sea.

The carrier had just completed the exercise Talisman Sabre 2011 off the coast of Australia and the reception served as an opportunity to celebrate its success down under while affirming the alliance between the United States and its host nation of Thailand.

During his opening remarks for the ceremony, *George Washington* Commanding Officer Capt. David A. Lausman emphasized that the ship's visit is just one way the two nations can continue to build upon their longstanding friendship.

"During our port visit you will see our Sailors out in your communities painting schools and visiting the elderly," said Lausman. "They want to learn about your culture and customs and help wherever they can. They represent everything good about our nation and I hope you get the chance to talk with them."

Raising a glass of Champaign and toasting those in attendance, Rear Admiral J.R. Haley, Commander, Task Force 70, commended the Royal Thai Navy for their professionalism and dedication to service.

"We work very closely with the [Royal] Thai Navy, from counter-piracy missions to humanitarian assistance and saving lives," said Haley.

The Honorable Kristie A. Kenney, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, comes on board the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) for a reception ceremony celebrating the friendship between the kingdom of Thailand and the United States of America Aug. 6.

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN William P. Gatlin

Haley also stated that being able to work so closely with the Royal Thai Navy is one of the best aspects about his job.

During the two-hour reception, guests mingled with the crew and toured the ship learning about how the U.S. Navy operates at sea.

"The Sailors who you see serving you tonight are the same Sailors who work 18-hour days launching aircraft, or building bombs, or working in the hospital," said Haley.

Additonally, in his speech, Haley echoed comments from Lausman that the *George Washington* Sailor's were the "real secret weapon."

George Washington returned to patrolling the waters of the Western Pacific on June 12, 2011, departing her forward operating base of Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka. Onboard are more than 5,500 Sailors from *George Washington* and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5. George Washington's mission is to ensure security and stability in the 7th Fleet AOR and to be in position to work with our allies and regional partners to respond to any crisis across the operational spectrum as directed.

All-hands needed for sexual assault survey

From Department of the Navy
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office

WASHINGTON – The Department of the Navy (DON) Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) announced Aug. 11 that all Sailors, Marines and DON civilians are encouraged to participate in an online survey.

The confidential and anonymous survey, which will end Sept. 30, is part of a Secretary of the Navy-directed tasking for DON SAPRO to assess its SAPR program functionality and effectiveness, as well as determine the scope of sexual assaults within the DON. Participation in the survey, which can be found at www.donsapro.navy.mil/survey.html, is completely voluntary.

"The Secretary [of the Navy] and I are committed to preventing sexual assaults in our Navy and Marine Corps," said Jill Loftus, director, DON SAPRO. "This means reducing their frequency, if not eliminating them entirely."

The online survey is the best tool for tracking where the DON stands, and will establish a baseline for comparison to move forward.

"It is important that as many Sailors and Marines as possible provide us their thoughts and opinions on our ongoing efforts to combat sexual assault," said Rear Adm. Martha Herb, director, Personal Readiness and Community Support Branch. "The survey responses will help us gauge our progress and serve to guide our program adjustments for increased effectiveness at combating sexual assault Department-wide."

Brig. General Robert Hedelund, director of Marine and Family Programs Division, echoed Loftus and Herb.

"Sexual assault is not tolerated in the Marine Corps, this is a clear message from our Commandant,"said Hedelund. "The Marine Corps has worked diligently to highlight the importance of this message. The results of this survey will help us measure our program effectiveness and ultimately strengthen our sexual assault prevention efforts."

Prior studies show that one percent of Navy women are raped each year, and three to four percent experience some form of sexual assault. Junior female Sailors are most at risk, however male Sailors are also victims of sexual assault. Their percentage risks are lower than those of females, but they still translate into way too many victims, said Loftus.

"Our cumulative sexual assault victim intervention/prevention and response program efforts do not appear to have changed these risks. Our core values demand that we find new ways to do better. This will not be easy or quick, and there is no tried-and-true formula for success," said Loftus.

All Navy message (ALNAV) 042/11 states that, in order to achieve maximum participation of as many Sailors and Marines possible, "Commanders will encourage participation of Sailors and Marines under [their] command to support this goal."

ALNAV 042/11 can be viewed at http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/messages/Documents/ALNAVS/ALN2011/ALN11042.txt.