

Getting Prepared for Bon Odori

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BON ODORI

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI, Japan – Every year in Japan, between the days of August 13 and August 16, the spirits of ancestors long past are said to return to this world so that their living descendants may welcome, honor and entertain them with dances. This celebration culminates in the Bon Odori Festival.

In preparation of this annual festival, Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi personnel participating are learning up to 14 dances. Of those dances only six are expected to be performed.

“I think it’s awesome,” said Amy Gardner, wife of Capt. Eric Gardner, commanding officer of NAF Atsugi. “I think it’s such a great way for the Americans and the Japanese to have friendships and to interact with the culture.”

The class of over 50 participants was led by Hisae Hamada and Haruko Nakagawa, two women from the Yamato Minyo Association.

They've been performing the dances for Bon Odori for more than 20 years.

“It's fun,” said Sumie Maruyama, coordinator and participant of the dance practices. “And it's the best way to communicate with the local people, by sharing the dance. Even if you're not good at dancing at all, the Japanese are so eager to teach how to [perform the] dance. So come out and join us.”

Practices are held every Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon. For more information please contact your AOSA/AESA representative.