



Lt. Kristin Seewald, the staff judge advocate for the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division and the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, takes a look around the deck of USS Nimitz. (U.S. Navy photo)

China Lake JAG helps Sailors on USS Nimitz

From Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division Public Affairs

The staff judge advocate for the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division and the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake recently spent a week aboard USS Nimitz (CVN 68) helping its Sailors take care of legal matters before deploying.

With a little more than three years in the Navy, Lt. Kristin Seewald has already done a lot of things she never imagined she would – she did a tour of duty with Combined Joint Task Force 435 in Afghanistan, she served and lived in Hawaii, she moved to Ridgecrest, Calif., in August and now she has logged time on an aircraft carrier.

When Region Legal Service Office Southwest asked for volunteers to spend the week before Thanksgiving aboard the Nimitz helping Sailors as part of pre-deployment legal readiness preparation, Seewald said she couldn't wait to get out there. Slightly disappointed that she couldn't have the experience of landing on a carrier, Seewald said she and four other lawyers in the Navy's JAG Corps walked onto the ship in San Diego. As the ship cruised up the coast to Washington, the judge advocates helped the Sailors prepare wills and powers of attorney, and tend to other legal issues like closing out leases and phone contracts.

Seewald may have gone to help the Sailors, but she benefitted from the trip as well.

"I learned a lot on that ship," she said. "And, I gained a greater appreciation for what our Sailors go through out there."

Seewald observed a few executive officer inquiries and a captain's mast while aboard the Nimitz.

"I was able to see a completely different way of doing them," she said. "It was a good comparison between how things are done on a ship versus on shore. I can incorporate that into my knowledge base here."

Seewald said her week on the ship consisted of a lot of work, at a fast pace and long hours, and she would jump at the chance to do it all again.

"Working with the other judge advocates was a good reminder of how cool our legal community in the Navy is," Seewald said. "We are mobile and we can get things done no matter where we are."

Joining the Navy wasn't an automatic choice for Seewald, an Albuquerque native, as she didn't come from a traditionally military family, although she had an uncle who served in the Army during Vietnam as a language specialist. It was while she was still in law school at Lewis and Clark in Oregon that Seewald came across a job announcement for the Navy JAG Corps.

"I had not thought of the Navy as a potential employer before but I kept an open mind and pursued it," Seewald said. "I found it interesting because I could practice various types of law, and I could travel to new places. So far, it's fulfilled every one of my wishes. I love my job." 🌟