CFAY hosts Region Japan Sailor of the Year luncheon

Story and photo by MC3 Dominique Pineiro, CNFJ Public Affairs

Sailor of the Year (SOY) finalists from installations throughout Commander, Navy Region Japan (CNRJ) were honored at the CNRJ 2011 SOY luncheon ceremony held aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Dec. 16.

Yeoman 1st Class Nashera Brown, assigned to Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo (CFAS), was selected from a group of eight nominees as the Region Japan SOY.

Commander Navy Region Japan Rear Adm. Rick Wren, addressed the finalists and guests, describing what it takes to be recognized as a stand-out Sailor.

"This is a process of being observed on a day-to-day basis," Wren said. "You're judged on how you handle yourself in tough situations, what they think about your loyalty, do they see you as a person with integrity. Their expertise is recognized by who they work with, not a distant commanding officer and that's the best way to be recognized."

After the speech, Wren presented Brown the award in front of an audience of peers and senior enlisted leaders from around the region.

"I was very surprised when I heard my name," said Brown. "The competition is very tough, and I believe [the other finalists] performed at such a high level I didn't think I had a chance."

Brown said that much of her success is due to the hard work of those she leads. "This award isn't for me, it's for my Sailors back in Sasebo. We've had our challenges throughout my tour. They look up to me and I motivate them, they motivate me. At the same time I also learn from them, so this is me giving back to them."

CFAS Command Master Chief Richard Hatton said he wasn't surprised Brown was selected for the award.

"She's the best first class I've had the pleasure to work with," said Hatton. "She has been a superstar in our command. This just further punctuates her marvelous career in the Navy. She gives it all to her work and taking care of her young Sailors."

Brown said winning the regional award is only part of her goal. She will go on to represent Navy Region Japan at the 2011 Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) Sailor of the Year competition.

"Now, I'm going to be competing at the CNIC level and I'm going to win for [CNRJ]," said Brown.

The nominees from the other CNRJ installations include:

• Quartermaster 1st Class Andrey Mihaylovski - Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan.

CNRJ Rear Adm. Rick Wren, presents YN1 Nashera Brown the Sailor of the Year (SOY) trophy during a SOY luncheon ceremony held aboard CFAY Dec. 16. Brown, assigned to CFAS, was selected as Region Japan Sailor of the Year out of eight first class petty officer finalists nominated from each Japan installation.

• Master-at-Arms 1st Class Edward Pare - Commander, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan.

• Master-at-Arms 1st Class Luke Hicks - Commander, Fleet Activities Okinawa, Japan.

• Yeoman 1st Class Fletcher McNeil - Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan.

• Personnel Specialist 1st Class Giovanni Espinosa - Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan.

• Navy Counselor 1st Class Aaron Graham - U.S. Navy Support Facility, Diego Garcia.

• Logistics Specialist 1st Class Kevin Waldron - Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan Naval Reserve Detachment Minneapolis.

U.S. Navy, JMSDF master chiefs take part in educational exchange

Story and photo by MC3 Adam K. Thomas, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

Demonstrating the opportunities for increasing the interoperability of the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), master chiefs from both nations gathered aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) (*GW*) Dec. 8 for an educational exchange during exercise Keen Sword 2011.

"We are conducting this visit to learn from each other's operations and procedures in order to improve our Sailors and commands," said JMSDF Fleet Escort Force Master Chief Koji Himori. "The United States and JMSDF both have their good and bad points. It is important that we work together to learn from each other's positive aspects and eliminate the negative so that we may both become better."

Escort Flotilla 2 Command Master Chief Tanaka Naosuke of the JMSDF also attended the meeting aboard *GW*, which was hosted by *GW* Command Master Chief Marty King.

"We need to understand how other forces operate. Continuing this international coalition development will only help us build a more cohesive unit that works together as one team," said King.

The visiting master chiefs plan to spend a total of 10 days aboard *GW* observing and participating in several evolutions including a refueling-at-sea with *USS John S. McCain* (DD 56), general quarters drills and flight deck operations. The master chiefs also had the opportunity to watch an anti-submarine warfare training exercise.

"I would like to see the United States take strengths from the Japanese, and the Japanese take strengths from the United States. This way we can become stronger together," said Naosuke.

The exchange program was limited to the command master chief level but all agree it should be expanded to petty officers and seamen for the next Keen Sword exercise.

"Any time Sailors have the opportunity to work together with Sailors from another nation, we should take advantage of the opportunity," said King.

"We learned a great deal during our visit. Next time I hope that U.S. and Japanese Sailors can both spend time on each others ships so that we can learn more and continue to build a strong team," said Himori.

Keen Sword, the world's largest joint bilateral exercise in 2010, is designed to evaluate the interoperability of the U.S. military and the JMSDF. The exercise brings together 34,000 Japanese troops and 10,000 U.S. service members, plus a combined 430 aircraft and 60 ships for missile-defense and other air, land and sea operations.

BMC Melvin Morris discusses refueling operations with Force Master Chief Koji Himori, of the JMSDF, and Command Master Chief Tanaka Naosuke, of the Escort Flotilla, during a refueling training exercise with the JMSDF destroyer *JDS Ikazuchi* (DD 107) Dec. 5.

Service members practice responding to a wide range of situations, including the defense of the region and reacting to a simulated contingency situation affecting Japan, within a realistic training environment.