LEADERSHIP CORNER
WITH THE CENTER DIRECTOR FOR NAVY COLLEGE ATSUGI

As the center director for the Navy College office NAF Atsugi, I report to the base CO, but as an ol’ retired Navy chief, I like to work for the CO via the base CMDCM. It is a formula that I have used the past nineteen and a half years since working for Navy College. To clarify any misunderstanding, I do not work with or for any of our on base universities. I work for the service and adult family college age member. I am here to help facilitate the obtaining of a college/university, undergrad/graduate degree for the service member in their off-duty time, and do everything I can to try and make it as painless as possible for enlisted and officer alike.

For undergrad programs, I will encourage the enlisted service member to use as much of their military training via their JST, formerly known as SMART, as possible depending on their school choice, since not every school accepts this type of non-traditional credit. I can discuss those schools which are the most generous with accepting their JST credits. I will also share websites where they can prepare free for taking CLEP/DSST exams, which is another form of non-traditional credit, and give them the contact for the base National Testing Center (NTC), which here at NAF Atsugi is one of our on base schools, UMUC.

For enlisted service members, officers and adult family members, I will also discuss the wide range of funding options, whether that is Navy tuition assistance, NCPACE monies, AEV funds for Sr enlisted and GEV for officers, as well as grants and scholarship opportunities.

I will also help every service member keep track of the many NAVADMINS that govern VOLED programs, since it can be hard to keep them all straight. For instance, there was a lot of confusion over NAVADMIN 161/07, which among many other things, included that for Sr. Enlisted, to stay competitive, they needed to pursue an Associate’s degree in a rate related field. Well, that was quickly rescinded after only eight months in Feb 2008 via NAVADMIN 042/08. Sadly, many senior enlisted think this requirement is still in effect, and that it was for E1 to E9. Well, it was originally only for E7/8, and a lot of time has elapsed since Feb 2008 when this requirement went away.

I am located in bldg. 987, behind the Navy Lodge, second deck above Personal Property. My counseling hours are Monday through Thursday 0800 to 1700, while Fridays are dedicated to ACT/SAT/DLAB/DLPT testing from 0800 to 1700. My phone number is DSN: 264-3280, The best way to reach me is via email: bryan.burdick@fe.navy.mil

Brian Burdick
Center Director for Navy College Atsugi
Southwest of the heart of the Tokyo Megalopolis, lies a neighborhood that at first glance could be mistaken for Williamsburg in Brooklyn or Fish Town in Philadelphia, it is an area filled with coffee shops, vintage clothing stores, record shops and restaurants. Amongst the narrow streets and hills, locals and visitors, the old and the young, intermingle in a place that has become the bohemian center for modern day Tokyo: Shimokitazawa. Shimokitazawa, or “Shimo” as many locals have come to call it, was originally a rice farming village located on the outskirts of Tokyo. The catalyst that changed it from a farming district occurred in 1923 after the “Great Kanto Earthquake” which left thousands of east Tokyo residents homeless, thus energizing the urbanization of Shimo. In 1927 Shimokiazawa Station was opened and thus connected the new prospering neighborhood to the larger metropolitan area. The area still retains a majority of its pre-war architecture, narrow streets and utter lack of parking spaces for vehicles. In the 1970’s Shimo saw a large influx of students due to the cheaper rent and development of Shinjuku and Shibuya into more commercial areas of Tokyo. Several establishments began to cater more to “youth culture” and thus laid the foundation for what is the Shimokitazawa that is known to the world today.

Visitors traveling to Shimokitazawa can exit from either the north or south exits of Shimokitazawa Station to enter into the neighborhood, after passing the construction in the area, an interconnected series of narrow roads connect the neighborhoods together, cars are very rarely seen as the streets are mostly populated with bike and pedestrian traffic. Dating back to the neighborhood’s roots as a post-war black market, the district is littered with an abundance of vintage and second hand clothing stores that sell everything from classic Japanese brands to military surplus, to 1990’s streetwear. Used record stores sell rare collectibles from yesteryear as well as rare copies of Japan Surf Rock, Hip Hop and Punk.

Due to the very diverse crowds that flock to the area, dining options are numerous and can satisfy any craving a visitor has. Anything from Vietnamese bahn mi sandwich shops, Thai green chili, Neapolitan pizza, French cuisine and British style pubs can be found all around. Typical Japan fare can also be had with izakayas and yakitori street vendors. One notable area that can be seen as an amalgamation of these different restaurants is the Shimokitazawa Cage. This commercial enclave is a park, beer garden, market area and performance space all under the local train tracks and surrounded by a chain link fence. Food trucks park outside and sell the latest in Japanese and western street food to customers. With a rising food scene, the area has also seen a rise in cafes since the 1990s. Coffee house are on every street selling typical cafe fare but also pour over drip coffee, custom made sodas and matcha lattes.

Also, Shimokitazawa is known for its thriving live music and theater scene. Since the influx of younger Tokyo residents in the 1970s, dozens of live houses, music venues, are scattered throughout the district, Shimo is known for producing many of the nationally famous tour bands from their small nook in the large metropolis. Theater is also popular with Shimo and contains several small theaters such as the Suzunari and Honda Theater.

If guests are drawn to a more traditional experience, there are various shrines located throughout Shimo but the two most notable are Shinganji Temple and Kitazawa Hachiman Shrine. Shinganji is extremely notable for featuring a large ginkgo tree and transparent telephone like shrine dedicated to the goddess of music, Benzaiten, located on the grounds.

While Shimokitazawa does not have a long a storied history dating back to the Edo period like most of Tokyo, in the short time of its existence it has garnered enough attention and praise that it is among the must-visit locales along with Shibuya, Harajuku and Ginza. To those from the west it will seem like you’re transported to somewhere familiar yet still new and different.
Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi’s Command Master Chief (CMDCM) Valissa Tisdale has served at NAF Atsugi since January 2017. Her time here is coming to a close as she prepares to go to her next assignment in Guam as the Naval Region Marianas Regional Command Master Chief. Tisdale has been in the Navy since 1989 and is approaching 29 years of service to the United States and her shipmates.

Words from our CMC

As my time as “The People’s CMC” here at NAFA comes to a close, I wanted to take a few minutes to reflect on the past year and a half spent serving alongside the outstanding group of Sailors, Civilians and MLCs that make up Team Atsugi.

It has been a real honor working here. It really has. My leadership style is a bit unique; I like to have fun while meeting the mission and you all have succeeded at every turn, not just meeting, but exceeding the standard and we’ve had a great time doing it. From flag-level visits, including the Vice President, to command inspections, real-world operations and exercises alongside our JMSDF counterparts, we took every pitch and knocked them out of the park. For that I have to say thank you!

I have a few pieces of advice I’d like to offer as I depart for Guam. First and foremost, keep pushing forward. Set your goals and attack them. Stick to your plan and use the resources available to you to keep you on course. It’s your career, whether you’re here for four years or twenty, keep your head down and move forward. Don’t be stagnant. You joined the Navy for a reason. Make yourself and those you love proud!

I hope I demonstrated during my tenure as CMC that leadership is here to support you. As I’m sure you noticed, my door was always open and I sincerely hope that I helped those of you who took advantage of that and walked in to see me when you had an issue, or just wanted to chat. My goal when I checked in was to try to make the base a better place and I hope that together, we accomplished that.

It’s been an absolute joy working with everyone here. I was blessed to have a great Chiefs Mess, some outstanding Future Chief Petty Officers in the First Class Mess and a tremendous group of E5 and below, who we all know do the real work every day out on the deckplates. And I certainly haven’t taken for granted the contributions of our Civilians and MLCs. We couldn’t have done it without you.

If you’re ever in Guam, my door will still be open. Stop by and say hi, and as always, Live Long and Prosper!
While the Navy offers many benefits for Sailors beyond a military career, including education opportunities, medical and dental care and access to both the NEX and Commissary, there’s one that many service members may not be well informed about or don’t often take advantage of, and that is Space-A travel.

“Space-A is short for ‘Space-Available air transportation on government-owned or controlled aircraft’,” said Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi Space-A Representative Quartermaster 2nd Class Mark Barron, from Pittsburgh. “When mission and cargo loads allow, there are often seats available to eligible passengers. With a little patience and flexibility, you can travel all over the world at a cost of almost nothing.”

Space available travel is a privilege that derives, in part, from United States Code, title 10, section 4744, which states that officers and members of the Military Departments, and their families, when space is available, may be transported on vessels operated by any military transport agency of the Department of Defense. Space available travel is defined as travel aboard DoD owned or controlled aircraft and occurs when aircraft are not fully booked with passengers traveling under orders.

But before arriving at your installation’s Air Operations to schedule a flight, there are several rules that must be followed in order to book a seat. There are four key steps and ideas to remember when traveling Space-A. The First is obtaining a sponsorship letter from your command’s admin department. The letter itself states that the active duty service member and their family is eligible to use the Space-A flights. Second, the service member must be on leave before signing up for a flight, although family members can sign up at any time. Third, tourist passports must have the SOFA stamp and a multiple entry and exit stamp, if intending to travel outside of Japan. These stamps are provided by the service member’s admin department. Lastly, service members need to come into the air terminal with the sponsorship letter and complete a Space-A form, to get signed up.

“If someone is unable to come to the Air Operations department, the form can be found on the internet with quick google search for Space-A form,” said Barron. “For those travelling from Atsugi we have an...
email to which the form can be sent; 
AIROPSODO@FE.NAVY.MIL.”

While Space-A is a fantastic program there are certain conditions that can alter when a traveler can take a flight. The first being that most Space-A’s are primarily mission-based. “Atsugi has a mission-based Space A program,” Said Barron. “We do not have any regular flights. All flights are subject to the missions of the day and the seats available on the aircraft. Also there is category seating that determines the priority of who gets on the aircraft for the flight.”

This seating process is based on status (active duty military, retired military, emergency traveler, etc.). Space-A travel applicants are assigned a category of travel numerically from 1 to 6, which categorizes priority: 1 being the highest priority. Thus, an applicant with priority 1 will gain a place on an available aircraft over an applicant with priority 4, for example.

Barron added, “There is no absolute guarantee that any traveler will get on a flight and cancellations can also occur on the day of, but Atsugi is not the only terminal that provides Space-A flights in Japan. Most military air installations have of a form of the program and a full list of terminals can be found on http://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/”

Even though Space-A doesn’t have many of the conveniences and accoutrements that commercial airlines have it offers a more affordable alternative for the frugal service member looking to explore more of the world for free.

“I would suggest that all active duty members and dependents in the area look into the Space-A program and take advantage of it,” said Barron. “It really is a great way to experience new places, see new things and meet new people.”
For some Sailors a budget may just be the quick math they do in their head to figure out how much money is going to be left over after they pay their bills. The problem with this way of thinking is that it leaves too much up to chance and without a proactive approach to unforeseen expenditures Sailors may find themselves financially unprepared.

“Failure to plan is planning to fail,” said Hillary Clarke, personal finance manager at Fleet and Family Support Center. “My thoughts on a budget, what I tell service members daily is having every dollar actually have a home prior to spending it. So, your budget or some people like to call it a ‘spending plan’ is a home for your dollars to utilize exactly and be able to track where your money is going.”

Having a plan when it comes to where your money goes may curb those impulse buys and help Sailors live comfortably within their means.

“What I mean by ‘having a home’ can mean establishing a goal fund for saving up for a vacation or a car. And, remember, we always do want to pay ourselves enough to have a reserve fund (and for active duty, eliminating the likelihood of losing their incomes altogether). We also like to have the service member establish an emergency fund. It will usually be one to three months of your expenses in that reserve fund.”

It is hard to plan for emergencies because life can come fast, but having an emergency fund may make those times in a Sailor’s life less of a struggle.

“If you are not organized and planning your life in other ways, then you are not usually planning financially. The burden of lack of planning financially affects everything else in our lives. I would say when I put a plan together and talk through the simple savings plan, nine times out of ten, I see a look of relief on the service member’s faces capturing the ‘oh, this is all it took?’”

Budgeting may not always be on a Sailor’s mind but Hillary Clarke boiled down some of her advice to three points for Sailors to consider.

**“Number 1.”**

Please track your spending. I don’t necessarily want you to look backwards as an indicator of what you need to do in the future. But, if you can track what you spent starting next month for a whole month that will give you a really good idea of what you and your family can identify as an accurate number within your budget. Track your spending.

**“Number 2.”**

Contribute to your retirement. We are losing two pillars of a three legged stool especially if you are in the younger portion of your career. We used to be able to rely on social security, pension, as well as our personal contributions, which would be defined as TSP or 401k. Now we are losing in the civilian world, which affect a lot of our spouses as well, we are losing the pension or have already lost it. For social security there are talks of that changing. That’s two legs out of three that we are normally relying on. And, so we are really relying on our own contributions. Even if we are a service member doing 20 years do we know if the blended retirement system is the best for us? I would highly recommend to come see me, get educated, and contribute to your retirement.

**“Number 3.”**

Every family’s budget and goals are unique as well as their investments and every financial plan is unique to that specific family. Please do not keep up with the Jones’s and rely on somebody else’s advice who may or may not be qualified to give you advice or they might have a completely different picture then you and your family have so that advice might not work for you. I think advice should only come from qualified professionals.

“We are blessed to have Fleet and Family Support Center here in Atsugi providing services to our Sailors,” said Navy Counselor 1st Class David Pruitt, command career counselor. “Sailors should take full advantage of services provided by your command. But, always remember that FFSC has specifically trained people that can also be utilized.”
How would you describe your Department’s primary mission?
NAF Atsugi Housing Welcome Center’s mission is to sustain the fleet, enable the fighter and support the family, and to provide safe, affordable, quality homes to support Military Families and other DoD affiliated stakeholders. We achieve this objective by providing access to several types of housing.

What primary services do you provide and who are your primary customers?
AHWC provides listings of real estate agents and landlords for persons seeking off base community housing. Additionally, we provide online support for bedroom layouts on base housing. For unaccompanied personnel, we provide housing for E1-E4 and up to 25% for E-4’s over 4 years of service, geographical bachelors who families are on approved delayed travel and members awaiting BAH approval for the dependent location.

How do the services you provide support the command’s mission?
The goal of AHWC is to assist all personnel (assigned to Atsugi) in locating or providing adequate housing within a reasonable timeline (whether it’s on or off base). We foster positive and good relationships with our local landlords and real estate agents and with the Japanese community.

How can your customers reach you?
We are reachable by email and phone. Our e-mail is M-AT-HousingWeb@fe.navy.mil. Visit our Web page at http://www.cnic.navy.mil/housing/ or, http://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnri/installations/naf_atsugi/ftt/housing_and_lodging.html and phone is 467-63-3237 or DSN 264-3237.
BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU PUT IN YOUR BODY

ALCOHOL
CANNABIS
BARBITURATES
BENZODIAZEPINES
COCAINE
METHAQUALONE
OPIOIDS
AMPHETAMINES