Chapel of Hope volunteers rebuild tsunami-ravaged home

By Paul Long, CFAY Public Affairs

Labor Day weekend, the last holiday weekend of summer in the United States. is a time for that final barbecue, or a trip to the beach or amusement park before fall gets into full swing.

For Lt. Cmdr. Douglas Vrieland, staff chaplain at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Chapel of Hope (COH), and 17 volunteers, chose to spend their time as unpaid laborers to help rebuild a home that was destroyed in the March 11 Northern Japan earthquake and tsunami.

On Sept. 2 at 10 p.m., Vrieland's group loaded into three vehicles for the 6.5 hour, 310 mile overnight drive north to the town of Ishinomaki. Once there, they made their way to the seaside home of Masayoshi Suda, a fisherman, whose home they would be working to restore.

The two-story home was one of the few surviving buildings in the area where Suda lives. His home is less than a 100 yards from the beach in Ishinomaki Bay.

Rebekah Falcone and Josiah Bubna work for Samaritan's Purse, a Christian charity. Falcone is a field office manager and Bubna is an assistant construction project manager. Normally they coordinate de-construction projects: helping to tear down damaged structures. This time, they were working with the COH volunteers to reconstruct Suda's home.

Volunteers from CFAY'S Chapel of Hope and Samaritan's Purse, a Christian charity, begin to prepare the floors and walls to lay insulation and hang drywall. The volunteers worked over the Labor Day weekend, to restore the tsunami-damaged home of an Ishinomaki resident.

Photo by Yuji Kawabe

COH volunteers are supporting Samaritan's Purse by helping to install insulation and drywall. The charity arranged for the work to be done; the COH volunteers supplied the manpower.

Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SW) Erik Woods, from *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Reactor Department, volunteered because he wanted to give something back to Japan, where he's lived for the past three years. "This is how anyone recovers from a catastrophic event, it's not just the government, or any organization stepping in, it's individuals stepping up and taking care of their own community," he said.

Woods worked on the first floor, helping to install drywall.

COH volunteer Trista Franklin, a civilian with the Defense Audit Agency in Yokohama helped install insulation into the walls on the second floor of Suda's home had a very strong reason for volunteering to work on this project.

"I feel passionate about helping people in their time of need," said Franklin. "It's very rewarding, helping out and the same time it's humbling because you know these people are suffering …and you hope that someone would be there for you (in a similar situation)," she said.

According to Bubna it took about a week and a half to clean the debris out of Suda's home. "We're about three weeks into this project from demolition to rehab. We're about 40 percent done," said Bubna.

Falcone was impressed with the speed of the re-building project. "It's really going fast," Falcone said. "I think it's great to have all of these volunteers working with us."

Suda said he didn't know there were volunteers like the COH or organizations such as Samaritan's Purse who helped people in their time of greatest need. "I'm very impressed and appreciative of the volunteer's effort to rebuild my home," a very emotional Suda said.

Vrieland said that volunteer projects like this one, help to solidify the relationship between Japan and America.

"I think it's a good way for us Americans to show support for our Japanese hosts," Vrieland said. "This is our home; it affects us almost as much as it affects the Japanese. I would encourage anyone who has a chance, an opportunity, to experience something like this (to volunteer), to do so...its life changing," Vrieland said.

Ishinomaki is in Miyagi Prefecture, approximately 93 miles northeast from Fukushima Da-ichi Nuclear Power Plant, the site of the nuclear disaster. It's outside of the 12 mile exclusion zone set by the Japanese government.

To find out more about Samaritan's Purse, check out their website at http://www.samaritanspurse.org. For more information on volunteering with the Chapel Of Hope, call 243-6773 or 6774.

Department of the Navy hiring system shifting to USAJOBS

From Department of the Navy, Office of Civilian Human Resources

WASHINGTON – The Department of the Navy (DON) urges its employees and applicants to shift from Civilian Hiring and Recruitment Tool (CHART) to USAJOBS prior to Sept. 30.

The transition to USAJOBS, a one-stop source for posting and receiving applications for all DON job announcements, is a key component to ongoing efforts across the DON to reform and streamline the hiring process.

During the next phase of the transition, operation of the DON's online application system, CHART, will cease.

CHART will no longer be available to external applicants beginning Oct. 12.

"We encourage employees and applicants for Department of Navy jobs to create new accounts and move their resume details to USAJOBS by Sept. 30, since USAJOBS will be unavailable Oct. 6-12 for updates and maintenance," said Jean Mercer, director of Human Resources Systems and Business Transformation for DON.

"All information must be manually copied from CHART and transferred to a resume built in USAJOBS or saved as a Word document," she said.

Mercer and the DON hiring reform team have put together a fact sheet which outlines how to transfer their information from CHART to USAJOBS in five easy steps.

"When applicants and employees move or create new resumes on USAJOBS, it's a great time to review and update their information" said Mercer. "Since USAJOBS will store up to five resumes, it is an opportunity to create resumes to support multiple job announcements."

The fact sheet outlining the key steps to transfer information is available at www.public.navy.mil/DONHR/employment/hiringreform - the CHART system will not be available for external applicants after Oct. 12.

Tips for applicants on creating a powerful resume also are available on the DONHR portal at www.public.navy.mil/DONHR/employment/CivJobOpps/pages/AllAboutYou.aspx .

The DON remains committed to improving applicants' experiences, reducing the time to fill vacancies and, at the same time, securing quality candidates for DON positions.

Civilian careers in the Department of the Navy offer real world challenges with real life rewards - careers where purpose and patriotism unite.

Questions about the transition from CHART to USAJOBS or about the Department of the Navy hiring reform efforts can be sent to DONhrfaq@navy.mil.