First qualified female submarine supply officer receives 'Supply Dolphins'

From Commander, Submarine Group 9 Public Affairs

BREMERTON, Wash. – A Sailor assigned to *USS Ohio* (SSGN 726) became the first female supply officer to qualify in submarines, June 22.

Lt. Britta Christianson of *Ohio*'s Gold Crew received her Submarine Supply Corps "dolphins" from the Gold Crew Commanding Officer Capt. Rodney Mills during a brief ceremony at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PSNS & IMF).

"I'm very proud of Lt. Christianson's accomplishments today," said Mills, "and I'm glad to welcome her to the elite community of dolphin-wearing submariners, past and present. She is a superb supply officer, an excellent watchstander, and she will be critical to ensuring the ship's success during our upcoming deployment."

(Left) Lt. Britta Christianson, a Gold Crew supply officer assigned to the guided-missile submarine *USS Ohio* (SSGN 726), is presented with her Submarine Supply Corps "dolphins" by her commanding officer, Capt. Rodney Mills, during a ceremony at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, June 22, as Capt. Dixon Hicks, former *Ohio* commanding officer, looks on. Christianson is the first female Supply Corps officer to qualify in submarines.
U.S. Navy photo by Chris Calnan

Ohio is currently undergoing maintenance at PSNS & IMF, having returned to the Pacific Northwest in March after a 14-month forward deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

Christianson, a native of Chippewa Falls, Wis., joined the Gold Crew in November 2011 during *Ohio*'s deployment. She is one of 13 women - four supply officers and nine submarine line officers under instruction - assigned to *Ohio* and *USS Maine* (SSBN 741) at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, Wash. Twelve other women are assigned to *USS Wyoming* (SSBN 742) and *USS Georgia* (SSGN 729), based in Kings Bay, Ga.

In order to receive her Supply dolphins, Christianson - already a qualified Naval Flight Officer and surface supply officer - was required to demonstrate knowledge in basic submarine operations and engineering fundamentals, perform damage control functions, and qualify as a diving officer of the watch (DOOW).

"I was honored to be given the opportunity to serve aboard a submarine, so receiving my dolphins is like icing on the cake for me," said Christianson. "It was a lot of hard work, but at the end of the day, two things bring us and our submarine home safely: knowledge of the submarine and our ability to execute the mission, and that basically sums up what dolphins are all about. I owe a lot of my thanks to my captain, chiefs and crew members who trained me and helped me to learn my boat."

Prior to reporting to their boats beginning in November 2011, Christianson and the other women assigned to *Ohio*, Maine, Wyoming and Georgia graduated from the Submarine Officer Basic Course in Groton, Conn. In addition, the submarine line officers under instruction graduated from the Naval Nuclear Power School at Charleston, S.C., and underwent naval nuclear prototype training.

Ohio and *USS Michigan* (SSGN 727) are homeported at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor and forward deployed to Guam.

Navy Misawa CPO 365 program brings relief to tsunami victims

By MC2 Pedro A. Rodriguez, Naval Air Facility Misawa Public Affairs

MIYAKO, Japan – Navy Misawa CPO 365 members, along with the "Fighting Tigers" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 8, and Airmen from Misawa Air Base brought a little bit of America to tsunami-damaged Miyako, Japan, June 16.

Sailors and Airmen spent their Saturday travelling to Miyako, then organizing a barbecue, entertainment and games for hundreds of Japanese residents living in temporary housing following the March 11, 2011, tsunami that wiped out their homes.

"Even though its been well over a year since the tsunami, the devastation is still very fresh and real here," said Aviation Structural Mechanic (Equipment) 1st Class Angela Berrios, a native of Scotland. "I'm glad to do what I can to help give these people an enjoyable day, while also letting them know that they are still very much on our minds."

In the immediate aftermath the tsunami, the U.S. Armed Forces began Operation Tomodachi, which means "friendship" in Japanese. This large-scale disaster relief effort helped Japan recover from the initial ravages of the tsunami. While the operation officially ended May 4, 2011, forward-deployed U.S. service members in Japan have continued to organize several assistance projects for those still in need.

"Without [U.S. service members'] help we wouldn't have as much recovery as we do today. It was amazing how quickly they came to clean up and try to help in the devastated areas," said Iwate Relief Effort Director Chiaki Takahashi. "For events like today, we really appreciate what they are doing; it is very amazing and very wonderful."

Collectively, the service members served more than 330 meals for the displaced residents, many of which were senior citizens and small children.

"This experience made me realize that our presence in Japan is greatly appreciated by the public," said Legalman 1st Class Damieka Wilson, a native of Port Arthur, Texas. "Although my family and I don't speak much Japanese, we were still able to communicate through smiles and kind gestures. Today, I think we all spoke the universal language of friendship."

CPO 365 is a three-phase training process, created by Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West. The goal of this program is to engage prospective chiefs beyond just Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Induction, while giving them a better insight into the responsibilities and expectations of the Navy CPO.

For more news from Naval Air Facility Misawa, visit https://www.cnic.navy.mil/misawa/index.htm or www.facebook.com/nafmisawa.