

MERLION STAR

Serving the Sembawang Community

DON'T FORGET

- ✦ E-5 Advancement Exam, Mar. 10
- ✦ Domino's Pizza Sale, Mar. 15
- ✦ St. Patrick's Day Celebration, Mar. 18

March 7, 2011

Volume 20

Issue 4

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Complete your Cost of Living Allowance prior to March 18

Navy Region Center, Singapore Third CNO Enviro Award

Singapore— U.S. Navy Region Center, Singapore (NRCS) won the fiscal year 2010 Chief of Naval Operations Environmental

By: MC2 JESSICA BIDWELL
CLWP PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Award in the Environmental Quality Overseas Installation category for the third year in a row.

A NAVADMIN was released on Feb. 16 by the Chief of Naval Operations announcing the award winners. The Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Award recognizes exceptional environmental stewardship by navy ships, installations, individuals and teams.

"I am extremely proud of our environmental team for having been awarded a CNO Environmental Award three years in a row. This award is proof that we have a fantastic program here and validates all the hard work of our team," said Capt. Michael Smith, Commanding Officer of NRCS. "I must thank Alice, Teo and our BOS contractor/partner for their commitment to the environment and our program."

Alice Wilson, Environmental Manager NRCS Public Works Department said, "We cannot do it without everyone's participation and support of the environmental program. The culture here equates environmental and safety compliance as paramount to mission accomplishment. Clean air, water, and environment have top billings in all facets of our operations."

The mission of NRCS is to provide

Fleet liaison between the host nation and naval, joint, of coalition military units conducting business in Singapore. NRCS provides facilities management in one of the most dynamic theaters and directly supports PACOM regional engagement and security plans, Forward Deployed Logistics Task Force Commander (CLWP/CTF-73).

Through program leadership and proactive planning efforts, NRCS constantly ensures mission accomplishment and protection of human health through implantation of environmental management systems in everyday operations, waste management and safe drinking water. The steady success of executing these potentially competing tasks requires dedicated work and innovative solutions of the NRCS Public Works Department staff.



Quote of the Week

Other things may change us, but
we start and end with family

-- Anthony Brandt

Merlion

Star

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Logistics Group Western Pacific**
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Navy Exchange Brings More Items, Lower Prices to Shelves

SINGAPORE- Responding to customer inputs, Singapore's Navy Exchange

is "re-setting" its store through May, increasing the number of grocery and perishable items it sells, improving the freshness of perishable goods, while lowering prices on hundreds of items.

"These changes reflect what our customers have asked for in recent surveys and focus groups," said NEX Singapore General Manager Linda Garcia. "We'll offer greater selection to hundreds more products, particularly in our grocery line."

Some changes have occurred already. In December, the NEX reduced the cost of frozen meat products from 25% markup, to NEX cost plus 10%. On Feb. 22nd, NEX lowered the prices of 352 grocery items to NEX cost plus 10%. An additional 113 line items will be reduced no later than March 4, 2011.

Also in February, the NEX discontinued a policy of selling

safety-inspected but expired perishable goods at discount; now, all date-coded items are pulled from shelves at or before expiration.

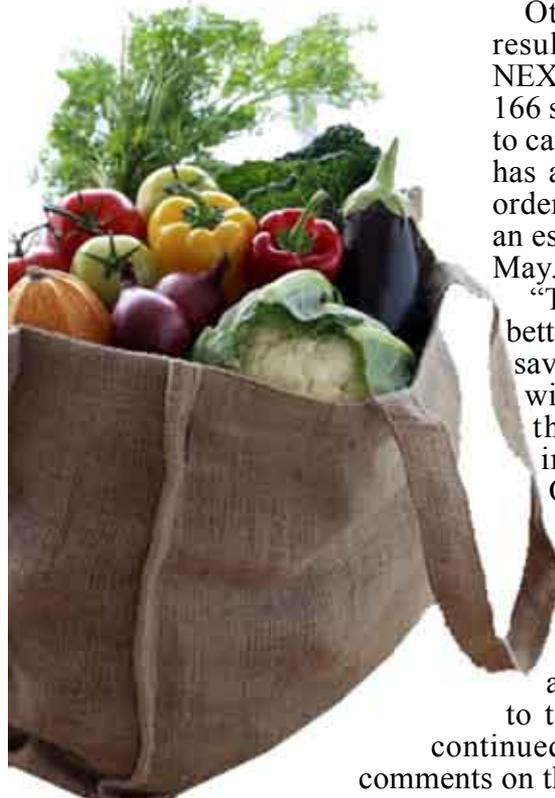
Additionally, suppliers are now date checking items bound for Singapore to ensure they have at least 45 days of shelf-life remaining (for DeCA, it is only 30 days of shelf-life remaining), ensuring items aren't at or near expiration before they hit the shelves. This may result in not having as much merchandise available.

In coming days, customers will see is a replacement of refrigeration equipment, which should be completed in mid-March, to accommodate a wider variety of perishables. Additionally, the facing and set-up of store shelves is changing to allow the NEX to carry a greater number and assortment of grocery items. Garcia estimates that re-facing and stocking the shelves will be ongoing through May, as the store begins receiving regular full shipments from its new food distributor.

Other changes were a direct result of customer surveys the NEX conducted in January. From 166 surveys, requests were made to carry 150 new products. NEX has added these items to future orders with its distributor, with an estimated in-store date of late May.

"These changes will provide better selection and considerable savings to the community, and will price the products below the NEX everyday prices in most other CONUS and OCONUS locations," Garcia added.

The NEX listens and acts upon the input from the community. Please use the Suggestion Box located at the entrance of the store to tell them your thoughts for continued improvement or positive comments on the changes they have made.



USS Higgins Makes Port Call to Maldives

MALDIVES -- USS Higgins (DDG 76), an Arleigh Burke-class Aegis destroyer, arrived in the Maldives on Feb.

By: ENS SAMANTHA J CARNAHAN,
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

25 in support of the U.S. Navy's agreement to provide Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) to the Maldives Coast Guard. This port visit further provided Higgins crew with a chance for cultural and professional exchanges with the people of the Maldives.

"Our port visit is just one small action that reflects our nation's continued commitment to the Western Pacific," said USS Higgins Commanding Officer, CDR Rome Ruiz. "We view this port visit as another excellent opportunity to increase our friendship with the people of the Maldives."

While in the Maldives, Higgins Sailors participated in a variety of activities, including maritime security training, hosting a joint PT program with the Maldivian Navy, a Women's Outreach Seminar, and a reception with tours for more than 100 distinguished guests.

Higgins Sailors also got to partake in a physical training exercise with Maldives Naval Defense Force (MNDF) to familiarize MNDF with the U.S. Navy's Fitness Model. This exercise will include a warm up



Maldives (Feb. 26, 2010) – Sailors assigned to USS Higgins interact with locals while at assisting at a Womens Outreach project while in Maldives. (U.S. Navy photo by LT Jennie Stone)

and workout that incorporates the Navy Operational Fuel and Fitness System which is the latest fitness exercise initiative implemented by the Navy. There was also a discussion that included aspects of the Physical Fitness Assessment, how we prepare for the PFA, and an open question and answer session.

Female Sailors will assisted in a Women's Outreach program led

by LT Megan Granger (Weapons Officer). There was a tour, lunch, and finally an open discussion about women in leadership roles.

This port visit made by a U.S. Navy warship represented an important opportunity to promote peace and stability in the Indian Ocean region, is an outward demonstration of U.S. commitment to the Maldives, and will foster relationships throughout the South Asia region.



Maldives (Feb. 25, 2010) – Sailors assigned to USS Higgins partake in a physical training exercise with Maldives Naval Defense Force (MNDF) to familiarize MNDF with the U.S. Navy's Fitness Model. (U.S. Navy photo by LT Jennie Stone)

Asia Society Welcomes Vice Admiral Scott Van



'COMMITMENT REMAINS STEADFAST' IN ASIA-PACIFIC

110221-N-5758H-002 HONG KONG (Feb. 21, 2011) Vice Adm. Scott R. Van Buskirk, commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, addresses members of the Asia Society during a forum in Hong Kong. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kenneth R. Hendrix/Released)

HONG KONG --

By: MC2 KENNETH R. HENDRIX,
U.S. 7TH FLEET,
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Commander,
U.S. 7th Fleet
Vice Adm. Scott
R. Van Buskirk

told members of the Asia Society in Hong Kong on Feb. 21 that the Navy's increased capabilities and growing maritime partnerships reflect an enduring commitment to peace and stability in the region.

"The 7th Fleet has actually increased its capabilities in several significant ways. The ships and aircraft that we operate today are vastly more capable than they were just a few years ago. At the same time, we have enhanced our maritime partnerships with navies around the region, enabling us to work together cooperatively more than ever before," Van Buskirk said.

He said the numbers of ships operating in the 7th Fleet on any given day are about 70 on average.

Van Buskirk cited the deployment to Japan of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington

(CVN 73) -- with greater speed, range, ammunition stowage and endurance, as an example of how the fleet's capabilities have increased.

He also cited the deployment of the Ohio-class fleet ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), the 60-40 split of attack submarines from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the recent deployment of the Virginia-class submarine USS Hawaii (SSN 776), which reflects the fleet's growing capability under the sea.

Van Buskirk added that upgrades to surface ships, including Ballistic Missile Defense capability and enhanced sonar suites, making them "increasingly potent."

He rejected the notion that the U.S., with its sluggish economy and military operations in Afghanistan, is lessening its commitment to the region.

"U.S. Navy and defense leadership continue to give me exactly the forces I need to do my mission," Van Buskirk said.

Improvements in capability have been made even stronger by a deepening of our alliances and

partnerships around the region, Van Buskirk commented.

"Our alliance with Japan continues to be the cornerstone of our forward presence in Asia, and has in my view been the foundation of security in this region for the past 50 years," Van Buskirk said.

He also expanded on the alliance with the Republic of Korea, interoperability with the Royal Australian Navy and growth of navy-to-navy relations in Southeast Asia.

Asia Society chairman Ronnie C. Chan said the group was delighted to hear Van Buskirk's views about security in the region.

"The vice admiral touched on subjects of interest to a wide range of our members. It was very well received."

Van Buskirk reiterated that the U.S. Navy remains "committed and engaged".

"That is the message. We remain committed to this region, we remain committed to the Pacific and actively engaging where ever we can to foster maritime partnerships," he said.

Essex Sailors Teach Royal Cambodian Navy English

CAMBODIA-- Sailors assigned to the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) participated in an English exchange program with Sailors of the Royal Cambodian Navy at Ream Navy Base in Sihanoukville, Cambodia Feb. 28 as part of Cambodia Maritime Exercise 2011.

By: MC2 EVA-MARIE RAMSARAN,
USS ESSEX,
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The purpose of the English exchange was to help members of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) communicate in English with their American and English-speaking counterparts.

“Our Sailors learn English two-hours-a-day for one year before they go on a ship,” said Ensign Mom Samoun, a Cambodian English instructor. “It’s important to know how to speak and write English for communication with another ship in the fleet.”

The Essex Sailors taught grammar and basic sentence composition. They also paired up for one-on-one training for annunciation practice and group role-playing scenarios. Each Essex Sailor read lines and asked questions pertaining to daily situations such as getting a flat tire or going to exercise.

“I felt a lot more helpful by coming and teaching them,” said Operations Specialist Seaman Monique Mottley. “I want to be an English teacher after the Navy, so I really enjoyed being a part of this English exchange.”

The exchange helped both forces come together to interact, learn about each other’s military and hone their English skills.

Cambodia Maritime Exercise 2011 is a theater security cooperation visit designed to enhance interoperability and improve capabilities of the U.S. Armed Forces and RCAF.

“The U. S. Navy is always honored to have the opportunity to visit the Kingdom of Cambodia,” said Capt. Bradley



SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia (Feb. 28, 2011) - Lt. Cmdr. Scott Myers, training officer on the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship, teaches Sailors of the Royal Cambodian Navy how to speak English during an English exchange exercise at Ream Navy Base. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Eva-Marie Ramsaran)

Lee, commander, Amphibious Squadron 11. “Exchanges such as this help to further strengthen the relationship between our Sailors and Marines and the people of Cambodia, who have been such gracious hosts.”

The English exchange was just one of a series of events in which U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel will participate designed to enhance interoperability between

the two nations. During the exercise, U.S. Sailors will teach courses in military leadership and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit’s medical staff will work with their Cambodian counterparts to provide primary care services, dental care and optometry care to Cambodians in the Kampong Som province.

The U.S. Embassy in now actively conducting a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) Survey in order to update our post allowance level. It is extremely importantly that everyone participates in this survey and that accurate cost of living data is captured as the results have a direct impact on allowance levels. In support of this effort, all eligible employees are encouraged to fill out a Living Pattern Questionnaire (LPQ). A copy of the LPQ is available at the SAC Front Office Reception area on Sue Rahiman’s desk. Please complete the survey by 18 March.