USS Mustin Sailors celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

Story and photo by MC2 Devon Dow, *USS Mustin* Public Affairs

YELLOW SEA – Guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) honored the contributions of the Hispanic community in the United States on the mess decks as they celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month Oct. 14.

Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrated from Sept. 15-Oct. 15, recognizes those American citizens whose ancestors are from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America by honoring their histories, cultures and contributions to the United States.

For the *Mustin*'s celebration, the Hispanic cultures were represented though dance, music, food and speeches showcasing the diversity within the Hispanic community and highlighting their contributions to the fleet.

"Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month is one of our many opportunities to recognize where we are from and to celebrate our diverse culture in the U.S. Navy," said Cmdr. Joseph Ring, *Mustin*'s commanding officer. "Our diversity is one of our most critical strengths; we are a diverse, harmonic and unique maritime force of volunteers from all four corners of the world. Today we focus on our Hispanic '*hermanos*' and 'hermanas' and everything they bring to our deck plates, our capability and our mission."

Famous Hispanic American Sailors include David Glasgow Farragagut, the son of a Spanish immigrant, who became the Navy's first admiral in 1866, Joe Campa, the Navy's first Hispanic Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy and Hospital Corpsman Luis E. Fonseca Jr. who was awarded the Navy Cross for saving the lives of several Marines during operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

Mustin Sailors said the day's event was a great way to recognize their heritage and honor the contributions made by the Hispanic community past and present.

"I think events like this are a great way to show just how diverse our Navy is," said Gas Turbine System (Mechanical) 3rd Class Diana Leiva. "It was nice to be able to serve dishes from my culture at the event and teach my Shipmates about the many Hispanic countries and service members who contribute to the U.S."

Sailors assigned to guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) watch a video celebrating the contributions of the Hispanic community during *Mustin's* Hispanic American Month Celebration on the mess decks Oct. 14. The celebration recognizes those American citizens whose ancestors are from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America by celebrating their histories, cultures and contributions to the United States.

"I am very optimistic for our Spanish Shipmates and the imprints they will leave on our Navy's combat team," said Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/FMF/SCW) Joshua Sandoval, the events guest speaker. "I encourage all of them to pass on the stories of their Navy experiences, they never know when their words could inspire and change the life of a Hispanic American."

The observance of Hispanic Heritage month was originally established in 1968 as a week-long remembrance but extended to a month-long celebration in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan.

Legal community gathers for Inter-Cultural Softball Tournament

By LTJG Nicholas Inns, RLSO Japan

More than one hundred members of the Japanese legal community joined members of U.S. Navy legal commands for the 30th Annual International Friendship Softball Championship Oct. 8.

The tournament featured a combined team from Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) Japan, Defense Service Office (DSO) Pacific, and the Navy Marine Corps Trial Judiciary as well as teams from Kurihama Prison, the Yokosuka Prosecutor's Office, the Japanese Police, and the South Kanto Defense Bureau.

During the tournament's championship game, the Kurihama Prison Team emerged victorious, defeating the Yokosuka Prosecutor's Office by a score of seven to three.

The Prison Team relied heavily on their "iron guard defense, which was praised by everyone," according to Koichi Sekizawa, legal advisor to Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka.

The U.S. Navy Legal Team failed to defend its title for the first time in three years, forcing RLSO Japan Commanding Officer Captain Robert F. Johnson to relinquish the championship trophy he had proudly displayed in his office for the past year.

RLSO Japan faced Kurihama in the opening round, and the four-inning game ended tied at two.

Kurihama won the tiebreaker – a coin toss – and then later, the championship.

Despite the loss, Johnson enjoyed the day.

"The spirit of friendship comes first and the essential thing is not to have won but to have played well," he said.

The event included U.S. and Japanese attorneys, legal advisors, and law enforcement agents whose daily cooperation is essential to maintaining the strong relationship between the two countries.

"This tournament is a great, time-honored testimony to the mutual friendship of the U.S.A. and Japan," said Johnson during his welcoming remarks.

Before the final game, the participants and their families took a break for an eclectic lunch featuring dishes from both cultures: hot dogs and *yakisoba*, fried chicken and *gyoza*.

At the end of the day, nearly 150 people left happy, having renewed the bonds between the two countries.

The tournament was hosted by the Japanese Community Legal Association (JCLA), which is a private organization comprised of U.S. military members and civilian employees of RLSO Japan and DSO Pacific.

For nearly 40 years, JCLA and its predecessor, the Yokosuka Legal Association, have been dedicated to helping support Kaifu Gakuen, a residential home for handicapped adults and children, and enhancing the cooperation among all members of the U.S-Japan legal community.