FISC leadership off-site addresses fleet support, strategic priorities

By H. Sam Samuelson, FISC Yokosuka Office of Corporate Communication

Senior leadership from nine Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka detachments and sites across the Western Pacific – from Guam to Diego Garcia – assembled at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Oct. 21 to conduct an annual strategic meeting.

Guest speaker, Commander U.S. 7th Fleet (C7F) Vice Adm. Scott R. Van Buskirk complimented the assembled logisticians for their efforts to streamline customer service to fleet and shore customers.

"I applaud what you do," Van Buskirk said. "Within the 7th Fleet we are generating a strategic picture of the future; you are a significant partner in that vision and I'm glad to see your great organization getting out ahead of the game, thinking strategically with a keen eye toward generating maximum efficiencies."

"Admiral Van Buskirk's words are a strong reminder of the significance our presence is in this theater. So, it is incumbent on us – and I mean all of us at this command – to understand the criticality of logistics to the overall 7th Fleet mission," said FISC Commanding Officer Capt. Matt Feely.

"C7F made a point to explain to us that we are among the most important people developing and maintaining relationships with indigenous populations in the AOR - particularly important as our Navy conducts 'Phase 0' (day-to-day, or 'shaping') operations," Feely added.

The off-site focus on both efficiency and effectiveness was broken down during a four-day period with segments devoted to Continuous Process Improvement (CPI), command structure and alignment, and internal controls and processes.

"Our charter this year was to take an in-depth look at our organization, evaluate how we conduct business, review how we interact internally and explore CPI as a means to greater efficiency," said Dr. Rodney Chapman, FISC Command Deployment Champion and Strategic off-site coordinator. "We have one overarching goal: better, more effective and efficient service to the Sailors out there in the fleet and their families back home."

FISC leadership from across the Western Pacific pose for a group photo following the conclusion of the FISC Yokosuka 2011 Leadership Off-site seminar held on board CFAY Oct. 21. FISC leadership from Guam to Diego Garcia and locations in between such as Hong Kong and Singapore joined the four-day event to discuss strategic initiatives and more efficient ways to service its fleet and shore customers throughout the 7th and 5th Fleet areas of responsibility.

Photo by Yohsuke Onda

The off-site kicked off focusing on CPI. FISC Yokosuka recently embraced CPI as the bedrock initiative to drive efficiencies throughout the command. CPI is based on Toyota's "Lean" process improvement and Motorola's "Six Sigma" defective elimination programs. Translated to FISC, each of the improvement concepts are being woven into both internal administrative and external products and services efforts.

The following two days were devoted to a thorough, bottom-up review of the command structure. Once a Japan-centric supply center, FISC now comprises detachments and sites throughout the western Pacific Ocean. Nine detachment and site leaders presented a critical review of challenges and opportunities to better participant as one FISC. FISC primary products and services department heads followed.

"No ideas are bad ideas," said Feely. "In fact, I asked all our leaders to question convention where doing so could increase our effectiveness and reduce or eliminate wasted efforts."

Every process was on the table, from such internal administrative practices as correspondence flow, the evaluation and fitness report process and effective communications to external priorities, such as reviewing port costs, regional services (ashore services) and fuels management.

Fuel terminal management in Guam, Atsugi and Diego Garcia were recently transferred to FISC.

"So, we not only reviewed our internal and external processes and command structure, we also had an opportunity to discuss new initiatives," said Chapman.

A key final discussion highlighted the draft strategic priorities handed down from Commander Naval Supply Systems Command.

"These strategic priorities are in their draft stages, but are very likely quite firm in terms of what we want to achieve strategically," Feely said. "But, we are going to work locally to ensure that support of our higher echelon strategic priorities translate to real world tactical goals here in our theater of operations and develop solutions based on the right data and research."