

MERLION STAR

Serving the Sembawang Community

February, 4 2011

Volume 20

Issue 2

DON'T FORGET

- ✦ Waitangi Day Fun Run, Feb. 5
- ✦ Superbowl XLV, Feb. 7
- ✦ Supply Corps Birthday Dinner, Feb. 11

INSIDE



2
Celebrating African American/ Black History Month through February



3
Number of Sailors using "Spice" alarms leadership



5
Seventeen three-person teams battled it out for the first-ever Navy Region Center Singapore triathlon

'DON'T ASK DON'T TELL' REPEAL PLAN PROGRESSING QUICKLY

WASHINGTON -- The plan to end the ban on gay men and lesbians serving openly in the military is progressing quickly, senior Defense Department officials said Jan. 28 in Washington, D.C.

By: KAREN PARRISH,
AMERICAN FORCES
PRESS SERVICE

Clifford L. Stanley, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, and Marine Corps Gen. James E. Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke to Pentagon reporters in the first of a series of briefings that will chart the department's progress in implementing the repeal of the law known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

"My sense is [we have a] really good working relationship with the services as we do this, ...not only the service chiefs, but the senior

enlisted," Stanley said. "You get good vibes about where we are in terms of cooperation [and] information coming forth."

President Barack Obama signed the repeal into law Dec. 22, with provisions ensuring the repeal will not take place until 60 days after he, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, certify the military services are ready.

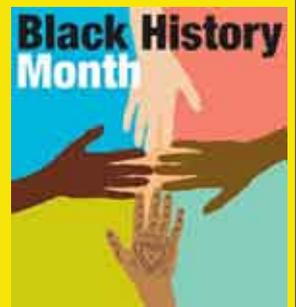
As part of the Jan. 28 briefing, officials distributed copies of two memos containing the department's guidance on repeal implementation. The first, signed by Gates, sets a planning deadline of Feb. 4. The second, which Stanley signed, outlines policy changes.

— Continued page 4

BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATIONS

25 February
6 - 8 p.m.

\$5.00 for all you can eat buffet with dishes from Africa, Caribbean and Cajun/Creole



Celebrations will include dinner, poetry readings, historical displays of African American History from a Civil War Perspective, and a special guest speaker

To join the celebration or volunteer contact LS1 Trenda Fletcher at 6750-2424 or OSCS Harold Vickers at 6750-2468

Quote of the Week

**The weak can never forgive.
Forgiveness is the attribute of
the strong.**

-- Mohandas K. Gandhi

Merlion

Star

**Commander,
Logistics Group Western Pacific**
Rear Adm. Ron Horton

Chief of Staff
Capt. Matthew Garside

Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Cmdr. Mike Morley

Assistant Public Affairs Officer
Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class
Jessica Bidwell

**Commanding Officer,
Navy Region Center, Singapore**
Capt. Mike Smith

**Commander,
Sealift Logistics Command, Far East**
Capt. Charles "Chip" Denman

**Commander,
497th Combat Training Squadron**
Lt. Col. Norman B. Dimond

**Officer in Charge,
Fleet Industrial Supply Center, Singapore**
Cmdr. Bobby Pitts

**Officer in Charge,
Military Sealift Fleet Support Command,
Ship Support Unit, Singapore**
Lt. Cmdr. Michael Little

**Special Agent in Charge,
U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service,
Singapore Field Office**
Greg Bachman

Merlion Star is an authorized publication for the members of the Sembawang military community, published by Logistics Group Western Pacific's public affairs office. Contents herein are not necessarily the views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, Department of Defense, Department of the Navy or the Commander of Logistics Group Western Pacific. All items for publication in Merlion Star must be submitted to the editor (jessica.bidwell@fe.navy.mil) (6750-2431) by noon Friday the week prior to publication.

African American/Black History Month

Throughout February, the Navy joins the nation in celebrating African American/Black History Month.

Historically and currently, African Americans have seized opportunities to serve, lead and excel in challenging naval assignments worldwide.

- In 1947, Ensign John W. Lee became the first African American to be commissioned into the regular Navy.

- The Centennial 7 were black officers who commanded submarines during the 20th century.

- Rear Adm. Michelle Howard is the first African American female to lead a combined task force in the 5th Fleet, serving as commander during the Maersk-Alabama piracy incident off the Somali coast, which led to the rescue of Capt. Richard Phillips.

- Force Master Chief Laura A. Martinez was awarded the 2009 Pioneer Award from the National Women of Color for achievements that include leading 500 corpsmen in providing health services for 15,000 troops while deployed to Kuwait in 2003.

Paying Tribute to Service
A number of Navy vessels are named to honor notable African Americans including:

- MSC ships USNS Watson

(T-AKR 310) and USNS Henson (T-AGS 63), an oceanographic survey ship, which is currently supporting Haiti relief as part of Operation Unified Response.

- Charles Drew (T-AKE 10), which will be christened on Feb. 27.

- The destroyers USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79), USS Pinckney (DDG 91) and the future USS Gravely (DDG 107).

Navy Empowering its Members

- President Truman increased opportunities for African Americans to serve throughout the Navy in July 1948 with Executive Order No. 9981. Today, roughly 72,000 African American officer and enlisted Sailors serve in uniform. About 94,000 African Americans serve in the Navy's Total Force.

- Navy offers ROTC scholarships at 16 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the nation.

Facts & Figures

- Today, 14 African American admirals serve in the Navy and the Reserves.

- More than 50% of African American naval officers graduated from HBCUs.



In February 1944, the Navy commissioned its first African-American officers. The twelve commissioned officers, and a warrant officer who received his rank at the same time, came to be known as the "Golden Thirteen." US Navy photo

Navy leadership Concerned with the Rise of “Spice” use among Sailors

NORFOLK — Navy leaders are expressing alarm at recent statistics that show that Sailors’ use of “Spice” and similar so-called designer drugs rose in the last quarter of 2010. Spice and similar products are essentially an herbal, synthetic form of marijuana, mimicking the chemical compounds found in the drug. These products are banned for Navy personnel.

“The number of incidents of designer drug usage is rising at an alarming rate in our Navy. In the last four months alone, 79 of our Fleet Forces Sailors and 72 Pacific Fleet Sailors have been accused of using or possession of the drug. That’s 151 Sailors that if found guilty will be administratively separated from our Navy,” said Adm. John C. Harvey, Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

Harvey believes it’s everyone’s responsibility to deal with what could be a dangerous trend.

“I need each and every one of our Sailors looking out for each other,” Harvey explained. “Talk to your shipmates about Spice and make sure they understand the dangers and serious consequences involved with its use.”

In response to the rising

concerns of the military over Spice and similar products, the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board of Southeastern Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina placed 10 businesses in Hampton Roads off-limits to service members in November.

Since the release of Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 108/10 in March 2010, which reemphasized the Navy’s drug policy, the U.S. Navy has been proactively campaigning to reduce the number of incidents related to the use of synthetic marijuana.

“Our Navy has zero

is no second chance.”

Navy personnel determined to be unlawfully using, possessing, promoting, manufacturing or distributing drugs and/or drug abuse paraphernalia shall be disciplined, as appropriate and processed for administrative separation, according to Navy regulations.

In the Navy, drug abuse includes: the wrongful use, possession, manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance. Drug abuse also includes: the unlawful use of controlled substance analogues, natural substances, chemicals, propellants and/or prescribed or over-the-counter drugs or pharmaceutical compounds with the intent to induce intoxication, excitement or stupefaction of the central nervous system and will subject the violator to punitive action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and/or adverse administrative action. Examples of other substances, the wrongful use of which constitutes drug abuse, includes, but is not limited to the following: Products that contain synthetic cannabinoid compounds, such as Spice, Genie, Blaze, Dream, Ex-Ses, Spark, and K2; natural substances such as Salvia divinorum and mushrooms, prescription medications such as Oxycodone, Vicodin, Adderal and Valium.



tolerance for drug use. If you are considering using Spice or a similar drug, I strongly urge you to reconsider,” Harvey said. “If you are caught using it, even once, you will be separated from the Navy. There



Free Tax Preparation

VITA/ELF tax assistance will be available by appointment, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please schedule an appointment by emailing clwptaxes@gmail.com or calling LT Gehlen at tel: 6750-2305.

Plan to Repeal 'Don't Ask Don't Tell'

-- Continued from page 1

"Strong, engaged and informed leadership will be required at every level to implement the repeal... properly, effectively and in a deliberate and careful manner," Gates' memo read in part. "This is not, however, a change that should be done incrementally. The steps leading to certification and the actual repeal must be accomplished across the entire department at the same time."

Gates' guiding principles for implementation stress respect for individuals and common across-the-services standards, while prohibiting harassment, unlawful discrimination and policies based solely on sexual orientation.

Gates directed that a repeal implementation team lead the process to develop plans, update policies and train the force.

"What you're going to see as we move forward, we have actually three tiers as we get to the training part," Stanley said.

The three levels of training begin with policy makers, chaplains, lawyers and counselors; continue with leaders including commanding officers, senior noncommissioned officers and senior civilians; and culminate with troops across the services.

Cartwright said the tiers don't have to be sequential, and the services can conduct the levels of training as they see fit.

Present at the Jan. 28 briefing were Virginia "Vee" Penrod, deputy assistant secretary for military personnel policy and chairwoman of the repeal implementation team, and Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Steven Hummer, the team's chief of staff.

Penrod said the team has worked for several weeks with service representatives to develop training guidance, modules and plans.

"We expect to have those accomplished next week," said Penrod. "It's been a joint effort, with not only the military departments but [also] the Joint Staff, to develop consistent training."

Hummer said the team is developing a "standardized commander's toolkit" for the training effort. The services can tailor the toolkit to ensure the training meets their specific needs. The training packets will include videos featuring the service commanders, presentations outlining policy considerations and a series of vignettes trainers can use to spur audience discussions.

"We know, when you're dealing with 2.5 million people and a new policy, that we're probably going to have some discovery as we go," said Cartwright.

The two-week updates provide

a feedback mechanism that will allow defense and service leaders to track what they've learned, react and then move forward.

"That will all be considered in the so-called calculus of when we go to the secretary and the chairman to certify," said Cartwright.

Stanley's memo detailed military policy changes that will happen when repeal takes place. Defense officials emphasized that any changes will not take effect until repeal is implemented, and that all current policies remain in force in the meantime.

Most policies will not change, including those covering standards of conduct, equal opportunity, personal privacy, military benefits, medical treatment and duty assignments. But recruiting, re-accessions and separation policies will change. Sexual orientation will no longer serve as a bar to enlistment or a return to the military, or as a reason for dismissal.

"We are fundamentally focused right now on our leadership, professionalism, discipline and respect," said Stanley. "I have to underscore that every person who serves and who wears a uniform - and to include our civilians, who are working within the Department of Defense - they take an oath. And that oath breaks into that foundation of leadership, professionalism, discipline and respect."



Change in NRCS Housing Policy Allows Sailors to Request to Live on the Economy

Single and accompanied Sailors might have the opportunity to live on the economy in Singapore, in accordance with a policy change enacted by Navy Region Center Singapore (NRCS) Jan. 5.

By: MC2 JESSICA BIDWEL
CLWP PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The policy change is in response to a policy review that resulted in the mandate no longer being practical, Sailors now the option of either residing in the quarters offered by NRCS or seeking a private residence on the local economy when certain occupancy ceilings are reached.

“When housing reaches 95 percent occupancy Sailors now have the choice to request to

move out on the economy,” said NRCS Executive Officer Cmdr. Andrew Crowe. Crowe continued that it is a good opportunity for Sailors to have the choice, but also recommended they do their research prior to making the final decision.

Four Sailors have put their special request in to move out on the economy. Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Akira was the first Sailor approved to move out on the economy.

“I choose to live out in town amongst the local population, to better understand the culture of Singapore,” said Radke.

Crowe said this is a great opportunity for Sailors however; they may want to look at what they

have prior to making the decision to live on the economy. Housing is currently renovating existing housing units, and has completed 11 family housing units, and 36 of 45 duplexes. Additionally housing is installing new living room and bedroom furniture in 80 percent of the bachelor units by May.

If you would like to move out on the economy and would like assistance, contact the housing office or a Sailor that has already gone through the process for help. Also visit <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/index.cfm> for allowances that you will receive when living on the economy.

17 Teams Complete First-Ever NRCS Triathlon

Seventeen three-person teams battled it out for the first-ever Navy Region Center Singapore triathlon, held Saturday, Jan. 29th. And in a surprise twist, the lone all-Australian team “The Victims” put on a strong showing, sweeping each of the three events and taking first place.

The teams, consisting of active duty, family members and international partners, conquered a 15-lap swim at the Terror Club

pool, 10k run through housing and 25 mile stationary bike event in NRCS’ two gyms. Team members ranged in age from their 50s (no names please!), to 8 years old. Teams were ranked according to the lowest cumulative time.

Army Master Sgt. Ron Singer, who teaches a series of popular spin classes part-time, co-organized the event and said with the strong turnout, it’s an event they hope to grow and hold more frequently.

Second place went to a competitive NCIS team, anchored by a strong swim performance

by Mary Bachmann and spin instructor Mindy Lobb on the bike. Gregg Bachman, the team’s runner, turned in a respectable middle-of-pack showing.

Third place went to a team captained by Mike Clark of the Kiwi delegation. His strong second place showing on the run helped his team shave enough time to finish in medal territory.

Congratulations to all participants, and we hope to see even more teams in the next triathlon.

