USS Blue Ridge offers Tokyo ship tours

By MC2 Mel Orr,
***USS Blue Ridge* Public Affairs**

TOKYO – Nearly 3,000 visitors toured U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) while the ship was moored in Tokyo on June 17.

Blue Ridge opened its brows to allow visitors the opportunity to see what the inside of a U.S. Navy ship looks like and how it operates.

"I think everybody had a good time," said Communications Officer Cmdr. George Davis. "We had almost 3,000 visitors come on board the ship. Our guests were able to experience a Sailor's life through demonstrations and interaction with the crew."

Included in the tours were damage control demonstrations and look at weapon displays presented by the Marines from Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team (FAST) Pacific, 3rd Platoon as well as a close look at the SH-60F Sea Hawk helicopter on the flight deck.

For one guest, it was his first time being on a Navy ship.

"On television your ships look huge and beautiful," said Johnnie Moylett, an Ireland native who resides in Japan. "When I approached the ship, I underestimated how big it really was. It's enormous. Inside the skin of the ship, it was very roomy, comfortable and clean. I was very impressed with the United States Navy."

Lance Cpl. Bryan Cook of FAST helped guests understand the equipment he uses.

"We like to let other people try on our gear because they probably have never seen anything like it before," said Lance Cpl. Bryan Cook. "They seemed to be very fascinated with all the different tools and equipment we had out there."

"The demonstrations were beyond my expectations. The Sailors showed us how to operate their equipment effectively, safely and with a smile," added Moylett. "The tour left me feeling fulfilled and with an understanding of the U.S. Navy's global force for good."

DC1 Nathan Alberti, a Sailor aboard U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), gives a fire fighting demonstration to a local child during an open ship tour event in Tokyo June 17. *Blue Ridge's* visit to Tokyo is an outward demonstration of U.S. commitment to the defense of Japan, the strong relationship between the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, and will help maintain peace and stability throughout the entire East Asia region.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Fidel C. Hart

Sailor saves shipmate's life on mess decks

By MC3 Marcos Vazquez,
***USS George Washington* Public Affairs**

PACIFIC OCEAN – June 7 started as any other day at sea aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) for Aircrew Survival Equipmentman Airman (PRAN) Taylor Reed, from Frisco, Texas, but it would soon turn into a one he wouldn't soon forget.

Reed planned on eating lunch alone, but he recognized people on the mess decks from his squadron, the "Dambusters" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 195, so he joined them at their table.

Reed began to have difficulty breathing during his meal, so he placed his hands to his throat to make the universal sign for choking.

It took a moment, due to Reed's calm demeanor, before those around him realized that he was legitimately in trouble.

"I was sitting there and then all of a sudden I couldn't breathe," said Reed. "I wasn't really in danger though, I calmly put my hands to my throat and looked around the table and tried to get someone's attention."

Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Seth Pieper, from Franklin Center, Penn., was the first to respond.

Pieper acted on instinct and unsuccessfully attempted to give Reed the Heimlich maneuver. He remained calm and repositioned his fist underneath Reed's diaphragm and executed the Heimlich again, which caused Reed to expel some of the phlegm that was caught in his throat.

Reed sat back down and drank some fluids, but he felt his throat seize up and he was unable to breathe yet again.

Reed made the hand signal once more and Pieper again performed the Heimlich.

When Reed sat down, he tried to drink more fluids but began choking yet again. Reed flailed his hands and tapped Pieper as he began to lose consciousness.

"The first two times weren't that bad, but the third time was different," said Reed. "I began to get scared and my vision started to fade. Without hesitation, Pieper was to my aid again."

The culprit was a basil leaf that was a part of the seasoning for his pork adobo.

During the event, a fellow Sailor from the Dambuster alerted medical personnel to Reed's situation. Medical arrived on scene, but Pieper already did all the hard work and was giving Reed water.

"There was a little bit of blank panic when I realized he was choking, but I did what I was trained to do after the initial shock went away," said Pieper. "I just happened to be the person closest to him. I'm sure anyone else would have done the same."

Pieper has taken a basic CPR class three times during his Navy career, a requirement for being an AT and for his squadron.

"The class works; I wasn't expecting it to be so effective. When I was sitting there at lunch, it just became second nature for me to get up and help him," said Pieper. "I didn't get it right immediately because I was still kind of shocked, but when I composed myself and thought about it, I was able to give him the Heimlich properly and clear his airway…three times."

Pieper originally wasn't supposed to go on patrol with *George Washington* because he is preparing to report to his next command. At the last minute, he was told that he had to pack his things and join the rest of his squadron.

Reed was originally intending to eat alone and would have done so if he hadn't noticed Sailors from his squadron and joined them.

If things had been a little different, the outcome might have been altered and Reed might not be telling the same story he is now.

"It was both the scariest and most embarrassing moment of my life all at once," said Reed. "But now I know that the Heimlich really does work; I can vouch for that but I don't want to do that ever again."