

# Japanese police volunteer to teach Sasebo Sailors motorbike safety

*By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Richard Doolin*

SASEBO, Japan - Three Japanese motorcycle-police officers volunteered to teach a motorcycle-safety class at Commander, U.S. Fleet Activities, Sasebo (CFAS), June 9th.

The officers were motorcycle police from Nagasaki police headquarters, and came at the request of CFAS' Safety Department.

Japanese police have taught this motorcycle-safety class every year for the last seven years.

While not mandatory, the class supplements required motorcycle training provided by Safety so Sailors may legally ride a motorbike in Japan.

Senior Chief Quartermaster Eddie Thomas was taking the class for the third time. Thomas said refresher training was always a good idea, especially after a long time at sea.

Years ago, when Thomas was a Second Class Petty Officer in San Diego, he had known a shipmate who died in a motorbike accident shortly after returning from a Persian Gulf deployment.

"Some people like to use that cliché, it's just like riding a bike, but it's not like riding a bicycle," said Thomas.

By taking the class, Thomas said, "you get the muscle memory back, you get to remind yourself to look through the turns, watch out for a strong gust of wind. You need to be able to react."

The police officers demonstrated the proper way to sit on a motorbike, and then repeatedly rode with the students around an obstacle course.

The officers showed Thomas how to use his hips in tandem with his wrists to turn his heavy bike around tight corners at slow speeds.

"The hip method, that's good. I'll add that to my tool box for sure," said Thomas.

Officer Keisuki Ishii had never taught a motorcycle-safety class to non-Japanese before.

"It's the first time I teach foreign people," said Ishii. "At first, I am very nervous, but just now, I relax and enjoy. So, I am very happy to teach the people."

Over the last three years only one Sailor who took the Japanese police motorcycle-safety class has been involved in an accident, said James Whalen, CFAS' Safety Manager.