# *USS Lassen* finishes deployment, returns to Yokosuka

**Story and photo by MC3 Charles Oki, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan**

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS Lassen* (DDG 82) returned to Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) May 26 after a two and a half month spring deployment.

*Lassen* made port calls to South Korea, Singapore, India and Thailand during the two and a half month deployment, and took part in exercises Foal Eagle 2010, Malabar 2010 and Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise Thailand 2010.

"It was a long and rewarding underway period with lots of terrific training opportunities. We were honored to participate in significant exercises with three of our partner nations," said *Lassen* Commanding Officer Cmdr. H.B. Le. "We were not originally scheduled to be underway for that length of time, but that is one of the exciting aspects of the forward deployed naval forces. I could not be more proud of how my officers and crew responded to the changes and how well they performed at sea and ashore."

*Lassen* also provided air defense coverage assistance to the Republic of Korea (ROK) in their salvage and recovery efforts for the ROKS Cheonan after the ship sank March 26 in the Yellow Sea near the western sea border of North Korea.

**Sailors prepare to mount the flagstaff aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS Lassen* (DDG 82), as the ship returns to CFAY May 26, following a spring deployment to the Western Pacific.**

*Lassen* then made its way to Goa, India for Exercise Malabar 2010. Training with ships from the Indian Navy as well as *USS Shiloh* (CG 67), *USS Curts* (FFG 38) and *USS Chafee* (DDG 90); *Lassen* conducted surface and anti-submarine warfare events, coordinated gunnery exercises, air defense operations, and visit, board, search and seizure drills. Malabar 2010 also had Sailors from both navies serving as liaison officers as part of personal and professional exchanges.

"Spending time aboard the Indian Navy ships was definitely a unique and valuable experience," said Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Benjamin Wooldridge. "Not only was I able to share professional knowledge with my counterparts in the Indian navy, but I was also able to experience the culture of Indian ships and the Indian people."

After the completion of Malabar 2010, *Lassen* transited to Laem Chabang, Thailand to participate in CARAT Thailand 2010. Other exercise participants included *USS Tortuga* (LSD 46), *USS Vandegrift* (FFG 48), the US Coast Guard cutter *Mellon* (WHEC-717) and ships of the Royal Thai navy.

The bilateral exercise was held to train in missions and tasks ranging from maritime security to air defense and amphibious operations.

"The Royal Thai navy is one of our key partners in the region and the CARAT exercises reinforce that relationship, so that we are ready to work together in a time of crisis," said Lt. Michael Root, the operations officer aboard *Lassen*. "The time saved by already being able to communicate and work together as a team rather than two separate entities in situations like the earthquake and tsunami that hit the region in 2004 could be what saves hundreds if not thousands of lives."

The work did not stop in port for *Lassen*, as community service projects took place during every port of call.

"Every time a ship makes a port visit, it becomes an extension of America," said Operations Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Joshua Eddy, a native of Barberton, Ohio and *Lassen*'s community service coordinator. "Every time Sailors or Marines step off a ship they become ambassadors for the United States, so it's important to show that not only do we want to experience the culture of your country, but that we also want to extend a helping hand."

*Lassen* returned to CFAY to a celebration and greeting from CFAY Morale, Welfare and Recreation Division (MWR) and families who had been waiting to see their loved ones for more than 10 weeks.

"I very much appreciate Mr. Mike Crockett and his team from MWR Yokosuka for giving us such a warm homecoming. It was unexpected but fantastic," said Cmdr. Le. "I'm glad that *Lassen* has the opportunity to be back in Yokosuka for a little while before our next mission. It will be great to spend some time with families and friends before our next mission."

**A harbor pilot embarks the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS Lassen* (DDG 82), as the ship returns to CFAY.**

# Navy announces new SRB levels

**By Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs**

The Navy has adjusted Selective Reenlistment Program (SRB) levels to match reenlistment needs for critical skills and ratings, such as nuclear operators, Aegis fire controlmen, and air intercept controllers.

NAVADMIN 175/10 approves 24 increases in SRB award levels and 10 decreases. Award levels in 124 categories remain unchanged, one was added and 12 award levels were removed.

"The Selective Reenlistment Bonus program allows Navy to properly incentivize high-demand Sailors with critical skills in order to maintain a prepared force, which is ready and able to execute global operations in today's complex security environment," said Rear Adm. Dan Holloway, director of Navy's Personnel, Plans and Policy division.

SRB is a dynamic market-based incentive designed to retain Sailors in the Navy's most critical ratings and NECs. The science of behavioral economics informs our decisions when we adjust SRB.

"People are our most valuable resource and we are a world class Navy because of their skills and professional dedication," said Holloway. "The intent of the SRB is to reward those who attain training in skills most critical to Navy's current needs and mission requirements. We know our Sailors have a strong direct effect on all readiness resource areas; we must never forget this."