

The Signature

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CNO meets with Task Force EXCEL

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 Konetzi, 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."

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 meet 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 where there are no non-rated Sailors. The Navy's future is about a more highly educated force. We are going to do this!"

Overseas car conversion can prove costly

USEUCOM Customs PAO Mannheim, Germany

Americans in Europe must beware of foreign car dealers who claim they can convert cars to U.S. standards. The Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) only accept work done and warranted by licensed companies in the United States. They do not accept the work of individuals or overseas companies. Fines, extra bonds and storage fees will ensue if you try to import a vehicle "converted" overseas and you will probably lose the money you paid for the work. U.S. Customs perform a computer check of the vehicle identification number to detect false conversions. It is nearly always cheaper for personnel to sell a foreign-specification car abroad and buy a replacement stateside. "Shipping, paperwork, and conversions cost at least \$6,500, and up to \$25,000 for exotic cars," said Michael L. Burkert, director of the U.S. European Command's Customs Executive Agency. "It is tempting to save some expense by doing work here in Europe," he added. "But car shippers must realize that overseas conversions are not licensed by U.S. agencies." DOT work must also be warranted for eight years and for a \$2,000 parts defect. Emissions conversions must be warranted for 50,000 miles or five years, whichever comes first. Burkert explained that used vehicles rebuilt by the original manufacturer to U.S. specifications can be imported with the proper documents.

Under EPA regulations, nonconforming vehicles less than 21 years old may only enter the United States through an independent commercial importer. Vehicles that are 21 years old or older do not require tests or conversions.

The DOT requires shippers of nonconforming vehicles to sign a contract with a registered importer who must certify in advance that the model is convertible to U.S. safety standards. The owner must also post a bond for one and a half times the vehicle's dutiable value. "Vehicles over 25 years old do not need conversion to U.S. safety, bumper and theft prevention standards," Burkert added.

Seabees destroy NATO Annex facilities



Crew Leader EO3(SCW) Thomas Hennemann, Assistant Crew Leader EO3 Matthew Ward, EO3 Felicia Ridings and EO3 Chad Dirling from Public Works Department assisted the Italian Air Force in the Demolition of two abandoned facilities located at the NATO Annex complex.

TAE BO™



Billy Blanks recently came to Sigonella to provide community members a glimpse of Tae-Bo, with basic and advanced instruction classes held Saturday at the NAS I Pool. His visit also included an autograph signing. Today Blanks is one of the most sought-after trainers and fitness consultants in the world. He has earned a seventh-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and black belts in five other forms of martial arts. He is a seven-time world karate champion and has won 36 gold medals in international competition. In 1975, he became the first Amateur Athletic Union Karate Champion, a title he held for five consecutive years. In 1980, he was selected as captain of the U.S. Olympic Karate Team.

Blanks visited Sigonella as part of a goodwill tour of military bases. The fitness guru enjoyed his visit to Sigonella and commented on the motivation of the participants from this community. "I was very impressed with the Sigonella community. By far, they were the best class I had on the tour," he said.

The Signature Online

Italian phrase of the week...

"Avete dei
piatti
vegetariani?"



(Do you have vegetarian
dishes?)