Softball association delivers expert training to CFAY umpires

Story and photo by MC2 Brock A. Taylor, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Softball umpires aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) received professional softball training March 6-8, directly from the source that dictates most of the game's rules.

Craig Cress, the director of membership and a senior member of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) paid a visit to CFAY to bring the most up-to-date rules and regulations of amateur softball to base umpires.

Softball, one of Yokosuka's most popular off-duty recreational sports draws enough interest from sea and shore commands, that games and tournaments are scheduled year-round. In fact, a majority of the base's officiating team are active duty and retired service members.

Cress, a 32 year veteran of amateur softball umpiring, says it was an honor to share his love of the game with those serving overseas.

"It's a great experience for me," Cress said. "I'm out here to better assist the umpires in calling a better game and having a good time doing it."

The ASA has hosted clinics at overseas locations such as Italy and Germany since 1996. This is the first visit for an ASA member to Japan since 2000. Cress says he would like to make regular visits here in the future.

All umpires base their calls from ASA regulations and each year those regulations are updated. Cress says that his presence as an ASA representative brings the rules of softball into light.

Craig Cress of the Amateur Softball Association of America describes the slow pitch softball strike zone to local umpires aboard CFAY March 7. Cress's visit was a rare opportunity for CFAY umpires to receive training and evaluation from an expert.

"I have a different voice, a different personality," he said. "I'm from an outside source, so [the umpires] have a tendency to want to listen and grasp the rules of the game."

The three-day clinic brought professional training to the umpires and it included everything from in-class lectures and videos to on the field practice. Cress followed up his training by monitoring umpire calls at a regularly scheduled Saturday game.

"I think they listened, they learned and had a lot of fun," said Cress.

Now, umpires like Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW) Nathan Jones, who spends a lot of his off-duty time on the field, have a better understanding of making the right calls with streamlined information provided by Cress.

"I definitely appreciate Mr. Cress coming out here," said Jones. "To actually see someone go through all the calls and teach you is a lot different than reading from a book or looking at pictures."

Cress said visiting forward-deployed service members was quite an honor for himself and the rest of the ASA and he's happy to be able to give something back.

"We're very proud of our military," Cress said. "We know that they put a lot of effort into what they do and because of their work, people like me are able to do what I do."

MWR receives environmentally friendly alternative fuel vehicle

By Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Department received an environmentally friendly, electric powered vehicle Feb. 13.

The EXV4, which are electric-powered vehicles that are manufactured by e-ride Industries, were provided by Commander Naval Installations Command (CNIC), and the Navy MWR Division.

"CNIC subsidized these vehicle purchases for a few installations as a test to see if they could be adopted more widely around the [organization]," said MWR Administrative Officer Jason Symak. "MWR Yokosuka is onboard with introducing the vehicle as a new concept and mode of transportation.

Though the vehicles are being used in a trial phase, they are anticipated to impact the organizations in a couple of ways.

"Were looking at a, possible, overall reduction in expenses and emissions," said Symak. "It cuts down on fuel costs and fuel emissions. Our 'gas tank' is an outlet. You simply plug it in and the vehicle recharges."

The use of the vehicles helps the MWR organization to be more active in helping take care of our environment, which is something that Symak thinks may, also, benefit other organizations.

CFAY MWR Department received the e-ride EXVR, an environmentally friendly electric powered vehicle Feb. 13. The use of the vehicle is part of a trial phase by CNIC and Navy MWR Division as to whether or not they may be adopted into use more widely throughout organizations.

Photo by John Sullivan

"It allows us to take immediate action as far as the environment goes, and being more environmentally friendly," he said. "I'm not aware if there are other electric vehicles introduced in the other government agencies, but I think it's a positive trend to start, and for our needs on base, it's ideal. It's just good environmental awareness for the [whole] base and community to take note of."

According to the e–ride Industries Web site, the EXV4 is "the largest, most comfortable NEV (Neighborhood Electric Vehicle) on the market." NEV is a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) classification for speed limited battery electric vehicles, according to the DOT Web site.

Though they may be considered the largest, most comfortable NEVs on the market, they are far from luxury vehicles or sports cars. However, the vehicles won't emit harmful hydrocarbons into the atmosphere.

"They're environmentally friendly to use for basic needs, such as daily runs and local transportation purposes," said Symak.

According to Symak, it will be easy for people to notice the vehicle when it is being driven around the base.

"It's going to be an [eye-catcher]," he said. "People are going to look at it and they're going to know it doesn't look like your standard vehicle. We have stickers on the car [that state] 100 percent electric."

CFAY, Zushi emergency personnel strengthen ties with training

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Emergency personnel from Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Ikego Housing Complex Fire Department teamed up with their counterparts at the Zushi Fire Department headquarters March 16 for training on the use of the automated external defibrillator (AED) as part of a monthly program.

This month's program provided paramedics from Ikego with advanced life support training. The training scenario centered on using an AED to diagnose and treat a simulated patient whose heart had entered cardiac arrest. An AED automatically analyzes the patient's heart rhythm and advises the rescuer whether or not a shock is needed to restore a normal heart beat. The AED delivers an electric shock that stuns the heart momentarily; stopping all activity. This gives the heart a chance to restart normal electrical activity and resume beating effectively.

Zushi City Fire Chief Kouichi Shimizu believes the training is important because it reinforces skills they need to better do their jobs. "This is very valuable training because we have to continually train; you can understand the concept of something or what the book says to do in a situation," said Shimizu. "But unless you actually go through the motions of doing something over and over, you will not be able to perform a rescue with an AED for example, as well as you could without the practice."

Zushi City and CFAY have mutual aid agreements in place that enable the two to cooperate closely during an emergency. Although this agreement is in place, the two departments realized that without building an accurate understanding of the techniques, procedures and equipment each command utilizes, the true potential of the agreements could not be realized.

For this reason, the two fire departments decided to join forces once a month to practice and train on a variety of scenarios, including fire fighting, advanced life saving techniques and other areas where the departments will need to work together in case of an emergency. CFAY Fire Chief Daniel Vogel attended the most recent session and believes the training is an important part of providing the best possible service to residents.

"If we've worked together in the past, we know each other, we know what type of training, what type of procedures we're going to use and we can work together better as a team," said Vogel. "The Navy community benefits from this training in a couple of ways; it strengthens and supports our mutual aid agreements and it also provides an enhanced level of training and service we can provide the community during medical emergency situations."

Personnel from CFAY's Ikego Housing Complex Fire Department practice emergency medical techniques on a mannequin at the Zushi City Fire Department Headquarters March 16, as part of an ongoing program that brings the two departments together for monthly training sessions.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Gabriel S. Weber