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NETSAFA Hosts 25th International Maritime Student Officer Workshop

PENSACOLA, Fla. - The Naval Education and Training Security Assistance Field Activity (NETSAFA) kicked off the 25th Department of the Navy Maritime International Military Student Officer (IMSO) workshop today in Pensacola, Fla.

The event which will run from Sept. 16-19, provides a venue for Navy International Programs, NETSAFA and other key participants to address the issues relative to this year's focus: 'Forward for enduring partnerships and back to basics.' The workshop is being held on behalf of the Navy International Programs Office (NIPO), and in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard Directorate of International Affairs and Foreign Affairs and the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group.

NETSAFA IMSO workshop coordinator Dave Babcock described the event as a working-level meeting for command personnel most involved with the administration of international military students (IMS) and the field studies program (FSP).

"Over 200 military and civilian IMSOs and staffers will take away outstanding ideas to improve their international training programs," said Babcock. "Participants are able to obtain information and share ideas on the latest security cooperation training policies and procedures, and discuss problems encountered in the management of international military students (IMS) with subject matter experts."

Kay Judkins from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the agency within the Office of the Secretary of Defense charged with execution of security assistance programs and security cooperation programs, highlighted the four goals of security cooperation programs for the workshop attendees: Contribute to partner and regional security; Enhance military-to-military cooperation; Enable interoperability; and Develop lasting relationships between the U.S. and the partner countries.

"The U.S. has a very large footprint all over the world," said Judkins. "IMSOs play a very important role in gaining trust, access and support from our partners, and are key to our international success."

The keynote speaker for the workshop was the Commander, Naval Education and Training Command (NETC), Rear Adm. Mike White.

"America's Navy is at its best operating forward," White said. "That presence gives our leadership options, bolsters global stability through engagement with allies and partners, and builds trust and confidence. Through the efforts of NETSAFA, and especially the IMSO's, Navy Training is building the foundations for successful partnerships." White also presented six letters of commendation to the winners of the 2014 IMSO of the year award. Their names and IMSO service locations follow:

The Navy recipients were: Fire Control Technician 1st Class Albert Roddy from Training Support Center Great Lakes, Ill., IMSO small command; Billy Martin from Naval School of Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Eglin AFB, Fla.,

IMSO medium command; Kathleen Noyes, from Defense Resource Management Institute Monterey, Calif., IMSO large command.

The Marine Corps recipient was Sherl Gowen from the Marine Corps Engineer School in Camp Lejeune, N.C. Coast Guard recipients were Lt. Kristin Driscoll, from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. and Gunner's Mate 1st Class John Kelly, from the Coast Guard Maritime Law Enforcement Academy in Charleston, S.C.

The IMSOs of the year are recognized for their sustained superior performance in IMSO knowledge, dedication and innovation. To qualify for consideration, a nominee must be an IMSO or assistant IMSO with a minimum of one year in the position.

"I'm definitely excited and appreciate that the Coast Guard took the time to write up this citation. I couldn't have done any of these things if I didn't such good support in international program up the chain of command," said Driscoll. Driscoll added, "This is an excellence chance to network with other IMSO's, and get all the training centers together not only with the Coast Guard but with the Navy and Marines as well."

NETSAFA Commanding Officer Capt. Doug Heady told the workshop attendees that they are a vital part of the relationship with our partner nations.

"Our international programs would not be possible without the exceptionally hard work of our IMSO's," said Heady. "They ensure successful training by verifying course prerequisites, security clearances, checking international travel orders for accuracy and a host of other critical duties. Last year, they handled more than 1,200 students from 156 countries in training with NETC commands. It's a herculean task."

NETSAFA is the U.S. Navy's agent for international education and training and coordinates training support to international governments and organizations. As a field activity of NETC, the command serves as a focal point for all security assistance training program issues, coordination and advice within the U.S. Navy.

For more information about NETSAFA, visit <https://www.netsafa.navy.mil>. More information on the Naval Education and Training Command can be found on the NETC webpage: <https://www.netc.navy.mil>.

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