CTF 70 command master chief holds town hall meeting on *Shiloh*

Story and photo by MC3 Charles Oki, *USS Shiloh* Public Affairs

Commander Task Force 70 command master chief held a town hall discussion on the mess decks of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Shiloh* (CG 67) March 29, to answer questions on the minds of many Sailors.

Command Master Chief (SS) Joseph Farhney spoke to more than 60 Sailors during the town hall meeting and discussed the situation on the ground in Yokosuka and information about family members who voluntarily departed as part of Operation Pacific Passage.

"A big reason of my visit here is to provide clarification for the Sailors whose families have left Japan as part of the voluntary departure," said Fahrney, a Jacksonville, Fla., native. "After doing my part to help the families through this rough time, I decided it would be best for me to come out to the ships that are supporting the disaster relief operations and let the Sailors know what the Navy is doing to help their families through this stressful time."

Within 48 hours of the disaster, U.S. military assets were on the move to assist the Japan Self-Defense Force with humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. During this time, a voluntary departure for designated family members and Department of Defense civilians was authorized.

Despite difficulties surrounding the situation, the departures and following issues were quickly resolved due to the vigilance of administrative personnel, volunteers and senior leadership.

"Despite the fact that we're facing an unprecedented tragedy, I think we've learned a lot about how to handle situations like this," said Fahrney. "The situation could have been vastly different had it been a mandatory evacuation. Due to the in between nature of the situation it made things difficult at first, but it was because of the around-the-clock efforts that Sailors, family members, fleet and family support volunteers, Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society volunteers and ombudsmen that we were able to take control of the situation and start moving people."

CTF 70 Command Master Chief Joseph Fahrney speaks to Sailors on the mess decks of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Shiloh* (CG 67) during a town hall discussion March 29. *Shiloh* is off the northeastern coast of Japan conducting humanitarian assistance operations in support of Operation *Tomodachi*.

The visit provided the crew a welcome voice who knew about the situations Sailors' families faced, how the whole situation was unfolding, and how it would affect the near future.

"It was a great opportunity for us to get solid information from someone who was in Yokosuka experiencing the same situations that our families were facing," said Chief Quartermaster (SW/SS) Trevor Foyston, from Seattle. "It always makes someone feel better to get information from someone that was on location facing the problems and that person being able to tell us 'this is what's going on.' He answered all the questions he could answer and put us more at ease."

Shiloh is currently underway supporting humanitarian assistance operations off the northeastern coast of Japan following the 9.0 magnitude earthquake and ensuing tsunami that devastated the region, March 11.

More than 13,000 U.S. service members, along side their Japan Self-Defense Force counterparts, have moved more than 250 tons of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief supplies to evacuation centers through out the area.

Yokosuka aerographer's mates assist with Operation *Tomodachi*

Story and photo by MC3 Mikey Mulcare, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Many service members working in direct support of Operation Tomodachi may not realize that Sailors from Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Naval Oceanography and Anti-Submarine Warfare Center (NOAC) are keeping a watchful eye out to ensure their safety.

The Sailors assigned to NOAC monitor and forecast weather and atmospheric conditions with Doppler radar and a number of various other tools and computer models. They use these tools to measure and determine wind speed and direction, sea height, pressure and temperature, as well as many other environmental factors, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"We have many missions here at NOAC," said Lt. Cmdr. Andrea O'Neill, NOAC operations officer. "One of our main missions is to provide meteorological support to CFAY and Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo (CFAS), and as noted throughout history, meteorological support has played and continues to play a huge role in and outside of maritime safety."

Without the crucial information provided by NOAC, ships throughout the 7th Fleet area of responsibility would have a lack of meteorological guidance and may be affected by dynamic weather conditions, such as thunderstorms and destructive winds. To provide this guidance, NOAC watch standers must be able to quickly collect and pass information to any Navy asset operating in their area of responsibility.

"At all times, we have to be able to send information in 10 minutes or less to any ship in the area," said Aerographer's Mate 2nd Class (AW) Stella Swartz, NOAC forecast duty officer.

While tracking and relaying information on wind directions and speed to keep U.S. forces and the Japan Self-Defense Force out of radiation exposed areas may seem extremely stressful, one Navy forecaster attains a feeling of fulfillment from his job.

"The last few weeks have been long and seemingly never-ending, but even over the last couple of days we have been overcome with a real sense of fulfillment," said Aerographer's Mate 2nd Class (SW) Travis Muth, NOAC forecast duty officer. "We may not be seen a lot by our fellow Sailors, but it feels really good knowing we're helping out so much."

NOAC watch stander AG3 Nick Pennell looks over a JSDF mobile operations sheet March 25. Aerographer's mates on board CFAY are responsible for sending detailed weather information to all U.S. ships in the 7th Fleet area of responsibility. They also provide critical information to JSDF troops to ensure their safety during Operation *Tomodachi*.