SRF-JRMC chief commissioned as limited duty officer

Story and photo by Keiichi Adachi, CFAY Public Affairs

Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center Yokosuka Ensign Ralph Vargas, a former Chief Information Systems Technician, became a limited duty officer (LDO) when he was commissioned during a ceremony Oct. 1. Vargas' selection as an LDO marks the culmination of a 13-year enlisted career. As his first officer assignment, he will report to *USS Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) as the information systems officer.

"My father's vision for me has always been to sustain excellence and to do my best in whatever profession I chose," said Vargas. "It may have taken me 13 years, but I feel that I have honored my family. No one in my family has ever been a naval officer despite many having served honorably in the military."

The Limited Duty Officer (LDO) and Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Programs provide the Navy with a vital form of experienced leadership by commissioning enlisted personnel as officer technical managers and officer technical specialists respectively. The LDO/CWO Program is one of the Navy's few commissioning programs for which a college degree is not required to become an officer. The program is designed to offer commissions to enlisted personnel whom have demonstrated sustained superior performance and posses extensive expertise and knowledge in one of any number of special fields that require the type of experience that is unable to be obtained by more traditional commissioning sources.

(Right) SRF-JRMC Commanding Officer Capt. Steve Stancy administers the oath of office to Ensign Ralph Vargas during his commissioning ceremony Oct 1.
オフィサー任命式でSRF-JRMC司令官スティーブ・スタンシー大佐が、バーガス少尉に対する就任の宣誓を行なった。

With his new role finally made official, Vargas is just starting in the LDO program and is excited about his future and emphasized his big-picture perspective.

"Making ensign is a significant milestone," he said. "I have the opportunity to serve with my country's best and it is truly an honor. I'm really proud, but this is a lot bigger than just me. It's more about the people that got me here. This command is really good about taking care of people by making sure those programs are available to them and that everybody knows about the opportunities.

"When I was notified of my selection, I felt nervous. Most people would say they felt joy, but I understand the great responsibility that the Navy has given me and I am very serious about my work and doing my best. The Navy needs Sailors on ships, and my career has been filled with arduous sea duty and deployments into dangerous contingencies. These experiences have enabled me to become a better leader." Vargas added.

Cmdr. Mike Thibodeau, SRF-JRMC fleet technical support director and 29-year navy veteran, served as the master of ceremonies for Vargas' commissioning. Thibodeau, also an LDO, wanted to accomplish as much as possible during his Navy career and felt that this program provides the opportunities that didn't present themselves in the enlisted ranks. "The LDO program allows you to earn a commission and the opportunity to promote as high as captain," he said.

For the LDO program, a first class petty officer can apply if they meet all eligibility requirements for chief petty officer, have been a first class for at least one year and have at least eight years of service. Chief, senior chief, and master chief petty officers with up to a maximum of 16 years of service may also apply. Senior enlisted personnel with more than 16 years, but less than 24 years total service can only apply for the CWO program, according to Thibodeau.

バーガス兵曹長、SRF-JRMCでLDO少尉の任命を受ける

文・写真:安達慶一、CFAY広報課

10月1日、艦船修理廠及び日本地区造修統括本部(SRF-JRMC)で元ITC（SW）ラルフ・バーガスが米海軍の少尉に任命された。任務限定オフィサー（LDO）へ選抜されたのはバーガス少尉の下士官としての13年間の努力の賜物に他ならない。バーガス少尉のLDOとしての初仕事はUSSアブラハム・リンカーン（CVN 72）で情報システムオフィサーの任務となる。

「私の父親は私に対し、常に卓越性を維持し、どの職業を選ぼうとも最善を尽くすことをビジョンとして掲げていました。13年を費やしたこの任命は家族にとっても、名誉なことです。私の家系では多くの者が軍隊に務めてきましたが、米海軍オフィサーになったのは私が初めてです」とバーガス少尉は語気を強めて語った。

LDOと准尉オフィサー（CWO）プログラムは、下士官を技術上の管理者や専門家のオフィサーとして任命することにより、海軍組織での経験豊かなリーダーシップの構築を図っている。これらの2つのプログラムはオフィサーとなる為に大学の学位を必須としない米海軍の数少ないオフィサー就任制度である。また、このプログラムは持続的に優秀な功績を示し、従来の方法では習得不可能な経験を必要とする特殊技能や知識をもつ下士官にオフィサー階級の門戸を開くものでもある。

(Left) Cmdr. Mike Thibodeau, SRF-JRMC fleet technical support director serves as master of ceremonies of the LDO commissioning ceremony for ITC Ralph Vargas Oct. 1. Vargas, seated next to SRF-JRMC Commanding Officer Capt. Steven Stancy, will report to *USS Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) as the information systems officer for his first officer assignment.
オフィサー任命式でSRF-JRMC司令官スティーブ・スタンシー大佐とITC（SW）ラルフ・バーガスさんが見守る中、SRF-JRMC艦隊技術支援部長のマイク・ティボディー中佐が式の司会を務めた。

新しい任務が正式に決まり、バーガス少尉はこれからの将来に胸を躍らせ、大きな目標を描いている。

「少尉に昇進した事は画期的な出来事です。母国の最善の為に奉仕する機会を持てたことは非常に名誉なことです。これもひとえに至らない私を支えてくれた皆さんのお陰です。SRF-JRMCは下士官に対してこのプログラムの周知徹底を図り、十分に援助をしてくれます」と話した。

「任命を知らされた時はたじろぎました。米海軍が自分に与えてくれた重要な職責と自分の職務と最善を尽くす事への忠誠心を噛締めると、一概に喜べない気がしたのです。米海軍が必要とする艦船乗組員として、私のこれまでの人生は艦上での激務と偶発的危険のある地域への航海ばかりでした。その経験が私を良き指導者にさせたのだと思います」とバーガス少尉は言葉を締めくくった。

29年間、海軍に勤務し、現在SRF-JRMCの艦隊技術支援部長で式の司会を務めたマイク・ティボディー中佐もLDOの1人だ。彼は海軍で出来るだけ多くの事を達成したいと願っていた。このプログラムで下士官では経験できないことに挑戦させてもらえたと感じていた。「LDOプログラムはオフィサーの階級の取得と、大佐までの昇進の可能性を与えてくれます。」

LDOプログラムの申請資格は、申請時に於いて、1等兵曹で兵曹長になる為の資格要求を全て満たしていること。そして、1等兵曹で1年以上、また、海軍での8年間の経歴があること。尚、兵曹長、上級兵曹長、最先任上級兵曹長であれば、その職位経歴が16年以内であることなどが条件とされている。その他、上級下士官で職位経歴16年以上25年未満でなければCWOプログラムには申請できないとティボディー中佐は説明する。