Logistics partnering talks strengthen bilateral ties

By H. Sam Samuelson, FISC Office of Corporate Communication

U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka hosted logistics leaders from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) in bilateral talks to share logistics practices and strengthen the bilateral logistics cooperation between the two agencies.

The cooperative talks were first initiated last year and hosted at the JMSDF Maritime Staff Office in Tokyo.

"It's especially gratifying, after last year's inaugural session in Tokyo, to host you here at FISC Yokosuka for the first time," said FISC Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Mike Arnold during opening remarks. "I appreciate the privilege of welcoming all of you for these important bilateral talks and very much look forward to sharing best logistics management practices among our respective organizations."

More than 40 FISC Yokosuka and JMSDF logisticians attended the talks, including representatives from the Maritime Staff Office, Maritime Materiel Command, Ship Supply Deport and Ship Repair Facility Yokosuka.

"We were very proud to host this year's talks here at FISC Yokosuka," Arnold said following the event. "We were hosted with great respect and honor last year in Tokyo and were happy to reciprocate here."

The "logistics summit," as it were, was initiated to establish a forum in which the Navy logistics community and the JMSDF logistics community discuss practices that help each to, first, serve their fleet customers better and, second, establish commonalities between the Navy and JMSDF logistics communities.

"We anticipated and, in fact, learned last year that these talks were extremely informative and helpful," Arnold said. "I think we made great strides reinforcing good logistics practices, sharing those process models and continuing important partnership initiatives that help all of us."

One of the greatest values to bilateral talks is the interaction and sharing that leads to better efficiencies in logistics management.

"It is always a pleasure being a part of these bilateral conversations," Arnold continued. "I always come away from discussions with our JMSDF counterparts more enlightened and gratified to be able to learn and share those practices that – I'm certain – will lead to better service to our respective customers.

(Left) JMSDF Maritime Staff Office Chief of Equipment and Supply Management Capt. Umesaburo Kawahara, JMSDF Director of Logistics Planning and Supplies Division Capt. Kiyoshi Matsuura, FISC Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Mike Arnold and Commander 7th Fleet Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics Capt. James Piburn open discussion at the recent bilateral logistics forum Dec. 1.

Photo by Blake Vives

"As I look back at last year's session in Tokyo, I am proud of the great strides we have made together reinforcing our logistics practices, continuing our many logistics partnership programs and ultimately building stronger ties among our organizations."

FISC Yokosuka, one of seven supply centers under Commander Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers (COMFISCS), is the Western Pacific region's largest Navy logistics command and includes more than 20 detachments, fuel terminals and sites from Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean to Guam, from Misawa, Japan to Sydney, Australia.

COMFISCS comprises more than 6,400 military and civilian logistics professionals operating as a single cohesive team providing global logistics services from more than 200 locations worldwide.

A component of the Naval Supply Systems Command, headquartered in Mechanicsburg, Pa., COMFISCS is part of a worldwide logistics network of more than 25,000 military and civilian personnel providing combat capability through logistics.

Postal employees deliver first-class service during holidays

Story and photos by Blake Vives, CFAY Public Affairs

During the holiday season, focus on customer service intensifies at the U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka Military Post Office.

Postal employees work longer to meet the demands created by an influx of holiday packages.

"Instead of receiving one truck of incoming mail in the evening, during the holidays we will get two trucks per day," said the Postal Officer of Yokosuka and Ikego Post Offices Chief Logistics Specialist (SW/AW) Daniel Weaver. "So, that means we need to have more people here to sort mail and make sure it gets to customers as soon as possible."

Customers may not know mail is continually received and sorted even when the customer service counter is closed. During the holidays, more packages mean more logistics specialists needed to work late hours.

LS1 (SW) Marcus Parks finds a holiday package for a customer among the shelves of parcels waiting to be picked up in the back of the FISC Yokosuka Post Office Dec. 1. Postal employees work longer hours during the holidays to ensure customers receive any gifts mailed by their families in the United States.

"What the holiday mailing time is all about is working hard to make sure our customers receive their packages," said Logistics Specialist 1st Class (SW) Maria Roldan. "These packages are especially important because, for people here in Yokosuka, they are really a little piece of home."

Weaver further explained why it is important for the FISC Yokosuka Post Office to provide outstanding service to its customers.

"This is the only way that service members, especially single Sailors, can get packages back and forth," said Weaver. "I think the post office does play a significant role in the morale of the service members by providing that vital link to home."

Amidst the holiday bustle of the FISC Yokosuka Post Office customer service lobby, LSSA Wilfredo Galarza assists a customer with mailing a package. Offering mailing appointments for customers with four or more packages is one of the many changes the post offices implements during the holiday mailing season to reduce customer wait time.

Patience and preparation are essential for a quick trip to the post office this holiday.

"Please be patient while we are trying to process all of the customers," Roldan advises. "It would be helpful if customers arrive with customs forms filled out, packages properly wrapped and the addresses clearly written. When you come to the customer service counter ready, we will be able to process your parcels faster."

To guarantee quality customer service during the temporary increase in outgoing mail to the United States, the FISC Yokosuka Post Office offers mailing appointments for customers with four or more packages.

"The mailing appointments are designed to keep the lines down; customers with appointments will have no wait time," said Weaver. "We simply ask that customers with appointments arrive on time with their packages properly wrapped, labeled and customs forms complete."

Appointments may be scheduled on weekdays until Dec. 18. To make a mailing appointment for four or more packages, in Yokosuka, call 243-5486 or 243-9740; in Ikego, call 246-8024; and, in Negishi call, 242-4114.

The parcel pick-up counter of the FISC Yokosuka Post Office will remain open on Christmas Eve until 4:30 p.m.; the Ikego Post Office will be open until 6 p.m.; and the Negishi Post Office will be open until 6:30 p.m. to distribute any packages arriving last minute.

Weaver says the extra effort during the holiday season comes with the job.

"This is part of working in the post office," said Weaver.

"One of the responsibilities you take on when you sign up is that Christmas is going to be the busiest time of the year for you.

"While most people are on vacation, this is our time to provide the best customer service that we can."