Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Fleet Activities, Yokosuka celebrates 237th Navy birthday

Story and photo by Gregory Mitchell, CFAY Public Affairs

BM1 Shandell Black presents Fleet Activities (FLEACT), Yokosuka Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Douglas Vrieland the second piece of traditional cake as the oldest sailor present during the Navy Birthday ball held in the Purdy Fitness Center on board FLEACT, Yokosuka Oct. 13. The ball was held to commemorate the 237th birthday of the United

Service members and their families at Fleet Activities, Yokosuka celebrated the 237th birthday of the United States Navy during a Navy Birthday Ball held in the Purdy Fitness Center here Oct. 13.

Conducted annually, the Navy Ball is an event which is dedicated to the celebration of the heritage, history and the date that Congress created the Navy, Oct. 13, 1775.

The ball began with the playing of the national anthems of both the United States and host nation Japan by the 7th Fleet Band and the parading of the colors by the color guard. A traditional cake cutting ceremony was held with the youngest and the oldest Sailor present while remaining true to the host nation by having a cultural Japanese presentation by taiko drummers. Taiko is an ancient Japanese form of percussion using drums of various sizes played in religious festivals and ceremonies.

Vice Adm. Scott H. Swift, Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, served as the guest speaker as well as the guest of honor for the ceremony. He began his speech by focusing on the long history and overall strength of the United States Navy in its present form, as well as emphasizing the importance of the role of forward deployed forces in the area of responsibility.

"Next year will mark the 70th birthday of 7th Fleet. Since our founding in 1943 here in the Pacific, we have been permanently deployed forward, ensuring regional stability is either maintained or regained," said Swift. "This is particularly meaningful as the region has constantly grown in global importance. 3.5 trillion dollars of maritime trade passes yearly through the South China Sea alone."

"3.5 trillion dollars is hard to put into perspective. The vast majority of what we own travels by sea; our furniture, our clothes, our stereos, our TV's, cars or parts to build them, gas to run them, gas to heat our homes, computers, cellphones, almost all the food in our commissaries all come by sea, while the physical impacts to that trade will be significant should the freedoms of navigation that we have taken for granted for centuries be impacted by these stabilizing actions."

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CFAY, Sailors gather for bell ringing ceremony

Story and photo by Joe Schmitt, CFAY Public Affairs

Sailors gathered on command hill in front of the Fleet Activities (FLEACT) Yokosuka headquarters building to watch a celebration of the U.S. Navy's 237th on Oct. 12. The commemoration included a bell ringing ceremony and a speech by Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka Capt. David A. Owen.

"As we celebrate our Navy's 237th birthday, our history and heritage forms our identity, telling us who we are and what we stand for," said Owen, reading the historical message sent out from Chief of Naval Operations. "Our core values of honor, courage, and commitment, have been passed down from our founders, who charged the Navy with the solemn duty to serve as the "shield" of our republic. The first real test of our Navy faced was during the War of 1812. This war began at sea when the United States ships were ordered to heave to upon the high seas."

Boatswain's Mate Shandell Black ran the eight ceremonial bells that signal the end of a watch. It represents the end of the current year. Black rang the bell–the same bell used at many ceremonies–it's appealing sound heard at many local retirements, and drew the year to a close.

BM1 Shandell Black rings the ceremonial ninth bell at the 237th Bell Ringing Ceremony in the C-2 building, Oct. 12. The first eight bells signal the end of a watch and the end of the last year, the ninth bell starts a new watch and welcomes in the next birthday year for the Navy.

The previous year contained many things for FLEACT, Yokosuka. The command won the GreenGov award for reducing it electrical usage especially after the March 11 disasters, the base galley won the Ney Award, the command won several categories of the CNO Environmental awards, several open base events including, attendance-record setting Friendship Day hosted at Negishi Housing Detachment, and the base was visited by the Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Juan M. Garcia, III , Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West, Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and two Medal of Honor recipients.

"We are the tip of the spear out here," said Black. "We are always out where things are happening, right in the middle of it. It's good feeling to know that you're out here keeping everyone safe."

Owen read the rest of the speech to the Sailors gathered, "On this 237th Birthday of our Navy, we have the honor to serve in the greatest maritime fighting force the world has ever seen, but we do with humility, continuing to build on the framework those Sailors forged before us..."

After the speech Black rang the bell one final time signaling the beginning of the new watch and the new year for the Navy.

"Here is to 237 years of proud naval heritage, and many more!" said Owen.

INSIDE

USS Mustin Sailors celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

***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.**

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Corpsman, Nurses caring for patients together

United States Naval Hospital Yokosuka fifth-floor Multi-Service Unit is its official name. But, the doctors, nurses and corpsman working here have another name for it: "The Ward."

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