Chief of naval personnel visits CFAY

Story by MCSN Declan Barnes,
Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

The chief of naval personnel visited and spoke with Sailors on board Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) during an all-hands call at the Benny Decker Theater Feb. 23.

Vice Adm. Scott R. Van Buskirk spoke with Sailors about the future of personnel in today's Navy, focusing on the forward deployed aspect of the fleet.

Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Scott R. Van Buskirk addresses Sailors from afloat and shore units at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) during an all-hands call Feb. 23. During Van Buskirk's visit to CFAY he addressed various Navy-wide issues dealing with retention, retirement, training, and advancement.
U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Paul Kelly

"We're going to continue to put our best ships forward," said Van Buskirk. "It's all about the continuous process of becoming more forward deployed."

Van Buskirk talked primarily about the many procedures and tools the Navy is using to manage and improve the quality of the fleet, including programs such as "Perform to Serve" (PTS) and enlisted retention boards.

Van Buskirk spoke about the positive aspects of PTS, stating that the program reduced nearly 30 overmanned rates in 2011.

"It is a necessary, unfortunate tool that we have to use to continue to shape the force and to fix overmanned ratings," said Van Buskirk. "We continue to fine-tune PTS to make it the most fair and equitable force-shaping tool possible."

Van Buskirk commended the quality of today's service members and encouraged Sailors to continue to improve themselves.

"We are all serving among the highest trained and highest quality of people our service has ever had," said Van Buskirk. "That's what it's all about: being able to maintain that quality…and the bar keeps getting higher."

Van Buskirk then gave Sailors an opportunities to ask him questions regarding Navy personnel, policies and procedures.

Before assuming the duties as the Navy's 56th chief of naval personnel on Oct. 11, 2011, Van Buskirk was the 47th commander of the United States 7th Fleet, forward deployed here in Yokosuka.

Van Buskirk is responsible for the planning and programming of all manpower, personnel, training and education resources for the Navy.

Van Buskirk manages an annual operating budget of $29 billion and leads more than 20,000 employees engaged in the recruiting, personnel management, training and development of Navy personnel.

His responsibilities include overseeing Navy Recruiting Command, Navy Personnel Command, and Naval Education and Training Command.

'March Madness' brings added commissary savings

From Defense Commissary Agency Public Affairs

FORT LEE, Va. – Commissaries on military installations around the world are combining the excitement of college basketball's championship tournament with product promotions throughout the month of March to help customers extend their benefit even further.

"College basketball's biggest season event, NCAA March Madness, is also a prime time for our customers to save on discounted products at their local commissary," said Chris Burns, Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) director of sales. "As the teams are stirring excitement on the court, our stores are stepping up their game to offer super product savings, coupons and lots of prizes."

Throughout March, DeCA's industry partners – vendors, suppliers and brokers – will host many in-store promotions and provide extra savings focused around the NCAA Basketball Championship.

Overseas stores may have substitute events for certain promotional programs. Customers are asked to check their local commissary for the following super sales events:

• NCAA March Madness Contest – Road to the Final Four. Unilever and its men's grooming line are official partners of the 2012 NCAA Final Four Event and will sponsor a contest offering more than $25,000 in prizes. DeCA patrons will see displays promoting Unilever men's grooming products, along with contest details to win one of 10 52-inch, LED TVs.

• The General Mills March Madness Sale. Customers will see high-value coupons on Old El Paso items and General Mills salty snacks.

• "Perfect Pick." Reese's Candy will offer shoppers chances to win exciting NCAA and Reese's prizes. Store displays with cards and tear pads will encourage shoppers to "Shoot us a Text and Score." Winners will receive a "Branded Sport Tent" and DeCA gift cards.

• Kraft's "Fast Break to Breakfast" will offer shoppers more than $10 in extra savings through a four-page, military-specific coupon and recipe booklet, with additional savings on several Kraft products.

• "Party with the U.S. Olympic Men's Basketball Team in Las Vegas." Core 5 and Mott's will offer four stateside commissary shoppers an opportunity to see the USA Olympic men's basketball team. On July 11, winners will join the 2012 USA Olympic men's basketball team at the Sunkist Reception and meet some of the players. The next day, they will attend an exhibition game and celebration, and have a night on the town in Las Vegas. Also, 100 stateside customers will have the opportunity to win a Sunkist Pop-A-Shot electronic game machine, and an additional 60 games will be given away to customers in the Far East and Europe.

"It's all about winning in the month of March, and you're always a winner shopping at your commissary." Burns said. "Your local commissary offers you the very best in promotion specials, contests, free giveaways and everyday savings. Your commissary is always worth your trip."

The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment.

Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a five percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones.

Commissary shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually.

A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.

CFAY VITA Center
Tip of the Week

Foreign-earned income: If you had a spouse earn income off-base in Japan and that income was taxed by the Japanese government, the spouse still needs to claim it as income for U.S. tax purposes. However, they may qualify for a Foreign Tax Credit for taxes paid to Japan. This avoids double-taxation on the same income. For more information, visit the Naval Legal Service Office or the CFAY Tax Center.