Cowpens Sailors spend time with Hong Kong elderly

Story and photo by MC3 Paul Kelly *USS Cowpens* Public Affairs

KOWLOON, Hong Kong – Sailors assigned to the forward-deployed Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) volunteered to participate in a community service (COMSERV) project with some of Hong Kong's senior citizens at Po Leung Kuk nursing home, July 11.

"I'm always amazed with our Sailors," said Lt. Tae Kim, *Cowpens*' command chaplain. "This is their liberty port and they don't have to volunteer, but every port we visit, I usually have too many volunteers."

The Sailors introduced themselves and shared with the residents about various jobs they perform on the ship as well as some of the training Sailors undergo.

The 15 volunteers and numerous residents teamed up for a game of charades with the Sailors doing most of the acting and the residents guessing what the Sailors were acting out through a translator. Age and language barriers quickly faded as competition intensified and teammates cheered each other on and stood up to give high-fives.

"It was a lot of fun playing charades with the residents who participated," said Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Everett Crockett. "I think it was definitely different from their daily routine and I think we were really able to give them something enjoyable to do."

Cowpens Sailors also put on a short marching demonstration and recited the Sailor's Creed for the group. At the end of their time, the Sailors and residents exchanged handshakes, and thanked each other for a great experience.

"People usually don't realize that when you give - you receive," said Kim. "It's only a couple of hours for us, but it makes a big difference for those who invite us into their daily lives."

STG2 (Surface) Jake Watkins gives a resident of Po Leung Kuk nursing home a high five during a game of charades while participating in a community service project with other Sailors assigned to the forward deployed Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63).

Great Green Fleet sailing toward SECNAV energy goals

From Defense Media Activity - Navy

PEARL HARBOR -- The U.S. Navy's Great Green Fleet demonstration is underway as part of the 2012 Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, the world's largest international maritime exercise.

Beginning July 17, alternative fuels, including nuclear power, will be used in an operational setting, fueling helicopters and jets from the deck of an aircraft carrier, and refueling a cruiser and two destroyers during an underway replenishment. The demonstration will also incorporate prototype energy efficient technologies designed to enhance the combat capability of Navy warships.

The ability to use fuels other than petroleum is critical to our energy security, because it will increase our flexibility and reduce the services' vulnerability to rapid and unforeseen changes in the price of oil that can negatively impact readiness.

"We can't afford not to do this. First, our dependence on foreign sources of fossil fuel is rife with danger for our nation and it would be irresponsible to continue it. Second, paying for spikes in oil prices means we may have less money to spend on readiness, which includes procurement. We could be using that money for more hardware and more platforms," said Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

A $1 change in the price of a barrel of oil, for example, results in an approximately $30 million change in the Navy budget. These increases must be paid for out of existing funds, which means our Sailors and Marines may fly less, steam less or train less.

Procurement of critical platforms and other technology may also be impacted by these price spikes.

"I track energy very closely and the most efficient use of it at sea and ashore -- from our piers to our facilities," said Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Jonathan Greenert. "As we bring newer ships in and bring forward requirements, it's clearly to me a factor in security."

This demonstration will achieve one of the Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus' five energy goals: to demonstrate a Great Green Fleet in local operations by 2012 (http://greenfleet.dodlive.mil/files/2012/03/20120309_SECNAVEnergyGoalsFactsheet1.pdf).

The ships and aircraft will be powered by alternative fuel, either nuclear or advanced biofuel blends. The biofuel blends are 50-50 mixtures of biofuel (made from waste cooking oil and algae) and petroleum-based marine diesel or aviation fuel.

To prepare for this demonstration, the Defense Logistics Agency purchased 450,000 gallons of advanced biofuel in November 2011. This fuel was blended with equal amounts of conventional petroleum-based fuel, producing a total of 900,000 gallons of a 50/50 alternative fuel blend. When the fuel was blended with equal amounts of conventional fuel, the cost of the 50/50 blends amounted to approximately $15 per gallon, less than half the cost of the advanced biofuels purchased in 2009.

The fuel purchased for the Great Green Fleet demonstration is part of the test and qualification program; fuel produced from non-conventional sources for operational use will be purchased only at prices that are competitive with petroleum-based fuel.

"The Navy needs the flexibility to continue testing all alternative fuel sources in order to reduce fuel price volatility," said Greenert.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy Tom Hicks emphasized that biofuels can become a viable alternative for petroleum.

"(Department of the Navy) investments in biofuel will encourage a competitively priced, and domestically produced, alternative to conventional fuel," said Hicks. "The prices for biofuel have already dropped dramatically since we first began purchasing it for testing. Such investments help the Navy and the nation become less dependent on foreign oil, and thus less subject to volatility in oil prices that directly affect our readiness."

During the Great Green Fleet demonstration, certain energy efficiency technologies will be employed, such as solid state lighting, which is more efficient and lasts longer than incandescent or fluorescent fixtures, stern flaps designed to help reduce hull resistance when underway, a shipboard energy dashboard which displays energy usage to the operators in real time and informs energy efficient decisions, and gas turbine on-line water wash which improves engine efficiency.

Participants in the demonstration are:

- *USS Nimitz* (CVN 68) and Carrier Air Wing 11
- *USS Princeton* (CG 59)
- *USS Chafee* (DDG 90)
- *USS Chung Hoon* (DDG 93)
- *USNS Henry J. Kaiser* (T-AO 187)

"Our platforms take years to build, cost millions or billions of dollars, and operate for decades. By making these platforms more efficient and using alternatives that will run in today's engines, we are providing a tactical and strategic advantage to the Navy's fleet and aircraft for the foreseeable future," said Mabus.

For more news about the Great Green Fleet and the Department of Navy's overarching energy program, visit http://greenfleet.dodlive.mil/energy.