

MWR offers adventure on Mt. Fuji tour

MC2 Justin Smelley

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI , Japan – Mount Fuji is one of the most recognizable symbols of Japan. The mountain has been featured in numerous artworks and folk stories throughout Japan and the world.

It comes as no surprise that many people are curious about the mountain and want to challenge themselves by climbing the tallest landmark in Japan. Every year throughout the months of July and August, which are the open climbing months, thousands of people take on the task of conquering the 12,389 ft mountain.

For Sailors and the members of Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi, the base's Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program offers multiple chances to go and take on the vigorous climb.

"I wanted to climb Mt. Fuji really bad," said Damage Controlman 2nd Class Jeffery Ballard, tour participant. "As long as I've been in Japan I have yet to do Mount Fuji and this was a perfect opportunity."

The climb isn't an easy task to accomplish for those that aren't physically and mentally prepared for it.

The trails feature many obstacles including steep inclines that zig-zag up, jagged rocks that have to be scaled at a slow pace and the unpredictable weather that can change at any minute.

For the hikers that are prepared for the climb, it can be a peaceful and challenging activity that a lot of people don't have the privilege of doing.

“I thought it was really good and really challenging,” said Army Maj. Patterson Taylor, Medical Representative for the Science and Technology center at Camp Zama. “It wasn’t too hard but it was definitely a good workout. I think it was an important cultural activity to get to know Japanese culture and their society.”

Those that reach the top of Mount Fuji there is a sense of great accomplishment and relief that that accent is finally over.

“I felt really good,” said Taylor. “It was a very nice feeling knowing that I had gotten all the way up there.”

“I was happy that I actually conquered Mt. Fuji,” said Ballard. “I had a blast and it was definitely one of the most challenging things I’ve done in Japan.”

After the six strenuous hour climb it takes for the average person, climbers can enjoy a hot bowl of ramen to warm them up on the cold mountain top before returning back down.

For those that are not interested in climbing to the top during the tour can still get enjoyment out of the trip. The views and scenery around the bottom of the hiking trails offer stimulating landscapes and a bird’s eye view over the surrounding areas around the base of Mount Fuji.

For anyone interested in the seeing sights of Japan or for more information on tours call 264-3770 or stop by the MWR tour office located in building 978.