George Washington welcomes Hong Kong dignitaries

From *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

SOUTH CHINA SEA – Distinguished visitors (DV) from Hong Kong visited the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) to build relations and experience the daily operations that are conducted aboard the ship, July 9.

Maj. Gen. Chen Weizan, People's Liberation Army-Hong Kong Garrison deputy commander; Steven Young, American consulate general Hong Kong; and Robert Schuddeboom, consulate general of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, were among the 20 dignitaries that spent the day on board *George Washington* touring the ships' combat direction center, flight deck control, navigation bridge, and the flight deck.

The DVs were split into two groups as they began their tour of the ships' spaces. Out on the navigation bridge, guests were able to experience a birds' eye view of flight operations and Sailors directing aircraft on and off the flight deck.

Watching Sailors from the navigation bridge was just a preview to the actual heat of the jets they would feel after guest were able to go down on the flight deck and watch flight operations.

"What I find most interesting about this ship is when I was out on the flight deck, and I felt the roar from the jets under my boots," said Thomas Sands, American Consul General Hong Kong military liaison officer. The last time I came aboard the *George Washington* I watched flight operations, and it is just as amazing now as it was the first time."

***USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Sailors of Chinese descent speak with People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison Deputy Commander Maj. Gen. Chen Weizhan during a tour aboard the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier July 9.**
U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Brian H. Abel

Inviting tour groups from different nations to come aboard and have hands on experience with the *George Washington* fosters morale with our allies, and presents the ship in a manner that is informative to our foreign dignitaries.

"Building relationships between our partners and allies promotes the *George Washington* as a powerful force in the South China Sea," said Aviation Ordinance 1st Class Mike Clossin, flight deck safety escort from Marion, Ind.

DVs had the opportunity to take pictures in the hangar bay, flight deck, navigation bridge as well as in the Commanding Officers' in-port cabin.

"I was able to visit *George Washington* last year when the ship pulled into Hong Kong," said Jack Lange president of The American Club of Hong Kong. "What I enjoy most is seeing so many people working together as a team to achieve a common goal; to watch that happen is quite inspiring."

George Washington and its strike group conduct military operations and engagements to maintain mission readiness, and reinforce bonds with its allies and partners.

"As diplomats and as politicians, you always deal with the geo-political issues on paper and in discussions," said Robert Schuddeboom, consulate general of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. "For us diplomats, it's extremely useful to have field visits like this."

USS Blue Ridge crew celebrates senior chief selectees

Story by MCSN Kelby Sanders, USS Blue Ridge Public Affairs

U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) held a frocking ceremony for its Senior Chief Petty Officer selectees on the flight deck, July 3.

Senior Chief (select) Culinary Specialist (SW/AW) Duane Adams, Senior Chief (select) Interior Communications Electrician (SW/AW) Larry Carr and Senior Chief (select) Information Systems Technician (SW/AW) Norris Carter were honored by the 7th Fleet Band, *Blue Ridge* crew and commanding officer Capt. Daniel Grieco.

"Being a senior chief is surreal," said Carr. "It'll take some time to adjust to the new responsibilities, but it feels great to be a part of this community."

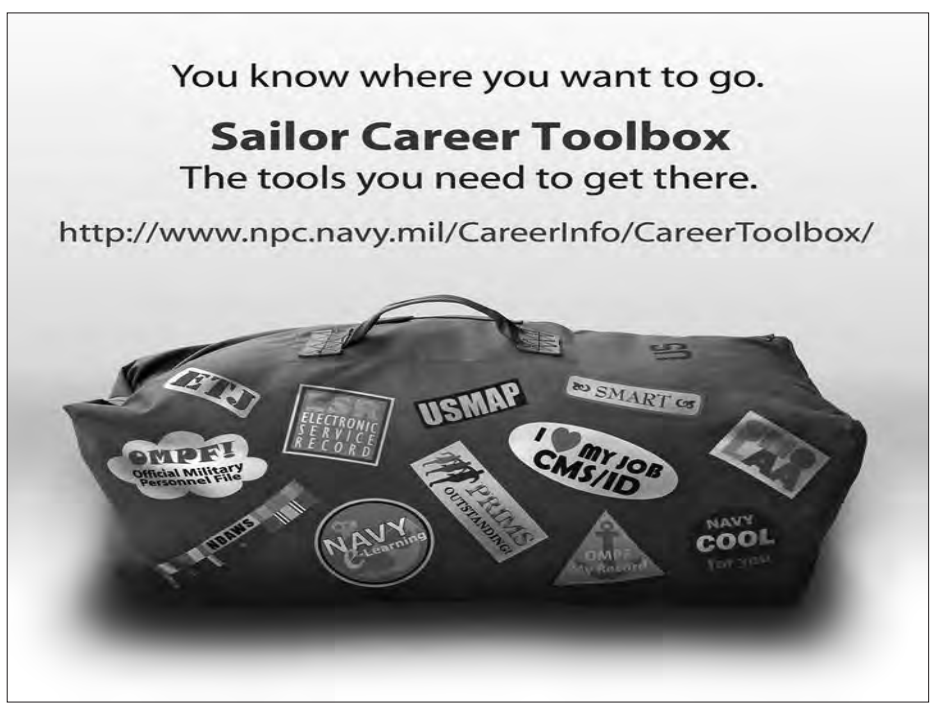
The 7th Fleet band's rendition of "Anchors Aweigh" filled the air with pride as the sun reflected off the gold-fouled anchor and star collar devices and covers were placed upon the selectees.

"It feels great knowing the *Blue Ridge* crew is here to support me," said Adams, who was frocked by some of his family members. "It feels even better to share the frocking with my family."

As senior chiefs, these men will take on new responsibilities and continue their roles as senior enlisted leaders.

According to Senior Chief Master-at-Arms Timothy Brown, who has held the rank since 2005, the keys to being an effective senior chief are, "...honesty, integrity and respect for your Sailors. As a leader you may hit roadblocks and obstacles from time to time, but if your main goal is to take care of your Sailors, then your Sailors will in turn take care of you, and any roadblock will be overcome."

With rank comes many years of dedication, hard work and perseverance, and these selectees have demonstrated these qualities throughout their years of service.

ICCS (Select) Larry Carr gets his senior chief "anchors" placed on by his daughter during a promotion ceremony aboard U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19).
U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Rafael Figueroa Medina

"After all the hard work I've put in, it's very rewarding to be promoted to senior chief, but in reality the work is only beginning," said Carter.