George Washington completes successful trilateral exercise

By MCSA Brian H. Abel,
***USS George Washington* Public Affairs**

EAST CHINA SEA – Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy leaders visited the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) at the closing of a two-day, trilateral exercise June 22.

Rear Adm. Hideaki Yuasa, commander of JMSDF Escort Flotilla Two, Rear Adm. Sung Bae Park, commander of ROK Navy Component Flotilla Five, were among several JMSDF and ROK Navy officers who toured the *George Washington* hangar bay, navigation and signal bridges, flight deck control, air operations, combat direction center, and witnessed flight operations first-hand on the flight deck.

"It was very exciting to see flight operations," said Yuasa. "I want to thank Commander Task Force 70 [Rear Adm. J. R. Haley] and *George Washington* commander [Capt. David A. Lausman] for our visit."

The exercise reinforced regional security and stability and increased interoperability, operational proficiency and readiness. It included integrated helicopters operations; visit, board, search and seizure exchanges and demonstrations; communication links; interoperability; dynamic ship maneuvers; and liaison officer exchanges.

"The sea makes us one, which is a symbol of our unity," said Park. "The capability of our forces together is endless. I think it's meaningful to conduct exercises to maintain peace."

The U.S. Navy, JMSDF and ROK Navy are no strangers to conducting annual exercises together, but this marks the first trilateral exercise involving the respective countries and a carrier strike group.

George Washington and its strike group regularly participate in military operations and events to maintain the highest possible mission readiness and strengthen the bond with its allies and partners.

"It was my personal honor to visit the carrier and experience everything," said Park. "I'm very proud of *George Washington*!"

An SH-60F Seahawk, assigned to the Chargers of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS 14) and *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) participate a trilateral event June 22. *The George Washington* Carrier Strike Group is participating in a trilateral exercise to improve interoperability, readiness and the capability to respond quickly to various situations in the region with ships and aircraft from the Republic of Korea Navy and the Japan Maritime Self Defense Forces.

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Jennifer A. Villalovos

MCPON: Sailors, families think summer safety first

By MCC (SW/AW) Sonya Ansarov,
Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy

WASHINGTON – Summertime means fun in the sun, vacations and a myriad of outdoor activities, and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) wants Sailors and families to think safety first.

"Benjamin Franklin said, 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,' and in the case of summertime, it's worth a pound of safety," said MCPON (SS/SW) Rick D. West. "Each year the Navy loses service members to senseless and avoidable mishaps, and the summer season brings the potential for increased risk."

According to the Naval Safety Center, summer deaths spiked in 2008 then decreased in 2009 and 2010, but unfortunately increased again last year.

In 2011, between Memorial Day and Labor Day, 16 Sailors and 15 Marines lost their lives. One in an ATV wreck; three drowned; three during recreational activities; 11 in motor vehicles; and 13 on motorcycles.

"Losing even one Sailor or Marine is too many, especially when most of the incidents can be avoided with the proper planning and training," said West.

Training is the priority when it comes to motorcycle safety. According to Naval Safety Center, motorcycle fatalities increased from six in 2010 to 13 in 2011, which is more than a 100 percent increase.

Motorcycle training and safety starts with the command having a designated motorcycle safety representative (MSR).

"Closing the training gap on motorcycle safety needs to be top priority for our leaders," said West. "Personal motor vehicle accidents are the second highest cause of fatalities in our Navy, and motorcycles are the primary casual factor with sports bikes remaining at the top of the list. MSRs play an important role in mitigating this risk by mentoring and educating our Sailors, and more importantly, ensuring they are registered and complete all required motorcycle training."

The Naval Safety Center's summer campaign "Live to Play, Play to Live," also focuses on alcohol awareness, water and boat safety, sexual assault, and suicide awareness, and summer sports activities.

"Fourth of July is just around the corner so start planning safety now," said West. "Whether you are on the highways, waterways or in the backyard, safety must come first. And if you drink, don't drive and have a plan to get home."

When traveling long distances, remember to use TRiPS, the on-line, automated risk-assessment tool that helps users recognize and avoid the hazards they face on the highway: fatigue, not buckling up, and driving too far. TRiPS is located at https://wwwa.nko.navy.mil.

"You and your families are important to the Navy," said West. "Use the tools the Navy provides and remember to think safety first."

Safety is one of the key areas of the 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative which consolidates a set of objectives and policies, new and existing, to maximize Sailor and Marine personal readiness, build resiliency and hone the most combat-effective force in the history of the Navy and Marine Corps.

To learn more about the Naval Safety Center's summer campaign, visit www.safetycenter.navy.mil.