Lassen makes Sailors career planning, development easier

By MCSN Charles Oki,
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Sailors aboard the Arleigh-Burke class guided missile destroyer *USS Lassen* (DDG 82) can be better informed about their reenlistment and career development decisions with the aid of several retention programs.

The programs helped the ship earn its fifth consecutive golden anchor for retention excellence.

Many *Lassen* Sailors' choices begin at a career development board (CDB), where Navy Counselor 1st Class (SW/SS) Milton Styron from San Francisco, provides both junior and senior Sailors information about the benefits of remaining in the Navy. The CDB also educates them on other stay Navy options, as well as the benefits of joining the naval reserve.

"We have programs like these so that Sailors know what their options are if they want to maintain their career in the Navy, whether they continue as enlisted or decide to go onto becoming an officer," Stryon said. "We also inform them about their ability to stay Navy by transferring from active duty to the reserves."

The lessons taught by Styron help Sailors like Gunner's Mate 2nd Class (SW) Beth Fawcett, a native of Philadelphia, make the decision to reenlist.

"The things I learned from the board and through the career counselor really helped me make my decision," said Fawcett. "Even before I learned the things they taught me, I was considering reenlisting, but the stuff I learned definitely helped me come to a final decision."

"Considering the options we have and the current global economy, I would highly recommend reenlisting," Fawcett said.

Another vital program to help with career decision-making is the first term success workshop. Tailored toward junior Sailors, the workshop teaches them about options they have before their first enlistment ends. This is designed to help them prepare earlier in the game. They are informed on the options they may have later on in their careers, from commissioning programs such as the Seaman-to-Admiral 21, to the possibility of special duty assignments like becoming a recruit division commander.

For Hull Technician 3rd Class (SW) Cody Potts, from Victor, Iowa, the information gained through the workshop will help him while making future career decisions.

"I've learned a lot from the workshop," said Potts. "It's awesome knowing that I have several options that I can look forward to in the future."

Despite the high operation tempo a forward-deployed ship endures, *Lassen* Sailors are still finding it easier to make the decision of staying Navy.

In the end, as Styron added, earning its fifth consecutive retention excellence award means *Lassen* continues to steam with a golden anchor, and many ships can't say they've earned that honor.

Sailors aboard *USS Lassen* (DDG 82) are better informed about their reenlistment and career development decisions with the aid of several retention programs available to them. These programs helped *Lassen* earn its fifth consecutive retention excellence award.

U.S. Navy file photo

George Washington Sailors help smooth shipmates' transition

By MC2 James Kimber,
***USS George Washington* Public Affairs**

A small group of hard-charging *USS George Washington* (*GW*)(CVN 73) Sailors have worked to help the command's newest Sailors adjust to life aboard *GW* since arriving in Yokosuka late November 2008.

Sailors who report to *GW* spend the first few weeks with a select group of Sailors who serve as mentors.

Patriots' Landing is *GWs* three-week orientation that newly-reporting Sailors must complete before checking aboard the only forward-deployed nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in the Navy.

"We're the first people they see," said Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Orlando Thomas, leading petty officer of *GW* Patriots' Landing. "We pick them up from the airport, bring them to base, get them racks and chow. We do everything any Sailor hopes their sponsor would do in other commands."

The program is geared toward grooming junior personnel.

"A lot of times, this is the first time these Sailors have been away from home, and this is their first ship. They have a lot of new things surrounding them and may want some guidance. So for the first three weeks they're in Japan, we're their sponsors," Thomas said.

The Sailors review basic maintenance, material and management (3M), basic damage control, and the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka's area orientation brief and inter-cultural relations (AOB/ICR) course in addition to the ship's indoctrination briefs.

"It's a lot to go over in three weeks, but we see a lot of growth," Thomas said. "We usually see that the Sailors are ready to get to the ship and do their job, especially since they are more familiar with what they will be doing specifically."

"We're here to provide a positive image of the ship and offer positive mentorship for the junior Sailors," added Electronics Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Ian Ershen, a class facilitator at Patriots' Landing. "We're a vanguard of first and second class petty officers expected to display the positive aspects of the ship and instill pride and professionalism in our newest Sailors so they are ready for life both shipboard and in Yokosuka."

In addition to the courses, Sailors also have a strict schedule that reflects physical training, all meal times, grooming and berthing inspections and other general military training.

Flight deck structures aboard *USS George Washington* (*GW*)(CVN 73) are enshrouded by cranes and tarpaulins as the carrier continues its ship's restricted availability (SRA) period at CFAY. Prior to actually reporting to *GW*, Sailors must spend their first three weeks in Patriots' Landing, *GWs* orientation program, geared toward grooming their Sailors for life on the ship and in Japan.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Derek J. Hurder

"It's up to us to introduce our Sailors to positive influences so they don't put themselves in bad situations," Ershen said.

"They're the future of *GW* and the Navy," Thomas continued. "If they do it here, then they'll have no problem on the ship."

The work doesn't go unnoticed when the newly-indoctrinated Sailors finally do check aboard *GW*.

"Other LPOs (leading petty officers) from the ship have been impressed with the Sailors they are getting. They're getting the basics here and are better able to run with their knowledge base on the ship. We try to set the lifestyle of professionalism before any negative influences have a chance to set. I think it's working and I'm glad to be a part of it," Thomas said.

"This is a wonderful thing—for us to be able to set a positive tone for our shipmates who have the opportunity of serving on the first forward-deployed, nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and be a part of that," said Senior Chief Information Systems Technician (SW/AW) Terry Francheschi, Patriots' Landing officer-in-charge. "It's just a wonderful opportunity for everyone here."