

Families depart on last MAVDD flight from NAF Atsugi

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Mar. 29 2011

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NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI, Japan – A few Department of Defense (DOD) dependents participating in the Military Assisted Voluntary Departure of Dependents (MAVDD) were the last to leave March 28 on the last commercial airliner departing from Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi.

According to NAF Atsugi officials, more than 1,500 people have departed through the MAVDD program since March 21. This last flight carried just over 100 people out of Japan.

Families and friends waited in Atsugi's hangar 183 for this last departure provided by Ryan International Airline. For families, this last flight was beneficial as it allowed them an opportunity to depart that was not open to them before.

For Petty Officer 2nd Class Ricardo Garcia, stationed with

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Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka (CFAY), this flight was perfect timing for his wife and three kids. They had just returned from leave.

“Our main concern is this little boy,” Garcia said as he cradled his sleeping infant son in his arms. “It’s hard because I’m going to be the only one staying at home once they leave. It’s going to be hard both ways. Hard for them, because my wife has three kids she has to take care of, wins and this little boy.” Garcia went on to say that his family would not be returning to Japan as he would be retiring in July.

Not everyone leaving however was a DOD dependent. Marcine Woodley is an instructor with The Sullivan’s Elementary School based in Yokosuka.

“I would have left earlier,” said Woodley, “However there has been multiple information put out about DODDs teachers, whether we are permitted to leave. So there has been a delay in our departure due to a lack of communication,” Woodley said.

There were many different reasons why people were leaving on this last flight out of NAF Atsugi as opposed to when the process first started. But the reasons as to why people were leaving in the first place were still the same.

“I’ll come back to Japan when it’s safe,” said Woodley. I want

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to know that it's safe for my family and myself and the children we  
teach at The Sullivans.”