

FLEET FOCUS

O'Kane takes part in joint force protection exercise



ISI William Sohocki photo

Ens. Matthew B. Capon stands watch on the USS Kane during a recent force protection exercise in San Diego.

By Ens. Jacqlynn K. Duquette
USS O'Kane Public Affairs

The USS O'Kane (DDG 77) participated in a vigorous force protection exercise in port San Diego June 1-4. The four-day event was part of a Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX), O'Kane's final pre-deployment training evolution with the Carl Vinson Battle Group (CVBG). Much like the at-sea evolutions of JTFEX, this pier-side training was designed to assess the battle group's level of preparedness and to

give her members the opportunity to practice challenging scenarios before potentially facing them firsthand in the Persian Gulf.

COMTHIRDFLT set the scene for the event – USS O'Kane and the other ships in the CVBG were told to simulate pulling into port in Country Green, a neutral nation with several active terrorist groups. No direct threats had been issued against U.S. forces, but the ships were to plan for the possibility of heavy surveillance, bomb threat, swimmer attack and small boat at-

tack. Extra watches needed to be posted, weapons issued and pier security dramatically increased.

On several occasions the exercise-terrorists tried to gain access to the pier and ships by using fake military identification cards and posing as technical representatives. In preparation, the USS O'Kane entered the San Diego port with the need to define acronym (SCAT) team manned and need to define? THREATCON 'B' set (two gradations above homeport THREATCON Normal).

Despite the disorder surrounding pulling into port, rigging hotel services and helping the USS Ingraham to moor alongside, O'Kane's preparations enabled her to maintain tight shipboard security. Pier sentries and rovers quickly established a defense perimeter and, as the battle group later discovered, successfully turned away all terrorists who attempted to gain entry to the berths.

The all-ship CVBG security team was so successful, in fact, that on June 2 the terrorists were forced to change their tact, resorting to bomb threats via telephone. This led to a series of long security alerts for USS O'Kane's Sailors. Despite exhaustion and the necessity of upgrading alert status to THREATCON 'C,' the Sailors remained vigilant and continued to keep their pier and ship secure.

In response to the effective reaction of CVBG's Sailors, the terrorists again upped the ante, further escalating the scenario to better challenge the battle group's force protection ability. In the early hours of the morning of June 3, USS O'Kane Sailors were awakened by yet another security alert – this time a swimmer attack. The

ships responded quickly and effectively, manning the fire hoses and subduing the threat.

A few hours later the call, "security alert, security alert," resounded once more on the pier. The exercise-terrorist forces had launched a full-scale small boat attack against the moored CVBG. Six hours and seven (exercise) casualties later, the USS O'Kane secured from the most intensive few hours of the weekend, having fought the good fight and defeating the terrorists' plans to prevent USS O'Kane from continuing her mission in the Gulf of Orange.

Although encompassing only a brief four days of the six-week JTFEX, this force protection exercise proved to be one of the most challenging evolutions of the month and a half. It placed the officers and crew of USS O'Kane in a high stress, high threat context that most had not previously experienced.

USS O'Kane's force protection officer began preparing the crew for the increased force protection requirements overseas months earlier, but it was still the first time the Sailors were being called upon to use their new skills with small arms, roving patrols and small boat operations in an exercise context.

Even though this aspect of force protection was new to them, USS O'Kane's crew rose to the challenge, proving their force protection prowess and earning a "Bravo Zulu" from COMTHIRDFLT. More importantly, however, is that the family and friends of USS O'Kane's officers and crew can rest easier knowing that their loved ones have the training and ability to defend self and ship from terrorist threat while on deployment.

Frederick crew hosts Republic of Korea Sailors, midshipmen

By JOC Al Fontenot
CNFK Public Affairs

CHINHAЕ, South Korea - USS Frederick (LST 1184), the only tank landing ship in the Navy, arrived in the southern port city of Chinhae, Republic of Korea (ROK) June 18 for a six-day port visit.

The Navy's only LST, USS Frederick, was in Korea to provide training to ROK Navy personnel and midshipmen from the Korean Naval Academy through static displays and lectures on damage control and amphibious operations.

"We came to Chinhae to work with the Korean Navy and to solidify our international relations," said Ens. Erin Bailey, Frederick's repair division officer. "We provided damage control training for the midshipmen as well as participated in some drills in other areas. It's been a learning experience for all of us."

Frederick's crew also provided daily tours for the midshipmen. Among those receiving a tour was a group of female midshipmen representing the first three classes of women at the ROK Naval Academy. Bailey, a class of 2000 graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., served as the tour guide for the ship's unique visitors.

While the women were impressed with the overall size of the Frederick and with its unique amphibious capabilities, what captivated them most was seeing a female officer – Ens. Bailey – assigned to the ship.

"Currently, we don't have any female officers in the Korean Navy so I was impressed with her position on this ship," said Kim, Ok Hui, a third year midshipman. "Meeting her [Ens. Bailey] helped me determine

my future in the Korean Navy. When I joined the [ROK] Naval Academy, I did not want to serve aboard a ship.

"I felt it would be very hard for a woman. But I have changed my mind and now I think I can do it."

Another student, second year midshipman You, Jeong Hui, was equally impressed with what she saw.

"I was very amazed with the size and structure of this ship compared with Korean ships," said You. "Of course, I was also curious about women on ships because there are no female officers in the Korean Navy. It was very interesting for all of us to see the female officer who led our group. I would like to visit this ship again and learn more details about this ship, especially about how it operates and how the crew works," she said.

While the midshipmen enjoyed their time touring the ship and talking with Bailey, the Knowles, Okla. native said meeting these women meant a lot to her personally.

"I think it was a little bit more personal to me because I have so much respect for them being pioneer women," said Bailey. "I know they must have faced a lot of adversity at first and when you have an institute that has been run one way for so long, change is always difficult. However, from what they told me and from my own experiences, after the initial change and shock settles down, it usually turns out to be better."

Although the female midshipmen who toured Frederick come from a different country and culture than Bailey, she believes that they shared many common experiences. Additionally, Bailey said she hoped she was able to give the midshipmen a taste of what to



JOC Al Fontenot photo

Ens. Erin Bailey talks to a group of female Republic of Korea midshipman during their tour of USS Frederick.

expect after they graduate.

"When I entered the Naval Academy, I was big-eyed and didn't know what to expect," said Bailey. "I believe they had those same feelings. I'm not sure how much information they were able to take away from here as far as shipboard knowledge, but hopefully I was able to shed a little light about what it is like to be a female officer," she added.

While the questions the midshipmen asked her generally had to do with the different aspects of her job, the questions often became a bit more personal.

"A few of the midshipmen wanted to know how I pinned my hair and things like that," said Bailey. "But I think the most difficult question they

asked was if I was treated any differently because I am a female officer. I told them that I do get treated a little differently, but it's not in a bad way. I'm still expected to perform my duties like the male officers," she explained.

Prior to arriving in Korea, Frederick visited the Philippines and Thailand, participating in exercises with the navies of those two nations.

"Our mission on this deployment is to establish and solidify our international relations we have with various countries in this region," said Bailey. "We worked with the Philippine Navy during an exercise called Balikatan and with the Thailand Navy during Cobra Gold. Now we are here working with the ROK Navy. It's just

been a great experience meeting people from the different navies."

Bailey said that although the ship's crew provided training for members of the ROK Navy, that wasn't the most important aspect of the visit.

"I think the transfer of knowledge was a secondary part of our mission," said Bailey. "The biggest benefit we got from this type of visit was being able to solidify the bond between our two countries."

"It was pretty difficult for a great deal of technical knowledge to be passed down in a visit like this because of the language barriers. But I think just spending time together really helped the international relations. It made it very worthwhile," she said.

Skinny Dragon Sailor pedals for AIDS vaccine research funds



AMH3 Blak Metcalf photo

Riding in the Ko'olau mountains, AT2 Andrew Corcoran prepares for his Alaskan adventure using the excellent training ground on Oahu. Corcoran, VP-4 flight engineer, will join 1,500 other riders and pedal 500 miles over six days in Alaska to raise money for AIDS vaccine research.

By Lt. Mark Brummett
VP-4 Public Affairs Officer

Avionics Technician Second Class (AW/NAC) Andrew Corcoran of Patrol Squadron Four (VP-4) will join 1,500 other riders in Alaska and pedal 500 miles over six days (Aug. 20-25) to raise money for AIDS vaccine research.

Corcoran will be a part of the Pallotta TeamWorks Alaska AIDS Vaccine Ride team. "This is the best way I know how to challenge myself and help others out at the same time", Corcoran stated. The Alaskan wilderness will definitely pose a challenge to the current P-3 Orion flight engineer.

Traveling across Alaska on their bicycles, riders will conquer adverse terrain and extreme weather conditions. The 500-mile journey will take them from Fairbanks down south to Anchorage through the Alaskan Mountain Range.

The reason that Corcoran decided to en-

ter the Alaskan ride was simple. "I wanted to go to the most challenging place to ride a bicycle and currently the AIDS vaccine ride doesn't have a contest in Hawaii," he explained.

Along the route, riders will be supported by 500 volunteer crew members providing gear transport, water and snack stops.

Each evening they will be welcomed at a full service "mobile city" featuring hot showers, hot meals, comprehensive medical services, tents and nightly entertainment.

In addition to the physical commitment, each rider will raise a minimum of \$3,400 in pledge donations to participate. Corcoran (rider number 21461) has set a personal fundraising goal of \$5,000.

To help him reach this goal, people can log on to www.vaccineride.org to make a pledge online. Email to Corcoran can be sent to him at ajcorc@hotmail.com or call toll-free (888) 553-4567.

Last year, Pallotta TeamWorks riders

raised \$4.1 million in net proceeds for vaccine research.

This year, the team is doubling their efforts by adding rides in Montana and Canada.

The total amount of miles for all three rides exceeds 1,500 miles, most on unfriendly terrain. In all the events that Pallotta TeamWorks has sponsored since 1994, more than \$150 million has been raised for both breast cancer and AIDS causes.

As a member of the Skinny Dragons for the past four years, Corcoran has been one of the two flight engineers on Combat Aircrew Six (CAC-6). The flight engineer aboard the P-3 is responsible for ensuring the safe operation of the four turbo-prop engines as well as the support systems on the aircraft.

Corcoran and the Skinny Dragons based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii-Kaneohe Bay are training for their next six-month deployment to Diego Garcia and the Persian Gulf.