CFAY ceremony honors, celebrates Women's History Month

Story and photo by MCSN Mike Mulcare, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) honored Women's History Month with a ceremony at the Adm. Arleigh Burke Officer's Club March 23.

The theme for Women's History Month this year is "Writing Women Back into History." The ceremony educated and reminded Sailors about the accomplishments of military and non-military women.

CFAY Chief Staff Officer Cmdr. Donna Kaspar said she thinks it's important for us to honor this month because women play such an intricate part in the Navy's mission.

"The significance of Women's History Month is so we can take some time to pause and recognize the achievements and sacrifices of women who have come before us," said Kaspar. "These women opened horizons and broke down barriers to make a significant impact in the service of our country."

Women in the Navy overcame many issues such as rank restrictions to the Combat Exclusion Law, which excluded women from service on surface combatant ships. Although the law was repealed in 1994, many believed exclusion from serving aboard combatant ships hindered career advancement for some Sailors.

The ceremony honored women such as former President of the American Red Cross and nurse Clara Barton, Pepsi Company President Indra Nooyi and the highest ranking female military officer, Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody, commanding general U.S. Army Material Command.

Speeches were shared during the ceremony by Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 1st Class (AW) Adrian Lawrence and Master -at-Arms 2nd Class Ashleigh Dickey. Additionally, a poem was read by Master-at-Arms 2nd Class (SW/AW) Vernetta Knox.

AZ1 Adrian Lawrence speaks during the Women's History Month ceremony at the CFAY Officer's Club March 23. During several speeches, Sailors discussed key events in history such as in 1967, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation removing rank restrictions on women in the military.

"I feel honored that I could speak during the ceremony," said Knox. "I'm a woman who has been through my fair share of struggles and it feels great to be able to write women back into history."

DANTES releases long-awaited credentialing DVD for military

By Gary Nichols, Center for Information Dominance Public Affairs

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) recently released its much-anticipated Department of Defense (DoD) DVD about credentialing (certification or licensing) for service members.

DANTES, which is based at Saufley Field in Pensacola, Fla., produced the new DVD to provide service members with an in-depth account of what certification and licensure is and how it can benefit them while they are in the military and later when they eventually leave the service.

Victoria Street, DANTES training manager, said it had been nearly a decade since DANTES had shot their last program about credentialing.

"A lot has changed in the 10 years since DANTES produced its last video about credentialing," said Street. "We needed to produce a new video that would reflect those changes."

One of the major innovations in the credentialing world is the development of the Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) program.

Since being launched at the Center for Information Dominance Corry Station in 2006, Navy COOL has processed more than 30,000 credentials for Sailors. On average, the Navy COOL Web site receives 1.7 million hits each month.

Sam Kelley, Navy COOL director, explained that credentialing is a DoD-wide program that can benefit all service members, no matter which uniform they wear. Credentialing documents a person's level of competency and achievement in a particular career or skill area.

"Credentials provide the civilian industry-recognized equivalent of a 'professional badge,'" said Kelley. "Military personnel may already have the experience and knowledge required to gain certification in their occupational specialty and may have no problem passing the exam to earn certification or a license in a profession."

DANTES produced the DVD to provide service members with an in-depth account of what certification and licensure is and how it can benefit them while they are in the military.

"DANTES is very excited about our new credentialing DVD," said Dr. Sandra L. Winborne, DANTES credentialing manager. "We thank those who participated in the making of the credentialing DVD. Our sincere hope is that military personnel worldwide will view the credentialing DVD and find reason to consider obtaining certification or licensing credentials. Credentialing may assist military members with their service promotions or prepare them for the civilian workforce."

Along with action scenes of military members working in aviation, medical, dental, radiology, engineering and electronics, the video also contains personal testimonials from service members on the importance of credentialing and from service members who have transitioned into the civilian workforce.

Additionally, the DVD highlights Army COOL and Navy COOL Web sites and how both services assist Soldiers and Sailors to achieve their credentials related to their military occupations and career fields.

Master Chief Navy Counselor Mark Lashuay, a Navy COOL analyst, was one of the Sailors who was interviewed for the DANTES DVD.

"It was an honor to be asked to participate in such an important program," said Lashuay. "I wanted to make sure that all Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Marines knew how important credentialing is and how much it can mean to all of us. It is such a great opportunity to earn nationally recognized certifications while we are still in uniform. And at the same time increase the professional work force of our military."

Originally modeled on a program by the Army, the Navy COOL program has taken on a life of its own and grown exponentially in the scope of certifications it offers to Sailors in the four years the program has been in existence.

Sam Kelley, Navy COOL program supervisor, said his Navy COOL team has successfully cross-linked every Navy specialty or rating with Department of Labor to ensure the Navy offered at least one civilian certification that matched every job in the Navy.

"Credentialing is a win-win, and I urge all active duty and reserve personnel to get involved," added Lashuay.

The 11-minute, 55-second DANTES Credentialing Program DVD is available online by visiting the Web site http://www.dantes.doded.mil/DANTES_WEB/distribution/audio.htm.

Navy updates fitness reports, evals

By Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

The Navy announced changes to the performance evaluation system and advancement policy March 9 to better reflect service as an individual augmentee/global war on terror support assignment (IA/GSA) and physical fitness assessment results.

The changes apply to all reports ending Aug. 1 or later and come as a result of Sailor feedback, according to NAVADMIN 083/10.

Under the new policy, a new billet subcategory code will be added to performance evaluation and fitness reports to provide a mechanism for reporting seniors to identify Sailors performing an IA/GSA.

"The IA/GSA billet subcategory was added to ensure IA and GSA Sailors are recognized for their service away from their parent command and remain competitive with their counterparts," said Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, chief of naval personnel. "Our Sailors are doing great work around the world, whether assigned to traditional billets, joint commands or as an IA. We want to ensure all Sailors are properly recognized for superior performance."

Additionally, both concurrent IA/GSA and regular evaluations will be used to determine performance mark averages and time-in-rate waivers to ensure outstanding performance during an IA/GSA is properly rewarded.

The new policy also requires reporting seniors to document all physical fitness assessments (PFA) conducted during the regular reporting period using new PFA codes on performance evaluation and fitness reports. The change supports Navy's culture of fitness and is another tool available to leaders to identify and reward top performers, according to the message.

The new policy applies to performance reports ending Aug. 1 or later. Timing of the change minimizes impact to selection board deliberations and the advancement process.