



The
MISAWAN



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The Skipper

Says . . .



By Captain P. W. Dillingham, Jr.

The Siberian swans have long departed and the last of the permanent snow has disappeared from everywhere except the surrounding foothills. Spring is in strong evidence around Misawa even though the cherry blossoms, the usual harbinger of imminent warm weather, are still tightly folded. Ball players and golfers, as well as a myriad of other outdoor enthusiasts, are in strong competition to do their thing whenever possible. It is also a time when spring fever is a continual threat and there might even have been a short-lived tendency to relax the high standards of military appearance and professional performance we have set for ourselves.

There are several areas of concern which need to be addressed because of the large number of new members in the command. The most important area is the apparent lack of awareness of the importance of complete and total leadership on the part of supervisory personnel. Supervisors set the tone for the entire workgroup's attitude, appearance and personal commitment to command objectives. They cannot avoid "being involved" without affecting the group's effectiveness or efficiency. No supervisor can deny any one of his or her members the opportunity to approach with a problem to be shared, whether it be personal or professional. The response "I don't want to become involved" is totally unacceptable at any level in the command. By virtue of their position in the organization, supervisory personnel are group leaders; because they are leaders, they are responsible for those they lead; and in order to be responsible, one has to be involved. Supervisors can gaff-off involvement for a while, but avoiding responsibility by passing the buck becomes very obvious to those led and it doesn't take senious in the chain of command very long to find our what is happening, either. One of the primary objectives if the military in general, and this command in particular, is to train its members to be future leaders and decision-makers. Involvement requires decisions to be made, some hard and some relatively easy. However, with each decision, the training lesson that is inherent in leadership development is present, i.e., the leader is in charge and is both responsible and accountable for his or her decisions. Some decisions may not be as good as others, but stronger leaders and better supervisors will be the result. As our leadership improves, so will our ability to make consistently good decisions for the betterment of the overall command.

We have set ourselves a difficult but maintainable course to ensure the continuance of our organizational pre-eminance. I see no reason to change now. Just as spring is a season of regeneration, so now is an appropriate time to rededicate our efforts to the Navy and the Nation.



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On the cover

The farmer prepares his rice paddies for spring planting as piles of harvested rice stand in the field nearby on the edge of Misawa city. (Photo by CTA2 Guy Fitzgerald)

MISAWAN

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