

Center for Cryptology

NEWS

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In the wake of Ivan's punch, Center for Cryptology Corry Station graduates students, restarts training

PENSACOLA, Fla. - Less than one week after Hurricane Ivan dealt a devastating blow to Navy commands in the Pensacola area, the Center for Cryptology (CC) Corry Station graduated six cryptology classes and sent a majority of students back into their classrooms Sep. 22.

"Today has been a monumental day," said CC Corry Station Commanding Officer Capt. Kevin R. Hooley. "This morning we graduated 99 Sailors and sent them to the Fleet. We also put 72 percent of our students back in class -- just six days after the destruction of Ivan. I'm so pleased to be a part of that. It's overwhelming to see how we're proceeding."

Students from six initial and intermediate cryptology classes were scheduled to graduate the week prior, but the approaching hurricane necessitated the cancellation of normal operations to allow for preparing and securing the base.

Joining Hooley and other CC Corry Station leaders at Wednesday's graduation was Commander, Naval Education and Training Command, Vice Adm. Alfred G. Harms Jr., who paid a surprise visit to the base, taking time from hurricane recovery efforts to attend the graduation. An obviously pleased Harms personally greeted each Sailor, Marine, Airman, and Soldier, inquiring about their next duty stations.

"What a special day this is and how proud you make us all," Harms said to the graduating class. "I wanted to participate in this first graduation since Ivan danced through our community. Your Navy, your Army, your Marine Corps, your Coast Guard, your Air Force are anxious for you to join the team to help us keep America, and freedom loving people all over this planet, free. You have been tested -- physically, mentally, morally, and you're ready. I've had the privilege in the last three days of talking to the President, the Governor, the CNO (Chief of Naval Operations), and you have amazed them with your tenacity, your spirit, and your commitment to service."

Following the graduation, Hooley visited the Naval Security Group Activity (NSGA) Pensacola headquarters to speak with students in cryptology classes which had convened in borrowed spaces that day.

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After Ivan, CC Corry Station restarts training, holds graduation 2-2-2

Hooley attributes the base's quick recovery to his team of officer and enlisted leaders and students, who worked long hours in difficult circumstances with limited power and telephone service -- and without air conditioning -- to get the base up and running.

"When Hurricane Ivan hit, and I saw the absolute devastation on this base, I knew we had to do two things," said Hooley. "We had to recover, but also we had to sustain our mission. We couldn't spend all our time and energy on just recovering what was destroyed -- we had to have a plan to continue our mission of training."

Immediately following the hurricane, Hooley set up a recovery team to focus on re-building the base, and a mission sustainment team to get training back online quickly, enabling the command to continue sending trained cryptologic personnel to the fleet.

"We had to come up with flexible, innovative plans to get training back online," he said. "We have taken what I'd call a rolling thunder plan of attack. We have labs and classrooms in buildings that are habitable, including the NSGA building, and we're repairing other classrooms. As they become available, we'll shift our classes as needed to take the best advantage of the usable space we have for training our students."

Hooley said that as soon as electric power is restored to the base within the next day or two, an additional 15 percent of the cryptology students will return to their classrooms. The remainder of the students should be back in class within a week, following the completion of critical roof repairs. Although the barracks sustained some damage, there are currently enough habitable rooms to house all of the students.

"Our students have an important function to perform in the war on terror, and our obligation to the fleet is not deterred by this storm," Hooley concluded. "What they've shown me in the past week - their honor, their courage against adversity, and their commitment to recover this base and training has inspired me to great lengths."

***Story by Darlene Goodwin
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