Ground broken at site of new MQ-25 Stingray hangar

From left, Cmdr. Grant Watanabe, NAS Patuxent River Public Works officer; Capt. Christopher Cox, NAS Patuxent River commanding officer; Jeff Dodge, Unmanned Carrier Aviation Program office (PMA-268) principle deputy program manager; and Frank Wompol, BL Harbert International corporate vice president for safety and health, officially break ground on the MQ-25 Hangar April 16.

The hangar will include multiple bays to accommodate up to three aircraft with extended wings and one with folded wings, maintenance shops, crew spaces, administrative areas, and laboratory space for the government and contractor integrated test team.

The MQ-25 is the Navy’s first operational carrier-based unmanned air system and will provide aerial refueling capability to the Carrier Air Wing to extend its range and make better use of Navy combat strike fighters that currently conduct tanking missions.

Workplace harassment training emphasizes that ‘just joking’ isn’t funny

By Donna Cipolloni
NAS Patuxent River Public Affairs

More than 400 Sailors and civilians turned out April 24 for two workshops by Pure Praxis, a socially adaptive performance group whose live improvisational training recreates real-world scenarios that allow audience members to participate and rehearse proactive responses.

Contracted by the Department of the Navy Sexual Assault, Prevention and Response Office, the training was titled “Just Joking” and dealt with four individuals involved in a workplace harassment situation.

“We bring the theory, you bring the ideas, and together we practice,” explained Sheno Khal, facilitator and program manager for the group, during opening remarks as the actors took the stage.

Throughout the hour-long session, as the dialogue and action played out, the audience came to know each character – the antagonist, a male Sailor who constantly spewed offensive remarks under the guise of “just joking”; his civilian friend and supervisor hesitant to take action; a newly arrived female Sailor inclined to address the bad behavior; and a fellow female shipmate who, while offended herself, suggests just putting up with it because nothing is likely to change.

By observing the situation the characters are in, the audience can participate in the narrative by recognizing what is happening and offering positive and safe solutions to the problem. Facilitators then call audience members up to the stage to “practice” their suggested intervention strategies.

“Some people may not know how to prevent workplace harassment or even fully understand it, and this training helps put it in perspective,” said Pax River’s Sexual Assault and Response Coordinator, Gloria Arteaga. “It’s hard to be the one to step up, but sexual harassment is a cycle that will continue unless we interrupt it. The troupe interacting with the audience – stopping a scene, discussing what’s going on, and soliciting ways to intervene – impresses upon people the importance of taking action.”

More dynamic than watching a passive PowerPoint presentation, the live performance training style draws the audience in on a more relatable level.

“Being able to see it played out in front of you is a great way to get people to actually recognize what is happening and feel the necessary emotions that help with moving forward in these situations,” said Hospital Corpsman Jasmine Humlicek. “What stood out for me was the blunt, honesty of it all. Some of the gestures shown on stage I never thought would have been okay to use in front of so many military members.”

See TRAINING, Page 3