Cowpens Sailors promote good will at Hong Kong school

By MC1 (SW/AW) N. Ross Taylor, *USS Cowpens* Public Affairs

HONG KONG – Sailors from the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) visited students at the Kowloon Sam Yuk School during a community service (COMSERV) project Nov. 11.

"I love going to these projects," said Gunner's Mate Seaman Chantall Knibb, a native of St. Louis. "It gives us a chance to show our gratitude to the people of the foreign nations we visit."

The volunteers from *Cowpens* participated in classroom discussions sharing their varied experiences in the Navy with the more than 50 students who were involved. The students even challenged the Sailors to a friendly game of ping pong after some cultural exchange.

"Community service projects are about outreach and globally coming together," said Lt. Tae Kim, *Cowpens* command chaplain and COMSERV coordinator. "Today we had a chance to do that with a great group of students from the Sam Yuk School. It was awesome to see our Sailors and the students learn more about each other's cultures as well as share different experiences."

The Sailors and students got to work on projects together after a little discussion time. The students were to prepare presentations in English about their favorite holiday. Each Sailor joined a group of about five or six students and worked with them on proper English and how to prepare their oral presentations.

"This was my first opportunity to attend and volunteer at a COMSERV," said Quartermaster Seaman Chelsey Hammer, from Rockford, Ill. "It was a great experience. Not only did we get to enjoy the sights of the city on liberty, but we got to really connect with the people of Hong Kong. I will definitely do it again."

CSSN Adrien Stone discusses presentation ideas with students from Hong Kong's Kowloon Sam Yuk School during a community service (COMSERV) project Nov. 11, between the school and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63).

U.S. Navy photo by Fire Controlman 3rd Class Tamala Baker

McCampbell conducts Visit Board Search Seizure training with JMSDF

Photo and story by
MC2 (SW/AW) John Smolinski,
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USS McCampbell (DDG 85) visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team members held a training class for Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) sailors from *JS Sawayuki* (DD 125) onboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Nov. 16.

The training consisted of classroom instruction followed by hands-on training covering the equipment and techniques on how to properly board and search a vessel.

"I think the interaction between the U.S. and JMSDF betters our relations," said Ens. Marshall Kraft, VBSS boarding officer, force-protection officer and class instructor. "We are both out for the common goal of protecting our countries and as allies we should share training which can improve our military as much as possible. We are guests in their country and should provide assistance as needed and as we train them our people get better with the material as well."

One of the challenges of the training was the language barriers between the U.S. Sailors and their JMSDF counterparts.

"There is a huge language barrier between most of our forces," said Kraft. "I think at first they had a difficult time due to the language gap, but they were able to walk away with the basics of VBSS team structure and boarding operations. We were able to overcome most of these barriers with the use of a translator, diagrams, and the hands-on training."

The purpose of the training was to help improve maritime security and promote operational readiness and good relates with our host nation, Japan.

ET3 John Griffin, VBSS security team member, *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85) demonstrates the proper visit, board, search and seizure techniques for a classroom of JMSDF sailors from JS Sawayuki (DD 125) Nov. 16.

"I feel this training was a success," said Kraft. "I know they did not get 100 percent of the material we taught, but they walked away with more knowledge than they arrived with. I will take away that we both need more training and continue our interactions together. We may need to do real world operations together and now is the time to work on communication issues and make sure we understand how each other conducts themselves."

JMSDF sailors had a chance to learn and work with equipment and techniques that they have not worked with before.

Lt. j.g. Asuo Matsuoka from JS Sawayuki said that the training was very informative and was interested in learning new techniques and strategies for safe, effective boarding procedures.