

Chief of Naval Operations meets with Task Force EXCEL

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Task Force EXCEL Public Affairs

"I have been looking forward to this day."

With these words, Adm. Vern Clark, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), set the stage for the direction of the Board of Advisors meeting of Task Force for Excellence through Commitment to Education and Learning (EXCEL).

The purpose of the recent meeting was to ensure total fleet involvement in Task Force EXCEL, the Navy's revolutionary training initiative.

"The 'Revolution in Training' is my top action item for the coming year," Clark told the attendees. "I am convinced the Navy cannot succeed in the future if we do not better equip our leaders to accomplish the task we've given them - which is to provide for the growth and development of our Sailors."

Specifically, the Board of Advisors reviewed how the Sailor Continuum is going to be implemented and how training requirements are going to be determined.

Members of the Task Force EXCEL Board of Advisors are a 'Who's Who' of Navy leadership. Some of the 16 admirals making up the board include: Vice Adm. Patricia Tracey, Director, Navy Staff; Vice Adm. Dennis McGinn, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfare Requirements and Programs; Vice Adm. Norbert Ryan, Chief of Naval Personnel/Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower and Personnel; Vice Adm. John Totushek, Chief of Naval Reserve/Commander

Naval Reserve Force/Director of Naval Reserve; Vice Adm. Albert Konetzni, Deputy Commander, Fleet Forces Command (chairman of the Board of Advisors); and Vice Adm. Alfred Harms, Chief of Naval Education and Training. Also on the board of advisors is Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, James Herdt.

"This is an incredible board of advisors," said Rear Adm. Harry Ulrich, Director of Task Force EXCEL. "This group is going to ensure that the Fleet is with us every step of the way."

"If we give our Sailors the chance to succeed, I think the rest will take care of itself."

*Adm. Vernon Clark
Chief of Naval Operations*

One of the goals of Task Force EXCEL is to give Sailors comparable training as received by their civilian counterparts, in a comparable time frame, and to provide comparable accreditation, certifications and qualifications. "We want to put initials at the ends of peoples' names as well as before them," explained Ulrich.

Using the Sailor Continuum as a road map, Task Force EXCEL is addressing professional and personal development, leadership, qualifications and certifications, and overall performance.

Vice Adm. Al Harms, Chief of Naval Education and Training (CNET) said, "We want to develop the whole Sailor; we want to provide all Sailors with the

necessary tools and opportunities to learn, grow and lead."

During the meeting, Fleet representatives updated the CNO and board of advisors on various projects and initiatives. A key part of the meeting focused on how pilot projects, such as the mess management specialist (MS), information technology specialist (IT) and master-at-arms (MA), are working to align Navy training with civilian certification programs. Currently, the MS pilot is working with the American Culinary Institute of America to adopt

and adapt their training and education program. The goal is to give Sailors the same certifications as their civilian counterparts.

Another highlight of the meeting was how the Navy is working with Franklin Covey and the Cooper Institute to develop the personal development vector of the Sailor Continuum. The areas that the personal development vector address include health (fitness, nutrition), safety (CPR, personal risk management), college education (non-professional college course work), educational access (computer skills, reading and learning skills), personal financial management (checkbook management, retirement planning) and ethics.

"Personal development is an area typically neglected in the past," said Capt. Jamie Barnett, Task Force EXCEL Program Manager. "We want to maximize our people's human potential as well as their Sailor potential."

In the area of leadership, Task Force EXCEL is working with the Fleet to test a blended learning system that integrates self-paced interactive multimedia programs with classroom discussions. Developed by Ninth House, a leading relearning company, this cutting edge computer-based course is considered by private industry to be one of the best leadership courses.

Clark's concern is that young Sailors worry about getting left behind and he is determined not to let that happen.

"We want to create a platform to provide prospects for success for our people, to give them responsibility and opportunities for leadership. If we give our Sailors the chance to succeed, I think the rest will take care of itself," Clark said. "What we really want to happen is for Sailors to walk away from this experience as the best marketing example as to why people should join the Navy."

When the board of advisors meets again in March, the focus will be on human performance analysis and upcoming pilots scheduled to get underway in the spring.

Clark admitted Task Force EXCEL is forcing a major cultural change.

"I want our people to be better educated, part of a Navy were there are no non-rated Sailors. The Navy's future is about a more highly educated force. We are going to do this," said Clark.

Changes make travel, moves less costly for military members

Army Sgt. 1st Class

Kathleen T. Rhem

American Forces Press Service

Several changes in the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act are making moves and official travel less costly for service members.

Changes dealing with dislocation allowance, temporary lodging expenses, pet quarantines and frequent-flier miles are all designed to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for service members. President George Bush signed this year's authorization act Dec. 28.

Dislocation allowances, paid when members with families are forced to move, are being improved in several ways. Previously, the allowance was paid only when a member made a permanent change of station move. Under the new

law, members receive a partial dislocation allowance of \$500 if they're moved involuntarily from government quarters at the government's convenience. The full allowance is generally equivalent to one month's basic allowance for housing.

"As we privatize and renovate quarters, we're requiring people to vacate family housing and they were receiving no compensation because there was no PCS," said Stephen Westbrook, director of DoD's Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee.

Another change allows dual-service couples with no other family members and who are moving into government quarters to receive the dislocation allowance. Westbrook explained that previous rules

treated dual-service couples as two separate, single members - and single members are not entitled to the allowance.

A third change allows new service members to claim the dislocation allowance for moves to their first duty stations. They previously were ineligible. Separation and retirement moves remain ineligible, Westbrook said.

Temporary lodging expense (TLE) payments are designed to cover costs associated with staying in a hotel or temporary quarters while moving from one duty station to another. The new law increases the daily payment maximum rate from \$110 to \$180, Westbrook said. TLE is limited to 10 days for moves to bases within the continental United States.

The 2001 authorization act

allowed the reimbursement of pet quarantine costs for members moving to areas that require quarantine. The 2002 act doubles that reimbursement rate from a maximum of \$275 to \$550.

The new authorization act allows members moving from one duty station within the United States to another to ship a second vehicle to their new duty station.

Westbrook explained that previously, the government reimbursed members a certain amount per mile to drive a second car. The new law will pay shipping costs for a second car up to the amount it would have cost to drive the vehicle, he said.

The new law allows federal employees, including military members, to keep frequent-flier miles and other promotion-

al benefits airlines may offer travelers. Westbrook said the government's longstanding position had been that it owned the frequent-flier miles employees earned for travel on the government's dime. The airlines, however, only award miles to individuals.

"There's no material benefit to the government (in keeping them from the members)," Westbrook said. "They are offered freely by those companies to all travelers. So this just recognizes that we should let federal travelers earn the same benefits and keep them just as if you worked for a civilian company."

He noted, however, that official travelers still must make their reservations through government travel offices and pay for official travel with government credit cards.