Blue Ridge crew hosts friends, family for cruise

Story by MC2 Mel Orr, *USS Blue Ridge* Public Affairs

TOKYO – Nearly 400 friends and family members of *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) and U.S. 7th Fleet staff Sailors traveled aboard *Blue Ridge* from Tokyo to Yokosuka, Japan for a "Friends and Family Day Cruise" June 18.

The three-hour cruise offered guests a chance to experience not only what it's like to be underway on the ship, but also an opportunity to observe Sailors in action including watching an SH-60F Sea Hawk helicopter launch from and return to the ship's flight deck.

"It's a unique opportunity for our family members and friends to actually get onboard the ship, get underway with us and see what we do here," said Master Chief Yeoman Steve Borba, *Blue Ridge*'s friends and family day cruise coordinator. "It's important for us to share these experiences with them - they deserve it. After all, it's because of their support that we can do our jobs knowing that things at home are being taken care of."

The guests also had the chance enjoy a meal prepared by the ship's culinary specialists, tour a variety of spaces within the ship, interact in a video teleconference, and watch damage control, seamanship, and stretcher bearer demonstrations on the main deck.

"This was our first time seeing flight quarters and we've never been that close to a helicopter before," said Theresa Chambers, wife of Chief Culinary Specialist Robert Chambers, who visited the ship with their two children. "The kids really liked the artillery and communications rooms. I didn't expect to learn so much during our visit but it gave us an idea of what everyone does on the ship."

Hospital Corspman and friends and family members of Sailors aboard U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) perform a stretcher demonstration during a Friends and Family Cruise with the ship June 18. The visit gave a chance for friends and family to see what their loved ones do day in and day out.

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

McCampbell medical department trains first responders

Story by MC2 Matthew R. Cole, *USS McCampbell* Public Affairs

EAST CHINA SEA – Hospital Corpsmen throughout the Navy have the ultimate responsibility to render medical assistance at a moment's notice and the corpsmen assigned to the medical department aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85) live up to that responsibility every day.

The medical department aboard *McCampbell* not only trains within the department, but in order to aid in the extremely demanding task of providing emergency medical care and first responder assistance, they conduct various emergency medical trainings for the rest of the 250 members of the crew.

The three members of *McCampbell*'s medical department consisting of Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Kenneth Metzger, Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Melissa Lusk and the Medical Department Head, Chief Hospital Corpsmen (SW) Juan N. Breboneria, train Sailors in CPR, first aid and stretcher bearing as part of the medical training team (MTT).

"This is the first chance that I have had to work with and train Sailors who have no medical background," said Metzger. "We provide all the medical training to the ten volunteer stretcher bearers we have aboard. There isn't a week that goes by that we don't conduct that training to ensure we do it right and can carry people safely to receive treatment."

The MTT trains Sailors in basic first aid and CPR. Each member of the medical team is responsible for supporting and participating in training exercises that help raise the crew's awareness to the possible dangers they may encounter.

"We have to train them up to be on par with emergency responders. We do drills multiple times a week to teach them how to react in case of a real medical emergency and what to look out for so that they do not put themselves in harm's way," said Metzger.

Due to the demanding nature of being forward deployed, it's a necessity for the medical training team to work as a cohesive unit, working off of each other's strengths.

"Team work is extremely important. If there is an emergency, I will need my team there swiftly and on the same page. Petty Officers Metzger and Lusk are extraordinary and I am proud of them. Petty Officer Metzger has been a good addition to my team - he has hit the deck running, and due to his meticulous nature, he gets things done right the first time," said Breboneria. "We couldn't function as efficiently as we do without Petty Officer Lusk either; she plays a valuable role in training other Sailors. The knowledge that she brings to the table makes the entire team better at our job. I couldn't do it without them."

The corpsmen aboard are also present at every major evolution on the ship, because safety is of the upmost importance during any operation.

"We're not just here in case something happens, i.e. an accident with the helicopter or someone goes overboard. We try to provide the crew with a skill set that may help them save each others lives," said Lusk. "We train others because we can't be everywhere at once. We want everyone to be safe during evolutions. We know not everyone has the same desire to do what we do, but we want everyone comfortable with the basics, and that's why we train the crew on how to respond to medical emergencies."

The team plays a fundamental role in supporting mission readiness and the continuing operation of *McCampbell*. The time spent training individual Sailors for multiple types of medical emergencies ensures the crew practices safer working routines during every evolution.

"It's important that we train people on the ship for first aid in preparation for any emergency situation," said Metzger. "There needs to be people aboard to react no matter what. The ship can't depend on just three people with medical knowledge in case of disaster."

McCampbell's medical department hopes to continue training its Sailors in order to have more stretcher bearers and move those already qualified to the medical training team.

USS McCampbell is assigned to Commander, Destroyer Squadron 15, and forward deployed to Yokosuka, Japan and is currently on patrol in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.