Surface Warfare Officer Indoctrination Academy: Providing training, building upon tradition

Story and photo by ITC (SW) Ben Tomlin, ATGWP public affairs officer

Afloat Training Group and Training Support Department Western Pacific (ATG WESTPAC) and Training Support Department Western Pacific graduated 17 students from its second Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) Introduction Academy Sept. 18.

Course Coordinator Lt. Amir Jenkins and Senior Chief Operations Specialist (SW/AW) Andre Colomas guided the class, which spans four weeks and consists of 127 hours of essential introductory training for Surface Warfare officers.

The training covers division officer fundamentals, engineering, maritime warfare, bridge familiarization, and customs and courtesies.

The course also includes division officer and surface warfare essentials including division officer administration, maneuvering boards, and the perfromance of Maintenance and Material Management system spot checks.

Training is conducted in a classroom environment, but there are several practical exercises conducted onboard ship and in the Navigation, Seamanship, and Ship handling Trainer.

According to Jenkins, of 17 students who graduated the course, of note were the accomplishments of class honor graduate Lt. j.g. Rebecca L. Islin from *USS McCampbell*.

"Lt. j.g. Islin excelled in grasping and perfectly demonstrating course fundamentals such as division officer requirements, maritime warfare, and bridge familiarization," said Jenkins.

Although the training was held by ATG WESTPAC, other commands helped by providing support, according to ATG WESTPPAC Director of Training Lt. Cmdr. Walter Bonilla.

ATG WESTPAC Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) Introduction Academy students pose for a class photo after graduation Sept. 18. SWO covers division officer fundamentals, engineering, maritime warfare, bridge familiarization, and customs and courtesies.

"I would especially like to thank to *USS Shiloh* (CG 67), *USS Mustin* (DDG 89), *USS Cowpens* (CG 63), *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85), *USS Fitzgerald* (DDG 62), and *USS Stethem* (DDG 63) for providing tours, seminars, and allocating time to convey their wisdom during this course of instruction," said Bonilla.

By developing and executing the SWO Introduction Course, ATG WESTPAC is building upon a rich tradition of providing training and successful professional development.

Pursuing innovative strategies, the course is intended to develop a level of training proficiency, which will contribute to maintaining fleet readiness.

Part of maintaining the readiness level stems from having experienced SWO officers who are willing to mentor and teach junior officers.

"ATG WESTPAC is looking for motivated Surface Warfare Officers interested in giving back to the SWO community by volunteering to help instruct as part of the SWO Introduction Academy," said ATG WESTPAC Commanding Officer Capt. Curt Gilbert. "We invite all Surface Warfare Officers on the waterfront interested in providing mentorship to our future SWO warriors to get involved in the SWO Introduction Academy."

The next SWO Indoctrination Academy scheduled is to begin Sept. 28.

For more information regading the SWO Academy or to reserve quotas contact Course Coordinator Lt. Amir Jenkins via e-mail at amir.jenkins@fe.navy.mil or by phone at 243-6176.

USS Fitzgerald welcomes family, friends for Family Day cruise

Story and photo by ENS Bill Morrison, USS Fitgerald (DDG-62), public affairs officer

Upon returning from sea in support of a *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) summer cruise, *USS Fitzgerald* (DDG 62) welcomed loved ones aboard for a Family Day Cruise Sept. 4.

Family and friends of *Fitzgerald* spent the day learning about the ship, life underway, and what their Sailor does on a daily basis.

Children explored the ship with their Sailor completing a scavenger hunt and some volunteered as "victims" to be rescued by damage controlmen in hot suits during a, simulated, crash and salvage drill.

Guests were treated to a display by the gunner'smates who showcased the ship's firepower of small arms and the 5-inch gun.

A demonstration by the visit, board, search, and seizure drill showed how *Fitzgerald* Sailors employ some of the weapons as the team tactically maneuvered during a non-compliant boarding drill.

Sailors and their guests relaxed during a "steel beach" picnic while they enjoyed an air-power demonstration by *USS George Washington* aircraft.

Fitzgerald family members and friends responded very positively to their day underway with the Sailors.

"My guests really appreciated the chance to see what life is like on the ship," said Operations Specialist 1st Class (SW) Ryan King. "They hear about the ship all the time, and now they have some first-hand experience of what we are telling them about."

IC3(SW) John Brandner of *USS Fitzgerald* (DDG 62) teaches his father how to use an alidade during a Fitzgerald Family Day Cruise Sept. 4.