Command mail orderly system scheduled for termination

Story and photo by Blake Vives, CFAY Public Affairs

As part of a recent initiative to streamline mail distribution, the command mail orderly program is scheduled for termination December 2010.

In anticipation of the cessation of these services, the U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka Military Post Office encourages all customers currently receiving mail by any of the 79 command mail orderlies to sign up for an individual mail box at their local post office.

"We're phasing out the mail orderly system," said Officer-In-Charge of Ikego, Negishi and Yokosuka Military Post Offices Postal Clerk Master Chief Petty Officer (SW) Otilio Santos. "Eventually, within about a year, the mail orderly program will be gone completely; so, we are encouraging mail orderly customers to sign up for a mail box now."

After a successful initial campaign in April 2009 that encouraged mail orderly patrons to switch to post office box services, FISC Yokosuka continues to encourage all remaining mail orderly customers to sign up for a post office box as soon as possible.

"We are making steady progress as additional personnel are opening mail receptacles at the post offices," said Santos. "CFAY (Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka) Security Department has really supported this initiative as all newly reporting personnel are sent directly to the post office to open up a mail receptacle.

Also, postal briefs are presented at the CFAY AOB/ICR (Area Orientation Brief and Intercultural Relations) Class weekly to advise all newly reporting personnel to open a mail receptacle at Yokosuka, Ikego or Negishi Post Offices because, eventually, they will no longer receive their mail through the mail orderly system."

Orders, Family Entry Approval or Command Sponsorship are the only documents needed to be assigned a post office box at the Yokosuka, Ikego or Negishi Military Post Offices.

Each customer currently receiving mail via the mail orderly program would need to fill out a change of address card and notify all correspondents of the new mailing address.

However, due to logistical concerns, one group is excluded from participating in the open box initiative.

"The only exception to this recent allowance is single, deployable Sailors in forward-deployed units and this is because we want to ensure they continue to receive their mail while they're underway," said Santos.

The initiative to provide every customer with a mail receptacle will not affect Yokosuka Naval Hospital or internal FISC Yokosuka customers because both commands are already equipped with fully serviced mail boxes.

FISC Yokosuka Military Post Office employee PCSN Jonathan Sanders verifies PSSN Joshua Blair's mail orderly identification card and asks him to sign verifying he picked up his command's mail. Blair has served as a collateral duty mail orderly for Personnel Support Detachment Yokosuka Customer Service for two years. After the mail orderly system is terminated, his command and others currently using the mail orderly system will no longer use work time to deliver mail, as all employees will have individual mail boxes at the post office.

In December 2010, the job of sorting and distributing command mail will completely shift from the command mail orderlies to the postal clerks in the post office, saving each command up to an estimated 40 hours of labor each week.

"The benefit of moving away from the mail orderly program is that it eliminates the daily task of driving to pick up the mail, sorting the mail and performing directory services on undeliverable mail; these services could take hours a day for each command," said Santos. "Currently, the orderlies perform mail services as a collateral duty. After the transition, each command will regain the full utilization of its personnel."

Another anticipated benefit is increased mail security.

"The security of the mail will also be greatly improved because only postal clerks will handle the mail once the orderly system is gone," said Santos.

The post office advises customers take advantage of the constant mail delivery and convenient access provided by a mail box as soon as possible.

"Having a mail box at a post office is more advantageous than the current mail orderly program employed at most of the shore commands, which only process mail during the weekday," said FISC Yokosuka Postal Officer Postal Clerk Chief (SW/AW) Daniel Weaver. "The main benefit of having a box at your local post office is the immediate sorting of the mail every day of the week and the constant availability to customers."

Additional changes at the post offices designed to improve customer service and postal efficiency include the standardization of all military addresses to allow customers use of the U.S. Postal Service online national change of address service and allow military mail to be processed through the Postal Automation Redirection System, which will allow a military member's mail to be forwarded from a previous address to a new address anywhere in the world.

George Washington Family Day Cruise inspires Japanese visitor

Story and photo by John Lontoc, DDYJ Public Affairs

The crew of *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) held their first Family Day Cruise since arriving in Yokosuka last year, providing thousands of guests an opportunity to experience Navy life at sea and enjoy demonstrations of the ship's operational readiness, including flight operations.

For one visitor, 87-year-old Hiroo Takagi, the experience was an especially memorable one, bringing back visions of his early years as a sailor in the Japanese navy.

Takagi joined the Japanese navy when he was 21, during World War II.

While stationed at Maizuru city in Kyoto prefecture, he worked in the aviation community as an airplane mechanic, maintaining such aircraft such as the well-known Mitsubishi "Zero."

The Zero was known as one of the world's best carrier-based fighter aircraft of its time.

Following the war, Takagi continued his trade as a garage mechanic for the U.S. military.

His daughter, Kazuko Yamamoto, a Defense Distribution Depot Yokosuka Japan (DDYJ) employee, expressed wonder after learning of her father's experiences.

"I never knew," she said. "Being one of only two daughters, it wasn't something a man would talk to women about."

Now retired from auto mechanics for 20 years, Takagi spends time enjoying life and his family.

Though he never left Japan, events such as the *George Washington* Family Day Cruise have sparked his desire to travel, "Maybe to Korea or Guam," says daughter Kazuko.

When asked how he felt about his trip on board the *George Washington*, Takagi said he was excited to "sail" aboard such a ship and observe the demonstration by the Navy jets and helicopters of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5.

Takagi said he was especially thankful for the peace that now exists between the U.S. and his country.

Hiroo Takagi poses with his daughter, Defense Distribution Yokosuka Japan employee Kazuko Yamamoto, next to an E-2C Hawkeye airborne early warning aircraft from (CVW) 5, during a recent *George Washington* Family Day Cruise Sept. 3.