Mustin furthers suicide prevention awareness

Photo and story by MC2 Devon Dow,
Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

PACIFIC OCEAN – Sailors assigned to guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) took part in suicide prevention training on the ship's mess decks Sept. 11.

The hour-long training helped Sailors recognize the warning signs that may suggest an individual could be thinking about committing suicide. Two sessions of the training were given throughout the day to ensure all hands had the opportunity to attend.

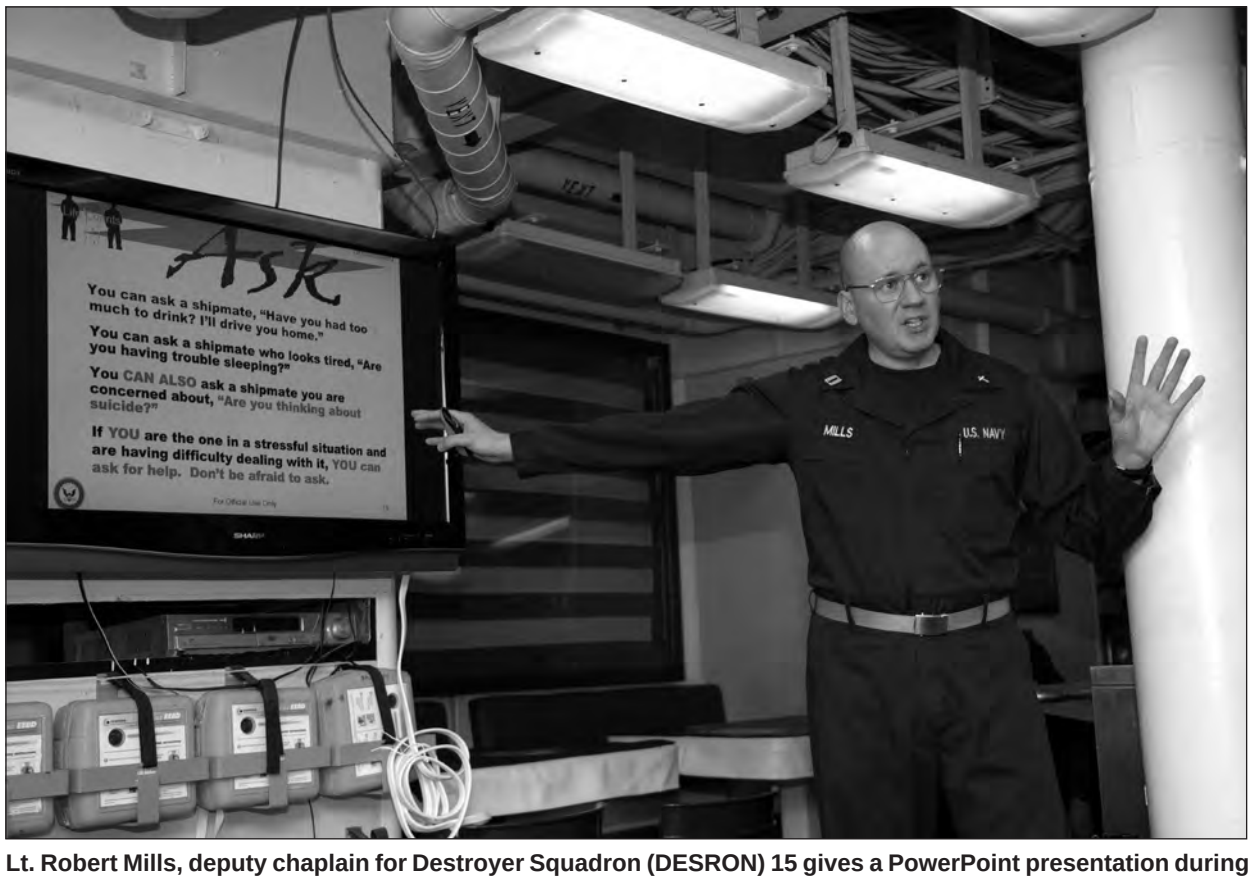
The training consisted of a presentation led by Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 Deputy Chaplain Lt. Robert Mills and concluded with a question and answer session.

"All of us are on the deck plates everyday, Sailors of all different ranks can have suicidal thoughts," Mills said. "By providing this training, all Sailors can look up and down the chain of command and recognize signs, symptoms and potential risk factors and intervene to take care of them. This course sends a very strong message, Sailors taking care of Sailors."

Mustin Commanding Officer Cmdr. Joseph Ring, stressed the significance of ensuring his entire crew receives the training.

"This program is of vital importance to the *Mustin* Nation, not only because it's a mission readiness and performance issue, but more importantly because it is a personal issue," Ring said. "Operating forward deployed can bring about many challenges to a Sailor's life, we want to get this training out to let our Sailors know that they matter; and as a Shipmate, to take care of one another."

Personnel Specialist 3rd Class Jarvis Joseph, a native of Marietta, Ga., said the training provided a lot of information that was beneficial and can help raise the awareness of suicide prevention contributing to a healthy work environment.



Lt. Robert Mills, deputy chaplain for Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 gives a PowerPoint presentation during suicide prevention training to Sailors assigned to guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) on the ship's mess decks. The training provides Sailors with the tools to recognize the warning signs that may suggest an individual could be thinking about committing suicide.

"I think its good training for the crew," Joseph added. "Something as simple as asking another Sailor about how their day is going can mean a lot, especially when we are at sea and away from family and friends. Today's training gives us good ways to prevent a Shipmate from harming themselves and point them in the right direction to get proper treatment."

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and the Navy is using the month as a launch pad to focus on Navy's ongoing suicide prevention efforts, officials announced in Navy Administrative Message 259/12 released Aug. 27.

USS George Washington welcomes its newest chiefs

By MC3 William Pittman,
***USS George Washington* Public Affairs**

PACIFIC OCEAN – The *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group, led by the Navy's full-time forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73), frocked their newest chief petty officers (CPO) Sept. 14.

Sixty Sailors, hailing from *George Washington*; Commander, Task Force (CTF) 70; Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5; and Destroyer Squadron 15, earned their anchors after six weeks of learning what it takes to have the title of CPO.

"You can't imagine what these men and women went through these last six weeks," said Master Chief Cryptologic Technician (Maintenance) Kyucca-Ali Simpson, from New York. "They learned what it takes to be a CPO in the greatest Navy in the world. They survived on pure adrenaline, and today are exhausted and excited. They have been tested, tried and accepted."

CPO selectees form a close bond soon after getting notice of their selection to the rank of CPO; they work together for several weeks, accomplishing various tasks and attending countless training sessions in the hopes of learning what it means to be a CPO. They no longer have a foundation to rely on, such as the petty officer first class (PO1) mess, whom they have worked side-by-side with and have been chosen to lead. They also have not been accepted as CPOs, whose mission is to instill the traits expected from a future leader.

"Nobody can be taught how to be a CPO as a PO1," said Simpson. "Even if a PO1 has been in the Navy for more than 19 years, they still could not grasp the concept of what it takes without the [weeks of training]. The concept can't be understood until the CPO puts on their khakis and looks into a mirror; then they get it. They know what it's all about."

The CPO selectees were rigorously drilled about the importance of leadership and fellowship; traits that will prove invaluable to them upon entering the goat locker.
"I learned that taking care of our people is key," said Chief Aviation Electronics Technician Eric Setterfield, from St. Petersburg, Fla., one of *George Washington*'s newest CPOs. "We have to take care of our junior Sailors and junior officers; we can't function without the team."

CPOs, from the newest inductee into the goat locker to the master chief petty officer who has worn anchors for more than 15 years, do not quit training because they wear anchors; by interacting with their brothers and sisters in the CPO mess, training their junior Sailors and officers, and making sure the job of the day gets completed expeditiously and safely, every day is a learning experience.

"In my opinion, if you want to be a good leader, you have to maintain a servant's heart," said Master Chief Hull Maintenance Technician Barry Norris, "You serve your people, you serve your chain [of command], you serve your nation."