USS George Washington enters next phase of AE 11

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan Pinalez, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN – The flight deck of the forward-deployed nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) is on high alert with jets scrambling in response to simulated air contacts in support of the bilateral Annual Exercise 2011 (AE 11), Oct. 29.

"The first strike is going to take out the air threat," said Lt. Mike Nunziato, describing how Carrier Air Group (CVW) 5 responds to an attack on the first day of simulated hostilities in AE 11. "And after that, we're going to take out the surface threats."

Throughout the day, with pilots and their aircraft at the ready, *George Washington* launched wave after wave of aircraft.

"The flight deck it was exhilarating because we got to simulate an attack on our ship," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 2nd Class Louis Mountain. "It definitely helped us to realize we must always be prepared in the event of alert situations. The small things that we do, training, maintenance and drills really matter when you only have 10-20 minutes to save the ship."

AE 11 is a bilateral field-training exercise that is designed to allow the U. S. and Japan to practice and evaluate the coordination procedures and interoperability elements required to effectively and mutually respond to the defense of Japan, to a regional crisis or contingency situation in the Asia-Pacific region.

"It's the joint information sharing aspect that's key to this exercise, not just using the ships and aircraft, but also the intelligence that both of us have that we could share to help take out the enemy," said Nunziato. "These exercises help us develop the communication necessary to win the fight."

George Washington and Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) Sailors are training on a variety of scenarios that prepare pilots, those in the combat direction center and crews from 13 other U.S. ships on better ways to communicate and share critical information to ensure the strike packages will result in success.

"This is my first time on an aircraft carrier and I was impressed with the ability we had to determine the effectiveness of strike packages and report back to the exercise group," said Lt. Yasuhiro Nakashima from JMSDF Commander, Escort Flotilla Three (CCF3). "From the combat direction center I was able to immediately report in my native language, Japanese, and this really helped the interoperability of the mission."

Landing Signal Officers monitor an F/A-18F Super Hornet from the "Diamondbacks" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 102 as it lands on the flight deck of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Oct. 29.
U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Adam K. Thomas

Annual Exercise 2011: Homecoming for Japan-born *GW* Sailors

By MCSN Justin E. Yarborough, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN – For Aviation Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Yuji Toda and Lt. Thomas Miyano, Annual Exercise 2011 (AE 11) is more than just a joint exercise between two long-time allies, it's a homecoming as the Japanese-born U.S. Sailors reunite with their countrymen and shipmates.

For Toda, who is originally from Kumamoto and a former sailor of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), it is a chance for him to reconnect with those he's served with while wearing a different uniform. For Miyano, who hails from Fukuoka, it's an opportunity for him to proudly operate with sailors from his birth country.

Toda joined the JMSDF in 1994 as a Signalman where he was responsible for steering the ship, maintaining charts and relaying and receiving signals.

"I was young, just like a lot of these airmen here. I had no responsibility and got into trouble a lot," said Toda with a laugh. "But I liked it; I had the best job on the ship."

Toda stayed in the JMSDF until 1999 when he separated as a 3rd Class petty officer.

"I met my wife while I was still in and I fell in love," said Toda. "She was an American, who came over as an English teacher with a teaching obligation for three years."

After he separated from the JMSDF, Toda's wife completed her teaching contract and the two moved to Indiana where Toda landed a packaging job for an orthopedics company.

"I worked there for three years, doing the same thing over and over every day," said Toda. He continued "I got bored and wanted a change."

"I missed the ocean and wanted to travel the world again," said Toda.

Toda joined the U.S. Navy in 2005. Fast forward seven years later and he's back on the water, but as a Sailor serving aboard a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

"While I was in the JMSDF on a destroyer, I saw the *USS Kitty Hawk* (CV 63)," said Toda. "Now I'm on the *George Washington* and I'm looking at Arleigh-Burke-class guided- missile destroyers, I never thought I'd be on an aircraft carrier back then"

But, Miyano, on the other hand, never thought he would find himself in the Navy.

"I wanted to go to the States because I wanted to study aerospace engineering," said Miyano. "America has the most impressive record. I mean they were sending people to the moon and that impressed me."

Miyano was so taken by the U.S. that he transferred to the Ohio State University (OSU) after his freshman year in Japan. He eventually earned a degree from OSU.

"Initially, I went to college in Japan for a year, and then transferred to OSU to get my Bachelor's in Mechanical Science and my Masters of Aerospace Engineering," said Miyano.

But the Navy didn't come into place for Miyano until the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11 took place.

"I think that's where it all started was when 9/11 happened," said Miyano. "I was not a U.S. citizen at the time but the U.S. felt like home to me. I felt like I owed a lot of my success to this country."

"Also when I swore my oath of citizenship, I swore to fight for my country," said Miyano. "I take my oath very seriously."

Miyano went to Naval Officer Candidate School in 2006, and served tours with Strike Fighter Squadron 131 and Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light (HSL) 37 before arriving aboard George Washington in August.

With AE 11 in full swing, Toda says it's a great feeling to be working alongside his former shipmates from the JMSDF.

"During my first year here during AE 11, I actually ran into a couple of friends of mine," said Toda. "One is a lieutenant junior grade and one is a chief petty officer now."

"Even though I have a sense of belonging to the Navy, I am proud to be serving alongside with my brothers from JMSDF," said Miyano. "It gives me a great sense of pride."

Fleet Activities Sasebo conducts ASF Academy for Sailors

Story and photo by MCSA Mackenzie P. Adams, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Sasebo

SASEBO, Japan – In the event of heightened force protection at Fleet Activities Sasebo (CFAS), efforts to protect CFAS fall on the security force consisting of Master-at-Arms (MA) and their Japanese counterparts.

ITSN Vincent Ochoa participates in a security training course at Fleet Activities Sasebo Nov. 4. The course is apaprt of the Auxiliary Security Force Academy.

But, the MAs are not the only Sailors in the fight to maintain security at CFAS. This mission is equally ensured thanks to the Auxiliary Security Force (ASF).

The ASF is composed of qualified Sailors from different rates and commands around CFAS.

Sailors participate in a three-week academy, taught by CFAS security staff. CFAS ASF Training Coordinator, Master-at-Arms 1st Class Robert Campbell, said the duties of ASF Sailors mirror those within the MA rating.

"They do what we do, such as stand watches and patrol around the base," said Campbell. "The training covers the fundamentals of force protection to include post-standing and vehicle inspection procedures, non-lethal weapons training and mechanical advance control holds (MACH) training."

During the course, Sailors learn weapons training, unarmed self-defense and force protection measures and the use of the expandable baton and Oleoresin Capsicum spray. Campbell said the training is rigorous and Sailors will have to bring their best when they attend the training.

"Not just anybody can show up, this is serious business," said Campbell. "Candidates who complete this training are required to stand monthly watches at guard posts, as well as attend monthly training, to maintain their proficiency."

The ASF academy is open to E-6 and below Sailors. Upon completion of the course, Sailors are then qualified to perform duties that are associated with the qualification.

ASF academy provides the opportunity for other rates to not only understand the MA rate, but also provide the extra protection for the base.

Yeoman Seaman Jeffery Cope, who recently graduated from ASF, said that attending the academy offered him a chance to experience the MA rating and everything they do.

"Standing ASF duty is a nice break for the normal routine of my rate," he said. "I get to learn about the MA rate and the training is a lot of fun. The ASF Academy reminds me of being a kid playing G.I. Joe in the woods, but this time I am learning skills that will benefit me and help keep CFAS safe."