Training supplies storekeeper knowledge to postal clerks

Story and photo by Blake Vives, CFAY Public Affairs

U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka concluded its first weeklong specialized training program July 30, introducing postal clerks (PCs) to fundamental storekeeper (SK) knowledge to aid in their upcoming merger into the new logistics specialist (LS) rate.

The name change to logistics specialist will be official October 2009.

"The training is very vital because we are going to be performing a totally different function from what we have ever done before," said Chief Postal Clerk (SW/AW) Daniel Miller.

FISC Yokosuka Regional Postal Manager Dale Pinchart said postal clerks traveled from all corners of the FISC Yokosuka area of responsibility (AOR), which stretches across the Western Pacific.

"Currently, 30 postal clerks are going through the training. They came from Hong Kong, Korea, Guam, Sasebo, Okinawa, Atsugi, Yokohama and Yokosuka," said Pinchart.

To combat the potential challenge presented by this wide AOR, senior SKs will attend the centralized training, creating a Mobile Training Team (MTT).

"There are still 100 others [PCs] throughout the FISC Yokosuka region who need this training," said Pinchart. "However, as everyone knows, the mail never stops, so we could not shut down operations to allow all to attend at once; that is where the MTT will hopefully come into play."

The first LS advancement exam will be administered January 2010. The greater volume if its content will be devoted to conventional storekeeper knowledge.

"I understand some postal clerks are discouraged that the exams contain only 10 percent postal training, but just like everything else, it falls on them to be proactive rather than reactive," said Miller.

PC3 Ronald Lee Murray III joins fellow postal clerks in a class July 28 designed to teach fundamental storekeeper knowledge such as the supply community structure and manual ordering techniques for receipt and dispatch of parts and supplies. With the approaching transition to the logistics specialist rate, postal clerks need to acquire storekeeper skills in addition to the vital postal services they currently provide.

In addition to assisting with the preparation for the PC training course, Miller also attended the classes as a student.

"When we integrate with the storekeepers and become logistics specialists, this course, together with on the job training, will make the transition a lot easier," said Miller.

Miller believes success for PCs in the new LS rate is all about personal initiative. "Going into a new rating is going to take a little time but as long as you apply yourself and study the basics you have every opportunity to grow with that," said Miller. "Take it upon yourself and you are going to do fine."

The PC training course has already been offered in locations such as Norfolk, Va., and San Diego, Calif.

"The feedback we have received has been positive," said Pinchart. "Most are agreeing there is a lot of information to digest but it is well worth the time; however, nothing will take the place of on the job training."

Providing this training to PCs in order to ease the transition to the new LS rate remains consistent with the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Supply Community Command Master Chief (SW) James Collins' message earlier this year.

"We're going to make sure that they [PCs] have every opportunity to excel, both through advancement and where they are being stationed," said Collins. "We won't let them fail. We will adjust things as we go through the process to make sure this merger is as successful as possible."

According to Collins, the yearlong process of merging the PC and SK ratings into the new LS rating was designed to ready the enlisted workforce for the 21st century by giving them a broader skill set and therefore enhancing career opportunities.

Fleet Mail Center Yokohama carries out worldwide postal first

Story by Blake Vives, CFAY Public Affairs

FISC Yokosuka Fleet Mail Center (FMC) Yokohama recently found itself at the forefront of a U.S. Postal Service (USPS) cost savings initiative July 11 when it was recognized globally throughout the USPS for dispatching the first "deregulated" mail bag worldwide, signaling the beginning of a new business model designed to cut costs.

Under the new deregulated business model USPS no longer has to pay a standard flat rate for commercial air transportation of mail; instead, air lines will now bid to be the lowest price carrier, saving the Department of Defense and the U.S. Navy money when transporting mail to and from overseas locations.

FISC Yokosuka Regional Postal Manager Dale Pinchart said he was excited to learn FMC Yokohama essentially had the honor of "breaking ground" on this new system, if only by chance.

"After all of the hard work and pain and heartache that it took to prepare to operate after deregulation, I was very happy to hear that FMC Yokohama not only implemented the system successfully, but was actually recognized as the first in the world to dispatch mail once it took effect," said Pinchart.

Throughout the FISC Yokosuka area of responsibility (AOR) postal personnel worked to supply data to USPS to input into the global mail tracking system so the entire mail transportation system could operate effectively after deregulation.

All possible destinations in the world from each available airport in the FISC AOR were submitted along with a daily estimate of mail volume at each military postal location. At each location, new airline points of contact were established; for some, this was their first time carrying military mail.

"Working in postal takes extra hours and dedication because things just don't happen, you have to make them happen, and that takes a lot of hard work behind the scenes and all FISC Yokosuka postal personnel are doing just that," said Pinchart.

FMC Yokohama employee PC3 David Strickhouser displays the first mail bag dispatched worldwide under the new cost saving, deregulated business model July 11. After working long hours preparing for this operational conversion, the FMC crew was honored to be recognized throughout the USPS.
Photo by Mitsuru Shibuya

FISC Yokosuka looks skyward

FISC Yokosuka employees step outside to capture a glimpse of a rare partial solar eclipse through the thick cloud cover July 22. This once-in-a-lifetime celestial event constituted a reason to take a quick break. The full solar eclipse, which passed over Japan's Ryukyu Islands, was the longest eclipse of this century, according to NASA, lasting almost 7 minutes.
Photo by Blake Vives

Policy gives spouses PCS pounds

Military spouses are now given a weight allowance for professional books, papers and equipment (PBP&E) during a permanent change of station (PCS) move. This policy was effective Jan. 12, 2009.

This newly established spousal PBP&E policy is only slightly different from the military PBP&E policy.

Spousal PBP&E must be itemized in a list describing the profession or community service for which each item is used. The list must be certified by the service member and provided to the U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka Personal Property Office for final approval.

Spousal PBP&E must be weighed separately from the service member's PBP&E and annotated as "spouse PBP&E" on the descriptive inventory.

Spousal PBP&E is limited to 500 pounds net weight according to Joint Federal Travel Regulation U5310.C2.

This policy is only applicable to military spouses. Contact the FISC Yokosuka Personal Property Office at 243-6311 for more information.