

Progress: Senior leadership tells SWO community 'we're listening'

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it to state their views on a variety of issues from numbers of duty sections to uniform regulations.

Another interactive SWONET feature is the weekly poll question. This question is generated directly from the desk of Commander, Naval Surface Force to the entire SWO community.

The questions give SWOs a chance to voice their opinion on a variety of surface warfare community issues as well as see how other SWOs feel on the same topics. But the most important reason for SWOs to answer the weekly poll question is to affect change in the fleet.

"Vice Adm LaFleur closely monitors the polling results each week to see what the SWOs think," said Cmdr. Negus. "The answers the respondents give go directly to

COMNAVSURFFOR, as well as the other members of the Surface Warfare Commander's Conference (SWCC). "They gain better insight into how the community feels about issues and then are able to take poll results for action."

As with the "What's the Gouge?" section, respondents are anonymous in their postings, with the lone exception being their rank. This helps the leadership identify areas it needs to work on. For example, a recent poll question was, "How comfortable are you with the detailing process?"

From the responses, COMNAVSURFFOR was able to see a 100 percent comfort level for O-6, 70 percent comfort level for O-3 to O-5, but only a 30 percent comfort level for O-1s and O-2s. This information spurred COMNAVSURFFOR to identify ways to improve the communication process and

better the detailing process for junior officers.

The poll question has also fixed problems as well. A poll result on a question about the PERS-41 selection board video tipped off Navy leadership about a mailing problem in the video's distribution. Leadership corrected the problem and the fleet received the video.

Just above the poll question in the upper left-hand corner of the homepage is "From the Bridge." This is an article from Navy leadership, usually COMNAVSURFFOR, addressing specific issues. Not only is "From the Bridge" an excellent tool for SWOs to see where the surface Navy is headed, but it is also a chance for SWOs to send the admiral their thoughts on what he's saying.

"From the Bridge" is not one-way communication," Negus said. "It's a chance for SWOs to

get direct feedback to the admiral." If an officer has any feedback on something the admiral is addressing, all he/she has to do is click on the "Click here to provide feedback to VADM LaFleur" link. The subsequent e-mail goes directly to Vice Adm. LaFleur's inbox.

The interactive features of SWONET have had far-reaching impacts on surface warfare officers, both in their career development and quality of life.

For instance, SWOs can use the "classified" section to sell real estate and automobiles to fellow SWOs in areas such as Newport, Mayport, San Diego and Norfolk. And "What's the Gouge?" has helped numerous junior officers make career decisions.

One lieutenant junior grade asked, "Is being a CHENG on a minesweeper a good or a bad thing?" and got the answers he

needed from SWOs who had been there to help him make his decision.

Vice Adm. LaFleur says he's enthusiastic about what SWONET offers the surface warfare community and its ongoing development.

"It's a great communication tool that provides SWOs an open forum to share information and exchange ideas," said LaFleur. "My message to the rest of the community about SWONET is this: If you've got an idea or issue you want to bring to the attention of the senior leadership in the community, SWONET is a great place to do it. We're listening!"

If you're not already a registered member of SWONET, becoming one is simple. Just go to www.swonet.com and click "sign up." Being a member of this fleet-wide internet wardroom is one luxury every SWO should take advantage of.

'The King and His Court' visits Pearl Harbor

Eddy Feigner, the last original barnstormer, signs a "King and His Court" t-shirt after he and 'his court' perform their baseball comedy show Nov 3. Feigner has been performing the show for 57 years. He is also the only person to perform more shows to military audiences than Bob Hope. This is Feigner's farewell tour.



J03 Tim Walsh photo

Terrorism: Variety of ideas needed to help defend against terrorism

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Arabic dialects - and automatically translate them.

Others are less technical but no less important. One calls for physical security ideas.

This includes equipment and systems to safeguard personnel, prevent or delay unauthorized access and to protect against terrorist threats and sabotage.

The section on locating and defeating of hard or difficult targets would

have direct application in Afghanistan.

One calls for ideas on detecting and mapping underground facilities. Another asks for ideas on early warning devices.

Still another calls for "through-wall" imaging. The announcement calls for a three-phase process. In the first phase, those with ideas submit a one-page description of their idea. These are due to DoD by Dec. 23.

DoD officials said ex-

perts in the various fields will examine the ideas.

DoD will contact those whose ideas appear workable for a further 12-page proposal.

DoD will evaluate these Phase 2 submissions and ask those who have offered the most promising ideas to submit full proposals in a third phase that may form the basis of a contract.

For more information on how to fight terrorism, go to www.bids.tswg.gov.