Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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USNH Yokosuka earns Navy Safety's VPP star recognition

By Jeffrey C. Doepp, CFAY Public Affairs

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Safety) Paul Hanley announced Feb. 3, that United States Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka, on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka, has been recognized for attaining the equivalent of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) star status.

"It gives me great pleasure to recognize officially the exemplary achievements of U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka in attaining (this) status," stated Hanley in a letter to USNH Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Stephen Pachuta.

"As the first Department of the Navy OCONUS (outside the continental United States) medical treatment facility to attain this recognition, the unified efforts of U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka to implement successfully such a complex program establishes the gold standard of safety program management for the Department of the Navy OCONUS." added Hanley. "This 'first' brings great credit to you, your employees and to the Department of the Navy at large. I have included a flag for you with this letter to fly above the hospital as a symbol of the collective U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka dedication to improved safety performance."

According to the OSHA website, VPP promotes effective worksite-based safety and health. In the VPP, management, labor, and OSHA establish cooperative relationships at workplaces that have implemented a comprehensive safety and health management system. Approval into VPP is OSHA's official recognition of the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who have achieved exemplary occupational safety and health.

USNH Yokosuka staff members Cmdr. Chad Roe, director for Administration Hirokazu Moritomo, safety inspector Bill Heath, safety manager, and Cmdr. Paul Brochu, director for Public Health admire a flag presented to USNH Yokosuka from the deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for safety recognizing the achievements of USNH Yokosuka in attaining the equivalent of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Star status. This is the first time a Department of the Navy OCONUS medical treatment facility has attained this recognition.

Photo by Richard McManus

VPP works by setting performance-based criteria for a managed safety and health system, inviting sites to apply, and then assessing applicants against these criteria. OSHA's verification includes an application review and a rigorous onsite evaluation by a team of OSHA safety and health experts. OSHA approves qualified sites to one of three programs:

Star: Recognition for employers and employees who demonstrate exemplary achievement in the prevention and control of occupational safety and health hazards, and the development, implementation and continuous improvement of their safety and health management system.

Merit: Recognition for employers and employees who have developed and implemented good safety and health management systems but must take additional steps to reach Star quality.

Demonstration: Recognition for employers and employees who operate effective safety and health management systems that differ from current VPP requirements. This program enables OSHA to test the efficacy of different approaches.

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Blue Ridge, 7th Fleet Sailors prepare for deployment season

Story and photo by Jamie Chevalier, Seahawk contributor

Sailors assigned to *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) and 7th Fleet staff had the opportunity to make sure they are ready for the upcoming deployment season by attending a pre-deployment fair at the Community Readiness Center Feb. 15-16.

***USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) Sailors gather information from the Red Cross at the pre-deployment fair Feb. 16. Representatives from several agencies were on hand to help Sailors and their families with the upcoming deployment season.**

Representatives from several on base facilities were present including the USO, Red Cross, Navy Legal Service Office (NLSO), Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) and the Chapel of Hope. Relocation specialist and Exceptional Family Member program liaison Stacie Shook said the fair is an important event because it unites Sailors with resources they may not be aware of.

"The Sailors can meet the representative of each agency and gain more in-depth knowledge of programs and classes that are offered to them and their family," she said.

NLSO was on hand to provide Sailors with essential information their families might need during a deployment. Aerographer's Mate 1st Class Mike DeMauro said that having them at the fair to help with things such as powers of attorney was very important. DeMauro attended the event to make sure his family would be ready for the deployment season.

"I just wanted to ensure that there was nothing I was overlooking. It served as a reminder of what services are available to me and my family," he said.

Along with the Sailors, family members were encouraged to attend to find out about programs that are available on base.

The USO gave out care packages to families with children, which included a teddy bear, post cards and a journal to write in throughout the deployment.

Representatives from the family readiness groups as well as ombudsmen from both *Blue Ridge* and 7th Fleet were on hand to welcome spouses and answer questions.

Jessica Kaufman, a spouse of a 7th Fleet Sailor, said that the deployment fair is especially beneficial to new spouses.

"If you're a new spouse coming in, there is tons of information out there that you can get in one room instead of going to multiple places to find it," she said.

Personnel Specialist 2nd Class Nicolette Lockwood said the event was important for both Sailors and their families.

"The pre-deployment fair is a much needed evolution to help the families and Sailors during deployment," she said.

For spouses who were unable to attend and would still like to get information, Shook said they can find most of it at the FFSC. She said that the FFSC has points of contact information for all agencies that were represented at the fair.

INSIDE

Chief of naval personnel visits CFAY, speaks with Sailors

The chief of naval personnel visited and spoke with Sailors on board CFAY during an all-hands call at the Benny Decker Theater Feb. 23.

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Military Saves campaign promotes culture of saving

FFSC Yokosuka hosts support events including financial management classes, financial briefs for service members and families for Military Saves campaign week Feb. 19-26.

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